



Ethical Views

January 2005 Vol. 119, No. 5 Newsletter of the Philadelphia Ethical Society

January Platforms

Sunday, January 2

Platform: **Memorial Sunday.** Richard Kiniry, Leader, presiding. In an interactive program, members and friends of the Philadelphia Ethical Society pay tribute to the memories of loved ones who remain a part of our lives.

Sunday, January 9

Platform: Dr. Lyle Murley, member of the Philadelphia Ethical Society and Professor Emeritus of English at California Lutheran University, will speak on the topic, **“Poetry as Dialogue: “Hunting is Not Those Heads on the Wall.”** He will explore ways in which poetry, or art in general, can lead a person to change, or at least want to change. Reading poetry or experiencing art opens a dialogue with a poem, a work of art. The first step is to see the work, the order and beauty that an artist creates; then to engage oneself with that creation and to be moved by that interaction is to open oneself to a relationship in much the same way as Martin Buber describes authentic dialogic interactions between two people. In some ways it is better because the artist is more focused on artistic integrity than about convincing a person of anything.

Sunday, January 16

Platform: Ifkekhar Hussain, a student of Islam and Muslim culture, will speak on the topic, **“Understanding Islam.”** He will discuss both suicide bombings and the oppression of women and how they relate (or not) to the teachings of the Koran. He will question whether understanding of this culture, perpetuated by government and the media, corresponds to reality and how it affects our relationship with the Muslim world.

Sunday, January 23

Platform: T.B.A

Sunday, January 30

Platform: Dr. Steven Dinero, Associate Professor of Human Geography at Philadelphia University, will speak on the topic, **“After Arafat: Where Do We Go From Here?”** He will address the primary question of the day with regard to Palestinian aspirations: now that President Arafat has died, what are the prospects for a real peace between Israelis and Palestinians developing any time in the foreseeable future? This question, he will show, should be addressed in the context of recent developments in the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, in particular how and why the Al-Aqsa intifada arose, as well as why at present it seems to be waning somewhat.



Leader’s Message
Memento, Homo, Quia Pulvis es
by Richard Kiniry

I’m not ready for the grave yet but if the list of the people I love were in two columns, the column mark those deceased is growing in relation to those I love and are still alive. That does not make me yearn for death but it does add a quality of sadness to life. Of course, I have the option of adding more living loved ones to help me forget those who are lost.

(Continued on page 2)

**Platforms at 11:00AM, Sundays
Coffee Hour & Discussion
follow the Platforms.**

**Musical interludes performed by
Pianist Tim Ribchester.**

**Childcare provided at no charge.
All are welcome!**



Little **Marlee Orange** works hard in her Sunday School Class

BRING OUT THE BEST IN YOUR CHILDREN

Children don’t become good people without working at it. The Philadelphia Ethical Society offers an Ethics for Children program that encourages an open search for personal values.

- Age appropriate curriculum
- Community service opportunities
- Arts and crafts
- Workshops for parents: discipline, dealing with aggression, sex, bullies
- Child-care offered for infants & tots
- *Sundays at 10:45 A.M.

For information call
(215) 735-3456

Leader's Message (Continued)

Each January we offer ourselves an opportunity to remember those loved ones who have died. First we remember the members who have passed away during the past year, then others in our personal lives who have died recently and finally we open the floor for stories and memories of those who are deceased yet still hold an essential place in our hearts and minds.



Death is the hidden fact of life. Even the most melancholic, depressed person avoids the inevitable last act in their approach to daily living. Even as our limbs start falling off we can pretend every thing will be okay. I have always assumed that was necessary. If we faced death each day, the human race wouldn't have gotten out of the cave. A community full of people dwelling on death isn't going anywhere. It wouldn't be especially energetic, productive, or happy. So, ignoring our inevitable demise seems to be necessary for life to go on.

But, I suspect that it would not kill the human spirit to remind children, adolescents and especially young adults in business school that this is it: life actually is short; and making the most of life doesn't have to mean accumulating lots of stuff you can't take to the grave.

We do seem to be doing a good job of recognizing the stages of life. We appreciate that at certain ages our needs are different and our responsibilities change, and we are reminded often to save for our retirement years. But no one mentions that you may not live long enough to spend all that money.

In more traditional societies the ancestors are part of daily life and even here in families that hold on to tradition,

the photos are displayed in abundance. In old, traditional Barber Shops they have pictures of John Kennedy and Martin Luther King, sometimes even Roosevelt, on their walls. The past is treasured and displayed. In stores in the Italian Market or on Jewelers Row there are pictures of the street as it once was and of the fathers and uncles who started the business, then on a lower level the pictures of generations of staff members ending with newest children to join the family.

Acceptance of your own death makes sense only at a certain age; before then it should not resonate with a mentally healthy life, but an occasional jolt of recognition can give a young person's life more depth. It can free a person both from the expectation that life has to be a great success – after all success is fleeting – and also free them to do their own great stuff, after all we only have one chance to be ourselves.

Memorial Sunday is coming, time to remember those whom we love but who have left us behind, time to feel ourselves in the stream of life. We bring the best pieces of the past into the present. Come and share your stories and memories. <>



President's Message

by Howard Peer

November and December were very interesting and productive months here at the Society. There is lots of news to report. We welcome three new members. **Mary Scholl** and **Amber Anderson** are our newest members. And **Henry Pashkow**, who has been with us long as I can remember, has officially joined the Society. Welcome aboard, all.

The Board agreed to support the **Just Matrimony Society**, which requests that marrying couples direct some financial support to supporting equal rights for gay couples and which has

created a brochure detailing this proposal to endorse just matrimony. In effect this means that **Richard** (and **Temma and Arnold** - see below) will broach the subject with couples and ask for their support.

For those who don't know, Temma and Arnold have attended Adjunct Leaders' training sessions. They are now eligible to become Adjunct Leaders. The Board has recommended them to that position. When approved, they will be able to perform marriages.

Arnold reported that the Veterans' Administration has requested permission to bury soldiers under the AEU symbol. You know how soldiers have a cross or Star of David or other denominational symbol on their graves. It's great that we have the VA's recognition, and sad that there are soldiers' graves that need to be thus consecrated.

Arnold's term as President of the AEU will be up in May, 2005. The Board unanimously agreed to re-nominate him for another two-year term as an AEU Director. Our re-nominating him allows the possibility (probability - I hope) that he serves another term as AEU President.

The Board also agreed that the PES should sign onto the AEU's amicus brief opposing the display of the Ten Commandments in the public sphere.

One of the things I have been trying to do as President is to make a comprehensive listing of all the things that the PES is involved in and to gather up the core documents that describe our obligations. I thought I had a pretty good grip on every thing we were into until Carol Love brought up the Hadley Committee, which sponsors educational activities for people in the Kennett Square area. PES and the Kennett Square Friends each nominate three board members who oversee the fund's actions and decide how the money is to be allocated each year. Carol has graciously provided me with a copy of their constitution for my core documents book. I wonder what else will turn up over the course of the year.

Does anyone out there know anyone who needs a good **safe**? We have a

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President's Message (Continued)

huge safe in our office. Its walls are six-inches thick. It must weigh a couple of tons. From the markings on the safe it was given to the PES by the Stiffel and Freeman Company of Philadelphia on December 12, 1871. We really don't need it and it takes up a lot of space. But we don't know what to do with it. I'm trying to see if there it has any historical value or value as an antique.

I've spent a couple of hours on the internet doing research. It seems that old safes are not especially valuable and that you have to hire an insured rigger to get rid of them. While I've not yet found a similar one it seems that a comparable safe costs several thousand dollars. Anyway, if you know anyone who wants a safe we should talk.

Next month's topic - Burial Plots – and a deal I have for you. <>

Platform Summaries

October 17. In his address, "The Future of Marriage," Richard Kiniry asserted that the future of that institution so central to our lives depends on more diverse arrangements with more possibilities. Historically, marriage has evolved from being a part of the web of family and community relationships to its current focus on the couple. With our increasing emphasis on individualism in modern society, there is increased tension between our romanticized concept of marriage and individual desires. In order to recognize both biological and social needs, coupling arrangements need to be inclusive so as to include more varieties of marriage experiences than our legal or religious institutions currently embrace.

– *Betsy Lightbourn*

November 28 The Philadelphia Ethical Society celebrated a Humanist Thanksgiving. Richard Kiniry, PES Leader, opened the event with a welcome and some musings on this original American holiday. He noted that an undercurrent of racism and cruelty accompanied our story of

bounty, unspoiled land, and religiosity. A primary example of this paradox was, of course, the befriending of Native Americans before we set out to destroy them. Richard concluded that nevertheless, we still have reason to give thanks and celebrate many good things in our lives. Several courses of the meal followed, accompanied by readings from participants and singing led by Saul Machles on guitar. Special thanks to all the cooks, especially Carol Love and Ken Greiff, who were responsible for the delicious turkey.

—*Mary Wasserman*



Richard Kiniry during his "Abortion is Life" address on December 5th.

December 5 In his platform address, "Abortion is Life," Richard Kiniry headed right into the controversial, hot-button topic of abortion. In the abortion debate, he argued, we can see clearly the battle between two religious visions over once-secular ground. One religious vision categorically opposes all abortions, energized less by thinking than by feeling compassion for the fetus, imagined as a sentient child. The opposing religious vision admits all scientific evidence into the decision-making process. It sees the cons of producing a dead fetus along with the pros of enabling a woman to live in control of her own body. It takes into account people's happiness as they live in the context of a social world.

—*Ken Greiff*

December 12 The Ethical Society hosted Steven W. Ginsburg, M. Ed, an addiction/mental health psychotherapist, who spoke on "Professional Treatment and Resources for Helping Addicts." He walked us through the patient's enrollment and treatment in both in and outpatient therapies. He brought special

attention to the fact most patients afflicted with addictions have co-occurring addictions or mental debilitations. Dr. Ginsburg touted the importance of twelve-step programs along with therapies and medication (as needed).

—*John Hall*
<>

Sunday Morning Volunteers

Ushers - Saul Machles, Chair

Rick Zonger, Richard Kiniry, Saul Machles and Joe Monte

Flower Dedications - Ken Greiff, Chair

January 2 From Susan Jo Klein in memory of her mother, Eleanor Klein.

January 9 From Jill Leeds Rivera.

January 16 T.B.A.

January 23 From John Hall.

January 30 From Saul Machles in honor of his sister Libba's Birthday. She lives near Chicago with 2 boys & her husband is out to sea right now with the US Navy.

Greeters - Saul Machles, Chair

January 2 Saul Machles

January 9 Janice Moore

January 16 Harry Thorn

January 23 Saul Machles

January 30 Lew Wilkinson

Coffee Hour Hosts - Harry Thorn, Chair

January 2 Doris Leicher

January 9 Harry Thorn

January 16 Jean Bradley

January 23 John Hall

January 30 Amber Anderson

Coffee Hour Lunch

January 2 Howard Peer & Doris Leicher

January 9 Jean Bradley

January 16 Ken Greiff & Janice Moore

January 23 T.B.A.

January 30 T.B.A.

JANUARY 2005

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
						1
2 11 AM <u>Platform</u> <i>Memorial Sunday</i>	3	4	5 <u>Meeting</u> 7:30 PM Camp Linden Board of Trustees at the Society	6	7	8
9 11 AM <u>Platform</u> <i>“Poetry as Dialogue: “Hunting is Not Those Heads on the Wall.”</i>	10 7:30PM GET TO KNOW US SOCIAL Carol Love 	11	12 <u>Meetings</u> 6:30 PM Ethical Action Committee 7:30 PM Education Committee	13	14 Lyle Murley 	15
16 11 AM <u>Platform</u> <i>“Understanding Islam”</i>	17	18	19 <u>Meetings</u> 6:30 PM Executive Committee 7:30 PM Board of Trustees	20 7:30PM Weston Rm. <u>Class History of Ethics</u>	21	22
23 11 AM <u>Platform</u> T.B.A.	24	25	26 7:30PM Weston Rm. <u>Class The Qur’an and Islam</u>	27	28	29
30 11 AM <u>Platform</u> <i>“After Arafat: Where Do We Go From Here?”</i>	31					 Birthdays

(FUN-LOVING) VOLUNTEERS NEEDED FOR SOCIALS!!

The Community Committee needs volunteers for our socials for the rest of this season - Here are your choices!!

You will be provided with a task list and helpful hints and ideas from the committee:

February 18 - LOVE PARTY and Service Auction - A valentine theme

March 20 - Pledge Luncheon - a Sunday event with Board and Treasurer's presentations

April 29 - Awards and Confessions - Honoring and listening to our members

May 15 - Founders Sunday and Luncheon

Ethical Views is published monthly
except July and August.

Editor, Ellen Rose
Layout and Photographs, Janice Moore
Distribution, Jean Bradley
Web Master, Bob Moore

Philadelphia Ethical Society

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(215) 735 - 3456,
philaes@prodigy.net,
www.phillyethics.net

Philadelphia Ethical Society
1906 South Rittenhouse Square
Philadelphia, PA 19103