



# Ethical Views

Summer 2002

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Newsletter of the Philadelphia Ethical Society

## Education Committee Report

# Tradition and Change

by Temma Fishman, Chair

Professor Barry Schwartz, Swarthmore College, in *The Tyranny of Choice*, explored the psychological effects of the bewildering choices of goods, careers and lifestyles available in modern America. While we have more freedom than ever to actualize ourselves, an epidemic of discontent, confusion and depression has resulted from having to deal with this banquet of alternatives. Dr. Schwartz finds this particularly evident in college students he teaches. He said it is far better to be a “satisficer”- one who is content with one’s choices, than to be a “maximizer” - one who relentlessly pursues the ever-elusive “best”. In his view, we must teach ourselves and our children to embrace and appreciate limits on our freedom of choice.

American Ethical Union Leader Lois Kellerman in *Life Partnership from the Heart*, thinks we can make a better world by building caring, honest relationships. From her book, *Marriage from the Heart*, she described the steps to a life which expresses the core values of Ethical Culture, the Eight Commitments. This ideal includes the willingness to right wrongs, to create a safe haven for loved ones, and to abide through difficult times. But, most important of all is the need to honor each other. Civilization will collapse if we can’t create a world in which we revere each other and look for the god within.

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Dr. Dale Drews, Ethical Culture Leader, stated that fundamentalism is found in all religions and is grounded in scripture. In *Fundamentalism and the War on Terror*, he explained that the essence of fundamentalism is the belief that there’s only one way to truth. Extremists believe they should be instruments of this truth even to the point of terrorism. Yet, all religions contain liberal tendencies, as well. Humanism and secularism embrace the idea that there are many roads to the truth and that humanity is the reality. Dr. Drews read from Ethical Culture author David Muzzey, “Ethical religion offers a platform on which people of every race and land can unite and end the rule of strife and slaughter... inspired by our faith to shape our destiny.”

Richard Kiniry in *The Usefulness of Religion* referred to Ethical Culture as “the last-ditch religious café” and asked, “What are we trying to do?” We focus on making life the best for ourselves and others. Without mystery and dogma, we stick to the big questions.” We believe we can do it better than oppressive, close-minded religions. We desire transcendence - taking your life and making it more meaningful. In fact, we believe we are the “meaning-makers”. As Richard said, “Life is supposed to mean something, and what religion does is give it authenticity and intention. But religion is useful only if we make it so and keep it evolving toward deeper responses to life... This is the glory and promise of Ethical Culture.”

Members and friends expressed their beliefs of *Hope for the Future*. The messages were positive, but cautionary - especially concerning our ability to >

get along with each other and to respect other life forms on our fragile planet. Zareefah Story read a poem she had composed dedicated to the people of Africa. Many thanks to her, Jesse Zelnick, Bertha Waters, Steve Cipolone, Arnold Fishman, Bob Allen, Madeleine Suringar and Ruth Ann Dubb for making our last platform of the season a personal and meaningful appeal for making the world a better place.

I am grateful for the help of fellow Education Committee members Betsy Lightbourn, Bertha Waters and Harry Thorn in planning our Sunday morning platforms. We had much-needed support from Richard Kiniry. In addition, many members and friends throughout the year offered help and words of encouragement. Thanks to Jean Bradley who diligently prepared the Sunday program, advertised the platforms and selected the songs. Arnold Fishman was there when we needed him and was our president. Rick Zorger worked without fail to get the auditorium ready and stayed to clean up. He readied the bulletin board so that all who walked by would see what program was coming the following week. And who can forget the fabulous music of pianist Jeremy Gill? He thoughtfully selected pieces to accompany our monthly themes and presented short talks on the musical program. Jeremy lifted us to great heights.

Let’s make the Sunday morning experience even more meaningful. Fill out the platform survey in your newsletter and return it to the PES office soon. We need your input as we prepare for the season ahead. <

# Reflections

by Arnold Fishman

The Philadelphia Ethical Society has concluded its 116<sup>TH</sup> year and what a year it was! Our Platforms continue to be the best Sunday in town. Rather than liturgy, we get an eclectic mix of challenging and inspiring offerings. I am awed at my enjoyment time and time again. Temma and the Education Committee do a terrific job. I can hear the applause. A Platform survey is included in this edition. I urge you to take a few minutes to fill it out. Remember, it does us no good unless you get it back to us.

We are toying with the idea of replacing the colloquy with a discussion group. How does that sound? And it's not just the Platforms that make Sundays great! Thanks to Selma Toth, Harry Thorn and Susan Jo Klein, for providing flower dedications, coffee-hour hosts and greeters. I also want to thank our head usher Rick Zorger, who can always use a hand.

We had great classes facilitated by our Leader, and forums ranging from a film producer telling her life story to a confrontational sojourn into the Israeli - Palestinian dilemma. Our parties continue to be a "lovely way to spend an evening" and the food is always delectable and interesting. The Community Committee, with Dr. Carol Love's imagination and enthusiasm, is a prescription for fun. Our Newcomers' Social has been changed to every other month and is well-attended thanks to invitations sent by our remodeled Membership Growth Committee. With Saul Machles at its head, we expect to grow at an exponential rate. We are considering instituting a Newcomers' Luncheon next season and are pleased to see so many new and young faces.

On the subject of membership growth, please keep in mind that we are all a >

committee of one. Bring a friend and befriend a newcomer; that's what transforms visitors into members! Which reminds me to welcome this year's new members, Steve Cipolone, Zoray Godwin and Nick Muhlenberg.

Sadly, we lost members Joe Zelnick and Ilene Haas. Eli Shneyer, Lester Waters and Gladys Huber are no longer able to attend. Some who are able to attend find it difficult to maneuver our seemingly endless steps. To address this last problem, we have opened an account with funds dedicated to making the building more handicapped-friendly.

We have finally changed trustees for our Endowment Fund to Sovereign Bank. The new co-trustee is much more responsive to our needs and the statements are actually comprehensible. Our trustees are Treasurer Jeffrey Dubb and Saul Machles, who has done such yeoman's work on the Rose Rappaport Long Scholarship Fund.

With our rental income near its maximum we are planning to create more usable space. By air conditioning the first floor, we can extend rentals into the summer. The Leader's Office / Library is well on the way to completion. It will be an impressive space for classes and meetings. The lovely new stage curtains were a much welcome gift from Doris Leicher. Having completed the handicap-accessible bathroom and the renovations of the men's room last fiscal year without any budgeted funds, leaves me optimistic that we can continue to upgrade our building. Kudos to our Treasurer and to Society Manager Jean Bradley and the Planning Committee! It is important that we continue to pledge generously and meet our obligation as early as possible.

Ethical Action also had an outstanding year. Just about every Sunday, petitions abounded. We purchased and distributed dictionaries to all third grade students attending the Robert Morris >

School in North Philadelphia. Temma and Lew Wilkinson gave a how-to-use-a-dictionary lesson at the presentation. This year's continuing book drive was very successful, though ever since Eli and Gladys have been absent, donated glasses and batteries have been piling up in the office. Any suggestions? The Winter Shelter provided many members with the opportunity to contribute their culinary talents to the less fortunate.

Camp Linden, with Jean Bradley in charge, is cranking up. Raised garden beds have been added to supplement the existing swimming and nature programs. The kids will grow and eat healthy additions to the lunches they get. I intend to spend my first day off during the summer at the Camp helping our swimming instructor Deb Hodies in the pool - sounds like good duty to me.

We have created a Program Committee, chaired by Richard. The members are the chairs of the working committees. The aim is to better coordinate their activities. Richard will be leaving as part-time interim Leader at Long Island and, (Can you keep a secret?) will be speaking here twice a month. His hope is to cover his subjects in greater depth, while not having to cover so much at each seating. While we are telling secrets, it looks like the 2003 Biannual AEU Assembly will be in Philadelphia. We have donated our building and look forward to being the host Society. This will make the already planned replacement of our folding chairs imperative. Consider endowing a chair. Or how about extending home hospitality to our visitors. We'll need everyone's cooperation to make this a success.

Temma and I will be traveling to Amsterdam and the IHEU Congress in July. And, Richard, Temma, and I will be attending the AEU summer school in North Carolina in August. We should be brimming with new ideas come September!

At the Annual Membership Meeting, >  
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## President's Message

we passed the budget and elected officers and trustees. My thanks to outgoing Cherin Silver and Susan Jo Klein and my congratulations / condolences to Dr. Dale Drews, our new Vice President, and Trustees Jean Bradley and Jessie Zelnick. Temma Fishman gets special thanks for succeeding herself, and my gratitude to the membership for the confidence expressed in returning me to office. I look forward to working with the new Board to build a home in which we can grow and strive to improve the world.

I am writing this on a rainy afternoon with a deadline staring me in the face, and there are many contributions of time, skill and energy that I have still not mentioned. Ruth Ann Dubb graciously helped host our Newcomers' Socials. Zoray Godwin provided us and the men at the winter shelter with countless vegan meals. Jessie Harmath collects the financial donations at most of our events. She's living proof that we don't get older, we just get better. We enjoyed Carol Kaufmann's talent at the piano more than once. Elizabeth Lightbourn, Howard Peer, Irene Putzer and Lew Wilkinson faithfully served on the Board. Jill Leeds Rivera is sorting through our past 50 years of newsletters, programs and correspondence. Cherin Silver, Harry Thorn, Madeleine Suringar and Bertha Waters offered their time and energy to our standing committees. Ken Greiff proved that men actually do know how to cook.

A final thank you to all who supported the Society financially..

I am particularly happy about the attitude I sense around the Society. There is a spirit of cooperation and good will. We are growing together as a community. I am grateful to the truly talented and committed teams who do the work for which I receive the credit. It has been my privilege to serve as your President. <>

## Camp Linden Report

# So Little Time

by Jean Bradley, Executive Director

I hired four counselors early last week, though I still haven't called all the candidates who were not hired. The number of applicants this year was overwhelming. The chosen four are fun loving, athletic, responsible and very enthusiastic. We are bound to have another great summer.

Cherin Silver, Zoray Godwin, Ken Grieff, Henry Pashkow and I have spent nearly every Saturday since early May working on the garden. There is so much to do, but it is truly a labor of love. Gardening is addictive! We have already shared a harvest of melt-in-your-mouth-tender spinach and eagerly anticipate sharing this wealth of healthy and delicious food with the children.

Yesterday I attended the 50<sup>TH</sup> Annual Ethical Society Picnic. The weather was gorgeous and the food was plentiful and scrumptious. I even took the time for a little weeding and watering, but there was too much to do and so little time. I'll head back to Camp tomorrow, if I can get this newsletter out of the way.

I'm behind in sending thank-you letters to contributors. If you are waiting for a letter from us, don't give up, it will arrive soon. As a matter of fact, I seem to be behind in everything: paying bills, making phone calls, sending confirmations, finishing the newsletter, gardening - everything.

My excuse? Our lease was terminated effective August 1; the owner who works for the Peace Corps is returning to Philadelphia from Africa. We are looking for a house to buy - a very exciting, but time-consuming project. And, I can't imagine a worse time to move than the middle of the children's summer program. Oh well.

Other news includes a visit by University City Highschool students. Their >

teacher and *Friend of Camp Linden* Saul Machles led the group in a walk through the woods to the Brandywine Creek. Adolescents, much more than little kids, are suspicious of, well everything, especially adults and even the great out-of-doors. None the less, I have it from a reliable source that a good time was had by all.

Each year we receive a few requests to use the Camp by other junior-high and high-school programs. We are unable to oblige since these summer programs run the same weeks as our elementary school programs. What a shame that more schools don't think about coming to the Camp in the spring or fall.

Swimming Instructor Deb Hodies raised \$115 for the Camp at a flea market on Saturday, May 25. I had dropped off some of my "valuables" that morning before heading on to the garden and picked up a nice straw hat.

Richard has not yet received final bids from local contractors for the overnight cabin. A few corrections were made in the plans by the Township and we will soon be forwarding the revisions for approval. With any luck, all will come together within a few weeks. In the meantime, Lew Buckingham has moved to Camp to start renovating the kitchen in the main cabin. He's another gardening addict and I look forward to his help over the course of the summer.

I am still waiting to here from some of you with this year's contribution. We need you more than ever! Life hasn't gotten any easier for the children who come to the Camp. Each year we have worked to improve what we offer them not because we like to spend even more money, but because we have slowly and steadily learned what it takes to make a lasting difference in these young lives.

Thank you for your support. Thank you for caring.. <>



# **This Summer at the Philadelphia Ethical Society**

## **Colloquies at 10:00 AM Every Sunday from June 16 until July 28**

The Colloquy is open to all Society members and friends. The process, similar to a Quaker dialogue, begins with a centering meditation and reflection. Participants share experiences without engaging in discussion, analysis or theorizing. We do not probe or cross-question each other. Instead, we aim to answer from our hearts with complete honesty and freedom. In developing the skills of creative listening, we create a safe space in which openness and trust are nurtured, and we can be receptive to each other.

The Colloquy is designed to encourage us to delve more keenly into the depths of our own beliefs and to develop the habit of self-reflection. It is a method by which we can begin to bring our lives into closer conformity to our stated beliefs.

Each colloquy is based on a specific topic. It consists of a quotation, a narrative, and a parable, interspersed with music and periods of quiet reflection.

Please join us, and plan to arrive early as the Colloquy begins promptly and latecomers interrupt the process.

### **Meetings**

#### Ethical Action Committee

Wednesday, June 19 at 5:30 PM  
Wednesday, August 14 at 5:30 PM

#### Education Committee

Wednesday, June 19 at 6:30 PM  
Wednesday, August 14 at 6:30 PM

#### Community Committee

Thursday, June 20 at 6:30 PM

#### Program Committee

Wednesday, July 10 at 5:30 PM

#### Board of Trustees

Wednesday, August 21 at 7:30 PM

### **Other Events**

#### Volunteer at Camp Linden!

Work parties almost every Saturday,  
June through August. We provide lunch.

Monday to Friday, June 28 to August 9  
Work at the pool, in the garden or on the trail  
with our trained staff and  
small groups of 5 to 12 year old children.  
Bring your own lunch.

Rewards include pool time.  
Your greatest reward is knowing you are  
making a difference in a child's life!

Call the office at (215) 734 - 3456  
or Jean at (215) 471 - 4129  
or the Camp at (610) 793 - 1923

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Editor and Layout, Jean Bradley

**Philadelphia Ethical Society**

Richard Kiniry, Leader

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Ethical Culture is a humanistic religious and educational movement inspired by the ideal that the supreme aim of human life is working to create a more humane society. Our faith is in the capacity and responsibility of human beings to act in their personal relationships and in the larger community to help create a better world. Our commitment is to the worth and dignity of the individual, and to treating each human being so as to bring out the best in her or him.

Members join together in Ethical Societies to assist each other in developing ethical ideas and ideals...to celebrate life's joys and support each other through life's crises...to work together and improve our world and the world of our children.

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## Sunday School Director / Developer

The Society wishes to resume its Sunday School Program for 5 to 12 year children. We need a self-assured, dynamic person with an educational background. The Director / Developer will develop curriculum, attract prospective families, and be responsible for the growth of the program. This is a part-time position and will entail working closely with Society Leader and members.

Salary commensurate with experience. Letter of application should be sent to Richard Kiniry, Philadelphia Ethical Society.

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At the Philadelphia Ethical Society

# From Tbilisi to Philadelphia

Contemporary visual artists from the Republic of Georgia

June 9 to June 24

Opening reception

Sunday, June 9 beginning at 2:00 PM

Introductory remarks by

Thora Jacobson, Director, Samuel S. Fleisher Art Memorial

Georgian wine, music and refreshments

Georgians are among the most imaginative and skilled artists working today. The country's rich cultural heritage is evident in the use of a wide range of materials and complex imagery, synthesizing the best from the cultures to the West, the East and the South. Even 75 years of cruel and oppressive communist control of Georgian art failed to suppress the vital creativity which is blossoming again.

Norton Dodge, Ph.D., Professor Emeritus, St. Mary's College of Maryland.

Collector and donor of the Norton and Mary Dodge Collection of Nonconformist Art, Zimmerli Art Museum, Rutgers University, New Brunswick, NJ

includes exhibition participants include David Monavardisahvili,

Manana Ebralidze and Maia Duduchava.

Elena Koridze, Tamara Inaridze and Kaha Topchishvili are newcomers to America's cultural arena.

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## At Camp Linden

### ***Caribbean Pool Weekend***

**from noon Saturday, July 13 to**

**8:00 PM on Sunday, July 14**

Bring your instruments to the drumming circle Saturday night!

Tropical food and beverages. Reggae Music.

\$15 per person per day,

\$5 per child to 15 years,

free to children under 6 years old.

Questions about the weather?

Call us at Camp. (610) 793 - 1121

### ***Labor Day Picnic***

**Monday, September 2 at 12 Noon**

Meet in front of the Society building at 10:30 AM to travel to 50 acres of fields and wooded paths in beautiful and historic Brandywine Valley.

We'll be serving traditional picnic fare, but you need not worry; vegetarians will have plenty to eat.

\$10, \$5 if you bring a salad,

dessert or entre to share.

Please call the office at (215) 735-3456 for

directions or to offer or request transportation.