



Ethical Views

Summer 2003 Vol. 117, No. 10 Newsletter of the Philadelphia Ethical Society

This Summer at the Society

Sunday, June 29 at 10 AM

Book Discussion - The Moral Animal by Robert Wright - Part 1- led by Richard Kiniry

One of the most provocative science books in recent years. Wright presents the latest findings in the emerging field of evolutionary psychology and how it relates to our ethical decision making. Is monogamy natural for men? For women? What evolutionary advantages might come from having low self - esteem? What are the biological roots of self deception?

Sunday, July 6 at 10 AM

Colloquy - *Recreation* - led by Arnold and Temma Fishman

Sunday, July 13 at 10 AM

Book Discussion - Soulforce, a website - led by Ken Greiff

A manual on how to conduct nonviolent direct action, Soulforce organizes the precepts and strategies of King and Gandhi in a way which is theoretical, spiritual, political, and practical. Soulforce is especially focused on the struggle for justice in the Gay and Lesbian community. While this emphasis is valuable, our discussion will probably focus more generally on nonviolent actions. Online at www.soulforce.org. Please read steps 2,3,and 4, and the credos and vows. This is about 20 pages of great reading!

Sunday, July 20 at 10 AM

Colloquy - *Faith* - led by Jean Bradley

Sunday, July 27 at 10 AM

Book Discussion - The Moral Animal - Part II - led by Richard Kiniry

See June 29 above.

Sunday, August 3 at 10 AM

Colloquy - *Empathy* - led by Kate Esposito

Sunday, August 10 at 10 AM

Book Discussion - Reading Lolita in Tehran: A Memoir in Books - led by Ellen Rose

A moving testament to the power of art and its ability to change and improve people's lives, this memoir is about teaching Western literature to women in revolutionary Iran.

Sunday, August 17 at 10 AM

Colloquy - *Listening* - led by Arnold and Temma Fishman

Sunday, August 24 at 10 AM

Book Discussion - State of the World, 2003 by Worldwide Press, chapters 1 and 8 - led by Saul Machles

"The use of clean, renewable energy technologies, like wind turbines and photovoltaics is growing at over 25 % per year, and they are increasingly competitive with fossil fuels. Organic farming is the fastest-growing sector of the world agricultural economy, with the potential to rejuvenate rural communities from the Philippines to Sweden. And a quickening of religious interest in humanity's place in the natural environment could awaken a powerful new constituency to the cause of sustainability."

Copies are available at the office or at Worldwatch.com for \$16.95

Ethical Action Committee Update

A Great Year

by Lew Wilkinson

For the second year, we started off by presenting the third graders of the Robert Morris Charter School with individual copies of dictionaries. Temma Fishman conducted a mini lesson in each third grade class on their proper use. The lessons were very well received by the students and teachers.

Ellen Rose and Ken Procaccini volunteer their time as tutors at that school once a week. We also collect and donate both adult and children's books to Robert Morris, as well as quality magazines such as *National Geographic* and *Smithsonian*, for students, their parents and the teachers.

In December, 200 students from that school came to the PES building to see an adaptation in dance and song of the play *A Starry Night* presented by the Philadelphia Children's Theater. The kids loved it.

Another ongoing project is our winter connection with the men's shelter at Trinity Episcopal Church. Many Philadelphia organizations serve meals throughout the month. We provide a hot, nutritious, delicious dinner on the third Wednesday of every month that the shelter is open.

In the fall, volunteers went to Camp Linden to put the garden to bed, rake leaves and perform a myriad of other tasks. This spring volunteers returned to the Camp and are rebuilding the pool bathhouse, growing vegetables, mowing the fields and helping maintain the trails. This summer join us in welcoming the nearly 200 campers who will be coming to learn about nature and how to swim.

December saw the beginning of our monthly Friday night *Down Home Dinners* featuring yummy home-style food, along with beverages and dessert. The money raised is earmarked for >

Camp Linden and for the fund to make our building handicapped accessible. Attendance at these dinners has been rising and will hopefully continue to rise as the idea catches on.

Another of our charitable events was the clothing, non-perishable food, and cash drive to benefit St. John's Hospice for Men.

Since we passed a resolution opposing the war with Iraq, we also put our feet where our mouths are. Several members attended protest marches in Washington D. C. and in Philadelphia. Our best showing was at the Candlelight Vigil held at Rittenhouse Square in April. PES provided candles to our members for that evening.

As part of our educational program, we presented several forums throughout the year, including: *Journalism, Religion, and Democracy Post 9/11* with Margot Adler from Public Radio; *The Case of Jonathon Pollard*, a video followed by a discussion with producer Eran Preis; *The War on Drugs* with activist Frank Fulbrook; *American Homelessness...Is There a Way Out?* with a panel consisting of Robert Hess from Special Needs Housing of Philadelphia, Dedorah Wagner from Housing and Homeless Services at Catholic Social Services, Jennine Miller from Project Home, and former Project Home resident Emmanuel Havens. The last forum of the year, Maggie Growls, presented the video of the same name and a discussion.

Not all of these projects, events, and activities were the exclusive products of Committee members; however, as is evident, your EAC has been quite active during the past year. <>

President's Message

It's the Experience

by Arnold Fishman

Three years ago when I was elected as President, I committed myself to accomplishing our mutual goals by concentrating on only one thing. That one thing was the PES experience of our existing members. It was then, and it remains my conviction that member satisfaction is the key to the success of any not - for - profit organization. Your Leader, Officers, Trustees, Committee Chairs and members, as well as countless volunteers have worked tirelessly and cheerfully, and they have succeeded in creating that satisfaction.

All around me I can feel the warmth and vigor of a healthy Society. Members approach me offering suggestions and volunteering to help without being asked. Members, old and new, are welcomed with smiles. We have come together as a community. We are fiscally sound, responsibly managed, and experiencing exponential growth. Our accomplishments in terms of program, ethical action, and community outreach is a source of great pride, not only at home but across the movement. So much for the past.

We look forward to an even more exciting year and recognize that we must guard against complacency. We pledge to continue in our devotion to your wants and needs. You can assist us by becoming more involved - you only get out what you put in. It's the experience that counts. <>

Come to Camp Linden!
Volunteers welcome on most Saturdays and Sundays
from 10 AM on - lunch and beverages provided!!
Children's Summer Program from June 23 to August 15.

Education Committee Report

Looking Back and Ahead

by Temma Fishman, Chair

American Ethical Union Leader and PES member Dr. Dale Drews explained the Humanist view in, *Hope Beyond Death*. Humanists do not believe that we go on after death - neither through resurrection nor reincarnation. So what sustains a Humanist as he or she contemplates the end of life? The way we live - committing to something beyond and more lasting than ourselves. We find hope in the renewal of our species. When we die we are replaced by those coming into the world - a world we have made better by having lived honoring the intrinsic worth of every human being.

Dr. Clarkson Palmer in *The Nonviolent Peaceforce - An Ideal Whose Time Has Come*, spoke about this group - diverse in gender, religion, and nationality - which trains peace workers. They provide protective accompaniment for peace activists, operate as an international presence, monitor elections, and position themselves between warring parties. The UN is considering adopting these methods. What can we do? Join a local affinity group to inform each other of progress by the Nonviolent Peaceforce, be part of an emergency response team to bombard legislators with letters and calls if members are ill-treated. And, donate money. We need Peaceforce to attend to what others can't do and to build a team of international workers.

On Founders Day we commemorated the founding of Ethical Culture in 1876 by Felix Adler and that of the Philadelphia Ethical Society by S. Burns Weston eight years later. The visiting nurses' program and the country's first settlement homes were introduced by members of Ethical Societies.. Paraphrasing Adler's words, religion brings

the greatest promise. It summons old wisdom to be examined in light of the new. Religion must be about doing the best for humanity. Edwin Collier started the tradition of singing in Philadelphia - we remain the only Society that sings during the Sunday service. Members read from essays by former leaders Lester Mondale, Algernon Black, Benjamin Miller, and by our present leader Richard Kiniry. We welcomed our new members, giving each a book about the history of the movement and a "little Humanist" pin. Each had a chance to speak about what they hoped to discover. We offer a philosophy which embraces human life and provides the means to critique our too often dehumanizing world. We proclaim faith in our future and dare to live a meaningful life. As Richard said, "We're a community of questioners still figuring out how to live".

At the American Ethical Union's Certification Ceremony, Leader Susan Teshu lit candles to celebrate new light and energy brought by Leaders David Reis, Anne Klaeyesen and Robert Greenwell. As chair of the New Leadership Committee, Carol Bartelly said, "We've put you through hell and

you survived...you are our future - welcome". Each then spoke of his or her vision of an ethical leader. Bob Greenwell said that an Ethical Society provides the flint and the flint stone and the leader provides the sticks. A leader is an activist in whom the ethical flame can flourish. Anne Klaeyesen said a leader is there in community - listening, seeing and learning - a spiritual presence making personal connections and creating the sacred space. David Reis of Queens fervently declared, "Dammit! We need some lay leadership!" He said, "We are our own West Side Story - ready to rumble at any moment." He believes in a core purpose - ethical personalities aflame with a passion for ethical living. Leader Joe Chuman in his charge to the new leaders reminded all that the ethical flame burns without sacred books or icons. "We are in a dark moment in our history, but it is our moment. We can liberate humanity from dark, oppressive forces". Leaders old and new then came to the front, holding candles and gave each other warm hugs. Our pianist Jeremy Gill ended the program with a powerful rendition of Finlandia by Jean Sibelius and received a resounding standing ovation. ◇

My Ethical Culture III by Arnold Fishman

I do not believe in god; I believe in humanity.
I do not believe in heaven; I believe in Earth.
I do not believe in a hereafter; I believe in now.
I do not believe in the Bible; I believe in Darwin.
I do not believe in revelations; I believe in figuring it out.
I do not believe in a divine plan; I believe in free choice.
I do not believe in infallibility; I believe in learning from my mistakes.
I do not believe in always getting it right; I believe in trying hard.
I do not believe in propriety; I believe in integrity.
I do not believe in winning; I believe in accommodation.
I do not believe in hitting; I believe in talking.
I do not believe in getting even; I believe in charting my own course.
I do not believe in being bitter; I believe in the understanding of experience.
I do not believe in perfection; I believe in personal growth.
I do not believe in sainthood; I am far from holy.
I do not require perfection in others; but I do demand their respect.

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Join the Ethical Action Committee!

Friday, July 4 at 9:45 AM

7TH & Market Streets (Dunkin' Donuts)

National Protest to Stop US Wars at Home & Abroad

www.justiceinjuly.org for more information

&

EAC endorsed

Sunday, July 6 at 7:15 PM

SW corner of 2ND & Market Streets

Interfaith Vigil and Candlelight Procession

for Peace Justice and Freedom

contact erose@temple.edu for more information

Camp Linden Carribean Pool Party Weekend

Saturday and Sunday, July 12 and 13

contact carolove@prodigy.net for reservations or more information or

call the office (215) 735 - 3456

Don't worry about the weather - the sun is always shining at Camp Linden