



Ethical Views

May 2005 Vol. 119, No. 9 Newsletter of the Philadelphia Ethical Society

May Platforms



Sunday, May 1

Platform: Our leader, **Richard Kiniry**, will give a platform entitled **"It's All Your Fault."** Each May we try to focus on the Ethical Humanist tradition and this year we will examine the difference, if any, that tradition makes in our lives. Every religious tradition indicates a way of living, a way to live a good life. Is Ethical Humanism so different in its expectations? Is it of use in our personal lives?

Sunday, May 8

Platform: **Parent's/Nurturer's Day.** We will celebrate those who care for others in an interactive program including music, readings, and personal reflections.

Sunday, May 15

Platform: **Founders Day Celebration and New Members Ceremony.** **Dr. Dale Drews**, Leader of Ethical Culture Society of Queens 1964-1967 and member of Philadelphia Ethical Society, will highlight history of the Ethical Culture movement, in particular, the Humanism of John Dewey in the organizational framework of Felix Adler. Also, we will have the welcoming ceremony for new members and the Society's annual meeting following the platform.

Sunday, May 22

Platform: **Richard Kiniry**, PES Leader, will be speaking at the last platform of the season, **"It's All Society's Fault."** We will examine the difference, if any, that Ethical Humanism makes in our public lives.



Attention all members and interested friends!

The 90th Assembly of the
AMERICAN ETHICAL UNION

Hosted by the Northern Virginia Ethical Society
at the
Days Hotel & Conference Center
2200 Centreville Road, Herndon, Virginia 20170

Memorial Day Weekend
May 27-30, 2005

Theme: **Our Best Practices**

On Sunday, May 29 a bus will be leaving from the Philadelphia Ethical Society to take members and friends to the Assembly. The bus will return in the evening. This will allow those who were unable to attend the entire event to participate in it for the day. Inquire at the PES office for details.

The AEU website has more information. <http://www.aeu.org>
Click on the *AEU News* link



Leader's Message *He Wasn't All Bad*

by Richard Kiniry

The Pope is dead and most of us are sick of the orgy of unreflective sentimentality about John Paul's life. It was worse than the Reagan funeral. The Pope we remember as a reactionary and who held a view of reality that didn't make sense five hundred years ago, was idealized as the wise father figure. Without a doubt he was a person of character; he lived what he believed. But he seems to have thought that loving theoretical people and hugging actual people was enough. The life of those people did not have to actually get better.

But believe it or not: this column is about appreciating Karol Wojtyla. Besides being a man of character, he was not shy about expressing progressive opinions on economic justice, the War in Iraq and the death penalty. The Catholic Church is a complicated institution, not a little schizophrenic in its wish to address contemporary problems while insisting on the truth of its ancient beliefs and rituals. Now that the Pope is buried, we are starting to hear more balanced reporting about his papal career. In his authoritarian style he stifled the democratic approach of the Vatican Council. He failed many people in his denial of equality to women. He legitimized the hatred of homosexuals. In his opposition to birth

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Leader's Message

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control, he contributed to the spread of both poverty and AIDS. And his pursuance of the hundreds of priests who victimized children (and of the bishops who brushed it under the rug) was lukewarm at best.

Of his more positive side, from our more progressive perspective, we have heard little of the Pope's challenges to Western Capitalism. We have heard endlessly of his role in creating an environment for the collapse of Communism, but not heard about his appreciate of aspects of Communism. When he visited the Baltic States after the collapse of the Soviet system, he announced to the crowds that there was a kernel of truth in Marxism. As opposed to the capitalist system, Marxism refused to put a price tag on everything. The Pope appreciated that as bad as the Soviet system was, the Marxist philosophy that it supposedly enshrined was value based. It was concerned that people live purposeful lives in a shared community that served all. People were not primarily economic units.

There is good in everyone, but the media seems to want to ignore what we would consider Karol Wojtyla's good points. We are offered a whitewashed, American version of the Pope. We don't hear of his disapproval of our consumer lifestyle or of globalization. We don't hear about the Pope wagging his finger at George Bush's face to stress his opposition to the Iraq War. America may not have heard but there was another side to John Paul's message. We can only hope his successor will speak that message loud enough to make the evening news. ◇



President's Message

by Howard Peer

It's May, and Spring is upon us. Pretty soon it will be summer once again. Another PES season is nearly over. The Annual Membership meeting, rapidly

approaching, is on Sunday, May 22. And we have a lot to report to you.

This is a busy time of year for us on the Board. There are all sorts of financial matters, as well as some administrative, to address. The Pledge Campaign is ongoing. Hopefully everyone has by now both caught up with their pledge for the 2004-2005 season and made a generous pledge for the next season. The pledges are important: they represent our personal commitment to sustaining our cultural core.

This is also the time of year when we do our planning for next year. Normally, this is effected through our budget process, as it is this year. But this year we have a couple of special initiatives going on. I'll explain.

First the budget. The budget is how we decide what we are going to be able to do next year. The building is largely self-supporting in that we generate most of our income from its rental and its upkeep accounts for most of our expenses. This is well and proper for the building is one of the major contributions we make to the community. But our programs are largely self funded. That is, we pay for what we do. Hence the importance of Pledges. The more you give the more we can do. We also have the endowment account, which provides us with some additional discretionary cash. But I would really like to get to the point where we do not have to rely upon that money but use it for other worthy causes.

This year is special in that we are making definite strides toward becoming handicapped accessible. It has been a long process. You may remember that last fall, in this column, I said that I hoped to have a fund-raising campaign for an elevator, provided the estimate from our Architect (Charles Loomis of Loomis/McAfee) was within our abilities. Getting the estimate has proved more difficult than anticipated. Whatever we do needs to meet the City building codes. But the City is modifying the codes and our building, due to its age and renovation history, does not fit neatly therein. While we had hoped to get the work done entirely pro-bono we have had to

authorize a very modest stipend to offset the Architects direct expenses. But now things are moving and we may (but may not) have a more formal report by the Membership meeting. In the meantime the handicapped elevator fund has grown substantially over the year through some generous gifts.



You should know that the Board took a serious look at alternative solutions to the access problem and has discussed them with the Architect. Unfortunately an elevator seems to be the only viable solution. I am hoping that the Architect's report identifies a reasonably priced solution and is sufficiently detailed enough to allow us to do some serious fund raising. We shall see.

Another special item: the proposal to air condition the Assembly Room and Auditorium. Jean has made the case that by air conditioning these rooms we can increase building rentals during the summer months, thereby making the building more useful to both the community and ourselves. Cash flow projections are such that we believe we can safely borrow the money from the Rose Rappaport Long Fund. The direct benefit is obvious, a more usable space. There are spin-off benefits in that through the process we will upgrade our main electrical feed sufficiently to handle the future elevator and improve the cash flow to the RRL, thereby assuring sufficient cash to the support the scholarships. Jean is now in the process of soliciting bids and scheduling the work. We hope to have the system functioning by the end of June. You may even see evidence of progress at the Membership meeting.

So, enough for now. Relax, enjoy the fine weather. I'll report further on May 22nd, at the membership meeting. ◇

Platform Summaries

March 13th

Anne Klaeyen, leader of the Long Island Ethical Humanist Society delivered the platform "We Are the Ones Building an Ethical Community," in which she charged us with the task we purport to take on: creating a more humane society. Her address began with a parable about a village whose residents are consumed with the pride in proving themselves more virtuous than their neighbors. But the village only truly becomes a community when the life of a child is threatened. The threat awakens in the residents the need for connection, by which all may work together to save the life of that child. So we may all take note: community is not a virtue, but a lived experience by which each may become more fully human. A successful community requires our commitment to commonly held goals. Only as a result of shared rituals, meaningful actions, and psychological intimacy, are we provided with an attribution of worth.

—*Henry Pashkow*

March 20th

Despite rainy conditions outside, spring conditions prevailed inside the Ethical Society as members celebrated the spring equinox with flowers, metaphorical words, and songs, accompanied by the sound of a flowing fountain.

Leader Richard Kiniry outlined some meanings of spring which members then illustrated using poetry and prose on human nature, growth, hope, and the natural world, as well as personal stories of growth and change. Emily Dickinson, William Carlos Williams, and Langston Hughes, among other writers, helped communicate our responses to spring. Pianist Tim Ribchester and soprano Julia Madden provided musical expression to articulate the twin themes of awakening and love with selections from Britten, Purcell, and Handel.

—*Terry Martin-Murley*

April 10th

Robert Flemming argued that the organizing principle of green architecture is sustainability: "the present generation meeting its present needs without compromising the future needs of future generations." Flemming organized needs into a three-tiered hierarchy informed by the thinking of Abraham Maslow. From bottom to top it reads: physical security, community, and transcendence. Flemming called for walkable communities with stores incorporated into neighborhoods, and buildings that utilize both materials that are natural and beautiful. These building, he said, can incorporate simple technologies to make each building more sustainable. Examples include more effective insulation, cisterns to collect roof rainwater (for use in toilets and gardens), windows positioned to catch breezes, produce cross-drafts, and provide passive solar heating, and overhangs to shade from direct sunlight. All of this, Mr. Flemming maintains, can be achieved reasonably on a budget.

—*Ken Greiff*

Sunday Morning Volunteers

Ushers - Arnold Fishman, Chair

Rick Zorger, Richard Kiniry and Joe Monte

Helpers - Saul Machles and John Hall

Flower Dedications - Ken Greiff, Chair

May 1. From John Hall in memory of his grandparents, Lester Lee and Elsie Mae Hall.

May 8. From Amber Anderson in celebration of Amber's nephew Cai's Birthday. He's turning 1.

May 15. From Katie, Jordan & Audrey Orange in honor of Marlaina Orange's birthday.

May 22. From Temma & Arnold Fishman to celebrate their daughter Cindy's birthday.

Greeters - Saul Machles, Chair

May 1 Lew Wilkinson

May 8 Saul Machles

May 15 Temma Fishman

May 22 Saul Machles

Coffee Hour Hosts - Harry Thorn, Chair

May 1 Doris Leicher

May 8 Amber Anderson

May 15 Irene Putzer

May 22 Harry Thorn

Coffee Hour Lunch

May 1 Ken Greiff
& Janice Moore

May 8 Jean Bradley

May 15 Community Committee

May 22 Howard Peer
& Doris Leicher



Members & visitors read selections during the Spring Equinox Celebration (here are some of them)

Founder's Day Homemade Bake Sale!

May 15th



Ethical Society members are notoriously good cooks - so why not heat up that oven and bake something to raise more funds for our Handicap Access Fund. You can treat someone else's sweet tooth and raise money as well!

Founder's Day Celebration May 15th

We will take a moment to look back and to acknowledge those who preceded us at the Ethical Society, beginning with Felix Adler.

Membership Meeting Sunday, May 22nd

The Community Committee will host a luncheon that will precede the year-end Membership Meeting. You'll think more clearly on a full stomach when asked to cast your vote.



Photo by Jean Bradley

Coming in June – The Joys of Camp Linden

What do you know of the camp? We help inner city kids learn about nature and swimming. We have woods, fields and streams. We have a fabulous raised bed garden for fresh vegetables and fruit for our campers. We have a Caribbean Pool Party each summer. We have a wonderful main cabin, bathhouse, a tractor in the shed, and small, completed cabin. We have big plans for an overnight cabin. We have a telescope...

BUT have you seen it? For years the PES membership has come out the first Sunday of June for our picnic (this will be our 52nd) amidst the wonderful fragrances of Russian-olive, honeysuckle and wild rose. You can't beat it for a great day trip and you'll be with our tremendously interesting and entertaining members! The food is always good and transportation is provided. You should pack up a contribution to the lunch and take this great opportunity to see the Camp for yourself. Our Leader Richard Kiniry will lead a short hike around the property and you'll have a chance to answer all your questions about our camp outreach project.

**DON'T MISS OUR 52nd ANNUAL PICNIC
SUNDAY JUNE 5th!!!**

We will leave the Society building at 10:30 AM
Call the office to reserve a ride or to offer one.

W o r k D a y

In order to be ready for the opening of the camp, Members are invited to come out to Camp Linden on **May 21st** to help with various preparatory tasks. We will have the same arrangement that we have for the picnic, i.e., leave the Society building at 10:30 AM; call the office to reserve a ride or to offer one.

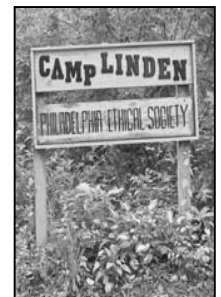


Photo by Bob Moore

Free Pot Luck Performance of The Prison Years



Sunday, May 8th
6:00-8:30 PM

FIRST UNITARIAN CHURCH
21st and Chestnut

The Criminal Justice Taskforce is hosting a free "potluck performance" of Ray Hill: The Prison Years.

Potluck at 6:00 PM
Performance at 7:00 PM
Brief discussion at 8:00 PM

The show features prison rights and gay activist Ray Hill telling the story of his amazing odyssey through the Texas prison system.



You must RSVP with your potluck contribution by Tuesday, May 3rd to Ken Grief:

Email: zonco@yahoo.com