



Ethical Views

September 2003 Vol. 118, No. 1 Newsletter of the Philadelphia Ethical Society

Sunday, September 7

Platform: Richard Kiniry, Leader, Philadelphia Ethical Society

Random Acts of Kindness

Are Not Enough

As we start a new year of Sunday platforms, we wonder about the usefulness of Ethical Humanism as a guide to better living.

Sunday, September 14

Platform: Dale Drews, Ph.D., Leader, American Ethical Union
Personal Ethics for Humanists

Many people think of ethics as something that mainly concerns people in certain occupations -- like politicians, pharmacists, and undertakers. This address shows that ethics can be the everyday concern of all people, including those who reject supernaturalism.

Dr. Drews taught Sociology at Rutgers University. He is Vice President of the Society and a Leader of the American Ethical Union.

Sunday, September 21

Platform: Fall Equinox Celebration
Members and friends of the Society welcome autumn with poetry, prose and music.

Platforms at 11:00 AM

Coffee Hour & Discussion follow the Platforms.

Musical Interludes performed by Pianist Tim Ribchester.

Childcare provided at no charge.

All are Welcome!

Leader's Message

Golden Rules

by Richard Kiniry

The traditional Golden Rule that says, "do unto others . . ." has many versions around the world. It is a convenient, capsulized guide to moral behavior - if you would not want it done to you, then the next person probably would not want it done to them either. Its message is reciprocity. It assumes we all have similar needs, so you know what the other person wants. If everyone reciprocates, we will have a nice well-run community of helpful people. The newer version that says you should, "do unto others not what *you* would have them do unto you, but what *they* would have done unto themselves", is still reciprocity but with the added understanding that other people are individuals with their own personal needs. So, it takes reciprocity to a more empathic level. >

Sunday, September 28

Platform: Fritz Williams, Leader, Baltimore Ethical Society
A Hunger for Goodness

Nowadays people seem to believe that, beneath a veneer of civility, our deepest motives and inclinations are selfish, violent, and evil. This perspective on human nature is grounded in ancient religious myths and in modern psychology, and it is surely supported by human history. Knowing the terrible things we are capable of doing, the speaker believes that a far deeper and potentially more powerful dimension of human character is our hunger for goodness. He says that Ethical Culture exists in large measure to celebrate, liberate, and educate this innate and underappreciated human goodness. <

Which brings me to Felix Adler's Ethical Culture version of a Golden Rule, "act so as to elicit the best in others thereby bringing out the best in yourself." It is more than just another version of a moral guideline. As a new religious approach, Ethical Culture changed the focus of the ultimate meaning of life to our communal life. The way you treat the rest of life isn't just the moral part of your life, it is your life, it is who you are. Adler's instructive advice is an approach to living, a theory about the best way of living life. The emphasis is no longer on specific acts or obeying rules but on your approach toward others, how you relate to them. Values like justice and honesty are only empty shells, tools of self-interest, unless they are filled with concern and respect for the other unique individuals in your life. People can hide behind such values as they actively disrespect other people.

What passes for religion these days, especially liberal religion, has attempted in the last thirty years to reverse its slide into irrelevance by stressing personal spirituality. We also have been tempted in that direction but the essence of the Ethical Humanist approach is the realization that your inner life is a reflection of your external life. There is no special knowledge in you that is not developed in your relationship with the rest of life. Yes, human beings are spiritual creatures in the sense that we are motivated by our feelings and thoughts but the rest of life is in there with us. It is a dynamic relationship.

Commandments, moral principles, >
continued next page

Golden Rules

and Golden Rules are nice guidelines but life is messier than those rules indicate and life is lived between the lines. The judge in Alabama who put the 10 Commandments in the State House was standing up for moral values but his actions were those of a nasty, mean-spirited bully. From his version of morality he was doing a good deed to the citizens of Alabama, doing what he thought they needed done to them; but it was an act of disrespect. He was actually interested in shoving his personal values down the throats of those of different beliefs.

In that sense Adler's "act so . . ." is not a Golden Rule. It is not a convenient, capsulized guide to moral behavior, it is a statement about the human condition. He's saying that we all live in a web of relationships and how we relate to the rest of that web determines the kind of person we are. Being ethical is not so much about doing or not doing to others but about why we are doing it. Most people want to be good and Adler is saying, stop trying to make yourself good. Instead, bring out the unique best in the people and the world around you. In his way, Felix Adler was saying to all of us, "Get a life." We don't have to worry about fitting into some idea of good. We should be making life good. The whole natural world including all the people is our palette. The most fortunate life is the one that is actively involved in making life better. ◇



President's Message

Take A Bow

by Arnold Fishman

What a tremendous season we had at the Philadelphia Ethical Society! We have a right to be proud of our accomplishments. With no attempt to be inclusive, and with apologies to those I will leave out, I will mention some of our achievements and give you a preview of coming attractions. I was privileged to sign a brand new Certificate of Incorporation for the PES. Cherin Silver represented us on a pro bono basis - thanks Cherin! Jean Bradley and Jill Rivera are having the original historic document restored and framed for display here at the Society.

Our platforms were as usual the finest way anyone could spend a Sunday morning. As it is in Lake Wobegon, where Garrison Keillor assures us that "all the children are above average," our speakers were consistently exceptional. Jeremy Gill's music and guest musicians, such as our own Ken Procaccini and Jessie Zelnick's daughter Beth, were a delight. We are excited that this year Tim Ribchester will be our music director. He substituted for Jeremy a few times last year, and we were enthralled. Temma Fishman and the Education Committee did a smashing job this year, and the prospects for next year are even better, with the addition of newcomers Nick Sanders and Terry and Lyle Murley swelling the Committee's ranks. Our calendar is filling up with such notables as the Reverend W. Wilson Goode on "faith-based initiatives," and Chris Albertson on the history of jazz. My thanks, also, to lunch providers Doris Leicher and Howard Peer, Ruth Ann Dubb, Betsy Lightbourn, Jean Bradley and Jesse Zelnick - I could always count on seconds. Our Sundays would not have been complete without Harry Thorn who signed up coffee hour volunteers and Selma Toth and Ken Greiff, who took the flower dedications - make their jobs easier by contacting them before they call you. Kudos to Rick Zorger, unsung hero of the PES, who got to wrestle with our new chairs every week. You can "buy" a chair - inquire about our limited time offer. >

Our attendance at all functions, including the wonderful Sunday summer programs, was way up. The summer facilitators included Ken Greiff, Saul Machles, Ellen Rose, Temma, Kate Esposito, and of course Richard. We appreciate the effort involved. Once people were in the door, Saul Machles and his Membership Growth team were ready. We experienced unprecedented membership growth of truly talented, enthusiastic people, many of whom have already taken on enormous responsibilities.

New to Ethical Culture, Bob Moore is our webmaster. If you haven't visited our site (www.phillyethics.net) you are in for a treat. It contains information about us, upcoming events, as well as the Ethical Views - Bob, Ellen Rose and Lew Wilkinson have volunteered to take over editing and layout of our newsletter. To assist Bob in developing policy, a new web site committee has been formed. Also at the August meeting of the Board, we approved the creation of a Strategic Planning Committee. Another new member, Ellen Rose agreed to head this effort. Guess what! She actually has had some experience and knows how to do it. It is important that she receive our fullest cooperation.

Chair Cherin Silver and the Ethical Action Committee continue their special relationship with the Robert Morris Charter School. Temma and Lew Wilkinson distributed dictionaries to the entire third grade. Some of our members served as tutors to their students, and Temma serves on its Board of Trustees. Always to be counted on, Jesse Zelnick has taken charge of providing our once-a-month contribution to the Winter Shelter Project, and could probably use a helping hand. We were treated to provocative evening forums on the "war against drugs," homelessness, >

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President's Message

Take A Bow

the "Case of Jonathan Pollard" and the life of Maggie Kuhn. This season we are working on themes such as hunger, poverty, and the never ending Israel-Palestine conflict. Ellen Rose will present a new lunchtime series on feminist issues. Her first offering is entitled "Why We Are All Feminists" - men included I am assured. I can't wait!

Dr. Carol Love, who has taken on the presidency at Camp Linden, was hoping to be relieved as chair of the Community Committee, but I talked her out of a sabbatical. She is so creative and upbeat that I don't know what we would do without her. The Humanist Thanksgiving was great, and I bet this was your first Saturnalia. Special recognition to Irene Putzer for her work as liaison to the Board. Let's give them our support by attending committee meetings - pizza is generally served and there are only four a year!. We encourage everyone to join one or more of our committees - Education, Ethical Action, Membership Growth or Community. Your voice can make a difference. We have an open policy for PES members. If you go to a meeting, you are a member of that committee for that meeting.

It soon will be time for Jean to trade the shorts and sandals for the jeans and sneakers. Camp Linden had another summer of bumper crops pouring out of its gardens and from the buses transporting inner city kids for a day in the woods. Temma was a frequent volunteer at the swimming pool, but I didn't manage to get there until the final Friday. That day's group, from Camden, was sponsored in part by a generous gift from the Camden County Bar Foundation. The kids were well chaperoned, and our counselors were trained and eager to work with their >

charges. We had a cookout. This tired old former army cook arrived just in time to man the grill. It was a joy!

I was most proud this past season of our hosting the 89TH Biennial Assembly of the American Ethical Union (AEU). We are a member society of the AEU which is in turn a member organization of the International Humanist and Ethical Union (Ethical Culture is the E in IHEU). The feedback from all who attended was extremely positive. The Assembly was a resounding success in spite of horrible weather. Much was accomplished and I was reelected to serve on the AEU Board of Directors - thanks for your support.

A special thanks to Dale Drews for filling in when I was absent, to Chuck Hinson and Lew Buckingham for their outstanding accomplishments at Camp Linden, and to Lyle Murley for painting the Society woodwork from the Auditorium to the second floor landing. Our officers, VP Dale Drews, Secretary Howard Peer, Treasurer Jeffrey Dubb and Trustees Jean Bradley, Temma Fishman, Betsy Lightbourn, Irene Putzer, Lew Wilkinson, and Jesse Zelnick came together as a unit, and the support of the membership was gratifying and appreciated. Finally, Richard Kiniry embodied the spirit of the PES. Through his caring and concern he was a leader in the truest sense of that word. He set a tone which reflected what we, our Society, and our planet can be. His platforms and classes inspired us to live out that vision. He acted to bring out our best.

Everyone, get up and take a well deserved bow; your support was our sustenance. Everyone, workers and nonworkers, religious and secular humanists, liberals yes, and even conservatives, your satisfaction was our goal; your input was imperative. Everyone, I extend to you the opportunity to become more involved in the operation and functioning of your Ethical community; it will enrich your life, as it has enriched mine. ◇

Sunday Morning Volunteers

Coffee Hour Hosts

Harry Thorn, Chair
September 7 Nick Sanders
September 14 Harry Thorn
September 21 Irene Putzer
September 28 Temma Fishman

Ushers

Rick Zorger, Head Usher,
with help from Richard Kiniry, Saul Machles & Arnold Fishman

Flower Dedications

Ken Greiff, Chair
September 7 Jessie Harmath, in loving memory of her brother and sister-in-law Maurice and Elsy Gelb.
September 14 Jean Bradley, in loving memory of Saul's mother Meryl Jacobs.
September 21 Dr. Carol Love, in celebration of the birthday of her thirteen years younger brother Dunkin Richard Love who lives in Vermont.
September 28 Mary Lou da Silva, in celebration of her mother's 101ST birthday on September 29.

Greeters

Saul Machles, Chair
September 7 Saul Machles
September 14 Temma Fishman
September 21 Dr. Carol Love
September 28 Saul Machles

Coffee Hour Lunch

September 7 Community Committee
September 14 Jean Bradley
September 21 Jesse Zelnick
September 28 Ken Greiff

Rushing toward Fall

by Temma Fishman, Chair

As I write this, summer speeds by, not caring that I yearn for it to slow down. Every Sunday in July and August something special happened at the Society. We've had colloquies that allowed a glimpse at our inner selves and book discussions that enhanced our understanding of the baffling community of human beings we live amongst. All were well attended by members and newcomers. The discussions were expertly led by Ken Grieff, Richard Kiniry, Ellen Rose, and Saul Machles.

Lovely Camp Linden beckoned from the hills of the Brandywine Valley. Children from North Philadelphia and Camden encountered the pleasures of eating vegetables fresh from the garden, walking along wooded trail, discovering all sorts of critters, and cooling off with buddies while learning to swim - all part of a day at Camp Linden!. The campers were transported out of their hot inner city neighborhoods to a world where nature welcomed and instructed them.

Education Committee members Bertha Waters, Betsy Lightbourn, Harry Thorn and Richard Kiniry have been busy arranging an exciting array of platforms and forums. However, we have plenty more to do. Now, we have the able hands of Nick Sanders to boost our efforts. He has already obtained several provocative platform speakers. As if we weren't lucky enough, Terry and Lyle Murley have also offered to serve. Welcome, Nick, Terry and Lyle! The Education Committee meets the second Wednesday of the month. But you don't have to be a member of the committee to suggest a speaker or >

help plan a festival. Madeleine Suringar secured our October 26 speaker, Norma Van Dyke, who will address *Why America Needs the UN*; Ellen Rose and Jesse Zelnick will help create our *Fall Equinox Celebration*.

There will be a change in the musical program. Pianist, Jeremy Gill, has decided he needs a year off. In his place, the talented Tim Ribchester, who had often substituted for Jeremy this past year, will be performing and serving as Musical Director.

The Education Committee has enjoyed the support of Leader Richard Kiniry, Society Administrator Jean Bradley, the Ethical Action, Community, and Membership Growth Committees, President Arnold Fishman, the Board of Trustees and many other members and friends. Rick Zorger, as head usher, set up the auditorium in advance of platforms, cleaned up afterward, and updated the information on the letter board weekly. The beautiful flowers you saw on the podium every week were selected by Don Houser, our custodian. Friend and frequent visitor, Bob Kay, gave a terrific talk. We again look forward to a year of working together to create memorable events.

Richard will open the season on with his talk, *Random Acts of Kindness Are Not Enough*. You can't miss by showing up to hear him. And many more great platforms are already scheduled. Visit us on our web site, www.phillyethics.net masterfully managed by Bob Moore, to learn more about what's planned. Don't forget to invite family and friends to our platforms and other events. Free street parking is available with a permit you can pick up at the Society office. You can also help our Sunday services become even more significant by sharing your personal view of Ethical Culture. Contact Richard or anyone on the committee to sign up. We need everyone to make Sunday mornings the nourishment that sustains us as we go about our business in this crazy world. ◇

Another Successful Season

by Jean Bradley, Director

It's the end of summer, so it's only natural that Camp Linden is mentioned on almost every page of this newsletter. The Camp Linden Board has decided that we should help you, our support-ers, to remember the Camp year round.

Dr. Jeff Dubb and I are collaborating on a fund - raising package that will be sent to you within the next few weeks. At the end of September we will begin our most ambitious project in years - building an overnight cabin. By October, we will be turning over the raised beds, planting garlic and a cover crop. By November the bathhouses will have to be winterized. Deadlines for grant requests take place through-out the winter. By February, I will have contacted most of the inner-city day camps that we'll work with over the summer. In March we'll begin to get the garden ready for early crops like snow peas and spinach. In April we will be clearing trails.. In May I'll be placing ads for lifeguards and counselors and meeting with the staff of our inner-city partners. By the end of June our staff will have developed the curriculum. The summer children's program opens the first week of July and runs through mid - August. If the overnight cabin is completed, we can look forward to other groups renting space from us next fall.

We want you to remember Camp Linden year round because we need your support year round.

We are dependent on volunteers. What we do costs far less than anyone in this day and age would think possible. But to continue our good work, we need to ask you for your help. I can affirm that many of us find the fruits of our labor to be extremely satisfying. Dare I add that we have fun? Join us for just one day at the end of the month and you'll see for yourself. ◇

August 8, 2003

Dear Jean and Wonderful Camp Linden Staff,

Thank you so much for hosting us at Camp Linden this summer! Our campers really looked forward to our Thursday trips, as did our staff.

We really appreciate all your hard work and dedication in providing us with safe, fun, and educational activities each week. We wanted to provide a special thanks to Jean for organizing everything so well, and for providing us with such great food; to Lisa and Sarah, for their wonderful swimming lessons and the careful surveillance; and to the other counselors for introducing us to so many exciting new activities in the woods and fields.

Our campers especially enjoyed the pool (they asked about it every day!), and the parachute games, the creek, the firemen and the walks in the woods. Camp Linden provided the campers with the opportunity to see and do many things that they had never seen or done before, and that made Camp really special for them.

Once again, thank you for sharing your wonderful space with us. Best wishes for a lovely end of summer, and a happy beginning of fall.

Warm regards,
Lisa Lerner, Camp Director,
Urban Nutrition Initiative

October 25, 2002

Dear Jean,

Summer turned into fall very quickly and before any more time passes I wanted to send my deep thanks for everything you have done for NSCC.

I think this past summer at Camp Linden was the most successful one yet, and I heard only good things from those who participated. Our Team Leaders at Douglas, Rhoads and Even Start were very happy with the program and said the staff was great. This is a tremendous resource for us and offers our students an opportunity they would not have without you and the Camp Linden program. We truly appreciate this partnership and the way it has grown over the past several years.

Please let me know if there are activities that take place during the school year or special projects in which students or NSCC members may be able to help out. I hope we will be able to continue working together and giving students the great experiences available at Camp Linden.

Thanks very much,
Craig Heim, Assistant Director,
National School and Community Corps,
An Americorps Program of Education Works

from the Guardian, August 14, 2003



Smile of Death

The sight of Amrozi bin Nurhasyim, the “smiling bomber” of Bali, raising his arms in triumph as his death sentence was announced was profoundly disturbing. Throughout his trial Amrozi betrayed no glimmer of remorse for the appalling crime he had helped execute. His claim to be seeking vengeance against America, the West and “the Jews” might be dismissed as delusional, but for the uncomfortable fact that many Muslim extremists have a similar aim. Amrozi’s belief that somehow he served Islam by killing 202 defenseless people of all creeds and colours could be ignored as the ravings of a sick mind. But the judges told Amrozi, “Islam never teaches violence; you never have the right to slaughter other people.”

Islamic leaders in Indonesia and beyond should ask why many supposed devotees disagree. They should inform Amrozi and his confederates that no martyr’s laurels await them, that there is no honour in Islam for unrepentant killers.

Amrozi’s callousness undoubtedly spurred the anger of the bereaved, leading some to say vengefully that a firing squad would be too quick, that he should suffer a slow and painful death. But others, including some of the British relatives, did not allow his lack of humanity to rob them of their own. They hoped that his death sentence would be commuted, that he would be denied the symbolic importance he craves, and that, by being made to live, he might eventually learn. Their forbearance does them credit. From Liberia, Iraq and New York to Palestine Rwanda and the Hague, the quest for justice is universal, unending and deeply imperfect. Often there is no justice at all. But violent acts of vengeance by individuals, by groups - or by states - provide no remedy. They are the executioners of hope. <

September at the Philadelphia Ethical Society - Celebrate Beginnings

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
 Birthdays	1 12 PM Labor Day Picnic at Camp	2	3	4	5	6
7 11 AM <u>Platform</u> Random Acts of Kindness are not Enough Welcome Back	8 <u>Social</u> 7:30 PM Get to Know Us	9	10 <u>Meetings</u> 6:30 PM Ethical Action Committee 7:30 PM Education Committee	11	12	13
14 11 AM <u>Platform</u> Personal Ethics for Humanists	15	16	17 <u>Forum</u> 12:30 PM Why You're a Feminist <u>Meeting</u> 7:30 PM Board of Trustees	18 <u>Class</u> 7:30 PM The History of Ethics	19 Nancy Freilich 	20
21 11 AM <u>Platform</u> Fall Equinox Celebration	22	23 <u>Class</u> 7:30 PM Economic Justice	24	25	26	27
28 11 AM <u>Platform</u> Hunger for Goodness <u>Meeting</u> 3:00 PM Camp Linden Board at Camp Linden	29	30	Join Us at Camp Linden for a Cabin Raising ! From September 28 to October 4, Volunteers are Desperately Needed to Help Erect an Overnight Cabin. Talk to Jean, Saul or Carol to Sign Up. Lunch and Beverages will be Provided.			

California Dreamin'

Sunday, September 7 following the platform
 Our theme this year will be regional American
 cooking, so the Community Committee will
 start the season with a *welcome back luncheon*
 celebrating the cuisine of California.
 California roll, fresh fruits and salads, wine,
 bread and cheese will be offered.
 All for a \$3 contribution!

Supper with Soul and Slides

A Camp Linden Evening
 Friday, October 10 at 7:30 PM
 Join us for black eyed peas, cornbread, mashed potatoes,
 collard greens, Southern fried chicken, tofu or fish!
 Sign up with the Community Committee & bring your
 favorite dish. You'll take home a Camp Linden souvenir
 & memories of an exciting slide show about our
 summer program for inner - city kids.
 \$10, \$5 if you bring something to share.



Ethical Forum Series Fall and Winter 2004

Lunch and Learn Series:

Why You're a Feminist (But May Not Know It)

From 12 noon to 1:30 PM

In the 90s, feminism became the new F-word, an unspeakable epithet, largely because the media portrayed feminists as man-hating, baby-killing lesbians who didn't shave their legs. Rush Limbaugh even called us Feminazis.

Wednesday, September 17

This series of forums will begin with one by Ellen Rose, retired chair of the women's studies department at University of Nevada Las Vegas, on feminist education, explaining what women's studies is and proposing that it should be part of everyone's education

Wednesday, October 15

Karen Bojar, who teaches English and women's studies at Community College of Philadelphia, will follow with a presentation on how to turn students who have received a feminist education into social activists.

Wednesday, November 12

We will then profile a feminist non-profit agency, the *Community Women's Education Project* in Port Richmond.

Wednesday, December 17

The series will conclude with a discussion by Kathy Black, president of the *Coalition of Labor Union Women*, of pay-equity and other economic issues that differentially affect women and men.

On the Ground Observations from Israel and Palestine

Friday, October 17, beginning at 7:30 PM

Lawrence Davidson, professor of Middle East history at West Chester University, and his wife, Janet Amighi, Adjunct Professor of Anthropology at Drexel University, have traveled extensively in the Middle East and will present a slide show and talk on the Israeli-Palestinian situation. The presentation is based on several recent trips to Israel and the Occupied Territories. The most recent trip took place this past June and was in conjunction with a three week Faculty for Israeli Palestinian Peace (www.ffipp.org) tour. During this time they met with many leaders and ordinary people on both sides of the Green Line. These ranged from Yasir Arafat and Hannah Ashwari on the Palestinian side, to Gen. Ben Eliazar, retired Mossad officers, and refuseniks on the Israeli side.

The presentation runs 45 minutes. The Davidson's welcome dialogue and are not afraid to be challenged. They attempt to present a realistic picture.

The Hunger Project.

November 7 beginning at 7:30 PM. Facilitated by Jim Goodman, Regional Director of US Funding.

The Hunger Project is a strategic organization and global movement committed to the sustainable end of world hunger. In Africa, Asia and Latin America, they empower local people to create lasting society-wide progress in health, education, nutrition and family incomes. They apply a two-prong strategy: mobilizing grassroots self-reliant action, and mobilizing local leadership to clear away obstacles to enable grassroots action to succeed.

Their highest priority is the empowerment of women. Women bear primary responsibility for family health, education and nutrition — yet, by tradition, culture and law they are denied the means, information and freedom of action to fulfill their responsibility. The Hunger Project is committed to transforming this condition.

Donations to The Hunger Project will be gratefully accepted.. Visit < thp.org > for more information.

Wine and cheese receptions will follow the evening forums. Free and open to the public.



The Ethical Forum Series is presented by

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