



Ethical Views

February 2011 Vol. 125, No. 6 Newsletter of the Ethical Humanist Society of Philadelphia

Platforms

Sunday, February 6, 2011

The Lions on Our Doorstep

Speaker: Catherine Bordeau, Acting Leader, Ethical Culture Society of Brooklyn



Patience and Fortitude are the names of the lions in front of NYC Public Library in midtown Manhattan. Last

fall, one of our children suggested names for the lions outside of the Brooklyn Society for Ethical Culture. This platform will explore how the names of our lions—personal or communal, metaphorical or concrete—are symbolic of our beliefs and what we find important. In doing so, we will discover that sometimes the lions on our doorstep might alienate those whom we are trying to welcome in our Societies, in our communities and in our work for Ethical Culture.

Sunday, February 13, 2011

Greater Equality, Stronger Societies

Speaker: Duncan Wright, Psychiatrist

Because economic inequality has an adverse effect on the majority of people in society, we should all be working to bring about greater equality. But in order to know how to lessen inequality, we need to understand the many ways in which it is maintained. One is the effort by elites to persuade the majority that the existing order (which adversely affects them) is based in common sense. Elites do this with the help of people who help define things, such as lawyers, teachers, therapists and doctors. I will give some examples from my work as a psychiatrist that illustrate this work on behalf of elites. I will then describe reforms in psychiatric care in Italy that have been part of a movement for greater equality.

Sunday, February 20, 2011

Jagged Edges

Speaker: Mary Herman, Leader for Congregational Life, Washington Ethical Society

Compassion, it has been said, is the leading indicator of our moral strength. It is the hallmark of a healthy religious community; it is what leads the work we do in the wider world; it is what champions the kind of world we wish to inhabit; it is what guides us to be the kind of people we wish to be. It also creates risks and vulnerabilities both in the giver and the receiver. As Ethical Culturists we know that the creation of a genuinely caring community is a careful and demanding construction that depends on demonstrating the truth of our values and our authentic commitment to one another. Join us as we explore the efficacy of cultivating compassion and what the practice of compassion requires of us.



Sunday, February 27, 2011

From Civil Rights to Economic and Environmental Justice: Ongoing Organizing in the African American Community

Speaker: Aissia Richardson, President, African American United Fund (AAUF)

Whether forming churches, working to raise funds to free family members, creating escape plans on the Underground Railroad, leading mass uprisings against slave owners or forming the Abolitionist Movement, organizing in the African-American community has been an ongoing effort to attain equity in America. Aissia Richardson will discuss the exciting work of several organizations that are addressing Food Justice/Sovereignty, Economic Justice for the formerly incarcerated and the burgeoning Environmental Justice movement in low income and communities of color.



Ethics for Children

Each Sunday the Society offers a children's program at the same time as the Platform. Although this is a "one-room school house," we will have age-appropriate activities for all age groups. The underlying theme of the classroom will be the children's growing awareness of the world around them and developing an appreciation of all forms of life. Relationships with parents, siblings, animal and human friends and plant life are stressed. We have a certified teacher and will use the text "Love Your Neighbor."

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President's Message

*News from
the Front, or
Challenge and
Opportunity*

—Temma Fishman

The new year brings many changes to our Society. We've hired an executive director for Camp Linden, **Anthony Buffone**. Anthony comes to us with many qualifications and much enthusiasm. He is the founder and president of Strategic Identity Consulting, whose mission is "to help non-profits use who they are to get to where they want to be." Anthony will conduct a feasibility study on Camp Linden with the purpose of creating an overnight camp and perhaps even a conference center. He will determine the cost of developing such a camp with the possibility of partnering with others interested in using and funding the camp's facilities. Anthony will work out strategies for fundraising, an area in which he has much expertise. However, our day camp program will be in full swing this summer under the leadership of a head counselor, who will be hired. We plan to expand to five sessions a week and improve the program to better serve the needs of the inner city children who come to us. The Camp Linden subcommittee is presently at work evaluating and refining our already excellent program.

Volunteer your help to get Camp Linden ready for the new season when those volunteer days roll around. Be sure to respond when the *Adopt a Kid* plea comes out. Make the world a better place by giving an underserved child a chance to blossom by being a camper at beautiful Camp Linden, a unique experience for many of these children who must spend their summers in the hot city. What better way can you put your time and money to work?

Other areas of the Society are also experiencing change. New member **Garry O'Rourke** has agreed to join the Society's Board of Trustees. By so doing, he will fill one of two vacancies.

Garry has become an active member of our Finance Committee and is serving on a subcommittee dealing with rental and custodian's issues. Another of our newer members, **Doris Dabrowski**, has agreed to serve on the Finance Committee. **Linda Richardson** and **Marta Guttenberg** are now active on the Camp Linden Committee. **Sharon Wallis** and **Leonard Weeks** have joined the Education Committee. Welcome aboard to all these new and newish board and committee members.

New positions on the Board of Trustees will be up for grabs as some of us move on. **Doris Leicher**, who presently serves as a trustee and secretary of the Board, will not be standing for re-election. **Irene Putzer** will be stepping down after many years of service. **Nick Sanders** will be giving up his position as Treasurer, although he will be running for the position of **Secretary** of the Board. Trustees not up for re-election this May and remaining on the Board will be **Kate Esposito**, **Ken Grieff**, **Arnold Fishman**, **Jeffrey Dubb** as vice-president and yours truly as president. Our new nominating committee, made up of **Terry Martin-Murley**, **Marta Guttenberg** and **Harry Thorn** will be seeking candidates to fill these positions. We need motivated people on our board to help us face the changes that lie ahead and the many decisions that keep our Society running smoothly.

Our committees will be changing, too. **Ellen Rose**, after several years of service as chair of the Education Committee, will be retiring from this job. **Doris Leicher** will be giving up her position as chair of the Ethical Action Committee. In addition, Community Committee needs you. So, you see, we need new people to keep all our committees and our mission vital. Everyone must become active in some way to keep our Society alive and well.

We will be holding a special membership meeting on Sunday, March 6th following leader **Richard Kiniry**'s platform. We will consider the changes we must deal with as we face the possibility of a period of time without a leader.

Remember that Richard, on whom we depend for just about everything, will be retiring in June. Richard, who is paid as a part-time leader, has been giving us more than full-time service. We cannot expect this in a new leader, who will be working on a truly part-time basis. Therefore, all of us, whether serving on the Board or not, will have to fill in the gaps. At this meeting we will explore the transformation that will surely take place in our Society. We will be seeking ways to motivate all members to serve as lay leaders. We will consider together what our new roles must be, what we would like to see happen and how we can define ourselves in new ways. All members should mark their calendars for this very important date. I will be sending you a letter to officially announce this meeting. It's our challenge and our opportunity. We need you—no exceptions!

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Thank you for your service!

Many thanks to those who rushed to us from 12/12/10 through 1/9/11, namely **Mike Fiore**, **Jeffrey Dubb**, **Sharon Wallis** and **Leonard Weeks**, **Marta Guttenberg**, **Ken Greiff**, **Nick Sanders** and **Jim Cummings**.

In the forthcoming weeks, we can use additional assistance in setting the stage for our Sunday morning Platforms. If you would like to serve our community by ushering either regularly or occasionally, please contact Betsy Lightbourn at elightbourn@verizon.net or 215-575-1128.



Report of the Search Committee

—Lyle Murley

As the Search Committee continues to review applications, we are encouraged by the quality of people interested in leading our society. We think we will be on schedule in choosing a person and ready to present a candidate to the Board of Trustees and to the whole Society later this spring. Once the application deadline of March 1 is here, the committee will narrow the candidate list and conduct final application evaluations, which will include observations of final candidates as they present platforms at venues other than Philadelphia.

During the Fall, we conducted a written survey regarding your priorities for a new Leader; we conducted three hour-long meetings with Society members to hear your views and to answer questions; and we held one session with **Richard Kiniry** to listen to his perspectives. During that time we wrote to all Leaders and Leaders-in-Training to alert them to our opening and to request advice and questions from them. In addition we wrote to a number of humanist, secular and religious institutions or groups to alert them and to invite inquiries. Beyond these resources, we met with the Board of Trustees on two occasions to be sure that we understood the parameters the Board has set for our work.

On these grounds, then, we prepared and published on the EHSOP website a job description that now is being used for our direct advertising for the position. From December through February our job opening has been widely advertised. The AEU has given it prominence on their website, in “Dialogue” and in “In Touch.” Leaders and Leaders-in-Training have been contacted three times regarding applications and nominations, many Leaders have put our opening on their websites and we have had direct help from the Brooklyn Society from their recent experience with searching. The Chairs of the Leadership Committee of the AEU have assured us of their willingness to help us explain the scope and intensity of the Leader Training Program and to work with potential candidates for our position who want to apply for admission to the AEU program. We have kept under budget for our paid advertising and yet our ad is and has been visible in six journals and on placement lists for 15 institutions. Our extended outreach has surpassed 200 contact points.

While the deadline for applications is March 1, we have encouraged people to apply as soon after January 1 as is convenient for them. **Ron Coburn** has gathered materials about our programs, has written to local universities and is checking credentials of applicants; **Kate Esposito** is handling our budget, has placed our paid ads and is our liaison to the Board; **Betsy Lightbourn** has been preparing a history of our Society and is arranging for our committee to visit other Society platforms; **Linda Richardson** has been investigating funding sources and has been preparing materials for community opportunities for candidates and their partners; **Lyle Murley** is chairing the committee and is functioning as its spokesperson. We have met just about every Sunday since we were appointed to the committee, and each of us is now engaged in evaluations of the applications as they arrive.

The committee appreciates that Society members have respected the confidentiality of our work and we ask that you continue to do so as we now become engaged in the rather delicate tasks of evaluating credentials and trying to see which candidate best matches our priorities and best fits our needs. If you do have questions or concerns for the committee, please address them to **Lyle Murley**. <>



Ethical Humanist Society of Philadelphia 125th Anniversary Bash

On Saturday, February 5, 2011 at 7:00 p.m., come join us in celebrating 125 years of bringing out the best. They say that those who do not learn from the past are doomed to repeat it; well, this evening we intend to do a little bit of both—learn from the past and repeat it. We also intend to eat and drink and have a general good time, and don't forget, this will be the start of the **Service Auction**, so get your event in.

Please contact **Nick Sanders** about the Service Auction. His e-mail is nmsanders3@verizon.net. The co-impresarios will be **Carol Love** and **George Bunk**. Bring food, especially old-time favorites and pay \$10 (preferred), or come with only money (you'll need \$15). Please sign up ahead of time, and help with the setup and cleanup.

Class

WORLDLY WISDOM

GREAT BOOKS AND THE MEANING OF LIFE

James Sloan Allen has created a humanist approach to the Great Books. His book, *Worldly Wisdom*, is a series of commentaries that follow human wisdom from Homer's *Iliad* to the works of Sartre and Martin Luther King. His focus is the humanist ideas that appear in all these historic writings. This is a chance for members and friends of the Society to read and discuss those books we meant to read earlier in life while following the course of humanist thinking through the ages. Another advantage of this reading group is we will have the opportunity to examine our own lives in the presence of ideas from around the world and through the ages.

This will be a monthly series with participants taking turns in leading the discussion. We will have copies of Allen's book to be lent to those leading the discussion and participants will be expected to have read at least part of the selection for that month.

Since the meetings are planned for the **third Tuesday of the month**, our next meeting will be **February 15 at 7:30 p.m.** The readings will be Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, *Othello*, *King Lear* and Moliere's *The Misanthrope*.



GET TO KNOW US SOCIAL

**Friday, February 11,
7:30 p.m.**

Every other month we hold a casual informational event for those who are curious about the Society and its philosophy. The Society offers an alternative to theistic revealed religion and at this event we offer a friendly presentation of our point of view.

Interested visitors, newcomers and members are invited to examine the basic approach of Ethical Humanism. Members will be there to talk about their involvement with the Society and what membership has added to their lives. Leaders of the Society will be present to answer your questions.

Refreshments will be served.




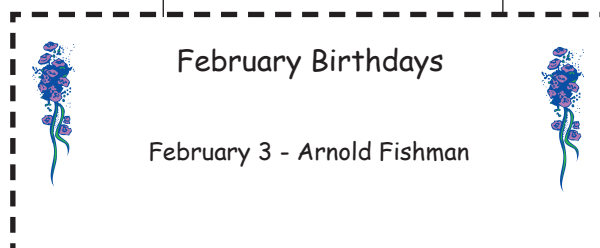
No Impact Man



In a book and movie, both entitled *No Impact Man*, Colin Beavan describes his one-year journey trying to live an environmentally correct life. As they give up on TV, cars and take-out food and as they compost, eat local food, walk and bicycle, they test the boundaries of their commitment to making a difference. This is a chance to at least imagine how far you could go in reducing your global footprint. You can read the book or see the movie or do both and we will have a discussion on **Monday, February 21, 7:30 p.m.**

February 2011

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
		1	2 Meetings 6:30 Education Committee 7:45 p.m. Ethical Action Committee	3	4	5 125th Anniversary Birthday Bash & Service Auction 7:00 p.m.
*6 11:00 a.m. <i>The Lions on Our Doorstep</i> Catherine Bordeau	7	8 <i>Pennsylvanians for Alternatives to the Death Penalty Meeting</i> 7:00pm	9 Meeting 6:30 p.m. Finance Committee	10	11 Get to Know Us Social 7:30 p.m.	12
*13 11:00 a.m. <i>Greater Equality, Stronger Societies</i> Duncan Wright	14	15 Class Worldly Wisdom 7:30 p.m.	16 Meeting 7:30 p.m. EHSOP Board	17	18	19
*20 11:00 a.m. <i>Jagged Edges</i> Mary Herman	21 No Impact Man Discussion of movie and book 7:30p.M.	22	23 Meeting 7:00 p.m. Camp Linden Meeting	24  Amnesty International 7:00 p.m.	25	26
*27 11:00 a.m. <i>From Civil Rights to Economic and Environmental Justice: Ongoing Or-ganizing in the African American Community</i> Aissia Richardson	28					



*Child care provided
during all platforms

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Layout, Janice Moore
Distribution, Dottie Wesley
Web Master, Nick Sanders

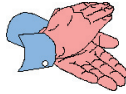
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(215) 735 - 3456
office@phillyethics.org
www.phillyethics.org



SUNDAY MORNING VOLUNTEERS

**Flower Dedications - David Ralston,
Coordinator**

February 6—Happy 39th birthday to
Arnold Fishman, from your loving wife
Temma.

February 13—Betsy Lightbourn: In loving
memory of my beloved partner and co-
conspirator, Dale Drews.

February 20—Ken Greiff: In honor of
the love of my grandparents.

February 27—Doris Leicher: In honor of
"True Love."

Ushers - Betsy Lightbourn, Coordinator

February 6
February 13
February 20
February 27

T.B.A.



Greeters - Ken Greiff, Coordinator

February 6
February 13
February 20
February 27

T.B.A.



Coffee Hour Lunch

February 6 - Groups A-D
February 13 - Groups E-K
February 20 - Groups L-O
February 27 - Groups P-Z

***Ethical Humanist Society
of Philadelphia***

1906 South Rittenhouse Square
Philadelphia, PA 19103