



# Ethical Views

January 2008

Vol. 122, No. 5 Newsletter of the Ethical Humanist Society of Philadelphia

## Platforms

January 6, 2008

### Memorial Sunday



Richard L. Kiniry

This is the time to remember those whom we love but who have left us behind, a time to feel ourselves in the stream of life. Guided by **Richard L.**

**Kiniry**, Leader of the Ethical Humanist Society of Philadelphia, we will remember and honor our members who have died in the past year and others who have played a significant part in our lives. Members are invited to come and share their stories and memories.

January 13, 2008

### *The Secular Coalition: Where it has been, where it's going*

**Speaker: Herb Silverman, President of the Secular Coalition for America**

After describing why and how he first became active in secular causes, Silverman will discuss some of the problems in creating a cooperative model and why it is beginning to work. Also, he will talk about the importance of nontheists engaging in activism.

January 20, 2008

### *From the Tree of Spirituality, Politics and Morality*

**Speaker: Deena Stryker, multi-lingual writer on international politics and culture**

Deena Stryker will present an overview of the themes of her book, *A Taoist Politics: the Case for Sacredness*, which explores the links between ancient Wisdom – in particular Taoism – and modern physics and biology,

and how these enable non-believers to affirm that God is not necessary for morality. Seeing serenity in a sense of the sacred rather than in religion, she suggests the necessity of a transition from linear to circular, or systems-based, thinking in order to arrive at sustainable development.

January 27, 2008

### *A Palestinian Perspective on the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict*

**Speaker: Dr. George Zahr, Board Member of the Arab-American Antidiscrimination League of Philadelphia**

On the heels of the November 26-28, 2007 Annapolis Conference, which newly launched serious negotiations between Israel and Palestine, Dr. Zahr will bring us up to date on the history of that conflict, as well as the current state of affairs, from a Palestinian perspective.



Laura Katz-Rizzo with her children

or her.” In what follows I will talk about how I apply these concepts to three areas

of my life: my teaching, my research and scholarship, and my parenting.

I teach classical ballet to beginning students at Bryn Mawr College and advanced students at the Pennsylvania Academy of Ballet. In my teaching I try to give students access to the joy of movement and the liberatory feeling of dancing with abandon. Also, through a teaching methodology that values the dignity of each student, and the importance of consistency in introducing new material, I guide my students toward experiencing success.

(Continued on Page 2)

## Living Ethical Humanism

*On November 4, 2007 four members of the Society spoke eloquently about how ethical humanism affected their professional and personal lives. I published two of those talks—by Scott Cox and Henry Pashkow—in the December issue of Ethical Views. Here are the remaining two.*

— **Ellen Rose, Editor**

Each morning, as I start the day, or hopefully at some point throughout my day, I try to remember the words that we read each week at the beginning of platform: “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 him

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## *Living Ethical Humanism (Cont'd.)*

I hope that as they learn to surmount the technical and physical challenges of learning ballet technique, they gain confidence in themselves as dancers. This confidence carries over to other areas of their lives and they see themselves as proactive individuals who have the power to make change in the world, attack a challenge with confidence, and achieve the goals they establish as important.

In my scholarship, I have concentrated on bringing a feminist perspective to traditionally male-centered dance history. In the past, I wrote about the life and work of Bronislava Nijinska, and I also did a series of articles about race and difference in the work of the Ballets Russes. For my dissertation, which I just completed at Temple University, I chose to look at ballet history in Philadelphia. I wrote about the work of two unsung heroes of American dance history, Catherine Littlefield and Barbara Weisberger. These women, so often ignored in lieu of George Balanchine in the history books, were largely responsible for the establishment of classical ballet in the United States. In addition, I did a series of interviews with dancers. In looking to dancers rather than critics as sources of authority in dance history, I made a methodological shift, putting the power of meaning-making into the hands of the women who dance the ballets in question.

Lastly, and most importantly, I try to think about the words I cited at the beginning of this talk in my most difficult task – mothering. I have three young children, and being responsible for their spiritual and ethical development is huge. I need them to know that they have the power to make the world (and our home) a better place. This starts, I believe, with making sure they know that they need to put their dirty clothes in the hamper and their dishes in the sink. That if they don't do it, the clothes



are on the floor and the dishes are on the counter. It comes from knowing that they need each other, and if their brother or sister is crying and upset, it is their responsibility to act with compassion and try to help them. Gratitude is also an important part of what I try to teach at home, and therefore each one of us identifies one thing we are grateful for at the end of each day. Most difficult and most important of all, however, is to remain patient with my kids and give them unconditional love and a safe place to grow and be themselves. If I can do this for them, then they can have the confidence and room to grow into the kinds of people who can make choices and impact the world in creative and empowered ways.

— **Laura Katz-Rizzo**

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Ramona Ward

just how ethical humanism has impacted me. Forging new and existing relationships in a way consistent with ethical humanism has enriched my life greatly.

I once received an email message that relates a story which bears repeating, if you have not already heard it. The story is about a professor in his philosophy class. He has a large, empty mayonnaise jar. He first places golf balls into it; filling it to the top. He asks the students if the jar is full and they reply in the affirmative. Then, he places small pebbles into the jar and jiggles it to gently stir the pebbles in between the golf balls and again asks the students if the jar is full and they agree that it is.

Then he adds sand to the jar, filing it yet again. He asks the students for a third time if the jar is full and they agree that it is.



He takes two cups of coffee from under the desk and pours them into the jar. The students start to laugh....

The professor explains that the golf balls are all the important things in your life – your health and well-being, your family, friends, the things you care most about. The pebbles support the things you care about, like your house, your car and so forth. The sand is the small stuff you do on a daily basis to live. If we put the sand in first, then there is no room for anything else!

One student asked what the two cups of coffee have to do with the analogy. “I’m glad you asked that question.” The professor replied. “No matter how busy your life is there’s always room to have a cup of coffee with a friend.”

In October, I participated in the Human Chain for Peace. Before I was in this group, I would have been in one of the cars that were beeping to cheer us on, but now I am taking that extra step to actively engage in things that matter most to me.

— **Ramona Ward**



Photo by Ken Greiff

## **President's Message**

by Howard Peer

Welcome to 2008! When I was a kid the year 2000 seemed so far away. But here we are at 2008. And this year there will be something special happening. We are going to get a new Manning Street entrance equipped with a wheelchair lift!

Interior construction is starting while we work out a few details and try to coordinate some plumbing work so as to economize. No matter how we work it we are still a few bucks short. Well, a few thousand actually. A necessary part of the plan is to replace the sidewalk in the back of our building. The existing sidewalk is pretty broken up and needs to be replaced and we need to work in a small rise to make the threshold meet

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### President's Message (Cont'd.)

the exterior. We have a plan to pay for this and by doing so we will have met our fund-raising goals for this new facility improvement. Here's the plan and it is a unique deal.



The back sidewalk will consist of about 20 blocks of concrete. We all know that people really like to write something cute and witty or maybe even sentimental in wet concrete. You know, you walk down the street and there is this wet concrete and it just talks to you "Write in me, be immortal." And there you are faced with a childhood fantasy and an ethical dilemma. You need to think of something really cool to write and think of it right now before the concrete hardens and hope you don't get caught. Well our deal is so much better. We are going to give you lots of time to think and you won't have to feel the least bit guilty. In fact you can feel quite good. For \$500 we will install a brass plaque engraved with the words of your choice in a piece of sidewalk. And there it will be, forever. OK, not forever but for a really, really long time. \$500 bucks for near immortality, now that's a deal.

What to write? You are limited only by your own imagination, but just to whet your appetite, here are a few modest suggestions:

A memorial – *In memory of my loving wife/husband, J Doe*  
Honoring yourself — *Donated by Mr. and Mrs. Jane Doe*  
Something ethical – *Deed before Creed (donated by J Doe)*  
Something cryptic – *We will attain sustainability*  
A quotation – *When going through hell, keep going, W Churchill*  
Something romantic – *To my one true love - For Jane from John*  
Something anonymous – *From a friend*  
Something silly – *Holy Rollers, Rock On*

Or whatever you think of.

If you act now, you can make it your New Year's Resolution. Then you just write out your check and you've fulfilled your New Year's Resolution – no guilt, no angst. Where else short of an indulgence can you get a deal like that?

### Ethical Actions Update

On June 10, **Josh Bickford, Richard Kiniry and Scott Pleune**



participated in the Philadelphia Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Pride Parade in Center City. The Society also made a \$60 contribution to the event, and that allowed us to have an Ethical Humanist Society of Philadelphia information table during the Penn's Landing program that followed the parade.

The Ethical Action Committee (EAC) suggested to the Society's Board of Trustees that the rainbow symbol representing all peoples – including especially gays, lesbians, bisexuals and transgenders – be added to the announcement board in front of the building. The Board agreed, and it is now there. Also, soon to be on the announcement board is the Society's support of the United Nations Millennium Development Goals, which will be referenced in many of our programs this year.



After the September 30th and October 28th platforms, **Ron Coburn** again provided us with an opportunity to sign Amnesty International letters – first requesting attention by governmental officials in Guatemala to three prisoners of conscience in that country and then concerning a human rights lawyer in China and taking a stand against the death penalty in the US. Each time we had as many signers as there were pre-printed letters: 24.

On October 27, the Society was represented in Philadelphia's human chain demonstration against the US's

continued military involvement in Iraq.

Members **Ron Coburn, Mary Lou Da Silva, Arnold and Temma Fishman, Betsy Lightbourn, Henry Pashkow, Nick Sanders, Harry Thorn and Ramona Ward** were joined by **Ann Freed, Paul Leonard and Deena Stryker** in the demonstration. Some carried the large Philadelphia Ethical Society banner, which we understand made the evening TV news.



➡ On November 13, **Temma Fishman and Nick Sanders** continued an annual Society tradition by delivering dictionaries to the two classrooms of third graders at the Robert Morris School, a charter school in North Philadelphia. Temma presented a short lesson on using the dictionaries, and Nick talked with the classes about the concept of "pay it forward," helping someone because someone else helped you.

As a part of the Society's Humanist Thanksgiving celebration on November 18, we conducted a special collection for a loan requester who is sponsored by the micro-lending organization Kiva. All told, we have collected \$1,050 for this borrower (a Ugandan tailor who requested \$1,200 to increase her business's capacity). As this money is repaid to our Kiva account (repayment success is higher than with bank loans), we will report progress to the Society and select another recipient. Somewhat in preparation for this collection, we sponsored on November 11 a forum on the topic of micro-lending.

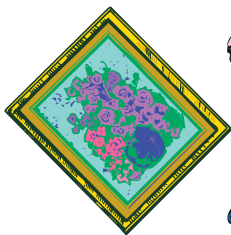
Finally, we have begun this year's support of the Trinity Men's Shelter dinners. We have committed to one a month for five months, beginning with dinner preparation by **Scott Pleune and Irene Putzer** for December 2.

— **Nick Sanders**



## JOB OPPORTUNITY

The Ethical Humanist Society of Philadelphia is looking for a Director/Teacher for the Ethics for Children Program. The job is part-time and we want someone with educational experience. The salary is negotiable. Please spread the word. Call Richard Kiniry: 215-922-4052.



## Non-Violent Communications Workshop



Facilitated by peacemaker  
**Keith Pacheco**

Saturday, February 16th  
10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.  
(1 hour for lunch)

• Connect with others in a way  
• that meets your needs and helps  
• those you care about. Improve  
• your relationships -- with your  
• children, co-workers, friends,  
• and partners.

• \$10 per person. REVP by  
• February 9th, to the Society or  
• email [temma@phillyethics.org](mailto:temma@phillyethics.org).

## RELATIONAL GROUPS

• Relational Groups will be starting in  
• January. Groups are already being  
• formed. If you wish to be included  
• or have a question, call **Richard  
• Kiniry** at: 215-922-4052.

## Sign up for the Service Auction!

It's not too late. Our fabulous annual Service Auction is ongoing. Be sure to sign up for several events when you visit the Society. We're offering Canoe Carnival in Medford Lakes, a dim sum lunch, a trip to a Phillies game, a beautiful painting, lessons in Microsoft Word and many more specialties. Care to host an event or offer a service? Do you need a service (like yard clean-up) or a treat (like a birthday cake) that you're willing to buy? You can still offer a service or request one. Contact Temma at [temmafish@aol.com](mailto:temmafish@aol.com) or the Society at [philaes@verizon.net](mailto:philaes@verizon.net). Or call the Society at 215-735-3456. Give yourself a treat while you help support the work of the Ethical Humanist Society of Philadelphia.

For a limited time only  
Performances of works for piano  
by **Tim Ribchester**



**Weekly Platforms**  
at the  
Ethical Humanist Society of  
Philadelphia

Sunday Mornings - 11:00 a.m.


## Tribute and Friendship Fund

*Traditionally, members of the Ethical Humanist Society of Philadelphia have marked the passing of other members or members of their families by donations to the Tribute and Friendship Fund. It is a lovely way to honor those who, like us, see our Society as an important part of our lives and of the community we serve. A card is sent to the family of the deceased indicating that a donation was made and a thank you card is sent to the donor. (The amount is not specified in the card to the deceased's family.) Keep the Tribute and Friendship Fund in mind as a way to remember a lost friend as well as to support our Society.*

## Name a Chair

*Honor yourself, a family member or friend by donating an auditorium chair. Compose a tribute or memorial to be engraved on a beautiful brass plaque, which will be attached to the back of the chair. Help support the work of the Ethical Humanist Society of Philadelphia while you celebrate someone who has made a difference in your life. \$60 for one chair or \$100 for two. Mail your check to the Ethical Humanist Society, 1906 S. Rittenhouse Square, Philadelphia, PA 19103. For more information, contact the Society office at [office@phillyethics.org](mailto:office@phillyethics.org) or at 215-735-3456.*

# JANUARY 2008

<i>Sun</i>	<i>Mon</i>	<i>Tue</i>	<i>Wed</i>	<i>Thu</i>	<i>Fri</i>	<i>Sat</i>
 Birthdays						
		<b>1</b>	<b>2</b> <b>Meeting - Weston Room</b> Community Committee 6:30 p.m.	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b> Camp Linden Work Day 12:00 noon
<b>6</b> 10:45 a.m. - Weston Room <b>Ethics for Children</b> 11:00 a.m. Platform: <b>Memorial Sunday</b> <b>Richard L. Kiniry</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>9</b> <b>Meetings - Weston Room</b> 6:30 p.m. Ethical Action Committee 7:45 p.m. Education Committee	 <b>10</b> Carol Love	<b>11</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>13</b> 10:45 a.m. - Weston Room <b>Ethics for Children</b> 11:00 a.m. Platform: <b>The Secular Coalition:</b> <b>Where it has been, where</b> <b>it's going</b> <b>Herb Silverman</b>	 <b>14</b> Lyle Murley	<b>15</b>	<b>16</b> <b>Meetings - Weston Room</b> 5:45 p.m. Fundraising Committee 6:30 p.m. Finance Committee 7:30 p.m. Exec. Committee/ Board of Trustees Meeting	<b>17</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>20</b> 10:45 a.m. - Weston Room <b>Ethics for Children</b> 11:00 a.m. Platform: <b>From the Tree of Spirit-</b> <b>uality, Politics &amp; Morality</b> <b>Deena Stryker</b>	 <b>21</b> Ken Greiff	<b>22</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>26</b>
<b>27</b> 10:45 a.m. - Weston Room <b>Ethics for Children</b> 11:00 a.m. Platform: <b>A Palestinian Perspective</b> <b>on the Israeli-Palestinian</b> <b>Conflict</b> <b>Dr. George Zahr</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>30</b> <b>Meeting - Weston Room</b> Camp Linden Board Meeting 7:30 p.m.	<b>31</b>		

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**Ethical Humanist Society  
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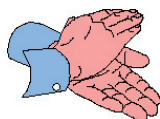
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## SUNDAY MORNING VOLUNTEERS

**Flower Dedications** - Ken Greiff, Chair

**January 6** - In loving memory of our dear friend Pat Leopold from Temma and Arnold Fishman.

**January 13** - Susan Jo Klein in loving memory of her father, Victor Klein.

**January 20** - Ken Greiff. It's his birthday and he doesn't want presents but house warming gifts might be nice.

**January 27** - Carol Love in loving memory of her mother, Sheila Love.

**Greeters** - Saul Machles, Head Greeter

For the month of January, Saul Machles and friends

**Coffee Hour Lunch**

**January 6** - Group A-E

**January 13** - Group F-L

**January 20** - Group M-P

**January 27** - Group Q-Z

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of Philadelphia**  
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