



# Ethical Views

March 2007

Vol. 121, No. 7

Newsletter of the Philadelphia Ethical Society

## Sunday Platforms

### Sunday Platforms

March 4, 2007

#### *Have You Sold Your Vote Yet?*

**Speaker: Richard L. Kiniry, Leader of the Ethical Society of Philadelphia**

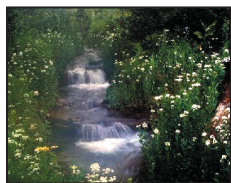
We know that money and politics are in bed together, but money is ultimately the route to power. Your vote is the prize and the ticket to power, and politicians bid for your vote with more than money. So, what is the price of your vote?

March 11, 2007

#### *Finding Hope – Locally*

**Speaker: Kim Miller, former marketing executive, now a community activist and economic development agent in Mt. Airy**

The welfare of a community relies on the health of the local economy. Buying and partnering locally keeps your money within your community, reduces demand on environmental resources, and preserves the character of your community.



#### **March 18, 2007 *Spring Festival***

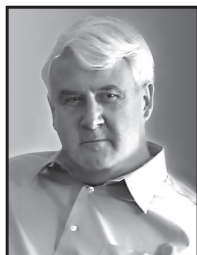
With the theme of growth, we celebrate the spring equinox with song, poetry, flowers, and a babbling brook.

March 25, 2007

#### ***Ethics, Politics, and Multiple Identities - A Gender Based Perspective***

**Speaker: Jack Waters, nationally-known film maker, choreographer, performer, writer, and educator**

How do gender, sexuality, race, class, economic status, and nationality inform our sense of self and what impact do variations of self-identity have on our social and political responses? <>



#### **Leader's Message**

**IF YOU'VE SEEN  
ONE TREE.....**

by Richard L. Kiniry

It may be freezing outside but spring is coming and with spring people discover nature again. Body parts other than faces will be visible while other things will be hidden by nature's burst of growth. The trees will hide graffiti and some ugly modern buildings. Nature will again be on the move and we will forget about that promise to better insulate the house. And that is not all we will probably forget.

Even after Al Gore's powerful movie and the president's sudden conversion after years of using phony science to deny global warming, the resulting concern has opened up few avenues of action. There seems to be little we can personally do. Since the amazing ebb and flow of nature continues from year to year with little variation, it is easy to avoid facing global warming. Maybe the summers are a little hotter but life goes on and many of us are counting on being dead before we have to buy a bigger air conditioner.

To do your part you can buy a hybrid or get rid of the car, change to wind energy and wear sweaters inside, support family planning and be careful who you vote for, but I have a more philosophic suggestion - live closer to nature. We must face the fact that we can personally do little to address global warming because we are embedded in the technological world. Our modern lives are disconnected from nature.



The story of modern living is one of increase in comfort and by comfort we mean freedom from anything that gets in the way of pleasure and that "freedom" often distances us from nature. Civilization has been an attempt to control our own natures and the facts of the natural world.

As a humanist I am proud of our human world – just look at what human beings have been able to create out of the natural world – but the human-made horrors are also obvious. Many point to the religion-approved idea of control and conquest of nature as sources of some of the horror, and changing that approach is all I'm talking about. Living closer to nature could mean living in a cave and eating berries, but what I actually mean is nature awareness - feeling the natural experience that is just beyond the technological cocoon in which we live.

Too often "nature" means the weather report and our environmental concern expresses an intellectual opinion. Our concern becomes a sense of duty that is

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## Leader's Message (Continued)

intellectually justified but not felt. That sense of duty is certainly of help to the environment but if you feel the problem, you are more likely to act and act with sensitivity. We can find mechanical ways to solve environmental problems but listening to nature and working with nature is a better answer. We wear hats, sunglasses, and sun block to protect us from the sun. They all help us go out into nature but are we listening to nature? Maybe the sun is telling us to bring our human activities into the shade. Being aware of nature does not necessitate turning into a recycling fanatic or watching only PBS nature specials, but accepting that we are part of the larger natural world and finding congenial ways of fitting into that world. We are too quick in finding easy answers to uncomfortable situations. We could stay warm in winter without warming the entire earth. Empathy is the start of an ethical response to life, and it isn't just about people. Empathy is getting out of ourselves and bringing the rest of life inside. Nature needs to be appreciated for what it is and not just for what it can do for us.

Spring is coming and the change of seasons offers novelty to life. In fact as daily life becomes predictable the change of seasons provides a natural change of scene, an opportunity to both experience and play with life in a new way. What we eat, drink, wear and who we see changes with the seasons. We don't have to fly to Disneyland to find joy. Rather than find our fun in manipulating nature, we can enjoy what the natural world offers. ◇



Photo by Ken Greiff

## President's Message

by Howard Peer

This month I'm happy to announce that we have taken some definitive steps towards handicapped accessibility. You may recall that, several months ago I discussed the possibility of using an

inclined chair lift to bring people into the main hall through the door in the South East corner of the building. The lift is a platform that rides on a rail affixed to the brick wall. It is driven by an electric motor and runs up and down the rail, parallel to the plane of the steps. The unit is useful for anyone with limited mobility and will accommodate wheel chairs as well as people using walkers, canes, or crutches. When not in use the platform folds up against the wall and is relatively out of the way. The Board has authorized me to sign a "letter of intent" for the purchase of the unit. The letter has been signed, a contract entered into, and progress is being made.

This arrangement will not make us ADA compliant as it will not be a fully autonomous operation: some assistance will be needed to open the door and help operate the lift. Still, it is far better than negotiating the front steps. And, as a religious organization, we are exempt from ADA requirements. A fully ADA-compliant lift is beyond our means financially and presents operational challenges we are not prepared for. For example, we really don't want people coming and going on the lift in the middle of a platform or performance. This "assisted" operation allows us greater control of the unit and will allow us to limit its use if necessary.

The contract is for a little under \$24,000 and includes the lift and its installation. Our letter of intent locks the price of the unit for four months. Prior to the installation we will need to make some relatively minor modifications to the stairs, move a radiator, and provide an electrical outlet. All of this will cost in the order of \$2,000. The major additional cost will be repairing the sidewalk behind the building and sloping the sidewalk up to the door sill. The sidewalk is badly broken as it is and needs to be replaced anyway. The lift is just forcing us to do it



now. We are now in the process of getting estimates for this final piece of work but are assuming it will cost under \$8,000.

So, the total bill will be close to \$34,000. We have just about \$24,000 in our handicapped accessibility fund and that will cover the cost of the lift itself. We still need to come up with the rest of the money. We will be reaching out for some assistance, perhaps with a fund-raiser.

I feel confident in saying that this is a building renovation that each of us will see some benefit in. None of us is immune to the ravages of time. None of us should be insensitive to the great difficulty that some of our members go through to participate in our services and functions. I ask that you keep these thoughts in mind when approached to contribute to our "over the hump" campaign. ◇

## Platform Summary



Photograph by Janice R. Moore

On Sunday, January 21 **Dr. Roger Allen**, professor of Arabic and Comparative Literature at the University of Pennsylvania, challenged us to consider how we identify ourselves in his talk, *Identity in Today's Middle East*. In the Middle East, one's religion, considered essential to identify, is revealed by one's name. In western cultures, nationality is considered essential to identity. But the idea of nation is a construct that faces difficulties. For example, the nation of Iraq was created by the British in 1921 and consists of three separate ethnic groups – Kurds, Sunnis, and Shiites. Only the imposition of a dictatorial leader held Iraq together as a nation. Without that, it fell apart. Lebanon was invented by the French in 1942. Israel, founded in 1948 by a U.N. mandate, is a state precisely because Palestine is not, Dr. Allen believes. We have imposed our notions of nationhood

(Continued next page)



## SCHOOL FOR ETHICS

(All in the Weston Room)

### INTRODUCTION TO ETHICAL HUMANISM

The Ethical Society of Philadelphia is part of a 130-year old humanist religious tradition. The discussion is a chance to delve into that history and tradition. Interested visitors, newcomers, and members are invited to examine the basic ideas of Ethical Culture. Do they make sense and can they make your life better? Using the Eight Commitments of Ethical Culture we will look at our core ideas - the intrinsic worth of every human being, naturalism, nontheism, and ethics as a way of life. Led by Richard Kiniry.

**Sunday, March 4, 1:30 p.m.**

### THE HISTORY OF ETHICS

This is a lively discussion group. We have been examining the evolution of ethical systems through history. We will continue discussing the idea of permanence in Craig Eisendrath's book, *At War with Time*. All are invited.

Third **Thursday** of the month,  
**March 15, 7:30 p.m.**



### Platform Summary (Continued)

and democracy on the Middle East. When we consider how the Lebanese identify themselves in relation to their government, or the Kurds in Iraq, or the Shia in Pakistan, we see that the criteria for identity and nationhood differ widely from our own. Dr. Allen advises that we attempt to understand the motivations that drive people in this region. A sense of altruism and empathy are necessary. "Learn more about Islam and the role of religion in emerging, nonwestern societies, or the clash of civilization will remain part of our future," he predicted.

— **Temma Fishman**

### Pledge Luncheon

**Sunday - March 18th - 12:00 p.m.**

This year, the Board will be doing another amusing skit and we will be talking about the financial health of the Society.



## The Ethical Action Committee of the Ethical Society of Philadelphia

*will host a forum:*

## ORGAN HARVESTING AND HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS IN CHINA

Organ harvesting by the Chinese regime from those who have died in Chinese prisons has been well-documented. However, since 1999, the number of organs available for transplants has increased many times over.

On July 6, 2006, Hon. David Kilgour, former Secretary of State (Asia-Pacific) of Canada, and David Matas, international human rights lawyer, released an independent report following a detailed inquiry into allegations that vital organs are being seized from unwilling Falun Gong practitioners across China. Kilgour and Matas concluded regrettably that the allegations are true. Since that original report, new evidence and analysis have reinforced the original and are presented in a revised report, ***Bloody Harvest: Revised Report into Allegations of Organ Harvesting of Falun Gong Practitioners in China***. The revised report, released on January 31, 2007, concludes:

"Based on our further research, . . . we have concluded that the government of China and its agencies in numerous parts of the country, in particular hospitals but also detention centres and 'people's courts', since 1999 have put to death a large but unknown number of Falun Gong prisoners of conscience. Their vital organs, including kidneys, livers, corneas and hearts, were seized involuntarily for sale at high prices, sometimes to foreigners, who normally face long waits for voluntary donations of such organs in their home countries."

*Presenters will include:*

**David Matas, Esq.**, Senior Legal Counsel, B'nai Brith Canada, Co-author of ***Bloody Harvest: Revised Report into Allegations of Organ Harvesting of Falun Gong Practitioners in China***;  
**Erping Zhang**, Director of the Association for Asian Research in New York City; and  
An authority associated with Doctors Against Organ Harvesting

**Sunday, March 11<sup>th</sup> - 2:00 p.m. (Daylight Savings Time)**

at the Ethical Society of Philadelphia, 1906 Rittenhouse Square  
*Admission is free*





# MARCH 2007



Birthdays

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
				<b>1</b>  Jessie Harmath	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>4</b> 10:45 a.m. - Weston Rm. <b>Ethics for Children</b> 11:00 a.m. Platform: <i>Have You Sold Your Vote Yet?</i> <b>Richard L. Kiniry</b> 1:30 p.m. - Weston Rm. <b>Introduction to Ethical Humanism</b>	<b>5</b>  Terry Martin-Murley (March 4)	<b>6</b>  Doug Riddle	<b>7</b> <b>Meeting</b> Weston Room - 6:30 p.m. Community Committee	<b>8</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>10</b> <b>Camp Linden Volunteer Day</b>  1:00 p.m.
<b>11</b> 10:45 a.m. - Weston Rm. <b>Ethics for Children</b> 11:00 a.m. Platform: <i>Finding Hope - Locally</i> <b>Kim Miller</b> 2:00 p.m. - Forum - <i>Organ Harvesting - China</i>	<b>12</b>  Lew Wilkinson (March 11)	<b>13</b>	<b>14</b> <b>Meetings</b> Weston Room 6:30 p.m. Ethical Action Committee 7:45 p.m. Education Committee	<b>15</b> <b>Class</b> <b>The History of Ethics</b> 7:30 p.m.	<b>16</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>18</b> 10:45 a.m. - Weston Rm. <b>Ethics for Children</b> 11:00 a.m. Platform: <i>Spring Festival</i> 12:00 <i>Pledge uncheon</i> Saul Machles	<b>19</b>  Christa Vanderbilt	<b>20</b>	<b>21</b> <b>Meeting</b> Weston Room - 6:30 p.m. Executive Committee 7:30 p.m. Board Meeting	<b>22</b>	<b>23</b>  Susan Jo Klein	<b>24</b>
<b>25</b> 10:45 a.m. - Weston Rm. <b>Ethics for Children</b> 11:00 a.m. Platform: <i>Ethics, Politics &amp; Multiple Identities - A Gender Based Perspective</i> -- Jack Waters	<b>26</b>  Ruth Ann Dubb	<b>27</b>	<b>28</b> <b>Meeting</b> Weston Room - 7:30 p.m. Camp Linden Committee  Adam Pine	<b>29</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>31</b>



## Camp Linden Volunteer Day Saturday, March 10 - 1:00 p.m.

Another opportunity to support the summer program and our wonderful campers. Call Jean or Saul for more information or if you need a ride.



Photos by Janice R. Moore

## ETHICS FOR CHILDREN

Our children's program is growing quickly. We now have a staff of three with our new lead teacher, **Josh Bickford**. We strive to challenge the child's understanding of right and wrong and not brainwash them. If you know of any parents who might be interested, we can send them our Ethics for Children brochure. Call the office with the information, 215 735 3456.

Each **Sunday** morning, 10:45 a.m.

## Report from the Ethical Action Committee

Nick Sanders and Judith Will, Co-Chairs

by Temma Fishman

We held a collection for Oxfam in November. In December **Ron Coburn** organized an Amnesty International letter-signing Sunday, and **Ken Grieff** and **Jim Cummings** handled the first Trinity Shelter meal of the year. **Carole** and **Jim Erb** provided the food, but **Doris Leicher** and **Howard Peer** were last minute substitutes for serving it, at the Shelter in early January.

Just before Christmas, **Ron Coburn** and **Nick Sanders** joined a demonstration at Lockheed-Martin in King of Prussia, with the Brandywine Peace Community. **Jean Bradley** publicized and helped Nick show the movie, *Why We Fight*, which included a call to demonstrate at Lockheed-Martin on Martin Luther King, Jr. day.

On Saturday, January 27th, leader **Richard Kiniry** and members **Ron Coburn**, **Susan Jo Klein** and her partner **Jerry D'Alessio**, **Temma Fishman**, **Pat Leopold**, **Bob Moore**, **Ellen Rose**, and **Nick Sanders** went to Washington to protest the surge of troops and the war in Iraq. We joined members from the Washington Ethical Society and the thousands using their feet and lungs to tell Congress and Bush that we are serious about ending this war. Marchers hefted catchy signs, huge puppets pranced, dogs paraded with their owners. Young and old, celebrities, and even some members of Congress came out to declare, "No More Funding for War! Bring Our Troops Home Now!" <>

**Washington, D.C.**  
**anti-war Protest** (See article above)

**Left to Right:**

Richard Kiniry, Leader;  
Ellen Rose, Ron Coburn,  
Susan Jo Klein, Bob  
Moore, Jerry D'Alessio,  
Nick Sanders, and Temma  
Fishman.



Photograph by Bob Moore

## News from the Caring Committee

Temma Fishman, Chair



**Arnold Fishman** was appointed as the Trustee of the New Jersey State Bar Association for Camden County. His predecessor in that office was appointed to be a Superior Court Judge, and Arnold will fill the balance of her unexpired term.

### Liam Morningstar Cox

was born at 8:07 am on February 13, 2007 at Bryn Mar Hospital. He was 7 lbs. 15 ½ oz., 20 inches and is growing already! Scott reports that Dawn is healthy and happy, and Liam is mellow and sweet. Noah says, "He's only been around for a couple of hours and we love him already!"



**Amber Anderson** reports that she, Shawn, and their baby Teagan are "doing great!" Teagan has a hearty appetite and is gaining much more than the minimum needed. She savors her meals, taking an hour to feed. Amber says that does impinge on her sleep, but she's one of those lucky people who's always been able to nap. Shawn works only 15 minutes away, so he visits often at lunchtime.

**Jessie Harmath** needs visitors.



**Roberta Wood** welcomes calls and letters. She would also love visitors.



Our best wishes to **Pat Leopold**, as she recovers from her recent surgery.

Jesse Z. & Pat L.

A special greeting to **Jesse Zelnick**, whom we miss greatly.



## New Member Profile

— David Ralston

Please welcome our newest members to the Ethical Society, Charles and Ramona Ward. Both are looking forward to participating more actively in the Ethical Society. Chuck, who's from Pittsburgh, has two sisters and Ramona has nine siblings. They met in a print shop about 27 years ago, fell in love, and married. With their sons Patrick (12) and Chuckie (15)—along with 2 birds, 2 guinea pigs, 2 cats, and 1 dog, Chuck and Ramona are enjoying family life in lower Bucks County. Chuck runs a printing press and, as a hobby, enjoys being a private pilot. Ramona works with computers for the Department of Defense and, in her spare time, loves to play the piano.



She also loves numbers and math and is interested in organizational dynamics.

Both of our newest members lived in Japan for three years and studied Japanese. Following Ramona's assignment in Japan they moved their family to Frankfurt, Germany before returning to the US. Both are intrigued by the humanist way of life. They have also observed the individuality among our members.

Again, please say hello and welcome two most interesting additions to the Ethical Society.



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*Ethical Views* is published monthly  
except July and August.

*Editor*, Ellen Rose  
*Layout and Photo Editor*,  
Janice Moore  
*Distribution*, Jean Bradley  
*Web Master*, Bob Moore

**Philadelphia Ethical Society**

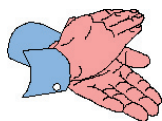
Richard Kiniry, Leader

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## SUNDAY MORNING VOLUNTEERS

**Flower Dedications** - Ken Greiff, Chair

March 4 - Bob Kay: In honor of his son  
Stephen Kay.

March 11 - Ellen Rose & Judith Will:  
To our grand children, who are above  
average.

March 18 - Jim Cummings: To my  
brothers & sister, Charles, Russel, &  
Elestine.

March 25 - Dawn Morningstar & Scott  
Cox: To welcome Noah's new brother!!!

**Ushers** - Arnold Fishman, Head Usher

March 4 - Ellen Rose & Joe Monte  
March 1 - Henry Pashkow  
March 18 - Bob Moore & Jim Erb  
March 25 - David Ralston & Bob Kay

**Greeters** - Saul Machles, Head Greeter

March 4 - Saul Machles  
March 11 - Saul Machles  
March 18 - Temma Fishman  
March 25 - Saul Machles

**Coffee Hour Lunch**

March 4 - Group A-D  
March 11 - Group E-K  
March 18 - Group L-O  
March 25 - Group P-Z

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