



# Ethical Views

March 2008

Vol. 122, No. 7 Newsletter of the Ethical Humanist Society of Philadelphia



## Platforms

March 2, 2008

*Money, the Root of All Good?*

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

There never seems to be enough money to do what we want, but is there enough to what we need? Money can be a tool for the best.

March 9, 2008

*To Be or to Have, That is the Question*

**Speaker: Ray Torres, Chair of the Mid-Atlantic Regional Steering Committee of Witness for Peace**

How do we move from an economy oriented to having more things to a society and economy oriented to nurturing human being? Ray Torres will talk about how his experience with the cooperative movement and his travels to Mexico, Nicaragua, Cuba, Venezuela and Haiti challenged him and taught him why human rights and nonviolence are central to wrestling with these questions.

March 16, 2008

*Education: More than Just School*

**Speaker, Marciene Mattleman, President of ASAP: After School Activities Partnership**

Marciene Mattleman will focus on education issues in Philadelphia and the nation, highlighting initiatives external to formal schooling.

March 23, 2008

*Spring Festival*

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

March 30, 2008

*The Sacred*

**Speaker: Michael Bogdanffy-Kriegh, President of the New York Society for Ethical Culture, 2001-07**

In general, how useful to humanity is the concept of the sacred? More specifically, is there a place for the sacred in the ethical humanist religion? ◇



## SCHOOL FOR ETHICS

### Introduction to Ethical Humanism

The Philadelphia Ethical Society is part of a 130-year-old humanist religious tradition based on the idea that life is an ethical experience. This introduction is an opportunity 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 principles – the intrinsic worth of every human being, naturalism, nontheism, and ethics as a way of life. Led by Richard Kiniry.

Sunday, March 2 at 1:30 PM

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## ETHICS FOR CHILDREN

Our children's program continues to grow. We strive to challenge the child's understanding of right and wrong. If you know of any parents who might be interested, we can send them our "Ethics for Children" brochure. Call the office with your contact information, 215-735-3456.

Each Sunday, 10:45 AM



## President's Message

by Howard Peer

### Presidents Message Tragedy of the Commons

— by Howard Peer

I thought about calling this message the Tragedy of the Commons as a sly way of working into talking about pledges. You know that pledge season is upon us and member contributions are, as they should be, a significant portion of our annual income. In fact the Society's fiscal wellbeing is arguably the principal charge of the Board.

Ideally we should bring in enough money though contributions and pledges that we can adequately maintain our building, pay our staff, save a little for emergencies and perhaps put some back into our endowment account for future generations. But we are not doing that. We are getting by just marginally: our staff works for a pittance, we draw down on our endowment and we rely upon the continued generosity (and health) of a few especially generous benefactors.

The reason I thought of the Tragedy of the Commons was that it struck me as analogous to our situation: we have a common or shared asset that we all use. The asset is, of course, the building, but it is also Richard (our Leader) and Jean (our Administrator.) Like all assets they need to be maintained (paid) or they will fall into disrepair (quit.) So we should all share in the cost of maintaining these assets. The Tragedy of the Commons, according to Wikipedia, "involves a conflict over finite resources between individual interests and the common good... This class of problems includes many of those raised by human population growth and the use of the Earth's natural resources. To maximize population, one needs to

minimize resources spent on anything other than simple survival, and vice versa." Consider the "hypothetical example of a pasture shared by local herders." The herders are assumed to wish to maximize their herd size whenever possible. The utility of each additional animal has both a positive and negative component: Positive: the herder receives all of the proceeds from each additional animal. Negative: the pasture is slightly degraded by each additional animal. Solutions require a "change in human values or ideas of morality" and perhaps technical solutions as well.

Upon reading Wikipedia, I realized that the Tragedy of the Commons model does NOT work for us. Our resources (building size, staff hours) are under-not over-utilized. Our problems come from insufficient population (membership) growth. The addition of each member to our population has benefits but there are no obvious negatives. Only the solutions statement is applicable to us; we must use all tools available.

Well, this started out as a pledge campaign letter and by Jove, a pledge campaign letter it shall be. We need your money, of that there is no doubt. Please give generously and in proportion to your ability. But more than money, we need to bring in more members. Surely we are not exclusive in attitude. Could it be that we are unique in outlook? That would be a truly frightening <>



### CAMP LINDEN VOLUNTEER DAY

Want to start 'thinking Spring'?  
Come on out to Camp Linden  
on Saturday, March 8th at 12  
noon and help us with our 'spring  
cleaning' in preparation for this  
year's Summer Camp. Enjoy  
breathing fresh air and soaking in  
beautiful scenery while you work!



**Temma Fishman**, reading her poem, "Evolution's Prize," at the Darwin's Birthday Party at EHSOP on February 15th.

### Evolution's Prize

Old Mr. Darwin created quite a stir  
With his theory of natural selection  
We find we're related to folks with fur  
To which religious righters raise  
strong objection

Things will never be the same, I sigh  
For there's been no special creation  
For we puny, unhairy guys  
Alas, the gorilla is our close relation!

But the gorilla won't wage war to  
defend  
Ideas both destructive and crazy  
It turns out he's a real, good friend  
To Earth we engulf in gases hazy

And while he has much fearsome  
passion  
To defend his home and family  
No mad pursuit of latest fashion  
Causes him to pollute land and sea

He'll never drive an SUV  
Or use obnoxious cell phone  
Or cause engine's jarring cacophony  
He begs only to be let alone

To live in habitat quickly shrinking  
Rightly wary of we fur-less strangers  
Whose greed and erroneous thinking  
Has placed his kind in tragic danger

Yet, he cares not one whit, if you're  
saint or sinner  
Or gay, or straight, or otherwise  
He should be the hands-down winner  
Of evolution's special prize

— **Temma Fishman**



## 2008 AEU ASSEMBLY -- ETHICAL SOCIETY OF AUSTIN

Thursday, April 17 - Sunday, April 20

A  
Event  
V

Join members from across the country in Austin, Texas to socialize, learn, teach, and celebrate our history and our ethical values.

***Here are some of the workshops that will be offered:***

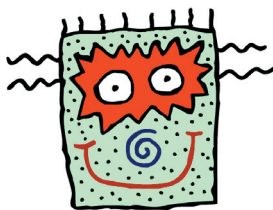
"Biocentric Ethics" with Curt Collier ... An Ethical Humanist Religious Approach to Living with Richard Kiniry ... Religious Education ... Growing & Sustaining Society Membership and Society Financial Management; Ethics in Pop Culture: The Ethics of Harry Potter ... Communication Skills in Ethical Society Life with Jone Johnson Lewis ... Out of the Box: Brainstorming to Reinvigorate Ethical Culture, with Hugh Taft-Morales ... and Ethical Decision-making Throughout a Lifetime, with FES member Max Romano and friends

***Plans also include:***

Keynote speaker and Opening Reception  
The National Service Conference Luncheon and speaker  
The Elliott-Black Award and Banquet  
Sunday Platform; A Liberation Festival -- A Humanist Seder  
Entertainment

Watch for the brochure in January, and count on having an experience you will long remember. Extend your visit for a delightful Austin vacation. Austin was selected as the No. 2 Best Big City in "Best Places to Live" by Money Magazine in 2006, and the "Greenest City in America" by MSN.

### Blockheads Wanted!



Want a little piece of immortality while you do something wonderful for our community at the Ethical Humanist Society of Philadelphia? You can write your name in stone (actually cement) along with a message that will last forever, or as close to forever as we can get. As Society president **Howard Peer** pointed out in his January article, for \$500 you can do just that. Twenty blocks of concrete from the sidewalk at the back of our building are for sale.

Each block purchase will bring us closer to realizing our dream (and yours) of making our building accessible to everyone. You can make the dream come true. Your name and message will be engraved on a brass plaque installed in the concrete block. Passersby will know you were here and made your statement for a most ethical cause. Send your check for \$500 to the Ethical Humanist Society of Philadelphia along with the name and message you want engraved on the plaque. For more information, contact the Society office at [office@phillyethics.org](mailto:office@phillyethics.org) or at 215-735-3456.



## Name of Honoree

### 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.

### Recent Guest Speakers

*Clockwise, beginning top left:* Herb Silverman (January 13), Deena Stryker (January 29), Dr. George Zahr (January 27) and Tony Hileman (February 10).



## 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.*

### In Memoriam:

#### Sheldon Ackley 1919-2008

We sadly announce the death of Sheldon Ackley, Leader of the Long Island Society 1950-59, Leader of the New York Society for Ethical Culture, 1978-1990. Through the years he remained active in The Ethical Humanist Movement, the New York Society and the Metro Leaders group. He also taught at NYU and was a founding member of the New York Civil Liberties Union and on the Board of the ACLU.

“All values exist in persons and therefore exist in a pattern that is unique, different from everyone else and different from every possible person” — Sheldon Ackley






### Welcome to Kasia!

We are privileged to have **Katarzyna Marzec-Salwinski** as our new pianist on Sunday mornings. Kasia is not only an accomplished performer on the piano, but a sought-after collaborative pianist and vocal accompanist as well.

She is educating us on Polish composers at our Platforms.

# MARCH 2008

<i>Sun</i>	<i>Mon</i>	<i>Tue</i>	<i>Wed</i>	<i>Thu</i>	<i>Fri</i>	<i>Sat</i>
 Birthdays						 1 Jesse Harmath
<b>2</b> 10:45 a.m. - Weston Room <b>Ethics for Children</b> 11:00 a.m. Platform: <b>Money, the Root of All Good?</b> Richard L. Kiniry 1:30 PM - Weston Room <b>Intro - Ethical Humanism</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>  Terry Martin-Murley	<b>5</b> <b>Meeting - Weston Room</b> Community Committee 6:30 p.m.	<b>6</b>  Doug Riddle	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b> Camp Linden Work Day 12:00 noon
<b>9</b> 10:45 a.m. - Weston Room <b>Ethics for Children</b> 11:00 a.m. Platform: <b>To Be or to Have, That is the Question</b> Ray Torres	<b>10</b>	<b>11</b>  Lew Wilkinson	<b>12</b> <b>Meetings - Weston Room</b> 6:30 p.m. Ethical Action Committee 7:45 p.m. Education Committee	<b>13</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>16</b> 10:45 a.m. - Weston Room <b>Ethics for Children</b> 11:00 a.m. Platform: <b>Education: More than Just School</b> Marciene Mattleman	<b>17</b>	<b>18</b>  Saul Machles	<b>19</b> <b>Meetings - Weston Room</b> 5:45 p.m. Finance Committee 7:30 p.m. Exec. Committee/ Board of Trustees Meeting	<b>20</b>  Christa Vanderbilt	<b>21</b>	<b>22</b>
<b>23</b> 10:45 a.m. - Weston Room <b>Ethics for Children</b> 11:00 a.m. Platform: <b>Spring Festival</b>	<b>24</b>  Susan Jo Klein	<b>25</b>	<b>26</b> <b>Meeting - Weston Room</b> 7:30 p.m. Camp Linden Board Meeting  Ruth Ann Flynn	<b>27</b> <b>Meeting</b> Weston Room 7:30 p.m. Amnesty International 	<b>28</b>  Adam Pine	<b>29</b>
<b>30</b> 10:45 a.m. - Weston Room <b>Ethics for Children</b> 11:00 a.m. Platform: <b>The Sacred</b> Michael Bogdanffy-Kriegh	<b>31</b>					

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**Ethical Humanist Society  
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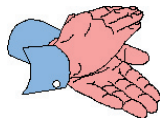
Richard Kiniry, Leader

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## SUNDAY MORNING VOLUNTEERS

**Flower Dedications** - Ken Greiff, Chair

**March 2** - Lyle Murley in honor of his  
loving wife, Terry Martin Murley.

**March 9** - Andrea Smith in honor of  
Ray's birthday.

**March 16** - Temma Fishman in honor of  
her son and new father, Craig.

**March 23** - Richard Kiniry in celebration  
of our Sunday School children who offer  
such hope for the future.

**March 30** - Irene Putzer in honor of her  
mother Lillian Putzer.

**Greeters** - Saul Machles, Head Greeter

For the month of March, Saul Machles  
and friends. March 9: Howard Peer

**Coffee Hour Lunch**

**March 2** - Group A-E

**March 9** - Group F-L

**March 16** - Group M-P

**March 23** - Group Q-Z

March 30 - Volunteers

**Photo Credits:**

*Page 1*, Ethics For Children photo, - *Janice R. Moore*

*Page 2*, Howard Peer - *Ken Greiff*; Temma  
Fishman - *Janice R. Moore*

*Page 4*, Recent Guest Speakers and Katarzyna  
Marzec-Salwinski - *Janice R. Moore*

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