

# Ethical Views

October 2005

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Newsletter of the Philadelphia Ethical Society

## October Platforms

### Sunday, October 2

Platform: Our leader, **Richard Kiniry**, asks: *"We Need the Military, Why?"*

Although our huge military supposedly makes us safe, in reality it is the greatest threat to our safety and world peace. It is a toy that begs to be used, and so we bully the whole world. Our national wealth is shoveled into the bank accounts of the military-industrial complex while the military mentality is held up as a sacred American value.

### Sunday, October 9

Platform: **Patrick Murphy**, an Iraq War veteran and former Constitutional Law professor at West Point who is currently a democratic candidate for the US Congress in the 8th district of Pennsylvania (Bucks County, N.E. Philadelphia, and a section of Montgomery County), will speak to the *"Ethical Dilemmas and the War in Iraq."* The speech will discuss the "just war" theory, leadership challenges soldiers currently face in Iraq and throughout the globe, and where America should go from here. While at West Point, Mr. Murphy served as a values education officer, challenging cadets with the ethical dilemmas they would face in command and war. In Iraq, he prosecuted radical Shia leader Sheik Moyad, a lieutenant of Moqtada Sadr and hired ten Iraqi attorneys to assist in the adjudication of over 1,600 claims under the Foreign Claims Act.

### Sunday, October 16

Platform: **Andrew A. Chirls**, Chancellor for 2005 of the 13,000-member Philadelphia Bar Association, will discuss the efforts of the organized bar to afford access to justice for groups that have often been excluded from the justice system. He will describe the

Philadelphia Bar Association's innovative efforts to make the legal system accessible to people who don't speak English and to people who come to Philadelphia from other countries. He will also describe the impact this has on our economy, the fabric of our city and the organization and well-being of our immigrant communities. Mr. Chirls practices law as a litigator at the Philadelphia law firm of Wolf, Block, Schorr and Solis-Cohen LLP, where he concentrates his practice in eminent domain, products liability and class actions. As Chancellor of the Bar Association, he has worked to reduce barriers between the justice system and the immigrant communities of Philadelphia, and to enhance the international outlook and profile of the legal community.

### Sunday, October 23

Platform: **Kenneth J. Campbell** will deliver his platform, *"The UN on the Bubble."* Mr. Campbell is associate professor of political science & international relations and Director of the International Relations program at the University of Delaware. A Philadelphia native and Vietnam veteran, Mr. Campbell's experience in youth prepared him for the study of political science. He received his M.A. and Ph.D. from Temple, having written his dissertation on the military's lessons in Vietnam. Mr. Campbell will address the withering criticism the UN is facing from many sides: for corruption, weakness, and irrelevance; the failure to stop genocide in Rwanda; the oil-for-food scandal; and of course the UN's marginalization in the Iraq war. Will the UN go the way of the League of Nations? Or are these difficult times just a temporary setback for an indispensable institution serving the world community?

### Sunday, October 30

Platform: **Jon Shure**, President of New Jersey Policy Perspective, a nonprofit, nonpartisan organizations he started in 1997 to inject a credible, forceful, progressive voice into the debate on important issues, will present the topic: *"Being Right is Not Enough."* Progressive-minded people must do a lot of work at every level to see to it that we as a society return to the concept of taking care of each other. The political/cultural climate has changed in ways we must understand so that we can restore the values we care about and help citizens--and the nation itself--live to their full potential. Mr. Shure speaks and writes extensively on tax and economic policy, expanding public participation and how to overcome the forces of inequality. He has been involved in public policy in New Jersey for 30 years, including as a reporter for *The Bergen Record* and as Communications Director for Gov. Jim Florio. <>





## Leader's Message

### *Katrina and Reality*

by Richard Kiniry

The horror of it all was incomprehensible. It was so frustrating to watch - "just find buses and get those people out of there." How incompetent can government be?

The immediate response, which actually needed time to get over the shock, was, send money. Sending money will, at least for a while, relieve the feeling of helplessness. After a couple days all that money seemed to be producing little effect, and people started to try direct action - finding ways of sheltering refugees, organizing caravans of food, equipment and building supplies. Then all of us with hearts to see, saw the reality behind the crisis. The immediate reality started to reveal the hidden one. In the sea of frightened, hungry, thirsty, sick, dying, and angry Black faces, the hidden reality was displayed. All of America's dirty laundry was there to see.

These days everything we learn about our world is filtered through some form of electronic media and those filters produce a version of reality that can deflect us from the real. This time it was different. Very quickly the "liberal media" became true to its name and honestly reported what they saw - black people were left behind to die. Fox remained true to form and tried to deflect reality: some people stayed in New Orleans to have a chance to loot and if they choose to live beneath sea-level, why should the taxpayer pick up the bill.

This is a moment in history that just might get citizens out of their self-absorption and into an appreciation (or disgust) at the world they have built. Everyone is doing their part to meet the immediate crisis, from responding with Lemonade Stands to

the million here and there from huge corporations like Wal-Mart (that have already taken billions out of those very citizens' pockets). But will we respond to the reality behind the crisis?

For a hundred and fifty years we have been unsuccessful in coming to terms with the effects of slavery, and the bill is still outstanding. And all those poor white folks who lost what little they had in Mississippi and Alabama are evidence that American capitalism too often punishes the ordinary person. Freedom and justice may be noble American values but the actual foundation of the country seems to be search for the good life. The losers in that search become invisible as we step over our neighbors to get our little bit of heaven.

Will we rise out of this catastrophe and build the same kind of world or will we face the reality that is? We live in a racist world built on economic inequality. We already knew that the neo-conservative world view was a fraud, a smoke-screen to disguise greed and selfishness, but it is also an excuse for people to avoid their better selves. That neo-conservative view has been very successful in clouding the national political discussion, but now the chickens have come home to roost. It is now plainly apparent: you cannot build a society, a community, that is fair and offers a healthy environment for its people if you let the rich take the lion's share of the wealth and not be taxed accordingly.

As long as CEOs and others way on top of the pay scale can make exponentially more money than the average citizen, we will never have a just society. We must draw the line and find ways of getting some of the money back. I think we have to tax income more than a hundred thousand at a rate of 90%. That ought to leave the rest of us with enough to start building a just society that we can all enjoy and make sure the levies are built high enough. ◇



## SUNDAY MORNING VOLUNTEERS

**Ushers** - Arnold Fishman, Chair

Rick Zorger, Richard Kiniry and Joe Monte; **Helpers** - Saul Machles and John Hall

**Flower Dedications** - Ken Greiff, Chair

October 2 Nick Sanders in honor of his & Molly's 4<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary.

October 9 Ellen Rose - Happy Birthday to her daughter Amanda

October 16 Jessie Harmath in honor of her niece and nephew, Susan & Stanley Genkin for their many kindnesses to her during her illness.

October 23 Gian Polizzi & Sylvia Bornkoff Polizzi in memory of Miriam & Anna Bornkoff.

October 30 Richard Kiniry in loving memory of his aunt, Mary Hagan.

**Greeters** - Saul Machles, Chair

Greeters will be announced.

**Coffee Hour Hosts** - Harry Thorn, Chair

October 2 Harry Thorn

October 9 Henry Pashkow

October 16 Ellen Rose

October 23 Ken Grief

October 30 Lyle and Terry Murley

## Coffee Hour Lunch

October 2 Doris Leicher and Howard Peer

October 9 Jean Bradley

October 16 Ken Greiff and Janice Moore

October 23 Henry Pashkow

October 30 T. B. A.



## President's Message

by Howard Peer

I thought it might be interesting to mention some of the things that go on at the Board of Directors' monthly meeting. First of all, these meetings are open and free to attend and all Society members are welcome. They are held at 7:30 on the third Wednesday of the month. If you have never been, it might be an interesting exercise to come and watch.

The Board meeting always starts with an agenda which has our Mission Statement right up on the top: "The Board of Trustees of the Philadelphia Ethical Society will strive to represent the spirit of the Society. We acknowledge and uphold the missions of the Society and of the American Ethical Union through our support of the Ethical Action, Education and Community Committees. Our focus will be to assess and maintain the Society's financial structure and organizational integrity."

One way to describe the meetings is this: three different processes take place. First we have regular reports by the Treasurer, the Leader, and President and a report on Camp Linden. These folks cover a variety of topics. Obviously the Treasurer covers

our financial status and any significant budgetary deviations. He also reports on the Rose Rappaport Long fund and upcoming expenses of note including capital expenses. This is also a good time to get any special funding requests on the table. For example is we want to send someone to some special training or to a conference we may vote to fund the trip.

Richard covers the Leader's report which covers new Membership Applications and any other general items of note concerning our members. This is a time for him to address the Board with his concerns and observations. The Camp Linden report generally includes comments on the status of the day camp program, building progress, and an update on funding activities. The President's report addresses business matters.

The second portion of the agenda deals with items requiring Board action. This can vary considerably from month to month. We actually have an annual agenda that is roughly set down in the Societys bylaws. For example, in September we need to set the minimum pledge amount, preauthorize the Executive Committee, appoint a Finance Committee, and appoint a Long Range Planning Committee. This portion of the agenda becomes full starting in January because the late Winter and Spring have a number of important and recurrent activities. We make sure contribution receipts get out for tax season, that we plan the Service Auction, call for nominations for the

upcoming elections, plan the pledge luncheon, approve the new budget, and set up the Annual Membership Meeting. It all sounds rather simple and is easily summarized in a couple of lines, but there is a little more to the execution than may be immediately obvious. When it all gets done, we have a plan for the year.

The third part of the Board meetings is reserved for Committee reports. Each Board Member-at-Large (the six members who are not officers) sits on at least one of the main committees. The Board takes reports on what each committee is doing. Besides reporting on recent and planned activities, this is the time and place where a committee puts a petition before the Board for action. Do we want to join such-and-such group or make a contribution to that cause to show solidarity with the movement? Obviously, should a committee fail to meet or have difficulties functioning then this is where that would become apparent.

We, as a Society, are a group of people with deep convictions, and it shows. The meetings have been known to be heated. Disagreements come out, open and frank discussions ensue. Real work gets done and real opinions are expressed. I think that it is very, very interesting process to watch. I feel privileged serving with this fine group of people. <>



**UNITED NATIONS  
HALLOWEEN PARTY**  
FRIDAY OCTOBER 28, 2005 - 7 PM  
\$5 if you bring some food or  
beverage and \$10 if you don't.

Dress up in national costume and set up a table at our Halloween party for either your ancestral country or any country you have an interest in and some items from. Contact Carol Love or any member of the Community Committee if you have music, information or items to share about another country. We'll give you a small table to display your wares and there will be a presentation (video??) about the United Nations and our National Service Committee involvement. There will be food from many nations so sign up on Sundays and tell us what you can bring. Start getting out your kilts, burkas, lederhosen, and turbans!



**Richard Kiniry** during his first address of the 2005-06 Season.

## A REMINDER

Each Sunday there is time during the Platform for "My Ethical Culture". This is a space (3 to 5 minutes) for members to offer their personal take on Ethical Humanism's approach to life. On Sundays when we don't have a personal version from one of you, we find an inspiring quote. If you are interested in presenting your version of "My Ethical Culture", speak to Richard and he will find a date for you.



## Platform Summary

**Sunday, September 11, 2005**

Richard Kiniry opened the new year with a challenge for us to face reality, to reject the illusory realities that ignore poverty, racism, hatreds, fears, and false beliefs that are at the core of our society. He reminded us that our religion of Ethical Humanism is an on-going striving of human beings who have joined together to create meaningful lives and to establish a base for the incremental creation of a better reality. Our religion is one that questions, that changes, and that continues to grow through human thinking and action. Our ethic is a relational one, one that seeks our individual validations by the ways we reach out to others. Our religious movement is to step out of illusion towards reality and our active roles are to respond to the realities we see in rational ways. Richard then pointed to a number of specific societal issues we plan to address this year, each of which will force us to see and respond to what he called various "uglinesses" at the center of our society.

—Lyle Murley

Platforms at 11:00AM, Sundays

Coffee Hour & Discussion  
follow the Platforms.

Musical interludes performed by  
Pianist Tim Ribchester.

Childcare provided at no charge.

All are welcome!

## From the Community Committee:

**Dale Drews** would welcome visits.

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**Jesse Harmath** could use some help getting to and from the Society for platforms and other events, and would like to go out to eat.

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**Gladys Huber** would enjoy visits (please call first). We suggest bringing a lunch to share with her at her house. Temma Fishman and Judith Will did that during the summer and found it very enjoyable. (Her birthday is on October 29<sup>th</sup>.)

Gladys would also welcome telephone calls and perhaps rides to and from the Society when possible.

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**Roberta Wood** would delight in any contact.

## CAMP LINDEN WORK PARTY

Join Us at Beautiful Camp Linden  
on Saturday, October 15.

Enjoy a day of fellowship while  
working for the benefit of children  
who need our love and support.

Lunch and Beverages Provided!

Meet at 10 AM in front of the  
Society.

Call the office at (215) 735-3456 or  
Jean and Saul at (610) 259-3392.










**GET TO KNOW US  
SOCIAL**

**Wednesday  
October 5<sup>th</sup>  
7:30 PM**



# October 2005

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
						1  Carol Kaufmann
2 11:00 AM <u>Platform</u>  <b>Richard Kiniry</b>  <i>We Need the Military, Why?</i>	3	4	5 <b>Get to Know Us Social</b> 7:30PM  <b>Jeffrey Dubb</b>	6	7	8   Cherin Silver
9 11:00 AM <u>Platform</u>  <b>Patrick Murphy</b>  <i>Ethical Dilemmas and the War in Iraq</i>	10	11	12 <u>Meetings</u> <i>Weston Room</i>  6:30 PM-Ethical Action Committee  7:30 PM-Education Committee	13	14   <b>Doris Leicher</b>	15 <b>CAMP LINDEN WORK PARTY</b>
16 11:00 AM <u>Platform</u>  <b>Andrew A. Chirls</b>  <i>Access to Justice for Groups Often Excluded</i>	17  < <b>David Collier</b> (on the 16 <sup>th</sup> )	18	19 <u>Meeting</u> <i>Weston Room</i> 7:30 PM Board of Trustees	20	21	22
23 11:00 AM <u>Platform</u>  <b>Kenneth J. Campbell</b>  <i>The UN on the Bubble</i>	24 <u>Meeting</u> 7:30PM Camp Linden Board at <i>Carol Love's House</i>	25	26	27	28 <b>United Nations Halloween Party</b>  7:00PM	29   <b>Gladys Huber</b>
30 11:00 AM <u>Platform</u>  <b>Jon Sure</b>  <i>Being Right is Not Enough</i>	31					  <b>Birthdays</b>

There will be no **History of Ethics** or **Voluntary Simplicity** classes in October.

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***Ethical Views*** is published monthly  
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Rittenhouse Square, on which the Philadelphia Ethical Society borders, sparkles on a Sunday morning in September.  
*Photograph by Janice R. Moore*

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