



Ethical Views

October 2008

Vol. 123, No. 2 Newsletter of the Ethical Humanist Society of Philadelphia



Platforms

Sunday, October 5, 2008

What if God is the Good We Do?

Speaker: Michael Benedikt, ACSA Distinguished Professor of Architecture at the University of Texas at Austin and author of *God Is the Good We Do* and *God, Creativity, and Evolution: The Argument From Design[ers]*

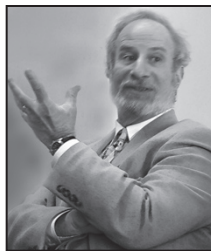
In later life, Felix Adler developed a mystical theology he kept largely to himself. Why? Benedikt says that having founded a movement that claimed that theology ("creed") did not matter to ethical action ("deed"), Adler could not well preach that—or any—theology. But Benedikt believes that a theology was implicit all along in the establishment and growth of Ethical Culture—the notion that the good we do ("deed") is the very substance of God. In this Platform he will offer an answer to the question, "Why bring 'God' into Ethical Culture?"

Sunday, October 12, 2008

If There is No God, from Where Do We Get Our Hope?

Speaker: Joseph Chuman, Leader, Ethical Culture Society of Bergen County, NJ

From the point of view of theistic religions the life of "nonbelievers" must end in despair. Is this true? If we cannot vest our hope in cosmic guarantees, from where do humanists derive their sense of hope?



Sunday, October 19, 2008

Meet a Real Community Organizer

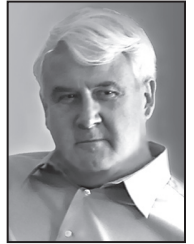
Speaker: Neil Herrmann, lead organizer for Philadelphia ACORN
Neil graduated from Syracuse University in 2004. He's been a community organizer with ACORN for three months. Prior to that, he spent a year teaching at the Roberto Clemente Middle School in the Bronx. Neil will tell us how he came to work at ACORN and how it's affected and changed him. He will also talk about some of the work that ACORN does.

Sunday, October 26, 2008

The Meaning of Work

Speaker: Richard L. Kiriya, Leader, Ethical Humanist Society of Philadelphia

Most of us perform some activity for money, but that job may be peripheral to your actual work. Regardless of what you consider your work, the question is, how close do you connect your values, your work and your sense of self. ◇



The Ethical Humanist Society of Philadelphia offers an **Ethics for Children** Sunday morning program that respects the uniqueness of each child & encourages an open search for personal values. Each week, children celebrate the joys of life through discussion, songs, and projects. Parents have the opportunity to attend our Platform meetings, with stimulating speakers & classical music.

Family-friendly Humanism in a great Center City location

Classes are Sunday, 10:45 A.M. to 12:00 Noon at the Society, 1906 Rittenhouse Square (SW corner). Free parking is available with a permit you can get at our office. For info, call 215-735-3456 or check us out at www.phillyethics.org.



Platforms at 11:00AM, Sundays
Coffee Hour and Discussion
follow the Platforms.

Musical interludes
performed by Pianist
Katarzyna Marzec-Salwinski

Childcare provided
at no charge.
All are welcome!

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President's Message

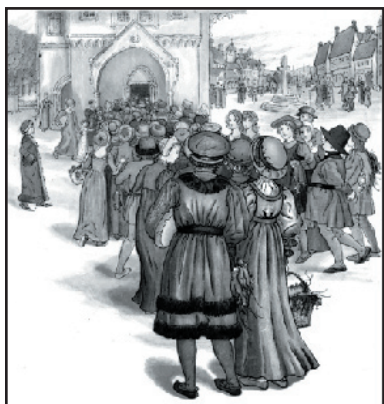
by Temma Fishman

You must be the change you wish to see in the world.

— Mahatma Ghandi

Here at the Ethical Humanist Society of Philadelphia, we don't have trouble accepting the theory of evolution. We're about evolving toward the better – each year becoming a little more efficient at shaping our future and telling the world who we are.

Witness our informative, timely, attractive newsletter, our fabulous website, our growing Sunday School and membership list. Our handicap-accessible entrance is well underway and will bring new people through our door. Our Sunday platforms are the best in town. People should be breaking down our doors to get in.



Young parents and beautiful children now grace our rooms and make us smile. They hold the future of Ethical Humanism and the health of our planet in their hands. Let's bring more of them in. Be a greeter to all newcomers. Champion the growth of our Society and the Ethical Humanist Movement whenever you get the chance.

Each year, our Society is a little different from the year before as we evolve

under the influence of new viewpoints and challenging conditions. New ideas and practices are tried and sometimes succeed. We continue to meet the challenge of keeping our beautiful old building, our home, in repair.

Speakers, members, and visitors present their unique perspectives and challenge old ones. We educate each other, grow and change. There were times when I suddenly saw a new way of looking at an old idea. I'm challenged, and I don't always find that comfortable. Leader Richard Kiniry urges us to take charge of our lives and live intentionally. Like Yogi Berra who said, "If you don't know where you're going, you'll wind up somewhere else".

We can only evolve toward the better if we all work together. Let's offer our willing hands, our expertise, and good will to each other as we create our community anew. Every member shapes the Society – not just those who serve on the Board and committees. All of us are depending on you. We evolve while our desire to make the world better remains steadfast. As we work to maintain and improve our Society, we also work for the betterment of the community outside our door and beyond our nation. Saddled with a government that ignores the lessons of history and those suffering in the present, we have been devolving into the Dark Ages of ignorance and intolerance. While the promise of a new day shines, the threat of more of the same looms on the horizon. We need each other and the world needs Ethical Humanism more than ever. There is much work to be done.

If you see the need for change, don't complain, but do help. Give time, give money, give whatever you can. Come to a Board meeting, or attend an Ethical Action, Education or Community Committee meeting. Share your ideas and volunteer to put them into action. The Society is all of us. I am proud to have the opportunity to serve as your president as we begin the new season together.



At our Humanist Thanksgiving celebration in November, the Ethical Society collected over \$1000 for KIVA, an organization that makes available small loans to people in developing countries. KIVA fights poverty and encourages human dignity by providing loans to people working to develop small businesses in countries such as Togo, Uganda, Pakistan, Nigeria, Ecuador and others where people struggle to provide for themselves and their families. Our Ethical Action Committee (EAC) promoted this project, which supports the first Millennium Development Goal, "Eradicate extreme hunger and poverty" and the third, "Promote gender equality and empower women." KIVA, in turn, provides progress reports on what is happening to the money donated. For example, Munirjon Mansurov, a clothing salesman in Tajikistan has repaid 100% of his loan, Rosemary Ebowe from Nigeria, who owns a food market business, has repaid 75% of hers, and Victoria Marca, who runs a general store in Ecuador, has repaid 25%.

At this point, \$516.25 in KIVA credit has been released to our account. The money we loaned is being returned to us for re-lending or some other purpose to be determined by the EAC. It is a win-win situation. Individuals as well as organizations can lend money to KIVA. You can get more details and see who the lenders are when you explore the KIVA website. We are in good company.

— Temma Fishman





SCHOOL FOR ETHICS



THE IDEA OF GOD

This three-session discussion group will look at what human beings have said about God and what they have been trying to say about life when they speak of God. We will start with Karen Armstrong's *The History of God*, then move on to Richard Dawkins's *The God Delusion* and end with Michael Benedikt's *God is the Good We Do*. This group is open to members and non-members but you must sign up on Sundays, or by contacting the office by phone or email.

Led by Richard L. Kiniry.

Second Tuesdays – October 7, November 11, December 9 – 7:30 pm, Weston Room



Get to Know Us Social

The Ethical Society will be holding a Get to Know Us Social on **Wednesday, October 29th at 7:30pm**. This is an opportunity for newcomers and members to learn about the history and philosophy of the Ethical Culture movement and to share with each other how our spiritual journeys have led us towards Ethical Humanism.

Help introduce newcomers to the spirit and beliefs of Ethical Humanism while enjoying tasty foods and beverages. Everyone is encouraged to attend. Invite a newcomer, and come yourself.



Relief For Haiti

Haiti has been severely damaged by four hurricanes. People are without food and shelter. We recommend that those who are interested send donations for relief supplies to one or all of the following websites, after viewing their information and their provisions for making donations online.

Paul Farmer's Project, Partners in Health is at:

http://www.pih.org/inforesources/news/Haiti_Hurricanes_2008.html

Also check:

<http://www.DoctorsWithoutBorders.org>

and

<http://www.UNCommitteeonHumanRights.org>

You can also send contributions by mail to Haiti Konpay, 7 Wall Street, Gloucester, MA 01930.

— Ron Coburn



Ethical Action Committee Report

The EAC started this season with a good strong committee meeting and lots to do. Activities for this year include: fighting the death penalty in PA, staffing the homeless kitchen project, supporting My Ethical Action during platforms, continuing the dictionary project at the Robert Morris School, possibly hosting a monthly movie series, offering an alternative to the National Day of Prayer, and so on. There are plenty of opportunities to participate, through the committee meetings or through direct action. We hope that a conference line can be set up to facilitate participation in our meetings by more Society members. Meetings are regularly scheduled for the second Tuesday of the month. All are welcome.

— Howard Peer



Howard Peer

COMMUNITY COMMITTEE EVENTS SCHEDULE

2008 - 2009







Wednesday, October 29 at 7:30p.m.	A Get-to-Know-Us Social
Sunday, November 23 at 11:00a.m.	Humanist Thanksgiving
Wednesday, December (date TBA)	Get-to-Know-Us Social
Sunday, December 21 at 11:00a.m.	Winter Solstice Celebration
Saturday, December 27	"Party Before New Years" fundraiser. Jean Bradley, impresario; Irene Putzer, assistant
Friday, February 20	Darwin Anniversary Party and Service Auction kickoff Bob and Janice Moore, impresarios
Sunday, March 22 at 11:00a.m.	Equinox Celebration
Friday, April 24	Earth Day Celebration
Sunday, May 17 (or 24)	Annual Membership Meeting
Sunday, June 7	Camp Linden Picnic

Fall Celebration Shared by EHSOP Adult Members and Sunday School Students

September 21, 2008



OCTOBER 2008

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			1 Meeting - Weston Room 6:30 p.m. Community/Membership Growth Committee	 2 Carol Kaufmann	3	4 Camp Linden Volunteer Day
5 10:45 a.m. - Weston Room Ethics for Children 11:00 a.m. Platform: What if God is the Good We Do? Michael Benedikt	 6 Jeffrey Dubb	7 Class The Idea of God 7:30 p.m.	8 Meetings - Weston Room 6:30 p.m. Education Committee 7:45 p.m. Ethical Action Committee	9	10	11
12 10:45 a.m. - Weston Room Ethics for Children 11:00 a.m. Platform: If There is No God, from Where Do We Get Our Hope? Joseph Chuman 1:30 p.m. Finance Committee Meeting	13	 14 Doris Leicher	15 Meetings - Weston Room 6:30 p.m. Exec. Committee 7:30 p.m. Board of Trustees	 16 David Collier	17	18
19 10:45 a.m. - Weston Room Ethics for Children 11:00 a.m. Platform: Meet a Real Community Organizer Neil Herrmann	20	21	22 Meeting 7:00 p.m. Camp Linden Committee	 23 Meeting Weston Room 7:00 p.m. Amnesty International	24	25 Camp Linden Volunteer Day
26 10:45 a.m. - Weston Room Ethics for Children 11:00 a.m. Platform: The Meaning of Work Richard L. Kiniry	27	28	  29 7:30 p.m. Get to Know Us Social Gladys Huber	30	31	 Birthdays

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except July and August.

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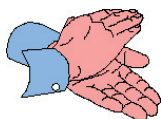
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SUNDAY MORNING VOLUNTEERS

Flower Dedications - Ramona Ward, Chair

October 5 - Nicholas Sanders: "With
Love for My Loving Wife, Molly."

October 12 - Ellen Rose: "Happy
Anniversary to My Daughter Emily and
Her Husband Mike."

October 19 - Arnold and Temma
Fishman: "In Loving Memory of Alvin
Wolf, Temma's brother."

October 26 - Sylvia Bornkoff-Polizzi:
"Dedicated to My Loving Husband,
Gianbatisto."

Ushers - Betsy Lightborn, Chair

October 5 - Temma and Arnold Fishman
October 12 -
October 19 -
October 26 -

Greeters - Saul Machles, Head Greeter

For the month of October, Saul Machles
and friends

Coffee Hour Lunch

Sept 7 - Group A-E
Sept 14- Group F-L
Sept 21 - Group M-P
Sept 28 - Group Q-Z

Photo credits

*Except Haiti photos from wire services
on p. 3, all photographs in this issue
by Janice R. Moore*

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of Philadelphia**
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