



# Ethical Views

Summer 2008


Vol. 122, No. 10

Newsletter of the Ethical Society of Philadelphia

## Sunday Calendar - Summer 2008

Although our regular Platforms will be in hiatus until after Labor Day, we will have Sunday morning events almost every Sunday during the summer. **All will start at 10 a.m.** and will be held in our air-conditioned meeting space with coffee following. Members are taking responsibility for the Colloquies (a meditative, reflective event on a different theme each time) and for leading the Book Discussions. They will be looking for helpers, so check your schedule and be ready to volunteer when asked.

*(More information on next page.)*

JUNE	JULY	AUGUST	SEPTEMBER
<b>1<sup>st</sup></b> Colloquy, led by <b>Richard Kiniry</b>  <i>11:00 a.m.</i> New and improved <b>Annual Membership Meeting</b>	<b>6<sup>th</sup></b> Colloquy	<b>3<sup>rd</sup></b> Colloquy	<b>7<sup>th</sup></b> <i>11:00 a.m.</i> First platform of fall, <b>Richard Kiniry</b>
<b>8<sup>th</sup></b> <b>Picnic at Camp Linden</b> Catch a ride in front of the Society at 10:30AM. Call Saul if you have a car or need a ride.	<b>13<sup>th</sup></b> Book Discussion led by <b>Nick Sanders</b> .	<b>10<sup>th</sup></b> Book Discussion led by <b>Terry Martin-Murley</b>	
<b>15<sup>th</sup></b> Book Discussion led by <b>Ellen Rose</b>	<b>20<sup>th</sup></b> <i>10:00 a.m. to noon</i> Workshop led by <b>Richard Kiniry</b>	<b>17<sup>th</sup></b> Colloquy	
<b>22<sup>nd</sup></b> Colloquy	<b>27<sup>th</sup></b> Book Discussion led by <b>Richard Kiniry</b>	<b>24<sup>th</sup></b> Book Discussion led by <b>Richard Kiniry</b>	
<b>29<sup>th</sup></b> Lecture by <b>Dr. G. Vijayam</b>		<b>31<sup>st</sup></b> Labor Day weekend. No meeting.	

## Summer Sunday Events

### Colloquies and Book Discussions



- June 1:** Colloquy, led by **Richard Kiniry**
- June 8:** The Camp Linden Annual Picnic will take place on Sunday, **June 8, 2008**. Lots of Friends. Lots of Food. Lots of Fun. **Temma Fishman** will coordinate food sign up. Think of what you'd like to contribute: salad, dessert, sliced tomatoes & onions for sandwiches etc. \$5 for those who bring a dish; \$10 for those who don't.
- June 15:** Discussion of Jhumpa Lahiri's new book of short stories, *Unaccustomed Earth*, led by **Ellen Rose**
- June 29:** Lecture on Indian humanism by **Dr. G. Vijayam**, Executive Director of the Atheist Centre, Benz Circle, India
- July 13:** Discussion of Ursula Le Guin's *The Lathe of Heaven*, led by **Nick Sanders**.
- July 20:** Workshop, led by **Richard Kiniry**: An Ethical Humanist Religious Approach to Living. Ethical Culture has through the years been a Movement that emphasized concern for social, political and cultural issues. While personal living has also been addressed through those years, this workshop will attempt to integrate the personal and social into one understanding of life. It will present one Leader's understanding of an Ethical Humanist religious world view and offer opportunities for participants to question and shape their own world view. This workshop will be from 10:00 a.m. to noon.
- July 27:** Discussion of of Nel Nodding's *Caring: A Feminist Approach to Ethics and Moral Education*, led by **Richard Kiniry**
- August 10:** Discussion of Toni Morrison's *The Bluest Eye*, led by **Terry Martin-Murley**
- August 24:** Discussion of Eckhart Tolle's *A New Earth, Awakening to Your Life's Purpose* (An Oprah's Book Club selection), led by **Richard Kiniry**



Summer Meetings at the  
Ethical Humanist Society  
of Philadelphia

Thursday evenings - 7:00 p.m.  
**June 26, July 24 and August 21**  
in the Weston Room

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#### EHSOP Summer Committee Meetings

- Wednesday, June 11  
6:30 PM  
Community Committee
- Wednesday, June 18  
6:30 PM  
Executive Committee  
7:30 PM  
Board Meeting
- Wednesday, June 18  
6:30 PM  
Executive Committee  
7:30 PM  
Board Meeting

### Mark your calendar!

#### Annual Service Auction Events Over the Summer

JUNE						
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				

- ✓ Come and read a part in Moliere's *The Misanthrope* with **Ken Greiff** on **Sunday, June 15 at 11:30 AM**. Latecomers are welcome to attend this fun event. Ken will be serving light snacks and beverages (alcoholic and nonalcoholic). Call Ken or the office for more information or to add your name to the list of those attending. \$15
- ✓ *Canoe Carnival and Picnic* with **Temma and Arnold Fishman** on **Saturday, August 2 at 7 PM**. The canoe carnival returns! You can be sure you'll have a great time at their beautiful home in Medford Lakes, NJ. Call Temma and Arnold or the office for more information or to add your name to the list of those attending. \$25
- ✓ *Mostly Vegetarian Continental Dinner* with **Jean Bradley and Saul Machles** on **Saturday, August 16 at 7 PM**. If interested, you can still register for this tasty event. Call Jean and Saul or the office for information. \$25



## President's Message

by Howard Peer

Well, here it is at last – my final President's Message. Although I have had a lot of time to think about what I would write (and have written it several times in my head), I now find myself somewhat tongue-tied. Obviously I first want to thank all of you for having bestowed upon me the honor of being President. I also would like to thank all the Board members with whom I have served over the years. I would very much like to thank my kind Editor for making me seem more literate than I am. And most of all I would like to thank Richard for many, many reasons.

One of the neat things I look forward to about being Ex-President is that it is another step towards retirement. As you may know I have been taking some time off from work without pay for a couple of years. That was step one. Now I can

say that I am a retired Society President. That is step two. Next I can work on steps 3, 4, 5 and so forth. Pretty soon you'll have to prod me to breathe.

I feel a certain temptation to dole out copious advice to our new President. I find that I am full of great ideas about what a President should do, now that I don't have to do them. But maybe one of the things an Ex-President should know is when to shut up and stand aside. There will be no backseat driving here. We are truly fortunate to have someone as competent and skillful as Temma willing to step up to this position. Still, I feel I can properly say what I did as President, and why.

Some people seem to think that to be a good President you need to sit on a lot of committees and be involved in lots of activities. I don't agree. The President should encourage others to take on a more active role. One person can do a lot but five people can do even more, and more easily. Sometimes the project will flounder and at times it may even

fail. But that is how we learn. None of us, President or not, should try to make themselves so important that the sky will fall if we disappear. That is not good stewardship.



My new ambition is to be a good member, to contribute when and where I have the opportunity and to support our new President in her position – and, perhaps, to be a mentor to others, if appropriate. But I don't want to sit on the Board again, at least not for a while, not until I'm truly retired anyway. That would be taking the opportunity away from others to have the experience. It is a worthwhile experience and each of us who desires to sit on the Board should have the opportunity. I encourage it. <>

## Humanist Seder



On Saturday, April 26 the Ethical Humanist Society of Philadelphia celebrated with our own version of a Seder. The standard Jewish haggadah was modified. Traditionally, the Seder celebrates the Jewish people's deliverance by God from Egyptian slavery – an event both glorious and blood thirsty. Our Humanist Seder is more a celebration of freedom, spring and community, as well as a call for solidarity with those who continue to suffer under the yolk of oppression. As a rather frivolous example of the difference, the traditional Seder calls for the eating of hard-cooked eggs. We served ours in a tastier manner – deviled (no theological reference intended).

Other than this minor diabolical change to the eggs, however, we served the standard Jewish fare called for in the Seder: bitter herbs, salt water, matzo, matzo ball soup, beige gefilte fish with hot pink horseradish. Many other sumptuous food items were also contributed, and nobody walked away hungry.

It was an enjoyable celebration and everyone had a good time at this very nice Seder event.

--Ken Greiff



## Summer Birthdays

### June

3 - Ellen Rose  
3 - Temma Fishman  
7 - Janice Moore  
10 - Monica Peer  
18 - Robert Allen  
19 - Sylvia Bornkoff Polizzi

### July

3 - Dawn Morningstar Cox  
9 - Harry Thorn  
22 - Laura Katz Rizzo  
13 - Elit Felix II  
23 - Carole Erb  
23 - David Ralston  
24 - Jim Erb  
26 - Elisabeth Lightbourn  
28 - Ramona Ward

### August

9 - Amber Anderson  
12 - Carole Karash



## Blockheads Wanted!

Want a little piece of immortality while you do something wonderful for our community at the Ethical Humanist Society of Philadelphia? For just \$500, you can purchase a block of cement and help make a dream come true.

Each block will be used to create the ramp that will make our building accessible to everyone. Your name will be engraved on a plaque that will be prominently displayed on a wall in the Society. All who see it will know you were a generous donor to a most ethical cause. You can even purchase a block along with others, thus reducing the cost for each person. Send your check to the Ethical Humanist Society of Philadelphia along with the name(s) 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.

# Committee Reports

## Education Committee Annual Report, 2007-08

### Membership

**Ellen Rose**, Chair; **Richard Kiniry**, Leader (ex officio); **Ron Coburn**, **Temma Fishman**, **Terry Martin-Murley**, **Lyle Murley**, **Henry Pashkow**, **Scott Pleune**, **Chuck** and **Ramona Ward**, **Bertha Waters**, others from time to time (meetings are open).



### Responsibilities

The Education Committee is responsible for

- Sunday mornings (i.e., inviting and paying platform speakers, hiring and paying a music director, arranging for ushers and coffee hour hosts—everything but Sunday School and lunch)
- educational forums
- classes (although, historically, the Leader usually has been solely responsible for them).

As the Ethical Humanist Society of Philadelphia, we have a religious philosophy and point of view, which our Sunday morning platforms should present (rather than merely providing a platform for representatives of various political and social causes with which we probably agree anyway). Our programs aim to address the whole person—appealing emotionally as well as intellectually (this is why music is integral to our platforms).

The September-May platform calendar has monthly “themes” for internal use by the committee—to remind us of core values and issues of concern—but it is understood that we take speakers when we can get them, even if their subjects do not fit that month’s theme. These themes are:

**September:** New Beginnings  
**October:** Children  
**November:** Harvest and Hunger  
**December:** Community  
**January:** Diversity

**February:** Love and Relationships  
(also Black History Month)  
**March:** Justice (also Women’s  
History Month)  
**April:** The Natural World/Science  
**May:** Tradition

### Procedure

As in the past, individual committee members (sometimes prompted by recommendations from Society members) usually suggested possible speakers and—after they were approved by the committee—initiated contact with them. (This year the committee standardized the letter that will be used by any member of the committee to invite a potential speaker.) Sometimes would-be speakers contacted Jean to express their interest in speaking to the Society. The committee always vetted them and followed up those that sounded in keeping with our priorities. Those that seemed interested in promoting their book or personal hobby horse we politely declined. Henry continued to send confirmed speakers the “confirmation packet” (confirmation letter, information sheet, brochure about the Society, copy of a recent Sunday program, and parking permit).



### Issues Discussed

We decided unanimously to discontinue including platform summaries in *Ethical Views* because we felt they were too short to capture the essence of the platform for someone who wasn’t there and unnecessary for someone who was.

Reviewing the list of people who have either suggested themselves or been suggested by others as platform speakers, we tried to identify what we’re looking for in speakers. We’re not looking for a particular theme (save that we want all our speakers to relate their subjects to ethics in general and ethical humanism in particular, if possible in the latter case). But we agreed that we want to hear of their personal engagement in the issue they bring to our attention—we don’t want a mere abstract, academic talk.

We decided in February that once a month we would schedule the dialogue downstairs in the auditorium, immediately following the platform address, as was successfully tried on Jan. 13, choosing the platform/dialogue format selectively, depending on the nature of the platform.

We decided in February that **Saul Machles** will be permanent greeter and that ushers will be provided with a written list of instructions, so that there will be no confusion about what they are to do and what is Saul’s responsibility.

(Continued next page)



## *Education Committee (Continued)*

**Looking Forward:** Topics: homelessness, globalization, poverty and violence in the city, history of humanism before Ingersoll, connections with other religious organizations in the city, decriminalizing marijuana and treating drug use as a health issue rather than a criminal offence, black liberation theology. Possible speakers: **Bob Kay** on children and education for October (whose theme is children); *Inquirer* columnist **Annette John-Hall** on black liberation theology; **Ronald Cuie**, Director of the Mayor's Office for the Re-Entry of Ex-Offenders; more Ethical Culture leaders

## **Ethical Action Committee Annual Report, 2007-08**

Members who served on the Ethical Action Committee (EAC) this year were Jean Bradley, Arnold Fishman, leader **Richard Kiniry**, **Saul Machles**, **Scott Pleune**, **Nick Sanders** as recording secretary, and **Temma Fishman** as chairperson.

The mission of the Ethical Action Committee is "to offer an Ethical Humanist response to social problems, with an area of responsibility that includes community outreach programs and political involvement."

Following are the projects sponsored by the EAC this year.

1. **Millennium Development Goals:** Read about the MDG's in detail at <http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals> or on the chart displayed in our lobby. A statement declaring our support of these goals is posted on the board outside the Society building.

2. **The Dictionary Project:** This is annual effort to distribute dictionaries to third graders at the Robert Morris School. **Nick Sanders** and **Temma Fishman** led an interactive lesson in their use. We also distributed bookmarks designed by **Nick Sanders** and **Janice Moore** with the notion of "Pay it Forward" – urging the children to do a favor for someone else now that they have received a favor.



3. **Ethics in Action:** This is the part of our Sunday platform where members bring issues from the Ethical Action Report (EAR) to our attention. The EAR is available online at [aeu.org](http://aeu.org) or in the Society lobby. Causes for action from other sources may also be presented.

4. **Micro lending to help eliminate poverty:** We held a forum on micro lending organized by **Nick Sanders** and facilitated by **Russ Hill** for Fonkoze-Haitian enterprises on Nov. 11th. At our Humanist Thanksgiving Celebration, we collected \$1,000 for KIVA, an organization that offers micro loans to entrepreneurs from the developing countries of Southeast Asia, Africa, South America and the Middle East.



5. **Opposition to the Iraq War:** We joined United for Peace and Justice protests on October 27th and March 19th -the 5th anniversary of the war. **Nick Sanders** organized both events.

6. **Helping the homeless:** **Judith Will** led the effort to provide home-cooked meals to homeless men at the Trinity Shelter at 22nd and Spruce in the winter months. Members prepared and served the meals to the men. **Scott Pleune** organized an effort for getting lockers installed at city shelters for the homeless so they can have a secure place to store belongings. He forwarded a letter and petition signed by members to Mayor Nutter. Scott is awaiting a reply from the mayor.

7. **Promoting Peace and Compassion through Nonviolent Communication:** On February 16, peacemaker **Keith Pacheco** led a workshop exploring the philosophy and techniques of NVC. Member **Chuck Ward** has organized a discussion group for those interested in putting NVC to use in their lives. If you are one of them, contact Chuck. To read about it, visit [nvc.org](http://nvc.org).

8. **Opposition to the Death Penalty:** Leader **Richard Kiniry** regularly reports to the EAC on meetings of the Pennsylvanians for Alternatives to the Death Penalty and is currently engaged in persuading local clergy to work to eliminate the death penalty in Pennsylvania. We supported the nomination of **Celeste Fitzgerald**, winner of the American Ethical Union Elliott-Black Award at the AEU Assembly in April. Ms. Fitzgerald is founder of the New Jerseyans for Alternatives to the Death Penalty, the group that succeeded in getting the death penalty abolished in New Jersey.

9. **Human Rights:** **Ron Coburn** attends monthly Amnesty International meetings. At platforms, he educates us about the violations AI is protesting and provides letters of concern to sign, which are then mailed to the appropriate leaders.

*(Continued next page)*

## ***Ethical Action Committee (Continued)***

10. **Day of Caring:** This is our humanistic, rational response to the National Day of Prayer. Our Sunday School children prepared 60 breakfast bags of non-perishable foods to be donated to the elderly and disabled by Aid For Friends. **Carole** and **Jim Erb** supplied the items needed and delivered the finished bags to AFF headquarters for distribution.

The EAC needs your leadership and creative energy to fulfill its mission. Meetings can be scheduled at convenient times. Contact Temma or Richard if you are interested in serving in some way. Opportunities abound for putting your passion for doing good to work.

### **Communications Committee Annual Report, 2007-08**



The Communications Committee has responsibility for communications within the Society and between the Society and the outside world. Currently, our main tasks are (1) to put out the monthly *Ethical Views* newsletter and (2) to keep the website current. We do most of our work by email and went all this year without a real-time meeting.

The Committee's current chairman and webmaster is **Bob Moore**. **Ellen Rose** is editor of the newsletter. **Janice Moore** designs the newsletter and takes photographs. **Jean Bradley** handles newsletter printing and distribution. We have a contract for web design services with the all-women's local firm YIKES!

Right now we're short-staffed; we manage to get the website and newsletter out, but we lack "depth." We could use more people to back us up – especially someone to take pictures on Sundays when Janice isn't here: you'll get free training on digital photography. We also could use more writers.

And always there's a lot more we could do – such as a member's forum on the website, a collection of Richard's writings and platforms, recording and distributing our Sunday platforms and special events as podcasts, advertising and PR outreach, and so on. We could use more help...

### **Community Committee Annual Report 2007-08**



When you think "party," when you think "after platform lunch" you're thinking of the Community Committee. Our mission also includes caring for members and membership growth.

This year, the committee organized several successful parties and events (impresarios are listed in parentheses): The Preposterous Poets' Party (**Carol Love**), the Humanist Thanksgiving (**Dawn Morningstar** and **Scott Cox**), Darwin Day (**Bob** and **Janice Moore**), the Humanist Seder (**Ken Greiff**) and the Camp Linden Picnic (**Temma Fishman**).

This year also saw the solidification of a change in the after platform lunch program, with the culinary duties now spread among the entire Society. This change has produced more successful lunches, with greater attendance and more proceeds—for the season, close to \$3,500 going to the handicapped access fund.

We thank our Membership Growth chair, **Saul Machles**, who knows everybody's name. We gained three new members this year: **Elit Felix II**, **Ann Freed** and **George Bunk, Jr.**

The Caring Committee arranges visits to sick members and sends birthday and condolence cards—thanks to **Mary Scholl** for sending out cards.

Members who served on the Community Committee this year were: **Arnold Fishman**, **Carol Love**, **Irene Putzer**, **Jean Bradley**, **Richard Kiniry**, **Saul Machles**, **Mary Scholl**, **Temma Fishman** and **Ken Greiff**, Chair.

\* \* \* \* \*

### ***Community Committee Statement about serving meat at Society events***

The Community Committee is friendly to the recommendation that members refrain from bringing meat or poultry to Society events, such as pot lucks and parties. If members bring meat or poultry, it should be free range and preferably organic. We would like to build consensus among the membership, and therefore encourage discussion of this topic at some plenary session of the Society, such as the annual meeting. ◇





# **Mountain Top Removal Coal Mining**

An Environmental & Human Rights Tragedy in Appalachia

The Ethical Humanist Society is proud to host

**Wednesday, June 4**  
**7 PM**

**Ethical Humanist Society of Philadelphia**

1906 Rittenhouse Square, Philadelphia, PA 19103

For more information about the presentation, call (215) 735 – 3456

or email [office@phillyethics.org](mailto:office@phillyethics.org)

[www.phillyethics.org](http://www.phillyethics.org)



Special Presentation of

## **Appalachian Treasures**

with guest speaker:

Mike McCoy of Appalachian Voices

[www.AppalachianVoices.org](http://www.AppalachianVoices.org)

[www.iLoveMountains.org](http://www.iLoveMountains.org)



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**Ethical Humanist Society  
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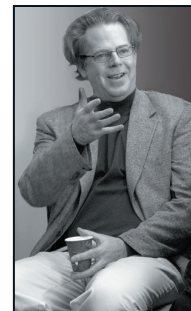
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*Top Row, Left to Right: Jeffrey Dubb, Nick Sanders, David Ralston. Middle Row, L to R: Ruth Ann Flynn, Richard Kiniry, Ellen Rose. Bottom Row, L to R: Howard Peer, Lyle Murley, Bob Moore.*

**Recent Platform Speakers**

March 30, 2008  
***The Sacred***  
Speaker: **Michael Bogdanffy-Krieh**,  
President of the  
New York Society  
for Ethical Culture,  
2001-07



April 6, 2008  
***Walt Whitman, De-  
mocracy and Ethical  
Culture***  
Speaker: **Robert  
Berson**, Leader of  
the Ethical Society of  
Northern Westchester



April 20, 2008  
***The Invention of  
Race***  
Speaker: **Karen  
Helm**, Sociologist  
and Board Member  
of the Baltimore  
Ethical Society



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