



The Ethical Humanist

Newsletter of the Boston Ethical Community

Ethical Society of Boston

MEMBER OF THE AMERICAN ETHICAL UNION

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December 2015

BEC Members Attend State House Hearing on Death with Dignity

Andrea Perrault

On Tuesday, October 27th, BEC members joined a packed State House hearing room in support of a bill filed by Representative Louis Kafka – "An Act affirming a terminally ill patient's right to compassionate aid in dying". As supporters of this legislation, the Board of Trustees of the Boston Ethical Community submitted written testimony in support of the bill, providing our voice to the Joint Committee on Health Care Policy chaired by Representative Kate Hogan and Senator Jason Lewis. As occurred in 2013, the issue drew many people to testify and to attend in support and in opposition to the legislation. Rep. Kafka was first to testify in support of the Act that he had proposed, and told the story of a constituent who had endured a long and painful

death, and who had enlisted Kafka's support in drafting this bill. Although his constituent has died, Kafka remains committed to the cause and does so in memory of his friend. Other legislators appeared with Kafka to speak in support, including Jay Kaufman of Lexington and Chris Walsh of Framingham. Representative Lori Ehrlich of Marblehead also addressed the committee to tell them of her heart-wrenchingly sad experience with the death of her father; she appeared with a Marblehead doctor and a police detective who also support the bill.

ER nurse Barbara Mancini, who had been featured on 60 Minutes, described being prosecuted and jailed for handing her father his legally

prescribed morphine. Dan Diaz testified also; he was the husband of Brittany Maynard, who had left her home state of California and moved to Oregon, where support of compassionate aid in dying is currently legal.

"It's definitely a moral issue, if someone is in what has been defined and diagnosed as a terminal situation ... I think if the individual is competent to make an informed decision as to whether or not they want to die with dignity, I think they should be afforded that opportunity."

State Rep. John Scibak, D-South Hadley,
co-sponsor

We hope this legislation (HB 1991) will be reported favorably out of committee to allow further debate on the issue to occur. Stay tuned for news of the vote of the committee – BEC members keep you informed.



The Way It Is (?)

Marvin Miller

Human Rights

On the anniversaries of the adoption of the U.S. Bill of Rights, Dec. 15 1791, and of the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Dec. 10 1948, everyone, especially humanists, should think about human rights and the degree of respect for them in our country and in the world. Have these improved or deteriorated recently?

Recently, the pervasive presence of video cameras has made it possible to document abuse of the most basic of human rights -- the right to life itself. Abuse targeting African-Americans, both by people of authority and by those of self-appointed authority, gave rise to the "Black Lives Matter" movement.

Leaks of information by Chelsea Manning and Edward Snowden have revealed US government actions in violation of rights granted by the Fourth Amendment of the Constitution to keep our private communications private. These same leaks further reveal violations of the rights of citizens outside the US, as declared in Article 3 of the UN Declaration, which states that "...everyone has the right to life, liberty, and security of person."

Cruel and unusual punishment is forbidden by the Eighth

Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, but executions, which are certainly cruel, continue although they are, fortunately, unusual.

Freedom of the press is supposed to be protected by the First Amendment, but journalists have been harassed for refusing to reveal their confidential sources, lest those sources be subjected to harsh treatment.

In other countries, austerity, and especially war, deprive people of their economic rights, and indeed of all rights.

Immigrants are being imprisoned without trials for entering the US without government permission, or having come with such permission, for staying longer than their visas allowed.

Article 14 of the UN Declaration states: "Everyone has the right to seek and to enjoy in other countries asylum from persecution." But in many countries, including our own, people are being treated harshly for doing so.

Article 25 of the UN Declaration states: "Everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself and of his family, including food, clothing, housing, medical

care and necessary social services, with the right to security in the event of unemployment, sickness, widowhood, old age, or other lack of livelihood in circumstances beyond his control." The extent to which realization of these rights is advancing or deteriorating can be judged by the current headlines. In our country, modest advances in rights pertaining to access to medical care were achieved a

few years ago, but rising costs and Congressional actions are eroding that achievement. The rise in the cost of housing, faster than that of incomes, erodes access to affordable housing. In other countries, austerity, and especially war, deprive people of their economic rights, and indeed of all rights.

In society, as in nature, change is a response to forces. When the forces of the "Haves", those with military, police, political, and economic power, are dominant, the people's rights tend to be eroded. When the forces of the "Have-nots" predominate, the people's rights tend to advance. These are the forces that need and deserve the support of those of us who want to see the advance of human rights.

Fireside Chat

*I see one-third of a nation ill-housed,
ill-clad, and ill-nourished.*

-- FDR, 2nd inaugural Address

She, in her Woolworth's housedress,
the color squeezed out of it and her
and the tired man she is waiting on.

He . . . his godawful shoes —
one sole flapping loose when he ran for the
bus
that brought him too late to the labor pool,
the last hand having been hired for the day.

Together in their kitchen, how used up
they are, — Like the cheap linoleum,
everything around them has given out.

They lean toward the radio's weak signal;
My fellow Americans . . .
the President's voice riding through static,
his graceful diction addressing them.

Shhh! the man says to his wife,
drying her hands on her apron.
Shhh! she counters, echoing him.

Attention fixed, hushed, they listen
— as if at a birth.

Faye George

Stephen Jenkinson to Speak in Lexington

On Monday, December 7th from 7:00 to 8:30 p.m., Stephen Jenkinson will be speaking at a special event sponsored by Lexington Community Education at the Lexington Depot at 13 Depot Square, Lexington. The title of the presentation is "Die Wise: A Manifesto for Sanity and Soul: An Evening with Stephen Jenkinson".



Jenkinson was the subject of the video "Griefwalker" shown at an October meeting of the Boston Ethical Community in conjunction with BEC support for Compassion and Choices, and death with dignity legislation in Massachusetts. He is founder of the Orphan Wisdom Center that pushes against "death phobia" and "grief illiteracy" in society; previously, he had directed the Palliative Care Center at Mount Sinai of Toronto. For more information about the event, go to www.lexingtoncommunityed.org/classes.

Cost is \$10.

Sunday Programs in December 2015

December 6

Program to be determined



At press time, the speaker originally engaged for this date had cancelled, and a replacement is being sought. Check www.bostonethical.org for updates.

December 13

Bart Worden, Executive Director for the American Ethical Union



Bart Worden currently serves on the boards of The Humanist Institute and the Institute for Humanist Studies. Bart also works with The Ethical Community Charter Schools (TECCS) with a study group to support the schools'

ethical education programs. Bart's recent social justice efforts have focused on addressing bias and discrimination in communities in Westchester County, and he is a member of several civil rights organizations.

December 20

Annual Solstice Celebration

Join us for the annual celebration of the winter solstice. We'll have refreshments and a variety of activities and performances by BEC members.

December 29

No Program on December 29

We hope you enjoy the New Year's holiday, and we look forward to great things in 2016.

Musicians for December



December 3rd, clarinetist Katsuya Yuasa will play with Roman Soto, cellist.

December 13th, Carolyn McCrone, flute. Marguerite Salajko, cello.



Information About the Society

Officers for 2014-2015

President	Brian King	(781) 581-6104
Vice President	Michael Bleiweiss	(978) 689-2874
Treasurer	Terry Goldzier	(617) 232-7704
Secretary	Andrea Perrault	(781) 593-5794

Other Board Members

Donald Aharonian, Peter Ames,
Cathy Haskell, Fred Hewett, Martha Werman

Archivist	Brian King	(781) 581-6104
Caring Committee	Marline Miller	(617) 244-1471
Ethical Action	Michael Bleiweiss	(978) 689-2874
Membership		
Music	Ingrid Kisliuk	(617) 332-7109
Newsletter	Fred Hewett Martha Werman	(617) 945-0396 (617) 497-7888
Officiant	Katrina Scott	(617) 965-3067
Program Comm.	Andrea Perrault	(781) 593-5794
Publicity	John Lampert	(617) 923-8550
Finance Committee		
Sunday Bulletin		
Website	Fred Hewett	(617) 945-0396

The Ethical Movement

Ethical Culture is a humanistic religious and educational movement working to create a better world through ethical actions. We are dedicated to the ideal that the highest value is human worth and that our relationships to each other are of greatest ethical concern. Our commitment is to the worth and dignity of the individual and to treating each human being so as to bring out the best in him or her. Members join together in ethical societies to assist each other in developing ethical ideas and ideals...to celebrate life's joys and support each other through life's crises.

Hospitality and Refreshment Schedule

Sunday attendees are asked to contribute some food item to the refreshment table, according to the first letter of their last name.

Week 1	Sunday, December 6	A - F
Week 2	Sunday, December 13	G - K
Week 3	Sunday, December 20	L - R

E-mail newsletter@bostonethical.org for all print and e-mail newsletter requests (subscriptions, changes and cancellations)

Website: bostonethical.org

Facebook: [facebook.com/bostonethical](https://www.facebook.com/bostonethical)

Twitter: twitter.com/bostonethical

~ Program Schedule for December 2015 ~

December 6	<p>Program to be Announced <i>Please check the website, www.bostonethical.org</i></p>
December 13	<p>Bart Worden, Executive Director for the American Ethical Union <i>American Ethical Union</i></p>
December 20	<p>Annual Solstice Celebration</p>

Sunday Meetings are held at 10:30 AM at 33 Garden St in Cambridge

<p style="text-align: right;">Return Service Requested</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Ethical Society of Boston Post Office Box 38-1934 Cambridge, MA 02238</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Non-Profit Org. US Postage Paid Lawrence, MA Permit No. 28</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">THE ETHICAL HUMANIST</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Newsletter of the Boston Ethical Community</p> <p style="text-align: center;">(617) 739-9050 newsletter@bostonethical.org www.bostonethical.org</p>
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