



in-touch.online

Theosophical Order of Service International Newsletter

Issue 3 - March 2009

Dear fellow members of the TS and TOS around the world,

We hope you are enjoying keeping in touch with what is happening in the TOS internationally. Our international electronic newsletter aims to keep you up to date with organisational developments, to bring you information to inspire your service work within or outside the TOS and to help you get to know TOS members outside your own country.

This third issue invites you to take advantage of the Kern Foundation's generous offer to match donations to the Golden Link School in the Philippines, introduces some of New Zealand's TOS workers, shares a poster from the Spanish TOS, reports on a group of Theosophists' participation in a UN activity, brings you a science report on the contribution of animal farming to global warming, and shares good news about the increase of teenage volunteering in the USA and an article in which a scientist questions the ethics of using animals in research.

Remember that the newsletter is designed to be read while you are connected to the internet.

We welcome your contributions, either through your National TOS Director/President/Coordinator/ Correspondent or directly to the editors at: carolyn.tosinternational@gmail.com

Take advantage of the Kern Foundation's offer and support the Golden Link School in the Philippines

Following the enormous success of last year's fundraising project, the Kern Foundation has offered up to US\$20,000 to match donations to the Golden Link School in the Philippines in 2009. [Read more in Latest News on our international TOS website.](#)

Meet some of the TOS team in New Zealand

The TOS in New Zealand was first started in 1910 but it has had several 'incarnations' since then. The current team came together in 2003 and is thoroughly enjoying involving members around the country in making Theosophy practical. [Read more...](#)

Find out about the latest TOS activities in Australia, India, Italy, the Philippines and the USA.

[Read more...](#)

Poster to promote the TOS

Take a look at this great initiative from Spain. [Read more...](#)

What's new on the International TOS website?

The new [Featured Project](#) on our International TOS website shares three inspiring projects that the Swedish TOS conduct to improve the lives of street children in Latvia.

In the new [Featured Article](#) Pedro Oliveira reflects on what he has learnt from his fellow bus travellers. There is also news of the latest offer from the Kern Foundation to match donations to the Golden Link School in the Philippines and additions to the TOS photo gallery and the Inspiration section.

Go to <http://international.theoservice.org>

Have you ever wondered about the effect that our eating choices make to our planet's well-being?

Cutting back on beefburgers and bacon could wipe \$20 trillion from the cost of fighting climate change. [Read more...](#)

Our duty towards fellow animals

This article by A.C. Grayling appeared in The New Scientist in November, 2008. In it, the author comments on recent agreements about the use of animals in research and questions the ethics of using any mammal, and even other animals such as crustaceans [Read more...](#)

Report of Theosophists in India joining UN campaign

Demonstrating Universal Brotherhood in action, Theosophists in Adyar joined a United Nations led campaign to show solidarity with brothers and sisters worldwide in over 100 countries demanding reduction in poverty. [Read more...](#)

UN International Days

For information on [UN International Days from April to July 2009.](#)

Survey: More teens volunteer than work part-time

American teens are setting an example for their parents through their volunteer work, according to a new poll by Harris Interactive. [Read more...](#)

The power of individual action

This inspirational video tells the story of a little boy to highlight the importance of taking responsibility and the power of individual action. [View it.](#)

Invitation from the USA TOS website

The TOS-USA website (<http://usa.theoservice.org>) has been re-cast as a dynamic, user-built community website. Site members can easily comment on any article and even post their own article, or email their contribution to the webmaster. The interactive features of the website allow it to serve as an effective networking and communication tool for TOS members and friends.

[\[Go to top\]](#)

Would you like to automatically receive this on-line newsletter?

To sign up, you only have to send a blank message to tos.intouch@gmail.com with 'Subscribe TOS e-newsletter' in the subject line.

If you do not want to receive future newsletters you can easily unsubscribe. All that is needed is a blank message to tos.intouch@gmail.com with 'Unsubscribe TOS e-newsletter' in the subject line.

With best wishes,

Carolyn and Diana

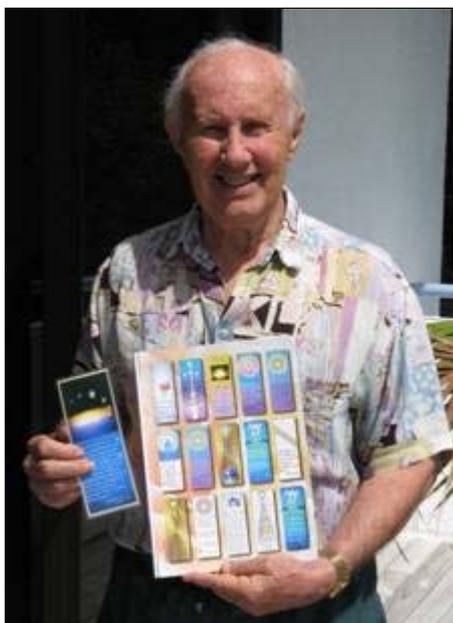
Diana Dunningham Chapotin is the International Secretary of the TOS and
Carolyn Harrod is the National Coordinator of the TOS in Australia.

Sai Baba (is said to have said): **"The hands that help are holier than the lips that pray."**



Meet some of the TOS team in New Zealand

The TOS in New Zealand was first started in 1910 but it has had several 'incarnations' since then. The current team came together in 2003 and is thoroughly enjoying involving members around the country in making Theosophy practical. We report here on just one aspect of their work: fund-raising. Here are some of the workers and what they do.



John Sell of Auckland designs bookmarks with uplifting theosophical quotations for sale within New Zealand and overseas.



For many years Lois Pollock from New Plymouth has knitted stuffed toys and baby clothes for the TOS in addition to making generous donations out of her pension.



Elizabeth Sell donates her paintings for sale, auction or raffle in aid of TOS projects. To the left is the painting by Elizabeth Sell that was raffled in 2008 to raise funds for the TOS.



In 2008 Maureen Paterson of Warkworth organised the filling of a container of over 11,000 books which the TOS shipped to Manila, along with sports equipment, teaching tools, musical instruments, computers and much more. At left, we see her working with her husband, Alf. At right, Golden Link School students helping to unload the container of books and educational equipment sent from New Zealand.



All manner of creative contributions are sold at the sale table the TOS has at most TS Conventions. At right, Rewa Douglas from Auckland donated this beautiful quilt/wall-hanging called 'Ancient Memories' to be raffled.



Vicki Jerome takes care of the 25 or 30 sponsorships TOS members in NZ donate for the education of children looked after by the TOS in Pakistan and India.

Right: The teacher and children in a literacy home-school organised by the TOS in Pakistan and funded by the New Zealand TOS.



Left: Core workers and friends gather in Auckland to celebrate the centenary of the TOS last year. *Right:* Key workers Richard Sell, Renee Sell, Val White and John Vorstermans host a visit from TOS Pakistan representatives Aman and Fareeda Amir (second and third from left). Renee is the national coordinator of the TOS and couldn't manage without Val White, stalwart member from Auckland.

[Back to newsletter](#)



TOS news from around the world

TOS in Australia

Members of the Perth TOS group presented a session on *Transformation in Society* at the Annual Convention of the Theosophical Society in Australia in January 2009.

Here we see panel members Bheena Sewnarain (on left), Rhonda Phillips (on right) and George Wester (in front) with Carolyn Harrod, National Coordinator of the TOS in Australia.



Bheena spoke about her work with the successful *Alternatives to Violence* program that is offered in prisons and community centres, while Rhonda shared stories from her professional work with a religious order. George concluded the session by talking about examples from his Theosophical and professional work that have the potential to transform society.



In February 2009 TOS members from Brisbane, the Sunshine Coast and Toowoomba got together for a weekend of work to help maintain the National Theosophical Society's Centre at Springbrook. With great energy, the group spruced up the buildings and tidied the surrounding gardens.

These regular working-bees also provide time for relaxation in the beautiful rainforest environment as well as lots of opportunities for getting to know fellow TOS enthusiasts.



TOS in India

The education of needy children forms a significant part of the work of the TOS. Children in the town of Orai in the state of Uttar Pradesh, India are given after-class coaching by the local TOS group. The girls enjoy learning traditional Indian dance. This project is supported in part by members of the TOS in France. Mr Krishnan L. Gupta is the devoted member in charge of the work done here.



TOS in Italy



Inspired by the article on *Teddies for Tragedy* in the last electronic newsletter, Italian TS member, Maria Teresa Elicio (on the right in the photo) and her husband, Marco Rinaldi Chini (also an Italian member) promoted the project, 'infecting' female friends. The first to be 'contaminated' by them was Marco's mum, Maria Teresa Tinivella (on the left).

The Italian knitting team who lovingly created cuddly teddies for children in traumatic situations.



The enthusiasm of the Italian knitting team has resulted in 58 beautiful teddies being sent to the TOS in the UK, for distribution through the *Teddies for Tragedy* project.

TOS in the Philippines

We have been hearing so much about the Golden Link School lately that we might overlook the fact that the TOS in the Philippines runs a significant number of other schools. Here is a photo taken at a Learning Centre for pre-schoolers in a depressed area of outer Manila. In this photo we see the children with the International Secretary of the TOS, Diana Dunningham Chapotin, and some of the TOS volunteers who have made the centre possible:

Miss Rekha Nahar (front left), Mr Vicente Hao Chin Jnr. (middle back) and the class teacher, Miss Lorie (back right).



TOS in the USA



Tim Boyd, the President of the TOS in the USA, has launched a project to help build a proper bathroom with several showers, toilets and sinks for the Chushul Orphanage in Tibet. With a number of Theosophists, Tim travelled in Tibet last year and was able to see the orphanage's needs for himself.

[Back to newsletter](#)



Poster to promote the TOS

In addition to being coordinator of the TOS work in all Spanish-speaking countries, Fernando Perez Martin is also director of the TOS in Spain. He has just written to all TS branches within Spain, sending this poster and inviting them to display it on their information tables. It invites TS members interested in practical Theosophy to get in touch with the TOS. What a great initiative!



Orden Teosófica de Servicio

"Una unión de todos los que aman al servicio de todo lo que sufre"



Annie Besant
Presidenta de la Sociedad Teosófica y fundadora de la OTS en 1.908



Practica la Teosofía

Si quieres poner en práctica tus conocimientos teosóficos mediante el servicio y la fraternidad, ponte en contacto con la OTS:

<http://www.otshispania.org>
ste_rakoczy@yahoo.es
 tlf: 91 442 36 82
 C/ Ríos Rosas, 25, 1ºD
 28003 Madrid

[Back to newsletter](#)



Ditch meat, save the Earth?

Report in the New Scientist, 14 February 2009

Cutting back on beefburgers and bacon could wipe \$20 trillion from the cost of fighting climate change.

So say Elke Stehfest of the Netherlands Environmental Assessment Agency and colleagues. They totted up how our diet would affect the cost of ensuring global carbon dioxide levels rise no higher than 450 parts per million by 2050. This limit might prevent catastrophic drought and sea-level rises.

The calculations show that reducing individual meat intake to 70 grams of beef or pork a week would create a carbon sink in the form of 15 million square kilometres of abandoned farmland. Greenhouse gas emissions would also fall by 10 percent due to the drop in livestock.

All this would lessen the need for technologies such as 'clean coal' power plants and save huge sums, say the team (*Climatic Change*, DOI:10.1007/s10584-008-9534-6).

(Editors: And it would reduce the suffering of millions of animals raised for the meat industry, too.)

[Back to newsletter](#)



Our duty towards fellow animals

A. C. Grayling
New Scientist, 29 November 2008



An hour at the zoo is enough to convince most people that apes and monkeys are close kin to humankind. Some say that an hour watching proceedings in any parliament is enough to show that humans are close kin to monkeys. Either way, we know that the primate family is an intimate one, with the great apes — gorillas, chimpanzees, bonobos, orangutans and humans — particularly closely related.

It did not take genetics to tell us this, however, nor comparative anatomy. We now know that we share many of our genes with insects too, and the anatomies of all mammals are just resized and repositioned versions of one another. The key to understanding the true closeness of apes, ourselves included, is ethology. When Jane Goodall first sat in the Gombe rainforest, giving with fortuitous naivety anthropomorphic interpretations of the chimpanzee behaviour she witnessed, she was initiating a rethink: about apes, about humanity's relationship with them, and ultimately about humanity itself.

A lot has since happened in the almost 50 years since then. Not only has primate ethology flourished, it has influenced sociobiology and evolutionary psychology, and perhaps most importantly for apes themselves it has been a stimulus for the Great Ape Project, which aims to secure a UN declaration granting non-human apes entitlements to life, liberty and freedom from torture and experimentation.

The Great Ape Project was launched in 1993 with the publication of a book edited by philosophers Peter Singer and Paola Cavalieri, and supported by distinguished scientists including Richard Dawkins and Goodall herself. Central to the project's argument is the fact — established by work that Goodall began — that great apes have complex social, emotional and cognitive lives, with self-awareness and capacities for affection and grief. Their genetic proximity to humans is also important: chimps and humans differ in only 1.2 per cent of genes.

The relevance of all this today is that the European Union has just published a much-awaited set of proposals about regulating the use of animals in research, which includes a ban on all medical research on great apes. Studies of great ape behaviour, and research that would protect great ape species from extinction, will still be allowed, and there is an exception for circumstances in which serious epidemic disease might threaten humankind. There has in fact been little experimentation on great apes for some time now, but the ban is nevertheless a remarkable achievement, and a marker on the road to greater controls on all research using animals.

We are already a considerable way down that road. To see how dramatically things have changed, consider this: in one of his letters, the 17th-century philosopher and scientist René Descartes recommends slicing off the apex of a living dog's heart and inserting a finger to feel the strong contractions there. For a long time his approach to the use of animals was the norm.

But no campaigner for animal welfare can be quite satisfied even with today's principle of the 'three Rs': reduce the number of animals used in research; refine experimental techniques to minimise animal suffering; replace animals with alternatives whenever possible. For as knowledge increases, so do doubts about the ethics of using any mammal, and even other animals such as crustaceans. There is evidence that lobsters and crabs can experience pain, which makes one shudder at the thought of those lobsters in the restaurant window, claws held with elastic

bands, waiting to be thrown into a pot of boiling water.

It makes one think, and once one starts reflecting on ethical boundaries, it's hard not to conclude that they are best drawn as far out as possible.

[Back to newsletter](#)



Report of Theosophists in India joining UN campaign

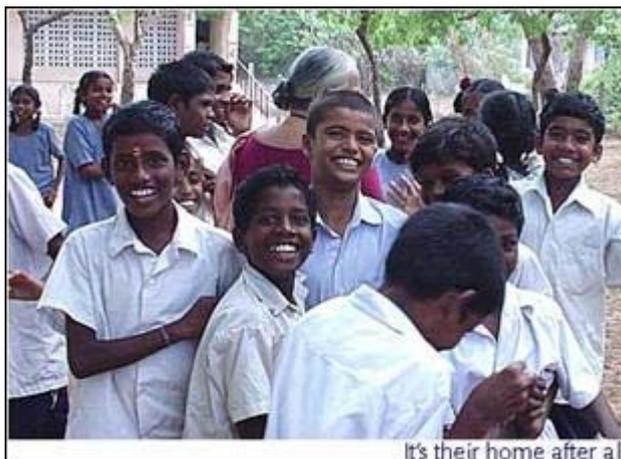
OCTOBER 17, 2008 – UNITED NATIONS NEWS FROM ADYAR

Demonstrating Universal Brotherhood

Excerpt from the Adyar Newsletter – November 2008

On October 17, 2008, demonstrating Universal Brotherhood in action, Theosophists in Adyar joined a United Nations led campaign to show solidarity with brothers and sisters worldwide in over 100 countries demanding reduction in poverty and meeting Millennium development goals by 2015. The Headmistress of the Olcott Memorial High School explained the campaign objectives to school children and teachers during the event. Over 400 students, teachers and TS members participated in the event.

Worldwide, nearly 117 million people attended in over 8,000 events, making it a record for a single event.



[Back to newsletter](#)



UN International Days from April to July 2009

The United Nations was built on spiritual principles and universal values such as peace, human rights, human dignity and worth, justice, respect, good neighbourliness, freedom, respect for nature and shared responsibility. TOS groups will therefore find that many UN designated International Days provide opportunities for promoting the theosophical principles underpinning TOS work as well as networking with similar community groups in supporting relevant UN activities.

April 7: [World Health Day](#)

April 22: [Earth Day](#)

April 23: [World Book Day](#)

([World Book Day](#) was celebrated on March 6 in Ireland and the UK)

April 25: [World Malaria Day](#)

May 3: [World Press Freedom Day](#)

May 15: [International Day of Families](#)

May 17: [World Telecommunication and Information Society Day](#)

May 25 - June 1: [Week of Solidarity with the Peoples of Non-Self-Governing Territories](#)

May 29: [International Day of United Nations Peacekeepers](#)

May 31: [World No-Tobacco Day](#)

Tobacco is the leading preventable cause of death in the world. It is the only legal consumer product that kills one-third to one-half of those who use it as intended by its manufacturers, with its victims dying on average 15 years prematurely. **500 million of today's smokers will be killed by tobacco.** Approximately 1.8 billion young people (aged 10-24) live in our world today with more than 85% found in developing countries. Having survived the vulnerable childhood period, these young people are generally healthy. However, as the tobacco industry intensifies its efforts to hook new, young and potentially life-long tobacco users, the health of a significant percentage of the world's youth is seriously threatened by their deadly products.

June 4: [International Day of Innocent Children Victims of Aggression](#)

June 5: [World Environment Day](#) (slogan: Kick the Habit! Towards a Low Carbon Economy)

June 12: [World Day Against Child Labour](#)

June 17: [World Day to Combat Desertification and Drought](#)

(UN Convention to Combat Desertification)

June 20: [UN World Refugee Day](#)

June 26: [International Day Against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking](#)

The UN Office on Drugs and Crime launched a 3-year campaign on June 26 2007 with the slogan, "Do drugs control your life? Your life. Your community. No place for drugs." The campaign will focus on illicit drug trafficking in 2009.

also **International Day in Support of Victims of Torture**

July 5: International Day of Cooperatives

July 11: World Population Day

July 15: World Youth Day

July 17: World Day for International Justice, which commemorates the adoption of the founding treaty of the International Criminal Court, the Rome Statute, on July 17, 1998.



Survey: More teens volunteer than work part-time

Associated Press, USA, Feb 23, 2009
Donna Gordon Blankinship

SEATTLE (AP) — American teens are setting an example for their parents through their volunteer work, according to a new poll by Harris Interactive.

The random national telephone survey released this week by the Federal Way-based charity World Vision found that more teens volunteer to support a charitable cause — 56 percent — than have a part-time job — 39 percent.

Parents and guardians said 82 percent of the teens in their lives do something to support charitable causes, including volunteering, recruiting others to a cause, wearing a button or T-shirt or donating money.

Forty-six percent of the adults surveyed said they volunteer their time, but they also take credit for inspiring their children to volunteer.

The Harris Interactive poll was conducted in the United States between January 29 and February 2 among 2,003 adults.

Sara Johnson, a teacher who advises the student service club at a private high school in a suburb south of Chicago, says she's seen a resurgence of teen involvement in social causes since President Barack Obama was elected in November.

"I think that kids are realizing more and more how important it is," said Johnson, who teaches English at Illiana Christian, in Lansing, Ill., near the Indiana border.

Johnson, 29, said she saw a similar surge in involvement after Hurricane Katrina, and believes this generation of teens is more involved in charitable work than her generation was.

Unlike many public high schools across the nation, Illiana Christian does not require its students to clock public service hours. Senior Melissa Martin said some kids are too busy with other commitments like sports and music, but most of her classmates do volunteer.

"Our school shows a rare passion for service. It's something I'm really proud of," said Martin, who is editor of the school newspaper and chairs a group organizing a fundraiser for World Vision this coming weekend.

Ninety-five students at Illiana Christian have signed up to participate in a 30-hour fast in support of hungry children around the world.

Some of the school's more than 650 students are too busy and some just aren't interested, said Suzanne Hammer, a junior who is helping Martin plan the fundraiser.

"Personally, I don't understand why you wouldn't get involved if you can," Hammer said. "I think everybody should make a conscious effort to serve others."

Alynn Woodson, director of volunteer engagement at Habitat for Humanity International, said she has noticed a new enthusiasm among teen volunteers for the Atlanta-based organization, which has had a structured youth program since 1987.

"I've worked at Habitat for about eight years now. Over that time it's been great to see the increase in youth volunteering. But throughout that time, I've never seen it be quite so energetic as I'm seeing now," Woodson said on Monday.

"Students are feeling very energized by this new president encouraging them to go out and serve," she added.

Habitat for Humanity celebrates the 20th anniversary of its alternative spring break program this year and is expecting more than 12,000 young people to help build homes for low-income people around the nation.

Food banks are also benefiting from the increase in teen volunteering, although representatives of a Washington state hunger relief organization, Northwest Harvest, said they do not track of the age of their volunteers.

Stephanie Davison, volunteer manager for Northwest Harvest, said youth groups, school classes and even individual teens are calling the food bank looking for a place to volunteer their time.

[Back to newsletter](#)