



Ethical Views

September 2012 Vol. 127, No. 1 Newsletter of the Ethical Humanist Society of Philadelphia

Sunday Platforms

Sunday, September 9, 2012
Ethical Labor Day: Honoring Workers

Speaker: Hugh Taft-Morales, Leader, Ethical Humanist Society of Philadelphia



130 years ago in New York City - for many a time and place of meager wages, dangerous workplaces, and horrible

tenement houses - Labor Day was first celebrated. There, Felix Adler, the founder of Ethical Culture, struggled to transform the labor movement into a vanguard of broad social reform. He sought to end material oppression and spiritual stagnation by promoting the nobility of all workers, blue and white color alike. Today, as unions are under attack, what can we learn from Ethical Culture's place in the history of American labor? How might Ethical Humanism best honor the inherent worth of all who labor?

Sunday, September 16, 2012
Celebrating Camp Linden
Camp Linden Committee

Experience Camp Linden, our "country home" and the site of our summer children's program since 1930. We



promise an inspirational program that will invoke the majesty of the natural world, the joys of childhood, and the altruistic spirit which brings us together as a community.

Sunday, September 23, 2012
Fall Festival Platform
Education Committee



Come celebrate the advent of autumn with stories, music and poems at our Fall Festival Platform! Fall is a time when everyone lends a hand to the harvest. We try to bring out the best, whether that is the best from nature, from our community, from friends and family, or from ourselves. We will reflect on what we hope to accomplish this year, both as individuals and as a community at the Ethical Humanist Society of Philadelphia.

Sunday, September 30, 2012
Functional Atheist Religions
Herb Silverman, Founder and President of the Secular Coalition for America

A talk about religions and worldviews whose adherents may believe in deities or supernatural forces, but whose actions in this life are independent of whether there is an afterlife. It will describe ways we can cooperate on issues with such "functional atheists," a much larger group than open atheists.

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Herb Silverman is a Distinguished Professor Emeritus of Mathematics at the College of Charleston (S.C.) from where he founded and served various student and other atheist/humanist organizations. He has written for "On Faith" at the Washington Post and for the Huffington Post. In his book, *Candidate Without a Prayer: An Autobiography of an Atheist Jew in the Bible Belt*, he describes his journey from an Orthodox Jew born and raised in Philadelphia to his accidental activist atheism when he moved to South Carolina.

Lecture, Conversation and Book Signing
Friday, September 28, 7:00PM,
EHSOP

Speaker: Herb Silverman, Candidate Without a Prayer, co-sponsored with the Free Thought Society, Donation \$5.

Herb Silverman ran for governor of South Carolina in 1990 to successfully challenge the state's unconstitutional provision that barred atheists from holding public office. *Candidate Without A Prayer:*

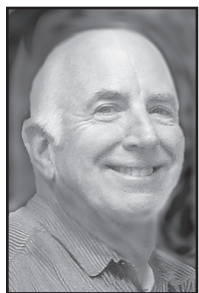


An Autobiography of a Jewish Atheist in the Bible Belt describes this experience running for office and many other episodes of his iconoclastic life in the Bible Belt.

A frequent spokesperson for secular humanist causes, Silverman has participated in a number of freethought conferences and debates, including one in Oxford, England on the topic "Does American Religion Undermine American Values?"

Born in Philadelphia, Silverman received his Ph.D. in mathematics from Syracuse University and is a Distinguished Professor Emeritus of Mathematics at the College of Charleston.

Silverman will also present his platform address, "Functional Atheist Religions," at 11:00 AM, Sunday, September 30.



President's Letter

A Very Busy Summer at the Society

Jeffrey Dubb, M.D.

Usually summer at the EHSOP has been a time for slowing down with our work, but this year things seem to have speeded up. On Thursday, June 14, a contingent of 10 members including **Hugh Taft-Morales (HTM)** drove up to Latham, New York for the 97th Annual Assembly of the American Ethical Union. The theme of the meeting was "Humanizing Criminal Justice," and the AEU organizers assembled an all-star cast. The program began on Friday with a prize-winning film entitled "Zero Percent" documenting the work of Hudson Link, an organization that provides college education and life-skill opportunities to prisoners at the Sing Sing correctional institution. Graduates of the Hudson Link program after release have had a recidivism rate of zero percent. On Saturday, the keynote speaker was Ernest Drucker, author of *Plague of Prisons*, a book describing the explosive growth of our nation's prison system, fueled in large part by enforcement of harsh penalties for drug offenses. For me, the highlight of the day's program was the address by David Patterson, former governor of New York, who described his role in revising the draconian Rockefeller drug laws enacted in 1973. These laws provided for a minimum of 15 years to life for selling 2 ounces of marijuana. In the evening, Robert Gangi, the former Executive Director of the Correctional Association, received the Elliott-Black Award for his work in humanizing the criminal justice system in New York. Throughout Saturday, there were workshops with dedicated individuals who were active in the prison system.

EHSOP members were also honored at the AEU assembly. **Temma Fishman** presented **Carol Love** with the Anna Garlin Spencer award for great service to a local ethical society. **Arnold Fishman** received

an award in gratitude for his years of service on the AEU Board as treasurer and president. If you want more details about the program, please speak to me.

Another important development at the assembly was the naming of Bart Worden, the leader of the Westchester Society, as the Executive Director of the American Ethical Union. One of Bart's highest priorities is to strengthen the relationships between all the societies and between the societies and the AEU. He will be coming to conduct a Sunday Platform on October 28.

This summer we have been treated to some wonderful Sunday presentations that let members be creative and try out new ideas. These meetings included a Morning Musicales by flutist Stephen Tanzer, a concert of protest songs by **Kate Esposito**, a play reading "Where's Hitler" hosted by **Pat McGeever**, another play "Time to Go" starring **Temma** and **Arnold Fishman**, **John McCormick**, and **David Ralston**. The last Sunday event in July was a colloquy devoted to mindfulness and meditation led by **HTM**. Sunday mornings are a real pleasure, always limited to one hour, with coffee and great cookies from Metropolitan. The turnout runs between 20 and 40.

July was also a busy time for ethical action. The Occupy Philly movement hosted the Occupy Movement National Gathering with representatives from around the country. The Board of Trustees (BOT) had previously passed a resolution supporting the goals of the Occupy Movement and followed this up by approving the use of the building for their meetings as well as use of the kitchen. Volunteers from the EHSOP were present in the building to provide assistance. Thanks are due to **Bob Moore**, **HTM**, and **Kate Esposito**, who did the lion's share of the organizing. Other EA activities included the June 1 art show "Execute Art Not People," the June 10 Philly Pride Parade (see below), and a demonstration against the new Pennsylvania Voter ID law.

Of course, no account of the Society's summer doings would be complete without mention of Camp Linden, our long-running commitment (since 1930)

that provides a summer camp experience to underprivileged inner city children. Much to my delight, responsibilities for running the Camp have been taken over by **Leonard Weeks** and **Sharon Wallis**. They have thrown themselves into the job with a zeal that knows no bounds, including obtaining grants for the camp, devising a new program of activities, meeting with our clients in the city, working in the garden, and hiring the staff. They had the wonderful idea of getting the Director of Education for the Lenape Nation, Shelley DePaul, to spend a week at the camp instructing the kids in the culture and history of the first Native Americans in the Delaware Valley. We anticipate that the work of the Camp Linden Committee will continue throughout the year to improve our funding base and find off-season uses for the property.

Finally, I want to mention the work of all our committees that do the heavy lifting for the Society. The Education Committee under **Betsy Lightbourn** has been active during the summer firming up the platforms for September and October. **Linda Richardson** has worked with Dotti and Craig Firestone, our accounting consultant, to improve the Society budget process. **Kate Esposito** held regular meetings for the EAC. **Gary O'Rourke** on the Building Committee oversaw upgrades for the alarm system. **Nick Sanders** and **Ken Greiff** held Community Committee meetings, overseeing ushering and greeting activities, and planning social events. And **Doris Dabrowski** on the Personnel Committee has been working to improve our personnel evaluation and reporting procedures.

I close by reporting that the new Board had a day-long retreat on July 28 to work on new Board procedures to improve efficiency and assign certain specific tasks to the committees. As our opening platform with **HTM** on September 9 approaches, I feel that we are ready for a really great year, full of educational and cultural programs and with opportunities for ethical action to fulfill our commitment to making a more humane society. <>



Philly Ethics involved in Philly Gay Pride March



EAC Chair **Kate Esposito** proudly waves the message, "Marriage is a Pursuit of Happiness," above the EHSOP banner in support of Gay Marriage as five members pose in front of the Society building before joining the Philly Gay Pride March on June 10.

L-R: **Ron Coburn, Betsy Lightbourn, Kate Esposito, John McCormick, and Harry Thorn.**

SAD NEWS AND MEMORIAL: JESSIE ZELNICK



Jessie Zelnick, a long-time member of EHSOP, who together with her late husband Joe inspired many current pillars of the Society to join and become strongly committed, died on the morning of August 8. Temma Fishman says Jessie was a huge cause in getting her and Arnold to join the Society. Kate Esposito: *Jessie was the right stuff.*

One of Jessie's daughters: *Although Jessie's physical frailties of the past few years made it increasingly hard for her to get into Philadelphia, she never stopped feeling a part of the Philadelphia Ethical family or believing in the tenets of ethical humanism. ... Jessie and our father, Joe, spent countless hours ... at Camp Linden ... and, after he died, we planted a tree there, nourished by his ashes. Last time we visited there with Jessie ... it was tall and strong. Our family agreed today that next spring we will ask about planting something there for her, too. If they're moved to do so, [members can] send gifts in Jessie's memory to PES, earmarked for Camp Linden. A good way to do this is to write the check to 'Camp Linden' and note ... that it is 'In memory of Jessie Zelnick.'*

Please convey to Ethical members that we appreciate their thoughts at this confounding time.

Labor Offers a Second Bill of Rights at Workers Stand For America Rally

On Saturday August 11, tens of thousands of union workers marched to the Eakins Oval to demand the adoption of a Second Bill of Rights. Society members **Steve Bremner, Kate Esposito, Doris Dombrowski, Nick Sanders** and **Sally Redlener** joined the crowd to hear a number of speakers including Richard Trumka, President of the AFL-CIO, DNC Chair Rep. Debbie Wasserman-Schultz, and Rep. Bob Brady of Philadelphia support the Rights to Full Employment and a Living Wage, Full Participation in the Electoral Process, a Voice in the Workplace, a High Quality Education and a Secure and Healthy Future.

Five other speakers, "ordinary Americans," also spoke of their experiences facing the hardships of underemployment, trying to organize at the Sugar House Casino without losing a job, teaching in a Philadelphia public school, working at a factory that closed due to jobs being outsourced to Mexico, and being denied the right to vote, refusing to pay a poll tax in the age of the new Jim Crow. A video of President Obama was also shown, wherein he pledged his support of labor's agenda.

It was enthralling to see thousands of people pour into the City of Philadelphia, where the first Bill of Rights was authored, to demand elected officials take notice that working people have dreams and aspirations that need to be upheld by the support of a government that cares about them.

In the words of Richard Trumka, "Work is who we are. Hard work alone never led to decent wages and retirement. It takes hard work and activism."

I look forward to educating Society members further about the Second Bill of Rights in the coming weeks.

—Kate Esposito, Ethical Action Chair

Quote-Unquote

MONEY IS THE BAROMETER
OF A SOCIETY'S VIRTUE.

—Ayn Rand

Introduction to Ethical Humanism

Sunday, September 9, 7:00PM



Come learn about Ethical Humanism. Leader Hugh Taft-Morales will offer a general presentation followed by more in-depth exploration of one aspect of Ethical Humanism. This month's focus will be *the primacy of ethics*. Members and first-time visitors will share questions and reflections. Wine and cheese will be served. Open to the public.

Please RSVP to
leaderhugh@phillyethics.org

Panel Discussion on Church and State, Tuesday, September 11, 1:00PM, at EHSOP



*"Religious Freedom Forum:
Religious Leaders Discussing
Church/State Separation"*



Ethical Society members are welcome to join local clergy at this event hosted by the Clergy Advisory Board of the Delaware Valley Chapter of Americans United for Separation of Church and State. Speakers include your own Leader, Hugh Taft-Morales, speaking on "Some Ethical Considerations about Church/State Separation," as well as Reverend Steven Baines, Director of Religious Outreach, Americans United who will discuss "The Perils of Politicized Pulpits: Do's and Don'ts for Houses of Worship," and Reverend Thomas Beers, Pastor, Central Baptist Church, Wayne, PA, who will share "Thoughts on Religious Freedoms."

Democracy on Trial

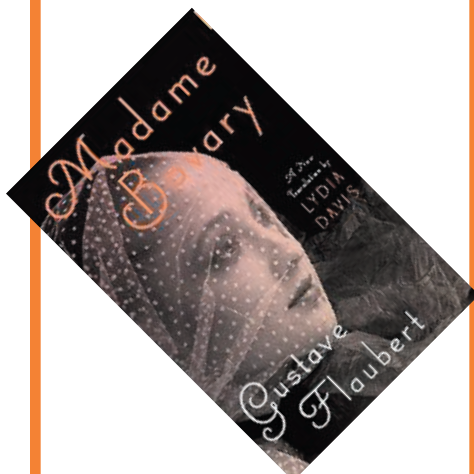
Sunday, September 16, 2:00 PM, EHSOP



Starting this fall, the Ben Franklin Thinking Society and the Ethical Humanist Society of Philadelphia will host events entitled *Democracy on Trial*. Our goal is to foster a more enlightened approach to social and political issues.

At these forums/debates, groups representing various political philosophies will offer their positions on certain issues. The audience, acting as a jury, will judge the merits of the arguments. A moderator will offer guidelines to promote constructive exploration of the ethical implications and rational substantiation for all arguments.

Come to this event prepared to contribute to democratic dialogue. The first Fall installment at 2:00 PM on Sunday, September 16 will focus on "the role of government."



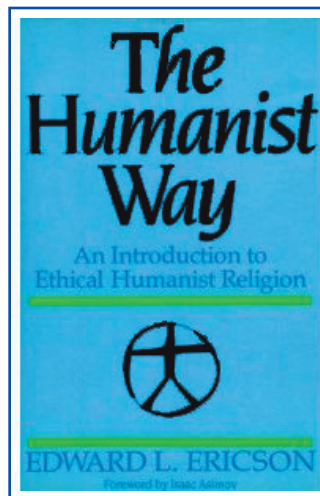
Worldly Wisdom Tuesday, September 18 7:00 PM

We will be discussing
Madame Bovary, led by
Jim DeHullu and Terry
Martin-Murley.

[PS: Want to keep Worldly
Wisdom going? Contact
Betsy Lightbourn at:
lightbourn@verizon.net.

Peace Day Philly Sing-Along and Program, Friday, Sept. 21, 6:00 PM, EHSoP

For the second year running,
the Ethical Humanist Society of
Philadelphia is celebrating the
United Nations International
Peace Day with a sing-along
in front of 1906 Rittenhouse
Square! Join other participants
in Peace Day Philly for the sing
along. Then stay for an hour-long
program, "Nurturing Peace from
the Inside Out." Along with some
comments from Leader Hugh Taft-
Morales, guided meditation and
music will be offered as a way to
nurture peace in our selves, our
communities, and the world.



Ethical Humanism Reading Group, Monday, Sept. 24, 7:00 PM, EHSoP

Come to the first of four discussions
of *The Humanist Way: An
Introduction to Ethical Humanist
Religion*, by Ed Ericson. Each
month this fall we will discuss a
portion of this great book about
our movement. The first discussion
will take place Monday, September
24, from 7:00-8:30 PM and will
focus on Chapters 1 and 2, as well
as the Forward by Isaac Asimov,
the "Introductory Note on Secular
and Religious Humanism." Future
discussions of the rest of the
book are scheduled for 7:00PM
on October 22, November 19 and
December 11.

NOVEMBER 2012						
SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
				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	

We have a winner!

"November Women," a deeply moving
drama about two very different
women on the brink of Thanksgiving,
by Philly playwright Kate McGrath,
was the unanimous choice of the
Ethical Society's One-Act Playwriting
Contest committee as the winner for
2012. It will be read (when else?) at
the November 11 Platform, shortly
before Thanksgiving.



PHS Pops Up in our Neighborhood!

Most of you already know this, but the Philadelphia Horticultural Society (PHS) has a popup garden in Rittenhouse Square! The fun garden at 1905-15 Walnut Street features an extremely long table with many different colored chairs that almost look like the Mad Hatter's tea party from Alice in Wonderland. Brightly colored flowers decorate the space. The open space is perfect for taking your lunch and meeting a few new friends.

The PHS website explains that the theme of the garden is: "Bring everyone to the table. Everyone is invited to get involved in the issue of food security, connect with one another, and bring their ideas, recipes, and urban gardening tips to the table." Open spaces offer empowerment for community and a place for recreation, relaxation and escape from busy city life.

This is the second popup garden that the PHS has organized in Philadelphia. The PHS decided to create popup gardens because after their prestigious Flower Show, they did not want just to throw out all of the beautiful flowers. They wanted to reuse them. The popup garden is closing in October, so check it out when you can! Its open hours are 11:00 AM – 2:00 PM, Tuesday through Friday, 5:00 – 7:00 PM on Thursday and from 9:00 AM – 1:00 PM on the second Saturday of each month.

-Catherine Weingarten, EHSOP Summer Intern

(Hugh thanks Catherine for her helpful work and cheerful demeanor this summer and wishes her well back at college this fall! So does Pat McGeever, for her savvy help with our drama program.)

September 2012

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
						1
2	3	4	5 Meetings 6:30 p.m. Education Committee 7:45 p.m. Ethical Action Committee	6	7	8
*9 11:00 a.m. <i>Honoring Workers</i> Hugh Taft-Morales 7:00 p.m. Intro to Ethical Humanism	10	11 1:00 p.m. Panel discussion on Church & State 7:00 p.m. <i>Pennsylvanians for Alternatives to the Death Penalty Meeting</i>	12 Meetings 6:30 p.m. Finance Committee 7:30 p.m. Community Committee	13	14	15
*16 11:00 a.m. <i>Celebrating Camp Linden</i> Camp Linden Committee 2:00 p.m. <i>Democracy on Trial</i>	17	18 Class 7:00 p.m. Worldly Wisdom <i>Madame Bovary</i>	19 Meeting 6:30 p.m. EHSOP Board	20	21 6:00 p.m. Peace Day Philly Sing- Along	22
*23 11:00 a.m. <i>Fall Festival Platform</i> Education Committee	24 7:00 p.m. Ethical Humanism Reading Group	25	26 Meeting 6:30 p.m. Camp Linden Meeting	27  Amnesty International 7:00 p.m.	28 7:00 p.m. Lecture, Book Signing, <i>Candidate Without a Prayer</i>	29
*30 11:00 a.m. <i>Functional Atheist Religions</i> Herb Silverman						

SEPTEMBER BIRTHDAYS



5 – Katie Orange
14 – Tom Carroll
16 – Diann Brown
18 – Susan O'Connell

*Child care provided
during all platforms

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**Ethical Humanist Society
of Philadelphia**

Hugh Taft-Morales, Leader

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(215) 735 - 3456
office@phillyethics.org
www.phillyethics.org

SUNDAY MORNING VOLUNTEERS



**Flower Dedications -
David Ralston, Coordinator**

Sept. 9 - "Looking forward to a good year for
a fine Society," Nick Sanders

Sept. 16 - "Camp Linden Volunteers," Leonard
and Sharon

Sept. 23 - "In loving memory of our good
friend Jessie Zelnick, Arnold and Temma
Fishman

Sept. 30 - "In memory of Diane Mc Cormick,"
John Mc Cormick



**Ushers -
Ken Greiff, Host**

September 9 T.B.A.
September 16
September 23
September 30



**Greeters -
Ken Greiff, Host**
September 9 T.B.A.
September 16
September 23
September 30



Coffee Hour Lunch Cleanup

September 9 - Group A-E
September 16 - Group F-K
September 23 - Group L-O
September 30 - Group P-Z

***Ethical Humanist Society
of Philadelphia***

1906 South Rittenhouse Square
Philadelphia, PA 19103