



# Ethical Views



March 2013

Vol. 126, No. 7 Newsletter of the Ethical Humanist Society of Philadelphia

## Platforms

**Sunday, March 3, 2013, 11:00 AM**  
***Ethical Culture, Psychotherapy, and My Grandmother the Spy***  
**Hugh Taft-Morales, Leader, Ethical Humanist Society of Philadelphia**

The Victorian Felix Adler was not a big fan of therapeutic exploration of the psyche; he resisted what he considered a narcissistic invasion of the private world. Today, however, counseling is an important part of Ethical Culture. It nourishes our ethical relationships and our congregational life. Two counseling orientations that resonate with Ethical Culture are those of Alfred Adler and of existential therapists such as Victor Frankel. Hugh Taft-Morales will explore the inspirational power of these orientations, while weaving an amazing tale of his own family's psychotherapeutic adventures and relationship with C. G. Jung.

**Sunday, March 10, 2013, 11:00 AM**

***The Past is So Present: Reflections on writing a book about my parents and their escape from Nazi Germany***

**Bettina Hoerlin, Past Health Commissioner of Philadelphia**



When Bettina Hoerlin discovered a treasure trove of her parents' love letters written during the rise of Hitler, she knew she needed to tell their story. In her subsequent memoir, *Steps of Courage: My Parents' Journey from Nazi Germany to America*, she relates a chilling tale that blends personal and historical facts. When her parents first met in 1934, Dr. Hoerlin's mother was a beautiful doyenne of the Munich intelligentsia and her father, finishing his PhD in physics at Stuttgart University, was a mountain climbing hero with world-record conquests. Their lives, however, were changed cruelly as Hitler's reign of

terror took hold. Multiple obstacles lay in their path, including that their romance, between a Jew and an Aryan, was forbidden by racial laws. Their universal tale of courage and love is shaped by some of the most profound markers of the 20<sup>th</sup> century: Hitler's Germany, the American immigrant experience and the threats of nuclear annihilation during the Cold War. Bettina will raise issues she grappled with as she uncovered secrets of her parents' lives, choices they made, and ultimately how we all seek to integrate our heritage with the present.

Bettina Hoerlin, a graduate of "The Atomic City" High School (Los Alamos), holds a Ph.D. in Policy Sciences from the State University of New York. She served as Health Commissioner of Philadelphia and taught at the University of Pennsylvania and Haverford College. An enthusiastic hiker and avid music lover, she lives with her husband, physicist Gino Segre, in Philadelphia.

**Sunday, March 17, 2013, 11:00 AM**  
***Spring Festival***

**Led by Hugh Taft-Morales, Leader, Ethical Humanist Society of Philadelphia**



Come to our annual festival celebrating the spring equinox with prose, poetry, and music! This year's festival theme is seeds: actual seeds to plant for Camp Linden, and the seeds of change in you life. What new habit, hobby, project, or friendship would you like to plant in hope of later harvest? Come for some inspiration to help us move from winter into a flourishing spring!

**Sunday, March 24, 2013, 11:00 AM**  
***From Reproductive Choice to Reproductive Justice***  
**Dorothy Roberts, Professor, University of Pennsylvania**

Dr. Roberts will discuss the limits of the dominant view of reproductive

freedom that centers on the right to make reproductive choices, especially the choice to terminate a pregnancy, free from government interference. *Roe v. Wade's* landmark decision remains essential for protecting women's equality and self-determination. But Roe did not go far enough: it did not take into account the social, political, and economic conditions, including poverty and racism, that affect women's lives and decision-making; it did not guarantee women access to reproductive health services and other resources they need; and it did not trust women to make decisions about their childbearing for themselves, their families, and their communities. She will discuss an alternative vision of reproductive justice, developed by women of color advocates, that goes beyond the limits of Roe.

Dorothy Roberts is the fourteenth Penn Integrates Knowledge Professor, George A. Weiss University Professor, and the inaugural Raymond Pace and Sadie Tanner Mossell Alexander Professor of Civil Rights at the University of Pennsylvania, where she holds appointments in the Law School and Departments of Africana Studies and Sociology. An internationally recognized scholar, public intellectual,

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## President's Message



### *Slaying the Fearsome Dragons*

**Jeffrey Dubb, M.D.**

Ruth Ann and I were talking to my nephew after the Sandy Hook shooting, and we told him that we were going to avoid extremely violent movies from now on. He said, "What good will that do? People will always go to that kind of movies." We didn't reply right away, but later I started thinking about how social change occurs. What makes something not acceptable that was formerly common practice or, conversely, how does something become accepted that was formerly anathema?

The most fascinating, socially significant, and fast-paced example of social change in this country has been the acceptance of same-sex marriage (SSM) which had been legalized in 9 states by 2012. The first legally binding SSM contract was solemnized by a Methodist minister in Minnesota in 1971 between Jack Baker and Michael McConnell. The immediate reaction was for states to enact bans on SSM. Maryland was the first in 1973. The years from 1994 - 1996 were the high water mark for the push-back against SSM. By 1994, 45 out of 50 states had banned it, and in 1996, the United States Congress passed the Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA), which was signed into law by President Bill Clinton. DOMA banned the U.S. government from recognizing SSM, and Section 3 of DOMA blocked federal benefits such as Social Security to SSM partners.

But the next stage of the battle, where opposition to SSM was overcome, arrived with even greater rapidity. On the world stage, in 2000, Queen Beatrix

of the Netherlands approved SSM, which began being performed in 2001. And in the U. S. in Vermont, Governor Howard Dean signed legislation granting civil unions with substantial marriage rights to SS couples. This was not exactly SSM, but this eventually came to Vermont in 2009.

The most exciting episode in the SSM struggle began when the Supreme Court of California ruled that SSM was legal. The ruling was in May of 2008, and by June the first legal SSM unions began to take place. This victory was short-lived because in November of 2008, the voters passed Proposition 8 banning SSM by a margin of 52% to 48%. The victory of the supporters of "Prop 8" was aided by large contributions from the Mormon Church. This appears to be the first time in the history of SSM that once legalized, it was later banned.



However, the victory celebrations for Prop 8 may yet turn to lamentations for the anti-SSM movement. In August, 2010, the U.S. District Court for Northern California ruled that Prop 8 was invalid because it violated the due process and equal protection clauses of the Constitution. And another panel of the court affirmed this ruling in February, 2012 after supporters of Prop 8 filed an appeal in favor. The case is now pending before the Supreme Court (*Hollingsworth v. Perry*).

In 2011, the Obama Administration left the 1996 DOMA in limbo by refusing to defend it in court on the grounds that Section 3 of the law violated the U.S. Constitution. This task of defending DOMA in court was left to the general counsel of the House of Representatives. In 2012, President Obama (with a little nudge by the VP) came out in support of SSM and then reiterated his position more strongly in his second inaugural address on January 21. Knowing the political skills of Mr. Obama, it appears

that he thought backing SSM was a winning move.

In March of this year, the Supreme Court will rule on the constitutionality of both Prop 8 and DOMA. If Prop 8 is ruled unconstitutional, then no state will be able to prevent SSM. But regardless of the court's decision, the battle for SSM is almost over. The court cannot run history backward; the court will not ban SSM in individual states. DOMA is dead. In 2008 Karl Rove used the anti-SSM props on the ballot in several states to defeat John Kerry. But that strategy would not work now. And ironically, Maryland, the first state to ban SSM in 1973 approved it by referendum in 2012. And further, just as we go to press with this article, on Feb. 5, 2013, Britain's House of Commons voted 400-175 to legalize SSM.

So back to my conversation with my nephew about violence in movies. Will we ever see a decrease in movie violence? Why would my decision to skip violent movies have a national effect? But, how could a practice like SSM which was widely unpopular as late as 1996 be accepted in so many states and appear to be headed to even wider acceptance now? Is it because the number of gay couples has increased? Actually, census figures for same-sex couples from 2000 to 2010 show a substantial increase of as much as 80% in some states, but the actual LGBT percentage of the US population is only about 3.5%. This does not seem to explain the success of the SSM movement. Is it because the LGBT community has mounted a huge public relations campaign to influence the voters? Hardly. Do more of us actually know an LGBT individual, have they become more visible in public life; are people more open at work? This is possible. Have the courts become more sensitive to arguments that sanctions against SSM amount to violations of due process and equal protection? Perhaps the Supreme Court is becoming

*(Continued next page)*

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sensitive to “the evolving standards of decency that mark the progress of a maturing society.” (“America’s Retreat from the Death Penalty,” *New York Times* editorial, Jan. 1, 2013.)

It seems to me that the Ethical Humanist Society is on solid ground in pointing out issues where moral standards are evolving, as we become a more mature society. Let us remember Kate Esposito’s piece in the recent *Ethical Views*, entitled “How to Keep Sane.” She writes, “On the Ethical Action Committee, we chip away at these things. We make the difference we can in small but meaningful ways through KIVA, the Dictionary Project, the Men’s Shelter Dinner Program, Midnight Angels, Martin Luther King Day of Service and marching in the Interfaith Walk and Pride Parade. We weigh in through coalition work on the macro issues: opposing how General Assistance was ended in Pennsylvania in an injudicious and unethical manner, trying to end the death penalty in the Commonwealth, and exposing the dangers of fracking, incarceration injustice, and impeding voters’ rights. And the best thing about it? We feel that doing something, thereby wresting back some of the control, is much more empowering than not doing anything.”

Although we may seem to be in an unequal struggle with the fearsome dragons of social injustice, eventually there will be enough of us to wound them fatally and see them collapse at our feet. <>

#### Quote-Unquote

Percentage believing in global warming:

Of Canadians	98
Of Americans	70
Of Republicans	48

Percentage believing in demonic possession:

Of Republicans	68
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-Harper’s Index

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and social justice advocate, she has written and lectured extensively on the interplay of gender, race, and class in legal issues and has been a leader in transforming public thinking and policy on reproductive health, child welfare, and bioethics. Professor Roberts is the author of the award-winning books *Killing the Black Body: Race, Reproduction, and the Meaning of Liberty* (Random House/Pantheon, 1997) and *Shattered Bonds: The Color of Child Welfare* (Basic Books/Civitas, 2002), as well as co-editor of six books on constitutional law and gender. She has also published more than eighty articles and essays in books and scholarly journals, including *Harvard Law Review*, *Yale Law Journal*, and *Stanford Law Review*. Her latest book, *Fatal Invention: How Science, Politics, and Big Business Re-create Race in the Twenty-First Century*, was published by the New Press in July, 2011. Among her many public interest positions, Roberts is the chair of the Board of Directors of the Black Women’s Health Imperative.

**Sunday, March 31, 2013, 11:00 AM**  
**Is there a Feminist Ethics?**

**Jone Johnson Lewis, Leader,**  
**Northern Virginia Ethical Society**

Drawing on the work of such thinkers as Nel Noddings and Sharon Welch, Jone will ask how feminist thought has influenced thinking about ethics in the last quarter-century. What insights has feminism brought to ethical thinking that can be useful on our ethical quest for the “good life”?

Jone Johnson Lewis has been serving half-time as the Leader of the Northern Virginia Ethical Society since 1997, and before that, she was Leader at the Ethical Humanist Society of Chicago. She is current president of the National Leaders’ Council of the American Ethical Union, the federation of Ethical Societies in the United States, and served for a year as its Interim Executive Director. Jone is also a certified personal coach for individuals creating personal and social change, writes about women’s history for About.com (<http://womenshistory.about.com>) and is the quotemaster at

[WisdomQuotes.com](http://WisdomQuotes.com). She’s on Facebook at [facebook.com/jonelewis](http://facebook.com/jonelewis) and on Twitter: @jonelewis. Other interests include Nonviolent (Compassionate) Communication, interpersonal neurobiology, organizational development and politics. She lives in Virginia with her husband, Bill Lewis; together, they have five adult children and 13 grandchildren. <>

## Happenings

**Mother-Daughter combo**  
**tells story of North Broad St.**



Photograph by Betsy Lightbourn

Linda (r) and Aissia Richardson (l) deliver February 10 Platform (Details in Feb. EV)

## Dictionaries to Duckrey

It was a drizzly morning on Tuesday, January 15<sup>th</sup> when Leandra Handfield, new member Christian Hayden and I brought dictionaries to the Duckrey Elementary School at 15<sup>th</sup> and Diamond Streets. This was the culmination of this year’s Dictionary Project, an annual outreach effort by the Ethical Action Committee of the Ethical Humanist Society of Philadelphia. Upon entering the school, after being buzzed in (the days of just walking into a school are long gone, as you can well imagine) we met Ms. Eunikue Vass, (pronounced “unique vaiss”) the site coordinator. Sitting at a table in the hall just beyond the entrance, she cheerily welcomed us. We signed in and received our stick-on name tags, a thoughtful gesture and helpful when meeting the children and their teachers. Because



(Continued on page 4)



*(Dictionaries cont'd. from page 3)*

there are so few third grade students at Duckrey, both classes were able to gather in one room. To our surprise, we discovered there were only 32 children altogether. They greeted us merrily before we began to distribute the dictionaries. Each child then wrote her/his name on the nameplate glued inside the cover and printed with the EHSoP name and that of the Duckrey School. We explained to them that this was their very own book to keep, take home, and share with others. The children and teachers suddenly rose, cued by a voice coming over the public address system leading everyone in the Pledge of Allegiance and an inspirational message reminding them of their worth and dignity.

When the morning's recitation was finished, Leandra, Christian and I led an interactive lesson in the use of the dictionaries. The children were very attentive and eager to participate in the lesson.



One little girl used the word “imagine” in a sentence after the group looked it up. She said she imagined she had already taken a test she was scheduled to take later. When Christian asked her what score she imagined she got, she enthusiastically said, “100!” As usual, the children were lively in their responses and demonstrated pretty good knowledge of dictionary use and the parts of speech. I wondered if their understanding and obvious enthusiasm for learning weren't to some degree due to the good luck of being placed in nice small classes this year. I also wondered how likely it is once the school closings are accomplished, they will be placed in classes that will enable each child to fulfill his/her potential.

After reviewing the basic uses of a dictionary, the children explored the rest of the book. In the back, they discovered the pages about planets, presidents, continents, countries, states, and other goodies. Of particular interest was the sign language page.

Leandra led them in spelling their names in this special language. They had a great time doing that. One little boy, excited by the page on the planets in our solar system, offered a detailed, and obviously researched explanation as to why Pluto is no longer considered a planet. He demonstrated a knowledge of the subject far beyond his years. The children were amazed at the page containing the longest word in the English language, a scientific term of over 1,000 letters – really! We all tried to pronounce it, but couldn't, no matter how hard we tried.

So, this year, these children, so eager and full of promise, are getting lots of teacher attention. But the School District of Philadelphia has scheduled Duckrey to be closed because its class sizes are deemed too small. Too small for what, I wonder! Certainly not for learning, the main point of being in school! Not to mention that to these children and their parents, this is their neighborhood school, the school that serves their community. Next year, the children may be uprooted and sent to a different school, losing much of the friendship and familiarity of Duckrey and placing them at greater risk.

Soon it was time to go. You can't make the lesson too long or the kids get restless and we had already been there 45 minutes. (I told Ms. Vaiss the lesson would take only about 15, but he time flew by.) I was grateful for Leandra and Christian whose inventive teaching made the lesson much more fun for the children (and for me) than it would have been without them.

The children thanked us as we said goodbye with wishes that they enjoy their books and share them with others. Because we ordered more books than we needed for each child, we were able to leave the extras for their classroom libraries. On the way out, we said goodbye to Ms. Vass who also thanked us. We invited her to attend the platform on January 27 in which Daniel Denvir would speak about the state of the Philadelphia public schools. I left contemplating the fate of these kids as they become older and move through a school system that insists on placing them in larger classes, apparently to

satisfy budgetary considerations. But at least we were able to do something now to make their lives a little richer, and enrich our own at the same time. That's the joy of the Dictionary Project. We hope to do it again next year. Maybe you'll want to take part in 2014. If you do, let me know.

[Supt. Hite has since removed Duckrey from the list of schools to be closed. --Ed.]

*Temma Fishman* ([temmafiah@aol.com](mailto:temmafiah@aol.com))



### **NOTICE FOR THE ELECTION AT OUR ANNUAL MEETING**

The Annual Meeting for EHSoP will be on May 19th. It will include elections to the Board.

Positions to fill are Secretary, Treasurer, and three other Board Members.

The Nominating Committee is making a list of people who would like to run for office.

If you would like to run for any of these positions, or if you would like to nominate anyone with their permission, please submit the name to any member of the Nominating Committee - Harry Thorn, Ron Coburn, and John McCormick. Last day for nominations is April 22nd.

The requirement to serve as a Trustee on the Board, including Secretary or Treasurer, is that you have been a member for one year.

Terms are for two years. Current office holders may run for re-election.

# Announcements



## PLAY CONTEST SUBMISSIONS OPEN MARCH 2

If you were thinking about submitting a one-act play for our annual contest at the Ethical, then Saturday, March 2 is the first day you can submit. For details, go to <http://www.phillyethics.org/>, and under "What's new?" click on "2013 Play Contest."

Or, if you would like to read the incoming play scripts and help pick the winners, please contact Pat McGeever at [patethical@gmail.com](mailto:patethical@gmail.com). Submissions close May 2, and we need a committee rarin' to go by then.

## Introduction to Ethical Humanism

Sunday, March 3, 7:00 PM



Come learn about Ethical Humanism. Leader Hugh Taft-Morales will discuss the history and philosophy of Ethical Humanism, along with a key ideal: **the inherent worth of every person**. 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](mailto:leaderhugh@phillyethics.org).



## The Constitution at Work: Presidential Power

Monday, March 4,  
7:00 PM

OUR MONDAY EVENING CONSTITUTION AT WORK SERIES CONTINUES THIS SPRING. Leader Hugh Taft-Morales will discuss issues at the crossroads of constitutional law and ethics with University of Pennsylvania Law Professor Kim Roosevelt. We will have additional special guests for our grand finale in May. Currently the schedule is as follows:

**March 4 at 7:00 PM** - Presidential Power discussion questions: What are the constitutional limits to executive power, particularly regarding the so-called "war on terror?" We will consider issues such as detention or killing of terrorist suspects, methods interrogation and torture, use of drones overseas, withholding of information from the public.

**April 8 at 7:00 PM** - Capital Punishment

**May 6 at 7:00 PM** - Reproductive Rights

Our public forum discussions, "**Democracy on Trial**," will also continue. The spring series takes place on Sunday, March 17, at 2PM, Monday, April 22 at 7PM, and, Sunday, May 19, at 2PM.

See you there!

Prof. Kim Roosevelt & Leader Hugh Taft-Morales



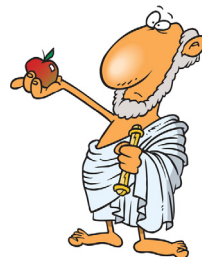
Photograph by Betsy Lightbourn

## Fun with Western Philosophy

Tuesday, March 5, and March 19,  
7:00-9:00 PM

Four Evenings Exploring Reality, Mind, and Meaning: March 5, March 19, April 9 and April 23.

Western philosophy, particularly metaphysics and epistemology, can be esoteric and mind-numbing. But taught imaginatively and with a sense of humor, it can be enriching and



**even fun!** Join Hugh Taft-Morales, Leader of the Ethical Humanist Society of Philadelphia, for a rigorous exploration of some of the major philosophical themes from Plato through Sartre. Other philosophers to be touched upon include Descartes, Berkeley, Hume, Kant, Bradley, Bergson, Sartre, James, and Camus.

March 5: "Asking Questions" addresses some overarching issues about human ignorance and arrogance in our search for understanding, along with a "map" of philosophy.

March 19: "Questions of Reality" focuses on **metaphysics: the study of the nature of reality**. Themes in this section include how unifying theories have trouble explaining the connection between the material and the immaterial, and how our explanations of reality often cannot be distinguished from reality itself.

## APRIL FOOL'S PREVIEW!

Roy Zimmerman: Wake-Up Call, Monday, April 1, 7:30 PM



There is no one like Roy Zimmerman! His hilarious, rhyme-intensive songs are incisive calls to action, smart, savvy and undeniable. Roy brings the sting of satire to the struggle for Peace and Social Justice. Hugh will attend hoping to learn some of his songs for future EHSoP occasions! His songs have been heard on HBO and Showtime, and he's been profiled on NPR's "All Things Considered." Come hear songs such as "Abstain With Me," "I Want a Marriage Like They Had In the Bible," and "I Approve This Message." Check him out on YouTube!

This event is co-sponsored by the Freethought Society  
Admission is \$18 or pay what you can (students, half price).





the Ethical Humanist Society of Philadelphia  
and the Freethought Society of Philadelphia  
present:

# roy Zimmerman

Monday, April 1 - 7:30 pm

1906 S. Rittenhouse Square

\$18 or pay what you can (students, half price)

**WAKE  
UP  
CALL**

Funny songs about ignorance, war, greed, hope, struggle and change

# March 2013

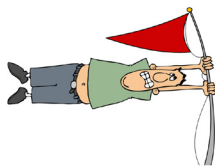
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
					<b>1</b>	<b>2</b> Play submissions open <a href="mailto:patethical@gmail.com">patethical@gmail.com</a>
<b>*3</b> 11:00 AM. <i>My Grandmother the Spy</i> Hugh Taft-Morales 7:00 PM Intro. Ethical Humanism	<b>4</b> 7:00 PM Constitution at Work Leader Hugh, and Professor Roosevelt	<b>5</b> 7-9:00 PM Fun with Western Philosophy Hugh Taft-Morales	<b>6</b> <b>Meetings</b> 6:30 p.m. Education Committee 7:45 p.m. Ethical Action Committee	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>*10</b> 11:00 AM <i>A Past so Present</i> Bettina Hoerlin	<b>11</b>	<b>12</b> <i>Pennsylvanians for Alternatives to the Death Penalty Meeting</i> 7:00pm	<b>13</b> <b>Meetings</b> 6:30 p.m. Finance Committee 7:30 p.m. Communications Cmte.	<b>14</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>*17</b> 11:00 AM <i>Spring Festival</i> Hugh Taft-Morales et al. 12:30 PM Community Committee 2:00 PM Democracy on Trial	<b>18</b>	<b>19</b> 7-9:00 PM Fun with Western Philosophy Hugh Taft-Morales	<b>20</b> <b>Meeting</b> 6:30 p.m. EHSOP Board of Trustees	<b>21</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>23</b>
<b>*24</b> 11:00 AM <i>Reproductive Choice/Justice</i> Dorothy Roberts	<b>25</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>27</b> <b>Meeting</b> 7:00 p.m. Camp Linden Meeting	<b>28</b>  <b>Amnesty International</b> 7:00 p.m.	<b>29</b>	<b>30</b>
<b>*31</b> 11:00 AM <i>A Feminist Ethic?</i> Jone Johnson Lewis						



\*Child care provided during all platforms

## March Birthdays

4 Terry Martin-Murley  
9 Garry O'Rourke  
11 Lew Wilkinson  
20 Vince McKenna  
23 Susan D'Alessio  
26 Ruthann Dubb  
28 John Marshall



**APRIL 1**  
7:30 PM  
**Wake-up Call!**  
Concert  
Roy Zimmerman

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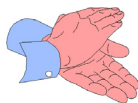
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of Philadelphia**

Hugh Taft-Morales, Leader

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(215) 735 - 3456  
office@phillyethics.org  
[www.phillyethics.org](http://www.phillyethics.org)



## SUNDAY SERVICE

**Hosts** - Coordinated by Nick Sanders



March 3 - Temma and Arnold Fishman

March 10 - Garry O'Rourke and Irvin Carter

March 17 - Ken Greiff and David Ralston

March 24 - Bill and Sandy Coffey

March 31 - Harry Thorn and Bob Bueding

**Flowers** Coordinated by David Ralston



March 3 - Bill Coffey, "In honor of my lovely wife, Sandy"

March 10 - Ken Greiff, "In honor of my father"

March 17 - Carol Love, "In celebration of the return of Spring"

March 24 - Bill Goldberg, "In honor of my parents"

March 31 - Bertha Waters, "In honor of the birthdays of my youngest daughter Nica and her husband Rob."



**Coffee Hour**, Coordinated by Ken Greiff

Feb. 3 - Group A-E

Feb. 10 - Group F-K

Feb. 17 - Group L-O

Feb. 24 - Group P-Z

March 31 - Group A-E (not again!)

***Ethical Humanist Society  
of Philadelphia***

1906 South Rittenhouse Square  
Philadelphia, PA 19103