

Ethical Views

June 2013

Vol. 127, No. 10 Newsletter of the Ethical Humanist Society of Philadelphia

**SUMMER SUNDAY MEETINGS
ARE AT 10:00 AM, except August 11
(see on next page)**



JUNE

Sunday, June 2, 2013, 10:00 AM

Ethical Page-Turners

**Betsy Lightbourn, EHSOP Education
Committee Chair**

Ethical issues are often creatively explored through fiction, and sometimes through genre page-turners; thrillers, historical novels, romances, and science fiction all offer good reads (especially during vacations) often with ethical insights. Several members will share their guilty pleasures in this program. Join us and help set the mood for a day at the beach by bringing your beach towel, beach hat, sunglasses, sandals, and your own favorite "read" you would like to recommend to others.

Sunday, June 9, 2013, 10:00 AM

Picnic at Camp Linden

(No meeting on Rittenhouse Square)

Join us for our annual community picnic at Camp Linden! This informal gathering celebrates the end of our program year and marks the start of summer when children from Philadelphia will come to the Brandywine Valley and learn about nature, swim and enjoy the outdoors. Come to 1523 Camp Linden Rd., West Chester, PA 19382. For more complete directions go to: <http://www.phillyethics.org/cl-directions.plp>. From noon to 4:00 PM, but come as early and stay as late as you want. Duck race and other fun activities for children. \$15 per person, \$10 if you bring food. Children free. Bring your own dogs and hamburgers for grilling if you wish. Grills will be going.

Sunday, June 16, 2013, 10:00 AM

Reflections on Fatherhood in the Arts

Lyle Murley, Ph.D., EHSOP Member

Dr. Murley will explore the meaning of fatherhood through images, music and words.

Summer Edition

Sunday, June 23, 2013, 10:00 AM

The Language that is Music

Rollin Wilbur, EHSOP Pianist

How can we listen better to music's meanings? A musical seminar.

Sunday, June 30, 2013, 10:00 AM

Ethical Culture Today!

Hugh Taft-Morales, EHSOP Leader

The American Ethical Union (AEU) hosts a national assembly each year for many reasons. It generates constructive dialogue between member societies and the staff and board of the AEU so we can agree on strategy and budget priorities for the coming year. It provides members with workshops to improve internal governance and public ethical action projects. And it offers all who attend opportunities to generate meaningful and personal inspiration to bring Ethical Humanism to the world. Having just attended this year's conference in Fairfax, Virginia, Leader Hugh Taft-Morales will share insights into the state of the Ethical Culture movement nationwide.



JULY

Sunday, July 7, 2013, 10:00 AM

The Sum of Me, by Catherine Rush, Philadelphia playwright; a dramatic reading

Adult children gather on a remote mountain to bury their mother's remains. They still have more to learn about her, and one another.

EHSOP members do a dramatic reading of one of the top plays from our 2012 contest. To volunteer, contact Pat at patethical@gmail.com

Sunday, July 14, 2013, 10:00 AM

Yoga, Humanism, and You!

**Hugh Taft-Morales, EHSOP Leader,
and Jack Schwar, member**

This dynamic duo will offer insights into the benefits of yoga in a humanist context. They will share some of their experiences with yoga, lead some breathing and meditation activities, and facilitate some gentle yoga practice that you can do seated in your own chair. Audience members can participate in some or all of the program, or simply observe. No pressure! For those doing seated meditation, wear comfortable clothes.

Sunday, July 21, 2013, 10:00 AM

Songs for the Dispossessed

**Kate Esposito, Ethical Action
Committee Chair**

Musical inspiration for listening and reflection.

Sunday, July 28, 2013, 10:00 AM

A Colloquy: Compassion

Hugh Taft-Morales, EHSOP Leader

The colloquy format is designed to stimulate thoughtful, meditative self-reflection. Short readings, silence, and music encourage us to listen deeply, connect with our heart, and share. A colloquy is not a debate, discussion, or forum to offer advice to others, but rather a time to deepen our awareness.

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AUGUST

Sunday, August 4, 2013, 10:00 AM

A Colloquy: topic to be announced

Richard Kiniry, EHSOP Leader Emeritus

**Sunday, August 11, 2013, 11:00 AM
(Please note time change.)**

Robert G. Ingersoll and the Freethought Movement in Philadelphia

Tom Flynn, Director, Robert G. Ingersoll Birthplace Museum

This special presentation, on the 180th birthday of Robert Ingersoll, is cosponsored with Freethought Society.

A leading expert on Ingersoll and the Freethought movement, Tom Flynn is editor of *Free Inquiry*, Executive Director of the Council for Secular Humanism as well as director of the Robert G. Ingersoll Birthplace Museum.

Sunday, August 18, 2013, 10:00 AM

Liberation Theology

Ken Greiff, Member, EHSOP Board of Trustees

Sunday, August 25, 2013, 10:00 AM

Book Discussion: Spirituality for the Skeptic, Robert C. Solomon

Hugh Taft-Morales, EHSOP Leader

A conversation about spirituality from a humanist perspective. All are encouraged to read *Spirituality for the Skeptic* which though written by a philosopher is mercifully only 140 pages long. Of course anyone can attend and participate having read the book or not. Hugh will frame the discussion with some insights into some of Solomon's most intriguing points.

**Sunday, September 1: No meeting.
Fall Platforms begin Sept. 8, <
2013. 11:00 AM.**

Leader's Column



The Joy and Challenge of Growth

Hugh Taft-Morales

Over the past year the Ethical Humanist Society of Philadelphia has grown and signs are that it will continue to grow. From June 2012 to May 2013, EHSOP has added 15 new members to our roster! A new cohort of young adults are attending our functions and meeting as a group socially. Attendance at Sunday platforms has been high. New outside groups sharing our humanist commitment to social justice, including Delaware Valley Americans United and new offshoots of Occupy Philly, are meeting regularly in our building, along with longtime allies Amnesty International and Pennsylvanians for Alternatives to the Death Penalty. We are bustling with activity and the energy is good. So what's not to like?

Well, when I went through Leadership training with the American Ethical Union, the unit devoted to Congregational Development opened my eyes to the challenges of growth.

While every Ethical Society I know is eager to grow, there is a consensus amongst experts in "organizational development" (or "OD" for those in the biz) that growth can be one of the hardest things to handle, especially for small organizations with limited resources.

Let's begin with the challenges of growth in program offerings. This year our community benefited from lots of educational and personal growth opportunities. There have been Worldly Wisdom gatherings, a reading group of Ed Ericson's *The Humanist Way*, six "Constitution at

Work" evenings focusing on matters constitutional, five "Democracy on Trial" forums, a four-part "Fun with Western Philosophy" class, special evening talks and concerts co-sponsored with the Freethought Society, a Beacon Theater play on Lincoln and Frederick Douglass, and more. Obviously these events have served our members and the local community as well. Reviews were very positive.

These events, however, demand much



from our staff, volunteers and leadership. Not only are Dotti and Antuan asked to handle many details surrounding

these events, but our volunteers are huffing and puffing too! There is even "audience fatigue." Some of our more active members apologize to me about having to miss an event. I reassure them that this is OK: we can't all be there for all events. Sometimes we need to take a night off and refuel. Individuals and the group can feel overwhelmed by our own offerings.

How about growth in networking and collaboration? This too is a double-sided coin. On the one hand, it's wonderful to support various groups with staff time and free or low-cost use of our building space. 1906 Rittenhouse is a major resource that we should continue to leverage in service of our mission. But when many groups use our building a couple of things happen. First, it requires more hours of service by our administrative and custodial staff: more opening and closing, vacuuming and cleaning, wear and tear. Additionally, a crowded building affects Dotti's ability to rent our space to paying clients who help us pay our bills.

And finally, what could possibly be problematic about growth in membership? Isn't this the greatest thing since sliced bread? I answer

(Continued on next page)

Growth (Cont'd. from previous page)

a definitive...“YES!!!” The energy, ideas, and perspectives contributed by new members are *fundamental* to our continued success as a force for Ethical Humanism in Philadelphia. There is no standing still. Without a growing, diverse membership, EHSoP would shrink into a closed, inwardly focused social club. This is the fate for many small congregations.

Taking in new members in an effective and ethical manner, however, requires the careful attention of staff, leadership, Community Committee and volunteers. Organizational hospitality has to be learned. Take, for example, the reception for young adults interested in Ethical Humanism hosted at the home of our gracious Board President and his wife. This was an important evening, but one that required much planning.

But more fundamental than the time required, growth in membership can prove surprisingly challenging to small organizations like ours. What is called “family-style” organizations of 50 members or so operate well by word of mouth and informal governance. Access to information is open to all through conversation and personal relationships. But when organizations grow closer to one hundred members and beyond, this style becomes a roadblock to integration of new members. Organizations have to work hard to convert the *oral tradition* of sharing “how things have always been done” into a *written culture* where information is accessible to all in multiple forms. This helps new members and visitors feel on an equal footing with longer-term members.

Finally, a more subtle challenge involved in growth is that of identity. New members bring new ideas and fresh perspectives to Ethical Humanism. This may challenge long-term members who worry that we will lose our past and our traditions. Certainly some practices and perspectives may fade into history; so it goes with all evolving organizations. But in order to serve the

core mission of the Ethical Humanist Society of Philadelphia, to cultivate character guided by ethical principles and demonstrated in community engagement and behavior, we must adapt to changing social conditions and needs. The challenge of evolving with integrity is then this: how do we both stay true to general values of Ethical Humanism while welcoming new ways to express these values in daily life?

Half of the answer to this question is that



we need to continue to understand our roots. The rich tradition of Ethical Culture guides us still. I will continue to teach our

history not so that we march in lockstep with our founder Felix Adler, but so our members can separate the wheat from the chaff, bringing out the best of our history while leaving behind what has become outdated. This pragmatism that tests ideas by applying them to the real world is a part of our tradition that makes me proud!

But the other half of the answer to the question of evolving with integrity is to be open to change. This takes *listening* to new voices in our community, both inside and outside our doors. We must continue to reach out into the Philadelphia community and integrate with a city in need of healing and justice. We should be open to critiques of how we operate, appreciating candid feedback as a gift that strengthens Ethical Humanism.

To help us open up to new perspectives, I’m excited about a fall workshop currently in the works. I hope many of you, especially those in leadership positions, will take advantage of this opportunity to learn how we can better incorporate new and diverse voices, some that may challenge our assumptions in surprising ways. Look for a notice of this workshop in the September newsletter!

In conclusion, I will sound the trumpet clarion call: volunteers, step forward! It takes a village, so they

say, and the Ethical Humanist Society of Philadelphia is no exception. Our Board and committees invite you all to contribute your time and talent in helping us grow in positive and exciting ways. Those of you who attended May’s membership meeting heard from our committees: Education, Community, Finance, Building, Ethical Action, and our new Outreach and Communications Committee. Which of these might benefit from your interest and skills?

Might any of the following projects entice you? Help create a “Caring Team” to support the Community Committee by offering support and comfort to members in need. Help spruce up our building through basic and aesthetic improvements as guided by the Building Committee. Step up as an “Intern Mentor,” recruiting and supervising college interns helping Dotti in the office. Be the first one to sign up for a “Pledge Drive task force” to organize the most fun and effective pledge drive ever. Be an online calendar manager spreading information about what’s going on at 1906 Rittenhouse! These are just some of the initiatives welcoming your energy and enthusiasm.



If you have read to the end of this column, chances are you believe in the Ethical Humanist Society of Philadelphia. Maybe you are more interested in supporting a caring community, or maybe you prefer the educational opportunities, or perhaps social justice work attracts you the most. Whatever it is about our community that floats your boat, please join me in helping us grow in new and exciting ways. This will require the commitment and patience of us all. If you believe in Ethical Humanism as I do, our growth will reap rewards beyond our imagination. Let’s grow together!

Happenings

Our Art Floweth Over – EHSOP Opens its Own Art Gallery

By Hugh Taft-Morales

If you haven't gotten over to 1906 Rittenhouse to see the new Collier Room Art Gallery do so soon! Our exhibit of member Robert Allen's incredible work will be there for the summer, but we hope to obtain new installations over the course of the year. About 50 members attended the opening of Robert's work on April 21st and got to hear Robert's story "Kirsten," read in part at platform just before. (Copies of the complete story are available in the Collier Room.)

Member Ron Coburn was particularly struck by Robert's fanciful imagination, originality, and drawing expertise captured by what Robert referred to as 'his doodling.' Ron borrowed Robert's drawing book, scanned some of his drawings, and in 2010, he organized an exhibit of some of the scanned work at the Ethical Humanist Society. Ron also shared the scans with several art galleries. Experts there said that Robert should expand his drawings to a larger scale, and that they might then sell. (If you are looking for artwork to buy, you should know that many of Robert's works are for sale! If interested, please tell Dotti Wesley in our Office.)

Meanwhile, another member, Janice Moore, saw Robert's talent and told him about the Plastic Club, an artists' society, where Bob began attending a workshop and drawing in a larger format. Robert soon gained the admiration of folks at the Club. This resulted in an ongoing sponsored membership and a one-month scholarship to a special life class. He was also able to exhibit in several group shows there and at a local gallery.

Thanks to Ron, Janice, Antuan, Dotti, Garry, the Community Committee, and the EHSOP Board, the art was gathered, the hanging equipment chosen, paid for, and installed, and the opening was publicized and put on. Now all of us can enjoy Robert's art this summer, and look forward to future exhibits.

If you would like to support our "art flowing over," please leave a message with Dotti in our Office addressed to "Art Task Force." We need a couple of volunteers to oversee policy, and some artists, of course, to install and exhibit their work.

TOP DOWN:

- Hugh Taft-Morales shows a patchwork piece constructed from drawings Robert did on Sunday morning programs.
- Robert reads an excerpt from his story, "Kirsten."
- More than 50 people (middle two photos) attend the first opening in the Collier Room showing Robert's work
- Robert holds a Dialogue at his opening (bottom two photos) and answers some questions from fellow EHSOP members and guests.



Announcements



**Jay Wexler talk,
Monday, July 1, 7:00
PM at the Ethical**

"Holy Hullabaloo and Beyond: The State of Church/State Law in the United States (and maybe some other places)" is another event co-hosted by the Ethical Humanist Society and the Freethought Society. It is free and open to the public, but a \$5 donation is requested to offset expenses. Wexler will talk about the various people and places he visited while researching the book and will talk about the current state of First Amendment law in the United States. Wexler is an award-winning Professor of Law at Boston University, an author of three books, two dozen articles, and over fifty essays, reviews, and stories in the *Boston Globe*, *Huffington Post*, *National Geographic NewsWatch*, *Salon*, *Slate* and *Spy*.

Two networking notes that might interest you!

First, you are all invited to the 7th Annual Unity Picnic hosted by the Philadelphia Coalition of Reason on **Sunday, July 28th**. It will occur rain or shine at Fort Washington State Park's Flourtown Pavilion. EHSOP is a member of the PhillyCOR along with the [Humanist Association of Greater Philadelphia](#), the [Freethought Society](#), the [Drexel Freethought Society](#), the [Philadelphia Atheist Meetup](#), the [Temple Atheists and Critical Thinkers](#), and the [Penn State Atheist Agnostic Association](#). Please contact PhillyReason@gmail.com to RSVP and bring a \$10 donation and a side dish to share. See Hugh or the Office for more information.

Second, the Pennsylvania State Atheist/Humanist 2013 Conference occurs from **September 13 to 15** at the Embassy Suites Airport Hotel. Scheduled speakers include Rep. Mark Cohen, Fred Edwards, David Silverman, A.J. Johnson, Ethical Culture Leader-in-Training and Fellow at Harvard Humanist Community James Croft, and maybe even your own Leader Hugh! For more information got to <http://atheistpa.org/>.



Miss Manners of the Listserv!

As most of you know, the Ethical Humanist Society has begun using a listserv for non-urgent communications between Society administration, leadership, committees and members at large. We urge everyone to subscribe to the listserv. If you are not on it and want to join, please contact Nick Sanders at: nick@phillyethics.org.

We added the listserv for a couple of reasons.

First, the listserv address is easily identifiable so you can tell which emails are society business just by seeing the listserv address. If you don't have time or interest to read them, you can just delete them knowing that they were not emails directed specifically to you.

Second, listservs work well as forums for conversations, where everyone is free to read or not read, contribute or not contribute. You are free to read only a fraction of the contributions, and you can reply only to a fraction of that fraction, or to none of them.

Here are some pointers regarding use of the listserv:

1) Use the listserv for general items of interest to members of EHSOP, not for personal or professional business.

2) Use "Reply" only to send a reply to the entire list.

3) Do not hit "Reply" just to acknowledge receipt or say thanks.

To do this, use "Forward" and type in their address, adding your own comments if you wish. You can include others by typing their address(es) in the "TO" or "CC" fields.

4) Consider using the listserv to bring out your best by double-checking that you are both being clear and not simply venting. Never use the listserv for personal attacks or ad hominem arguments (attacking the messenger rather than the message). Be polite; do not "flame." Make your point succinctly and do not ramble on. You may disagree without being disagreeable.

5) Put a succinct, clear, and perhaps catchy title in the subject line to make it easy for people to know the core content of the email.

6) Don't overuse the listserv; contribute your best thoughts to the group conversation!

7) Remember that not everyone has subscribed to the listserv. If you must get a message out to everyone in the society, speak to a board member about using the email list and make sure to send by post notice to those members who don't have any email.

8) To repeat a point made above, don't be overwhelmed by the listserv. It is really OK to delete listserv messages without reading them, especially if the subject line does not indicate a subject that interests you.

Thanks for helping our on-line community flourish!

Hugh Taft-Morales

To repeat: if you'd like to join the ESHoPMembers listserv, notify Nick Sanders at: nick@phillyethics.org.

P.S. from the editor:

Coming soon on the EHSOP listserv:
"Should the Society call itself
'religious'?"

Sign up, tune in, speak out! -P. McG.



Welcome to all
Atheists
Agnostics
Humanists
Freethinkers
Rationalists
Skeptics
etc.

July 28th
1-5 PM

Rain or shine
Fort Washington State Park
Flourtown Pavilion

*On W. Mill Road a quarter mile west
of Bethlehem Pike in Flourtown, PA*



The Philadelphia Coalition of Reason

- Atheist Meetup
- The Ethical Humanist Society
- The Freethought Society
- The Humanist Association of Greater Philadelphia
- Drexel Freethought
- Penn State Atheists Agnostic Association
- Rekindle Reason: Atheists, Agnostics, and Freethinkers at UPenn
- Temple Atheists and Critical Thinkers
- West Chester University Secular Student Alliance

\$10 minimum donation per adult covers the cost of burgers, hot dogs, vegetarian grill alternatives, buns and beverages.

Please bring a side dish!

If your last name begins with:

- A-G bring salad or vegetable
- H-P bring fruit or dessert
- Q-Z bring bread, potato or rice dish

Please RSVP!

(So we can estimate our food and beverage needs)

Contact PhillyReason@gmail.com

DIRECTIONS

From the North:

From 276 take exit 339 toward PA-309/Fort Washington/Philadelphia/Ambler
Drive 1.4 miles South on PA-309
Take exit PA-73 toward Flourtown
Turn right at PA-73 W/Church Rd.
Take the 2nd left onto E Mill Rd.
The entrance to the park will be on your right about a quarter mile after you pass Bethlehem Pike

From the South:

Take 76 W to 476 North toward Plymouth Mtg.
Then take exit 20 and turn right on Plymouth Rd.
After about a half mile it will turn into Flourtown Rd. Stay on Flourtown Rd. for another two miles then turn left to stay on Flourtown Rd.
Then turn right on Stenton Rd. and left on W. Mill Road.
The entrance to the park will be on your left.

Summer Calendar

Please note: This calendar does not cover summer meetings of our committees or related groups.



6/2 Ethical Page-Turners, Betsy Lightbourn, 10:00 AM
6/9 Camp Linden Picnic, Noon to 4:00 PM, or whenever
6/16 Fatherhood in the Arts, Lyle Murley, 10:00 AM
6/23 Music as Language, Rollin Wilbur, 10:00 AM
6/30 Ethical Culture Today, Hugh Taft-Morales, 10:00 AM

7/1 *Holy Hullabaloo*s, Jay Wexler, 7:00 PM
7/7 *The Sum of Me*, Dramatic Play Reading, 10:00 AM
7/14 Yoga and You, Hugh Taft-Morales, 10:00 AM
7/21 Songs for the Dispossessed, Kate Esposito, 10:00 AM
7/28 Colloquy: Compassion, Hugh Taft-Morales, 10:00 AM
7/28 Unity Picnic, PHL Coal. Of Reason, Ft. Washington Park

8/4 Colloquy: TBA, Richard Kiniry, 10:00 AM
8/11 Robert G. Ingersoll, Tom Flynn, 11:00 AM
8/18 Liberation Theology, Ken Greiff, 10:00 AM
8/25 *Spirituality for the Skeptic*, led by Hugh Taft Morales, 10:00 AM

PREVIEW

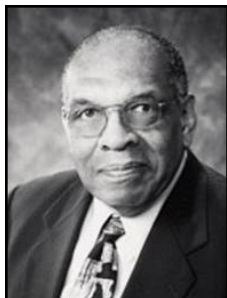
9/13-15 PA Atheist/Humanist Conf., Embassy Suites Airport Hotel

Quote-Unquote

Few nations have been so poor as to have but one god. Gods were made so easily, and the raw material cost so little, that generally the god market was fairly glutted, and heaven crammed with these phantoms.

-Robert G. Ingersoll

MEMORIAL NOTE: ALTON LEMON



Alton Lemon, the first African-American president of the Philadelphia Ethical Society, where he served during the 1960's, died last month. Mr. Lemon, a Philadelphia resident, was director of the Police Community Relations Division of the North City Congress, but gained national fame for being the plaintiff in the 1971 Supreme Court case, *Lemon v. Kurtzman*. This decision established what was known as the "Lemon Test" to determine when the wall separating church from state had been breached. He also won the 2003 First Amendment Hero Award from the Freedom From Religion Foundation for his successful challenge of Pennsylvania's use of public tax funds to support religious schools.

In brief, the "Lemon Test" pronounced that in order to be constitutional, laws must 1) have a secular purpose; 2) be neutral towards religion, neither hindering nor advancing any religion; and 3) not result in "excessive entanglements" between government and religion.

We at the Ethical Humanist Society are keeping in our heart Mr. Lemon's widow, Augusta Lemon, and his son, Anthony Lemon. At the time of this writing, arrangements for a memorial service have not been finalized.

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except July and August.

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**Ethical Humanist Society
of Philadelphia**

Hugh Taft-Morales, Leader

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SUMMER BIRTHDAYS

June

3 - Temma Fishman
7 - Steve Bremner
7 - Janice Moore
12 - George Sakheim
18 - Bob Allen

July

9 - John McCormick
9 - Harry Thorn
10 - Janet Cooke
10 - Sylvia Lee Metzler
20 - Bill Goldberg
20 - Rita Verbin
22 - Marvin Liebman
23 - David Ralston
26 - Elisabeth Lightbourn
26 - Sharon Wallis

August

6 - Kim McKay
12 - Carole Karash
14 - Ilse Sakheim
20 - Nic Esposito

***Ethical Humanist Society
of Philadelphia***

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