



Ethical Views

2014

January 2014 Vol. 128, No. 5 Newsletter of the Ethical Humanist Society of Philadelphia

Sunday Platforms January 2014

Sunday, January 5, 11:00 AM
Memorial Sunday: The Past Builds the Future

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

On the first Sunday of each year we at the Ethical Humanist Society remember those who have died. Members and guests are invited to share memories of loved ones or historical heroes no longer with us. These memories can inspire us to make the most of the future.

Hugh will also recall an Ethical Society member important to our past and future: Jennie Fels. As described by Betsy Lightbourn in our March, 2013 *Ethical Views*, Fels became Board President and Society Administrator under Leader S. Burns Weston. Her involvement in the Ethical Society inspired her and her husband to purchase and deed to the Society both Camp Linden (1926) and the Rittenhouse Square building (1929). Without such generosity we can literally wonder, "Where would we be today?" Our January pledge drive for 2014 will determine our tomorrow. May remembering our past help build our future!

Sunday, January 12, 11:00 AM
At-Risk Philly Youth and Work
Nic Esposito



Join Philadelphia Parks and Recreation (PPR) Project Manager Nic Esposito as he presents the workforce development goals of PowerCorpsPHL. This new initiative of PPR, the Mayor's Office of Civic Engagement and Education Works is designed to advocate for workforce opportunities for at-risk 18-26-year-olds. Esposito will discuss the program's goals and methods for giving the youth of Philadelphia the resources and support to succeed, as

well as tell the stories of these inspiring young people who are defying the odds and bucking the trends of urban youth struggling with poverty, incarceration and a lack of opportunity.



* * * *

Nic Esposito is a writer, urban farmer and entrepreneur from Philadelphia. Along with managing PowerCorpsPHL projects, Esposito is also the co-manager of Emerald Street Urban Farm in Kensington. Esposito is also an accomplished writer and novelist, and founded The Head & The Hand Press to build a publishing company and increase the writing community in Philadelphia. He lives on his urban homestead with his wife Elisa and their wonderful animals.

Sunday, January 19, 11:00 AM
Transforming Jail:

MLK in Birmingham

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

Martin Luther King Jr. was jailed dozens of times for his efforts to defend the dignity of every human being. While imprisonment can break the spirit of many, somehow it strengthened King's resolve and enhanced his personal dignity. In 1963 it produced one of the most important civil rights documents in history: King's *Letter from the Birmingham Jail*. Like many others thrown into jail for standing up for their social justice beliefs – Henry David Thoreau, Margaret Sanger, Gandhi, Malcolm X, Nelson Mandela – King managed to overcome forces of oppression. What can we glean from the power of some to transcend jail and bring out the best? How can we apply these lessons to our own ethical action efforts, including reforming a prison system that destroys hopes and maximizes recidivism? Can we help society transform imprisonment?

Sunday, January 26, 2014, 11:00 AM
Homelessness and the Road to Hell
Dennis Culhane, Prof. of Social Policy, Univ. of Penna.

At present, homelessness in the United States is primarily addressed by

providing emergency and transitional shelter facilities. These programs do not directly address the causes of homelessness, and residents are exposed to victimization and trauma during shelter stays. We need an alternative that is more humane, as well as more efficient and effective, in order to fully address the issue of homelessness. Culhane will discuss outdoor feeding programs, transitional housing, consumer perspectives, and emerging national and international housing policy strategies, with emphasis on the Housing First program.

* * * *

Dennis Culhane is the Dana and Andrew Stone Professor of Social Policy at the University of PA. His primary areas of research are homelessness, assisted housing policy, and policy analysis research methods. His current work includes studies of the dynamics of homelessness among families and adults, and the impact of homelessness on the utilization of health, education and social services. He is the Director of Research for the US Veterans Administration's national center for homelessness among Veterans. He is also working with several states and cities to develop preventive approaches to homelessness, including "rapid exit" and community-based housing stabilization programs. Culhane's work has resulted in federal legislation requiring all cities and states to develop administrative data systems for tracking homeless services in order to receive HUD funding. Culhane's recent research includes studies of vulnerable youth and young adults, including those transitioning from foster care, juvenile justice, and residential treatment services.

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Leader's Column



Money is Not a Dirty Word!

Hugh Taft-Morales

This month at the Ethical Humanist Society of Philadelphia the Board and pledge team are encouraging generous financial commitments on the part of all members. "Now is the time," they are proclaiming, "to demonstrate your dedication to growing Ethical Humanism in the Philadelphia region! Open up your hearts and your wallets, people, and bring out your best pledge!" (Well, at least that's how I *imagine* them proclaiming.)

Members of the pledge team and the Board will tell you, however, that this is not always easy to do. "After all," some will say, "no one likes asking for money." Fundraising can be challenging for many different reasons. Some people don't like asking for money because they hate being turned down. Some think that it is an imposition to ask for money. Others simply feel that money is somehow "dirty," something you deal with in life, but not something you talk about in public.



My response is simply to say that money is not a dirty word! But I would not have said that a decade ago. Let me tell you why I've changed. Back in 2006, after serving as President of the Board of Trustees at the Washington

Ethical Society (WES), I was seeking another way to support my local hub of humanism. It was suggested that I take the position of pledge chair. My first reaction was, "Ewww... yuck!" You see, like many, I was afraid of being rejected, thought it would be rude to ask, and was taught growing up not to talk about money.

Part of my evolution away from this perspective was stimulated by my academic life. In teaching bioethics and moral philosophy I often was bemused by those who refused to discuss money in ethical debates. For example, while studying bioethics at Georgetown University's Kennedy School of Ethics we often analyzed debates about scarce resource allocation. Should we pour money into cancer research or infant inoculations? Should a hospital invest half a million dollars in one CT scanner, or in providing pre-natal healthcare for 5,000 mothers each year? Sometimes people will get frustrated and say, "How can you measure the dollar value of a human life?"

Of course juggling the practical and the ideal, the financial and the ethical, is a challenge. But it is important to remember that values are often expressed by how one chooses to spend money. While not making a show of things, it is important to be candid and honest about how we allocate our financial resources. To put your head in the sand about this is irresponsible.

That is part of what I learned after I accepted the job of WES Pledge Chair. Recalling both a seminar I took on marketing, and some excellent advice from some of Ethical Culture's best fundraisers, I changed my attitude about running a pledge drive. I was asked to consider the following questions: "Do you believe the world needs Ethical Culture? Do you believe that the Ethical Society serves an important role in the lives of its members and the larger public? Will you give generously to support our community commitment to Ethical Culture?" My answer to all three questions was an emphatic, "Of course! Of course I will! This is what I believe in, deep in my heart."

"Well, then," I was asked, "why do you hesitate to offer others the same opportunity to contribute generously to something important the world desperately needs?"

Why indeed? You see for years I considered fundraising a form of asking for favors. I approached potential funders timidly asking, "I hate to impose on you, but please, please, please, would you consider giving just a little something to this little project of ours?"

... I am offering the opportunity to be a part of something profoundly good!

In reality, however, Ethical Humanism is not a pet project requiring the favors of a few friends. We come together to bring out the best in each other so we can support each other through life and help heal a broken world. This is a grand and noble project. Being a part of it has opened my life up in many ways. In asking others to join me in this project I am not asking favors; I am offering the opportunity to be a part of something profoundly good!

I leapt into my fundraising duties at the Washington Ethical Society enthusiastically. It was a year when funds were needed to complete some capital improvements, so our 2006-2007 theme was, "Brick by brick, dollar by dollar, deed by deed, building a better world together!" We continued the brick theme in our pledge dinner interactive fable called "The Wizard of WES", a mini-play emphasizing the gold bricks needed to build the yellow brick road! The emerald city of a flourishing future required investment. We encouraged members to give 5% of their gross adjusted income to the cause, saying "for some of you this is not new; for others it would be a bold step in leadership." The drive was a tremendous success.

(Continued next page)

We at the Ethical Humanist Society of Philadelphia need to decide what is the right formula for us. We are still relatively small and still learning. But it is time we begin understanding that money is not a dirty word. The new pledge brochure coming out this month lays out some of the realities involved in keeping our building on Rittenhouse Square in good repair while providing sufficient resources to help our educational programs, social justice efforts, and community home flourish. If you believe in our mission, in our deeds, and in our community, this is your opportunity to express your values by supporting our shared work with a generous pledge.



Of course generosity is a relative thing. Some of us have at our disposal greater financial resources than others. The pledge team wants to encourage *everyone* to dig deep and be as generous as possible. But only you can judge what you can afford. Look at your practical needs and life situation. But also dream about what the Ethical Society means to you. Think carefully about how much you want to see humanist values promoted in our region and the world. This is our Ethical Society and it requires our generosity to flourish. I hope you will agree with me that “money is not a dirty word.” While respecting each other’s privacy, let’s encourage everyone to pledge a financial contribution that together demonstrates our commitment to Ethical Humanism and our community home at 1906 Rittenhouse Square!



Billions and Billions

By Arnold Fishman

Now that the news of the discovery of the Higgs boson has faded, the latest scientific buzz is that the recently retired Kepler space telescope has confirmed that there are hundreds of billions of Earth-like planets just in our galaxy alone. And there are hundreds of billions of galaxies in the known universe. By “Earth-like” we mean small, rocky, and within the Goldilocks zone (i.e. not too hot and not too cold) so as to harbor liquid water considered a requirement for life as we know it. This has, once again, fueled the discussion as to the existence of extraterrestrial life. Note that we are talking about life in general and not just intelligent life.



Intelligent life (read technologically advanced) would produce transmissions that escape the planet of their origin. Our television waves, propagating at the speed of light, have been traveling since TV became commercially available in the late 1920s. They would be almost a hundred light years away. I can’t help visualizing a green scaly alien with a tail and three heads. One head is watching Uncle Miltie and the other two are staring at each other in utter amazement. If there are such creatures, where are all of their transmissions?

Given that plethora of planets, some of that intelligence must be much older than ours. Their transmissions would have traveled longer, and should have reached us by now. The fact that they have not been detected should give us pause. Some time ago an astrophysicist named Frank Drake attempted to calculate the probability of extraterrestrial intelligent life. He was able to estimate with some degree of precision the number of galaxies, stars within..., planets around..., planets close enough for liquid water, etc., until he came to an incalculable term. The probability of a technologically advanced civilization to self-destruct is unknowable. We have but one example, and for it my prognosis is guarded.

I used to think that unknowable term (the propensity of a technologically advanced civilization to self-destruct) referred to a nuclear holocaust. I envisioned a cataclysmic destruction. I now believe, if it happens, it is likely to be subtler than that. Our death march will be to the beat of environmental degradation. We are engaged in making our insignificant but magnificent home in this vast universe dangerous to our health. We won’t blow ourselves up; we will render the Earth unfit for human habitation. All other animals know not to foul their nests.

My wife and I grew up in Philadelphia hugging concrete. It has been almost forty years since we moved to an old log cabin on a lake in the Pine Barrens. Since that time the character of the community has remained remarkably stable and unspoiled. But the current climate gorilla in the Pines is threatening that pristine quality. There is an application pending before the Pinelands Commission to allow South Jersey Gas to run a twenty-two mile, twenty-four inch diameter high-pressure pipeline transporting fracked liquefied natural gas from Pennsylvania’s Marcellus Shale Formation through the Pinelands. ***It would carry 20 billion cubic feet of gas to repower the Beesley’s Point Generating Station, creating well over 1 million tons of new greenhouse gas emissions at a time when we need to make deep emissions reductions to prevent catastrophic warming.*** Although the final outcome is far from certain, the choir of robust voices raised in opposition is gratifying. This would be just one more lesion in that death of a thousand cuts. As E. O. Wilson the Harvard entomologist said, “Despoiling a forest for economic gain is like burning a Renaissance painting to cook a meal.”

Has anyone (besides me, that is) noticed that weather events like Super Storm Sandy and Typhoon Haiyan, tempests that we like to call five hundred year storms, are occurring on an annual basis? If we continue down this path: rising oceans will obliterate island nations and inundate low-lying

(Continued bottom of next page)

Ethical Action Spotlight

Fracking in Dimock, Susquehanna County

by Sylvia Metzler

[A note from Hugh: As a new member, Sylvia Metzler inspires me with her commitment and activism regarding many ethical action issues. This article touches on her efforts to fight reckless fracking in our area. I am particularly impressed by how human relationships are fundamental to such environmental work. Ethical Humanists believe that improving relationships is the most effective way to make positive change in society. Her recent trip showed just how hard this work can be. Please speak to Sylvia if you would like to get involved!]

As bad as the pollution/contamination of Dimock drinking water is, could the poisoning of relationships there be even worse?

Fifteen people from the Philadelphia area traveled to Dimock in Susquehanna County in October, 2013 to see what fracking looked like close up. We were not an unbiased group.

We all believed that fracking was bad for people's health and dangerous for the environment. Our fears were more than confirmed, especially with the help of our guide, Vera Scroggins, who lives in the county. Because of her activism and criticism of the gas companies, she has an injunction issued against her and is not allowed to set foot on any Cabot-leased lands, whether they have gas wells on them or not. So she often stood on the road while the rest of us walked onto properties to see the well pads, holding ponds, pipelines, polluted wells and water buffaloes.

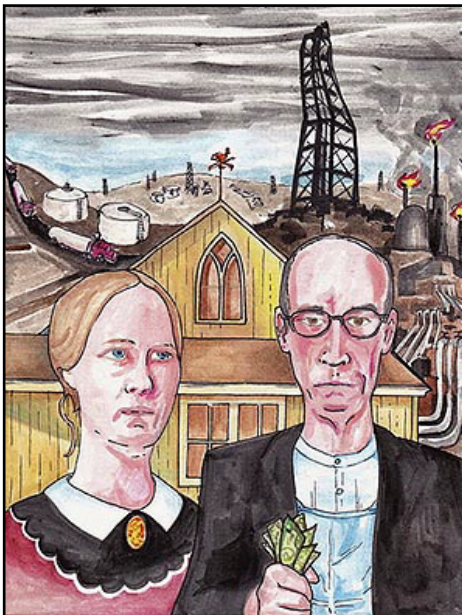
That was actually a dangerous position for her as large tank trucks carrying water, fracking fluids, or sand were constantly speeding by on the narrow country roads. We experienced the

rough deteriorating condition of the roads and heard about accidents as well.

One of the local women that we spoke to shared how difficult it was to live without a reliable water source. Her well had become polluted, which resulted in skin and respiratory illnesses in her family.

So now they have a "water buffalo," a 1000-gallon plastic tank in a shed next to their house. Since the EPA stated that they could not prove that the pollution was caused by fracking, the gas company no longer has to fill the tank. Now individual families have the expense of filling their tanks which they use for bathing and washing clothes and dishes. But they cannot use this water for drinking and cooking! For that, they need to buy bottled water in the markets. If that is not enough aggravation and expense, they also have to buy a heater and pay about \$100 per month to keep the water in the buffalo from freezing in the winter.

We saw and heard about other kinds of pollution: air, soil, light and noise. The argument against fracking seemed to be a "slam dunk" except for three other powerful factors: money, fear and the erratic path of underground water in the shale.



Some families still have good well water and are receiving much-needed cash from the gas companies. Other families sued over the loss of their potable

water and are receiving settlements from the companies. However those settlements were accompanied by "gag orders" which prohibit them from disclosing the amount of the settlement or from criticizing the company in any way.

Not surprisingly, this had pitted neighbor against neighbor, friend vs. friend, even family against family. A community has been fractured as surely as the shale beneath it. Was this a goal of the gas companies or just an unexpected and welcomed consequence?

I now take shorter showers and try not to waste any water. I'll continue to contact Gov. Corbett, President Obama and my state and national legislators to urge a moratorium on fracking. I'll attend meetings of Food and Water Watch or Protecting Our Waters. I'll help to organize other tours to Dimock. Will you join me (not in the shower!)? I don't know how to help heal the relationships in Dimock but will work to "agree to disagree" without being disagreeable myself in my own relationships. ◇

Billions and Billions

(Cont'd. from previous page)

population-dense coastal areas creating hordes of refugees; pure life-sustaining air and water will become contaminated and poison the multitudes; and desertification will make even the wealthy nations food insecure.

You and I are comprised of atoms that were spread throughout the universe in the supernovae explosions of second-generation stars. In a real sense, we are made of star stuff. According to latest calculations, this universe is 13.7 billion years old. It took that long for us to get here. It would be tragic for that timeline to end, and shameful if it were to come to pass on our watch. Accordingly, the uncertain component in the Drake Equation is of no small consequence. Extinction is not an option!

(Also submitted to *The Barrister* of the Camden County Bar Assn., January, 2014)

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Happenings

PARKING PERMITS E - X - T - E - N - D - E - D

Our Sunday parking hours have been extended. Beginning in January our hours will be:

Sundays, 9:00 AM to 10:00 PM
(extended from 4:00 PM)

and

Wednesdays, 6:30 PM to 10:00 PM
(unchanged).

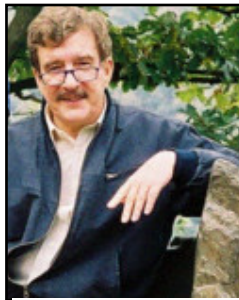
Our parking permits are for events that EHSOP sponsors or participates in and not for events by renters.

ETHICS ON THE SQUARE

Monday, January 6, 7:30-9:00 PM:

A Pluralistic Universe, a discussion with
H. G. Callaway

There is enough food for philosophic thought in William James' *A Pluralistic Universe* to feed an intellectual army. In many ways, from his critique of all-unifying Hegelian absolutism to his



H. G. Callaway

analysis of consciousness, this work represents the birth of twentieth century pragmatic thought. Add to that the twenty-first century editorial introduction and footnotes of Ethical Society friend, H. G. Callaway, and the table is set for a rich discussion. Join Leader Hugh Taft-Morales for a conversation with Dr. Callaway where we explore not only the complex metaphysical and epistemological points James raises, but the social and political implications of his approach for today. How do we best create an America where respect for diversity balances our need for continuity and unity?

Pick up a copy of the book up for your personal library, or from your neighborhood library: *A Pluralistic Universe*, by William James, *A New Philosophical Reading*. Edited and introduced by H. G. Callaway, Cambridge Scholars Publishing (2008).

Announcements



Sunday, January 5
7:00 PM

Introduction to Ethical Humanism

Come enjoy an *Introduction to Ethical Humanism*. Leader Hugh Taft-Morales and members discuss the history and philosophy of Ethical Humanism, followed by Q & A and wine and cheese! Visitors new to the Ethical Society are encouraged to attend. Please RSVP to leaderhugh@phillyethics.org.

Thursday, January 9, 7:00-9:00 PM, "The Art of Living: The Roles of Self and Community," (Fifth session)

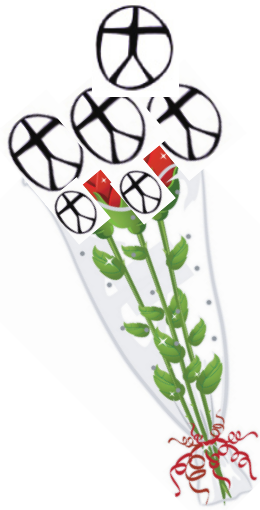


Facilitated by guest C.J. Fearnley and hosted by Hugh Taft-Morales, "The Art of Living" asks us to examine the meaning and purpose of our lives so we can live more thoughtfully and fully. This month's discussion will explore the novel ***Song of Solomon*** by **Toni Morrison** (b. 1931) who won the 1993 Nobel Prize in Literature. What does Morrison's novel say about the roles of self and community in our lives? What does Morrison think the end and aim of our lives ought to be? For you personally, what are the roles of ownership, the whole truth, names, self and community in your life? How do these values fit into your art of living? The book is widely available in libraries and bookstores.

The three videos are:

1. *The Narrative Construction of the Self*, by Kenneth Taylor
<http://vimeo.com/22352839>
2. *The Flight of Self*, by R. Lanier Anderson
<http://vimeo.com/22358387>
3. *It's not about you Living Longer. It's About how you Live and Why*, by Joshua Landy
<http://vimeo.com/22362723>

Feel free to attend even if you can't read the book and/or watch all the videos.



Dr. Martin Luther King Day of Service

Monday, January 20,
8:15 AM - 2:00 PM

Overbrook High School

5898 Lancaster Avenue
Philadelphia, PA 19131

Monday, January 20, 8:15 AM-2:00 PM, Martin Luther King Day of Service

Location: 5898 Lancaster Ave. Philadelphia, PA 19131

Thanks to Christian Hayden, for the second consecutive year the Ethical Humanist Society of Philadelphia will join *City Year Greater Philadelphia* on the Martin Luther King, Jr. Day of Service. The service day will be located at Overbrook High School and it will be a large-scale beautification project with mural paintings, mosaics, light construction and more!

If you would like to attend, please contact Christian Hayden at chayden423@gmail.com. As we get closer to the date, logistics for transportation will be discussed.

January is Pledge Month

Help Keep Our Garden of Humanism Growing!

The 2014 pledge campaign will kick off on January 5. Following the Platform you can pick up your pledge information. The information will be mailed to all members who cannot pick up the information at this time. A stamped return envelope will be provided for your convenience. Please read the form carefully so that you understand just how crucial your generosity is to the future of the Ethical Humanist Society of Philadelphia (EHSOP).

The brochure offers notes from Board President Jeffery Dubb and Leader Hugh Taft-Morales, highlights of our 2013 accomplishments, a snapshot of our budget, an explanation of the sources of our income, and more. But most important of all is the pledge form we need you to return no later than January 31.

You, the members and friends of EHSOP, will determine the growth of our garden of humanism. Your financial contributions plant the seeds, your expertise nurtures the plants, and your hours of volunteering harvest the fruits of our commitment to build a better world. Help make this pledge drive our best ever!

MARK THE DATES:

May 23-26, 2014,

FES Conference support announcement



The Future of Ethical Societies (FES) is coming to Philadelphia and needs your help!

Every year, young Ethical Humanists from around the country (usually ages 18-27) gather for 3 days over Memorial Day weekend to explore humanism and deepen their connections with each other. Traditionally members and friends of local Ethical Societies open up their households to help defray the cost of the conference, so that organizers can dedicate more resources to activities. From May 23rd - 26th, 2014, the Ethical Humanist Society of Philadelphia will be hosting the conference and we need your help! If you live in Philadelphia, can you host some young Ethical Culturists? Do you have any good friends that might be willing to be hosts? Please contact Hugh Taft-Morales or Christian Hayden ASAP!



**Current
Art Exhibition
in the
Collier Room**

*Photography
by*

Bob Bueding

January 2014

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			1 	2	3	4
*5 11:00 a.m. Memorial Sunday Hugh Taft-Morales 7:00p.m. Intro.- Ethical Humanism Hugh Taft-Morales	6 7:30 p.m. Pluralistic Universe H.G. Callaway	7	8 Meetings 6:30 p.m. Education Committee 7:45 p.m. Ethical Action Committee	9 7:00p.m.- The Art of Living CJ Fernley 7:00 p.m.- LAA Center-City "Captioning Philly"	10	11
*12 11:00 a.m. At-Risk Philly Youth and Work Nic Esposito	13	14 7:00 p.m. Pennsylvanians for Alternatives to the Death Penalty Meeting	15 Meetings 5:30p.m. Finance Committee	16	17	18
*19 11:00 a.m. MLK in Birmingham Hugh Taft-Morales	20 8:15 a.m. MLK Day of Service (Overbrook HS) Christian Hayden	21	22 Meeting 6:30 p.m. EHSOP Board	23  Amnesty International 7:00 p.m.	24	25
*26 11:00 a.m. Homelessness and the Road to Hell Dennis Culhame	27	28	29 Meeting 6:30 p.m. Camp Linden Committee	30	31	
*Child care provided during all platforms						

JANUARY BIRTHDAYS

10	Carol Love
11	Sandy Coffey
14	Lyle Murley
18	Victoria Kent
21	Ken Greiff

Quote-Unquote



According to the Center for Disease Control (CDC) cigarettes kill over 435,000 people a year in the United States. ... The annual death toll of illegal drug addicts, according to the same government study? 17,000. Heroin or coffin nails, you be the judge.

-Piper Kerman, *Orange is the New Black; My Year in a Women's Prison*, Random House, 2011, p. 259.

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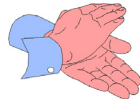
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of Philadelphia**

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SUNDAY SERVICES

**Hosts - Coordinated by
Nick Sanders**



January 5 - Henry Pashkow with
Joel and/or Rita

January 12 - Garry O'Rourke with
Vince

January 19 - Sandy and Bill Coffey
with Linda

January 26 - John McCormick with
Ron Colburn



Flowers Coordinated

by David Ralston

January 5 - Irene Putzer

January 12 - Carole Love, "For my
January birthday"

January 19 - Arnold and Temma
Fishman, for Granddaughter Zoey's
Birthday.

January 26 - T.B.A.



**Coffee Hour, Coordinated by Ken
Greiff**

(Alphabetically by last name)

January 5- Group A-E

January 12 - Group F-K

January 19 - Group L-O

January 26 - Group P-Z

***Ethical Humanist Society
of Philadelphia***

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