

Ethical Views

June 2014

Vol. 128, No. 10 Newsletter of the Ethical Humanist Society of Philadelphia

Summer Edition

SUMMER SUNDAY MEETINGS ARE AT 10:00 AM.

Summer programs offer a change of pace from the rest of the year. While we try to inspire as well as inform all year around, we try especially hard during the summer months to present more art, music, literature and other aesthetically-orienteed programs.



JUNE 2014

Sunday, June 1,
departing 11:00 A.M.

EHSOP Annual Picnic (in lieu of meeting)

Camp Linden, 1521 Camp Linden Rd., West Chester, PA 19382

Grilled hotdogs, hamburgers, veggie patties, beer, soft drinks and potluck lunch. Afternoon of games and activities for all ages, including folk songs led by Hugh Taft-Morales and kayaking on the Brandywine. \$15 per person for adults (\$10 if you bring a dish). Children under the age of 12 free. Proceeds benefit the Camp Linden Summer Children's Program. Meet at EHSOP building at 11:00 AM to carpool to Camp Linden. RSVP to Henry Pashkow: hpashkow@gmail.com or 215 694-4498.

Sunday, June 8
The Power of Song
Marta Guttenberg, guest Jonathan Sills, Hugh Taft-Morales

Through the ages and around the globe, song has been able to unite people to resist oppression. In a production including operatic, blues, folk and rock numbers, three gifted performers sing and invite you to sing along with both classic and newer songs of resistance.

This program written by Pat McGeever in honor of the recently deceased great, Pete Seeger, will be performed by EHSOP singers Marta Guttenberg, Hugh Taft-Morales, and special guest Jonathan Sills.

Sunday, June 15
Music variations are like inspired improvisations Rollin Wilbur, EHSOP Pianist.

Sunday, June 22
Children are the Barometers
Marietta Tanner, Hugh Taft-Morales

Tanner reads excerpts from her essay collection, *Children are the Barometers*, about her experience teaching during the drug war in the South Bronx in the 1970-80's. Hugh Taft-Morales facilitates a discussion of these stories and their relevance to the lives of young people in Philadelphia today.

Sunday, June 29
Ethical Page-Turners
Betsy Lighbourn, EHSOP Committee Chair and lifelong bookworm

Ethical issues are often creatively explored through fiction, even genre page-turners such as thrillers, historical novels, romances, and science fiction. These can all offer good reads (especially during vacations), often with ethical insights. You are invited to share your favorite guilty pleasures and make your recommendations through a series of short reviews delivered at our "beach" here at the Ethical Society. To volunteer as a critic, speak to Betsy.

Quote-Unquote

"The Court re-created the system of legalized bribery."

--Fred Wertheimer, president of Democracy 21, on the Supreme Court's *McCutcheon* ruling. (Quoted in *The Nation*, April 28, 2014, p. 6)



JULY 2014

Sunday, July 6
To be announced.

Sunday, July 13
Friendship. A Colloquy, of course
Led by EHSOP member Leslie Williams

Sunday, July 20
Considering Ending Poverty, a Discussion
Led by EHSOP member Elisabeth Leonard.

Sunday, July 27
The Bully Pulpit
Hugh Taft-Morales, Leader, Ethical Humanist Society of Philadelphia

Hugh leads a discussion of Doris Kearns Goodwin's *The Bully Pulpit*, which focuses on relationships among Teddy Roosevelt, William Howard Taft and the national press. Given its 750+ pages, Hugh will recommend a chapter or two to focus on, closer to the event.

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AUGUST

Sunday, August 3

Yoga: Body and Mind

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

After last summer's popular seated-yoga program, Hugh will offer another supplemented with more personal and philosophical insights into the benefits of increased harmony between the body and mind that he attains through his modest yoga practice. Wear comfortable clothes if you want to participate in some gentle poses, or you are free to just listen and observe.

Sunday, August 10, 2014

A Few Moments with DH Lawrence

Lyle Murley, Ph.D., EHSOP member and retired English professor.

Lyle will consider a number of poems Lawrence used to explore and articulate his visions of relationships, personal integrity, evolution, and newness.

Sunday, August 17,

Travel beyond vacationing

Richard Kiniry, EHSOP Leader Emeritus and globe-trotter extraordinaire

There has always been a divide between tourists and beach-sitting travelers. But among tourists there is also a distinction between those searching out historic beauty and those looking for a cultural experience. This will be a combination. What can we learn about our world by travel to a particular country?

Sunday, August 24

You want funny? I'll give you funny!

Colloquy led by Temma Fishman, EHSOP member and long-term spouse of Arnold

Sunday, August 31

Labor Day Weekend. No program scheduled.



President's Corner

The Return of Evil

By Jeffrey Dubb, EHSOP President

I was reading Leslie Jamison's book, *The Empathy Exams* and considering writing about empathy in this President's Corner. After all, such a basic emotion -- one shared by little children, orcas, and elephants -- might be the sentiment that forms the basis for morality. But then I got sidetracked onto another "e" word, evil. In a way, evil is a case of extreme lack of empathy. What distracted me from empathy was a column by Paul Krugman, entitled "Health Care Nightmares" which appeared in the *New York Times* for April 10. Krugman makes a connection between the opposition to the Affordable Care Act, and evil.

To get up to speed in thinking about evil, I made an appointment with our philosopher emeritus, Richard L. Kiniry. In the absence of a left bank café à la Deux Magots, with Jean Paul Sartre and Simone de Beauvoir smoking Gauloises and arguing existentialism at the next table, we had a sumptuous breakfast at The Famous Deli at 4th and Bainbridge. (I love breakfast for interviews. I did all my discussions with Kate Esposito at breakfast places.) RLK said that he thought evil was back as a real force affecting our lives and that evil which is legitimized by government sanction is the most dangerous of all. Richard set me to reading Hannah Arendt's amazing study *Eichmann in Jerusalem* as the starting place for understanding evil in our times.

In spite of misunderstanding the virulent antisemitic nature of Eichmann, Arendt presented a profound description on how evil is expressed in the modern state. Arendt was trying to understand

how "good Germans" with a Christian background, not demons, monsters, or sadists could have perpetrated the horrors of the "final solution." She writes:

"The trouble with Eichmann was precisely that so many were like him, and that the many were neither perverted nor sadistic, that they were, and still are, terribly and terrifyingly normal. From the viewpoint of our legal institutions and of our moral standards of judgment, this normality was much more terrifying than all the atrocities put together, for it implies -- as had been said at Nuremberg over and over again by the defendants and their counsels -- that this new type of criminal, who is in actual fact *hostis generis humani* [an enemy of humanity], commits his crimes under circumstances that make it well-nigh impossible for him to know or to feel that he is doing wrong."

Roger Berkowitz in the *New York Times* for July 7, 2013 quotes Arendt as saying "The longer one listened to him [Eichmann], the more obvious it became that his inability to speak was closely connected with an inability to think, namely, to think from the standpoint of someone else." Berkowitz added, "His evil acts were motivated by thoughtlessness that was neither stupidity nor bureaucratic obedience, but a staggering inability to see the world beyond Nazi clichés."



In talking to Richard about evil, he explained some of the necessary qualifications that were required to describe the worst kinds of evil.

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First, the actions must be voluntary, conscious, and carried out knowing the consequences. Second, the actions should result in human suffering on a large scale. Third, the actions must be legitimized by the state. When the government carries out evil actions, they are usually directed against a segment of the population that has been stigmatized and scapegoated. It does not seem that people who carry out discriminatory policies are totally lacking in empathy, but rather the process of denying empathy or compassion to racial minorities, immigrants, or the poor has been made acceptable.



The Affordable Care Act is the latest piece of a 50-year old effort to provide insurance for the American public. Modern health insurance in the US began with World War II when health insurance was offered as a benefit to help military contractors find workers. Employer-based health insurance is the cornerstone of the American healthcare system and is based on generous tax incentives. In 1965, LBJ pushed through Medicare and Medicaid. In 1997, SCHIP (State Children's Health Insurance Program) was passed. So we have a system where most of the population is covered by insurance that is subsidized by the Federal Government.

When the ACA was passed in 2010 there were about 40 million people in the US without health insurance. People lack health insurance for a number of reasons, the most common being an inability to afford it. I haven't met anyone who thinks it would be better for someone to not have health insurance than to have it. And I think that willing all US citizens to have it would pass Kant's categorical imperative test that it should be a universal law.

What has been the reception of the ACA? The House has voted over 54 times in 4 years to repeal it. States like Missouri have put up barriers to prevent advocates from explaining the law to eligible people. Wealthy corporate interests like the Kochs have paid for TV ads attacking the law. And the most controversial part of all is the rejection of Medicaid Expansion (MedExp). For example, Texas will lose over 9 billion dollars in 2022, and about one million Texans will not have access to health care under MedExp.

Now back to the comment in Paul Krugman's article on "Health Care Nightmares". Krugman quotes the health care economist Jonathan Gruber: The Medicaid-rejection states "are willing to sacrifice billions of dollars of injections into their economy in order to punish poor people. It really is just almost awesome in its evilness."

Can the MedExp rejections be truly called evil? The policies do satisfy the three criteria in the previous paragraph: conscious action, widespread suffering, and legitimization. The governors and legislators who are doing this are trying to gain favor with right wing constituents who do not want to support people who, in their view, do not deserve the aid. They say, "I worked and saved so I could buy insurance for my family, so why should some lazy or shiftless person get health insurance for nothing?" But the question for any MedExp rejecter should be: "If you wouldn't live a single day without health insurance, why does your waiter or hairdresser have to live months or years without it?" The poor who would most benefit from MedExp have been singled out as a politically expendable segment of the electorate who can be sacrificed to get votes. The message is "They don't deserve it. They should be punished."

No one is saying that forcing our fellow citizens to live without health care when it is available at acceptable

cost is active genocide although the consequences could be the same. But the moral stupidity is similar in both situations. Medicaid rejecters are denying the intrinsic worth of a certain segment of the population and using people for their own selfish ends.

◇

The Power of POWER
Philadelphia and the Minimum Wage
Hugh Taft-Morales



POWER

Philadelphians Organized
to Witness Empower &
Rebuild

There is power in POWER! ...and in other coalitions who come together to demand greater social justice. Despite previous resistance to some calls for raising the minimum wage, Mayor Michael Nutter signed an executive order raising the minimum wage for subcontracted Philadelphia workers to \$10.88 per hour. More precisely, the mayor extended Philadelphia's 21st Century Minimum Wage law so that in addition to the wage increase, it provides health insurance and paid sick leave. The executive order also ties this wage floor to inflation and will go up to \$12 per hour in 2015.

Although we only recently joined the coalition known as POWER (Philadelphians Organized to Witness, Empower, and Rebuild), the Ethical Humanist Society can feel proud to be associated with many activists who made it politically worthwhile for the Mayor to do what is right. In the words of Councilman Wilson Goode, Jr., this might not have happened without the "local movement to push progressive economic policy...being led by SEIU 32BJ, POWER, and Fight for Philly."

While the pressure put on the mayor by this coalition was political, perhaps the moral imperative behind it also played a role in Mayor Nutter's thinking. The mayor concluded his own remarks at the signing ceremony with a plea that all workers, not just those involved in city business, be treated fairly. He said, "Let me ask, propose and suggest, to the business owners in the city of Philadelphia – those who don't do business with the city - before you look

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at your financial bottom line, I want you to look into the eyes and the hearts and the souls of your workers first. I want you to look at the cost of living in this city and the minimum wage. And sometimes in the quiet of your heart you might ask yourself if your employees are, in fact, worth more. And if you can afford it, and if you have the capacity to do it, and if it is within your being, give your own employees a raise.”

Many members of EHSOP have already contributed time and energy to phone bank evenings with our fellow POWER allies from Leyv Ha-Ir, Heart of the City. Making “cold calls” is not always easy, but many EHSOP members have really come through with time and energy. Thanks to the enthusiasm and persistence of our outgoing Ethical Action Committee Chair, Kate Esposito, members shared space, snacks and socializing in calling our fellow Philadelphians urging them to vote on May 20 and to support minimum wage and a fair funding formula for public schools.

We look forward to the on-going campaign for social and economic justice in Philadelphia. For now, we can take a moment to enjoy one more small step towards a better world for all. ◇



Hugh seeks volunteers

Looking for a way to work for peace and criminal justice reform? Three possibilities:

First, are you willing to help promote viewing of our **Art for Justice** exhibit in the Collier Gallery? We seek volunteers willing to learn a bit about the art and artists and be available at mutually agreeable times to meet small groups at 1906 Rittenhouse and spend an hour in the gallery with them. In particular, we seek such help for the weekend of June 6-8.

Second, Hugh is preparing a Criminal Justice Reform Summit to occur the afternoon of September 7 and would love help in planning, preparing and hosting.

Third, Peace Day Philly is Saturday, September 21. If you would like to help with logistics and program for our fourth annual Sing-Along for Peace as well as an evening event in the auditorium, please contact Hugh.

Potential summer fun!

Want to help plan some fun, easy, social and learning field trips for the summer months?

How about a leisurely walk along the river (with a trash bag in hand, perhaps, for beautification efforts), followed by a casual dinner on the summer solstice, June 21?

Want to try a volunteer night at preparing and serving food at Broad Street Ministries, a remarkably active and progressive community we can learn from?

Why not join with other EHSOP members for a tour of Eastern State Penitentiary, a meal and a discussion?

If any of these ideas intrigue you, and you would like to help plan or just attend, contact Hugh to make them a reality!

On View in the Collier Gallery: “Dignity and Worth in the Era of Mass Incarceration”

From across Rittenhouse Square, these haunting images created by incarcerated individuals beckon at night through the second-floor windows of the Ethical Society Art Gallery when the room is lit. Ann Marie Kirk, director and co-founder of Art for Justice, a grassroots organization that supports and exhibits art by incarcerated individuals, spoke about the art work and her efforts to use art to stimulate public dialogue on critical issues and systemic flaws in the criminal justice system at the opening in April and again on May 11. The exhibit, “Dignity and Worth in the Era of Mass Incarceration,” can be viewed in the gallery by appointment through September by contacting the Society at [301-580-1481](tel:301-580-1481) or LeaderHugh@phillyethics.org.



Photographs by Betsy Lightborn

Happenings

SPECIAL REPORT: AEU, EHSOP AND SKOKIE

From May 1-4, the American Ethical Union held its 99th annual convention in Skokie, Illinois. Attending were Arnold and Temma Fishman, Hugh Taft-Morales, Garry O'Rourke, and Nick Sanders

This special report will include (1) the bestowing of the Anna Garlin Spencer Award upon Arnold Fishman, (2) the EHSOP resolution against investing in companies that extract carbon fuels from the earth, and (3) Arnold Fishman's address accepting the Garland Award.

(1) The Award

Our Arnold received the Anna Garlin Spencer award for his many years of volunteer service to our Society, with an addition for his more than ten years volunteer service to the ethical culture movement nationally and internationally. He had been nominated by EHSOP and our Incoming President, Nick Sanders, shown in the photo below, made introductory remarks. Richard Koral, president of the AEU Board of Directors is standing on the far left.



Photograph by Temma Fishman

(2) The Resolution

We also succeeded in getting our resolution on investment decisions regarding climate change passed by consensus. This resolution originated at EHSOP, while Nick Sanders worked hard to explain it to the members of the Assembly and to get it into final form for adoption.

This resolution urges organizations and individuals to divest themselves of any investments in businesses that have a primary purpose of extracting or distributing fossil-based sources of energy, and instead, to invest in funds and businesses that support the exploration, development, and use of clean, sustainable, renewable sources of energy.

With the help of Martha Gallahue, the chief representative for the National Ethical Service, the resolution will be forwarded to Jim Sniffen, the Program Officer for the United Nations Environmental Program. The National Ethical Service is the AEU's NGO (non-governmental organization) at the United Nations.

The text of the resolution:

American Ethical Union Resolution on INVESTMENT DECISIONS Regarding CLIMATE CHANGE May 4, 2014

WHEREAS, Climate change disproportionately harms poor and disempowered populations; and

WHEREAS, Dramatic flooding resulting from Arctic polar and other glacial melting are caused by climate change; and

WHEREAS, The rapid disappearance of Arctic ice is threatening the extinction of wildlife depending on the ice for hunting and other purposes; and

WHEREAS, Sea level rise and warming temperatures are threatening the existence of native cultures; and

WHEREAS, Increased intensity of hurricanes, typhoons and droughts are attributed to climate change; and

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WHEREAS, Melting polar ice has caused organisms once locked in ice to be unleashed, causing illness and death among sea and land mammals who frequent Arctic waters; and

WHEREAS, The permafrost of the Arctic tundra is melting and releasing increasing amounts of methane gas, a serious contributor to climate change; and

WHEREAS, Rising global temperatures are threatening the disappearance of coral reefs; and

WHEREAS, Increasing global temperatures are threatening forests due to invasive species, thereby causing more warming of the planet; and

WHEREAS, The scientific community warns of dire and irreversible consequences to our planet with continued use of fossil fuels; and

WHEREAS, The extraction, transport, and burning of fossil fuels have proven hazardous to human health and safety; and

WHEREAS, The primary force behind human-caused climate change is the use of fossil-based sources of energy; and

WHEREAS, Many fossil-based companies are public or otherwise amenable to interest in share holding by the public.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the American Ethical Union shall divest itself of any investments in businesses that have a primary purpose of the extraction or distribution of fossil-based sources of energy, and instead, shift its investment dollars to funds and business that support the exploration, development, and use of clean, sustainable, renewable sources of energy; and we urge the Societies, their affiliated organizations, and their respective individual members to do the same.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this **Resolution** be sent to the appropriate media outlets and corporate and governmental offices to enlist wide support in our effort to address the scourge of climate change.

Submitted to the 99th AEU Assembly
Ethical Humanist Society of Philadelphia

(3) The Speech

Acceptance Speech
Anna Garlin Spencer Award
Arnold Fishman

I would like to thank the Ethical Humanist Society of Philadelphia for its nomination, and the American Ethical Union for bestowing upon me this high honor. When I was trying to determine what to say today, I went on line for quotes from Anna Garlin Spencer for some inspiration. (Parenthetically, I was both surprised and delighted to learn they were gathered by our own Jone Johnson Lewis.) The one that most exemplifies the point I would like to make is:

The experience of the race shows that we get our most important education not through books but through our work. We are developed by our daily task, or else demoralized by it, as by nothing else.

Accordingly, I want to use this time to thank this Ethical Humanist community for the opportunity it has given to me to grow while in the service of more humane society and a better world.

Self-actualization, in my judgment, requires a vehicle for its realization. Just as my professional skill developed over almost fifty years of practicing law, my ethical maturation and leadership skill was enhanced through the experiences afforded to me by my involvement with Ethical Culture. So, to borrow a phrase from the military, if you want to “be all that you can be,” then immerse yourself in your Society and in our national and international associations. It is a win-win situation. You do it not only for us; you do it for yourself. I promise that like me, you will be able to say, “While I would like to believe that my service has been good for the cause, I know it has been good for me.”

The final thought that I would leave you with, which I also found on Jone’s web site, is Anna Garlin Spencer, our first woman Ethical Culture Leader, was fond of telling this story:

A successful woman preacher was once asked,
“What special obstacles have you met as
a woman in the ministry?” “Not one,” she answered,
“except the lack of a minister’s wife.”

Thankfully, I have been spared even that obstacle. To my amazing partner, how bleak the journey would have been without you.

All dates are Sundays except one indicated by an *

Quick Reference Summer Calendar

6/1	11:00 AM	Picnic at Camp Linden	Henry Pashkow
6/6-8		Art for Justice Weekend	HTM
6/8	10:00 AM	Power of Song	HTM et al.
6/12	6:30 PM	HCAA meeting	Pat McGeever
6/15	10:00 AM	Musical Variations	Rolin Wilbur
6/21		Summer Solstice fun	HTM
6/22	10:00 AM	Children as Barometers	Maria Tanner, HTM
6/29	10:00 AM	Ethical Page-turners	Betsy Lightbourn
7/6	10:00 AM	TBA	
*7/10	6:30 PM	HCAA meeting	Pat McGeever
7/13	10:00 AM	Friendship	Leslie Williams
7/20	10:00 AM	Ending Poverty	HTM
8/3	10:00 AM	Yoga	HTM
8/10	10:00 AM	DH Lawrence	Lyle Murley
8/17	10:00 AM	Travels	Richard Kiniry
8/24	10:00 AM	Funny!	Temma Fishman
8/31		No program	



HCAA Center-City Philly Summer Schedule

The Hearing Loss Association of America, Center-City Philly Chapter-in-Formation announces its summer schedule.

Thursday, June 12, 7:00 PM
(gathering at 6:30), 1906 Rittenhouse Square.

Thursday, July 10, 7:00 PM (gathering at 6:30), 1830 Rittenhouse Square, Apt. 14 B.

No meeting in August. See you again September 11. Topics to be announced.

Contact Pat McGeever:
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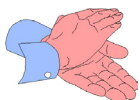
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SUNDAY SERVICE



**Hosts - Coordinated by
Leslie Williams**

June 8 - Garry O'Rourke and Henry Pashkow
June 15 - Leslie Williams and Nick Sanders
June 22 - Terry Martin-Murley and Lyle Murley
June 29 - Bob Bueding and Vince Russo
July 6 - Leslie Williams and Nick Sanders
July 13 - Garry O'Rourke and Lelah Marie
July 20 - Arnold and Temma Fishman
July 27 - Henry Pashkow and Ken Greiff
August 3 - Harry Thorn and Linda Richardson
August 10 - Garry O'Rourke and Don Munson
August 17 - Leslie Williams and Nick Sanders
August 24 - John Marshall and John McCormick

SUMMER BIRTHDAYS

June

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

July

9 John McCormick
10 Janet Cooke
10 Sylvia Metzler
17 Mike Black-Smith
20 Bill Goldberg
20 Rita Verbin
21 Rachel Hayward
22 Marvin Liebman
23 David Ralston
26 Betsy Lightbourn
26 Sharon Wallis
30 Don Munson

August

4 Leslie Williams
6 Kim McKay
12 Carole Karash
14 Ilse Sakheim
20 Nic Esposito

***Ethical Humanist Society
of Philadelphia***

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