



Ethical Views



September 2014 Vol. 129, No. 1 Newsletter of the Ethical Humanist Society of Philadelphia

Sunday Platforms September 2014

Sunday, September 7, 11:00 A.M.
Relationships through Bars
Hugh Taft-Morales, Leader, Ethical Humanist Society of Philadelphia

Due to reactionary tough-on-crime politics and the over-criminalization of drug use, the U.S. penal population has grown from 300,000 to over 2 million over the past three decades. The retributive model of criminal justice is inhumane and ineffective. It has become a cultural cancer eating away at our social fabric, devastating families and neighborhoods. Most poignantly it denies children the opportunity for relationships with incarcerated parents. Hugh Taft-Morales continues to advocate reform of our system, in particular a recognition that family connections should be nurtured so as to bring out the best in those who are incarcerated, those who love them, and us all.



Sunday, September 14, 11:00 A.M.
Felix Adler and the Free Kindergarten Movement
Paulo Ribeiro



When Felix Adler founded the Free Kindergarten in 1877, he was not merely putting ethics into action.

He was becoming part of a movement deeply tied to the ideas of freethought and pluralism challenging conservative values of the time. The efforts of the kindergarten stood in stark contrast to similar charitable efforts by New York City's traditional religious communities, while being set against the backdrop of a wider national and international drama over the education of the world's youngest citizens.

Paulo Ribeiro is a Leader-in-Training with the American Ethical Union. He holds a B.A. from Montclair State University in sociology and is currently enrolled in the Humanist Institute. He is a three-time recipient of the U.S. President's Volunteer Service Award for his work with children's education and recreation programs.



Sunday, September 21, 11:00 A.M.
Music and Peace
Hugh Taft-Morales, Leader, Ethical Humanist Society of Philadelphia



Growing up in the sixties, Hugh experienced the peace movement as intimately wrapped up with music. Singing

seemed a great way to give peace a chance. While martial compositions have also been used for centuries to drive our troops into harm's way, music can offer aesthetically transcendent and communal experiences useful in building a culture of peace. Felix Adler, the founder of Ethical Culture, appreciated the power of music in creating a "deeper psychology" and "richer experience" that some humanists value. Come explore humanistic harmony and the inspiration behind the Ethical Society's fourth annual "Sing-Along for Peace."

Sunday, September 28, 11:00 A.M.
The Music in Nature
David Rothenberg

Prof. Rothenberg will discuss his experiences making music with birds, whales, and bugs. He will explain why human beings are not the only

musicians on the planet, and how music is an ideal way to bridge the gap between our species and the rest of the animal world.

David Rothenberg, a philosopher and musician, is the author of *Why Birds Sing*, published in eight languages and as a feature-length BBC TV documentary. Rothenberg has also written *Thousand Mile Song*, about making music live with whales, *Survival of the Beautiful*, on evolution and beauty, and *Bug Music*, on insects and their million-years-old music. His music, recorded on ECM, Gruenrekorder, and the Terra Nova labels, usually integrates his clarinet improvisations with live and recorded natural sounds. Rothenberg has nine CDs out. He is professor of philosophy and music at the New Jersey Institute of Technology. www.davidrothenberg.net

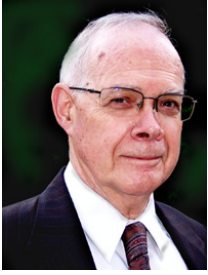


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President's Column



Why Join?

Nick Sanders

Several months ago, I had a brief exchange with someone who frequently attended platforms and actively participated in other Society programs. I asked if they were ready to apply for membership. Their quick response was no, but they would be contributing their time, talent, and treasure.

That was how I thought for most of my adult life. I did not want to become a member of any religious or political organization, though I was willing to devote time and money. I felt that way about the Quaker meetings where I worked on building maintenance projects and taught First Day School, and where I pledged and contributed money. Likewise for the Democratic Party: I canvassed on behalf of candidates and gave money. But I did not want to join these groups because I could not agree with every position they took. I would occasionally write a letter to the editor or send money for a cause that I did not think was right for a Quaker or a Democrat. So, I didn't want to be entangled in the expectations that membership implied to me.

Now look at me: not only a member of this ethical humanist organization, but a member who has been on its governing board as the treasurer, secretary, v-p, and now as president! So what happened to me? Did I finally find an organization whose positions I completely agreed with? Not at all. Compared to what I saw in the Ethical Society when I joined, I was more of a spiritual seeker and less of a political liberal. Instead, what drew me to join were (1) a psychological need to be

part of a group that respected me (my capabilities and my interests), coupled with (2) my strong belief that support of positive, inclusive organizations is important to societal development. I wanted to be part of one of those groups, and the Ethical Society was the best of the bunch I saw. I joined in March, 2003.

Ethical Society membership has made a big difference in my life, much more so than my previous involvements in organizations. In preparing to say something in this column about that difference, I have not only reflected on my experience but also reviewed other presentations on the topic, especially a fine one of our Leader Hugh's platforms [see below]. They were especially helpful to me in articulating the meaning of my membership. I related it to his distinctions among "clientele" membership (based on mostly material value for cost of joining), "cooperative" membership (coming together to further common goals), and "identity" membership (an emotional sense of belonging together).

First, I can say that my membership experience has definitely not been a clientele relationship. It has actually cost me monetarily and in time, doing maintenance work and engaging in interpersonal relations that sometimes have been quite stressful!

On the other hand, my membership experience has definitely been a cooperative one, sharing with others in social betterment activities and in just plain having fun together.

Finally, my membership experience has probably been most characterized by my identification with a humanist way of thinking and acting. Being a member of the Ethical Society has been primary in my development as a humanist.

But as Hugh clarified in the platform I mentioned, membership doesn't require me to promise to sacrifice my life for the group. My membership does not need to be forever and ever. It is a

choice that I continually make. So even though membership has been primary in my development as a humanist, I have become aware of alternative avenues that would be less costly and less stressful in learning about humanism and taking related actions. But for me, the opportunities to be a part of the Ethical Society's organizational structure, which provides for organizing and carrying out humanist events and projects, offer paths to other levels of membership—active committee participation, committee leadership, and board membership—that I believe would be much less available through those alternatives. Furthermore, because I strongly believe that support of positive, inclusive groups such as our Ethical Society is important for the development of a more humane society, I want to contribute to the Society's organizational structure. Thus, for both my own personal growth and for the growth of the Ethical Society, I have sought committee and board levels of membership.

Being curious as to how widespread these motivations of mine were among other board members, I asked some previous and current members why they joined the Ethical Society board and what they got out of it. A good number of them (14) replied. Although this little survey is not guaranteed to be representative, and it required my grouping of their individual answers, here is a summary of the main replies, in order of frequency:



Why they joined:

- Were asked to serve by a president or nominating committee
- Wanted to take care of the Society
- Had experience to contribute
- Wanted increased level of participation in the Society

(Continued next page)

(Continued from previous page)

How they benefited:

- Increased sense of personal worth
- Involvement in decision making
- Sense of accomplishment

Of these seven types, I can identify three--care for the Society, increased level of participation, and involvement in decision making--as substantially overlapping my motivations of personal growth and organizational support. I believe that the four other types refer to our needs for appreciation of our contributions.

With regard for these very important needs for appreciation of what board members bring to the existence and growth of our Ethical Society, and on behalf of the Society, I will conclude with some words of thanks to recent and current board members:

- To Jeffrey Dubb, who led the board as president during the last term, wrote some excellent president's columns in the *Ethical Views*, and presided ably over many platforms—and has volunteered to be secretary during the current board term;
- To Leonard Weeks, who has developed with our Society's administrator a clear and clearly appropriate system for financial reporting—and whom we have the fortune to continue to have as our treasurer for this coming year;
- To Doris Dabrowski, Kate Esposito, Ken Greiff, and Carol Love for their various contributions as board members during the past term;
- To Marta Guttenberg, Betsy Lightbourn, and Garry O'Rourke for "soldiering on" during this next year (with Garry coping with the relatively undefined position of vice-president); and

- To Bob Bueding, John McCormick, Sally Redlener and Linda Richardson, who are "stepping up" to the board for the next term

I also hope you will give your own thanks to each of them for their service. And consider whether there is Society membership, committee participation and leadership or board membership in your future.

* * *

Hugh's video on membership at:
<http://www.phillyethics.org/videos/HTM12-05-20membership.php>.



Summer Sundays on the Square

The EHSOP on the Square has become a popular summertime destination for members, friends, and visitors alike with our relaxed but stimulating summer Sunday programs presented or arranged by members coordinated through the Education Committee. This year we offered twelve Sundays of music, yoga, colloquies, book discussions and more:

In June, for our kick-off, Pat McGeever scripted and produced "The Power of Song," weaving together protest and oppression songs performed by guest Jonathan Sills, and our own Hugh Taft-Morales and Marta Guttenberg; Rollin Wilber, our pianist presented "What

Makes Musical Impressionism Different from other Music Styles?"; Hugh led a conversation with guest Marietta Turner on her essays on teaching in the Bronx in the 1970s and their relevance for today; Betsy Lightbourn facilitated a discussion on summer reading with members who recommended their favorite summer reads.

In July guest musician Joe Becton both performed and presented a history of the blues for the July 4th holiday weekend Sunday; members Leslie Williams and Sylvia Metzler led discussions on "Friendship" and "Talking Across the Aisle" respectively; Hugh reported on Doris Kearns Goodwin's "The Bully Pulpit: Theodore Roosevelt, William Howard Taft, and the Golden Age of Journalism" and its relevance for today.

In August, our very versatile Leader Hugh led an introductory session on Yoga; member and retired English professor Lyle Murley introduced (or reintroduced) us to DH Lawrence's ideas on nature and visions of relationships, personal integrity, evolution and newness. As this is being written, we look forward to Leader Emeritus (and worldwide traveler) Richard Kiniry's program, "Travel Beyond Vacationing"; and member Temma Fishman's colloquy, "You Want Funny? I'll Give You Funny!"

Thank you all for leading us on amazing virtual journeys this summer. And many thanks, too, to those of you who made the Ethical Humanist Society of Philadelphia your Sunday vacation destination.

--Betsy Lightbourn,
Education Committee Chair <>

Happenings

Linda and Aissia's Uptown Tour

This June EHSOP got its second annual look at the Uptown Theater, 2227 N. Broad St., in the process of being renovated. Members Linda Waters Richardson and her daughter, Aissia Richardson, hosted other members for a tour. Linda and Aissia, who have lead roles in the renovation project, explained that this year has seen much basic renovation to the electric, water, and heating systems, so the internal spaces did not yet reveal their original, impressive appearance. The highlights of the tour came from the stories about when the theater was in full operation, as told by Linda and several other tour participants who had fond memories to share. <http://www.philadelphiauptowntheatre.org/#1>!



After the tour, Aissia and Linda provided a delicious meal for the EHSOP members, who had signed up for the tour as a service auction item benefiting EHSOP. Thanks to Linda and Aissia for the tour and special meal.



Summer Solstice Litter Cleanup: The Start of a New Tradition?

EHSOP has forever greeted the Fall Equinox, Winter Solstice, and Spring Equinox with very special events, but the Summer Solstice has seldom gotten much attention, until 2014. On June 21, 2014, Leader Hugh gathered an Ethical Society Litter Cleanup Team to find every last stray plastic bag and cigarette butt on the beautiful Schuylkill River Walk north of Walnut Street.

After an hour or so, approximately a mile of that Walk was completely litter-free! Furthermore, we had some happy talks with other walkers on the Walk. (We do need some EHSOP uniforms—or at least

identifiable T-shirts—for occasions like this. How about a Presidential Task Force to iron out the details?) Having done some good, we got back to home base at the 2101 Coop, where we ate and drank.

Photographs by Nick Sanders

Announcements



Pat McGeever wins EHSOP's One Act Playwriting Contest

Pat McGeever, EHSOP member and newsletter editor—a man of many acts—is the winner of this year's One-Act Playwriting Contest for his play, *Dumpling and the Leprechaun*, a comedy about late love.

"He won fair and square," assured Betsy Lightbourn, one of the contest judges. "All plays are reviewed anonymously, and Pat, being an actor as well as a playwright, was able to keep a poker face during the judging." (As contest founder, he sits on the committee but has no vote.) The EHSOP will be proud to present a reading of the play at 11:00 AM, Sunday, November 9.

McGeever, a professor emeritus of political science and award-winning playwright, began writing plays in 2002 and since then has written more than 20, with 20-some productions around the country. Included in his list of awards is *Sister Sex*, winner of the national "Make the Lion Roar" contest. He is a member of the Drama Guild and a Board member of the Philadelphia Dramatists' Center.

Introduction to Ethical Humanism Sunday, September 7, 7:00PM



Come and enjoy. Leader Hugh Taft-Morales discusses the history and philosophy of Ethical Humanism. Members and visitors will share questions and reflections over wine and cheese. Open to the public but please RSVP to: LeaderHugh@phillyethics.org

Sunday,
September 7th
2:00-6:00 P.M.

CRIMINAL JUSTICE REFORM SUMMIT

See ad on next page

Quote-Unquote

"There is nothing new under the sun." [Ecclesiastes] ... The optimists among us are either running for public office or on strong medication; the rest of us are skeptical.

—Garrison Keillor, on his native Minnesota, quoted in *The New York Times Book Review*, August 10, 2014, p. 8.

Sunday, Sept. 21 Peace Day Philly at 1906 Rittenhouse

The United Nations International Day of Peace is a day of non-violence observed throughout the world on September 21. Check out all the citywide events at www.peacedayphilly.org. EHSOP will be hosting three Peace Day Philly activities. All are free and open to the public!

11:00 A.M. - Our regular platform program featuring a talk by Leader Hugh Taft-Morales on "Music and Peace."

3:30 P.M. - Viewing and discussion of "Lives of Commitment - Working for Peace" by Julie Rainbow, hosted by Hugh and the Granny Peace Brigade. Julie Rainbow herself will be present for the talk-back! Let's talk about what it takes to commit to peace-building!

6:00 P.M. - Sing-Along for Peace

Get your vocal chords warmed up and sing out for peace in front of 1906 South Rittenhouse Square. Lemonade and lyrics provided! Interested in sharing a song or poem? Contact host Hugh Taft-Morales at LeaderHugh@phillyethics.org.



Criminal Justice Reform Summit

“Broken Systems, Broken Neighborhoods, Broken Lives”

**Sunday, September 7th
2:00 – 6:00 PM**

1906 S. Rittenhouse Square

Co-Sponsored by *Art for Justice* and
The Ethical Humanist Society of Philadelphia

National & local speakers share lived experiences and creative solutions.

Demand criminal justice reform in Pennsylvania!



*Life in Pennsylvania/
Are You Comfortable Yet?*
2011
By Charles Z. Lawson

Screening

Award-winning documentary, “Broken on All Sides”
with Director **Matt Pilltscher**,
who will introduce the film and lead a small-group discussion

Keynote Speaker

Harold Wilson: member of *Witness to Innocence*
and survivor of Pennsylvania death row, exonerated in 2005

Speakers

Tyrone Werts: Soros Fellow, PA Lifer commuted by Gov. Rendell

Dr. Jill McCorkel: Professor at Villanova and author of *Breaking Women*

J. Jonhdi Harrell: Founder and Director of the Center for Returning Citizens

Pam Superville: Mayor’s Office of Reintegration Services (RISE)

Reuben Jones: Founder and Director of Frontline Dads


Small group discussion with speakers & partners

The Center for Returning Citizens, Witness to Innocence,
I’m FREE, Pennsylvania Prison Society, Frontline Dads

Registration: LeaderHugh@phillyethics.org, [301-580-1481](tel:301-580-1481)

Free and Open to the Public: www.phillyethics.org and www.artforjustice.org,

September 2014

<i>Sun</i>	<i>Mon</i>	<i>Tue</i>	<i>Wed</i>	<i>Thu</i>	<i>Fri</i>	<i>Sat</i>
	1	2	3 Meetings 6:30 p.m. Education Committee 7:45 p.m. Ethical Action Committee	4	5	6
7 11:00 a.m. <i>Relationships through Bars</i> Hugh Taft-Morales Big Sunday - see below	8	9	10 Meetings 5:30 p.m. Finance Committee 7:00p.m. Community Committee	11	12	13
*14 11:00 a.m. <i>Felix Adler: Free Kindergarten Movement</i> Paulo Ribeiro	15	16	17 Meeting 6:30 p.m. EHSOP Board	18 6:30PM CntrCty Philly HLAA P. McGeever	19	20
*21 11:00 a.m. <i>Music and Peace</i> Hugh Taft-Morales Big Sunday - see below	22	23	24	25  7:00PM Amnesty Intl.	26	27
*28 11:00 a.m. <i>Music in Nature</i> David Rothenberg	29	30				
*Child care provided during all platforms						

Big Sunday - Sept. 7th

11:00 a.m.
Platform (see calendar)

2:00-6:00 p.m.
Criminal Justice Reform Summit (See ad)

7:00 p.m.
Intro to Ethical Humanism
Hugh Taft-Morales

SEPTEMBER BIRTHDAYS



4 - Joel Benjamin
8 - Paul Lux
11 - David McDevitt
14 - Tom Carroll
18 - Susan O'Connell

Big Sunday - Sept. 21st

11:00 a.m.
Platform (see calendar)

3:30 p.m.
Lives of Commitment/
Working for Peace
Julie Rainbow

6:00 p.m.
Sing-Along for Peace
Hugh Taft-Morales

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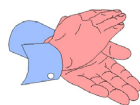
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(215) 735 - 3456
office@phillyethics.org
www.phillyethics.org



SUNDAY SERVICES

Hosts - Coordinated by
Leslie Williams



Sept. 7 - Lelah Marie and Harry Thorn

Sept. 14 - Garry O'Rourke and Vince Russo

Sept. 21 - Bill and Sandy Coffey

Sept. 28 - Garry O'Rourke and Leslie Williams



Flowers - Coordinated by
David Ralston

Sept. 7 - Ken Greiff

Sept. 14 - John McCormick, "In loving
memory of Diane McCormick."

Sept. 21 - Arnold and Temma Fishman,
"In loving memory of our good friend,
Jesse Zelnick."

Sept. 28 - Harry Thorn, "Dedicated to
peace in a New (Jewish) Year."



Coffee Hour Coordinators

Sept. 7 - John McCormick

Sept. 14 - Ken Greiff

Sept. 21 - Garry O'Rourke

Sept. 28 - Harry Thorn

***Ethical Humanist Society
of Philadelphia***

1906 South Rittenhouse Square
Philadelphia, PA 19103