



# Ethical Views



October 2014 Vol. 129, No. 2 Newsletter of the Ethical Humanist Society of Philadelphia

## Sunday Platforms October 2014

**Sunday, October 5, 11:00 A.M.**  
**Humanist Spirituality**  
**Hugh Taft-Morales, Leader, Ethical Humanist Society of Philadelphia**

A growing number of people today describe themselves as “spiritual but not religious.” They yearn for *something more* than the mundane experiences of everyday life, but without the trappings of dogma and bureaucracy. Hugh Taft-Morales explores ways humanists could best approach the word “spiritual.” Does it threaten rationalism? The founder of Ethical Culture, Felix Adler, said that spirituality is often “a synonym of muddled thought and misty emotionalism.” Or is it a term we should embrace? Can naturalistic forms of spirituality found in the writings of Baruch Spinoza, John Dewey, and Carl Sagan enliven humanism today?



**Sunday, October 12, 11:00 A.M.**  
**Engaging Young Adult Humanists**  
**Elizabeth Collier, Fellow, American Ethical Union**



How can Ethical Societies become more attractive to young adults and engage them into their communities? Elizabeth Collier,

AEU Mossler Fellow, will speak on her ongoing research. She will discuss current trends in young adult religious participation, as well as thriving young adult humanist communities today. She will also offer ways that Ethical Societies can become more attractive communities to younger generations as

well as ways that Ethical Societies can do outreach to young adults.

\* \* \*

Elizabeth Collier was raised with Ethical Culture at the Ethical Society of Northern Westchester. She was a founding member of the Future of Ethical Societies, a group for young adults to stay connected to Ethical Culture. Elizabeth is currently a Fellow of the American Ethical Union, researching what will attract young adults and future generations to Ethical Culture.

**Sunday, October 19, 11:00 A.M.**  
**Thinking Outside the Box**  
**Hugh Taft-Morales, Leader, Ethical Humanist Society of Philadelphia**

The human race is confounded by our stubborn reliance on patterns of behavior that don't work. Often we approach overwhelming problems – like climate change, racism, and war – in ways that haven't worked in the past, and probably won't work in the future. The time for radical creativity is now. Hugh Taft-Morales explores ways we can learn, brainstorm and think outside of the box to lead more flourishing lives and save the world!



**Sunday, October 26, 11:00 A.M.**  
**Shocked: Adventures in the Strange Science of Bringing Back the Dead**  
**David Casarett, MD, Professor of Medicine, University of Pennsylvania**



Not too long ago, there was no coming back from death. But a little electricity, applied to the heart in the right way, has changed all that. Now

death has become just another serious complication. Based on his recent book, *SHOCKED: Adventures in Bringing Back the Recently Dead*

(Penguin Random House), Dr. Casarett's address will explore the cutting edge of resuscitation and reveal how far science has come. He will also tell the stories of people who are alive today because of that science, and reveal how people's lives have been changed irrevocably. The result is an insightful tour of science and stories that reviewers are calling “fascinating” (*New York Times*), “engaging” (*Chicago Tribune*), and “electrifying” (*Booklist*). *SHOCKED* is a lighthearted yet thoughtful exploration of how all these scientific breakthroughs are changing the way we think about ethical choices concerning life and death.

\* \* \*

David Casarett, MD is a palliative care physician and health services researcher whose work focuses on improving systems of care for people with serious, life-threatening illnesses. He is a Professor of Medicine at the University of Pennsylvania's Perelman School of Medicine, a faculty member of the Penn Department of Medical Ethics, and Director of Hospice and Palliative Care for the University of Pennsylvania. Dr. Casarett is a recipient of the Presidential Early Career Award for Scientists and Engineers, the highest honor given by the US government to researchers in the early stages of their careers.



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# Leader's Column



## Summer School and Music

Hugh Taft-Morales

My first Leader's column of this year's season discusses two subjects: "What I did on my summer vacation" and some "Musings about music." Let me first dive into summer vacation by admitting that after 25 years of teaching I grew accustomed to long changes of routine in the summer months. It's not that I spent my summer doing nothing (a persistent myth that bothers hard-working teachers). While there may be some time to put one's feet up and recover from an academic year of under-appreciated, demanding work, many teachers also create curriculum, improve their course plans, or develop professionally in other ways. For me, my time away from 1906 Rittenhouse Square this summer was full of growth opportunities I hope will contribute to my work as Leader of the Ethical Humanist Society of Philadelphia.

The most professionally significant of these opportunities was as a faculty member of the Lay Leadership Summer School (LLSS) at "The Mountain," a Unitarian Universalist retreat site in far western North Carolina. For one thing, I got to spend a week with three EHSOP lay leaders, Sally Redlener, John McCormick, and Xavier Mack. I will let them speak for themselves, but I believe they found it a challenging, rewarding experience. I know they will bring new ideas and renewed confidence to their work as EHSOP Lay Leaders!

Personally, serving as a LLSS faculty member was deeply meaningful. It was a valuable reminder of both Ethical Culture values and the broader humanist movement to which I committed myself years ago. It was as a LLSS student back in 2006 that I gazed out over the rolling hills of North Carolina

and solidified my plans to pursue professional EC Leadership. I know it did something similar for our new board president and my 2006 summer school roommate, Nick Sanders.

Being in a different environment this past summer led me into renewed philosophical explorations that will find their way into a number of platform talks. I have some particular LLSS students to thank for my October 5 platform topic because they requested a group discussion on "humanist spirituality." In what little "down time" I had, I found myself revisiting authors touching on this subject, such as Alain de Botton, Robert Solomon, and Andre Comte-Sponville, to prepare for a discussion at lunch on one of our last days at summer school. Where better to explore "spirituality" than at a UU retreat center?

For those whose toes curl when I mention "the 's' word," take a deep breath. When I suggest we explore the term within Ethical Humanism, I don't mean any form of "spirituality" that violates reason. I don't intend to dabble in mysticism or new age silliness. For me, however, some of the experiences that *some* humanists crave: awe, humility, and connection to something greater, come to them in forms that they may call "spiritual."

I also appreciate that the more strictly rationalistic humanists in our movement – those who see the world more like *Center for Free Inquiry's* Tom Flynn – don't want or need such "spirituality." Rest assured that I share skepticism for much of what is brought under the "spirituality" tent. I will continue to offer plenty of skepticism and science in my work. I will also, however, bring back from LLSS a fresh helping of awe, humility, and connection to something greater.

This summer I was also reminded that one way I could bring such awe and connection to 1906 Rittenhouse is through music, which will constitute the second half of this column. We had lots of music at summer school almost from dawn to dusk, from our optional 8:45AM sing-alongs to start the day, to music woven into

our Day's End celebrations. While every individual has their own unique relationship to music, it is amazing how well it provides opportunity for group experiences that both create a sense of unity and allow for deep introspection.



For me, personally, it is this connection between the inner and the outer that makes music special to me. There is little that I do that so naturally connects what I feel inside with whoever is within earshot. It's a cathartic experience, especially when I get to sing songs that help process emotions we often run away from, such as angst, loss, and despair!

This explains my love of the genres of music that I call "alt-country" and "crossover," which often relate stories of broken lives, like many old cowboy songs and blues ballads. Oddly, I don't find them as depressing as some others do, especially when I play one after the other after the other! When I play for an audience, I try to mix in more obviously optimistic songs because I know they find some of my favorites a bit, oh...on the dark side, perhaps?

Playing the music I love, however, enlivens me. I did my first open mic performance in years just a few weeks ago at a bar near my home. My initial nervousness melted away as the song I chose for starters, Ryan Adam's "Winding Wheel," flowed through me. It opened up avenues to connect with the world while connecting deep within myself. Such experiences help me be more honest with myself, and more engaged in the world. Those are some

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of the big reasons why we have such marvelous music every Sunday at our Platform programs.

Even though the genre of music we offer each Sunday is very different from my folkie style, in some ways it is even better at offering moments for honest introspection and greater connection with the world. The classical masterpieces artistically performed by our pianist Rollin Wilber can facilitate a turning inwards and a self-exploration often denied us by a life full of chores. Along with Rollin's comments on the musical selection, the dramatic energy he pulls from the piano fills the hall and draws our attention up and out to the world around us.

The great religions of the world use music to connect their followers to deep values and commitment. Can't we do the same? Can't Ethical Humanism use music effectively to promote our dedication to the worth of each person, the importance of justice for all, and the relationships that honor both?

It's my great hope that we will expand our musical moments at 1906 Rittenhouse in the coming years, from spontaneous songs on the front stoop or in Rittenhouse Square, to the beginnings of a Society chorus, to programs that link the great works of classical music with the themes of humanism. Do you have an interest in expanding our musical life? Want some more humanist harmony in yours? Let me know how you would like to support such initiatives. Together we can fill our community home with sounds that bring out our best!

### Quote-Unquote

"I hate housework. You make the beds, you do the dishes ... and six months later, you have to start all over again."

-Joan Rivers, 1933-2014

## Announcements



### Introduction to Ethical Humanism

Sunday, October 5, 7:00PM

Leader Hugh Taft-Morales discusses the history and philosophy of Ethical Humanism, this month with an emphasis on the concept of "inherent worth." Members and visitors will share questions and reflections over wine and cheese. Open to the public but please RSVP to: [LeaderHugh@phillyethics.org](mailto:LeaderHugh@phillyethics.org)

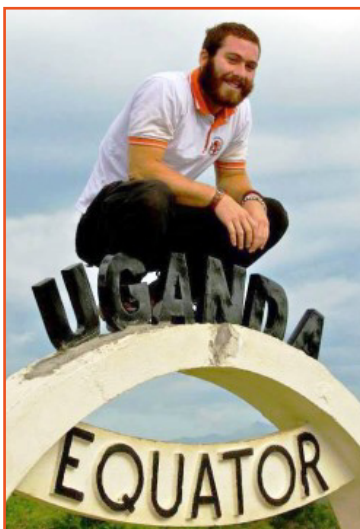
Monday, October 6, 5:30PM

### Launching the Humanist Service Corps. with Conor Robinson

The Ethical Culture movement is thrilled that Dale McGowen has come on board as the new Director of Ethical Education for the American Ethical Union. Dale is also founder and Executive Director of the *Foundation Beyond Belief* (FBB). Come and hear from a young humanist leader, Conor Robinson, about a new FBB project, the Humanist Service Corps, and the year of work that led to its birth.



Dale McGowen



Conor Robinson

### Seeing Home with New Eyes: Insights from a Year of Service

Conor Robinson recently completed a year of international humanist service in which he contributed to ten clean water, education, and human rights projects in seven countries. He will share how volunteering abroad shaped his approach to service and gave him hope for the work being done by humanist communities in the U.S. Come hear about the successes and lessons learned in the Pathfinders Project, Conor's reflections about service, and how it all helped frame the new Humanist Service Corps.

\* \* \*

Afterwards join Conor, Hugh, and other EHSOP members as we go over to the Free Library for Sam Harris' 7:30PM discussion of his new book, *Waking Up: A Guide to Spirituality Without Religion*.



Sam Harris



## RELATIONSHIP BUILDING



**Tuesday, Oct. 7, 7:00-8:30 PM**  
**and**

**Sunday, Oct. 19, 7:00-8:30 PM**

**These are the first 2 of 8 Sessions on  
Relationship Building**

### Relationship-Building Discussion Group: *Personality Types and Communication.*

At the heart of Ethical Humanism is our emphasis on nurturing healthy ethical relationships. Yet, like everyone else, we don't always find it easy to do. Differences in background, personality and communication styles can challenge the best-intentioned. Come join Hugh Taft-Morales for an exploration of who we are and how we can strengthen our social bonds in a way consistent with Ethical Culture.

We will use the Myers-Briggs Personality Type Indicator as a starting point. All participants are encouraged to have taken some form of official Myers-Briggs assessment, either in the past or in preparation for the second meeting of this group. There is an on-line version available at <https://www.mbticomplete.com/en/index.aspx>. It takes about an hour to do the on-line assessment.

Enrollment is capped at 16. The group is intended to serve members of the Ethical Humanist Society of Philadelphia, but non-members can ask to be put on a waiting list and if there is room they will be informed a week prior to the first meeting. We will meet eight times, every other week, in the Collier Room. To register or for more information, contact Hugh at [LeaderHugh@phillyethics.org](mailto:LeaderHugh@phillyethics.org). Registration deadline is October 5.

### SHADOW PLAY: The Story Behind the Exhibition

On October 3, 1986, I was walking along New York's Seventh Avenue when there was a solar eclipse. The mid-day sun dimmed, which was spooky. But especially striking were the shadows cast on the sidewalk by the eclipse: backlit crescent shapes, hollowed out, as if we had been transported to a science fiction planet with a double sun.

Shortly after that, I started doing a series of pastel paintings inspired by those spooky shadow patterns. I worked on the series for about a month, making nearly a dozen of them. Then I moved on to other subjects. The Shadow Series went into deep storage, moved from storage space to studio, city to city, for nearly thirty years.

The Shadow Series has never been shown in public. When the chance to exhibit at the EHSOP came up, I decided that this was the perfect time to let the series see "the light of day."

While I was digging through dusty boxes and portfolios to find the old shadow pieces, I was inspired to do more modern digital interpretations of the shadow effect, taking greyish photos using my digital camera and enhancing them using color with Photoshop. These digitals are also on exhibit, along with the Shadow Series originals, in the Collier Room.

--Janice R. Moore

### CURRENT EXHIBITION IN COLLIER ROOM

A poster for the 'Shadow Play' exhibition. The background is a dark, abstract image with swirling, ethereal shapes in shades of blue, purple, and red. The title 'SHADOW PLAY' is written in a large, white, serif font at the top. Below the title, the text 'Works in Pastel and Photography by Janice R. Moore' is written in a smaller, pink, serif font. The dates 'October 5 - December 31, 2014' and the opening time 'Opening: Sunday, October 5, 12 to 2 PM' are written in a white, serif font. At the bottom, the text 'Sponsored by: The Ethical Humanist Society of Philadelphia 1906 S. Rittenhouse Sq. Philadelphia, PA 19103' is written in a white, serif font. Below that, the text 'For available viewing times, please call: 215-735-3456' is written in a white, serif font.

# October 2014

<i>Sun</i>	<i>Mon</i>	<i>Tue</i>	<i>Wed</i>	<i>Thu</i>	<i>Fri</i>	<i>Sat</i>
			<b>1</b> <b>Meetings</b> 6:30 p.m. Education Committee 7:45 p.m. Ethical Action Committee	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>*5</b> 11:00 a.m. <b>Humanist Spirituality</b> Hugh Taft-Morales 7:00 p.m. <b>Intro to Ethical Humanism</b> Hugh Taft-Morales	<b>6</b> 5:30 pm Seeing Home with New Eyes Conor Robinson	<b>7</b> 7-8:30 pm <b>Relationship Building #1</b> Hugh T-Morales	<b>8</b> <b>Meetings</b> 5:30 p.m. Finance Committee 7:00p.m. Community Committee	<b>9</b> 6:30PM CntrCty Philly HLAA P. McGeever	<b>10</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>*12</b> 11:00 a.m. <b>Engaging Young Adult Humanists</b>  Elizabeth Collier	<b>13</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>15</b> <b>Meeting</b> 6:30 p.m. EHSOP Board	<b>16</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>*19</b> 11:00 a.m. <b>Thinking Outside the Box</b> Hugh Taft-Morales 7-8:30 pm <b>Relationship Building #2</b> Hugh Taft-Morales	<b>20</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>22</b> <b>Meeting</b> 7:00 pm Camp Linden Committee	<b>23</b>  7:00PM <b>Amnesty Intl.</b> Ron Coburn	<b>24</b>	<b>25</b>
<b>*26</b> 11:00 a.m. <b>Bringing Back the Dead</b> David Casarett, MD	<b>27</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>31</b>	
*Child care provided during all platforms						

## OCTOBER BIRTHDAYS



5 - Jeffrey Dubb  
10 - Geoff Baker  
12 - Leonard Weeks  
14 - Doris Leicher

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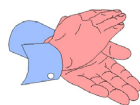
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## SUNDAY SERVICES

**Hosts** - Coordinated by  
Leslie Williams



October 5 - Arnold and Temma Fishman

October 12 - Garry O'Rourke and Bob  
Bueding

October 19 - Bill and Sandy Coffey

October 26 - Terry Martin-Murley and  
Lyle Murley



**Flowers** - Coordinated by  
David Ralston

October 5 - Nick Sanders for his  
anniversary with Molly Sayvetz.

October 12 - Doris Leicher, in honor of  
her sister's birthday.

October 19 - David Ralston

October 26 - Anonymous, in honor of  
Hugh, our devoted leader.



**Coffee Hour Coordinators**

October 5 - John McCormick

October 12 - Ken Greiff

October 19 - Garry O'Rourke

October 26 - Harry Thorn

***Ethical Humanist Society  
of Philadelphia***

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