

Ethical Views

June 2015

Vol. 129, 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 informal programs that encourage participation.



SUNE 2015

Sunday, June 7, departing 11:00 A.M.

EHSoP Annual Picnic (in lieu of meeting)

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

Time: noon to 5:00 PM. Cost: \$15 per person; \$10 if you bring a dish. Children 12 and under are free. We will provide hot dogs, beef and vegetarian burgers, soft drinks, beer, rolls and fixings.

There's fun for all ages! Leader Hugh is planning croquet, and, like Felix Adler, he will probably cheat. Also badminton, paddle ball, duck pool (for kids), kayaking and tubing on the Brandywine. Lots of sports equipment available. A brief tour of camp for those interested. Sitting, talking and drinking beer is also permissible.

Please respond to Leonard Weeks at leweeks1306@gmail.com or 215-681-7204 with the following:

- 1. How many adults?
- 2. How many children (and age)? Car pooling (from the Society around 11:00 AM)
 - 1. Can you take any members? How many?
 - 2. Do you need a ride? How many?

3. Do you need directions to/ from camp?

In case of weather-related cancellation, notice will be given to all who have responded to Leonard. And don't forget the sun block.

Sunday, June 14, 2015, 10:00 A.M. *Yoga and Breath* Hugh Taft-Morales, Leader, Ethical Humanist Society of Philadelphia

For the third consecutive summer, Hugh will offer a seated yoga session. This summer he will include added insights into the importance of breathing in yoga...and in life! Wear comfortable clothes if you want to participate in some gentle poses. Feel free to come for the discussion even if you prefer not to do the yoga and meditation.

Sunday, June 21, 2015, 10:00 A.M. Ethical Page-Turners
Betsy Lightbourn, EHSoP
Education Committee Chair, and lifelong bookworm.

Ethical issues are often creatively explored through fiction. Genre pageturners such as thrillers, historical novels. romances. science fiction as well as literary fiction can illuminate ethical issues as well as offer good reads (especially during vacations). However, should you consider summer vacation a chance to delve into "serious works" of nonfiction, feel free to share those books and why you recommend them to us as well. Reviewers will make recommendations of their favorite page-turner through a series of short reviews delivered at our vacation setting here at the Ethical Society. Wear your favorite hat (and don't forget the sunscreen). To volunteer as a critic, speak to Betsy.

Sunday, June 28, 2015, 10:00 A.M. *Tai Chi*

Lelah Marie, EHSoP member and experienced Tai Chi practitioner

Learn a bit about Tai Chi's history, principles, and practices. Wear loose clothes and comfortable shoes for a non-strenuous morning of gentle movement. Bring your questions too! Lelah has practiced Tai Chi for around 15 years, training with teachers in Oregon, British Columbia, California, and Pennsylvania.



Sunday, July 5, 2015, 10:00 A.M.

Accommodating Faith Without Getting Stuck in the Mudbank Lyle Murley, Ph.D, EHSoP member and retired English professor

Puzzle with Lear, Sterling Brown, and Adrienne Rich. Readings and discussion of Shakespeare's *King Lear* and poetry by Brown and Rich.

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Sunday Meetings (Cont'd from previous page)

Sunday, July 12, 2015, 10:00 A.M. Sustainable Ethical Culture: Reflections on the 2015 AEU Assembly

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

Hugh will offer some comments about, and then lead a discussion on, the 100th Annual Assembly of the American Ethical Union (AEU) to be held in Stamford, Connecticut this June. The Assembly theme, "Creating a Sustainable Future: Ethics and Advocacy," touches on *both* the sustainability of our planet, as well as the sustainability of the Ethical Culture Movement. Come share your thoughts and questions.

Sunday, July 19, 2015, 10:00 A.M. The War on Women: Reclaiming Reproductive Rights Sylvia Metzler, EHSoP member and Nurse Practitioner.

Discussion on the politics of women's health care.

Sunday, July 26, 2015, 10:00 A.M. Feeling Good about Doing Good Hugh Taft-Morales, Leader, Ethical Humanist Society of Philadelphia

Why does it feel good to do good? Does it always? Is the "purity" of good intentions spoiled by the fact that it can make the good-doer happy? Hugh leads a discussion of this intriguing issue. Come share your experience of doing good in a world that needs more good done!



Sunday, August 2, 2015, 10:00 A.M. Bringing Out the Best ... or at Least the Better

Scott Pleume, EHSoP member and acknowledged sillibody

Inspired by Oscar Wilde's "Life is far too important a thing to be talked seriously about" this facilitated discussion will consider the enhancement of personality, character, judgment, humor, and silliness. The questions to be considered include: 1) To what degree is it possible to enhance personality, character, judgment, humor and silliness? 2) What is wise to accept and appreciate about individual differences in personality and character? 3) What is wise to try and improve in the expression of individual personality, character, judgment, humor and silliness?

Sunday, August 9, 2015, 10:00 A.M. A Careful Reading of the Sermon on the Mount Ken Greiff, EHSoP member and Board of Trustees member

We will analyze the messages in The Sermon on the Mount (*Matthew* 5-7) and use them to consider and to clarify our own personal and collective ideas on morality and spirituality. Preparation is encouraged.

Sunday, August 16, 2015, 10:00 A.M. YARD SALE, a one-act play Melissa McBain, Ph.D., Philly playwright, actor, director and theater educator Yard Sale, runner-up in our 2014 playwriting contest, will be read by its author, Melissa McBain. In it, Old Emma and many other characters in this one-woman show tell the stories of the items she's offering, which in turn tell the multi-layered story of a woman you'll want to get to know. Don't miss it!

Sunday, August 23, 2015, 10:00 A.M. *Colloquy, Subject to be announced,* Temma Fishman, EHSoP member

Sunday, August 30, 2015, 10:00 A.M. Book discussion: The Road to Character, David Brooks Hugh Taft-Morales, Leader, Ethical Humanist Society of Philadelphia

Hugh leads a book discussion of the latest offering by *New York Times* journalist David Brooks. Known as a sophisticated Republican willing to "engage with" the liberal agenda, Brooks was praised for writing "a pitch-perfect clarion call, issued not with preachy hubris but from a deep place of humility, for awakening to the greatest rewards of living." Whether you can read the book beforehand or not, come for this important discussion.

Happenings



EHSoP Members turn out for \$15/hour, with R. McDonald

From left to right, John Marshall, Betsy Lightbourn, Sylvia Metzler, Pat McGeever, John McCormick, and Sylvia Goldman are just some of the many Ethical Humanists who have joined protests for social justice this past year. This **April 15** protest was **"for 15"** dollars per hour as the minimum wage for fast-food workers (thus the presence of a Ronald McDonald protester!).

Photograph: Hugh Taft-Morales

Leader's Column



Rebuilding the Inner City: What's It Going to Take?

Hugh Taft-Morales

Note: So much has happened in the last month regarding Baltimore that I wanted to make sure readers saw the statement I produced in consultation with Bart Worden, Executive Director, American Ethical Union, Dr. Paul Furth, President, Baltimore Ethical Society. Richard Koral President. American Ethical Union, Kate LaClair, Chair, AEU and BES Ethical Action Committees, Jone Johnson Lewis, President, National Leaders Council, and Roy Speckhardt, Executive Director. American Humanist Association. You can see it at: http:// aeu.org/2015/05/aeu-and-besstatement-on-baltimore/.

What's it going to take to rebuild crumbling neighborhoods in places like Balti-



more and Philadelphia? We can start by rebuilding the trust between police and the citizens they serve. In a May 6 *Philadelphia Magazine* article, Joel Mathis gives Police Commissioner Charles Ramsey credit for some good first steps.

This is the same Charles Ramsey who in 2002 arrested 400 people in Washington, D.C. for peacefully protesting the World Bank and IMF meetings. The same Charles Ramsey who, according to court testimony, said, "We're going to lock them up and teach them a lesson," leading to over \$1 million in settlements for these violations of rights. And (full disclosure here) this is the same Charles Ramsey who oversaw tactics that led to my protesting son Sean's dislocated knee.

But maybe this is a Charles Ramsey who learned from his mistakes just in time to keep things cool as anger over Freddie Gray's death bubbles over. As he told Mathis in a recent interview, "The philosophy is to make no arrests if we don't have to. Most people who want to come out to protest want to do so peacefully." Under Ramsey's leadership, Philadelphia police have done better at protecting the rights of protesters, allowing crowds to march where they wish (except on highways, which would endanger their lives), and not overreacting to protesters who cross the line.

When I attended the April 30 "Philly is Baltimore" rally, I noted that the police looked very different from the phalanxes of police at protests around the country. Police were on bicycles, dressed in shorts, and chatting with the crowd. They actually seemed to be a part of the group, not an opposing army – what a concept! Ramsey even gave the protestors credit for reasonableness despite the clear, deep disappointment over the happenings an hour south in Baltimore.

I don't want to pretend that these two cities are all that different, however. There are few cities in this country without the racial antagonisms and economic despair that are tinder for explosions of rage. As Ramsey admits, "It's not like things like that could not happen in Philly. It could happen anywhere. ... If we're not the story at the end of the day, that's a success."

Unfortunately, police relations are only a small part of the picture. Serving as an Ethical Culture Leader in both Philadelphia and Baltimore, I see too many similarities: inadequate housing, poor access to health care, substandard schools, underemployment, and the class and ethnic prejudices that prevent us from working together. These issues have plagued almost every major city for decades. They confronted Felix Adler almost a century and a half ago in New York City. They led him to begin a tradition of ethical activism that we inherit and that inspires me today.

There was a time when it seemed that government would take the lead in

social justice activism. Twenty years after the founding of Ethical Culture, when progressive politicians began using government to address the systemic economic issues crippling the disempowered, the modern middle class began to grow in America. From Teddy Roosevelt through FDR to Johnson's Great Society, the federal government took the lead. Today, there are signs that national initiatives need to be strengthened.



At a May 6 press conference, Secretary of Education Arne Duncan, Secretary of Labor Thomas Perez, Representative Elijah Cummings, and others, addressed federal interventions to address the root causes of urban civic unrest like those we saw in Baltimore. Being a fan of the New Deal, I was heartened to hear Sec. Perez speak in sweeping terms: "We at the Department of Labor, the Department of Housing and Urban Development, what we are really are the departments of opportunity. ... We have come from the federal government making sure we can make a difference in Baltimore. ... Money is not enough. The development of a holistic plan that reflects the values of the community of Baltimore is indispensable."

I can hear critics of big government moan at such talk. Many blame the bureaucracy for the problems we face. Pouring money into a bad system doesn't work, they insist. After all Baltimore has received monies from Maryland's \$250 million Race to the Top grant fund supporting comprehensive education redesign, without dramatic results. My reply to such critics is to admit that money, by itself, is not enough. But it's a start.

An important missing ingredient is the network of ethical relationships that make these programs effective in the

(Continued next page)

long term – relationships between poor communities and the police that patrol them, between Baltimore's bastions of privilege and the neighborhoods where desperation reigns.



In my work with an interfaith organization called *Philadelphians Organized to Witness, Empower, and Rebuild* (POWER), those relationships are growing. People of good faith – religious leaders from traditional faith communities who embrace humanist allies dedicated to the cause – are welcoming members of the Ethical Humanist Society of Philadelphia into an effective and rewarding network.

Now, with a hot Baltimore summer and contentious legal proceedings over the death of Freddie Gray ahead of us, such relationships are even more important.

The Baltimore Ethical Society has been nurturing a number of connections that might help us contribute to the healing. We've been involved in a number of programs focusing on race and disempowerment in the inner city. They've drawn on the expertise of Diamonte Brown of *Out for Justice*, Farajii Muhammad, the Youth Empowerment Coordinator of the American Friends Service Committee, and (thanks to Rev. Olson of First Unitarian), on that of Paula Cole Jones, founder of A Dialogue on Race and Ethnicity (ADORE).

These connections will help members of Ethical Societies move beyond dialogue into action. While actions can include pushing for systemic reform on the federal, state or municipal levels, they can also be random acts of kindness. They can be about changing our lives in profoundly personal ways as well.

I would like to end this column with some reflections about a recent conversation that is stuck in my head. It was about a Baltimore couple brave enough to reach out into the lives of an inner city family facing seemingly insurmountable obstacles. About six months before the violence in Baltimore was broadcast nationally, Josh and Nicole witnessed a less dramatic but equally as corrosive form of violence. Driving one day in Baltimore they passed a woman cadging change in the median, caught up in desperation and drug addiction. By her side was three-year-old girl.

As the light changed and they began to drive away, Nicole suddenly insisted they turn the car around and return to the mother and child. Their lives took a dramatic, wonderful, challenging turn. After inviting the mother and girl to lunch, their relationship grew. After some time of figuring out where to go from here, Josh and Nicole became unofficial guardians for the threeyear old, as well as her sisters (aged twelve and fifteen.) Their mother, HIV positive and hobbled by addiction and past jail time, has grown to trust Nicole and Josh. The girls, the oldest and youngest living with them some of the time, with access to better nutrition, health care, and the loving support of two new mentors, are doing better in school.

As Josh told me the story, however, I kept asking myself if I could take on such a remarkable commitment. Would I be brave enough to make a similar commitment out of the blue? I might not be as lucky as Nicole and Josh, who have found the experience meaningful and often joyful. Josh even said that stepping into the lives of these three girls was "easy" in the sense that it continues to be deeply rewarding. Nicole and Josh are now trying to support the schools where the girls attend, while seeking boarding school educational opportunities where they might flourish.

Clearly the most important contribution Nicole and Josh made was of their time, care, and concern. Many young people in poor urban environments are without consistent academic and interpersonal support. Ethical relationships — the bread and butter of Ethical Culture—are hard to come by when simple survival is a daily challenge.

As I look to the future of my work in Baltimore and Philadelphia, I hope to

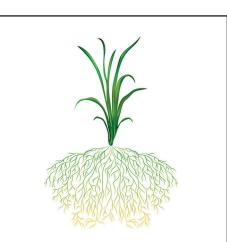
continue nurturing ethical relationships with the Ethical Societies, and between our small group and the broader society. Anyone of us could make the choice Josh and Nicole made. Most of us today could reach out to one person, one family, to connect and support them. We can also support federal, state, and local mentoring initiatives. President Obama's "My Brother's Keeper Initiative" for example, is aimed at improving outcomes for African-American male youth.





Such approaches, whether from the top down or bottom up, have to replace the impersonal retributive approach to urban discontent. The points of light in the darkness of Baltimore's violence come from many sources. Today in Baltimore and Philadelphia we need all the light we can get. Let's work on as many levels as possible to turn our country around.





Quote-Unquote

"Sustained grassroots pressure had moved the president and the FCC."

--Zephyr Teachout, professor of law at Fordham University, explaining recent federal government reversals on internet neutrality and the Comcast merger proposal. "Restoring Antitrust," Zephyr Teachout, *Nation Magazine*, May 18, 2015, p. 5.



POWER Advocacy in Legislative District 182!

The Ethical Humanist Society of Philadelphia (EHSoP) and Leyv Ha-Ir~Heart of the City combined to represent Philadelphians Organized to Witness, Empower, and Rebuild (POWER) in an April 30th meeting with State Representatives Brian Sims.who was accompanied by his Chief of Staff, Mason Lane, Sims represents the 182nd Legislative District, which includes Rittenhouse Square. The nine members from the two congregations here on the south side of the square, spent an hour advocating for many important issues but focused most on education.

Rep. Sims agreed with a number of our requests, including tracking the education funding process, speaking with at least one Republican colleague on the legislative funding commission about the importance of fair, full funding, and attending a POWER event in Harrisburg on June 20 bringing along a Republican colleague.

We were all impressed with Rep. Sim's' energy, dedication and candor. He gave us a lesson about the political realities of Harrisburg, but pledged to build relationships across the aisle. We hope to develop a long-term relationship with Rep. Sims as he struck us as an up and coming statewide progressive leader. He was also very down-to earth, self-effacing, and funny – a breath of fresh air in the stale world of political sound bites. He also expressed an interest in speaking at a Sunday platform.

It was an additional treat for EHSoP member Irene Putzer and Hugh Taft-Morales to hear Sims speak two days later at the May 2nd conference hosted by the Delaware Valley Americans United for Separation of Church and State. He urged us all to reach across divisions between different groups – religious and secular, conservative and liberal - to find common ground. Religious and conservative people have a lot of power in Harrisburg. We need to learn how to work together. We hope that, with Rep. Sims walking the walk, we will manage to find consensus about offering all Pennsylvania school children the best education we can provide.

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Terry Martin-Murley

Being Welcomed on Sundays

Vince Russo

Nick Sanders, EHSoP President

It's great to be welcomed when we show up on Sunday morning. I think most people would agree that it is especially important for newcomers, but it is also quite nice for those returning and even for long-time members. Our Ethical Humanist Society is fortunate to have many members who are willing to serve as Hosts to welcome us on Sundays. They deserve to be appreciated. Here are those who have signed up to be Hosts one or more times during the 2014-2015 program year (with apologies to those who are not in the list, due to last minute substitutions):

Arnold Fishman	Bill Coffey	Bob Bueding	Don Munson
Garry O'Rourke	Harry Thorn	Henry Pashkow	Janet Cooke
Jeffrey Dubb	John Marshall	John McCormick	Ken Greiff
Lelah Marie	Leonard Weeks	Leslie Williams	Lyle Murley
Marta Guttenberg	Mike Black-Smith	Nina Diamond	Sandy Coffey
Sharon Wallis	Sylvia Metzler	Temma Fishman	

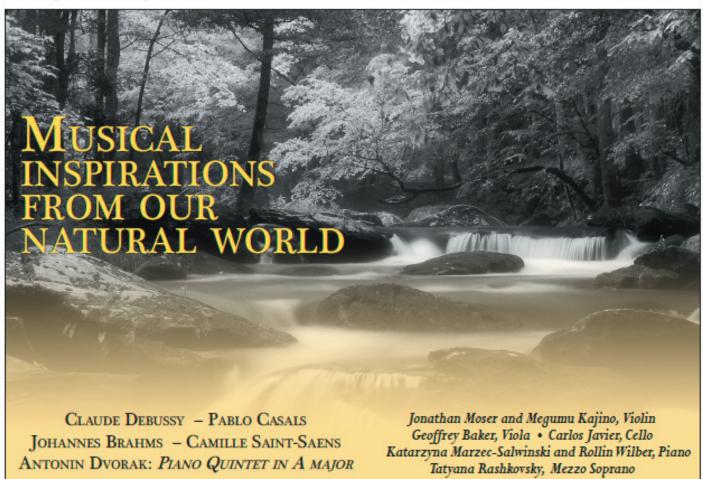
Coordinating the Hosts is a big job, so a big thanks goes to the member who has been doing that: Leslie Williams! Members should check with Leslie to help in this important welcoming role for future Sundays.

Another aspect of feeling welcomed in our Ethical Society is the opportunity to visit with others after platform over coffee and a snack. Those members who step forward to make that happen also deserve our appreciation. The most dedicated of them are the coffee hour Coordinators, who are (in monthly order of Sundays): John McCormick, Ken Greiff, Garry O'Rourke, and Harry Thorn. Please give them your thanks. And, of course, offer to help.



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IN CONCERT WITH NATURE



SUNDAY, JUNE 14TH 3:00 PM THE ETHICAL SOCIETY BUILDING 1906 S. RITTENHOUSE SQUARE PHILADELPHIA, PA 19103 PREVIEW CONCERT JUNE 13TH, 7:30 PM INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR CULTURE 6331 LANCASTER AVENUE PHILADELPHIA, PA 19151 215-877-9910 WWW.IICULTURE.ORG

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This series is jointly presented by Ethical Humanist Society of Philadelphia, Leader Hugh Taft-Morales, and Fine Art Music Company, Directors Rollin Wilber and Geoffrey Baker

Photo courtesy of Nicholas Bell Photography

Announcements

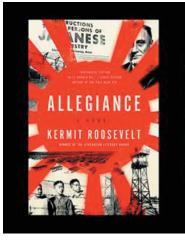
June 25-28 **AEU Assembly**

Consider attending the 2015 Assembly of the American Ethical Union which takes place from Thursday, June • 25 through Sunday, June 28 in Stamford, Connecticut.

This year's theme is "Creating a Sustainable Future: Ethics and Advocacy."

Come meet other Ethical Humanists, celebrate our 100th Assembly, and help plan for Ethical Culture's flourishing future! Go to http:// aeu.org/event/celebrate-aeu-100th-assembly/ to register.

Let Nick know if you plan to attend.



Thursday, July 2, 7:00 PM- Author Talk Kermit Roosevelt: Allegiance: A Novel

Come for a sneak preview into Kim Roosevelt's newest book, Allegiance: A Novel. Due out August 25, it is described by Amazon as "a sophisticated legal thriller that plunges readers into the debate within the U.S. government surrounding the imprisonment of thousands of Japanese-Americans during World War II." Recommended highly by host Hugh Taft-Morales who read an advance copy of the work, Allegiance is of particular significance given the contemporary "war on terror" and associated debates about loyalty, surveillance,

and civil liberties. As a prelude to the 4th of July weekend, come discuss the human quest to understand patriotism in an era of fear.

Kermit Roosevelt is a professor of constitutional law at the University of Pennsylvania Law School. Born in Washington, D.C., he attended Harvard University and Yale Law School. Before joining the Penn faculty, he clerked for D.C. Circuit Judge Stephen F. Williams and Supreme Court Justice David Souter, and practiced law in Chicago. His experiences clerking and practicing law informed his first novel, the national campus bestseller *In the Shadow of the* Law (Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2005).



Welcome to all

Atheists **Agnostics Humanists** Freethinkers Rationalists Skeptics etc.

July 26th 1-5pm

Rain or shine **Fort Washington State Park** Militia Hill Pavilion (MHL-1)



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

Please bring a side dish! If your last name begins with: A-G bring salad or vegetable

H-P bring fruit or dessert Q-Z bring bread, potato or rice dish

Please RSVP!

Contact PhillyReason@gmail.com

The Philadelphia Coalition of Reason

-Atheist Meetup

Black Atheists of Philadelphia

-Delaware Association for Humanism -Delaware Atheists

-Drexel Freethought Society

-The Ethical Humanist Society

-The Freethought Society

-The Humanist Association of

Greater Philadelphia

Penn Secular Society (UPENN)

Penn State Atheists Agnostic Association

-Temple Atheists and Critical Thinkers

DIRECTIONS

GPS/Google Maps/Mapquest: 6036 Joshua Rd Ft Washington PA 19034

Then go straight on Joshua RD Turn Right through the gate Stay Right at the fork in the road Parking is on the Right side Pavilion is on the left.

Quick Reference Summer Calendar

5/31	4:00 PM	Einstein's Dice and Schrodinger's Cat Paul Halpern
6/7	11:00 AM	Depart for Camp Linden Picnic Leonard Weeks
6/9	1:30 PM	HLAA tour of the Art Museum Pat McGeever
6/14	10:00 AM	Yoga and Breath Hugh Taft-Morales
6/14	3:00 PM	Music at Ethical Rollin Wilber
6/21	10:00 AM	Ethical Page-Turners Betsy Lightbourn
6/25-2	98	AEU Assembly, Stamford, CT
6/28	10:00 AM	Tai-Chi
0,20	70.007111	Lelah Marie
7/2	7:00 PM	Allegiance: A Novel Kermit Roosevelt
7/5	10:00 AM	Accommodating Faith w/o Getting Stuck Lyle Murley
7/12	10:00 AM	Sustainable Éthical Culture
7/19	10:00 AM	Hugh Taft-Morales The War on Women
7/26	10:00 AM	Sylvia Metzler Feeling Good about Doing Good Hugh Taft-Morales
7/26	12-5 P.M.	Unity Picnic Phila. Coal. Reason
8/2	10:00 AM	Bringing Out the Better? Scott Pleume
8/9	10:00 AM	The Sermon on the Mount Ken Greiff
8/16	10:00 AM	YARD SALE, a one-act play Melissa McBain
8/23	10:00 AM	Colloquy, TBA Temma Fishman
8/30	10:00 AM	The Road to Character, David Brooks Hugh Taft-Morales

Ethical Views is published monthly except July and August.

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Hosts will be announced throughout the summer



Ethical Humanist Society of Philadelphia

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