



Ethical Views

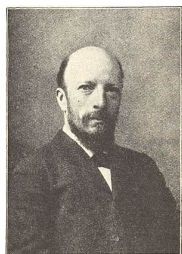


September 2015 Vol. 130, No. 1 Newsletter of the Ethical Humanist Society of Philadelphia

Sunday Platforms September 2015

Sunday, September 6, 11:00 A.M.

Ethical Humanism, Then and Now
Hugh Taft-Morales, Leader, Ethical Humanist Society of Philadelphia



When Felix Adler created our dynamic alternative to traditional religion, he saw a world without a moral compass. Humanity appeared to be “drifting on the seething tide of business,” leaving the conscience of each person lost in a sea of greed and competition. By focusing on ethics in caring communities, Adler believed we could chart a new course for civilization. How different is our situation today? How has Ethical Humanism evolved to respond to our current crisis while maintaining our commitments to honor the worth of each person, grow ethical relationships, and build justice?

Sunday, September 13, 11:00AM

From Cuba to Ukraine
Deena Stryker, Journalist



Fifty-four years ago the U.S. cut off diplomatic relations with Cuba, an island of 6 million people off the Florida coast. A year later, the world teetered for the first time on the brink of nuclear war. Recently, the US renewed diplomatic relations with Cuba, after backing a coup in Ukraine whose muscle came from Neo-Nazi militias. Once again, the threat of nuclear war is real, even though weapons are still in their

silos. Europe would bear the brunt of any hostilities, just as it would have during the Cold War. Has anything really changed, and what fate awaits journalists who follow their own dictates rather than those of the rulers?

After training at the French News Agency in Rome, Deena Stryker used the proceeds of her first book to investigate the Cuban revolution, taking advantage of her dual US/French citizenship. Her relatively daring exploit earned her the respect of Cuban leaders, enabling her to publish a portrait of Fidel Castro in a major French weekly, then return to the island to write a book, meeting with Fidel five days after Kennedy was assassinated. But before the internet and self-publishing, and without academic affiliation, it was almost impossible to get a contrarian message out, especially while raising two children.

Sunday, September 20, 11:00 A.M.

Peace, Poverty and the Planet
Hugh Taft-Morales, Leader, Ethical Humanist Society of Philadelphia



On the eve of the United Nations' International Day of Peace, Hugh Taft-Morales explores what it will take to bring lasting peace to the planet. While grateful for the energy and time diplomats and strategists contribute to contain violence, he wonders if such efforts will fail without a radical change of perspective on the part of most of the human race. From a humanist perspective, the recent Encyclical Letter of Pope Francis, “Our Common Home,” can be instructive. It emphasizes the fundamental interrelatedness of all of nature and society. War, greed, and exploitation feed off each other. To build peace, we need sustainability and justice.

Sunday, September 27, 11:00AM

Francis, the Good Guy ... But How about the Good.

Richard Kiniry, Leader Emeritus, Ethical Humanist Society of Phila.

Pope Francis demonstrates a lot of what could be called natural goodness, but he represents an institution that defines good within narrow, oppressive parameters. We ought to encourage him to run with his natural tendencies. Good is not a set of rules but a way of caring for the best in other people.



Richard Kiniry served as Leader (clergy person) of the Ethical Humanist Society of Philadelphia from 1990-2010,

and is now Leader Emeritus. He spent his college years in a Catholic seminary, raised chickens in India for two years with the Peace Corps, and had his own stained glass business for many years. He is a graduate of, among other institutions, the Humanist Institute and the leadership program of the Ethical Culture Movement. ◇

In This Issue

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President's Column

By Guest Columnist Betsy Lightbourn

PRESERVING OUR PAST FOR THE FUTURE

Until last year, the EHSoP archives occupied a wall of dedicated shelves in the Weston Room adjacent to the photo gallery of EHSoP leaders' official portraits. Thanks to former society member Jill Leeds Rivera, the bulk of materials were sorted, classified, and stored in grey archival boxes, for which I was very grateful when I took on the task of writing a short history of EHSoP in 2010. Since then other important materials have resurfaced, often in unlikely places. These include correspondence from Felix Adler to S. Burns Weston, detailing plans for deploying early leaders outside New York City environs, reminiscent of early western circuit riders. In going through some of these materials, dating from the 1880's, I was excited to find a letter penned on Hull House letterhead from Jane Addams, who had lectured at the Society, regarding some editorial changes in an unspecified publication and placing an order for 500 copies. These early, mostly handwritten documents -- and many like them -- have become quite fragile, easily chipped at the edges when handled. Even

enclosed in archival folders, they remain extremely vulnerable to climate variations and unforeseen disaster.

As chair of the Education Committee responsible for inviting guest platform speakers, I especially noted that on a speakers' list covering 1897-1909, leading progressive thinkers of the period lectured at the Society. They included such well-known figures as G. Stanley Hall, psychologist, author of a seminal study on adolescence; William James, and Josiah Royce, philosophers; William Lloyd Garrison, abolitionist; Carrie Chapman Catt, suffragist; and Jane Addams, social reformer (with no. 8 written after her name -- could that mean she spoke 8 times?) In 1897, the Society advertised a course of "six entertainments" (yes, lectures were considered a form of entertainment back then) with a lecture by Leader William Salter entitled "Recent Attacks Upon Marriage." Other noteworthy speakers included Aldous Huxley and Walt Whitman, the bard from Camden across the river.

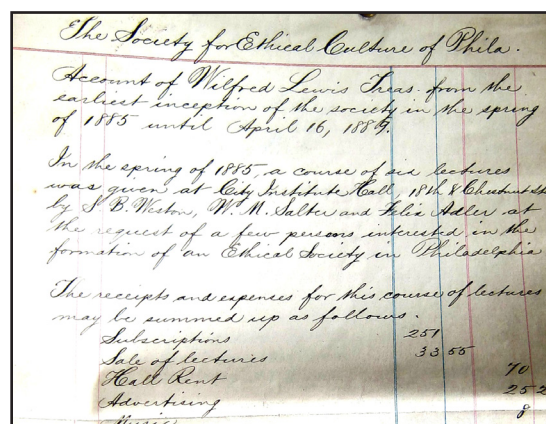
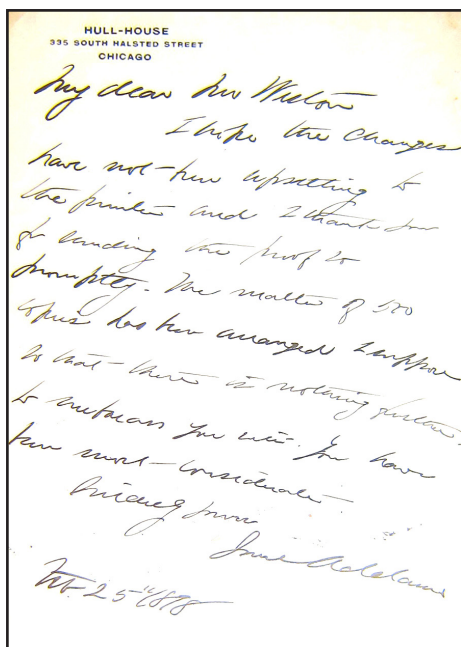
So far we have been fortunate that our documents, dating back as far as 1885, have avoided a major catastrophe like the one the Baltimore Ethical Society experienced last winter when water from a burst pipe in an overhead apartment drenched the Society archives. It took many hours of labor by Hugh and BES members to dry thousands of documents and other materials dating from the 1950's. If our handwritten documents from

the late nineteenth century had been water damaged, they would have been unsalvageable.

When our Archives relocated to the Leader's office last winter, the expanse of grey boxes caught the eye of new member Eric Clausen, who proposed transferring the collection to an institution that could provide state-of-the-art climate control, professional management, and greater accessibility to researchers: the nearby Historical Society of Pennsylvania. Housed at the HSP, our records would be close neighbors to the Fels family papers, whose member Jennie Fels is important to our history. From a prosperous German Jewish family, she began a lifelong connection with the Society in 1896 that was to influence the future direction of her life as a social reformer in the broader context of the women's labor movement and beyond. For the Society, she not only provided substantial lay leadership, serving as Board president and as an unpaid administrator under S. Burns Weston over many decades, but was instrumental in our acquisitions of both Camp Linden and our current home at 1906 S. Rittenhouse Square. Her correspondence is included in the preserved papers of her husband, Samuel Fels, a businessman and one of Philadelphia's leading philanthropists.

The Archives Committee -- Hugh Taft-Morales, Richard Kiniry, Nick Sanders and Eric Clausen (and later myself)

(Continued next page)



Social reformer Jane Addams, who lectured both here in Philadelphia and at the Chicago Ethical Society encloses note to S. Burns Weston regarding printing order.

Treasurer report for receipts and expenses for a series of lectures in spring, 1885 by Leaders S. Burns Weston, William Salter, and Felix Adler.

(Continued from previous page)

– met with Matthew Lyon, head of the HSP Archives to consider several possible arrangements. Eric has made a targeted donation to the management and processing costs, for which we are extremely grateful. The proposal under consideration might include digitizing the most fragile records, which in addition to protecting the originals would make key documents available for online research.

When I was a graduate history student in the 1970's, researchers (after consulting various collection guides) would customarily travel to the repositories to view documents. Since the advent of various computer technologies, this is often unnecessary. It has become increasingly commonplace to access primary materials online, so even high school students can easily make use of them for their research. While sitting at home in front of a computer is less romantic than traveling to distant archives, it can yield amazing results. For example, in her recent book, *Passing Strange: A Gilded Age Tale of Love and Deception Across the Color Line*, Amherst historian Martha Sandweiss uncovered the double identity of explorer and geologist Clarence King, who mapped the post-Civil War West. Researching the digitized census from her desk, she quickly discovered that King had led a parallel life for thirteen years as black Pullman porter and steelworker James Todd in a household with his black

common-law wife Ada Copeland King and their five children. (She took his real name posthumously.) *Passing Strange* explores how this was possible in late-nineteenth century New York City. While King was well-known, ordinary people like Ada King, who seldom leave an imprint on written historical records, are actors in extraordinary stories that raise questions about, and increase our understanding of, larger historical issues. Sandweiss describes their relationship as “a peculiarly American story that could take root only in a society where one’s racial identity determined one’s legal rights and social opportunities. At every turn it exposes the deep fissures of race and class that cut through the landscape of American life, cracks as deep and enduring as the geological features that King once mapped on his treks across the continent—rifts that are, in the end, even harder to explain.” (p. 306)

Inspired by Sandweiss, I followed a link on the HSP website to Jennie Fels’ entry in the 1940 Census. The information on the handwritten document showed her living on the Southeast Corner of 39th and Walnut Streets, age 70, with her husband, Samuel, age 80, a “protégé” from Eastern Europe, and three servants. (I noted that like Ada King, Jennie Fels presented herself to the census taker as five years younger than her actual age, and the census term “protégé” reflected Jennie’s otherwise known efforts to help others (struggling musicians, etc.) by taking them into the

household. If I were not faced with a looming deadline for this article, I would have explored further, through other censuses.

In the words of the late historian Gerda Lerner, “History-making, then, is a creative process, by means of which we fashion out of fragments of human memory and selected evidence of the past a mental construct of a coherent past that makes sense to the present.” Our history as documented through the Archives can contribute to that process.

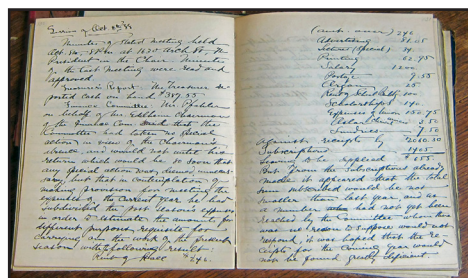


THANK YOU, SUMMER SUNDAY VOLUNTEERS

**Also by Betsy Lightbourn
Education Committee Chair**

This summer’s Sunday programs have ended another successful season, thanks to the accomplished, talented, and creative volunteers who have planned and presented programs that have inspired as well as informed through a variety of formats. Our facilitators this summer deserve our deepest appreciation:

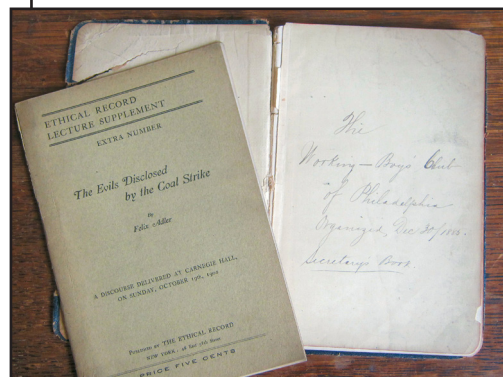
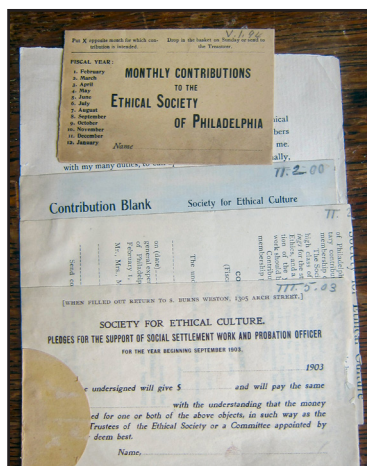
Lelah Marie, introduction to Tai Chi; Betsy Lightbourn, summer reading; Lyle Murley, poetry; Sylvia Metzler, reproductive rights discussion; Scott Pleune, personality enhancement; Ken Greiff, Sermon on the Mount; Pat McGeever and guest Melissa McBain, play reading; Temma Fishman, nature colloquy; and last but not least Leader Hugh with four Sundays ranging from Yoga to a discussion of David Brooks’ *The Road to Character*. Also our mini reviewers for Ethical Page Turners, Sylvia Metzler, Don Munson, John Marshall, Temma Fishman, Denise Shamro, Elisabeth Leonard, Terry Martin-Murley and Betsy Lightbourn.



Ethical Society of Philadelphia Minutes, October 8, 1888.

1903, “Pledges for the Support of Social Settlement Work and Probation Officer.”

Records of the Working Boys Club of Philadelphia, Organized Dec. 30, 1880.



Happenings



“AND THE AUDITORIUM WAS
WITHOUT FORM AND VOID...”

Or, in less biblical terms,
getting a summer spruce-up

Photo by Ken Greiff

Playwright, actor, and director Melissa McBain delivers dramatic reading of her poignant and funny one-woman show, *Yard Sale*, at our Summer Sunday, August 16. The play, in which one woman puts on sale many items from her long and fascinating life, was runner-up in the 2014 One-Act Play Contest at the Ethical Society.

Photograph by Betsy Lightbourn



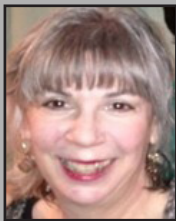
Announcements

Introduction to Ethical Humanism

Sunday, September 6, 7:00PM



Come to this season's first Sunday night *Introduction to Ethical Humanism*. Over wine and cheese, those new to Ethical Culture can learn about the history, philosophy and life of the Ethical Humanist Society of Philadelphia. Please RSVP to your host, Hugh Taft-Morales, at leaderhugh@phillyethics.org.



Thursday, September 10, 6:30 PM
Center-City Philly Hearing Loss
Association

Psychologist Julia Weinberg, JD, PhD, discusses the emotional side of hearing loss.



Thursday, September 17, 7:00 PM
WORLDLY WISDOM

Gullivers Travels by Jonathan Swift,
a discussion led by Lyle Murley.



Saturday, September 19, 8:00 PM

Music @ Ethical, Season Two Opener

In recognition of National Hispanic Heritage Month in September, our second season's opening concert celebrates Argentina's musical spirit. Inspired with the visit to Philadelphia by Pope Francis, his own Latin origins, and the humanity of his world vision, Fine Art Music Company has created "An Argentine Musicale," displaying intimate and exceptional classical music of Argentina.

The show combines violin, cello, piano, guitar and male voice into the soulful lyricism and powerful rhythms found at the core of works by Carlos Guastavino, Alberto Ginastera, Maximo Diego Pujol, Jose Luis Merlin, and Astor Piazzolla. Together, they comprise a journey into Argentine culture, from its folk music, poetry, and the elemental tango, to its twentieth century passions. (A prior performance at Ivy Hall, on Lancaster Avenue in Overbrook, takes place on Saturday, September 12, at 8:00 PM. See www.FineArtMusicCompany.com for all details.



Sunday, September 20, 2:00-4:30 PM

Interfaith Peace Day Philly Celebration and Dialogue, Nurturing the Activist Within & Relationships Beyond

The Peace Day Philly 2015 event is co-sponsored by: the Interfaith Walk for Peace and Reconciliation, Music Media Ministry, Zones of Peace, and the Ethical Humanist Society of Philadelphia. Come build the community, networking, and inspiration necessary to grow peace in our hearts, our city and the world! Learn about other peace groups in Philadelphia! Come for music, poetry, personal stories, refreshments, and dialogue to nurture the activist within!

-Share with others a transformative moment, person, or experience that shaped your peace activism.

-Talk about why your peace-related organization is the right fit for you, where, in the words of Frederick Buechner, "...your deep gladness and the world's deep hunger meet."

-Explore what you would do if the "Peace Genie" offered you the opportunity to magically institute one systemic change in this city, country or world. Free and open to the public!



**Monday, Sept. 21
6:15 PM**

Fifth Annual Peace Day Philly Sing-Along

Come celebrate the United Nations International Peace Day outside the Ethical Humanist Society of Philadelphia (1906 S. Rittenhouse) on the Southwest corner of Rittenhouse Square!

We will gather for the Fifth Annual Peace Day Philly Sing-Along! Hugh Taft-Morales, Leader of the Ethical Humanist Society, along with families, musicians, the Granny Peace Brigade and other peace organizations, will sing out songs of peace.

The program will include some participatory dances for Universal Peace! The event will conclude around 7:15 PM with a silent candlelight walk around Rittenhouse Square.

For more information, or if you are a musician with sing-along experience who would like to lead a peace song, please email Hugh at LeaderHugh@phillyethics.org. For more information about the many other activities Peace Day Philly, go to <http://www.peacedayphilly.org>.



Thursday,

September 24, 7:00 PM

Annie Laurie Gaylor

Why Women Need Freedom From Religion

The Ethical Humanist Society of Philadelphia and the Freethought Society are co-hosting a talk by Annie Laurie Gaylor, co-founder and co-president of The Freedom From Religion Foundation, which is a national 501(c)(3) educational, legal and activist organization based in Madison, Wisconsin.

Gaylor's presentation, "Why Women Need Freedom From Religion," is based on her books, *Woe to Women: The Bible Tells Me So*, and *Women Without Superstition: No Gods — No Masters*.



Quote-Unquote

"The Bible and the Church have been the greatest stumbling blocks in the way of women's emancipation."

-Elizabeth Cady Stanton,
Free Thought Magazine,
September, 1896

September 2015

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
		1	2 Meetings 6:30 p.m. Education Committee 7:45 p.m. Ethical Action Committee	3	4	5
6 11:00 a.m. <i>Ethical Humanism, Then and Now</i> Hugh Taft-Morales 7:00 PM Intro to Ethical Humanism	7	8	9 Meeting 5:30 p.m. Finance Committee	10 6:30 PM Center Cty Philly HLAA P. McGeever	11	12
13 11:00 a.m. <i>From Cuba to the Ukraine</i> Deena Stryker	14	15	16	17	18	19 8:00 PM Music @ Ethical: An Argentine Musicale
20 11:00 a.m. <i>Peace, Poverty and the Planet</i> Hugh Taft-Morales 2-4:30 PM - Interfaith Peace Day Philly Celebration and Dialogue	21 6:15 PM Fifth Annual Peace Day Philly Sing- Along	22	23 Meeting 7:00 p.m. EHSOP Board	24 7:00PM Amnesty Intl. 7:00 PM Annie Laurie Gaylor Why Women Need Freedom From Religion	25	26
27 11:00 a.m. <i>Music in Nature</i> David Rothenberg	28	29	30 Meeting 6:45 p.m. Camp Linden Committee			

SEPTEMBER BIRTHDAYS



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

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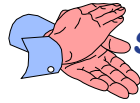
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SUNDAY SERVICES

Hosts - Coordinated by
Leslie Williams



Sept. 6 - Lelah Marie and Harry Thorn

Sept. 13 - Garry O'Rourke and Vince Russo

Sept. 20 - Arnold and Temma Fishman

Sept. 27 - tba



Flowers - Coordinated by
David Ralston

Sept. 6 - Ken Greiff, "In honor of all
the people who work so hard to make
our Sunday platforms a success."

Sept. 13 - John McCormick, "In
appreciation of this auditorium and its
fresh coat of paint."

Sept. 20 - Arnold and Temma Fishman,
"In loving memory of our good friend,
Jesse Zelnick."

Sept. 27 - David Ralston, "Smooth
Transitions."



Coffee Hour Coordinators

Sept. 6 - John McCormick

Sept. 13 - Ken Greiff

Sept. 20 - Garry O'Rourke

Sept. 27 - Harry Thorn

***Ethical Humanist Society
of Philadelphia***

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