



Ethical Views



April 2016

Vol. 130, No. 8 Newsletter of the Ethical Humanist Society of Philadelphia

Sunday Platforms

Ethical education classes for 5 to 12 year olds during Platform on first and last Sundays of the month.

Sunday, April 3, 11:00 AM

Wonder

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



We often take the world for granted, checking off the mundane tasks of our “to do list” without looking up towards broader horizons and open skies. Exclusively

focusing on the practical, one can lose touch with the awe, mystery and wonder that we felt as a child. In the words of John Stuart Mill, “It is not understanding that destroys wonder, it is familiarity.” How can we keep the unfamiliar in our lives? What is “wonder” and how can it help inspire us to live more fully?

Sunday, April 10, 11:00 AM

Green Space in the Gritty

City: The Development of Philadelphia’s Park System

Rob Armstrong, Preservation and Capital Projects Manager, Philadelphia Parks and Recreation



Philadelphia’s vast park system, encompassing over 10% of the City’s land, took several decades to assemble. From the mid-19th to the early 20th century, park planners worked to enhance the public realm by acquiring open space and natural areas for the citizens of Philadelphia. This address will highlight the history of planning Philadelphia’s park spaces,

which include the large watershed parks: Fairmount Park, Wissahickon Valley Park, Pennypack and Cobbs Creek Parks as well as current issues surrounding Philadelphia’s parks.

Rob Armstrong, a native of Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, holds a Ph.D. in American History from Lehigh University. He works as the Preservation and Capital Projects Manager at Philadelphia’s Dept. of Parks and Recreation. He lives in South Philadelphia with his wife, Jeannette, and their cat, Buzzy and is the son-in-law of EHSOP member John Marshall.

Sunday, April 17, 11:00 AM

Liberation: Some Jewish Roots of Ethical Culture

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

Felix Adler, the founder of Ethical Culture, drew inspiration from many sources. They included Emerson, Immanuel Kant, and Jesus. The deepest and most consistent source for Ethical Culture, however, was Judaism. Raised in an environment committed to Reform Judaism, Adler carried into his alternative to traditional religion an appreciation of some lofty goals of the Reform movement, such as a collective duty to heal a broken world and liberate humanity from oppression. In this season of Passover, which honors the ancient liberation from Egyptian slavery, Hugh Taft-Morales explores some of the Jewish and Reform roots of Ethical Culture.



Sunday, April 24, 11:00AM

Kant, Moral Progress and Ethical Humanism

Omar Khan, Business Consultant and Author

Immanuel Kant is considered by many to be the greatest philosopher of the Western tradition after Plato and Aristotle. His insights into the nature of perception, the “categories” by which we process experience, and the key conditions by which an act or deed becomes “moral” rather than just personally attractive or amenable to rationalization, continue to provide us with bracing and illuminating guidance today as we grapple with how to ensure both the integrity and the relevance of our ethical thinking.

Omar Khan studied Philosophy, Politics and Economics at Oxford University and wrote a thesis on “Moral Responsibility and Kant’s Noumenal Self” at University College, Oxford. He had the privilege of having his work guided and critiqued by his eminent friend, Isaiah Berlin. Omar went on to become a business consultant and a behavioral psychologist, and helps leaders, teams and individuals around the world to grapple purposefully with key choices, ethical and otherwise. He is the author of five books and numerous articles. Kant continues to provide important guard rails and foundations for his thinking. <>

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LEADER'S COLUMN



A SPRING FLURRY OF ACTIVITY!

Hugh Taft-Morales
Leader, Ethical
Humanist Society
of Philadelphia

Sometimes it is hard to keep up with all that's going on here at 1906 Rittenhouse Square. Members offer their time, energy, and talents to provide a rich array of activities and events. In this Leader's Column, I offer some updates about just a few of these.

I'll start with one of my favorite annual activities: our **Dictionary Project**. On Wednesday, March 2nd, members Kim McKay and Bob Bueding, along with EHSOP youths Manny Hoffman and Eliot and Ben Raynor, gave 40 dictionaries to students in two classrooms at Spring Garden School. When I have participated in this project I have been amazed at how many of the students said they did not have dictionaries at home.

Our Ethical Society ambassadors engaged students in discussion about, and exploration of, the most useful book in the world. Kim read a children's story with rich vocabulary and then helped students look up some of the words used and discuss their meaning. Manny, Eliot and Ben were



Kim McKay introduces
a book of words.
Photo: Bob Bueding

eager to show the students the many useful charts, graphs, and lists in the appendix, from metric tables to the longest word in the world!

On February 28th the Ethical Society was treated to a platform talk by Bishop Dwayne Royster, Executive Director of POWER, (Philadelphians Organized to Witness Empower and Rebuild), our interfaith social justice coalition. Dwayne spoke about how important it is to understand intersectionality – the overlapping of many forms of systemic oppression – especially if we want to build effective contemporary justice movements. We have to take as broad a perspective as we can because now, more than ever, we understand the truth expressed by Martin Luther King Jr.: “We are caught in an inescapable network of mutuality, tied in a single garment of destiny.

I am so grateful for the grace and compassion



shown by Bishop Royster through his leadership in making POWER a force in Philadelphia. Just a couple of weeks ago, Governor Tom Wolf raised the minimum wage for state workers to \$10.15. In announcing this increase of nearly \$3 an hour, the governor invited some of the movers and shakers that helped make this a reality up on stage with him. And who was over the governor's left shoulder? That's right, Bishop Royster, representing us and other progressive congregations and communities in our city. Effective and concrete results are some of the main reasons why the Ethical Society commits time and resources to support POWER. You can see a clip of the press conference with Gov. Wolf and Bishop Royster on stage at:

<http://6abc.com/politics/gov-tom-wolf-raises-minimum-wage-for-pa-state-workers/1234231>

Another reason why we joined POWER is that it supports the efforts of our members to grow as individuals so that they can become

more effective advocates for justice. Sylvia Metzler is participating in an intensive workshop called **Whites Confronting Racism**. (See Sylvia's article in the *Happenings* section of this edition of *Ethical Views*). Sylvia is bringing what she



learns back to 1906 Rittenhouse as head of our anti-racism team of the Ethical Action Committee. Sylvia, along with Kate and Hugh, is also interviewing members and friends who have had some extensive experience with our criminal justice system. This information will be used by POWER in its efforts to help improve relationships between the police and the public. Please see Sylvia, Kate, or Hugh if you are willing to share your experience.

I want to send out some kudos to Elisabeth Leonard who, along with a number of other EHSOP members, meets nearly every Sunday at 1:30 PM with supporters of **Move to Amend**. Some of you may remember last September when David Cobb of Move to Amend spoke in our auditorium and energized volunteers to work towards a constitutional amendment to overthrow *Citizens United*. That meeting led Elisabeth and others to advocate and educate us all about how we can get money out of politics. As of this writing, they were arranging a viewing of *Koch Brothers Exposed*, a documentary about the growing power of cash over candidates.

Relatedly, **Democracy Spring** will be underway when many of you read this newsletter. I spoke about this in my March 6 platform which you can find on YouTube at <https://youtu.be/ftz2ECV92yM>. As I said in my talk, I don't know whether this effort will effectively pressure our legislators to get some of the money

Leader's Column (cont'd.)

out of politics, or whether it will even be noticed by the mainstream media. But I feel that we have to do something. At the "talk-back" after platform, members and guests expressed a wide diversity of opinions about the tactics of **Democracy Spring**. What many agree on, however, is that our democracy is seriously  flawed and, for the sake of our country and our children, we have to become more

**DEMOCRACY
SPRING**



Many members are into the spring swing of things out at **Camp Linden**, helping to get the grounds prepared for another fantastic camp program. For newer members who may not know a lot about Camp Linden, I urge that you make a trip out there, whether it's for a

volunteer day, to see the camp in action, or just for some peace and solitude in the Brandywine Valley. Hopefully many of you attended the March Concert Fundraiser for Camp Linden where I sang my heart out!:) If you missed it, keep an eye out for me when I busk in Rittenhouse Square – you can throw a dollar or two in my guitar case to help "send a kid to camp." Speak to Leonard or other members of the Camp Linden Committee to find out more about how you can support our work at the camp.

If thinking about Camp Linden makes you nostalgic about your own camp experiences, consider reigniting your connection with nature – as well as your Ethical Culture knowledge, skills, and commitment – by attending the **Lay Leadership Summer School** from August 13-20. For the third time I am serving on the staff of this

intensive, weeklong exploration of our unique alternative to traditional religion.

There are brochures next to my office door that offer more of the details, but speaking to an alumnus might be even more



informative. Distinguished Lay Leadership Summer School vets include Susan D'Alessio, Kate Esposito, Temma and Arnold Fishman, Richard Kiniry, Xavier Mack, John McCormick, Henry Pashkow, Sally Redlener, Nick Sanders, and yours truly.

Until next time, thanks for helping us grow a community so full of energy and activity!



ANNOUNCEMENTS

Sunday, April 3, 7:00 PM

Introduction to Ethical Humanism

Come for an informal discussion of Ethical Humanism – its history, philosophy and living presence here on Rittenhouse Square. Ethical Society Leader Hugh Taft-Morales will offer information and answer questions about our inspiring alternative to traditional religion! Members and newcomers welcome.

RSVP to LeaderHugh@phillyethics.org

Monday, April 4, 7:00 PM

Ethics on the Square presents *Capitalism in Crisis!* a series of engaging ethical explorations of economics. Our April guest is John Taft, CEO of RBC Wealth Management – U.S. and former Chairman of the Securities Industry and Financial Markets Association (SIFMA), who also happens to be the brother of our Clergy Leader Hugh Taft-Morales. John will speak on **Stewardship in Financial Services** and address the tragically bad behavior that caused the financial crisis of 2008, which was portrayed in the movie *The Big Short*. Can anything keep us safe from such unethical behavior in finance? John will argue that fines, regulations, and the threat of jail won't reform the industry. Our only hope is a return to stewardship, which is "the responsible management of what others have entrusted to our care."

Looking ahead: **On May 1** we welcome Jamie Gauthier, Executive Director of the Sustainable Business Network, who will speak on ***The Environment and Economics – Local, Sustainable, and Self-Reliant.***

Thursday, April 14, 6:30 PM – Hearing Loss Association of America local chapter meeting.

Details to be announced. For up-to-date information, contact Steve Bremner: stevebremner@fastmail.fm

HAPPENINGS

FARMS NOT FRACKING

~ Sylvia Metzler

On Saturday, January 9, 2016, two members of EHSOP's Ethical Action Committee traveled to the Pennsylvania Farm Show in Harrisburg with a busload of environmentalists from the Philadelphia area. Marta Guttenberg and Sylvia Metzler joined anti-fracking* activists from across the Commonwealth to support around 150 Pennsylvania farmers crying, "Farms Not Fracking!"

*** Fracking is the shortened form of hydraulic fracturing, a technique used by the energy industry to extract oil and gas from rock by injecting high-pressure mixtures of water, sand or gravel and chemicals. For a five minute video introduction to the fracking process and its pros and cons, please see <https://youtu.be/Uti2niW2BRA>**

The farmers had signed a petition which they planned to deliver to Governor Tom Wolf when he spoke at the show's opening. The petition cited heartbreaking examples of how the negative effects of fracking had already destroyed their lives, from sick and dead animals to contaminated farmlands to family health concerns.



Marta stands fast in the rain.

While the farmers' delegation went inside to present their petition to the governor, we supporters stood outside the entrance with banners and signs to greet and educate the thousands of visitors. As we shivered in the cold and rain, we read aloud statements from dozens of farm families.

George and Lisa Zimmerman of Washington County, for example, tell how baseline tests on their water a year before the drilling began were "perfect." Tests after drilling found arsenic at 2600 times acceptable levels, benzene 44 times above limits and naphthalene five times the federal standard. Soil samples detected mercury and selenium above official limits, as well as ethyl benzene, a chemical used in drilling, and trichloroethylene, a naturally occurring but toxic chemical that can be brought to the surface by gas drilling.

With a wife, an eight-year-old son and eight-month-old twins, George Zimmerman worries about both air and water quality. He concludes that his land has become "virtually valueless" since the ten wells drilled by Atlas Energy have caused permanent contamination with toxic chemicals, and rates his chances of selling the property as "slim to none." "I don't want to live here anymore," he says. "I'm afraid of the chemicals."

Angel and Wayne Smith from Bradford County have experienced unprecedented losses since drilling began: one horse, three cows, twelve chickens, four cats, and twelve calves which were either miscarried or stillborn. They had to watch their animals die in agony because of the dangerous chemicals introduced by fracking, including methane and arsenic in their drinking water. The Smiths had planned to leave the farm to their grandchildren, but fracking has destroyed that dream.

Michele Beegle of Bedford County was told by a specialist M.D. that the episodes of syncope (passing out) that she experienced after a compressor station was built near her farm were the result of toxic exposure. She has broken all but one of her ribs from her many falls. She is also distressed by the unexplained deaths of some of her cows.

Pam Judy reports that since a large compressor station was built 900 feet from her family's farm, and with more than 35 wells drilled and producing within a mile of their



Sylvia shares the farmers' stories.

home, the noise, odors and heavy road traffic have diminished many benefits of the country life. But Pam, her husband and their two children have been most concerned about their health. They have often felt tired and suffered headaches, runny noses, sore throats, and muscle aches. Pam has had bouts of dizziness and vomiting and, until they moved away, both of her children had frequent nosebleeds.

How many more family farmers will give up and move away? How many farms and farmlands can we afford to lose? What will it take for us to stop using fossil fuels and switch to renewable energy sources? Marta and Sylvia urge you to take action:

- Buy your electricity from either www.theenergy.coop/ or www.greenmountainenergy.com/, companies that use only wind and solar power.
- Support the Pennsylvania farmers by contacting Governor Wolf and demanding, "Farms not Fracking!"

Gov. Wolf can be contacted via <https://governor.pa.gov/contact/> or at 717-787-2500.

Photos courtesy of Roger Smith, Stills Photographer (rjsphoto@ptd.net) For Roger's full coverage of the Farm Show demo, see his photos on <https://www.flickr.com/photos/photographybyroger/sets/>

WHITES CONFRONTING RACISM – A POWER WORKSHOP

~ Sylvia Metzler

Thank you!

Editor's note: Philadelphians Organized to Witness Empower and Rebuild (POWER), the interfaith social justice organization that EHSOP joined over a year ago, recently facilitated a workshop to address racism in our country and region. EHSOP member Sylvia Metzler took part, and shares her experiences.

When eighteen POWER members began our “Whites Confronting Racism” (WCR) experience at 8:30 on Saturday morning, fifteen of them were strangers to me. I wondered what my thoughts and feelings would be about them by Sunday evening? How would twenty hours of intensive study and introspection affect them,



Sylvia looks over the symbols of workshop participants' spiritual values.

me, and our relationships?

To begin with, our two experienced facilitators, Lorraine and Sarah, asked us to share the physical object we had brought to the workshop that symbolized the qualities and values we drew from our spiritual orientation. Among the crosses, poems, statues, books and a boot was my photo of my son Rob, his wife and their two biracial grandchildren.

It soon became apparent that I was the only non-theist there. While I was a little uncomfortable with some of the overt religiosity, I did not want to disrespect or inhibit my new friends. I struggled over whether to speak

up but decided early on to share that I was an Ethical Humanist. To my surprise and relief, the response was very warm and welcoming. In fact, one member of the group said I might be surprised to find that I was not the only agnostic present!

We learned that the agenda would include work on our individual racism, group racist behavior, and systemic or institutional racism. For example, my individual racism may manifest itself when I encounter some noisy women on the subway and think, “Damn, those Black people are loud.” When I am in a mixed racial group, we white people often monopolize the conversation with little awareness of what we are doing. And on the systemic level, instead of working to stop redlining, police racial profiling and “stop and frisk,” etc., we often are unaware or even unconcerned.

We prepared for this workshop by digesting the assigned readings. Some sample titles include: “Key Terms for Discussion,” “Examples of How White People Express Racism,” “Examples of White Group Level Behavior,” “White Privilege and Male Privilege,” “What is White Supremacy?” “Why It’s Hard to Talk to White People About Racism (White Fragility),” “Solidarity Not Charity: Racism in Katrina Relief Work,” and several chapters in Howard Zinn’s book, *A People’s History of the United States*.

The workshop’s format included some didactic presentations and lots of experiential learning such as role-plays. A timeline of racial history was very helpful, especially learning that the concept of race was invented by white men in the United States to keep poor oppressed whites and Blacks from joining forces to demand decent living conditions, equality and justice in their lives.

Agreeing on definitions of key terms

was super important that Saturday morning. For example: the difference between prejudice and racism (prejudice plus power), reverse racism (not possible in the U.S.), colorblindness (not a good thing), microaggressions, internalized oppressions, etc. A new concept for me was “intent vs. impact.” I may not have meant to say something hurtful but when in doubt about feedback I get, “It is best to believe the one who perceives the bias.” We did “Iceberg work” and learned about conscious vs. unconscious bias. I learned that “What’s down below is running the show.”

Another important learning for me was on how to confront racism in myself and others without being harsh and judgmental. We learned to differentiate guilt, which is not helpful, from remorse, which leads to change and action.

Despite all this, it seems we have only begun to scratch the surface. We have our homework: readings, journaling, practicing what we learned, calls to our small support group of three, evening meetings, researching our own congregation’s racial history and two more long weekends.

I now know all eighteen faces and names and some information about everyone. We have shared our stories and experiences and our secrets, heartaches, challenges and goals for confronting racism. It feels so supportive and empowering to have this amazing group at my back as we embark together to cleanse ourselves and the United States of our country’s “original sin.”

Questions? Comments? Want to know more? Wondering what icebergs have to do with racism? Sylvia invites you to contact her by phone 215-423-9375 or email sylmetz@juno.com.

REMINDER

OUR 2016 SERVICE AUCTION
EVENT IS UNDERWAY!

WHAT IS IT?

MEMBERS OFFER AN EVENT
FOR A PARTICULAR PRICE AS
IN THE FOLLOWING LIST -
AND OTHER MEMBERS CAN
MAKE A BID ON THE OFFER IF
THEY WOULD LIKE TO PARTAKE
OF IT. ALL PROCEEDS GO
DIRECTLY TO OUR EHSOP.

EVENTS INCLUDE:

• Ice Cream & Games Events

• Boat Rides on Schuylkill

• Uptown Theater Tours

• Canoe Carnival

• Museum Visits

• Cocktail & Dinner Parties

• Sing Alongs with Hugh

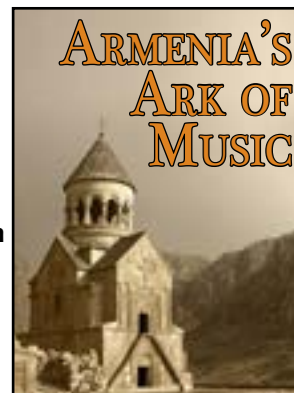
• and many more, including
popular items from last
year ... plus some new and
unusual ones!

We are accepting items for the Service
Auction Events by Phone, Email, Sunday
Platform, Stagecoach, Wells Fargo Express
or any Other Conveyance. Look out for
the orange sheets at Sunday platforms, or
contact our untiring Service Auctioneer,
Sally Redlener: sredlener110@gmail.com



Saturday, April 16, 8:00 PM
Saint Mark's Episcopal Church
1625 Locust Street

Sunday, April 17, 3:00 PM
The Ethical Society Building



Rollin Wilber writes: On April 16 & 17, we will be presenting a concert titled **Armenia's Ark of Music, Part 1**. I have wanted to perform this music ever since I learned of its existence, just a few years ago. For all of my life's focus on classical music, I knew nothing of the musical traditions that have existed in Armenia for centuries. An Armenian friend introduced it to me, telling me of a man named Komitas who, a century ago, dedicated his life to singlehandedly salvaging the liturgical and folk traditions of music from this culture, with roots that go back many centuries. When I listened to the music, I was stunned at its haunting beauty, and even more moved by the commitment of this one man to save his people's music in the face of societal decline and ultimate genocide.

This music truly does live on. Hence the title of our concert, **Armenia's Ark of Music**. The culture saved by Komitas created a resource for modern composers who have continued the tradition in their own voices. We will be presenting instrumental and vocal music by Hovhanness, Khachaturian, Babajanian, Arutiunian, and Komitas, and a world premier specially composed for this occasion by Canadian-Armenian composer Petros Shoujounian. This concert is the first part of a two part series, which will be continued in next year's season, when we will explore these musical arts at their source. Because of anticipated large attendance we are presenting the Saturday concert at St. Mark's Episcopal Church, followed on Sunday afternoon at the Ethical Society.

BASS-BARITONE: Vartan Gabrielian (guest artist from Curtis Institute)
SOPRANO: Anush Avetisyan (guest artist from Academy of Vocal Arts)
VIOLIN: Jonathan Moser **CELLO:** Michal Schmidt
PIANO: Rollin Wilber **PIANO:** Katarzyna Marzec-Salwinski

In May, we are honored to present a very special recital by Polish-born pianist Pawel Chęciński, Juilliard-trained, world-renowned performer, prize winner in major competitions, acclaimed for interpretations of Chopin, esteemed for his "quality of sound that is always kept within lyrical bounds. Besides his poetic interpretation, this extremely talented artist is also a brilliant musical dramatist." Our very own Kasia Marzec-Salwinski studied under Chęciński for several years in Chicago before coming to Philadelphia. We are excited to now bring him to the Ethical Society for this one-evening-only recital on **Saturday, May 21, at 8:00 PM**.

For more about this and other Music At Ethical concerts, see
www.fineartmusiccompany.com/

APRIL 2016

Sun	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Sat
					1	2
3 11:00 a.m.: <i>Wonder</i> Hugh Taft-Morales 7:00 p.m.: <i>Intro to Ethical Humanism</i> Hugh Taft-Morales	4 7:00 p.m. <i>Capitalism in Crisis: Stewardship in Financial Services</i> John Taft	5	6 MEETING 6:30 p.m. Education Committee	7	8	9
10 11:00 a.m.: <i>Greenspace in the Gritty City</i> Rob Armstrong	11	12	13 MEETINGS 5:30p.m. Finance Committee 6:30p.m. Ethical Action Committee	14 6:30p.m. Center City Philly Hearing Loss Association - local chapter meeting	15	16
17 11:00 a.m. <i>Liberation: Some Jewish Roots of Ethical Culture</i> Hugh Taft-Morales 3:00 p.m. Musical at Ethical: <i>Armenia's Ark of Music</i>	18	19	20 MEETING 7:00 p.m. EHSOP Board of Trustees	21	22	23
24 11:00 a.m. <i>Kant, Moral Progress and Ethical Humanism</i> Omar Khan	25	26	27 MEETING 7:00 p.m. Camp Linden Committee	28  7:00 p.m. Amnesty International Meeting	29	30

QUOTE - UNQUOTE

"There's an old saying in Tennessee
 - I know it's in Texas, probably in
 Tennessee - that says, 'Fool me once,
 shame on ... shame on you. Fool me -
 you can't get fooled again.' "

- yes, this is a direct quote from
 George W. Bush, speech, Nashville, TN.,
 9/17/02

"Fool me 367,859 times, you're a
 weather man."

- Anonymous

APRIL BIRTHDAYS

14 Aissia Richardson
 21 Henry Pashkow
 22 Kate Esposito
 22 Christian Hayden
 29 Nina Diamond



SUNDAY SERVICES

11:00 A.M. SEPTEMBER
THROUGH JUNE

Ethical Views is published monthly
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Hosts Coordinated by Lelah Marie, Host



Thanks to our February
hosts:

Vince Russo, Richard Kiniry,
Garry O'Rourke, Elisabeth Leonard,
Susan Brotherton, Dan Hoffman,
Maureen Pielli, and Arthur Pielli.



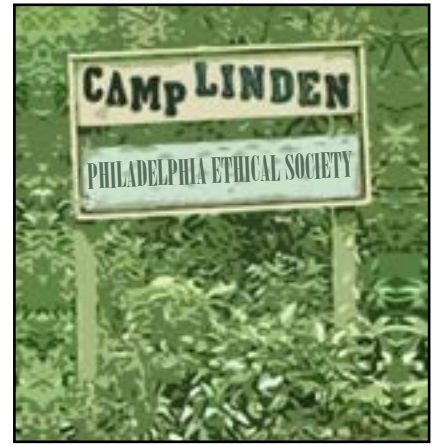
Coffee Hour Coordinators

April 3 - John Marshall
April 10 - Ken Greiff
April 17 - Garry O'Rourke
April 24 - Harry Thorn



Flowers Coordinated by David Ralston

April 3 - Michael Black-Smith,
"In honor of my grandmother,
Robin Black-Schaffer, who was
never so pleased as when she
realized she had 'become an
ancestor!'"



EHSOP provides summer camp,
without cost, to low-income inner
city children from Philadelphia.

April 10 - Doris Leicher, "In honor
of all EHSOP members who joined in
ethical actions"

April 17 - Betsy Lightbourn, "In
loving memory of my parents,
the Rev. Francis C. and Marion V.
Lightbourn"

April 24 - Nick Sanders, "To
Leonard, Sharon, and Jeffrey for
Camp Linden leadership"

Ethical Humanist Society of Philadelphia

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