



# ETHICAL VIEWS

March 2017

Vol. 131, No. 7 Newsletter of the Philadelphia Ethical Society



## Sunday Platforms

In March, the *Sunday Ethical Education for Kids (SEEK)* program will be meeting during platforms on the 5th and 19th. If you have questions, please contact Nick Sanders, [nick@phillyethics.org](mailto:nick@phillyethics.org)

**Remember, clocks  
spring forward on  
Sunday, March 12**

**Sunday, March 5, 11:00 AM  
*Fragility and Resilience*  
Hugh Taft-Morales, Leader,  
Philadelphia Ethical Society**



There are many times when as individuals, or as a country, we have felt fragile. Times can be hard, and the strengths we rely upon can slip from our grasps.

We can be knocked down. How do we get back up? How do we go on? What is resilience, and from where does it spring? Hugh Taft-Morales explores the importance of the trait of resilience in surviving health challenges, national crises, and ecological threats. At a time when many are feeling grave uncertainty about the future, maybe paradoxically it is in our very fragility that resilience is born.



**Sunday, March 12, 11:00 AM  
*Helping Neighbors South of the Border*  
Walt Vail, Sylvia Metzler and  
Garry O'Rourke, Members,  
Philadelphia Ethical Society**

Two PES members will discuss their experiences working on social action projects in Latin America. Sylvia Metzler, who has traveled to Nicaragua for a number of years, will discuss her recent trip to Nicaragua to provide medical care through Medicines for Nicaragua (MedNica) as well as her observations about political change in that country. Garry O'Rourke will discuss his work with *Manos Amigas* (Friendly Hands), a medical/dental clinic in an underserved region of Honduras which was started ten years ago by a Chester County dentist and businessman, and sees almost 20,000 patients per year.



**Sunday, March 19, 11:00 AM  
*Spring Festival***

On the day before the spring equinox, come celebrate at our annual Spring Festival. Ethical Humanists commit to protecting the amazing, delicate and rare balance that allows life to flourish. Come enjoy music, poetry and prose to help inspire gratitude and encourage radically more sustainable attitudes and life styles.

**Sunday, March 26, 11:00 AM  
*Paying The Price: College Costs, Financial Aid, And The Betrayal Of The American Dream*  
Sara Goldrick-Rab, Professor  
of Higher Education Policy,  
Organizational, & Leadership  
Studies, Temple University**

If you are a young person, and you work hard enough, you can get a college degree and



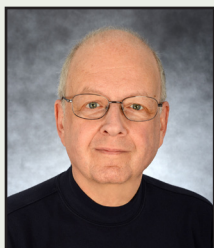
set yourself on the path to a good life, right? Not necessarily, says Sara Goldrick-Rab, and in this talk she will show exactly why. Quite simply, college is far too expensive for many people today, and the confusing mix of federal, state, institutional, and private financial aid leaves countless students without the resources they need to pay for it. Goldrick-Rab will reveal the devastating effect of these shortfalls: huge numbers of students drop out of school every year not with a degree, but with crippling debt. To fix this problem, she will offer a range of possible solutions, from

*Continued on page 2*

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# PRESIDENT'S COLUMN



## Getting to the Heart of the Matter

Bob Bueding

A few weeks ago I did battle with some cardiac issues. My doctor thought he saw “something,” which led to a series of tests, and a calming resolution.

We are accustomed to taking our personal health for granted and we often treat our country’s health that way too. I’m glad my health situation is stable, but my heart hurts because of what’s going on in our nation’s backyard.

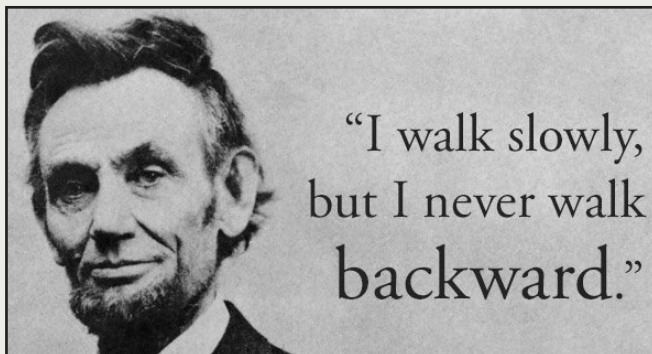
Our newly-elected leaders have lost their way; there is no cooperation and little rationality within our government. As Ethical Humanists, we know what working together for the common good does. We know how important it is to cooperate with others to make our planet a better home.

I think about young families just starting out on their life’s journey, and I worry about our newest generation. How do we educate our children and explain what’s happening in our country? Just as with my medical situation, I’m confident there are solutions to our challenges. After all, there is so much good in our world. My motto? “Never give up.”

Our Ethical Society is a beacon of hope. We epitomize the concept of the common good. So what can we do to help our lost leaders? I honestly believe there are many members of our government who are good people with good intentions. Our new president campaigned on making America great again. America is already great, but there is much more that can be done to move us forward. What we do at the Ethical Society is an example of what can be accomplished nationwide. Now we have to grow our efforts even more.

If you are not actively involved in our Society, please consider what you can do. There are many ways that your contribution can make an impact. We all need to continue to learn; we need to keep up all our demonstrations; we need to make sure our elected officials know that we are not going to let up.

My hope is that if we keep the pressure on, people will realize what’s real and what’s not. If we all do our jobs we can turn things around in 2018, and beyond. America IS great, now let’s keep working so that we can get back the sane and solid government we deserve.



– Bob  
[bbueding@phillyethics.org](mailto:bbueding@phillyethics.org)

*Continued from page 1*

technical improvements to the financial aid application process, to a bold “first degree free” program. What’s not an option is doing nothing, and continuing to crush the college dreams of a generation of young people.

Sara Goldrick-Rab is co-editor of *Reinventing Financial Aid: Charting a New Course to College Affordability* and has written on education issues for *The New York Times*, *The Wall Street Journal*, and *The Washington Post*. Dr. Goldrick-Rab is Professor of Higher Education Policy, Organizational, & Leadership Studies at Temple University and in 2016 was named by *Politico* as one of the fifty most important “doers, thinkers, and visionaries transforming American politics.” Follow her on Twitter:

@saragoldrickrab

## BOARD OF TRUSTEE VACANCIES

Nominations are now open for the following Board of Trustees positions:

Treasurer  
 Secretary  
 – plus three other  
 Trustee positions

All positions have two-year terms. Elections will take place at the May membership meeting.

If interested please contact  
 Temma Fishman,  
 Harry Thorn  
 or Ron Coburn.



## LEADER'S COLUMN



### BEING ONE IN SONG

*Hugh Taft-Morales,  
Leader, Philadelphia  
Ethical Society*



Most Sundays when speaking at the Philadelphia Ethical Society, I drive up early in the morning from Washington. Besides sparse traffic, one of the pleasurable things about my ride is that I am accompanied virtually by Krista Tippett, host of NPR's *On Being*.

In December Tippett hosted Alice Parker, a 90-year-old composer, conductor, and teacher of singing. They discussed how singing joins human beings in ways few other arts can. Parker calls singing the "language of babies." She says, "That's what they're born knowing. From their first utterance, it's all singing." Bobby McFerrin said we probably sang before we spoke.

I don't recall singing much in my life until my parents sent me twice a week to the boys' choir of Trinity Church in New Haven, Connecticut. It's the only time my parents ever encouraged me to enter a house of worship, but it was to honor music, not honor god. Their encouragement made a tremendous difference in my life. History and philosophy greatly shaped my intellectual growth, but few pastimes gave my intuitive life such room to grow. This is what fascinated Ms. Parker and animated her work in drawing forth this "language of emotions."

Equally important to her is the communal expression of singing. It need not be the famous Robert Shaw Chorale, with whom Parker collaborated for 20 years. As she explains, "In any place there's a group of singing, where two or three are gathered together, we can sing." Tippett noted how mysterious the process can be. She said that you can take, "a collection of very ordinary people, some – many of whom have no training, maybe all of them have no training, probably a fair number of any group like that is tone deaf, and yet make a gorgeous noise."

For years I've wanted a chorus group here at the Ethical Society, but there always seem to be so many other more urgent tasks to complete by day's end. And yet, singing is more than just something we do in order to "present" at a Sunday program. It can help us bond as a community. Now, as society seems so divided over political and social issues, many of us feel the need to be a part of an organic whole.

Ethical Humanism has a long tradition of bringing people together around ideas. Explaining, comparing, debating ideas can be an important part of community and is a necessary part of a functioning civic body. But it's not enough. Ideas, in and of themselves, don't always engage the whole person. Rationality does not necessarily nurture the web of relationships so necessary for a complete life.

Parker explains it this way: "It has to do with the fact that the walls that we put up around ourselves in order to get through growing up in polite society and stuff simply dissolve when we are all listening together to a song, and when we've called forth the emotional underpinning of that song, the context out of which the song arises." As I grow older, personally, I seek more ways to dissolve those walls.

This month I turn 60. (Please no fuss, no gifts – don't make me regret bringing this up!) Parker speaks of how music echoed her sense of wholeness that came more fully into focus as she grew older. "I was about 60 when I began to see my own experiences adding up to me instead of being very diverse experiences in conducting, and composing, and teaching, and mothering, and all the rest of it. When you begin to get out of it, it's as if you're putting your head up above water, and you're looking out and saying, 'Oh, is that the way it works?'"

Can we make it work at 1906 Rittenhouse? Ethical Culture, often called a religion of relationships, can grow stronger through singing. A chorus creates relationships because, in Parker's words, it "has to be face-to-face, and it has to be local." We have an opportunity to create such a chorus thanks to the skills and energy of a new member of the Ethical Society. Many of you already know Bob Steinfort, whose professional name is Robert Edwin. He has shared his prodigious musical talents already. If there is sufficient interest, maybe he can help us create our own modest, joyful chorus this year. He's already led the debut of the "PES Pop-Up Chorus" on February 19 singing Bob's song, "*So Much to Be*."

So often I hear people say, "Oh, but I'm not a singer." If we think about this more as connection than performance, however, perhaps it will be an important bonding experience during these divided times. As Alice Parker explains, "As the first often faint sounds come from my throat, I'm beginning to spin a web connecting me to the group, and my whole effort is to get connecting threads coming back from them. As the song builds, the thread becomes a line, a rope, a cable, a bridge. And finally, there is no division. We are all one in song."



# ANNOUNCEMENTS

**Sunday, March 5, 7:00 PM**

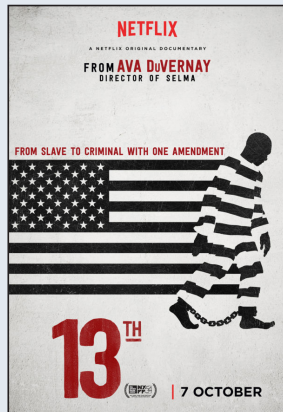
## **Introduction to Ethical Humanism – A Focus on Social Justice**

Newcomers and visitors are encouraged to attend an Introduction to Ethical Humanism. PES member Christian Hayden and Leader Hugh Taft-Morales will host a discussion from 7:00-8:30 PM focusing a core value of our alternative to traditional religion that we share with many progressive groups and religions: the importance of building social justice. Come enjoy a relaxed 90 minutes with wine, cheese and conversation RSVP to [LeaderHugh@phillyethics.org](mailto:LeaderHugh@phillyethics.org)

**Sunday, March 5, 2:00 PM**

## **The PES Confronting Racism Task Force presents a screening of the documentary “13th”**

POWER member congregations have been urged to show Ava DuVernay’s powerful documentary *13th* as a tool to more fully understand the evolution of the Thirteenth Amendment which abolished slavery yet perpetuated its legacy through the mass incarceration of Black people in the United States.



The full Thirteenth Amendment reads: “Neither slavery nor involuntary servitude, except as a punishment for crime whereof the party shall have been duly convicted, shall exist within the United States, or any place subject to their jurisdiction.”

The film consists of fast-paced and dynamically integrated interviews, historical footage,

statistical analysis of incarceration rates, other significant demographics and the for-profit forces driving the prison industrial complex.

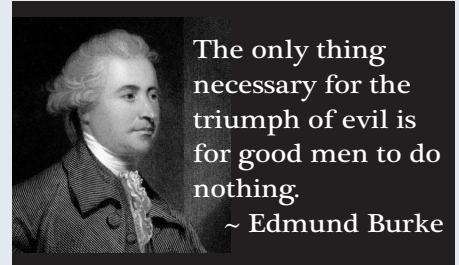
It was nominated for an Oscar in the Best Documentary Feature category. Owen Gleiberman, in *Variety*, wrote, *When you watch “13th,” you feel that you’re seeing an essential dimension of America with new vision. That’s what a cathartically clear-eyed work of documentary art can do.*

We will hold a post-film discussion immediately following the screening in the Auditorium.

**Monday, March 6, 7:00 PM** *Edmund Burke’s Relevance to Today – A Discussion with H.G. Callaway*

Since the presidential election of 2016 has torn up our map of U.S. political alignment, what can we learn from statesman and philosopher Edmund Burke (1730-1797)? Contemporary analysts turn to Burke for wisdom because he defies obvious political boxes – he advocated for the rights of the colonial subjects of the British Empire but harshly

condemned French revolutionaries. Liberals and conservatives today both quote him, in part



because of his clear critique of the excesses of politics and empire. He argued against swings to the left or right, advocating for both justice and continuity. Given today’s chaotic political environment, what can we learn from Burke to guide us towards sensible public policy and civic community? Come hear scholar H.G. Callaway explore this, as well as comment on his new book, *Edmund Burke, the Imperatives of Empire and the American Revolution* (Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2016). Hugh Taft-Morales will lead a discussion with the author and moderate discussion with the audience. Free and open to the public. There will be a book signing at the end of the evening. The author will bring his newest works, as well as past works, all available for purchase.

**Friday, March 17, 6:30 PM**

## **Black Lives Matter: Potluck and Discussion**

The Confronting Racism Task Force invites all PES members to its second potluck and discussion of Black Lives Matter and white privilege. This event will take place in Center City.

For more information, or to confirm your attendance, please contact Sylvia at 215-423-9375

**Monday, March 20, 7:00 PM**

## **Lawrence Krauss at the Philadelphia Ethical Society**

Come join other area humanists, skeptics, and freethinkers to hear Lawrence Krauss discuss his new book, *The Greatest Story Ever Told – So Far* at the Philadelphia Ethical Society. Krauss will explore our current understanding of nature and the struggle to



## ANNOUNCEMENTS cont.



construct the greatest theoretical edifice ever assembled, the Standard Model of Particle Physics. How can we best understand its implications for our existence? This master teacher, physicist, television, film personality, and in-demand lecturer always effectively conveys complex ideas to the general public! Leader

Hugh Taft-Morales lists Krauss as one of the greatest thinkers of our time – his previous appearances have packed our auditorium. Co-hosted by the Freethought Society and the Philadelphia Ethical Society.

Please make your choice of reservation at the site listed as soon as possible. Seating is limited. Select from multiple ticket options including VIP Full Party Pass which includes a pre-lecture reception with the author: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/an-evening-with-lawrence-krauss-tickets-30498140760>

### Sunday, March 26, 3:00 PM Johannes Brahms and the Schumanns - A Story of Music and Love



A deep love and respect existed between these three 19th - century musical giants, from youth through to the tragedy of Robert Schumann's mental breakdown. Our program contains works by each:

- Robert Schumann – *Fantasy Pieces, op.73 for viola and piano*
  - Clara Schumann – *Piano Trio for violin, cello and piano*
  - Johannes Brahms – *Piano Quartet #1 in G minor, op.25 for violin, viola, cello and piano*
  - Three Piano Pieces by Robert Schumann, Clara Schumann, and Johannes Brahms
- Performers:

Jonathan Moser, violin; Adelya Shagidullina, viola; Michal Schmidt, cello; Rollin Wilber, piano; Katarzyna Marzec-Salwinski, piano

Tickets: \$25/general; \$15/members; \$20/seniors; \$10/students [Fineartmusiccompany.ticketleap.com](http://Fineartmusiccompany.ticketleap.com)

Information: 215-803-9725

[info@FineArtMusicCompany.com](mailto:info@FineArtMusicCompany.com)

The program will also be performed the previous evening, March 25, at 7:30 PM at:

Ivy Hall, 6331 Lancaster Ave., 19151

## EDITORIAL: DO WE, LIKE, DO EDITORIALS?

No, *Ethical Views* doesn't usually have one. But hey, anything can happen these days.

Lately every day seems to bring what a neighbor, late due to Center City traffic yet again, called "Another shout-and-wave-cardboard." Three cheers, of course, for all the caring PES members who have repeatedly hit the streets. Loved your cardboard! But isn't everyone by now feeling a tad "protested out?" And what are all these demos really achieving?

"Protests are by their nature reactive," says George Lakey, (the *Viking Economics* guy). "Simple protests, no matter what the issue, essentially signal to Trump that he is winning – he has manipulated us into reacting. I realize that reactivity is a habit among many activists, and may take heroic self-discipline to avoid. An alternative is to organize a campaign, or join a campaign near you, even if the issue is not your favorite, and plunge in with full talent and energy."

So, cardboard aside, (and responsibly recycled), what can – and should – PES people do next?

For some ideas we could turn to the source of the above quote, George Lakey's *A 10-point plan to stop Trump and make gains in justice and equality* (<http://wagingnonviolence.org/feature/stop-trump-10-point-strategy/>). Note that he's not just talking stop, he's seeing an opportunity for gains.

At a more personal level, Unitarian Universalist minister Rev. Jake B. Morrill – see link under this month's *Quote ... Unquote* – offers a thought provoking *3 Ways to be a Totalitarian*, (don't try this at home), plus *9 Ways to be Free*, (make it so!)

Thinking of gains, Leader Hugh's March 5 platform considers fragility versus resilience, but can we do better than break even? How about a word that Nassim Nicholas Taleb thinks is missing from the English language: antifragile. "Antifragility is beyond resilience or robustness. The resilient resists shocks and stays the same; the antifragile gets better." Sometimes immersion in adversity can elicit from us a best that would otherwise have stayed un-elicited. Consider Gautama the Buddha; anyone who ever had kids; had cats, even?

Shortly after the election there was a reactive surge of what could be called "non-theist OMG" contributions, leading to a huge January 2017 *Ethical Views*. Since then, apart from the regular columns, words have been staying away in their thousands. PES member, Uncle Felix wants YOUR thoughts!

So, what do we do next? I've done everything necessary to initiate an Ethical Humanist/Ethical Cultivist Meaningful Dialogue here, (viz. cited a Quaker, a UU, and a 50¢ Latinate word!) Now, to deploy the word that launched a thousand words: Discuss.

All contributions of the written variety will be gratefully received, and quite possibly published.

As always, your photos – where "your" means "taken by you" – are welcome too, with caption, please. And look out for the deadline: the 10th of each month, (except June and July), for the following month's issue.

Thanks!

Steve Bremner



## HAPPENINGS PES Talk-Back Sessions:



Social change activist and retired Swarthmore professor George Lakey spoke about the struggles and achievements of socialism in Scandinavian countries in his Jan. 31 address, "How Scandinavians Challenge Us with an Ethic of Equality and Freedom," the subject of his book, "Viking Economics: How the Scandinavians Got It Right – and How We Can, Too."



PES members and visitors engage guest speaker John L. Jackson, Dean of UPenn's School of Social Policy and Practice, in Dialogue following his address, "Love, Paranoia and the Limits of Community in a Multiracial Society." He argued for an expanded understanding of "love" different from the ways most people think of the term.

Photos by Betsy Lightbourn

### PES Members protest the ban on immigration and refugees from the 7 "Muslim countries"

Upper right, Leslie Williams and Kate (or "Kat"?) Esposito at Philadelphia International Airport on January 29.

Below right, John Marshall, John McCormick, Kate Esposito, and Harry Thorn march in Center City on February 4.

Photos from Kate Esposito



### Gerontia: A Dramatic Reading



At the February 12 platform, members read the PES 2016 One Act Playwriting Contest's winning entry, 'Gerontia.' Left to right: Arnold Fishman; Pat McGeever; Walt Vail, playwright; Temma Fishman; Betsy Lightbourn.

Photo by Bob Bueding

### And Who is This Little Boy?



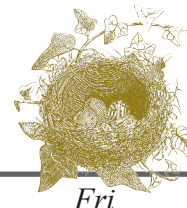
PES Leader-to-be Hugh Taft-Morales, nearly 6 years old in 1963, (and this month 10 x 6), celebrates St. Patrick's Day in this photo from the John F. Kennedy Library, sent by his grandmother, Mary Bancroft, to Evelyn Lincoln, Kennedy's secretary. In an accompanying note she describes her grandson as "very Irish," and recounts an anecdote in which Hugh expresses his desire to see Kennedy

"about something." When asked how he would accomplish his mission, Hugh, whose great-grandfather William Howard Taft once occupied the White House, replies, "I know where he lives. I'll just go up and ring the bell of his house." The picture is enclosed for identification should "Hugh manage to escape from his parents on a planned trip to Washington and ring the bell."





# MARCH 2017



Sun	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Sat
			1  PES MEETING: 6:30 PM Education Committee	2	3	4
5  11:00 AM <i>Fragility and Resilience</i> 2:00 PM <i>Screening of 13th</i> 7:00 p.m.: <i>Intro to Ethical Humanism</i> A Focus on Social Justice	6  7:00 PM <i>Edmund Burke's Relevance to Today</i>	7	8  PES MEETINGS 5:30 PM Finance Committee 6:30 PM Ethical Action Committee	9	10	11  Daylight Savings starts: Bedtime Don't forget to "Spring Forward"!
12  11:00 AM <i>Helping Neighbors South of the Border</i>	13	14	15  6:30 PM PES Board of Trustees	16	17  6:30 PM Confronting Racism potluck (at Member's home - see page 4)	18
19  11:00 AM <i>Spring Festival</i> 	20  7:00 PM <i>Lawrence Krauss at PES</i>	21	22  PES MEETING 7:00 PM Camp Linden Committee	23   7:00 PM Amnesty International Meeting	24	25
26  11:00 AM <i>Paying The Price</i>  300 PM Music at Ethical <i>Johannes Brahms and the Schumanns</i>	27	28	29	30	31	

## QUOTE - UNQUOTE

"Find common ground: we're all in the same boat, even people who voted differently. Listen to understand, not to rebut. Keep the invitation open. Connect through non-political ways - [the next big sports event] is coming up. Talk about that. Or talk about *Hidden Figures*. Or the weather. Even if someone regards you as the enemy, sinking to thinking the same of them gets you nowhere. Be the adult. Doesn't mean you can't disagree clearly and out loud, but keep on looking for it: common ground."

- Rev. . Jake B. Morrill, Oak Ridge Unitarian Universalist Church, Oak Ridge, TN

**Editor's note:** : This was written in late January, when "the next big sports event" was conveniently the Super Bowl. "Hidden Figures" is the 2016 movie about NASA's African-American women mathematicians.

The above is the first item in Rev. Morrill's list of "9 Ways to be Free" at <https://www.facebook.com/revjakebmorrill/posts/10211938416085166>

[revjakebmorrill/posts/10211938416085166](https://www.facebook.com/revjakebmorrill/posts/10211938416085166)

## WHAT'S GOIN' ON?

Other public events at the Ethical Society Building in March.

- State Senator Daylin Leach discusses "ADA's Response to Trumpism." Tuesday, March 14. 6:00-7:00 PM: ADA (Americans for Democratic Action) Membership Meeting; 7:00-9:00 PM: Sen. Leach. Info: [SePaADA@gmail.com](mailto:SePaADA@gmail.com) or <http://www.phillyADA.org>



## SUNDAY SERVICES

11:00 A.M. SEPTEMBER

THROUGH JUNE

*Ethical Views* is published monthly  
except July and August.

*Editor*, Steve Bremner  
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*Web Master*, Bob Moore

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## Coffee Hour Coordinators

Mar 5 - John Marshall  
Last names: A-E  
Mar 12 - Ken Greiff  
Last names: F-K  
Mar 19 - Garry O'Rourke  
Last names: L-R  
Mar 26 - Harry Thorn  
Last names: S-Z

## Flowers Coordinated by David Ralston



Mar 5 - Happy Birthday to Terry  
Martin-Murley from Lyle Murley

Mar 12 - Henry Pashkow, "In  
sympathy for our increasingly  
divided country"

Mar 19 - Katie Esposito, "Dedicated  
to POWER for bringing out the best  
activist in ourselves and each other"

Mar 26 - Jeffrey Dubb, "Happy  
Birthday to my lovely wife Ruthann"

## Hosts Coordinated by John Marshall

Sunday hosts greet  
and orient members  
and visitors and make a  
valuable contribution to  
the community. If you'd like to help  
out, please contact John Marshall.



For suggestions regarding this  
newsletter, contact Steve Bremner:  
[stevebremner@fastmail.fm](mailto:stevebremner@fastmail.fm)

## MARCH BIRTHDAYS

4 James Cooke  
4 Terry Martin-Murley  
9 Garry O'Rourke  
20 Vince McKenna  
20 Hugh Taft-Morales  
23 Susan D'Alessio  
26 Ruthann Dubb  
28 John Marshall

**Philadelphia Ethical Society**  
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