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Movie Night Coordinator
Joe Fox

Tranhumanist Discussion
Group Moderator
Will Wieland

PhillyCoR Needs Volunteers!

In May of 2008, HAGP helped form PhillyCoR, a coalition of Atheist, Freethought, and Humanist organizations in the Delaware Valley. Since then, PhillyCoR's mission has been to promote the growth of nontheistic communities in our region, and to raise awareness and understanding of nontheistic communities through public communication and education.

With that mission in mind, PhillyCoR's latest undertaking is a marketing research project. We need volunteers to conduct surveys to friends and acquaintances who are not involved in the secular movement. Volunteers will be gathering useful information that will help PhillyCoR members improve our marketing strategies and also be a model for other regional coalitions and national organizations. *Volunteers will not be soliciting donations or trying to attract new membership.*

You can volunteer by simply signing up for and attending a training session. The next training session for volunteers will take place on Saturday, April 11, 2pm, at the Giant Superstore, 2nd floor community room, 315 York Road, Willow Grove, PA. If you would like to volunteer and can make the April 11 training session, email info@phillycor.org or call 215-475-2573.

Another training session will be scheduled at the Ethical Society on Rittenhouse Square in Philadelphia, date TBA.

Highlights from January and February

HAGP rang in the new year with two notable guests who gave amazing presentations. First, Lauri Lebo, a journalist who covered the Dover Intelligent Design trial and who was prominently featured on the *Nova* special about the trial led a group discussion during the January Secular Book Club, co-hosted with the Freethought Society.



Lauri Lebo casually animating a panda puppet during her talk.

Continued on page 2.

Highlights from January and February continued

The turnout was the best ever for the Secular Book Club. During and after the discussion, Lebo raved about how informed the audience was about the trial and science education in America, and how much she enjoyed the intelligent questions and comments.



A crowd converses with Lauri Lebo about the attempts of creationists to dumb down evolution and insert intelligent design into public schools.

Later in the month, David Silverman, national communications director for American Atheists, gave a stirring talk about “Atheism in the New America.” The oration was videotaped by request of the Library of Congress. There it will be stored for posterity, along with orations and sermons from other religious and nonreligious groups.

The overall tone of the lecture was optimistic about the present and future of the secular movement, citing examples such as Elizabeth Dole’s failure to demonize Kay Hagan with and ad associating her with atheists. Silverman was especially pleased to show off a photograph of President Barack Obama being sworn in for the second and official time (Chief Justice Roberts confused the wording the first time, requiring a do-over,) this time without a Bible.

Silverman insisted that nontheists must “catch the wave” by coming out of the closet about their secular worldview and contributing to many different organizations, be they hard-nosed Atheist or more soft-spoken Humanist in their approach to confronting dogmatic religion. He also pointed out the cooperation of various types of nontheistic organizations on the national level.

The new year also marked the beginning of two new monthly events sponsored by HAGP. While the organization is mostly based in Willow Grove, HAGP has contacts and connections throughout the Delaware Valley region, and often members have requested more events in or closer to Philadelphia. Ask and ye shall receive!

First Sundays at 6pm are now the meeting time for the Transhumanist Discussion Group at the Kelly Writers House on U Penn’s campus. This is an informal meeting for anyone interested in speculation over coming technologies, such as genetic engineering and nanotechnology, and the impact they will have on human societies. The group was started and is moderated by Will Wieland. It takes no official stances on any of the topics within the larger subject of Transhumanism. As of yet, the group discusses readings chosen by the members, although in the future it might host special speakers.

The Humanist Creative Arts Circle also meets at the Kelly Writers House on a weekday evening usually in the third week of the month. This is a meeting for visual artists, musicians, film-makers, poets, novelists and short story writers to meet and critique each others’ work. Professionals and amateurs alike are welcome! This small, intimate group has several future aspirations, including hopes of creating a zine, and planning a film screening.

Be sure to check out up-coming events listed in this newsletter. It would be a shame to miss out on all the wonderful speakers, discussions, and films!



David Silverman speaking enthusiastically about *Atheism on Track*.

Can you help HAGP Save Money (and trees)?

To the HAGP community,

HAGP is working to cut costs where we can so that more funds are available for new projects and for advertising our presence in the Greater Philadelphia area. One way to cut costs is by going from paper to electronic whenever possible. Currently HAGP mails out a newsletter every other month to all of our members, and this costs money for stamps and printing, as well as volunteer or paid staff time. However, we also post the PDF file of the newsletter on the website and email it out to all of our contacts, which costs no money and much less time.

If you want HAGP to continue sending you a paper copy of the newsletter, we are happy to do so. We understand that not everyone is online and also that for many people, having a hard copy come in the mail is a better reminder than email. In that case, no response to this message is necessary.

However, if you feel that having the electronic copy of the newsletter alone is sufficient for your needs, please let us know by emailing me at celebrant@hagp.org, and we thank you very much in advance for your help.

As always, if you would like to donate any extra funds to HAGP, you can do so by either mailing a check to P.O. Box 161, Willow Grove, PA 19090 or online using PayPal: <http://www.hagp.org/membership.html>.

In love in reason,

Martha Knox
Director, [HAGP](#)

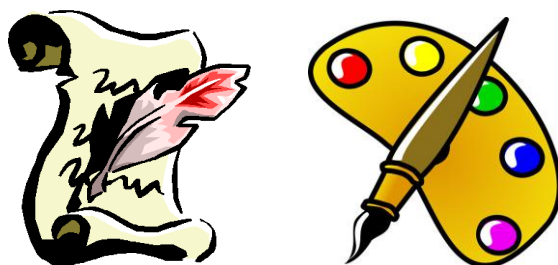
What is the Humanist Creative Arts Circle?

Primarily it is a monthly discussion group for artistically inclined humanists to share and critique each others' creative writing, as well as artwork and music.

We also hope to plan a week-long summer retreat where members can focus more intensely on their projects in a supportive peer environment.

That said, the Circle can potentially expand into being whatever its participants decide, and is open to other projects such as group outings to inspiring locations, organizing performances and art exhibitions, or any other ideas involving the creative arts.

Space is limited so please RSVP by calling 215-475-2573 or by email celebrant@hagp.org.



Wednesday, March 18, 7pm
Tuesday, April 21, 7pm

Kelly Writers House (U Penn's campus) 3805 Locust Walk,
Philadelphia, PA

**First Saturday of each month:
Movie Night at Giant Superstore**
2nd Floor Community Room
315 York Road
Willow Grove, PA 19090

Movie night is a showing of independent films and documentaries, utilizing wide-screen projection, concerning the issues of Humanistic interest – followed by spirited a discussion. Topics such as human evolution, the occupation of Iraq, the media, religion and other world and political events.

**Second Saturday of each month:
Luncheon at the Olive Garden**
2328 W. Moreland Road
Willow Grove, PA

Informal lunches that allow members to interact outside the formal meetings and socialize with other Humanists. Occasionally, HAGP business is conducted after lunch.

**Third Saturday of each month:
Secular Book Club at
Barnes and Noble**
102 Park Avenue
Willow Grove, PA

The Book club is a joint event with The Freethought Society of Greater Philadelphia. We discuss books relevant to values, issues, history, etc. These meetings are designed to build a stronger secular community, develop our thoughts more coherently, and embrace our history. Books are usually chosen two months in advance by the group. Following the meeting, join us for food/drink/socializing at the Macaroni Grill - everyone is welcome.

**Last Sunday of each month:
Program Meeting**
Upper Moreland Library
109 Park Avenue
Willow Grove, PA

Our monthly speakers cover a wide variety of subjects. This is an opportunity for group members to come together with each other; become educated on a topic by hearing from a speaker; or discuss issues and explore ideas. Following the meeting, join us for food/drink/socializing at the Mandarin Garden - everyone is welcome.

Meet Fellow Humanists & Like-minded Freethinkers

MARCH

Sat. March 14, NOON: **HAGP's Informal Luncheon at the Olive Garden**

2328 W. Moreland Road
Willow Grove, PA 19090

Wed. March 18, 6 pm: **Humanist Creative Arts Circle**. This is an informal meeting where individuals share and critique each other's art, music, and creative writing.

Kelly Writers House (U Penn campus)
3805 Locust Walk, Philadelphia, PA

Thurs. March. 19, 6:30pm: **Drinking Skeptically** monthly casual mixer.

Where the Elite Meet to Defeat Deceit.

All are welcome.

Tattooed Mom's, 530 South Street
Philadelphia, PA



Thurs. March. 19, 7pm **Philadelphia Atheist Meetup** monthly meeting.

This is an informal gathering where freethinkers can network and socialize with each other.

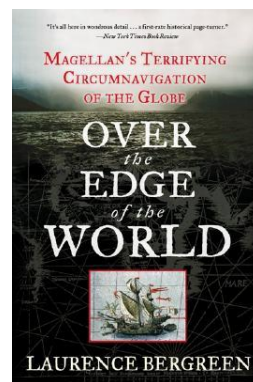
Cosi, 4th Street and Chestnut Street
Philadelphia, PA



Sat. March 21, 2 pm: **PhACT** (Philadelphia Association for Critical Thinking) monthly program: Journalist **Lauri Lebo** speaks on the **Dover Intelligent Design Trial**
Room S2-03 (second floor) Winnet Student Life

Sat. March 21, 7 pm: Secular Book Club - Discussion of *Over the Edge of the World: Magellan's Terrifying Circumnavigation of the Globe* by **Laurence Bergreen**

Barnes and Noble, 102 Park Ave
Willow Grove, PA 19090



Sun March 29, 1:30pm: **HAGP Program Meeting** presents **Fred Edwards**, communications director for the American Humanist Association on *Being Good Without God*.

Upper Moreland Library
109 Park Avenue Willow Grove, PA



NOTE: Fred will be giving his talk at the Ethical Society in Philadelphia at 11AM.

Meet Fellow Humanists & Like-minded Freethinkers

APRIL

Sat. April 4, 7pm: **HAGP's Movie Night** shows *Religulous*, Bill Maher's hilarious documentary that pokes fun at faith. Don't miss it!
Giant Superstore, 2nd floor community room
315 York Road, Willow Grove, PA 19090

Sun. April 6, 6 pm: **Transhumanist Discussion Group**
Discussion of *Down and Out in the Magic Kingdom* by **Cory Doctorow**. Download the book for free at craphound.com/down/download.php
Moderator Will Wieland.
Kelly Writers House (U. Penn campus)
3805 Locust Walk, Philadelphia, PA

Tues. April 7, 7pm: **Freethought Society of Greater Philadelphia Program Meeting: Mel Seesholts** speaks on *Theopolitics: The Christianist War on Equality and Knowledge*
Ludington Library
5 South Bryn Mawr Avenue, Bryn Mawr, PA

Why, when America insists that an enlightened society must be inclusive and that a rational culture embraces differences as a source of strength – and after decades of sometimes feverish efforts to enfranchise virtually every minority group in America – are some people so determined to keep gay men and women disenfranchised, especially when it comes to the legal right to a civil marriage?

Mel Seesholtz is a professor of English at Penn State Abington. He also teaches in the Science, Technology, and Society Program as well as in American Studies. For the last decade he's been studying the rise of theopolitics especially as it relates to "gay rights." He has authored several scholarly studies on the subject and over 325 articles for various electronic venues. He is currently working on a book, *The Politics of Religion and the Demise of a Secular Nation*, and is under consideration by several publishers.



Sat. April 11, NOON: **HAGP's Informal Luncheon at the Olive Garden**

2328 W. Moreland Road
Willow Grove, PA 19090

Thurs. April 16, 7pm **Philadelphia Atheist Meetup** monthly meeting. This is an informal gathering where freethinkers can network and socialize with each other.
Cosi, 4th Street and Chestnut Street, Philadelphia, PA



Sat. April 18, 2 pm: **PhACT** (Philadelphia Association for Critical Thinking) monthly program: *Teaching Critical Thinking* - Speakers are **Sharon Schwarze** and **Harvey Lape** of Cabrini college.
Room S2-03 (second floor) Winnet Student Life

Community Service Volunteer Opportunities with the Secular Service Club

Being Good for Goodness' Sake!

NEXT OPPORTUNITY: Saturday, April 4, 12:30-3:30
Work day at Philabundance's Warehouse
302 West Berks Street Philadelphia PA
Volunteers must wear sneakers
Must be at least 10 years of age

Call Martha at 215-475-2573 or email humanistmarf@gmail.com to sign up for the April 4 work day or to get on the volunteer notification list.

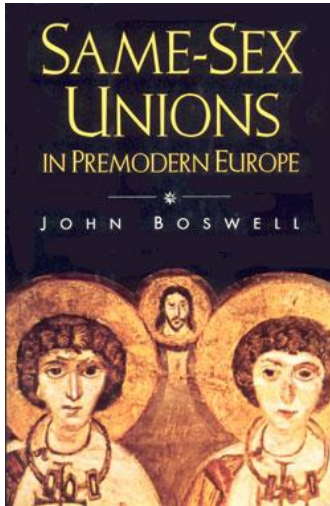
Sponsored by:



www.phillycor.org

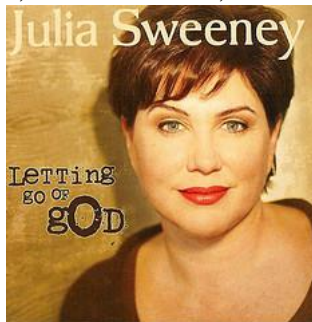
Meet Fellow Humanists & Like-minded Freethinkers

Sat. April 18, 7 pm: **Secular Book Club** -
Discussion of *Same Sex Unions in Premodern Europe* by **John Boswell**
Barnes and Noble, 102 Park Avenue
Willow Grove, PA 19090



Sun April 26, 1:30pm: **HAGP Program Meeting**
speaker and topic TBA

Sat. May 2, 7pm: **HAGP's Movie Night** shows
Julia Sweeney's very funny and deeply personal
monologue *Letting Go of God*
Giant Superstore, 2nd floor community room
315 York Road, Willow Grove, PA 19090

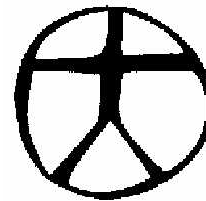


While she scores some easy, flawlessly deadpan laughs at the expense of Mormonism, Deepak Chopra, astrology and Catholicism, the tradition she says she was happily raised in, she is after much bigger game than cheap disdain. As she says to an imaginary God she's at last parting with near show's end: "It's because I take you so seriously that I can't bring myself to believe in you." – Amazon.com

Ethical Humanist Society of Philadelphia

1906 South Rittenhouse Square,
Philadelphia
215-735-3456
www.phillyethics.org

Weekly Platform meetings are held at 11 a.m. September through May. Ethical Society Platforms are free and open to the public. A coffee hour follows for discussion and conversation. *Ethics for Children* classes start each Sunday morning at 10:45AM; child care provided for children to seven years. Free parking is available with a permit you can get inside the Society's office. Classical piano interludes are performed by Katarzyna Marzec-Salwinski.



Socrates Cafe

Facilitated by Sam Frederick
Springfield Township Library
1600 Paper Mill Rd, Glenside, PA
Mondays, 7pm (except holidays)

Socrates Café is a worldwide movement that fosters independent, informal community discussion groups under the overarching topic: "What is the good way to live life?" The local discussions approach the big topic by discussing more specific subjects like 'Integrity,' "If no one is perfect, what is perfection?" and the like. Participants contribute questions and observations based on their own experience. Participants learn new perspectives from each other and then make up their own minds. An extraordinary group culture of reason, honesty, compassion and trust can and has developed among strangers.

HAGP fully supports the spirit in which these discussions are conducted and encourages all curious and open minds to attend! To learn more about the Socrates Cafe movement, visit this website:
<http://www.philosopher.org>

New Freethought/Humanist Groups in the Lehigh Valley

This year, Joe Fox connected with long-time Humanist leader Harley Brown who was forming a new Humanist chapter just north of Philadelphia. Along with helping in other capacities, Joe is administrator for the Lehigh Valley Humanists' facebook page. In December, David Beyer from the Allentown Freethought Society reached out to Martha Knox. Martha attended the March meeting and met a small but enthusiastic group of friendly people, happy to hear about what has been going on in Philly and Willow Grove, and eager for suggestions on how to grow their membership. Read on to learn more about these two new members of our extended community of reason:

Republished from the March 2009 issue of the *Allentown Freethought Times*:

Happy Birthday to AFS!



The Allentown Freethought Society was founded on January 26th, 2008 when Barry McGowan became the organizer for a new Meetup.com group. During the course of the last year we formed a board, adopted a motto and a mission statement, got a logo and started a newsletter. Our membership peaked at 38 before we decided to move away from Meetup.com and go to Yahoo groups to save some money. That brought membership down significantly but we are back up to 23 and gaining. Our first meeting was in March of 2008 and we have held meetings on the first Monday of every month without a miss since. Besides our presence on Yahoo Groups, we are also on Facebook, MySpace, Google Groups, our own two websites; AtownFS.org and AllentownFreethoughtSociety as well as a consistent reposting on Craigslist. All things considered, it has been a pretty successful year so thanks go out to all who participated and made it possible!



AFS Meetings are first Mondays at **7pm**. The **April 6th meeting** will be at a new location, Lehigh County Senior Center. The large meeting room will hold 30 people or more so we are trying to arrange to have a speaker in April and will announce on Yahoo Group when plans are final. Refreshments will be provided either way. Come see our new home: **Lehigh County Senior Center**, 1633 Elm St. Allentown, Pa 18102

Republished from the LVH Meetup page:



Lehigh Valley Humanists first meeting was on 1/18/09 and we discussed the promising future of Humanism in the Lehigh Valley. Our website www.LVHumanists.org is under construction.

If Humanism interests you and you live in the Lehigh Valley area, please join our Meetup group and our facebook page <http://www.facebook.com/home.php?#/group.php?gid=67291625...> FREE of charge.

LVH meetings are first Sundays of the month at **11am** at **Bethlehem Brew Works**, 569 Main Street, Bethlehem, PA 18018.

The **April 5th** meeting hosts Martha Knox speaking on *The Need For "Humanist Celebrants."* She will speak about her experiences as a celebrant, weddings and commitment ceremonies, baby naming, coming-of-age celebrations, funerals/memorial services, and even divorce celebrations.

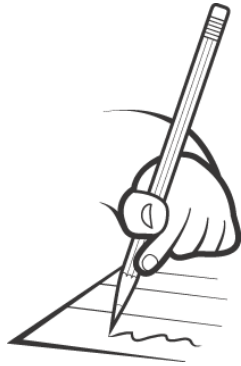
Humanist Celebrant Available

Martha Knox, Certified Humanist Celebrant, would like to remind you that she is available for all your life passage ceremonies, including weddings and commitment ceremonies, baby namings, coming-of-age celebrations, funerals/memorial services, and even divorce celebrations.

Discounts for HAGP members! Contact her at Celebrant@hagp.org.



Now Taking Submissions



The HAGP newsletter is taking your submissions of stories, book or film reviews, poems, jokes, or anything else you'd like to share with the HAGP community.

Either email submissions to celebrant@hagp.org or mail them to:

HAGP
PO Box 161
Willow Grove, PA
19090-0161



Join the fun on Meetup! Go to <http://humanism.meetup.com/152/boards/> to sign up for HAGP's group and be updated on our ongoing events.



HAGP proudly supports Tabor Children's Services, Inc., a private nonprofit child welfare agency serving children, youth, young adults and families. Tabor Children's Services is a non-profit, non-sectarian organization that serves children and families in need in the southeastern Pennsylvania and nearby New Jersey areas.

To learn more about the important work of these dedicated people, visit www.tabor.org.

JOIN HAGP TODAY!

HAGP is now a Member Chapter of the American Humanist Association (AHA)!

In order to become a member of HAGP, individuals and families must also become members of the AHA.

Join the AHA today at the website: <https://www.americanhumanist.org/secure/joinform.php>. Membership is only \$35.00 for first time members who join online! If you join online, make sure to check the box "I want to join my local Membership Chapter" and then select "Humanist Association of Greater Philadelphia" If you join by phone, call 1-800-837-3792 and make sure to mention your desire to also be a member of HAGP.

If you're already a member of the AHA, great! Just let Lindsay Gemberling in the AHA office know that you also want to be a member of HAGP: 1-800-837-3792 or lgemberling@americanhumanist.org.

You can also donate the dues you used to pay to HAGP. Donate at www.hagp.org or by mail (address below.)

Don't want to join the AHA, but want to be affiliated with HAGP? Become a *Friend of HAGP!* Friends can't vote in annual elections or run for the Board, but they receive all other benefits of HAGP membership. Those who would like to become a Friend, simply send a check (\$15 for individuals, \$25 for families) to:

Humanist Association of Greater Philadelphia
P.O. Box 161
Willow Grove, PA 19090-0161