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Joe Fox
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Book Club Moderator

Peter Gagliardi
Movie Night Coordinator

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Service Club Coordinator

Elaine Oxman

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Ric Hopkins

Rosemary Horstman

Will Wieland
*Transhumanist Discussion
Group Moderator*

HAGP Turns 50

In 2010 HAGP proudly celebrates its 50th year as a continuously operating secular humanist organization. HAGP began as a "Provisional Charter" of the American Humanist Association to the Montgomery County (PA) Chapter on October 13, 1960, with eight names on the charter member list: Benjamin Chesler, William B. George, Josephine R. Gurbarg, Samuel J. Gurbarg, William Earl Proctor, Jr., Albert B. Teague, Edward A. Tyczkowski, and Robert E. Weder.

These past five decades HAGP has been maintained by many volunteer leaders. Perhaps most notable was Gabriel Elias who ran the organization for over 30 years. Though he no longer serves the group through volunteer work, Gabriel is still the Honorary President and his family continues to support HAGP through generous annual donations.

Another notable HAGP leader is Joe Fox, who served as President from 2006 through 2009, and under whose leadership HAGP won the AHA's Chapter of the Year award. This year Joe will continue to serve on the Board of Directors as Vice President. Today HAGP is a thriving community and educational group that organizes nearly fifty events per year and stands as an inspiration to other humanist chapters across the United States.

Now HAGP's celebrant Martha Knox takes the reigns as HAGP's new President. Martha's goals for 2010 include maintaining interest and attendance at all of HAGP's current regular events, expanding community service activities, developing the Creative Arts Circle, and continuing growth in membership and volunteers. Toward these efforts, HAGP begins the new year unveiling its new website. In addition to looking more professional, the new site (scheduled to launch in February) will be easier for volunteer webmasters to update and for visitors to navigate. Learn more at www.hagp.org.

The Humanist Association of
Greater Philadelphia celebrates



Secular Service Club

Jan. 18 is the MLK Day of Service



Last year was so much fun that this year PhillyCoR's Secular Service Club returns to the Fishtown Recreation Center to volunteer again with Art Sphere Inc. We will be working with stencil workshops, making cards and art for senior citizens and demo art projects for local youth programs, and painting and cleaning up the play areas. There are both indoor and outdoor tasks, but volunteers should dress appropriately for work outside. Volunteers should also be prepared for potentially messy tasks and wear old clothes and shoes, and bring work gloves if possible. Due to safety concerns and enormity of project we must restrict volunteers to high school and older; children must be accompanied by an adult. There are a basketball courts for taking breaks.

Our event will take place at the Fishtown Recreation Center, 1201 East Montgomery Avenue, Philadelphia, PA, 19125. Fishtown Recreation Center is located one block north of Girard Avenue between Palmer and Montgomery, across from Fishtown 26th Police Precinct and Fishtown Library on Montgomery. It is easily accessible by I-95, the El and Girard Trolley stops.

Volunteers must RSVP in advance with Martha by either email (celebrant@hapg.org) or phone 215-475-2573. All volunteers will get a free t-shirt to commemorate the day, and a pizza lunch will be provided—unfortunately, we cannot accommodate special dietary needs, so please bring appropriate provisions if necessary.



Left: In October, six secular volunteers joined in cleaning up one of the Teens 4 Good Community Gardens for the first annual National Secular Service Day.



Right: PhillyCoR's secular volunteers pull up and bag plants to prepare the beds for the winter.

Celebrating Darwin Day 2010

In 2006 the University of Pennsylvania Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology held the first annual Darwin Day and Evolution Teach-In, set in time to honor the 197th birthday of Charles Darwin. Thus began a fantastic tradition of science fun and education fit for the whole family. The celebrations included talks by scientific experts, discussion forums, a birthday cake, and even a costumed Darwin himself. Last year the event coincided with an evolution exhibition, "Surviving, The Body of Evidence." These celebrations, free and open to the public, have always been well planned and heavily attended.

Rather than reinvent the wheel by planning our own event, HAGP has instead encouraged our members to attend the U Penn Museum's celebration and organized an informal meet up, with great success. This year will be no different. Unfortunately the details of the 2010 Darwin Day celebrations have yet to be posted to the U Penn Museum's website. It is likely to be either Sunday, February 7 or Sunday February 14 in the afternoon. However, anyone on the HAGP Meetup, Facebook, or email announcement lists will receive invites as the date looms closer. If you don't have access to the Internet and want to receive a notice about the event and HAGP members meet up, call 215-475-2573 in late January or early February.

To learn more about the International Darwin Day Foundation, a project of the American Humanist Association, visit <http://www.darwinday.org>



Lysistrata Wieland, HAGP's youngest member, celebrates her evolutionary past with a knitted monkey hat.



Ethical
Humanist
Society
of
Philadelphia

Ethical Humanist Society of Philadelphia

1906 South Rittenhouse Square, Philadelphia

215-735-3456

www.phillyethics.org

Sunday 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.

HumanLight 2009

HAGP's 2009 HumanLight/Winter Solstice Party was held on December 20th at the Williamson Restaurant in Horsham, with keynote speaker Jennifer Michael Hecht, author of "Doubt: A History," science entertainers Wondergy performing the program CoolScience, and musicians Letters From June.



Jennifer Michael Hecht, whose book "Doubt: A History" was the inaugural selection of our Secular Book Club, was keynote speaker for the HumanLight/Winter Solstice Party. Hecht had planned to attend our celebration with her husband and two children, but the snow storm kept them away—she delivered her address via speaker phone!



HumanLight illuminates Humanism's positive secular vision. In Western societies, late December is a season of good cheer and a time for gatherings of friends and families. During the winter holiday season, where the word "holiday" has taken on a more secular meaning, many events are observed. This tradition of celebrations, however, is grounded in supernatural religious beliefs that many people in modern society cannot accept.

HumanLight presents an alternative reason to celebrate: a Humanist's vision of a good future. It is a future in which all people can identify with each other, behave with the highest moral standards, and work together toward a happy, just and peaceful world. (from HumanLight.org)



Upper left: Joe Fox received this award of appreciation as he finishes out his three year term as HAGP's president.



Upper right: A "lit human" for HumanLight, as Ken Fink of Wondergy explained and demonstrated how one can light one's hand on fire. Ken concluded his presentation by making ice cream with the help of two young volunteers and liquid nitrogen. For more information on Wondergy's innovative and exciting educational programs, visit <http://wondergy.com>.



Right: Jim and Eileen Childress, two of HAGP's most committed volunteer leaders, lit the large HumanLight candles. The three small ones represent reason, compassion, and hope.

HAGP First Quarter Events

MOVIE NIGHTS

Every first Saturday, 7 PM
Giant Superstore, 2nd floor Community Room
315 York Rd.
Willow Grove, PA

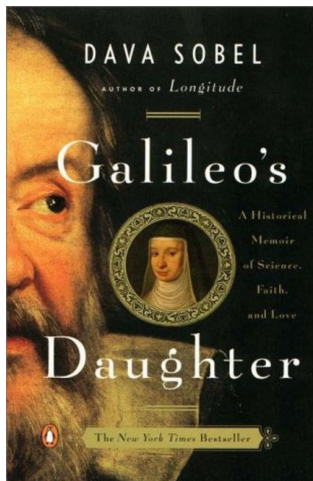
Films and documentaries concerning the issues of Humanistic interest, followed by spirited discussion.

January 2 *Bicentennial Man*. Based on the short story by Isaac Asimov and starring Robin Williams, this uplifting film tells the story of one robot's quest to become fully human.

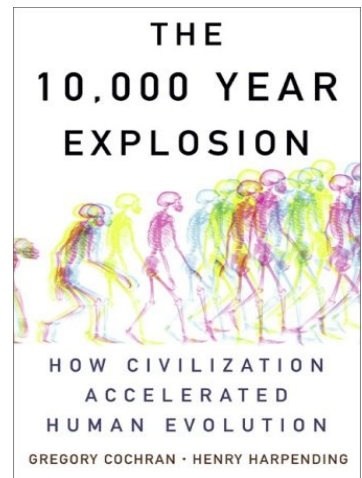
February 6 and March 6 TBA

SECULAR BOOK CLUB

7 PM
Barnes and Noble
102 Park Ave.
Willow Grove, PA



January 16 (Saturday) *Galileo's Daughter: A Historical Memoir of Science, Faith, and Love* by Dava Sobel (432 pages). "Despite its title, this impressive book proves to be less the story of Galileo's elder daughter, the oldest of his three illegitimate children, and more the story of Galileo himself and his trial before the Inquisition for arguing that Earth moves around the Sun. That familiar tale is given a new slant by Sobel's translation for the first time into English of the 124 surviving letters to Galileo by his daughter, Sister Maria Celeste, a Clarisse nun who died at age 33; his letters to her are lost, presumably destroyed by Maria Celeste's convent after her death." - Publisher's Weekly



February 20 (Saturday) *The 10,000 Year Explosion: How Civilization Accelerated Human Evolution* by Gregory Cochran and Henry Harpending (304 pages).

March 20 (Saturday) Selection TBA

TRANSHUMANIST DISCUSSION GROUP

See page 8 for more information

HAGP First Quarter Events (cont'd)

CASUAL LUNCHEON

Second Saturday of each month (1/9, 2/13, 3/13), Noon
The Olive Garden
2328 W. Moreland Rd.
Willow Grove, PA

Come socialize with other HAGP members outside the formal meetings. (Occasionally, HAGP business is conducted after lunch).

CREATIVE ARTS CIRCLE

January 14, Thursday, 7pm
Intermezzo Café
3131 Walnut Street
Philadelphia, PA

Come share your creative writing, artwork, or music. RSVP with Martha by calling 330-242-4741 or emailing celebrant @hagp.org

PROGRAM MEETINGS

Last Sunday of each month, 1:30 PM
Upper Moreland Library
109 Park Avenue
Willow Grove, PA

January 31 *Let's Play Hardball* with speaker Ellen Johnson, former president of **American Atheists**
February 28 Rob Boston from **Americans United for the Separation of Church and State**
March 28 Sean Faircloth, executive director of the **Secular Coalition for America**



Enjoy casual company and conversation with other atheists. Meetups are held the third Thursday of each month at the Midtown II Restaurant, 122 S. 11th St., Philadelphia. For more information, join at <http://atheists.meetup.com/215/>.

The Transhumanist Discussion Group celebrates its one-year anniversary!



The Transhumanist Discussion Group was founded in 2009 by Will Wieland (far left).

The Transhumanist Discussion Group, moderated by Will Wieland, meets monthly at

Kelly Writers House (at the University of Pennsylvania)
3805 Locust Walk
Philadelphia, PA 19104

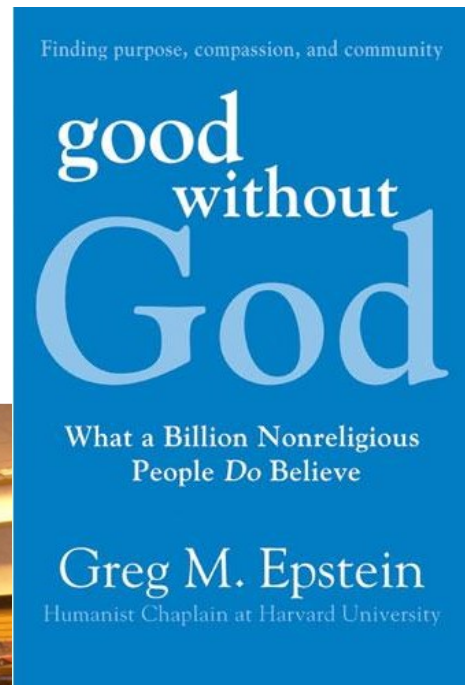
Sunday, January 17, 6pm Cognitive-enhancing drugs. All attendees are asked to bring something (such as a news or opinion article) to the table and we'll go about the discussion round robin style.

Sundays February 7 and March 7, 6 PM Topics TBA

About Transhumanism: Human enhancement techniques and other emerging technologies will transform the human condition. We will modify and improve our minds and bodies in increasing powerful ways. How will this impact our culture? Will current inequalities be remedied or new, more vast ones be created? Who will be left behind? Transhumanism is a movement that advocates the use of technology to enhance the human body and mind. Transhumanists also confront the ethical questions that arise in the creation of a posthuman world and the transformation of our identities.

If you have questions or would like to receive announcements about the Transhumanist Discussion Group email Will at transhumanism@hagp.org.

In November the Secular Book Club welcomed Greg Epstein, Humanist Chaplain at Harvard University and author of “Good Without God: What a Billion Nonreligious People Do Believe”



*Epstein's talk
packed the
room at Barnes
& Noble*



Greg Epstein (center) with HAGP leaders Joe Fox and Martha Knox

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 or memorial services, and even divorce celebrations. Discounts are available for HAGP members.

Email celebrant@hagp.org or call 330-242-4714.



Socrates Cafe

Facilitated by Sam Frederick

**Wissahickon Valley Public Library
650 West Skippack Pike, Blue Bell, 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 <http://www.philosopher.org>

Freethought Society of Greater Philadelphia

The Freethought Society of Greater Philadelphia (FSGP) advocates reason, rationalism, freethought and humanism. To this end, FSGP provides forums in which freethinkers can gather for informational and educational meetings, and for fun events and social networking with like-minded individuals. Visit <http://www.fsgp.org> to learn more.



The Philadelphia Association for Critical Thinking (PhACT) hosts monthly lectures at the Community College of Philadelphia. For information see www.phact.org.

Joint Newsletter Discontinued, *HAGP News* Goes Quarterly

The last two newsletters produced by HAGP were a joint effort with the Freethought Society of Greater Philadelphia. The purpose of the joint newsletter was to increase distribution while relieving some of the burden on volunteers for both organizations. These two issues were met with a generally positive response from HAGP members. However, this was not the case with many FSGP members who wished for *The Greater Philadelphia Story* to return to its original state. Starting this month, our two groups will again produce two separate newsletters.

Since producing the newsletter is a timely task for the volunteers who run HAGP, this year *HAGP News* will be a quarterly rather than bimonthly publication. We appreciate any submissions, including book and film reviews, opinions, articles, poetry, jokes, comics, etc., and will happily publish any submitted items of interest to our community. Email submissions to admin@hagp.org or mail them to P.O. Box 161 Willow Grove, PA 19090.

JOIN HAGP TODAY

(If you don't want to join the AHA, but want to be affiliated with HAGP, become a Friend of HAGP! Friends can't vote in elections or run for the Board, but receive all other benefits of HAGP membership.)

____ NEW MEMBERSHIP
____ RENEWAL

Membership Types:

____ Individual, \$25.00
____ Family, \$35.00
____ Student/Limited Means, \$15.00
____ Sustaining member, \$50.00
____ Patron, \$100.00
____ Sponsor, \$150.00
____ Lifetime, \$250.00
____ Benefactor, \$500.00
____ Building Fund, \$1000.00
____ Friend of HAGP (\$15 for individuals, \$25 for families)

Name _____

Address _____

Email _____

Phone _____

Spouse/Partner _____

Mail your check (payable to HAGP) to

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