

Director  
Martha Knox

Honorary President  
Gabrial Elias

President  
Joe Fox  
[admin@hagp.org](mailto:admin@hagp.org)

Vice President  
Eileen Childress  
[vp@hagp.org](mailto:vp@hagp.org)

Treasurer  
Warren Goss  
[treasurer@hagp.org](mailto:treasurer@hagp.org)

Secretary  
Jim Childress  
[secretary@hagp.org](mailto:secretary@hagp.org)

Board Members  
Joe Fox  
Eileen Childress  
Warren Goss  
Shirley Goss  
Elaine Oxman  
Ric Hopkins  
Rosemary Horstman  
Peter Gagliardi

Humanist Celebrant  
Martha Knox  
[celebrant@hagp.org](mailto:celebrant@hagp.org)

Book Club Moderator  
Eileen Childress

Movie Night Coordinator  
Joe Fox

Tranhumanist Discussion  
Group Moderator  
Will Wieland

## May 7, '09 is the National Day of Reason

The National Day of Prayer was established by the United States Congress in 1952 and fixed to be set on the first Thursday of May by President Ronald Reagan. Many supporters of church state separation have viewed this federally sponsored holiday as a violation of the Establishment Clause in the First Amendment to the Constitution and an insult to nontheistic Americans.

The National Day of Reason is a secular holiday established by organized humanists, atheists, and other freethinkers as an alternative to the National Day of Prayer. Toward this effort an official website was set up in 2003 for information, a list of endorsers, and as a place for groups to list activities.

HAGP is a proud supporter of the National Day of Reason. If you would like to be listed as officially supporting the National Day of Reason as an individual, visit the website [www.nationaldayofreason.org](http://www.nationaldayofreason.org) and click on "Endorsers" in the menu.



## Matthew LaClair To Speak On May 31<sup>st</sup>

Our May program meeting speaker is Matthew LaClair, student activist. LaClair achieved national fame when he brought attention to a teacher at Kearny High (a public school in NJ) preaching Christian doctrine during an American History Class. When the teacher denied the accusation, LaClair produced a recording.

LaClair is currently attending college in New York City and continuing his work for religious freedom as a Board Member of the Secular Student Alliance. Matthew has given inspiring talks for various groups and at the 2008 American Humanist Association conference. He's also confidently appeared in several interviews and recently published an Op Ed in the LA Times.

Don't miss meeting and hearing a talk from one of the secular movement's youngest and brightest rising stars!



Matthew LaClair will speak for HAGP on May 31<sup>st</sup> at 1:30pm at the Upper Moreland Library.

# PhillyCoR Celebrates its One Year Anniversary!

PhillyCoR (The Greater Philadelphia Coalition of Reason [www.phillycor.org](http://www.phillycor.org)) was established on May 1<sup>st</sup>, 2008 in conjunction with the 2008 National Day of Reason and the 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Humanist Manifesto. The coalition began with a billboard campaign featuring a billboard with the positive message “Don’t Believe in God? You Are Not Alone” on I-95.



[www.PhillyCOR.org](http://www.PhillyCOR.org) 1-800-NEW-REASON

PhillyCoR soon proved to be a national inspiration as groups around the nation have started their own local coalitions and billboard campaigns. The same billboard went up in Colorado, Arizona, Los Angeles, Texas, and most recently in Charleston, South Carolina. The billboards have been met with much positive media attention including CNN, Fox News, the Philadelphia Inquirer, Playboy Magazine, and the New York Times. According to polls, nontheists are on the rise and speaking out for their reality-based worldview.

To help support these grassroots efforts, a new national organization has been established by the same man who helped PhillyCoR get off the ground. Steve Rade, the CEO of Wireless Xcessories Group Inc. has established UnitedCoR. Leading the UnitedCoR project is the former communications director of the American Humanist Association, experienced activist Fred Edwards.

Since our own billboard campaign, PhillyCoR has been active in expanding its membership and raising the profiles of its now six participating members: HAGP, the Freethought Society of Greater Philadelphia, The Ethical Humanist Society of Philadelphia, The Philadelphia Atheist Meetup, Temple Atheists and Critical Thinkers (TACT), and Secular Penn. Other groups in the area are currently considering membership in PhillyCoR.

This fall, PhillyCoR will kick off its new *Good Without God* campaign, inspired by the upcoming publication of a book by the same title by Greg Epstein, Humanist Chaplain at Harvard. The book will mention PhillyCoR’s Secular Service Club which was established in August of 2008 when PhillyCoR leaders invited the Lighthouses of Oxford

Valley – a Christian Revival – to co-organize a food and fundraiser for and work day at Philabundance, a local food bank and hunger relief organization. The invitation was extended in the spirit of celebrating shared, human values after the Lighthouses mentioned the similarities between PhillyCoR’s billboard and their own billboard which appeared about a mile apart on I-95. A reporter from City Paper attended the work day and wrote a positive article about the event.

The Secular Service Club has continued to organize community service events at least once per month, including special projects in honor of Martin Luther King Day and Earth Day.

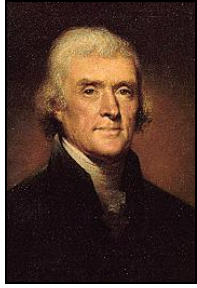
PhillyCoR’s *Good Without God* campaign will include appearances of Greg Epstein speaking about his new book, advertisements, and an outdoor barbecue and fundraiser for Philabundance. More information about the details of this campaign will appear in the July/August HAGP newsletter and on the PhillyCoR website as they develop.



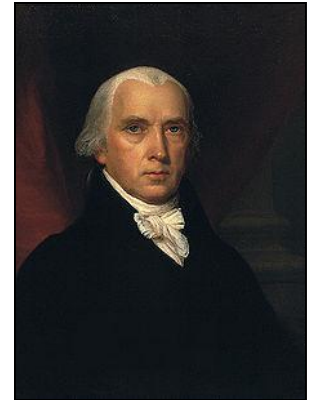
ABOVE: Volunteers helped beautify the Fishtown Recreation Center for the Martin Luther King Day of Service. BELOW: Volunteers cleaning up the Perkiomen River for Earth Day.



## What would the Founding Fathers Think of the National Day of Prayer?



"Fasting and prayer are religious exercises; the enjoining them an act of discipline. Every religious society has a right to determine for itself the time for these exercises, and the objects proper for them, according to their own particular tenets; and right can never be safer than in their hands, where the Constitution has deposited it. ...civil powers alone have been given to the President of the United States and no authority to direct the religious exercises of his constituents." –**Thomas Jefferson**



"There has been another deviation from the strict principle in the Executive Proclamations of fasts & festivals, so far, at least, as they have spoken the language of injunction, or have lost sight of the equality of all religious sects in the eye of the Constitution. Whilst I was honored with the Executive Trust I found it necessary on more than one occasion to follow the example of predecessors. But I was always careful to make the Proclamations absolutely indiscriminate, and merely recommendatory; or rather mere designations of a day, on which all who thought proper might unite in consecrating it to religious purposes, according to their own faith & forms. In this sense, I presume you reserve to the Govt. a right to appoint particular days for religious worship throughout the State, without any penal sanction enforcing the worship." – **James Madison**

## Save the Date Unity Picnic 2009 Sunday, July 26 1:00pm-5:00pm

This year's Unity Picnic, sponsored by all of PhillyCoR and celebrating collaboration and extended community among local nontheist groups in the Greater Philadelphia region, will again be held at the Fort Washington Park.



## Attention Secular Parents

Some parents in our community seek to network with other parents to form a Secular Families meetup for possible monthly outings and/or play groups. Please contact [celebrant@hagp.org](mailto:celebrant@hagp.org) or call 215-475-2573 if interested.

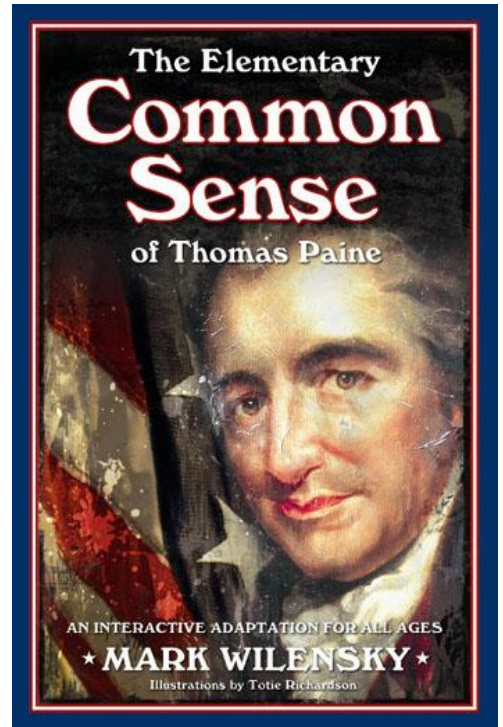
## Author Mark Wilensky at Secular Book Club

In the past the Secular Book Club has invited authors to come and speak with the group about their books. In 2007 we hosted James Morrow, author of *The Last Witchfinder*, and this January we hosted Lauri Lebo, author of *The Devil in Dover*.

This June we continue this successful tradition by having author Mark Wilensky give a short presentation about *The Elementary Common Sense of Thomas Paine: An Interactive Adaptation for All Ages*. Wilensky will then lead a discussion about this important figure in American history.

Saturday, June 20  
Barnes and Noble  
102 Park Ave, Willow Grove

The Secular Book Club is co-sponsored by HAGP and the Freethought Society of Greater Philadelphia



---

## Local Blogging for Freethinkers

HAGP started a blog in November of 2006. Unfortunately, it has failed to attract much interest in the way of regular contributors, readers and comments.

Recently, the Freethought Society of Greater Philadelphia (FSGP) has started their own blog, and with much greater success. Regular contributors include “The Science Pundit” and Staks Rosch of the radio-show-turned-blog *Dangerous Talk*. The FSGP blog is full of interesting articles on current events of interest to freethinkers and philosophical ruminations. Many of the articles inspire further discussion or debate of the issues at hand in the comments section.

Due to the impressive success of the FSGP blog, HAGP has made the decision to shut down our own blog in favor of promoting FSGP’s.

You can read and comment on articles posted to the FSGP blog by visiting <http://freethoughtsociety.wordpress.com>



Freethought Society  
of Greater Philadelphia



The FSGP logo, web: [www.fsgp.org](http://www.fsgp.org) and *Dangerous Talk* logo, web: [www.dangeroustalk.net](http://www.dangeroustalk.net)

## HAGP Facts, Growth and Statistics:

- HAGP has 59 dues-paying members, a 42% increase from May 1<sup>st</sup> of last year.
- HAGP has 447 contacts, over triple the number from May 1<sup>st</sup> of last year.
- HAGP maintains an online Meetup with 150 members and a facebook page with 78 members.
- In 2005 HAGP organized 24 events. In 2007 we organized 45 events. In 2008 we organized or co-organized 48 events, and in 2009 we are projected to organize/ co-organize at least 74 events. Although primarily based in Willow Grove, events are spread throughout the Greater Philadelphia area and appeal to a wide variety of interests.
- In 2006 HAGP won the American Humanist Association's Chapter of the Year award primarily for our recent growth and development.
- HAGP received a grant for a part time paid director for one year in June of 2008 and has since employed Martha Knox. Funds for this position might be extended until December 31<sup>st</sup>, 2009. With this one exception, HAGP has historically been run entirely by volunteers.
- Next year HAGP will celebrate its 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary, making it one of the oldest local Humanist groups in the United States.

## The Need for Steady Donations:

All this growth comes at a cost. HAGP requires funds for speaker honorariums and travel reimbursement, refreshments, literature, mailings, and various administrative expenses. Currently HAGP only has the funds to cover a very basic 2009 projected budget, but not enough for additional efforts, such as advertising, and not enough to start out 2010 strong. Increasing our funds is crucial now that the secular worldview is gaining visibility and appeal in mainstream society - the momentum will not fuel itself. Funds are also crucial since HAGP will most likely lose our only paid staff in 2010. Our volunteers are dedicated, but they cannot complete their work without donations.

HAGP is launching a letter fundraising campaign in May, but you can get a jump on that campaign by donating to HAGP *today* either online with PayPal here: [www.hagp.org/membership.html](http://www.hagp.org/membership.html) or mail a check to:

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



**First Saturday of each month:**  
**Movie Night at Giant Superstore**  
2<sup>nd</sup> 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

### MAY

**Sat, May 2, 7pm – 10pm**

#### **HAGP Movie Night**

Showing Julia Sweeney's very funny and deeply personal monologue *Letting Go of God 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  
Come watch and discuss this film with other Humanists in your area!

Giant Superstore, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor  
315 York Road, Willow Grove, PA

**Sun, May 3, 6pm**

#### **Transhumanist Discussion Group**

Sponsored by HAGP

May's discussion will be of *The Artilect War: Cosmists Vs. Terrans: A Bitter Controversy Concerning Whether Humanity Should Build Godlike Massively Intelligent Machines* by **Hugo de Garis**, a researcher working with evolutionary algorithms, topological quantum computing, and neural nets. He predicts a dystopian end for the attempt to develop true AI. He envisions that humanity will be swept aside by the minds that it creates.

Kelly Writers House, Room 209  
3805 Locust Walk, Philadelphia  
[transhumanism@hagp.org](mailto:transhumanism@hagp.org)

**Fri, May 8, 7:00pm – 8:30pm**

#### **FSGP monthly program meeting presents: Susana Mayer—Ageless Sex Life: Secrets of Great Sex at Any Age**

Free and open to the public! Susana Mayer's presentation on the Ageless Sex Life: Secrets of Great Sex at Any Age; is geared to adults of all ages. This entire event will be given in lecture and anonymous question format. Mayer is a PhD. candidate at the Institute for Advanced Study of Human Sexuality. She is a member of the American Academy of Sexologists, AASECT (American Association of Sex Educators, Counselors and Therapists), and the Society for the Scientific Study of Sexuality.

William Way Community Center 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor Ballroom 1315 Spruce St., Philadelphia, PA 19107



Freethought Society  
of Greater Philadelphia

**Sat, May 9, 12pm – 2pm**

#### **HAGP Casual Luncheon**

Our second Saturday Casual Luncheon at the Willow Grove Olive Garden. Meet other Humanists and other freethinkers in a casual restaurant. All are welcome!

Olive Garden 2328 W. Moreland Rd.  
Willow Grove, PA

# Meet Fellow Humanists & Like-minded Freethinkers

Sat, May 16, 7pm – 9pm

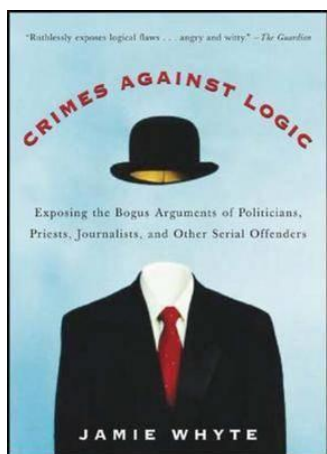
## Secular Book Club

The Secular Book Club is co-hosted by FSGP and HAGP. May's book for discussion is **Crimes Against Logic** by Jaime Whyte (186 pages)

"Philosopher Jamie Whyte is waging war on sloppy thinking, logical errors, and fallacies--and he's taking no prisoners." -- *New Scientist*

As usual, we'll head over to a nice restaurant at 9pm for anyone who is hungry and/or wants to continue the discussion.

Barnes and Noble 102 Park Ave Willow Grove, PA



## Thursday May 21, 7pm Philadelphia Atheist Meetup monthly meeting

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

Cosi, 4<sup>th</sup> Street and Chestnut Street Philadelphia, PA



Sun. May 31, 1:30pm:

**HAGP Program Meeting** – Our speaker is **Matthew LaClair** (see cover page for more info on this amazing speaker!)

Upper Moreland Library, 109 Park Ave.  
Willow Grove, PA 19090

## Saturday, May 30, 2009 – PhACT (Philadelphia Association for Critical Thinking) Fund-Raising Banquet

PhACT's annual fund-raising banquet will be at Edibles in Horsham, starting at 12:00 noon. They will have Faye Flam with a talk and a book signing for her latest book called *The Score - How the Quest for Sex has Shaped the Modern Man*. Faye has long been the Science writer for the Philadelphia Inquirer and switched to a science-sex column called "Carnal Knowledge". In the course of her research, she investigated a training class where men supposedly learned how to be more successful getting action.

To reserve a seat, contact Becky Strickland at [quasar@snip.net](mailto:quasar@snip.net). Seats are limited and are \$30.



## Community Service Volunteer Opportunities with the Secular Service Club

May's service project will be a volunteer work day to help maintain the Ethical Humanist Society of Philadelphia's Camp Linden in West Chester.

Time and date to be announced. Keep updated at [www.phillycor.org/service.php](http://www.phillycor.org/service.php)

Call Martha at 215-475-2573 or email [humanistmarf@gmail.com](mailto:humanistmarf@gmail.com) to get on the Secular Service Club email announcement list.

Sponsored by:



[www.phillycor.org](http://www.phillycor.org)

# Meet Fellow Humanists & Like-minded Freethinkers

## JUNE

Sat, June 6, 7pm – 10pm

### **HAGP Movie Night**

June's pick is *The Ascent of Money*

*In THE ASCENT OF MONEY, Ferguson – whose series War of the World garnered critical attention last summer – traces the evolution of money and demonstrates that financial history is the essential back-story behind all history. “Everyone needs to understand the complex history of money and our relationship to it,” he says. “By learning how societies have continually created and survived financial crises, we can find solid solutions to today’s worldwide economic emergency.” As he traverses historic financial hot spots around the world, Ferguson illuminates fundamental economic concepts and speaks with leading experts in the financial world. - From [PBS.org](http://PBS.org)*

2nd Floor Community Room, Giant Superstore, 315 York Road, Willow Grove, PA 19090

---

Sat, June 13, 12pm – 2pm

### **HAGP Casual Luncheon**

Our second Saturday Casual Luncheon at the Willow Grove Olive Garden. Meet other Humanists and other freethinkers in a casual restaurant. All are welcome!

Olive Garden 2328 W. Moreland Rd. Willow Grove

---

Sat, June 20, 7pm – 9pm

### **Secular Book Club**

Co-sponsored by HAGP and FSGP.

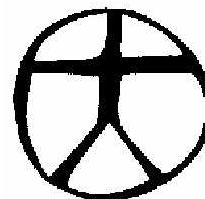
June's meeting we have a special treat - the author will be present to give a special presentation and then lead a discussion with the participants! The book is *The Elementary Common Sense of Thomas Paine: An Interaction Adaptation for All Ages* by **Mark Wilensky** (192 pages) This event is especially appropriate for adults and children. As usual, we'll head over to a nice restaurant at 9pm for anyone who is hungry and/or wants to continue the discussion.

Barnes and Noble 102 Park Ave Willow Grove, PA

## Ethical Humanist Society of Philadelphia

1906 South Rittenhouse Square,  
Philadelphia  
215-735-3456  
[www.phillyethics.org](http://www.phillyethics.org)

Weekly Platform meetings are held at 11 a.m. September through May. Summer programs begin at 10 a.m. 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.



## 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>

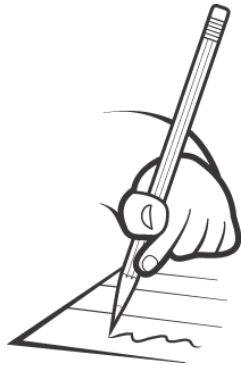
## Humanist Celebrant Available

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](mailto: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](mailto: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](http://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](mailto:lgemberling@americanhumanist.org).

You can also donate the dues you used to pay to HAGP. Donate at [www.hagp.org](http://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