



# Ethical Views

November 2011 Vol. 126, No. 3 Newsletter of the Ethical Humanist Society of Philadelphia

## *Sunday Platforms*

**Sunday, November 6, 2011**

### *The Ache for Home*

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

Every person deserves that sacred place we call "home." Respect for human worth demands it. From its inception, Ethical Culture has worked to assure decent housing for all. Founder Felix Adler did so when serving on the New York State Tenement House Commission, and Leader John Lovejoy Elliott demanded homes for the poor of New York's Chelsea neighborhood. This talk weaves Ethical Culture history with reflections about the special meaning of "home" with the Ethical Humanist Society of Philadelphia's ethical action commitment to the men's shelter dinner program

**Sunday, November 13, 2011**

### *Cultivating Ethics on the Overnight Train to Kerala*

**Nic Esposito**

Many people embark on trips to India with a well-defined mission. Some go to experience the myriad of cultures all colliding on the sub-continent. Others go to see the breathtaking scenery or to study the heart-wrenching poverty. And many go to explore the vibrant and ancient spiritual and religious traditions. Nic Esposito and his fiancée Elissa Ruse embarked on their trip with similar goals. But as they found out after two months in India, the only way to enjoy this country of contradictions is to let go of any expectation. And when it came to their spiritual experience, it was not

found in the many ashrams or temples scattered throughout the country's landscape. Spirituality in India is more easily discovered on an overnight train through the country side. Nic's lecture on his travels seeks to explore just what can be found when people let go of their expectations, and just enjoy the ride.

Nic Esposito is a writer and urban farm developer. He co-founded the organization Philly Rooted, which brought two community gardens, an urban farm and a grower's cooperative to West Philadelphia. He is currently strategizing the development of the Marathon Urban Farm in the Bewerytown section of Philadelphia. Nic released his first novel titled, *Seeds of Discent* [sic], about Philadelphia's urban farming movement in April 2011. He is currently working on his second novel, *Beyond Recognition*, based on the life of burn survivor John Capanna. He lives and works from his homestead in the Kensington section of Philadelphia.

**Sunday, November 20, 2011**

### *A Humanist Thanksgiving*

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



Hugh is planning a program to give focus and significance to the dinner with readings. He is soliciting suggestions from Society members.

Join Members and friends for a Humanist Thanksgiving Festival. Share in the feast prepared with Loving (wink, wink) hands by our community. In addition to the fabulous turkey, a treasured tradition prepared by Carol Love, we need folks to bring their favorite side dishes. Be prepared to

sign up on Sunday mornings with your contribution. With music, poetry, readings, and song, we will celebrate fall's bounty and the company of friends. \$10 if you bring a dish; \$15 if you don't.

David Ralston, Sally Redlener and Temma Fishman will be the impresarios for the event, so please talk to or email them about the contribution you wish to make. We will need plenty of people to help with set-up and clean-up.

**NOTE:** RSVP's are very important and should be forwarded to [temmafish@aol.com](mailto:temmafish@aol.com) by Wednesday, Nov. 16th.

**Sunday, November 27, 2011**

### *Colloquy*

This will be something between a colloquy and a platform. Marta Guttenberg will be the point person for planning and the impresario for the program. ◇

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## Leader's Message

### "Home"

By Hugh Taft-Morales

A big part of my decision to apply to be Leader of the Ethical Humanist Society of Philadelphia is that I felt so at home here, even during my first visit in 2005 as part of the American Ethical Union Planning Committee. A couple of years ago, as your Leader intern, I felt that our community home here on Rittenhouse Square fit me like an old slipper. This is one of the most important ways a house becomes a home – the comfort a place of refuge provides.

Sometimes homes do not provide such comfort. Where there is violence, abuse or neglect, homes are far from a refuge. Sometimes we find our home apart from the place where we live. In one of my favorite Prairie Home Companion narratives by Garrison Keillor, he speaks about growing up in Minnesota where the winter storms come so suddenly that school children who live outside the city often get stranded. As a result, each child who lives far from town is assigned a "storm home" where they can go for the night.

Keillor talks about how, while he never actually went to his storm home, it was important



to him to have one. It became in his mind a secret welcoming place where waited a kind and comforting elderly couple baking cookies in anticipation of his arrival. It reminds

me that often "home" is more a state of mind than an actual place. If we are denied that comforting space in our lives, it can hurt. Maya Angelou said, "The ache for home lives in all of us, the safe place where we can go as we are and not be questioned." Without such a place, we ache.

I don't expect not to be questioned in my home away from home on Rittenhouse Square. In fact, I look forward to many questions. But I do feel that our community home is, and will remain, safe. I know that the EHSP will always offer to members and guests a community that honors their worth for just being who they are. It has made my first few months here as your Leader a joy.

As I anticipate the winter months ahead, I think of the men we serve at the shelter sponsored by Trinity Memorial Church on Spruce Street. Of those we offer food, many will have no home, no storm home, no refuge, no safe place. Maybe they won't be questioned, but it will not be because they are safe but because they are ignored by the rest of us.

Homelessness has always been an issue that has touched me deeply. The idea of home and homelessness is the topic of my November 6 platform address. And I look forward to helping prepare and serve dinner at the shelter on December 4. I invite you to sign up to help at one of our assigned evenings. Most of us are lucky enough to often feel "at home" – whether we are in our bed, our workplace, or the Ethical Society. May we remind ourselves to work towards a world where everyone, now and then, can feel "at home."

<>

## Hungry and Homeless: An Ethical Action Opportunity

As we observe the "Occupy Philly" protest, I've been wondering: what percentile am I in the 99%? Am I at 10, 20, 30%? A truly interesting question. But I have heat in the winter and secure housing for the foreseeable future. I do not lack food and have health insurance. And thankfully at the moment, my job is secure. Yet, it feels nonetheless precarious.

With all of this **relative** security intact, I find it difficult imagining how it must feel to be homeless on the streets of this "City of Brotherly Love." Vulnerable, hostile, cold and alienating? I should think so much of the time, but knowing there is shelter and food at the Trinity Memorial Church at 2212 Spruce St. here in Center City would surely provide a measure of profound relief.

We have provided dinners there to approximately 20 homeless men on the first Sunday of the month from December through April for several years and we will continue to do so this winter. It is a great service and a lot of fun to cook, serve and eat with the guys. Last year when I did this with Jim and Nick, it was Super Bowl night and truly memorable.



We already have volunteers for December and April, but all other months remain open. The dates are: Sundays January 1st, February 5th, March 4th. I am looking for someone to recruit and coordinate sign-up, provide direction and support to our volunteers, relay the church key to and from cooks, and generally oversee operations.

Please consider taking this opportunity to walk the talk. I can be reached at [kmesposit@gmail.com](mailto:kmesposit@gmail.com) or you can speak to me at Platform.

—Kate Esposito

*Sunday, November 6:  
Introduction  
to Ethical Humanism  
with Hugh Taft-Morales*



Come learn about the history and philosophy of Ethical Humanism on Sunday, November 6, from 7:00 to 9:00 p.m.. Leader Hugh Taft-Morales will offer about a 30-minute presentation followed by reflections from members on what Ethical Humanism means to them. We will then open it up to a lively question and answer period. The evening offers those new to ethical humanism a chance to learn more about it in a relaxed atmosphere. Wine and cheese will be served!

Open to the public - please RSVP to:  
to: [leaderhugh@phillyethics.org](mailto:leaderhugh@phillyethics.org).

**Monday, November 21, 7:30-9:30PM**

**"The Day the Universe Changed"  
A philosophically fun video and  
discussion series**



Come view and discuss a video series by James Burke, *The Day the Universe Changed*. Burke explores with wit and wisdom links between knowledge and reality through stories about the history of Western Civilization.

Join Ethical Culture Leader Hugh Taft-Morales for the third installment on Monday, Nov. 21: "Point of View: Scientific Imagination in the Renaissance." Feel free to dress in your renaissance festival costumes!

Free to the public.

**Community Committee Wish List: YOU**

Membership growth is a critical goal for the Ethical Society, everybody agrees. We have a dynamic new Leader to show off, and we have become a pretty friendly place to newcomers.

The next step is to keep better track of newer people by focusing on their names and their interests, and contacting them appropriately after a platform or before a Get to Know Us Social.

To accomplish this goal, we need more volunteer commitment, and this is where you come in. Please read this job description and see if you fit it:

***Wanted: One or two or three people who can work with the Community Committee, the Society Administrator and the Leader to maintain a database on newcomers to the Society --their names and interests--see to it that these newcomers are contacted for appropriate opportunities, and keep the Leader and other Society members informed of newcomer interests and needs.***

Please talk to me if you have any interest in putting some work into this effort. It is one of the very most important ways you can contribute to the Ethical Society and its bright future.

-Ken Greif, Community Committee Chair  
[kengreiff@gmail.com](mailto:kengreiff@gmail.com)

**Thank you for your service  
From Betsy Lightbourn**



Many thanks to those who have joined the ush rush this fall and have been pleasantly surprised by how much easier this important job has become with lightened responsibilities: **Nick**

**Sanders, Jim Cummings, Ron Coburn, Garry O'Rourke, Doris Dabrowski, Kate Esposito, Temma and Arnold Fishman, and Marta Guttenberg**, you make us proud and keep up the good work.

Since we need two ushers every Sunday, we can use additional volunteers. If you would like to serve our community by ushering either regularly (one Sunday every month or two) or as your schedule permits, please contact Betsy Lightbourn at [elightbourn@verizon.net](mailto:elightbourn@verizon.net) or [215-575-1128](tel:215-575-1128).



On September 21, accompanied by Hugh Taft-Morales on guitar, members of the Ethical Humanist Society and some new friends added their voices in song to a Peace Rally staged in Philadelphia.

Photos were provided by Lisa Parker, the coordinator of Peace Day - Philly 2011.

# IN MEMORIAM



ELLEN CRONAN ROSE  
1938-2011

*Saturday, November 5, 2011:  
Memorial Service*

To all who have known and loved Ellen Cronan Rose, you will be sad to know that our Mom died on Monday, October 10.



Ellen Cronan Rose, PhD, co-Editor of the Journal of Modern Literature since 2002, distinguished retired professor, admired friend and colleague, and loving mother of three, succumbed to cancer on Monday, October 10. She was 73. She was an elegant writer, an expert editor, an inspiring teacher, a staunch Democrat, a proud feminist, and an ardent Phillies fan. Ellen will be greatly missed by her family, her many friends, and those she has touched over the years.

There will be a memorial service at the Philadelphia Ethical Society, 1906 South Rittenhouse Square, on Saturday, Nov. 5<sup>th</sup>, 2011 at 11am. In her memory, please consider a donation to the Human Rights Campaign ([www.HRC.org](http://www.HRC.org) ).

All the best,

Amanda Rose,  
Emily Rose Hoffman,  
Barnabas Rose

# November 2011

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
		<b>1</b>	<b>2</b> Meetings 6:30 p.m. Education Committee 7:30 p.m. Ethical Action Committee	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b> Memorial for Ellen Cronan Rose 11:00 a.m.
<b>*6</b> 11:00 a.m. <i>The Ache for Home</i> Hugh Taft-Morales 7:00-9:00 p.m. Intro: Ethical Humanism Hugh Taft-Morales	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b> <i>Pennsylvanians for Alternatives to the Death Penalty Meeting</i> 7:00pm	<b>9</b> Meetings 6:30 p.m. Finance Committee 7:30 p.m. Community Committee	<b>10</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>*13</b> 11:00 a.m. <i>Cultivating Ethics on the Overnight Train to Kerela</i> Nic Esposito	<b>14</b>	<b>15</b> Worldly Wisdom 7:00 p.m.	<b>16</b> Meeting 7:30 p.m. EHSoP Board	<b>17</b>  Amnesty International 7:00 p.m.	<b>18</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>*20</b> 11:00 a.m. <i>A Humanist Thanksgiving</i> Hugh Taft-Morales	<b>21</b> The Day the Universe Changed 7:30- 9:30p.m.	<b>22</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>26</b>
<b>*27</b> 11:00 a.m. <i>Colloquy</i> Marta Guttenberg	<b>28</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>30</b> Meeting 7:00 p.m. Camp Linden Meeting	<b>November Birthdays</b>  07- Irene Putzer 13 - Joe Monte 29 - Howard Peer		
*Child care provided during all platforms						

## Deadline, deadline!

Members are reminded that the deadline for submitting information for the upcoming newsletter is the 10th of the preceding month. This applies to articles, notices, and CALENDAR ITEMS. If I don't get them by the 10th, they are liable to be missing from the next edition. Please DO NOT send information or queries directly to Janice; her job is to format the newsletter, not to edit it. But even if your committee is meeting at the usual time, please send that info to me, in an email with the title (in caps) NEWSLETTER ITEM.

Thanks, Pat McGeever <patethical@gmail.com>

Also please copy Lyle, Murley, stand-in editor, at "Lyle Murley" <lyle.murley@verizon.net>

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## SUNDAY MORNING VOLUNTEERS



**Flower Dedications - David  
Ralston, Coordinator**

November 6 - Bertha Waters: my  
daughter, Linda, granddaughters, Monifa  
and Serafina and great-granddaughter  
Faith

November 13 - Lyle Murley and Terry  
Martin-Murley: Lyle and Terry's 35th  
anniversary

November 20 - Harry Thorn

November 27 - Doris Leicher: In honor  
of Howard Peer's Birthday, November 29



**House of Ushers  
-Betsy Lightbourn,  
Coordinator**

November 6 - Tom Carroll  
November 13  
November 20 - T.B.A.  
November 29



**Greeters - Ken Greiff,  
Coordinator**

November 6  
November 13  
November 20 T.B.A.  
November 27



**Coffee Hour Lunch Cleanup  
by members with last  
names beginning with:**

November 6 - Group A-D  
November 13 - Group E-K  
November 20 - Group L-O  
(Thanksgiving Celebration -  
See Platform schedule for  
11/20 on first page.)  
November 27 - Group P-Z

***Ethical Humanist Society  
of Philadelphia***

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