



Ethical Views

November 2012 Vol. 127, No. 3 Newsletter of the Ethical Humanist Society of Philadelphia

NOV. 4TH



Sunday Platforms

Sunday, Nov. 4, 2012, 11:00 AM

Ethical Winning and Losing

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



Are there ethical ways to win and lose? Do adults engaged in high-stakes contests maintain the "good sport" habits we're taught growing up? Should they? How will victorious and defeated candidates and their political partisans respond to the election results? Ethical Humanists active in our political process will strive to bring out our best when the dust settles after November 6th. In a national culture dominated by sports analogies, we must learn to win and lose ethically so we can create an ethical culture.

Quote-Unquote

"Winning isn't the main thing; it's the only thing."

--attributed to Vince Lombardi

Sunday, Nov. 11, 2012, 11:00 AM

November Women

Kate McGrath, Phila. Playwright.



NOVEMBER WOMEN, a deeply moving story about two very different women as they face Thanksgiving

Day, is the 2012 winner of our one-act playwriting contest. It has previously been produced in New York (finalist in the Lovecreek One Act Festival) and in Philadelphia (Women's Place Theatre at St. Joseph's University, and Theatre Under the Stars). In addition to innumerable performances throughout the US, foreign productions have occurred in Edmonton and Alberta, Canada, in Russia, and in Kazakhstan.

Kate McGrath is an award-winning playwright and solo performance artist. Her plays have been performed

nationally and internationally. Her full-length musical SEAFOOD won Best Play of North Carolina, was produced by Perihelion Theatre and was a finalist for Theatre in Process, Boston. WAITING FOR RAIN was produced at M.I.T. WHAT WANDA WANTS and BLUEBIRD OF HAPPINESS were produced at the Philly Fringe. Other production venues: Walking Fish Theatre, The Ritz Theatre, Brick Playhouse, Philly Primary Stages, etc. Solo work: THIS IS MY PLACE at the Women in Theatre Festival at the Painted Bride, other original one-woman shows at City Theatre, GLUE Performance Series, and Women's Ensemble's Women's Theatre Fest at the Walnut Street Theatre. Her plays have been published by TheaterWords.com and YouthPlays.com. She has served for 22 years as a teaching artist with Philadelphia Young Playwrights, and taught at Wolf performing Arts Center, The Shipley School, PA Performing Arts Center, Walnut Street Theatre School, and Montgomery County Cultural Center's summer arts program for nine years. She currently teaches Fun with Acting at Walking Fish Theatre, Drama at Holy Child Academy in their after school programs, and several programs with ArtSpace in Lansdowne. She worked for two seasons as a Dramaturg for Philadelphia Theatre Workshop, and was a founding member of New Plays Rising in North Carolina, and of the Philadelphia Dramatists Center. Kate was a Samuel Fels Fellow at the Wilma Theatre. Kate received her Bachelors Degree from UNC at Chapel Hill where she was a Morehead Scholar. She studied at the National Theatre Institute, and received her Masters in Theatre from Villanova. Most recently, Kate was selected to be the first Playwright in Residence with Iron Age Theatre.

Sunday, Nov. 18, 2012, 11:00 AM

A Humanist Thanksgiving



Come out for our delicious annual Humanist Thanksgiving meal! Bring your favorite dish to share or your energy

to help us decorate, set up or clean up. \$10 if you contribute a dish or effort, \$15 if you just want to join us. We will be celebrating community and Nature's bounty with music, readings, poetry and song and sharing our collection with Philabundance. Kindly RSVP by November 14. Sign up after Platforms or contact Temma at temmafish@aol.com for offers and replies.

Also, Hugh is seeking a few good volunteers to write and read their own personal statements of gratitude. Contact him ASAP but no later than November 7 if you are interested.

Sunday, Nov. 25, 2012, 11:00 AM

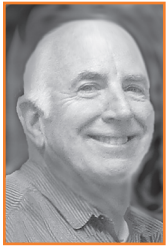
Toward a New 'Black Friday': A Discussion

Time was when the day after Thanksgiving was a unique day of door-busting deals for avid shoppers. Now it's metastasized. Followed by Cyber Monday for electronic gadgetry, it's also nearly any Friday of the year when merchants want to use the term to describe some very modest discounts they're offering. On this Sunday following the original "Black Friday" we invite you to join us in discussing how we can transform this symbol of materialism gone haywire into a catalyst for our ethical humanist values. ◇

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President's Column



What Would Felix Adler Do?

Jeffrey Dubb

When I first heard about Felix Adler's background – going to Germany to study neo-Kantian philosophy and returning to New York to found a new religion based on ethics and morality – I assumed he was an idealist type and not a hands-on activist. That shows I did not understand “deed before creed.”

As we all know, Adler was incredibly active in addressing the social problems of his time. He served on the National Child Labor Committee, the Civil Liberties Bureau (later the ACLU), the Executive Board of the National Urban League, and the New York State Tenement Commission. In his platform on September 9, Hugh described Adler's involvement in the dispute between the New York Clothing Trade Association and the Cutting Committee.

Later Adler opposed the Versailles Treaty ending World War I with its punitive, imperialistic and militaristic tendencies that directly led to a second, more destructive world war only 20 years later. Adler died in 1933 before FDR implemented the New Deal. It is safe to say that Adler would have approved of the sweeping changes that increased the economic security of the average American.

But if we could use a time machine to enable Adler to return to us now in 2012, what would he say? Have we made any progress since he started his work in 1876 or are we in a worse predicament than at that time? And which problems would he want to attack?

It appears that the average American is better off now than he/she was in the late nineteenth century. We have government unemployment insurance, Social Security, Medicare, Medicaid, etc. Although our health statistics are not the best, the U. S. does pay more for healthcare than any other country – about \$8,000 per person, or 17%

of GDP. According to Bloomberg News, about half of Americans live in a household where one member received at least one type of government benefit. Over the years, the US has built a substantial social welfare system.

But the question remains: If F.A. returned now, what problems would he devote his energy to remedying?

1. Income inequality: We have always had gross disparity in wealth distribution. Possibly it was greater in F. A.'s time during the Gilded Age. But now it has widened again in a relatively short period of time. The Occupy movement has focused on this, and our Society has supported them.

2. Racial discrimination in the criminal justice system: No one likes to think that the system of slavery and racial exploitation that was present at the founding of the republic and over which our most destructive war was fought is still a pressing issue. But there is no doubt that the current high incarceration rates for men of color, the draconian sentences for possession of small amounts of drugs, the bloated prison-industrial complex, and the loss of civil rights for released inmates amount to “The New Jim Crow” as documented by Michelle Alexander.

3. Weapons of mass destruction: In 1945, the first test of an atom bomb named Trinity ushered in the nuclear age. Since then, eight more countries have developed nuclear weapons. We have done a credible job of keeping the atomic genie in the bottle, but proliferation and a nuclear arms race are a constant threat, especially with Iran's dogged pursuit of the bomb.

4. Climate change associated with human activity: On September 20, the *New York Times* reported another manifestation of climate change in that the Arctic sea ice has reached a new low this summer and set off warnings about the rapid rate of warming in the region. We have only a faint idea of what the implications of global warming will be. Maybe in a few years the Jersey Shore will be about 50 miles closer to Philadelphia.

5. The need for moral enhancement: It just doesn't seem that wearing yellow

tee shirts, marching, and emulating no-impact man is going to cut it. The problem is that our ability to cause global damage is much greater than our ability to take the necessary steps to save ourselves. Please note that climate change was not even mentioned in the Republican platform.

Students of our moral evolution like Ingemar Persson and Julian Savulescu in their book *Unfit for the Future, The Need for Moral Enhancement*, explain that we are morally stuck in the hunter-gatherer phase and do not have the ability to cope with societies of billions of people with weapons of mass destruction. A number of scientists think that the human species has only a 50% chance of surviving the next 100 years.

Stephen Hawking thinks that we should plan to colonize other planets. He says “...our genetic code carries selfish and aggressive instincts that were a survival advantage in the past. It will be difficult enough to avoid disaster in the next 100 years let alone the next thousand or a million.” Persson and Savulescu believe that unless a significant number of humans develop enhanced moral consciousness concerning our present dangers and their impact in the future, humanity is doomed. They present a number of possible means for enhancement, none of which are completely practical.



So what would Dr. Adler do? Would he extend his ideals about the interconnectedness of the individual and the whole society to include moral enhancement? Considering that we are talking about changing fundamental human behavior on a global scale, the proposed solutions might have a science fiction character. Would they include behavior modification (“Clockwork Orange”), worldwide dictatorship to control use of fossil fuels, interplanetary colonization, genetic reprogramming, etc.?

So let me issue a challenge to the reader. Send me your suggestions for “What Would Felix Adler Do?” to my email: jeffrey.dubb@gmail.com by November 30. Hugh and I will review them and put the best answers in the next edition of *Ethical Views*. We are looking forward to your ideas. <>

Helen Caldicott speaks at EHSOP

Sunday, October 28, 7:00 PM



Come to hear Dr. Helen Caldicott, noted physician and anti-nuclear activist. The event, *Loving This Planet – An Evening with Helen Caldicott*, is a benefit for the Coalition For Peace Action's Pennsylvania Peace Voter Project, fighting to promote electoral involvement by peace voters in Pennsylvania. Dr. Caldicott is the Founding President of Physicians for Social Responsibility and received the Humanist of the Year Award in 1982 from the American Humanist Association. The Smithsonian Institution named her as one of the most influential women of the 20th century. She is the recipient of 21 honorary degrees and was nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize by Nobel Laureate Linus Pauling.

The suggested donation of \$45 or more (\$25 for students) will include a copy of Dr. Caldicott's new edition, *Loving This Planet*. Book discussion, wine and light fare follow the lecture until 9:00 p.m. The suggested donation of \$10.00 is for the lecture only from 7-8 p.m. Please call [215-360-5608](tel:215-360-5608) or reserve online at www.peacecoalition.org. If anyone is interested in this event, please contact Kate Esposito at kmesposit@gmail.com or [609-273-0170](tel:609-273-0170).

America the Philosophical

Thursday, November 1, 7:00PM

At the Ethical Humanist Society of Philadelphia, Prof. Carlin Romano will speak about his book, *America the Philosophical*, with Hugh Taft-Morales. Prof. Romano rejects the longstanding cliché of America as an anti-intellectual society and contends that America today is the most philosophical culture in the history of the world. *The New York Times Book Review*, in a front-page review of the book on July 1, called it "ambitious... convincing... an encyclopedic survey of the life of the mind in the United States... Romano is enlightening when he analyzes American intellectual life and illustrates its liveliness."

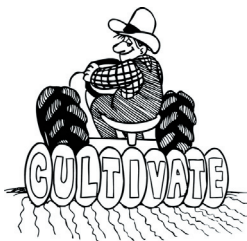
Following a Q & A session, Prof. Romano will sign copies of his book that will be available for purchase.



Prof. Romano, Critic-at-Large of *The Chronicle of Higher Education* and Literary Critic of *The Philadelphia Inquirer* for twenty-five years (1984-2009), is Professor of Philosophy and Humanities at Ursinus College, Collegeville, PA. His criticism has appeared in *The New York Times*, *The Wall Street Journal*, *The Nation*, *The New Yorker*, *The Village Voice*, *Harper's*, *The American Scholar*, *Salon*, *The Times Literary Supplement*, and many other publications.

Cultivating Community

Sunday, November 4, 9:30 AM



Staging parties, having coffee & bagels together, hosting newcomers -- just some of the ways we cultivate our Ethical Humanist Society as a community. This community cultivation is fun and fulfilling, for both newcomers and oldcomers. We will appreciate what we have done so far this year and plan for more at our Community Committee meeting, right before Hugh's platform. Newcomers, as well as all Society members and associates, are invited to be there then.

CONSTITUTION AT WORK,
GUN CONTROL
Monday, November 5, 7:00PM

Join us for the second in our series of discussions of the U.S. Constitution. *Constitution at Work* examines current social debates through the lens of the Constitution, related legal rulings, and ethical considerations. University of Pennsylvania Law School Professor Kermit Roosevelt will share his expertise in constitutional law with Hugh Taft-Morales, Leader of the Ethical Humanist Society of Philadelphia. Questions to be explored include: What are the major rulings regarding the Second Amendment? What does the future hold for gun rights and public safety? [Note: On 12/3, *Constitution at Work* will focus on Separation of Church and State.]



Sunday, Nov. 11: New Paths to Peace, Princeton University

EHSOP is one of the co-sponsors of New Paths to Peace, the 33rd Annual Interfaith Service and Conference for Peace sponsored by the Coalition for Peace Action (CFPA). Father Pat Connor, a Divine Word Missionary and a member of the Roman Catholic peace group Pax Christi, will preach at the Interfaith Service at 11:00 a.m. at Princeton University Chapel. The Conference, from 1:30 - 5:00 p.m. at Nassau Presbyterian Church, 61 Nassau Street in Princeton, will feature a talk from Noam Chomsky, Professor Emeritus of Linguistics at M.I.T. Professor Chomsky will be joined by Dr. Juan Cole, Professor of History at the University of Michigan, Amy Goodman, Executive Producer of Democracy Now and Katrina vanden Heuvel, editor and publisher of The Nation magazine. Early Bird registration is until October 15th at \$40.00 for non-members and \$25.00 for members of the Coalition for Peace Action. Prices will increase thereafter. Call [609-924-5022](tel:609-924-5022) or at www.peacecoalition.org. Patron spaces, which include a listing in the program, preferred seating and a post-conference reception honoring Professor Chomsky are \$100 for CFPA members and \$125 for non-members.

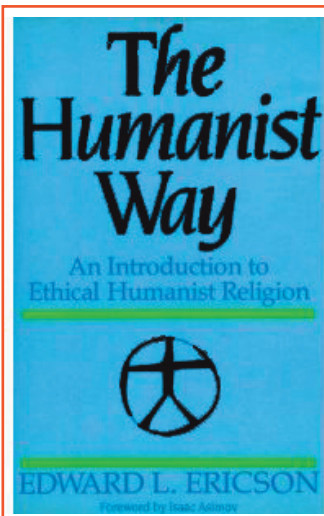
If anyone is interested in this event, please contact Kate Esposito at kmesposit@gmail.com or [609-273-0170](tel:609-273-0170).



Democracy on Trial: Gun Control

Sunday, November 18, 2:00PM

The Ben Franklin Thinking Society and the Ethical Humanist Society of Philadelphia host our second Democracy on Trial event. Topic this month: Gun Control. In order to try to foster more enlightened public dialogue, volunteers will speak from different political perspectives about the right to carry arms, after which we will invite questions and comments from the audience. Join us!



Book Discussion Series: *The Humanist Way* Monday, November 19, 7:00 PM

Come to the third part of our series of discussions about Ed Ericson's book, *The Humanist Way: An Introduction to Ethical Humanist Religion*. We will discuss Chapters 6 and 7, focusing on inclusion and moral creativity.

SAVE THE DATES!



SUNDAY, DECEMBER 2 (before 11:00 AM)

Decorating the Tree of Knowledge

What book offered you the most inspiration and enlightenment in your lifelong search for knowledge and meaning? Honor that book on the Tree of Knowledge in our lobby this December. Make two color copies of both the front and back of the book and give it to Hugh or place it in the envelope by his office door no later than November 21st. A \$2-\$5 donation to cover lamination is gratefully accepted. Everyone is welcome to come decorate the tree on Sunday, December 2, morning before platform!



FRIDAY DECEMBER 28

Party Before New Year's
Live Music
Refreshments
A GREAT TIME WILL BE HAD BY ALL!

EHSoP Photograph Album

EHSoP Hosts Peace Day Philly

On Friday, Sept. 21, Hugh Taft-Morales, the Ethical Society, and Rittenhouse Square were host to the 2012 United Nations International Day of Peace, or, in local terms, "Peace Day Philly." Hugh welcomed Mayor Nutter, presided over a minute of silence, and strummed on his guitar, for a good-sized, and (as you can see) quite varied group of participants, including Society members.

Well done!



Photos courtesy of:

Anne Creter

Lisa Parker

*Temple U.S. Media
Meltdown*



Photos by Betsy Lightbourn

Society Members Take Action on Threat of Voter ID



Photo by Kate Esposito

EHSOP members John McCormick, Sharon Wallis, Nick Sanders, Betsy Lightbourn and Steve Bremner stand outside the PA Voter Coalition office with Field Organizer Bob Previdi on September 29 after canvassing door to door to educate voters in Philadelphia's Wynnefield neighborhood. Voters are not required to show photo ID for this election, but may still be confused or harassed, resulting in voter suppression. Volunteers are still needed to do lit drops, hand out literature at SEPTA locations and get out the vote on Election Day. Call Bob Previdi at 215-848-1283 to help out!

Society Co-Sponsors October 10 Candlelight Vigil Against Death Penalty



As part of the World Day Against the Death Penalty (October 10), the Society co-sponsored the Philly vigil with Pennsylvanians Against the Death Penalty, in Love Park. To drum rolls for each name, Kate Esposito read the names of those who had been executed in Pennsylvania.



Photos by Maureen Roche

November 2012

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
7:00 p.m., Sunday October 28 An Evening with Helen Caldicott				1 <i>America the Philosophical</i> Carlin Romano	2	3
*4 9:30 a.m. Community Cmte. Mtg. 11:00 a.m. Ethical Winning & Losing Hugh Taft-Morales	5 7:00PM The Con- stitution at Work	6	7 Meetings 6:30 p.m. Education Committee 7:45 p.m. Ethical Action Committee	8 7th Deadline: <i>Reasons for</i> <i>Gratitude -</i> <i>leaderhugh</i> <i>@phillyeth-</i> <i>ics.org</i>	9	10
*11 11:00 a.m. November Women Kate McGrath Princeton, NJ New Paths to Peace Noam Chhonski et al.	12	13 7:00 p.m. <i>Pennsylvanians</i> <i>for Alternatives</i> <i>to the Death</i> <i>PenaltyMeeting</i>	14 Meeting 6:30 p.m. Finance Committee	15	16	17
*18 11:00 a.m. A Humanist Thanksgiving 2:00 p.m. Democracy on Trial	19 7:00 p.m. The Humanist Way	20	21 Deadline: book titles for Tree of Knowledge	22	23	24
*25 11:00 a.m. Toward a New Black Friday	26	27	28 Meeting 6:30 p.m. EHSoP Board	29	30 Deadline: <i>What Would</i> <i>Felix Adler</i> <i>Do?</i> <i>jeffrey.dubb</i> <i>@gmail.com</i>	

*Child care provided
during all platforms

NOVEMBER BIRTHDAYS



7: Irene Putzer
11: Linda Richardson
29: Howard Peer

Sunday
December 2
pre-11:00 a.m.

DECORATE THE
TREE OF
KNOWLEDGE

Ethical Views is published monthly
except July and August.

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**Ethical Humanist Society
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SUNDAY SERVICES



Hosts - Nick Sanders,
Coordinator

Nov. 4: Arnold and Temma Fishman

Nov. 11: Garry O'Rourke and Nick
Sanders

Nov. 18: Ken Greiff and Marta
Guttenberg

Nov. 25: Bill and Sandy Coffey



Flowers - David
Ralston, Coordinator

Nov. 4: Jim Cummings "in honor of
my wife Adlyn"

Nov. 11: Terry Martin Murley "36
illustrious years of marriage for the
Murleys"

Nov. 18: Diann Brown "in honor
of Ethical Culture's Thanksgiving
Dinner"

Nov. 25: Doris Leicher "in honor
of Howard Peer's Birthday on
November 29th"



Snacks - Ken Greiff,
coordinator

Nov. 4: Group A-E

Nov. 11: Group F-K

Nov. 18: Group L-O

Nov. 25: Group P-Z

***Ethical Humanist Society
of Philadelphia***

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