



Ethical Views



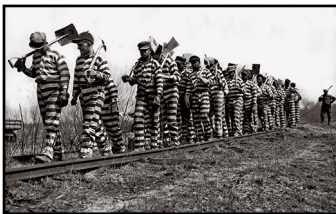
February 2014 Vol. 127, No. 6 Newsletter of the Ethical Humanist Society of Philadelphia

Sunday Platforms February 2014



Human Painting by Andrea Meyer

Sunday, February 2, 11:00 AM
Humanizing Art
Hugh Taft-Morales, Leader, Ethical Humanist Society of Philadelphia
Prior to the Renaissance, the dominant direction in European art was upward, towards the heavens, reaching for God. As Aristotelian influences turned cultural perspective back to the earth, human beings dominated the artist's eye. From da Vinci and Michelangelo to Rembrandt and Vermeer, beauty and truth came in human form. Join Hugh Taft-Morales as he explores this creative turn that fueled the aesthetics of modern humanism.



Sunday, February 9, 11:00 AM
The Moral and Ethical Costs of Mass Incarceration
Heather Ann Thompson, Prof. African American Studies and History, Temple University

In the last forty years the American criminal justice system became the largest in the world, incarcerating more people than any other country in history. Recently, however, our citizenry has begun to question the costs of this policy turn. Whereas politicians tend to emphasize the economic cost of a massive carceral state, Dr. Thompson

asks us to reckon with its moral and ethical costs. She will discuss the impact this punitive turn has had on our nation's already fragile communities and how it has distorted and diluted our very democracy.

* * * * *

Dr. Thompson is a professor of African American Studies and History at Temple University who writes and speaks extensively on the history of the American justice system as well as current justice policy. Thompson is also completing the first comprehensive history of the Attica Prison Rebellion of 1971 and its legacy, for Pantheon Books.



Sunday, February 16, 11:00 AM
Why Animals Matter
Hugh Taft-Morales, Leader, Ethical Humanist Society of Philadelphia

In honor of the birthday of Charles Darwin, Hugh Taft-Morales will explore the use and abuse of animals by homo sapiens. Non-human creatures serve as pets, are served on plates, and are strapped down for product testing. As guinea pigs and companions they are fundamental to our lives, but we rarely consider them independent of their value relative to human projects. Have they inherent worth? Hugh will discuss some recent studies in animal cognition that may surprise us and affect how we see our fellow inhabitants of planet earth.

Sunday, February 23, 11:00 AM
A "Dark Symphony" of American Literature
Lyle Murley, Professor Emeritus, California Lutheran University

Literature allows me to hear a real person, one to whom my only task is to

listen. I will try to provide opportunities to hear a symphony of dark voices. We will listen to the strivings of the souls of Black Folk that W.E.B. DuBois says are at the core of the real America. These



Top: W.E.B. DuBois
Bottom: Ralph Ellison

are not voices of an America that excludes but of those who refuse to be excluded, voices that keep America striving to become what it claims to be, voices that keep looking for ethics that are real. When Ralph Ellison says a writer's role is "to preserve in art those human values which can endure by confronting change," he laments that the ethic preserved in American Literature is too often divided: talking our idealized ethics while practicing pragmatic ethics that explain qualifications as "adjustments to reality." Ellison sees African-American writers striving for a real ethic, for a culture that relishes diversities while it pursues commonalities and celebrates real selves. Literature can open my mind to hear a writer seeking the highest, and, as the words above our proscenium arch say, that is holy ground.

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Lyle Murley (PhD, English, Northwestern University; MA, English, University of Chicago; BA, English, St. Olaf College) was Professor of English at California Lutheran University, Chair of the department and Professor Emeritus. He is now teaching at Temple University's Life Long Learning Program. He was professor of the year on two occasions and received the Sears Roebuck Foundation Award for Teaching Excellence. He is also a member in good standing at the Ethical Humanist Society of Philadelphia. ◇

Quote-Unquote



"The state would rather give me an Uzi than a microphone."

-Mumia Abu Jamal, Philadelphia journalist imprisoned in Pennsylvania prisons (until recently on death row) since 1983 for the murder of a police officer for which he was convicted (many observers world-wide claim "framed") in his *All Things Censored*, ed. Noelle Hanrahan, Seven Stories Press, 2000, p. 21.

President's Corner



Cognitive Dissonance at Christmas: Lester Brown vs. Santa Claus

Jeffrey Dubb, M.D.

Every once in a while, we have the wonderful experience of gaining new insight into a familiar subject. This happened to me on December 12 when I heard the famed environmental analyst Lester Brown discussing his autobiography, *Breaking New Ground*, on NPR. Brown was born in 1934 in a farming community in Bridgeton N.J., where he grew up in a house without indoor plumbing or electricity. He began his career at the age of 13 as a tomato farmer. Over the years, he has become one of the most respected voices in the environmental and sustainability movement. He has written over 50 books, founded two successful institutes (The World Watch

and The Earth Policy), advised heads of state, and saved millions in India from starvation during the monsoon failure in 1965. He currently commands \$50,000 for a speaking engagement, but routinely declines, preferring to stay home to research and write.

Listening to Brown on December 12 was like hearing the voice of unarguable truth. He speaks with more than 50 years of experience observing the relationship between population growth, poverty, natural resource depletion, and climate change. He believes that if we continue on our unsustainable course, it will mean the end of civilization. In his book *Plan B 4.0*, he presents a program with four components. Cut net carbon dioxide emission 80% by 2020. Stabilize the world population at 8 billion or lower. Eradicate poverty. And, fourth, restore the earth's natural systems including soils, aquifers, forests, grasslands, and fisheries.

But as I was reading Brown's books, the lead-up to Christmas began to produce in me a case of "cognitive dissonance," the collision of two opposing thought processes. The ideas on saving civilization from itself were crowded out by seeing Christmas trees at Rockefeller Center and the White House, Santa and his elves producing millions of toys in their factories at the North Pole, families jetting to see distant relatives, and all the songs about a White Christmas. Finally, all the parties with socializing, imbibing, and overeating made the holiday cheer complete. Could we be on the road to oblivion when the holidays were so jolly? I was totally confused.

But, as it has done many times in the past, our reliable Ethical Society came to the rescue. The Society acted like a turbo assist for my feeble super ego and strengthened my resolve to be more hopeful about the possibility of reversing the downhill course to environmental destruction. Two local Society projects stand out. In Feb. 2012, the Corbett administration had pushed

through Act 13, imposing a statewide zoning plan for the natural gas fracking industry. The state had characterized this bill as one that imposed stronger environmental standards on the industry, but what it really did was to remove any vestige of local control over what the frackers were doing in the neighborhood. Local authorities had no say over the aesthetic, health, or environmental consequences of the fracking industry. But on Dec. 20, 2013, the Pennsylvania Supreme Court affirmed an earlier lower court decision and ruled against the statewide zoning plan for oil and gas fracking. The consequences of the Dec. 20 decision are hard to foresee with certainty, but environmentalists are hopeful that local control will ameliorate some of the more objectionable effects of the explosive growth of fracking in Pennsylvania.



Fracking Facility

I am not saying that everything associated with the amazing increase in natural gas production in the U.S. in recent years has been undesirable. For the immediate future, the change in the energy balance has decreased our reliance on imports from the Middle East. In addition, the combination of increased natural gas production together with the slowdown in the economy since 2008 has actually decreased U.S. carbon dioxide emissions. (Electric power generation with natural gas produces less greenhouse gases than electric power generation with coal.)

The second local development, the defeat of Pine Barrens pipeline, was a very close call. Temma and Arnold Fishman have brought the matter to the

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attention of Society members. In 1978, Congress passed legislation setting aside 1.1 million acres of heavily forested land in southern New Jersey as the Pinelands Natural Reserve. But recently South Jersey Gas has proposed building a 22-mile, 24-inch, high-pressure gas pipeline across parts of Atlantic, Cumberland, and Cape May counties to supply natural gas from Pennsylvania to the B.L. England plant in Cape May county. As a sweetener (or bribe?) to the Pinelands Commission, S. J. Gas has offered an \$8 million "donation" to buy and preserve land adjacent to the pipeline.

In addition, the Christie administration has become involved with a heavy-handed attempt to remove one member of the Pinelands Commission for "ethical" considerations. Ed Lloyd is an attorney who has opposed the project the pipeline. It appears that public opinion is swinging against the project. Four former N. J. governors, Whitman, Florio, Kean, and Byrne, have written to the Pinelands Commission to oppose the pipeline. The Pine Barrens pipeline is getting national attention because it offers a preview of the fight over the Keystone XL pipeline where short-term economic issues are pitted against irreversible damage to the environment. The intense pressure from environmentalists is making things uncomfortable for the Pinelands Commission. In late-breaking news, on Friday, January 10, the Commission did not approve the pipeline. The vote was 7 to 7, and 8 votes were required to approve. Ed Lloyd did not vote. It is possible that the issue could be brought up again.

I am also buoyed by Lester Brown's comprehensive plan for saving human civilization. We are already seeing the early successes of this plan: increasing use of wind power for sustainable electricity generation, phasing out of coal-burning plants in the U.S., more electric and hybrid automobiles, and increasing use of bicycles in urban areas, to name a few. There will need to be a revolution in society to cope with these issues. Some of the impetus will come from average citizens. Some of the push will come from political

leaders. Brown points out that during World War II, beginning in 1942, the U.S. shifted industrial production from consumer goods to planes, tanks, ships, and other armaments. The U.S. became "the arsenal of democracy."

Brown feels confident that we are capable of the kind of effort that will be necessary to save civilization. It is a question of mobilizing our industrial resources and changing our priorities from military power to environmental relief. The Ethical Society is already committed to this effort. Let's be optimistic and continue our work.

<>



Jonathan D. Moreno

Monday, February 3, 7:30 PM

The Politicization of Bioethics

Ethics on the Square presents **Explorations in Bioethics and Medicine**
Mondays, 7:30 PM: February 3, March 3, April 7, May 5, June 2

We start the series off with a bang: a discussion of "The Politicization of Bioethics" with Prof. Jonathan D. Moreno, PhD., Professor of Medical Ethics and Health Policy and of History and Sociology of Science, U. of Pennsylvania. Leader Hugh Taft-Morales will interview Dr. Moreno followed by Q & A from the floor.

The American Journal of Bioethics has called Jonathan Moreno "the most interesting bioethicist of our time." Moreno has published 21 books and hundreds of papers, book chapters, reviews and op eds. His book, *The Body Politic*, was named a Best Book of 2011 by *Kirkus Reviews*.

Other evenings in coming months include a discussion of gender and medical ethics, the ethics of care, and feminist conceptions of autonomy with Miriam Solomon, professor of Philosophy and Women's Studies, Temple University, as well as an exploration of "reproductive justice" with Kimberly Mutcherson, associate professor of Law, at Rutgers University.

Announcements



Sunday, February 2, 5:00 PM

Introduction to Ethical Humanism

Come enjoy an *Introduction to Ethical Humanism*. (NOTE EARLIER TIME for this Sunday only.) Leader Hugh Taft-Morales discusses the history and philosophy of Ethical Humanism. Members and visitors will share questions and reflections over wine and cheese. Open to the public but please RSVP to:

leaderhugh@phillyethics.org.



Scene from movie: *Nothing But a Man*

Sunday, February 9

5:00-9:00 PM

***Understanding the
Impact of Oppression
Dinner and Ethics through
Video Program***

A 5:00 PM vegetarian dinner to raise funds for the EHSOP Ethical Action Program (Camp Linden and POWER) will conclude in time for participants to attend the video program that follows (see below). The charge for the dinner will be \$15 per person, or \$10 for EHSOP members who bring a dessert. You are encouraged to invite your friends to both events.

The first in a series of Ethics Through Video Classes will include a showing of *Nothing But A Man*, a film by Holocaust survivor Michael Roemer on the hardships of life for African-Americans in the 1960's South. The program will relate the measures taken by the Nazi regime to restrict the rights of Jews, and how Roemer's childhood experience in Germany prepared him to understand race discrimination against Blacks in the U.S. Members of Operation Understanding (OU), which educates young Afro-American and Jewish leaders about each other's histories and cultures, will conduct the class, and then lead small group discussions. Our own Christian Hayden is a group leader for OU.

Thursday, February 13

7:00-9:00 PM

***The Art of Living: The How
and Why of Living Our Lives***

(sixth and final session)



Facilitated by guest C.J. Fearnley and hosted by Hugh Taft-Morales, this month's capstone discussion will explore the theory and practice of the Art of Living. Can great works of literature or philosophy inform your own personal Art of Living? What great works might we read to further inform and inspire our Art of Living?

To broaden our perspective, we will critique the approaches of the three Stanford Art of Living lecturers. These can be gleaned by watching (or re-watching) their introductory video (<http://vimeo.com/20383042>).

All are welcome, even you haven't participated previously or do not have time to watch the video resources suggested.

Finally, we will explore the practice of an Art of Living by sharing the approaches of participants. What is your Art of Living? What spurs you to "freedom for expansion and self-development"? What is the end and aim of your life? How do you answer the questions for the problem and project of your life? What shall I be? How shall I become? What are your highest value(s)? How do you practice your Art of Living?

If you need some inspiration for the practice of your Art of Living, these videos are recommended:

Be Yourself by Neil deGrasse Tyson (2 min.) at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BOKFvTGUGk>

Neil Gaiman's Commencement Speech to the University of the Arts Class of 2012 (20 min.) at <http://vimeo.com/42372767>

The Meaning of Life by Jill Lepore (13 min.) at http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YspXDn7z_6s

Be An Artist, Right Now! by Young-ha Kim (17 min.) at http://www.ted.com/talks/lang/en/young_ha_kim_be_an_artist_right_now.html

The Power of Outrospection by Roman Krznaric (10 min.) at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BG46lwVfSu8>

Thursday, February 13, 7:00 PM

Alan Kutner: Rights of Hard-of-Hearing Persons



At its monthly meeting, the Center-City Philly Chapter of the Hearing Loss Association of America will host Alan Kutner, a nationally prominent leader in the campaign to actually enforce the 1990 Americans with Disabilities Act.

This Act mandated equal treatment in public venues for hard-of-hearing persons, among others. Admission is free and open to all; wine and cheese will be served. For more information, contact Pat McGeever at patethical@gmail.com.



IN MEMORIAM GEORGE BUNK, 1959-2013

EHSOP member George Bunk died after a brief illness on December 27, 2013 at the Hospital of the University of Pennsylvania.

His grand passion in life, and much of his career, can be summarized in the phrase *ad astra* – “to the stars.” Inspired by writers like Isaac Asimov and Ray Bradbury and the adventures of Star Trek, he obtained a Masters degree in Space Technology and worked for Boeing and Lockheed-Martin for the space shuttle program, testing payloads, maintaining laboratories and in numerous other capacities for space flights. He also taught astronomy and physics to train and inspire the next generation of space scientists.

He is survived by his wife, Renée Aiello-Bunk, his mother, Willie Faye Bunk, his daughter, Theresa Ayers, a sister and three brothers, and numerous nephews and nieces.

His cheerful presence and sparkling wit will be greatly missed at the Ethical Society.

It's that time again: Announcing our 2014 Service Auction



BID

In 2013, we had 20 service auction items: special dinners, outings to museums, members'-home-based socials, tours, pet care, tickets to sports events and concerts, and other creative offerings, such as naming the topic of one of Hugh's 2014 platforms. Bids for the items totaled \$4,450, all going to the benefit of our Ethical Society. Not incidentally, we had much fun in participating. (Many thanks to Ron, Doris D., Jeffrey and Ruthann, Ken, Marta, Bob K., Richard, Doris L., Carol L., Kim, Bob and Janice, Sally, Linda and Aissia, Nick, Hugh, Sharon and Leonard, and Meghan and Brian, who provided these profitable and much-enjoyed activities.)

In 2014, please join in by offering an item. If you are new to this, talk to Sally or Nick about what you might do. It's a great way to enjoy the company of other members, as well as to raise funds for the Society!

Kickoff of the auction will be at our Darwin Day Party, on Sunday, February 16. Because the kickoff is highlighted by the attractive, creative table displays for each item, as constructed by Sally, she needs to have your item description (i.e., what, when, where, etc.) by the previous Sunday, February 9. Join in in 2014!

Sunday, February 16, Darwin Day!!

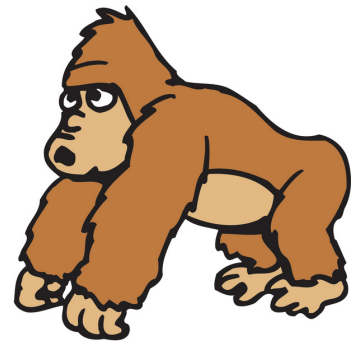


On February 12, 1809, Charles Darwin was born. His life and work had arguably as great an influence on our understanding of the world as any other human being ever. If humanism were to have “patron saints,” he would be one. Sounds like a reason to celebrate!

Like any great project (be it life on earth or our EHSoP Darwin Party), things evolve. This year a children’s party open to families from the neighborhood has grown into existence, giving us two ways to honor Charles Darwin’s birthday.

3:00 PM-5:00 PM Family Party for children of all ages

Games and activities for children 5-12 years old
Dress as your favorite animal, prizes to all participants
Gorilla Hugo makes another appearance
Banana Splits grand finale!



5:00-7:00 PM: Adult Party

BYOB
Bring an appetizer
Trivia games and activities

So mark your calendars and RSVP to Hugh Taft-Morales at LeaderHugh@phillyethics.org no later than **Feb. 10** for each party:

3:00 PM-5:00 PM Family Party.

Please indicate:

- 1) how many children will be attending,
- 2) their ages, and
- 3) how many adult chaperones will attend.





5:00 PM-7:00 PM Adult Party.

Please indicate:

- 1) how many adults will attend, and
- 2) how many chaperones.

February 2014



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
						1
 *2 11:00 AM Humanizing Art Hugh Taft-Morales 5:00 PM Intro. Ethical Humanism Hugh Taft-Morales	3 7:30 PM Politicization of Bioethics Jonathan D. Moreno	4	5 Meetings 6:30 p.m. Education Committee 7:45 p.m. Ethical Action Committee	6	7	8
*9 11:00 AM Mass Incarceration's Moral/Ethical Costs Heather A. Thompson 5 & 6:00 PM - Understanding the Impact of Oppression Sharon Wallis	10 Deadline: RSVP Hugh-Darwin Parties	11 <i>Pennsylvanians for Alternatives to the Death Penalty Meeting</i> 7:00pm	12 Meetings 5:30 p.m. Finance Committee	13 7:00 PM Hearing Loss Assn.: Alan Kutner Pat McGeever 7:00 PM Art of Living C.J. Fearnley	14 	15
*16 11:00 AM Why Animals Matter Hugh Taft-Morales  3:00 & 5:00 PM Darwin Day Parties	17	18	19 Meeting 6:30 p.m. EHSOP Board of Trustees	20  Amnesty International 7:00 p.m.	21	22
*23 11:00 AM "Dark Symphony" of American Literature Lyle Murley	24	25	26 Meeting 6:0 p.m. Camp Linden Committee	27	28	
*Child care provided during all platforms						

Deadline:
 SUNDAY - Feb. 9
Auction Item
 Sally Redlener



FEBRUARY BIRTHDAYS

2 - Sally Redlener
 3 - Arnold Fishman, Esq.
 18 - Vince Russo

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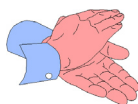
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SUNDAY SERVICE

Hosts - Coordinated by
Nick Sanders



Feb. 2 - Harry Thorn, Sharon
Wallis and Leonard Weeks

Feb. 9 - Garry O'Rourke,
Geoffrey Baker, and Elisabeth
Leonard

Feb. 16 - Bill and Sandy Coffey
with Leslie Williams

Feb.- 23 Arnold and Temma
Fishman with Ron Coburn



Flowers - Coordinated by
David Ralston

Feb. 2 - Carol Love "In Loving
Memory of my mother, Sheila Mary
Cumming Love - a walking encyclo-
pedia and a true wit"

Feb. 9 - Sharon Wallis, "For
Operation Understanding"

Feb. 16 - Nick Sanders, "In memory
of my father, Earl L. Sanders"

Feb. 23 - Ken Greiff, In honor of



Coffee Hour Coordinators

Feb. 2 - John McCormick
Feb. 9 - Ken Greiff
Feb. 16 - Garry O'Rourke
Feb. 23 - Harry Thorn

***Ethical Humanist Society
of Philadelphia***

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