



Ethical Views



May 2014

Vol. 127, No. 9

Newsletter of the Ethical Humanist Society of Philadelphia

Sunday Platforms

May 2014

Sunday, May 4, 11:00 A.M.

The Ethical Culture Story

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

Founded by Felix Adler in 1876, Ethical Culture has philosophical roots that reach back into humanity's earliest attempts to make meaning and construct community. Ancient western religions established the common polarities of good and evil, divine and mundane. Dominant religious paradigms from Judaism, Christianity and Islam embraced dualism and offered differing ways for mortals to attain eternal life. As inheritors of the scientific revolution, Ethical Culture sought better ways to live in modernity, in the here and now. Fresh off his attendance at Ethical Culture's annual national gathering, Leader Hugh Taft-Morales will talk about our brand of humanism and the challenges and opportunities that lie ahead.



Sunday, May 11, 11:00 A.M.

Promoting Justice and Humanity in the Era of Mass Incarceration

Ann Marie Kirk, Director, Art for Justice



Ann Marie will share the work of Art for Justice, a grassroots organization that supports and exhibits art by incarcerated individuals to

stimulate public dialogue on critical issues and systemic flaws in the criminal justice system. She will explore the

capacity of art to engage us in deep conversation about what it means to be human, how we honor the dignity and worth of ourselves and others, and how we translate individual worth to respect all people in the corrective justice system. The presentation will include voices of the artists through their writing, poetry and artwork. We will ask how each individual participates ethically in our times, now that a massive, ineffective, inhumane and unjust system of incarceration has been woven into the social fabric of the United States.

Ann Marie is the co-founder and Director of Art for Justice. She has forty years of experience as a social worker, teacher, social justice advocate and multidisciplinary artist (dance, poetry, photography). Through bold, innovative work with Art for Justice she has brought inspirational prisoner art many times to diverse locations, primarily in the Philadelphia area. In 2008 she received the Leeway Foundation's Transformation Award for women artists working for social change.

Sunday, May 18, 2014, 11:00 A.M.

Growing Ethical Community in Philadelphia

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

The Ethical Humanist Society of Philadelphia offers our city unique and exciting opportunities: a growing community of humanists dedicated to living more ethical lives. Philadelphia offers the Ethical Humanist Society opportunity to put our ideals into practice in a city aching with inequality (housing, schools, employment) but full of progressive organizations and activists.

Leader Hugh Taft-Morales explores



Photo by Janice R. Moore

ways our humanist community can connect more with the greater Philadelphia area in a way that honors progressive humanist values while building our community at 1906 Rittenhouse.

Sunday, May 25, 11:00 A.M.

Building an Ethical Future

Future of Ethical Societies Members

Future of Ethical Societies (FES) is a national movement composed of young adults invested in Ethical Culture. Every year FES has a conference in cities around the U.S., and this year's host city is Philadelphia. After a weekend of relationship building, service and reflective dialogue, FES members will present a platform on what building an ethical future means to them.

Sunday, June 1, from 11:00 A.M.

EHSOP Annual Picnic* (in lieu of Platform) **Camp Linden, 1521 Camp Linden Rd., West Chester, PA 19382*

Grilled hotdogs, hamburgers, veggie patties, beer, soft drinks and pot-luck lunch. Afternoon of games and activities for all ages, including folk songs led by Hugh Taft-Morales and kayaking on the Brandywine. \$15 per person for adults (\$10 if you bring a dish). Children free. Proceeds benefit the Camp Linden Summer Children's Program. Meet at EHSOP building at 11 AM to carpool to Camp Linden. RSVP to Henry Pashkow: hpashkow@gmail.com or 215 694-4498.



In This Issue

Page

1 Sunday Platforms

2-3 Leader's Column

3 - Recycling Updates

4 - Happenings; Quote-Unquote

5-6 Announcements

7 Calendar

8 Sunday Service



Leader's Column

Hugh Taft-Morales

Humanizing Criminal Justice – Ongoing Opportunities

It's been two years since I read Michelle Alexander's *The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness*, and I haven't stopped talking about it yet. In this column, however, I'll focus on where her challenging and important work has led me. (But if you haven't yet read it, the time is now!)

It has led me into supporting *Art for Justice*, a labor of love and commitment of Ann Marie Kirk in partnership with incarcerated individuals seeking a redemptive voice through their art. If you read last month's newsletter you already know about "Dignity and Worth in the Era of Mass Incarceration," an art installation in our Collier Gallery on the second floor of 1906 Rittenhouse. If this is the first you've heard of it, please read the article in the April *Ethical Views*.

Although at the time of this writing we are still 10 days away from the opening, the art has already had an impact on our community. The few individuals who wandered into the gallery unprepared and unaware of the full purpose and context of the work understandably found some of the images disturbing. It is powerful, moving, poignant work that deserves to be viewed and processed carefully.

This is one reason why Ann Marie spent much of three days hanging the art, with much help from custodian Antuan Heath, and support from Bob Moore, Janice Moore (who really got the Collier Gallery going), and Bob Bueding, the current coordinator of our Collier Gallery exhibits. Bob, who himself was powerfully affected by his many trips to Graterford Prison to

discuss religion and life with inmates, hopes all Society members spend some time in the gallery contemplating the art work and the voice of the artist. Sometimes big changes in the world begin in changes in the hearts and minds of individual people. Through almost 70 separate exhibits, this artwork has affected many people, and has deepened my commitment to this issue.

I will speak about this artwork the day after the opening at the William Penn House on April 21. My talk, entitled "The Injustices of our Criminal Justice System," is from the point of view of an Ethical Culture Leader, obviously not as a criminal justice professional. I know things are more complicated than I realize, and that some of my opinions are naïve. But I have read enough to know that I cannot remain silent. I hope some residents of William Penn House will accept my invitation to come view the art in our gallery and learn a little bit about the artists. I hope that they will better appreciate how these artists, who are "self-proclaimed as wrongly convicted or guilty seeking redemption," seek basic recognition of their humanity.

Reading *The New Jim Crow* has also led me to get to know Martha Copithorne, a member of First Unitarian Church of Philadelphia, and her friend and longtime literacy teacher Betsy Wice. They are both organizers of a literacy project initiated by First Unitarian offering tutoring to citizens returning to public life after being incarcerated.

Currently they tutor at the state-run Halfway House on 8th Street just north of Callowhill Street. Working in partnership with the *Center for Returning Citizens* (www.tcrphilly.org) and the *Center for Literacy* (www.centerforliteracy.org), Martha and Betsy hope their efforts expand into the community and draw in tutors from many groups.



Copithorne



Wice

It does not surprise me that Martha got involved in this work after reading Michelle Alexander. It did surprise me how instantly I was attracted to the approach she and Betsy were taking to helping returning citizens. There was no sign of the paternalism that can infect many worthy efforts to help those in need. The tutoring experience is as much of an education for the teachers as it is for their students. This is reflected in the approach taken by the *Center for Literacy* that trained volunteer tutors from First Unitarian in three, 3-hour sessions. It emphasized the importance of relationships of dignity and respect. Obviously this is part and parcel of respecting the inherent worth of everyone. But also, it is simply not as effective to tutor anyone, including returning citizens, without first understanding the needs and goals of the student.

In Martha's case, she has gotten to know the person she is tutoring in way that helps establish a mutually respectful relationship. It also has led to better learning. As she explains, "To engage my learner requires me to take the time to get to know him, his goals and his interests, and then find the materials that will engage him. We both become learners. He grew up in Puerto Rico, went to school through the third grade, and came to this country in his late teens. He has had no formal schooling in English. He wants to learn to read the songs at his church that are scrolled on a large video screen."

Betsy Wice has gotten to know her learner, a father of three children who live with their mother in New Jersey. He yearns to return to live full time with his family, but for the moment has to be content with passes for weekend visits. In the meantime, he is working to improve his spelling and punctuation so he won't be embarrassed when writing a note to his child's teacher. In pencil, he wrote a rough draft of an excuse for absence, stopping to ask Betsy if he should use a colon or comma for the beginning greeting. Betsy explained, "He opted for a comma over a colon, and after writing, 'Dear Ms. Jones,' he quickly and thoughtfully composed the

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body of the letter. He put the letter in the red folder which he takes back to his sleeping quarters to keep for future reference, hopefully not too far in the future when he gets to return home for good."

The literacy program offers an opportunity to get beyond the stereotypes, assumptions, and fear that block many of us from caring about how our society treats those in the criminal justice system. Despite the fact that it is our tax dollars that support this system, too many of us (myself included) fall into the trap of "out of sight, out of mind." Since reading *The New Jim Crow*, it is hard to get it out of my mind.

It's for this reason I am organizing a "Criminal Justice Reform Summit" to kick off our program season next year. On September 7, from approximately 2:00 – 6:00 PM, I hope to host a panel discussion, film viewing, and workshops designed to empower all of us more honestly to address our criminal justice system. From the targeting and arresting of suspects, to their treatment before and during arraignment and trial, to institutionalization, to the lack of services to aid in reintegration of returning citizens, we can and must do better as a nation. Please see me right away if you would like to help plan and organize this event.

TRANSITION



Want to help tutor returning citizens through a mutually empowering literacy program?

Have a couple of hours a week to help humanize our system?

Training courses may be available this spring at the Ethical Society or in June at the Center for Literacy.

Contact Betsy Wice at betsywice@aol.com or [267-254-3334](tel:267-254-3334) about training opportunities or to find out more information.



Recycling Updates from the City

By Marta Guttenberg

Both at EHSOP and in our homes, we all need to be attentive to recycling. The latest flyer from the city makes important changes. Recycling becomes less complicated, includes more items, and even offers rewards for helping the effort! See below for the latest from PhiladelphiaStreets.com/Recycling.



All together now!

WHAT CAN I RECYCLE?

NOW CARTONS, TOO! ALL TOGETHER, EACH WEEK, SAME RECYCLING BIN

NEW! Cartons - you use them every day, now you can recycle all those orange juice cartons, milk cartons, juice boxes, soup boxes, ice cream cartons, and more

Plastic -- all household plastic containers marked #1 through #7, including detergent/shampoo/soap bottles, water bottles, rigid plastic containers, lotion tubes, to-go containers

Paper -- newspaper, magazines, mail, phone books, food boxes (remove plastic liner), computer paper, flyers, wrapping paper, soda and beer cartons (no food-soiled paper please!)

Metal -- tin and aluminum cans, empty aerosol cans, empty paint cans, aluminum foil (not food-soiled)

Glass -- jars and bottles

Cardboard - empty and flattened

DO NOT RECYCLE:

- Styrofoam products including packing inserts and "peanuts"
- Plastic bags
- PVC pipe
- Paper towels, napkins or food-soiled paper
- Medical plastics including IV tubing, sharps, and syringes (please refer to proper disposal guidelines from your medical service providers)

ALSO:

Sign up at PhillyRecyclingPAYS.com to receive your recycling sticker in the mail. Put your sticker on you hard-sided bin (32 gallons or less). Earn rewards points toward discounts.

Happenings

Standing Against the Oil Trains Through Philadelphia

When a crude-oil-train derailed on a bridge over the Schuylkill in center-city Philly in the small morning hours of January 20, no one was killed. But crews were unloading the seven cars threatening Penn and CHOP, four days later. This was unlike another such train of Bakken Shale oil from the Dakotas that exploded in Quebec, killing forty-seven people. But our event was enough to alert local residents that something very dangerous was going on in their neighborhood, and that included Ethical Society members.

So we had a substantial presence at the April 10 demonstration to make public the opposition to the very dangerous transport of very crude and explosive oil, on old train tracks, in outdated container cars, through residential and commercial centers of our beloved city. We gathered at the Mellon Center at 1735 Market (home of the misnamed "Philadelphia Energy Solutions") and then joined in a march to register our concerns with Philadelphia City Council. Special thanks to Jeffrey for pointing out the importance of this issue and to Steve for rounding up the facts of the situation.



QUOTE-UNQUOTE

"WE ALWAYS HEAR THAT THINGS WILL NEVER HAPPEN, BUT THINGS ALWAYS HAPPEN."

--Curt Weldon, former Rep. (R-PA) and former firefighter, testifying about the January 20 crude-oil-train derailment in Philly.

Announcements



May 1-4, Skokie, IL: 99th Assembly of the American Ethical Union

The Assembly will be sponsored by the Ethical Humanist Society of Chicago. The theme of our Assembly this year is: "Revitalizing Democracy! Money, Power & Politics." For more information, go to aeu.org.



FRIDAY, MAY 2, 11:59 PM:
SUBMISSIONS CLOSE TO
EHSOP PLAY CONTEST

-And that means that the latest crop of one-act plays will be ready to read. If you enjoy reading and discussing plays, please contact Pat McGeever at patethical@gmail.com to volunteer for this year's committee to pick one winner and two runners-up. Only two or three meetings are needed for this, and they're a lot of fun!



Sunday, May 4, 7:00 PM

Introduction to Ethical Humanism

Hugh Taft-Morales

Come enjoy an Introduction to *Ethical Humanism*. 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.

Ethics on the Square Program presents: Explorations in Bioethics and Medicine

Interviews and Q&A with area ethicists and philosophers,
hosted by Hugh Taft-Morales

Monday, May 5, 7:00 PM: Miriam Solomon: Understanding Medical Controversies

Why do medical experts sometimes disagree about the effectiveness of a medical intervention? If all experts are following "the scientific method," wouldn't they agree with one another? Prof. Miriam Solomon of Temple University shows why the experts can disagree, how they manage their disagreements, and how patients can navigate the uncertainty produced by conflicting recommendations. Come examine the overlap of philosophy and medicine known as medical epistemology.



Monday, May 19, 7:00 PM: Jonathan D. Moreno: The Politicization of Bioethics



What is the proper role for government regarding biotechnology and science? Why is there such fear and suspicion in the United States surrounding advances in science and medicine, as reflected in some of the positions of the president's Council on Bioethics, especially during the George W. Bush administration? What is the new bio-political landscape and how does it challenge traditional political left/right divisions? Come explore these questions with Prof. Jonathan Moreno, U. Penn., who is called "the most interesting bioethicist of our time" by the American Journal of Bioethics. We will focus on his newest book, *The Body Politic*.

The final evening in this spring series will be on **June 2** and will focus on Environmental Stewardship and Feeding a Hungry Planet, with Swarthmore College Prof. Hans Oberdiek.

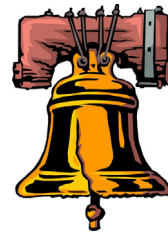


DEMOCRACY IN ACTION

ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING

May 18 after Platform

We will be electing new board members, officers, and voting on amendments to the bylaws.



Let Humanism Ring!

*The American Humanist Association is pleased to announce that its 73rd Annual Conference will be held **June 5-8, 2014** in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.*

Join hundreds of humanists, atheists and freethinkers in Philadelphia for a four-day celebration of humanism! The American Humanist Association will feature informative lectures, book signings, celebrity guests, networking opportunities, child care, fun activities and more!

*Sheraton Philadelphia Downtown Hotel
201 North 17th Street
Philadelphia, PA 19103*

*Registration can be done on line:
<http://conference.americanhumanist.org/>*



May 23-25:

FES visits 1906 Rittenhouse!

Members of Future Ethical Societies (FES) will be coming to Philadelphia over the Memorial Day weekend for workshops, service projects, socializing, and to offer our May 25 Platform program. Thank you much to those offering home hospitality to these young adults, many of whom will be leaders in Ethical Culture for many years to come!

July 12-19, 2014, in North Carolina's hills: AEU Lay Leadership Summer School




Created in 1996 to promote the evolution of Ethical Culture, the Summer School provides a special opportunity for committed leaders and members to strengthen skills, share ideas and ideals, and broaden inter-Society connections.

The Board of each Society may recommend up to four active members and staff, age 21 or older, who want to deepen their commitment to living Ethical Culture in their personal lives and to assist in the development of their Ethical Societies. If you are interested in this opportunity, speak to Hugh or any Board member.

We have a wonderful staff this year. It includes: Jan Broughton, AEU Board Secretary and member, Ethical Humanist Society of the Triangle (NC); Mary Herman, Leader, Washington Ethical Society; Diane Kirschner, Ethical Leader-in-training, Brooklyn Ethical Cultural Society; Paulo Ribeiro, Ethical Leader-in-training, Ethical Culture Society of Bergen County; Bart Worden, AEU Executive Director; Leader, Ethical Culture; Society of Westchester; and Hugh Taft-Morales, Leader, Ethical Humanist Society of Philadelphia and Baltimore Ethical Society.

Invest in yourself! Invest in Ethical Culture!

May 2014

| Sun | Mon | Tue | Wed | Thu | Fri | Sat |
|--|--|-----|---|---|---|-----|
| | | | | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| | | | | AEU 99 TH Assembly, Skokie, IL | | |
| | | | | | Submissions end for Play- writing Contest Pat McGeever | |
| *4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| AEU 99 TH Assembly, Skokie, IL 11:00 AM <i>The Ethical Culture Story</i> Hugh Taft-Morales | 7:00 PM Understanding Medical Controversies Miriam Solomon | | Meetings 6:30 p.m. Education Committee 7:45 p.m. Ethical Action Committee | 7:00 PM CC HLAA Traveling With Hearing Loss Pat McGeever | | |
| Intro. Ethical Humanism Hugh Taft-Morales | | | | | | |
| *11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 |
| 11:00 AM <i>Justice, Humanity in Mass Incarceration</i> Ann Marie Kirk | | | Meetings 5:30 p.m. Finance Committee 6:30 p.m. EHSOP Board of Trustees | 7:00 PM  Amnesty International Ron Coburn. | | |
| *18 | 19 | 20 | 21 | 22 | 23 | 24 |
| 11:00 AM <i>Growing Ethical Community in Philly</i> Hugh Taft-Morales | 7:00 p.m. | | | | FES Workshops, etc. at 1906 | |
| 12:30 PM Annual Membership Meeting | | | | | | |
| *25 | 26 | 27 | 28 | 29 | 30 | 31 |
| 11:00 AM <i>Building an Ethical Future</i> FES members | | | Meeting 6:30 p.m. Camp Linden Committee | | | |
| | | | | | | |

*Child care provided
during all platforms

MAY BIRTHDAYS

1: Jim Cummings
7: Pat McGeever
7: Nick Sanders
14: Marta Guttenberg
20: Doris Dabrowski
21: Ethel Boyer
28: Bob Kay



Save the dates!

- 6/2 The final evening in Ethics on the Square series -- *Environmental Stewardship and Feeding a Hungry Planet*, with Swarthmore College Prof. Hans Oberdiek.
- 6/5-8 73rd Annual AHA Conference, Philadelphia,
- 7/12-19 AEU Leadership Conference, NC

Ethical Views is published monthly
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**Ethical Humanist Society
of Philadelphia**

Hugh Taft-Morales, Leader

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(215) 735 - 3456
office@phillyethics.org
www.phillyethics.org



SUNDAY SERVICE



Hosts - Coordinated by
Leslie Williams

May 4 - Joel Benjamin
and Rita Verbin

May 11 - Garry O'Rourke and
Harry Thorn

May 18 - Sandy and Bill Coffey

May 25 - Sylvia Meltzer and
John McCormick



Flowers - Coordinated by
David Ralston

May 4 - Carol Love: "In Honor of
the birthday of Lynne Summers,
who graduated from our
Sunday School, and to celebrate
her running for Judge of Court
of Common Pleas."

May 11 - Nick Sanders:
"Celebrating another good year
with Molly."

May 18 - Ruth Ann and Jeffrey
Dubb: "All the members of
EHSoP"

May 25 - David Ralston and
Evan Sorg: "For finishing the
Love Run."



Coffee Hour Coordinators

May 4 - John McCormick
May 11 - Ken Greiff
May 18 - Garry O'Rourke
May 25 - Harry Thorn

***Ethical Humanist Society
of Philadelphia***

1906 South Rittenhouse Square
Philadelphia, PA 19103