



Ethical Views

November 2014 Vol. 129, No. 3

Newsletter of the Ethical Humanist Society of Philadelphia



Sunday Platforms November 2014



Sunday, November 2,
11:00 A.M.

Hunger of Body and Conscience Hugh Taft Morales, Leader, Ethical Humanist Society of Philadelphia

Every day, almost 1 billion people go undernourished and 20,000 children die from hunger and hunger-related diseases. How can humanists process such horror so that we act more consistently to change the situation? Can we ameliorate what Jane Addams called the "starvation struggle" of half of humanity?



How can we do the right thing to ease the hunger of both body and conscience? Hugh Taft-Morales explores using his hands, head, and heart, including increasing empathy through fasting.

Sunday, November 9, 11:00 A.M. *Dumpling and the Leprechaun* Pat McGeever, EHSoP member

Two seventy-somethings go online looking for the occasional night out and maybe a new friend, but suddenly find themselves in deeper waters than they expected. Is this kind of love possible for oldies like them? Definitely not, says Dumpling's sister. And that's only the beginning of the complications. *Dumpling* was the winner of EHSoP's annual one-act play-writing contest, and the first winner by a member of said EHSoP. Come and see if you think the judging was rigged.



Pat McGeever took up playwriting after he retired from teaching political science, and has had over 20 plays produced in numerous states, including one winner of a national contest: *Sister Sex*, about a nun who's a sex therapist. You can see where his mind is. Oh, by the way, he edits this newsletter.

Sunday, November 16, 11:00 A.M. *Our Dual Nature: Autonomy and Interrelatedness*

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

Underlying Ethical Humanism is a model of personality that emphasizes two fundamental characteristics: our *individual uniqueness* and our *mutual interrelatedness*. This model honors the enlightenment tradition of individualism that helped liberate people from oppressive social and political collectivist theories. It also respects the organic and collective nature of identity. Hugh Taft-Morales shares his appreciation for how the often-clashing qualities of autonomy and interrelation can coexist, without reducing one to the other, or placing one above the other, allowing him to live a more balanced and ethical life.



Sunday, November 23, 11:00 A.M., *Health Democracy* Paul Glover, Grassroots Activist and Organizer



Health care should be directly controlled by the people providing and needing health care. Social entrepreneur Paul Glover is organizing the Patch Adams Free Clinic, a solar-powered health center in North Philadelphia to be surrounded by greenhouses and orchards. He believes that grassroots ownership of health facilities, even with a national health plan, will keep the system democratic, affordable and humane.

Paul Glover is the founder of 18 organizations and campaigns, including Ithaca HOURS local currency, the Philadelphia Orchard Project (POP), Citizen Planners of Los Angeles, Health Democracy, and the League of Uninsured Voters (LUV). He

is author of six books on grassroots economies, including *Deep Green Jobs*, *Hometown Money*, and *How to Take Power*. He is a former adjunct professor of urban studies at Temple University. In 1978 he walked across the United States, entirely on foot, from Boston to San Diego. He consults at Greenplanners: <http://www.paulglover.org>



Sunday, November 23,
Noon
An Ethical Thanksgiving

The Platform program will end earlier than usual at noon for our Humanist Thanksgiving feast for Members and Friends from noon-2 P.M. Please sign up to bring food (side dishes to go with turkey, desserts, and beverages). If you would like to share a Thanksgiving reading, please let Hugh know by November 16 what you would like to share! Cost \$15 or \$10 with food to share. RSVP for dinner by November 16.

Sunday, November 30, 11:00 A.M. *Once More Into the Breach:* *A Discussion of the War on ISIS* Arnold Fishman, Facilitator

Informal discussion led by member Arnold Fishman, who denies having any expertise but follows this issue closely. Express your thoughts and concerns, and listen to those of others.

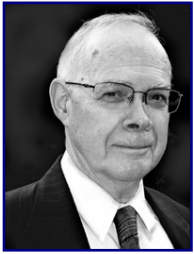


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President's Column



Values Clarification

Nick Sanders

I remember first hearing the term “values clarification” in 1974 when I came to Philadelphia for a new job. The job was to be an evaluator in an education program development effort. The program was to be in moral education of middle-school students, sixth through eighth grades. This age group (early adolescence) was chosen due to the influence of the developmental psychologist Jean Piaget. Piaget and other developmental psychologists were presenting evidence that it was at this time in life that formal reasoning capabilities were beginning to develop. Others, most notably Lawrence Kohlberg at Harvard, were applying the notion of increasing reasoning ability in the field of moral development.

However, the program I was to work on was not focusing on facilitating the development of reasoning. Instead, it would seek to result in moral behavior. And the primary scholarly basis for having this program establish behavior-oriented outcomes was “values clarification.” Those values-clarification programs involved school-age children as well as adults in clarifying their values by considering how they were acting on them. According to this approach, one could not claim to have a value if it were not acted upon in some way.

After some considerable discussion of what our program should be called, the development team labelled it *Skills for Ethical Action*. It involved teaching a series of steps (“skills”) that a student was to learn to apply. Somewhat to my surprise, the first step was not one of identifying clearly a problematic situation to which the student would consider alternative actions and their implications. Instead, the first step was to identify a value that the student

would like to act on. Thus, the program was set not to prepare for reaction to some moral dilemma—but to have the student be proactive. I think that this was a reorientation of values clarification: Choose some value you would like to clarify, and determine how to act on it!



Although the other steps, or skills, in the *Skills for Ethical Action* program did take up more standard fare from contemporary writing on moral education (e.g., giving reasons for an action and considering an action’s impact on various other persons), this unusual, proactive orientation--based on a somewhat unorthodox version of values clarification--has remained in my thinking about ethical action.

In our Ethical Humanist Society, we are seldom at a loss to find possible ethical actions. At least once a week, we are given numerous actions to take to cope with such issues as climate change, environmental degradation and pollution, economic and social inequality, an unjust justice system, poor education funding, new means of warfare, etc., etc., etc. So, why then would we need to generate opportunities to clarify our values by coming up with self-developed ethical actions? Isn’t just joining in with others to react to some issue of mutual concern, enough? Why be proactive when we have so many good opportunities to be reactive?

Usually I do myself follow a reactive orientation. I have at times voiced my opinion in our Society that rather than agonize over what to do about the big issues of the day, we should join and support big organizations coping with the problems such as the Southern Poverty Law Center, the Citizens for Pennsylvania’s Future (AKA Penn Future), and UNICEF, each of which will provide multiple opportunities to react each week! In addition to probably being more effective than self-initiated actions, this reactive stance takes less effort. The issues are clearly identified by the press and the organizations with

which we might join, and the action is one that others define for us.

The problem for me is that the action then is often not really mine, not really a satisfying manifestation of my values. Even though I might be present at a demonstration or adding my name to a petition for action by a government official or someone else in authority, I can feel disconnected from the action. A rough analogy is the disconnection from an action I experience when a doctor checks for my knee-jerk reflex. I am guessing that this experience is shared by others.

I do try to make my actions more personally satisfying in these reactive situations by expressing my specific thoughts. I will take the opportunity (now given in online petitions) to add a sentence or two expressing my own particular views on the issue and maybe take out some sentence or phrase I do not agree with. I enjoy designing my own sign to carry when I have participated in demonstrations.

However, beyond this customizing of the messages when I am asked for an endorsement, I need more proactive values-clarifying actions. I suppose it’s a little like a graffiti tagger’s need to mark territory. Some of my past life as a researcher also reflects my orientation: I like to identify problems and then work to solve them, not just work on problems others have identified. It must be something about my need to establish my identity by giving my particular spin on the issue at hand. These most often are small things, like being sympathetic with a volunteer calling to solicit me for money for a good cause to which I will not be giving. Granted: I am reacting. But I am proactive in revealing my value of respect for the person, in contrast to hanging up on them (as I might be tempted to do if they have interrupted my dinner). Much more dramatic, we have such examples as Edward Snowden. He identified serious problems of worldwide scope, and did his part very effectively in initiating reaction to it. Now that’s really being proactive in the ethical action realm!

So this is my point: I believe that building an ethical culture is furthered

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not only by ethical reactions, but also by ethical “proactions.” Although it is effective and efficient to join with others in common actions, I believe it is also important and personally satisfying to clarify our values through initiating ethical actions. In our day-to-day lives, we are the ones who act. And as for the bigger issues, someone has to initiate the actions for others to react to. I am curious to know if readers of this column have this ethical proactive orientation as well.

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A View from the AEU

Linda Napoli

As a new member of the American Ethical Union Board, I’m excited to report all the wonderful activities we’re putting together for our members.

Since its founding in 1889, the American Ethical Union (AEU), the national organization of Ethical Societies in the United States, has helped form new Ethical Societies, supported existing Societies, and worked to provide a national presence for Ethical Culture. A significant part of the AEU’s activities are geared toward national conferences, such as the annual Assembly, and toward training for ethical leadership.

Three conferences were scheduled this fall:

- A workshop was held October 24-25 at the Ethical Culture Society of Westchester featuring a professional fundraiser to familiarize Societies with effective approaches to running annual pledge campaigns that engage members.
- The Annual Ethical Education Conference will be held at beautiful Stony Point in Rockland County, New York from November 7-9. Those

involved in ethical education for children at their Societies will meet Dale McGowan, our new National Ethical Education Director. Dale is a knowledgeable, personable and experienced individual who has published on this subject. Having been involved in (what was called) religious education almost from the outset of my connection with Ethical Culture 33 years ago, I can attest to how informative and meaningful this program is not only to the RE Directors and teachers, but to the families who attend and find others who are raising their children with the same values they are. There is nothing comparable to a young family meeting, sharing and making friends with other families from different Ethical Societies.

- There is also the annual YES (Youth of Ethical Societies) Conference November 14-16 in New York. Teens scattered throughout our various locations will get an opportunity to meet and share their views and concerns, both personal and social. Trish Cowan, the YES Coordinator, organizes the conference with assistance from the teens and advisors of our Societies, and support from the AEU office. An outgrowth of this group is Future of Ethical Societies (FES) for college-age students whose commitment to building a better world is only starting to mature as they grow older. FES has had its conferences in May.

Our National Director of Ethical Education, and YES Coordinator are the dedicated and inspired individuals the AEU pays to run these annual conferences as well as to support all involved in our youth education throughout the year.

To continue on the path of life-long ethical education there is Lay Leadership Summer School, a one-week course at a beautiful location in North Carolina. Created almost 20 years ago by Ethical Culture Leaders Joy McConnell and Jone Johnson, this program is underwritten by the American Ethical Union as a way to train individuals in communication, organizational development and ethics, allowing them to go back to their

Societies with enhanced skills to help them flourish. As first a student and then an instructor at Lay Leadership Summer School, I can assure you of the transformative nature of this experience and its value to the over 200 members who have taken part in it.

The AEU supports every Society with information and advice. There are active national committees that correspond with your local committees in membership, ethical action, communications, finance, and leadership. The AEU office, located at the New York Society for Ethical Culture, is a group of dedicated individuals who are always at the ready to answer questions, direct calls, and issue communications to all of us. When inquiries come in from all over the country regarding forming new Societies, the AEU goes into action to develop a support system for the fledgling group. Its most recent activities have been with a coterie in Silicon Valley.



In addition to this, it is well to remember that the American Ethical Union is our national voice on social issues of the day. Along with other major groups, we speak in favor of or in opposition to matters that concern all of us as Americans and citizens of the world.

Last and most important is the AEU Assembly, which is held in a different city each year to give members an opportunity to meet, commiserate, discuss, and learn through workshops and meetings. In June 2015, we celebrate the 100th Assembly of the American Ethical Union in Stamford, Connecticut. It is a noteworthy occasion not just for historic reasons, but also for its continued vitality and dedicated mission to meet the needs of you, its members.

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Linda Napoli is a member of the AEU Board and of the Ethical Humanist Society of Long Island

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Our Ethical Commitments: Let's Share

Steve Bremner
Ethical Action Committee Chair

"Small Ethical Societies often are stretched thin regarding volunteer manpower," says the Baltimore Ethical Society's Leader, (and, of course, our own Leader), Hugh Taft-Morales. "Although this strain is due in part to their size, there is another reason. It is this: those who are drawn to Ethical Societies are often people already very engaged in the world, committed to making a difference, and, as a result, quite busy!"

We EHSOP folks occasionally come out *en bloc* and literally rally around the banner. Yet a Sunday visitor could be forgiven for suspecting that after we sing *We Would Be One*, we abruptly cease to be one, grab a donut and run, leaving ethical action behind with our name badge until next Sunday.

To show how far this is from the truth, Hugh and the Baltimoreans have produced *Making a Difference*, a brochure of members' accounts of their ethical commitments, which vary from aid to rural Nicaragua, through local literacy, literature and poetry, to the housing of house rabbits. Do take a look, there's a link at the end of this article to an online PDF version.

And if you're thinking this could make a good platform subject, check out the MP3 audio (again, link 2 below) of an Ethical Society of St. Louis *Day of Deeds* platform.

Shouldn't we be doing something similar? In the knightly British spirit of leading from the front, your Ethical Action Chair hereby mounts the big white steed a tad gingerly, and goes first ... :-)

Links:

- 1 Baltimore Ethical Society's *Making a Difference* brochure: <http://bmoreethical.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/09/EthicalCmtmnts.pdf>
- 2 Ethical Society of St. Louis's *Day of Deeds* platform audio: <http://ethicalstl.org/platforms/ESSTLPlatform2007-10-21.mp3>
- 3 **Communicare** welcomes both new volunteers and nominations for new elders. Contact Program Director, Nancy DeLaura, via the form on the web page: <http://www.communityoutreachpartnership.org/communicare>
- 4 Men's Shelter dinners – look out / listen out for announcements at EHSOP!

If you *had* to get stuck in an elevator with someone, you could do way worse than my friend Fred. In spite of reading the gloom-filled *NY Times* from cover to cover daily, Fred has a refreshingly positive take on life, and an engaging life story. He lives at 1919 Chestnut, (where you're in clear and pleasant danger of bumping into our members Vince Russo and Jack Schwar), and is a retired teacher, having taught business subjects, including law, to high school students. In the days when classes were small enough for teachers to truly know their students, and Philly industries were thriving, Fred was dropping in on manufacturers and law firms, saying, "I've got the perfect trainee for your machine shop / admin office / law office." Fred knows the importance of relationships, and is one great Ethical Humanist, not that he knows it!

Clearly Fred has always been a getter-around and a doer, to the extent that he was working three jobs in the days when you could still get by nicely on one. Lately, mobility problems have badly "cramped his style." Realizing that Fred could use some new company for conversation and to ensure safe trips to the park or the coffee bar, Lenore (Mrs. Fred) contacted Maris Krasnegor, (who, by the way, knows Richard Kiniry from way back when), then Program Director of Communicare, who matched him with yours truly.



Communicare is part of Community Outreach Partnership, (CORP), the folks who run the men's winter shelter at Trinity Memorial Church, 22nd and Pine, at which EHSOP volunteers serve dinners once a month. I'll let Communicare describe itself:

Communicare volunteers serve the Philadelphia frail elderly population



one-on-one in a variety of ways, filling in for lost family and friends. Services they provide may include friendship socialization, shopping assistance, transport to medical appointments, acting as advocate with healthcare practitioners, record-keeping, help with correspondence, general problem-solving, and many other things.

Sharing one-on-one experiences with people in fragile circumstances breaks down the barriers between those who serve and those who are served, those who have and those who need. Such intimacy is the guiding principle of Communicare.

Director Maris recently retired after 24 years (*bravissima!*) with Communicare. And as for this "young volunteer," calling myself a "graybeard" would be shaving a few years off my unambiguously white beard. Reminders that "seniorhood" comes to us all. Perhaps it's less about breaking down the barriers, more about realizing that they aren't really there. We all have, we all need. Let's all serve, and truly be one in building for tomorrow.

So what's *your* ethical commitment? Please let me know, so we can share it via *Ethical Views*, via the EHSOP Ethical Action web page, and perhaps eventually via our own brochure. No need to go on for anywhere near as long as I just did; no literary brilliance required; and it's probably as well not to imitate my style.



Let's share!

Steve Bremner
stevebremner@fastmail.fm

Happenings

CLIMATE CHANGES

Five EHSOPers were among the 311,000 people who put their boots on the ground at the Climate Change March on Sept 21 in New York City to sound a message of alarm against global warming as world leaders gathered at the UN for a summit meeting on climate change. Elsewhere in the crowd were Ron Coburn, Marta Guttenberg, Doris Leicher, Xavier Mack and Howard Peer. Quite a turnout. They were joined by many other Ethical Culturists and Humanists including the Brooklyn Society and the American Humanist Association.



Left to right: Sylvia Metzler, John Marshall, Steve Bremner, Kate Esposito and John McCormick.



Photographs by Sylvia Metzler

Quote-Unquote

"Every hour, an acre of Louisiana sinks into the sea."
-Nathaniel Rich, New York Times Magazine, cover, October 5, 2014
[About Rich's attempts to sue big oil and gas, and officials' efforts to suppress it]

Announcements



Introduction to Ethical Humanism

Sunday, November 2, 7:00PM

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.

Current Exhibition in the Collier Room



SHADOW PLAY

Pastels and Photographs
by Janice R. Moore



Sunday, November 30, 3:00 P.M.: Ethical Music: First Concert of Concerts on the Square

A one-of-a-kind concert series brought to you by the Ethical Humanist Society of Philadelphia and Fine Art Music Company [FAMC]. Our first season: November through June, 2014-2015.

Inspired by the visions of Rollin Wilber, Artistic Director of FAMC, and EHSOP member Geoff Baker, and supported by Leader Hugh Taft-Morales, the series will feature co-directors Rollin and Geoff, and other local artists, performing musical works that relate to humanist philosophy and values. Programs will be offered on several Sunday afternoons. Each concert will end with a lively discussion between audience and musicians about the composers, their music, and themes; a reception will follow.

The series begins with *Sounds of Our Cultural Crossroads: A classical thanks-giving of music*. It offers a bounty of sound from violin, viola, cello, and piano, in works by William Kroll, Roy Harris, Rebecca Clarke, John Corigliano, and Antonin Dvorak.

Three to four additional concert events for the first half of 2015 are planned.

General admission: \$25.

EHSOP members, students and seniors: \$15.

Full concert information is available at: www.FineArtPianoCompany.com

November 2014

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
						1
 *2 11:00 a.m. Hunger of Body and Conscience Hugh Taft-Morales 7:00 p.m. Intro to Ethical Humanism Hugh Taft-Morales	3 7:00 p.m. Relationship Group	4 ELECTION Vote!	5 Meetings 6:30 p.m. Education Committee 7:45 p.m. Ethical Action Committee	6	7	8
*9 11:00 a.m. Dumpling and the Leprechaun Pat McGeever	10	11	12 Meetings 5:30 p.m. Finance Committee 7:00p.m. Community Committee	13 6:30PM CntrCty Philly HLAA P. McGeever	14	15
*16 11:00 a.m. Autonomy and Interrelatedness Hugh Taft-Morales 3:30 p.m. Relationship Group	17	18	19 Meeting 6:30 p.m. EHSoP Board	20  7:00PM Amnesty Intl. Ron Coburn	21	22
*23 11:00 a.m. Health Democracy Paul Glover Noon An Ethical Thanksgiving	24	25	26	27	28	29
*30 11:00 a.m. Once More Into... War on Isis Arnold Fishman 3:00 p.m. An Ethical Concert Rollin Wilbur						

*Child care provided during all platforms

NOVEMBER BIRTHDAYS



1 Bob Bueding
 7 Irene Putzer
 21 Linda Waters Richardson
 29 Howard Peer

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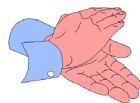
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SUNDAY SERVICES

Hosts - Coordinated by
Leslie Williams



November 2 - Ken Greiff and Sylvia
Metzler

November 9 - Garry O'Rourke and Vince
Russo

November 16 - Bill and Sandy Coffey

November 23 - John McCormick and Don
Munson

November 30 - Leslie Williams and
Janet Cooke



Flowers - Coordinated by
David Ralston

November 2 - Arnold and Temma
Fishman, "Celebrating our grandson
Robin's 4th Birthday"

November 9 - Bob Bueding, "In memory
of my mom's birthday; she died in 1990"

November 16 -Lyle and Terry Martin-
Murley, "In honor of Lyle and Terry's
38th Anniversary"

November 23 - Nina Diamond, "In
memory of my dad, Philip J. Diamond (11-
21-16 to 12-15-2000)"

November 30 - Doris Leicher, "In honor
of Howard Peer's Birthday"



Coffee Hour Coordinators

November 2 - John
McCormick

November 9 - Ken Greiff

November 16 - Garry O'Rourke

November 23 - Community Committee

November 30 - Harry Thorn

***Ethical Humanist Society
of Philadelphia***

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