



Ethical Views

December 2014 Vol. 129, No. 5 Newsletter of the Ethical Humanist Society of Philadelphia

Sunday Platforms December 2014

Sunday, December 7, 11:00 A.M.

Great Awakenings

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



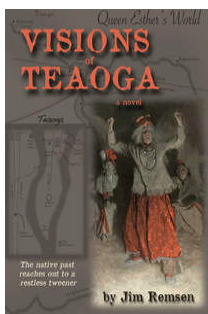
Waves of “righteous” social change periodically wash over the United States affecting our national culture. Beginning with the 18th century, an angry god of “The First Great Awakening” roused Americans from our slumber. At the beginning of 19th century, “The Second Great Awakening” sounded the alarm of public social reform. At the start of the 20th century, progressivism woke us up to our government’s responsibility for those in need. In the spring of the 21st century, what might be our “great awakening?” Hugh Taft-Morales explores these waves and the possibility that there is a righteous humanist wave of compassion and activism on the horizon.

Sunday, December 14, 11:00 A.M.

Untold Chapters of Pennsylvania’s Indian History

Jim Remsen, Author and Journalist

Jim Remsen will explore the powerful themes of his new book, *Visions of Teagoa*. This richly researched historical novel inhabits the era of the 1700s that saw Indian civilization virtually



snuffed out in Pennsylvania. The book’s true-life historical figures ruminate on those losses, while a set of modern-day characters tune into native history--and examine how our history is told and by whom.



Jim Remsen spent most of his award-winning career at The Philadelphia Inquirer. There he served as the newspaper’s Religion Editor, reporting reported or editing countless daily articles on religion, both hard news pieces and intimate lifestyle stories. Jim and his reporters won national awards during his tenure, with the Religion Writers Association honoring FaithLife as one of the top two religion sections among major North American newspapers. Since his retirement from newspaper work, Jim has pursued his keen interest in history -- with a focus on underappreciated aspects of our nation’s local history.

Sunday, December 21, 11:00 A.M.

Winter Solstice Platform

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



Come to our Winter Solstice Platform, EHSOP’s traditional celebration of our warm community that makes the cold of winter more bearable! Words of wisdom, music, and candles will help kindle hope and inspiration. Please speak to Hugh if you would be willing to do a reading or play some music. (And stick around for our Humanlight celebration at 2:00 PM – tickets required.)

Sunday, December 28: closed



Sunday, Dec. 21, 2:00PM

HUMANLIGHT CELEBRATION

Come socialize and celebrate Humanlight, co-

hosted by EHSOP and the Humanist Association of Greater Philadelphia (HAGP) in the Assembly Room. \$20 tickets are required for this family-friendly luncheon catered by Day-by-Day. Children 14 and under are free! There will be music and entertainment for young and old. Started in 2001 by the New Jersey Humanist Network, Humanlight offers non-theists a new way to ring in the holiday season.

To learn more about Humanlight, go to:

<http://humanlight.org/>.

EHSOP members and friends purchase tickets by e-mailing Hugh and sending a check for \$20 with “Humanlight” in the memo line to Dotti at the office by December 7. Space is limited so get your tickets ASAP!

Quote-Unquote

If Americans improved the energy efficiency of their homes by just 10 percent, they could cut some \$20 billion from their utility bills and remove emissions equivalent to taking some 25 million cars off the road.

-Cooler, Smarter; Practical

Steps for Low-Carbon Living

Union of Concerned Scientists, Island Press, 2012, p. 5

In This Issue

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Leader's Column



News From Hugh

Hugh Taft-Morales

I offer this Leader's column as a potpourri of thoughts and items of interest to reflect on as we near the end of the calendar year. December is a good time to consider our evolution as a humanist community. We are at an important time in our history as Philadelphia's congregational home for humanism. Long-time

members and new members alike are engaging in ethical action projects, committee work, and self-exploration. There is renewed energy and a willingness to experiment and grow. I encourage all of us to tap our creativity, which is one reason why last month I spoke about "Thinking Outside the Box." (If you missed it, it can be found at: <http://phillyethics.org/platform-videos.php>)

One example of such creativity came from our own Board president, Nick Sanders. Thanks to his encouragement, early in the misty morning of October 15th, I joined seven members of EHSOP at the studios of WHYY, our local public radio affiliate. We gathered to support one of the few sources of reliable news, one many of us rely on every day. Given the partisan and corporate domination of the media, it is now crucial to support independent journalism that clarifies national issues and offers coverage of grassroots community concerns. So, we answered phones and accepted donations during WHYY's fall membership drive.

Other than feeling a bit nervous on the first phone call, especially having to

access and manipulate WHYY's caller database, I was surprised by how fun it was. To begin with, callers were genuinely happy to give. They spoke of how much they loved WHYY, and I began feeling good, as if I myself had created the wonderful programs offered by the station! It was also fun to see EHSOP members in various stages of consciousness (we took the early morning shift, arriving at 6:00AM) and to share in the free breakfast along with



Top photo, left to right: Nick Sanders, Member of the Curio Theater Company, Carol Love, Member of the Curio Theater Company and David Ralston. Bottom Photo, left to right: Christian Hayden, Marta Guttenberg and Ken Greiff.

Photographs by Hugh Taft-Morales

another group from the Curio Theater Company of West Philly.

In addition to supporting WHYY, this opportunity got our name out to public radio listeners in the Philadelphia region. Numerous times the on-air personalities gave us a big shout out, sharing a description about EHSOP that Nick created. We were able to hoot, holler and clap for ourselves. (Did any of you hear us?) This is the kind of free publicity that will help connect Ethical Culture more with Philadelphia, getting our word out and new visitors in!

If increasing visitors leads to larger membership, new resources would

allow us to offer a broader range of services that promote humanist values. For example, it would be great to have more families at 1906 Rittenhouse so that a vibrant Sunday school program could develop. Little does more to assure that Ethical Humanism will continue on into the future as sharing it with the next generation. It was, after all, the children's programming at the Washington Ethical Society (WES) that first drew my attention to Ethical Culture. In the early 1990's my wife Maureen and I thought that our children would benefit from spending Sunday mornings in the warm and supportive classrooms at WES. Looking back from our empty nest, Maureen and I are more thankful than ever for what Ethical Culture Sunday school offered our children. It was a part of the reason why we have three flourishing, engaged, and ethical kids doing good in the world.

It was that gratitude that motivated Maureen and me to attend the American Ethical Union (AEU) Ethical Education Weekend last month at Stony Point, NY. Despite more than eleven hours of driving within a 36-hour window, we were glad we went. Christian Hayden attended as our EHSOP representative, and I attended as a new member of the AEU's Ethical Education Committee. I was eager to support our new Ethical Education Director, Dale McGowan. If you don't know about Dale yet, I strongly urge you to read the interview with Dale available on the AEU website at <http://aeu.org/2014/07/ethical-education-starts-with-curiosity/>.

Dale is extremely intelligent, personable, and experienced. He has produced numerous books, including a great collection of insights about *Parenting Beyond Belief*, which – by the way – includes an article by our own Dr. Bob Kay! Dale also runs the *Foundation Beyond Belief* that offers a philanthropic avenue for humanists, freethinkers, and secularists to support organizations doing good works nationally and around the globe. You can explore all of this on Dale's website at <http://dalemcgowan.com>.

(Continued next page)

On a separate topic, I want to offer a clarification about statistics on world hunger cited in my recent platform address called, "Hunger of Body and Conscience." Dedicated to an Ethical Culture tradition stressing reason and evidence, I pride myself on accuracy. In my talk I said that, regarding world hunger, "...things are getting worse, not better, statistically." I cited the publication, *Ending Hunger in Our Lifetime*, a publication of the International Food Policy Research Institute. I said that, "in 2000 there were 8 million more hungry children than there were in 1990."

While I stand by that statistic, I was glad to find out that there are signs of recent progress. For example, in 2010 the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations cheered the first decline in annual hunger statistics. It said that there were fewer hungry people in 2010 than in 2009, the first such decline in 15 years. (See <http://www.fao.org/docrep/012/al390e/al390e00.pdf>). And, according to Scott Pleune, who first alerted me about current trends (thanks Scotty!), the website Humanosphere confirmed that in 2014 fewer people suffer from hunger.

Of course all involved, including Humanosphere, admitted the bad news: "that some 850 million people wrangle with hunger," an unacceptably high number in a world of abundance. So, as I try to work off the extra pounds I put on over the Thanksgiving holiday of feasting, I will continue to seek new ways to address the issue of world hunger. In particular, I hope to feed the "hunger of conscience" I have when contemplating how many children go hungry every day. I agree with President Obama when he says that, "the United States has a moral obligation to lead the fight against hunger and malnutrition...."

The final piece of news I will share is that after over five years of being the Secretary for the National Leaders Council I am handing off that position so I can serve as Vice President of the same organization. I hope that as VP, through closer attention to the strategy

and agenda of the NLC, I will be able to help capitalize on the recent surge of positive energy in the national Ethical Culture movement.

As the number of religiously unaffiliated in the United States grows, especially in the younger generations, time is ripe for Ethical Humanism to step out of the shadows. I urge all members of the Ethical Humanist Society of Philadelphia to promote our unique alternative to traditional religion. I believe that by broadening our horizons here at 1906 Rittenhouse, new inspiration and energy will enrich us all. Thanks for being a part of our exciting community, rooted in a great history, and propelled by humanist values and commitment to deed before creed! <>



Building a Relationship: Difficult, but Worthy

Relationships are really important to me as an ethical humanist. That does not mean I am always good at developing them or the skill comes easy, but I choose to hold the process in reverence, cherish its difficulty, and invest in it as a means of pursuing the justice I seek to find. 'Social' and justice go together, no? It is with that thought that I have tried to foster a connection between the Ethical Humanist Society and Philadelphia Futures. This is a program which serves high school students who go to neighborhood public schools. The program provides them with a supportive structure to help them get to and complete college. Last year, two members, Leslie and myself, in addition to two friends of the Society, Rebecca, and Zia, joined the program as mentors. Also the Rose Rappaport Long Fund voted to form partnership with Philadelphia Futures so it could be

a beneficiary of a yearly donation from the fund, and we could work with an organization that would give us a greater intimacy and allow us to witness our impact.

I won't try to communicate the litany of adjectives and gerunds that the prospect of building a relationship with a high school student might sound like, but trust me they run the gambit. In a speech for an Americorps Rally, I wrote these words and they still ring true: 'I get frustrated when my infinite wisdom doesn't get every student to reach their potential. But I think back to a younger Christian, whose priorities in high school were girls, music, and girls. So I keep trying, because I remember my mentor, Johnny Cook. I remember when he would give me the truth in colorful language, because that's what I needed. I remember when he would listen to me ramble about Tupac because that's what I needed. I remember when he believed in me, regardless of my struggles, because that's what I needed.'

Interestingly enough, in a karmic way I am blessed with a student whose priorities are not really aligned with mine. He is chiefly concerned with making money when he graduates, cannot wait to get a part time job, and has little interest in talking about social justice or race or even music. But nevertheless my goal in our relationship is to engender some type of skill building, so much of what we talk about focuses on the bigger picture. I asked him once during one of our meetings, "what do you want your life to mean?" he replied after a moment and said, "No one has ever asked me that question before." But months might go by before we connect again: he misses a meeting, or he excitedly wants to meet (mostly for a free meal) and I am broke, or I can't make it out of the mountain of school and work duties that are upon me.

Nevertheless we are making some strides. One day during one of our impromptu meetings that seem to serve us well (as he lives in the neighborhood I work in) he excitedly read me a draft of his

(Continued next page)

college essay which detailed his experience of witnessing violence at his school in tenth grade and how it affected him, encouraging him to transcend the stereotype that would be attributed to him as being a part of that institution. He wanted to control the way he viewed himself and how he wanted others to view him, transitioning from simply being a student to being a scholar. He changed schools and is now in his junior year. I said, "What is the next part of the story?" He said, "A new beginning." There are few things more worthy than hearing that, but getting there and further takes time, effort, and a wealth of vulnerability. You have to be willing to try hard enough to fail, be rejected, and in the midst of that develop a foundation built on trust and perseverance. This bears the most basic fruit, the simplest and most beautiful: a connection between two humans. Building a relationship across race, class, and experience, I am convinced, is the most radical action you can take. I invite you to join us in that action.

--Christian Hayden, mentor and member of the Ethical Humanist Society ◇



Left to Right: Pat McGeever (playwright), Barbara Silver (Dumpling), Kate McGrath (Sister), Ben Kendall (Leprechaun)"



EHSOP extends hearty welcomes to two new members, Linda Benowitz and Sylvia Goldman. Welcome aboard!

Happenings

Actors Barbara Oaks Silver (Dumpling), Ben Kendall (Leprechaun) and Kate McGrath (Sister) gave memorable performances Nov 9 in "Dumpling and the Leprechaun." Two seventy-somethings find and define love second time around in the winner of the 2014 One Act Playwriting Contest by Pat McGeever, the first winner by a member of the EHSOP.



Photographs by Bob Bueding

Announcements



**Sunday,
Dec. 7
12:15PM**

Tree-trimming!

Come help decorate the Tree of Knowledge in our lobby after platform around 12:15PM on December 7! We join our friends from the Freethought Society for this celebration of openness, freedom of conscience, and knowledge. Everyone is welcome. (If you have a book cover you want to contribute to the tree, bring TWO (2) color copies of your book cover on Dec. 7th and we will try to laminate them that day so they can adorn our tree!)



Sunday, December 7, 1:30 PM, Pay 2 Play screening and discussion

Hugh Taft-Morales and the Ethical Humanist Society of Philadelphia are hosting Public Citizen and Philly Rootstrickers in a screening of *Pay 2 Play: Democracy's High Stakes*, by John Wellington Ennis. In the wake of the elections, what better time to explore how we might change a political system that currently allows money to rule? Come watch and discuss what some reviewers have called "the layman's guidebook to taking back our democracy!"



**Introduction to Ethical Humanism
Sunday, December 7, 7:00PM**

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.

Monday, December 8, 7:00 PM
The Necessity of Secularism
Ron Lindsay



The Ethical Humanist Society of Philadelphia and the Freethought Society host Ron Lindsay, president and CEO of the Center for Inquiry. Ron will speak on his newest book, *The Necessity of Secularism: Why God Can't Tell Us What To Do*. Following the talk we will celebrate Ron's birthday with cake and beverages and conversations. Cash donations to offset cost of refreshments are appreciated.

Relationship Building Group



While this group is fully subscribed, if you would like to be a part of a new group starting this winter, please let Hugh know.

Tuesday, December 9, 7:00 PM
Meeting #5

Saturday, December 20, 2:00 PM
Meeting #6



Wednesday
December 10
6:00 PM



Human Rights and Press Freedom: ***Global and Domestic Challenges***

Our Ethical Society is hosting and co-sponsoring with the United Nations Association of Philadelphia and the Global Philadelphia Association a celebration of Human Rights Day. The program will be a panel with keynote speaker Courtney Radsch, Advocacy Director for the New York City-based Committee to Protect Journalists. Panelists will be *Inquirer* staff writer Michael Matza and editorial cartoonist Signe Wilkinson.



The new concert series in the making, ***MUSIC AT ETHICAL – CONCERTS ON THE SQUARE***, is a collaboration between the Ethical Humanist Society of Philadelphia, and Fine Art Music Company, a Philadelphia-based performance group. It consists of thematic concerts that bring together universally appealing, classical music compositions, connected by humanist values, and reflecting life's conflicts as well as universal hopes and aspirations. These ideas will also tie into composers, their works and the culture of their times.

The productions are designed to set the tone for a deep and rewarding listening experience. To generate questions about the choices of works, a short panel discussion will take place directly after the concert, followed by a reception. All concert events are held on Sunday, at 3:00 PM.

SERIES PREVIEW EVENT: November 30, at 3:00pm

SOUNDS OF OUR CULTURAL CROSSROADS - a classical thanks-giving of music

A warm, holiday concert with stylistic works, representing the migration of musical traditions that gave voice to 20th century classical composers.

MUSIC BY: Antonin Dvorak (*American String Quartet*), Igor Stravinsky (*Suite Italienne*), Roy Harris (*Soliloquy and Dance*), Rebecca Clarke (*Dumka* trio), Manuel Ponce, William Kroll, and John Corigliano

2015 SEASON

JANUARY 25, 2015 - "HARMONY ACROSS BARRIERS"

The equalizing spirit of music

MARCH 1, 2015 - "OPPRESSION AND TRANSCENDENCE: SOUNDS OF REACTION"

Music speaks for the marginalized

APRIL 19 - "OF WAR AND IMPRISONMENT: COMPOSING FOR MANKIND"

Sanity sought through music

JUNE 14 - "IN CONCERT WITH NATURE"

Musical inspirations from our natural world

THE ETHICAL SOCIETY BUILDING - 1906 S. Rittenhouse Square, Philadelphia, PA 19103
ADMISSION: \$25 general; \$15 for students, seniors & EHSOP members

EHSoP Pledge Drive Luncheon

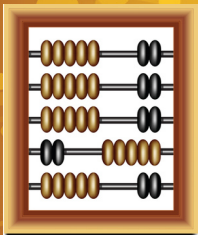
You are invited to what might be...

(cue the dramatic music!)



*...the most important 90 minutes
of our program year!*

What:



Pledge Luncheon for Members -
130 Years and Counting

Who:



You, a proud Ethical
Humanist Society member!

When:

Sunday, January 18
12:30-2:00PM

Where:

Assembly Room
1906 S. Rittenhouse Sq.

Why: Because we are counting on you and the world is counting on us!

For 130 years Ethical Humanism has contributed good works to the Philadelphia area. We have spread our message of deed before creed. Your commitment to our community here on Rittenhouse Square promises that we will continue to flourish. Come learn about where we've been and where we hope to go! Come for fun, celebration, and a renewal of our dedication to humanism!

Please volunteer to make this luncheon a success by contacting Vince Russo or John McCormick.

Look for your special RSVP invitation coming to you soon after the new year!

December 2014

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
NOVEMBER 30 3:00 PM Music at Ethical Series Preview Rollin Wilbur	1	2	3 Meetings 6:30 p.m. Education Committee 7:45 p.m. Ethical Action Committee	4	5	6
7 11:00 a.m. Great Awakening Hugh Taft-Morales See BIG SUNDAY below	8 7:00 p.m. God Can't Tell Us What to Do Ron Lindsay	9 7:00PM Relationship- Building Group Hugh Taft- Morales	10 Meetings 5:30p.m. Finance Committee 7:00 p.m. Human Rights & Press Freedom 7:00 p.m. Community Committee	11 6:30p.m. HLAA Center City P. McGeever 7:00p.m. Worldly Wisdom	12	13
*14 11:00 a.m Untold PA Indian History Jim Remsen	15	16	17 Meeting 6:30 p.m. EHSoP Board	18	19	20 7:00PM Relationship- Building Group Hugh Taft- Morales
*21 11:00 a.m Winter Solstice Platform Hugh Taft-Morales 2:00 p.m. Humanlight Celebration HAGP, EHSoP	22	23	24	25	26	27
28 CLOSED	29	30	31	JANUARY 18 EHSoP Pledge Drive Luncheon		
*Child care provided during all platforms	<div>Current Exhibition in the Collier Room</div>  <div>SHADOW PLAY Pastels and Photographs by Janice R. Moore</div>			<div>DECEMBER BIRTHDAYS</div> <div><div>2</div><div>Yuji Miyakawa</div></div> <div><div>3</div><div>Jack Schwar</div></div> <div><div>4</div><div>Xavier Mack</div></div> <div><div>5</div><div>Josh Bickford</div></div> <div><div>7</div><div>Bill Coffey</div></div> <div><div>10</div><div>Ron Coburn</div></div> <div><div>14</div><div>Ann Gay Freed</div></div> <div><div>14</div><div>Richard Kiniry</div></div> <div><div>16</div><div>Elizabeth Leonard</div></div> <div><div>21</div><div>Bertha Stovall Waters</div></div> <div><div>23</div><div>Bob Moore</div></div>		
<div>BIG SUNDAY (Continued) 12:15 p.m. Tree of Knowledge Decorating 1:30 p.m. Pay 2 Play screening Public Citizen 7:00 p.m. Intro to Ethical Humanism Hugh Taft-Morales</div>						

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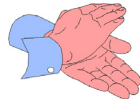
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SUNDAY SERVICES

Hosts - Coordinated by
Leslie Williams



December 7 - Hary Thorn and Lelah
Marie

December 14 - Garry O'Rourke,
Michael Black-Smith

December 21 - Sandy and Bill Coffey

December 28 - (Closed)



Flowers Coordinated
by David Ralston

December 7 - Harry Thorn

December 14 - Irene Putzer, "In
memory of my mother who passed
away this year."

December 21 - Betsy Lightbourn, "In
loving memory of my partner and life
co-conspirator, Dale Drews."

December. 28 - (Closed)



Coffee Hour Coordinators

December 7 -John McCornick

December 14 - Ken Greiff

December 21 - Garry O'Rourke

December 28 - (Closed)

***Ethical Humanist Society
of Philadelphia***

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Philadelphia, PA 19103