



Ethical Views



January 2015 Vol. 129, No. 5 Newsletter of the Ethical Humanist Society of Philadelphia

Sunday Platforms January 2015

If you wish childcare during Sunday Platforms, please notify Nick Sanders at nick@phillyethics.org or 215-662-5636 by the previous Thursday at 5:00 P.M. He will notify you by noon Saturday whether arrangements are in place.

Sunday, January 4, 11:00 A.M.
Memorial Sunday: Personal Memories and International Connections
Hugh Taft-Morales, Leader, Ethical Humanist Society of Philadelphia

On the first Sunday of each year we at the Ethical Humanist Society remember those who have died. Leader Hugh Taft-Morales invites members and guests to share memories of loved ones or historical heroes no longer with us. Memories connect us to the past and nurture the present.



Member Xavier Mack will join Hugh for a brief exploration of our historical and contemporary connection to the global humanist community. Xavier's participation in this summer's World Humanist Conference reminds us that there's a whole world out there for us to explore. Perhaps a more global perspective will help us grow as a local center for humanism. Further discussion will follow coffee hour.

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



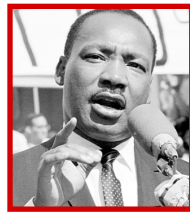
**Life After Life:
A Story of Hope,
Transformation
and Redemption**
Tyrone Werts

Tyrone A. Werts will tell his story of thirty-six years'

incarceration at Graterford Prison in Pennsylvania. Amid the drugs, despair and violence of the state's most dangerous maximum-security prison, he earned a Bachelor of Arts degree from Villanova University, was deeply involved in developing Temple's Inside-Out Prison Exchange Program and became a founding member of its affiliated Think Tank Group.

Mr. Werts was born and raised in North Philadelphia. In 1975 he was convicted as an accomplice to a second-degree murder and sentenced to life in prison without parole. On December 30, 2010, his sentence was commuted by Governor Ed Rendell. He was selected as a Soros Justice Fellow in 2013.

Sunday, January 18, 11:00 A.M.
Ethical Policing
Hugh Taft-Morales, Leader, Ethical Humanist Society of Philadelphia



In 1963 from the steps of the Lincoln Memorial, Martin Luther King, Jr. cried out, "We can never be satisfied as long as the Negro is the victim of the unspeakable horrors of police brutality." Today many Americans are speaking out against police actions involved in the deaths of Michael Brown, Eric Garner, and Tamir Rice. Communities of color have declared their mistrust and fear of the men and women sworn to protect them. Leader Hugh Taft-Morales explores the questions: "What can Ethical Humanists do to help restore justice and rebuild trust? What can we do to demand ethical policing?"

Sunday, January 25, 11:00 A.M.
Holidays and Our Connections with Nature

Sean Duffy, Professor of Psychology, Rutgers University



Sean Duffy will discuss holidays as they represent our connections with nature and the larger universe, the psychological principles that are involved in why we

celebrate things, and the connection of holidays with findings across several academic disciplines. He will use the history of several holidays to illustrate how they are continually reinvented and re-imagined by cultures as they evolve and change. Through considering our holidays, he asks us to think about the broader role of culture in shaping how we think about the world.

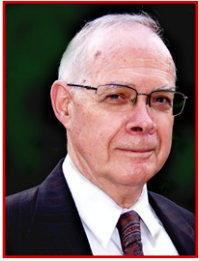
Prof. Duffy received his Ph.D. in psychology from the University of Chicago in 2003. He is an associate professor of psychology at Rutgers University, where he conducts research on culture, memory, development, and behavior.



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President's Column



Priorities

Nick Sanders

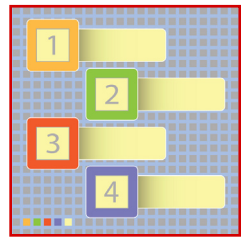
In my previous column entitled *Values Clarification*, I wrote about my need to put my own spin on what I support: being alert to opportunities to take the initiative in making the world better in everyday life, as well as joining with others to react to injustice, but still trying to include something that states the situation in my own words, proactively. I had some doubts about that piece. I thought it would seem to some readers to be kind of quirky.

In this column I present an idea that is not at all quirky. I believe it is quite normal, though not one that is often made explicit: The idea is that according to the values we hold, we set priorities in our lives. When we say “I don’t have time for ...” or “I can’t afford to ...,” we suggest that there are prior commitments that take up all our resources. Of course, sometimes we are just seeking a polite way to avoid what we do not want to do. But I often experience an “approach-approach conflict,” which is to say that I value each alternative, but must make a choice. I must set priorities. These issues arise for me when I must choose between the many aspects of life that I value as to which will receive “my time and treasure.”

Take now as an example. This morning as I am beginning to draft this column, I cannot go out to join my neighbors for a “block cleanup,” though I would very much like to. Our block cleanups result in a cleaner block through some fairly light effort on the part of about one-third of the block’s residents, but my desire to be part of the block cleanup comes mainly from my anticipation of the positive social interaction I have experienced in past block cleanups. Now I must choose between writing

a clear, thoughtful column before deadline, and the opportunity for positive social interaction. (I hope you can tell which choice I made!)

In the bigger picture, there are priorities that govern how I spend my “fixed income” retirement money. Of course, the basics of life (i.e., shelter, nourishment, keeping my body within a healthy temperature range, etc.) have high priority. But beyond the basics, I have money left over to do with as I choose. One general area for my “left-over” money is to give back to the world where there are definitely problems to be solved and improvements to be made. I aim to make charitable and problem-solving and improvement contributions that amount to ten percent of my total income.



I believe I have been influenced to set ten percent from the notion of tithing used in religious circles. In contrast, though, to tithing,

I do not devote the full ten percent to my religious congregation. I spread it around, according to my priorities for giving. In that regard, I receive requests for contributions from many good causes. Right now I have a stack of requests from at least fifty good causes that I have at one time or another supported. I will be prioritizing them and determining the related contribution amounts based on various criteria that reflect my values.

- Is the organization’s area of concern (e.g., international peace, environmental conservation, good government, etc.) one that I think deserves more support?
- Is the organization focusing on what I think is most important within its area of concern?
- Does the organization have a realistic, effective strategy?
- Is the organization not one of the big, well-funded ones that probably do not need my small contribution?

- Is the organization dealing with local concerns with which I am familiar?
- Does the organization have the active support of those that are close to me?
- Is the organization one in which I am personally active with others?

I also note what I have given to an organization previously. But I believe I should occasionally reconsider. Organizations adjust to new internal and external influences. The definition of a cause evolves. My personal circumstances change. I learn that something I thought earlier is incorrect. Prompted by the greater than normal requests for support that come at this time, the end of the year seems to me to be a good time for a formal reconsideration of my contribution priorities.

The end of the year is also a time I think about how much to pledge for financial support of our Ethical Humanist Society during the next year. I use the same criteria for deciding about my pledge as I do for the other charitable contributions. Because I am very much involved in the Society, that criterion implies a higher priority for contribution to the Society. As I have become more involved in the Society, the proportion of my ten-percent-of-income money that goes to the Society has increased. In addition, because I have become increasingly aware of how much other Society members support the Society through giving of their time, talent, and treasure, that also has implied an increase in my pledge.

Of course, giving more to the Society implies that I am giving a lower proportion of my ten-percent-of-income to at least some of the other good causes that come to my attention. However, I doubt that that proportion would ever drop to zero, because there are other criteria in my list that imply I should give to other organizations. Still, as the Society does deal with more areas of my concerns and appears to me to

(Continued next page)

manifest a realistic, effective strategy for acting on those concerns, I would direct an even greater proportion of my ten percent to the Society. That greater proportion would be implied because that is the way I set my priorities for giving.

I am curious to know how you set your priorities for contributions. Do you have explicit criteria? What might cause a change from what you previously gave? How does what others give affect your contributions? I am looking forward to some conversations about this matter of how we prioritize giving of time and treasure. ◇

Managua Report

By Sylvia Metzler

Several days after I arrived in Managua, Nicaragua, I spent a day at the health center which is supported by Medicines for Nicaragua (MedNica) in Philadelphia. Almost immediately I was surprised and upset when I went to the sink to wash my hands and found that there was no water! This had been a frequent problem for years, not just for the Clinica Juanita Connelly Mendoza, but for the whole barrio in which it is located. Because of the geography of that area, the water pipes and goodness knows what else, the only time water ran freely there was in the middle of the night. So several years ago, MedNica funded the erection of a big water tank which could be filled during the night so that it could supply water for the clinic all day. So what happened? I soon learned that the tank had sprung a leak, was turned off and there was no money available to drain and repair it. But voila, I had recently arrived with a gift in hand from the congregation of the Ethical Humanist Society of Philadelphia. Six hundred and eighty eight dollars to be exact. I found the right person and requested they repair the tank ASAP, which they did. In addition I used that generous donation to buy rechargeable batteries for the clinic's otoscope and ophthalmoscope, \$150 worth of medications, a laser printer for its computer, a \$50 slush fund to buy prescriptions meds that are not available in the clinic, and paid

the salaries of two part-time doctors for a month.

Obviously a little money goes a long way there: the second poorest country in this hemisphere next to Haiti. One U.S. dollar exchanges for 26 Cordobas, their currency. One of the better-paid jobs there is a 5½- to 6-day week in a call center paying \$500 per month. My friend Sandra Forbes who works full time as a nurse in Bluefields supports herself and her three teens on \$300/month. But both unemployment (50%) and many prices are high. The staples, rice and red beans, cost fifty cents and one dollar a pound respectively; a dozen carrots, \$3.00; chicken, \$1.00 a pound; eggs, \$4.00 a dozen; gas, \$3.25 a gallon. Bus rides are cheap at 2½ cords, taxis cost 30 cords; milk, 50 cords; bread, 25-45 cords.



While at the clinic that day, I saw Dr Bradford care for many children with respiratory infections and a four-day-old baby with constipation. Dr. Varela took care of adults with hypertension and diabetes, gave a steroid injection for bursitis and acupuncture for a headache. Dr. Zepeda did several pap and STD tests along with general medical problems. Thankfully there were no cases of malaria, dengue fever or chikungunya. Thanks to my insect repellent and mosquito net at night, I was not infected with them either.

I spent but did not celebrate Thanksgiving in Bluefields on the Atlantic Coast where I had gone to help set up a rotation for Temple Medical students at the BICU medical school (Bluefields Indian and Caribbean University). I think I had fish and gallo pinto (rice and bean mixture) with coconut for dinner that day. My meeting with the staff at the medical

school went very well and we hope to get the program up and running in 2015.

While I spent significant time with Med Nica affairs, I had time also to visit with dear friends made during the two years I lived there working as a volunteer nurse practitioner from 1989-1991. In addition, being a news junkie, I paid attention to current events there and in the U.S. To my amazement, "Black Friday" was pushed hard even though there is no Thanksgiving on Thursday! Consumerism is everywhere. Radio Shack advertised the sale of drones one day and the government banned the use of all drones the next day. News about the very controversial transoceanic canal was in the news daily and December 22 was given as the date to begin construction.

One of the daily papers, Nuevo Diario, actually had a reporter in Ferguson, MO to report on the grand jury decision not to indict Darren Wilson in the shooting of Michael Brown. Most Nicaraguans are critical of the way Black and Brown people are treated in the U.S.

I was painfully reminded of my own stubborn racism one day in Bluefields on my way to the BICU medical school. My Nica friends were constantly giving me advice on how to stay safe, especially when riding in taxis, as taxi drivers and passengers sometimes gang up to rob and beat other passengers. So when the cab that I was riding in stopped to pick up three very large Black men, I have to admit that I became nervous. I breathed a sigh of relief when we reached the BICU. I paid my fare, hopped out and was on my way when the cab driver called me back. Seems I had paid him with a 100-cord note instead of a ten. When I got back to the cab, he and the other three men were all going through their pockets to find the right change for me.

I am always glad to return home to my hot showers and reliable electricity after my yearly visits to Nicaragua. But I am always grateful for the lessons I learn and re-learn there with every visit. I will try not to be so materialistic and selfish and not to take advantage of my white privilege, middle class status and U.S. citizenship. ◇

Happenings



© 2005 - "What It's Like To Be Me" by Charles Zaffir Lawson

Art For Justice presents

PRISONER ART FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE

Free Library of Philadelphia, Parkway Central Library

1901 Vine Street, Phila., PA, between 19th & 20th on the Parkway

January 12 - February 15, 2015

Opening Reception: January 13, 5:30 - 7:00 PM

Tyrone Werts: Soros Fellow, PA Lifer commuted by Gov. Rendell

Dr. W. Wilson Goode, Sr.: Pres. & CEO, Amachi, Inc.

Ed Voves: Manager of Free Library's Education, Philosophy and Religion Department

Ann Marie Kirk: Co-founder & Director of Art for Justice

Art for Justice supports the Free Library of Philadelphia's initiative to bring Library Services to the Philadelphia Prison System.



© 2007 - "Lagan Square" by Charles Zaffir Lawson

Please spread the word about Art for Justice's show!

On the evening of Sunday, December 7, eight of us from the Ethical Humanist Society of Philadelphia joined hundreds of others in our inter-faith group POWER for a "die-in." We blocked traffic leaving the Eagles-Seahawks game (that's football). We lay down in the streets for 4 1/2 minutes to mark the 4 1/2 hours that Mike Brown's body lay in the streets. Our members felt it was meaningful and positive despite the vulgar taunting by the drunken fans leaving the game. It was also rewarding to hear organizers include "humanists" and "ethicists" in their welcome. The police were very respectful.



From left to right are Don Munson, Adrianna Munson, Hugh Taft-Morales, Linda Benowitz, Kate Esposito, Jeffrey Dubb, Sylvia Goldman, and Ruthann Dubb. Behind the group is Lincoln Financial Field, home of the Eagles. Behind the photographer are about 250 protesters and lots of police!

(Photograph by Anonymous using Hugh's camera)

Quote-Unquote

"In American prisons, life means death."

-Robert Hillary King. A member of the Angola Three, he spent 29 years in solitary confinement before his conviction was overturned and he was released. (Wikipedia)

Announcements



Introduction to Ethical Humanism January 4, 7:00PM

Come enjoy an Introduction to Ethical Humanism. Leader Hugh Taft-Morales discusses the history and philosophy of Ethical Humanism.

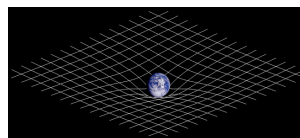
Members and visitors will share questions and reflections over wine and cheese.

Open to the public but please
RSVP to

leaderhugh@phillyethics.org.



Arthur S. Eddington



Monday, January 5, 2014. 7:30-9:00 PM **The Nature of the Physical World** A conversation with H. G. Callaway



Albert Einstein

Arthur S. Eddington (1882-1944), a British astrophysicist, used a 1919 solar eclipse to generate the first empirical evidence for Albert Einstein's theory of [relativity](#). Eddington proceeded to explain it to the English-speaking world and earned Einstein's praise. But Eddington embraced indeterminism and opposed the determinism that Einstein and others supported. Even more against the grain, Eddington was a philosophical idealist opposed to materialistic metaphysics. Howard Callaway, who recently edited Eddington's *The Nature of the Physical World*, will discuss these and other issues with Leader Hugh Taft-Morales. What if any parallels are there between Eddington's thought and the idealism of the founder of Ethical Culture, Felix Adler? Come and find out. Free and open to the public.



Sunday, January 25, 3:00 PM: "Harmony Across Barriers"

Last month, the first concert in this new series was a huge success. Now the series continues with selections from William Grant Still, George Gershwin, Samuel Coleridge-Taylor, Maurice Ravel and Betty Roe. Performers will be Megumu Kajino and Jonathan Moser on violin, Geoffrey Baker on viola, Lucy Strothers on cello, and our own Rollin Wilbur on piano. \$25 general admission and \$15 for students, seniors and EHSoP members. Come and celebrate the equalizing power of music!



January 14-15 (times below) **Trainings on Race, Faith and Power**

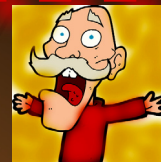
These trainings are open only to members of Philadelphians Organized to Witness, Empower and Rebuild (POWER), an interfaith organization we joined last year. Please consider attending any of the trainings below. More information about location and content of the workshops will follow.

Training for Lay Leaders: January 14 and 15,
6-9 PM (a two-part training series)

Training for Board: January 14, 10AM-3PM

Training for Clergy: January 15, 10AM-3PM

Have **you** RSVP'd to the Pledge Luncheon yet?



Every member is encouraged to attend
because we are counting on you!

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

Assembly Room
1906 S. Rittenhouse Sq.

Ethical Culture took root in Philadelphia 130 years ago. We are counting on you to ensure its future. To continue providing a home for humanism and serving the community and world through ethical action, we need to join together.

Come for the fun, food, and fellowship! Come celebrate and pledge to keep 1906 Rittenhouse flourishing!

Please RSVP to jeffrey.dubb@gmail.com

Speak with Vince Russo or John McCormick if you would like to volunteer to help plan and host the event

We are Counting on You!

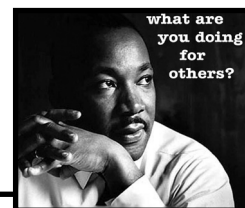
Sunday, January 18, 5:30 PM

James Baldwin: ***The Price of the Ticket***

Observe Martin Luther King weekend at the Philadelphia Ethical Society, with a free screening of this award-winning documentary, followed by a discussion and optional vegetarian dinner for \$15.00. Proceeds benefit Camp Linden.

Now considered a documentary classic, *The Price of the Ticket* by Karen Thorsen premiered in 1990, and was recently restored in honor of James Baldwin's 90th birthday. An emotional portrait, a social critique, and a passionate plea for human equality, its extensive vérité footage allows Baldwin to tell his own story: exploring what it means to be born black, impoverished, gay, and gifted in a world that has yet to understand that "all men are brothers." "On-camera witnesses" include the late Maya Angelou (she reads passages from the author's writings), Amiri Baraka, David Leeming, Bobby Short, and William Styron. The film runs 87 minutes.

For reservations visit www.camplinden.ticketleap.com/baldwin.



Monday, January 19 **MLK Day of Service**

Interested in being part of an Ethical Humanist group involved in a service project on Martin Luther King Day? Contact Christian Hayden by January 11 if you want to volunteer a couple of hours during the day on January 19. The project is being organized; more details will follow. In the past it has involved school beautification and public space clean-up, some years with City Year volunteers. This year we may team up with our friends with Leyv Ha-Ir.

January 2015

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
				1	2	3
4 11:00a.m. Memorial Sunday Hugh Taft-Morales 7:00 p.m. Intro to Ethical Humanism Hugh Taft-Morales	5 7:30 p.m. The Nature of the Physical World H.G. Callaway	6	7 Meetings 6:30 p.m. Education Committee 7:45 p.m. Ethical Action Committee	8 6:30p.m. HLAA Center City P. McGeever	9	10
11 11:00 a.m. Life After Life Tyrone Werts	12	13 Opening: "Prisoner Art for Social Justice" Phila. Free Library	14 Meetings 5:30p.m. Finance Committee 7:00 p.m. Community Committee	15	16	17
18 11:00 a.m. Ethical Policing Hugh Taft-Morales 12:30 p.m. EHSOP PLEDGE LUNCHEON 5:00 p.m. James Baldwin: The Price of a Ticket	19 tba MLK Day of Service Christian Hayden	20	14 - POWER TRAINING - 15		23	24
25 11:00 a.m. Holidays and Nature Sean Duffy 3:00 p.m. Music @Ethical Rollin Wilbur	26	27	28 Meeting 7:00 p.m. Camp Linden Committee	29 7:00PM Amnesty Intl. Ron Coburn	30	31



JANUARY BIRTHDAYS

10	Carol Love
11	Sandy Coffy
14	Lyle Murley
18	Victoria Kent
21	Ken Greiff
30	Lelah Marie

Held Over Through January
Collier Room



SHADOW PLAY

Pastels and Photographs
by Janice R. Moore

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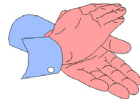
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SUNDAY SERVICES

**Hosts - Coordinated by
Leslie Williams**



January 4 - Arnold and Temma
Fishman

January 11 - Sharon Wallis and
Leonard Weeks

January 18 - Sandy and Bill Coffey

January 25 - Terry Martin-Murley
and Lyle Murley



**Flowers Coordinated
by David Ralston**

January 4 - Carol Love: "For my
January birthday and all the other
fine people born in January --
especially Martin Luther King"

January 11 - David Ralston: "For the
City of Philadelphia"

January 18 - Arnold and Temma
Fishman: "In honor of our
granddaughter Zoey's 7th birthday"

January 25 - Harry Thorn



Coffee Hour Coordinators

January 4 - John McCormick

January 11 - Ken Greiff

January 18 - Garry O'Rourke

January 25 - Harry Thorn

***Ethical Humanist Society
of Philadelphia***

1906 South Rittenhouse Square
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