



# Ethical Views



October 2015 Vol. 130, No. 2 Newsletter of the Ethical Humanist Society of Philadelphia

## Sunday Platforms October 2015

**Sunday, October 4, 11:00 AM**

***So Many Good Deeds, So Little Time*  
Hugh Taft-Morales, Leader, Ethical  
Humanist Society of Philadelphia**



Ethical Humanism proclaims the importance of “deed before creed.” But how do you figure out WHAT deed to do? Given limited time and energy, how can humanists

maximize the effectiveness of their commitment? Hugh Taft-Morales offers some variables to consider in your deliberations, including effectiveness in respecting both the worth of individuals *and* relationships, and maximizing both the potential of individuals *and* the realization of social justice. Ultimately, however, individuals and groups should focus on where they agree pragmatically so as to avoid the paralysis of infighting and burnout. Find out more about sustainable ethical action.

**Sunday, October 11, 11:00 AM**

***Life Sentence*  
by Robin Rodriguez**

Mikai is a non-white man convicted many years ago of rape and murder, and consigned to death row. Now, due to recanting witnesses and proof of prosecutorial misconduct, the conviction has been vacated and Mikai released from prison. Will he be able to rejoin the ranks of those presumed to be innocent? See the answer offered by Robin Rodriguez in her deeply moving and insightful new play, *Life Sentence*.

Robin Rodriguez is an accomplished and award-winning Philadelphia playwright. She is a member and former Director of the Philadelphia Drama Center.



Her play was winner of the 2015 Ethical Humanist Society of Philadelphia’s annual One-Act Playwriting Contest. It will be read by professional actors under the direction of Connie Norwood.

**Sunday, October 18, 11:00 AM**

***A World of Refugees*  
Hugh Taft-Morales, Leader, Ethical  
Humanist Society of Philadelphia**



Globalization, poverty, war, and climate change have accelerated the migration of people all over the globe. Migration has generated bigoted backlash against “the other” as well as acts of welcome and kindness. It has created new opportunities for economic growth as well as security risks and strain on social services. Hugh Taft-Morales explores one particular story of migration in his extended family as a way to process our current debate about the ethical responsibilities and limits of welcoming refugees. *Half of the money put in our collection plate will be shared with organizations aiding refugees as determined by the Ethical Action Committee.*

**Sunday, October 25, 11:00 AM**

***Francis, the Good Guy, but How About the Good?***

**Richard Kiniry, Leader Emeritus,  
Ethical Humanist Society of  
Philadelphia**

Pope Francis demonstrates a lot of what could be called natural goodness, but he represents an institution that defines good within narrow, oppressive parameters. We ought to encourage him to run with his natural tendencies. Good is not a set of rules but a way of caring for the best in other people. In his address postponed from last month due to the Papal visit, Richard will also consider the impact of Pope Francis’ visit on the Catholic church and beyond.



Richard Kiniry served as Leader (clergy person) of the Ethical Humanist Society of Philadelphia from 1990-2010, and is now Leader Emeritus. He spent his college years in a Catholic seminary, raised chickens in India for two years with the Peace Corps, and had his own stained glass business for many years. He is a graduate of, among other institutions, the Humanist Institute and the leadership program of the Ethical Culture Movement.



### In This Issue

- 1 Sunday Platforms
- 2 Leader’s Message
- 3 Quote-Unquote; Happenings
- 4 Happenings; Announcements
- 5-6 Announcements
- 7 Calendar; Birthdays
- 8 Sunday Service

# Leader's Column



## *Our Place in the World*

**Hugh Taft-Morales**

Last month, in my first platform address of the program year here in Philadelphia, I touched on Ethical Humanism's place in the world. What about our history, mission, and communities makes us unique? What do we bring to the world that you can't find anywhere else? In this column I would like to expand on my brief answers to those questions.

We are, I said, first and foremost a community of people striving to live lives that better reflect our ethical values. We are an ever-evolving community of people sharing, discussing, and refining our values through open, compassionate and honest dialogue. That dialogue flourishes best when built upon effective communication and respectful relationships.

Human beings are not born with the ability to communicate effectively and grow respectful relationships. These are things that, hopefully, we learn over our lifetime. Sometimes we succeed and sometimes we fail. As an Ethical Humanist Leader, I see my role as providing guidance and tools so that we have a better shot at success.

I spoke a bit about how this is connected to the pragmatic tradition. John Dewey, arguably our nation's most influential philosopher, spoke at Ethical Societies and contributed to our toolkit. He saw most human endeavors as efforts to solve problems. Given the challenges we face, from the capitalism-driven scourges of poverty, injustice, war and ecological collapse, to our own mundane attempts to be kinder and less self-centered, Ethical Humanism's core problem is: where do we find the power to carry on? Where do we find the energy and commitment to help heal a broken world?

As individuals we find our energy in many different places. We are all different, and no two of us share the exact same formula. Even in an ideal world, we might all seek different sources of rejuvenation in different proportions: exercise and rest, socializing and solitude, entertainment and meditation, chemicals and abstinence. Each one of us will get different levels of support from Ethical Humanism as well. My role is to get to know you and to support your individual journey.

I can, however, continue to nurture two resources available to you at the Ethical Society: community and inspiration. With the contribution of time, energy and resources of so many members and volunteers, we have much to offer. Regarding community, most of us bring out our best when working with others. I do yoga more regularly and energetically by attending classes. I write more letters to my legislators armed with templates and envelopes at an Amnesty International meeting. I shout out for justice more loudly at group vigils for Black Lives Matter.

It is the close intentional communities offered by Ethical Humanism that make us different from other freethought organizations. Unlike many groups today that rely on occasional meet ups, we emphasize an ongoing congregational format. When becoming a part of our community, members make a deeper commitment than usual to support each other through life's ups and downs. We say more often, "I am here for you," and then we strive to live up to these words.

This is one of the reasons why we meet every week – why we have seasonal celebrations to mark the passage of time – why we offer ceremonies that mark life passages such as births, weddings, and memorials. In celebrating and sharing the larger arc of our lives, we open ourselves up to others in more challenging, meaningful and fulfilling ways. It demands caring hearts and open minds. Our communities grow best in a sea of gratitude, patience, and joy.

Regarding inspiration, personally I strive to offer accessible, thought provoking programs that speak to intellect and emotion. I work with others on our many committees to provide opportunity for ethical action and continuing education that feed our appetite for meaning. We do not abandon our commitment to reason and evidence when stirring up inspirational experiences. For those seeking "humanist spirituality," they will find in Ethical Humanism not divine miracles or supernatural magic, but inspiration with the steady legs of science, the wings of imagination, and outstretched helping hands. This is a trio I have been touting for the last few months.

We are a community of diverse thinkers, so I am sure some of you have a different take on what makes us unique. Please share with me what you think is Ethical Humanism's "place in this world." Then help me let the world know about us. The time is now. The place is here. The job is ours.

## SOME OTHER LEADER NOTES:

1) One of the strengths of the Ethical Humanist Society of Philadelphia is the selection of Sunday morning guest speakers. The high quality of speakers (which I, sadly, rarely get to hear speak as I am at the Baltimore Ethical Society those days) is due to the hard work of the Education Committee led by Betsy Lightbourn. In order to keep up with our high standards, the committee would appreciate your input. Please share your ideas with Betsy and me. Especially valuable are concrete suggestions for individuals *that you know* are dynamic and effective presenters. The committee seeks speakers on a wide variety of topics, but this fall we are particularly seeking to address a number of issues including: transgender issues, effective environmental activism, fighting Islamophobia, and successes in real community policing and fostering trust and cooperation between law enforcement officers and neighborhood groups.

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2) This summer's Ethical Humanist Society of Philadelphia field trip to Eastern State Penitentiary was a great success. Members and friends of the society discussed the tour afterwards at lunch. As I shared then, I was impressed with how the penitentiary was intended to be a humane alternative to English

style prisons that threw prisoners together into large enclosures without any real hope for redemption. Overcrowding and over-reliance on solitary confinement, however, led to the failure of the Eastern State experiment.



I was disappointed that I could not attend Police Commissioner Charles H. Ramsey's talk at Eastern State on September 2. Members Linda Benowitz and Sylvia Metzler, however, were on hand and witnessed the frustration of a city on edge. Shortly into Ramsey's presentation, protesters from Black Lives

Matters shouted him down, and continued their protest outside. They were particularly incensed by the lack of accountability shown by the department over the death of Brandon Tate-Brown who was shot to death by police officers last December in Mayfair. There are many unanswered questions about this death, as there are with other shootings, but the event was shut down due to the protests, so those very questions could not be fully addressed.



Linda Benowitz shared that during the short program the Chief was addressing many demands made by protesters and organizations, such as the coalition we are members of: POWER, or Philadelphians Organized to Witness, Empower, and Rebuild. In the wake of events in Ferguson, Staten Island, and Baltimore,

we need more conversation about police accountability, not less. I hope that we can hear from both Black Lives Matters as well as from progressive leaders within our law enforcement community. Eastern State has posted a full discussion between Philadelphia Police Commissioner Charles Ramsey and Eastern State Penitentiary Vice President Sean Kelley online at [www.EasternState.org](http://www.EasternState.org).

Photos by Hugh Taft-Morales



### Quote-Unquote

"Today we face many problems. Some are created essentially by ourselves based on divisions due to ideology, religion, race, economic status, or other factors. Therefore, the time has come for us to think on a deeper level, on the human level, and from that level we should appreciate and respect the sameness of others as human beings."

-- His Holiness, Tenzin Gyatso, the 14th Dalai Lama, who visits Philadelphia this month.

## Happenings

*All this month  
in the Collier Room, 2nd floor,  
Ethical Society Building*

### **Exhibition of Photographs by EHSOP Member Sandy Coffey**



After many years of study at Philadelphia College of Art's evening school, Sandy worked as a commercial interior designer for Reliance Insurance Co., two architectural firms, and as Director of Planning and Design for a major Philadelphia bank.

In 1977, living in a dorm room at the Wetlands Institute in Avalon, NJ, Sandy took a week-long photography class using her first camera, a Nikon FE. Needless to say this was a film camera with no automatic settings. And so it began. She was using black and white film and developing her prints in a lab.

In her years as an interior designer she developed an eye for composition, color and light, so it was an easy transition to use these skills in photography.

She has been an avid traveler and photographer for the past 38 years. This collection of photographs covers her travels to Morocco, Botswana, Zimbabwe, China, India, Thailand, and Turkey.

Sandy edits, prints and frames her own photos in her home office.

She has been teaching classes at Temple University OLLI for the past five years and continues to learn new photography techniques on a regular basis.

## Ethical Action Committee – New Wednesday, New Start Time ... New Chair!

After many first Wednesday evenings spent waiting for “Ed Com” to end, then struggling to adjourn before it got light again (or so it sometimes felt!) the Ethical Action Committee (EAC) has a new day and a new, earlier start time: Second Wednesday of the month at 6:30 PM.

What's more, a major item on last month's agenda was the appointment of a new EAC Chair and, to quote Temma's draft minutes, “Marta accepted to cheers of joy!”

EHSOP regulars may be vaguely aware that Marta Guttenberg is involved in something to do with fracking. However, there's much more to Marta's practical activism than policing the recyclables and compostables on Sunday mornings, and rescuing and/or manicuring feline ingrates. The social justice activities to which she quietly but intensely devotes herself are too many and varied to list here. Ask her about them – and ask how you, too, might get involved.

I'm sure you'll join me in joyfully cheering Marta for rising to the occasion, and in wishing her a successful term as EAC Chair.

And if you'd like to find out more about EAC, come along to a meeting. All members are welcome, and you'll get out way before it gets light again – promise!

– Steve Bremner

## Introduction to Ethical Humanism

Sunday, October 4, 7:00 PM



Come explore Ethical Humanism with Hugh Taft-Morales, Leader of the Ethical Humanist Society of Philadelphia. Share wine, cheese, and conversation in a relaxed environment at 7:00 PM, Sunday, October 4. Please RSVP to [leaderhugh@phillyethics.org](mailto:leaderhugh@phillyethics.org).

Monday, October 5th, 7:00 PM

## “On the Other Side of the Fence” A Screening and Panel Discussion

Come view and discuss an internationally acclaimed documentary, “On the Other Side of the Fence.” This touching feature-length documentary, produced and directed by local filmmaker Henry Nevison, presents a story about the development of empathy, compassion, acceptance and friendship between children from two very different Philadelphia schools through a unique thirty-year musical collaboration. The story is told by following the children from HMS School for Children with Cerebral Palsy and Germantown Friends School (GFS) as they rehearse and perform this musical specifically created and directed by Philadelphia playwright/composer and music therapist Andrea Green.



The film has received numerous awards, including the Gold medal for a Television Documentary on Social Issues from The New York Festivals® (NYF) [International Television & Film Awards](#). The film also received the Silver Telly (highest honor) and a ‘Judges Choice’ in the 36th Annual Telly Awards, selected from over 12,000 entries. “On the Other Side of the Fence” was nominated for a Mid-Atlantic Emmy Award; winners will be announced September 19th.

After the 7:00 PM screening of this hour-long documentary, Hugh Taft-Morales will lead a discussion beginning at 8:00 PM between the audience and film maker Henry Nevison and composer/playwright and music therapist Andrea Green and others associated with the film. The film will be aired on WHYY-TV at 1:00 PM, Sunday, October 4, so if you see it then, you are welcome to join us for the discussion at 8:00 PM, Monday, Oct 5. A trailer is available at [www.ontheothersideofthefence.com](http://www.ontheothersideofthefence.com).

## Announcements

### Wednesday, September 30, 7:00 PM Ending Corporate Personhood

Come meet David Cobb, co-founder and spokesperson for “Move to Amend”—and 2004 Green Party presidential candidate. David's free talk, “Creating Democracy & Challenging Corporate Rule,” is part history lesson and part heartfelt call-to-action.



Move to Amend is a national partnership of 395,000 people and hundreds of organizations whose goal is to amend the U.S. Constitution to end corporate rule by building a multiracial, cross-class democracy movement. They intend to overturn the Supreme Court-created precedent of corporations enjoying constitutional rights that were intended solely for human beings. Their “We The People” amendment to the U.S. Constitution—currently before Congress—challenges corporate personhood, declares that inalienable rights belong to human beings only, and insists that money in political campaigns can be regulated because money is not a form of protected free speech under the First Amendment.

In 2011, the American Ethical Union passed a resolution criticizing the ruling in Citizens United (see [http://aeu.org/library/display\\_article.php?article\\_id=2227](http://aeu.org/library/display_article.php?article_id=2227)). Some argue that other methods of controlling the influence of money in politics, such as greater transparency or campaign contribution limits, would be more effective. Come learn and discuss how best to reclaim our democracy from moneyed interests.



Learn more about Move to Amend at  
<https://movetoamend.org/about-us>

To see how corporate personhood goes  
far beyond money in politics, see:  
<https://movetoamend.org/frequently-asked-questions#1>





*Saturday. October 10<sup>th</sup>, 6 to 10:30 pm*  
*Waltz-Swing Party and Dinner*  
1906 S. Rittenhouse Square, Philadelphia



Tickets \$15 to \$25 per person.

For details and reservations go to

<http://camplinden.ticketleap.com/waltzparty2015>

Sponsored by Philadelphia Ethical Humanist Society  
and St. John's College Alumni of Philadelphia

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**Benefits Camp Linden Children's Summer Program**

# Announcements

(Continued)



Thursday, October 8  
8:45 AM-6:00 PM

## Common Ground

A free conference at Rutgers University, New Brunswick, NJ, on "Understanding & Cooperation between Religious Believers & Secular Humanists for Social Programs." Ethical Culture Leaders Hugh Taft-Morales, Anne Klaeyen, and Bart Worden join Roy Speckhardt, Executive Director of the American Humanist Association, and more than a dozen other speakers for this exciting day of dialogue. For more information or to register to reserve your place, go to:

<http://www.commonground2015.org/>



## Thursday, October 8 DVAU talk at Free Library



The Delaware Valley Americans United Chapter, DVAU, hosts Hugh Taft-Morales on Thursday October 8, 2015, from 7:00 to 8:30 PM at the Free Library of Philadelphia, 19th & Vine Streets, in Room 407. Free and open to the public. Hugh is a member of DVAU's Clergy Advisory Board, and will speak on "The Wall for All: Protecting the Integrity of Both State and Religion." Ethical Humanism supports a high wall of separation between the state and religion. As Thomas Jefferson said, this wall is "essential in a free society." It protects the rights of citizens of religious, atheist, and nontheist perspectives. As zealots try to deconstruct this wall brick by brick, we must speak out more forcefully against those who distort its real purpose: to maintain the secular nature of the state so it better serves believers and non-believers alike.



Monday, October 18  
7:00-9:00 PM

## THE MORAL BASIS OF ECONOMICS

A group dialogue co-sponsored by the Greater Philadelphia Thinking Society and the Ethical Humanist Society of Philadelphia. Free and open to the public. Please register at: <http://www.meetup.com/thinkingsociety/events/225214958/>.

Although most authors and authorities assume that "fairness in reciprocity" is the core moral principle governing our economic lives, careful reflection reveals that we are governed by a complex set of nuanced and sometimes contradictory precepts. Come explore the moral principles affecting our economic relationships with other people. C. J. Fearnley, Hugh Taft-Morales, and a team of facilitators will help participants discuss:

- The role of the moral principle of fair reciprocal exchanges
- The role of the moral principle of communism
- The role of the moral principle of hierarchy
- The relationship between debt and morality

Saturday, October 24 (U.N. Day)



## Celebration of the 70th Anniversary of the United Nations

*From Nick Sanders, President, EHSOP and Treasurer, U.N. Association of Philadelphia:*

On globally celebrated United Nations Day, October 24, we are participating in a Kimmel Center tribute to the 70-year-old United Nations. The tribute is actually three events: a forum; a concert; and a dinner.

**The forum**, from 1:00-2:30 PM in the Kimmel Center's Assembly Room, is a homage to Pennsylvania's founder, William Penn, who proposed a united nations for peace based on a tolerance for diverse religious beliefs. This forum will be presented by the United Nations Association of Greater Philadelphia, and will include our own Hugh Taft-Morales, who will elaborate beyond William Penn's world to the great variety of beliefs in today's world.

**The concert**, from 3:00-5:00 PM will be a grand "Harmony for Peace," in the great hall in the Kimmel Center. The concert is organized by the Harmony for Peace Foundation, which is bringing internationally acclaimed musicians for the concert, featuring composer and conductor Johan de Meij, ("Lord of the Rings").

**The dinner** will be at the Estia Greek Restaurant, a short walk from the Kimmel Center. Beginning at 5:30 PM, the dinner will offer opportunities to meet and talk with the concert artists and some of Philadelphia's dedicated concert-goers.

The price of admission to the Kimmel Center for the forum and the concert will range from \$28 to \$48, depending on seating for the concert. Arrange tickets on [www.kimmelcenter.org](http://www.kimmelcenter.org). For those who only wish to attend the forum, please order tickets via [info@una-gp.org](mailto:info@una-gp.org). For Concert & Dinner information: [www.harmonyforpeace.org](http://www.harmonyforpeace.org) or contact [info@harmonyforpeace.org](mailto:info@harmonyforpeace.org) or 484-885-8539.

Watch for more information about this special UN70 event closer to U.N. Day.

# October 2015

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
				1	2	3
4 11:00 a.m. <i>So Many Good Deeds, So Little Time</i> Hugh Taft-Morales 7:00 PM Intro to Ethical Humanism	5 7:00 PM On the Other Side of the Fence Screening & Discussion	6	7 Meeting 6:30 p.m. Education Committee	8 All Day Conf. COMMON GROUND Rutgers Univ. 7:00 PM DVAU Talk Free Library	9	10 6:00 PM Waltz-Swing Party & Dinner For Camp Linden
11 11:00 a.m. <i>Life Sentence: A one-act play</i> Robin Rodriguez	12	13	14 Meetings 5:30 p.m. Finance Committee 6:30 p.m. Ethical Action Committee	15 6:30 PM Center Cty Philly HLAA P. McGeever	16	17
18 9:30 a.m. Board Meeting 10 am HLAA Walk4Hearing 11:00 a.m. <i>A World of Refugees</i> Hugh Taft-Morales	19 7:00 PM The Moral Basis of Economics	20	21 Meeting 7:00 p.m. EHSOP Board	22  7:00PM Amnesty Intl.	23	24 Various U.N. 70th Anniversary Celebration
25 11:00 a.m. <i>Francis, the Good Guy, but How About the Good?</i> Richard Kiniry	26	27	28 Meeting 7:00 p.m. Camp Linden Committee	29	30	31 Set your clocks back 1 hour tonight!

## OCTOBER BIRTHDAYS



5 Jeffrey Dubb  
10 Geoff Baker  
12 Leonard Weeks  
14 Doris Leicher

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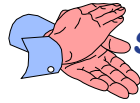
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**SUNDAY SERVICES**



**Hosts** - Coordinated by  
Lelah Marie

Oct. 4 - Ken Greiff and Elisabeth  
Leonard

Oct. 11 - Henry Pashkow and Doris  
Dabrowski

Oct. 18 - Sharon Wallis and Leonard  
Weeks

Oct. 25 - John Marshall and John  
McCormick



**Flowers** - Coordinated by  
David Ralston

Oct. 4 - Nick Sanders, "For Molly,  
in celebration of our 14 years of  
marriage"

Oct. 11 - Doris Leicher, "In honor of my  
Sister Ulrike"

Oct. 18 - Carol Love: "In Honor of My  
New Husband, Marvin Friedman"

Oct. 25 - Nina Diamond, "Celebrating the  
EHSoP community"



**Coffee Hour Coordinators**

Sept. 6 - John Marshall

Sept. 13 - Ken Greiff

Sept. 20 - Garry O'Rourke

Sept. 27 - Harry Thorn

***Ethical Humanist Society  
of Philadelphia***

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