



ETHICAL VIEWS

October 2016

Vol. 131, No. 2

Newsletter of the Philadelphia Ethical Society



Sunday Platforms

Children's Sunday Programs:

Beginning each Sunday at 10:55 AM and continuing during our platforms, we have an ethical topics program designed for children ages 5 through early teens. Also, child care for younger children may be provided with at least two days' prior notice. Interested persons may contact Nick Sanders, nick@phillyethics.org

Sunday, Oct. 2, 11:00 AM **Transgender Progress** **Hugh Taft-Morales, Leader,** **Philadelphia Ethical Society**

Despite deep-rooted bigotry toward transgender individuals, over the last decade there has also been



remarkable progress toward fuller rights, respect, and visibility for those who don't identify with the gender identity assigned to them at birth.

Hugh Taft-Morales, a cisgendered heterosexual, explores his own path toward fuller appreciation of the challenges for the transgender community. What can Ethical Culturists and humanists do to better defend the rights of transgender individuals? What personal biases or resistance should allies of transgendered people identify and neutralize?

Sunday, Oct. 9, 11:00 AM **Cheney's Epiphany** **Gordon Bennett, Playwright**

WHAT IF? Most of us know what kind of a politician – and person – former Vice President Dick Cheney was and is. And we may have our

opinions about this. But Gordon Bennett, playwright, educator and activist, refuses to be limited by the historical record and instead invites us to play a delightful game of "What If?" What if Mr. Cheney, undergoing the heart transplant surgeon's knife, had come out of surgery a different person? What if he had had a "sudden, intuitive insight into the essential meaning of" let us, say, his life?



Come to the Ethical Society on October 9, and get an answer to this question in the reading, by brave thespians among our membership, of *Cheney's Epiphany*. The playwright will be there.

Sunday, Oct. 16, 11:00 AM **Be Honest with Death** **Hugh Taft-Morales, Leader,** **Philadelphia Ethical Society**

For those who do not have a belief in heaven or reincarnation, managing one's mortality can be psychologically challenging. What are some of the ways we can process the poignant and terrifying realization that each one of us is going to die? Hugh Taft-Morales does not have the answer – he has many answers. Some approaches work better than others to ease that cold existential shiver that runs down his spine when the Grim Reaper invades consciousness. Hugh borrows from Buddhists to existentialists, from Morrie Schwartz to Monty Python. Come explore some light shone on this darkness.

Sunday, Oct. 23, 11:00 AM **Gender and the 2016 Election** **Kelly Dittmar, Political Science professor, Rutgers University-Camden**

A woman may well break the highest, hardest glass ceiling in American politics this year. But there remain barriers to women's political advancement at all levels of elected office. Dr. Dittmar will provide an overview of the status of women

in American politics, and discuss the role of gender dynamics in the presidential election, asking how candidates – women and men alike –



have navigated the gendered terrain of presidential politics in 2016. Have they disrupted gender expectations, or adhered to traditional rules of the game? And how have voters and media responded? Together, 2016 provides insights into both the progress women have made and persistent hurdles they face in achieving parity in American politics.

Kelly Dittmar is an Assistant Professor of Political Science at Rutgers University-Camden and

Continued on page 2

IN THIS ISSUE

- 1-2 - Sunday Platforms
- 2 - President's Column
- 3 - Leader's Column
- 4-5 - Announcements
- 6 - Birthdays
- 7 - Calendar
- 8 - Sunday Services

PRESIDENT'S COLUMN



Making a Difference

It was so good to see so many of you at our September platforms and other events. In the months to come, there are many fabulous programs and events covering a variety of subjects that will interest all of us.

The 2016 presidential election is incredibly important. I hope everyone of you is out there making sure the folks in our community are registered to vote. Please exercise your American duty and get out and vote on November 8. If you have a car, please ask all of your friends if they need help getting to their voting place. I can't stress

enough the importance of getting out the vote. I've had the privilege of voting for almost 50 years, and I can't think of an election that was as critical as the one before us now.

Meanwhile, we are improving our building here on Rittenhouse Square. During the last month we have painted the entire second floor and replaced the ceiling tiles in the Weston and Collier Rooms. In the year to come, we hope to make further improvements, such as sanding the floors in the Assembly Room and the Auditorium. You may have also noticed that we have installed a high-end video system and a large motorized screen which will enhance our ability to show films and offer visual presentations; it's also a plus for our renters. One more note: we soon will illuminate our Ethical Society name above the outside entrance. We also hope to have a more modern illuminated display case outside with events and program announcements. We rely on our members and friends with

their generous contributions to help fund these improvements. Thank you for all of your help, it's greatly appreciated.

Last month I spoke about our committees. I'm happy to report that Susan Brotherton has agreed to chair our Community Committee. Its first Sunday meeting will be sometime in October. I hope to see many of you there, we need your input. I will post the first meeting date on the listserv, and I'll announce it when I'm presiding.

In conclusion, please get involved. A majority of our committees are staffed by a core group of members, many members serve on many committees, we need some new blood. You'll enjoy interacting with other members, it can be a very rewarding experience. Talk to me and let me know how you can help our society grow.

Bob

bbueding@phillyethics.org

Continued from page 1

Scholar at the Center for American Women and Politics (CAWP) at the Eagleton Institute of Politics. She is the author of *Navigating Gendered Terrain: Stereotypes and Strategy in Political Campaigns*, (Temple University Press, 2015), and has authored multiple book chapters on gender and American politics. At CAWP, Dittmar manages national research projects and Presidential Gender Watch 2016, a project to track, analyze, and illuminate gender dynamics in the 2016 presidential election.

Sunday, Oct. 30, 11:00 AM
Why is the U.S. in bed with Saudi Arabia and what can we do about it? Medea Benjamin, American Humanist Association, Heroine Award

Saudi Arabia is one of the key U.S. allies in the Middle East yet it's a country with tremendous internal oppression and has used its military to crush democratic uprisings in neighboring countries. Saudi Arabia is also the source of the extremist Wahhabi ideology that has bred groups like Al Qaeda and ISIL. It's



important to examine the U.S.-Saudi Alliance. More and more Americans are starting to question this toxic relationship, especially in light of the last year's killing of a Shia cleric that has led to increased tensions in the region. Come listen

to Medea Benjamin, co-founder of CODEPINK and author of an upcoming book on Saudi Arabia, analyze these issues.

Medea Benjamin is the co-founder of the women-led peace group CODEPINK and the co-founder of the human rights group Global Exchange. She has been an advocate for social justice for more than 40 years. Described as "one of America's most committed – and most effective – fighters for human rights" by *New York Newsday*, and "one of the high profile leaders of the peace movement" by the *Los Angeles Times*, she was one of 1,000 exemplary women from 140 countries nominated to receive the Nobel Peace Prize on behalf of the millions of women who do the essential work of peace worldwide.

LEADER'S COLUMN



Seeing the Big Picture

Hugh Taft-Morales,
Leader
Philadelphia
Ethical Society

As I enter my sixth year at the Philadelphia Ethical Society I continue to be honored to serve as Leader. We are an eclectic mix of freethinkers seeking ways to bring out our best and make the world a little better. Our membership has grown. Our programs have multiplied. Though world problems are great and people suffer every day, I believe that together we make a real, if modest, difference. Of course, we could do better. I could do better. That's why the Board is ramping up its commitment to a long-range planning process. The hope is that such a process will help the Philadelphia Ethical Society update and clarify its mission, enhance our effectiveness, and make us more sustainable over the long term. The only way this can be done is if we use the process to better see the big picture.

Whatever process the Board ultimately chooses to move our planning forward, I believe it's crucial to see the "big picture" and take a long-term perspective. What do we want the Ethical Society to be in five, ten, twenty years' time? Creating a clearer vision of our future must occur before concrete steps and budgetary decisions can be made to realize that vision. One reason such a process is necessary is that running the Ethical Society – programs, organization, building, and rentals – involves nearly constant and immediate management: Renters need more chairs, programs have to be printed for Sunday platform, there's a leak in the basement, a member struggling with a health

crisis needs support, speakers need to be selected and invited, bills have to be paid... all while we try to nurture a caring community actively engaged in bringing out the best in ourselves, others, and the world. This is no easy charge.

Personally, I need a long-range planning process to help me focus on the big picture. Sure I love the *philosophical big picture*: How do I live, and help others live, an engaged, ethical and fulfilling life in the face of the bottomless pit of need in the world, and our own limitations and mortality? This philosophical question is a constant part of my thinking. But the *organizational big picture* is harder to keep front and center. I hope long-range planning, owned by the Board and supported by all members, will help us all understand how best to focus on the big picture.

Personally I am trying to do this independent of our long-range planning process. Juggling two ethical societies, and contributing to the important work of the American Ethical Union and the National Leaders Council, can challenge me with many details. With so much on my "radar," I can get mesmerized simply by the flow of emails into my in-box. It preys on my tendency to say "yes" to most requests. It's reinforced by the sense of accomplishment one gets by crossing things off my "to do" list. Unfortunately this can distract from seeing the big picture.

For help, I am returning to some wisdom I gleaned from a best selling book by Stephen Covey, *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People*. The one lesson that struck me as most important is to focus on the big picture. Sometimes Covey explains this as "putting first things first." This can mean making sure your priorities are balanced and contribute to a fulfilling life – it's important to pay attention to your health, your family, your vocation.

Without physical, psychological and social health, it's harder to be professionally effective. Even looking strictly at the professional sphere, focusing on the big issues is fundamental. But it's not easy. So Covey offers a simple metaphor. Imagine that your work has a number of major issues to consider, and each of them is a rock about the size of your fist. They are big jobs that require a lot of time – such as a long-range planning process. Then imagine that there's a pile of sand, each grain being a small task that can be accomplished in a minute – like responding to an email.

Covey then says imagine that your day is an empty bucket. If you pour all the sand into your bucket first it may fill it up halfway. You might then find that there is no room for all the rocks, the big issues. If, however, you put all the rocks in first, and then pour the sand into the bucket, you'll find that the sand filters in around the rocks and there's room for both. If you start with the big things first, you will find the little stuff will get the attention that it needs.

While metaphors can be overly simplistic, I hope that this particular one guides me in my next year of work. I am committed to focusing on long-range planning as well as offering quality programs while nurturing a caring community. I will do this by reserving the first hours of my day for the big picture items. Emails, phone messages, and meetings about many other important issues and legitimate requests will have to wait till later. Will I succeed? You can help by reminding me of my personal challenge. And you can help by being patient with me if I don't respond immediately to emails and phone calls. I hope to reap the benefits – for myself and for the Ethical Society – that come when one can keep focused on "the big picture."

Yours, Hugh



ANNOUNCEMENTS

Sunday, October 2, 7:00 PM
– Introduction to Ethical Humanism

Newcomers and visitors are encouraged to attend an Introduction to Ethical Humanism. Hugh Taft-Morales, Leader of the Philadelphia Ethical Society, will offer a brief presentation and host a discussion from 7:00-8:30 PM. Come learn about Ethical Culture's unique brand of humanism and what it could mean to you during a relaxed 90 minutes. Please RSVP to leaderhugh@phillyethics.org.

CAPITALISM IN CRISIS SERIES

Monday, October 3, 7:00 PM
Capitalism in Crisis – John Gerzema – Think Like a Woman. Improve the World.

John Gerzema, strategist, speaker, consultant, and author of bestselling and highly praised works, thinks that the world would be a better place if men thought more like women. That



was the opinion given by two-thirds of the 64,000 people surveyed by Gerzema in 2012, as part of a research project that became *The Athena Doctrine: How Women (and the Men Who Think Like Them) Will Rule the World*. Gerzema and his co-author, Pulitzer Prize winner Michael D'Antonio, traveled the world interviewing leaders in

politics, business, and society about the global trend away from the winner-takes-all, masculine approach to getting things done that has contributed to many of the world's ills. Host Hugh Taft-Morales will interview Gerzema about how men and women alike are recognizing significant value in traits commonly associated with women, such as nurturing, cooperation, communication, and sharing.

Presentation, discussion and questions from the floor. All programs are free and open to the public. Co-sponsored by the Philadelphia Ethical Society, Fox Net Impact, the Fox School of Business at Temple University and the Sustainable Business Network of Great Philadelphia.

FUTURE CAPITALISM IN CRISIS EVENINGS INCLUDE:
November 7 - Lynne Andersson – Philanthrocapitalism: The Dark Side of Charity

Andersson, Associate Professor of Business & Society at the Fox School of Business at Temple University, will explore how good intentions can go wrong.

December 5 - Joseph Schwartz – Why Not Socialism?

Schwartz, is a progressive political activist, **Professor of Political Science at Temple University**, and leader in the Democratic Socialists of America (DSA) www.dsausa.org

Thursday, October 20, 6:30 - 9 PM
You Cannot Fix What You Cannot Face – Last Meals

PES member Christian Hayden is curating *You Cannot Fix What You Cannot Face*, a series of events which will explore social justice through ritual, art, and conversation. These events will engage the ideas of community and isolation, solidarity and exaltation, disease and healing. These spaces will be intentionally challenging, as they are meant to foster experiences and exchanges between cultures, faiths, and classes, hopefully pushing us together, towards building communities meant to realize social justice.

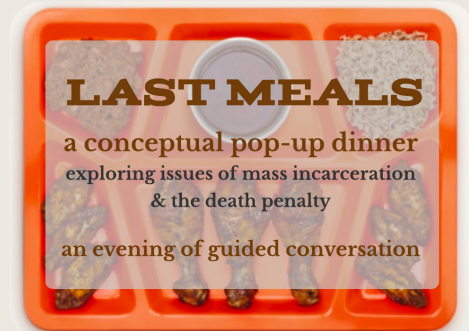


Image © 2013 Amnesty International
 "Can You Stomach This?" campaign

The first in the series of events will be **Last Meals**, a conceptual pop-up dinner combining human rights issues with communal dining. Food has long been a connecting force among diverse groups of people. Breaking bread naturally encourages camaraderie and familiarity; it is a fitting environment to have difficult conversations about important topics such as mass incarceration. Last Meals is meant to inspire participants to think about their own mortality and ways in which to use the time they have to do the most good.

Continued on page 5

Conversations will be facilitated by professionals, politicians, and organizers, all working towards ending mass incarceration, as well as life without parole sentences in Pennsylvania. Chef Claire will re-create the last meals of presumably innocent inmates. *Last Meals* is a creative collaboration between *Cooking by Claire*, the Black Capital Coalition, and the Philadelphia Ethical Society.

Cooking with Claire Phelan, based in Old City, Philadelphia, is a private chef service that focuses on connecting people through personalized, intimate events featuring interesting meals. The Black Capital Coalition is an initiative to foster collaboration between local artists, businesses, and cultural institutions.

Tickets are \$15. Use this link to purchase: <https://eatfeastly.com/>

Look out for announcements of further events in this series.

Saturday, October 22, 7:30 PM
Scott Blakeman:
Laughing Liberally
An evening of political comedy.
With special guest Simon Cadel



The *New York Times* called **Scott Blakeman** “An astute, funny political observer who loosed his



darts in a tone that remained suave and smilingly ironic.” NBC said Scott is “The top political comedian working in New York today.” Scott has performed his progressive political comedy from a liberal Jewish point of view around the world including the Edinburgh Fringe Festival

in Scotland, the Just for Laughs Festival in Montreal, and the Jewish Historical Museum in Amsterdam. Scott was the resident comedian on MSNBC’s live coverage of the 2016 *White House Correspondents’ Dinner*. Blakeman also tours the U.S. with Muslim-American comedian **Deen Obeidallah** in their highly acclaimed show *Standup for Peace*.



Simon Cadel is just your average 16-year-old kid. Other than the fact that he’s been performing standup comedy professionally for the past four years. Simon is one of the stars of *Raising Expectations*, a new sitcom currently airing on The Family Channel in Canada.

Tickets are \$20 and are available online at www.eventbrite.com/e/scott-blakeman

MEETUP EVENT:

Tuesday, October 4, 2016, 7:00 PM

Aside from the educational system, the media is the primary means by which most Americans come to “know”. It therefore plays a critical role in the knowledge discovery process and how Americans make decisions about the issues that affect their lives.

This meetup will review how the media functions to facilitate the overall objective of delivering objective understanding about the issues germane to building a better society.

AMERICAN MEDIA - A CRITICAL REVIEW

The first part of the discussion will be an attempt to review the status of the media today. We will then move on critical review of that status, and then discuss what improvements can be made to how the media functions so that it more effectively supports the creation of a more successful society.

Relevant quotes:

“It’s not a matter of what is true that counts but a matter of what is perceived to be true”

Henry Kissinger

“When you control opinion, as corporate America controls opinion in the United States by owning the media, you can make the masses believe almost anything you want, and guide them as you please”

Gore Vidal

“We’ll know our disinformation campaign is complete, when absolutely everything the American people believe is false”

William Casey, Director of the CIA 1981

www.meetup.com/Ethical-Humanist-Society-of-Philadelphia

Pause . . . for thought A Wound in Human History

Sylvia Metzler of the PES Anti-Racism Subcommittee shares a quotation to give us pause for thought: "Racism is a wound in human history, and wounds are ugly – we want to ignore them. Ignoring a wound, however, can kill. In his *Letter from the Birmingham Jail*, Martin Luther King, Jr., speaks of racism as an infected boil festering in our civic body. It needs to be exposed to air and to the healing 'light of the human conscience.' Activism lances the boil so the infected pus oozes out, allowing healing to begin. This metaphor, like the reality behind it, is difficult to consider, but we must, for this wound still hurts." On this topic, view Hugh Taft-Morales, Philadelphia Ethical Society platform talk in January, 2013: *The Dangerous Myth of Post-Racial America: Humanist Anti-Racist Activism*, (Video of full talk at <https://youtu.be/3rCi6KYs00E>)



News from Rollin Wilber:

Fine Art Music Company enters into its third season of presenting classical music concerts jointly with the Philadelphia Ethical Society. Kasia Marzec-Salwinski and I will perform in every concert.

The season opener takes place on **Sunday, November 6, at 3:00 PM**

With election intensity consuming us, we could not resist an all-American music program: America's Classical Voices, in the music of Samuel Barber, Charles Ives, Aaron Copland, with violin, flute and piano.

www.fineartmusiccompany.com

Sunday, January 22, 2017, 3:00 PM

A Russian Soirée with a Touch of Mysticism, with mezzo-soprano Tatyana Rashkovsky, poetry reader Inna Lobanova-Heasley, and piano.

Sunday, March 26, 2017, 3:00 PM

Johannes Brahms and the Schumanns, piano and strings.

And a season finale on **Sunday, May 7, 3:00 PM**: Kasia Marzec-Salwinski and I will be performing a DUO-PIANO Concert, at the Venice Island Performing Arts Center along the Schuylkill River, in Manayunk.

NOTE: November, January and March concerts to be repeated on the previous Saturday night (the night before the Sunday concerts) at 7:30 PM at: Ivy Hall, 6331 Lancaster Ave, Philadelphia, PA 19151

HIGHLIGHTS FROM PES PARTICIPATION - PEACE DAY PHILLY 2016



On the corner of Rittenhouse Square, PES members, Leader Hugh Taft-Morales, and community joined voices in songs of peace. Peace Day Rally activists also spoke, did dances of universal peace, and created "Chalk for Peace" on sidewalks.



OCTOBER 2016

Sun	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Sat
2 11:00 a.m.: <i>Transgender Progress</i> Hugh Taft-Morales 7:00 p.m.: <i>Intro to Ethical Humanism</i> Hugh Taft-Morales	3 7:00 p.m.: <i>Capitalism in Crisis: Think Like a Woman, Improve the World</i> John Gerzema	4 MEET-UP GROUP 7:00 p.m. <i>American Media: A Critical Review</i>	5 PES MEETING 6:30 p.m. Education Committee	6	7	8
9 11:00 a.m.: <i>Cheney's Epiphany</i> Gordon Bennett	10	11	12 PES MEETINGS 5:30 p.m. Finance Committee 6:30 p.m. Ethical Action Committee	13	14	15
16 11:00 a.m. <i>Be Honest with Death</i> Hugh Taft-Morales	17	18	19 PES MEETING 6:30 p.m. PES Board of Trustees	20 7:00 p.m. <i>Last Meals</i> PES Member Christian Hayden	21	22 7:00 p.m. <i>Laughing Liberally</i> Scott Blakeman
23 11:00 a.m. <i>Gender and the 2016 Election</i> Kelly Dittmor	24	25	26 PES MEETING 7:00 p.m. Camp Linden Committee	27  7:00 p.m. Amnesty International Meeting	28	29
30 11:00 a.m. <i>Why is the U.S. in Bed with Saudi Arabia</i> Medea Benjamin	31	<div style="border: 2px solid orange; padding: 10px; text-align: center;"> OCTOBER BIRTHDAYS <div> 5 Jeffrey Dubb 10 Geoff Baker 12 Leonard Weeks 14 Doris Leicher </div> </div>				





SUNDAY SERVICES

11:00 A.M. SEPTEMBER

THROUGH JUNE

Ethical Views is published monthly
except July and August.

Editor, Steve Bremner
Layout, Celeste Hardester
Production, Cheryl Desmond
Web Master, Bob Moore

Philadelphia Ethical Society
1906 South Rittenhouse Square
Philadelphia, PA 19103

Hugh Taft-Morales, Leader
PES Board of Trustees
Bob Bueding, President
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(215) 735 - 3456
office@phillyethics.org
www.phillyethics.org

Hosts Coordinated by John Marshall

Sunday hosts greet
and orient members
and visitors and make a
valuable contribution to
the community. If you'd like to help
out, please contact John.



Flowers Coordinated by David Ralston

Oct 2 - John McCormick, "In loving
memory of Diane"

Oct 9 - Nick Sanders, "15 good
anniversaries and counting with
Molly"

Oct 16 - Bob Bueding - For all who
are working to get the vote out on
Nov. 8

Oct 23 - Nina Diamond, "Bless the
beasts and the children - imagine all
the people living life in peace"

Oct 30 - Carol Love, "To my
wonderful husband Marvin Friedman
for his birthday on the 27th"

QUOTE - UNQUOTE

**"We are told there is
not enough money for
education, but somehow
there is enough money for
people to raise billions of
dollars to defeat somebody
in an election? Oh! Okay!
Does that make sense?"**

— Phylicia Rashad



Coffee Hour Coordinators

Oct 2 - John Marshall
Oct 9 - Ken Greiff
Oct 16- Garry O'Rourke
Oct 23- Harry Thorn
Oct 30 - TBA

For suggestions regarding this
newsletter, contact Steve Bremner:
stevebremner@fastmail.fm

Philadelphia Ethical Society
1906 South Rittenhouse Square
Philadelphia, PA 19103