Sunday Platforms

In May, the Sunday Ethical
Education for Kids (SEEK) program
will be meeting during platforms
on the 7th and 21st. If you have
questions, please contact Nick
Sanders, nick@phillyethics.org

Sunday, May 7, 11:00 AM
Inclusive Feminism: A Strategy
for Collaboration and Justice
Brandi Blessett, Assistant
Professor, Public Policy and
Administration, Rutgers
University – Camden



The experiences of women of color (WOC) offer important insights for understanding the marginalizing effects of institutional practices and

discretion. administrative In inclusive feminism response, describes a counter-narrative that can be used to pose difficult questions about how disparity emerges, the role of institutions in perpetuating inequality, and why communities of color are adversely represented by the most disparaging quality of life statistics. Inclusive feminism recognizes womanhood in the broadest conception and therefore holds the voices and experiences of WOC in high esteem. Ultimately, challenging dominant narratives is an important way to begin to repair damaged relationships across diverse constituencies.

Brandi Blessett is an assistant professor in the Department of

Public Policy & Administration University-Camden. Rutgers Her research interests include institutional racism, cultural competence, and administrative responsibility. Specifically, examines the role institutions and administrative actions play in facilitating disadvantage among underrepresented groups. Each area has the potential to offer insightful perspectives regarding the effects of systemic injustice as well as their contemporary implications for urban communities and their residents. Ultimately, she hopes her research will help public administrators move toward thoughtful consideration of and engagement with underrepresented groups decrease disparity to through social equity measurement and evaluation.

Sunday, May 14, 11:00 AM Environmental Justice is a Civil Right Jerome Shabazz, Director, Overbrook Environmental Education Center

Civil Rights brings to mind a citizen's protected human and political rights and the freedom from their infringement by powerful groups and individuals. By contrast, Environmental Justice addresses the non-discriminatory, fair treatment and meaningful involvement of all people in environmental issues.

Our relationship with the environment is currently important topic of discussion. Whatever the issue – energy production, chemical use in the agriculture, fracking, or disturbance of domestic toxins - our most vulnerable communities need

to assert their rights to protection from the abuse of the built and natural environments.

Jerome Shabazz is the founder and Executive Director of the Overbrook Environmental Education Center/



JASTECH. He is nationally known for his environmental justice and education programs in vulnerable urban communities. Shabazz has trained over 8,000 students on the Clean Water Act and Toxic Substances Control Act, and other topics that reduce human exposure to hazardous substances at home and at school. He has received numerous citations and awards, most recently from the Pennsylvania Legislative Black Caucus, and from the City of Philadelphia, for his commitment to environmental justice. He is a radio host for WURD 900 AM's The Green Hour show and has a Master of Science degree in Environmental Protection and Safety Management from St. Joseph's University.

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LEADER'S COLUMN



Politics, War, and a Better Alternative

Hugh Taft-Morales, Leader, Philadelphia Ethical Society

Of all the campaign advertisements of our last presidential election cycle, the one that frightened me the most was set at the Ellsworth Missile Site in South Dakota. It was produced by the Clinton campaign. In it, a nuclear missile launch officer warns us that, "Self-control may be all that keeps these missiles from firing." At that point in the campaign, I felt relatively sure that Donald Trump – a man seemingly proud of his unthinking lack of self-control – would not end up in the White House.

Now I worry about the man who has his finger on the trigger of our military machine. Despite his numerous "America First" campaign promises not to try to be the policeman of the world, the unpredictable President Trump has pretty impulsive tendencies for a commander in chief. In that same campaign ad, for example, Trump says, "I love war," and threatens ISIS by yelling, "I would bomb the shit out of 'em."

And now, after flailing away at one bad news item after another this month, (failure to dismantle Obamacare, the Russian investigation, and falling approval ratings), Trump is doubling down on a tried-and-true method of gaining public support – lash out with military fury. This tactic may not always bring the long-term desired political results, but in the

short run too many Americans support war-fighting presidents. In many ways U.S. citizens have lost their post-Vietnam hesitation to show the world how easily we can destroy and kill.

My emotional reaction to Trump's March 6 missile attack on Syria reminded me how I felt on January 17, 1991. When George Herbert Walker Bush ordered the first bombing runs over Iraq and Kuwait, I worried not only about the suffering it would cause, but also about the righteous belligerence it would arouse in my fellow citizens.

"An eye for an eye makes the whole world blind."

On May 2, 2011, similar righteous belligerence animated the crowd in front of the White House cheering the killing of Osama bin Laden. I want the passion of our citizens directed more towards peaceful conflict resolution.

I am not naïve about the dangers posed by men like bin Laden, Saddam Hussein, and Syrian president Bashar al-Assad. I don't want to overlook the suffering such brutal bullies cause. And I don't want to get pulled into debates about tactics for "taking out" such actors with the least possible "collateral damage," a euphemism that masks the suffering of innocent people. Instead I will simply say that violence is a poor long-term strategy for limiting violence. Perhaps in response to short term threats it's naïve to repeat Gandhi's aphorism, "an eye for an eye makes the whole world blind." But over the long haul,

Gandhi was right.

Retributive justice and revenge may satisfy us emotionally, especially when those we attack have done terrible things. If, in fact, Trump was disgusted by the gas attack that killed men, women and children, that's a sign of his humanity. It would worry me more if he felt no repulsion. But a president needs to weigh his emotional needs against the pragmatic realities and long-term policy implications. I hope that by the time this article is published, the White House has a clear, thoughtful strategy for moving forward in this powder-keg region of the world.

But I am also worried that this initial missile attack has garnered Trump praise. I fear this reward will feed his ego and encourage continued military violence. With little else going well for his administration, Trump may be tempted to ramp up the perpetual war scenario and wrap himself in the flag. The deliberative nature of Congress theoretically could temper impulsive violence. But as the 1973 War Powers Resolution slowly atrophies into history, the executive branch has reclaimed a dangerous monopoly over the use of violence overseas.

This is not a partisan complaint. I was glad that Obama was cautious about committing ground troops and broadening the theater of battle, but I criticized his over-use of force through drone strikes and secret detentions. While I was pleased that Obama received the Nobel Peace Prize, I was concerned that it was a bit early in his tenure to be certain that he fully accepted the tenet of non-violence.

How fully has any president accepted Martin Luther King Jr.'s words given at his 1964 Nobel Peace Prize ceremony? In that acceptance speech King declared that, "nonviolence is the answer to the crucial political and moral question

of our time – the need for man to overcome oppression and violence without resorting to violence and oppression. Civilization and violence are antithetical concepts." This idealism inspired me greatly when I was young, and it still does today. U.S. foreign policy should reflect this idealism.

Unfortunately some violent autocrats have gained their power due to power politics and the shortsighted greed of the United States and other global powers. Too often we prop up human right violators for economic advantage and we sell weapons to the highest bidder. We can do better as a nation.

As an Ethical Culture Leader I hope that, whatever internal debates our Ethical Society may have about how to deal with violent bullies around the world, we nurture out idealism and pave the road to a better tomorrow.

Yours, Hugh



President's Column



May you Live in Interesting Times

Bob Bueding

Who knew that ancient Chinese curse referred to 2017? Isn't interesting always better than boring? After all, who'd want to be bored to death? Fat chance.

Our world is here to stay, so let's figure out together how to navigate forward. We've seen craziness in the past and survived. Now we need to get to work and move on.

There are many ways to make a difference, it can be an individual or a group effort. One idea is to join us in Baltimore this June for the AEU Annual Assembly. It's happening in Charm City's Inner Harbor. Last year I attended my first Assembly in St Louis. It was a very rewarding experience; I met so many likeminded people and learned so much. As Ethical Humanists we have a unique opportunity

to put our heads together and discern what we can do to make a difference. Hopefully, we each have a vision of what can be done and we can definitely get ideas from our comrades in different Societies. I want our Society here in Philadelphia to flourish and I believe we are on the right track, so if you're inclined, please consider joining us in Baltimore. Together we can learn from each other and have a good time doing it.

A few weeks ago a group of us got together at 1906 to brainstorm the future. When I took over as Board President, my number one goal was to grow our Society. We are crafting a plan that will do us proud, reaching out to let people know what we have to offer on Rittenhouse Square. We want to foster diversity and ideas and be a gathering spot for knowledge, growth, and new friendships.

There's no doubt that we're living in interesting times. There's so much to fan our excitement. Please tell everyone you know that the Ethical Society is here to make a difference. We're making the world a better place.

Bob

bbueding@phillyethics.org

Dear PES members and friends,

I hope many of you will attend our annual national Assembly, just down I-95 or by Amtrak, in Baltimore. This important gathering of over 100 Ethical Culturists from around the country is focusing on an issue of great concern to many PES members - confronting systemic racism. There will also be plenty of time for fun and conversation with members of other Ethical Check Societies. out the registration options including oneday, two-day or whole conference at aeu.org/event/aeu-102nd-assembly.

Hope to see many of you there!

Hugh

BMORETHICAL 2017: Communities Confronting Systemic Racism American Ethical Union 102nd Assembly Holiday Inn Inner Harbor June 8-11, 2017

Come learn about growing our local Ethical Societies and effective ways of confronting systemic racism through the distinguishing characteristic of Ethical Culture: the nurturing of ethical relationships and conversations that lead

to action. With assistance from our partners, including humanist groups and grassroots organizations with first-hand knowledge of fighting systemic racism, we will develop more comprehensive strategies to work within organizations, amongst communities, and in our personal relationships to build racial justice.

Register at aeu.org/event/aeu-102nd-assembly Early bird discounts end May 8.

See you at #bmorethical2017!

Continued from page 1

Sunday Platforms

Sunday, May 21, 11:00 AM What's Ethical About Ethical Culture? Hugh Taft-Morales, Leader, Philadelphia Ethical Society

Begun by Felix Adler in 1876, Ethical Culturehasofferedthosenotattracted to theistic religion a humanist congregational alternative. Adler saw the greed and brutality flowing from materialistic approaches to life and hoped Ethical Societies would retain the essence of many religious traditions, in particular the importance of compassionate, respectful relationships and the "golden rule." How do you answer the question, "What's 'ethical' about Ethical Culture?" Come explore many answers with Hugh Taft-Morales.

Sunday, May 28, 11:00 AM War, Genocide and the Refugee Experience Sarorng "Rorng" Sorn

Sarorng Sorn will speak about her experience during the Khmer Rouge Regime, her refugee journey to find a new home in America, and

her struggles and successes as a former refugee and as a woman. She will touch on the long term impacts of wars and



genocide on social, psychological, economic, and legal ramifications of Cambodian communities in Philadelphia and in the United States. Sorn is the Director of Immigrant Affairs and Language Access Services for Philadelphia's Department of Behavioral Health and Intellectual disAbility Services

(DBHIDS). Her role is to assist in the development of an agencywide strength-based approach to providing wellness and culturally linguistically appropriate services for immigrant communities with behavioral concerns. She is a former Executive Director of the Cambodian Association of Greater Philadelphia where she spent almost 15 years focusing on community and leadership development, coalition building, program and resource development, and strengthening organizational structure to better serve the underserved communities. She has over 30 years of experience working at local, national and international levels to address social, health and economic development issues affecting refugee immigrant communities. She holds a master's degree in Nonprofit/NGO Leadership from the University of Pennsylvania's School of Social Policy and Practice.

From the PES Confronting Racism Task Force:

MAY 19TH AND THE FIGHT FOR EQUALITY

Erik Younge

May 19 celebrates the births of two extraordinary and influential men, both having an indelible impact on my life, and both titans in the global fight for equality, freedom, and justice for all: Malcolm X, (El-Hajj Malik el-Shabazz), and Ho Chi Minh, the father of Vietnamese independence.

Malcolm was the "shining prince" of African-Americans and the fight for freedom. His qualities – intelligence, honesty, determination, oratorical skills, vision for justice – are unmatched. His influence on me, as a young Black man in the late 1960s eager to learn and to join the civil rights struggle, was life-changing. He set the path I have embraced in the fight for freedom.

Although not as well known or as widely taught, Ho Chi Minh also has

a strong connection to the Black struggle. He was strongly influenced by Marcus Garvey, having attended several of the Civil Rights pioneer's meetings and rallies. Ho Chi Minh also published a pamphlet titled *The Black Race* detailing the horrors African-Americans faced under "the false democracy of America." In particular, he denounced the lynchings of hundreds of Black Americans and the violent racism they faced in the North and the South.

The war in Vietnam was the first war fought by the United States which featured the whole enlistment by non-white soldiers in a truly integrated manner. The number of Black deaths was disproportionate to the Black population. Blacks accounted for 14.1% of total deaths, while forming just 11.0% of America's young male population. More than 7,262 African-American soldiers died. Edison High School in North Philly has the tragic distinction of losing 64 young men of color in the war, the highest casualty

rate of any high school in the nation. Black soldiers, of course, came home to white violence, discrimination, acute racism, scorn and trauma that many could not fathom or forget.

May 19 is a reminder of the legacy of two men who were united in their lifelong struggle against all oppression, united in their commitment to bring about complete freedom for their respective peoples and the entire world.

The Vietnam War was a turning point in my life and altered the course of my vision. I was inspired by the life, writings, and actions of both of these men, and they helped to give meaning and purpose to my life. I've never regretted it. I never made it to the baseball big leagues, (sorry Baltimore Orioles!) but being a very small part of the freedom struggle is like winning the World Series.

May 19 is a great day for me and for millions of other African-Americans, Asians, and freedom-loving folks.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Monday, May 1, 7:00 PM
Greater Philadelphia Thinking
Society event –
The Vital Pole of Shifting One's

The Vital Role of Shifting One's Perspective:

Don't Trust The Truth!

Co-sponsored by the Greater Philadelphia Thinking Society and the Philadelphia Ethical Society, this dialogue is stimulated by a profound 52-minute video presentation by Tricia Wang entitled Don't Trust The Truth! (watch it on YouTube: http://y2u.be/gw3SddWa9DQ).

What are the benefits, prospects, techniques, and challenges of shifting one's perspective? Are the dangers of failing to consider and incorporate more perspectives into our thinking as embarrassing and damaging as Wang's story suggests? Is assuming truth based on a single perspective without the hard work of

considering multiple and sometimes conflicting perspectives ever trustworthy? Can Wang's insights help us navigate the post-truth era to build broader understanding and more effective action? RSVP via the PES Meetup page (www.meetup.com/Ethical-Humanist-Society-of-Philadelphia)

Friday, May 19, 6:00 PM Confronting Racism Task Force – Monthly Potluck and Discussion. Location TBD – not at 1906.

Sunday, May 7, 7:00 PM Introduction to Ethical Humanism - A Focus on Social Justice

Christian Hayden will lead the Introduction to Ethical Humanism on May 7, which also happens to be the week of 'Founder's Day' where 141 years ago Felix Adler delivered Ethical Culture's founding speech.

Dive deep into some of Adler's work and thoughts, as we celebrate the father of Ethical Culture. Please RSVP, so Christian can send out readings for the class. Contact him at chayden423@gmail.com

Sunday, May 21, 9:30 AM Confronting Racism Task Force – Monthly Planning Meeting Second floor, Ethical Society Building.

Monday, May 22, 5:30-7:30 PM Meditation and Peace

Annalisa Castaldo, a Zen Buddhist and Associate Professor of English, Widener University, will lead participants in several mindfulness meditations and then facilitate an interactive conversation about the important role mindfulness can play in our daily lives. Peace Day Philly core team members Frank Neill, Rorng Sorn and Hugh Taft-Morales will also share about their use of mindfulness in bringing positive awareness and action into personal, work and community life. FREE.

A WIDER VIEW OF ETHICAL ACTION

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Henry Pashkow

Just a few opening words to tell our Ethical Action Committee that I've been listening to what you've said from the podium. Your fervor has got me attending more demonstrations than ever before. People are coming together to protest against the political forces that prey upon our vulnerable communities. Political action of every kind is happening all over the world. The energy generated by this effort is exhilarating. But some piece of it is missing, at least for me. It's related to how we build relationships among ourselves to encourage commitment to our humanist ideals.

This missing part calls for a commitment of a quieter sort. It's



a call to action that we hope will lend force to what you have already set in motion. The action centers on building those relationships that imbue our global issues activism with deeper meaning. We are assigning all functions of the old Caring Committee to a new group: Connections. The name change, it seems to me, imputes a wider perspective and a deepening commitment to the entire effort, with the goal of binding the two types of ethical actions together. Let's call it a closing of the circle. Both parts can and should be mutually supportive.

The way we propose to go about this is to form a team to pick up where the old Caring Committee left off. People in that effort were asked to drive people to and from Society events, or deliver food or supplies to their home, when possible. We also asked them to visit people in their homes when they couldn't get out, or at the hospital. Another way was to call members not often at Society to touch base and share Society news, or cook and/or collect food or supplies for members going through a rough time.

HAPPENINGS

Administrators can't walk on water, but...



...ours can work without a floor! "It's all good," says our awesome office administrator, Cheryl Desmond, in the midst of the her usual 'to do' list tsunami in spite of floor resurfacing.

Photos by Nina Diamond

PES rallies with POWER



Youth Voices on Youth Violence



A dozen Ethical Culturists joined the crowd at Thomas Paine Plaza for the April 4 rally honoring the legacy of Martin Luther King Jr. on the 49th anniversary of his assassination. Together we proclaimed that "Workers' Rights are Human Rights."

Taft-Morales Hugh (Philadelphia Ethical Society) and Marla Davis Bellamy (Philadelphia CeaseFire) co-hosted a panel discussion on "Youth Voices on Youth Violence." Radio talk show host Nick Taliaferro facilitated a meaningful conversation with local youth, public officials and faith leaders. Hugh and Marla hope this is just the first dialogue about how to best stop the plague of gun violence in Philadelphia.

Photos by Hugh Taft-Morales

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A WIDER VIEW

I realize I am asking a lot of you. Maybe not so much if you could envision taking one small part of it. The way I do it is to begin with an idea that I cherish and hold within the realm of possibility. Not some fanciful 'what if,' but something I can really envision the fulfillment of. I try to hold it steady in my imagination. In our moral lives, imagination creates ideals that guide us. In the world, and in ourselves, imagination can bring out the best in life. Thinking this way has enriched and deepened my own experience, and given me more to share with other people. It's helped to relieve to some extent the frustrations we all feel as we struggle together against the forces we are faced with.

In a world gone awry, would personal connections with each other help us generate relationships and community that can help address the global issues more effectively? I think it would.

Here are the ways by which to sign on:

- Phone calls or emails to members we haven't seen much of lately
- Visiting those members in hospital or at home, maybe bringing food
- Supporting members going through a tough time, such as the death of a loved one

- Bringing members to the Ethical Society to attend platforms and other events
- Help with referrals by giving Hugh annotated recommendations of individuals or centers offering physical and psychological counseling, and therapy

If you're doing this already, keep doing it. If you want to participate with us, let us know.

Henry Pashkow hpashkow@gmail.com

(Leader Hugh contributed to the final draft of this article)

May 2017

						<u> </u>
Sun	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Sat
	1	2	3	4	5	6
	7:00 PM Don't Trust the Truth		PES MEETING: 6:30 PM Education Committee			
7 11:00 AM Inclusive Feminism: 300 PM Music at Ethical Music for Two Pianos 7:00 p.m.: Intro to Ethical Humanism A Focus on Social Justice	8	9	10 PES MEETINGS 5:30 PM Finance Committee 6:30 PM Ethical Action Committee	11	12	13
14 11:00 AM Work of Overbrook Environmental Center	15	16	6:30 PM PES Board of Trustees	18	6:00 PM Confronting Racism Task Force Potluck	20
9:30 AM Confronting Racism Monthly Planning 11:00 AM What's Ethical About Ethical Culture? 12:00 PM Annual Membership Meeting	5:30 PM Meditation and Peace	23	24 PES MEETING 7:00 PM Camp Linden Committee	7:00 PM Amnesty International Meeting	26	27
28 11:00 AM War, Genocide and the	29	30	31			

Annual Membership Meeting Sunday, May 21st, 12:00 PM

Refugee Experience

We invite all (members only) to attend our annual membership luncheon. Food, drink, and some entertainment will be provided.

At our annual meeting we will vote on amendments to the by-laws, elect new Board of Trustees members, and review our finances and budget for 2017/2018. As required by our by-laws, we will notify the membership of any by-law amendments and proposed new Trustee members 15 days in advance of the annual meeting.

I hope to see all of our members there. It's Sunday, May 21, at 12:00 pm, immediately following the platform. If you plan to attend, please send me an email to advise you'll be there: bbueding@phillyethics.org

Bob Bueding

PES Community Social Events

This year members will be sponsoring a series of Community Social Events. These events will take the place of Service Auction Events that we have had in past years. Events could be a dinner party, a picnic, a museum tour or a service such as photography, counseling, or pet care.

For more information on what events are being offered or to offer your own special event, please contact Jeffrey Dubb: jeffrey.dubb@gmail.com



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Flowers Coordinated by David Ralston

May 7 - David Ralston,
"To my friend Dan Sulman
who is running for Judge
in Philadelphia, and best of luck on
Election Day"

May 14 - Sally Redlener, "To all those Mothers who have brought love and comfort to those in their care"

May 21 - Carol Love, "In celebration of the birthday of my wonderful sister-in-law Megan Love: mother of my two nephews and dedicated worker at Planned Parenthood"

May 28 - TBA

May BIRTHDAYS

- 1 Jim Cummings
- 7 Pat McGeever
- 7 Nick Sanders
- 14 Marta Guttenberg
- 20 Doris Dabrowski
- 28 Bob Kay

Coffee Hour Coordinators

May 7 - John Marshall

Last names: A-E

May 14 - Ken Greiff

Last names: F-K

May 21 - Garry O'Rourke

Last names: L-R

May 28 - Harry Thorn

Last names: S-Z

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 Marshall.

EFFORMED - EFFORD

"My country, right or wrong" is a thing that no patriot would think of saying, except in a desperate case. It is like saying, "My mother, drunk or sober." – G.K. Chesterton

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



Sunday, May 7, 3:00 PM Fine Art Music Company presents Music for Two Pianos

On Sunday, May 7, a second piano will be brought into the Ethical Society auditorium for an all-piano concert by **Kasia Marzec-Salwinski** and **Rollin Wilber**. The entire program will be works for two pianos, which can be one of the most exciting and dynamic performances an audience can see and hear. The

program will include what are considered two of the finest pieces composed for two-piano performance, by Johannes Brahms and Sergei Rachmaninoff.

Program:

Brahms – Variations on a Theme by Haydn Prokofiev – Ballet Suite from Romeo and Juliet Barber – Souvenirs (arranged for two pianos) Rachmaninoff – Suite #2 for Two Pianos

Tickets are \$15 for PES members.

A reception follows the concert - please stay to visit.