



# ETHICAL VIEWS

December 2017

Vol. 132, No. 4 Newsletter of the Philadelphia Ethical Society



## Sunday Platforms

**Sunday, Dec. 3, 11:00 AM**

***Tell Me a Story: Nurturing our Lives through Narratives,***  
**Hugh Taft-Morales, Leader,**  
**Philadelphia Ethical Society**



Storytelling has been a hallmark of human civilization since our species learned to communicate. For children in particular, stories help make sense

of an often-chaotic present, the fading past, and the indeterminate future. Ethical messages are often best translated through story.

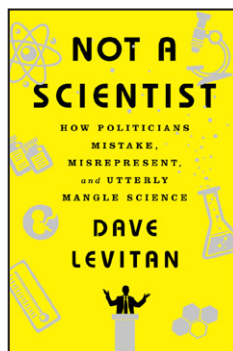
What children's stories helped shape your life, your sense of self, and your conception of right and wrong? Bring in two color copies of the front cover of one of your favorite children's books that helped create meaning in your life and we'll hang it on our *Tree of Knowledge*.



**Sunday, Dec. 10, 11:00 AM**

***Truth and Consequences: Good Science, Bad Politics***  
**Dave Levitan, Science Journalist**

As long as the government is involved in legislating and regulating scientific topics, some of our elected officials will try to mislead us on those topics to further their agenda. In this talk, hear about some of the techniques they use to do so, as well as how some of those scientific topics – from climate change to vaccines – can affect our everyday lives.



How can we, the public, better understand how science is misused by politicians, and what can we do about it?

Dave Levitan is a science journalist, whose work has appeared at a variety of publications including the Atlantic, the Washington Post, Slate, and many others. He writes about a variety of topics, with a focus on the intersection of science and politics, as well as climate change, energy, biomedical research, and more. His book, *Not A Scientist: How Politicians Mistake, Misrepresent, and Utterly Mangle Science*, was released in 2017.

**Sunday, Dec. 17, 11:00 AM**

***Solstice Celebration***



All are welcome to our Winter Solstice Platform, PES's traditional celebration of warmth and light that helps us get through the cold and dark of winter months! Words of wisdom, music, and candles will help kindle hope and inspiration.

**Sunday, Dec. 24, 11:00 AM**

***There will be no platform this Sunday. Our best wishes for a happy holiday.***

**Sunday, Dec. 31, 11:00 AM**

***New Year's Revelations: How We've Grown and What We've Learned in 2017***

**Facilitator: Janet Horwitz,**  
**Psy.D., PES member**

Janet Horwitz will facilitate a discussion on this topic through posing some thought-provoking questions which will help us reflect on and appreciate areas of our lives in which we've made progress or where we have learned valuable lessons.

***Sunday Ethical Education for Kids (SEEK) will meet during platforms on December 3rd and 17th. If you have questions, please contact Nick Sanders,***  
**[nick@phillyethics.org](mailto:nick@phillyethics.org)**

## LEADER'S COLUMN



### *Hills and Valleys: Managing the Ups and Downs of Life*

*Hugh Taft-Morales,  
Leader, Philadelphia Ethical Society*

Part of what I love about being in community with others is how we help each other through the ups and downs of life. Despite being a particularly “immature” 60-year-old, I had my two arthritic hips replaced just a year ago. I credit my surgeon and all the doctors, nurses and the therapist for allowing me to be back hiking the hills of Quebec last summer. But it was my wife,

ruminate further, but unable to converse about other things. Soon, however, we helped each other up so we could figure how to start climbing out of that valley.

Without other people, we might stay in a cocoon made of a mixture of self-pity, anger, and hopelessness. We might curl up into a fetal position and stay in bed. I’ve felt that way now and then. Or, we could fall further into the depths of depression. To avoid that fate, I reminded myself of the words of one of my favorite philosophers, Bernard Williams: “Life is supposed to be a series of peaks and valleys. The secret is to keep the valleys from becoming Grand Canyons.”

We cannot control the ups and downs of our lives, but we can control our attitude toward them. We can’t control them all the time,

As I shared in a November platform on “Happiness,” it is not always easy to feel “happy.” Sometimes the valleys are too deep for that. But, if we look at the whole journey of our lives, and see the many hills and valleys we have traversed, we are reminded that there will be hilltops in our future. We can climb the slopes of the valley, especially with others who help us from time to time.

Helen Keller’s life is a testament to her remarkable strength and optimism. She said, “The marvelous richness of human experience would lose something of rewarding joy if there were no limitations to overcome. The hilltop hour would not be half so wonderful if there were no dark valleys to traverse.” Despite the seductive, Taoist wisdom that in all dark there is a spark of light, I am not always

willing to thank the valley for giving me the hill. But it is true that overcoming adversity can bring us joy.

The adversity I have faced in my life has been relatively modest. My valleys have been relatively small, and for that I am grateful. But no one knows what the future holds. Perhaps I need to steel myself more for times when the valleys are



my family, and my friends that helped me climb out of my arthritis-provoked psychological valley.

Whether we are stuck in physical or mental ruts, it is those we know and care about that best help us manage the ups and downs of life. This past year many of us were thrown into the valley of political despair. For days, even weeks, after the election, we were in shock. Many retreated from the world, not wanting to

or do it as easily as flipping a switch. It takes intention and will to shape one’s attitude. Simple techniques of affirmation, like writing three things you are grateful for each day when you wake up or before you go to sleep, can help keep the valleys in perspective. But little does better to shape our attitude than the friendship of others willing to be with us as we find the energy to climb out of the valley.

deep. I hope then to tap some of the toughness evident in this quote from Queen Latifah: “There are times you can’t really see or even feel how sweet life can be. Hopefully its mountains will be higher than its valleys are deep. I know things that are broken can be fixed. Take the punch if you have to, hit the canvas and then get up again. Life is worth it.” Life is worth it – its hills and its valleys.

## PRESIDENT'S COLUMN



### *The Darkest Time of the Year*

*Bob Bueding*

Remember the old saying that the light at the end of the tunnel is really an in-coming train? Sometimes life feels like that, especially now, in early December, the darkest time of the year. By the time we reach the 21st of this month, the darkness will begin to lessen.

The darkness in our government continues, but we as Ethical Humanists can find the light at the end of the tunnel. So how do we go about this, to put the light back where it belongs?

Back in October a number of members and I attended a Skills Summit presented by The

American Ethical Union. The purpose of this gathering was to help sharpen our skills in getting the word out about the message of goodness we strive to live every day.

If you look at history, yes, we've come a long way, but in many ways, we're still moving very slowly. We live in a large and prosperous city. Philadelphia is a wonderful place to live, but Philly is the poorest big city in the country. Just take a drive through areas of North Philadelphia and witness the poverty, the run-down homes and buildings, and the children playing in the streets because there are no playgrounds and the kids have little or no structure in their lives.

In a city like Philadelphia, with its growth and wealth, no one should be homeless, no one should go hungry, no one who wants to work should lack a job. Much of what I'm talking about goes directly back to education. That's where we come in! We have an obligation to help those less fortunate. We're not just talking about money; we have to lend our time and talents to help

others. That's our daily goal at The Ethical Society.

Our work will never be done. Many of our members are on the front lines every day, striving for social justice for all. We need to continue our fight to improve our government, so that our representatives are not fighting with each other instead of accomplishing what we have elected them to do.

Our Skills Summit helped our members hone their individual skills so that we can better spread the word. Let's take those lessons and put them into action. The light at the end of the tunnel can begin to get brighter every day. Please be part of the solution; help us to achieve our goal. Let your light shine!

I hope everyone has a happy holiday season and a peaceful and healthy new year.

Bob

[bbueding@phillyethics.org](mailto:bbueding@phillyethics.org)

## Philadelphia Ethical Society Gallery

Opening  
December 17,  
Noon-1:30 PM

Member Susan K. D'Alessio will display her paintings in the gallery with a formal opening after Platform. Working abstractly with oil paint, watercolor and collage, she creates small fantasy worlds filled with color, texture, movement and space. An instinctive process, there is no planning done beforehand. Rather, she begins with one interesting shape and builds the composition, gradually adding additional shapes suggested by the one before.

Susan has been painting since 2006 after concluding a successful 30 year career as a designer/jeweler. She graduated with a Certificate in Painting from the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts in 2012. Currently she is a member of the Cerulean Arts Collective, 1355 Ridge Avenue, Philadelphia. A solo exhibition of her work is scheduled at Cerulean in April, 2018.

Susan has been a member of the Ethical Humanist Society of



Philadelphia since 1985. She lives with her writer husband, Gerard R. D'Alessio, in South Philadelphia. One-half of the proceeds from sales of the work will be donated to the EHSOP.



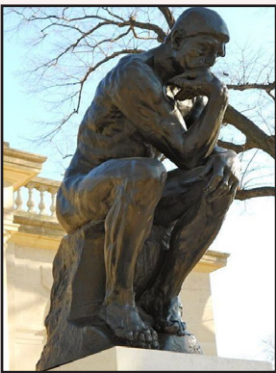
# ANNOUNCEMENTS

## Sunday, December 3, 7:00 PM Introduction to Ethical Humanism

Join Hugh Taft-Morales and Christian Hayden for our last Introduction to Ethical Humanism of 2017. We'll share some snacks and conversation with anyone wanting to know more about our non-theist alternative to traditional religion. Please RSVP to [LeaderHugh@phillyethics.org](mailto:LeaderHugh@phillyethics.org) so Hugh knows you are coming!

## Monday, December 4, 7:00 PM PES/Thinking Society joint event: *Empathizing with Enemies*

Human beings are capable of empathizing with friends and dehumanizing enemies. How do we balance these two often-conflicting tendencies? We often fall into "us-versus-them" thinking regarding those we label as



enemies. Can we find a way to protect ourselves from real threats while also deescalating our own "fight or flight" reactions? Can we, should we, empathize with our enemies?

Come to a discussion organized by the Greater Philadelphia Thinking Society (GPTS) and the Philadelphia Ethical Society (PES). The format will be similar to previous joint events: short introductory presentations to frame the discussion, followed

by small group discussions, and ending with a whole-group sharing of take-aways. Most of the time will be spent in small groups. Light refreshments and non-alcoholic beverages will be provided. Hugh Taft-Morales (PES) and Sandy Catz (GPTS) will be co-hosts. More at <http://phillyethics.org/notices/ThinkSocEmpathy.pdf>



## Thursday, December 7, 5:30 PM PES hosts a discussion presented by the United Nations Association of Greater Philadelphia, in Honor of Human Rights Day:

*Can Health Care Ever Be a Human Right in the United States?*

The panelists are:

- **Gene Bishop, MD** is a Clinical Professor of Medicine at the Perelman School at Penn and retired Associate Director of the Wood Clinic at Pennsylvania Hospital. She is a long-time member of Physicians for a National Health Program.
- **Allison Hoffman, JD** is a faculty member at Penn Law School and a fellow at Leonard Davis Institute of Health Economics. Her work focuses on health care policy and law, most notably in regard to the Affordable Healthcare Act.

• **Tony Spadaro** is a 4th year MD/MPH student at the Perelman School and works with Students for a National Health Program.

They will present their views and engage in a dialogue about how we, as a country, can move forward. We're the world's richest country. So, why can't we guarantee everyone the right to good health care? Can we ever get to the point where we can? What practical steps are necessary and what do we need to do to move forward in our current political environment? Come and hear advocates for reform of the Affordable Care Act (ACA) and a Single Payer System. Free refreshments & cash bar.

## Fun with Fictionary

### Sunday, December 17, 5:00-7:00 PM at PES: Fun with Fictionary, Drinks and Appetizers

Hugh hosts and teaches how to play "Fictionary," his favorite parlor game! Bring a modest appetizer to share and BYOB. RSVP to Hugh at [LeaderHugh@phillyethics.org](mailto:LeaderHugh@phillyethics.org) so that he brings enough dictionaries!?

### Tuesday, December 19, 7:30-9:00 PM at PES: Stories and Desserts

Hugh reads and leads a discussion about two of his favorite holiday stories: *The Grinch that Stole Christmas* and O' Henry's *Gift of*

*the Maji*. What do humanists have to say about these Christmas classics?



Bring a dessert or a beverage to share. RSVP to Hugh at [LeaderHugh@phillyethics.org](mailto:LeaderHugh@phillyethics.org) to say what you will be contributing so we don't end up with four fruitcakes and a bottle of beer.

### Seeking Pledge Luncheon hosts for March 4, 2018!

Mark your calendar for one of the most important events on the PES calendar – our annual Members Pledge Luncheon when we share a special lunch, have some fun, and recommit to support the community we love so much.



Please see Pledge Chair Vince Russo or Hugh Taft-Morales if you are willing to act as a *table host* for the pledge luncheon. The Pledge Team needs you!!!

**All members, mark your calendars and join us on March 4, 2018, 12:00 Noon for our PES Pledge Luncheon!**

### From the PES – John Marshall CONFRONTING RACISM TASK FORCE: *The Legacy of Race and Policing*

On October 25th the Parkway Free Library held a panel discussion on the topic of race and policing. It was sponsored by the Pennsylvania Humanities Council. The moderator was Dr. James M Peterson, Professor of African Studies at Lehigh University. The panelists were:

- Kevin J Bethel, retired Deputy Police Commissioner
- Andrea Custis, CEO of the Philadelphia Urban League, until recently
- Councilman Curtis Jones Jr. 4th District
- Andrea Ritchie of NYC Barnard Center

After Kevin J Bethel retired in January 2016, he joined the Philadelphia School District Diversion Program. Its purpose is to help stop the school to prison pipeline. He said that whenever possible, instead of telling officers to go out and arrest “bad persons”, police must be given the proper tools. They must be aware of the effects of trauma, poverty, and mental health problems. They should consider referring youths to community experts. Mr. Bethel, who also favors the ending of cash bail, also discussed profiling.

Andrea Custis has worked as affiliate CEO of the Philadelphia Urban League. Her focus is community action for social and economic empowerment. She feels that this can be achieved by retraining and hiring adults and young people. She also cited “broken window policing” - the overreacting to minor infractions. As a result young people are afraid of the police.

Curtis Jones, Jr. is Vice Chair of the City Parks, Recreation, and Cultural Affairs. He is also chair of the West Philly Public Safety Office. Because a youth's first contact with police is so important, he strongly supports community policing. He said that his top three issues are acting on prejudice and fears, overcoming justice by zip-code, and early education.

Andrea Ritchie is head of NYC's Barnard's Center's Research on Women. She is on the LGBT Advisory Panel that, along with other issues, focuses on LGBT women's issues involving the police. She said the top three issues are racial and gender disparities in police reactions to calls, police sexual violence, and police contact with youth.

There was byplay between Kevin J Bethel and Curtis Jones, Jr. Mr. Bethel said that if the home environment is unstable, it is of vital importance that there be a good mentor. Mr. Jones commented that he was somewhat wild during his youth. Mr. Bethel playfully asked Mr. Jones to elaborate, though he declined. The effectiveness of body cameras was raised – especially the ability of officers to turn them off at critical times. Mr. Bethel replied that while it is unfortunately true that this happens, the technology is improving. One enhancement will automatically turn the camera on when the officer draws the weapon.

Ms. Custis was asked about how her career at Verizon prepared her for the Urban League position. She replied that she was deeply involved in community outreach (unlike the common belief that corporations are impersonal). Mr. Jones and Mr. Bethel shared experiences of being stopped for “driving while Black.” They said that if a Black male is driving a nice car, it is too often assumed that he might be involved in criminal behavior. Andrea Ritchie spoke about police sexual violence in general, but focused on attacks against minority and LGBT women. Mr. Bethel replied that he has been horrified by these transgressions.

A member of the audience raised the issue that too often officers are not convicted of crimes. Mr. Bethel responded that he is aware that the FOP fights to keep investigations in-house. He said that he favors an independent investigative authority. He allows that movement in that direction has been slow, but feels that the tide is changing.

# Happenings

## News about what our members have been doing

On October 25th, PES member Adrienne McNair organized & presented the 2nd Cancer Awareness Event Information and Awards night to the community of Kingsessing in Southwest Philadelphia. The event was held at the Francis J. Myers Recreation Center. Representatives from the Criminal Justice, Parks & Recreation, Free Library of Philadelphia, Drexel Medicine & the World USA Tae Kwon Do Martial Arts supported this worthwhile event.

Speakers included Dr. Roy Gay, oncologist who spoke of the seriousness of having a family physician and annual exams for possibly early detection of cancer especially for men & women over fifty. Awards were handed out to exceptional persons overcoming cancer.



*The Francis J. Myers Recreation Center, 5801 Kingsessing Avenue, hosted the 2nd Cancer Awareness Event Information and Awards night, presented by PES member Adrienne McNair.*

On Sunday, November 5, Drag songstress and host Cookie Diorio and *"The Art of the Heal"* held an entertaining musical fund-raiser, *Music, The Food of Love*. \$540 was raised to benefit for the **Greater Philadelphia Coalition Against Hunger**. Cookie was accompanied by pianist Ting-Ting Wong and Philadelphia-based singer/songwriter Sonja Sofya performed a mix of covers and original songs.



*Above: Cookie Diorio and Hugh Taft-Morales at The Art of the Heal fund-raiser on November. 5.  
Left: singer/songwriter Sonja Sofya*





# DECEMBER 2017



| Sun  | Mon  | Tues   | Wed   | Thurs   | Fri | Sat |
|--|--|--|---|---|-----|-----|
|  |  |  |   |   | 1   | 2   |
| 3<br>11:00 AM<br><i>Tell Me a Story</i>  | 4<br>7:00 PM<br><i>Empathizing with Enemies<br/>PES/Thinking Society Event</i> | 5  | 6<br>PES MEETING: 6:30 PM<br>Education Committee                                    | 7<br>5:30 PM<br><i>Can Health Care Ever Be a Human Right in the United States?</i><br>Refreshments first; program begins at 6:15 PM | 8   | 9   |
| 10<br>11:00 AM<br><i>Truth and Consequences</i>  | 11   | 12   | 13<br>PES MEETINGS<br>5:30 PM Finance Committee<br>6:30 PM Ethical Action Committee | 14<br>7:00 PM<br>Amnesty International Meeting  | 15  | 16  |
| 17<br>11:00 a.m.<br><i>Winter Solstice Celebration</i><br>NOON<br><i>PES Gallery Opening</i><br>5:00 PM<br><i>Fun with Fictionary,</i> | 18   | 19<br>7:30 PM<br><i>Stories and Desserts</i> | 20<br>6:30 PM<br>PES Board of Trustees  | 21  | 22  | 23  |
| 24<br><i>No Platform</i><br><i>Merry Christmas!</i>  | 25   | 26   | 27<br>PES MEETING<br>5:30 PM<br>Camp Linden Committee                               | 28  | 29  | 30  |
| 31<br>11:00 AM<br><i>New Year's Revelations</i>  | JANUARY 1<br><i>Happy New Year</i>   |  |   |   |     |     |

## QUOTE - UNQUOTE

**“When it comes to moral judgments, we think we are scientists discovering the truth, but actually we are lawyers arguing for positions we arrived at by other means.”**

Jonathan Haidt, author of *Why Good People are Divided by Politics and Religion*



## SUNDAY SERVICES

11:00 A.M. September  
through June

*Ethical Views* is published monthly  
except July and August.

*Editor*, Henry Pashkow  
*Layout*, Celeste Hardester  
*Production*, Cheryl Desmond  
*Web Master*, Nick Sanders

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## Coffee Hour Coordinators

December 3 - Kate Esposito.  
Last names: A-E  
December 10- Ken Greiff  
Last names: F-K  
December 17 - Garry O'Rourke  
Last names: L-Q  
December 31 - Harry Thorn  
Last names: R-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.

## DECEMBER BIRTHDAYS

|    |                       |
|----|-----------------------|
| 1  | Bill Coffey           |
| 10 | Ron Coburn            |
| 14 | Richard Kiniry        |
| 21 | Bertha Stovall Waters |
| 23 | Bob Moore             |
| 25 | Susan Brotherton      |

## Flowers Coordinated by Sally Redlener



December 3 -  
The Sunday Flower  
Dedication is from Betsy Lightbourn  
"In loving memory of Dale Drews, my  
beloved partner and co-conspirator."

December 10 - The Floral Dedication  
today is from Sally Redlener "In  
memory of the first anniversary of  
Marguerite Matthew's passing -  
to her selfless devotion & action  
toward PEACE."

December 17 - The Floral Dedication  
today is from Vince Russo  
"dedicated to the unity of  
humankind."

For suggestions regarding this  
newsletter, contact Henry Pashkow  
[hpashkow@gmail.com](mailto:hpashkow@gmail.com)

## What's Goin' On?

Other public events at the  
Ethical Society Building in December

• Friday, December 8th 8PM – 10PM at PES  
**A Cappella Project—Philly, Fall Benefit Concerts -**  
Featuring Project Philly's Reprise, & Reverb, as well as  
guests the Baldwin B-Flats and The Liberty Belles Chorus.  
\$5 admission supports a scholarship fund for promising  
students to attend Walnut Street Theatre's summer camp.  
More info at: [facebook.com/events/186317998591704](https://facebook.com/events/186317998591704):

• Saturday December 23rd at 5PM at PES  
**"Carols in the City" Holiday Concert, Marian Anderson  
Museum and Historical Society**  
- Featuring Marian Anderson Scholar Artists and Talent.  
For more information and to purchase tickets  
call 215-779-4219, or visit  
[marianandersonhistoricalsociety.weebly.com/  
special-events.html](http://marianandersonhistoricalsociety.weebly.com/special-events.html)

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