

Harriet Tubman

ETHICAL VIEWS

February 2020 Vol. 134, No. 6 Newsletter of the Philadelphia Ethical Society



Sunday Platforms

Sunday, Feb. 2, 11:00 AM
Mr. Republican Rolls in His Grave

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



The Philadelphia Ethical Society does not endorse any political candidate or political party. Analyzing the transformation of the Republican

Party over the last seventy years, however, seems fair game! Leader Hugh Taft-Morales explores the values and policies of the Republican Party regarding how the state can best serve its citizens. Rather than seeing the government as part of the solution to social problems, Ronald Reagan pronounced: "The most terrifying words in the English language are: I'm from the government and I'm here to help." How might Mr. Republican - Hugh's grandfather Robert A. Taft - respond to the anti-government drift of the "Grand Old Party?"

Sunday, Feb. 9, 11:00 AM
What's Love Got To Do With It: Harriet Tubman and Black Power Lorene Cary, Author



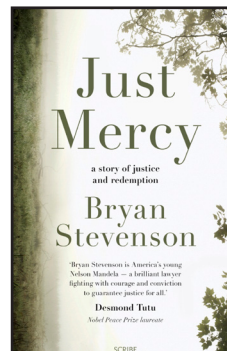
Lorene Cary will speak about Harriet Tubman's later life, and what it tells us about faith and activism in America – and their consequences.

Lorene Cary's books include the most recent memoir, *Ladysitting: My Year With Nana at the End of Her Century*. Her first novel, *The Price of a Child* was the inaugural selection of Philadelphia's Annual One Book, One Philadelphia program.

She teaches Creative Writing at the University of Pennsylvania, including courses that connect to the youth voting project, #VoteThatJawn. *My General Tubman*, her first play, appears at the Arden Theatre until March.

Sunday, Feb. 16, 11:00 AM
Just Mercy
**Hugh Taft-Morales, Leader,
Philadelphia Ethical Society**

With the release of a feature film *Just Mercy*, Bryan Stevenson's work helping the poor, the incarcerated, and the condemned caught up in the criminal justice system will soon be known by millions. Already praised for his book, *Just Mercy*, and the creation of his Equal Justice Initiative, Stevenson is worth a closer look. In honor of Black History Month, Hugh Taft-Morales explores both a cruel and unjust criminal justice system that hits particularly hard on people of color and the poor, and the efforts of one person to right the scales of justice.



Sunday, Feb. 23, 11:00 AM
Keeping Church and State Separate: Recent Developments
Alex Luchenitser, Associate Legal Director, Americans United for Separation of Church and State

Alex Luchenitser will discuss the recent lawsuit against officials of the Pennsylvania House of Representatives in which he represented the Philadelphia Ethical Society, its late Leader Emeritus Richard Kiniry, and other nontheist groups and individuals that sought equal rights for nontheists to deliver solemnizing messages to open House sessions. He will also consider other current and recent cases that Americans United has litigated, as well as the obstacles that an increasingly conservative federal court system presents to the battles for church and state separation and equality for nontheists and religious minorities.

Luchenitser has litigated church-state lawsuits throughout the country for Americans United since January 2001. His cases have challenged discriminatory governmental prayer practices, public-school promotion of religion, public funding of religious activity, and governmental sponsorship of religious displays. He has also defended the rights of women, LGBTQ people, and religious minorities against religion-based discrimination and deprivation.

And next month . . .

Sunday, Mar. 1, 11:00 AM
"Deed Before Creed" and Ethical Non-Theism,
**Hugh Taft-Morales, Leader,
Philadelphia Ethical Society**

LEADER'S COLUMN

REMEMBERING RICHARD

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

Thanks to John Marshall, Lelah Marie, Aissia Richardson, Betsy Lightbourn, Nick Sanders, and others for sharing some reflections. I am sorry I could not include everything sent to me.

It will take the Ethical Society a long time to process the fact that our Leader Emeritus, Richard Kiniry, is no longer amongst us. The private side of him kept the details of health decline somewhat hidden from view. This column just scratches the surface of what he meant to us; a hundred such columns would not do justice to the man and his work. At least we will have an opportunity to honor him more formally at a memorial service later this spring, details to follow.

Personally, I am indebted to Richard for his support as one of my mentors. He offered candid advice when asked, appropriately shared useful wisdom, and gave me the space to become PES's Leader in my own way. In particular I valued his intellectual work, a broader collection of which will soon be available on our website. He was known amongst the National Leaders Council (our national humanist clergy group) for fluid writing, philosophically sound reasoning, and ethical insight.

He was a Renaissance man – he had many talents and areas of expertise, from his teaching skill demonstrated in many of his continuing education classes to the gourmet meals he prepared at his home when entertaining. Betsy

fondly remembers summer evenings in Richard's garden – a “quiet spot of nature in the midst of South street, amongst rocks, plants of all kinds, a fish pond home to sinuous carp, birds in the trees” – when he would prepare and serve delicious salmon, vichyssoise, and assorted canapes.

His artistic side was on display every day in the Leader's office, the trees and light of Rittenhouse Square reflecting off a beautiful mirror he crafted. For our Winter Solstice services he would deck the hall with garlands of pine, famously teetering on a ladder to do so, leaving the auditorium lovingly prepared and ready for us to “bring back the light.” A small touch of thoughtful artistry



was related by Aissia, remembering how her grandmother, Bertha Waters, worked with Richard to enhance our Sunday flowers on the podium with a metal container. The brass vase will remind us of their partnership as “problem identifiers and problem solvers.” As Aissia put it, “They shake the tree so others can pick up the fruit.”

No reflection about Richard would be complete without mentioning his own embrace of the “cranky curmudgeon” label. Perhaps he was different earlier in life, but in the 15 years I have known him, Richard liked to play this role – making wise cracks, complaining about the cruelties and

superficialities of the world. As Betsy recalled, Richard was “a man of strong opinions that he did not hesitate to express,” and he often did so with a flair. John Marshall recalls Richard's “dry humor” and the time he threw chalk at someone for agreeing with him about the challenge of correctly pronouncing his last name!

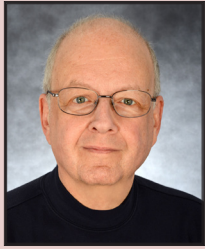
Little will stick with me as much, however, as Richard's earnest and sincere dedication to explaining and advocating for Ethical Humanism. When searching for a spiritual home, Nick remembers being warmly welcomed by Richard who “gave me the conceptual underpinning of a life as an ethical humanist.” Nick explained that “[t]he readings and discussions he provided led me to see that naturalism and ethical human relationships were quite adequate and fulfilling. I have since then been building on that foundation.”

Lelah, who only knew Richard for a couple of years, appreciated the fact that “he seemed to be a die-hard old school left wing liberal.” He certainly rejected the “dog-eat-dog” competitive capitalism promoted by those wanting to sanctify greed. His politics revealed his deep sympathy for the downtrodden. Despite his cynicism, Richard had faith that human beings could make the world a better place. He believed that government and other forms of collective action should be directed to feed the poor and protect the planet. He admirably represented our proactive approach to the world encapsulated by Aissia's words: “Ethical culture teaches not to accept the status quo and to not just complain but actively work to make positive change.” Thank you, Richard, for being such a good teacher.

A memorial service will take place in April, details to follow.

PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

20/20 VISION



*Bob Bueding,
President,
Philadelphia
Ethical
Society*

Here it is the beginning of February and I've already blown through all my New Year's Resolutions. So I was thinking what it would be like if the U.S. made some resolutions for 2020.

What would realistic gun laws

look like? Is it barely possible that we're rational enough to get semi-automatic weapons off the streets? Could we enact legislation to require mandatory background checks for ALL gun purchases or transfers?

In the wealthiest country in the world, why do millions of our people have no health insurance, and why do Americans spend ten times more, on average, for prescription drugs than our Canadian neighbors a few hundred miles away? Why are an inordinate percentage of personal bankruptcies the result of out-of-control medical costs?

Why, 155 years after the Civil War, are we still judging people by the

color of their skin, and not the contents of their character? Why does our court justice system reek of our racial bias? Why are huge swatches of our prison system run for personal profit, and why is our theory of criminal justice retributive and not restorative?

Since I'm not a viable candidate to win the Nobel Prize (in any category), what can I do? What can any of us do? Probably not much alone. Lucky that there are so many groups providing opportunity for action together--including with our Ethical Society.

– Bob

bbueding@phillyethics.org

From the PES Ending Racism Task Force:

WHY THE GOAL OF ENDING RACISM IS INEXTRICABLY TIED TO ETHICAL HUMANISM

submitted by Stan Horwitz

Every month, our Ethical Views editor sets aside space for this column. Every month, a different member of the Ending Racism Task Force volunteers to write this column. This month, it is my turn to write this column.

I am going to share with you why I believe that one cannot be an Ethical Humanist without renouncing racism. I am fairly new to Ethical Humanism, so I have a lot to learn, so this is what I have learned, thus far.

Every Sunday before the Platform begins, we are reminded of the words of the late Richard Kiniry and Curt Collier who are both former

Ethical Culture leaders. Richard and Curt taught that the primary belief in Ethical Culture is "if we relate to others in a way that brings out their best, we will at the same time elicit the best in ourselves."

As we strive to bring out the unique abilities in other people, we bring out our own unique abilities, so the reverse must also be true. If we relate to others in ways that prevent the best in them being brought out, we also inhibit bringing out the best in ourselves.

When we behave in a racist way towards another person, we prevent ourselves from bringing out our best, so we become victims of our own racism. Because of racism, millions of people of color have had their unique abilities held back. This is antithetical to Ethical Culture. No one can bring out the best in themselves by relating with anyone in a way that does not bring

out their best. This is why I feel that racism and Ethical Culture are polar opposites. So, to be faithful to Ethical Culture, we must actively oppose racist behavior and call it out whenever we encounter it.

None of us white people can fully relate to people of color if we allow racism to taint our interactions with them. Racism brings out the worst in others, not their best. As a result, no one can bring out their best by relating with others in a racist way. To build ourselves up, we must avoid engaging in racist behavior.

With that in mind, I invite my fellow Philadelphia Ethical Society Members to join the Philadelphia Ethical Society's Ending Racism Task Force. You can see Sylvia Metzler, Erik Younge, Marta, Bob Bueding, John Marshall or McCormick, Michi, Nick, Betsy, me, or any of the ERTF's other members for more information about our task force.



ANNOUNCEMENTS

All events in PES building
unless otherwise noted

Sunday, Feb. 2, 4:00- 5:30pm **Intro to Ethical Humanism**

Come to an afternoon discussion on the history and



philosophy of Ethical Humanism. Hugh Taft-Morales will lead this discussion and share what goes on at the

Ethical Society, a home for this progressive alternative to traditional religion. Wine and cheese served. Free and open to all. Note the earlier time just for February!

Tuesday, Feb. 4, 7:00pm- **Effective Altruism: Lightning Talks**

Members of the Effective Altruism Philadelphia group will be giving Lightning Talks, i.e. short 10-15 minute presentations, on topics they are passionate and knowledgeable about. Topics covered might range from Global Health to Artificial Intelligence to Pandemic Risks.



Saturday, Feb. 8, 2:00pm- **Climate Change Action Theater presents "Art Meets Climate Change"**

Stop being paralyzed by the specter of environmental collapse! Come for the reading of five climate change plays followed by a discussion of climate change actions, and distribution of the *Sustainability Pledge* asking people to take responsibility for at least one new climate action.

The plays are:

Philip Braithwaite – *Ice Flow*

Jordan Hall – *The Donation*

Elsbeth Tilley – *Lin and Ash*

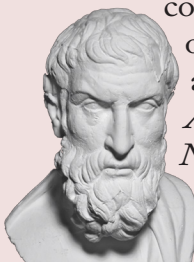
Maryann Karanja – *The Birthday Suit*

Stephen Sewell – *The Reason*

Readers are all from the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute (OLLI) at Temple University. Free and open to the public!

Sunday, Feb. 9 and 23, 4:00pm **Philadelphia Stoics discussion**

Join the Philadelphia Stoics on February 9 and 23 for their continuing discussion of the lessons and exercises in *A Handbook for New Stoics: How to Thrive in a World Out of Your Control – 52 Week-*



by-Week Lessons by Massimo Pigliucci and Gregory Lopez.

In preparation for the meeting on February 9, you are encouraged to do the reading and try the exercises for Weeks 15 and 16. For the February 23 meeting, please do the reading and exercises for Weeks 17 and 18.



Sunday, Feb. 16, 3:00 pm **Fine Art Music concert**

Chopin: Later Years, in Paris

This is the second of the three-part season entirely devoted to the music, life, and influences around the composer, Frederic Chopin. fineartmusic.com

PRESIDENTIAL TRIVIA QUIZ GAME

**Monday, Feb. 17,
7:30 - 9:30pm**

Presidential Trivia Quiz Game

Come for a casual gathering with Hugh Taft-Morales on this President's Day when he will try out a Presidential Trivia Quiz Game he is making up for the occasion! This is mainly a post-dinner social gathering, so BYOB. Cheap munchies provided! RSVP to Hugh at LeaderHugh@phillyethics.org.

Continued on page 5

ANNOUNCEMENTS continued

ON GOOD BEHAVIOR

**Wednesday, Feb. 19,
12 noon - Is Civility
Always Good?** Second in a series, "On Good Behavior," a light-hearted but serious exploration of how we treat each other. Come for a brown bag lunch discussion with Hugh Taft-Morales about this question: "Is Civility Always Good?" In today's tempestuous times commentators bemoan the apparent loss of civility in social discourse. On TV, radio and on-line, sometimes it seems that people are competing to be rude. Discussion of "hot button issues," like politics, religion, racism, and the #MeToo movement, often provoke mean-spirited shouting matches. Can we revive our respect for basic civility, both in the media and in our everyday interactions? Join Hugh Taft-Morales as he explores "civility."

Future discussions include the following:
March 18 - *Enemies and Empathy*
April 22 - *Friendship*
May 20 - *Cultivating Gratitude*

**Thursday, Feb. 20, 6:00pm
- 8:00 pm – The Ethics
of Affirmative Action** A presentation by the Forum for Philosophy, Ethics, and Public Affairs of the University of Pennsylvania in partnership with the Philadelphia Ethical Society. Should universities design admissions policies to increase the representation of racial and ethnic minorities? Some argue that affirmative action is necessary to address inequality; others argue that affirmative action is racist. Come and discuss the ethics of affirmative action with two prominent philosophers from the University of Pennsylvania: Anita Allen (the Henry R. Silverman Professor of Law and professor of philosophy, and Vice Provost) and Quayshawn Spencer (the Robert S. Blank Presidential Associate Professor of Philosophy).

**Sunday, Feb. 23 2:00pm
Think Ethics – Thoughtful
conversations about
philosophy: Power and
Discipline** Alex Gutierrez, a senior at Haverford College majoring in philosophy, continues the philosophical conversations series with the

WHAT IS SCIENCE?

question, What is Science? In today's society, science is viewed as the primary arbiter of knowledge. But what kinds of things are proper scientific objects? How does science work in producing knowledge? And how does science relate to philosophy? Explore these questions and more in this month's Think Ethics event, What is Science? Free and open to the public.

FUTURE EVENTS: SAVE THE DATE!

**Sunday, March 1, 12 noon –
"Seeing 20/20!"**

We hope to see all PES members at our 2020 Membership Pledge Luncheon! Food, fun, and friendship all to make sure we focus on our future. In February you'll receive a formal invitation from your luncheon host.



*Who lurks at our door?
Could it be Hercule Poirot,
Agatha Christie's famed Belgian
detective from times long past?
Has he returned and is he on a
fresh new case? What could it
be but, well, Poirot never tells!
Come to the Membership Pledge
Luncheon on March 1st to find
out!"...*

From Camp Linden
submitted by Leonard Weeks

LEONARD'S NATURE WALK

The first week of camp we divide the campers in the environmental education program into two groups of ten to fifteen children.

One group goes to the garden first. Last summer I took the other group on a nature walk.

My goal was to encourage the campers to focus on the natural world and experience it with all of their senses. I told the campers that this was an experiment, and we would evaluate it at the end of the walk. I asked them to imagine that they were Lenapi Indians, who once lived in this area.

Like Indians, we were going to walk through the woods in total silence. We would communicate with hand signs. I reviewed several familiar hand signs: pointing an index finger for "look here;" a hand behind the ear for "listen;" a single finger at the lips for "silence;" and two index fingers in the shape of the letter "T" for "time-out," which meant we were permitted to talk until the time-out concluded.

I asked the campers to look very carefully at the things I pointed to, and listen very carefully when I

signaled them to listen; and to always stay behind me, and not run ahead. With this instruction we walked, first along the main driveway, and then along the path leading to the cabin where Sharon and I reside during the summer. As we walked I pointed out different things that attracted my attention, and stopped to listen from time to time.

As we approached the fence separating our property from the neighbor's field, I signaled "time-out." I told the campers: "there are kids who lived next door who would like to meet you, but

campers to feed them through the fence.

After feeding the goats, we resumed our silence and headed back. We returned to the main driveway and, after walking through the parking area, followed a short path leading to the field. As we entered the field the open sky replaced the overhanging tree branches, and, with my hands held high, I signaled the campers to look at the sky. We proceeded to visit the roosters, and that was the end of the walk.

As an evaluation, I asked the campers to answer these questions in their own minds: (1) how well were you able to remain silent; (2) how well were you able to walk without noise; (3) how well were you able to look really carefully; and (4) how well were you able to listen carefully? I thanked them for going on the walk with me.

When we parted these campers met with Sharon for the introduction to the garden program. I met with the group that had just finished in the garden, to take them on the nature walk.



The campers ...



The kids ...

you have to call them in their own language." The campers started to guess what language the kids spoke. Then I told the campers to repeat after me, and I called out: "nyaah, nyaah," As the campers called: "nyaah, nyaah," a big billy-goat; two nanny-goats and two kids emerged from a lean-to in the neighbor's field, and headed towards us. The campers squealed with delight. When the goats reached us, I handed out leafy twigs for the




Super Volunteer Joe Bonus getting into it.



FEBRUARY 2020



Sun	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Sat
2 11:00 AM <i>Mr. Republican Rolls in his Grave</i> Hugh Taft-Morales 4:00 PM: <i>Intro to Ethical Humanism</i>	3	4 7:00 PM Effective Altruism: Lightning Talks	5 PES MEETING: 6:30 PM Education Committee	6	7	8 2:00 PM Climate Change Action Theater presents "Art Meets Climate Change"
9 11:00 AM <i>What's Love Got To Do With It: Harriet Tubman and Black Power</i> 4:00 - 5:30 PM Philadelphia Stoics Discussion	10	11	12 PES MEETINGS: 5:00 PM Finance Committee 6:30 PM Ethical Action Committee	13	14	15
16 9:30 AM: End Racism TF 11:00 AM <i>Just Mercy</i> Hugh Taft-Morales 3:00 PM Fine Art Music concert <i>Chopin in Paris</i>	17 7:30 PM <i>Effective - 9:00 Presidential Trivia Quiz Game</i>	18	19 12:00 noon Ethical Lunch – On Good Behavior discussion PES MEETING: 6:30 PM PES Board of Trustees	20 6:00 - 8:00 PM The Ethics of Affirmative Action	21	22
23 11:00 AM <i>Keeping Church and State Separate</i> 2:00 PM Think Ethics 4:00 - 5:30 PM Philadelphia Stoics Discussion	24	25	26 PES MEETINGS: 5:30 PM Building Committee 6:30 PM Camp Linden Committee	27  7:00 PM Amnesty International Meeting amnestyeastpa.org	28	29

QUOTABLE

For over twenty years I have been claiming that Ethical Humanism is not just a liberal religious alternative but a worldview and life stance, a way of living that if honestly accepted can change your life or at least give you a boost toward better living. In a world of ritualistic religion, Ethical Societies are trying to get to the essential function of religion"

– Richard Kiniry,
Ethical Views, January 2011



PES member Sylvia Metzler addressing those gathered for POWER's Rally for Police Accountability at Arch Street Methodist Church, on December 16. District Attorney Larry Krasner is second from right in the photo.

FEBRUARY BIRTHDAYS

- 2 Sally Redlener
- 3 Arnold Fishman
- 18 Vince Russo
- 18 Lauren Strong



SUNDAY SERVICES

11:00 A.M.

Ethical Views is published monthly
except July and August.

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For suggestions regarding this
newsletter, contact Henry Pashkow
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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.

Coffee Hour Coordinators



Feb. 2 - Kate Esposito
Last names: A-E
Feb. 9 - Ken Greiff
Last names: F-K
Feb. 16 - Garry O'Rourke
Last names: L-Q
Feb. 23 - Harry Thorn
Last names: R-Z

Flowers Coordinated by Sally Redlener



February's flower, violets

Feb. 2 - from Temma Fishman -
"Happy Birthday to my ever-young
husband Arnold with love"

Feb. 9 - from Chuck O'Neil - "To my
wife, Pat Naylor"

Feb. 16 - from John Marshall - "For
a bright future"

Feb. 23 - from Nick Sanders "In
gratitude due Richard Kiniry for
cultivating Ethical Culture in my life"

SAVE THE DATE: Sunday, March 1st, 2020, 12:00 noon - Membership Pledge Luncheon



**Focus in on March 1st! Come
for lunch, laughs, and learning
more about supporting the
Philadelphia Ethical Society. This
catered affair will help us see our
future as Philadelphia's home for
congregational humanism. Hugh
promises some more bad jokes!**

TRIBUTE AND FRIENDSHIP

For those of you who are new to the Ethical Society,
and by that I mean that you have arrived within
the last 20 or 30 years, I wanted to tell you about
a program we have called Tribute and Friendship.
It was set up so we could make donations in honor
and memory of special people in our lives whether
connected with the Ethical Society or not. I was
preparing to make a donation in Richard Kiniry's
name and began to wonder how many of you knew
about this program. It is a lovely way to honor those
we have cherished. - Carol Love



Rittenhouse Square, 1910, before it was redesigned by Paul Cret.