



# ETHICAL VIEWS

March 2020 Vol. 134, No. 7 Newsletter of the Philadelphia Ethical Society



## Sunday Platforms

### **Sunday, March 1, 11:00 AM** ***Deed Before Creed: Ethics and Non-Theism***

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



What does it mean to commit to “deed before creed?” To Hugh Taft-Morales it simply means that it is more important how you treat people than

the reasons behind your actions. Treating people with compassion and respect matters more than the motivating philosophy. Whether you help someone as an expression of your existential values, or your commitment to Ethical Humanism, or because you believe we are all “God’s children,” means little to those in desperate need. Non-theism – which sets aside theological debate – helps those who embrace Ethical Humanism focus on deed before creed.

**Remember that clocks spring forward on Sunday, March 8.**

### **Sunday, March 8, 11:00 AM** ***From Nuclear Madness to a Green New Deal*** The Rev. Robert Moore, Executive Director, Coalition for Peace Action (CFPA)



The Rev Robert Moore will give an overview of the two existential threats to human survival: nuclear weapons and the climate crisis.

He will explore the inter-relationship between those two issues, and will propose a solution. He will also include a description of CFPA’s intersectional No Wars, No Warming Campaign, and how that can be a model for synergistic collaboration to gain the transformative power necessary to mitigate these grave threats to survival. Ed Aguilar, CFPA’s PA Director, will join him for the Dialogue.

The Rev. Moore has served since 1981 as full-time Executive Director of the Princeton, NJ-based CFPA, a regional organization dedicated to global abolition of nuclear weapons, a peace economy, and a halt to weapons trafficking. He was National Secretary of Mobilization for Survival.

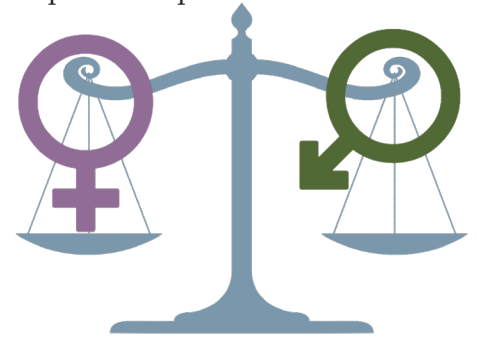
### **Sunday, March 15, 11:00 AM** ***The “Seven Deadly Sins” through a Humanist Lens*** Hugh Taft-Morales, Leader, Philadelphia Ethical Society

Most humanists reject the concept of “sin” as it relates to divine judgment. Many liberal religions embrace the idea that human nature, as flawed as it is, is basically good. So how do humanist process the *seven deadly sins* condemned by the bible as “deadly”? How should we regard pride, greed, lust, envy, gluttony, wrath, and sloth? Come explore with Hugh Taft-Morales some of the different approaches to how we biological creatures might process these traits within the context of our lofty ideals.

### **Sunday, March 22, 11:00 AM** ***Improving Community Responses to Sexual Violence***

**Rose Corrigan, Professor,  
Thomas R. Kline School of Law,  
Drexel University**

Rose Corrigan will provide an overview of sexual violence, the responses to it by police, prosecutors, and medical staff, and why those responses are problematic. She will



discuss how communities have tried to improve these responses, and the continuing challenges facing organizations that serve victims of sexual assault.

Prof. Corrigan has a long history working with organizations such as Women Organized Against Rape, Domestic Abuse Project of Delaware County, Women’s Medical Fund, and National Clearinghouse for the Defense of Battered Women. She holds a Ph.D. in political science and is an associate professor at Drexel, where she directs the Center for Law, Policy, & Social Action at the Thomas R. Kline School of Law.

*Platforms continued on page 2*

**And next month . . .**

**Sunday, April 5, 11:00 AM**  
***What is Humanism?***  
Hugh Taft-Morales, Leader,  
Philadelphia Ethical Society

**Sunday, March 29, 11:00 AM**  
**Susan B. Anthony Performance: A**  
**Visit from Susan B. Anthony**  
**Marjorie Goldman, Actor**

Susan B. Anthony takes you back to 1883, when the struggle for women's suffrage was well underway. Miss Anthony will share some details about her life and upbringing, but will also do her best to convince you to join her in the cause of equal rights for all. A highlight of the presentation is the story of her arrest, trial and conviction for the alleged crime of voting in 1872.



*Marjorie Goldman in the role of  
Susan B. Anthony*

Marjorie Goldman, a Philadelphia-based actor, has been researching and performing the role of Susan B. Anthony for over 20 years. She holds bachelor's and master's degrees in American studies, in addition to her theater training, and is a former U.S. history teacher. Like Miss Anthony, she takes her work seriously, but not to the exclusion of a few good laughs whenever appropriate. Marjorie has been certified as a docent at the National Susan B. Anthony Museum and House in Rochester, New York, where she continues to do research as often as possible. For more info please go to [www.ahtheatre.org](http://www.ahtheatre.org).

**TURN UP THE  
POWER: VOTER  
ENGAGEMENT AND  
THE CENSUS**  
**News from POWER**  
**submitted by Kate Esposito**

Nick Sanders, John Marshall, Sylvia Metzler, Chuck O'Neil and I attended POWER's packed Leadership Assembly, held on Tuesday, January 28. We heard updates on our campaigns and the Reflection and Renewal process. Bishop Dwayne Royster, POWER's Interim Executive Director, proposed a voter engagement framework entitled *Vision 2020: Life, Liberty and Democracy*. Since POWER is non-partisan, this would offer a way to engage voters in this most important election year. We can talk about the issues, but not urge people to vote for any individual candidate.

Bishop Royster offered this thinking... Life is endangered when health care is threatened, food stamps are cut, the environment is degraded, kids go to toxic schools, gun violence cuts down young people and folks can't make a living wage. Liberty is denied when people are incarcerated for non-violent crimes, made to sit in jail if they can't make bail, and are incarcerated at the border. Democracy is threatened when rampant voter suppression efforts go unchecked. And as we know, these issues especially impact communities of color.

Anticipating the PA primary election on April 28, the Assembly voted to adopt a specific voter engagement approach with a campaign launch date of March 13 -15. All of us with cell phones can participate using a special app called OutVote to message as many people as possible reminding them to vote, then tally the numbers of responses and report our results to POWER. We also discussed a possible *PA Presidential Candidate Faith Forum* to be held in April, which would be very exciting.

POWER is also working on outreach efforts for the census. **Please, everyone, fill out your forms and remind your friends, neighbors and co-workers to do so.** Federal funds, grants and support to states, counties and communities are based on population totals and breakdowns by sex, age, race, and other factors. If we all respond to the census, we'll get our fair share of the more than \$675 billion per year in federal funds spent on schools, hospitals, roads, public works, and other vital programs. **SO IMPORTANT!**

POWER is relentless in seeking social justice and empowering us to help achieve Life, Liberty and Democracy... especially here in Philadelphia, where our brilliant Constitution was crafted and where we are still fighting to fulfill its promises. This election year is critical. So... will you sit it out or turn it out? *Let us know.*



**Drop in to refresh your vision!**

**Members Pledge Luncheon**

**Sunday, March 1st, 12:00 noon**

**20/20 Vision:**

**Focus On Your Pledge!**



# LEADER'S COLUMN

## VISIONING

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

I hope all PES members will attend our **Sunday, May 3 Annual Meeting** hosted by the PES Board of Trustees. This is when PES members will elect new members to the Board. It will also be when the PES Board shares some information and vision about the challenges and opportunities our humanist community will navigate in the coming years. It's my hope that this year the membership meeting will be a springboard into a long-range planning process, something we've tried over the last couple of decades with mixed success.

Earlier in the morning during our weekly platform gathering, I will offer the opportunity for members to stir the pot regarding thinking about our future. I will weave together a tapestry of your visions about the future of Ethical Culture in Philadelphia. I invite *all members* to send me statements of no longer than 100 words that, *as poetically as you can*, offer your visions for the future. You will have the option of reading your own 100 words from your chair, or having me read them while attributing the words to you or keeping them anonymous. What I ask is that you spend some time contemplating deeply this question: "How would I like to see our philosophy and way of being in the world flower at the Ethical Society?"

You can submit your 100 words to me as a first or final draft – I will be happy to work with you to craft what

you say in a way that brings out some of your best. What I ask of you are these two things: 1) please speak more about what you want to see flourish at the Ethical Society than what you don't want to see; and, 2) try as well as you can to offer an answer that is poetic or visionary in form; consider dressing up your vision with beautiful words. Intimidated by this call for artistry in language? Don't worry – I will entertain all submissions without heavy critique. The main point is that your words connect to a deep yearning in you.

Philadelphia's  
ethical culture  
in the future  
... what do YOU  
WANT to see?  
Give us your ideas,  
your hopes, your  
VISION.

I will do my best to honor your vision while sharing with you some of my own thoughts about the future of Ethical Humanism. Having completed my ninth year as your Leader, I am honored to have the trust and support of so many fine human beings who do important work. At a time when public integrity and ethics seem to be shunted aside by those who practice social manipulation and deal primarily in political power, we need compassionate and ethical humanism more than ever. But the devil is in the details, so they say. How are we

best to express our commitment to integrity and ethics?

At times in my work I will admit I am uncertain as to the best way forward. Sometimes I feel that I am bumbling forward in efforts to advance integrity and ethics. Sometimes my calls to action or appeals to conscience strike others as insufficient or too extreme. Given our free-thought tradition, perhaps I shouldn't be surprised. I love that we encourage each other to think for ourselves, but we also must live together.

That is the particular challenge to any congregational movement. What I mean by "congregational" in this context is very simple. I mean that we meet together regularly and try to connect to each other on deeper levels than many of our secular or professional associations allow. Forging deep and meaningful relationships is something we encourage at the Ethical Society. Mixing free-thought and relationship building together takes compassion, wisdom, and persistence. It also is deeply humbling.

It is with humility that I will end this column. A decade of ministerial work – attempting to raise a prophetic humanist voice in the din of civic life, offering pastoral support to those of you wrestling with your hopes and expectations as well as those of others, and juggling growing administrative duties – has been fulfilling and demanding. It means so much when members share with me their joyous and positive visions for the future. I hope members will send to [LeaderHugh@phillyethics.org](mailto:LeaderHugh@phillyethics.org) no later than the April 19th a personal vision statement of 100 words or less. It need not be practical, or comprehensive, or perfect. It needs just to be you.



# ANNOUNCEMENTS

*All events in PES building  
unless otherwise noted*

## **Sunday, March 1, 12:00 noon - 1:30pm Members Pledge Luncheon**

Let's keep our eyes focused on our pledges. We hope all members can attend.

## **Sunday, March 1, 3:00pm Music for Good Concert**

Robert Cart and Regina DiMedio-Marrazza explore the music of modern and classic composers in *Passions New & Old*. In this PES series, 20% of sales are donated to a charity of the Artists' choice.



## **Sunday, March 1, 7:00pm Intro to Ethical Humanism**

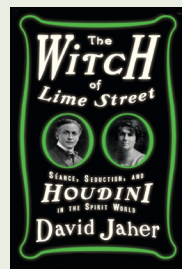
This month's Intro focuses on the talk given earlier this day by Hugh Taft-Morales - "Deed Before Creed:



Ethics and Non-Theism." Come discuss how Ethical Humanism frames theological discourse in a world all too often shattered by metaphysical differences. How do we help heal a broken world despite our different perspectives on God?

## **Tuesday, March 3, 7:00pm- Book discussion - *The Witch of Lime Street: Séance, Seduction, and Houdini in the Spirit World*, David Jaher**

Come discuss David Jaher's exploration of Mina "Margery" Crandon (1888 - 1941) who claimed to be a psychic who channeled her dead brother. Margery, who was nicknamed "the Witch of Lime Street,"



was promoted by author Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, of Sherlock Holmes fame, and publicly doubted by the magician Harry Houdini. Come discuss the first part (parts I-V; first 180+ pages) of this fascinating historical investigation. We'll finish the book for our discussion in April. RSVP to [LeaderHugh@phillyethics.org](mailto:LeaderHugh@phillyethics.org).

## **Thursday, March 5, 7:00pm- Effective Altruism:**

### **Abolitionist vs Welfarist: Approaches in Animal**

**Activism** Mansi Bhagwate of Liberation Philadelphia and Jon Campbell of the



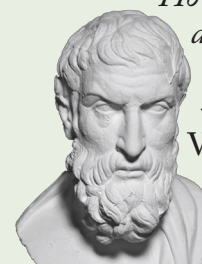
Humane League will discuss their different approaches to animal rights activism,

abolitionism and welfarism. We will discuss the ethical implications of these two approaches, the difference in strategies that these two activist approaches would take, and where the two approaches agree and diverge. Vegan dinner will be served.

## **Sunday, March 8 and 22, 4:00pm Philadelphia Stoics discussion**

Join the Philadelphia Stoics on March 8 and 22 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 March 8, you are encouraged to read and try the exercises for Weeks 21 and 22. For the March 22 meeting, please read and try the exercises for Weeks 23 and 24.

*Continued on page 5*

# ANNOUNCEMENTS continued

## ON GOOD BEHAVIOR

**Wednesday, March 18,  
12 noon Another  
installment of *On Good  
Behavior: Enemies and  
Empathy***

In our minds, human beings both create images of the enemy and feel deep empathy towards others. We dehumanize those we label as threats and share the feelings of those we embrace. How do we balance these two often-conflicting tendencies? Can we find a way to protect ourselves while de-escalating our own “fight or flight” reactions? Hugh Taft-Morales explores the age-old question, “Friend or foe?” Bring your own brown bag lunch. Free and open to the public. Future discussions in the “On Good Behavior” series include the following:  
April 22 – *Friendship*  
May 20 – *Cultivating Gratitude*

**Thursday, March 19,  
6:00pm - 7:30 pm – *Freedom  
of Speech, Forum for  
Philosophy, Ethics, and  
Public Affairs of the  
University of Pennsylvania***  
with Sigal Ben-Porath and Amy Sepinwall. Is support for free speech declining

on college campuses? Can universities prohibit hate speech, and other forms of expression that threaten inclusivity? This is the second event in our three-part series of public ethics talks that aim to increase dialogue between philosophers and the public at large. Free and open to the public.

### The First Amendment:

*Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances.*

**Sunday, March 22, 2:00pm  
Think Ethics – Neoliberalism  
Thoughtful conversations  
about philosophy, Alex  
Gutierrez, Haverford  
College** Mr. Gutierrez, a senior senior majoring in philosophy, will tackle the subject of Neoliberalism. Perhaps you have heard of the term “neoliberalism”. It has recently been applied to such

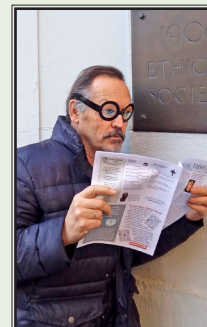
NEO  
LIB  
ERA  
LISM

diverse figures as Reagan, Clinton, and Obama. The current economic order is largely neoliberal. What does neoliberalism mean? Where did this idea come from, and what effects

has it had on global culture and economics? Explore these questions and more in today’s Think Ethics Seminar.

**Thursday, March 5, 7:00pm-  
Effective Altruism:  
Criminal Justice Reform Talk  
with Chloe Cockburn**

Chloe Cockburn leads the Open Philanthropy Project’s strategy for investing in criminal justice policy and practice reforms. This will substantially reduce incarceration while maintaining public safety. She will be discussing her work at the Open Philanthropy Project, as well as the criminal justice space in general. Chloe previously oversaw state policy reform work for the ACLU’s Campaign to End Mass Incarceration. Previously, Chloe worked with the Vera Institute and the civil rights law firm of Neufeld, Scheck and Brustin, and clerked for Judge Sifton of the Eastern District of New York. Vegan dinner will be served.



*Who lurks at  
our door? Could  
it be Hercule  
Poirot? Come to  
the Membership  
Pledge Luncheon  
on March 1st to  
find out!”...*



**From the PES  
Ending Racism Task Force:  
TRIPLE THREAT**

*submitted by Erik Younge*

It is a triple threat season. The *coronavirus* has emerged from Wuhan, China and has spread around the world. More than 24 countries have (at this writing) reported cases of this scary virus.

There has been an increase in anti-Chinese sentiment. There've been episodes of discrimination including violent incidents, racist words and deeds against all Asians globally, and calls for full travel ban on Chinese visitors. *The Philadelphia Inquirer* reported this quote from local student Rosalind Vo, "It just feels like I'm kind of an outsider, like they're scared to be around me. Just because we're Asian does not mean we have it." Universities and Chinese areas of business have been hit hard by the virus, including quarantined students and plummeting businesses. Asian children have been taunted, verbally assaulted, and barred from areas, from France to these United States.

Fear of diseases, ignorance and racism – this triple threat—are strongly linked. Harvard psychologist Brian O'Shea reported in a 2019 study that "people who live in states with higher rates of infectious disease are more likely to hold both overt and implicit prejudices." Research has linked fear of disease to anti-immigrant bias, based "on the false notion that migrants are carrying germs or viruses in this country." For those white people who are highly averse to germs, images that evoke thoughts of infectious disease can also increase bias against African-Americans.

Vanessa N. Gamble, a noted physician, documented the history of this triple threat in a public health

journal. At the beginning of the 20th century, Black doctors, nurses and scientists worked diligently to repudiate theories by certain white physicians, that the poor health of Blacks was due to their inherent racial inferiority. At one point, blame for the deadly spread of the 1918 influenza epidemic was cast upon African-Americans, with hysterical calls for mass deportations, sterilization, quarantines, etc. White rage fueled by lower rates of infections among blacks was one major cause of the violent, racist summer of 1919. More than a thousand Blacks were murdered.

Racist theories of germ-carrying Blacks are laced throughout history. Black men were thought to be inherent carriers of syphilis prompting fear of interracial relationships between Black men and White women. In many cases, lynchings of Black men were the penalty.

I remember, while working in a Philly anti HIV/AIDS organization in 1991, encountering the theory and fear that this raging AIDS virus was caused and carried by Haitian refugees. More than 310 Haitian men, women and children were kept prisoner at a special detention camp, a hellhole, inside the U.S. Guantanamo Naval in Cuba. Later, refugees along with HIV Advocates staged a two month-long protest tent city outside the Philly court house against this inhumane racist treatment. In 1993, a judge ordered the closing of the camp.

These old beliefs – that Africans, Asians, Native Americans, Black People - are dangerous races that carry disease is the triple threat racist fear that I plead must end immediately. As people of compassion, as humanists, as anti-racists, it is urgent that we act to end these diseases, especially the inhumane diseases of the racist mind. Peace!

**FROM THE EDITOR**

**DEHUMANIZATION AND  
ITS CONSEQUENCES**

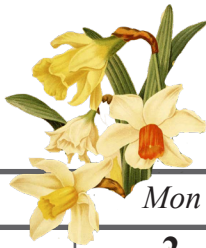
*by Henry Pashkow*

Recently a friend told me he'd received a joke gift of toilet paper with the President's picture imprinted on each sheet. I'd heard several such stories and commentaries following Mr. Trump's election. Till now I paid scant attention. This latest pushed me into the domain of those troubled by the dehumanizing of "the other".

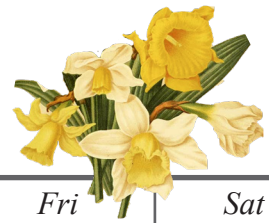
"The other" is a large group of people referred to as "the President's base". The media tells me they are a fixed quantity. Their positions are said to be antithetical to my own. The adherents of this group are characterized as being of one mind and one belief system. I can easily feel angry at them all. If I follow this feeling down the perilous path it takes me on to the rut it leads to, I feel frustrated and powerless. When my feelings are added together with others who feel similarly, and given renewed expression, they can sweep us up in a tide of anger and bitterness stronger than any one individual or group of individuals contributing to it.

But my view of these people is from a distance and distorted by what the media tells me they stand for. This "they" may include people who hold a wider variety of beliefs and opinions than those I had attributed to them. I hold onto that thought when I think about dehumanization, and the tendency it has to turn us into two competing groups bitterly fighting each other with no room for common ground. Especially when I see it sapping our energy and turning us away from the fight for a more humane world.

*Continued on page 7*



# MARCH 2020



Sun	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Sat
<b>1</b> 11:00 AM <i>Deed Before Creed: Ethics and Non-Theism</i> Hugh Taft-Morales 3:00 PM <b>Music for Good concert</b> 7:00 PM: <i>Intro to Ethical Humanism</i>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>8</b> 11:00 AM <i>From Nuclear Madness to a Green New Deal</i> 4:00 - 5:30 PM <b>Philadelphia Stoics Discussion</b>	<b>9</b>	7:00 PM <b>Book Discussion</b> <i>The Witch of Lime Street</i>	<b>PES MEETING:</b> 6:30 PM Education Committee	7:00 PM <b>Effective Altruism:</b> <i>Abolitionist vs Welfarist</i>	<b>13</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>15</b> 9:30 AM: <b>End Racism TF</b> 11:00 AM <i>The "Seven Deadly Sins" through a Humanist Lens</i> Hugh Taft-Morales	<b>16</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>18</b> 12:00 noon <b>Ethical Lunch – On Good Behavior discussion</b> <b>PES MEETINGS:</b> 5:15 PM Camp Linden Committee 6:30 PM PES Board of Trustees	<b>19</b> 6:00 - 7:30 PM <b>Forum for PEPA, U Penn, Freedom of Speech</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>21</b>
<b>22</b> 11:00 AM <i>Improving Community Responses to Sexual Violence</i> 2:00 PM <b>Think Ethics</b> 4:00 - 5:30 PM <b>Philadelphia Stoics Discussion</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>25</b> <b>PES MEETING:</b> 5:30 PM Building Committee	<b>26</b>  7:00 PM <b>Amnesty International Meeting</b> amnestyeastpa.org	<b>27</b>	<b>28</b>
<b>29</b> 11:00 AM <i>A Visit from Susan B. Anthony</i>	<b>30</b>	<b>31</b> 7:00 PM <b>Effective Altruism:</b> <i>Criminal Justice Reform</i>			<b>QUOTABLE</b> <b>"All government is founded on compromise and barter."</b> ~ Edmund Burke	

Continued from page 6

So I will consider other possibilities, and hold onto the thought that some connection to those whom we regard as "the other" may be found and built upon. I like to believe that most people will act ethically under the right circumstances when given the chance.

In the meantime I won't besmirch the office of President, or demean the personhood of the office

holder, for the simple reason that if I do it only gets worse. And I don't want it to get worse.

I like to believe that when we regard others as unique individuals having intrinsic worth – even those with whom we may have strong political differences, even those we may deem incapable of doing better – some change for the good will take place. It's worth a shot.

## MARCH BIRTHDAYS

- 4 James Cooke
- 4 Terry Martin-Murley
- 9 Garry O'Rourke
- 20 Vince McKenna
- 20 Hugh Taft-Morales
- 23 Susan D'Alessio
- 26 Ruthann Dubb
- 28 John Marshall





## 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  
[hpashkow@gmail.com](mailto:hpashkow@gmail.com)

### 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



March 1 - Kate Esposito  
Last names: A-E  
March 8 - Ken Greiff  
Last names: F-K  
March 15 - Garry O'Rourke  
Last names: L-Q  
March 22 - Harry Thorn  
Last names: R-Z  
March 29 - volunteer needed



Flowers Coordinated  
by Sally Redlener

*March's flower,  
daffodils*

March 1 - from Michi Tashjian,  
"For my parents who believed in this  
country."

March 8 - from Bob Bueding,  
"Wishing my wife of 51 years a very  
Happy Birthday."

March 15 - Today's flowers are  
dedicated to the Sunday man, Bob  
Bueding, by Javad Mohsenian. Bob  
has hardly ever missed presiding  
over these meetings. Hope he will  
blossom with better health with the  
forthcoming Spring to preside on  
many more."

March 22- from Susan Klein D'Alessio,  
"In gratitude to my many friends at  
the Philadelphia Ethical Society."

March 29 - from Ken Greiff  
"In honor of doing impartial justice  
according to the Constitution and  
laws."

## PAST EVENTS



Left: Hugh Taft-Morales  
and PES members visited  
the Al - Aosa Islamic  
Society in Germantown.



Left: PES members  
at Philadelphia City  
Hall, standing in  
opposition to the  
possibility of War  
with Iran

Right: PES members  
standing (or sitting)  
in opposition to  
pretrial punishment.

