



# ETHICAL VIEWS



March 2021 Vol. 135, No. 7 Newsletter of the Philadelphia Ethical Society

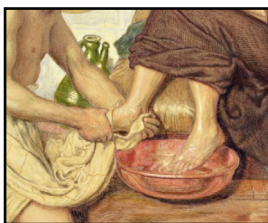
## SUNDAY PLATFORMS

Please turn to page 3 for full platform descriptions.

**Sunday, March 7, 11:00AM**

***Being Wrong: The Virtues of Humility and Doubt,***  
**Hugh Taft-Morales, Leader,**  
**Philadelphia Ethical Society**

*We all like to be right, but should we get more comfortable being wrong?*



**Sunday, March 14, 2:00PM**

***Speaker and topic not confirmed at publication time. We will update via the Weekly Bulletin.***



**Sunday, March 21, 11:00AM**  
***Freethought Feminist Helen Hamilton Gardener,***  
**Hugh Taft-Morales, Leader, PES**

*We'll explore the life of this freethinker and feminist.*

**Sunday, March 28, 11:00AM**

***All-Society Platform Featuring***  
***Congressman Jamie Raskin***

*Congressman Jamie Raskin, (Maryland 8th District), recently won national acclaim for his role as lead impeachment manager for the 2nd impeachment of former President Trump*

**Preview of March Platform**

**Sunday, April 4, 11:00AM**

***Spring Festival,*** **Hugh Taft-Morales, Leader, PES**



## PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

March On



We have started a new year with many positive signs that we may finally be on the path to normalcy. The first positive sign was the swearing in of a sane US president on January 20, 2021. It's going to take many years to undo all of the harm that has been done to our

country, but hopefully we are on the way to regaining respectability in the world arena.

The next positive sign is the COVID-19 vaccine. On top of all the turmoil in our country, the pandemic struck. This pandemic is unlike anything we've seen in our lifetimes, and because of COVID our lives have been turned upside down. Now we finally have a vaccine that will curb the virus and will begin to bring us back to a point where we'll be able to gather together again in person. Zoom has been a lifesaver,

*Continued on page 2*

## IN THIS ISSUE . . .

**Small gestures and large acts as people find their own ways to speak out, right wrongs, or at least point us all in a direction that sheds light and offers ways to heal.**

**On the Banner:**

**In 1987, Congress designated March as *Women's History Month*. Since then, every year, the President proclaims March as *Women's History Month*. The Library of Congress, National Archives and Records Administration, National Endowment for the Humanities, National Gallery of Art, National Park Service, Smithsonian Institution and United States Holocaust Memorial Museum join in commemorating this observance. Internationally, purple is a color for symbolizing women.**

***Philadelphia Ethical Society invites the public to attend our platforms and events listed on page 3.***

## PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

### March On

Continued from page 1

but it's not the same as personal contact. I'm truly hoping that by the time autumn arrives we'll be able to gather once again in our beautiful Rittenhouse space. That will be possible if a major portion of our population receives the vaccine. When your turn comes to get your shots, please take them.

I have four months left on my term as your president. It has been a privilege and a pleasure to serve you, but after nine years on the Board of Trustees and the last five years as president, I'm ready for a rest. I'll still be involved on several committees, but it's time for new blood to assume the leadership roles.

When I became president one of my top goals was to grow the membership. Sadly, that has not happened. We have maintained our numbers, but growth has been slow. We are a "mature" group, so it's vital we get some younger members. Over the past few years, we have reached out to the community



and to various colleges and universities but recruiting younger folks has been challenging. Ethical Humanism has so much to offer, but millennials are a hard nut to crack.

We are in the formative phase of long-range planning and hope to roll out our goals in April. I would love to see new blood on the Board and committees. Our upcoming election will have five vacancies; it would be great to see some newbies step up. We need some fresh ideas and different ways of doing things. Please consider getting involved; I promise you it will be rewarding.

Thank you for your membership or your presence on Sundays. We encourage your feedback or suggestions.

~ Bob Bueding [bbueding@phillyethics.org](mailto:bbueding@phillyethics.org)

## PERSONAL JOY

Manny Hoffman, the son of PES Members Susan Brotherton and Dan Hoffman, was seriously injured in a recent auto accident.

Dan shares this happy photo, and writes: *Manny's Central Class 281 sweatshirt arrived while he was on the surgical-trauma floor at Presbyterian Hospital, recovering from a car accident. He couldn't wear his own clothes because of all those devices he was hooked up to. Now that we are staying at Moss Rehab (where I'm not permitted re-entry if I leave the room), he can model it for us. It made him happy when Susan dropped it off at the desk for him. He's very much looking forward to the day where he gets to return to the school in person.*

Manny is now recovering at home.



# SUNDAY PLATFORM DESCRIPTIONS

All platforms are held on Zoom and may be accessed by going to [www.tiny.cc/phillyethics](http://www.tiny.cc/phillyethics)

**Sunday, March 7, 11:00AM**

***Being Wrong: The Virtues of Humility and Doubt,***  
**Hugh Taft-Morales, Leader,**  
**Philadelphia Ethical Society**



We all like to be right, but should we get more comfortable being wrong? So often we make truth claims and proceed to stake so much on them: our ego, our reputation, our power. Given that every person's knowledge is limited, shouldn't we let go of certainty and embrace our painstaking collective construction of wisdom? After all,

doubt is what launched the freethought movement. Hugh Taft-Morales explores the liberation that comes when one embraces intellectual humility and doubt.

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**Sunday, March 21, 11:00AM**

***Freethought Feminist Helen Hamilton Gardener,***  
**Hugh Taft-Morales, Leader, PES**

We'll explore the life of freethinker and feminist Helen Hamilton Gardener who, in partnership with freethinker Robert Ingersoll, railed against religious institutions that brutally oppressed women.

"This religion and the bible require of a woman everything and give her nothing. They ask her support and her love, and repay her with contempt and oppression."

~ Helen Hamilton Gardener

faux-science, and serving on the United States Civil Service Commission. Hugh Taft-Morales explores what inspiration we can draw from this remarkable woman.

Gardener became vice president of the National American Woman Suffrage Association and played an important role in bringing about the 19th Amendment. She advocated for the rights of women by writing fiction, challenging sexist

**Sunday, March 28, 11:00AM**

***All-Society Platform Featuring***  
***Congressman Jamie Raskin***



Congressman Jamie Raskin, (Md 8th District), recently won national acclaim for his role as lead impeachment manager for the 2nd impeachment of former President Trump, and as the primary author of the impeachment article which charged Trump with inciting an insurrection by sparking the

storming of the Capitol. Although Trump evaded conviction, he is the only US president who has been impeached twice, and the most recent with a bipartisan majority.

As his first action in Congress in 2016, Raskin and several other members of House of Representatives objected to certifying the election of Donald Trump as president because of Russian interference in the election and voter suppression efforts. The objection could not be acted upon because it had to be sponsored by at least one member of each chamber, and it had no Senate sponsor.

Prior to being elected to the House of Representatives, Raskin was a member of the Maryland State Senate from 2007 to 2016. Raskin served as general counsel for Jesse Jackson's National Rainbow Coalition (1989 – 1990). He was a constitutional law professor at American University Washington College of Law, where he co-founded and directed the LL.M. program on Law and Government and co-founded the Marshall-Brennan Constitutional Literacy Project. Raskin received a B.A. from Harvard College (magna cum laude) and a J.D. from Harvard Law School (magna cum laude), where he was an editor of the Harvard Law Review.

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**Preview of April Platform**

**Sunday, April 4, 11:00AM**

***Spring Festival, Hugh Taft-Morales, Leader, PES***

This Easter, come celebrate the arrival of spring in humanist style! Care to offer a reading? Please email [LeaderHugh@phillyethics.org](mailto:LeaderHugh@phillyethics.org)

## LEADER'S COLUMN Chess in Black and White ~ *Hugh Taft-Morales*

*NOTE: In my January Leader's column, I wrote about the engrossing Netflix series "The Queen's Gambit" and how refreshing it was that fictional protagonist, chess wizard Beth Harmon, did not encounter blatant sexism in her journey. I wanted my next column to look at one critique of the series having to do with race. Then the Capitol was invaded. After commenting on that assault to democracy in February, I return to the chess world for a final commentary.*

In writing about *The Queen's Gambit*, Bethonie Butler of the Washington Post pointed out that the real hero of the story is Jolene, a Black woman who befriended chess prodigy Beth Harmon during their days together in an orphanage. Butler says that "the show blunders" in giving Jolene a minimal backstory and little character development and that she "seems to exist merely to make Beth's life easier." She comforts Beth,



**Grandmaster Pontus Carlsson,  
playing white**

helps her sober up, and loans her money. She tells her, "I'm here because you need me to be here — that's what family does, that's what we are."

But Jolene was the only character to demonstrate familial devotion. Once Beth escapes the orphanage, her friend seems forgotten.

Jolene is never taken in by Beth and her mother. She's barely a part of the story until she comes to the rescue. This limits how much we can celebrate a cross-racial friendship begun in a time and place when racism would have made such friendships difficult. I wondered, if Jolene had climbed the chess world along with Beth, would racism have been as absent in the series as sexism?

While I can't answer this hypothetical question, I do know that racism is a part of today's chess world. I'm not talking about the superficial reality that white



*In 2018, Grandmaster Pontus Carlsson of Sweden visited New Orleans on a trip to inspire young people and advance his project, "Business Meets Chess & Kids," a program designed to pair business people with children in tandem chess games to encourage development and communication. Pontus' tour included a visit to a correctional institute to encourage inmates. - US Chess Federation*

pieces always move first in the game of chess (yes, this is a live wire in chess social media circles). Grandmaster Pontus Carlsson, a Black Grandmaster from Sweden, has been a victim of harassment, racial slurs, and insults at international tournaments. As a symbolic gesture towards racial solidarity, last year two grandmaster chess players, Magnus Carlsen and Anish Giri, marked the United Nations International Day for the Elimination of Racism by playing a match in which the black pieces moved first. "We broke a rule today," Mr. Carlsen said. "To change minds tomorrow," Mr. Giri added. Carlsson appreciated the gesture, and admits that, despite the racism he confronted in the chess world, it's much worse in the world outside chess. For him, the chess world "has been vacation from the real world."

Lemuel Laroche, a professor at the University of Georgia's School of Social Work, invited students into this "vacation" through his program, Chess and Community. In an interview with PBS, Laroche explains how chess builds relationships across racial lines. He uses "chess as a tool" to build community. Laroche said, "Chess is such a metaphor for life. When I teach chess, I try to teach it from the perspective of, how do you take this game and correlate it with the real world?"

*Continued on page 5*

## Chess in Black and White continued

Laroche does so by encouraging young people to follow the *Chess and Community* motto, “Think Before You Move.” He uses chess to teach kids to respond to a situation versus reacting to it. The program’s website offers a fuller explanation: “Chess strengthens cognitive skills such as perception, information management, attention, memory, logical thinking, and analysis. We assist youth in taking those skill sets and applying them to life. Our programs utilize chess to help youth develop critical thinking, problem-solving, and planning skills. Chess requires each player to consider all possibilities and outcomes before each move; in other words, think before you move.”

Though chess is just a game, and though *The Queen’s Gambit* is just a Netflix series, they can serve us during a pandemic. Both the game and the series offer enjoyable distractions that offer more – chess teaches skills and the series can stimulate positive conversations about a better world. Let’s hope that when life returns to “normal” after the pandemic we remember to think before we move.

For more information about *Chess and Community* and Prof. Laroche, see this PBS story and (<https://www.pbs.org/newshour/show/simple-game-chess-can-break-stereotypes>), and this short video (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wSiXwhsK8BY>).

### Updated Report on the OEEC Program AND OUR CONNECTION TO IT

The Overbrook Environmental Education Center, or OEEC, runs multiple educational programs for high school students designed to get them interested in environmental justice. Their offices are at 6134 Lancaster Avenue in West Philadelphia.

Our Leader, Hugh Taft-Morales initiated contact with them in 2019. The PES Board voted to provide \$5,000 from the Rose Rappaport Long Fund to underwrite their programs. A new provision from the Long Fund is planned for 2021.

The program has two components. First, it provides scholarships for students who enroll in the educational activities they operate. The second provides college scholarships for African-American students who are applying to college and will study courses related to Environmental Justice.

City, state and local organizations provided resource information to the public to help residents understand what tools are available to help them become stewards of their environment and protectors of our biosphere.

Jerome Shabazz, founder of the OEEC, will continue to carry the program forward.



**PES members at the OEEC “Environmental Justice and Community Wellness Fair” on April 13th, 2019.**

We are looking for a few PES members to be recruited in April to help choose the 2021 scholarship winner.

Let Hugh know if you are interested in this helping with this meaningful decision! [LeaderHugh@phillyethics.org](mailto:LeaderHugh@phillyethics.org)

## COLLECTION OF THE MONTH AT PPH by Sylvia Metzler

When a couple I know realized that I was in the market for a retirement community, they urged me to consider the Philadelphia Protestant Home. They were moving there soon themselves, to their amusement. "Imagine", the wife told me, "I'm a Catholic and my husband's a Jew and we're moving to the Protestant Home." Now there has been an agnostic added to this mix of mostly white Protestants. To their credit, the management wants to become more diverse in every way so they now want to be known only as PPh. While many of the staff are Black and LatinX, there are very few residents who are not white. I have become friends there with an African American woman who is also a retired RN. When I offered to submit my collection of books on Black history and racism, she offered to help me pick out the most appropriate ones to fill the glass cabinet for Black History month this February.

When I encounter another resident or staff person looking at the collection in a busy hallway, I stop to have a conversation with them. One white security staff member said he had never read any of them and which one would I recommend he start with? Seems he was a recent college graduate majoring in criminal justice so I suggested *The New Jim Crow*.

Another white male resident said he had heard of the movie *Hidden Figures*. I shared that I kept a poster of that film on my bedroom wall to remind myself about



the myth of white intellectual superiority. He became angry and defensive that he never thought such a thing. Several women have asked to borrow some books after the month is over. I wrote another article recently entitled *Bloom Where You're Planted* and I guess this is the next chapter in my new PPh home.

### March Birthdays

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

**"The obvious faults of our democracy have retarded the progress of democracy in Europe. Our failure in municipal government is constantly quoted abroad as an argument against democracy. This should be a real incentive to rouse us out of our self-complacency."**

(from his book  
*An Ethical Philosophy of Life*, p. 330)

~ FELIX ADLER



# UPCOMING EVENTS

ALL EVENTS ARE OFFERED  
ONLINE THROUGH ZOOM



**Monday, March 1, 5:30pm: Fiction Book Discussion - *Little Women* by Louisa May Alcott.** If you missed the Feb. 27 discussion, you can join Baltimore Ethical Society Members for a final time. Please email Hugh so he knows to expect you. [LeaderHugh@phillyethics.org](mailto:LeaderHugh@phillyethics.org)

**Sunday, March 7, 7:00pm:**

## Introduction to Ethical Humanism

PES Leader Hugh Taft-Morales will offer his monthly Intro to Ethical Humanism. This is particularly for newcomers, but all are welcome!. To attend, email Hugh at [LeaderHugh@phillyethics.org](mailto:LeaderHugh@phillyethics.org)

**Tuesday, March 16, 12:30pm Lunch with Hugh**

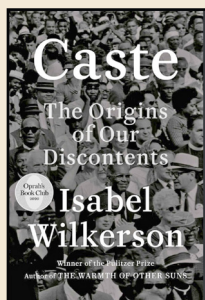
After a go-round, we'll discuss the 300-word entries entitled *Nature*, from *The Magic of Humanism*. Written by James Croft, Leader of the Ethical Society of St. Louis, it explores six values central to humanism: truth, nature, community, growth, goodness, and justice. This is the second in this series. There'll be plenty of time for casual socializing too! You can access this brochure here,

<https://ethicalstl.org/who-we-are/what-is-ethical-humanism/the-magic-of-humanism/> or you can email [LeaderHugh@phillyethics.org](mailto:LeaderHugh@phillyethics.org).



**Thursday, March 18, at 5:30pm: Non-fiction Book Discussion - *Caste*, by Isabel Wilkerson.**

Hugh Taft-Morales and members of the Philadelphia and Baltimore Ethical Societies will discuss this important new book. We will address the second half (Parts 5, 6, and 7, pp. 233-388). Please email Hugh so he knows to expect you. [LeaderHugh@phillyethics.org](mailto:LeaderHugh@phillyethics.org)

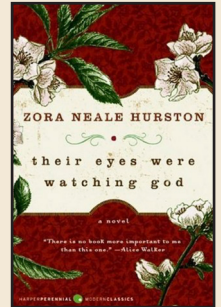


**Sunday, March 28, at 5:30pm:**

## Fiction Book Discussion -

***Their Eyes Were Watching God*, by Zora Neale Hurston,**

Hugh Taft-Morales and members of the Philadelphia and Baltimore Ethical Societies will discuss this classic by this African American author, anthropologist, and filmmaker who lived from 1891-1960. Please email Hugh so he knows to expect you. [LeaderHugh@phillyethics.org](mailto:LeaderHugh@phillyethics.org). If you can't make this time, join Baltimore Ethical Society members for a discussion on Monday, March 29, at 5:30PM.



**Register for exploring Resmaa Menakem's *My Grandmother's Hands*, hosted by Sarah Tieleman.**

**Five Thursday sessions in March and April from 7:00-9:00PM\***

Members of the Ethical Societies in Philadelphia and Baltimore are invited to join a Circle engaging the book *My Grandmother's Hands* by Resmaa Menakem, MSW, LICSW, SEP. This is "the first self-discovery book to examine "white body supremacy in America from the perspective of trauma and body-centered psychology." We will work to understand intergenerational racial trauma, practice noticing where racial trauma has been embedded in our own bodies, as well as begin the work of healing. The Circle limited to ten people.

March 11 - Gathering/Creating Agreements & Shared Values

March 25 - Part I; April 8 - Part II; April 22 - Part III

May 6 - Closing Expressions of Gratitude and Commitments

\* In order to best support ourselves and each other, you are asked to commit to attending all sessions. If you would like to be a part of Circle, please email Sarah at [s.e.badgerow@gmail.com](mailto:s.e.badgerow@gmail.com) and include "My Grandmother's Hands" in the subject line.

The series is free to Ethical Society members. Donations of any size will help pay for Sarah's continuing education in humanism, and are gratefully accepted.



## SUNDAY SERVICES

11:00 A.M.

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

*Executive Editor*, Henry Pashkow  
*Copy Editor*, Betsy Lightbourn  
*Web Master, Copy Editor*, Nick Sanders  
*Layout*, Celeste Hardester  
*Production*, Cheryl Desmond

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## PHILADELPHIA ETHICAL SOCIETY COMMITTEES

Our Society is sustained by all of its volunteers who serve on the many committees that fulfill our purpose and guide our decisions. The following generous members serve as chairs.

**Building Committee**  
**Michael Black-Smith,**  
**Next Meeting TBD**

**Camp Linden**  
**Jeffrey Dubb,**  
**Next Meeting TBD**

**Communication Committee**  
**Drew Snyder,**  
**Next Meeting TBD**

**Education Committee**  
**Betsy Lightbourn, Meets**  
**on Wednesday, March 3**  
**3:00 - 4:00PM**

**End Racism Task Force**  
**Sylvia Metzler, Meets**  
**Saturday, March 20th**  
**11:00 AM -12:30 PM**

**Ethical Action Committee**  
**Nick Sanders, Meets on**  
**Monday, March 15th,**  
**3:30 - 5:00PM**

**Finance Committee**  
**Vincent Russo,**  
**Meets Wednesday,**  
**March 10th, 5:00 PM**

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

## Philadelphia Ethical Society

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