



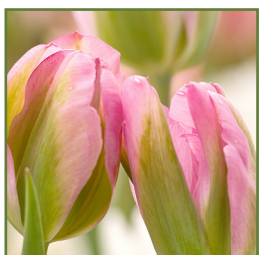
ETHICAL VIEWS



April 2021 Vol. 135, No. 8 Newsletter of the Philadelphia Ethical Society

SUNDAY PLATFORMS

Please turn to page 3 for full platform descriptions.



Sunday, April 4, 11:00AM
Spring Festival,
Hugh Taft-Morales, Leader,
Philadelphia Ethical Society

*Celebrate the arrival of spring
in humanist style*

Sunday, April 11, 11:00AM

***Women, Work, and Economic Justice: Past
Struggles and Future Prospects***

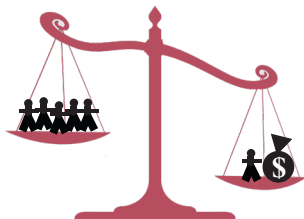
**Dorothy Sue Cobble, History and Labor
Studies Professor Emerita, Rutgers University**

*Wage justice, universal health care, and better
work-life balance*

Sunday, April 18, 11:00AM

***Rethinking Personal Wealth:
Taboos and Transparency,***
Hugh Taft-Morales,
Leader, PES

*Wealth inequality in the United
States and the taboos of talking about it*



Sunday, April 25, 11:00AM

Global Health Justice and Governance

**Jennifer Prah Ruger, Professor of Medical Ethics
and Health Policy, University of Pennsylvania**

Health disparities - humankind needs a new vision.

Preview of May Platform

Sunday, May 2, 11:00AM

Members Platform – Favorite Spots,
Hugh Taft-Morales, Leader, PES

*How does your favorite spot
interest you, heal you, or inspire you?*

LEADER'S COLUMN

Focusing on Teaching



Serving the Philadelphia Ethical Society as Clergy Leader is an honor, and I hope I can continue serving the community at 1906 Rittenhouse Square for at least a few more years. Currently, however, I am in conversation with the Board about my request to shift my role and responsibilities.

All my life I have found my calling as a teacher. This has been true through twenty-five years in a formal academic environment and through ten years as a Clergy Leader. But over the last decade I have directed more and more of my time and energy toward administrative, pastoral and networking tasks. Beginning in the fall of 2021, I would like to focus on teaching. It energizes and sustains me.

Under the umbrella of teaching, I include: platform

Continued on page 2

IN THIS ISSUE . . .

Spring is a time for new beginnings, coming alive again, moving out of hibernation, and joining the world. In coming months, PES and its board and committees will offer many opportunities for you to be a part of its mission by bringing yourself to its table of shared life and values.

On the Banner: Japanese Cherry Tree - Sakura
In Japanese poetry, literature, and art, sakura carries layered meanings. Because they bloom briefly, the blossoms may be seen as a metaphor for the ephemeral beauty of living. In the nineteenth century, audiences in the U.S. and around the world embraced sakura-viewing.

All flower photos in this issue by Celeste Hardester

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

LEADER'S COLUMN Focusing on Teaching

Continued from page 1

talks, classes, workshops, and book discussions; occasional organizational development consulting with the Board or Committees; and, spreading the word about Ethical Culture through articles, talks, and interviews. In a world increasingly mired in conflict, confusion, and greed, I want to spend more time spreading the values at the heart of Ethical Humanism.

For me to focus on teaching, however, I need to relinquish some of my responsibilities, such as

attendance and participation in Board and committee meetings, primary responsibility for pastoral counseling, primary responsibility for outreach and coalition contact, and being the lone PES person in charge of ceremonies such as memorial services and weddings. That would mean one of two things for life at PES: either certain supports and services that I have offered will have to be cut back, or, the Board and lay leaders will have to decide how to offer these supports and services in other ways.

I have shared with the Board a few ideas about how PES could maintain these elements of our community life. Probably the easiest way to maintain energy regarding administrative tasks is to boost the Society's administrative and organizational efficiency through new systems, additional staffing, more volunteers, and/or increased Board oversight.

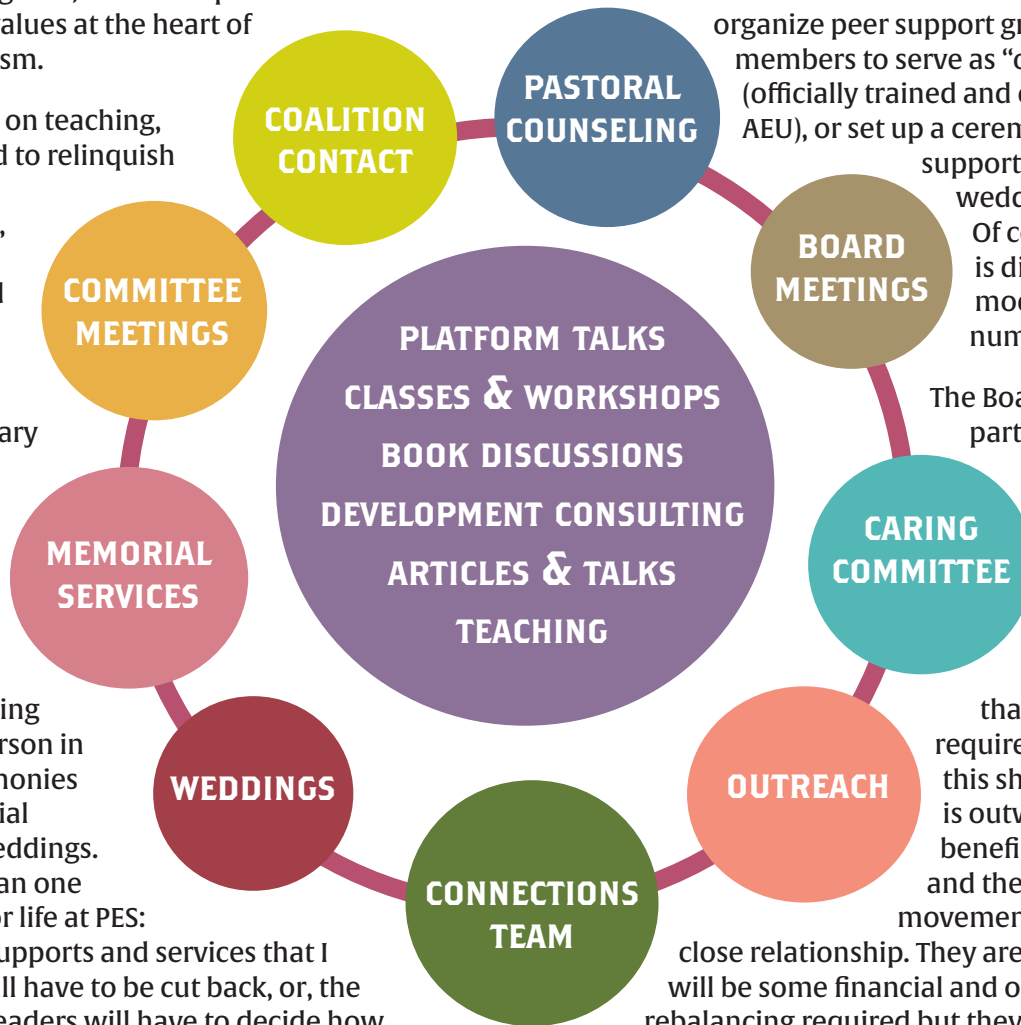
Our administrator Cheryl Desmond already does an amazing amount for PES and we need to be careful not to ask her to do too much more. To provide

some of the support I offer as a pastoral counselor, the Society could hire an Ethical Culture Leader, a Leader-in-Training, a life coach, or a social worker. Alternatively, the Board could organize volunteers to fill in with some of these services. They could revive a Connections Team or Caring Committee,

organize peer support groups, recruit members to serve as "officiants" (officially trained and certified by the AEU), or set up a ceremonial team to support memorial and wedding planning. Of course, all that is difficult with our modest membership numbers.

The Board has been a partner in discussing and shaping my plans. Board members have consistently expressed their conviction that the energy required to allow for this shift in my role is outweighed by the benefit the Society and the broader Ethical movement gains from our close relationship. They are aware that there will be some financial and organizational rebalancing required but they are committed to working with me to address these.

My decision to request this shift of duties did not come easily, as I am deeply committed to this wonderful humanist community. But I believe with all my heart that it is in the interest of the Society for me to focus on what I do best. I know that I will grow more whole and more effective as a spokesperson for Ethical Humanism by spending more of my time as a teacher.



SUNDAY PLATFORM DESCRIPTIONS

All platforms are held on Zoom and may be accessed by going to the bottom of our **HOME PAGE**.

Sunday, April 4, 11:00AM

Spring Festival,
Hugh Taft-Morales, Leader,
Philadelphia Ethical
Society

This Easter, come celebrate the arrival of spring in humanist style with poetry, music, and communal gathering on Zoom! As we slowly emerge from pandemic isolation, let's celebrate the return of new life.



comfortable even discussing their personal wealth. Should we challenge taboos that shut down candid conversation? Would more transparency promote greater personal responsibility for managing wealth? How might organizations like Resource Generation and Patriotic Millionaires help guide us?

Sunday, April 25, 11:00AM

Global Health Justice and
Governance

Jennifer Prah Ruger, Professor
of Medical Ethics and Health
Policy, University of
Pennsylvania



In a world beset by serious and unconscionable health disparities, by dangerous contagions that can circle our globalized planet in hours, and by a bewildering confusion of health actors and systems, humankind needs a new vision, a new architecture, new coordination among renewed systems to ensure health for all.

Jennifer Prah Ruger is the Amartya Sen Professor of Health Equity, Economics, and Policy and Professor of Medical Ethics and Health Policy, both at the Center for Global Health at the Perelman School of Medicine. Additionally, she is Senior Fellow at the Leonard Davis Institute for Health Economics and at the Center for Public Health Initiatives, all at the University of Pennsylvania. She is the founder and director of the Health Equity and Policy Lab (HEPL) that conducts quantitative and qualitative research on the equity implications of health and social policies.



Sunday, April 11, 11:00AM
Women, Work, and Economic
Justice: Past Struggles and
Future Prospects
Dorothy Sue Cobble,
Professor Emerita, History
and Labor Studies,
Rutgers University

Covid has widened the gulf between rich and poor, transformed work, and intensified the push for economic justice. Katherine Ellickson, raised in Ethical Culture circles in New York, is just one of the many mid-century labor leaders who laid the basis for today's movements for wage justice, universal health care, and better work-life balance. This talk draws on their political wisdom to help us chart the future.

A distinguished professor of history and labor studies emerita at Rutgers University, Dorothy Sue Cobble writes about work, social movements, and social policy. Her multiple prize-winning books and articles have been translated into over a dozen languages. Recent honors include an Honorary Doctorate from Stockholm University and election to the Society of American Historians. Her latest book is *For the Many: American Feminists and the Global Fight for Democratic Equality*, available May 2021.

Sunday, April 18, 11:00AM

Rethinking Personal Wealth: Taboos and
Transparency, **Hugh Taft-Morales, Leader, PES**

Many Americans feel there is something deeply wrong with the staggering wealth inequality in the United States. Those who seek collective solutions often promote progressive taxation and government support for those on the lower rungs of our economic ladder. But few people feel

Preview of May Platform

Sunday, May 2, 11:00AM

Members Platform – Favorite Spots,
Hugh Taft-Morales, Leader, PES

Hugh invites members to share descriptions of "a favorite spot" in Philadelphia. It can be a spot in your home or some place in public. How does it interest you, heal you, or inspire you? Has the pandemic led you to change what spots you most enjoy? Spend most of your description explaining why this is a favorite spot and send it (no more than 300 words) to Hugh by Sunday April 25 for our May 2nd Sunday morning. Please email LeaderHugh@phillyethics.org

From the PES Ending Racism Task Force FIGHT OR FLIGHT

submitted by PES Member John Marshall

In the 1950's, on a trip to visit paternal relatives in Tennessee, we passed rundown shacks along the road. I asked my father who lived in them. He answered that they housed sharecroppers. I then wondered why they chose to live in them. At first, my father's response was evasive, so I asked him to explain the concept of sharecropping. He answered that the sharecroppers were obliged to turn over a share of their crops' income to landowners.

This raised in me the question of why the sharecroppers' income share wasn't sufficient to allow them to purchase better housing. My father said that the situation was too complicated for a child to understand. When we arrived at a rest stop, I noticed that the facilities had signs discriminating between Whites and Blacks. I sensed that that situation, too, was too complicated for a child to understand.

I continue with another dive into my life history. While visiting relatives in Little Rock, Arkansas as a youngster in 1957, my family and I experienced media coverage of the school integration crisis. Governor Orval Faubus had blocked the entrance to a school to prevent the admission of an African American student. Our relatives did not express strong opinions one way or another, perhaps because we were "Yankees". I wondered why the admission of African American children was so controversial. This was my first exposure to the impact of racism. At the time, I had not formulated the concepts of white privilege and white supremacy.

While attending high school and college, I attempted to process the political and societal impacts of the Civil Rights Movement and the backlash to it. I began

exploring history of race relations and questioning the school textbook version. When the Black Power Movement was vilified as terrorism, I questioned the veracity of that claim. The War on Drugs led to mass

incarceration and severe disruptions to Black families. These attacks on our social fabric caused me to feel very uneasy about my white privilege. I had not yet fully grasped the extent of white privilege and supremacy in America.

A pivotal experience occurred after graduating from college in 1969. I enlisted in the Army Security Agency and received training as a Korean linguist. During my tour in South Korea, I gained invaluable experience in relating to members of a foreign culture in their native language. I feel that this experience has enhanced my ability to successfully engage with members of other races and cultures.

The Ending Racism Task Force of the Philadelphia Ethical Society meets monthly to discuss local and State race-related issues and events. At each Society Sunday Platform one Task Force member delivers a short race-related message. Before the pandemic struck, we sponsored monthly Pot-Luck Dinners at which non-members were welcome. Each dinner had a theme that oriented attendees to share their insights and feelings.

We also attended gatherings at the Reading Terminal Market where members of different racial and ethnic groups engaged in dialogue.

I am continuing to learn about the harms of racism as a member of the Philadelphia Ethical Society. Consider joining, too.



Sharecropper and cabin, Jackson, MS, 1937



Elizabeth Eckford, Little Rock Nine, Arkansas, 1957



Bobby Seale and Huey P. Newtown, 1967

MEET THE NEW ETHICAL ACTION COMMITTEE (EAC) CHAIRPERSON

by Nick Sanders, former EAC Chairperson

While “ethical action” is something that all Ethical Society members might consider to be basic to their membership (as “deed before creed” implies a prominence of acting ethically before just mouthing off), we do have a long-standing Ethical Action Committee (EAC) that exists to help in that regard. Because it is a committee, some organizational structure is needed. In our Society, that has meant – among other things – having a chairperson. Thus, when a committee chairperson leaves (Help ... Let me out of here!), a new chairperson is needed.

For me, having chaired the EAC for three-years-plus-some since 2017 and previously from 2004 into 2007, it is wonderful that there is a willing, capable PES member to take over! That member is Denise Marx.

Denise began attending EAC meetings soon after she came to the Ethical Society in early 2019. She has been

willing to present her views in the committee, which (as most Society members know) has some very outspoken and experienced members. She has also stepped up to present our Ethics-in-Action and Ending Racism Sunday platform announcements on a number of occasions – and with a thoroughness and care that I have found very impressive. Leader Hugh and all other regular EAC members endorsed my opinion that she would be an excellent EAC chairperson. And thank goodness, she was willing to do that!

She jumps right in with this message: “2021 will be another year of challenges for the Society and humanity. I hope to be of service to the committee and to the Ethical Society as a whole. Now we are putting out a call to all members to please join us at the monthly committee meetings every 3rd Monday of each month at 3:30. Or please tell us what good works you or others are doing so we can share.”

Please take a moment to thank Denise for stepping up and answer her call for engagement in our Ethical Society’s ethical actions: [mail to: ethicalaction@phillyethics.org](mailto:ethicalaction@phillyethics.org)



April Birthdays

- 14 Aissia Richardson
- 21 Henry Pashkow
- 22 Kate Esposito
- 22 Christian Hayden
- 29 Nina Diamond

“Behold, my friends, the spring
is come; the earth has gladly
received the embraces of the sun,
and we shall soon see the results
of their love.” ”

~ SITTING BULL

NOTEWORTHY



U. S. Representative Jamie Raskin was the speaker at the all-AEU platform on March 28th. He was introduced by Leader Hugh Taft-Morales who lives in the Representative's neighborhood in Takoma Park, Maryland.

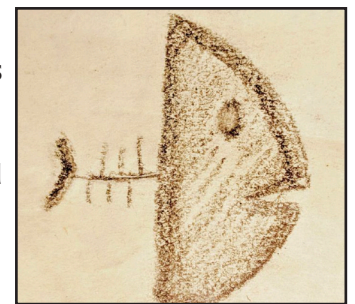
Hugh mentioned that signs such as these express the deep respect and gratitude for Rep. Raskin's leadership in shining a spotlight on President Trump's culpability for the January 6th riot at the U. S. Capitol.



Our basement Community Room is nearing completion, thanks to the combined efforts of numerous PES members and Staff.

Thanks to Small World Seafood

We send a special "thank you" to Robert Amar, owner of *Small World Seafood* on North 4th Street for a generous contribution to the Philadelphia Ethical Society! In the midst of a pandemic that has been hard on small businesses. Robert organized a fundraiser to support our work. He praised our efforts to serve the community through our programs and reduced rental spaces for non-profit group activities. Robert added that we helped enrich his life, and that we support folks who want to become better people. He concluded, "We can all use all the good people we can get in this world...." So, next time you need some delicious seafood, think ***Small World Seafood***.





UPCOMING EVENTS

ALL EVENTS ARE OFFERED
ONLINE THROUGH ZOOM

Sunday, April 4, 7:00pm:

Introduction to Ethical Humanism

This informal session, led by Hugh Taft-Morales, is particularly for newcomers, but all are welcome! We will envision a springtime for humanism to grow and flourish! email Hugh at LeaderHugh@phillyethics.org

Tuesday, April 13, 12:30pm Lunch with Hugh

Come gather for an informal virtual lunch and conversation. Leader Hugh Taft-Morales hosts a discussion about the 300-word entries entitled "Community" from *The Magic of Humanism*, written by James Croft, Leader of the Ethical Society of St. Louis. This is the third in this series. You can get a copy of this brochure here:

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

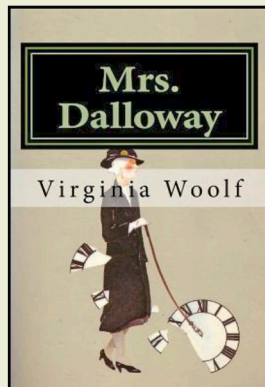


Thursday, April 22, at 5:30pm:

Fiction Book Discussion - *Mrs. Dalloway*, by Virginia Woolf

Join Hugh for another installment of fiction by women authors when he explores Virginia Woolf's 1925 classic, *Mrs. Dalloway*. Come find out why author Jenny Offill wrote in *The New Yorker* that *Mrs. Dalloway* offers "a lifetime of lessons." How is a book about a single day so expansive? What themes of modernity were alive in post-WWI England, and why do they matter today? If you can't make Thursday's discussion, join Baltimore Ethical Society members Monday, April 26 at 5:30PM. (For the month of May we'll discuss Isabel Allende's first novel, *The House of the Spirits*, after business). Please email Hugh so he knows to expect you.

LeaderHugh@phillyethics.org



OUR PATH FORWARD 2021

Over the past two months the PES Board has been meeting regularly to create the new plan, **Our Path Forward 2021**, which will help guide our Society in developing and strengthening its capacity.

The draft plan will be presented to the membership for comment in early April 2021. Members will receive an email with a copy of the plan and a link to an online comment survey. There will also be a Zoom meeting for members to provide input. If members want to receive the plan or the comment survey in hard copy, please contact Cheryl in the PES Office.

The Board will carefully review and consider all the comments provided and make final decisions on the plan in late April. The final plan will then be presented to the membership at the Annual General Meeting on May 16 for your adoption.

Thank you for your continuing thoughtful input on our planning process.



SUNDAY SERVICES

11:00 A.M.

Ethical Views is published monthly
except July and August.

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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,
Wednesday,
April 28, 5:00PM

End Racism Task Force
Sylvia Metzler, Meets
Saturday, April 17th,
11:00 AM -12:30 PM

Camp Linden
Jeffrey Dubb,
Next Meeting TBD

Ethical Action Committee
Denise Marks, Meets on
Saturday, April 17th,
3:00PM

Communication Committee
Drew Snyder,
Next Meeting TBD

Finance Committee
Vincent Russo,
Meets Wednesday,
April 14th, 5:00 PM

Education Committee
Betsy Lightbourn, Meets
on Wednesday, April 7
3:00 - 4:00PM

For suggestions regarding this newsletter, contact
Henry Pashkow
hpashkow@gmail.com

Philadelphia Ethical Society

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