



ETHICAL VIEWS



September 2021 Vol. 136, No. 1 Newsletter of the Philadelphia Ethical Society

SUNDAY PLATFORMS

The public is welcome to join us



Sunday, September 5, 11 AM
Calling Out Outrageous Lies,
Hugh Taft-Morales, Leader,
Philadelphia Ethical Society

Joe Biden won the 2020 election fair and square, but the outrageous lie that the election was rigged fueled the January

6 insurrection at the Capitol. Though lying has long been used as a tool to gain political power, the normalization of blatant lying threatens our democracy. Hugh Taft-Morales explores this toxic twisting of truth and calls for continued condemnation of outrageous lies by public servants.

Sunday, September 12, 11 AM

Program to be announced

(See Weekly Bulletin for week of September 5)

Sunday, September 19, 11 AM

Peacebuilding, Hugh Taft-Morales, Leader

Since the Department of War's creation in 1789, the United States has followed an all-too-familiar strategy: prepare for war to keep the peace.

**We
hereby
resolve**

The painstaking, crucial work of peacebuilding has not received equal federal attention and resources. As weapons become more deadly and expensive, isn't it time the federal government devoted more time, resources and status

to peacebuilding? Hugh Taft-Morales explores the important initiative to establish a cabinet level Department of Peacebuilding that is the heart of a resolution passed on August 8, 2021 by the American Ethical Union: "Renewal of Commitment to a Culture of Peace."

FROM THE PRESIDENT

Moving Ahead with Caution and Hope



By Michael Black-Smith

Greetings from my summer "office" at my basement workbench. The heat and humidity cannot wilt my excitement at taking up the role of your Society president!

I'm sure everyone's first question is, "when and how will we begin our hybrid meetings?" Our Reopening Task Force has been following closely the progression of COVID-19, as well as best-practices guidance from multiple sources. The situation changes constantly. What we can control are the systems and infrastructure that will make our building safe for a return to hosting platforms. Though we are a liberal congregation in most ways, the Society will be extremely conservative in our approach to meetings. Moving to hybrid platforms is important. Equally important is our ability to switch back to being fully remote if necessary.

Continued on page 3

Sunday, September 26, 11 AM

People and Planet Before Profit, Nora Elmarzouky,
POWER, Climate Justice and Jobs

Nora Elmarzouky, a Climate Justice organizer at POWER, will discuss POWER's campaign to pressure elected state leaders to appoint Public Utility Commissioners who will represent people and the planet rather than profits for the fossil fuel industry.

IN THIS ISSUE . . .

A generous donation, the great language debate, a fleeting moment of togetherness, battling bias at the Salvation Army, and stimulating events to be part of.

Join us just prior to each session at www.tiny.cc/phillyethics

FROM THE LEADER Chase Lenfest Helps Us on Our Path Forward

By Hugh Taft-Morales

THE *OUR PATH FORWARD* initiative at the Ethical Society is getting a big boost thanks to the generosity of Chase Lenfest. Chase, who knew my brother through their shared love of collegiate squash, has attended the Ethical Society a number of times over the last few years. He's impressed with our speakers, reads our newsletter regularly, and has made significant financial donations to the Society. Most of all, he supports our efforts to promote ethical living.

This is why Chase has made a new directed donation to fund a part-time Ethical Society staff position, Community Life Coordinator. You'll learn more about this new member of our team soon. For now, as I return to Philadelphia after a prolonged, Covid-imposed absence, I am deeply grateful for the opportunities a Community Life Coordinator offers the Ethical Society. Not only will the position help us improve how we welcome new people, support volunteers, and communicate electronically, it will also allow me to focus on teaching and preaching about Ethical Humanism.

Though Chase was sent to Sunday School in his early years and embraces the Golden Rule, he was never interested in the details of organized religion. What drew him to the Ethical Society was his belief in ethical evolution: the potential for everyone to become more empathetic and dedicated to the betterment of others. He liked how we focus both on personal caring relationships and systemic social transformation.

Chase spoke to me of his own ethical evolution. For a while as a student he was a "class clown" who enjoyed pulling pranks. As he met more victims of prejudice, his sense of social justice grew. In college, for example, he got to know folks in the LGBTQ community who suffered from marginalization. He began developing a greater sense of social responsibility and recognized the importance of defending the rights of all people.

Chase's father had been driven by a similar sense of obligation, inspired by the precept that those to whom much is given have a responsibility to give back. Most of you have heard of H.F. "Gerry" Lenfest. In 2000, after selling much of the family company,



Our benefactor: Chase Lenfest and students at the Lenfest Center

Lenfest Communications, to Comcast, Chase's father dove into the arduous work of philanthropy. He learned the truth of the words of Andrew Carnegie: "It is more difficult to give money away intelligently than to earn it in the first place."

Chase took this to heart as he developed his central philanthropic project, the community-focused non-profit North10 Philadelphia (<https://north10phl.org/>). North10 is anchored by the Lenfest Center (3890 North 10th Street), which offers a range of innovative programs for children—from academics and sports to cooking and chess—as well as a growing array of education, training, and service options for adults in the Hunting Park-East Tioga community of North Philadelphia. Chase contributes to that fun with his signature enthusiastic participation in sports with the kids.

After studying the strategy of Geoffrey Canada and the Harlem Children's Zone, however, Chase realized that no single community center or system of supports is sufficient. To break the cycle of intergenerational poverty a broader spectrum of recovery and reform efforts is required.

Continued on page 3

Continued from page 2

This is why the North10 team, led by Executive Director Joshua Klaris, has broadened its scope to include affordable housing, public school support, healthy food availability, and economic development. Chase explained that too often what begins as “urban renewal” turns into gentrification. The neighborhood changes; but without careful planning the residents are pushed out and end up in another impoverished area. Paternalistic approaches rarely work, which is why the Ethical Society is so involved in POWER, a grassroots organization that creates change by empowering marginalized populations. Similarly, North10 is dedicated to partnerships with local residents and neighborhood associations.

The Lenfest Center has sent its children to our Camp Linden summer program for a couple of years. We are thrilled that Chase has been inspired to deepen his support of the Ethical Society. Of course, the responsibility to use his directed donation in a transformational way weighs heavily on my shoulders, just as Chase’s commitment to transform the Hunting Park-East Tioga neighborhoods for the benefit of current residents weighs on his. But for me, support from Chase Lenfest has injected exciting energy into *Our Path Forward*. I’m thrilled that Chase is on the same path with us all.

Hugh Taft-Morales is the Leader of the Philadelphia Ethical Society

Moving Ahead with Caution and Hope

Continued from page 1

Beyond our reopening, I hope to get us off to a strong start on the *Our Path Forward* plan whose framework we approved at our annual Membership Meeting. Thank you to our members for voting with confidence and a strong interest in seeing our Society thrive. Though the “path” here is metaphorical, the improvements we carry out will ensure a very real vigor and vibrancy.

To keep members informed of our progress, beginning in November I will include in each Ethical Views column a graphical representation showing what we’re working on and what’s up next. At times I will use this column for a fuller explanation of an activity and how it fits within the overall plan.

I hope this feature piques your interest in our committees and the board. Please reach out to me or to any committee chair with questions or if you’d like to get involved with the work of *Our Path Forward* or any of the other meaningful work of our Society.

Michael Black-Smith is the President of the Philadelphia Ethical Society



Child’s play: Chase Lenfest brings his signature enthusiasm to working with kids.

HUMANIST HUMOR

“If this is going to be a Christian nation that doesn’t help the poor, either we have to pretend that Jesus was just as selfish as we are, or we’ve got to acknowledge that he commanded us to love the poor and serve the needy without condition and then admit that we just don’t want to do it.”

~ STEPHEN COLBERT, COMEDIAN

THIS IS US Reunited and It Feels (Felt?) So Good

IT WAS, FOR A while, an out-of-the-box summer.

While the city baked, Ethical Society members burst from their Zoom boxes to greet one another in all their glorious three-dimensionality. The reunions began in June, when 14 members and friends of the Ending Racism Task Force gathered in Rittenhouse Square for a picnic. Some brought food from Black-owned restaurants or other items they'd purchased from Black-owned businesses. The meal concluded with a show-and-tell. A week later, around 10 people attended Ken Greiff's potluck for the vaccinated in his apartment. And on August 15, several members joined Erik Young for a tour of the Penn Museum, followed by some catch-up on the museum's patio.

The annual Camp Linden Picnic on July 18 marked the reunion of many members both with one another and with Leader Hugh. More than 30 attendees munched burgers—beef and veggie—while catching up on all things



Remembering Bertha: Family and friends of Bertha Waters dedicate the memorial rose garden.

Standing on the porch of the newly dedicated Richard L. Kiniry Cabin, Hugh recited the Maya Angelou poem “When Great Trees Fall” in memory of Bertha, a pillar of the Ethical Society for 54 years and a habitual presence—with family members in tow—at Camp Linden, a place she loved and fought for. To honor Richard, who helped preserve the camp and established the children's summer program there, Hugh read from the former leader's own writing: “We may call for protecting the remaining wild spaces for future human generations. But we should be treating

those spaces as entities with their own voice, as presences that lay demands on us. Simply existing means it deserves respect.” Members of the Waters and Kiniry families and other Society members also shared memories.

After a short struggle with an unwieldy sapling, several amateur arborists planted a white dogwood in honor of Richard. Then two-dozen people trekked down to the

pool to unveil a plaque in the new Waters Rose Garden, in honor of both Bertha and her late husband, Lester.



A Tree for Richard: A trio of arborists wrestle into place a dogwood honoring our former leader.

political and personal. After lunch, as birds chattered and wind tousled the leaves, people gathered to pay tribute to two of the camp's most passionate advocates: longtime Society member Bertha Waters and Leader Emeritus Richard Kiniry, who died in 2018 and 2019 respectively.

The picnic ended with a sing-along. Nick Sanders requested “Somewhere Over the Rainbow,” the song to which he and his granddaughter had danced at her recent wedding. Just two weeks later renewed Covid fears would dim the promise of normalcy. But in that moment, if only for a while, the clouds, indeed, felt far behind.



Food and Friends: Sylvia Metzler and Stan Horwitz

FROM THE ENDING RACISM TASK FORCE Let's Get Our Words Right

By Leigh Buchanan

IN THE 1920s W. E. B. Du Bois took up pen against the popular press, demanding capitalization of the word “Negro” in its pages. “Eight million Americans are entitled to a capital letter,” he wrote.

NEGRO

Over the next century, the English language morphed repeatedly in response to a growing demand for social justice, an evolving understanding of race, and the rising voices of marginalized people. “Negro” won its upper-case “N,” then ceded primacy to “black” in the 1960s, followed by “African-American” in the ‘80s. More recently, “black” regained popularity as a better expression of ancestral diversity, including people who trace their origins to places like Jamaica, Haiti, and Cuba.

BLACK

The elasticity of language is a beautiful thing. But so is consistency and clarity. In the interest of the latter, at some point editors must make choices.

After the murder of George Floyd the Associated Press (AP), whose style guide I had to memorize as a journalism major in the ‘80s, decided to upper-case “Black.” (At the same time it opted to capitalize “Indigenous.”) In editorial departments last summer debate surged over the nuances of “people of color” and “BIPOC.” Some criticized the former for obscuring the particular evils perpetrated on Black people. Many found the latter confusing.

After reprising some of those debates last spring while editing the ERTF survey, I set out to create a style guide for this newsletter focused on race, ethnicity and gender. Most of the guidance I cribbed from the New York Times and the AP. In a few cases I modified their rules to align with Ethical Culture. Then I asked members of the ERTF to weigh in.

We dispensed quickly with the question of capitalizing “Black” but not “white.” (White supremacists advocate for the upper case “White.”

Enough said.) Other topics prompted greater discussion. I wanted to drop the phrase “non-white,” but Nick Sanders pointed out that POWER uses it, and also that much research on race is predicated on a distinction between “white” and “other than white.” Sylvia Metzler had a different perspective. “There are so many words we use and didn’t realize they make white the standard and the norm,” she said. “We have to be alert to that because it is the water we swim in.” In general, members felt comfortable with “people of color” when referring broadly to all groups subjected to racism.

We also agreed that specificity, when possible, is always the best choice. When you mean Black people, say “Black people.” The sentence “The crowd was inspired by Black, Latino, and Indigenous speakers” is better than “The crowd was inspired by speakers of color.” John McCormick pointed out that even the word “Indigenous” can be too broad. “Many people who are Indigenous—their real preference is their nation,” he said. Nick added that the same is true of those with Asian backgrounds.

The style guide remains a work in progress. We didn’t have time to discuss “brown,” which to me feels ill-defined. (But maybe I’m wrong? And if we do use it, should we capitalize?) We barely scratched the surface of “Latino” and

“Hispanic,” let alone “Latinx,” which appears loved and loathed in equal measure.

Someone told me recently that “inner city” is offensive. I thought we might standardize on “underserved communities.” But another person noted that “underserved communities” is a “euphemism that often conceals some ugly facts”—for example, redlining, gentrification, over-policing, and underfunded schools. Chike Ukaegbu, a Nigerian contributor to LinkedIn, suggests “untapped populations,” which speaks to potential. I’ve never seen that phrase before, but I like the optimism.

Consensus is impossible. Consistency is desirable. I invite anyone with suggestions to reach out.

Leigh Buchanan is the Editor of Ethical Views.

**AFRICAN
AMERICAN**

BIPOC

ADVENTURES IN ETHICS Fighting Bias at the Salvation Army

by Susan Brotherton

IN 1994 I STARTED doing drug and alcohol counseling at the Red Shield Family Residence, an emergency housing program operated by the Salvation Army. I fell in love with it. The kids were so resilient and the moms and dads were turning their lives around. While located next to the Divisional Headquarters of The Salvation Army, the Residence had very little interaction with leadership. So at first my not being Christian was not a problem.

After I became residence director things got more complicated. I remember the first time a same-sex couple turned up at the facility and asked for a single room. They were two young women in their 20s struggling with substance abuse, and they had three very young children. They said they were a family. The folks at the front desk said no. I said yes. If you are a family then you are a family.

Many of the residential aids were outraged. They said it was sinful. They tried to get me fired. My boss and my boss's boss agreed with them. Fortunately, other officers understood that we had contracts with the city and received federal and state funding. We had to comply with HUD rules, which required giving shelter to anyone who identifies as a family. The Salvation Army sometimes wouldn't comply with HUD rules. But this time they did.

Back then the shelter didn't take men or teenaged boys either. Can you imagine losing your home and wanting to come into shelter and being told that your teenaged sons had to make other arrangements? I changed that. We also started taking couples that weren't married.

Later, when I was running all the social services for the Salvation Army in Philadelphia, we opened a residence for survivors of human trafficking. The first two folks who came to us were here under Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals. They were also trans. We took them in; and I remember waking up in the middle of the night and thinking, "Oh my gosh, are we going to be able to do this?" But the leadership said, "When you commit to anti-trafficking work, this is what you do."

The Salvation Army now says it serves anyone and is seeking to improve its relationship with the LGBTQ community, which is great. But it is that organization's values that make it so hard for kids to come out as gay and trans in the first place.

Society member Susan Brotherton worked for the Salvation Army for 25 years. She now teaches at Temple's School of Social Work and consults on trauma-based care for anti-trafficking organizations and others.

SOME PEACE DAY PHILLY EVENTS



Peace Day Philly, the local initiative honoring the United Nations International Day of Peace (September 21), is celebrating its 11th year with over a dozen virtual programs related to peace and justice. Learn more and join our events

between September 14 and September 21 here: www.peacedayphilly.org/events.

Join Hugh Taft-Morales for these two events:

Monday, September 20, 5:30 PM

Panel Discussion: Peace on the Streets

How can citizens, interfaith coalitions, and practitioners of trauma-informed policing build more peace on Philly's streets? Panelists will share their perspectives and talk with participants.

Panelists: Altovise Love-Craighead, Chief Inspector,

Philadelphia Police Department; the Rev. Naomi Washington-Leapheart, Philadelphia's Director of Faith-Based and Interfaith Affairs; and Briana Clarke, Program Director for Artwell. To learn more visit <https://bit.ly/PeaceonTheStreets>.

Register for this virtual event here: <https://bit.ly/RegisterPeaceOnTheStreets>.

Tuesday, September 21, 11:30 AM -12:30 PM

The International Day of Peace in Philadelphia

Join our annual Peace Day gathering with live music leading up to the Global Minute at noon. The Rev. David Brown, a peace activist and professor at Temple University; and Erica Atwood, a city official, will share their thoughts about creating a more peaceful Philadelphia. This free, open-to-the-public event takes place in Rittenhouse Square, 18th and Walnut Streets. Masks are encouraged. To learn more visit <https://bit.ly/PeaceDayPhilly2021>



UPCOMING EVENTS

Dust off your cat-face filter and rendezvous at www.tiny.cc/phillyethics

Sunday, September 5, 7 PM

Introduction to Ethical Humanism

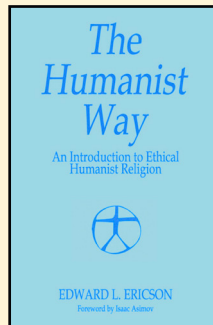
This informal session, led by Hugh Taft-Morales, is particularly for newcomers, but all are welcome!

Monday, September 6, 7 PM

Fall Ethical Culture book discussion:

***The Humanist Way* by Ed Ericson**

Those interested in the history and philosophy of Ethical Culture can join Hugh Taft-Morales over six Monday evenings to discuss *The Humanist Way*. On September 6 we'll cover the forward, introduction and chapters 1 and 2. Subsequent meetings are scheduled for October 4, October 18, November 8, November 22, and December 6.



obviously appealing after 18 months of pandemic. But Hugh Taft-Morales found in this 2001 international bestseller guidance for how we live today. (October's novel will be *Hottentot Venus*, by Barbara Chase-Riboud.)

Tuesday, October 5, 11 AM

Discussion series: *On Good Behavior*

Join Hugh Taft-Morales for another light-hearted but serious series about how we treat each other. This first session is titled *Being Wrong: The Virtues of Humility and Doubt*. It will be followed by *Being Mortal* (October 19), *Being Here Now* (November 9), *Our Dual Nature - Individualism and Relationships* (November 23) and *Winning and Losing* (December 7). We have invited participants from Friends in the City to join us.

Wednesdays, September 8 and 22, 12:30 PM

Lunch with Hugh: *The Magic of Humanism: Growth*

Hugh Taft-Morales continues his informal conversations about *The Magic of Humanism*, written by James Croft, leader of the Ethical Society of



St. Louis. This month we'll discuss the final two 300-word entries: "Goodness" (September 8) and "Justice" (September 22). We'll chat about these short readings and whatever else is on your minds.

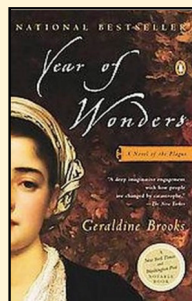
The book is available here:

<https://ethicalstl.org/who-we-are/what-is-ethical-humanism/the-magic-of-humanism/>

Tuesday, September 21, 6 PM

Book discussion: *Years of Wonder: A Novel of the Plague* by Geraldine Brooks

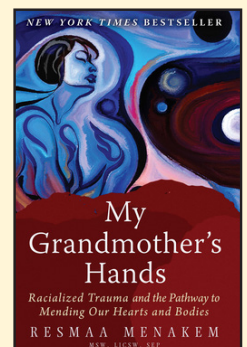
A novel about a village that quarantines itself during the 14th century Black Death might not sound



Thursday, October 7, 7 PM

Circle series: *My Grandmother's Hands* by Resmaa Menakem

Members of the Baltimore and Philadelphia Ethical Societies are invited to join a circle exploring the book *My Grandmother's Hands*, by psychotherapist and trauma specialist Resmaa Menakem. This book examines white supremacy in America from the perspective of trauma and body-centered psychology. Sarah Tieleman from the New York Ethical Society will host. Participants are asked to commit to attending all five Thursday sessions. The others, all held from 7 PM to 9 PM, are scheduled for October 21, November 4, November 18, and December 2.



For information or to RSVP, please email Hugh Taft-Morales at LeaderHugh@phillyethics.org



SUNDAY SERVICES

11 AM

Ethical Views is published monthly
except July and August.

Executive Editor, Leigh Buchanan
Copy Editor, Henry Pashkow
Web Master, Copy Editor, Nick Sanders
Layout, Celeste Hardester
Production, Cheryl Desmond

Philadelphia Ethical Society
1906 South Rittenhouse Square
Philadelphia, PA 19103

Hugh Taft-Morales, Leader
PES Board of Trustees
Michael Black-Smith, President
Kate Esposito, Vice President
Nick Sanders, Treasurer
John Marshall, Secretary
Drew Snyder
Stan Horwitz

(215) 735 - 3456
office@phillyethics.org
www.phillyethics.org

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 of committees that meet on the dates shown.

Board of Trustees
Michael Black-Smith
Sunday, Sept. 19, 6PM

Building Committee
Michael Black-Smith
Wednesday, Sept. 22, 5 PM

Camp Linden Committee
Jeffrey Dubb
Wednesday, Sept. 22, 7 PM

Communications Committee
Drew Snyder
Wednesday, Sept. 22, 6 PM

Education Committee
Betsy Lightbourn
Wednesday, Sept. 8, 7 PM

Ending Racism Task Force
Sylvia Metzler
Saturday, Sept. 18, 11 AM

Ethical Action Committee
Denise Marks
Monday, Sept. 20, 3 PM

Finance Committee
Nick Sanders
Wednesday, Sept. 15, 5 PM

Join all programs and meetings
at www.tiny.cc/phillyethics

For suggestions regarding this newsletter, contact Leigh Buchanan
leighebuchanan@gmail.com

Where's That?

Every month we challenge readers to identify a photo taken within a three-block radius of the Society building. We'll collect all the right answers and pull one out of a hat.

The winner receives a \$10 gift card from the online store of **Uncle Bobbie's Coffee & Books**, a Black-owned business in Philly. Respond to leighebuchanan@gmail.com

