



ETHICAL VIEWS



January 2023 Vol. 137, No. 5 Newsletter of the Philadelphia Ethical Society

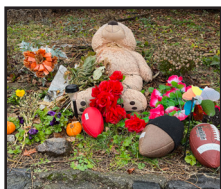
SUNDAY PLATFORMS

The public is welcome to join us *

Sunday, January 1, 11 AM

No platforms on the holiday.

There is no platform on New Year's Day. Enjoy the time with family and friends or visit the American Ethical Union [calendar](#) for information about Sunday morning programs at other Societies.



Sunday, January 8, 11 AM

Memorial Sunday

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

At our first Sunday gathering of each year, we remember important life lessons and inspiring memories left to us by those who have died. Members in-person and on Zoom are encouraged to share some words about how those lessons and memories help us live more fully, joyfully, and ethically. Join Hugh for this moving annual tradition.

(Image: Roadside memorial to Roxborough gun victim N. Elizalde)



Sunday, January 15, 11 AM

The Rise of Worldwide Antisemitism Rabbi Julie Greenberg

Rabbi Greenberg will speak about the rise in antisemitism around the world. Why now? Where does this

hatred come from and what does it mean? How can we combat it? Greenberg serves Congregation Leyv Ha-Ir~Heart of the City and also is director of Climate Justice and Jobs at POWER Interfaith. She teaches therapists at the Council for Relationships and has her own counseling practice that integrates spirituality and mental health. Greenberg's family tree extends back to Felix Adler's Ethical Humanist congregation in New York City.

Sunday, January 22, 11 AM

Resisting American Antisemitism

Hugh Taft-Morales, Leader

The recent surge of hostility toward Jews in the United States is terrifying. Neo-Nazis march in our streets and dine with powerful politicians. Antisemitism, stoked by lies and hate, is used to generate attention, money, and votes. Building on Rabbi Julie Greenberg's comments from the prior week, Hugh will explore this complex topic and ask what lessons we can draw from the civil rights movement. Will exploring Martin Luther King Jr.'s partnership with the Jewish community help us better resist antisemitism?



History repeats:

This [print](#) comments on a 1903 pogrom in Kishinev. A "Russian Jew" bears on his back a large bundle labeled "Oppression." Hanging from the bundle are seven weights: "Autocracy," "Robbery," "Cruelty," "Assassination," "Deception," and "Murder." On the right, a Jewish community burns. On the left, President Theodore Roosevelt asks Tsar Nicholas II, "Now that you have peace without, why not remove this burden and have peace within your borders?"

Sunday, January 29

All-AEU Platform

Time, speaker, and subject to be announced.

On the Banner: [Beirut Memorial](#), Front and Spruce Streets

* Where They'll Be

As a general rule, we'll run hybrid platforms when Hugh is the speaker. Platforms with guest speakers will remain on [Zoom](#). In-person attendees should be up-to-date on vaccinations, wear masks, and maintain six feet of separation. Please, read your emails and check the website before you come.

IN THIS ISSUE . . .

Why Hugh is changing his title; your chance to fund a good cause; meet our new Community Life Coordinator.

FROM THE LEADER New Year. New Challenges. New Title.

By Hugh Taft-Morales



Many times in my Ethical Culture life I have felt called to serve. Last month, it happened again when I was elected as an officer of the National Leaders Council (NLC), the organization representing clergy in Ethical Culture. In December, I became Secretary to the NLC.

I thought long and hard about this decision. For one thing, I sort of felt that I had “paid my dues.” I have been a member of the NLC for 15 years and served as an officer for 10. It was time for a break, right? In addition, recently I have been trying to minimize administrative tasks and focus on educational work.

However, some important factors led me to sign on again as an officer. First, I believe in the values of Ethical Culture and want them to spread. Second, I admire many Leaders and volunteers active in the American Ethical Union (AEU), our federating organization. They are trying to build back the strength and vibrancy of our movement. I felt the pull of loyalty.

The work will be challenging. Over the past couple of years, diverse problems including lack of trust, miscommunication, and burnout have shaken the NLC. After a recent review, the AEU Board discovered that its bylaws legally bind the NLC to the AEU in a way that affects the NLC’s ability to fully govern itself. Among those areas affected are management of professional codes of conduct and clergy credentialing.

But in every crisis lies opportunity. This feels like just the right moment to be part of exciting transformational growth. The world needs our particular brand of

humanism. I hope we can find a way for the NLC, the AEU, and Ethical Culture to flourish.

For that to happen, we’ll need to tighten up our processes so that everyone, including Leaders and Lay Leaders, are held to high standards in a supportive community. We must increase our organizational capacity.

The boldest work will be to reimagine how power is held in Ethical Culture. I’d like to see us dismantle hierarchy and patriarchy, allowing for a more collaborative community. As a symbolic step in that direction, I am switching my own title from “Leader”

to “Teacher.” For years, I’ve been uncomfortable with the hierarchical connotations of “Leader.” But I was too timid to make the change.

Relatedly, I hope that our Ethical Culture community centers the voices of a newer generation of Leaders, Leaders-in-Training, and Lay Leaders. We need to rethink and experiment with how we carry Ethical Culture into the world. Fresh perspectives will help.

I admit that I have more questions than answers.

How can we both stay true to our legacy and become more relevant to today’s world? How can we rethink leadership? Should we consider alternatives to our congregational model, perhaps make forays into community ministry? What about shared ministerial teams and more vibrant virtual communities?

I don’t know the answers. But when offered the chance to serve, such exciting possibilities lured me back. I look forward to sharing more about this in the future.

“What I’ve learned is that unless it’s an emergency, like a fire or brain surgery, hierarchy is not necessary and may be damaging. If you have a hierarchy, you’re repeating the strengths and weaknesses of one person without allowing for the accumulative strength of a group.”

Gloria Steinem

Hugh Taft-Morales is a Teacher of the Philadelphia Ethical Society

LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT Call for Proposals: Whom Should We Fund?

By Michael Black-Smith

MEMBERS OF THE ACADEMY OF MOTION PICTURE ARTS and Sciences vote this month on nominations for the Oscars. Why should they have all the fun?

One of the amazing benefits that comes with your membership in the Philadelphia Ethical Society is the opportunity to nominate a person, group, or organization about which you care deeply for a financial grant from our Rose Rappaport Long Memorial Fund. In 1956, member Rappaport Long established an endowment that generates a perpetual benevolent fund. We ask for proposals that honor either of her chief concerns: the opportunity for worthy individuals to pursue general or professional *education* or the promotion of *leadership* within our humanist movement.

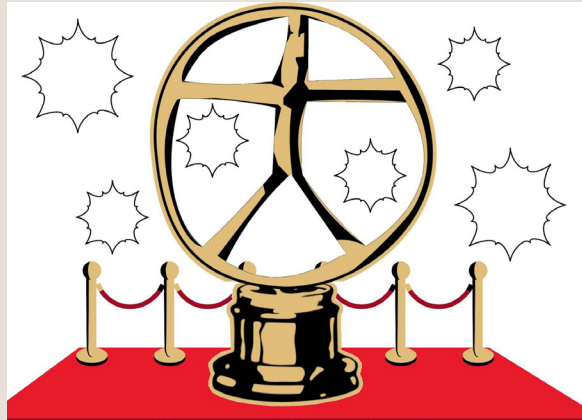
Our Restricted Funds Subcommittee meets to review those proposals and sends its recommendations to the Finance Committee for consideration. Once approved, they go to our Board for granting and disbursement. Grants may range from supporting participation in a single event to funding multiple individuals over multiple years.

Recent education grants include sponsorships for students in the Philadelphia Futures program and at

the Overbrook Environmental Education Center. Recent leadership grants have helped fund the American Ethical Union's Visiting Leaders program and anti-racism training for members of our Ending Racism Task Force.

Now it's your turn to shine the spotlight!

The process is straightforward. Just send your proposal to **Bob Bueding**, the chair of our Restricted Funds Subcommittee, and answer these four questions:



- Is this an education or a leadership grant?
- What is the amount of the grant, and what would it cover?
- How can we contact the individual or organization?
- How will we know the grant did some good?

Providing these grants is an excellent way for our Society to support educational needs in our membership's vicinity and leadership needs within our movement. We are excited to hear your ideas for sending out good through our Rose Rappaport Long fund!

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

LOOKING AHEAD What Is Your Greatest Hope for 2023?

Society members and friends weighed in...

My single most ardent hope is that we never lose faith in our ability to face the myriad difficult problems that overwhelm us. That we not fall prey to despair or the belief that our lives in a chaotic world cannot be made better. That, as individuals, we never feel we have nothing to offer: that we're too old or too tired or that it's not worth making the effort. We all have something to offer. If we find and share it, then it all becomes worth the effort. In doing so, we may discover an inner strength we never thought was there.

Henry Pashkow

My deepest hope is that we will clearly disqualify Trump from ever again running for office.

Carol Love

MY GREATEST HOPE FOR 2023 IS A SIGNIFICANT REDUCTION IN GUN VIOLENCE HERE IN PHILLY.

STAN HORWITZ

I'd like to see a decrease in the rhetoric in conservative media about how LGBTQIA+ people are a danger to children for simply existing, for having representation on television shows, and for performing drag at family-friendly events. Contrary to what is said, children have lower rates of mental health issues when they feel safe to be themselves and are among people who lovingly accept their identities. This kind of negative rhetoric also leads to violence against LGBTQIA+ people.

Oliver Jane Jorgensen

FROM THE ENDING RACISM TASK FORCE

How Emissions Auctions Can Help End Racism

By Nick Sanders

THE EXISTENCE OF SYSTEMIC ENVIRONMENTAL RACISM IN our country is quite clear. Because of discrimination and associated socioeconomic factors, people of color are disproportionately relegated to communities that experience the greatest impact of climate change.

Support for the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative (RGGI) is part of **POWER**

Interfaith's expanding resistance to environmental racism. The initiative aims to reduce and eventually eliminate the use of fossil fuels by utilities that has contributed so much to climate change and its effect on people of color.

RGGI takes a regional economic-market approach to the reduction of carbon-dioxide (CO₂) emissions, a major source of greenhouse gas. The initiative brings together utility regulators in neighboring states in a coordinated effort to lessen climate change. And it commodifies a standard unit of CO₂ emissions through auctions in which utilities buy permissions (called "allowances") to emit units of CO₂.

With this approach regulators are able to reduce, over time, the "cap," or maximum number of allowable units of CO₂ in the region. Reducing the cap raises the economic value of a unit at auction. That is, the purchase of allowable units by a utility becomes increasingly expensive. The utilities are thus economically motivated to reduce their CO₂ emissions by using cleaner energy or some process of CO₂ capture.

Currently, RGGI has been adopted by 11 states: the six New England states plus New York, New Jersey, Delaware, Maryland, and Virginia. To make it more politically appealing, states may decide how to use

the proceeds from the auctions. "Most of the proceeds have been invested by states back into their communities, including funding of clean energy programs, energy efficiency, and bill assistance to local businesses and communities," according to the RGGI [web site](#). POWER wants to target investment specifically at those communities affected by environmental racism.



Eleven and counting: Pennsylvania should be the Keystone State for RGGI!

Last year, the administration of Pennsylvania Governor Tom Wolf moved to include Pennsylvania in RGGI, and the governor vetoed a Republican bill that would prevent it doing so. The opposition in the Pennsylvania legislature failed to override the veto but did obtain a stay of implementation until their case is heard by Pennsylvania's Commonwealth Court. No date has been set for that hearing. Furthermore, any decision likely will be appealed to the Pennsylvania Supreme Court.

Pennsylvania's membership in RGGI is on hold. But some point out that political pressure may influence the timing and outcome of the final decision. Although it is fairly certain that a legislative majority will continue to oppose Pennsylvania's participation, it is uncertain how the new governor, Josh Shapiro, will respond. Shapiro has called for a comprehensive [climate and energy plan](#). We could help determine what is in it.

RGGI is a distinctive and important tool for combating climate change and its devastating effects on people of color. We should join POWER Interfaith in voicing our support for participation by the Pennsylvania Commonwealth. Please [contact me](#) about how we can get vocal on this matter.

Nick Sanders is a member of the Ending Racism Task Force.

NEW FACES

Oliver Jane Jorgensen Wants to Hear Your Questions

OLIVER JANE JORGENSEN, 34, IS DEDICATED TO MAKING sense of the world through yoga and making joy in the world through theater and art. Jorgensen (who uses the pronouns they/them) was hired by the Ethical Society last month as Community Life Coordinator. Ethical Views asked Jorgensen to talk about themselves and what brought them here.

Let's start with your biography.

My parents emigrated to Canada from England, and I was born in Quebec. When I was 3, we relocated to northern New Jersey. I grew up going to the opera, the Museum of Modern Art, dance class, theater class, and making plays.

I majored in theater at Drew University. When you grow up in New Jersey and you're an artist, you always think, "To make it, I have to go to New York City." At first, I wanted to be an actor. I was also an intern for The Wooster Group: this wild, experimental theater company.

What brought you to Philly?

A pamphlet appeared at the office for a new conservatory program with Philadelphia's Pig Iron Theater Company. I graduated from that, obtained my MFA, then moved to Toronto to start my own theater

company. The pandemic made it impossible for my collaborator and I to continue that. So, I dissolved the company and came back in 2021.

You're also a yoga therapist?

I'm currently finishing training as a yoga therapist. I guide people to yoga tools that help them with pathologies, injuries, or generally improve their quality of life. I also teach yoga and work at a wellness concierge service.

Why did you want to come work for the Ethical Society?

I appreciate working with people who are trying to facilitate social change. I want to participate in fixing the things I find troubling about the world, like excessive consumption. I have a lot of issues with capitalism. There are things I miss about Canada, politically, that are more in line with my vision of how the world can become more equitable. Also, a big part of my yoga practice is engaging with ethics. At its core, yoga is a philosophical system. Among its most important tenets are one shall not harm and one shall be truthful. Sometimes, those things conflict. I feel at home being in community with others also trying to make sense of the complex nature of life.

What are your priorities for us?

Helping to foster an even greater sense of community. Drawing more young folks. Helping people find more playfulness inside the focus on ethics. I think part of my role is trying to bring some pep, as well. But there is also something very nourishing about the emotional connection that arises among people when they can share silence and share space.

Practically, I'll be kind of a connective tissue among the Board, leadership, and members. If members have a question about how to get involved, it's easier to go, "Where's Oliver?" than to float around asking a bunch of people.

What else should members know about you?

I have a lot of skills in collaboration. My master's degree in performance involved two years of working very intensively with people to make a play every week. So, I have considerable experience talking, communicating, and dissecting things in order to make something happen. I want people to ask me questions. And I want permission to ask them questions as well.



Connective tissue: Oliver Jane Jorgensen applies their experience in theater and yoga to bringing folks together.

O HUMANIST TANNENBAUM

The Tree of Knowledge, that evergreen symbol of non-theism, returned this season to the Society's lobby. Following Hugh's December 4 platform lamenting the scourge of book bans, around 20 members and friends adorned its branches with laminated covers of both religious texts and critiques of religion. Margaret Downey, president of the

Freethought Society, proposed exhibiting the Tree—which previously has been rejected from public holiday displays—during Banned Book Week (October 1-7, 2023). Downey expressed her warm appreciation for the Philadelphia Ethical Society for hosting the Tree. “Otherwise,” she said, “it would be totally banned in the state of Pennsylvania.”



Freethought! The Tree of Knowledge was decorated by Doris Dabrowski, while Margaret Downey and Hugh Taft-Morales led a book-themed version of “If I Had a Hammer.”



HOW'D HE DO THAT?

Televised magic never made a lot of sense. Special effects, after all, are baked into the medium.

Interactive magic on Zoom, by contrast, can be astounding. On December 11, the Social Committee presented a show by virtual magician Jon Finch as a thank you to the Ethical Society's volunteers. Finch engaged many of the two dozen attendees individually: asking them to select cards from their decks at home; conjure four-digit numbers in their heads; choose symbols and colored logos from arrays on-screen; and touch parts of their faces while blindfolded. Again and again, Finch anticipated the members' acts, even though the format rendered the usual magician's tricks (sleight-of-hand, misdirection) impossible. Special thanks to Ruth Dubinsky for conjuring this entertainment.

Presto! Jon Finch made a treat of his virtual tricks.



UPCOMING EVENTS

As always, check which events take place in Rittenhouse Square and which in the squares on your Zoom screen.



Thursday, January 5, 5:30 PM-7 PM (Zoom)
Monday, January 9, 12:30 PM-2 PM (Hugh's office)
Discussing Antisemitism in America

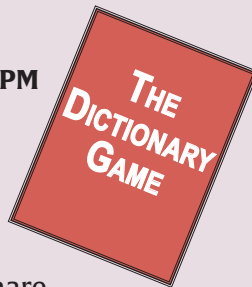
Hugh will host a casual discussion about the country's recent surge of antisemitism. This is not a presentation but rather an opportunity to share feelings and thoughts. The Zoom session is with members of the Baltimore Ethical Society. In-person attendees, please bring your own lunch.

Sunday, January 8, 7 PM
Introduction to Ethical Humanism

Hugh welcomes everyone—especially those unfamiliar with Ethical Humanism—to this casual Zoom and in-person presentation and discussion. We'll also briefly discuss the pros and cons of New Year's resolutions.

Tuesday, January 10, 5:30 PM - 7:30 PM
The Dictionary Game

Come to Hugh's office and play his favorite game of all time! Participants write definitions for odd and unfamiliar words. You're encouraged to bring appetizers to share. Hugh will provide beverages. RSVP to [Hugh](#).



Sunday, January 24, 5:30 PM
Women's History Book Discussion and Planning

Join Hugh on Zoom or in his office after platform for a twofold discussion. First, those who read *American Women's History: A Very Short Introduction*, by Susan Ware, will share their thoughts. We will choose our next title—to read for Women's History Month, in March—in the second part of the discussion.



Saturday, January 28, 2 PM-4 PM
Ending Racism Task Force Potluck

In the building. Bring yourselves and something delicious.



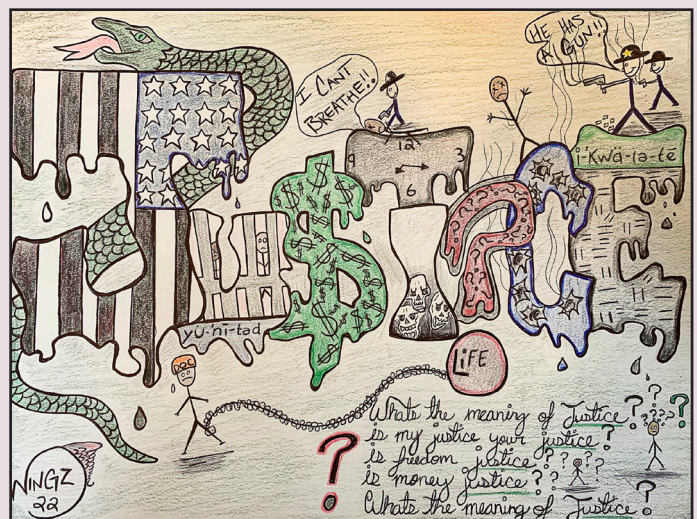
Tuesday, January 31, 5:30 PM
Environmentally Responsible Investing

People should be able to invest without worrying about reckless financial risk imposed on consumers or how investments might make climate change worse. Hugh hosts Mike Litt of [U.S. PIRG](#) on Zoom as he discusses mobilizing consumers to hold insurers, big banks, and other companies accountable to shareholders. A Q&A will follow

CELEBRATING HIGHER EDUCATION BEHIND BARS
Sunday, January 22-Friday, January 27

The Philadelphia Ethical Society is excited to host a weeklong multimedia art installation and series of public events organized by Eastern University's Prison Education Program (PEP). The installation will feature original artwork and poetry by incarcerated students who were enrolled in a PEP course on creativity and artistic expression at State Correctional Institution (SCI), in Chester. It is designed to foster community dialogue about the "college-in-prison" experience while highlighting the partnership between SCI-Chester and PEP.

The week begins with an opening reception on Sunday, January 22, at 4 PM. There will be a film screening and discussion on Wednesday, January 25, at 6 PM; and a spoken word event on Friday, January 27, at 6 PM. All events will be free and open to the public at the Ethical Society and live-streamed on Zoom. For information, please contact Tieshka Smith, PEP artist-in-residence, at (267) 362-9535.



"Justice:" A work in pen and colored pencils by Wingz22.



SUNDAY SERVICES

11 AM

Ethical Views is published monthly
except July and August.

Executive Editor, Leigh Buchanan

Copy Editors, Henry Pashkow, Nick Sanders

Web Administrators, Cheryl Desmond, Nick Sanders

Layout, Celeste Hardester

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Philadelphia Ethical Society
1906 South Rittenhouse Square
Philadelphia, PA 19103

Hugh Taft-Morales, Leader

PES Board of Trustees

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(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 the committees, which meet at the times shown. Members and interested others are welcome to attend. Email us to learn more at office@phillyethics.org.

Board of Trustees

Michael Black-Smith

Sunday, Jan 15, 6 PM

Building Committee

Michael Black-Smith

No meeting this month

Camp Linden Committee

Jeffrey Dubb

Wednesday, Jan. 25, 6 PM

Education Committee

Betsy Lightbourn

Wednesday, Jan. 4, 5:30 PM

Ending Racism Task Force

Sylvia Metzler/Erik Younge

Saturday, Jan. 14, 11 AM

Ethical Action Committee

Open chair

Next meeting TBA

Finance Committee

Nick Sanders

Wednesday, Jan. 11, 5 PM

Media Committee

Drew Snyder

Wednesday, Jan. 18, 6 PM

Social Committee

Ruth Dubinsky

Sunday, Jan. 29, 12:30 PM

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

HUMANIST HUMOR

"Religion has convinced people that there's an invisible man living in the sky. Who watches everything you do every minute of every day. And the invisible man has a list of 10 specific things he doesn't want you to do. And if you do any of these things, he will send you to a special place of burning and fire and smoke and torture and anguish for you to live forever, and suffer, and suffer, and burn, and scream, until the end of time. But he loves you. He loves you. He loves you and he needs money."

— George Carlin