



ETHICAL VIEWS



February 2023 Vol. 137, No. 6 Newsletter of the Philadelphia Ethical Society

SUNDAY PLATFORMS

The public is welcome to join us *



Sunday, February 5, 11 AM ***The Japanese Have Disappeared*** **Hugh Taft-Morales, Leader** **Philadelphia Ethical Society**

"The Japanese have disappeared." That disembodied voice in Julie Otsuka's novel *The Buddha in the Attic* was speaking about the 120,000 innocent

citizens of Japanese descent consigned to internment camps during World War II. Considered among the worst-ever Supreme Court decisions, *Korematsu v. United States* stood 74 years, until it was overturned in *Trump v. Hawaii*. It was justice grievously delayed. Hugh urges us never to forget the words of the plaintiff, Fred Korematsu: "Fears and prejudices directed against minority communities are too easy to evoke and exaggerate, often to serve the political agendas of those who promote those fears."

Sunday, February 12, 11 AM

More Than a Dream: The Radical Roots of the March on Washington

Yohuru Williams, University of St. Thomas

In honor of the 60th anniversary of the March on Washington, Yohuru Williams, professor of history and founding director of the Racial Justice Initiative at the University of St. Thomas, in Saint Paul, Minnesota, will explore the event's history, legacy, and implications for today. Williams is the author of *Black Politics/White Power: Civil Rights, Black Power and the Black Panthers in New Haven*, and the forthcoming *In the Shadow of the Whipping Post: Lynching, Capital Punishment, and Jim Crow Justice in Delaware, 1865-1965*. He also is co-editor of several studies on the Black Panther Party.

*** 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.

Sunday, February 19, 11 AM

Public Health and Civic Responsibility **Hugh Taft-Morales**

There has been renewed attention in the last few years to the link between public health and civic responsibility. That connection was recognized in the 16th century by Martin Luther, who wrote, "It is even more shameful for a person to pay no heed to his own body and to fail to protect it against the plague the best he is able, and then to infect and poison others who might have remained alive if he had taken care times over." Hugh proposes that it is the responsibility of every person to consider the health of others when making decisions about vaccinations.



Sunday, February 26, 11 AM

The Struggle to Save Philly's Chinatown **Casey Butcher, POWER Interfaith**



Casey Butcher, POWER's community organizer in South Philadelphia and Center City, will discuss the history of Philadelphia's Chinatown, its outsized importance for the city and region, and the current struggle to protect its integrity.

If the proposed arena construction is approved, the neighborhood is expected to become a construction site for six years. A representative from another local movement organization also will participate. Butcher is a veteran of many social justice campaigns, including the Movement to Ban Fracking in New York State and Occupy Wall Street. He is a pre-candidate analyst of the Lacanian School of Psychoanalysis.

On the Banner: [The Philadelphia Citizen's](#) spotlight on 28 African American Philadelphia heroes to honor in Black History Month.

IN THIS ISSUE . . .

How hybrid platforms come together; a member recalls the first Poor People's Campaign; reflections on Black History Month.

FROM THE LEADER

The Upside of a Breakdown

By Hugh Taft-Morales

I HAVE A CONFESSION TO MAKE. ALTHOUGH I LIKE TO THINK people enjoy my company, I'm not much fun to be around when my computer breaks down. As if my laptop were a vital but failing internal organ, when it breaks down, so do I. My breath gets shallow; I double over; and the swearing begins. “#*\$%&! What's going oooooonnnn?!”

Yup, in times of stress I speak to malfunctioning inanimate objects, as if they'd pay attention and fix themselves. It's the closest to supernaturalism that I get, like an ancient farmer beseeching the sun to return after winter. I've had animated conversations with my phone, my printer, and my car. Especially my car if it misbehaves only when my mechanic is not looking.

So it was that I recently found myself, apoplectic, at the Apple Genius Bar. Employees there must receive prodigious customer-service training. They knew they had to be at their best when they saw me storming up with crazed eyes. Before I could rant, a peppy 20-something greeted me. “My name's Tim. What brings you in today?” Tim listened attentively and sympathetically as I unloaded my exasperation on him. “That sounds frustrating. Let's see if I can help.” My pulse rate slowed substantially.

With the help of Genius Bar Tim and some deep breathing, I regained my equilibrium. It was another

valuable lesson in mindfulness and perspective. Right, I thought. Of all the negative things that could happen to me, this was way down on the list in terms of severity.

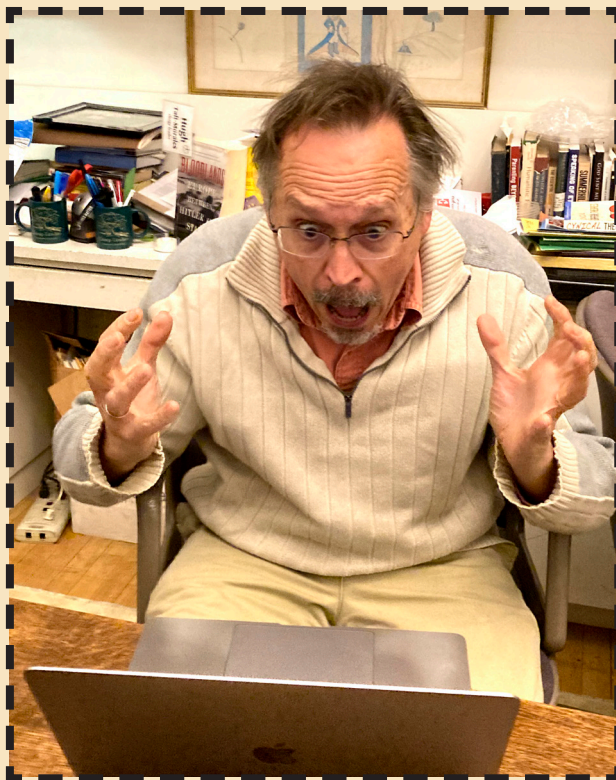
Time to return to meditations on gratitude. I'm lucky to have access to the marvels of technology. And each day is a gift, after all.

In the end, I wasn't pleased when on this—my third recent visit to the Genius Bar—they sent out my laptop for service. It was the first week of the year: just when I needed to get back into work. My first two visits had been right before and right after Christmas, when I more easily could have set work aside. Starting off the work year tech-challenged, using only my iPhone, was like wearing snowshoes while trying to vacuum the house: clumsy and inefficient.

Since then, though, I've regained some perspective.

With my laptop broken, unable to work, I was able to catch up on the bottomless pile of articles I've put aside “for later,” such as David Brooks' “Why Mass Shooters Do the Evil They Do” and my back copies of *The Humanist*. That helped me refill my tank a bit. For that, I thank my laptop, even though I know it's not listening.

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



#*\$%&!: Hugh confronts his technological nemesis.

HUMANIST HUMOR

“The secret of a good sermon is to have a good beginning and a good ending and to have the two as close together as possible.”

— George Burns

ADVENTURES IN ACTIVISM

Recollections from the First Poor People's Campaign

By Carol Love

THE SOUTHERN CHRISTIAN LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE (SCLC) was founded on January 10, 1957. That was my 11th birthday.

I got interested in politics not long afterward. My friend and I—big fans of John F. Kennedy—used to go to Philadelphia's Democratic headquarters after school to address envelopes. In 1964, we had plans to go to Atlantic City to see Kennedy re-nominated. But, of course, it was Johnson.

We tried to get into the Democratic National Convention. Out front, a group called the Mississippi Freedom Democrats, who wanted to be seated, were holding signs that read, "One Man, One Vote." That made sense to me. I picked up a sign and joined them. That was my first protest.

In high school, I listened to the weekly radio show *Martin Luther King Speaks*. He became my hero. After seeing civil rights protesters attacked by dogs and hoses on TV, I had to do something. King had a plan to stage a Poor People's Campaign, in Washington D.C., with mule trains coming from all around the country. I volunteered to be among those visiting government agencies to lobby for the poor.

I got picked up at the train station and taken to the Pitts Motel, which was the SCLC's headquarters. The public relations director, to whom I was assigned, sent me to get the room numbers of all the ministers staying there. I walked into a room full of ministers. One asked me to pour him some Ambassador scotch and have some myself. He gave me a key and told me to go to a certain room. When I asked why, he replied, "you want those room numbers, don't you?" That ended my involvement with the establishment at the Pitts Motel.

The head of the New York delegation took me to Resurrection City, a village of A-frames built by the SCLC next to the Reflecting Pool. I would live there for the rest of the summer. We ate bread that a bakery made for us in coffee cans. Loudspeakers played Sam Cooke's *A Change Is Gonna Come*.

Locals would toss Molotov cocktails into the camp. One night we were tear-gassed. At the Reflecting Pool, I splashed water on my face, not realizing that made it worse. Eventually, the D.C. police revoked our permit, and we were all arrested. At a hearing in the middle of the night, a judge asked me if I promised never to do this again. I said never was a long time. He let me out anyway.



I spent the remainder of the summer working for the SCLC's Jail Committee, arranging bus rides home, collecting clothing and food, and lobbying the jail system for better treatment of inmates.

My father, who had insisted I come home, had spent my tuition on a new car. From then on, I paid for my own education. At the University of Pennsylvania, I joined the Vietnam Week Committee, regularly demonstrating against the war. At a meeting in Chicago, I heard about plans for the 1968 Democratic Convention. Black protestors were to come from one end of town; students from the other. We would meet in the middle and demonstrate. I decided not to go.

Those were heady times, as the nation recognized the futility of the war. My mother and I participated in the March on the Pentagon. Around 1965, I joined the Philadelphia Ethical Society and became involved with its Public Action Committee. Soon, I was a board member, then treasurer for 15 hand-written-spreadsheet-years before computers.

Over the last few decades, I have served under-resourced communities as a physician.

Carol Love is a member of the Philadelphia Ethical Society.

FROM THE ENDING RACISM TASK FORCE

Black History Is American History

By Sylvia Metzler

FEBRUARY IS BLACK HISTORY MONTH. THE “BLACK LIVES Matter” sign in Leader Hugh’s office window will be replaced by a sign that reads “Black History Is American History.” On March 1, our BLM sign will resume its place..

But if Black history is American history, then why do we only observe it one month a year? (If women’s history is American history—same question.)

Before I share some of my research about Black History Month, I want to share a little background about our BLM sign. We put it up in 2016 as an expression of our ongoing commitment to racial justice. The sign acknowledges the continued existence of white supremacy, which marginalizes communities of Black and brown people. “When we at the Ethical Society say Black Lives Matter, we have done more than just display a banner,” Hugh wrote in a [statement](#) about the Society’s racial justice work. He goes on to list 17 actions we have taken to help our nation transform into a racially just society.

The Black Lives Matter movement goes back a decade. Black History Month is much older. I just learned that the first effort to recognize Black history was in 1926, when Carter G. Woodson, a historian who studied the history of the African diaspora, created Negro History Week to celebrate the achievements of people largely ignored by the white historical establishment. Woodson chose the second week of February, which included the birthdays of both Abraham Lincoln and Frederick Douglass.

Black History Month was conceived by Black educators and the Black United Students organization at Kent State University. The first celebration took place in 1970. In 1976, Black History Month was officially recognized to pay tribute to the generations of African Americans who struggled with adversity to achieve full citizenship.

In a blog post, Terri E. Givens, author of the book *Radical Empathy: Finding a Path to Bridging Racial*

Divides, listed eight ways to honor Black History Month:

1. Support Black-owned businesses.
2. Learn about noteworthy [Black figures](#) and their contributions.
3. Donate to charities that support anti-racism efforts, equity, and equality. (Among those she cited: the [Black Youth Project](#) and [Amistad Law Project](#).)
4. Purchase, read, and share books by Black authors. Fight book banning in public and school libraries.
5. Support and learn about Black women.
6. Listen to or read *The New York Times*’ [“The 1619 Project.”](#)
7. Participate in relevant online events, such as those offered by the National Museum of African American History and Culture.
8. Attend events or view content related to Black history. (Givens mentioned Questlove’s new Disney+ animated series, *Rise Up, Sing Out.*)



Since the murder of George Floyd in 2020 by on-duty police officers, there has been a swelling of interest in learning more about Black history throughout the United States. But just as has occurred in the past when we make progress against racism, a backlash occurred. Now is not the time to limit our pursuit of knowledge to one month, let alone ban books like *Beloved* and *The 1619 Project*!

So, the members of the Ending Racism Task Force at the Philadelphia Ethical Society are pledging to observe Black History Month and to be faithful to the goals of our Mission Statement, which include “understanding and admitting to white privilege and ending racism, be it individual, group, and/or systemic, by motivating ourselves and our congregation to unlearn our personal biases and work to undo institutional racism throughout society.”

We will do this in February and throughout the year. Because Black history is American history.

Sylvia Metzler is a member of the Ending Racism Task Force of the Philadelphia Ethical Society

NEW MEMBER PROFILE: Welcome Kimiko Doherty!

NEW-MEMBER PROFILES IS A NEW COLUMN IN THIS newsletter. We thank Kimiko Doherty for granting us this interview.

Where are you from?

I'm from the Washington D.C. area. In early adulthood I was in the Peace Corps in Honduras, where I was a Municipal Development Volunteer, working with women's groups to encourage civic participation.

My background is in architecture and construction management, so I also did a series of disaster-mitigation and construction-practices workshops for both men and women. I moved to Philadelphia by way of Honduras, Michigan, and India.

What do you do?

I work for a company that helps affordable-housing developers with the design and construction of their buildings. Prior to that, I worked for the Archdiocese of Philadelphia, converting old school buildings into affordable housing for seniors.

What got you interested in Ethical Humanism?

I've been friends with Mike Black-Smith and his wife, Morgen, for about 12 years. Mike and I talked about humanism and PES over the years; and when the platforms went on Zoom during the pandemic, I tried it out. I participated in Hugh's Introduction to Humanism session and thought, I think I've been a humanist all along without knowing what it was called!

What social justice issues are important to you?

Immigration and immigrants. Being the daughter of an immigrant and living in Honduras really informed me about the opportunities and challenges of living in the United States. A few years back, I served on the board of the Southeast Asian Mutual Assistance Associations Coalition (SEAMAAC), an organization that provides a ton of social services to help people thrive in Philadelphia—especially in South Philadelphia, where I live. They are not a refugee relocation organization like the Nationalities Service Center (NSC). But they have a health clinic with Jefferson; help budding entrepreneurs; and work on language, computer, and food access.

More recently, I've been trying to reduce the amount of plastic I use in my life and when I make purchasing decisions. It's hard! I burned my trash when I lived in



Kimiko Doherty: *Housing expert and immigrant advocate.*

Honduras, so I've been very mindful of plastics for a while. I'm trying to live a low-waste lifestyle.

What do you do for fun? I go for walks. I love exploring cities. And I absolutely love history! Even though I've lived in Philadelphia for over a decade now, I still love exploring this city. There are so many layers of history here!

What is your favorite place in Philadelphia? Today, I'd say, my kitchen. That's where everyone gravitates when friends come over. We hang out, cook, and chat. Ask me again in a few weeks, and I'll probably have another favorite place!

What would you bring to a potluck? I'd be taking SEPTA, so something that wouldn't spill easily. Maybe a pasta salad in a container with a tight-fitting lid, LOL!

Who is your favorite Beatle? Paul McCartney (my mom adores him). But as someone who also has a different-sounding name, I also like Ringo.



BEHIND THE SCENES

Our Master of Hybrid

by Oliver/Olivia Jane Jorgensen

DREW SNYDER IS THE GO-TO PERSON FOR incorporating technology into our Sunday platforms. Every other week you can find Drew, our Media Committee chair, seated at a long table at the front of our auditorium with two computers, a sound mixing board, a microphone, and a projector. From there, he makes our gatherings hybrid.

Drew shares in-person events with the Zoom audience, projects the Zoom meeting on a screen in the auditorium, and mutes and unmutes participants on Zoom. He also shares and projects sing-a-long lyrics and any videos woven into the event. And he ensures the microphones' audio is heard by everyone in the auditorium and logged into the Zoom meeting.

Aside from Hugh, Drew is usually the first to arrive and the last to leave on hybrid-platform Sundays. It takes him about an hour to set up the equipment and launch the Zoom meeting. His checklist includes connecting both computers to the Wi-Fi, setting up microphones, connecting audio components and computers to the mixing board, setting up a projector and screen, launching the Zoom meeting on the two computers, and pointing the main computer's camera at the podium and stage. After the platform, Drew waits as the recorded meeting processes and saves to a virtual drive.

That whole process takes four to five hours. Later he will download the file from the storage space, edit the recording to show just the platform, upload the file to our online library, and make small updates to our website.

Drew has assistance from a few members, including Nick Sanders and Bob Bueding, who co-host the Zoom proceedings. Nick and Bob admit participants into the meeting and mute and unmute people, allowing Drew to focus on the technology in the auditorium. On Sundays when we meet exclusively online, Nick, Bob, and Mike Black-Smith co-host. Society Administrator Cheryl Desmond also is integral to making sure the technology operates flawlessly.

Since the pandemic forced us online, Drew has been working with Nick and Mike to refine the process of incorporating virtual space into our meetings. It's been a process of on-the-go learning and adapting. The set-up is still too complicated and needs work. The Media Committee is searching for a better set-up that allows one person to control the whole system from one computer.

Drew generously donates his own equipment for the meetings. We hope that eventually we will be able to use less equipment, and that the Society can buy its own. We also hope to simplify the hybrid process enough that other volunteers can run the computer.

If you would like to offer your expertise or learn to run the Society's technology, please contact the Media Committee at mediacommittee@phillyethics.org. Meanwhile, when you see Drew, give him a big thank you.

Oliver/Olivia Jane Jorgensen is Community Life Coordinator at the Philadelphia Ethical Society.



Keyboard wizard: Drew Snyder makes our platforms possible.



UPCOMING EVENTS

Your place or ours? Check your Weekly Bulletin to be sure whether events are in-person or virtual.



Sunday, February 5, 7 PM

Introduction to Ethical Humanism

Hugh welcomes everyone, but especially those unfamiliar with Ethical Humanism, to this casual [Zoom](#) and in-person presentation and discussion.

Monday, February 6, 5:30-7 PM ([Zoom](#))

Discussion of Rachel Maddow's Podcast *Ultra* (Episodes 1-4)

In a brilliantly crafted podcast, Rachel Maddow's team tells the story of how, in the 1930s and '40s, members of Congress aided Nazi propagandists, domestic terrorists, and extremists plotting to overthrow the government. The podcast is available through [MSNBC](#) and other streaming services. **We will discuss episodes 5-8 on Monday, February 13, 5:30-7 PM, also on [Zoom](#).** These are combined events for the Philadelphia and Baltimore Ethical Societies. Hugh will lead the discussions.



Tuesday, February 7, 12:30 PM

Lunch with Hugh

Bring a brown bag lunch to Hugh's office for casual conversation. This month, we'll start by talking about the most memorable musical concert we've attended. After that, we'll just chat about life.



Monday, February 20, 5:30-7 PM

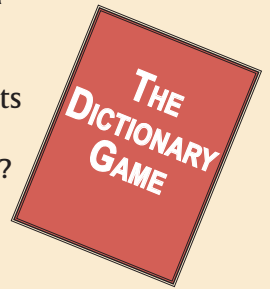
Discussion of Entire Rachel Maddow *Ultra* Podcast

An opportunity to discuss the entire series in-person at the Ethical Society building. See the entry above for details about the podcast.

Tuesday, February 21, 5:30-7:30 PM

The Dictionary Game Redux!

Another opportunity to play Hugh's favorite game of all time. Participants create definitions for odd and unfamiliar words. Which one is real? RSVP to [Hugh](#). You are encouraged to bring appetizers to share. Hugh will provide beverages.



Saturday, February 25, 2-4 PM

Ending Racism Task Force Potluck

In the building. Bring yourselves and something delicious. We plan to screen a movie at 4 PM.



They said goodbye: Among those at the Memorial Sunday platform remembering people who have died were (from left) Betsy Lightbourn, Kate Esposito, Lee MacIver, Irene Putzer, and Scott Pluene.

Black History Month in Philly

The city hosts an abundance of events. Here is a small sampling. (Check websites for more information.)

Mural Arts Philadelphia Black History Month Civic Heroes Trolley Tour (Sunday, February 5 and Saturday, February 25, 10-11:30 AM)

Betsy Ross House Meet the History Makers (Saturdays in February, 11 AM-4 PM). Learn about the contributions of four Black Philadelphians to our nation's history.

Franklin Institute Celebration of African Americans in Science (Saturday, February 11, 12-4 PM). This day of celebration will include a performance by the Kulu Mele African Dance & Drum Ensemble.

Greater St. Matthew Independent Church The Meeting (Saturday, February 18, 12 PM). An imaginary meeting between Martin Luther King Jr. and Malcolm X in 1965.

The African American Museum in Philadelphia An Evening Conversation with Dr. Bernice A. King (Sunday, February 26, 4-6 PM)



SUNDAY SERVICES

11 AM

Ethical Views is published monthly
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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 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, Feb. 19, 6 PM

Building Committee

Michael Black-Smith
Wednesday, Feb. 15, 6 PM

Camp Linden Committee

Jeffrey Dubb
Wednesday, Feb. 22, 6 PM

Education Committee

Betsy Lightbourn
Wednesday, Mar. 1, 5:30 PM

Ending Racism Task Force

Sylvia Metzler/Erik Younge
Saturday, Feb. 11, 11 AM

Ethical Action Committee

Open chair
Next meeting TBA

Finance Committee

Nick Sanders
Wednesday, Feb. 8, 5 PM

Media Committee

Drew Snyder
No meeting this month.

Social Committee

Ruth Dubinsky
No meeting this month.

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

COMMUNITY SAVERS

At its December meeting, the Ethical Society Board approved by consensus signing on to the Save Chinatown Coalition. The group is working to prevent a sports venue from displacing longtime residents and small businesses. Hugh joined its kick-off press conference, on January 9, at Tom's Dim Sum, on 11th Street. There, local leaders, residents, businesspeople, and representatives of legal-aid organizations advocated stopping developers from destroying a unique neighborhood. Also present were POWER clergy Bishop Dwayne Royster, Rev. Robin M. Hynicka, Rev. Mark Kelly Tyler, and Rabbi Abi Weber.

