



# Ethical Views

October 2011 Vol. 126, No. 2 Newsletter of the Ethical Humanist Society of Philadelphia

## Sunday Platforms

Sunday, October 2, 2011

*World Peace from the Inside Out*

**Speaker: Hugh Taft-Morales, Leader of the Ethical Humanist Society of Philadelphia**

Since its birth, Ethical Culture has advocated peaceful solutions to all forms of conflict - from interpersonal conflict to street crime, to global war. As an inspirational humanist philosophy, perhaps Ethical Culture's most unique contribution to peace building is about starting with our selves. Hugh Taft-Morales explores the truth behind Thich Nhat Hanh's advice: "Root out the violence in your life, and learn to live compassionately and mindfully. Seek peace. When you have peace within, real peace with others is possible."

Sunday, October 9, 2011

*Keeping Religion & Government Separate: It's the Right Thing to do*

**Speaker: Ed Joyce, chapter leader of Americans United for Separation of Church and State**

Our nation's First Amendment Religious Clause is vague about where to draw the line between church and state. This, in spite of over 50 years of Supreme rulings dealing with the issue. Regardless of the interpretation of the First Amendment, keeping religion and government separate is the right thing to do. The responsibility of maintaining a distinct separation between religion and government lies not in our Constitution but in an enlightened public and in intelligent legislation.

Ed Joyce has been a chapter leader with Americans United for Separation of Church and State since 2008, and was elected President of the Delaware Valley Chapter of Americans United in 2010. Ed speaks to groups in the

Delaware Valley on the importance of maintaining a healthy separation between religion and government. Prior to joining Americans United, Ed was a research scientist involved in the oil industry with a Ph.D. in Geology. He has also served as adjunct professor of Earth Sciences at the University of Houston and the University of St. Thomas.



Sunday, October 16, 2011

*Moral Heroes and Feet of Clay*

**Speaker: Hugh Taft-Morales, Leader of the Ethical Humanist Society of Philadelphia**

Great spiritual moral leaders, like Mahatma Gandhi and Martin Luther King Jr. are often placed on a pedestal, but their inevitable human limitations and frailties often disappoint. Some people idealize such leaders because in a world darkened by violence and greed, we seek moral heroes who can drive away evil with the light of their goodness. At the other extreme, others take pleasure in tearing down every icon of moral purity, either to expose hypocrisy or to relieve themselves of the burden of living up to such a high standard. How can we acknowledge the goodness expressed by our moral leaders, while admitting their limitations, in a way that brings out our best as moral leaders?

Sunday, October 23, 2011

*Building the (global) Beloved Community*

**Speaker: Mary Day Kent, board member of the United Nations Association, Greater Philadelphia chapter**



In recognition of United Nations Day (Oct.24) and the challenges of bringing the United States into the international community, the talk will highlight the

urgency of engaging the US in being part of the global community. Specific points will include the role of the UN globally, the impact UN agencies have, and the ways that participation in UN treaties and programs would benefit us in the US. Support for the UN brings us into the world community as equal members. "Our rights and nothing less, our rights and nothing more."

Mary Day Kent's professional work has included advocacy for CARE USA and the Philadelphia Yearly Meeting (Quakers). She has administered international programs for the American Friends Service Committee and served as Executive Director of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, US Section. She has worked in international education as the associate director of the Intercultural Career Training program at the School for International Training, World Education, Vermont and as Coordinator of the International Classroom program at the Penn University Museum. She is a member of Chestnut Hill Friends Meeting.

*(Continued next page)*

### In this Issue

Page	
1	- Sunday Platforms
2	- President's Message: Meet the New Leader
3	- Connecting With Leader Hugh; Celebrate United Nations Day; The Day the Universe Changed; Worldly Wisdom; Upcoming Community Committee Events
4	- October Calendar; Birthdays
5	- Our new Leader's first Get to Know Us Social; Camp Linden 2011 Summer Season; Taft-Morales Writes for AEU Report; Janice Moore Wins First Place in Arts Competition
6	- Sunday Morning Volunteers

*Sunday Platforms* (Continued)

Sunday, October 30, 2011

**FAMILY ALBUM—A One-Act Play**  
By Diana Cavallo, Playwright and professor (ret.) of fiction and non-fiction writing at the University of Pennsylvania.



This play was the winner of the Ethical Society's 2011 One-Act Playwriting Contest. Set in an upscale Philly apartment in the present, the play features a confrontation between two sisters, both of them writers, one of whom has just written a book about their father's suicide that raises serious ethical questions, both regarding suicide and the sense of personal and family betrayal. The reading will be directed by Karen DiLossi and performed by experienced actors. A coffee break and discussion with the participants will follow.

Diana Cavallo, playwright, novelist and non-fiction writer, is a member of P.E.N., American Center, the Authors Guild, and the Philadelphia Dramatists Center. Her plays include Bearing Witness, The Ladies of Juniper Street, and The Truth of the Matter. Her published work includes the novel A Bridge of Leaves (Atheneum), the non-fiction work The Lower East Side: A Portrait in Time, (Macmillan), and inclusion in various anthologies: Don't Tell Mama (Penquin), The Dream Book, (Schocken), and From the Margin (Purdue University Press). Other professional credentials include a Fulbright Teaching Fellowship (Pisa, Italy) and her 18-year stint teaching fiction and non-fiction at Penn. <>



**President's Message**

**Meet the New Leader**

**Temma Fishman**

On March 21, 2011 at a special meeting of the membership, the Ethical Humanist Society of Philadelphia unanimously and enthusiastically voted to offer a contract to Hugh Taft-Morales to serve



Photograph by E. Lightbourn

as our new leader. We couldn't have been happier. This was the result of an exhaustive effort by our Search Committee culminating in an unqualified recommendation from them and a unanimous endorsement of Hugh by our Board of Trustees.

Hugh now serves as our half-time leader in Philadelphia, a quarter-time leader at the Baltimore Ethical Society, and as a consulting leader with the Ethical Society Without Walls. He is a devoted husband to his wife Maureen and father to their three children, Sean (24), Maya (18) and Justin, (16). They all live in Takoma Park, MD - so he is indeed a very busy man. Fortunately, Hugh is an extremely dedicated and organized leader, who has already inspired us. Last year, while serving as our leader intern, he analyzed the structure of our board of trustees and committees and wrote reports making recommendations on how we can improve their functions.

Hugh may have inherited his leadership abilities genetically. To quote from a press release composed by Betsy Lightbourn, "Although Taft-Morales was raised in a secular environment, his great-grandfather, William Howard Taft, a Unitarian, was the only U. S. President to serve as president of a religious organization: the General Conference of Unitarian Churches from 1915 until 1925."

His gift at organization is helping our Board of Trustees and committees become more efficient in the service of our Society. While Hugh is committed to making our involvement as volunteers and lay leaders more productive, he is also very interested in making it a more rewarding endeavor. He thinks it is crucial that we come away feeling we are getting more out of our experience at the Society than we are putting in, and he is working toward that end. He has a patient, compassionate way of

making suggestions as to how we can improve our contributions in time and effort - and he's a great listener. He has already soothed many a fevered brow. And, did I mention that he plays the guitar and sings? As I write this, we plan to gather and sing for peace on International Peace Day, September 21 outside our Society under Hugh's musical direction and guitar playing.

Hugh has his busy schedule for the year already figured out. We know when he will be working in the leader's office, (he posts his hours on our door) and when he will be presenting platforms, attending meetings and leading adult education classes. Through it all, Hugh remains accessible to us when we need to share information or seek his advice.

Hugh is committed to spreading the word about us. He willingly offers to speak to the press or to serve as a spokesman for Ethical Culture to anyone who will listen. He welcomes people to meet him in his office and has written an eloquent message about our Society that you can find on our website, [phillyethics.org](http://phillyethics.org). He has even sat outside our building wearing a sign encouraging passers-by to question him about Ethical Culture. As Hugh says, for him, "Ethical Culture leadership is not just a job, but a calling." With Hugh's encouragement, we will be forming more connections with the community of freethinkers, humanists, atheists and other progressives to give us a stronger voice in the service of social justice. Hugh will encourage us to connect with local colleges and universities to bring those young people to our doors.

Aren't we lucky that Hugh was drawn to us by what he sees as our vibrancy and desire to make our Society flourish? He inspires and invigorates us with the hope that we can spread the Ethical Culture vision of a humane world. He has instilled in us a justified hope for a great future for our Society, which is, for many of us, our home away from home.

And, if you haven't already done so, come by the Society to meet our new leader. You'll want to stay or return to enjoy a platform or class, I guarantee it. <>



### Our new Leader's first Get to Know Us Social

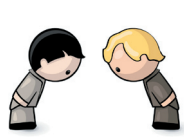
Sunday, October 2 at 7:00PM

The Get to Know Us Social offers interested visitors and newcomers the opportunity to mingle over wine and cheese with established members as we all review the ideas central to the Ethical Society's special religious perspective. We will reflect upon Ethical Humanism's key tenets—the intrinsic worth of every human being, naturalism, nontheism and ethics as a way of life. We will contemplate the importance of this philosophical slant, as it pertains to us, as individuals and as a collective.

The program will be led by Hugh Taft-Morales, the new, dynamic leader of the Ethical Humanist Society of Philadelphia.

### Camp Linden 2011 Summer Season

Camp Linden completed a successful camp season which ran from July 5 until August 12. The camp worked with three groups: Education Works, Haddington Townhouses, and Community Concern 13, to provide a day camp experience for six groups of children. Camp activities included swimming, nature walks, and organic gardening.



The theme of this year's Camp was RESPECT. EHSOP members who wish to learn more about the camp or get involved with the Camp Linden Committee should contact Jeffrey Dubb at [jeffrey.dubb@gmail.com](mailto:jeffrey.dubb@gmail.com)

### Quote-Unquote

"Life would be tolerable but for its amusements."

--George Bernard Shaw

### Taft-Morales Writes for AEU Report



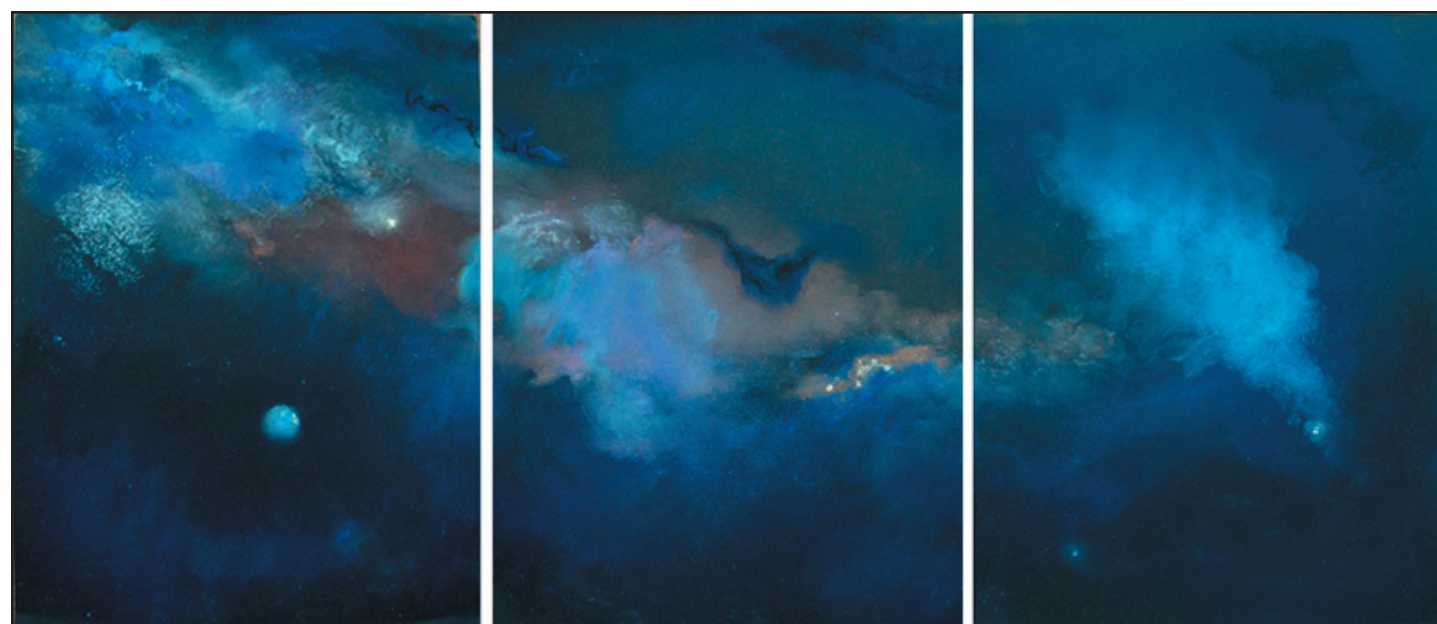
The September issue of the *Ethical Action Report* of the American Ethical Union was written and edited principally by Hugh Taft-Morales. Among the topics addressed are the following:

- \*Respond to African Famine Crisis Now *and* Create Long-term Solutions
- \*Support HJ Resolution 47 to Extend Time for Ratification of the Equal Rights Amendment
- \*Advocate for an Ethical Path to Deficit Reduction
- \*Write to Your State Legislators to Oppose Voter Photo ID laws and Early Voting Cutbacks

You may read the issue at: <http://aeu.org/library/eactions/EAR201109.pdf>

### Janice Moore Wins First Place in Arts Competition

Janice Moore, the layout editor of this newsletter, recently won first place in the September exhibition of the Plastic Club at 247 S. Camac St., which since 1897 has been devoted to the promotion and preservation of the visual (plastic) arts in Philadelphia. The theme of the exhibition was "Sand, Sea, Wind and Stars," and Janice submitted a triptych that fit the "stars" part. Congratulations, Janice!



Cosmic Triptych - A work in pastel - by Janice R. Moore

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of Philadelphia**

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## SUNDAY MORNING VOLUNTEERS



**Flower Dedications - David  
Ralston, Coordinator**

October 2 — Harry Thorn  
October 9 - Nick Sanders  
- In honor of Molly and  
Nick's 10th anniversary.

October 16 - Betsy Lightbourn - In  
loving memory of my parents Rev.  
Francis C. Lightbourn and Marion  
Lightbourn

October 23 - Gary O'Rourke

October 30 - Sharon Wallis and  
Leonard Weeks - to Pat McGeever for  
his role in initiating the play writing  
competition, and his leadership in the  
selection of the play and production of  
the play reading.

*We have new guidelines for ushers this year  
so that ushers can focus more on orienting  
people before and after the platform and  
less on preparation of the building. If you  
would like to serve our community by joining  
the "House of Ushers," either regularly or  
occasionally, please contact Betsy Lightbourn  
at [elightbourn@verizon.net](mailto:elightbourn@verizon.net) or 215-575-1128.*



**House of Ushers  
-Betsy Lightbourn,  
Coordinator**

October 2 - Temma Fishman and T.B.A.

October 9 - T.B.A.

October 16 - Terry Martin-Murley,  
Lyle Murley

October 23 - Marta Guttenberg &  
Gary O'Rourke

October 30 - Henry Pashkow &  
Linda Richardson

**Greeters - Ken Greiff, Coordinator**

October 2

October 9

October 16 T.B.A.

October 23

October 30

**Coffee Hour Lunch Cleanup**

October 2 - Group A-D

October 9 - Group E-K

October 16 - Group L-O

October 23 - Group P-Z

October 30 - Potluck (see p. 3)

***Ethical Humanist Society  
of Philadelphia***

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