



The Ethical Humanist

Newsletter of the Boston Ethical Community

Ethical Society of Boston

MEMBER OF THE AMERICAN ETHICAL UNION

Volume 62, No. 7

April 2017

Resistance in the Age of Trump

Andrea Perrault

As the Trump administration continues its march to Make America Great Again, it seems that on each day we are shocked by a new tweet, press release, or news item promoted by Sean Spicer, the Trump Press Secretary.

There are so many issues that deeply concern us, as budget cuts or severe decimation seem likely: the Environmental Protection Agency, the National Endowment for the Arts, National Public Radio, the Public Broadcasting System, public education, the National Science Foundation, and, of course, Obamacare. While we may be disillusioned or downright depressed, we need to focus on the types of actions that will bring about collective action to save the things we hold dear. Consider the following:

Rage Giving. This is a new term to me – promoted since

the election – that denotes a phenomenon of concerned people stepping up to the plate by making charitable donations to organizations that exist to fund what we care about. A clear beneficiary of this trend has been the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU). Their coffers are exploding with new funding from those of us who value the organization's mandate, which is critical in this new political era.

Marches for Unity. The Women's March on the day after the Inauguration was an overwhelming success. In Boston, 175,000 people peacefully marched and demonstrated solidarity in opposition to the Trump agenda. Since then, civil rights groups, immigrant rights supporters, scientists, and environmentalists have organized to build movements and solidarity.

Senators and Congressional Representatives from Massachusetts. No state has more vocal resistance to the Trump agenda from its federal

legislators than Massachusetts. From Senators Warren and Markey to our outstanding Congressmen and women (Rep. Moulton, Kennedy, Clark, Capuano, Lynch, and others) are making us all proud. Be sure to attend local meetings, and send them your letters and emails of support for the work they are doing.

Contact the media. If you are concerned that mainstream media is not doing enough to blunt the Trump message, then send the word to local newspapers, radio and TV stations: I want less promotion of Tweets, and more solid news about the damage that the Trump agenda will do to the services and agencies that support our communities. Let them all hear from us.

We all need to act to save the values we hold dear. Let's hope our mobilization for good will turn the tide of cultural devastation.



The Way It Is (?)

Marvin Miller

Efficiency

Our society is the most inefficient in the world.

In physics, efficiency is defined as the ratio of useful work done to total energy used. Americans use more energy per capita than the people of any other country. But we don't live better than people do in other technologically advanced countries. Those of us who have jobs work longer than people do elsewhere. We don't spend less time getting to and from work than others do. We don't have more time for lunch breaks, vacations, leave for family care, or holidays than others do.

Another more general way of defining efficiency is results obtained compared with resources used. Economists may use the monetary value of goods and services produced and delivered as the measure of results and the money spent to accomplish this production and delivery as the measure of cost. By this measure, the relative efficiency of U.S. production and distribution is not obvious. We know that most of our products come from far away, across the country or around the world. The resources used in this long distance transportation are a cost of production and reduce efficiency.

From the viewpoint of human welfare, this economic measure can be misleading. Production of harmful products, such as bullets or cigarettes, counts as production and so does the work done in trying to remedy their effects, like medical care, or in dealing with their ultimate results, like funerals. Costs to future generations such as degraded environment aren't counted. Indeed, we can't possibly know their full extent.

Only paid work is counted as a cost in economics. Unpaid work by parents taking care of their children or by family members taking care of other family members who need care doesn't count, because no money changes hands. The value of work is measured by the amount of money paid for it. The work of highly paid workers, for example, a corporate lawyer devising a merger, counts a lot more than that of a low-paid worker, like a strawberry picker or a hospital laundry worker. But it's not clear that the former makes a greater contribution to people's welfare than the latter.

Businesses may use a different measure of results — profits rather than production. By this measure, highly profitable businesses, such as, for example, financial speculation, may be regarded

as efficient, even though they only change the ownership of assets rather than improving people's lives.

The American healthcare "system" is notoriously the most inefficient in the world. We spend much more per capita on healthcare than any other country, but we aren't healthier and don't live longer than people in other advanced countries. Much of what we spend on health care doesn't go for health care. Instead, it goes for the determination of who pays whom how much for what. Countries with universal systems deliver health care much more efficiently.

Improving energy efficiency in heating, power generation, and transportation might make fossil fuel companies less profitable, and their political power has impeded progress toward it.

Our gigantic military establishment is at best a colossal waste, and, when not at its best, destructive.

In our society, efficiency is often praised, but not always sought in practice. From an ethical viewpoint, efficiency ought to be measured by human welfare produced versus human harm caused. If we did that, we would have a measure of efficiency different from the ones commonly used.

Sunday Programs in April 2017

April 2

Harris Sussman, Ph.D

Failing Civics



The central ethical issue in America is sustaining a benevolent civil society in all its permutations. How's it going? Dr. Sussman thinks we need to revive our commitment to learn, and practice, civics. We've really fallen down on the job.

April 9

Community Discussion

"Trumpcare"

We'll gather to discuss what's changing in healthcare. All welcome.

April 16



**Michael Bleiweiss,
Vice President,
Boston Ethical
Community**

*The History of the
Earth Part 1: From
Gas Cloud to Early
Reptiles*

The earth has existed for 4½ billion years and it's been a very busy planet. Continents have formed and broken up and formed again. Millions of species of living things have come and gone. Eventually, one species capable of understanding this history evolved. This three part lecture series will explore our knowledge of this history. The first part will take us from

earth's formation up until the appearance of the first reptiles.

April 23

TED Talk Video and Discussion

Jamila Raqib: *"The secret to effective nonviolent resistance"*

April 30



**John Froio, Deputy
Directory, Community Legal
Services and Counseling
Center**

John will talk about housing issues and CLSACC's efforts to promote immigration rights.

Officers for 2016-2017

President	Brian King	(781) 581-6104
Vice President	Michael Bleiweiss	(978) 689-2874
Treasurer	Terry Goldzier	(617) 232-7704
Secretary	Andrea Perrault	(781) 593-5794

Other Board Members

Pamela Dritt, Fred Hewett

Committees

Discussion Group	Carolyn Nalbandian	(617) 916-2229
Program Comm.	Andrea Perrault	(781) 593-5794
Caring Committee	Marline Miller	(617) 244-1471
Ethical Action	Michael Bleiweiss	(978) 689-2874
Newsletter	Fred Hewett	(617) 945-0396
Music	Ingrid Kisiuk	(617) 332-7109
Officiant	Katrina Scott	(617) 965-3067
Publicity	John Lampert	(617) 923-8550
Website	Fred Hewett	(617) 945-0396

Website <http://bostonethical.org>



facebook.com/bostonethical



@bostonethical



~ Program Schedule for April 2017 ~	
April 2	Harris Sussman, Ph.D <i>Failing Civics</i>
April 9	Community Discussion <i>Trumpcare</i>
April 16	Michael Bleiweiss, Vice President, Boston Ethical Community <i>The History of the Earth Part 1: From Gas Cloud to Early Reptiles</i>
April 23	TED Talk Video and Discussion <i>Jamila Raqib: "The secret to effective nonviolent resistance"</i>
April 30	John Froio, Deputy Director, Community Legal Services and Counseling Center
Sunday Meetings are held at 10:30 AM at 33 Garden St in Cambridge	

THE ETHICAL HUMANIST
 Newsletter of the Boston Ethical Community
 (617) 739-9050
 newsletter@bostonethical.org
 www.bostonethical.org

Ethical Society of Boston
 Post Office Box 38-1934
 Cambridge, MA 02238
 Return Service Requested

Non-Profit Org.
 US Postage Paid
 Lawrence, MA
 Permit No. 28