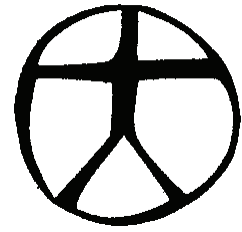


BESpeak



September 2009

Newsletter of the Baltimore Ethical Society

Sunday Platforms

10:30 am
(details on pages 4 and 5)

September 6

Start of Season Picnic

Off-site pot-luck—all are welcome!

September 13

“End of Life Ethics”

Lawrence Egbert, M.D.

Medical Director, Final Exit Network

September 20

“Updating the Enlightenment”

Stewart Jordan, Ph.D.

Humanist, Scientist

September 27

“News as Gleefully Packaged Anxiety”

Djelloul Marbrook

Journalist, Editor, Author

Snack Schedule

Last names starting with:

Sept. 13: A to F

Sept. 20: G to L

Sept. 27: M to R

Other Activities

1st Saturday

Coffee House

~~Sept. 5 at 7:00 pm~~

Canceled—see you next month.

Moveable Treats

Sept. 13

See Page 7

Poetry Group

Sun. Sept. 13 - 9:30 am

See Page 7

Mindfulness Meditation

2nd Sundays starting October 11

Board Meeting

Sun., Sept. 13 - 12:30 pm

Movie Night

Fri., Sept. 11 - 7:30 pm

See Page 6

Ethical Action Breakfast

Sun., Sept. 20 - 9:00 am

See Page 3

Newcomers' Meeting

Sun., Sept. 27, 12:30 pm

See p. 8

Ethical
Humanist
Sunday School

10:30 am - Noon



Waiting for snow

I think my life is like
the violet impendingness
of waiting for snow.

I see a hail of angels
when it finally comes,
but some see dervishes.
Shoveling snow is better than
pretending
to know what's good for
nations,
but how do we vote for
humble notions?

Djelloul Marbrook

Baltimore Book Festival Sept. 25—27

Volunteers needed to staff
BES' booth— 2 hour
shifts Fri. & Sat. noon—8
pm, Sun. noon—7 pm
Come help out, then treat
yourself to some books!
Contact: Karen Elliott.

Stand with BES at the
8th annual

Peace Path

on 9/11, 4—6 pm
Corner of Charles &
Franklin; details p. 5

BESpeak going digital - see p. 6 - IMPORTANT!

BESpeak

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Explore BES on the Web at
www.BaltimoreEthicalSociety.org
Web Master.....Emil Volcheck

President's Column

Lately I've been thinking about expectations. I expected to do more work for the Society this summer than I did. I expected to lose more weight than I did. I didn't expect to continue to have negative side effects come up as the result of treatment for a health problem I had in the spring. Bah, humbug.

If I thought about all of these expectations too much, I could end up feeling significantly depressed but instead I am feeling pretty positive. After all, thirteen years after my cancer diagnosis and treatment I remain cancer free. My son is getting closer to the end of his first stint at college. (He'll need a Masters degree to become a full fledged architect, but has decided to take a break after completing his Bachelors degree.) I own a home in a neighborhood I love, not far from many people I love, and have both a vocation and avocation that I love. Life is pretty good.

So, back to expectations. They can really keep us from seeing the good in life by allowing us to focus on the "nots" - all those things that did not happen the way we thought they should. After all, we're intelligent people—we know best how things should be done, right? But trying to control everything is impossible—there are too many variables, and none of us is perfect even if our SAT scores once were. We can frustrate ourselves into bad health thanks to self-induced stress if we try too hard.

Some people have the option of "giving it over to a higher presence", but most of us in Ethical Culture don't believe in a supreme being. For us, the advice of one of my former bosses is effective: "You have to go with the flow." I used to get irritated when he said it to me (over and over). I was going with the flow even if it wasn't where I wanted to be going—and recently I realized that there was my problem.

I might have let the flow take me in the direction it led but I was still resisting it. I started emulating the behavior of people I knew who never seemed to get bothered by all of those incredibly irritating situations that come up. I also started meditating more often to help deal with the irritations. And suddenly, I got it. I still make plans, but I don't hold on to them when things change—I let go of my expectations, see what happens and adapt to it—I go with the flow and I smile a lot more, because it's such a great ride after all.

Karen

Putting Our Ethics into Action

Ethical Action

The Ethical Action Committee is starting to plan a forum about health care (from an ethical perspective). If you'd like to help with planning it, contact Ben Busby ASAP: Ben dot Busby at gmail dot com (without spaces and with the actual punctuation marks and at sign).

Monthly Ethical Action Breakfasts resume on Sunday, September 20th. Bring a \$5 contribution and be prepared to eat, listen, and plan how we can put our ethics into action.

American Ethical Union Health Care Reform Statement of 2009

The National Leaders' Council of the American Ethical Union supports current efforts to reform the United State's health care system in order to provide affordable, effective and dependable health care for all. We reaffirm our historic position that "Health care is a right to which every man, woman and child is entitled."* Although the present proposed bills in Congress do not address all the issues of concern to us, we support President Obama's effort at creating a just and fair health care system. We expect that any national reform legislation should contain:

Availability of health care to all persons, regardless of age, ability to pay or pre-existing conditions.

Universal insurance coverage that would include preventative, diagnostic, therapeutic and rehabilitative services and mental care for as long as necessary.

Assurance of freedom of choice for patients and doctors and equality of price for all.

Nothing in such health care legislation should preclude the private practice of medicine or the private funding of medical care or research.

Things to Act On Now

These are not actions items developed by the Ethical Action Committee nor voted on by the Board o membership of BES—just suggestions about ways to put your ethics into action from the newsletter editor, the Ethical Action Committee of the American Ethical Union, and others.

Look at the platform talks this month and think about people you know who might be interested in them. Forward information about the talk (contained in the monthly e-mail, or in BESpeak) to them, along with a not that you thought they might be interested in that talk. (Thanks to Bobbi Hahn for this suggestion.)

Members of the Final Exit Network (see information on Sept. 13 talk on p. 4) have been arrested twice this year. As of July 12, the state of Georgia was presumably delaying a grand jury indictment against them so as to keep the organizations assets in that state frozen and to prevent them from resuming their work. You can help by:

1. Inviting everyone you know to come hear Dr. Larry Egbert speak on Sept. 13.
2. Send donations to Final Exit Network at www.finalexitlibertyfund.org.
3. Inform anyone you know in Georgia about the situation there and ask them to consider writing to their location politicians and to the media asking that the case there be acted on so that it can be decided on by the courts, rather than by the prosecution's inaction.

Read the AEU's Health Care Reform Statement (see box to left) and write to your congress people about affordable health care as a necessity for all in an ethical society.

Come to the next Ethical Action Committee meeting and help out!

Sunday Platform Programs

Sept. 13: “End of Life Ethics”

Lawrence Egbert, M.D.

Medical Director, Final Exit Network

The Final Exit Network is a volunteer non-profit educational organization that serves people who are suffering from an irreversible illness which is more than they can bear. The organization offers information so they can, if and when they choose, end their suffering. It also provides guides who give comfort and counseling, but does not physically assist in any manner.

On February 25th, 2009, Dr Egbert and three others from Final Exit Network were arrested by the Georgia Bureau of Investigation and charged with assisting a suicide. He was arrested again on May 26, 2009 by Maricopa County, Arizona authorities and charged with “conspiracy to commit manslaughter” because as Medical Director of FEN he oversees the acceptance or rejection of all member applicants for services. Dr. Egbert is staunchly dedicated to the last human right a person may choose; the right to die.

Lawrence (Larry) Egbert is an anesthesiologist and has been a visiting Assistant Professor at Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine since 2001 and a member of the undergraduate campus’ Health Pre-professions Committee from 2002—2008. He is a supporter of Doctors Without Borders (about which he spoke at BES some years ago), Physicians for Human Rights, and Physicians for Social Responsibility. He is a member of First Unitarian Church of Baltimore.

Man is a social being. As a drop is raised upward in the great ocean by the onflowing of the wave, so the individual mind is exalted by the presence and communion of congenial minds moving in the same current.

Felix Adler, in “Creed and Deed”

Sept. 20: “Updating the Enlightenment”

Stewart Jordan, Ph.D.

Humanist, Scientist

The Western philosophers and well educated political leaders of the 17th and 18th centuries developed one of the most profound and optimistic visions for the future of humanity ever conceived anywhere, it became known as the Enlightenment. The past two centuries have challenged this Enlightenment vision, and many in this country today have reintroduced a more gloomy, otherworldly outlook disturbingly similar in some ways to the cynical thinking that developed during the decline of the historical Roman Empire. This talk will argue that turning backward in time is the worst mistake people who are setting high-level policies could possibly make. The talk will make a simple case for two claims: The first claim is a) that the basic goal of the historical Enlightenment remains sound because of two things ... the strong “will to live and to thrive” that is built into the human genome, and b) the fact that science works in determining how the natural order works, and that ancient myths and dogmas do not. The second claim is that we must consciously adapt to what the past two centuries should be teaching us that universal public education take time, requiring patience and courage of a kind one sees too seldom in this society today, where Americans have been conditioned to want all good things NOW. Thus the Enlightenment needs to be updated.

Stuart Jordan is a retired Emeritus senior staff scientist at NASA’s Goddard Space Flight Center. He has been a leader in the mid-Atlantic secular humanist community for two decades and is presently the science advisor to the Center for Inquiry Office of Public Policy in Washington, which recently on July 17 presented at the National Press Club their vetting of a U.S. Senate list of global warming skeptics that proved to be comprised primarily of individuals with little or no background in climate science. He holds a Ph. D. in physics and astrophysics, and conducted independent studies at Oxford University on a Rhodes scholarship.

Sunday Platform Programs

continued

Sept. 27: "News as Gleefully
Packaged Anxiety"

Djelloul Marbrook

Journalist, Editor, Author

During this talk Djelloul Marbrook, a veteran news executive, will make the case that the real news in our society is not what we think it is, but is in fact our poetry and art, because it is in poetry and art that the cultural and intellectual envelope is being pushed and defining our experience as a civilization. In a corollary vein he will explain why the quality of journalism has deteriorated, stating that we do not have, as is much vaunted, a free press, but rather a commercially censored press that is utterly beholden to the same corporate interests that hold our government in thrall.

Djelloul (jeh-lool) Marbrook is the author of *Far From Algiers*, a book of poems that won the Stan and Tom Wick Prize for Poetry and was published by Kent State University Press last year. His short story, *Artists Hill*, won the 2008 first prize in fiction from the magazine *Literal Latté*. His poems have been published in *The American Poetry Review*, *Oberon*, *Reed*, *The Ledge*, *The Same* and a number of other journals. Mr. Marbrook is a professional newspaper reporter, editor and executive. He maintains a popular blog about culture, journalism, art and literature. He has worked for such major news organizations as *The Providence Journal*, *Gannett*, *The Baltimore Sun*, *The Winston-Salem Journal*, *The Washington Star* and *MediaNews*. Now retired, he lives with his wife in Columbia County, New York.

Friday, September 11, from 4 to 6 PM a Peace Path will form along Charles Street from Fort Avenue (south of the Inner Harbor) north to the Beltway. Individuals and groups will stand with signs promoting peace, as they have each year since 2002 in an event coordinated here in Baltimore by Women In Black. The people standing form a "reverse parade" – the parade is stationary and the spectators (motorists) pass by. BES will again be standing on the south side of Franklin St., holding signs made by the Sunday School.

Ethical Coffeehouse

Oct. 3 @ 7 pm

Poetry ● Music ● Open Mic
Refreshments ● Donation Requested

The featured performer is unknown at press time; come and find out! An always lively open mic follows the featured performers. Coffee, tea, and snacks are available. No charge, but donations are requested.

Start of Season Picnic

September 6th, noon - 3PM

Come and enjoy our traditional start of the new meeting year with talk and food. (Isn't that what Ethical Societies are all about? At least in part!) Bring something to share; drinks and tableware are provided. If it's as large a crowd as it sometimes is, you may want to bring folding chairs as well. Our hosts this year will again be members John and Janet Nugent, at their home in Parkville at 7937 Westmoreland Ave., 21234.

Directions from the Baltimore Beltway: Take exit 30A to MD Rte. 41—Perring Parkway, heading south. At the second traffic light, turn left onto Taylor Ave. Turn left onto Westmoreland Ave. Look for the mailbox a little ways down on the right. There is some parking by the house, or park nearby and walk down the driveway.

Peace Path

Second Friday Ironweed Film Club

Friday, Sept. 11 at 7:30 p.m.

After you've participated in the Peace Path on Charles St (from 4—6 PM), grab a bite to eat and then walk over the BES for the best in independent documentary film making. The movie for each month is decided upon by those attending the previous month. Sometimes more than one film is shown; they can be short. As always, the discussion following the film is part of the reason to come—interesting, intelligent, and accompanied by coffee and perhaps a little something sweet to munch on. What more could you ask for on a Friday evening?

People People People

News from the family of long-time member Gilda Morse: Gilda's daughter, Minna Morse, who grew up at BES wanted to let members who remember her mother know that Minna's newly adopted baby is named Gilad Martin Scherlinder, in her mother's honor.

Our thoughts are with member Jean Pollack and family due to the recent death of her husband Stan, a long-time BES member and former Board member and president. A memorial service was held for Stan on August 15, led by Leader Emeritus Fritz Williams, and many great memories of Stan were shared by those attending. Stan and Jean's daughter, Bry, put together a great display of photos with captions, sculptures made by Stan, and his collection of bolo ties, many of which he made.

Welcome to new member Richard Campbell. Richard and his wife Ann McAlpin have been attending BES for about six months now and are a first to BES (as far as I know) in residing on a boat rather than on land like the rest of us. Make a point to say hello when you see them next!

Most Print Delivery Ending with This Issue!!

Most recipients of BESpeak will no longer receive a printed copy of the newsletter starting in October UNLESS you ask us for one. With the current issue, we will begin sending the full newsletter to our e-lists.

If you wish to continue receiving a printed copy and your address label says "e-copy" next to your name, you must notify us prior to September 15th via e-mail to

President@BaltimoreEthicalSociety.org or by snail mail:

BESpeak

Baltimore Ethical Society
306 W Franklin St., Ste. 102
Baltimore, MD 21201-4661.

MOVEABLE FEAST

Every Day

Don't forget that you have the opportunity to support the good work done by Moveable Feast every time you come to BES by contributing non-perishable food. Look for the colorfully decorated box in the main lobby and pick up one item each time you shop; they add up and the many people helped by Moveable Feast each week really appreciate it!

Poetry Group

Sunday, Sept. 13 at 9:30 am

Not a morning person? The poetry and conversation are worth waking up early for! Facilitated by Karla, BES' "poet in residence". Bring poems by others or yourself. Want to join in?

Contact

poet@BaltimoreEthicalSociety.org

Gift Cards vs. Donations?



Do both at once. Go to <http://www.glscrip.com/retailerlist/> or check the listing of available gift cards at the Society and decide which cards you'd like to order. To order, fill out an order form (available at the Society) and return it to Judy Katz along with a check to cover the cost of the cards. Get your groceries, coffee, and anything else and give to BES!

MOVEABLE TREATS

Sunday, Sept. 13

Let's start of the new meeting year with a great collection of treats! Bring in desserts for Moveable Feast, which serves people with AIDS and breast cancer. Remember to wrap your desserts in serving size portions and label them. Mark your desserts if they contain nuts. Avoid desserts that have heavy icings or that contain alcohol.



Eat out Thursday, Sept. 17 to benefit Moveable Feast

You can choose from many great restaurants in the area, enjoy a wonderful meal you don't have to cook, and a portion of the proceeds is donated (by the restaurant) to Moveable Feast. If you donate as well (or even just fill out the envelope provided without a donation) you may win some great prizes. And, if you decide to come to Helmand for dinner, you'll be greeted by BES President Karen Elliott instead of some anonymous volunteer.

This year, these three restaurants are contributing 50% of their proceeds to Moveable Feast: Woodberry Grill, Brewers Art, & Gertrude's at the BMA.

Go to <http://www.diningoutforlife.com/Baltimore> for a list of participating restaurants.

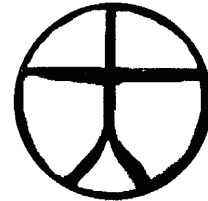
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NEWSLETTER
Please do not delay!
TIME VALUE

Newcomers' Meeting

— Sunday, Sept. 27, 12:30 pm —

New to the Society and interested in learning more? Attended a meeting or two? Thinking about joining? Come to the Newcomers' Meeting, held following the last platform of every month, and learn more about Ethical Culture and about our Society—its history, its philosophy, and its organization. Meetings last about one hour and attendance is recommended before becoming a member.

Get The Latest Things in Print!

Six talks by **Fritz Williams** have been published by BES in booklet format, thanks to the hard work of members **Rosemary Klein** (editor) and **Kathryn Sloboda** (graphic designer). Booklets are \$2 each, with discounts for volume (3 for \$5, 6 for \$10). Available in the BES lobby or by mail (plus shipping & handling).

**Anyone wishing to receive an e-mail copy of each month's programs
should send an e-mail to admin@BaltimoreEthicalSociety.org**

Welcome to "BESpeak", the newsletter of the Baltimore Ethical Society, free to members of BES. If you are interested in our programs, the date to the right of your name is the last month you will receive the newsletter unless you request that it be extended. We also ask that you make a contribution to help defray the costs of printing and mailing. Send checks payable to BES to: BESpeak, 306 W. Franklin St., Ste. 102, Baltimore, MD 21201. Thank you.