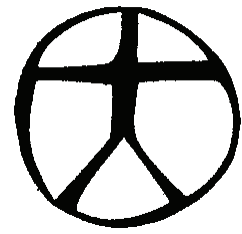


BESpeak



March 2011

Newsletter of the Baltimore Ethical Society

Sunday Platforms

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

March 6

“Reverence and Ethical Culture”

Hugh Taft-Morales

Leader,

The Baltimore Ethical Society

March 13

Turn your clocks forward!

Spring Festival of Hope & Peace

An interactive celebration

March 20

“Flourishing:

New Insights into Happiness and the Life Well Lived”

John Nugent

President, Washington Area Secular Humanists

March 27

“A Poetic Journey Through South America”

Karla Mancero

Former BES Poet in Residence

Ethical Humanist

Sunday
School
10:30 am -



Other Activities

(details on page 5, 7, and 8)

Skepticism and Truth (class & pot luck)

Sat., Mar. 5, 4:30 pm

Moveable Treats

Sun., Mar. 6

Poetry Group

Sun., Mar. 6, 9:30 am

Board Meeting

Sun., Mar. 6 - 12:30 pm

Movie Night

Fri., Mar. 11 - 7:30 pm

Mindfulness Meditation

Sun., Mar. 13 - 9:30 am

Program Committee

Sun., Mar. 13 - 12:30 am

Ethical Action

Committee

Sun., Mar. 20 - 9:15 am

A U. S. Constitution

Primer (class)

Sun., Mar. 20 - 12:30 - 2 pm

Newcomers' Meeting

Sun. Mar. 27, 12:00 pm

Snack Schedule

Last names starting with:

Mar. 6: A to F

Mar. 13: G to L

Mar. 20: M to R

Mar. 27: S to Z

Ethical Quote

by Felix Adler

The purpose of the Ethical Movement, of which each Ethical Society is a part, is to inspire its members with a certain ideal, namely, that of the ethical perfection of human society as the supreme aim of man on earth – an aim to which all others should be subordinate and subservient.

The purpose of the Ethical Movement is to inculcate in its members the most earnest desire to realize this ideal in their own lives.

The Ethical Movement declares that to live ethically is to attain to life by promoting the best life in others, never seeking to thrive at the expense of other life.

The Ethical Movement affirms that it is possible so to live without a formulated creed or philosophical doctrine, to have an implicit religion without an explicit religion.

Cont'd. on page 5

BESpeak

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

President's Column

Contributing to Change

A couple of weeks ago I attended a very inspiring talk by Wendell Potter, the author of *Deadly Spin*, an illuminating account of health care reform. While there I bought--in addition to Potter's book--the recent Douglas Coupland biography of Marshall McLuhan, the man often identified with his famous dictum that "the medium is the message." The biography being a relatively quick read, I found myself plunged back into rereading McLuhan's 1962 book *The Gutenberg Galaxy*, which left me feeling a bit trapped within the printed word and made writing this column less than easy! Actually, my thoughts of late have been too fragmentary to bear gathering. So against the larger social canvas--in particular the collective bargaining rights issues of public employees as played out in Wisconsin, I will just place the following words of Felix Adler as they are thoughts that though written at a far different time still have bearing (and thus should really be considered in their full context rather than just what is excerpted here):

"I have felt that the so-called labor question is the chief moral question of the day, not the only one by any means, but the chief in the sense that all the other great moral questions and the religious questions as well must be brought into relation with this one, and must acquire a new depth and significance by being brought into such relation...The Ethical Movement was started with the labor situation in view as one stinging motive. The desire to contribute to the evolution from an unjust society into a just society was present at the initiation of it. And heaven save us from the time when the impression should go forth that we had lost the connection, that we were not interested, or were shy of this question, interested perhaps in private morals, but not in the very subject-matter that has given the Movement life. That interest has never ceased, and must never cease. To be above the melee [confused struggle] does not mean not to commit oneself."

Adler's wording may seem somewhat "old school," but he surely knows how to sound the clarion call. Not surprising from a man committed to inspiration as a hopeful, causal factor in the world: "Optimism sees the

(Continued on page 3)

Ethical Inspiration by Leader Hugh Taft-Morales

Recently I have drawn ethical inspiration from the dedication and joy of advocating for the rights of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer individuals here in Maryland. Galvanized by two bills being considered by the Maryland legislature - one on marriage equality and the other on sexual orientation non-discrimination - activists and average citizens are working together for civil rights in a spirit of love. I felt the love in particular three times.

First was at the First Unitarian Church in Baltimore at Equality Maryland's Baltimore Kick-Off. After some sushi with Judy and Dick Katz, we shared an evening of brain-storming, fundraising, and committing to further work with Equality Maryland staff and a host of young ebullient volunteers. In the faces of the younger volunteers I saw my children and the future of diversity and social justice work. No longer is the issue simply making room for tolerance, as if it was about "putting up" with the messiness of difference. Rather it is about celebrating difference and benefiting from a world where everyone's contributions, regardless of their sexual orientation, benefit us all.

The second time I felt the love was at the Equality Maryland lobbying evening in Annapolis. After a mercifully brief rally in the frigid Lawyers Square outside the statehouse, small groups of citizens marched off to lobby their representatives. Dan, Shantida, and I got to speak with delegates Tom Huckler and Heather Mizeur, and Senator Jamie Raskin. Since all three support both bills fully, what was the point of our visit? Well, besides thanking them, and getting some tips on what

(Continued from page 2)

lights in the picture, pessimism broods over the gloomy shadows. The genuine idealist is one who sees both. He also sees something else: the possibility of making the lights predominate, of contributing to change the picture."

Rosemary

else we can do to move forward, I as struck by the positive energy these legislatures poured out to us. Their hospitality and determination multiplied my determination to fight the good fight. I was also inspired at how easy it was for me, a rookie in statehouse lobbying, to move from intimidated to energized.

And the third time I felt the love was at a prayer breakfast and press conference organized by the Human Rights Campaign. Driving back out to Annapolis again, this time to the Annapolis Unitarian Universalist Church, I anticipated too much traditional religious talk for my liking. Pleased to see that my fellow Ethical Culture Leader Amanda Poppei was scheduled to speak, I soon felt as if I belonged. I connected with other Baltimore area faith leaders dedicated to social justice. I listened to testimony of commitment to LGBT rights by diverse clergy - UU, Presbyterian, Unity, Judaism, and, yes, even Catholic.

When Lea Gilmore - singer, activist, and member of the Maryland Black Family Alliance - picked up the microphone and said, "It sure is quiet in here!", the energy began to rise. Soon she was leading the group of 100 faith leaders in a spirited version of "This Little Light of Mine" which moved me deeply. It was in the music that morning that I most fully tapped the love that inspires my social justice work. It was in the music that I felt connected to the civil rights tradition I have so admired about progressive America. It reminded me of one of the big reasons I was inspired to become an Ethical Culture Leader. I am grateful that I am now in Baltimore working with such great people and standing on the side of love. It made it easier to sit through some nasty testimony from people opposing marriage equality at the hearing I attended today, Tuesday, February 8. By the time this article comes out in print and is in your hand, we may know if this is the year for marriage equality in Maryland. But right now it is inspiring just to work for it!

Sunday Platform Programs

March 6

“Reverence and Ethical Culture”
Hugh Taft-Morales

Leader, The Baltimore Ethical Society

What is reverence, and how can it contribute to living a more ethical life? A common definition of reverence is “a feeling or attitude of deep respect tinged with awe.” For many people, reverence plays an important role in their religious faith. Felix Adler, the founder of Ethical Culture, applied reverence to how we should manage our relationships with others. Hugh Taft-Morales explores both Adler’s “three-fold reverence” as well as how reverence can enrich ethical living.

Hugh Taft-Morales is the Leader of The Baltimore Ethical Society as well as working with the Ethical Society Without Walls (ESWoW). He lives in Takoma Park, Maryland. He taught philosophy and history in high school for twenty-five years, graduated from Yale College in 1979, earned a Masters in Philosophy in 1986 from University of Kent in England. Hugh received a certificate in Humanist Leadership from the Humanist Institute in May of 2009.

March 13

Spring Festival of Peace and Hope

An interactive celebration

Vaclav Gavel said, "I am not an optimist because I am not sure that everything ends well. Nor am I a pessimist, because I am not sure that everything ends badly. I just carry hope in my heart." A. J. Muste said “There is no way to peace; peace is the way.” As the beginning of spring brings new life to the earth, our Spring Festival of Peace and Hope gives us the opportunity to cultivate peace and hope within our hearts so that we can help to create a more ethical culture in our world.



March 20

“Flourishing: New Insights into Happiness and the Life Well Lived”

John Nugent

President, Washington Area Secular Humanists

During the last forty years, numerous studies have been carried out on the subject of happiness. What has been learned and should it have any impact on how we live or make governmental policy? Today we will review the results and look at the implications for structuring a life well lived.

John Nugent holds an MA in ethics from San Francisco Theological Seminary and a BA in philosophy and has been an adjunct college philosophy instructor. He is the volunteer President of the Washington Area Secular Humanists (WASH) and is President of Planned Parenthood of Maryland. John is a certified Humanist Celebrant/Officiant through the American Humanist Association.

March 27

“A Poetic Journey Through South America”

Karla Mancero

Former BES Poet in Residence

Last year, Karla and her husband, poet Brian Langston, packed up their belongings and set off for a five month long adventure in South America. Karla was born in Ecuador but had not been there since she was two years old, so this was a voyage of discovery of her birthland as well as of many other countries and cultures. Like all significant journeys, it was also a voyage of self-exploration and understanding. Karla and Brian shared their experiences as they traveled through their blog, Viaje del Sueño, but today Karla will tell about the trip from the full perspective it gave her, through photographs, poems, and stories.

Karla Mancero is a poet and a member of The Baltimore Ethical Society, and was the Society’s Poet in Residence for (*cont’d. next page*)

Ethical Quote (cont'd.)

We do not therefore disown or disparage the far out-reachings of religion, or the philosophical reflections of profound thinkers. On the contrary, we consider them to be invincible manifestations of the higher nature of man, but we hold that their value, in the last analysis, is tested by the degree to which they illuminate the ethical ideal and actually affect the conduct of men.

We seek to take over whatever is vitally true in the moral experience of the generations that preceded us, but at the same time to restate the moral truths transmitted from the past in terms more conformable to present needs, and above all ourselves to add to the fund of moral truth, as far as our utmost searchings may avail.

The Ethical Movement seeks to preserve the ethical ideal from petrifying, no matter how sublimely conceived at any time, in the belief that it must ever be a growing ideal, and that it will become more convincing and radiant as the developing intellect and character of men shall achieve new insights.

Finally, the Ethical Movement affirms that to contribute to the perfection of mankind is the sovereign good, for nations and for social groups, no less than for individuals. They who make this creative ethical task their object will never be distracted with the doubt whether life is or is not worth living. The outlook on that sublime goal will give them courage to meet life greatly, whatever its exigencies, to persist in their endeavors, despite endless failures and in contempt of every specious success, to discover a finer happiness in life's joys, and to see the star of hope and faith beyond life's sorrows.

From a booklet reprinted November 1958 by the New York Society for Ethical Culture.

A U. S. Constitution Primer

March 20, 12:30-2:00PM

Want a better understanding of the U. S. Constitution? Care to engage more confidently in conversations about the basis for our nation's laws? Come join Hugh Taft-Morales, Leader of the Baltimore Ethical Society, for a fun, dynamic overview of this amazing document and how it is being interpreted in some debates about contemporary political issues, such as health care, gun control, and immigration reform.

Sunday Platform Programs *cont'd.*

many years. She is currently doing preparation for a graduate degree to further her work helping people live better lives, as well as working with autistic children. She is a member of Zelda's Inferno and has published multiple zines. She has performed with the activist performance group Gimmee Shelter.

Skepticism and Truth: A Philosophical Exploration and Dinner Conversation

Class 4:30-6:00,

Pot-Luck Dinner 6:00-7:30PM

Come have some fun exploring philosophical perspectives on the meaning of truth and doubt. Humanism has much to say about both. Hugh Taft-Morales, Leader of the Baltimore Ethical Society, will speak on the historical evolution of skepticism and three philosophical perspectives on truth: correspondence, coherence, and pragmatism. Bring a dish to share at a casual dinner following the class. Free and open to the public.

Sunday Morning Volunteer Schedule

Date	Presiding	Sound	Sunday School	Opening/Closing
March 6	Kirk Mullen	Stephen Meskin	Karen Elliott	Kirk Mullen
March 13	Karen Elliott	none	Kirk Mullen	Karen Elliott
March 20	Joan Bromberg	John Reuter	Karen Elliott	Karen Elliott
March 27	Karen Elliott	Emil Volcheck	Rosemary Klein	Karen Elliott

NOTE: If you are unable to attend when scheduled, notify Karen Elliott (platform duties) or Kirk Mullen (Sunday School).

Ethical Action Spotlight!

This month's Ethical Action Spotlight is turned on Ken Brenneman, and his young niece Pearce's remarkable story of survival and service. Here Ken shares just a part of why he is inspired to volunteer time with the Pearce Q. Foundation.

Pearce Elizabeth Quesenberry is an exceptional 13-year old girl who at 11 was diagnosed with an extremely aggressive brain cancer. She presented with a lemon sized brain tumor and was subsequently diagnosed with STAGE IV medulloblastoma, a highly aggressive cancer exhibiting a severely steep survival curve. Her prognosis was grave, at 11 she didn't have more than a few years to live. Pearce is my niece, my sister's daughter.

I was called to the hospital and along with her dad and mom (my sister), we began to make decisions about her future. Unfortunately this was not unfamiliar territory for us. My sister and I just went through a traumatic year in which our mother was diagnosed with an aggressive lung cancer. After a year in conventional therapies, our mother died from cancer just months before Pearce's diagnosis.

Pearce began the most grueling cancer treatment regimen available. She was elected into a clinical trial that made use of extreme amounts of chemo and radiation. Her cancer was not treatable if it reoccurred so there was only one chance to kill it. The treatment cycle lasted for 8 months and caused permanent damage to her body. Her growth has been stunted, she has permanently lost much of her hair, she cannot have children, and the treatment itself may spur a new type of cancer. Fortunately Pearce has outlived her prognosis and presently remains NED – No Evidence of Disease.

Pearce has since turned her personal tragedy into a beneficial cause. She has decided to help other children who may face the same obstacles. She started a foundation that has been very successful and gained much notoriety for helping kids. The Pearce Q Foundation (PQF) funds novel research for childhood cancers and provides financial assistance to families of children newly diagnosed with cancer. PQF money is raised through direct donations and fund-raising events. The PQF donates this money to leading cancer research centers and cancer patients. Families benefit from PQF by payment of non-medical bills such as food, utilities, and mortgage. This allows parents who otherwise could not afford to be present during cancer treatments to be with their child. *(continued on next page)*

Ethical Action Spotlight (cont'd)

This foundation was conceived by a 12 year old girl who experienced first-hand the burden cancer can bear on the individual and family. Pearce saw her and other families struggle, coping with finances not covered by medical plans thus forcing parents to rotate through lengthy treatment cycles. Once treated, Pearce wanted to change this. The Pearce Q Foundation motto - "Winning is Everything When Fighting Cancer" - comes from a belief that soon there will be a cure for cancer. As a result of her efforts her message has been broadcast through newscasts, TV specials, Senate testimonials, numerous ceremonial speeches, news articles, and the like.

I have been involved with the Foundation for 3 years. I volunteer by helping staff its many fundraising events. I particularly enjoy helping staff the walk/run in April. This event provides many volunteering opportunities from filling water cups for runners to t-shirt distribution during race day. I also help clean and set-up for other events. BES members are more than welcome to join me in these efforts to support an inspiring foundation begun by an inspiring young lady. See more about her journey at <http://www.pearceqfoundation.org/index.asp>.

Do you have an ethical action commitment or event you are willing to share in the newsletter? Please contact Hugh at Leader@BaltimoreEthicalSociety.org.

Ethical Action Meeting March 20, 9:15AM

Looking to engage your conscience in building the Ethical Action program of BES? Join BES Leader Hugh Taft-Morales to discuss next steps in our Ethical Action program.

Poetry Group Mar. 6, 9:30 am

*March winds blow so strong
I'll be glad when it is done
Poetry month soon*

**Bring one or more poems
on the topic of the
month. For the topic or
more info, contact
[poet@BaltimoreEthical
Society.org](mailto:poet@BaltimoreEthicalSociety.org)**

Ethical Mindfulness Meditation

Mar. 13 at 9:30 am

The teachings of Thich Nhat Hanh from an Ethical point of view.

**No experience needed.
Questions? Contact
[KarenSElliott@ aol.com](mailto:KarenSElliott@aol.com) .**

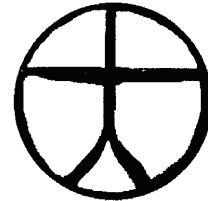
Second Friday Ironweed Film Club

Friday, Mar. 11, 7:30 p.m.

A short film plus a longer documentary, followed by discussion. Films run the gamut from issues of sustainability to workers rights and more. This month's film is "Who Killed the Electric Car?" Running solely on electricity, General Motors' fleet of EV-1 electric vehicles were so efficient, they were on the brink of altering the future of driving in America --- perhaps even the world. Those lucky enough to drive one gave it glowing reviews. So why were they all destroyed? Narrated by Martin Sheen and featuring on screen contributions with Ed Begley Jr., Ralph Nader and Alexandra Paul, "Who Killed the Electric Car?" is a murder mystery like no other, as it unravels the puzzling demise of a vehicle that could have saved the environment and America's dangerous addiction to foreign oil. For more, see <http://whokilledtheelectriccarmovie.com/> . The screening is open to members of BES and the BES Ironweed Film Club. Ask Emil about free membership in the film club (email volcheck@acm.org, cell 443/791-9910). Donations are requested for refreshments.

BESpeak

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



NEWSLETTER
Please do not delay!
TIME VALUE

Newcomers' Meeting

Sunday March 27 at 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.

Help Moveable Feast

Baked Goods - March 6
Other Items - Every Sunday

Support Moveable Feast in their work to feed people with AIDS or breast cancer and their families. Guidelines for donations are posted at the Society. For more information about Moveable Feast and their many additional programs, visit them on the web at www.mfeast.org.

Welcome to "BESpeak", the newsletter of the Baltimore Ethical Society, free to members of BES. If you have asked for a paper copy, 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.

Anyone wishing to receive an e-mail copy of each month's programs and a link to the full BESpeak should send an e-mail to admin@BaltimoreEthicalSociety.org.