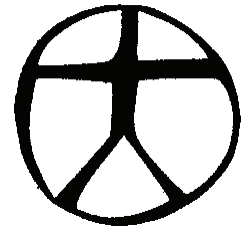


BESpeak



June - August 2011

Newsletter of the Baltimore Ethical Society

Summer Sundays

Informal discussions on topics related to social, spiritual, and philosophical issues - or just a little bit of fun.

10:30 - 11:30 am
(details on pages 4 and 5)

June 5

No program this week

June 12

“BES Platforms: the Good, the Bad, and the Future”

Stephen Meskin

June 19

“Karate as a Moral Practice”
Richard Campbell

June 26

“The AEU and You”
Stephen Meskin

July 3

“The Secular Coalition for America”
Emil Volcheck

July 10

“The Atheist Spirituality of Andre Comte-Sponville”
Hugh Taft-Morales

July 17

“The Dream of Earth: a proposed origin story for our time by Tom Berry”
Bob Corbett

July 24

Potluck Discussion
Stephen Meskin
followed by a
Potluck Picnic Plus
off-site, with words by
NoVES Leader Jone Lewis

July 31

“Sustainable Seafood”
Lisa Alderson

August 7

“Social Media: Facebook, Twitter, and Beyond”
Emil Volcheck

August 14

“Is There a Scientific Method?”
Joan Bromberg

August 21

“Communication”
Rosemary Klein

August 28

Annual Clean Up: Day 2
Bob Corbett & John Reuter

Other Activities

(details on page 2, 7, and 8)

Moveable Treats
June 12, July 3, Aug. 7

Poetry Group
June 5, July 3, Aug. 7
9:30 am

Movie Nights
Wed., July 27, &
August 24 - 7:30 pm

Board Meeting
Sun., July 10 - 12:00 pm

Ethical Action

at Moveable Feast

Thurs., June 9, 5:45-8:00PM

Annual Clean-Up Day
Sat. Aug. 27, 9:00 am - 3 pm
Lunch will be provided

**Joint BES-NoVES
Potluck Picnic Plus!**
Sun. July 24, 12:30 - 3 pm

Newcomers Meetings
Sun., June 26, July 31, &
August 28 at noon

BESpeak

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Explore BES on the Web at
www.BaltimoreEthicalSociety.org
Web Master.....Kathryn Sloboda

With this summer news-
letter, BES is on the verge
of beginning a year-long
60th anniversary celebra-
tion, and we hope that
members and friends alike
will participate in all of our
regular and anniversary
events and festivities.

Rosemary Klein
President

Ironweed Film Club
**** 4th Wednesday ****

July 27 & August 26
7:30 p.m.

The film club moves to the fourth Wednesday of the month after taking a one month hiatus in June. What will we screen in July? It's too soon to tell , but more information will be sent closer to the dates via BES's e-mail lists and our new Meet-Up group.

Screenings are 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.

Poetry Group
June 5, July 3, &
August 7 at
9:30 am

Summer is so hot
Poetry will cool you
down
Come and share some
poems.

Bring one or more
poems on the topic
of the month. For
more info, contact
poet@
BaltimoreEthical
Society.org

Ethical Inspiration by Leader Hugh Taft-Morales

The theme of my May 1 platform on “Leadership” was that we all have the potential – in our own unique way – to be leaders. I then asked, “How does a community where everyone is a leader keep chaos at bay?” I mean if a parade was made up of nothing more than drum majors, wouldn’t it just degenerate into a crowd of people each marching in different directions to the beat of their own drummer?

Well, in part, what holds us together are our wonderful shared collection of beliefs, ways of living, ethical relationships, and caring communities. We are also held together by our common history from Felix Adler to today. For me, however, what really holds us together are the values we share. While they have evolved through our history, they maintain a consistency and heart.

I concluded my talk by sharing the three values I tend to promote in my “elevator speech” – that two-minute explanation of Ethical Culture you offer to an inquirer in the time that you are riding in an elevator together. Em Sabatiuk suggested I share these values again in this newsletter, and so I do. I ask you to consider them over the summer.

The three values I find that best reflect what Ethical Culture means to me are as follows: 1) respect and celebration of the inherent worth of every person; 2) the importance of creating flourishing ethical relationships; and, 3) a commitment to

nurturing social justice. These values reflect the sacredness of each one of us, of all of our relationships with other human beings, and of the whole human community stuck together on this planet flying through space.

In saying these are our shared values, notice that I don’t imply that they are set in stone, like the 10 Commandments. I don’t believe that these values are handed down by an authority. They simply are, as the Merriam-Webster dictionary says, “something (as a principle or quality) that is intrinsically valuable or desirable.” Being intrinsically valuable means that they are valuable in themselves. I don’t try to honor them out of fear of punishment. Instead I am drawn toward them. They make my life brighter and more beautiful. I want more of them, which is why I joined Ethical Culture.

Do these values inspire you? Do you have a slightly different version? How do your Ethical Culture values and my Ethical Culture values overlap? How can they help us work together? But most importantly, how you would adapt them to fit your life so that you can bring out your best and help you live more ethically every day? I invite you to contemplate these questions over the summer. Please bring your thoughts into our BES community with renewed energy for our 2011-2012 celebration of 60 years of BES. See you all in September!

<http://meetup.com/bmoreethical>

The Baltimore Ethical Society has broken through to yet another electronic frontier. Thanks to intrepid electronic explorer Emil Volcheck (aka Publicity Committee Chair) and with help from his loyal committee members and other supporters, BES now has a Meet-Up presence. This is another way the Society can get the word out about all of the interesting, meaningful, and often fun programs we provide. Interested in learning more about Meet Up? Ask Emil, or come to his presentation on Social Media on August 7th.

Summer Sunday Details

June 12

“BES Platforms: the Good, the Bad, and the Future”

Stephen Meskin

We will review and comment on a list of the platforms presented over the last year and generate ideas on platforms we would like to see in the future.

June 19

“Karate as a Moral Practice ”

Richard Campbell

Most people associate karate only with violence. Although violent in its origins, in Japan it evolved into a "Doh" or path for full personal development over its practitioner's lifetime. This talk will relate a brief history of karate in general, address some of its main moral concepts, and outline how it is practiced in a traditional school. It will include a demonstration of "kata", the primary vehicle of instruction in such a school.

June 26

“The AEU and You”

Stephen Meskin

What is the AEU? How does it affect BES? News from the American Ethical Union's 2011 General Assembly.

July 3

“The Secular Coalition for America”

Emil Volcheck

The Secular Coalition for America lobbies for the rights of nontheistic Americans. Emil Volcheck will report on the SCA Biennial Summit that he attended this past May. He'll sketch the SCA's "Secular Decade" strategic plan and describe the SCA's first Lobbying Day. Discussion will center on whether nontheistic Americans face discrimination and how the SCA and the Ethical Movement should respond.

July 10

“The Atheist Spirituality of Andre Comte-Sponville”

Hugh Taft-Morales

In *The Little Book of Atheist Spirituality*, French philosopher Comte-Sponville reaches into Eastern philosophy to offer a form of spirituality that even an atheist could love. It is a spirituality devoid of supernaturalism but full of friendship and community. He embraces a rational humanism that avoids both nihilism and hostility towards religion. Hugh will explore if such a perspective is consistent with Ethical Culture.

July 17

“The Dream of Earth: a proposed origin story for our time by Tom Berry”

Bob Corbett

July 24

Potluck Discussion

Stephen Meskin

If you want to stay in Baltimore, or are just feeling particularly chatty - come at the usual time and bring your own topics for discussion. Find out what others are interested in and put in your own two cents.

followed by a

Potluck Picnic Plus

starting at 12:30

The first of what we hope may become an annual get-together, in Deale, near Annapolis, Come and meet some other Ethical folks from south of the border (the Maryland border, that is) as the Baltimore and Northern Virginia Ethical Societies come together for food followed by a brief program including words on “Taking in the Good” from Jone Lewis, Leader of the Northern Virginia Ethical Society.

After the program we can continue to enjoy the sunshine and the company at the house of

Summer Sunday Details *cont'd.*

NoVES members Ellen Dinerman and Jim Perdue. A canoe and a kayak are available, as well as a badminton net and more. There is also a small beach for picking shells, building sandcastles, and other summery activities.

Bring your own chairs (some available) and a contribution for the potluck. A food sign-up (and details about the location) will be available on the internet closer to the date of the picnic so we don't end up with all desserts – not that some of us would mind having all desserts!

Those who want to share rides to the picnic should meet at BES no later than 11:30 (the end of the potluck discussion led by Stephen). So get out your sunscreen and get ready to enjoy good food, good conversation, a bit of Ethical inspiration, and some general good times when BES and NoVES get together!

July 31

“Sustainable Seafood”

Lisa Alderson

What is happening to the world's marine ecosystems? What we can do to reverse the trend(s), including how to be responsible consumers.

August 7

“Social Media: Facebook, Twitter, and Beyond”

Emil Volcheck

A workshop on using Social Media and a report on the AEU workshop on the same subject, which Emil helped present although he wasn't even in the same state as everyone else!

August 14

“Is There a Scientific Method?”

Joan Bromberg

Is there an authentic scientific method? Can you define what it is? What methods have various scientists used and for what purposes?

August 21

“Communication”

Rosemary Klein

An interactive overview from 30,000 feet of how language - the core and coinage of communication - exists at once on many levels from plain to beautiful, from deceptively simple and straightforward to incredibly complex. Hand-outs will be distributed.

August 28

Annual Clean Up: Day 2

Bob Corbett & John Reuter

We will complete anything left undone from Saturday's official annual clean-up and contemplate the year to come.

Hair Nets, Anyone?

Thursday, June 9, 5:45-8:00PM

Baltimore Ethical Society Leader Hugh Taft-Morales is organizing a third ethical action outing to Moveable Feast, 901 N. Milton Avenue, on Thursday, June 9, from 5:45-8:00PM.

Moveable Feast provides nutritious foods and other services in order to preserve the quality of life for people with HIV/AIDS and other life-threatening conditions. We will again be helping Heide Morgan who organizes a “baking night” once a month.

If you would like a ride to and from BES, e-mail Hugh by June 7 at leader@baltimoreethicalsociety.org.

We will send out an e-mail to BES members should we decide to go in July and August. We anticipate definitely going monthly beginning again in September.

Ethical Action Spotlight!

Ethical Action Brochure

Small Ethical Societies often are stretched thin regarding volunteer manpower. Although this strain is due in part because of their size, there is another reason. It is this: those who are drawn to Ethical Societies are often people already very engaged in the world, committed to making a difference, and, as a result, quite busy!

BES is a good case in point. At one of our Ethical Action meetings this year, we discussed how hard it is to get members to join together for group service projects. In our conversation it became clear that this was not because we were all cooped up at home eating chocolates and watching television. (Although every once and a while that can be fun and rejuvenating!) No, it was hard to get people involved in newly organized group projects because many BES members are already committed to ethical action as a part of how they live. Many have personal service commitments that have enriched their lives for years – and that is good news worth sharing!

This is why the Ethical Action Committee produced the first BES Making a Difference brochure. This modest little publication edited by me and formatted by Kathryn Sloboda, contains written contributions from BES members Bobbi Hahn, Em Sabatiuk, Kathleen Wilsbach, John Reuter, Dale Adams, Ken Brennehan, Carol Mays, Rosemary Klein, and Emil Volcheck. They share just a little bit about why they take time out of their week to contribute to the lives of others. They explain how the small tasks they perform help make our short, shared time on this planet more fulfilling and joyous.

Putting the catalog together took a little doing, however. We are not always comfortable discussing our service commitments. We feel like we are boasting, or making too much out of a small contribution. And it is easy to minimize the difference any one of us can make. As I shared in my last platform, however, I think that Supreme Court Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes was right when he said, “Every calling is great when greatly pursued.” I want to thank those who were willing to contribute their words to the brochure. Our hope is that it will encourage others not to hide “this little light of mine” but rather let it shine!

The Making a Difference brochure also is meant to encourage those who do not already have fulfilling service opportunities to join with other BES members in their small projects. Maybe you can knit baby caps for premature babies, work in a food pantry, or care for abandoned dogs, cats, or rabbits for a couple of hours a week. Maybe you promote Baltimore poets, help your neighborhood association, or make a splash with a “cannonball for the cure.” Maybe you want a more substantial commitment, and see the potential of becoming a literacy teacher, a final exit guide, or deliverer of school supplies to Nicaragua! Or, maybe you will share your own personal service commitment for the second edition of this brochure.

Let’s all distribute the brochure to visitors and newcomers. Help them understand that Ethical Culture is less about what you believe than it is about how you live your life. Use it to invite them to join us at BES for inspiration. Explain to them that the Baltimore Ethical Society is a humanistic, educational and religious fellowship that inspires people to become ethical agents working to make the world more humane. This month’s Ethical Action spotlight shines on the Making a Difference brochure. Pick one up at the BES or e-mail Hugh at leader@baltimoreethicalsociety.org and ask him to send you one that you can share with a friend who might be interested. Even that can make a difference!

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

Sat. August 27, 9 am - 3 pm

Sun. August 28

10:30 - 11:30

Annual Summer Clean-Up

At BES we don't say that "cleanliness is next to godliness" but it sure is nice to see the building sparkle at the start of each season thanks to the hard work of a group of volunteers led by Building Committee chair Bob Corbett and his able assistant John Reuter. You too can be one of those hardy members who brave the dirt and grime that makes its way into all the nooks and crannies and dulls the beautiful marble floor in the foyer. Supplies are provided, and on Saturday so is lunch, so all you need to bring is yourself - in some clothes that can handle a bit of hard work in a not yet pristine environment. Tasks will be found to suit all levels of strength, agility, and ability!

Excerpt from the June 2011 AEU Ethical Action Report

Support the EPA and End Mountaintop Coal Mining

On January 13 of this year, the Environmental Protection Administration (EPA) denied a Clean Water Act permit for the largest-ever proposed mountaintop removal coalmine in Appalachia. Although the U. S. Corps of Engineers had already approved the permit for Spruce Mine in Logan County, WV, the EPA acted in time to protect our environment. According to Tierra Curry, an Appalachia native and a biologist at the Center for Biological Diversity, if the EPA hadn't acted 2,300 acres of forest would have been destroyed and nearly seven miles of streams would have been buried.

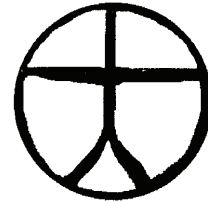
Since that ruling, Congressmen and Senators from coal mining states have attacked the EPA for over-stepping its authority. Senator Joe Manchin (D-WV) introduced S. 272 which he has called the "EPA Fair Play Act." It has been referred to the Committee on Environment and Public Works. On the House side, Rep. David McKinley (R-WV) has introduced similar legislation, H.R.457, which has been referred to the Subcommittee on Water Resources and Environment. For the sake of our environment, it is important that neither bill makes it out of committee.

According to the National Resources Defense Council [see: <http://www.nrdc.org/land/appalachian/default.asp>] coal is one of the dirtiest energy sources, and mountaintop removal is one of the most destructive ways to produce it. Already more than 500 mountaintops have been destroyed and more than one million acres of forest have been clearcut due to mountaintop mining. Well over a thousand miles of valley streams have been buried under tons of rubble, polluting drinking water and threatening the health and safety of all who make their home in the region.

Write the EPA Administrator Jackson [jackson.lisap@epa.gov] thanking her for the permit denial to Spruce Mine and telling her that you support strong EPA regulation of mountaintop removal coal mining. Write your representatives about opposing any legislation, such as S. 272 and H.R.457, which would kill a sensible energy policy in return for short-term financial gain. America should seek energy solutions that will create long-term employment and help fight global warming. See the full issue at <http://aeu.org/library/articles/EAR201106.pdf>.

BESpeak

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



NEWSLETTER
Please do not delay!
TIME VALUE

Newcomers' Meetings

June 26, July 31, & August 28 at noon

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: June 12, July 3, Aug. 7

Other Items: Every Sunday

Support Moveable Feast in their work to feed people with AIDS, blood cancer, 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.