

BESpeak

MARCH 2012

NEWSLETTER OF THE BALTIMORE ETHICAL SOCIETY

Top Ten Reasons to Attend the Reason Rally

by Hugh Taft-Morales, BES Leader

Reason number 10 to attend the Reason Rally on March 24 in Washington: Ben's Chili Bowl! Check it out at 1213 U Street, NW, Washington, D.C. The best chili since 1958. Now you can eat where the President eats!



Reason number 9: D.C. ain't that far away! With gas prices as they are, why not take a vacation close to home - make a weekend out of it.

Reason number 8: Have coffee and bagels at Hugh's home before going down to the rally. We live a pleasant half-mile walk from the Takoma Metro which can whisk you down to within a half mile of the rally in 14 minutes. We aren't far from I-95, and it's much easier to park near our house than to park downtown. RSVP to leader@bmorethical.org so that I have enough coffee and bagels!

Reason number 7: This may be the world's largest gathering of freethinkers and non-believers! (Yea, you could be a little part of history.)

Reason number 6: The excitement of the unexpected: With so many freethinkers in one place, you never know what may happen!

Reason number 5: This is a great chance to explain to others what is unique about Ethical Culture – our focus on deed before creed, our explicit non-theism, our naturalistic humanism, our congregational warmth, and the support we give each other and our relationships. As a movement, Ethical Culture shares many values with our friends who identify as atheists, agnostics, freethinkers, engaged Buddhists, Unitarian Universalists, deists, secular humanists, and more. But we are a distinct and unique lineament in humanism that should be better understood. This is our chance to be ambassadors for Ethical Culture!

Reason number 4: Sightseeing! (Have you seen the new MLK Jr. memorial yet?)

Reason number 3: It's a great opportunity to remember all the other great moments on the National Mall, such as King's "I Have a Dream" speech, numerous civil rights marches, and the inauguration of many presidents.

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CELEBRATING

60

YEARS

APRIL 21-22, 2012

SUNDAY PLATFORMS

10:30 a.m.

(details on pages 4-5)

MARCH 4

"Understanding Homelessness in Baltimore: A Discussion of Issues"

Vanessa Borotz

Coordinator, "Faces of Homelessness" Speakers' Bureau

MARCH 11

"Apocalyptic Environmentalism: Is the End Near?"

Hugh Taft-Morales

Leader, Baltimore Ethical Society

MARCH 18

"Educational Accountability Systems: Ethical and Political Issues"

Gail Sunderman, PhD

Senior Research Associate, The George Washington University Center for Equity and Excellence in Education

MARCH 25

"Problem Solving with Interests not Positions"

Iris Woodard, RNCS, ANP

Nurse Practitioner, Kaiser Permanente

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www.bmorethical.org

Details to Come...

by Rosemary Klein, BES President

The third weekend in April has been designated as primary in our commemoration of Baltimore Ethical Society having existed for 60 years. That Sunday's platform will be one of several special moments. And while all the anniversary details are not yet in place, I hope you will hold aside Saturday the 21st for our celebratory dinner.

When the Ethical Movement's 50th anniversary took place in 1926, Felix Adler recalled that at its start he had been "a very young professor of religious history and literature" at Cornell University asked to present to an assembly of some hundred people in New York city a "sketch of a religious society imbued with the spirit of religion but without its dogmas."

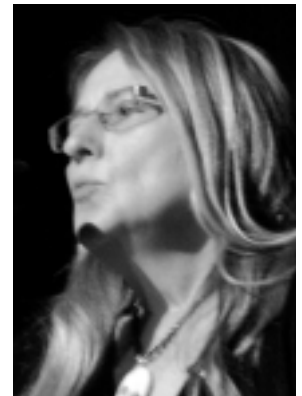
From his vantage point at that golden celebration, Adler daringly addressed the "spiritual evolution" as a process he envisioned had to be undertaken as core by future Ethical Societies. Key to this process must be that "the human race shall take its evolution into its own hands, and that as yet unrealized manhoods and womanhoods shall appear." Such achievement Adler grounded in the concept that social reformation can be achieved only when changes in human living conditions are accompanied by changes within humans themselves.

For change to occur within each solitary human being, Adler offered that there must be constraint as well as affirmation of the self, that the individual must submit to discipline as "no great thing has ever been accomplished without it." We must realize or understand ourselves and perfect what we realize into habit.

Adler noted too that those who participated in the formation of Ethical Societies were concerned even more for their children than for themselves. That was certainly true by those who brought the Baltimore Ethical Society into being.

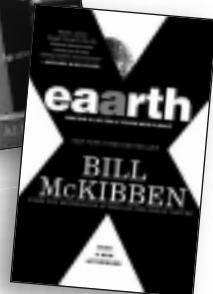
In the words of Pell Kangas when BES celebrated 37 years of existence, "Con-

(continued on page 5)



BOOK DISCUSSION GROUPS FORMING

On Sunday, April 29 at 12:45 p.m., we will discuss Michelle Alexander's *The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness*.



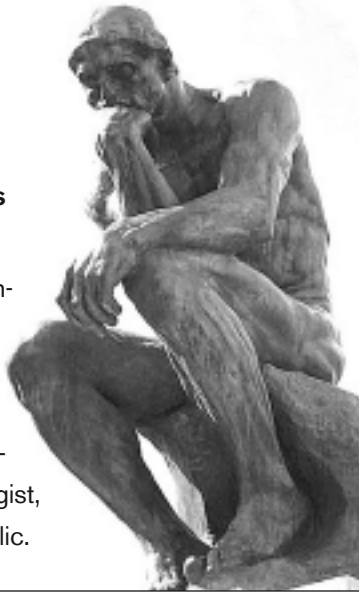
On Sunday, May 27 (time to be determined), we will discuss Bill McKibben's latest plea for action: *Eaarth - Making a Life on a Tough New Planet*.

Additional evening times for discussing each book will be scheduled if there is interest! For more information, contact Leader HughTaft-Morales at leader@bmorethical.org.

Great Thinkers Discussion Series

Sunday, March 25, 12:30 p.m. – W. E. B. Du Bois
Du Bois, Inclusion and Power

Join Hugh Taft-Morales, Leader of the Baltimore Ethical Society, for the third installment of a series of stimulating conversations about some of the most important American thinkers connected to the humanism and freethought. Hugh will lead a discussion about W. E. B. Du Bois, a visionary sociologist, philosopher, and activist. Free and open to the public.



Community Currency

The Baltimore Green Currency Association was founded in spring 2010. Its mission is to foster economic opportunity through the establishment of an alternative currency for the communities of Baltimore. BNote (short for Baltimore Note) is the new alternative or complementary currency – real money that can be used for any local transaction in the Baltimore area – issued by the Baltimore Green Currency Association.

The Baltimore Ethical Society has joined this local alternative currency movement and is now accepting BNotes as partial payment for weddings and commitment ceremonies. We are among over 140 local merchants and service providers accepting the BNote, and more are joining the network every week. As of December 10, 2011, over 19,000 BNotes were in circulation across the city.

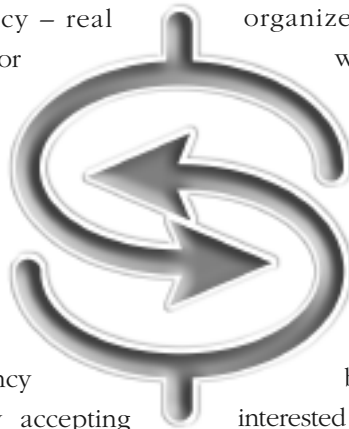
Leaders from the Baltimore Green Currency Association are also launch-

ing the Baltimore Time Bank. A time bank is a forum where members volunteer to help each other reciprocally, keeping track of the hours they give and receive. Time banks respect the worth of individuals by recognizing that everyone has something to give.

A time bank makes it possible to organize exchanges of services within a group. For instance, Alice babysits for Bob, who tutors Charlie, who drives Alice to a medical appointment.

BES members are involved with the time bank launching. If you're interested also, talk to Richard Lewis, Lisa Alderson, or Emil Volcheck. Time Bank organizing committees will be meeting at BES on Sunday, February 26, starting at 2:00 p.m.

To learn more about the Baltimore Green Currency Association, visit baltimoregreencurrency.org – and to learn about time banks, visit timebanks.org. The Baltimore Time Bank website is LetsBmore.org.



ETHICAL HUMANIST SUNDAY SCHOOL

WITH LINDA JOY BURKE

Every Sunday
10:30 a.m. – Noon

OTHER ACTIVITIES

Folk Music Night

Friday, March 2, 7:00 p.m.

Poetry Group

Sunday, March 4, 9:30 a.m.

Baking Night at Moveable Feast

Thursday, March 8, 5:45 p.m.

Moveable Treats

Sunday, March 11

Board Meeting

Sunday, March 11, 12:30 p.m.

Video and Discussion Series

Monday, March 12, 7:30 p.m.

Mindfulness Meditation

Sunday, March 18, 9:30 a.m.

Social Media Tutorial

Sunday, March 18, 12:30 p.m.

Great Thinkers

Discussion Series

Sunday, March 25, 12:30 p.m.

Newcomers' Meeting

Sunday, March 25, 12:30 p.m.

BES Ironweed Film Club

Wednesday, March 28, 7:30 p.m.

SUNDAY SNACK SCHEDULE

Last names starting with:

A to F	March 4
G to L	March 11
M to R	March 18
S to Z	March 25

MARCH 4

“Understanding Homelessness in Baltimore: A Discussion of Issues”

Vanessa Borotz

Coordinator, “Faces of Homelessness” Speakers’ Bureau

Often homelessness is perceived as an abstract social problem. Those who experience homelessness are seen as the sources of their own misfortunes, and the socio-economic policies and practices that give rise to homelessness are then too easily ignored. The “Faces of Homelessness” Speakers’ Bureau works to break down this abstraction and its attendant misconceptions and stereotypes by exposing the underlying causes of homelessness and bringing to light the reality of lived experience.

Vanessa Borotz is a coordinator of the Baltimore area “Faces of Homelessness” Speakers’ Bureau. The Bureau is a program of the National Coalition of the Homeless, which is supported locally by the collaborative efforts of Health Care for the Homeless, Beans and Bread, and Project PLASE. The speakers in this program – having all experienced homelessness—are the true experts on the topic.

MARCH 11

“Apocalyptic Environmentalism: Is the End Near?”

Hugh Taft-Morales

Leader, Baltimore Ethical Society

Many environmental activists warn that ignoring climate change is leading to dramatic ecological and humanitarian catastrophe. Some say we’ve already passed the tipping point – that rising sea levels and collapsed ecosystems will threaten our very survival. How do we process such challenging predictions? Do we take comfort in critics who denounce these activists as exaggerating Cassandras? Or has the horror of ecological apocalypse driven our species into nearly suicidal denial? What’s a humanist to do?

Hugh Taft-Morales serves as Leader for both the Baltimore Ethical Society and the Ethical Humanist Society of Philadelphia and also works as Consulting Leader to the Ethical Society Without Walls (ESWoW). A Yale College graduate (1979), he also earned a Masters in Philosophy (1986) from University of Kent in England and for twenty-five years taught philosophy and history in high school. In 2009 Taft-

Morales completed a three-year leadership certification program with the Humanist Institute. Taft-Morales and his wife Maureen, a specialist in Latin American affairs for the Congressional Research Service, live in Takoma Park, Maryland; they have three children, Sean, Maya, and Justin.

MARCH 18

“Educational Accountability Systems: Ethical and Political Issues”

Gail Sunderman, PhD

Senior Research Associate, The George Washington University Center for Equity and Excellence in Education

Use of educational accountability systems driven by measurable goals, incentives, performance monitoring and assessment, and consequences for low performance has been on the rise since the 1990s. Gail Sunderman will provide an overview of how these systems—based on new public management theories or a “business” approach—have come to dominate education policy over the past 20 years. In tracing their evolution, she will address what about them has stayed the same, what has been abandoned, and what new components have been added. Her talk is intended to engender a discussion regarding the ethical and political questions raised by this increased educational standardization.

Gail Sunderman is senior research associate at The George Washington University Center for Equity and Excellence in Education (GW-CEEE). At GW-CEEE she has also directed the Mid-Atlantic Equity Center (MAEC), managing a team of technical-assistance coordinators and working with state education agencies to coordinate services to districts with others provided by the state. She has expertise on equity issues and has conducted research on education policy development and implementation and policy impact on educational opportunities for at-risk students. Prior to joining MAEC, she directed a five-year study examining the implementation of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 for the Civil Rights Project at Harvard University. She is co-author of *NCLB Meets School Realities: Lessons from the Field* (2005) and editor of *Holding NCLB Accountable: Achieving Accountability, Equity, and School Reform* (2008). Her work also appears in the *Harvard Educational Review*, *Teacher’s College Record*, *Publius*, and *Educational Researcher*. A former Fulbright Scholar to Afghanistan, she received her PhD in political science from the University of Chicago.

60th
ANNIVERSARY
EVENT

MARCH 25

“Problem Solving with Interests not Positions”

Iris Woodard, RNCS, ANP
Nurse Practitioner, Kaiser Permanente

The ability to communicate effectively has been said to be exactly proportional to the ability to negotiate effectively. While not without controversy, the interest-based approach, also termed principled negotiation, has been used widely and well as a union negotiating tool. This approach – whose core elements include information-sharing, creative exploration, and working toward mutually beneficial solutions – continues to be extrapolated successfully to many other situations.

Iris Woodard, a nurse practitioner, is the Mid-Atlantic States region workforce planning and development coordinator for Kaiser Permanente, a position in which she is charged with helping employees develop the new skills required in the changing environment of health care. She has also presented today’s platform at the Northern Virginia Ethical Society (NoVES), where she has been a member for 20 years. Raised the child of a protestant minister, she was very happy to find in NoVES a community of people who truly care for each other and who practice their belief system daily.

Top Ten Reasons

(continued from page 1)

Reason number 2: There is a great lineup of speakers – including Richard Dawkins, author of *The Selfish Gene*, *The Blind Watchmaker*, *The God Delusion*, and *The Greatest Show on Earth*; Adam Savage, co-host of *Mythbusters*; PZ Myers, blogger at Pharyngula; Taslima Nasrin, activist for gender equality, free thought, and human rights and author of more than thirty books; Lawrence Krauss, author, most recently of the New York Times bestseller *A Universe From Nothing: Why There is Something Rather Than Nothing*; Hemant Mehta, “The Friendly Atheist” and chair of Foundation Beyond Belief; David Silverman, President of American Atheists; Roy Speckhardt, executive director of the American Humanist Association; and Rep. Pete Stark, the first openly atheistic member of Congress.

The number one reason to attend the Reason Rally: Reason is a good thing! For more information visit reasonrally.org.

WELCOME RAJEEV KUMAR



BES Membership Committee chair John Reuter presents new member Rajeev Kumar with his “official” name tag.

Details to Come...

(continued from page 2)

sider the challenges that are faced when undertaking to build a new unique religious fellowship to meet the needs of a new generation of people who come from various cultural and religious backgrounds” – and yet accomplishing this fellowship in a “Baltimore where racial discrimination in housing, eating places, schools, in employment was still a fact of life under the laws of the land and an accepted convention in the minds of most people.”

Those words remind us that the Ethical Society of Baltimore grew from – and will continue to grow from – the concept that “morality is going out of one’s self and living in, living for, something larger.” Keep that in mind along with the dates of April 21 and 22, details to follow.

bmorethical t-shirts

**GET YOURS
TODAY!**

Available in black,
blue, and white

ONLY \$15

IRONWEED

Film

CLUB

Wednesday, March 28,
7:30 p.m.

Join us this month at the BES Ironweed Film Club when we screen *The Best Government Money Can Buy?*

The Best Government Money Can Buy? is the first behind-the-scenes, comprehensive, non-partisan examination of the system of lobbying in Washington, D.C. Veteran documentary filmmaker – British-born Francis Megahy – makes a journey of discovery as he tries to answer some questions which puzzle him: Who provides the money? What effect does it have? How is it connected to the financing of political campaigns? And most crucial, is it in the public interest? The film explores the lobbying issue through interviews with real Washington beltway insiders. (76 min.)

Screenings are open to members of BES and the BES Ironweed Film Club. Contact Emil Volcheck about free membership in the film club (email volcheck@acm.org or call 410-929-3399). Donations are requested for refreshments.

Join the Film Club Meetup at <http://meetu.ps/7j1Nj>.

MINDFULNESS

meditation

Sunday, March 18, 9:30 a.m.

Mindfulness is a tool we can use in our daily lives to act in a more ethical way. We practice mindfulness meditation so that mindfulness comes naturally in stressful times. Join us as we sit (on chairs) and breathe (just the way it comes naturally) and listen to some words from Thich Nhat Hanh, one of the world's best-known teachers of mindfulness.

MONDAY, MARCH 12, 7:30–9:30 P.M.

The Day the Universe Changed *A philosophically fun video and discussion series!*

Come view and discuss a video series by James Burke, *The Day the Universe Changed*. Burke entertainingly explores links between knowledge and reality. Join Ethical Culture Leader Hugh Taft-Morales Monday, March 12 from 7:30-9:30 p.m. for this seventh

installment, *What the Doctor Ordered: Social Impacts of New Medical Knowledge*. Open to the public.



BAKING NIGHT AT MOVEABLE FEAST

Thursday, March 8, 5:45–8:00 p.m.

Join BES members and others for this enjoyable outing at a great organization – check out their website at www.mfeast.org. Let Lisa Alderson know you are coming (lialderson@gmail.com) and show up at Moveable Feast, 901 N. Milton Ave., Baltimore, MD, at 5:45 p.m. Park on the street in front of building. Enter through the door closest to Ashland Street. Let Lisa know if you'd like to carpool, and she'll try to match you up with another BES participant.

SOMEONE GETTING MARRIED?

The Baltimore Ethical Society has a team of officiants who are trained and licensed to conduct weddings, same sex commitments, memorials, and other life passage ceremonies. For more information: weddings@bmoreethical.org.

What Are You Doing This Summer?

by Karen Elliott, BES Member and AEU Board Member

If I had been given an assignment in the fall of 1996 to write about my summer vacation, I would have needed lots of time and paper. Why? Because I was one of the very lucky people to attend the first Lay Leadership Summer School put on by the American Ethical Union.

When people who have attended look back on Summer School, they focus on different things. For some, it's the great curriculum – ranging from Ethical Culture philosophy to organizational development to whether or not candle lighting during platforms and ceremonies is acceptable Ethical behavior. Okay, the latter was *not* part of the curriculum, but it's one of the topics that came up as we created meaningful ceremonies, worked through group dynamic challenges (not all on paper or while role playing), and learned and grew together.

One of the things I got the most benefit from was a sense of how we really are part of a larger movement with beautiful diversity and an amazing history. I am still close to the woman who was my roommate there; she's a capital "L" Leader now and today three of us on the current American Ethical Union Board attended that 1996 Summer School – facts that are a tribute to our training and commitment. I began attending the AEU's annual Assemblies the following year and have only missed one since.

Summer school wasn't all work, either, although there was certainly plenty of that. I remember walking around the beautiful campus of The

Mountain – a camp affiliated with the Unitarian Church and perched on a small mountain at the edge of the Smokies in western North Carolina. I loved it so much that I took my son there for a family retreat the next year, and he ended up attending their summer camp for many years while I split my time between a hotel nearby and Asheville, about an hour's drive away. There are waterfalls galore, lots of rocks and trees – and twisty mountain roads, which are lots of fun to drive once you get to know them and that get you down to the highway.

This year the staff includes BES' own Leader Hugh Taft-Morales (Leader Emeritus Fritz Williams also has served on the staff in the past) as well as Leaders Kate Lovelady and Bart Worden (both of whom have spoken at BES) and some talented lay leaders as well. 2012 Summer School runs from July 14-21, and there are some partial scholarships available. Attendees must be approved by their local Society Boards prior to enrolling.

More details and brochures are available at the Society. The deadline for applications is March 1, 2012.

I hope you consider attending – it's well worth the investment and you'll be able to tell loads of great stories when you are next asked "What did you do over the summer?"

FOLK music

NIGHT

Friday, March 2,
7:00–10:00 p.m.

Folk Music Night with Hugh and Margie! Come to the Baltimore Ethical Society for a casual evening of folk music – originals, classics, and sing-alongs! (Bring your own food and drink, or come after dinner.)

SOCIAL MEDIA TUTORIAL

Sunday, March 18,
12:30 p.m.

Want to learn about how to communicate using the tools of social media? This is the first in a series of small group tutorials at BES. This month's focus is Twitter and Meetup. Please notify Emil (volcheck@acm.org) if interested.

AEU LAY LEADERSHIP SUMMER SCHOOL

July 14–24, 2012
on The Mountain in Highlands, N.C.

The brochure and application/registration forms can be found on the AEU website – aeu.org – or at the Society. If you have questions about the program, please speak to Karen Elliott or Hugh Taft-Morales. In order to be considered, interested applicants **must** notify Board president Rosemary Klein by March 1, 2012.

BESpeak

BALTIMORE ETHICAL SOCIETY

306 W. Franklin Street, Suite 102, Baltimore, MD 21201-4661

NEWSLETTER

Please do not delay!

TIME VALUE



BES's 60th **ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION**

April 21–22, 2012 – Stay tuned for more details!

NEWCOMERS MEETING

Sunday, March 25, 12:30 p.m.

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. See John Reuter or Hugh Taft-Morales for more information.

SUPPORT MOVEABLE FEAST AND MOVEABLE TREATS

Baked Goods – Sunday, March 11

Other Items – Every Sunday

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



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