

BESpeak

SEPTEMBER 2014

NEWSLETTER OF THE BALTIMORE ETHICAL SOCIETY

What I Did in My Summer Vacation

by Hugh Taft-Morales, BES Leader

After 25 years of teaching I will admit that having a different routine in the summer is important to me. It's not that I spend most of the summer doing nothing – a persistent myth that bothers hard-working teachers. While some may put their feet up and recover from an academic year of under-appreciated demanding work, many teachers create curriculum or develop professionally. For me, my time away from BES this summer was full of growth opportunities I hope will contribute to my work as Leader of BES.

The most professionally significant of these opportunities was as a faculty member of Lay Leadership Summer School (LLSS). For one thing, I got to spend a week with BES star lay leader, Kate LaClair! I will let her speak for herself, but I believe she found it a challenging, rewarding experience. I know she will bring new ideas and renewed confidence to her work as a BES Lay Leader.

Personally, serving as a LLSS faculty member was deeply meaningful. It was a valuable reminder of both the Ethical Culture values and the broader humanist movement to which I committed myself years ago. It was as a LLSS student back in 2006 that I gazed out over the rolling hills of Carolina and solidified my commitment to professional EC Leadership.

Being in a different environment contributed to philosophical exploration that I intend to build upon in some platforms. I have LLSS students to thank for one potentially intriguing topic after they requested a group discussion on “humanist spirituality.” Revisiting authors touching on this subject – Alain de Botton, Robert Solomon, and Andre Comte-Sponville – I was reminded of the importance of including opportunities for spirituality in my work as an Ethical Culture Leader.

For those whose toes curl when I mention “the ‘s’ word”, I don't mean any form of “spirituality” that violates reason. I don't intend to dabble in mysticism or new age silliness. For me, however, some of the experiences that some humanists crave – awe, humility, and connection to something greater – come to them in forms that they may call spiritual.



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SUNDAY PLATFORMS 10:30 a.m.

(details on page 4)

SEPTEMBER 7

“Roundtrip”

Fritz Williams

Leader Emeritus,
Baltimore Ethical Society

SEPTEMBER 14

“Relationships Through Bars”

Hugh Taft-Morales

Leader, Baltimore Ethical Society

SEPTEMBER 21

“Afghanistan: What Can We Each Do?”

Alicia Lucksted

Associate Professor of Psychiatry,
University of Maryland
School of Medicine

SEPTEMBER 28

“Music and Peace”

Hugh Taft-Morales

Leader, Baltimore Ethical Society

ETHICAL HUMANIST SUNDAY SCHOOL

WITH LINDA JOY BURKE

Every Sunday

10:30 a.m. – Noon

Children of all ages are welcomed.

Separate supervision provided
for preschoolers between the
ages of one and four.



chester approached us about renting BES for a wedding reception for their son and his fiancée. We repeatedly contacted Bay Management to get permission to rent the space by the hour. A week before the date of the reception, they returned with an offer to rent on a month-by-month basis at a rate that could probably be paid with two commercial rentals per month. The Board was scheduled to meet the very next Sunday and approved renting on a three-month trial basis. In the following days, the Building Committee checked to make sure the HVAC and lighting worked, purchased and installed many replacement bulbs for the track lighting, and vacuumed and cleaned the space. The work was completed just in time for the family to set up for the reception! The family loved the space and was effusively grateful for our work. You can see photos from the reception here: <http://ur1.ca/i16cm>.

If you like the space and want to see BES keep renting it long-term, here's how you can help: tell the Board you like it, suggest ideas for how to use it or who might like to rent it, or consider an additional pledge contribution next year to help us afford the space.

SOCIAL EVENTS SURVEY

In an effort to nurture meaningful relationships and build community, the Board recently created the Social Events Committee. This survey is the first step in the committee's work to identify interesting and rewarding social activities for our society.

Please take a moment to follow the link below to complete the short survey. Be sure to offer any specific suggestions for future events. Please **DO NOT** complete this survey if you filled out the paper version of the survey at BES.

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/K7N98XK>

If you would like to join the committee, please let us know! Thank you for your help. Thomas & Mav, Co-Chairs, Social Events Committee

OTHER ACTIVITIES

Humanist Discussion Group

Wednesday, Sept. 3, 7:00 p.m.

Poetry Group

Sunday, Sept. 7, 9:30 a.m.

BES Eatery Social (B.E.S.)

Sunday, Sept. 7, 1:00 p.m.

Baking Night at Moveable Feast

Thursday, Sept. 11, 5:45 p.m.

Peace Music and Readings

Thursday, Sept. 11, 6:30 p.m.

Mindfulness Meditation

Sunday, Sept. 14, 9:30 a.m.

Board Meeting

Sunday, Sept. 14, 12:30 p.m.

Ignite Baltimore!

Thursday, Sept. 18, 6:00 p.m.

Ethical Action Meeting

Sunday, Sept. 21, 9:15 a.m.

Family Board and Card Games Party

Sunday, Sept. 21, 3:00 p.m.

BES Film Club

Wednesday, Sept. 24, 7:30 p.m.

Baltimore Book Festival

September 26–28

Teen Night

Saturday, Sept. 27, 7:00 p.m.

Newcomers Meeting

Sunday, Sept. 28, 12:30 p.m.

Sunday Assembly Baltimore

Sunday, Sept. 28, 2:00 p.m.

SNACK SCHEDULE

All are invited to bring snacks for our coffee hour following platform. Snacks are especially welcome from those whose last names start with:

A to F	Sept. 7
G to L	Sept. 14
M to R	Sept. 21
S to Z	Sept. 28

SUNDAY PLATFORM PROGRAMS

SEPTEMBER 7

“Roundtrip”

Fritz Williams

Leader Emeritus, Baltimore Ethical Society

Fritz Williams tells a short story which revolves around a dream in which he, as an Ethical Culture leader, meets a much younger version of himself when he was an Episcopal priest.

Fritz Williams is Leader Emeritus of the Baltimore Ethical Society, and he and his wife Belva remain long-distance members. In his retirement, he has turned his creative energy toward writing fiction and poetry. After graduating from Muhlenberg College and Philadelphia Lutheran Theological Seminary, he worked as parish priest in the Episcopal Church between 1962 and 1968. From 1970 to 2000, he wrote and produced documentaries and educational programs at public television stations in Harrisburg, PA, and Detroit, MI. His service as Leader of the Baltimore Ethical Society began when he was working in Detroit and continued after his retirement from public television.

SEPTEMBER 14

“Relationships Through Bars”

Hugh Taft-Morales

Leader, Baltimore Ethical Society

Due to reactionary tough-on-crime politics and the over-criminalization of drug use, the U.S. penal population has grown from 300,000 to over 2 million over the past three decades. The retributive model of criminal justice is inhumane and ineffective. It has become a cultural cancer eating away at our social fabric, devastating families and neighborhoods. Most poignantly it denies children opportunity for relationships with incarcerated parents. Hugh Taft-Morales continues to advocate reform of our system, in particular a recognition that family connections should be nurtured so as to bring out the best in those who are incarcerated, those who love them, and us all.

Hugh Taft-Morales joined the Baltimore Ethical Society as its professional leader in 2010, the same year he was certified by the American Ethical Union as an Ethical Culture Leader. He also serves as Leader of the Ethical Humanist Society of Philadelphia. His presence in Ethical Culture has

been termed “invigorating.” Taft-Morales lives in Takoma Park, Maryland, with his wife Maureen, a Latin American Analyst with the Congressional Research Service, with whom he has three beloved children, Sean, Maya, and Justin.

SEPTEMBER 21

“Afghanistan: What Can We Each Do?”

Alicia Lucksted

*Associate Professor of Psychiatry,
University of Maryland School of Medicine*

People in Afghanistan have faced decades of roiling devastation and war; many somehow remain persistent and determined to survive and rebuild. How can we offer solidarity from afar? I will offer personal observations and examples of how our volunteer group, Afghan Women’s Fund, works in partnerships with women and whole villages, in rural Afghanistan.

Alicia Lucksted has been involved in volunteer solidarity work with grassroots women’s groups in Afghanistan since 1998. This includes the Afghan Women’s Fund since 2000, where she is a volunteer and the Baltimore area point person for AWF’s work helping people and communities in rural Afghanistan on projects they prioritize for survival and rebuilding (www.afghanwomensfund.org) with emphasis on women’s empowerment. Alicia is an associate professor of psychiatry at the University of Maryland School of Medicine.

SEPTEMBER 28

“Music and Peace”

Hugh Taft-Morales

Leader, Baltimore Ethical Society

Growing up in the sixties, Hugh Taft-Morales experienced the peace movement as intimately wrapped up with music. Singing seemed a great way to give peace a chance. While martial compositions have also been used for centuries to drive our troops into harm’s way, music can offer aesthetically transcendent and communal experiences useful in building a culture of peace. Felix Adler, the founder of Ethical Culture, appreciated the power of music in creating a “deeper psychology” and “richer experience” some humanists value. Come explore humanistic harmony and the challenge of being a peace activist.

COLLOQUY: HUMANIST SPIRITUAL DISCUSSION GROUP

Wednesday, September 3, 7:00 p.m.

Does the concept of 'spirituality' or 'living a spiritual life' have any place in Ethical Culture? Science and reason are valued by humanists, and rightfully so. But does intellect negate spirituality, emotional values or that sense of "awe"? This group is intended to inspire a more personal discussions regarding spirituality from the perspective of humanism. Topics for discussion can include, "What is Spirituality from a Humanist Perspective?" or "Spiritual without Religion" or "Leading a Spiritual Life Through Reason," for example. We intend to establish a monthly meeting if there's enough interest within our BES Community. Please join us on this experimental journey.

We will meet on the first Wednesday of each month at the Baltimore Ethical Society at 7:00 p.m. For any questions or additional information, feel free to contact Paul Furth at PDQBlues@aol.com or call at 619-278-9322.

Baltimore Book Festival

SEPTEMBER 26-28 AT THE INNER HARBOR

Please volunteer to help out at the BES table at the Book Festival! Contact Ken Brennehan or Paul Furth, co-chairs of the Public Relations Committee. The festival runs Friday and Saturday: noon to 8:00

p.m., Sunday: noon to 6:00 p.m. This year the festival has moved to the Inner Harbor due to the historic restoration of the Washington Monument. Visit the website at <http://baltimorebookfestival.org>.



BAKING NIGHT AT MOVEABLE FEAST

Thursday, September 11, 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 in front of building and 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.

AN EVENING OF PEACE MUSIC AND READINGS

**Thursday, Sept. 11,
doors open at 6:30 p.m.**

Come join Hugh Taft-Morales for an evening of music and readings about peace. Potluck and BYOB, but the entertainment is free! If you want to contribute songs, poems or readings please contact Hugh at leader@bmorethical.org.

Doors open at 6:30 p.m. and the peace making begins at 7:00 p.m. Bring potluck meals or money for pizza.

FUNDRAISER TEAM NEEDED

To help our society grow, we need to establish a Fundraiser Team to ask for contributions from friends outside our society. It is our hope that, along with our Pledge Team, the Fundraiser Team will create new events and fun activities involving both non-members and members. We are grateful to Rosalie Donatelli, who launched the Flower Power Fundraiser, which brought in hundreds of dollars, and to Lane Berk who has offered to host a party at her home. If you would like to become a part of the team and bring your creative ideas to help raise funds in a fun way for all, please contact Paul Furth at PDQBlues@aol.com or call 619-278-9322.

BES
Film
CLUB

**Wednesday, September 24,
 7:30 p.m.**

Join us for a screening of *Back to Bosnia*. This gripping documentary follows the Vajraca family as they return to their hometown of Banja Luka in 2001 to reclaim the property they were forced out of at gun point. While there, the family is confronted with the destruction of their city's multi-ethnic character and forced to examine the community they left behind. They witness an exhumation, visit the sites of war crimes, and seek out the remnants of a city that was once their home, as well as confront those that forced them out.

It shows not only the problems that Bosniaks (Bosnian Muslims) face, but also the problems of Bosnian Serb refugees that moved to other parts of Bosnia.

This film was an official selection of the AFI Fest and the Amnesty International Film Festival. Visit the Facebook page at <http://backtobosnia.com>.

The BES Film Club meets every 4th Wednesday. Would you like to help select films? Please ask Emil.

Sunday Assembly Baltimore

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 28, 2:00 PM AT BES

Join in the launch of Sunday Assembly Baltimore! What happens at a Sunday Assembly? A Sunday Assembly service consists of songs (pop songs mainly) sung by the congregation, a reading (usually a poet), an interesting talk (that fits into live better, help often or wonder more), a moment of reflection and an address, which sums up the day and hopefully gives a take home message. Afterwards we have tea and cake (well, in Britain anyway!) to encourage people to stay and mingle with one another. Read more at <http://sundayassembly.com>.

The Sunday Assembly is a global

movement for wonder and good. It is an international not-for-profit that helps people start and run their own godless congregations. Our motto: Live Better, Help Often and Wonder More. Our mission: to help everyone find and fulfill their full potential.

Since starting in London in January 2013, we have helped 27 communities start their own Assemblies, and we're on track to triple that number by the end of the year. With Assemblies launching in Berlin, Amsterdam, Sao Paulo, Singapore, Vancouver, Toowoomba, Glasgow, and Baltimore to name just a few of our new congregations.

TEEN NIGHT AT THE COMMUNITY OF ETHICAL PEOPLE

Saturday, September 27, 7:00-9:30 p.m. at the Baltimore Homeschool Community Center, 1777 Reisterstown Rd., Suite 50, Pikesville

Come hang out with old friends and make some new ones! Free for BHCC members, \$5 for non-members. Please bring a drink or snack to share! Parents are welcome to stay and help with supervision. Join the Meetup at <http://meetu.ps/2vKLhC>.

FAMILY BOARD & CARD GAMES PARTY

Sunday, September 21, 3:00-6:45 p.m. at the home of Marjeta Cedilnic

Join members of the Baltimore Parenting Beyond Belief Meetup for a board and card games party at the home of Marjeta Cedilnic in Howard County. Feel free to bring a game or play one of the many there. Please bring a snack or drink to share (or a small monetary contribution for the host instead). Come when you can, while the party lasts. Ms. Cedilnic is the lead organizer of the Maryland Chapter of Americans United for Separation of Church and State. Address and directions provided when you RSVP. For questions, please call her at 301-642-1065. Join the Meetup at <http://meetu.ps/20KwvT>.



IGNITE BALTIMORE!

Thursday, September 18, 6:00 p.m., MICA Brown Center

Five minutes, 20 slides. What would you say? At every Ignite Baltimore, 16 artists, technologists, thinkers, and personalities take the stage to answer this challenge. About a dozen BES members and friends joined our coalition friends "Drinking Skeptically Baltimore" to attend Ignite Baltimore in Spring 2014. We had a great time, so we're doing this again! Admission is \$5. Purchase tickets and see videos of previous talks at <http://ignitebaltimore.com>. We will buy a limited number of tickets in advance for the group, but we encourage you to get your own. Join the Meetup: <http://meetu.ps/2vKH3K>.

NOTE FROM THE FINANCIAL COMMITTEE

Recently, some confusion arose regarding the request of receipts for donated items. As such, the Board has passed a resolution that states receipts will be given by the Treasurer only with approval of the Board. Receipts for your financial donations, as they already are approved, will continue to be issued. For items that the Board has not authorized, no receipt will be given. An appeal to the Board can be made to obtain that authorization, even after the fact. The Board continues to reserve final say on this matter.

BES EATERY SOCIAL (B.E.S.)

Sunday, Sept. 7, 1:00 p.m.

Members and friends are invited to go out together for lunch. We'll gather in the lobby at about 12:45 p.m. following post-platform snacks to decide what restaurant to visit. Everyone is encouraged to wear their BES shirts or other items to help promote the society. BES Eatery Social is held on a different Sunday each month to better provide members with the opportunity to attend. If you have any questions, please contact Adam at synxr0nic@yahoo.com.

What I Did in My Summer Vacation

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I also appreciate that the more strictly rationalistic humanists in our movement – those who see the world more like *Center for Free Inquiry*'s Tom Flynn – don't want or need such "spirituality." Rest assured that I share skepticism for much of what is brought under the "spirituality" tent. I will continue to offer plenty of skepticism and science in my work. I will also, however, bring back from LLSS a fresh helping of awe, humility, and connection to something greater. Look for it at an Ethical Society near you!

bmorethical t-shirts

bmorethical
THE BALTIMORE ETHICAL SOCIETY

Available in black,
blue, and white

ONLY \$15

GETTING MARRIED?

Baltimore Ethical Society has a Leader and a team of officiants who are trained and licensed to conduct weddings, memorials, and other life passage ceremonies. For more info, contact weddings@bmorethical.org.



BALTIMORE ETHICAL SOCIETY

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

NEWSLETTER

Please do not delay!

TIME VALUE

ETHICAL ACTION MEETING

Sunday, September 21, 9:15–10:15 a.m.

Come help plan the Ethical Action strategy for the Baltimore Ethical Society!

NEWCOMERS MEETING

Sunday, September 28, 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 Judy Katz or Janey Solwold for more information.

MINDFULNESS

meditation

Sunday, September 14, 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 it comes naturally in stressful times. Join us as we sit (on chairs) and breathe (just the way it comes naturally) and listen to the words of Thich Nhat Hanh, one of the world's best-known teachers of mindfulness.

bmorethical

Visit bmorethical.org and look for us on Facebook, Twitter, and MeetUp.com @bmorethical

Welcome to BESpeak, the newsletter of the Baltimore Ethical Society. Donations from readers like you help us keep it in production. Send checks payable to Baltimore Ethical Society to: BESpeak, 306 W. Franklin St., Ste. 102, Baltimore, MD 21201. If you would like to subscribe to the online version of this newsletter, sign up at bmorethical.org. Thank you.