

Reflections on Ethical Education Past and Future

by Hugh Taft-Morales, BES Leader

Years ago it was the children's programming at the Washington Ethical Society (WES) that first drew my attention to Ethical Culture. In the early 1990's my wife Maureen and I heard about WES through our midwife. After investigating, we thought that our children would benefit from spending Sunday mornings in the warm and supportive classrooms at WES. Looking back, with three flourishing, engaged, and ethical kids out of the nest, we are more than ever thankful for what Ethical Culture Sunday school offered our children.

It was that gratitude that motivated Maureen and I to attend the American Ethical Union (AEU) **Ethical Education Weekend** last month at Stony Point, NY. Despite more than eleven hours of driving within a 36-hour window, we were glad we went. Monique Stins and Evelynne attended as our BES representatives, and I attended as a new member of the AEU's Ethical Education Committee. I was eager to support our new Ethical Education Director, Dale McGowen. If you don't know about Dale yet, I strongly urge you to read the interview with Dale available on the AEU website at aeu.org/2014/07/ethical-education-starts-with-curiosity.

Dale is extremely intelligent, personable, and experienced. He has produced numerous books, including the a great collection of insights about **Parenting Beyond Belief**, available now through the on-line BES Book Store. I also recommend another of Dale's book that is fun and informative read, *Atheism for Dummies*. Dale also runs the Foundation Beyond Belief offering a philanthropic avenue for humanists, freethinkers, and secularists to support organizations doing good works in the world. You can explore all of this on his website at dalemcgowan.com.

On a related topic, I want to continue learning myself. This is one reason that after more than five years of being the Secretary for the **National Leaders Council** I am handing off that position so I can serve as **Vice President** of the same organization. While I admit that it may be crazy for me to take on what will be a



(continued on page 7)

SUNDAY PLATFORMS 10:30 a.m.

(details on pages 4-5)

DECEMBER 7

"Fighting For a Government That Represents Maryland's Working Families"

Charly Carter
Executive Director,
Maryland Working Families

DECEMBER 14

"Great Awakening"

Hugh Taft-Morales
Leader, Baltimore Ethical Society

DECEMBER 21

"Homelessness, and Its Effects on Children"

Dr. Tara Doaty-Mundell
Founder and CEO,
Sage Wellness Group

DECEMBER 28

"Winter Festival and Pancake Breakfast"

ETHICAL HUMANIST SUNDAY SCHOOL

Every Sunday
10:30 a.m. – Noon

Children of all ages are welcomed.

TODDLER CARE

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

BESpeak

is published monthly
September through June by
the Baltimore Ethical Society
306 W. Franklin St., Suite 102
Baltimore, MD 21201-4661
410-581-2322

Issue 444

Editor: Kathryn Sloboda

Proofreading & Circulation: Judy Katz

Deadline: 10th of the prior month

Hugh Taft-Morales *Leader*
Fritz Williams *Leader Emeritus*

OFFICERS & EXECUTIVE BOARD MEMBERS

President..... Emil Volcheck
Vice President.....Paul Furth
Treasurer..... Stephen Meskin
Secretary..... Amy Trauth-Nare
Ken Brenneman Argentine Craig
Fred Compton Kirk Mullen
Angad Singh Janey Solwold
Mav Vaughan

COMMITTEE CONTACTS

Building.....Ray Noemer
Caring.....Kirk Mullen
Communications.....Kathryn Sloboda
Ethical Action.....Kate LaClair
Ethical Education.....Argentine Craig
Finance.....Paul Furth
Membership.....Judy Katz and
 Janey Solwold
Programs..... Emil Volcheck
Public Relations.....Ken Brenneman
 and Paul Furth
Social Events.....Thomas Higdon
 and Mav Vaughan

ACTIVITY CONTACTS

Baking Night..... Karen Elliott
Film Club..... Emil Volcheck
Meditation..... Karen Elliott
Poetry..... Kirk Mullen
Workshops..... Hugh Taft-Morales

ETHICAL CULTURE/ HUMANIST OFFICIANTS

Karen Elliott and Kirk Mullen
Coordinator.....Kathryn Sloboda

Contacts by e-mail: use President,
VicePresident (one word), Treasurer,
Secretary, Poet, or Admin followed
by @bmoreethical.org. For general
questions: ask@bmoreethical.org.

On the web at bmoreethical.org

Big Change Baltimore

by Emil Volcheck, BES President

On Monday, October 27, BES members attended the event "Big Change Baltimore" hosted by the Open Society Institute (OSI) at Center Stage. Speakers addressed topics related to the programs of OSI-Baltimore, particularly education and criminal justice reform. The BES members and friends attending were Laura Griffin, Kate LaClair, Emil Volcheck, Kathleen Wilsbach, along with our friends Rachel Greene and Jahaziel ("Jah") Pérez. Here are some highlights of that event.

Piper Kerman, author of *Orange is the New Black*, and Bill Keller of the Marshall Project, were interviewed on stage by Judge Andre M. Davis. They spoke about problems with our criminal justice system, which acts like a form of racial control that is locking up more people even while crime is falling. Kerman referred to this phenomenon as the "Carceral State" and called attention to the privatization of prisons and the huge increase in incarcerating women. Keller spoke about using focused journalism to raise public awareness of these problems and how the Marshall Project will contribute to educating the public and developing nonpartisan solutions.

Two short documentary videos told inspiring stories of ex-convicts who rebuilt their lives after incarceration. After 42 years in prison, Kareem S. El-Amin got a job at Second Chance, a nonprofit that specializes in taking apart buildings to reclaim construction materials. After ten years in prison, Ketorus Gooding got a job with the green energy company, Bmoregreen. The films showed why our community needs employers willing to consider hiring people with a criminal record. One film concluded that we can't afford to waste a life. The films were powerful and well-composed.

David Miller of the Urban Leadership Institute, and a former OSI Fellow, spoke about his "Ten Rules of Survival" if stopped by the police. He explained how he taught his son these rules through games where he played the role of a police officer. The rules included "Be quiet and extremely polite," "Show your hands," "Do not run," "Do not argue." Miller teaches "Street Law" workshops through his company "Dare To Be King." His call to teach children how to stay alive was at the same time a condemnation of "stop and frisk" and other law enforcement practices that disproportionately target minority youth.

Ian Haney López spoke about how our political system is skewed by race. The racial disparity in politics is connected to rising wealth inequality and calls to shrink government. He gave several examples of words and phrases with racial connotations used by politicians, such as Ronald Reagan referring to a "young buck" who took welfare instead of working, and Newt Gingrich calling Barack Obama "the food stamp president." I purchased a copy of López's book *Dog Whistle Politics: How Coded Racial Appeals Have Reinvented Racism and Wrecked the Middle Class*, and donated it to the BES library.



(continued on page 5)



BES Supports Real Food Farms

On the blustery Saturday morning of November 1st, a brave group of Baltimore Ethical Society members and friends gathered at Real Food Farms (RFF) in Clifton Park for a volunteer morning. Kate LaClair organized the event and Hugh brought bagels and coffee. Everyone brought good spirits and energy. Those contributing their time and “sweat equity” included Hugh, Kate, Ray Noemer, Janey Solwold, Alan Shapiro, Tobias Rountree, Jah Perez, Daniel Sisto, Andy Brokaw and her son Eric.

Guided by two Real Food Farm staffers, we weeded, and dug ditches along the outside of a “hot house” so that a new plastic covering could be

installed to protect the crops over the winter season. It reminded me of another BES group two years earlier that helped construct the first two hot-houses in the sprawling complex.

Real Food Farms is a Civic Works’ urban agricultural project that battles food insecurity in Baltimore. Since 2009 it has grown to six acres of cultivated land, some of it used year round. In addition to providing healthy food at reasonable prices in many of Baltimore’s “food deserts,” RFF educates youth and partners with community organizations to build a city that cares for all. Find out more about Real Food Farms at realfoodfarm.org.

Join us next time we gather there!

COLLOQUY: HUMANIST SPIRITUAL DISCUSSION GROUP

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

Join us in a free-form discussion group for an exploration of spirituality from the perspective of humanism. Whether you identify as atheist or agnostic or questioning, or accept the concept of spirituality or not, we welcome everyone who is interested in expressing their thoughts and ideas in a safe, nonjudgmental and welcoming gathering. Please join us on this experimental journey.

For additional information, contact Paul Furth at PDQBlues@aol.com or Mary Beth Sodus at marybethsodus@gmail.com.

OTHER ACTIVITIES

Colloquy: Humanist Spiritual Discussion Group

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

Poetry Group

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

Baking Night at Moveable Feast

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

Mindfulness Meditation

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

Board Meeting

Sunday, December 14, 12:45 p.m.

BES Eatery Social

Sunday, December 14, 1:00 p.m.

Ethical Action Meeting

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

Sunday Assembly Baltimore

Sunday, December 21, 2:00 p.m.

Family Board and Card Games Party

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

HumanLight Party & Potluck

Tuesday, December 23, 7:00 p.m.

Newcomers Meeting

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

SUNDAY 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	December 7
G to L	December 14
M to R	December 21
S to Z	December 28



DECEMBER 7

“Fighting For a Government That Represents Maryland’s Working Families”

Charly Carter

Executive Director, Maryland Working Families

Charly Carter will speak about her work with Maryland Working Families. In her recent Op-Ed column in the *Baltimore Sun* (<http://ur1.ca/isheu>), Carter decried the wage freeze for tipped workers: “During the last Maryland General Assembly session, workers who rely on tips for salary were dealt a harsh blow when legislators permanently froze their pay at \$3.63 per hour. Previously, tipped workers earned 50 percent of the minimum wage, but as the state’s lowest wage goes up to \$10.10 per hour by 2018, the earnings of tipped workers will be stagnant.”

Charly Carter is the Executive Director of Maryland Working Families. Maryland Working Families is a grassroots independent political organization fighting for a government that represents the values of and works for the needs of Maryland’s working families. Maryland Working Families achieves its goals by: developing and electing candidates who share their values; organizing issue campaigns to move progressive legislation; and building a movement of working families to hold leaders accountable.

DECEMBER 14

“Great Awakening”

Hugh Taft-Morales

Leader, Baltimore Ethical Society

Waves of “righteous” social change periodically wash over the United States affecting our national culture. Beginning with the 18th century, an angry god of “The First Great Awakening” roused Americans from our slumber. At the beginning

of 19th century, “The Second Great Awakening” sounded the alarm of public social reform. At the start of the 20th century, progressivism woke us up to our government’s responsibility for those in need. In the spring of the 21st century, what might be our “great awakening?” Hugh Taft-Morales explores these waves and the possibility that there is a righteous humanist wave of compassion and activism on the horizon.

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.

DECEMBER 21

“Homelessness, and Its Effects on Children”

Dr. Tara Doaty-Mundell

Founder and CEO, Sage Wellness Group

Dr. Doaty-Mundell will speak about the effects of homelessness on children and how to build their self-esteem and confidence in the face of challenges. She will draw on her recent book, *Let’s Talk About It*, which is a collection of stories that highlights the journey to self-discovery that every child travels.

Dr. Tara Doaty-Mundell holds a Ph.D. in Clinical Psychology from Howard University. She has obtained several certifications in evidence-based practices aimed at improving parent and child attachment and has over 13 years of experience working with parents and families. Dr. Doaty-Mundell has developed curricula aimed at healing family dynamics and a parenting curriculum, and also one for individuals in recovery.

BES RELATIONSHIP BUILDING GROUP

The on-going BES Relationship Building Group will have their fourth and fifth meetings at the following times:

Saturday, December 6 from 1:00–3:00 p.m.

Saturday, December 13 from 6:00–8:00 p.m.

If you would like to be a part of a new group starting in 2015, please contact Hugh at leader@bmoreethical.org.

ery from substance abuse. In 2012, she founded Sage Wellness Group, LLC, a consulting firm that provides specialized trainings and workshops for agencies on an array of topics for agency administration, staff, clients and families. Dr. Doty-Mundell resides in Baltimore, Maryland with her husband and three children.

DECEMBER 28

“Winter Festival and Pancake Breakfast”

As 2014 flies out the door, we celebrate with a hearty breakfast and time to connect. Pancakes are on flap, with a variety of expert chefs turning out to turn things over. If you would like to volunteer to help, to bring a side dish to go with pancakes, or another breakfast/brunch-type food item, please contact Jayme Smith. Everyone is invited to bring a warm article of clothing such as gloves, scarves, hats, socks to adorn our mitten tree. Coffee, tea, and juice beverages will be provided. The Pancake Breakfast is free and open to all. This year warm items provided as mitten tree decorations will be donated to TurnAround, which provides support services to victims of domestic violence.

FAMILY BOARD AND CARD GAMES PARTY

Sunday, December 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/271S1j>.

SOMEONE GETTING MARRIED?

We have a team of officiants trained and licensed to conduct weddings, memorials, and other life passage ceremonies. Contact weddings@bmorethical.org.

Big Change Baltimore

(continued from page 2)

The theme of the event was connecting for change. To help participants make connections with each other, all were given a card in one of four colors and asked to exchange that card with someone else having the same color card. This provided a great excuse to introduce yourself to strangers during the reception following the talks. We met Brad Braxton, pastor of the Open Church of Maryland, located in West Baltimore. He knew about Humanism, and the church's website welcomes Humanists. We also spoke to Marc Steiner, and Kate exchanged cards with him. We spoke with Judge Andre Davis (son of BES member Gordon Stills), who said it was good to see us (BES folks) here and generously offered to speak to the society again. We also met staff from Evergreen Health, BGE, and the Ingoma Foundation; as well as our November speaker Jeff Dicken and Julie Gouldener.



Pictured (left to right) are Kathleen Wilsbach, Laura Griffin, Kate La-Clair, Emil Volcheck, and Jahaziel Pérez. Photo credit: Jim Burger Photography, www.burgerphoto.com

This event was a great opportunity to meet other activists and learn about some exciting progress in our city. I look forward to next year's Big Change Baltimore and hope that BES can participate again!

The website with a full list of speakers is bigchangebaltimore.org. You can watch videos from the event here: fora.tv/conference/big_change_baltimore_2014.

BAKING NIGHT AT MOVEABLE FEAST

Thursday, December 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 mfeast.org.

Let Karen Elliott know you are coming (KarenSElliott@aol.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 Karen know if you'd like to carpool, and she'll try to match you up with another BES participant.



BES Film CLUB

Due to the winter holidays, the BES Film Club **will not meet** in December but will return in January.

If you would like to help select films or help run the club, please ask Emil.



CELEBRATE KWANZAA

Wednesday, December 17, 6:30 p.m. at the Enoch Pratt Central Library

Charles Dugger presents the principles of Kwanzaa, which is based on a traditional African communitarian philosophy that resonates with our Ethical Culture and Humanist values. These principles include Unity, Self-Determination, Purpose, and Creativity. Join us at this event to learn about this holiday or read more at www.officialkwanzaawebsite.org.

Saturday, December 27, 12:00–2:00 p.m.
at the Lewis Museum of African-American History

Come with family and friends to celebrate Kwanzaa. Experience the infectious energy of Sankofa Dance Theater. Enjoy African dancing, storytelling, craft activities, and more. Purchase souvenirs from the African Marketplace of community vendors. Special admission \$5. Details and registration at www.rflewisumuseum.org/event/2014/kwanzaa-celebration-2014. A parking garage is opposite the museum across Pratt Street.

SUNDAY ASSEMBLY BALTIMORE

Sunday, December 21, 2:00 p.m.

Come to the next Sunday Assembly Baltimore for an inspirational event with this message: "Plan to make 2015 your Best Year Ever. Make the plan. Execute the plan." 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. Visit us on Facebook at <http://fb.com/sunday-assemblybaltimore>.

S
U
N
D
A
Y
A
S
S
E
M
B
L
Y

HumanLight Celebration and Potluck Dinner

Tuesday, December 23, 7:00–10:00 p.m.

Please join us to celebrate HumanLight with the Baltimore Coalition of Reason on Tuesday, December 23. HumanLight is a celebration of the winter season conceived by the New Jersey Humanist Network as a humanist or secular alternative to traditional religious celebrations. HumanLight features music and the lighting of three candles celebrating Reason, Compassion, and Hope. HumanLight was first celebrated in 2001 in New Jersey and has since spread throughout the country. This year is the fifth celebration of Hu-



manLight by the Baltimore Coalition of Reason. To learn more, visit the HumanLight website at HumanLight.org.

This year we are celebrating HumanLight at BES. We will have a potluck dinner and desserts, music, and the candle lighting. This is a family-friendly event, and children are welcome.

Please tell us you're coming (RSVP) and tell us what food you'd like to bring. Sign up for the potluck dinner here: <http://ur1.ca/isgz6>. If you can't access the Google Doc, then email BmoreCoR@gmail.com or call 443-267-8585.

TAKE ACTION AGAINST GENDERCIDE WITH BALTIMORE NOW!

Sunday, December 7, 5:00 p.m.

As many as 200 million females are missing world-wide because of gendercide. Watch the powerful documentary *It's A Girl* to understand what is happening in India and China and how we can stand up for girls and women everywhere. See the trailer: www.itsagirlmovie.com and join Baltimore NOW for a screening of this film. Find out how you can support feminism both globally and locally! This event is open to the public. Admission for the film is \$1–\$20 (sliding scale, pay what you can, dollars or Bnotes). Sign up to bring a dish for the potluck here: <http://ur1.ca/iraap>. If you can't bring a dish, you can sign up to contribute towards pizza on that form. Free childcare will be provided (donations accepted). Please RSVP by Thursday, Dec. 4th, if you will be bringing children.

Join the Facebook event at <http://on.fb.me/1udWxyd> or the Meetup event at <http://meetu.ps/2DNxZV>. If you can't join us but want to take action, visit www.itsagirlmovie.com/action. Visit Baltimore NOW on Facebook: www.facebook.com/BaltimoreNOW.

EATERY SOCIAL

Sunday, Dec. 14, 1:00 p.m.

Members and friends are invited to go out together for lunch at Trinacria Foods. We'll gather in the lobby at about 12:45 p.m. following post-platform snacks. Everyone is encouraged to wear their BES shirts or other items to help promote the society.

If you have any questions, please contact Nathan Whitmore at nww10@hampshire.edu.

Reflections...

(continued from page 1)

more demanding position, I hope that as VP I will help guide our movement through an important time in the national Ethical Culture movement.

As the number of religiously unaffiliated in the United States grows, especially in the younger generations, time is ripe for Ethical Humanism to step out of the shadows. We are lucky to be the recipient of the time and talent of Liz Mulhall Collier. Thanks to a grant from the AEU, Liz is working with the BES Board to examine how better to attract to 306 W Franklin Street young adults interested in humanism. We have an exciting community, rooted in a great history, and propelled by humanist values and commitment to deed before creed. If the next generation hears about us, whether through Ethical Education for children, or through outreach to young adults, we can rest assured that our unique brand of humanism will continue to flourish.



BALTIMORE ETHICAL SOCIETY

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

NEWSLETTER

Please do not delay!

TIME VALUE

ETHICAL ACTION MEETING

Sunday, December 21, 9:15–10:15 a.m.

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

NEWCOMERS MEETING

Sunday, December 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, December 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.