

Reflecting on the Future After Five Years of Service

by Hugh Taft-Morales, BES Leader

s I come to the end of five years of service to the Baltimore Ethical Society, I want to say that it's been tremendously rewarding. I have received meaningful expressions of gratitude,



support, and encouragement. It's exciting to see the growth in membership, energy and vision. And I look forward the future. I hope you are also looking forward.

Of course, since Ethical Culturists embrace a "common-sense naturalism," we don't think we can predict the future. That's the joy and challenge of looking forward. The fact that the future is a blank canvass is a joy – we can imagine a wide array of potential paths and projects. The fact that the future is a blank canvass is also why it's a challenge. Imagining potential paths and projects can produce anxiety.

What are the BES paths and projects that excite or scare you?

For me, I am excited about the new people that have joined our community and stepped up to nourish it with their skills and care. I am scared that it will be hard for me to offer them what their optimism and idealism deserve. Will they still want to be a part of BES after a year or two? Will our little community match the hopes they carry in their hearts?

I excited about the new groups we are getting to know, such as the Sunday Assembly and the Frederick Douglass Humanist Society. Sharing a space and exchanging ideas contribute to the sustainability of all involved. At the same time, I am challenged to deepen relationships with our own members – how am I possibly going to nurture all these other relationships, let alone know all the new names!

I am excited about our new space, with its high ceilings, ornate columns and southern exposure that add a sense of grandeur befitting Ethical Culture's history and mission. But of course I am afraid that we can't afford it on our own, and that by the time you are reading this we will retreat back into our old platform room. How will we process this eventuality? It wouldn't be a crisis, but I would be a little disappointed.

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SUNDAY PLATFORMS 10:30 a.m.

(details on pages 4-5)

APRIL 5

"The Tao of Ethical Culture" (video presentation)

Hugh Taft-Morales

Leader, Baltimore Ethical Society

APRIL 12

"Motivate or Change: Defining the Role of the Next Generation in Social Activism"

Farajii R. Muhammad

Youth Empowerment Coordinator

APRIL 19

"Sentencing Children to Die In Prison"

Nikola Nable-Juris Policy Counsel

APRIL 26

"J. Robert Oppenheimer and Nuclear Agony"

Hugh Taft-Morales

Leader, Baltimore Ethical Society

ETHICAL HUMANIST SUNDAY SCHOOL

Every Sunday 10:30 a.m. – Noon

Separate programs for preschool children and school aged students.

TODDLER CARE

Separate supervision provided for children up to age two.



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Hugh Taft-Morales Leader Fritz Williams Leader Emeritus

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Contacts by e-mail: use President, VicePresident (one word), Treasurer, Secretary, or Admin followed by @ bmorethical.org. For general questions: ask@bmorethical.org. On the web at bmorethical.org

Preserving Our History

by Emil Volcheck, BES President

n February 20, following days of exceptionally cold weather, water pipes burst in an apartment unit above BES. We were told the tenant had turned off their heat, presumably because they could not afford the utility bill. Water poured into the office, library, classroom, and lobby. On the way



down, it drenched the society archives stored in the space above the office. Late that night and early the next morning, Ray, Janey, and I lowered down wet boxes and hauled them into the meeting hall. In the coming days, many members took turns to work on saving the archives. We spread out pages on paper towels to let them dry and photographed about 1200 pages. By February 28, we had preserved all the archives up to 1970. By March 15, we had dried out the rest. You can browse the unsorted photographs here: http://ppl.ug/obLDVg6N0mk. (Included are photos of some of the volunteers at work as well as archive slides that we scanned previously.)

I'd like to express my appreciation to Argentine Craig, Karen Elliott, Paul Furth, Thomas Higdon, Wayne Laufert, Kirk Mullen, Ray Noemer, Jean Paffenback, Charlie Shafer, Alan Shapiro, Janey Solwold, Monique Stins, Hugh Taft-Morales, Nathan Whitmore, and Kathleen Wilsbach for all their labor and support.

The materials included hundreds of photos, thousands of pages of documents, some reel-to-reel audio tape, and mementos like Kay Vining's membership badge. The material we found is still meaningful for today. Argentine found lesson plans for the children that include pre-K curriculum, which is useful for the restart of the pre-school program in March. Let me describe some of what I learned from the archives.

In May 1951, the Baltimore Ethical Group completed its first season of operations and held its first annual meeting and banquet on May 4, 1951 in Levering Hall at the Johns Hopkins University. Later that month at the 44th Assembly of the American Ethical Union, members unanimously voted to grant us Associate Society status. We became the Baltimore Ethical Society, adopted a constitution, and elected Kenneth C. Milford as the first president. In June 1951, BES invited the DC and Philadelphia societies to a "Tri-Society Turnout" picnic at Elk Neck State Park in Cecil County.

In the invitation to the May 1951 banquet, Pell Kangas wrote "We are convinced that there exists in this city a real need for an organization that insists on the basic importance of ethics and human values." In his first message to the members as president, Ken Milford proposed a three-point program for the society that resonates today:

- 1. An expansion of the facilities and staff of the Childrens' Sunday Assembly so that it can offer a more complete graded program in helping children work toward developing their own ethical ideals.
- 2. Continued development of our adult program so that membership in an Ethical Society can become more meaningful to each of us.

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PLEDGE CELEBRATION LUNCHEON

Sunday, April 12, 12:00 p.m.

Come celebrate our community and the culmination of our 2015–2016 Pledge Drive. We will enjoy some hot catered food, and your cold dish potluck contributions, accompanied by music and fun! BES relies on the generosity of each other. Let's enjoy celebrating our success together. Please RSVP for the pledge luncheon on this form http://goo.gl/FAL4ib or by notifying Mav Vaughan or Kathleen Wilsbach ASAP but no later than April 8th.

Please submit your pledge card if you have not already done so! Your pledge tells the Board what we can commit to next year's budget that will be voted on at the Annual Membership Meeting.

ELECTING A NEW LEADERSHIP TEAM

Each year, the membership elects the team that will lead the society in the coming year. Ballots for this year's election will be sent to you by April 12 and must be returned on or before April 26, the date of our Annual Membership Meeting. The Nominating Committee has nominated the following candidates.

Officers:

Members-at-large:

President: Paul Furth Vice-President: Janey Solwold Stephen Meskin Alan Shapiro

Secretary: Amy Trauth-Nare

Mary Beth Sodus

Treasurer: Karen Elliott

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Members-at-large who will continue on the Board in the second year of their two-year terms are Fred Compton, Argentine Craig, and Mav Vaughan. Members of the Nominating Committee were Brian Dorsey, Karen Elliott, Paul Furth, Wayne Laufert, Kirk Mullen, and Janey Solwold (Chair). We thank them for their service!

THE ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING!

Sunday, April 26, 12:30 p.m.

Please stay after the platform address on April 26 for our Annual Membership Meeting. At this meeting, we celebrate a year of success by reporting on our growth and achievements over the past year. We welcome the new leadership team when we announce election results. We renew our commitment to the society and to each other when we review and approve the society's budget and pledge campaign goal for the next fiscal year July 1, 2015–June 30, 2016. We encourage questions, comments, suggestions, and volunteering. This is democracy in action, folks, so please attend this important meeting!

OTHER ACTIVITIES

Poetry Group

Sunday, April 5, 9:30 a.m.

Baking Night at Moveable Feast

Thursday, April 9, 5:45 p.m.

Mindfulness Meditation Sunday, April 12, 9:30 a.m.

Pledge Celebration Luncheon

Sunday, April 12, 12:00 p.m.

Bioethics Discussion

Sunday, April 12, 4:00 p.m.

Roy Zimmerman Concert Sunday, April 12, 7:30 p.m.

Ethical Action Meeting

Sunday, April 19, 9:15 a.m.

Board Meeting

Sunday, April 19, 12:30 p.m.

BES Eatery Social

Sunday, April 19, 1:00 p.m.

Family Board and Card Games Party

Sunday, April 19, 3:00 p.m.

BES Film Club

Wednesday, April 22, 7:30 p.m.

Annual Membership Meeting

Sunday, April 26, 12:30 p.m.

Sunday Assembly Baltimore Sunday, April 26, 2:00 p.m.

Ignite Baltimore #16!

Thursday, April 30, 6:00 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	April 5
G to L	April 12
M to R	April 19
S to Z	April 26

APRIL 5

"The Tao of Ethical Culture" (video presentation)

Hugh Taft-Morales

Leader, Baltimore Ethical Society

Both Ethical Culture and the broader tradition of Humanism in general use reason to liberate us from superstition so we can build a better world. Sometimes, however, we can get sucked into overly intellectualized debates about how many atoms fit on the head of a pin. This is why, the Taoist sage Laozi reminds us to think less and simply "be." What would the founder of Ethical Culture, Felix Adler, think of such wisdom? In trying to answer this question, Hugh Taft-Morales relies on Benjamin Hoff's *The Tao of Pooh* in an attempt to keep things simple. The presentation will be delivered by video, and discussion in small groups will follow. (Note: this talk was rescheduled from the original date of February 22 due to snow.)

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.

APRIL 12

"Motivate or Change: Defining the Role of the Next Generation in Social Activism"

Farajii R. Muhammad Youth Empowerment Coordinator

Mr. Muhammad will speak about the role and work of the Young Leaders for Peace Coalition, where young leaders and student activists are addressing issues of social justice including police brutality and other forms of systematic oppression. (Note: this talk was rescheduled from the original date of March 1 due to snow.)

Farajii R. Muhammad serves as the Youth Empowerment Coordinator for the American Friends Service Committee in Baltimore. He is a young nonprofit professional and media personality from Baltimore, Maryland. In 1999, Farajii cofounded (NLLC) New Leadership Learning Center, Inc. with former partner Tamara Muhammad at the ages of 19 and 17 years-old respectively. As president and spokesman for the youth-governed organization, he often worked to develop young leaders, connect youth to resources, and bridge the gap between youth and local government. Farajii has over 15 years of experience working with young people and has centered his many missions and initiatives around one simple concept, re-defining leadership. Farajii can be reached via social media on Facebook (fb.com/FarajiiMuhammad) and Twitter (@Farajii).

APRIL 19

"Sentencing Children to Die In Prison"

Nikola Nable-Juris Policy Counsel

Nikola Nable-Juris will speak about the use of life-without-parole sentences for youth under 18, both nationally and in Maryland. These sentences condemn a child to a lifetime in prison despite scientific evidence that adolescents are less culpable for their actions and more likely to be rehabilitated. The United States is the only country that sentences children under 18 to life in prison without parole and a growing number of states are revising their criminal laws to give children an opportunity to show they can grow and change. Nikola will share about reform efforts occurring around the country and the work in Maryland to end this practice, including ways to be involved in advocacy efforts.

Nikola Nable-Juris serves as policy counsel for the Campaign for the Fair Sentencing of Youth. After working with pregnant and parenting teenagers in Alaska and survivors of domestic violence in Virginia, she was inspired to advocate for systemic change. While at the University of Maryland School of Law, she interned with Juvenile Division of the Office of the Public Defender and the American Civil Liberties Union of Maryland. Her work at CFSY includes a blend of policy advocacy, community organizing, and support for local advocates around the country.

APRIL 26

"J. Robert Oppenheimer and Nuclear Agony"

Hugh Taft-Morales

Leader, Baltimore Ethical Society

Today, over 16,300 nuclear weapons make Russian, North Korean and terrorist aggression all the more alarming. Despite the end of the cold war, nuclear weapons are still ready for launch around the world. Even a limited nuclear war would cause unimaginable suffering, something known only too well to the father of the atomic bomb, J. Robert Oppenheimer. Raised in Ethical Culture, taught by its founder Felix Adler, Oppenheimer felt impelled to serve his country and do good. His heroic efforts him landed on the covers of *Time* and *Life* magazines. Soon, tormented by the horror of his own creation and persecution by his own government, Oppenheimer's life took a tragic turn. Hugh Taft-Morales explores this story in the context of current efforts to rid the world of nuclear weapons.

PROGRAM ADDENDUM

The programs for March 1, 15, and 29 were not ready in time for publication in the March issue. The March 1 program was postponed to April 12. The programs for March 15 and 29 are included here for archival purposes.

MARCH 15

"We Can Achieve Youth Advocacy"

Adrian Muldrow

3rd Vice President, Baltimore NAACP

Mr. Adrian Muldrow will speak about his work with the Baltimore Chapter of the NAACP, increasing opportunities for youth offenders to obtain expungement of their criminal records, and the "We Can Achieve" Youth Advocacy Project.

Mr. Adrian Muldrow spent over 20 years in and out of Maryland's prison system and was wrongly accused and sentenced to Life and 20 years in prison. Mr. Muldrow is founder of the We Can Achieve Project (WCAP) Baltimore that has worked with youth and adults returning from prison. Mr. Adrian Muldrow has helped many youth and adults obtain High School Diplomas, employment, and other opportunities. Mr. Muldrow is also the CEO of Promotional Concepts, a Consulting/Advertising agency that creates marketing materials for businesses. He has received several official acknowledge-

ments and various awards for his community work, including ones at the Mayoral and Senatorial levels. Mr. Muldrow is 3rd Vice President of The Baltimore Branch NAACP. In his spare time he loves spending down time with loved ones.

MARCH 29

BES Dialogue: "Race and Ethical Policing"

Convened by Laura Griffin, Omari Jeremiah, and Angad Singh

In December 2014, The Real News Network (TRNN) broadcast a town hall meeting that addressed the question "Should the Community Control the Police?" Instead of following the usual platform address format, this BES program will begin with screening several statements excerpted from the town hall meeting that have been selected for their impact. Then the program will switch to a community dialogue to discuss issues surrounding "Black Lives Matter," ethical policing, and the topics raised during the platform addresses this month. Watch the town hall meetings at http://goo.gl/i0g2jp.

Ms. Laura Griffin, a member of the BES Ethical Action Committee, and Mr. Omari Jeremiah are former leaders of Community Conversations, a 2013 project to facilitate Baltimore community dialogues on welcoming immigrants in Baltimore, addressing topics such as race, prejudice and community response. Mr. Angad Singh is a member of the BES Executive Board and co-chair of the Program Committee. He is an activist for social justice and campaign finance reform. He is the father of Jaisal Noor, a TRNN host, producer, and reporter.

IGNITE BALTIMORE #16!

Thursday, April 30, 6:00 p,m,, MICA Brown Center

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 in 2014. Purchase tickets and see videos of previous talks at ignitebaltimore.com. We will buy a limited number of tickets in advance for the group, but we encourage you to get your own.

Call for Submissions for Summer Sundays

uring the summer months, BES Sunday morning meetings feature talks that are less formal than platform addresses. These talks run 10-30 minutes in length and are commonly offered by BES members or friends. The speaker usually invites discussion following their talk. The Program Committee encourages BES members and friends to suggest topics for talks they'd like to give and invites you to contact Joe Adams, Angad Singh, Jayme Smith, Hugh Taft-Morales, or Emil Volcheck with your ideas and suggestions.





CLUB

Wednesday, April 22, 7:30 p.m.

The BES Film Club will screen selected short films from the Brave New Films: Justice project. Visit www.bravenewfilms. org/justice_shorts. Topics include ending private probation, mass incarceration, and overcriminalization.

The BES Film Club meets on the fourth Wednesday of each month. Would you like to help select films or join the Film Club Committee? Please speak to Joe Adams, Gil Munk, or Charlie Shafer.

BAKING NIGHT AT MOVEABLE FEAST

Thursday, April 9, 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 Karen Elliott know you are coming (KarenSElliott@aol.com) and show up at Moveable Feast, 901 N. Milton Ave., Baltimore. Park in front of building and enter through the door closest to Ashland Street.

BIOETHICS DISCUSSION

Human and Animal Subjects in Medicine and Science

Sunday, April 12, 4:00 p.m., Baltimore Free School, 30 W. North Ave.

Join Hugh Taft-Morales for an exploration of important ethical issues surrounding the use of subjects in medical and scientific research. Given the horrors of suffering caused by Nazi doctors and Tuskegee syphilis programs, it's rational to maintain a skeptical eye. Informed consent, the ground for most research ethics, is often not fully implemented in the case of human beings and never in the case of animals. How do we balance "the common good" that might be served by research with the violation of individual privacy and autonomy?

FAMILY BOARD & CARD GAMES PARTY

Sunday, April 19, 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. Please bring a snack or drink to share (or a small monetary contribution for the host). Address and directions provided when you RSVP. For questions, please call her at 301-642-1065. Join the Meetup at http://meetu.ps/2H5BW4.

SUNDAY ASSEMBLY BALTIMORE

Sunday, April 26, 2:00 p.m.

Sunday Assembly 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

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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 fb.com/sundayassemblybaltimore.

ROY ZIMMERMAN: THE FAUCET'S ON FIRE!

Sunday, April 12, 7:30 p.m. (doors open 7:00 p.m.)

What can one person do about climate change, torture, racism, gun violence, fracking, Congressional ineptitude, ignorance, war and greed?

Baltimore Ethical Society
Sunday April 12 - 7:50 pm
state | Sandy Sand 15 - 175

Write funny songs, says Roy Zimmerman. In trying to change the world, sometimes it helps to take a break and have a good laugh. "The Faucet's on Fire!" is ninety minutes of Zimmerman's hilarious, rhyme-intensive original songs. His songs have been heard on HBO and Showtime and he's shared stages with Bill Maher, John Oliver, Ellen DeGeneres, Kate Clinton and George Carlin. Sliding scale admission: \$5–\$25 (BNotes or USD). And, at no extra charge, the special warm-up act is... Hugh Taft-Morales! Check out some of Roy's acts on YouTube: youtube.com/royzimmerman.

Preserving Our History

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3. Bring the concepts of the Ethical Movement to the attention of the community so that others who can no longer whole-heartedly accept the older religions as consistent with intellectual integrity can have an opportunity to decide whether or not Ethical Culture is a religion in which they can enjoy satisfactions of a shared quest for a good life for all people.

The Evening Sun on December 3, 1966 ran a full-page feature story on BES in the Religion section titled "Accomplishment of Human Action Is Focal Point of Ethical Society." The article shows a photo of the old BES building at 3800 Gwynn Oak Avenue with the caption "Members of the Baltimore Ethical Society meet here each Sunday to discuss with guest speakers the task of everyday ethical action in the community." An advertisement for the Sunday School from that time reads "YOUR CHILD WANTS to go to

Sunday School because his friends do. YOU DON'T WANT him indoctrinated with dogma, but he keeps asking questions. WE WANT TO HELP your child develop an independent, ethical approach to life. Maybe we should get together."

The membership list from 1954 contains the names of the founders and early leaders of the society, including: Abramson, Banfield, Chodak, Frank, Granek, Halebsky, Isaacs, Kangas, Milford, Miller, Paris, Patterson, Pollock, Rodman, and Vining. The budget for fiscal year 1953-1954 lists expenses of \$1600 for the Children's Sunday Assembly and \$425 for the Adults Sunday Assembly.

To understand what all is in our archives, we will want to digitize and organize the documents and photographs. We haven't achieved that today, but by preserving them we've made it possible for future volunteers to do that.

On the Future

(continued from page 1)

I am excited about "the fierce urgency of now" exuding from the "black lives matter" movement and animating our discussions at BES. Having taught U.S. history for 25 years, I am tired of the racism that continually tarnishes our best ideals. I am eager for the change this movement can make. I am also frightened by the anger and violence that's wrapped up in it all, and by the potential that we can't handle the truth. But, I am ready to try. Are you?

When you envision the future of BES, I hope you find it more exciting than scary. I urge you to share your ideas with me and other members and the board. What becomes of BES will be determined by you who participate as active members. Please come celebrate at our April 12th Community Luncheon and our April 26th Membership Meeting. After all, the future is now.

BES EATERY SOCIAL

Sunday, April 19, 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.

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



BALTIMORE ETHICAL SOCIETY

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

NEWSLETTER
Please do not delay!
TIME VALUE

ETHICAL ACTION MEETING

Sunday, April 19 9:15-10:15 a.m.

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

NEWCOMERS MEETING

Sunday, May 31, 12:30 p.m. (no meeting in April)

New to the Society and interested in learning more? Attended a meeting or two? Thinking about joining? Come to a Newcomers Meeting and learn more about Ethical Culture and about our Society – its history, its philosophy, and its organization. Due to our Annual Membership Meeting in April, the next Newcomers Meeting will be in May. Attending a meeting is recommended before becoming a member. See Wayne Laufert or Janey Solwold for more information.



Sunday, April 12, 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.

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

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