

BESpeak

SEPTEMBER 2015

NEWSLETTER OF THE BALTIMORE ETHICAL SOCIETY

Building, Bridging, and Being More in Baltimore

by Hugh Taft-Morales, BES Leader

Before our BES program season ended last May, I shared at a couple of Sunday platforms my hope to become a greater presence in Baltimore. This is a challenge, given that from a nine-month, ¼ time position I hope to offer stimulating platform talks and classes, support individuals and committees trying to bring out their best, and promote ethical actions projects. But since Baltimore is, now more than ever, trying to heal and grow despite the violence and systemic injustice that hold so many down, it seems the right time to “be more in Baltimore.”

In an effort to reach beyond our walls, the Ethical Action Committee and other BES members are currently working with Out for Justice (OFJ). Its director Diamonte Brown, who led our May 3rd conversation about race, has helped develop an action plan with BES members. Various projects are proposed that range from providing services to constructively integrate returning citizens back into society to offering programs designed to encourage policy-community dialogue and cooperation. Diamonte will discuss these projects with OFJ members, and then our two organizations will begin working on concrete actions. Speak with BES Ethical Action Chair Thomas Higdon if you want to help out - we need you!

In case you all think I just sit in a hammock all summer, I will share the “community organizing” meetings that served as bookends for my day on July 23rd. From 9:00 a.m. until noon, I attended my second Clergy Caucus of BRIDGE (Baltimore Regional Initiative Developing Genuine Equality). The Clergy Caucus, co-chaired by Rev. Dr. Hoffman Brown III and Rev. Carl Olson of First Unitarian, supports and nurtures BRIDGE leadership. Invested in advocacy regarding bread-and-butter regional issues such as housing, transportation, the Dream Act, and paid sick leave, BRIDGE has organized busloads of congregants to go to Annapolis to demand progressive and just policies for Maryland.

Later that day, I met Thomas Higdon for dinner, following which we both at-



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SUNDAY PLATFORMS 10:30 a.m.

(details on page 4)

The final talk in our Summer Sunday Series is on September 6.

The new season of platform addresses begins September 13.

SEPTEMBER 6

“What is Addiction?”

Thomas Higdon
BES member

SEPTEMBER 13

“Ethical Culture, Then and Now”

Hugh Taft-Morales
Leader, Baltimore Ethical Society

SEPTEMBER 20

“Acting on Climate in Maryland”

Jaime DeMarco
CCAN Clean Energy Fellow

SEPTEMBER 27

“Peace, Poverty, and the Planet”

Hugh Taft-Morales
Leader, Baltimore Ethical Society

ETHICAL HUMANIST SUNDAY SCHOOL

Every Sunday, beginning Sept. 13
10:30 a.m. – Noon

Programs for both preschool
and school-age students.
All are welcome.

TODDLER CARE

Separate supervision provided
for children up to age two.

BESpeak

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We Share Because We Care

by *Paul Furth, BES President*

The foundation upon which the Baltimore Ethical Society is built includes Humanism, Social Justice, Equality, and Science. There are many groups and organizations founded upon these principles, albeit generally focusing only on one. What makes Ethical Culture special is that we strive and participate to build a better society based on reason and love. That is, we build community with thought and feeling, intelligence and emotion, mind and heart. And the committee that epitomizes the heart of BES, putting care into action, is our Caring Committee.

Currently, Kirk Mullen is our Caring Committee chair. He along with the several members of what he calls the “Sunshine Committee” help bring our members together as a Community through establishing an emotional support system as part of the pastoral service function that the Society offers. Em Sabatiuk and Carol Solomon have been among the past Caring Committee chairs, while Kirk has lead the committee off-and-on for the last 17 years, including the past 3 years. He’s a retired teacher, having served in both high and junior high school. With a background in psychology, he worked as a school psychologist as well as a special education teacher. A member of BES for 23 years, he also taught Sunday school to adolescents at BES at a time when there were actually three separate Sunday school classes. Like other Caring Committee chairs, his strengths in understanding and addressing the emotional needs of others have benefited him and his committee’s members in bringing those pastoral attributes to our Community.

The Committee offers support to BES members, particularly during times of difficulty. In Kirk’s own words, the Caring Committee strives “... to bring a little bit of sunshine into the lives of the members of the Ethical Society.” Committee members demonstrate that we as a Community are there for our members to provide a little support in a time of need. For example, Hugh Taft-Morales, Fritz Williams, and Kirk individually paid visits to the home of Helena E. Wright, a highly respected longtime member, whom I met during the annual BES Memorial Day picnic in 2014 at Dianne and Stuart Hirsch’s home. All three also paid visits during her several hospitalizations in the years preceding her August 2014 death. Earlier this summer, Kirk, Gordon Stills, and Emil Volcheck paid visits to Ruth Bronstein to wish her a happy 99th birthday. Kirk is proud to say that members of the Committee have been very generous in the extension of themselves.

For me, for instance, the Committee was there during the difficult times in my caring for my mom. Sometimes the Committee knows a phone call may be all that is needed. Sometimes the delivery of a kind word or the lending of a sympathetic ear can be the most appropriate actions to show the Society’s support for a member. In addition to sending greeting cards and get well cards, the Committee has helped three members apply for employment and given rides to those without transportation. All



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CIRCLE OF VOICES WORKSHOP

Saturday, September 26, 7:00–10:00 p.m.

In this workshop on “racism and other isms,” explorations of the concept of race and other differences that divide will take place as workshop leader J. C. Faulk guides participants in working towards a more equitable and just society. In the aftermath of violence that has torn and tears at the social fabric of our city, come help build a more inclusive, just, open, and compassionate Baltimore. Hosted by Hugh Taft-Morales, Leader of the Baltimore Ethical Society. Bring something to share for a potluck dinner. Non-alcoholic drinks will be provided. Free and open to the public but please register by emailing leader@bmorethical.org.

School Never Ends

People’s avoidance of engaging in anything on Friday the 13th (paraskevidekatriphobia) has resulted in yearly financial losses of more than \$800 million, according to the History channel. The number 13 attached to Sundays, however, has had a brighter outcome!

BES members and friends ably taught content-rich sessions for the 6 to 12 year olds among us during 13 Sundays this past summer. They created hands-on lessons that tackled a variety of subjects such as science (astronomy, bees, neuroscience, solar energy, polymers, trajectory), math, and creative jewelry making.

The Ethical Education Committee (EEC) extends appreciation and many thanks to the thoughtful volunteering of Brian Dorsey, Thomas Higdon, Stuart Hirsch, Dianne Hirsch, Stephen Meskin, Cheryl Pavlovsky, Mav Vaughan, Tovah Wax, and Nathan Whitmore.

Work In Progress

EEC members also committed their time and knowledge this summer, embarking on a search to hire a pre-kin-

dergarten teacher for September 2015 through May 2016 and undertaking an inventory of the resources available in the Sunday school classes. Susan Henley, in particular, contributed sound ideas concerning what makes for a healthy, appropriate learning environment.

Argentine Craig chairs the EEC Committee, which is composed of Ben Busby, Brian Dorsey, Paul Furst (ex officio), Karen Helm, Susan Henley, Rosemary Klein, and Monique Stins.

Halloween Already

Make a note that in October, the EEC will again host BES BOO a free-for-all potluck supper and spook-tacular activities for toddlers through teens including pumpkin decorating, classic games, and a costume parade with prizes. Tentatively, this year’s event is planned for Saturday, October 24, so pencil that date in and plan to enjoy the merriment.

Consider too becoming a member of the EEC. There is much enjoyment and satisfaction to be had in planning for and contributing to our children’s learning.

OTHER ACTIVITIES

Poetry Group

Sunday, September 6, 9:30 a.m.

Annual Labor Day Picnic

Sunday, September 6, 12:00 p.m.

Charm City Film Series

Wednesday, September 9, 6:30 p.m.

Baking Night at Moveable Feast

Thursday, September 10, 5:45 p.m.

Mindfulness Meditation

Sunday, September 13, 9:30 a.m.

Board Meeting

Sunday, September 13, 12:30 p.m.

Volunteer at Real Food Farm

Saturday, September 19, 9:00 a.m.

Family Game Night

Saturday, September 19, 6:00 p.m.

Ethical Action Meeting

Sunday, September 20, 9:15 a.m.

BES Eatery Social

Sunday, September 20, 1:00 p.m.

Family Board and Card Games Party

Sunday, September 20, 3:00 p.m.

Circle of Voices Workshop

Saturday, September 26, 7:00 p.m.

Newcomers Meeting

Sunday, September 27, 12:30 p.m.

Sunday Assembly Baltimore

Sunday, September 27, 2:00 p.m.

Ignite Baltimore #17!

Tuesday, September 29, 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: Sept. 6 G to L: Sept. 13
M to R: Sept. 20 S to Z: Sept. 27

SUNDAY PLATFORM PROGRAMS

SEPTEMBER 6

“What is Addiction?”

Thomas Higdon
BES member

Thomas Higdon is a group facilitator for SMART Recovery, an evidence-based peer support group for people struggling with addictive behavior, which meets every Saturday at 10:00 a.m. at BES. He will briefly summarize the models of addiction (e.g., moral, medical, and biopsychosocial) and discuss how our choice of model guides our public policy, treatment programs, and the way we treat people struggling with addiction.

SEPTEMBER 13

“Ethical Culture, Then and Now”

Hugh Taft-Morales
Leader, Baltimore Ethical Society

When Felix Adler created our dynamic alternative to traditional religion, he saw a world without a moral compass. Humanity appeared to be “drifting on the seething tide of business,” leaving the conscience of each person lost in a sea of greed and competition. By focusing on ethics in caring communities, Adler believed we could chart a new course for civilization. How different is our situation today? How has Ethical Humanism evolved to respond to our current crisis while maintaining our commitments to honor the worth of each person, grow ethical relationships, and build justice?

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 20

“Acting on Climate in Maryland: *How Climate Change is affecting Maryland and what we can do about it*”

Jaime DeMarco
CCAN Clean Energy Fellow

Jaime DeMarco examines the current climate movement,

addressing how we talk about climate change as well as how we can move past scientists and polar bears and begin speaking from a place of deep personal experience. Additionally, he will speak about what to expect in Annapolis in the coming legislative session and what you can do to play a vital role in transforming Maryland's energy future.

Jaime DeMarco is a Clean Energy Fellow in the summer fellows program of the Chesapeake Climate Action Network (CCAN). DeMarco's story is personally engaging. He notes “By the time I graduated high school in Baltimore, my eyes had been opened to the harmful costs of the lives we live. I took a gap year and traveled to Ecuador in an effort to escape the modern world and lived in a bamboo hut with an indigenous man. I grew attached to the primary rain forest we inhabited, but I learned that oil companies were actively trying to buy the land to clear it for oil extraction. When I returned to the states, I resolved not to ride in cars in an effort to combat what I had seen. I kept that up for two years until I became involved in organizing and decided that if we want to shape our world then we have to engage with it more systematically.” Now an undergraduate at Warren Wilson College in Asheville NC, he is double majoring in chemistry and in environmental education. He began working at the CCAN this past summer and will continue through the fall as he has “greatly enjoyed fighting for a livable future.” A short bio of DeMarco may also be found at <http://chesapeakeclimate.org/blog/welcome-ccan-summer-fellows>.

SEPTEMBER 27

“Peace, Poverty, and the Planet”

Hugh Taft-Morales
Leader, Baltimore Ethical Society

Hugh Taft-Morales explores what it will take to bring lasting peace to the planet. While grateful for the energy and time diplomats and strategists contribute to contain violence, he wonders if such efforts will fail without a radical change of perspective on the part of most of the human race. From a Humanist perspective, the recent Encyclical Letter of Pope Francis entitled “Our Common Home” can be instructive. It emphasizes the fundamental interrelatedness of all of nature and society. War, greed, and exploitation feed off each other. To build peace, we need sustainability and justice.

**IGNITE
BALTIMORE #17**

**Tuesday, September 29,
6:00 p.m. at the
MICA Brown Center**

5 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 Sceptically Baltimore" in attending Ignite Baltimore last April. 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. Please contact Nathan Whitmore at nww10@hampshire.edu or call him at 530-400-2420 to get a ticket or find out if we're going for pizza afterwards at Two Boots!

Teacher Returning and Sought

On Sunday, September 13th, Linda Joy Burke returns for her 4th year as the BES Sunday School Teacher, bringing her creative gifts: poetry, visual arts, and multicultural global thought-provoking lessons on ethical values.

This past May 24, BES opened its "Remembrance Sunday" with the Ethical Education Committee (EEC) presenting a rose bouquet to Linda Joy in acknowledgement of the warmth, joy, spirit, and creativity she brings to the curriculum she designed and teaches. In response, Linda Joy spoke of how much she enjoyed teaching and working with both the parents and their "beautiful children."



Search for Pre-Kindergarten Teacher

The BES EEC continues its search for a pre-K teacher. Launched only five months ago, the new prekindergarten Sunday school program for children three to five years old offers a curriculum focused on a different value

every month. Values are taught using original, creative, comprehensive lesson plans that incorporate stories and learning activities such as games, art, crafts, movement, songs, videos, plays.

While EEC members taught the BES pre-K Sunday school in its successful inception, the time has come for the program to officially hire its first teacher. BES members and friends are asked to contribute ideas for anyone who might be interested in teaching the pre-kindergarten class from September through May.

We are looking for this teacher to offer our children a safe, supervised environment in a program that nourishes social, emotional, physical, and cognitive development. The teacher will participate in creating curriculum, determining individual goals, and encouraging parent involvement.

If you have ideas that will help in this search, please contact Argentine Craig, EEC chairperson, any EEC member, BES Leader Hugh Taft-Morales, or BES president Paul Furst. Your suggestions can make a difference.

ETHICAL ACTION VOLUNTEER OUTINGS

Baking Night at Moveable Feast

**Thursday, September 10, 5:45–8:00 p.m.,
901 N. Milton Ave., Baltimore**

Join BES members and others for this enjoyable outing at a great organization – check out their website at www.mfeast.org. Park in front of building and enter through the door closest to Ashland Street. Let Karen Elliott know if you are coming (KarenSElliott@aol.com) and if you'd like to carpool, she'll try to match you up with another BES participant.

Volunteer Day at Real Food Farm

**Saturday, September 19, 9:00 a.m.–12:00 p.m.,
2801 St. Lo Dr., Baltimore**

We are volunteering with Real Food Farm throughout the year, contributing to a self-sustaining community and to the elimination of food deserts and food insecurity in Baltimore. All ages welcome! Be sure to dress for the weather, wear sturdy shoes, and bring water and a snack. We will help out, rain or shine!

CHARM CITY

film

SERIES

Wednesday, September 9,
6:30 p.m.

In September the Charm City Film Series will screen *Dirty Wars*. The film follows investigative reporter Jeremy Scahill, author of the international bestseller *Blackwater*, into the hidden world of America's covert wars, from Afghanistan to Yemen, Somalia, and beyond. Part action film and part detective story, *Dirty Wars* is a gripping journey into one of the most important and under-reported stories of our time. What begins as a report on a deadly U.S. night raid in a remote corner of Afghanistan quickly turns into a global investigation of the secretive and powerful Joint Special Operations Command (JSOC). In military jargon, JSOC teams "find, fix, and finish" their targets, who are selected through a secret process. No target is off limits for the "kill list," including U.S. citizens.

The Charm City Film Series is free and open to the public. Donations are suggested. Complimentary refreshments are provided, and films are followed by discussion led by a local expert on the issue.

SUNDAY ASSEMBLY BALTIMORE

Sunday, September 27, 2:00 p.m.

Come to the next 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 snacks to encourage people to stay and mingle with one another. Visit us on Facebook at fb.com/sundayassemblybaltimore.

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BES ANNUAL LABOR DAY PICNIC

Sunday, September 6, 12:00 p.m.

Join us for food, fun, and fellowship following the Sunday Platform at BES. Members Dianne and Stuart Hirsch have graciously agreed to open their home (and yard) to us once again and so we will gather for our annual Labor Day Sunday picnic from 12:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. The picnic is potluck so please bring a dish to contribute. This is a great opportunity to relax, enjoy great eats, and get to know new people and reacquaint with old friends. Directions will be handed out and/or provided on request.

DIVERSITY SALON

Sunday, September 6, the Labor Day Picnic

An evolving discussion about how perceptions of the Other affect our relationships. Usually, we meet at BES, but this month, we will instead gather during our annual Labor Day picnic to consider some great and interesting ideas for upcoming discussions. If you have any questions, contact Lane Berk at 410-727-1880 or Dianne Hirsch at diannehirsch1776@aol.com.

FAMILY GAME NIGHT

Saturday, September 19, 6:00 – 9:00 p.m.

Please join the Social Events committee for its LAST Family Game Night of 2015. School has begun, and soon the Halloween-Thanksgiving-Human Light juggernaut will begin! So come have a fun, easy breezy evening with us. You are welcome to bring a game or play one of ours. Please bring a snack or dish to share. And please invite your friends and neighbors: all are welcome and the more the merrier. (Especially among the youngsters!)

FAMILY BOARD & CARD GAMES PARTY

Sunday, September 20, 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 make a small monetary contribution to 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: to do so or to have questions answered, please call 301-642-1065.

Building, Bridging, and Being More in Baltimore

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tended another community-organizing coalition meeting: Baltimoreans United in Leadership Development (BUILD), an Industrial Area Foundation-affiliated group that BES discussed joining a couple of years ago after their Lead Organizer, Rob English, spoke at one of our Sunday platforms. BUILD describes itself as “non-partisan, interfaith, multiracial, and dedicated to making our city a better place for all Baltimoreans to live and thrive.” A bit more urban focused than BRIDGE, BUILD member organizations include not only places of worship but also many community and citizen groups.

When Thomas and I arrived at St. Matthews Church, the energy in the rapidly filling basement was palatable as BUILD is beginning a new initiative called BUILD ONE BALTIMORE, dedicated to “a city with jobs; a city for youth; a city that’s safe; a city for all.” At the heart of the project are voter registration and education. The first stage is to assure that participating groups have their own members registered to vote in 2016 and that advocating for jobs, community safety, and inclusion consistently takes place. The second stage

will involve a door-to-door registration and education drive beginning in October. For more information, check out their website at www.buildiaf.org.

One way the BES can become more active locally is to work in coalitions with other like-minded organizations. But BES can do this only if our members also get more involved. Members can support our membership in a community-organizing coalition by pledging to work on civic projects like voter registration. Or members could serve on one of our committees that keep BES functioning smoothly: this is one of our greatest needs. Such support will empower me to work more in the broader community as an ambassador for BES.

Whether we join BRIDGE or BUILD or not, finding avenues to demand effective, inclusive political leadership is important for many at BES. It is why I am trying to promote Ethical Culture values outside of our doors at 306 W. Franklin Street. It’s time we do more to unify our city and heal communities just down the street that still are reeling from the aftermath of the Freddy Gray’s tragic death of. Let’s be more in Baltimore!

We Share Because We Care

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of these activities are second nature for this Committee’s membership, who have personally delivered many tokens of hope to BES members.

With all events open to everyone, member or not, BES strives to be an inclusive organization. The Caring Committee is one of a few instances where BES membership is required to belong. This is the case because Committee members adhere to a strict confidentiality code due to the delicate and confidential nature of the issues they sometimes encounter.

Presently, the Caring Committee members are Ruth Schoonover, Fred Compton, Nathan Whitmore, Dan Blank, Gordon Stills, and Kirk (Hugh Taft-Morales and I are ex-officio members). If you wish to join or learn more about the Caring Committee, it holds a short (approximately 15 minutes) meeting on the first Sunday of every month.

BES EATERY SOCIAL

Sunday, Sept. 20, 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, September 20, 9:15 a.m.

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

NEWCOMERS MEETING

Sunday, September 27, 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 Wayne Laufert or Janey Solwold for more information.

MINDFULNESS

meditation

Sunday, September 13, 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

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