

# BESpeak

MARCH 2016

NEWSLETTER OF THE BALTIMORE ETHICAL SOCIETY

## Attend the 2016 AEU Lay Leadership Summer School!

by Hugh Taft-Morales, BES Leader

My experience as a student at the 2008 American Ethical Union Lay Leadership Summer School (LLSS) was transformative for many. Most of my fellow students became more inspired and effective lay leaders at their Ethical Societies. They wrote of the friendships they made and the confidence they gained to bring out their best in life and at their Ethical Society.

Personally, it helped me clarify my vision and purpose as an Ethical Culture Leader, and equipped me with the skills and confidence to succeed. It also led me to sign up to be a staff member at future Lay Leadership Summer Schools,

As I prepare for my third year on the Summer School staff, I am excited to be a part of a movement doing so much to *create, nurture, and inspire ethical communities*. During the week of August 13-20, in the beautiful hills of western North Carolina, there waits for you a special opportunity to strengthen skills, share ideas and ideals, and broaden inter-Society connections. The intensive week-long program offers many learning opportunities. Ethical Culture talks focus on our religious, philosophical, and organizational history. Congregational development presentations and practice sessions help you strengthen your interpersonal and leadership skills. All activities let you get to know one another, learn about other Societies, and have fun!

Our program helps participants: understand organizational dynamics and community development; gain the tools to be more creative and effective - agents for positive change; practice leadership skills in small-group settings; deepen their understanding of the history, ideas and development of Ethical Culture; build Ethical Societies faithful to our tradition yet flexible enough to meet present and future challenges; experiment with creating authentic and inspiring ceremonies; and more.

I am so happy to be working with a great staff, including Jan Broughton, AEU Board President and member Ethical Humanist Society of the Triangle (NC); Mary Herman, Ethical Culture Leader; Diane Kirschner, Brooklyn Society for Ethical Culture; Paulo Ribeiro, Ethical Culture Society of Bergen County; and Ken Novak, Eth-



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### SUNDAY PLATFORMS 10:30 a.m.

(details on pages 4-5)

#### MARCH 6

##### "Public Health Ethics"

Prof. Kathleen Hoke  
Director, NPHL

#### MARCH 13

##### "Strategies to Reduce Food Insecurity"

Tam Kelley  
MD Hunger Solutions

#### MARCH 20

##### "Can We Keep Our Democracy? (Or, Can We Get it Back?)"

Susan Ogden  
Vice President, GMOM

#### MARCH 27

##### "The Press, Lies and Politics"

Hugh Taft-Morales  
Leader, Baltimore Ethical Society

### ETHICAL HUMANIST SUNDAY SCHOOL

Every Sunday  
10:30 a.m. – Noon

Two classrooms with separate  
programs for preschool children  
and school aged students.

### TODDLER CARE

Separate supervision provided  
for children up to age two.

# BESpeak

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## Issue 457

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

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Baking Night..... Karen Elliott  
Meditation ..... Karen Elliott  
Poetry..... Kirk Mullen  
Workshops..... Hugh Taft-Morales

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Kate LaClair, Kirk Mullen,  
Hugh Taft-Morales, Amy Trauth-Nare

**Contacts by e-mail:** use President,  
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Secretary, or Admin followed by  
@bmoreethical.org. For general  
questions: ask@bmoreethical.org.

**On the web at bmoreethical.org**

# Making a Difference for Your Ethical Community

by Paul Furth, BES President



There may be no decision more important for the health and direction of the Baltimore Ethical Society (BES) than for a member to decide

to run for a position on the Board. It's the Board that makes the decisions that can impact the Society for years. Each member of the Board takes that responsibility very seriously. The committee that helps find members willing to serve on the Board is the Nominating Committee (NC).

The NC is the most important committee, in my opinion. It's this committee that will help create our Board for 2016-2017. It's charged to find those leaders who will serve on the Board, those who will set the direction for BES and guide our Society into the future. This committee seeks members who are trustworthy and dependable, and who will commit to serve our community for the duration of the term. But mostly, this committee wants to find those who indeed desire in their heart the best for BES, Ethical Culture and our membership.

The Board positions that are up for election every year are: President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer (all four positions being a one-year term), and three of the six Members-At-Large positions (which are two-year terms).

Members of the NC for 2016 are Wayne Laufert (Membership Committee Co-Chair), Karen S Elliott (Treasurer), Kirk Mullen (Caring Committee Chair), Joe Adams (Chair of Space Rentals and Charm City Film Club Committees), Gordon Stills, and Stephen Meskin (Financial Committee Chair). Please join me in thanking them for their efforts on this very important task. If you would like to throw your hat into the ring, or would like to know more about serving on the Board, please contact one of the members of the Nominating Committee.

Membership on NC is temporary and short-term, lasting no longer than 6 weeks and ending when names are submitted to the entire Society for our annual election. And it's you, our members, who will ultimately elect those leaders who are willing to make this commitment. The results of the election will be announced on Sunday, April 24th at our Annual Membership Meeting. Please mark it on your calendars. I encourage you all to attend this important meeting and vote. Your presence is greatly needed and wanted.

Another highly important committee is the Pledge Team (PT), formally called the Pledge Committee. The PT organizes efforts to allow members to commit their support of BES. While PT mostly focuses on financial commitments, we also encourage members to commit through the donation of their time and talent. Although it's my personal opinion that the time and talent you donate to BES are far more important than the money, it's the money that allows us to gather and meet at our Franklin Street hall, pays for the heat in winter, air conditioning during the summer, our

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# Democracy Spring

*Sit-in with thousands! Save democracy for millions!*

**E**ndorsed by the American Ethical Union, Get Money Out - Maryland, and over 80 other organizations.

This April in Washington, D.C. we will demand that Congress take immediate action to end the corruption of big money in our politics, and ensure free and fair elections in which every American has an equal voice. **It will be one of the largest civil disobedience actions in a generation.**

The campaign will begin on April 2nd with a rally at the Liberty Bell in

Philadelphia, followed by a march to Washington D.C. where thousands will gather to reclaim the U.S. Capitol in a powerful, peaceful, and massive week of sit-ins that no one can ignore. Almost 2000 people, including celebrities and respected public figures, have already pledged to risk arrest between April 11-16. Together we will open the door to reforms previously considered impossible and reclaim our democracy. Join us!

More information at [www.DemocracySpring.org](http://www.DemocracySpring.org).

## ETHICAL EDUCATION REPORT

The Tots to Teens march into March with "springy" activities surrounded by ethical values. From expressive reading and safe toy-playing in the BES Library with Toddler Care staff Ruth Schoonover to doing activities around the theme of family ("The Family Book" by Todd Parr), by drawing our families and noting that families have different structures but share love, celebrations, food and home. Puppets (or figurines) will be made for dramatic play. All this under the gentle direction of pre-k teacher Jill Gordon.

The pre-teen kids will continue their exploration and discussion of the care of our Springtime environment with creative teacher Linda Joy Burke.

March 27th: Something special for the last Sunday for the Tots-to-Teens. Come and See!



## SOMEONE GETTING MARRIED?

The 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 information about our ceremonies or to make arrangements, please contact our Officiant Team Coordinator, Kathryn Sloboda, at [weddings@bmoreethical.org](mailto:weddings@bmoreethical.org).

## OTHER ACTIVITIES

### Poetry Group

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

### Board Meeting

Sunday, March 6, 12:30 p.m.

### Charm City Film Series

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

### Baking Night at Moveable Feast

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

### Mindfulness Meditation

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

### Pledge Luncheon

Sunday, March 13, 12:00 p.m.

### BUILD Mayoral Forum

Sunday, March 13, 4:00 p.m.

### Ethical Action Meeting

Sunday, March 20, 12:45 p.m.

### Family Board and

### Card Games Party

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

### Newcomers Meeting

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

### BES Eatery Social

Sunday, March 27, 1:00 p.m.

### Sunday Assembly Baltimore

Sunday, March 27, 2:00 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	March 6
G to L	March 13
M to R	March 20
S to Z	March 27



**MARCH 6**

## “Public Health Ethics”

**Prof. Kathleen Hoke**

*Director, Network for Public Health Law*

Public health policies at the federal, state and local levels can have a tremendous impact on community and individual health, yet those policies often threaten individual autonomy or property interests. Different from medical ethics focused on individual patients, a code of public health ethics sets a framework for making decisions on policies that have a broad impact on the health of the population. Kathleen will reveal the emerging approach to such a code, looking at the issues public health professionals should consider before advocating for or implementing public health policy, including evaluating the evidence base, identifying potential burdens, seeking to minimize the harms, and enhancing the health of the disadvantaged.

**Professor Kathleen Hoke** is the director of the Network for Public Health Law (NPHL). She is also the Director of the Center for Tobacco Regulation at the University of Maryland Carey School of Law. The Network for Public Health Law provides technical legal assistance to national, state and local public health professionals, their attorneys, legislators, and advocates working to develop sound public policy to improve public health.

**MARCH 13**

## “Strategies to Reduce Food Insecurity”

**Tam Kelley**

*MD Hunger Solutions*

Food insecurity exists when a household has insufficient access to enough nutritious food to support an active and healthy life. People who are food insecure may skip meals, reduce the size of their meals, or may go hungry. Tam Lynne Kelley of Maryland Hunger Solutions will discuss the relationship between food insecurity, poverty, and health disparities. Strategies that have been proven to reduce food insecurity will be reviewed, including specific steps that BES can take to reduce food insecurity in our community.

**Tam Lynne Kelley** works with Maryland Hunger Solutions, a state-wide non-profit that works to end hunger and promote

well-being. Tam Lynne has worked in social services and public health for over fifteen years. She has experience working with people experiencing homelessness, English Language Learners, and people who are HIV+. She received a B.A. in Sociology from Franklin & Marshall College in Lancaster, Pennsylvania. She earned a Master of Social Work with a concentration in Management and Community Organizing from the University of Maryland, Baltimore and she is a Licensed Graduate Social Worker (LGSW) in the state. In addition, she holds a Global Health Graduate Certificate from University of Maryland, Baltimore, which further fueled her passion for social justice and work that addresses the social determinants of health.

**MARCH 20**

## “Can We Keep Our Democracy? (Or, Can We Get it Back?)”

**Susan Ogden**

*Vice President, Get Money Out-MD*

Princeton political scientists recently demonstrated that the U.S. functions as an oligarchy. Unlimited campaign money, the corruption of our political system by the donor class, systematic voter suppression, and voter cynicism conspire to challenge what's left of our Democracy. Reform efforts are growing, and Get Money Out-MD (GMOM) may be on the verge of passing, in the Maryland legislature, a state resolution to overturn 'Citizens United' through a U.S. constitutional amendment, including a guaranteed right to vote. An unprecedented direct action for Democracy, including civil disobedience, is planned in Washington by hundreds of groups this Spring (Democracy Spring/Awakening).

**Ms. Susan Ogden**, V.P. of GMOM, is an activist, retired teacher, child welfare advocate, and long-time member of the Washington Ethical Society.

**MARCH 27**

## “The Press, Lies and Politics”

**Hugh Taft-Morales**

*Leader, Baltimore Ethical Society*

With another presidential campaign in high gear, the public is again being tested by the best-paid spin-doctors in the world. Candidates are coached to speak out of both sides of their mouths telling prospective supporters what they want to



hear. The media is generally more interested in sensationalism than truth. As a fog of promises, lies, and hyperbole descend on us all, how can voters sort through the many stump speeches in order to become responsible citizens? Can we demand transparency and honesty in politics?

**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.”

### **FREDERICK DOUGLASS SOCIETY SCREENS “BLACK CHURCH INC.”**

**Sunday, March 6, 2:00 p.m.**

Join the Frederick Douglass Humanist Society of Baltimore for a screening of “Black Church, Inc.” This film is an investigative documentary that examines the excesses of the black church and its present day relationship with serving the community. The documentary compares the black church’s origins to its modern day cultural relevance. We will have potluck refreshments. Feel free to bring a snack or dish to share.

### **NAVIGATORS TO VISIT RAWLINGS CONSERVATORY**

**Sunday, March 20, 1:30-3:30 p.m.**

Join the Towson Navigators scouting chapter for a visit to the Rawlings Conservatory in Druid Hill Park. We will join their Plants and People program. The programs are interactive, informal and experiential opportunities for visitors to learn about plants, Baltimore gardening, and the conservatory environment. Each month, there is a different theme or topic of interest. For this Sunday, their program will revolve around “Sprouts” and is geared towards pre-schoolers. For more information visit [www.rawlingsconservatory.org/plants-and-people/](http://www.rawlingsconservatory.org/plants-and-people/).

### **BUILD MAYORAL FORUM**

**Sunday, March 13, 4:00 p.m., Location TBA**

Join BES Members and friends attending the 2016 Baltimoreans United In Leadership Development (BUILD) Mayoral Forum. Based on past years, BUILD expects all the leading candidates to attend along with thousands of Baltimore residents.

This is an opportunity to show the candidates that we stand behind BUILD’s “One Baltimore” platform calling for specific commitments to promote jobs, education, public safety, and opportunity for our youth. Look for more details as the event approaches. If you would like to be involved in this or other BUILD activities, please contact Thomas Higdon, Chair of BES’s Ethical Action Committee, at [higdon.thomas@gmail.com](mailto:higdon.thomas@gmail.com).



### **FAMILY BOARD AND CARD GAMES PARTY**

**Sunday, March 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.

# CHARM CITY Film SERIES

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

The Charm City Film series presents *I AM DIVINE: The True Story of the Most Beautiful Woman in the World*.

*I AM DIVINE* is a definitive biographical portrait of Harris Glenn Milstead, a.k.a. Divine, and honors him in just the way he always craved – as a serious artist and immortal star. Divine's entire story is told, from his early days as a misfit youth in Baltimore through his rise to infamy as a cult superstar.

As outrageous and fun as its subject, *I AM DIVINE* combines movie clips, rare home movies and photos, television appearances and live performance footage with brand new interviews with John Waters, Ricki Lake, Mink Stole, Tab Hunter, Holly Woodlawn, Michael Musto, Bruce Vilanch, mother Frances Milstead, and many of Divine's family, friends, colleagues, and devotees.

The film is free and open to the public. Donations are suggested. Refreshments are provided, and films are followed by discussion led by a local expert on the issue.

## VOTER REGISTRATION EFFORT

With only a month to go before the primary elections, Baltimoreans United in Leadership Development (BUILD) is supporting voter registration efforts throughout our city. BES will facilitate voter registration of our members before and after platform on March 27. We are also seeking ways to support registration efforts beyond our walls, perhaps at the University of Baltimore or with Out for Justice. If you are interested in helping with these efforts please speak to Hugh or with Thomas, Chair of the BES Ethical Action Committee.

## BAKING NIGHT AT MOVEABLE FEAST

Thursday, March 10, 5:45–8:00 p.m.

*This date is subject to change. Please check with Karen before attending.*

Join BES members and others for this enjoyable outing at a great organization – check out their website at [www.mfeast.org](http://www.mfeast.org). Let Karen Elliott know you are coming ([KarenSElliott@aol.com](mailto: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 EATERY SOCIAL

Sunday, March 27, 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. If you have any questions, please contact Nathan Whitmore at [nww10@hampshire.edu](mailto:nww10@hampshire.edu).

## SUNDAY ASSEMBLY BALTIMORE

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

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 [fb.com/sundayassemblybaltimore](https://fb.com/sundayassemblybaltimore).

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# Attend the 2016 AEU Lay Leadership Summer School

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ical Humanist Society of Chicago. We are committed to offering you a profound, challenging, and fun week that opens your horizons.

Horizons are something that on clear days our LLSS site offers bountifully. *The Mountain Retreat and Conference Center* near Highlands, N.C. ([themountainrlc.org](http://themountainrlc.org)) is a hidden gem with hiking trails and rich nature all around. There is a tower situated at the high point of the mountain top that offers a 360 degree view. I often climb the tower when I have a few moments and feel a need for reflection. Scanning all around I find an increased sense of

possibility, of promise, and of freedom. Ever since I first attended LLSS, that view has served me well.

Over the years, during those busy workweeks as an Ethical Culture Leader, I often bring my self mentally back to that spot and take a deep breath in gratitude.

If you are interested in this opportunity, speak to me or to any Board member. It takes commitment, and the tuition is \$1200 plus travel expenses. There is some limited scholarship help, however,

and I can think of few investments that have paid off so well for me and the communities I serve.



## Making a Difference

(continued from page 2)

Internet services such as our website and Meetup presence, BES presence at street fairs and gatherings such as Pride and African American Cultural Festivals, the salary of our Leader Hugh Taft-Morales, the Sunday School teachers' and toddler care salaries, ads, printing of material such as the newsletter, and so much more. What would BES be without your financial support? I suspect invisible.

On Sunday, March 13, the annual pledge luncheon will occur directly after the Platform. This luncheon is our gift to our membership as a thanks for your generous contributions from past pledge drives. We ask you to make a pledge, a commitment, a promise to BES for all that it means to you. Remember, we are asking for your promise for 2016-2017. You can make payments to fulfill this pledge over the course of the fiscal year.

Why is your pledge so important? Besides demonstrating your commitment to BES and Ethical Culture, your pledge helps the Board plan future activities and determine the needed budget for 2016-2017. The greater your pledges, the more activities and events can be planned and the more effective we can be at spreading Ethical Culture.

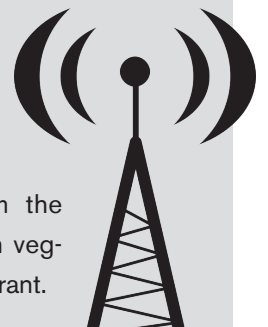
The members of the Pledge Team are Hugh Taft-Morales, Stephen Meskin, Karen Elliott, Kathleen Wilsbach, Mel Tillery, Tevis Tsai, Mav Vaughan and myself. If you would like to participate in this team effort, please join the PT.

Your ethical community is strong, dynamic and growing. It's so because you make that commitment to donate your time, talent and treasure. Whether you give of yourself on the Board, or a committee, or the donation of the funds that keeps BES active, putting deed before creed, you are the building blocks of our community. You matter, so be the change you want to see.

## PLEDGE DRIVE LUNCHEON

Sunday, March 13,  
12:00 p.m.

The 2016 BES Pledge Drive Luncheon is coming to W. Franklin Street March 13, at noon right after platform. Don't miss this important day for Ethical Culture. We'll have a fun spoof about public radio fundraisers in the name of keeping our community flourishing. "Radio BES" can keep broadcasting because of members like you who support Ethical Culture in Baltimore! Come for the fun, food, and friends! Look for information about cold potluck contributions to be supplemented with hot main courses from the Land of Kush vegetarian restaurant.





**BALTIMORE ETHICAL SOCIETY**

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

**NEWSLETTER**

Please do not delay!

**TIME VALUE**

**ETHICAL ACTION MEETING**

**Sunday, March 20, 12:45 p.m.**

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

**NEWCOMERS MEETING**

**Sunday, March 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, March 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](http://bmorethical.org) and look for us on Facebook, Twitter, and MeetUp.com @bmorethical

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