

BESpeak

MAY 2016

NEWSLETTER OF THE BALTIMORE ETHICAL SOCIETY

Gratitude for Democracy Spring

by Hugh Taft-Morales, BES Leader

I offer this Leader's column in honor of the Democracy Spring walkers who came through Baltimore in the first week of April. About 40 of the 150 walkers camped out on the floor of the Ethical Society Wednesday and Thursday nights, April 6-7. Friday morning, April 8, BES offered the entire group of 150 a breakfast of fresh bagels, cream cheese, fruit, pastries, coffee, orange juice and more. Many BES members helped out with generous donations of time and resources, including Maria who slept overnight on Wednesday and made two delicious egg casseroles that were nearly inhaled by the hungry marchers!

On their way to the U.S. Capitol to demand legislation to get big money out of politics, these marchers were facing great odds. Unpredictable weather, sore legs, and Spartan lodging options would challenge even the heartiest activist. Many will sit-in and risk arrest, including the Executive Director of the American Ethical Union, Bart Worden. An even more formidable obstacle, however, were the many interest groups that want the system to stay the same - those who are trying to protect the corrupt "pay to play" political system.



At the time of this writing, it is unclear whether the mainstream media will even notice this small band of protesters. Most of the limited national coverage has come from Fox News, which has mainly tried paint the march as a misdirected effort by fringe activists. During my overnight stay with them, however, I was impressed with the sensible and courageous common sense position of the walkers. Most were realistic

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SUNDAY PLATFORMS 10:30 a.m.

(details on pages 4-5)

MAY 1

"The Long Reach of Reason"

A TED Talk video by Steven Pinker and Rebecca Newberger Goldstein

MAY 8

"From Talk to Action: Part 4"

Diamonte Brown

Director, *Out for Justice*

Thomas Higdon

Chair, *Ethical Action Committee*

MAY 15

"Teaching Children About Climate Change Activism"

Lynne Cherry

Cofounder, *Young Voices on Climate Change*

MAY 22

"The Fragility of Goodness"

Hugh Taft-Morales

Ethical Leader

MAY 29

"Remembrance Sunday"

Hosted by Karen Elliott and Hugh Taft-Morales

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.



Ethical Education Throughout the Merry Month of May

The toddlers (1 and 2 year olds) with Ruth Schoonover and pre-K children (3 to 5 year olds) with Jill Gordon, will explore the theme of Feelings during the five Sundays in May. They will identify the feelings of storybook characters, act out different emotions through dramatic play and listen to different types of music to further understand the range of emotions.

In keeping with the core values of Humanistic living, the pre-teens (6-12 year olds) with the guidance of teacher Linda Joy Burke will continue exploring how to ask the right questions and being mindful: How do we work together? How do we respect each other and the planet? How do we listen? How do we form opinions regarding our own humanity? How do we use the power of critical thinking?

Each class will begin with a warm up activity that involves either music making, drumming and percussion or quiet movement (tai chi and yoga). We play the yes, no, maybe, or "I have no

idea what you're talking about" game - sometimes woven in with percussion and sometimes after quiet time. (This is an adaptation of a Golden Rule Curriculum (from AEU) called Wonder.

During the month of May, the children will continue to compare and contrast their experiences with young people from around the world through viewing and discussion of

videos of their peers' experiences ranging from what they do on a daily basis to what they have invented/created to make their communities better while learning about the intersection of human rights, environmental concerns and a mindful ethical approach to living.

Teens and their families can be involved in outdoor activities such as the Real Food Farm Volunteer Day (see details below); and scouting, hiking, and environmental events through the Navigators Baltimore Chapter 43: www.facebook.com/navigators-usa-chapter-43-baltimore-md-117313418453537. See Monique Stins for schedule.



VOLUNTEER DAY AT REAL FOOD FARM

Saturday, May 14, 9:00 a.m. at 2701 St. Lo Drive, Baltimore

Join Hugh for a Volunteer Day at Real Food Farm, an innovative urban agricultural enterprise in Clifton Park. Real Food Farm aims to improve neighborhood access to healthy food by growing produce and making it affordable to low-income customers.

We will meet in the parking lot south of the school. Sunday School families encouraged. When we end at noon, if there is enough interest we'll follow it up with a potluck picnic. Speak to Hugh if interested!

OTHER ACTIVITIES

Poetry Group

Sunday, May 1, 9:30 a.m.

Board Meeting

Sunday, May 1, 12:30 p.m.

Secular Humanist Seder

Sunday, May 1, 6:00 p.m.

Mindfulness Meditation

Sunday, May 8, 9:30 a.m.

Charm City Film Series

Wednesday, May 11, 6:30 p.m.

Volunteer at Real Food Farm

Saturday, May 14, 9:00 a.m.

Fourth Annual African American Children's Book Festival

Saturday, May 14, 12:00 p.m.

Ethical Action Meeting

Sunday, May 15, 12:45 p.m.

Family Board and

Card Games Party

Sunday, May 15, 3:00 p.m.

Newcomers Meeting

Sunday, May 22, 12:30 p.m.

Black Lives Matter Discussion

Sunday, May 22, 1:00 p.m.

Sunday Assembly Baltimore

Sunday, May 22, 2:00 p.m.

Memorial Day Weekend Picnic

Sunday, May 29, 12:00 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	May 1
G to L	May 8
M to R	May 15
S to Z	May 22



MAY 1

“The Long Reach of Reason”

A TED Talk video by Steven Pinker
and Rebecca Newberger Goldstein

TEDTalks presents an animated Socratic dialogue! In a time when irrationality seems to rule both politics and culture, has reasoned thinking finally lost its power? Watch as psychologist Steven Pinker is gradually, brilliantly persuaded by philosopher Rebecca Newberger Goldstein that reason is actually the key driver of human moral progress, even if its effect sometimes takes generations to unfold. The dialogue was recorded live at TED, and animated, in incredible, often hilarious, detail by Cognitive.

TEDTalks is a daily video podcast of the best talks and performances from the TED Conference, where the world's leading thinkers and doers give the talk of their lives in 18 minutes (or less). Look for talks on Technology, Entertainment and Design – plus science, business, global issues, the arts and much more.

MAY 8

“From Talk to Action: Part 4”

Diamonte Brown
Director, Out for Justice

Thomas Higdon
Chair, Ethical Action Committee

Ms. Diamonte Brown will lead a community conversation on action for justice. Issues will include empowerment of youth, opportunities for ex-offenders, and the worth and dignity of individuals (Black Lives Matter). Small group discussions will focus on approaches to solving these problems, with each group assigned a different topic.

Diamonte Brown is the Director of Out For Justice. Out For Justice is an ex-offender, member-led organization that promotes the reform of policies that adversely affect the ex-offender re-entering into society successfully. Out For Justice strives to change the perception of the ex-offender by promoting the 3 Es of Education, Empowerment, and Engagement.

Thomas Higdon is the Chair of the Ethical Action Committee, which coordinates the Society's social justice work in the community.

MAY 15

“Teaching Children About Climate Change Activism”

Lynne Cherry
Co-founder, Young Voices on Climate Change

Lynne Cherry will share her experiences with educating children, tomorrow's leaders, about the importance of protecting our natural environment.

Lynne Cherry is the founder and director of the non-profit Young Voices on Climate Change, an organization dedicated to helping the voices of environmentally-concerned young people be heard. Lynne is also a movie producer. Her Young Voices for the Planet short films feature youth success stories: California kids helping to get a ban on plastic bags; Florida students saving their school \$53,000 in energy costs; An 11-year old German boy planting a million trees... and many more. Cherry's books and movies are inspired by her love of the natural world. She speaks widely-and passionately about how children can make a difference. Learn more at www.youngvoicesonclimatechange.com.

MAY 22

“The Fragility of Goodness”

Hugh Taft-Morales
Ethical Leader

In her book *The Fragility of Goodness*, philosopher Martha Nussbaum explores the perils of trying to live ethically. Striving to be moral in an unpredictable world can be rewarding but also risky. Why does the quest for a good life make us vulnerable to being hurt? What is goodness, and how do we nurture it in ourselves? Why is living an ethical life worth the risk? Hugh Taft-Morales searches for answers to these questions and more.

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.

MAY 29

“Remembrance Sunday”

Hosted by Karen Elliott and Hugh Taft-Morales

Memorial Day Sunday offers BES members and guests a chance to celebrate people who have died but left us with gifts that enrich our lives. Whether the person was a family member or a historical figure, we owe so much to those no longer with us. We miss their living presence but take solace in the work, ideals, friendship, and love they offered to the world. In our quest to live more meaningful and ethical lives, we can turn to those who have gone before for inspiration, guidance and strength. During this platform program, members and guests will be offered a chance to honor someone important in their lives. It can be in honor of a relative, friend, mentor, or historical figure.

CALL FOR SUBMISSIONS

During 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. Please contact Greg Corbitt or any member of the Committee with your suggestions.

MEMORIAL DAY WEEKEND SUNDAY PICNIC

**Sunday, May 29, 12:00 p.m. at the home of
Dianne and Stuart Hirsch**

Join us for food, fun, and fellowship following the Sunday program which will end early at 11:30 a.m. Members Dianne and Stuart Hirsch have agreed to open their home to us again and so we will gather for our annual picnic from 12:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. The picnic is potluck so please bring a dish to contribute. Directions will be handed out and/or provided on request.



Gratitude for Democracy Spring

(continued from page 1)

about the chances of their efforts bearing fruit. But most just wanted to bring the issue more fully into the public debate. “What else can we do?” they asked.

A week earlier I spoke at the kick off rally in Philadelphia and I emphasized their effort was part of a long project to build a real democracy. I cited Benjamin Franklin who, at the end of the Constitutional Convention, was asked by a woman who called out to him asking, “Doctor, what have we got – a Republic or a Monarchy?” Supposedly Franklin replied, “A Republic, if you can keep it.”

Over two centuries later, with an incumbent reelection rate of 95%, we still have to ask ourselves the same question. We are still working to keep our republic. That’s why over 120 organizations, including the American Ethical Union, have endorsed the effort. Along with the marchers we are demanding that Congress take concrete steps to get money out of politics and ensure free and fair elections where everyone has an equal voice.

As I have argued before, democracy is not just a system of voting. It’s a way of life. The marchers who slept on our hard floors of the Baltimore Ethical Society are trying to live that life. They are putting their bodies on the line, many planning to risk arrest in D.C. for non-violent civil disobedience. I’ll admit that I am not sure Democracy Spring will succeed. But I am more convinced than ever of the heroic nature of this effort. Throughout their stay at BES, while drying their clothes or bandaging their blisters, the walkers and organizers thanked us profusely for our small show of support. After each “thank you,” I replied, “It’s the least we can do – *you’re* doing the hard work, like trying to change the nation!” I am glad BES could be a part of this grand project.

CHARM CITY

Film

SERIES

Wednesday, May 11,
6:30 p.m.

This month, the Charm City Film Series will be screening *'The Billionaires' Tea Party'*.

The Tea Party movement has taken American politics by storm. But is this truly a populist uprising or one of the greatest feats of propaganda ever seen? Seeking to find out, Australian filmmaker Taki Oldham embeds himself in the Tea Party uprising.

Weaving together commentary from propaganda experts and political insiders with unprecedented footage, *The Billionaires' Tea Party* follows astroturf groups Americans For Prosperity and Freedomworks coopting the Tea Party movement from day one. Witness hysterical scenes as a proposed Health Care bill is reframed as Soviet style 'socialised medicine'. Follow industry-funded spin doctors and scientists dismissing Obama's climate bill as a liberal conspiracy to control peoples lives and destroy the economy.

The film is free and open to the public. Donations are suggested.

BLACK LIVES MATTER DISCUSSION

Sunday, May 22, 1:00 p.m.

As a follow up to the April book discussion of *Between the World and Me*, by Ta-Nehisi Coates, Hugh Taft-Morales will lead a discussion of the Black Lives Matter movement on Sunday, May 22, from 1:00-2:30 p.m.

SUNDAY ASSEMBLY BALTIMORE

Sunday, May 22, 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 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.

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

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FOURTH ANNUAL AFRICAN AMERICAN CHILDREN'S BOOK FESTIVAL

Saturday, May 14, 12:00-4:00 pm

at the Lewis Museum, 830 E. Pratt St. (free admission)

A rare chance for children to experience the world of kids' literature focused on African Americans and people of other ethnicities. The event is fun-filled, while exposing children to their diverse world, and kids who look like them, through childrens' books and illustrations. Enjoy author readings, illustration workshops by illustrators, cultural performances, and craft activities. Purchase hard-to-find titles in the Book Village. Free children's books will be distributed while supplies last. Special guests include Ashlee Thomas, Miss Black Maryland USA 2016, and Tavon Mason, Former NFL New York Jets wide receiver. This program is presented in partnership with Baltimore City Schools and the Enoch Pratt Free Library. Free museum admission 12-4 pm. For all ages! RSVP and more information at <http://ur1.ca/ovedp>. If you are interested in attending, please see Argentine Craig or Emil Volcheck.

Turning Money into Ethical Action

(continued from page 2)

Stephen wants a venue to better inform the members about the Society finances. For example, many members may be unaware of our precarious financial situation. BES has been depending heavily on drawdowns from our capital reserves to cover expenses for the past many years, an unsustainable situation. The last several years, we have had to withdraw about \$10,000/year with an expectation that growing membership would add new members who would eventually contribute more financially. BES depends on the generosity our members to cover the costs of all our operations. But donations and pledges have fallen short of our needs. This coming year, we may be facing dramatic cuts unless this situation changes. By the end of May we will no longer have room 103. Although the room will be missed, it will help save us \$500/month (plus the cost of utilities). Even that savings will be far too little to make up for our expenses, which may run into a deficit of about \$20,000 this coming fiscal year 2016–2017.

The Chair has been filled by many important members through the years. Our current Treasurer, Karen, has been Chair, as well as President for 7 years, part of the pledge campaign, and Secretary for most of her time since she joined BES in 1993. She came to BES in 1992 looking for a Sunday School for her son, and a place for activists to

connect and renew. She was included on the Board almost immediately upon her joining BES. She hopes more people will contribute much more to help the Society eliminate deficits in our operations. In addition, she would like to encourage and see more people become more active and involved in the society to form a stronger and larger community of activists.

Both Dick and Judy Katz have also contributed much to BES efforts. Dick essentially married into Ethical Culture, but had little to do with it until he heard Howard B. Radest, PhD (1928–2014) speak, which inspired both him and Judy to join around 1980. At that time, there were about 10 active members. Often during these years, the Treasurer would function as the Chair. During the time Dick was President for 3 years, Judy was Treasurer. She held that position for 15 years, as well as serving as President.

For the two years prior to Stephen (2013–2015), I was asked by Emil Volcheck, then President, to Chair this committee. Perhaps my greatest contribution was seeing Stephen take Chair and Karen as Treasurer.

The financial strength of BES relies for the most part on the contributions of our members. And the FC functions to keep our community alive and functioning. Talk with our FC members to find out ways that you can contribute in time, talent and/or treasure.

SECULAR HUMANIST SEDER

**Sunday, May 1, 6:00 p.m.
at Prologue (3 Milford Mill
Road, Pikesville)**

The Baltimore Jewish Cultural Chavurah (BJCC) has invited BES to attend their annual Potluck Seder. Admission is free. This secular humanist seder will be led by David Saltzberg and will focus on Jewish history, culture and values. Please RSVP to Art Starr (410-833-8129 or adstarr@gmail.com) by April 29. Art will also talk to you about what food to bring; i.e., side dishes, desserts, drinks, etc.) If you can help set up, please arrive at 5:15. The seder will begin at 6:00.

FAMILY BOARD AND CARD GAMES PARTY

**Sunday, May 15, 3:00 p.m. at
the home of Marjeta Cedilnic**

Join members of the Baltimore Parenting Beyond Belief Meetup for a board and card games party. 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.

Address and directions provided when you RSVP: to do so or to have questions answered, please call 301-642-1065.

SOMEONE GETTING MARRIED?

We have a team of officiants who are trained and licensed to conduct weddings, memorials, and other life passage ceremonies. For more information, please contact our Officiant Team Coordinator at weddings@bmorethical.org.



BALTIMORE ETHICAL SOCIETY

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

NEWSLETTER

Please do not delay!

TIME VALUE

ETHICAL ACTION MEETING

Sunday, May 15, 12:45 p.m.

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

NEWCOMERS MEETING

Sunday, May 22, 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, May 8, 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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