

BESpeak

NOVEMBER 2016

NEWSLETTER OF THE BALTIMORE ETHICAL SOCIETY

The Importance of Reading

by Hugh Taft-Morales, BES Leader

Our Ethical Education program is flourishing, but we need to keep tending it. Thanks to the initiative and leadership of BES member Kim Knox, here's a great opportunity. This November we are holding a **Read-A-Thon** to upgrade our educational resources for our Tots-to-Teens program!

Young people in our community count on **you** to help raise donations so that we can purchase needed supplies. Pre-K Sunday School teacher Jill Gordon suggested that funds could buy: manipulative toys, such as Lincoln Logs and wooden beads; items for dramatic play like costumes, masks, stuffed animals, and a full-length mirror; and art supplies, such as paper, pastels, and poster board.

There are historical reasons for you to support the Read-A-Thon and our Ethical Education program. BES was born because our founders wanted an integrated Sunday School for their children. The *Baltimore Afro-American* newspaper headline announced the first such integrated school: "Bi-Racial Sunday School Assembly Formed Here." (October 6, 1951) One of the founders of BES, Pell Kangas, explained, "our children learned the lesson of true equality of all peoples."

Promoting reading is a particularly appropriate way to help BES keep teaching the lesson of equality. The person most responsible for promoting reading in Baltimore over the past decade, Dr. Carla Hayden, was just appointed the new Librarian of Congress. Under her leadership, while schools and businesses closed during



Dr. Carla Hayden, Librarian of Congress

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SUNDAY PLATFORMS

10:30 a.m.

(details on page 4)

NOVEMBER 6

Fall Family Festival

NOVEMBER 13

"Transgender Progress"

Hugh Taft-Morales
Ethical Leader

NOVEMBER 20

"Protecting East African Elephants"

Susie Needle
Education Volunteer,
The David Sheldrick Wildlife Trust

NOVEMBER 27

"The Ethics of Sports: The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly"

Hugh Taft-Morales
Ethical Leader

ETHICAL HUMANIST SUNDAY SCHOOL

Every Sunday

10:30 a.m. – Noon

Individualized programs for preschool children and school aged students.

TODDLER CARE

Separate supervision provided for children up to age two.



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Being Thankful

by Paul Furth, BES President

November is often associated with being thankful. This month, we as a country give thanks for the benefits (or dare I say blessings) we have received.

Over the past year, your Ethical Society has offered a plethora of programs, Sunday Platforms and socials to help create an ethical community predicated on actions to make the world, or at least a small part of it, a better place to live and thrive. And I'm certainly thankful for this community.

Although still in grieving, it's often difficult for me to be enthusiastically thankful this year. I feel I've lost much with the passing of my mom, and it's been a struggle for me psychologically to say goodbye and let her go. Such is the process of grieving. I continue to accept her passing as the pain lessens. Yet, I can also be thankful that I was able to share with her, and helped her during those last few years of her life. It was difficult to watch her slow deterioration, as it would be for anyone we love. I can look back upon my own denial and irrational hope for her recovery. Perhaps as a reciprocation of the love and time she gave all her children, I'm still grateful to have been able help her live a happier life.

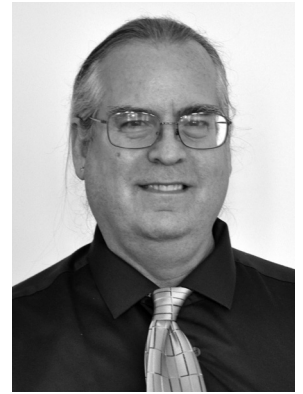
And the many friends I've made through our Society - yes, I am very grateful. Overcoming my own tendencies not to join organizations was an important step necessary to allow myself to open up to such a wide variety of people with a host of ideas and opinions. Feeling welcomed with such a group of free thinkers, where differences of ideas and opinions are freely shared, and civil discourse encouraged, is relatively new to me.

During my youth in Catholic high school, such free thinking was discouraged, especially by the Jesuits that were my teachers. Belonging to a group that rejects religious dogma, and pivots ethical actions and behaviors on helping our fellow human beings, rather than treating morals as a means to a prized afterlife, is quite refreshing. I am thankful.

While most of us may have much for which we can be truthfully thankful, there are many who do not. Baltimore, as in any large metropolitan, has a divide between those who have more than sufficient food and shelter to thrive and those who have barely enough to survive.

While we can be grateful and humbled by this situation of divergence between those who have and those who have less, and be sympathetic to those of us less fortunate, let's be thankful for what we have, keeping in mind the actions we can and will take to help bridge this divide.

So I call upon all our members to continue the good work our Society is doing, to get involved and make that goal of creating a more humane and ethical society a reality. Even if you may feel that you don't have much for which to be thankful, I call on you to open your heart and eyes, and feel and see just how much you have to be thankful. When you have family, or even a "family" in a welcoming community as ours, you have more than you may realize.



NAVIGATORS USA CHAPTER 43

The Baltimore Ethical Society is proud to sponsor Navigators USA Chapter 43. Navigators USA is an all-inclusive, co-ed, secular scouting group. The group meets regularly on the second and fourth Sunday's of each month.

November's program involves learning about refugees and from where they come. We will be making welcoming cards for families and collecting items for the Refugee Center in Baltimore. We also have two flex events this month. One will be to take an Underground Railroad Experience hike, and the other will be to see who and what remains in the park after the fall migrations.

If you are interested in joining Navigators please email baltimore Navigators@gmail.com for more information. Event details will be emailed to all members.

November's Ethical Education Program for Tots to Teens

The theme for November is "Gratitude and Generosity" and the Ethical Core Values are:

- Every person is important and unique;
- I am part of this earth;
- I cherish it and all the life upon it; and
- I am a member of the world community which depends upon cooperation of all people for peace and justice.

Facilitated by teachers Jill Gordon, Monica Cooper and Anita Brownstein.

READINGS include:

- "The Quiltmaker's Gift" (Jeff Brumbeau)
- "The Rainbow Fish" (Marcus Pfister)
- "In November" (Cynthia Rylant)
- "Stone Soup" (Jon J. Muth)
- "The Grateful Octopus"

ACTIVITIES: Watercolor painting, fabric collage, rainbow fish scales, making snacks. Dramatic play, drawings, poster making, questioning, discussing, listening.

SPECIAL 4TH SUNDAY SESSION (November 27): The language and culture of Spanish speaking people.

ALL BES TEENS: CONTACT Tevis Tsai (systemicerror@gmail.com) for participation in activities and events of your interests, curiosities, wonder, explorations.



OTHER ACTIVITIES

Poetry Group

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

BES Eatery Social

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

Charm City Film Series

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

Mindfulness Meditation

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

Board Meeting

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

Ethical Action Meeting

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

Program Committee Meeting

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

Newcomers Meeting

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

SUNDAY SNACK SCHEDULE

All are invited to bring snacks for our coffee hour following platform. Snacks are especially welcome from those whose last names start with:

A to F	November 6
G to L	November 13
M to R	November 20
S to Z	November 27



DON'T FORGET TO CHANGE YOUR CLOCK!

Daylight Saving Time will be ending on Sunday, November 6, at 2:00 a.m. Remember to set your clocks back so you won't be too early for platform!

SUNDAY PLATFORM PROGRAMS

NOVEMBER 6

Fall Family Festival

BES comes together in community to share gratitude for all of the things we are fortunate to have in this celebration for all ages. Together we enjoy a modified version of the Stone Soup story, putting together a Stone Salad as the story is told.

Bring something to add to our traditional and always delicious Stone Salad, or something to accompany it. Hot cider and the usual coffee and tea will be provided.

NOVEMBER 13

“Transgender Progress”

Hugh Taft-Morales

Ethical Leader

Despite deep-rooted bigotry toward transgender individuals, over the last decade there has also been remarkable progress toward fuller rights, respect, and visibility for those who don't identify with the gender identity assigned to them at birth. Hugh Taft-Morales, a cis-gendered heterosexual, explores his own path toward fuller appreciation of the challenges for the transgender community. What can Ethical Culturists and humanists do to better defend the rights of transgender individuals? What should we most remember on November 20, 2016, the Transgender Day of Remembrance? (Note: Mark your calendar for this day of remembrance on November 20 at First Unitarian – doors open at 6:00 p.m.)

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.

NOVEMBER 20

“Protecting East African Elephants”

Susie Needle

Education Volunteer, The David Sheldrick Wildlife Trust

The David Sheldrick Wildlife Trust is the most successful orphan-elephant rescue and rehabilitation program in the world and one of the pioneering conservation organizations for wildlife and habitat protection in East Africa. Its activities include anti-poaching, safe guarding the natural environment, enhancing community awareness, addressing animal welfare issues, providing veterinary assistance to animals in need, rescuing and hand rearing elephant and rhino orphans, along with other species that can ultimately enjoy a quality of life in wild terms when grown.

At the heart of the DSWT's conservation activities is the Orphans' Project, which has achieved world-wide acclaim through its hugely successful elephant and rhino rescue and rehabilitation program. The Orphans' Project exists to offer hope for the future of Kenya's threatened elephant and rhino populations as they struggle against the threat of poaching for their ivory and horn, and the loss of habitat due to human population pressures and conflict, deforestation and drought.

NOVEMBER 27

“The Ethics of Sports: The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly”

Hugh Taft-Morales

Ethical Leader

As a life-long sports fan, Hugh Taft-Morales is challenged to address the many ethical issues that arise around athletics in the United States. His experience playing football, hockey, and lacrosse, led him to believe that it all helped him effectively channel his aggression. But is this just an excuse to justify his *current* habit of watching sports? Are some sports less ethical than others? What are the greatest ethical issues surrounding sports: The violence? The abuse of college athletes as a tool for raising revenue? The diversion of resources away from more important priorities such as the health and education of our children? What's wrong with being a fanatical sports fan?



PROGRAM COMMITTEE MEETING

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

Join the Program Committee and help choose speakers for our Sunday morning meetings! Visitors are also welcome to provide thoughts and speaker suggestions, or to just listen. The Program Committee meets monthly on fourth Sundays.

Put Deed Before Creed with the Ethical Action Committee

After gaining input this summer from the Society's membership, the Ethical Action Committee is excited to announce our 2016-17 action plan.

We will continue our work within BUILD - Baltimoreans United in Leadership Development (www.buildiaf.org) to improve housing, increase job opportunities, and rebuild schools and neighborhoods in our city. BUILD is a broad-based, non-partisan, interfaith, multiracial community power organization rooted in Baltimore's neighborhoods and congregations.

We will also continue our partnership with Out for Justice (www.out4justice.org) to address systemic racism in the criminal justice system. OFJ is an ex-offender, member led organization that promotes policy reform of policies that adversely affect

the ex-offender re-entering into society successfully.

In addition to these ongoing partnerships, we will organize events and actions around three priority issues: campaign finance reform, death with dignity, and fracking in Maryland.

Finally, we will also track three other important issues and keep the Society's membership informed of any developments. These issues are homelessness in Baltimore, living wage, and voter registration opportunities.

This is the committee's most ambitious plan in recent memory, but we cannot put it into action without your help. We need volunteers to work with our partners, organize events, and track issues. Please contact Thomas Higdon, Ethical Action Chair, to discuss ways to get involved. His email is higdon.thomas@gmail.com.

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 at weddings@bmoreethical.org.

CHARM CITY

Film

SERIES

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

This month, the Charm City Film Series will be screening *Neurotypical*.

Neurotypical is a rare film among documentaries about autism. It relates the experiences of this neurological condition from the point of view of autistics themselves. Via the worlds of 4-year-old Violet, teenager Nicholas and middle-aged wife and mother Paula, the film recounts the challenges they face living among "normal" people.

But the film goes further, revealing the wide spectrum of autism and the creative adaptations people use to "pass" in the normal world. It throws a searching, often comic light on what defines the "normal" mind and calls attention to the subject of neurodiversity as an urgent and multi-layered issue within the 21st-century civil rights debate.

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.

The Importance of Reading

(continued from page 1)

the Freddie Gray unrest last year, she bravely kept the Enoch Pratt Library system open as an oasis of safety.

At her swearing in last month as the first woman and the first black to head the Library of Congress, Dr. Hayden said that, “people of my race were once punished with lashes and worse for learning to read.” She pointed out that it was historic “as a descendant of people who were denied the right to read” she taking the helm of “the national symbol of knowledge.”

Let’s celebrate the importance of reading – in both our history and for our children today. Please generously support the Read-A-Thon! Look for more information on how to get involved.

BES EATERY SOCIAL

Sunday, November 6,
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. We will walk or carpool to a nearby restaurant and enjoy the ancient tradition of breaking bread together.

An email will go out on the preceding Sunday with the name of the restaurant. Suggestions are welcome! If you have any questions, please contact Mav Vaughan at mav.vaughan@gmail.com.

BERNIE SANDERS TO SPEAK AT JOHNS HOPKINS AS PART OF MSE SYMPOSIUM

Thursday, November 17, 7:00 p.m. at JHU’s Shriver Hall

U.S. senator and former Democratic presidential candidate Bernie Sanders will visit Johns Hopkins University next month as part of the annual Milton S. Eisenhower Symposium speaker series.

Sanders will speak on campus on Nov. 17, according to *The News-Letter*, JHU’s campus newspaper. The event, co-hosted by JHU’s student-run Foreign Affairs Symposium, will begin at 7:00 p.m. at JHU’s Shriver Hall on the Homewood campus. It is free and open to the public.

Established in 1967, the MSE Symposium is a lecture series entirely run by Hopkins’ undergraduates. These fall semester events present issues of local, national and global importance to the university and surrounding communities. Notable past speakers include Jesse Jackson, Tyra Banks, and the late Maya Angelou.

DON’T FORGET TO VOTE!

Make your voice heard on November 8 ... Every Vote Counts!

Voting is one of the most important rights and responsibilities that U.S. citizens have. Don’t give up on a chance to choose leaders and representatives who will do things that are important to you!

BRIDGING THE DIVIDE BETWEEN HUMANISM AND FEMINISM

Sunday, November 20, 2:00 p.m. at Washington Ethical Society

The American Humanist Association (AHA) and Washington Ethical Society (WES) co-sponsor “Bridging the Divide Between Humanism and Feminism” led by Sandra Kim, Founder and Executive Director of Everyday Feminism.

The program focuses on the fact that while humanism and feminism share many overlapping values, each have their own distinct histories and movements and both have been smeared by dominant society. This has left many humanists with either a lack of interest or understanding of how feminism, particularly intersectional feminism, can strengthen and deepen their social justice analysis. Sandra Kim will highlight some of the common factors in this division and how to bridge the two so humanists are better equipped to work for a more just world.

This event will have ample Q&A and discussion time after the presentations. We hope that you can make it!

Spook-tacular Fun at BES Boo!





BALTIMORE ETHICAL SOCIETY

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

NEWSLETTER

Please do not delay!

TIME VALUE

ETHICAL ACTION MEETING

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

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

NEWCOMERS MEETING

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

New to the Society and interested in learning more? Come to the Newcomers Meeting, held following the last Sunday Platform of every month, and find out more about Ethical Culture and our Society – its history, its philosophy, and its organization. Meetings last about one hour and are recommended for anyone who's curious about membership. Please attend at least one Platform before going to a Newcomers Meeting. Contact Wayne Laufert or Janey Solwold for more information.

MINDFULNESS

meditation

Sunday, November 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.

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