

BESpeak

DECEMBER 2016

NEWSLETTER OF THE BALTIMORE ETHICAL SOCIETY

Coming to Grip with Trump Times

by Hugh Taft-Morales, BES Leader

Writing this Leader's column so soon after a stunning election result is challenging. The vast majority of Ethical Culturists had hoped for a different outcome. For a community that embraces the inherent worth of every person, it is hard to confront the fact that our President-Elect leveraged his way into the White house using bigotry, misogyny, and fear of "the other." For a community that tries to use reason and create relationships to build our future, it is hard to accept Trump's effective use of rabid emotional appeals and tribalism.

As I struggle to process it all personally, I am called to be steady as the Leader of your Ethical Society. It's metaphorically like I'm driving our community bus through a storm, trying to move us down the road of progress, but feeling like I want to pull over and wait it out. Sadness, anger, denial, and confusion swirl around, splattering like heavy rain upon my windshield. They make it very hard to see the road in front of me. Besides, the shock of it all makes me wonder if our nation has taken a wrong turn. Who knows what hairpin turns, steep ravines, and closed bridges lie ahead?

It's also challenging because this column will be published three weeks after I submit it, and that seems a long way off right now. By then we will all have read and heard thousands of words of explanation, consolation, and calls to action. I probably will have already shared with you - through emails, phone calls, and in person - advice that will go beyond the words I write now.

In the next weeks I will have read and listened to the words of others, gaining valuable inspiration and a better map for moving forward. Certainly, hearing over the next weeks from so many of you, the members of Ethical Culture, will educate me the most. Already I appreciate the diversity of our reactions, from those who have given up all hope to those calling on us all to redouble our efforts to make a better world. There is no single way to process the beginning of Trump times, though I hope that when the immediate squall of feelings subsides we will meet



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SUNDAY PLATFORMS

10:30 a.m.

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DECEMBER 4

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"Pre-trial Detention in Maryland Due for Reform"

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"Meaning-Making in 21st Century Western Culture"

Margaret Placentra Johnston

Optometrist and Author

DECEMBER 25

Winter Festival

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

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The Challenge is Yours to Take

by *Paul Furth, BES President*



Stunned. That's how I felt after the 2016 Presidential election. We're a nonpartisan fellowship of free-thinkers. Regardless of how you voted, please continue to feel free to express your opinions about any candidate, as I'm doing here. Civil discourse is the foundation of our democracy and Ethical Culture.

And there are plenty of reasons why neither of the major party presidential candidates should have received the nomination. What's most important is that you voted.

The 2016 election is history. My opinions may change as the newly elected president prepares to take the helm of this country. But these early days have only strengthened my concerns about his misogynistic and bigoted actions.

Many of us who expected to welcome the first woman US President experienced a considerable amount of emotions, including disappointment, anger, fear, frustration, disillusionment, sadness, darkness, pain. The results of this election are nightmarish. Memories of the 2000 Presidential election come to mind when the less popular candidate won the election, and the ensuing years brought the worst terrorist attack upon US soil resulting in a poorly executed and wasteful war in Afghanistan, and an unjust preemptive war in Iraq that obliterated the US economy and countless lives, leading the US into the practice of torture. History seems ready to repeat, sixteen years later.

Hugh gave uplifting messages to help us through this period. I wish I honestly could relay to you such encouraging words. At this time, it's not in my heart. My first inclination was to pack up and move to a country whose democracy I can be proud about, where the concerns of the people are heard, the rights of the minority are protected and the candidate with the most votes win. But I also recognize that running away or hiding is the worst strategy, and it'll accomplish nothing but to allow this country's cancer to fester. We are members of the Baltimore Ethical Society, dammit, and we can rise above the wallowing of self pity that simply degrades humanity and self respect.

The next few years will be hard and painful, but our country will prevail. If I may predict, bearing in mind how incorrectly I predicted the Republican president nomination, I expect that the ACA (aka Obamacare) will disappear with no replacement, coal and oil use in this country will increase dramatically while all efforts to stop climate change will be obliterated, freedom of and from religion will be curtailed so that a national Christian religion and Creationism taught as science are pushed, anti-choice Supreme Court Justices will be placed to overturn legal protection of abortion and civil rights, Planned Parenthood will be stripped of federal funding which will hinder many women's ability to get healthcare, white supremacists will feel emboldened to do ever increasing violence, the Iran nuclear disarmament treaty will be in tatters, the bloated military budget will increase thus driving up the prob-

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Tots-to-Teens with Love... In December

Love is the theme for December buttressed by the ethical core value: *Every person is important and unique*, and “I” statement: I am a member of the world community which depends on the cooperation of all people for peace and justice.

Books, activities, movement, songs, crafts, snacking and Winter Festival Events will engage the BES Tots to Teens:

- Guess How Much I Love You (Sam McBrantney)
- Daddy Makes the Best Spaghetti (Anna G. Hines)
- The Giving Tree (Shel Silverstein)
- The Kissing Hand (Audrey Penn)
- Special Spanish Cultural/Religious Lesson of the Season

ALSO: Participating with BES Parents and Members in Winter events:

- NAVIGATORS, USA
- Winter Solstice
- Hanukkah
- Christmas
- Boxing Day
- New Year’s Eve
- Kwanzaa Celebration at the Reginald Lewis Museum



OTHER ACTIVITIES

Poetry Group

Sunday, December 4, 9:30 a.m.

BES Eatery Social

Sunday, December 4, 1:00 p.m.

Mindfulness Meditation

Sunday, December 11, 9:30 a.m.

Board Meeting

Sunday, December 11, 12:30 p.m.

Ethical Action Meeting

Sunday, December 18, 12:45 p.m.

Newcomers Meeting

Sunday, December 18, 12:30 p.m.

HumanLight Party and Potluck Dinner

Friday, December 23, 7:00 p.m.

Program Committee Meeting

Sunday, December 25, 12:30 p.m.

Celebrate Kwanzaa at the Lewis Museum

Saturday, December 30, 12:00 p.m.

JOB OPENING: PRE-TEEN TEACHER

The Pre-Teen Teacher engages children in the age group of 6-12 years and uses an approved ethical education values curriculum which includes activities such as music, art, games, songs, stories, field trips – all with the objective to help children develop social skills and an understanding in the area of humanistic values and behaviors.

QUALIFICATIONS sought are:

- pre-teen teaching experience to facilitate a curriculum of ethical values and activities
- post-secondary education/training
- BA degree in the Humanities, Social Sciences or Education

EMPLOYMENT TERMS:

- Hours: 10am – 1pm every Sunday at the rate of \$25 per hour, for a total of \$75 per Sun.
- Position begins on Sunday, January 1, 2017 and continues through the end of May 2017.

If interested, please send an email by December 1 describing experience, qualifications, availability, and interest for a telephone interview to: Argentine S. Craig, Ph.D. at ascraig@comcast.net.

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	December 4
G to L	December 11
M to R	December 18
S to Z	December 25



SUNDAY PLATFORM PROGRAMS

DECEMBER 4

“Who Gets to Decide How You Will Die?”

Barbara Mancini

Compassion & Choices National Speakers Bureau

Barbara Mancini's 93 year old father prepared for the end of life with an advanced directive, a healthcare proxy and a hospice. Yet he was subjected to unwanted medical treatment in defiance of his wishes. His daughter endured a prolonged criminal prosecution for “aiding an attempted suicide.” Her case sparked outrage and condemnation in the media and was ultimately dismissed. She has spoken widely about her case in over 90 events in seventeen states. She has done numerous radio and television interviews, including NPR radio productions and a widely broadcast interview on CBS's 60 Minutes with Anderson Cooper. She has met with legislators to discuss end-of-life choice and has provided testimony at legislative committee hearings.

Barbara will show how dying can be fraught with unanticipated perils for the person and caregivers. Vaguely-worded criminal statutes and perverse incentives are some of the factors that may confront well-intentioned families in caring for their loved ones.

Barbara Mancini has been a nurse for over 30 years. She has a master's degree in burn, emergency, and trauma nursing, and has spent most of her career in emergency nursing. Her nursing experience includes working with Native Americans for the Indian Health Service on Pine Ridge Reservation in South Dakota in the early 1990's. She was born and raised in Pottsville, Pennsylvania. She lives in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania with her husband, Joe, and their two daughters.

DECEMBER 11

“Pre-trial Detention in Maryland Due for Reform”

Tara Andrews Huffman

*Director, Criminal and Juvenile Justice Program,
Open Society Institute-Baltimore*

Many citizens who pose no threat to society spend prolonged periods in prisons awaiting trial without seeing a judge, particularly those who cannot afford bail. Excessive use of pre-trial detention is destructive to families and may increase costs of criminal justice systems as a whole. Innovative reform pro-

posals will be a hot topic in the Maryland General Assembly this year.

Tara Andrews Huffman, Esq. is the Director of the Criminal and Juvenile Justice Program, Open Society Institute-Baltimore. Previously, Huffman provided coaching and consulting services to non-profit leaders and organizations—including to the Greater Baltimore Grassroots Criminal Justice Network. Before that, she served for five years as the Deputy Director for Policy and Programs at the Coalition for Juvenile Justice in Washington, D.C. There, she managed a project to advocate for national standards to reduce incarceration and criminalization of juvenile status offenders. Active in the community, Huffman has a deep commitment to reforming policies and practices that contribute to racial disparities, an over-reliance on incarceration, blocked opportunities, and unrealized potential.

DECEMBER 18

“Meaning-Making in 21st Century Western Culture”

Margaret Placentra Johnston

Optometrist and Author

Margaret Placentra Johnston is the author of the award-winning book *Faith Beyond Belief: Stories of Good People Who Left Their Church Behind*. The topic of spiritual development theory is just one aspect of a new perspective emerging in our culture regarding religious belief and spirituality. The beliefs on which traditional religions were formed are losing credibility due to cultural changes. This challenges us to consider a more comprehensive appreciation of the timeless and universal human drive to find meaning and hope in the 21st century. The author will introduce concepts from her forthcoming book, *Rx for Spiritual Myopia: an Eye Doctor's Prescription for Seeing Beyond the Societal Ills of Our Time*.

As a practicing Optometrist, **Dr. Margaret Placentra Johnston** has spent most of her professional career helping people see better in the physical world. But now she is on a new mission to offer clearer vision of a different kind – a broader perspective about religion and spirituality than what the conventional world typically recognizes.

DECEMBER 25

Winter Festival

PROGRAM COMMITTEE MEETING

Sunday, December 25, 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.

HumanLight Celebration and Potluck Dinner

Friday, December 23, 7:00-10:00 pm

Please join us to celebrate HumanLight with the Baltimore Coalition of Reason on

Friday, December 23.

HumanLight is a celebration of the winter season conceived by the New Jersey Humanist Network as a humanist or secu-

lar alternative to traditional religious celebrations. HumanLight features music and the lighting of three candles celebrating Reason, Compassion, and Hope. HumanLight was first celebrated in 2001 in New Jersey and has since spread throughout the country. This year is the seventh celebration of HumanLight by the Baltimore Coa-

lition of Reason. To learn more, visit the HumanLight website at www.HumanLight.org.

This year we are celebrating HumanLight at BES. We will have a potluck dinner and desserts, music, and the candle lighting. This is a fami-

ly-friendly event, and children are welcome.

Please tell us you're coming (RSVP) and tell us what food you'd like to bring. Sign up for the potluck dinner here: <http://goo.gl/KZ3rov>. If you can't access the Google Doc, then email BmoreCoR@gmail.com or call 443-267-8585.



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 Merrill, at weddings@bmoreethical.org.



CELEBRATE KWANZAA

Saturday, December 30,
12:00 – 2:00 pm,

at the Reginald F. Lewis
Museum, 830 E. Pratt Street

Bring out the family to celebrate the holiday's 50th anniversary and the Kwanzaa principle Nia ("Purpose"). Enjoy storytelling, African dancing and drumming by Sankofa Dance Theater. Sallah Jenkins leads holiday craft-making. Travel with teaching artist Culture Queen through Culture Kingdom Kids' Kwanzaaland to explore the seven Kwanzaa principles at workshop stations.

Special admission \$5.00. More details and registration (RSVP) at lewismuseum.org/event/2016/50th-anniversary-of-kwanzaa-celebration and www.eventbrite.com/e/50th-anniversary-of-kwanzaa-celebration-registration-27360012534. A parking garage is opposite the museum across Pratt Street.

Coming to Grip with Trump Times

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where people seek the highest.

In the last months of her campaign, Hillary Clinton echoed Michelle Obama's refrain, "When your opponent goes low, we go high." While she at times played rough politics, in her concession speech she was dignified and respectful. She asked us all to try to heal the nation and build a better future. She did not put herself in the center, stressing that, "Our campaign was never about one person or even one election, it was about the country we love and about building an America that's hopeful, inclusive and big-hearted."

"Hopeful, inclusive and big-hearted" - with so much hateful rhetoric still in the air, that's a tall order for us, right now. But I do believe it's a big part of how we need to be. It's one way that we can try to bring out our best. If we allow our wounds to fester, leading us to spew the hateful rhetoric used too often during this campaign, we could lose our moral center. And, pragmatically, we will lose whatever chance we have of influencing those soon to be in control of the executive branch.

Hillary is not naïve. She knows how destructive hate can be. So, within her realistic pragmatism, she makes room for hope. As she counsels us, "Donald Trump is going to be our president. We owe him an open mind and the chance to lead." Should we take her noble advice? It might even be pragmatic advice - Trump is, after all, wildly unpredictable. Who knows what he will do.

But, if we do manage to muster up hope, inclusivity, and a big-heart, let us not be fools. We must get our

best activist selves up off the floor and back to work. We must also be ready to speak truth to power should Trump try to honor his more horrific campaign promises. We cannot let him violate the Constitution. We must defend equal protection under law, and the basic civil liberties of freedom of conscience, press, and assembly. Personally, I intend to support more robustly an organization Ethical Culturists helped found a century ago: the American Civil Liberties Union. Channel your energy into the causes that you believe are most important in these Trump times.

What I most fear over the next four years is the erosion of our freedom of speech and press. President-Elect Trump has shown a remarkable disdain for this freedom. He intimidated and threatened reporters trying to do their job. While he has lied outright, he condemns those who disagree with his version of the truth. Down that road lies dictatorship. We can hope that this wildly unpredictable person somehow allows the better angels of his nature to guide him, but we must be vigilant, defending our right to free speech.

Before concluding this column, I want to offer some perspective involving privilege. Trump's presidency threatens me, but I am sheltered by a comfortable life and adequate resources. If you, like me, are so lucky, let us never forget others less privileged, including some of our members. Trump times could well bring greater racism and oppression manifest in the militarization of law enforcement and the prison-industrial complex. Many may lose their new-

found Affordable Care Act health coverage. Many fear harassment or deportation.

So for those of us who can avoid these immediate dangers, let's **not** use our privilege to escape Trump times, to another country or into cynical self-concern. Let's stay engaged and use our privilege to change a system of privilege run amok. Those feeling economically squeezed - many of whom voted for Trump - are justifiably angry with Wall Street. Something's not working for every one other than the super rich. Poor and middle class white men are not wrong that life has gotten harder for them.

Those of us relatively comfortable must help fix the system for the good of the 99%, especially the most marginalized: the poor, many women, and poor people of color. We must work in broad coalitions to bring out the best in our country. Let's put pressure on the future Trump administration. They must know we are watching. We cannot let them use their "mandate" to justify illegal activities and blatant cruelty.

I will do my best to drive our community bus through this storm. I will try to pull over only temporarily when we risk losing our way. But we should not stay on the shoulder simply because it's easier. In hopes of rallying us all to the cause, I leave you some final words from Clinton's concession speech: "...let us have faith in each other, let us not grow weary, let us not lose heart, for there are more seasons to come. And there is more work to do."

There is certainly more work to do.

BES EATERY SOCIAL

**Sunday, December 4,
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.

Everyone is encouraged to wear their BES shirts or other items to help promote the society.

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.

A NOTE FROM YOUR LEADER

Thanks to the marvels of modern medicine, Hugh Taft-Morales hopes to be up and walking, dancing and doing yoga. Two hip replacement surgeries will greatly reduce his availability for Ethical Culture work during the months of December-February, though he does hope to make a visit or two during January. Thanks to all you who volunteer to fill in for me regarding various duties!

The Challenge is Yours to Take

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ability of war, and war will be the distraction needed when citizens begin to get restless about the deteriorating economy and infrastructure... a very bleak picture if the president-elect keeps many of his most spoken campaign promises.

Considering the contempt this president-elect has shown to the press and journalists, I expect his administration to be the most opaque and corrupt since Harding while the freedom of the press is severely curtailed.

The president-elect will have to prove himself better than he presented himself, and I'll happily applaud if he does. I hope my concerns will turn out to be unfounded. After all, many politicians say things simply to get elected. That the Republican nominee's positions changed so quickly concerns me more than if he held consistent positions. He promised to default on US bonds to deal with the debt only to temper that statement later, he told Chris Matthews that a woman who has an abortion should be punished

only to walk it back, for example. His mocking of the disabled and former POW Senator John McCain were childish at best. How do we find hope that someone who seems so devoid of convictions and ethics will rise to a higher standard for the protection of all citizens?

So I challenge each and every one of you, myself including, to use this situation, and take your feelings, all of them, the disappointment, the anger, the fear, the frustration, the disillusionment, the sadness, the darkness, the pain and whatever else you may be feeling, to use these feelings to make a positive change. We have a community with BES, yes. BES is also a vehicle for action. Let's make the action that will prepare and protect many of the civil rights, social justice and safety nets for the poor that may disappear. I challenge you to get involved, more involved with BES. We the people have the ability to address and solve any problems created over the next four years, if we prepare. Let's do it!

DID YOU KNOW? BES HAS A MEETUP GROUP!

There is a listing of all our platforms; member sponsored events and social activities. The BES Meetup helps people do more of what they love with community members. BES Meetup helps us build a healthy community focused ethical culture. Cannot attend a platform, check out bmorethical Meetup for all upcoming events.

There is no cost to join the site, and it is the easy way to RSVP to an event, get directions or arrange car pools. Together we can create meaningful events, make friends and learn teach and share ethical culture.

See our BES site at bmorethical.org or go to www.meetup.com/bmorethical. Questions? Email Mary B at Marybethsodus@gmail.com, or via Meetup.



BALTIMORE ETHICAL SOCIETY

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

NEWSLETTER

Please do not delay!

TIME VALUE

ETHICAL ACTION MEETING

Sunday, December 18, 12:45 p.m.

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

NEWCOMERS MEETING

Sunday, December 18, 12:30 p.m.

New to the Society and interested in learning more? Come to the Newcomers meeting, normally held the last Sunday of the month (but a week early this 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 this meeting. Contact Wayne Laufert or Janey Solwold for more information.

MINDFULNESS

meditation

Sunday, December 11, 9:30 a.m.

Mindfulness is a tool we can use in our daily lives to act in a more ethical way. We practice mindfulness meditation so that it comes naturally in stressful times. Join us as we sit (on chairs) and breathe (just the way it comes naturally) and listen to the words of Thich Nhat Hanh, one of the world's best-known teachers of mindfulness.

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

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