

BESpeak

JANUARY 2017

NEWSLETTER OF THE BALTIMORE ETHICAL SOCIETY

Hugh Visits “Turn Around Tuesday”

by Hugh Taft-Morales, BES Leader

On Tuesday, October 25th, I attended a two-hour session of *Turn Around Tuesday* (TAT), a project supported by our interfaith coalition, Baltimoreans United in Leadership Development (BUILD). *Turn Around Tuesday* is a big part of BUILD’s commitment to job creation, just part of an overall effort to nurture a healthy and just Baltimore. *Turn Around Tuesday*’s mission is “to build new pathways in the lives of ‘returning’ and unemployed citizens to reenter the workforce through training and the development of public relationships to create safe, thriving communities.” I was inspired by what I saw during my visit.

What impressed me most was the commitment and leadership of the TAT staffers who run the show at the west Baltimore site for *Turn Around Tuesday* at Macedonia Baptist Church on W. Lafayette. They included Terrell Williams, Melvin Wilson, Cheryl Finney, and Gwen Brown, all of whom led part of the program while also prompting everyone to share their ideas and questions.

There were about fifty attendees, about two-thirds of who were looking for jobs. Perhaps half of them were first time attendees. Many were simply down on their luck, caught between some bad personal decisions and a system that offers few options. Some were more severely wounded, and seemed to thirst for a caring, personal oasis in which to heal. TAT served as that oasis for many.

Terrell Williams, a TAT staffer I have met many times at BUILD Clergy Caucus,

said that TAT offered those who were ready a transformative opportunity to grow beyond their suffering. He encouraged attendees to make “your pain your purpose.” By sharing your pain through personal narrative, Terrell

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SUNDAY PLATFORMS 10:30 a.m.

(details on pages 4–5)

JANUARY 1

“Healthy 2017 Demo and Lunch”

Marjorie Roswell
HealthyCampaign.org

JANUARY 8

“Solutions to Baltimore’s Eviction Crisis, Community Land Trusts, and Affordable Housing Requirements in Developments such as Port Covington”

John Nethercut
Executive Director,
The Public Justice Center

JANUARY 15

“Seeking Guidance in the Words and Deeds of King for the Era of Trump”

E.R. Shipp
School of Global Journalism & Communication, Morgan State University

JANUARY 22

“Community Solar – Solar Is for Everyone”

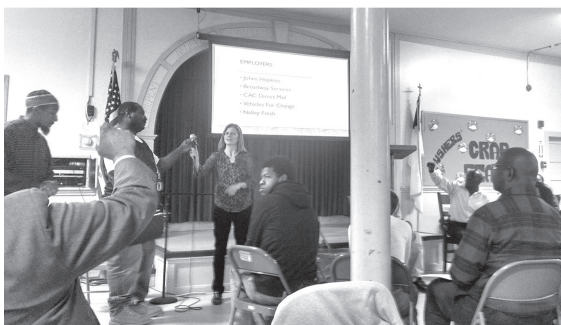
Gary Skulnik
Founder & President, Community Solar

JANUARY 29

“The First Amendment and President Trump”

Hugh Taft Morales
Ethical Leader

All programs are free and open to the public.



Ethical Education As We Begin the New Year

As we begin the new year with six Pre-K and nine Pre-Teen registered children in the BES Tots-to-Teens Ethical Education Program, facilitated by three experienced teachers and toddler Care staff (Jill Gordon, Monica Cooper, Anita Brownstein and Ruth Schoonover, respectively) we are guided and supported by the BES/Ethical Education Committee: Argentine Craig (Chairperson), Pat Denholm, Brian Dorsey, Kim Knox, Maya Kosok, Matthew Milstead, Max Romano, Monique Stins, Tevis Tsai and ex-officios Paul Furth and Hugh Taft-Morales.

We continue with lessons from the Ethical Education Curriculum that concentrates on learning through multifaceted educational theories, concepts and models. Lessons align with the ethical core val-

ues for humanistic living, drawn from a variety of multicultural sources.

The Ethical Education Program Theme for January is **Winter Wonder** and the core value statement is **I learn from the world around by using my senses, my mind and my feelings.**

This month, we will launch a "Read-a-Thon" project which will be coordinated by EEC member Kim Knox in collaboration with teachers Jill, Monica and Anita.

Among the story books that the Pre-K children (3-5 years) will listen to and learn from during January are:

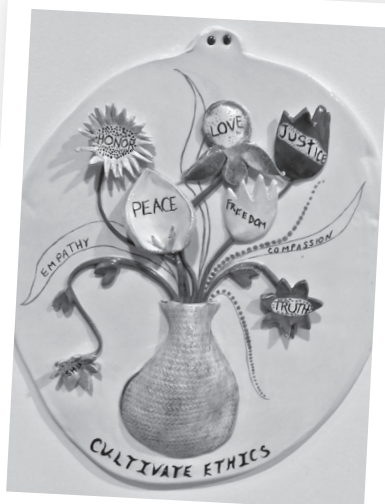
- *The Snowy Day* (Ezra Jack Keats)
- *The Mitten* (Jan Brett)
- *Snowballs* (Lois Ehlert)
- *Poppleton in Winter* (Cynthia Rylant)

During this New Year, several themes for the 6-12 year olds will be addressed in keeping with the core values for humanistic living: How do we work together? How

do we respect each other and the planet? We will also participate in student-centered drama and improv; games that challenge the imagination and allow for involvement across age groups to work together; "Wonder" (AEU Golden Rule curriculum adaptation).

Our Pre-Teen students will continue to compare and contrast their experiences with young people from around the world through songs, stories, dance/movement and through viewing and discussion of videos of their peers' experiences,

We also look forward in 2017 to our Teens' sharing of their creative talents, youthful perspectives and current interests during the Sunday Platform sessions.



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.

OTHER ACTIVITIES

Poetry Group

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

Visit to the Rawlings Conservatory

Sunday, January 1, 1:30 p.m.

Mindfulness Meditation

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

Board Meeting

Sunday, January 8, 12:30 p.m.

Charm City Film Series

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

Ethical Action Meeting

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

Program Committee Meeting

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

Newcomers Meeting

Sunday, January 29, 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	January 8
G to L	January 15
M to R	January 22
S to Z	January 29



SUNDAY PLATFORM PROGRAMS

JANUARY 1

“Healthy 2017 Demo and Lunch”

Marjorie Roswell

HealthyCampaign.org

Celebrate New Year's Day with ethical society friends and family! And start the New Year with your health resolutions intact! We begin with a healthy cooking demonstration by Margie Roswell (and you). Sign up to bring at least one plant-based ingredient at <http://tinyurl.com/healthy2017>. Feel free to bring a short blurb about your ingredient. (If you don't sign up, you may still attend, but advance signup and ingredient contribution decisions will help. Don't overthink it. Just choose something.) We'll eat what we make – including, a Lentil, Sweet Potato, Coconut Milk, Tomato Stew, brown rice, salad, and whatever you bring. Attendees will also have an opportunity to use the non-invasive Veggie Meter to monitor your carotenoid status. After we've enjoyed our own tasty, healthy cooking, we will visit the Rawlings Conservatory. Carpools will leave at approximately 1:00 p.m., and we will gather there by 1:30 pm. (See separate event listing at right.)

Marjorie Roswell is a nutrition educator, and founder of HealthyCampaign.org – a program to encourage social activists and campaigners to improve our nutrition environments, to eat more healthfully, and to stay well. It's a win-win strategy.

JANUARY 8

“Solutions to Baltimore's Eviction Crisis, Community Land Trusts, and Affordable Housing Requirements in Developments such as Port Covington”

John Nethercut

Executive Director, The Public Justice Center

Baltimore has the second highest rate of eviction filings in the nation, second only to Detroit, due largely to a lack of affordable housing as well as outdated court processes. In addition, the foreclosure crisis is seriously harming homeowners

and their tenants alike. Affordable housing requirements (in government-backed community development projects such as Port Covington), community land trusts, and legal reforms are innovative solutions being demanded by social justice advocates to create affordable, accessible and non-discriminatory, rental housing.

John Nethercut's life in social justice advocacy began with community organizing with the United Farm Workers and tenant union organizing in Boston. He was a legal aid worker in a variety of U.S. cities, and a Deputy Chief of the Maryland Consumer Protection Division before leading the Public Justice Center since 2002. For over 30 years Baltimore's Public Justice Center has pursued systemic change to build a just society through legal advocacy, representing low-income clients and collaborating with community and advocacy organizations.

JANUARY 15

“Seeking Guidance in the Words and Deeds of King for the Era of Trump”

E. R. Shipp

Pulitzer Prize Winning Journalist and Founding Faculty Member of the School of Global Journalism & Communication, Morgan State University

Too often in political discussions and always around January 15, we hear speculation – even predictions – about how Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. would react to a situation. Most of that is just self-affirming drivel. I propose not to pretend to read the mind of a man long dead, but to explore what he said and what he did in a life cut short. Rather than a focus on what he would be doing, I will suggest what we should be doing.

Professor E. R. Shipp is a journalist-scholar with advanced degrees from Columbia University and, as she says, from life. She is a founding faculty member of the School of Global Journalism and Communication at Morgan State University, where she currently directs the school's new Baltimore Reporting Project. She is the first black woman to re-



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SUNDAY PLATFORM PROGRAMS

ceive the Pulitzer Prize in the category of commentary. Her career in journalism has taken her to *The New York Times*, *The New York Daily News* and *The Washington Post*. She currently pens a biweekly column for *The Baltimore Sun* and is a frequent commentator on public radio.

JANUARY 22

“Community Solar – Solar Is for Everyone”

Gary Skulnik

Founder and President, Community Solar

Thanks to a new community solar law in Maryland, everybody can go solar. Community solar allows you to sign up for solar power for your home, business or organization without installing any equipment on your roof. It's clean energy from a local project in your neighborhood. Come to this presentation and learn how you, your business, and your neighbors can join together to build a local clean energy solar project that will let you save money and help the environment.

Gary Skulnik is the founder of a new social enterprise called Neighborhood Sun (www.neighborhoodsun.solar) and a leader in developing the clean energy market on the East Coast. As President of Clean Currents, he started the movement for clean power in Maryland and the region. Gary is an active public speaker on sustainability, clean energy, B-Corps, social enterprises and other topics.

JANUARY 29

“The First Amendment and President Trump”

Hugh Taft-Morales

Ethical Leader

As President Trump moves into the White House, what will become of our First Amendment rights, in particular freedom of press, speech and assembly? During the campaign, Trump demonstrated unprecedented hostility towards the media. This is in the context of market forces, which have already weakened the independent press and slashed budgets for investigative journalism. Trump threatens and intimidates those who publicly criticize him, endangering our freedom of speech. Even the right to assembly is being challenged by the incoming administration. What can we do to maintain a free, open flow of information and a diversity of opinion?

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.



VISIT TO THE RAWLINGS CONSERVATORY

**Sunday, January 1, 1:30 p.m., 3100 Swann Dr,
by Druid Hill Park, free admission**

Enjoy the warmth and greenery of the Rawlings Conservatory with ethical society friends and family! On a cold winter's day, you'll be dazzled by hundreds of poinsettias of exotic varieties, like “Ice Punch,” “Orange Spice,” and “Ruby Frost.” The citrus trees, coffee plants, and tropical ferns will refresh and invigorate you! Carpool will be leaving BES starting after lunch around 1:00 p.m. We'll gather in the Conservatory front lobby around 1:30 p.m. Visit their website at www.rawlingsconservatory.org. Afterwards, those interested may take a brisk walk around the reservoir, if weather permits.

CHARM CITY
Film
SERIES

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

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

Reportero is the story of a veteran reporter and his colleagues at an independent newsweekly who defy powerful drug cartels and corrupt officials to continue publishing the news.

In 1980, Jesús Blancornelas and Héctor Félix Miranda founded the Mexican newsweekly *Zeta*. They intended it to stand as an independent voice, different from the rest of the nation's largely government-controlled media. At the time, reporting the truth about the country's leaders was unprecedented – and risky, but to this day, despite Miranda's murder in 1988, beginning every Thursday evening, the 92-page weekly is printed just outside of San Diego and trucked to Tijuana.

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.

Hugh Visits “Turn Around Tuesday”

(continued from page 1)

explained, you can use some difficult life experiences to take back your life. He himself had taken that journey.

At the start of the meeting everyone was asked, “If you were given two-minutes to ‘tell your story’, what would you say.” Everyone shared briefly, some with enthusiasm and pride, and others reserved and mumbling. This exercise led into a main learning component – as Gwen Brown put it, “If you don’t tell your story, others will tell it for you.”

Gwen and Cheryl went on to explain that most attending would not be able to hide their past poor decisions from employers. It was better to share their story pro-actively to prove to employers that they owned their past, but were not defined by it. By reclaiming their story they could demonstrate their own determination to transform their past into a better future.

It would be easy for those attending to slip into angry or defiant frames of mind. The system is, to a degree, rigged against chronically poor people of color who cannot escape either economic disadvantage or social prejudice. Terrell explained, however, that there is a **world as it is** and a **world as it should be**. Returning citizens and others marginalized and disempowered could rail about how the world should be. But, Terrell said, they were currently stuck with the world as it is. If they want to flourish, there were going to have to put away blaming others and figure out how to work the system.

In small group breakouts, attendees participated in interview role-playing, picking up both tips and confidence from each other, TAT staff members,

and mentors. They were encouraged to “turn their light on” by having faith in their abilities and patience for TAT to work.

Through partnerships with local businesses, such as Johns Hopkins, TAT connects those who have “turned on their light” – who somehow have gotten away from blaming others, or relapsing into drug use or crime – with employers who are willing to take a risk. Given TAT’s recent success in connecting participants with well-above minimum wage jobs, I was again impressed with the work of POWER. Without POWER, TAT would not exist. Without TAT, most of those attending the October 25 session would be without hope.

If you would like to attend a *Turn Around Tuesday* program to see the good work we support for yourself, let me know!

What Can You Do to Support Turn Around Tuesday?

You could...

- ... offer coaching support and help TAT folks build resumes, learn basic computer navigation, and practicing being in an interview situation.
- ... direct those looking for employment to come to TAT.
- ... nurture relations with local businesses who might hire TAT men and women and pass that info along to TAT organizers.
- ... be a mentor to a TAT person recently hired, helping them figure out how to negotiate a workplace environment.
- ... write grants for TAT.
- ... offer financial donations to TAT.

PROGRAM COMMITTEE MEETING

Sunday, January 22, 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.

We are Them, and They are Us

(continued from page 2)

we build our ethical approaches. While I reject 'evil' as an absolute construct, especially with regards to human thought or activity, history is littered with many episodes of people perpetuating hurtful and harmful actions against another (from an otherness mentality). Yes, people have and are capable of doing quite harmful acts. But to label them "evil" is both lazy thinking and devoid of any possible understanding of the situation while rationalizing a lack of social and personal responsibility for a solution. Nondualism does not so easily give one ability to write off and throw people away.

While I can acknowledge the inherent worth and dignity of all, I also can, and will, criticize those of who do harmful acts. The acceptance of nondualism may even make such criticism and action, when it's reasonable and that it might help correct the wrong, a civic and ethical duty. Such action is a primary purpose for the BES, where we can share our opinions and engage

in civil discourse and acknowledge that you and I are entitled to our personal beliefs. And continue to make at least a small portion of the world a better, more ethical place.

I suspect dualism will be with us for many years to come. It's been in our psyche for centuries. Sadly, the war continues. So I ask you simply to pay attention to it, become more conscious of it and avoid falling prey to it. Remember, we can still describe something as being hot or cold as long as we realize it's a relative temperature descriptor. So it is with "us" and "them" as we are all people worthy of respect and humanity.

P.S. A big thank you to Hugh Taft-Morales for his visible participation in the Transgender Day of Remembrance (TDOR), held every year on November 20th. In addition, BES also participated in the March of Resilience for TDO Rally. Hugh is recovering from what will be two hip surgeries, and will be absent for a while as he gets hipper. ;-)

NAVIGATORS USA CHAPTER 43

The Baltimore Ethical Society is proud to sponsor Navigators USA Chapter 43, an all-inclusive, co-ed, secular scouting group. If you are interested in joining Navigators please email baltimore Navigators@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, Kathryn, at weddings@bmoreethical.org.

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 bmoreethical 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 bmoreethical.org or go to www.meetup.com/bmoreethical. 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, January 15, 12:45 p.m.

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

NEWCOMERS MEETING

Sunday, January 29, 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, January 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.

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