

BESpeak

JUNE-AUGUST 2017

NEWSLETTER OF THE BALTIMORE ETHICAL SOCIETY

Opportunities, Challenges, and Your BES Board

by Hugh Taft-Morales, Ethical Leader

On Monday, May 8, members of the 2017-2018 Baltimore Ethical Society Board met for an orientation retreat. Led by Thomas Higdon, newly elected Society President, the board spent five hours orienting themselves to the opportunities and challenges facing BES. Of course they got to know each other better and ate a delicious potluck dinner!

We started our meeting with a “go round” where each board member shared a bit about their past. There was clear diversity regarding religious upbringing with members raised in Catholic, Jewish, United Church of Christ, and Ethical Culture traditions. A couple of Board members had a secular rather than religious upbringing. There was geographic and family diversity as well.

There was greater consensus, however, regarding the depth of commitment to serving BES members and furthering Ethical Culture values. Everyone stressed the sense of community and meaning that they received from being a part of our home for humanists. Everyone expressed a desire to give back. That’s a good thing, given the high demands – both in time and energy – of Board work.

Having served on the Board of the Washington Ethical Society (WES) for three years, I know these demands first hand. Of course, WES was at a particularly challenging time in its history. It was wrestling with three critical questions: (1) how to finance a major building expansion; (2) whether to stay a member of the American Ethical Union; and, (3) how to negotiate transition to new professional Leadership after three decades with our current Leader. Though there were some serious bumps in the road, WES survived and, like BES, is currently flourishing!

Thankfully BES is not facing all these critical issues. First, I am not planning on retiring as Leader in the immediate future. Second, BES contributes to and supports the American Ethical Union. But we do have very real challenges: (1) how to serve our growing Sunday school participants; (2) where to find a new facility with



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SUMMER SUNDAYS

10:30 a.m.

Informal discussions on topics related to social, spiritual, and philosophical issues – or just a little bit of fun.

(details on pages 4–5)

JUNE 4

“How I Learned about Death:
A Humanist Story”

Kate Lovelady

JUNE 11

“Racial Justice
and Transformation”

Hugh Taft-Morales

(11:00 a.m. at the AEU Assembly,
Holiday Inn Baltimore-Inner Harbor)

JUNE 18

“Racism in Child Health:
Perspectives of a Family Doc”

Max Romano

JUNE 25

“India Pilgrimage”

Joanna Brandt

JULY 2

“Urban Agriculture:
Notes from the Field”

Maya Kosok

JULY 9

“What Does It Mean
to be Evolved?”

Mike Kohut

JULY 16

“Food Insecurity In Maryland”

Thomas Higdon

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Fritz Williams *Leader Emeritus*

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Contacts by e-mail: use President,
VicePresident (one word), Treasurer,
Secretary, or Admin followed by
@bmorethical.org. For general
questions: ask@bmorethical.org.

On the web at bmorethical.org

Turning Our Shared Vision into Action

by *Thomas Higdon, BES President*

I arrived at the Baltimore Ethical Society in February of 2014 seeking a humanistic community guided by reason, informed by science, inspired by art, and motivated by compassion. I found all those values and more. In my three years at BES, I've fought for social justice, formed close friendships, enjoyed countless potlucks, and even fell in love. The Ethical Society has provided me with a sense a belonging and purpose. For all these gifts, I am grateful. It is gratitude that motivated me to attend my first committee meeting (Ethical Action) and led me to eventually join the board and later serve as an officer. I hope that, as our Society's President, I can return some small measure of the gifts that have been bestowed upon me.

On May 8th, I met with my fellow board members for a half-day retreat. We talked about our hopes and dreams for the future of the society. The discussion eventually turned to goals. While the board is still in the process of refining its official goals for the next year, I would like to share some of my priorities.

- Attract more young adults and families with children to secure our society's future.
- Increase pledge and fundraising income to balance our budget.
- Find a new home to give us room to grow.
- Begin a process to develop a clear statement of who we are, our vision for the world, and the values that guide us.

These are ambitious goals and they will require considerable planning and effort if we are to bring them to fruition. I'll need your help and guidance every step of the way. Can I count on your support? The first step is come on Sunday (any Sunday) and stay for coffee after platform. I'll be there eager to hear your hopes and dreams for the society and to talk of how we can turn our shared vision into action.



BES WELCOMES A NEW MEMBER



On May 7, 2017, Brian Carter was welcomed as the newest member of the Baltimore Ethical Society.

If you have not yet had a chance to meet Brian, please introduce yourself the next time you see him!

MEMBER PROFILES

Let's get to know each other a little better. We have begun posting short biographies of our members in our website's Members Only section. Profiles based on the text used in recent welcoming ceremonies and a few other samples can be seen there. Now, we want to hear from you.

Go to the Directory or Member Profiles page and you will see a "Tell Us About Yourself" link in the sidebar that will take you to a form submission page. Type some details and attach a portrait-type photo. If you don't have a picture of yourself, our photographer can take one after a Sunday meeting. Use the published profiles as a guide. If you have any questions, contact Wayne Laufert (wlaufert@aol.com) or Janey Solwold (jsolwold@gmail.com).

Summer Children's Activities

Beginning on June 4th and every Sunday throughout the summer, BES will offer parent-led and member-led activities for children (ages 6-12) during the Platform talks (10:30 -Noon)

Activities, games and outings will be fun-planned, enjoyable and focused on the core values of ethical culture and include "I" statements; namely, in part:

- Every person is important and unique
- Every person deserves to be treated fairly and kindly
- I can learn from everyone
- I am part of this earth
- I learn from the world around me by using my senses, mind and feeling
- I am a member of the world community, which depends upon the cooperation of all people for peace and justice
- I can learn from the past to build on the future



- I am free to question
- I am free to choose what I believe
- I accept responsibility for my choices and actions
- I strive to live my values
- Ethics is my belief

Engaged in the Summer's Ethical Experience for Kids (SEEK), will

be several members of the Ethical Education Committee and volunteer BES members who will enthusiastically lead, conduct, and facilitate sessions on summer themes, hobbies, skills, creative projects and field trips.

We need more volunteers (12). If interested in serving for a Summer Sunday or two, please email the EEC Chairperson (ascraig@comcast.net). Please indicate which Sunday(s) during June, July and August that you can be available to have fun teaching and learning with our BES kids.

Note: The Ethical Education Program for Tots-to-Teens will resume on Sunday, September 10.

SUMMER SUNDAYS

(continued from page 1)

JULY 23

"Racial Bias in Media Representation"

Tevis Tsai

JULY 30

"Connecting to the Community through Music; a look at Community Bands in Southern Maryland"

Michael Luginbill

AUGUST 6

"Emotions in Ethical Life and Moral Philosophy"

Dom Eggert

AUGUST 13

"Let's Get Real About Renewables"

Stuart Hirsch

AUGUST 20

"Maryland Fauna"

Mel Tillery

AUGUST 27

"Ethical Humanist Ceremonies and What Makes Them Special"

Karen Elliott, and the wedding of Nine Trillion and Anneke Houge

FULLFILL YOUR PLEDGE BY JUNE 30!

Remember June 30 is the end of the current pledge cycle (FY 2016-2017). Please make a contribution to fulfill your pledge if you have not already done so.

Help BES finish strong and get a great start on the next year!

SUNDAY PLATFORM PROGRAMS

JUNE 4

“How I Learned about Death: A Humanist Story”

Kate Lovelady
Visiting Ethical Leader

This platform address will use the style of personal storytelling, in the tradition of former Ethical Society Leader Fritz Williams, to get to the heart of a universal experience: Every person has lost or will lose someone close to them. How do our experiences of death influence our worldview, choices, and lives? How do we feel and share about death and loss as Ethical Humanists?

Kate Lovelady received a BA as an English Major in Writing from Northwestern University. She discovered Ethical Humanism in North Carolina and was certified as an Ethical Humanist Leader by the American Ethical Union in 2005. She currently serves at the Ethical Society of St. Louis as one of its two Leaders, with James Croft. Her hobbies include native plant gardening and making music.

JUNE 11

“Racial Justice and Transformation”

Hugh Taft-Morales
BES Ethical Leader

Platform will take place at 11:00 a.m. at the Holiday Inn Baltimore-Inner Harbor, 301 West Lombard Street, at the American Ethical Union's Annual Assembly. All are welcome to this platform, free of charge, registration not needed.

Drawing lessons from a continuing personal journey, Hugh Taft-Morales explores some challenges and opportunities in our collective effort to build racial justice. In particular, how can majority white communities like Ethical Societies be authentic, respectful, and effective in this work? The WES Chorus & Friends will offer harmonies that reflect this struggle.

JUNE 18

“Racism in Child Health: Perspectives of a Family Doc”

Max Romano

Max Romano will discuss his experiences exploring the influence of racism in the health outcomes of children through his work as a family physician. He will discuss his own personal experiences, some relevant research findings, and future directions for addressing racism through primary care practice.

JUNE 25

“India Pilgrimage”

Joanna Brandt

Joanna Brandt's PowerPoint presentation of her 2013 spiritual pilgrimage to India to attend the Kumba Mela. Traveling to India was the fulfillment of a 40-year dream-come-true.

JULY 2

“Urban Agriculture: Notes from the Field”

Maya Kosok

Maya Kosok has almost a decade of experience in the field of urban agriculture, including doing community outreach for a nonprofit farm focused on food access, running a cooperative of 12 urban farms, and now running Hillen Homestead – her own business that grows and sells cut flowers in Northeast Baltimore. Hear about some of her experiences in this young and dynamic field as well as how her urban flower growing relates to Ethical Culture. There may even be some extra flowers to practice arranging and bring home a bouquet of your own!

JULY 9

“What Does It Mean to be Evolved?”

Mike Kohut

Mike Kohut is a cultural anthropologist who has studied creationism in Tennessee. Even before the publication of Darwin's “Origins of Species” in 1859, people have wondered about the implications of evolutionary origins for humans and ethical behavior. In this talk I will discuss several attempts to determine this, and their problems. In the end, I argue that the greatest implication of being evolved creatures is that we are free to figure out how we ought to be in the world without reference to how we got here.

JULY 16

“Food Insecurity In Maryland”

Thomas Higdon

One in nine Marylanders struggle with food insecurity, which means they are uncertain where their next meal will come from. Thomas will discuss which communities are hardest hit by food insecurity in our state, how our state and local organizations are responding, and steps individuals can take to join the fight to end hunger in Maryland. Thomas is the Vol-

SUNDAY PLATFORM PROGRAMS

unteer Program Manager at the Maryland Food Bank and the current President of the Baltimore Ethical Society.

JULY 23

“Racial Bias in Media Representation”

Tevs Tsai

Film and television are centerpieces of American culture, so why don't the racial demographics of either match the country at large? What are the causes of this mismatch, and what can we as consumers do to fix it?

JULY 30

“Connecting to the Community through Music; a look at Community Bands in Southern Maryland”

Michael Luginbill

Michael Luginbill, a music student at St. Mary's College of Maryland, recently completed his senior project on community music. He studied five community bands in Southern Maryland that play many different kinds of music, including Latin, jazz, marches and musical comedy. Through surveys of and interviews with members, Luginbill found a rich musical culture where members supported each other and where adults from all walks of life developed their musical potential. He also found that musicians consciously directed the efforts of their ensembles towards the broader community good, as they played in benefit performances for non-profit organizations, festivals and fairs. Michael Luginbill is BES member Elizabeth Milstead's father and lives in Leonardtown, MD.

AUGUST 6

“Emotions in Ethical Life and Moral Philosophy”

Dom Eggert

People often associate Western philosophy with a passionless, logical approach to problem solving. Philosophers like Kant, Bentham and others described rational principles as the sole judge of right and wrong, and emotions as morally irrelevant. But Aristotle, Spinoza and others believed that logic and emotion were intimately connected and equally important for ethics. – Dom's talk will tell this story as he investigates the question: What role should emotions play in ethical life?

Dom Eggert studied philosophy for nearly a decade at

Pennsylvania State and Vanderbilt Universities and still practices philosophy as a hobby.

AUGUST 13

“Let's Get Real About Renewables”

Stuart Hirsch

Mass development of renewable resources has been proposed, almost to the exclusion of traditional fossil fuels and nuclear energy. But over-hyping and overselling of renewables may actually delay the use of cleaner and more efficient energy sources, and the efficient use of energy. Overselling renewables will reduce living standards, especially among those with low incomes and resources. The appropriate use of renewables will be discussed, as well as their important role in humanity's future. The talk will conclude with a discussion of what will hopefully be our clean energy future, minimizing climate change and assuring our greatest prosperity. This will be our greatest challenge as the ethical community, Americans and global citizens.

AUGUST 20

“Maryland Fauna”

Mel Tillery

Baltimore park ranger of five years, Mel Tillery will be joined by several live animals native to the Maryland area for a talk about Maryland's Piedmont ecosystems and the creatures that inhabit them. This will be a fun animal encounter for both children and adults.

AUGUST 27

“Ethical Humanist Ceremonies and What Makes Them Special”

Karen Elliott, and the wedding of
Nine Trillion and Anneke Houge

Ethical Culture is a very non-traditional religion - some even argue that we're more of a philosophy. But either way you look at it, we do provide meaningful and very personal ceremonies to recognize important moments in life – including naming of children, coming of age, weddings, and memorial services. Come and get a feel for what Ethical Humanist ceremonies are like. After the discussion, Karen Elliott will officiate at a real live wedding ceremony. Come and help us celebrate the wedding of BES members Nine Trillion and Anneke Houge. All are welcome.

SUMMER SOCIAL GATHERINGS

Wednesday, June 14
Baltimore Museum of Art

Black, White & Abstract considers the work of three of the most important and influential American photographers of the 20th century: Harry Callahan, Aaron Siskind, and Minor White. Meet at 11:00 a.m. in the lobby by the gift store.

Friday, June 30
Walk along
Gwynns Falls Trail

Starting point Winans Meadow (directions to follow). Meet at 2:00 p.m.

Wednesday, July 12
One World Cafe

Lunch and chit chat. Meet in the front at 11:00 a.m.

Saturday, July 29
Walters Art Museum

Janet & Walter Sondheim Artscape Prize 2017 Finalists Exhibition. This summer see an exhibition of the finalists' work for the \$25,000 Janet & Walter Sondheim Artscape Prize, Baltimore's most prestigious artist award. Meet at 11:00 a.m. in the lobby.

Friday, August 11
Red Emma's

Lunch and chit chat. Meet by the book store area at 11:00 a.m.

Wednesday, August 23
Druid Hill Park
Lake Loop Walk

Starting point to be determined: suggestions appreciated! Meet at 6:00 p.m.

BMORETHICAL 2017: COMMUNITIES CONFRONTING SYSTEMIC RACISM

American Ethical Union 102nd Assembly
Holiday Inn Inner Harbor
June 8–11, 2017

Last call for registration for our national Ethical Humanism conference in Baltimore. Take advantage of it being in your hometown and come welcome Ethical Culturists to your city. There are flexible registration options. Go to aeu.org and click on the Bmorethical2017 logo or go directly to <http://aeu.org/event/aeu-102nd-assembly/>.



SECOND SUNDAY FAMILY MEET-UPS!

Join other families with young children immediately following platform on the second Sunday of each month to have fun, build community, and let off steam. The activities will be selected with 2-6 year olds in mind, but all are welcome! If you have questions, email Maya at may-agk@gmail.com or Beth at emluginbill@gmail.com.



Opportunities, Challenges, and Your BES Board

(continued from page 1)

room for our growing membership; and, (3) how in the times of Trump to build social justice with equanimity and good cheer! Add to that the

nineteen concrete goals for improving the Ethical Society the Board brainstormed at this meeting and our plates are pretty full.

**CAN'T MAKE IT TO THE SOCIETY ON
SUNDAY MORNINGS? INTERESTED IN A
PAST PLATFORM THAT YOU MISSED?**

Watch them on our Vimeo page! Simply go to vimeo.com/user4409178 to see video recordings of many of our platforms from the last several years.

A Visit with BES Member Ruth Bronstein

BES members Kirk Mullen and Karen Elliott recently visited with 101 year old member Ruth Bronstein. Karen managed to snap this selfy of the three of them during their visit.

Despite no longer being able to attend on Sunday mornings Ruth has maintained her BES membership for many years.



LISTENING AND LEVERAGING FOR JOBS AND JUSTICE WITH BUILD

Thursday, June 8, 1:00–4:00 p.m.

Before delving into workshops and presentations about “Communities Confronting Systemic Racism” at the American Ethical Union’s 102nd Assembly, come meet a local Baltimore organization that fights economic injustice. We will learn about the Baltimoreans United in Leadership Development (BUILD) program called Turnaround Tuesdays (TAT). Organizers and participants will teach us about the challenges the unemployed and underemployed face.

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.

OTHER ACTIVITIES

Poetry Group

Sunday, June 4, July 2, and
August 6, 9:30 a.m.

Board Meeting

Sunday, June 4, July 9, and
August 13, 12:30 p.m.

Mindfulness Meditation

Sunday, July 9, and
August 13, 9:30 a.m.

Second Sunday Family Meet-Up

Sunday, June 11, July 9, and
August 13, 12:30 p.m.

Ethical Action Meeting

Sunday, June 18, July 16, and
August 20, 12:45 p.m.

Newcomers Meeting

Sunday, June 25, July 30, and
August 27, 12:30 p.m.

CHECK OUT OUR MEETUP GROUP

It is the easiest 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.

www.meetup.com/bmoreethical

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	First Sunday
G to L	Second Sunday
M to R	Third Sunday
S to Z	Fourth Sunday





BALTIMORE ETHICAL SOCIETY

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

NEWSLETTER

Please do not delay!

TIME VALUE

ETHICAL ACTION MEETING

Sunday, June 18, July 16, August 20, 12:45 p.m.

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

NEWCOMERS MEETING

Sunday, June 25, July 30, August 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, July 9, August 13, 9:30 a.m.

(no meeting in June due to the AEU Assembly)

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 and breathe and listen to the words of Thich Nhat Hanh, teacher of mindfulness.

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

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