

BESpeak

APRIL 2018

NEWSLETTER OF THE BALTIMORE ETHICAL SOCIETY

A Thank You to the American Ethical Union!

by Hugh Taft-Morales, Ethical Leader

For my April Leader's column, I want to share with you my "thank you" to the American Ethical Union staff for all they do! Operating out of a small office at the New York Society for Ethical Culture on 2 West 64th Street in New York City, Executive Director **Bart Worden**, Director of Administration **Law'nence Miller**, and Administrative Assistant **Larissa Perez** are the hub of the wheel.

Working from remote locations in Boston, St. Louis, and Washington are Dean of Leadership Training **Susan Rose**, Youth of Ethical Societies Coordinator **Trish Cowan**, Communications Coordinator **Emily Newman**, and Director of Ethical Education **Melissa Sinclair**. These folks, many of whom are extremely part-time on paper, work long hours to help the federation of Ethical Societies in all sorts of ways, supported by three volunteers, **Eva Yachnes**, **David Combs**, and **Rita Wilson**!

This group helps coordinate the **extensive training** and support to our Ethical Culture Leaders. I found my three years of training extremely important in developing my leadership skills and improving my knowledge of Ethical Culture. The AEU staff plans our **Annual Assemblies** full of keynote speeches, workshops, colloquies, meals, social events, and the AEU business meetings where local societies can shape our national budget and strategy. AEU staff coordinates awards, including the **Elliott-Black Award** to individuals or groups sacrificing to advance the values we share in Ethical Culture, the **Anna Garlin Spencer Award** for outstanding volunteer contributions to Ethical Societies, and the **Mossler Fellowship** for creative work in advancing our movement.

The AEU staff also coordinates **skills summits** and **national conferences**, such as those for our youth (YES) and for young adults (FES). They maintain the AEU's **website** and social media platforms so there is a strong Ethical Humanist presence in the media. The AEU also supports the work of **National Ethical Service**, our very own NGO at the United Nations, and the **AHA Center for Education**.

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SUNDAY PLATFORMS 10:30 a.m.

(details on pages 4-5)

APRIL 1

"A Crucible for Humanism: Shaw's 'Pygmalion'"

Omar Khan

Senior Partner Sensei International

APRIL 8

"The Moral Insight"

Hugh Taft-Morales

Ethical Leader

APRIL 15

"Defending Democracy: Empowering Voters"

The League of Women Voters
of Baltimore City

APRIL 22

"Poetry of Resiliency"

Linda Joy Burke

Poet, Artist

APRIL 29

Marnie Halpern, Ph.D.

Carnegie Institution for Science,
Department of Embryology

ETHICAL HUMANIST SUNDAY SCHOOL

Every Sunday
10:30 a.m. – Noon

Individualized programs for preschool
children and school aged students.

Separate supervision provided
for children up to age two.

Ethical Ed and the Environment

by Matthew Milstead, Ethical Education Committee

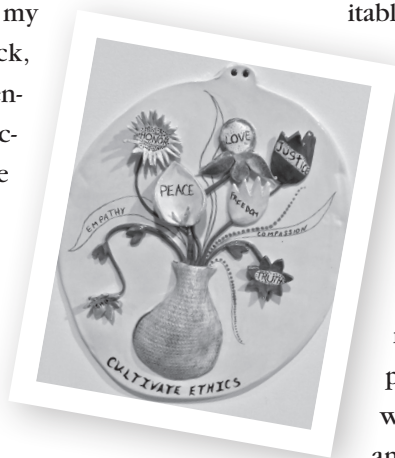
The Ethical Education theme for April is Celebrating and Protecting the Earth. I have been thinking about how our family tries to raise our kids with a sense of respect and appreciation for the environment. As adults, we're used to absorbing information about the environment on a daily basis through various media sources, whether the subject is climate change, mass-extinction, natural disasters, or just the daily weather forecast. For younger students, like my sons Michael and Jack, news reports and scientific studies don't necessarily carry the same weight.

In January, Cecilia Liss from the Waldorf School presented the educational philosophy they put into practice with their students. One of the tenets I most appreciated was the idea that sensory experience is the primary means of learning for younger children. Their students are encouraged to absorb information about new things through the use of all of their senses. As parents, I think we sometimes put this idea into practice naturally. I like the example from Max's column from February, "On Helicopters," of encouraging his daughter to walk out on the ice bare-footed just to see how it feels.

I can explain to Michael how plants grow, or why it rains, and we have read *The Magic School Bus Goes to the Waterworks* about a hundred times now, but I think he and Jack get a lot more

out of hands-on experiences. Our family is fortunate enough to have access to excellent resources like the Maryland Science Center, Port Discovery, and the Benjamin Banneker Museum, among others. These places engage our kids' imaginations and encourage an appreciation of nature. Of course there are opportunities right at home as well, helping to tend the garden and harvesting what we've grown, or simply playing with worms that emerge with the rain. These experiences inevitably generate myriad questions - sometimes the ones after the Science Center are a little unexpected, like "is a tornado able to suck up our house?" or, "are there any volcanoes in Maryland?" or my personal favorite, "when will the Sun explode?" In any case, the important part is that the children return with curiosity piqued and a desire to learn more.

Getting the kids to experience nature through interaction and direct experience will, I hope, encourage them to a greater appreciation of the environment as they grow up. Any and all suggestions from other BES members for new activities are more than welcome. Hopefully this appreciation generates a sense of responsibility for the second part of the April theme, Protecting the Earth. Our kids and their peers will inherit environmental problems from past generations that will be significantly more pressing than "when the Sun explodes."



OTHER ACTIVITIES

Poetry Group

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

Patapsco State Park Hike

Wednesday, April 4, 6:00 p.m.

Mindfulness Meditation

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

Second Sunday Family Meet-Up

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

Board Meeting

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

Book Discussion - *The Common Good*

Sunday, April 8, 2:00 p.m.

Ethical Action Meeting

Sunday, April 15, 12:30 p.m.

Tea or Coffee at Charm Kitty Cafe

Saturday, April 21, time TBD

Annual Membership Meeting

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

Program Committee Meeting

Sunday, April 29, 12:30 p.m.

Newcomers Meeting

Sunday, April 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	April 1
G to L	April 8
M to R	April 15
S to Z	April 22
Everyone!	April 29



SUNDAY PLATFORM PROGRAMS

APRIL 1

“A Crucible for Humanism: Shaw’s ‘Pygmalion’”

Omar Khan

*Senior Partner Sensei International,
President International Business and Wine Society,
Shaw Festival of Canada Governor’s Council*

George Bernard Shaw, Nobel Laureate, reluctant Oscar winner, was one of the greatest writers of the English language and one of the most fabled playwrights of all time. Of his many plays, none has captured more popular attention than *Pygmalion*, which went on to spawn *My Fair Lady*. Of course, this is even more timely, as Bartlett Sher’s production of *My Fair Lady* at Lincoln Center is just beginning previews in March!

Embedded in this play is a provocative, still utterly salient, radical and quite ecumenical view of human potential: what constrains it, what liberates it, how social roles congeal, that razor’s edge between empty rebellion and meaningful freedom. All this in what Shaw wryly calls “a romance.” And in exploring this play, our sense of “romance” gets enlarged and emancipated as well.

Shaw’s play throws down a gauntlet, challenging trite conceptions of human relations, as well as our sense of self and growth. It deserves to be “rediscovered” as a multi-faceted provocation, for shining a light on how we can engage with each other, for exploring different facets of “loving” with integrity -- even how at times as paradigms get unsettled and expanded, we may have to “wince” our way to wisdom.

Omar Khan, an avid New Yorker now, was born in Egypt, of Pakistani heritage, grew up in NYC, lived also in the UK, Japan, Singapore, Sri Lanka, the Netherlands, Dubai, Saudi Arabia and Japan. Founder of a consulting firm, Sensei International, which helps organizations engage human performance to deliver business results. Founder of The International Business and Wine Society, which offers “Symposia” and “Convivia” as the Greeks and Romans essentially intended. Long-time devotee, gadfly and benefactor of the Shaw Festival in Canada, the only Festival devoted to the work and ideas of George Bernard Shaw. Spoke previously at The Philadelphia Ethical Society on this topic as well on Kantian Ethics and Humanism, a topic on which he wrote a thesis at Oxford University. Mr. Khan is writing a book to be published in concert with the Festival, with editorial input from

the Adviser to the Shaw Estate, Leonard Connolly, entitled *The Quintessence of Shavianism*.

APRIL 8

“The Moral Insight”

Hugh Taft-Morales

Ethical Leader

Ethical Culture was greatly shaped by rationalism, and today Ethical Societies are part of a humanist movement dedicated to reason and skeptical of blind passion and magical thinking. But Ethical Culture also calls for empathy toward others – for holding others in our hearts. While respecting the role of emotion in a meaningful life, Hugh Taft-Morales believes reason is important in supporting “the moral insight” – the deep realization that other people are conscious creatures living lives full of pain, pleasure, suffering and joy. How do Immanuel Kant, Josiah Royce, and Martin Luther King Jr. help understand the rational nature of this insight?

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.

APRIL 15

“Defending Democracy: Empowering Voters”

The League of Women Voters of Baltimore City

Lois Hybl, *Co-President*

League of Women Voters/Baltimore City (LWV/BC)

Argentine Craig, *Director, LWV/BC;*

Professor, Human Development (Retired)

Elaine Breslaw, *Director, LWV/BC.; Professor, History (Retired)*

The League of Women Voters of Baltimore City is a non-partisan political organization which encourages informed and active participation in government; works to increase understanding of major public policy issues; and influences public policy through education and advocacy. For almost 100 years, the League of Women Voters has championed voting rights, and today this work is more important than ever.

SUNDAY PLATFORM PROGRAMS

At the local, state and federal levels, our work on voter protection, election reform, money in politics and redistricting is at the heart of the League's Mission and its future.

Lois Hybl, Co-President, will present a brief history of the LWV (1920-2018) and its current local/city focus on voting and voting rights; Argentine Craig, Project Coordinator of the 2018 Voter Education/Voter Registration for the Baltimore City Public High Schools and the Baltimore City Community College will describe reaching out to the young voters. Elaine Breslaw, in her role as Team Leader in one of the five designated BCPS, will share her experiences with high school students in registering to vote in 2018.

Lois Hybl came to Baltimore from Iowa in the 1960s and joined the League of Women Voters. She worked first as an education Research Assistant at Johns Hopkins University and then, as a reading curriculum specialist for "Success for ALL" (a nonprofit foundation working with schools with a high percentage of at risk students). When she retired, she became more active in the League – serving as President, Co-President (with Flo Valentine), Treasurer and representative to the Baltimore Education Coalition. She joined the LWV/MD State Board in 2016 and chaired the program on Police Community Relations at the University of Baltimore. She currently serves as 1st Vice President for Action.

Lois is active in the Czech and Slovak Heritage Association and the Towson Unitarian Universalist Church's Social Action Committee. She and her husband, Albert, enjoy Irish social dancing and ballroom dancing.

APRIL 22

"Poetry of Resiliency"

Linda Joy Burke
Poet, Artist

Participants will be guided in creating an interactive song with hand held percussion instruments. Linda Joy will share a poem or two while we make music and then more after we stop to talk about the relationship of intense and sometimes violent change to the cathartic nature of poetry bearing witness to that change.

Participants will read and discuss a few poems from handouts – using the work of Elizabeth Bishop, Alice Walker, Audre Lorde, Naomi Shihab Nye, Martin Espada, and other

poets who speak to the topics of resiliency. Writing session: Using a line from poems handed out, individuals will create a new poem to share with the group.

Linda Joy Burke's poetry, fiction, op-ed columns, reviews, profiles and feature stories have appeared in numerous publications including: *The Little Patuxent Review*, *Obsidian II*, *Black Literature in Review*, *Beltway: An On-Line Quarterly*, *Passager*, *Healing Design*; *Practical Feng Shui For Gracious Living*, *Thy Mothers' Glass Poems for Mothers and Daughters*, *Gargoyle 54*, *When Divas Laugh: The Diva Squad Poetry Collective*, *Maryland Voices—the 9/11 Project*, *Poetry for Peace*; *An Anthology of Maryland Poets on War, Peace & Social Justice*, *The Road Less Taken—The Saint Valentine Sunday Poetry Marathon 2001 CD*, *Maryland Institute College of Art*, *Word Up Baltimore CD*.

Her work can be experienced on her blogs Moods Minds and Multitudes – www.lindajoyburke.com, The Bird Talks Blog Too – www.lindajoyburke2.blogspot.com, and I Grew Up to Be the Neighborhood Nosey Lady – <http://birdpoet2.tumblr.com> and her photo blog: <http://www.flickr.com/photos/ljoyburke/> or you can follow her on twitter @ljoybird.

APRIL 29

Marnie Halpern, Ph.D.

Carnegie Institution for Science, Department of Embryology

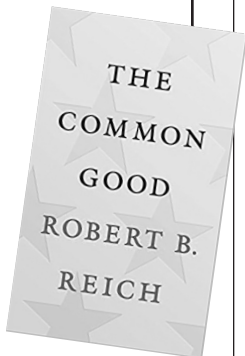
Marnie Halpern received her B.Sc. in biology from McMaster University and her master's at the McMaster University Medical Centre. She then went on to Yale for her Ph.D. and did postdoctoral work at the Institute of Neuroscience, University of Oregon. She joined the Carnegie Institute for Science staff in 1994 where she currently studies how left-right differences arise in the developing brain and discovers the genes that control this asymmetry. Using the tiny zebrafish, *Danio rerio*, Halpern explores how regional specializations occur within the neural tube, the embryonic tissue that develops into the brain and spinal cord.

Ms. Halpern is also very involved in outreach. Among her activities, she runs a speakers program with the Baltimore public schools, Women Serious About Science, which encourages girls from diverse backgrounds to pursue careers in science.

BOOK DISCUSSION – THE COMMON GOOD

Sunday, April 8,
2:00-3:30 p.m.

In preparing for a May platform to be titled, *Common Sense and Common Good*, Hugh Taft-Morales invites you to read this short primer on the concept of “the common good” by Robert Reich. How does the loss of a sense of community put our nation and our world in danger?



TEA OR COFFEE AT CHARM KITTY CAFE

Saturday, April 21, time TBD

Come enjoy a 60 minute reservation and grab a cup of coffee in the company of cats at Charm Kitty Cafe (charmkitty-cafe.com)! All of the cats are adoptable through the Baltimore Humane Society. Cost is \$12. You can buy tea, coffee, hot chocolate, and cookies at their cashless cafe. I will try for our reservation at 1pm, 2pm, or 3pm, in that order. I will only make the reservation if our entire number can be accommodated. Please RSVP to Mav at mav.vaughan@gmail.com by April 7!

PROGRAM COMMITTEE MEETING

Sunday, April 29, 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.

A Thank You to the American Ethical Union!

(continued from page 1)

I haven't even touched on the support the staff gives our **American Ethical Union board** headed by Philadelphia Ethical Society member John McCormick. The AEU Board, by the way, has just hired Momentum, a public relations firm that will help us become better known. Now more than ever, as our nation and world seem to be leaning toward authoritarian governance and climate collapse, we need to share our unique philosophical worldview and offer our relational approach to problem solving.

It is the relationships I have with the AEU staff, however, that make me deeply committed to our federating organization. Respect for these relationships is hard to convey to you in a newsletter article. Relationships take time and experience to grow strong. I can't fully share with you the calming advice I've received from **Bart**, or **L Miller's** patient support for the Na-

tional Leaders Council I now shepherd, or the details **Larissa** juggles, not to mention her singing talents shared at the last year's Assembly in Baltimore!

I can't convey adequately **Susan's** mentoring support for me, **Emily's** candid advice and efficiency, **Trish's** contribution to a youth program that benefited my children, or **Melissa's** educational insights offered at three institutions I served: the Northern Virginia Ethical Society, the Washington Ethical Society, and, now, the AEU. All these relationships mean a lot to me, as does the health of our national movement.

I hope you are willing to get to know the AEU better by visiting their website (aeu.org), attending national and regional meetings, and consider serving on any one of the AEU committees or on the Board. I believe such contribution will both help advance Ethical Humanism as well as reap rewards for the Baltimore Ethical Society!



Left to right: L. Miller,
Larissa Perez, and
Emily Newman.

'Seeds for the Future' at the 2018 AEU Assembly

Come to beautiful Albuquerque for the 2018 American Ethical Union Assembly, "Seeds for the Future: Environmental Justice and Ethical Culture." Make the trip so that you can: LEARN social media tools and ways to best attract millennials to Ethical Societies; DIALOGUE with Hugh Taft-Morales and guests from many non-believer groups of humanists, skeptics, and atheists how we can best work together while remaining true to our missions; DANCE to the social

justice rock music of Son Of Hwéeldi; EXPLORE with Leader James Croft how visioning about "what sort of a world we want" can help us hone our environmental activism; VOLUNTEER on a pre-conference environmental restoration project in the forest site in the Rio Grand Bosque in Albuquerque; HEAR from grassroots environmental activists how marginalized communities can fight back against corporate and fossil fuel interests to protect their neighborhoods and our planet; SPEAK

with leaders of interfaith groups weaving their religious fervor into their ecological work; CONNECT with indigenous leaders join their unique perspective with contemporary environmental justice campaigns. All that while meeting Ethical Humanists from around the country. Register today at aeu.org!



PATAPSCO STATE PARK HIKE

Wednesday, April 4, 6:00 p.m.

Patapsco State Park Avalon Area, 5120 South St, Halethorpe

Let's hope for moderate spring weather and hit the Cascade Falls (easy-moderate.) Trail. We'll set off promptly at 6:10 p.m. We'll walk a half loop on the Cascade Falls Trail, or simply turn back whenever we care to. Leashed dogs allowed. Bring water, and a snack if desired. Contact Mav at mav.vaughan@gmail.com with questions.

Directions from 95 East or West: Take the I 195 exit toward BWI Airport, then take Rt 1 South (1st exit). Take the 1st Right on South St and in two blocks make a left into the park. Go through the entrance (\$3 charge) and follow the road to a T. Make a left at the T and go about 2-3 miles to the parking lot by the swinging bridge. Park on Left Hand Side.

ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING

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

Please stay after the platform address on April 22nd for our Annual Membership Meeting.

At this meeting, we celebrate a year of success by reporting on our growth and achievements over the past year. We welcome the new leadership team when we announce our election results. We renew our commitment to the society and to each other when we review and approve the society's budget and pledge campaign goal for the next fiscal year July 1, 2018-June 30, 2019.

We encourage questions, comments, suggestions, and volunteering. This is democracy in action, folks, so please attend this important meeting!

We hope you can join us!

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 mayagk@gmail.com or Beth at emluginbill@gmail.com.





BALTIMORE ETHICAL SOCIETY

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

NEWSLETTER

Please do not delay!

TIME VALUE

ETHICAL ACTION MEETING

Sunday, April 15, 12:30 p.m.

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

NEWCOMERS MEETING

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

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