



BALTIMORE ETHICAL SOCIETY  
2521 Saint Paul St., Baltimore, MD 21218

#### NEWSLETTER

Please do not delay!  
**TIME VALUE**

#### ETHICAL ACTION MEETING

**Sunday, September 16, 12:30 p.m.**

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

#### NEWCOMERS MEETING

**Sunday, September 30, 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.

Welcome to BESpeak, the newsletter of the Baltimore Ethical Society. Donations from readers like you help us keep it in production. Send checks payable to Baltimore Ethical Society to: BESpeak, 2521 Saint Paul St., Baltimore, MD 21218. If you would like to subscribe to the online version of this newsletter, sign up at [bmoreethical.org](http://bmoreethical.org). Thank you.

## MINDFULNESS meditation

**Sunday, September 9, 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.

# bmoreethical

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SEPTEMBER 2018

NEWSLETTER OF THE BALTIMORE ETHICAL SOCIETY

## Welcoming Immigrants

by Hugh Taft-Morales, Ethical Leader

This past August I visited the Ellis Island National Museum of Immigration. If you haven't made this trip, I recommend it highly.

As a practical tip, access it from Liberty State Park in Jersey City and you'll miss all the crowds and traffic of Manhattan. There, on a small island, nearly in the shadow of the statue of liberty, more than 12 million immigrants arrived between 1892 and 1954.

With the notable exception that the original inhabitants, the Lenape Indians, were no longer able to harvest food from the tidal flats around the island, in the context of U.S. immigration policy Ellis Island was a place of welcome. In fact, it helped make America great.

Millions arrived with energy, skills, hope, and optimism about life in this new land of liberty. Our country flourished greatly because of their energy, skills, hope, and optimism. And, "they" are actually "us." Some estimate that 30-40% of Americans today can trace their ancestry to immigrants arriving at Ellis Island.

*(continued on page 7)*



#### SUNDAY PLATFORMS 10:30 a.m.

*(details on pages 4-5)*

##### SEPTEMBER 2

#### "Ethical Culture 101"

Stephen Meskin  
*BES Member*

##### SEPTEMBER 9

#### "Improving Science Communication"

Dr. Nina Martin  
*Public Health United*

##### SEPTEMBER 16

#### "Performance Poetry Heals the Grieving Heart"

Gayle Danley  
*Award-Winning Slam Poet*

##### SEPTEMBER 23

#### "From Head Shops to Whole Foods: The Rise and Fall of Activist Entrepreneurs"

Joshua Clark Davis  
*University of Baltimore*

##### SEPTEMBER 30

#### "Should Humanists Proselytize?"

Hugh Taft-Morales  
*Ethical Leader*

#### SUNDAY SCHOOL

Every Sunday, beginning Sept. 9  
*Individualized programs for preschool children and school aged students. Separate supervision provided for children aged one and two.*



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#### Issue 481

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

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Poetry..... Kirk Mullen  
Social Events ..... Mav Vaughan

#### ETHICAL CULTURE/ HUMANIST OFFICIANTS

Karen Elliott, Paul Furth,  
Kirk Mullen, Hugh Taft-Morales  
Coordinator: Kathryn Merrill

**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**

## New Beginnings

by Thomas Higdon, BES President

*“Every new beginning comes from  
some other beginning’s end”*

— Seneca

After fifteen years at the Congress Hotel in Mount Vernon the Baltimore Ethical Society (BES) moved last May to our new home at the

Village Learning Place (VLP) in Charles Village. Our time at the Congress was marked by tremendous successes. For example, we grew our membership by over forty percent; added professional Sunday School staff; reinvigorated our Ethical Action program; and closed an annual budget deficit (we actually have a surplus this year).

Our new location in a residential neighborhood and our partnership with VLP, an organization with deep roots in the community, offer incredible opportunities for continued innovation and growth. Over the next few months BES will be advertising and reaching out directly to the community to introduce ourselves. One such opportunity is the upcoming Abell Improvement Association Street Fair on September 16th, where BES will host a table. Please contact me if you are actively involved in any organizations in the area, live in the neighborhood, or would simply like to help spread the word about BES and our mission: To be a Humanist congregation that improves lives, relationships, and the world through reason, compassion, and action.

Our outreach effort officially starts on Sunday, September 9th, with our “Grand Opening.” In addition to our traditional platform and fellowship that Sunday, there will be a Society Fair during coffee hour. This will be a chance for members and guests to learn more about all the ways that both adults and kids can get involved at BES. From Sunday School and the Navigators troop, to poetry and meditation groups, to volunteer opportunities on the Board and various committees, there is something for everyone. Each group will have a table staffed with a volunteer to answer questions about what they do and how individuals can get involved.

One of the groups at the Fair will be the newly formed Capital Campaign Committee. While I’m excited about our move to VLP and all the new opportunities it affords, I’m also reminded that it is only a temporary arrangement. We selected VLP to be our home for three to five years while we run a capital campaign for the purchase (or longer-term lease) and renovation of a permanent space. The goal is to launch the campaign during the regular spring pledge drive. Please contact me if you have fundraising experience, especially with capital campaigns, and you wish to help with this important project.

With all this going on, it may be an understatement to say that this is an exciting time to be a part of BES. I look forward to working with you over the next year to continue building and growing our Society.

P.S. On a more personal note, it is good to be back. As many of you know, I was away for a month this summer tending to my mental health. I deeply appreciate all the well wishes. The experience reinforced to me the importance of friendship and community. I love BES and I hope that comes through in my words and actions.



## Welcoming Immigrants

(continued from page 1)

It’s true that there were dehumanizing moments for many immigrants. As a U. S. History teacher I didn’t hide times when people felt treated like cattle. They were ushered into long lines, inspected for physical and mental problems, and had their coats marked in chalk indicating how they might be a threat to the health of the nation. Some were deported immediately due to judgments about disease, deformity, poverty, mental illness, depression, and even homosexuality. Some had to stay for days or weeks, sleeping in the main hall wooden bunks.

And life after Ellis Island could be rough too, as documented by Lewis Hines and Jacob Riis. Their photographs were part of the immigration museum displays. To humanize the plight of the recent arrivals, Felix Adler worked with both men to share photographs with health inspectors and government committees. They documented the unhealthy conditions in tenement houses and factories, and stimulated progressive reforms aimed at freeing immigrants to flourish and contribute to society.



Despite the tough conditions, immigrants kept coming to Ellis Island, and they kept being welcomed. More than 95% managed to get through the long lines and crowded benches in about a half-day. Many were helped by immigration officers or comforted by immigrant aide organizations. There was at least a recognition that these immigrants should be accorded dignity, and that these *tired, poor, buddled masses* should be given the liberty to breath free. Felix Adler, who himself landed in New York harbor in 1857, was impressed with the welcoming embrace of his new home.

Beginning in the 1920’s Americans were less welcoming. They expressed their liberty to spew xenophobic anti-immigrant rhetoric. Today it’s not much better. Demagogues capitalize on fear of difference to get elected, whipping up concern about the “illegals” as they referred to them as being only good for gangs and prison.

*New York Times* reporter Nicholas Kristof admits that xenophobia and demagogy stigmatizes refugees throughout the world, but we can ex-

pect better from the United States. I admit that there are dangerous people in the world drifting in the ebb and flow of the refugee sea. But bigotry and overly restrictive policies were not, and are not the solution. In general, people coming to our country bring to us more than they take from us. In fact, they *are* us. That’s what I was reminded of during my summer visit to Ellis Island.

### SMART RECOVERY MEETING

Every Saturday,  
10:30 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.,  
downstairs

SMART Recovery (Self-Management And Recovery Training) is a free peer-support group for individuals who have chosen to abstain, or are considering abstinence from any type of addictive behaviors (substances or activities), by teaching how to change self-defeating thinking, emotions, and actions; and to work towards long-term satisfactions and quality of life. SMART is not a 12-step group like Alcoholics Anonymous. For more information about SMART, visit [www.smartrecovery.org](http://www.smartrecovery.org).

### AEU SKILLS SUMMIT

Saturday, September 29,  
9:00 a.m. – 6:30 p.m.

Join us at the Washington Ethical Society for a full day of insightful discussion, interactive workshops, and fun collaboration. Together we’ll explore best practices and burning questions on communications, ethical education, membership, and organizational development. Check the <https://aeu.org/> for more details.

Sponsored by the AEU Communications, Ethical Education, and Membership committees.



## HUMANIST improv GROUP

Every Wednesday,  
6:15 – 8:00 p.m.  
2510 Saint Paul St.  
(ring bell at rear of building)

Did you know that a central tenet of humanism and good improv is Bringing out the best in others brings out the best in ourselves?

One goal is to see if improv can be used to explore social justice issues. Another is to have fun and be silly for a little while.

We meet once a week to do improv exercises and work on improv skills and maybe even to perform.

## ANNUAL LABOR DAY SUNDAY BBQ/PICNIC

Sunday, September 2,  
12:00 – 4:00 p.m.

Join us for food, fun, and fellowship following the regular Sunday program. Our new home at the Village Learning Place has a lovely garden, so we will gather there for our annual picnic from 12:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. The picnic is potluck so please bring a ready-to-serve dish to contribute.

Please contact Mav Vaughan for more information at [mav.vaughan@gmail.com](mailto:mav.vaughan@gmail.com).

## PROGRAM COMMITTEE MEETING

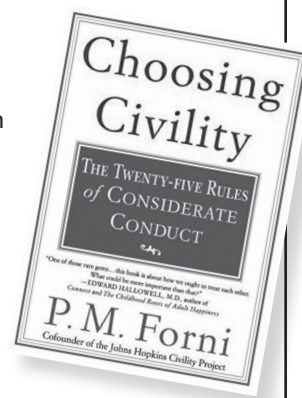
Sunday, September 23, 12:30 p.m.

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

## BOOK DISCUSSION CHOOSING CIVILITY BY P. M. FORNI

Sunday, September 23,  
3:00 – 4:30 p.m., Location TBD

In these days of discord, is there still room for civility in social interactions? Come for an informal discussion of P. M. Forni's work. You can read his short book, or visit his website and read some material on the "Civility Website" hosted by Johns Hopkins University. Go to <http://krieger2.jhu.edu/civility>. Please contact Hugh if would like to host this discussion in your home!



## 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](mailto:weddings@bmoreethical.org).

## THE BALTIMORE GO CLUB

Every Thursday, 6:00 – 10:00 p.m.

Go is an abstract strategy board game for two players, in which the aim is to surround more territory than the opponent. The game was invented in China more than 2,500 years ago and is believed to be the oldest board game continuously played to the present day.

Despite its relatively simple rules, Go is very complex. Compared to chess, Go has both a larger board with more scope for play and longer games, and, on average, many more alternatives to consider per move.

Please consider attending, whether you'd like to learn to play or are already an experienced player.

# News Updates from the American Ethical Union

## Faith Spotted Eagle is 2018 Elliott-Black Award Winner

Faith Spotted Eagle is a 69 year old grandmother who lives on Ihanktonwan Dakota Territory (Yankton Sioux) in Southeastern South Dakota. She is a fluent speaker of the Dakota Language and a member of the Ihanktonwan, although she descends from the Sicangu, Hunpapi, Hunkpapa and Mdewakantonwan of the Oceti /Peta Sakowinand has French/Irish blood through her grandmother Julia Deloria and John McBride.

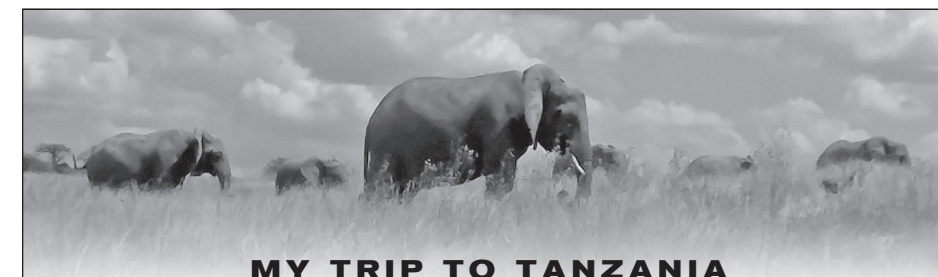
Due to her lifelong work, she was recognized by what is called a "faithless elector" who cast their pre-designated vote for another candidate and instead voted for Faith Spotted Eagle in the US Electoral College in the 2016 national election. From this, Faith received the first Presidential electoral vote ever cast for a Native American in US History. She credits all of her lifelong work to the strong Dakota cultural way she was raised in the traditional White Swan Community by strong grandmothers/grandparents

and her father, Henry Spotted Eagle, Padani Kokipesni, Not Afraid of the Enemy.

## Secular Groups Oppose Brett Kavanaugh Supreme Court Nomination

The American Ethical Union stands for the freedom of individuals to practice their religion and for a strong constitutional separation between US governmental and religious institutions. The Supreme Court of the United States has been crucial in ensuring freedom and separation, but the nomination of Judge Brett Kavanaugh for Supreme Court Justice threatens them both. Judge Kavanaugh's writings and speeches demonstrate his clear preference for particular religious sects. He has promoted prayer and religious coercion in public settings, and has supported employers' religious beliefs over employees' rights. We join the other signatories in opposing the nomination of Judge Kavanaugh.

Read more at <https://aeu.org>.



## MY TRIP TO TANZANIA

Sunday, September 30, 1:00 – 2:30 p.m.

Come enjoy a "casual and social slide show" of my first trip to Africa – a safari in Tanzania.

## OTHER ACTIVITIES

### Poetry Group

Sunday, September 2, 9:30 a.m.

### Labor Day Sunday Picnic

Sunday, September 2, 12:00 p.m.

### Mindfulness Meditation

Sunday, September 9, 9:30 a.m.

### Board Meeting

Sunday, September 9, 12:30 p.m.

### Ethical Action Meeting

Sunday, September 16, 12:30 p.m.

### Poetry Workshop: From Grief to Greatness

Sunday, September 16, 1:00 p.m.

### Program Committee Meeting

Sunday, September 23, 12:30 p.m.

### Book Discussion

Sunday, September 23, 3:00 p.m.

### AEU Skills Summit

Saturday, September 29, 9:00 a.m.

### Newcomers Meeting

Sunday, September 30, 12:30 p.m.

### My Trip to Tanzania

Sunday, September 30, 1:00 p.m.

### SMART Recovery

Every Saturday, 10:30 a.m.

### Humanist Improv Group

Every Wednesday, 6:15 p.m.

### The Baltimore Go Club

Every Thursday, 6:00 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:

Everyone!	September 2
A to F	September 9
G to L	September 16
M to R	September 23
S to Z	September 30

## SUNDAY PLATFORM PROGRAMS

### SEPTEMBER 2

#### “Ethical Culture 101”

Stephen Meskin

Highlights of the history of Ethical Culture from its founding in 1876 by Felix Adler up to the present time will be discussed with particular attention to our relationships with similar movements, such as Humanism.

### SEPTEMBER 9

#### “Improving Science Communication: Creating a Culture of Curiosity, Critical Thinking, and Engagement in Science”

Dr. Nina Martin  
*Public Health United*

Science communication often stops with journal publications and science conferences. The media then “translates” the science for mass consumption. Dr. Martin founded Public Health United out of a desire to end this game of “telephone” from lab results to the public. Misinterpreted science findings simply should not affect major public health decisions. Public Health United fosters new partnerships between scientists and the public that they are trying to reach to co-create excellent, evidence-based science communication.

**Dr. Nina Martin** is a scientist and science communicator at the Johns Hopkins International Vaccine Access Center. While obtaining a PhD in Molecular Microbiology & Immunology from Johns Hopkins School of Public Health, Nina started the Public Health United podcast to learn about the success and challenges scientists face when communicating science. Interests: figuring out how to engage the public on science in fun, creative ways, evidence-based teaching methods & science communication, baking, traveling, talking about vaccines, and her dog, Clark Kent.

### SEPTEMBER 16

#### “Performance Poetry Heals the Grieving Heart”

Gayle Danley  
*Award-Winning Slam Poet*

Join Gayle Danley for an electrifying 40-minute performance featuring her original poetry expressing and sharing her experience with grief and loss. This cathartic performance

will feature raw emotion and foster a sense of community and hope among all attendees. Following the presentation, Gayle will host an informative question and answer session.

**Gayle Danley** is a championship poet and grief writer who has won both the national and international poetry slam titles. Her passion is teaching kids, through slam poetry, how to soothe their wounds. Danley traces her love for words, especially spoken word, to her childhood in Georgia, where she soaked up encyclopedias and carried around a book of rhymes (“Jack Sprat could eat no fat...” “Fuzzy Wuzzy was a bear...”) because she adored how silly they were. “She was always reading and going to the library,” reports her uncle, who with his wife raised Danley as a child.

Danley has been named the Maryland Library Association’s Poet of the Year for 2018, the Young Audiences of Maryland Artist of the Year, and Young Audiences National Artist of the Year. She recently joined the Kennedy Center’s roster of master teaching artists, providing high-level arts integration workshops for language arts educators. She has been featured on *60 Minutes*, in the *Baltimore Sun*, and the *Washington Post*. Her alma maters include Howard University and Syracuse University.

### SEPTEMBER 23

#### “From Head Shops to Whole Foods: The Rise and Fall of Activist Entrepreneurs”

Joshua Clark Davis  
*Assistant Professor of History, Division of Legal, Ethical and Historical Studies, University of Baltimore*

The talk will look at political activists from the 1960s to today who have started businesses as vehicles for advancing their movements and disseminating their messages. These businesses operated all over the country, including in Baltimore, where feminists, Black Power activists, hippies, and environmentalists have all run their own small shops, including places like Red Emma’s today.

**Joshua Clark Davis** teaches and researches broadly in twentieth-century United States history, with a focus on capitalism, social movements, urban history, and African American history. Josh’s writing has appeared in the *Washington Post*, *Slate*, *Jacobin*, and *Black Perspectives*, and his research has

been supported by fellowships from the National Endowment for the Humanities and the Fulbright Scholar Program.

Joshua is also a devoted public historian with a deep interest in working with communities beyond universities. He serves on the advisory board of the Baltimore Uprising 2015 Archive Project and as a research associate for the Library of Congress’s Radio Preservation Task Force. He also co-directs “Media and the Movement,” a NEH-funded oral history and radio digitization project on activists of the Civil Rights and Black Power era who worked in media.

### SEPTEMBER 30

#### “Should Humanists Proselytize?”

Hugh Taft-Morales  
*Ethical Leader*

Many people like Ethical Culture because it tries to make the world a better place while defending freedom of thought and the uniqueness of every individual. How do we recruit people to help us in our ethical mission without crossing the thin line between advocacy and manipulation? For example, should humanists proselytize? Hugh Taft-Morales explores how we can promote our values, grow our movement, and protect individual dignity and autonomy.

**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.

**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](https://vimeo.com/user4409178) to see video recordings of many of our platforms from the last several years.

### WORKSHOP – FROM GRIEF TO GREATNESS: WRITING AND SHARING POETRY TO PROCESS PAIN

Sunday, September 16, 1:00 – 3:00 p.m.

Master Teaching Poet Gayle Danley will lead participants through her fun, simple, four-step process for writing and sharing performance poetry. Participants of all skill levels will have the opportunity to craft their first poem and share it in a loving, compassionate space. No expectations, no pressure, just love.

## Did You Know?

The **Caring Committee** provides support to BES members that includes (but is not limited to) visiting during illness, sending cards or flowers to support a significant challenge or celebrate a life event (hospitalization, loss of a loved one, birth of a child, getting married, etc.), assisting a member in need and/or financially distressed, and providing information or referrals to social services (housing, employment, etc.).

The Society will accept donations from members and non-members who designate that a given donation be used for The Caring Fund. Please contact the Treasurer, Richard Heffern at [richardheffern@hotmail.com](mailto:richardheffern@hotmail.com). To join the Caring Committee, please contact the Chairperson, Jeanne Sears.

# bmorethical t-shirts

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