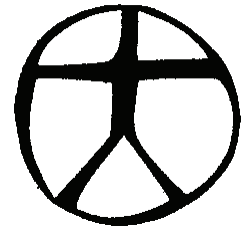


# BESpeak



April 2011

Newsletter of the Baltimore Ethical Society

## Sunday Platforms

10:30 am  
(details on pages 4 and 5)

April 3

“The War On Drugs -  
Unintended Consequences ”

*Major Neill Franklin*  
Executive Director of Law  
Enforcement Against Prohibition

April 10

“Pythagoras and  
Dark Energy”

*Donald C. Helm, Ph.D.*

April 17

“Race,  
the Death of the Public,  
and the Neoliberal Turn”

*Lester K. Spence, Ph.D.*  
Assistant Professor, Political  
Science, Johns Hopkins Univ.

April 24

“Rampant Inequality:  
The Hidden Cause of the  
Great Recession”

*Joseph M. Schwartz*  
Professor of Political Science,  
Temple University

May 1

“Hope, Courage, and  
Leadership”

*Hugh Taft-Morales*

## Other Activities

(details on page 2, 7, and 8)

Moveable Treats  
Sun., April 3

Poetry Group  
Sun., April 3, 9:30 am

Board Meeting  
Sun., April 3 - 12:30 pm

Movie Night  
Fri., April 8 - 7:30 pm

Mindfulness Meditation  
Sun., April 10 - 9:30 am

Program Committee  
Sun., April 10 - 12:30 am

Ethical Action  
Outing  
Thurs., April 14, 5 - 8 pm  
Moveable Feast

Newcomers' Meeting  
Sun. April 24, 12:00 pm

## Snack Schedule

Last names starting with:

April 3: A to F

April 10: G to L

April 17: M to R

April 24: S to Z

## Ethical Quote

by Algernon Black

Humanism must offer a view of life which recognizes that there are many ways of knowing, that humankind is not the center of the universe, that more than a way of seeing life, must be a way of living, an ethic making for survival and for world community . . . We carry our faith that every person can kindle and nurture the sacred fire within, the fire of truth, the fire of life, the fire that illuminates every life and brings new light, warmth, color to all the world.

Ethical Humanist  
Sunday  
School  
10:30 am -  
Noon



[bmorethical.org](http://bmorethical.org)

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Explore BES on the Web at  
www.BaltimoreEthicalSociety.org  
Web Master.....Emil Volcheck

*The President's Column will return next month.*

**Congratulations to BES' Leader Hugh Taft-Morales on his new (additional) position as Leader of The Ethical Humanist Society of Philadelphia!**

**Ethical Action Outing**

**April 14th 5 - 8 PM**

Baltimore Ethical Society Leader Hugh Taft-Morales is organizing an ethical action outing for Thursday April 14, from 5:00-8:00PM, to **Moveable Feast**, at 901 N. Milton Avenue. Moveable Feast provides nutritious foods and other services in order to preserve the quality of life for people with HIV/AIDS and other life-threatening conditions. BES has been donating tasty dessert treats to Moveable Feast for years. Come see their new facility and offer some help in their kitchen. Last year they served 1100-1300 clients each week. Hugh may be able to offer a ride to some people to and from BES. Maybe we can all grab a quick dinner afterwards! E-mail him by April 7 at [leader@baltimoreethicalsociety.org](mailto:leader@baltimoreethicalsociety.org).

**May 1 Platform Preview**

**“Hope, Courage, and Leadership”**  
*Hugh Taft-Morales*  
*Leader, The Baltimore Ethical Society*

The tremendous challenges that face humanity in the 21st century demand diverse and shared leadership. That's why we need Ethical Culture. Ethical Culture asks each of us to be a leader, and that requires hope and courage - hope which understands grim reality but sees a better day; courage that admits our fear, but faces it with resolve. For 60 years the Baltimore Ethical Society has nurtured such leadership. The future asks us once again to rise up and live out the true meaning of our creed through deed.

# Ethical Inspiration by Leader Hugh Taft-Morales

As I was standing in a prayer circle with about 25 other members of the clergy, I wondered how well I would do swimming in these theistic seas. I was called to Ethical Culture Leadership as a second career despite my skepticism about traditional religions. I was drawn by both the aching need in the world all around us, and a yearning to embrace more deeply the best in others and myself. I knew that to do this work I would probably have to wade into the religious waters of interfaith work. So I was here as a guest at a late winter Clergy Caucus organized by BUILD (Baltimoreans United in Leadership Development).

As the prayer concluded, Rob English, director of BUILD introduced Sean Closkey, President of TRF Development Partners. This unassuming but influential developer spoke about how the new City Arts Building came to stand at 440 E. Oliver. This \$14 million investment offers affordable housing and arts space as part of a broad strategy to rebuild the inner city a few blocks at a time. By creating “situations of strength” - like this one linking the Johns Hopkins Hospital area development to the railway station - BUILD hopes to offer current residents a safer, affordable alternative to the run down tenements that scar Baltimore.

BUILD is just one of many Industrial Area Foundation groups throughout the country that bring together diverse interests around a common goal: repairing the frayed social fabric of American cities through alliances of voluntary institutions including religious congregations, labor groups, homeowner associations, settlement houses, schools, and more.

These grand goals took on concrete form when I spoke with Rev. Hector Rodriguez, a Episcopal minister with a congregation in southeast Baltimore. A number of families he knew were living in unsustainable situations

and he needed a couple of apartments for them. Plans were made to offer them some newly available units. His work, and the Arts building before us, made clear to me that this was a pragmatic group looking to make this life - here and now - more humane.

As we moved back inside to begin the business portion of this clergy caucus, I was even more impressed with the commitment level. Cuts to education being proposed in the Maryland legislature were discussed. “We have to speak for the children,” one member urged. “February 28th we have buses ready. How many from your congregation are you bringing to Annapolis?” As they went around the table, almost every clergy member offered their best guess as to how many congregants or school community members they could convince or cajole into giving up a half-day of their life - “five,” “two,” “ten.” “How many fill a bus?” one asked. “Thirty-six.” “Thirty-six then,” was the reply. Some cheers filled the room.

Since I am a little too young to have been fully engaged in the civil rights movement when it was at its height, I can't be certain, but it seemed to me that a small piece of history was being replayed. I felt a religious energy that I imagined infused those marching from Selma to Montgomery, or serving time in crowded Birmingham jail cells. Whatever limitations I have for tolerating theistic language, they had faded into the background. While Rob English and his core of BUILD activists might call the energy “the spirit of the lord,” it didn't matter to me what they called it. I saw in their commitment an ethical compassion that inspired me the rest of the day, and I still feel it today.

I am thrilled that Rob will be able to come speak at BES on Sunday, May 15. Check out their website and learn about the many other programs that I cannot cover here:

*(Continued on page 7)*

## Sunday Platform Programs

April 3

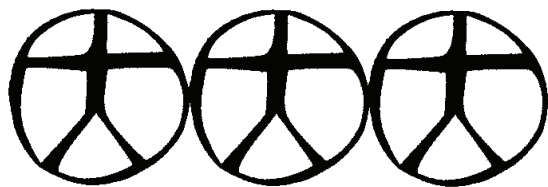
“The War On Drugs -  
Unintended Consequences ”

*Major Neill Franklin*

*Executive Director of Law Enforcement  
Against Prohibition*

This insightful talk is designed to educate the average citizen or the lifelong policy maker. The "War On Drugs," designed and implemented in the early 1970s with goals to reduce death, crime, disease and addiction, has not only failed to accomplish any of these goals, but amplified some of them. Additionally, it is responsible for many unintended consequences such as the prison industrial complex, poisonous and dangerous products, accessibility of drugs to children, increased overdose deaths, increased rates of AIDS and Hepatitis, and an increase in crime, violence and murders.

Major Neill Franklin, a 34-year law enforcement veteran, retired from the Maryland State Police in 1999 where he rose through the ranks from undercover narcotics agent to commander of the Bureau of Drug and Criminal Enforcement, Northeast Region. After retiring, Major Franklin was recruited by the Baltimore Police Commissioner to reconstruct and command Baltimore's Education and Training Division and was soon after promoted to Chief of Human Resources. In 2004 Major Franklin joined the Maryland Transit Administration Police Force as commander of the Detective Bureau and on July 13, 2010, he resigned to become the executive director for Law Enforcement Against Prohibition (LEAP).



April 10

“Pythagoras and Dark Energy”

*Donald C. Helm, Ph.D.*

Pythagoras, the world's first “mathematician,” invented the word “kosmos,” which he defined to be the ordered structure of nature. During the 6th to 4th centuries B.C., the Pythagoreans were a small secretive cult of ascetics who step by step discovered abstract mathematics. Their central metaphysical doctrine was that our natural surroundings are an incarnation of the logical arrangement of what they called “number.” Open-minded curiosity defines the group of Ionian Greeks we now call the “pre-Socratics.” This curiosity reached across the centuries to ignite the thinking of Copernicus, Kepler, Galileo, Newton, and others. Why did science refrain from pursuing theological issues and when and why did it begin to avoid metaphysical issues as well? The speaker will share this exciting epic that continues to the present day.

Don Helm is a member of the Baltimore Ethical Society. During his first three years in college he followed the family tradition of majoring in classical Greek within the philosophy department. Inspired by Pythagoras, he switched to mathematics in his senior year. He holds an A.B. degree (cum laude) in mathematics from Amherst College, an M.Div. in theology from the Hartford Seminary, and an M.S. and Ph.D. in engineering from Cal in Berkeley. Don has formally retired from a number of institutions of scientific research and of higher learning [namely, in chronological order: the U.S. Geological Survey; the University of California (Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory); the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation (Australia's flagship governmental research group); the University of Nevada, Reno; and Morgan State University]. He is currently Emeritus Chair of Excellence within the U.S. Department of Energy's national program of Samuel P. Massie chaired professorships. Further bio-information is available from Who's Who in America.

## Sunday Platform Programs *cont'd.*

April 17

“Race, the Death of the Public,  
and the Neoliberal Turn”

*Lester K. Spence, PhD*

*Assistant Professor, Political Science,  
Johns Hopkins University*

Over the past forty years we've seen the progressive role of government diminish, while the punitive role of government has increased markedly. The very concept of "the public" is under threat. My talk addresses the role race and racism plays in the move towards punitive governance and I end with a discussion about ways to resist this turn and rebuild the public.

Lester Spence is Assistant Professor of Political Science and Africana Studies at Johns Hopkins University. His specialties include black politics, racial politics, urban politics, public opinion, and American political thought. Interested in studying and contesting the reproduction of inequality, his work has appeared in academic journals (including the American Journal of Political Science, Political Research Quarterly, Political Analysis, the WEB Dubois Review, and the National Political Science Review), and in the popular press (Urbanite Magazine, Salon.com, Africana.com, TheRoot.com, the Washington Post, thegrio.com).

His book *Stare in the Darkness: The Limits of Hip-hop and Black Politics* will be published by the University of Minnesota Press in 2011 and empirically examines the political effect of hip-hop on black communities. He is working on a new book examining the neoliberal turn in black politics.

The 2009 recipient of Johns' Hopkins prestigious Excellence in Teaching Award (given yearly to the best teacher as judged by faculty, staff, alumni, and students), Dr. Spence is known for his ability to not only explain complex information in ways that diverse populations can understand and appreciate, but also for his willingness to mentor students. Spence appears regularly on NPR and provides expert commentary. He received both his bachelor's and doctoral degree from the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor. A proud native of the Detroit area, he is also a husband and a father of five.

April 24

“Rampant Inequality:  
The Hidden Cause of the Great Recession”

*Joseph M. Schwartz*

*Professor of Political Science, Temple University*

Joseph Schwartz will argue that the rampant growth of inequality over the past thirty-five years played a major role in the Great Recession. The decline in the real wages of working people contributed to a global crisis of overproduction and underconsumption. To sustain their modest standard of living, working families went heavily into debt. United States transnationals, on the other hand, could no longer earn profits at home by producing useful goods and thus turned to foreign outsourcing and financial speculation.

These two trends -- the decline in real living standards and the dependence of the global economy on asset bubbles to sustain economic growth -- caused the Great Recession. Despite the conservative nostrums that only further cuts in working people's wages and benefits can lead to economic recovery (a view accepted by many moderate Democrats), long-term global economic health must be rooted in a more egalitarian distribution of income and wealth, and an economy that serves human needs rather than short-term corporate profits.

Joseph M. Schwartz is Professor of Political Science at Temple University where he teaches political theory and American politics. He is the winner of several university teaching awards. Schwartz's most recent book, *The Future of Democratic Equality: Reconstructing Social Solidarity in a Fragmented United States* (Routledge, 2009) argues that rampant inequality can only be overcome if diverse, but disempowered social groups build a sense of solidarity founded upon their common humanity.

Long active on the democratic left, Schwartz serves as a National Vice-Chair of Democratic Socialists of America (DSA). Schwartz received his PhD in Political Science from Harvard University and his B.A. from Cornell. He also holds a second B.A. from Oxford University where he was a Marshall Scholar.

## Sunday Morning Volunteer Schedule

Date	Presiding	Sound	Sunday School	Opening/Closing
April 3	Hugh Taft-Morales	John Reuter	Karen Elliott	Kirk Mullen
April 10	Judy Katz	Karen Elliott	Kirk Mullen	Karen Elliott
April 17	Diana Corbett	Emil Volcheck	Rosemary Klein	Emil Volcheck
April 24	Karen Elliott	Karen Elliott	Rosemary Klein	Karen Elliott

NOTE: If you are unable to attend when scheduled, notify Karen Elliott (platform duties) or Kirk Mullen (Sunday School).

## Ethical Action Spotlight!

*Spring is here, and so is a great opportunity for BES members to support an innovative new movement with the potential to transform Baltimore: Urban Farming.*

When we arrived at Real Food Farms in Clifton Park the sun was bright and the wind brisk. The scent of damp earth filled the air. Lisa Alderson, my wife Maureen, and I grabbed our work gloves and headed off to the hoop houses, long greenhouses of curved polls and white plastic. There we met two urban farmers, Steve and Tyler, who were preparing for another volunteer morning the day before the official arrival of spring.

It was my second visit to Real Food Farms, the first being in the winter when Maya Kosok gave me a private tour of this growing – excuse the pun – Civic Works project. You may recall that Maya spoke at BES in February about “Ethical Eating.” As we walked down the rows of chard and carrots still growing in January, she explained the four interconnected goals of Real Food Farms: 1) to improve neighborhood and low-income access to healthy affordable food; 2) to stimulate a vibrant local agriculture sectors and employment in Baltimore; 3) to help Baltimore school students learn about healthy nutrition, food systems caddies, and spreaders made progress obvious, and the spirits were high as we made completed our and environmental sustainability; and, 4) to protect the environment. This dynamic combination of issues struck me as both bold and pragmatic. It is why I was back again to contribute to the cause.

“Where do we start?” I asked Tyler who was pushing a wheelbarrow piled with rakes and shovels. “Grab any implement of destruction,” he said, “and clear out between those flags.” Dotted along the scrubby ground were rows of red and yellow flags on wire posts, site of a future, sixth hoop house. We started out a small group, but by ten o’clock there were about twenty-five of us. Most were young adults - some from meet-up groups interested in making Baltimore a more livable city, some friends of Maya or her fiancé Max. Our increasing number was important when we started digging into a freshly delivered mountain of mulch. An assembly line of loaders, wheelbarrow caddies, and spreaders made progress obvious, and the spirits were high as we made completed our second full row of mulch and broke for a potluck lunch.

*(continued on the next page)*

**Poetry Group  
April 3, 9:30 am**

*If April showers  
Bring May flowers  
Will poems now  
Produce a cow?*

**Bring one or more poems on the topic of the month. For the topic or more info, contact poet@BaltimoreEthicalSociety.org**

**Ethical Mindfulness  
Meditation**

**April 10 at 9:30 am**

**Breathing in I know I am breathing in. Breathing out I know I am breathing out.**

It's that simple. The teachings of Thich Nhat Hanh from an Ethical point of view.

**No experience needed.**

**Questions? Contact KarenSElliott@aol.com .**

**Second Friday  
Ironweed Film Club**

**Friday, April 8, 7:30 p.m.**

To mark the occasion of Earth Day, the April selection for the BES Ironweed Film Club is "Fuel". FUEL is a comprehensive and entertaining look at energy in America: a history of where we have been, our present predicament and a solution to our dependence on foreign oil. Rousing and reactionary, FUEL is an amazing, in-depth, personal journey of oil use and abuse as it examines wide-ranging energy solutions other than oil, the faltering US auto and petroleum industries, and the latest stirrings of the American mindset toward alternative energy. Interviews with a wide range of environmentalists, policy makers, educators, and "green" celebrities such as Barbara Boxer, Richard Branson, Sheryl Crow, Woody Harrelson, Robert Kennedy Jr., Willie Nelson, Julia Roberts, and Neil Young, offer serious fuel for thought. (111 min.) More information on the Ironweed website at <http://www.ironweedfilms.com/fuel> . The screening is open to members of BES and the BES Ironweed Film Club. Ask Emil about free membership in the film club (email [volcheck@acm.org](mailto:volcheck@acm.org), cell 443/791-9910). Donations are requested for refreshments.

**Ethical Inspiration** *cont'd from page 3*

<http://www.buildiaf.org/>. I hope we will consider becoming a part of BUILD. I believe BES could be served by getting to know the dedicated group of clergy and educators and activists dedicated to rebuilding Baltimore a block at a time. While I am just beginning to know them, the relationship has brought me vibrant ethical inspiration.

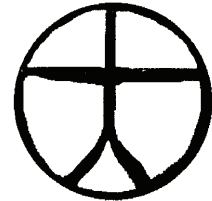
**Ethical Action Spotlight** *cont'd*

Advertising with my BES "bmorethical" t-shirt, I spoke with other volunteers as we ate and was impressed by the optimistic and innovative visions most had for a very different sort of a city. Many believed that urban farming was a transformational movement. Certainly this unused plot of land was being transformed into fertile crop rows, but the neighborhood, the city and the volunteers was also renewed by this Civics Works project. After only a couple of years in existence, Real Food Farms is already thriving. I hope others at BES get a chance to feel the spirit that stayed with me – despite the sore muscles – for the rest of the weekend! I urge you to grab a friend and head off to Real Food Farms for a volunteer morning. Find out more about this opportunity on their website [<http://real-food-farm.org/>], or speak with Lisa Alderson or me!

*Do you have an ethical action commitment or event you are willing to share in the newsletter? Please contact Hugh at [Leader@BaltimoreEthicalSociety.org](mailto:Leader@BaltimoreEthicalSociety.org).*

# BESpeak

Baltimore Ethical Society  
306 W. Franklin St., Ste. 102  
Baltimore, MD 21201-4661



**NEWSLETTER**  
**Please do not delay!**  
**TIME VALUE**

## **Newcomers' Meeting**

**Sunday April 24 at 12:30 pm**

New to the Society and interested in learning more? Attended a meeting or two? Thinking about joining? Come to the Newcomers' Meeting, held following the last platform of every month, and learn more about Ethical Culture and about our Society—its history, its philosophy, and its organization. Meetings last about one hour and attendance is recommended before becoming a member.

## **Help Moveable Feast**

**Baked Goods - April 3**  
**Other Items - Every Sunday**

Support Moveable Feast in their work to feed people with AIDS or breast cancer and their families. Guidelines for donations are posted at the Society. For more information about Moveable Feast and their many additional programs, visit them on the web at [www.mfeast.org](http://www.mfeast.org).

Welcome to "BESpeak", the newsletter of the Baltimore Ethical Society, free to members of BES. If you have asked for a paper copy, the date to the right of your name is the last month you will receive the newsletter unless you request that it be extended. We also ask that you make a contribution to help defray the costs of printing and mailing. Send checks payable to BES to: BESpeak, 306 W. Franklin St., Ste. 102, Baltimore, MD 21201. Thank you.

**Anyone wishing to receive an e-mail copy of each month's programs and a link to the full BESpeak should send an e-mail to [admin@BaltimoreEthicalSociety.org](mailto:admin@BaltimoreEthicalSociety.org).**