

# BESpeak

MARCH 2014

NEWSLETTER OF THE BALTIMORE ETHICAL SOCIETY

## The Whole is Greater: Networking in Humanism

by Hugh Taft-Morales, BES Leader

“The whole is greater than the sum of its parts,” is a phrase attributed to Aristotle that holds a lot of truth. Laboring with others can achieve more than laboring alone. Members of BES have already tapped into energy by working with the Baltimore Coalition of Reason and other groups that share our values. This column – a follow up on my February *BESpeak* reflections on Lay Leadership Summer School – reinforces the importance of reaching beyond 306 W. Franklin to the rest of Ethical Culture.

For those new to BES, you may not know that we are in *federation with 25 other Ethical Societies as part of the American Ethical Union*. Together we support and benefit from the American Ethical Union in many ways. We donate money, volunteers, and ideas and in return the AEU staff and Board do for its members what no member alone could do. For example, they train and certify Leaders, for which I am deeply grateful. My years of preparation for Leadership here in Baltimore were valuable and rewarding in multiple ways.

The AEU, now staffed with a part-time Executive Director, Bart Worden, also seeks to connect Ethical Societies so they can support each other and speak with one voice about important national ethical issues. And, since 1947, we have been represented at the United Nations by our advocates in National Ethical Service (NES). The AEU also supports all Societies through the *AEU Dialogue* newsletter, the *Ethical Action Report*, and the National Leaders Council.

Another exciting opportunity our federation offers is the AEU Annual Assembly this year in Chicago on May 1-4. This Assembly offers the chance to network, to acquire skills and knowledge about managing the growth of BES, and to learn about issues close to both the hearts of many of our members and the movement at large that is captured by this year’s Assembly theme: *“Revitalizing Democracy: Money, Power and Politics.”* You will also be able to meet our new National Director of Ethical Education, Dale McGowen, author of *Parenting Beyond Belief* and creator of



(continued on page 7)

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

(details on pages 4-5)

#### MARCH 3

#### “Ending the War on International Law”

Don Kraus  
CEO, GlobalSolutions.org

#### MARCH 9

#### “Eleanor Roosevelt and Ethical Humanism”

Hugh Taft-Morales  
Leader, Baltimore Ethical Society

#### MARCH 16

#### “Current Feminist Issues in Maryland”

Sara Wilkinson  
President, Maryland NOW

#### MARCH 23

#### “Humanizing Art”

Hugh Taft-Morales  
Leader, Baltimore Ethical Society

#### MARCH 30

#### “On Stealing Ideas”

Ben Klemens  
Principal Researcher,  
U.S. Census Bureau

### ETHICAL HUMANIST SUNDAY SCHOOL

WITH LINDA JOY BURKE

Every Sunday  
10:30 a.m. – Noon

Separate supervision provided  
for preschoolers aged one to four.

# BESpeak

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## Issue 437

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

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Programs..... Emil Volcheck  
Public Relations.....Ken Brenneman  
and Paul Furth  
Ethical Education .....Argentine Craig

### ACTIVITY CONTACTS

Film Club..... Emil Volcheck  
Meditation ..... Karen Elliott  
Baking Night..... Lisa Alderson  
Poetry..... Kirk Mullen  
Workshops ..... Hugh Taft-Morales

### ETHICAL CULTURE/ HUMANIST OFFICIANTS

Karen Elliott and Kirk Mullen  
Coordinator .....Kathryn Sloboda

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

**On the web at [bmorethical.org](http://bmorethical.org)**

# Divided Conscience

by Emil Volcheck, BES President



While serving jury duty in January at the Clarence Mitchell Courthouse, I faced an ethical challenge. The judge told us, the potential jurors, that the defendant was charged with possession of heroin and an open container of alcohol. In 2008, David Simon and other writers of HBO's *The Wire* published an essay in *Time* magazine that called for jurors to acquit defendants charged with nonviolent drug crimes. They wrote "If asked to serve on a jury deliberating a violation of state or federal drug laws, we will vote to acquit, regardless of the evidence presented. Save for a prosecution in which acts of violence or intended violence are alleged, we will - to borrow Justice Harry Blackmun's manifesto against the death penalty - no longer tinker with the machinery of the drug war. No longer can we collaborate with a government that uses nonviolent drug offenses to fill prisons with its poorest, most damaged and most desperate citizens." I was excited. I had a chance to heed Simon's call and join their campaign.

The presiding judge began a process of questioning the jurors, called *voir dire*, to determine if they had any biases that might influence how they would vote. The judge asked if any jurors had "feelings about the nature of the charges so strong that they would prevent you from serving impartially on a jury." Three hands went up immediately, but I was conflicted. I knew that if I said anything, I would not be picked to serve on the jury. When I was called to speak to the judge about a different question, I told the judge I had concerns that there was too much prosecution of nonviolent drug offenses. He asked me "Can you compartmentalize your concerns and apply the law?" I could have done that. However, I didn't want to be in a position where I promised to apply a law that I didn't believe in. I faced what Felix Adler called the "pain of divided conscience." I had to balance respect for the judicial process that required a truthful response during *voir dire* with my desire to oppose a misguided criminal justice system. So I told the judge that I didn't know. The court did not pick me to serve on that jury.

I felt angry and disappointed with myself. I was trying to be honest, but was I just showing my lack of civil courage? Was I conceding a place on that jury to someone with less social conscience? Even though David Simon and I have never met, I felt like I let him down. Still I think I made the right decision.

## NOMINATING COMMITTEE

A Nominating Committee has been appointed to propose candidates for officers and members-at-large of the Board for the 2014-2015 Term. The committee members are Ken Brenneman, Ben Busby, Argentine Craig, Stephen Meskin, Janey Solwold, and Mav Vaughan. If you are interested in learning more about serving please speak to a member of the committee.

## FLOWER POWER IS HERE!

Want a beautiful garden this spring? Want to help BES? Now you can do both! Get your seeds and bulbs through *Flower Power* and BES gets some money in return. Thanks to a joint initiative between Gardener's Supply and Dutch Gardens, over a million people are invited to participate each year. BES member and master gardener Rosalie attests to the high quality of the bulbs and plants. Also, purchases have a 100% money back guarantee and are shipped at the appropriate time for planting in your location.

You can either pick up a catalogue and order form at BES or just go online to our BES Flower Power page at [www.flowerpowerfundraising.com/i/t/407705/E2f9Z545651P](http://www.flowerpowerfundraising.com/i/t/407705/E2f9Z545651P). The catalogue has more complete information about the products, but ordering on line is fast and easy! You can help BES even further by sharing this site with your friends and family or on Facebook. Let's help BES and our gardens flourish this year!

## Making Life Easy

by Stephen Meskin, BES Treasurer

Let me say thank you from BES to our many new supporters this year. Whether or not you have already sent me your pledge commitment, there are some things you should know. First, what you indicate on the yellow card represents the financial contribution you will make by June 30, 2014, while what you indicate on the blue card represents your financial contribution by June 30, 2015. You **don't** have to send a check (or an old sock full of pennies) along with the cards, but we would really like to see the blue card filled out along with the yellow so that we may better plan our next fiscal year.

Second there are a number of ways to make your promised financial contribution. While there is nothing wrong with giving it all at once, dividing it into smaller pieces may make it easier for you.

■ Some members drop a check in the basket or mail it to BES each month.

■ Some members have told their bank to mail a check to me at BES each month which saves them the bother of remembering to bring their check book, or saves postage and writing a check. Most banks do not charge for this service.

■ One member puts cash in the basket each Sunday. That's dividing a contribution into really small easy to digest bites. However, if you do contribute cash, *please put it in an envelope found in the basket and write your name on it so I can record your pledge payments.*

If there is another way you want to contribute, please discuss it with me. I am open to reasonable alternatives. For example, PayPal will work under some circumstances. (Old socks may not work.)

Most importantly, if you have any concern about ultimately meeting your pledge commitment, please discuss it with me, the sooner the better.

## OTHER ACTIVITIES

### Poetry Group

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

### Mindfulness Meditation

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

### Board Meeting

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

### Explorations in Bioethics and Medicine

Sunday, March 9, 4:00 p.m.

### Baking Night at Moveable Feast

Thursday, March 13, 5:45 p.m.

### Ignite Baltimore

Thursday, March 13, 6:00 p.m.

### Ethical Action Meeting

Sunday, March 16, 9:15 a.m.

### Family Board and Card Games Party

Sunday, March 16, 3:00 p.m.

### BES Eatery Social (B.E.S.)

Sunday, March 23, 1:00 p.m.

### BES Ironweed Film Club

Wednesday, March 26, 7:30 p.m.

### Newcomers Meeting

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

## SAVE THE DATE!

Annual Membership Meeting is April 27. Please plan to attend!

## 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    | March 2  |
| G to L    | March 9  |
| M to R    | March 16 |
| S to Z    | March 23 |
| Everyone! | March 30 |

**MARCH 2**

**“Ending the War on International Law”**

**Don Kraus**

*CEO, GlobalSolutions.org*

GlobalSolutions.org is a groundbreaking online movement for Americans who want the United States to take a responsible and cooperative role in the world. We are confronted with threats to world peace and stability on a daily basis; costly wars, mass atrocities, destructive climate change, dehumanizing globalization and the spread of nuclear weapons. International law provides a mechanism to address these threats. Don Kraus will report on efforts to increase U.S. support for international law, including the Congressional Report Card published by the Global Solutions Action Network.

**Don Kraus** is the President and Chief Executive Officer of GlobalSolutions.org and its political arm, the Global Solutions Action Network. Don previously served as Global Solutions’ Executive Vice-President where he directed its Government Relations Department and Political Action Committee. Prior to that, he served as the Executive Director of the Campaign for United Nations Reform and its affiliated political action committee, CUNR PAC. An expert in building U.S. political support for the U.N. and other international institutions, Don brings his considerable enthusiasm and drive to advocating for responsible global policies.

**MARCH 9**

**“Eleanor Roosevelt and Ethical Humanism”**

**Hugh Taft-Morales**

*Leader, Baltimore Ethical Society*

*“The important thing is neither your nationality nor the religion you professed, but how your faith translated itself in your life.”*

– Eleanor Roosevelt, My Day, September 16, 1943

Few people have done more to support Humanist values than Eleanor Roosevelt. During the longest term ever served as first lady, she demonstrated courageous independence championing racial and gender equality. Later she served as delegate to the UN, oversaw the creation of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and started the Encampment of

Citizenship with Ethical Culture leader Al Black. Come explore why she is a role model for Ethical Culturists today.

**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.

**MARCH 16**

**“Current Feminist Issues in Maryland”**

**Sara Wilkinson**

*President, Maryland NOW*

Although Maryland was recently found to be the best state for women, the Maryland Chapter of the National Organization for Women (Maryland NOW) is always seeking ways to improve women’s lives. Issues such as raising the minimum wage, eliminating discrimination against transgender people, and making sure workers can take time off to care for their families are some current legislative aims of the progressive feminist community. Learn how you can get involved in making positive change in Maryland. Visit their website at MarylandNOW.org.

**Sara Wilkinson** was elected President of Maryland NOW in May 2013. She previously led and helped reinvigorate the newly reestablished Baltimore NOW chapter by increasing its presence in Baltimore and helping to organize several events. Sara is leading Maryland NOW around feminist issues such as reproductive justice and human rights, and is working to bring the chapter into the digital age. Sara hails from Minnesota, having moved to Baltimore in 2010 after completing law school at the University of Minnesota. She works for Maryland Legal Aid, where she represents low-income people, especially seniors, with civil legal problems. She grew up in a feminist household and attended Smith College, partly inspired by alumnae Betty Friedan (1942) and Gloria Steinem (1956). She is fluent in Spanish, loves to travel, is married, and has two cats and a Bernese Mountain Dog.

*Explorations in Bioethics and Medicine:  
The Politicization of Bioethics*

**MARCH 23**  
“Humanizing Art”

Hugh Taft-Morales  
*Leader, Baltimore Ethical Society*

Prior to the Renaissance, the dominant direction in European art was upward, towards the heavens, reaching for God. As Aristotelian influences turned cultural perspective back to the earth, human beings dominated the artist's eye. From Da Vinci and Michelangelo to Rembrandt and Vermeer, beauty and truth came in human form. Join Hugh Taft-Morales as he explores this creative turn that fueled the aesthetics of modern humanism.

**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.

**MARCH 30**  
“On Stealing Ideas”

Ben Klemens  
*Principal Researcher, U.S. Census Bureau*

The concept of intellectual property as we know it today is only about three hundred years old, and its bounds are still openly debated. In the last few decades, the bounds of what can be patented has expanded, to the point of including printed text and even mathematical formulæ. In this talk, Ben Klemens will discuss the status of the expansion, and measure the changes against the goals of intellectual property law.

**Dr. Klemens** is a Principal Researcher in the Statistical Research Division of the U.S. Census Bureau. He has a doctorate in Social Science, specializing in microeconomics and game theory, from the California Institute of Technology. His career includes positions at the World Bank, National Institute of Mental Health, Brookings Institution, and the Free Software Foundation. He has published three books and numerous articles. He is the son of BES member Ronit Klemens.

**“REPRODUCTIVE JUSTICE”**

**Sunday, March 9, 4:00-5:30 p.m.**

The Reproductive Justice movement creates space for much broader discussions about women, “choice” and feminism. It expands discussions about reproductive oppression beyond abortion; argues for both negative and positive reproductive rights; and stresses that justice in the context of reproduction should encompass conception, pregnancy, childbirth choices, and choices about parenting. Come explore this whole host of issues with Leader Hugh Taft-Morales

**PARENTING WORKSHOP**

**Saturday, March 29, 1:00-4:00 p.m.**

The Northern Virginia Ethical Society is sponsoring a 3-hour parenting workshop and children's program at Green Hedges School (415 Windover Ave., NW, Vienna, VA 22180). “Building Stronger Families – Raising Confident and Compassionate Kids”, presented by Dara Feldman, author of *The Heart of Education: Bringing Joy, Meaning and Purpose Back to Teaching and Learning*.

The parent workshop will be held simultaneously as the children's program that will echo the values expressed in this course, in age-appropriate content. The children's program will also occur at Green Hedges. To learn more about this event and register go to [www.NOVES.org](http://www.NOVES.org).

**HELP NEEDED!**

If you'd like to help with the work of the **Caring Committee**, please speak to Kirk, Judy, or Emil.

The **Program Committee** is looking for volunteers to help with set up and clean up for snacks on Sundays as well as ideas for Platform speakers. Please see Angad, Ronit, Hugh, or Emil if you would like to help.

**IRONWEED**

**film**

**CLUB**

**Wednesday, March 26,  
7:30 p.m.**

Join us as we watch Robert Reich's award-winning film, *Inequality for All*, one of a series of Watch Parties happening in communities across America. Watch the trailer at [inequalityforall.com](http://inequalityforall.com).

Robert Reich writes "We're in the biggest economic slump since the Great Depression, and we can't seem to get out of it. Why? Because, exactly as in the 1920s, so much of the nation's income and wealth are going to the top, that the vast middle class doesn't have the purchasing power to keep the economy going. ...One of the best ways to help people understand the challenges we face, is with a movie that can grab an audience and move them to action."

Would you like to select films or help run the club? Please ask Emil. As of February 1st, BES has obtained an umbrella license from the Motion Picture Licensing Corporation (MPLC), which will allow us to screen a wider range of films. (Thanks to Richard Campbell for telling us about MPLC!)

## Invest in Yourself...

*Attend AEU Lay Leadership Summer School  
July 12-19, 2014 in North Carolina*

Created in 1996 to promote the evolution of Ethical Culture, the Summer School provides a special opportunity for committed leaders and members to strengthen skills, share ideas and ideals, and broaden inter-Society connections.

The Board of each Society may recommend up to four active members and staff, age 21 or older, who want to deepen their commitment to living Ethical Culture in their personal lives and to assist in the development of their Ethical Societies. If you are interested in this opportunity, contact Hugh at [leader@bmorethical.org](mailto:leader@bmorethical.org).

We have a wonderful staff this year. It includes: Jan Broughton, AEU Board Secretary and member Ethical Humanist Society of the Triangle (NC); Mary Herman, Leader, Washington Ethical Society; Diane Kirschner, Ethical Leader-in-training; Brooklyn Society; Paulo Ribeiro, Ethical Leader-in-training, Member of the Ethical Culture Society of Bergen County; Bart Worden, AEU Executive Director; Leader, Ethical Culture Society of Westchester; and Hugh Taft-Morales, Leader, Baltimore Ethical Society and Ethical Humanist Society of Philadelphia. Invest in yourself *and* Ethical Culture!

### **IGNITE BALTIMORE #14!**

**Thursday, March 13, 6:00 p.m. at the MICA Brown Center**

Five minutes, 20 slides. What would you say? At every Ignite Baltimore, 16 artists, technologists, thinkers, and personalities take the stage to answer this challenge. Admission is \$5. Purchase tickets and see videos of previous talks at <http://ignitebaltimore.com>. We will buy a limited number of tickets in advance for the group, but we encourage you to get your own. Join the Meetup at <http://meetu.ps/27PQ9n>.

### **FAMILY BOARD & CARD GAMES PARTY**

**Sunday, March 16, 3:00-6:45 p.m. at the home of Marjeta Cedilnic**

Join members of the Baltimore Parenting Beyond Belief Meetup for a board and card games party at the home of Marjeta Cedilnic in Howard County. Feel free to bring a game or play one of the many there. Please bring a snack or drink to share (or a small monetary contribution for the host instead). Come when you can, while the party lasts. Ms. Cedilnic is the lead organizer of the Maryland Chapter of Americans United for Separation of Church and State. Address and directions provided when you RSVP. For questions, please call her at 301-642-1065. Join the Meetup at <http://meetu.ps/LDN2H>.

## APPRECIATION FOR PLEDGE DRIVE DINNER CELEBRATION!

Thanks to everyone who contributed to a successful pledge drive dinner celebration event on Saturday, February 1, including Ben Busby, Argentine Craig, Karen Helm, Stephen Meskin, Nancy Poznak, Kathryn Sloboda, Janey Solwold, Hugh Taft-Morales, Emil Volcheck, Kathleen Wilsbach, and all the cooks who provided such delicious and plentiful food. See photos at <http://ppl.ug/S5okkVDfJ-E/>. Please submit your pledge cards if you have not already done so. Your pledges tell the Board how much resources we can commit to next year's budget that will be voted on at the Annual Membership Meeting on April 27.



## 99TH AEU ASSEMBLY

Come to the 99th AEU Assembly this year taking place in Skokie, Illinois, and sponsored by the Ethical Humanist Society of Chicago. The theme of our Assembly this year is: "Revitalizing Democracy! Money, Power & Politics." Go to [AEU.org](http://AEU.org) for more information!

## BES EATERY SOCIAL (B.E.S.)

Sunday, March 23, 1:00 p.m.

Members and friends are invited to go out together for lunch. We'll gather in the lobby at about 12:45 p.m. following post-platform snacks to decide what restaurant to visit. Everyone is encouraged to wear their BES shirts or other items to help promote the society. BES Eatery Social is held on a different Sunday each month to better provide members with the opportunity to attend. If you have any questions, please contact Adam at [synxr0nic@yahoo.com](mailto:synxr0nic@yahoo.com).

## BAKING NIGHT

Thursday, March 13,  
5:45–8:00 p.m.

Join BES members and others for this enjoyable outing at a great organization – check out their website at [www.mfeast.org](http://www.mfeast.org). Let Lisa Alderson know you are coming ([lialderson@gmail.com](mailto:lialderson@gmail.com)) and show up at Moveable Feast, 901 N. Milton Ave., Baltimore, MD, at 5:45 p.m. Park in front of building and enter through the door closest to Ashland Street. Let Lisa know if you'd like to carpool, and she'll try to match you up with another BES participant.

## The Whole is Greater

(continued from page 1)

the *Foundation Beyond Belief*. I hope many of you come to Chicago for this event. Register soon by visiting <https://www.regonline.com/1445280>.

Lay Leadership Summer School is a big commitment, but for me it was a challenging, transformative, and deeply rewarding experience. It pools tremendous talents and energies of our federation for the benefit both of those attending and the Ethical Societies to which they return ready to step more fully into lay leadership positions. If you are interested in this opportunity, please speak to me about it.

Regarding our *affiliation with the American Humanist Association*, for minimal commitment BES receives some wider exposure in the humanist community through the AHA's website that currently receives 400,000 hits a month, and advice through pamphlets, magazines, books, speakers, and bimonthly field action packets.

For those of you interested in finding out more about the AHA, consider going joining me in Philadelphia for their June 5–8 Conference, "*Let Humanism Ring!*" It will bring together hundreds of humanists and freethinkers for lectures, book signings, celebrity guests, networking opportunities, and fun. Visit [americanhumanist.org](http://americanhumanist.org) for more information or to register.

Whether you choose to go to North Carolina, Chicago, or Philadelphia, or not, keep on the look out for ways you can connect with the broader humanist community. No one has to feel isolated and intimidated by the ethical problems confronting us all. There is strength in numbers. Let's contribute to a whole that is greater than the sum of its parts!



**BALTIMORE ETHICAL SOCIETY**  
306 W. Franklin Street, Suite 102, Baltimore, MD 21201-4661

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

**ETHICAL ACTION MEETING**  
**Sunday, March 16, 9:15–10:15 a.m.**  
Come help plan the Ethical Action strategy for the Baltimore Ethical Society!

**NEWCOMERS MEETING**  
**Sunday, March 30, 12:30 p.m.**  
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. See Judy Katz or Emil Volcheck for more information.

**MINDFULNESS**  
*meditation*  
**Sunday, March 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.

**bmorethical**

Visit [bmorethical.org](http://bmorethical.org) and look for us on Facebook, Twitter, and MeetUp.com @bmorethical

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