

Ethically Speaking

53 Prospect Park West
at 2nd Street in Park Slope
www.bsec.org
bsecdirector@yahoo.com
718.768.2972

Sundays at the Meeting House

10:00 am: Members' Sharing Circle, Library

10:30—12:30 pm Children's Sunday Assembly

11:00—12:30pm Platform, Meeting Room

1:00pm or as noted Afternoon Program

Sunday Platforms

Jan 11, 11 am
Storytelling and Community with **Lee- Ellen Marvin**

Jan 18, 11 a.m. Martin Luther King Jr. Colloquy

Jan 25, 11 a.m. Civil Rights Festival with **CSA**

Feb 1, 11 a.m.
The Future of Race with **Rev. Osagyefo Sekou**

Feb 8, 11 am
Darwin & Ethics with Alan McGowan

Feb 15, 11 am
TBA

Feb 22, 11 am
Storytelling with **Fritz Williams**
Workshop 1pm

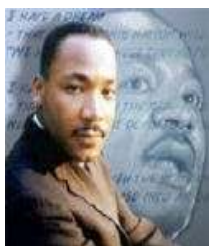
BSEC Platforms



Peace & Justice Activist, Lee- Ellen Marvin Shares with Brooklyn Society Sunday, January 11, 11am Storytelling and Community: the Charley Horwitz Memorial Platform

1pm Workshop: "Using Storytelling to Improve Your Activism"

Storytelling for activists! Learn the core skills used by storytellers to transform your messages into compelling narratives. This highly participatory workshop will explore the transformation of contemporary events into storytelling material. Start with newspaper clippings and apply the tools of structure, imagery, character, and rhythm to bend them into stories. As stories are developed, we'll talk about our performance resources, audiences, and responsibilities as storytellers. Bring a news clipping that interests you or receive one during the workshop.



Martin Luther King, Jr. Colloquy Sunday, January 18, 11am

For our colloquy on Jan 18, over Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. weekend and before President-elect Obama's inauguration: Tuesday, January 20th.

The core value of the quest for Dr. King's Beloved Community was agape love. 'Agape does not begin by discriminating between worthy and unworthy people...It begins by loving others for their sakes" and "makes no distinction between a friend and enemy; it is directed toward both...Agape is love seeking to preserve and create community."

(A colloquy is an intimate sharing in a circle around a theme.)



Civil Rights Festival with the Children's Assembly Sunday, January 25, 11am

Brooklyn Ethical's annual celebration with the Children's Assembly.

Inside this Issue	
President's Report	p.2
Good Coffee-house Schedule	p.2
Editor's Column	p.3
Save the Date	p.4
From the UN	p.4
CSA Schedule	p.5
Darwin's Birthday Celebration	p.6
Announcements/ Birthdays	p.6
Personal Notes	p.7



**The Good
Coffeehouse
Music Parlor**

**BROOKLYN'S HOME FOR
ACOUSTIC ROOTS MUSIC**

Our 34th Year

53 Prospect Park West at 2nd Street
Park Slope

Brooklyn, NY 11215

718-768-2972

January 9th

Adults: \$15 | Kids: \$6

Ernie Hawkins-Acoustic Blues

January 16th

Adults: \$10 | Kids: \$6

*Third Friday with Park Slope Food
Coop-Swing Street with Barry Brysen*

January 23rd-Closed

January 30th

Adults & Kids: \$15

*Night of Magic Advanced tickets
available @ Park Slope Copy Center
as of January 15th*

February 6th

Adults: \$10 | Kids: \$6

Beaucoup Blue-Americana Music

February 13th-Closed

February 20th

Adults: \$10 | Kids: \$6

*Third Friday with the Park Slope
Food Coop*

February 27th

Adults: \$10 | Kids: \$6

Frank & Nancy Moccaldi & Friends

DIRECTIONS BY MASS TRANSIT:

Q train to 7th Av station in Brooklyn; F
train to 7th Av; 2or 3 train to Grand
Army Plaza; B69 bus to 2nd St; B75
bus to Prospect

Park West; B41 or B71 bus to Grand
Army Plaza; B67 bus to 2nd St.

President's Report



Dear Brooklyn Society Members and Friends –

Happy New Year to you and yours! As we move forward in 2009, there is much to be grateful for and much to celebrate.

I am grateful for all the wonderful work volunteers have done at BSEC in 2008. I celebrate the range of efforts from participating in committees as leaders and doers to ensuring that we live our commitments and agreements among each other so very well! I am also grateful for the welcoming spirit of our members and visitors these past months. Sundays especially continue to so to be lively, enriching and welcoming at BSEC!

In ringing out the past calendar year, I congratulate all who volunteered to arrange the December craft fair and our holiday festivity. Special thanks go to Vandra Thorburn, Damal Edmond and Jean Rohe. And to all who participated...cheers to a rousing good time had by all!

I am also very grateful for the incredible contributions of our staff in administration (Damal Edmond), our Children's Sunday Assembly (Audrey Kindred, Simba Yangala & Gabrielle Belfiglio), and our Building and Grounds (Jason Dubin).

Following from the last newsletter, please note that the board has recommended extension of offers for part-time advising be made to both candidates identified by the committee. The work of crafting offers, discussion of on-going plans with the AEU Leaders Committee, and drafting of contracts for advising BSEC on programming and other activities is underway as I write. News to follow as contracts are signed and plans made.

And to the year ahead, there are many activities that will continue in earnest with strong groups at the ready to continue their good work. There are two that are especially important and need new participants: 2009 Leader search committee and our BSEC Communications Committee. Please see me, any board member, or Damal if you are interested.

Lastly, please note that the Board will hold a strategic planning session on Saturday, January 31st. Please see a trustee if you have ideas you would like to have considered.

Very best wishes to you and yours for 2009!

Warm regards,

Eda

Editor's Column

THOUGHT #1

I hope that the new Obama Administration will be able to deal with the unrealistic expectations that seem to have flowed from his hopeful messages during the campaign. At the present moment (December 26, 2008), as "The Onion" wittily observed, "the worst job in the United States has been given to a Black man." If he has any chance of success, two allowances must be made for almost everything he does: slower change than expected and compromise. Without these, he has little chance of succeeding.

THOUGHT #2

I wish that Obama's designee for Secretary of Education, Arne Duncan, will be properly informed about the damage that some of his "pay for grades" programs and the New Child Left Behind attack on education has done to the public schools in this country. I will try to resume the project I had initiated last year to inform the communities that are supposedly being served by these "teach to the test" and "data-driven" substitutes for education what harm their children are getting from these programs. Since, from what I understand, many members of these communities are under the mistaken impression that numerical data are a proof that learning is taking place in their schools, the task won't be an easy one.

THOUGHT #3

I hope that in the future, we at BSEC will be able to do more outreach to the communities nearby and open our forums for people with divergent views from ours, just as the President-elect has done with Rick Warren. It is only, I believe, through greater dialogue with people with whom we may strongly disagree on a number of issues but find common cause on others, that there is a chance for building a larger constituency for our own ethical views.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Dear Editor,

In response to your editorial, [Nov-Dec. 2008] I appreciate this thoughtful piece, but have a different point of view. Basically I see our local Society as a nurturing ground for the greatest diversity of leadership.... not a place we serve in lock-step, but a center where we entrust each other to our choices, find courage, and develop our skills to do whatever we do on the activist level from the spiritual source called ethical culture. Yet, i'm feeling we could benefit by trying your way. How might we try something simple? Is there a win/win between my point and yours?

Thanks for the excellent letter,
Martha Gallahue

Editor's Reply

Thank you for your response, Martha.

I am more a pragmatist than an idealist having gone through the Civil Rights period as an activist and seeing the self-destructive nature of idealism that is not tempered with a willingness to compromise. I fear this may happen in the Obama Administration where the perfect is the enemy of the good.. What I have seen in the various activities at Ethical Culture which prompted me to write my editorial is a lack of follow-through on the many worthy projects that are proposed and then seem to dissipate during the course of the year. I, myself, am at fault with an outreach project on education that never bore fruit. Perhaps if BSEC focuses on a single project that is an important, not exclusive, part of our agenda, we may see more tangible results than good intentions and monetary donations.



**"Thoughts for the
New Year"
by Joel Shatzky**

BSEC's Mission Statement

The Brooklyn Society for Ethical Culture is a humanistic, religious and educational fellowship promoting knowledge, love and practice of ethics-centered living. As a diverse and welcoming community, we assist each other in developing ethical ideals, exploring choices, navigating our life journeys, and working to realize a more just and compassionate world.

BSEC belongs to a federation of Ethical Culture & Ethical Humanist Societies and/or Fellowships in the U.S. known as the American Ethical Union

www.aeu.org



SAVE THE DATE



Jennifer Michael Hecht
@ Brooklyn Society for Ethical
Culture
February 16th, 7:30pm

Come out and hear **Jennifer Michael Hecht** discuss her works *Doubt: A History* and *The End of the Soul: Scientific Modernity, Atheism, and Anthropology*

*Sponsored by: Center for Inquiry
& Brooklyn Society for Ethical
Culture*



Inauguration Day
Tuesday, January 20th



January:
4th: Dennis Stallard

February:
28th: Stephen Klips

Be Well!

“Spirituality and Ethics in Human Rights Law” : Report from the Universal Ethics Working Group Week of Spirituality, 2008



The Universal Ethics Working Group’s panelists of the program “Spirituality and Ethics in Human Rights Law” noted three core principles - that ALL human beings are inherently spiritual whose well being requires us to connect conscience with universal principles. In this context, they are the architects for the ever expanding body of human rights law. Since all persons are called both to participate in and benefit from the principles of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, every person must know their rights for the UDHR to be realized. Human Rights Law is seen as a primary tool to honor the inherent worth and dignity of human beings.

One speaker suggested human rights law is key to the healing of nations, and one speaker addressed their need in such forgotten places as the prison system. After a panel presentation, participants in this program broke into small groups and offered feedback to the entire group. John Washburn, Founder of Americans or an International Criminal Court (AMICC) devoted to its global ratification, suggested that the transcendent possibility of the ICC is to offer redemptive hope to victims in conditions where restorative justice will never be enough. John Flynn, member of The Church of Gethsemane, a Presbyterian Church founded and led by formerly incarcerated persons and poet, shared his conversion experience after 23 years in prison, and Anglican Reverend Bishop Beroni Y. Ogwal-Abwang challenged us to help implement human rights in such areas as northern Uganda, one forgotten area in the world.

The panel was designed and moderated by Martha Gallahue and brought to a close by Genie Kagawa, co-implementer of the event. She quoted Ban Ki Moon who said, “It is our duty to ensure that these rights are a living reality...that they are known, understood and enjoyed by everyone, everywhere. It is often those who most need their human rights protected, who also need to be informed that the Declaration exists...and that it exists for them.”

Speakers were Audrey Kitagawa, Spiritual Leader of a world wide movement and Chair Person for the CSVGC, Widney Brown, Public Policy Director for Amnesty International, Reverend Liberato Bautista, CHAIR of CONGO and Assistant General Secretary for United Nations and International Affairs of The United Methodist Church, and Elizabeth Alexander, Pastor of the Church of Gethsemane, New York City. The program took place in Labouisse Hall, UNICEF House, on Wednesday, October 22nd, from 3:00-5:00 pm.

*Martha Gallahue – The National Service Conference of The American
Ethical Union*

Genie Kagawa – The Universal Peace Foundation



Children's Sunday Assembly Winter Schedule 2009

Contact CSA director, **Audrey Kindred** with any questions, requests,
RSVPs: akindred@gmail.com and (212)920-4483

Sunday, January 4th

10:30am-12:30 CSA

1:30pm-3:00pm YES Meeting: Youth (teens and young adults) -- RSVP

Sunday, January 11th

10:30am-12:30 CSA

1:30pm-3:00pm "Coming of Age" Meeting

Sunday, January 18th -NO CSA for MLK weekend

Sunday, January 25th :

11am Intergenerational Festival of Civil Rights

1:30pm-3:00pm Religious Education/Ethical Education Committee
Meeting (All welcome! If attending RSVP to akindred@gmail.com--
indicate need for childcare)

Sunday, February 1st

10:30am-12:30 CSA

SATURDAY, February 7th

2-5pm, in NYC's Society: DARWIN'S BIRTHDAY CELEBRATION!!!

Sunday, February 8th

10:30am-12:30 CSA

Sunday, February 15th -NO CSA for President's Day Weekend

Sunday, February 22

10:30am-12:30 CSA

1:00-3:00pm Religious Education/Ethical Education Committee Meeting
(All welcome! If attending RSVP to akindred@gmail.com--
indicate need for childcare)

Sunday, February 29

10:30-12:30 CSA

The Brooklyn Society for Ethical Culture (BSEC)

Damal Edmond,
Administrative Director
bsecdirector@yahoo.com

Board of Trustees Executive Committee:

President: Eda Kapsis
Vice President: Gregory Tewksbury
Treasurer: Vandra Thorburn
Secretary: Tasha Paley
Pledge Sec.: Tom Castelnovo

Trustees:

Fiona Boneham, Alec Gershberg,
Reina Horowitz, Dennis Stallard and
Rita Wilson (on leave)

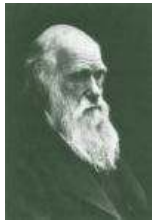
Board Emeritus: Constance Pigozzi
Leader Emeritus: Lois Kellerman

Next Newsletter Deadline: February 25

Send submissions to
bsecnews@gmail.com

Editor: Joel Shatzky
Proofreader: Vandra Thorburn





CHARLES DARWIN'S 200th BIRTHDAY CELEBRATION
2 p.m. to 5 p.m.
Saturday, February 7, 2009
New York Society for Ethical Culture
2 West 64th St and Central Park West

Fun Funky Food, Evolutionary Scavenger Hunt, Primate Paintings, Two Simultaneous Programs -- Lively Panel for Adults, Fun Stuff for Kids
And with an Intergenerational Wrap Up!

Currently formation of the program includes:
Dramatic Reading by the Ethical Culture Society of Suffolk County

SPECIAL PROGRAM FOR CHILDREN designed by Audrey Kindred with musician Jean Rohe

Why Fear Evolution? Interactive, Provocative Event for Adults

Keynote Speaker and Presider: Arnell Dowret of 'Equal Time for Free Speech' on WBAI

Response Panel Speakers:
John Teehan, Professor at Hofstra University, Religion from Evolutionary Prospective;
Reverend Tom Goodhue, Executive Director of Long Island Council of Churches

Program sponsors and designers: Ethical Humanist Society of Long Island, Brooklyn Society for Ethical Culture, Ethical Culture Society of Rockland County, New York Society for Ethical Culture, The Ethical Society of Suffolk County, and The Ethical Culture Society of Bergen

This special inter-society presentation from the NY Metro Area Ethical Culture Societies will provide an opportunity to meet, have fun and learn with fellow Ethical Culture members and others.

Happy Birthday!

Announcements



BSEC needs volunteers to assist with the **Good Coffeehouse (GCH)**. The GCH meets on scheduled Fridays from 8:00p.m. to 10:00p.m. Volunteers are asked to commit to one Friday per month where they will work with others to provide set-up, sound, and clean-up after the event. This is a great opportunity to hear some great music and meet some people. Please contact the office @ bsecdirector@yahoo.com if you are interested in helping.



Newcomer Supper, Friday, January 16, 2008 from 6:00p.m. to 8:00p.m. If your interested in finding out more about BSEC, please join us. Contact carolynmei@aol.com to R.S.V.P or for more information.



"Something New"

We are trying something new at the Good Coffeehouse Music Parlor: a pre-show "Meet the Musician" at 7:00 pm. We are particularly promoting this event to music schools and young musicians and their families. This is an opportunity to meet and converse with musicians in the intimate setting of the Library. We hope to generate a new cohort of fans for the musicians and the Coffeehouse. GCMP is wonderful and family-friendly entertainment and a must-do break from Friday night at the movies. **Make Friday nights time for live music and really good coffee at BSEC's GCMP.** We feature fair trade coffee and tea and the café is managed by Xena Brooks and Tyler Lurie. The plan is to build a team of teenagers to learn how to produce and manage the Good Coffeehouse Music Parlor. If you know of any teenagers that would be interested in joining this team, please call BSEC office (718 768 9272) and leave a message for Vandra.



Personal Notes.....



Robin Andrew Burns, Lisel's brother, died on Thursday, December 18, 2008, in Miami, Florida with two of his three sisters there with him. The night before his death, his group home housemates had filled his hospital room with hugs and cheer and staff from the Haven/Sunrise Center where he had lived for the last 3 decades.

Because his pulmonary, renal and heart systems were shutting down, he slept peacefully through the night. 56 years old; Robin Andrew Burns, a special Olympics local walker and plant nursery volunteer before his legs weakened some years ago.

Our greatest gratitude will always be to the African American women young and old who staffed his cottage 24/7 with respect and humor and consideration and high expectations. We're having a big EC life celebration in early February and had a breakfast at a local Denny's with his house staff to start begin planning it.

Lisel Burns
liselburns@earthlink.net





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Brooklyn, NY 11215-2629