



# ETHICALLY SPEAKING

*The Newsletter of the Brooklyn Society for Ethical Culture*

53 Prospect Park West at 2<sup>nd</sup> Street, Brooklyn, NY 11215  
718.768.2972    www.bsec.org    bsecoffice@aol.com

September - October 2007

## Sundays at BSEC

### 10:00 AM – Members' Sharing Circle Resumes in the Library on September 16

All members are welcome to attend. Our format has been repeated go-rounds on existing ethical concerns. The intentions are to build trust and create an opportunity for intimate sharing in a safe, supportive environment. At this season's opener we will discuss what it is we want from our circle this year and what format(s) would best serve our intentions. Come and share your heart, mind and spirit!

## Platform Programs

11:00 am – 12:30 pm \* Free \* All Welcome

**Sept 16: *At The End of the Day, What Does Really Matter?* Leader Lisel Burns opens the year** asking us to pace ourselves and take this season as a gift of consecrated time, place and community. Come; share your treasures of caring, consideration and social passion. Take your welcome place in our community's Centennial Season. This day's collection and food contributions will be shared with The Hope Dinner, a monthly dinner for people with AIDS and HIV, co-founded by Donna Roberts.

**Sept 23: International Peace Day Sunday: *Are Basic Agreements a Necessary Part of Positive, Peaceful Cultures?* With Lisel Burns.** Join us in a community reflection on ways people can make agreements to set their own standards. How do we tend those agreements, helping them evolve with current needs? How do we integrate ways of being together that have mutually agreed upon ideals, processes and boundaries? Please see The Earth Charter, [www.earthcharter.org](http://www.earthcharter.org).

**1:00 pm:** We will walk together to Church of the Gethsemane (8<sup>th</sup> Ave & 10<sup>th</sup> St) to share a 1:30 pm interfaith, intergenerational celebration of Peace Day.

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## BSEC Welcomes New Administrative Director, Damal Edmond

In June, after a diligent search, BSEC hired Damal Edmond as our new Administrative Director. He describes himself as "a unique individual who operates in integrity, excellence and style." Members interacting with him thus far heartily agree. Welcome, Damal, we're glad you've joined our team!

Born in the Midwest, Damal is the youngest of four children, having two sisters and one brother. He graduated from the University of Texas at Dallas with a Bachelor of Arts degree in American Studies and from DeKalb Tech College with a degree in Accounting. He is currently finishing his Masters Degree in Urban Affairs with a concentration in Community Redevelopment. Additionally Damal has completed studies in Personal Counseling, Leadership Development, Non-Profit Management, and Needs Assessment.

He comes to Brooklyn Society from Atlanta, GA, where he supported the mission and vision of the Salvation Army School for Continuing Education (SCE) as their Program/Operations Coordinator. The SCE hosted approximately 50 conferences, seminars and classes and over 1,000 guests per year. His responsibilities involved managing the day-to-day operation of the school, assisting with conference/seminar planning, program/curriculum development, mass media production and coordination of various international tours.

In the past Damal has worked with organizations in non-profit organizations addressing HIV/AIDS, Substance Abuse, Mentoring, Senior Services, and Cultural Awareness. From these experiences nationally and internationally, he has gleaned practical knowledge that assists him in better understanding other people's perspectives of their struggles and issues. He has found that "people are people no matter where you go and that often the biggest differences are cultural & spiritual perspectives. We must learn to accept people where they are and for who they are, promoting enlightenment, empowerment and encouragement."

## Sunday Platform Programs - continued

11:00 am – 12:30 pm \* Free \* All Welcome

### **Sept 30: *Lessons from Society's Edges: The Face of People Returning from Prison and the Failure of Current Punishment Models* with Lisel Burns.**

Following the Sept. 29 Life & Ethics Program, "Save Our Children From the Prison Industrial Complex," (See BSEC Events) at the Bedford Branch Library, L&E presents this Platform to extend the investigation and conversation of moving our criminal justice system from a punitive to a restorative model. Until that happens individuals and communities are punished by the current system's mistakes. How can we involve ourselves with issues and people at society's edges? Speakers from the prison advocacy group JusticeWorks and our congregational community partner Gethsemane Church share their experiences and strategies for change.

### **Oct. 7: *Choosing Wisely and Willingly* with Lisel Burns.**

How do you make important decisions? Are we the people others turn to when faced with an ethical dilemma? Are we proud of our own tough choices? We will look at ethical frameworks that may facilitate our decision-making.

### **Oct. 14: *Choosing Connection Across Language and Culture.***

How, when and why do we choose to cross language borders in our relationships? Join International Center conversation volunteers (& BSEC members) Joan Klips and Annemarie Mogil who share their experiences, along with a Center representative. Consider how we might help our Brooklyn neighbors learn English as their other language.

### **Oct. 21: *Education Reform, an Ethical Action***

**Committee Platform.** Check website, [www.bsec.org](http://www.bsec.org) for details TBA.

**1:00 PM - GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING**  
**Please plan to attend so as to contribute your vision and energies to our current and future activities.**

### **Oct. 28: *Choosing Connection in Desperate Times – A***

**LIFE & ETHICS PROGRAM.** Susan Cernyak-Spatz, a survivor of two years in the Auschwitz-Birkenau death camp, shares her inspiring story of triumph over the hatred and despair of the Holocaust to marry and raise three children, earn a Ph.D., and pursue a thirty-year career as Professor of German Literature. Tracy Garrison-Feinberg, Sr. Program Associate, New York region, *Facing History and Ourselves* ([www.facinghistory.org](http://www.facinghistory.org)), will contribute an historian's perspective. She and Ms. Cernyak-Spatz will also engage in a discussion with attendees in an **afternoon session beginning at 1:00 PM.**

## *The Eight Commitments Of Ethical Culture*

### Framing this Season's Sundays

See [www.bsec.org](http://www.bsec.org) for the full text of all eight commitments

September – What Really Matters?

#### • **COMMITMENT #1: ETHICS IS CENTRAL**

The most central human issue in our lives involves creating a more humane environment. Ethical Culture is an aspirational movement dedicated to cultivating the ethical life through the building of caring communities. Ethical Societies focus on humanity and are radically ethics-centered. They are intergenerational, and committed to life span ethical learning. The choice to enter an Ethical Society in many cases is a choice to "swim against the current" of modern social trends. Members of Ethical Societies believe that the most important thing for members to do is to create more caring communities.

October – Choosing Connection

#### • **COMMITMENT #2: ETHICS BEGINS WITH CHOICE**

Creating a more humane environment begins by affirming the need to make significant choices in our lives. One may live within the acceptable moral codes of one's world and be considered a good person. Yet until we begin to choose our commitments and be truthful, we cannot be said to be fully living an ethical life. The choice to join an Ethical Society comes at a point when reasonable maturity has been achieved. The decision to join should be fully volitional. It affirms the intention to continue how to choose helpful attitudes and behaviors instead of hurtful ones at every level of interaction.

## IN MEMORIUM

Rabbi Sherwin T. Wine, founder in 1969 of the Society for Humanistic Judaism, a movement that preached "humanism" as a religion "because, like all other religions, it enables man to relate himself to his universe," died on July 21 in a car accident while on vacation in Morocco with his companion, Richard McMains. He was 79 and lived in Birmingham, Michigan.

Rabbi Wine emphasized ethical imperatives of Judaism, changing the language in his service from, for example, "You shall love the Lord your God," to, "We revere the best in man." While the Society for Humanistic Judaism has 10,000 members in 30 congregations in the U.S. and Canada, its tenets may be held, to varying degrees, by about half of the 5.3 million Jews in the United States identifying themselves as "secular" or "somewhat secular." – adapted from *The NY Times* obituary written by Dennis Hevesi

The Brooklyn Society  
for Ethical Culture (BSEC)

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Next Newsletter Deadline:

October 15

Send submissions to  
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This edition's staff

Editor: Diane Kirschner

Proofreading assistance by  
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\*\*\* Editors sought. \*\*

Please contact BSECnews email to  
offer your services.

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**BSEC's Mission Statement**

*Are we living up to it?*

**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 re-  
alize 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



**President's Letter**

I am truly thrilled to be writing to you at the opening of the 2007 – 2008 Season of our Brooklyn Society for Ethical Culture. On Sunday, September 16<sup>th</sup> please join us as we gather for our homecoming platform at 11am and the first session of our Children's Sunday Assembly at 10 am, the details of which can be found on pages 1 and 4 respectively in this newsletter. Also please mark your calendar to join our membership meeting on Sunday, October 21<sup>st</sup> at 1 pm. Lastly very soon we will set a date in December to celebrate our centennial year. Please watch for further communication of that date. In all these events we celebrate our eight commitments and continue to elicit the best in each other and thereby in ourselves.

After the June elections, per our Constitution, board members elected their officers. I am honored to serve as President. The following members are also serving on the Board's Executive Committee: Greg Tewksbury, Vice President; Tom Castelnuovo, Treasurer; Tasha Paley, Recording Secretary; and Nettie Paisley, Pledge Secretary. We welcome your support and input. Also serving on the board are Maureen Egginton, Martha Gallahue, Remi Gay, Warren Miner, and Vandra Thorburn. We all value our Society and its Constitution.

Carol Horwitz, who served as the Board's attorney (pro bono) in the past year, will serve in the year ahead only as counsel on an "as requested" basis. We will identify another attorney for the Board in the weeks ahead.

In gratitude, and on behalf of the Board, I recognize the service of Carol and those Board members whose terms ended: Edith Calabro, Ruth Pikitch, Roger Kaufman and Gary Schechter.

On September 9<sup>th</sup> the Board will hold a retreat where we will dive into both strategic and ethics-centered work for the short- and long-term horizon. I will report on that work in our next newsletter.

This past summer, the work of the Board and the Society's committees and task forces yielded a number of accomplishments. Our primary areas of focus and priority continue to be guided by the Alban recommendations provided to us in October 2006, and the recommendations of our financial auditor, Ken Lederer and his team. Two notable outcomes are: 1) restructuring our personnel organization, and 2) implementing fiscal best practices anew to ensure we abide by IRS and other legal codes as a 501c3 entity.

On personnel, as President, I assumed the leadership role and continue to focus on ensuring that our practices are documented and in line with 501c3 standards and legal requirements. Damal Edmond joined BSEC as Administrative Director late in our 2006–2007 year. Damal's considerable expertise in administration and non-profit management and his skill in office applications fit well with Alban's recommendations on how to restructure and consolidate efforts in programming, facilities, administration and rentals. At the same time we transitioned the caretaker work to Jason Dubin, who will not be residing in the building and thereby opening up additional rental space. Jason reports to Damal and has been working with Warren as he becomes acquainted with the responsibilities of maintaining the building. Alongside these changes the positions held by Jim Alford and Rita Wilson were eliminated. Jim amicably signed a separation agreement in August 2007 and one has been provided to Rita. Rita has indicated that she will continue as a BSEC member and we wish them both well in other employment opportunities. In collaboration with Greg and Tom, I will continue to lead on managing our personnel concerns.

Tom is now leading on all matters related to finance and fiscal procedures including the follow up from the forensic audit, work that was conducted this summer in gracious collaboration with Abby Scher and Mary Holland. Much

progress has been made and Tom will make a report to the membership at our October membership meeting.

Also of notable mention are improvements to our chimney and collaboration with the teams at Poly Prep as they complete their construction. Damal and Warren are doing exceptional work with highly valued support from volunteers. And my gratitude to Damal and Diane Kirschner for all efforts that strive to excellence in member communications, be they in print, online or somewhere else.

In all cases change is handled by each of us in a range of ways. Responses to the realities of change can range from exhilarating to challenging to difficult to integrate into our everyday lives, and lots of experiences in between. As we all work through these changes, guided by sage counsel from professionals at the Alban Institute, I believe it is most important that we embrace the promise of their recommendations, hold dear respect for each other, and reject divisiveness in all forms. Please continue to ask questions and please do continue to ask how you can help. Volunteer efforts are essential for our society as we thrive.

To close, on a personal note, I want to share that my interest and commitment to Ethical Culture grew quite organically from my beliefs held as a member of the UUA Community Church of NY. My heart's desire and wish for my family is for spiritual growth among people who value each others beliefs be they humanist, theist, atheist or another, and do good work that contributes to community development locally and globally. I feel privileged to be a member of our Society and honored to serve in this our 100<sup>th</sup> year. I look forward seeing you all on the 16th.

Warm regards, Eda

## Children's Sunday Assembly (CSA) for Ages 2-12

10:00 am –12:30 pm, mid-September through mid-June



**Come Explore Ethics at Gatherings for Children and their Families**  
Open Enrollment.

Option to enroll through Ethical Culture family membership.

**Three Fall Season WELCOME DAYS** - Opportunities for curious families to explore and enroll in the CSA:

**September 16: Exploring the "E" word: ETHICS!** Weekly projects integrate practices of compassion and concern with nature, arts and fun.

**October 7: Ethical Heroes Unite.** Dress up and act as a person your family admires

**November 3: Approaching the Holiday Season with Ethical Awareness**

**10:00-11:00: Parent Info-Circle and Children Meet-n-Greet in the Meeting House Garden. 11:00-12:30: Experience the Children's Sunday Assembly & Ethical Culture's simultaneous Platform followed by a social potluck - Lunch-with-the-Bunch**

With focused appreciation, care and generosity, we create ethical action projects and community celebrations that connect us deeply to one another and to the world around us. **Contact CSA Director, Audrey Kindred, at [ethicalkin@aol.com](mailto:ethicalkin@aol.com) for details.**

## MEMBER NEWS, continued on pg. 7

**Helen Engelhardt** is recovering well from emergency surgery this past summer. **Blanca Nebbia** is back walking again in her Jersey City neighborhood, and will take part in a local art show in October. **Constance Pigozzi** also has a September surgery planned. Our condolences go out to **Antoinette Valiente Wagnerman** on the death of her mother over this past summer.

**Letter to the Editor:** "I am a Jewish woman who finds your attacks on Almontaser reprehensible. Her leadership in interfaith work post-9/11 and her steadfast championing of nonviolence are well-documented." - **Abby Scher**, Brooklyn, *The NY Post*, Saturday August 25, in response to the attacks on Debbie Almontaser, then principal of the new Khalil Gibran International Academy opening this September in Brooklyn. Debbie was the first honoree on the BSEC Community Honor Roll several years ago for her post-9/11 leadership promoting non-violence and cross-cultural education.

**AT THE LEADER'S DESK:**  
***WHAT MATTERS MOST***

*“The Ethical Societies must have for their unifying principle a way of living.” - Felix Adler, letter to Percival Chubb.*

Visiting Donna Roberts when she was quite ill in the months before she died on May 17 was a life enhancing experience. Here was Donna, in a good deal of physical pain, well aware that each visitor's future would be a good deal longer than her own. She might be talking feistily about the Ethical movement or world politics on an up day or lying with closed eyes listening to her visitors chatting as she rested when things were harder. Yet, as we heard many times over in the amazing 200 person memorial program Leonora organized at BSEC on July 21, nearly every visitor I spoke with mentioned that she/he left a visit pondering some gift received, some verbal life lesson, either from Donna's gentle heart or her partner Leonora's devastatingly honest one.

Lying in bed, week after week, Donna told me more than once that she used her time to think a lot about life questions and about what really mattered to her, as someone only 53 years old, but heartbreakingly near the end of her life. She said she cherished the possibilities in Ethical Culture and yearned for the BSEC community and her former employer, the AEU (our national federation of Ethical Societies), to take our professed ethical project even more to heart. She believed that trying to live one's ethical values, as she did, required taking one hundred percent responsibility for one's weaknesses and also acting to remove any double standards in one's life and organizations.

“I regret that I let work woes take me into reactive stress,” she told me. “No matter what has happened, please, take care of yourself; let any negativity go,” she said almost every time we talked. “Focus only on what matters most from an ethical standpoint. And make Sundays sing an Ethical Culture song!”

The 2007-08 Sunday Platforms will collect and address life questions from our young and older members. Surely it was in order to struggle with such perennial questions and yearning for a life of integrity that not only philosophy but also religion was invented. Certainly this is true for ethical humanism or Ethical Culture, this little humanistic religion. Our founders hoped that someday Ethical Societies everywhere would encourage people of many backgrounds to unite in modern covenants of conscience (rather than creed) to ethical ways of living.

This Season may we give our community and ourselves permission to slow down our harried lives, at least on Sundays. May we ponder together our most cherished and important questions and learn to sing together a refreshing and renewed Ethical Culture song.

The first Sunday of each month will address a theme tied to one of our Eight Commitments of Ethical Culture, with activities morning to afternoon combining to make a delightfully coherent day. Each platform will also now include a poem or other artistic contribution.

We envision each complete Sunday combining a wondrous mix of community, program, music, service project, conviviality and ethical inspiration. To accomplish this integration, the Board has approved a Sunday Task Force expanding the scope of Platform planning to coordinate all Sunday activities. So far it includes reps from the 10 am circle, the CSA (BSEC Children's program) and the Ethical Action Committee, hosting a monthly Sunday. Outgoing President Martha Gallahue returns to her studies as a Leader in Training and will liaison our group with the BSEC Board of Trustees. I will convene the group on a regular basis, possibly monthly on Sundays. We plan a Sunday suggestion box kept in the office or on a display table and welcome communication via email or phone with Martha or me.

Members, newcomers and friends are all invited to sign up to team-host one or more Sundays this Season. Each team will set the tone and share the work. You might handle pre-program community publicity, be a 10:30 am welcoming greeter, set up chairs, host children and families coming at 10 am or advise the members' Reflection Circle when it's time to join the Platform. You might help take the collection (to be split 50/50 with designated causes), help serve/clean up lunch, or alert attendees when the afternoon programs begin. There will be volunteer sign-ups every Sunday or you may contact Lisel or Martha by phone and email to join a team.

Many thanks to Constance Pigozzi, now stepping down from her longtime leadership as Chair of the former Platform Committee. She uncomplainingly took the work of at least three, ably guiding her committee agendas as well as producing the weekly brochure and doing the audio most Sundays. We realize that it will take several volunteers to take up Constance's former roles. We welcome her continuing counsel.

Too rare are places and times dedicated to deep mutual support and moral conversations that renew our deepest values and visions. I invite us all to deepen those opportunities and act as co-leaders at the BSEC and elsewhere, this year before what may be the most important national election in U.S. history. As marginalized as ethics-oriented progressives may perceive ourselves today, we live and breathe within this global super power. Our nation's "Pax Americana" wars are also carried out in our names. Therefore, as part of the only citizenry within electoral reach of U.S.-based government/corporate empire, I hold that we all have an enormous ethical responsibility to resist the lure of cynicism or powerlessness. Each of us can find our

chosen part in bringing the ideals and values in which we believe down to earth in our lifetimes.

We will dedicate the whole of our upcoming BSEC Season to Donna Roberts' gentle call for life enhancing self-challenge and action in service to a larger whole. In Donna's name, I'd like to suggest we start this September by asking our BSEC community and ourselves "What really matters to us?" From that perspective, I think that even the hardest struggles played out in families or in little voluntary communities can be viewed as apprenticeships to larger community challenges and sorely needed collaboration across conflict situations. And as our shared explorations ripen into self-knowledge and shared understandings, perhaps we will help ourselves (and those we influence) find our way to another transformative inquiry - Socrates' breathtakingly simple question "And how then shall we live?"

- Lisel Burns

## What's New at the AEU



Arnold Fishman, Joel Simon, Abby Scher and Diane Kirschner. Photo by Applequist/Ozarowski.

### AEU & BSEC Present 2007 Elliott-Black Award

At the AEU Assembly held at CW Post, Long Island, NY, outgoing AEU President Arnold Fishman, BSEC Ethical Action Co-Chair Abby Scher and Diane Kirschner made the 2007 Elliott-Black Award presentation to BSEC's nominee, **The Committee to Protect Journalists (www.cpj.org)**, and its Executive Director, Joel Simon. Mr. Simon, a Brooklyn Resident, updated the audience on the current activities of the CPJ and the ethical questions they have to address in their work. CPJ founded in 1981 to promote press freedom around the world and to defend the rights of journalists to report the news without fear of reprisal. Through its defense of journalists, CPJ upholds the right of all people to have access to independent sources of information, an essential part of a free society.

## WORKSHOP

### Creating Congregations of Generous People Led by Michael Durall, Alban Institute

Asking members for money is very different from creating congregations of generous people. Annual pledge drives, Durall asserts, inadvertently perpetuates low-level and same-level giving in congregations. He frames the stewardship task not as asking for money, but of bringing the congregation into authentic community from which generosity is a natural outcome. Learn how to create enduring Societies that will stand the test of time. This seminar will include:

- A new look at what membership means in our Societies
- Five ways to increase membership in your Society
- Why Societies should create generous people and pass this legacy on to our children and grandchildren
- Three elements of long-range planning
- Increasing service and outreach to the wider community

**Where:** The New York Society for Ethical Culture, 2 W 64 St, off Central Park West

**When:** September 29, 2007, 9:30 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.

**Cost:** The AEU requests that each individual or Society contribute \$50 per participant, with morning refreshments, a light lunch and book included.

**To register,** call the AEU office at 212-873-6500.

### AEU CONFERENCES: *Defining Our Ethical Identity*, this year's **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

gathering, will be held at the Stony Point Center, Stony Point, NY, from November 9-11, 2007. The **YES CONFERENCE** is scheduled for Nov. 1-4. Check the AEU website, [www.aeu.org](http://www.aeu.org), for details.

**THE ETHICAL ACTION REPORT**, a publication of the American Humanist Association and the AEU, is distributed by email 10 times a year. It highlights four current social and political issues and suggests actions you can take to make your opinion known. If you are not receiving this report, please advise Damal at [bsecdirector@yahoo.com](mailto:bsecdirector@yahoo.com).

### What's in a Name?

The AEU is encouraging Societies to "brand" each Society's name to begin with *The Ethical Culture Society of* or *The Ethical Humanist Society of* {Location}.

How does *The Ethical Culture Society of Brooklyn (ECSB)* sound to you?

## MEMBER NEWS - Continued

### MEMOIR-WRITING WORKSHOP

Member **Donna Minkowitz** will be teaching a new memoir-writing workshop focusing on using emotional and sensual details, musical language, and storytelling to build your memoir and give richness to it. Starting the week of September 15th. Contact Donna at 718-857-9275 or [minkowitz@earthlink.net](mailto:minkowitz@earthlink.net) for details.

Donna has taught memoir writing and creative nonfiction since 1998, at the 92nd Street Y, The Center's In Our Own Write program, The Kitchen and independently. She won a Lambda Literary Award for her memoir, *Ferocious Romance*, and was a columnist and feature writer for eight years at the *Village Voice*.

## Happy Birthday

### September

8 - Annette Bernstein  
9 - Fiona Bonham  
17 - Justin Stallard  
18 - Annemarie Mogil  
19 - Maureen Egginton

### October

5 - Abby Scher  
13 - Nettie Paisley  
16 - Rose Castro  
26 - Tasha Paley  
30 - Iolanthe Boneham

If you're a new member or haven't seen your birthday noted in this column, please email your name and birthdate to [BSECnews@gmail.com](mailto:BSECnews@gmail.com) and let us extend best wishes to you too.

## BSEC EVENTS

### LIFE & ETHICS

#### *Save Our Children from the Prison Industrial*

*Complex*, a program examining the interrelationships of family, education, poverty, crime, drugs, opportunity and relationships. Please join us for this informative and community building program.

**When: Saturday, Sept. 29**

**Time: 12 Noon to 2:30 PM**

**Where: Brooklyn Public Library, Bedford Branch Auditorium**, Franklin Avenue between Fulton and Hancock Streets.

**Cost: FREE**

**For more information**, visit [www.bsec.org](http://www.bsec.org) or email [lifeandethics53@yahoo.com](mailto:lifeandethics53@yahoo.com)

### MEMBERSHIP TASK FORCE

Rita Wilson now chairs a Membership Task Force, working with the Leader's Office to welcome and orient newcomers to basic Ethical Culture ideas and to roles of BSEC membership. Tasha Paley will be membership

liaison to the Board for now, along with Nettie Paisley our Pledge Secretary. First Event: Newcomer Supper, Friday, Sept. 14, 6-8 pm at home of Lisel Burns, 21 Park Place, between 5<sup>th</sup> & 6<sup>th</sup> Aves, Park Slope. Please contact Lisel, 718.768.2972, if you plan to attend.

**BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETINGS:** First Thursday of each month, 7:00 pm. Members welcome to observe. The Board Retreat will take place on Sunday, Sept. 9 at Meeting House.

**THE ETHICAL ACTION COMMITTEE** will meet on Sunday, October 7 (the first Sunday of each month) following Platform. All are welcome to engage in collective action and work on other aspects of the EAC's activities such as program planning, etc.

### HALLOWEEN BENEFIT PARTY

On October 31<sup>st</sup>, the BSEC Love & Equality group will join the UNICEF collection at the Park Slope Halloween parade, followed by a costumed Halloween Benefit Party (\$20 plus cash bar) at the Meeting House. Net proceeds will be split 50/50 between BSEC and the *Just Matrimony* Project of the AEU. This party continues our plan to host fun-raisers for gay and straight people of all generations.

## AROUND TOWN

**PEDAL FOR PEACE**, a fundraising bike ride to benefit NYC-United for Peace and Justice, **SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 23, 2007**. "Be a Part of the Cycle of Peace with an 10-20 mile afternoon family-friendly bike ride starting in Central Park, riding through Harlem and returning via Riverside Drive. Information & Registration: [www.unitedforpeace.org/nyc](http://www.unitedforpeace.org/nyc) or call 212-868-5545.

### SAVE THE DATE: OCTOBER 27

A National UFPJ Action Happening in Cities Around the U.S., including NY City

### DATES TO CONSIDER

On September 17, 1787, the U.S. Constitution was signed and on that day 220 years later (9/17/07), Alberto Gonzales will step down as Attorney General.

October 26<sup>th</sup> marks the 6<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the USA PATRIOT ACT.

For more information, you might choose to check out Bill of Rights Defense Committee website, [www.bordc.org](http://www.bordc.org)

## The Very Good Coffeehouse & Music Parlor

Visit [www.bsec.org](http://www.bsec.org) for more details

Unless otherwise noted, concerts begin at 8:00 pm on Fridays. Admission: Adults: \$10 | Kids: \$6

**Sept. 14-15 10th Annual Park Slope Old-Time & Bluegrass Jamboree.** A day and a half of workshops, jamming and concerts of traditional American music. *Sept. 14, 8pm James Reams & The Barnstormers – Bluegrass* (jamesreams.com). After a summer touring the Northeast (kicked off with their appearance before an audience of 5,000 at Celebrate Brooklyn), they're back at their home venue to kick off the 10<sup>th</sup> year of the Jamboree. *Sing Out* magazine says the band offers "...tight instrumental excellence and hard-edged vocals ...uncompromising, hard-core bluegrass."

**Sept. 15 - 12:30-10 pm: Workshops, jamming, concerts (\$4)** The only event of its kind in the Northeast, this is the place to play and hear the best in old-time and bluegrass music. **Workshops (harmony singing, fiddle, guitar, banjo and more) start at 12:30 pm. Jamming goes on all day. Showcase concerts start at 6 pm.** Bring your acoustic instrument (guitar, mandolin, fiddle, stand-up bass, banjo, Dobro), your ears, your love of American traditional music, your kids and friends. Non-musicians are also encouraged to attend.

**Sept. 21 Closed for Yom Kippur**

**Sept. 28 Singer-Songwriters Toby Fagenson and Bruce Markow.** **Toby Fagenson** (cdbaby.com/cd/fagenson) is a parodist and instrumentalist. **Bruce Markow** (bruceamarkow.com) writes and performs with passion, playfulness and finely honed craftsmanship.

**Oct. 5 Grammy-winning Mike Dowling: Country Blues Guitar–Traveling Troubadour Series (adults \$15, kids \$6)** (mikedowling.com) is quite simply one of the best guitar pickers in the universe, a virtuoso in country blues, slide and swing styles.

**Oct. 12 Singer-Songwriters James O'Malley and Rich Deans.** **James O'Malley** (jamesomalley.com) is described as "a rare find," "a great performer" and most often as "a warm and gifted songwriter" (*Music Matters Review*). **Rich Deans** (richdeans.com) is a fixture on the thriving East Coast acoustic music scene.

**Oct. 19 Third Friday with the Park Slope Food Coop – TBA**

**Oct. 26 David Laibman - Ragtime Guitar** - is noted for his innovative guitar arrangements of classical ragtime, but also explores a broad (ok: eclectic!) range of songs from many countries; in short, a good old roots-musical experience.



**Brooklyn Society for Ethical Culture**

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"I am a humanist, which means, in part, that I have tried to behave decently without expectations of rewards or punishments after I am dead." – Kurt Vonnegut