

# Ethically Speaking

53 Prospect Park West  
 at 2nd Street in Park Slope  
[www.bsec.org](http://www.bsec.org)  
[bsecdirector@yahoo.com](mailto: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

**Nov 2, 11 am**  
 Recovery: Imagining American After Bush with **Larry Bush**

**Nov 9, 11 a.m.**  
 Post-Election Reflections for the Grassroots with **Elizabeth yeampierre**

**Nov 16, 11 a.m.**  
 The Meaning of Work with **Richard Kiniry**

**Nov 23, 11 a.m.**  
 Wampanoag Annual Celebration with **Remi Gay**

**Nov 30, 11 am**  
 Colloquy on Gratitude (Valuing)

## BSEC Platforms



### Lawrence Bush, Editor of Jewish Currents Magazine speaks at Brooklyn Society

**Sunday, Nov. 2, 11a.m. Recovery: Imagining America After Bush**

What will it take to redeem America from the radical disruptions caused by the Bush Administration? What paths towards healing and change do we most want to see from a new administration? Join Lawrence Bush in a participatory discussion designed to move us from anger to hope.

Lawrence Bush is editor of *Jewish Currents* magazine and the author

most recently of [Waiting for God: The Spiritual Explorations of a Reluctant Atheist](#)



### UPROSE Director shares with BSEC

**Sunday, Nov. 9, 11a.m. Post-Election Reflections for the Grassroots with Elizabeth Yeampierre**

Elizabeth Yeampierre is director of UPROSE, a Sunset Park environmental, social and economic justice group. Elizabeth, a lawyer by training, was instrumental for getting New York State's first brownfield legislation passed and has received many honors including the 2004 National Latina Leadership Award from the National Foundation of

Women Legislators and its affiliate, the National Council of La Raza.

### Philadelphia Leader comes to Brooklyn



**Sunday, Nov. 16, 11 a.m.**  
**The Meaning of Work with Richard Kiniry**

For most of us, our jobs take over much of our time and energy. How closely do you connect your values, your work and your sense of self? The clergy leader of the Philadelphia Ethical Society will

consider how we can bring our values into our work situation, whatever that is, and the possibility of expressing our creativity, our interests and passions. A former Catholic seminarian, Richard has been Leader of the Philadelphia Society since 1990, and is coordinator of the national ethical action committee. *(cont. on page 2)*

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**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

**November 7th**

Adults: \$10 | Kids: \$6

*Singer Songwriter Jud Caldwell*

**November 14th**

Adults: \$10 | Kids: \$6

*The Plunk Brothers-Early Country Music*

**November 21st**

Adults: \$10 | Kids: \$6

*Third Friday with the Park Slope Food Coop*

**November 28th**

Closed for Thanksgiving

**December 5th**

Adults: \$10 | Kids: \$6

*Bev Grant & the Dissident Daughters/Friction Farm*

**December 12th**

Adults: \$10 | Kids: \$6

*Pat Victor with Cheryl Prashker-Root*

**December 19th**

Adults: \$10 | Kids: \$6

*Third Friday with the Park Slope Food Coop*

**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

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**Wampanoag! BSEC's Annual Celebration**

**Sunday, November 23, 11am**

**with Remi Gay and the Children's Assembly**

Brooklyn Ethical's traditional Thanksgiving celebration with the Children's Assembly.

**Colloquy on Valuing**

**with Constance Pigozzi**

**Sunday, November 30, 11am**



**Even the Black Sheep has a Shrine**

**With Dr. Michael Franch**

**Sunday, December 7, 11am**

Dr. Michael Franch is an affiliate minister at the First Unitarian Church, Baltimore, and has served as leader of the Baltimore Ethical Society. He is a "leader at large" of the

American Ethical Union. Dr. Franch is a storyteller and historian who has taught history at a number of colleges.

**Queering Democracy: James Baldwin, Bayard Rustin and the Quest for Democracy**

**with Rev. Osagyefo Sekou**

**Sunday, December 14, 11am**

Rev. Sekou, the author of the critically acclaimed *Urbansouls* and a social justice minister at Middle Collegiate Church in NYC, reflects on the contribution to democracy in thought and practice by these two major black, gay thinkers and civil rights leaders.



**Solstice Celebration**

**with the Children's Sunday Assembly**

**Sunday, December 21, 11am**

Join the Children's Sunday Assembly in celebrating the Solstice!

**Colloquy**

**Sunday, December 28, 11am**

Colloquies are an opportunity for deep group reflection on a theme.



## Editor's Column

At a recent BSEC meeting I sat in with the Ethical Action Committee and noted the number of different causes that were to be considered for support from our chapter. There were a variety of worthy issues involving human rights, support for a summer camp for needy children, and a few more locally based problems all of which seemed quite appropriate for our members' concerns. I, myself, suggested a topic involving my recent experience with peace groups in a visit to Israel. But what I've come to realize since I became an active member of BSEC is that although there are many worthy programs and platforms, there is little follow-up from one issue to the next in terms of an overall focus to enable us to be really effective.

I do understand that there are a variety of interests and causes with which members feel an involvement. Mine, for instance, was to inform parents of what is happening to their children in local schools that have been touted as successes by the Bloomberg Administration through test scores that prove little except that numbers can be manipulated for political advantage. But I realize that after my initial enthusiasm, I was derelict in following up in order to develop an effective program to which BSEC might find itself committed. Given all of the issues that crop up each month, it's difficult to maintain a consistent focus on one in particular and dedicate the members' energies primarily in that direction. This is, unfortunately, a problem with many progressive organizations: that instead of pooling their resources to promote one issue, they find themselves fragmented by the diversity of their constituents' concerns. On the other hand, the status quo can keep doing what they have always done: protect the interest of those who are most advantaged and leave the rest to fight among themselves for the scraps that are left. This can be even seen in the midst of the recent financial crisis in which it was revealed that having gotten bail out money from the Federal government, a number of the banks will be using the money to take over their rivals rather than loan it out to potential borrowers.

What I would like to propose is that BSEC begin to decide on a focus for our future goals that will take into account the anticipated impact of the economic crisis on the poorest and most vulnerable of our citizens. Rarely, if ever, during the Presidential campaign was the word "poor" ever mentioned: it was all about the middle class, a rapidly diminishing segment of the population. Given the likelihood that unemployment will rise, public services will be cut, food from soup kitchens and other charitable organizations will become scarcer, and the consumer-centered obsession that this country has been afflicted with since the invention of the credit card will focus on the "declining" lifestyles of the affluent or upward mobile, the needs of the truly *(cont. on page 4)*



**"On My Mind"**  
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](http://www.aeu.org)



## SAVE THE DATE



**Susan Jacoby**  
@ BSEC  
November 17th

Come out and hear Susan Jacoby discuss her new book, "**The Age of American Unreason—Spotlighting the Current State of Anti-intellectual in America and its Consequences.**"

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



**Annual Winter Crafts Fair**  
December 13th  
11am-5pm

Unique crafts and gifts, children's area, and food. If you are interested in being a vendor, please go to [www.bsec.org](http://www.bsec.org) and complete an application. Hope to see you there!



**BSEC's Holiday Festivity**  
December 13th  
7:30pm-11pm

**49 Prospect Park West**  
Catered buffet, Cash Bar, DJ, Dancing, and

Live music from Jean Rohe and friends. Special Children's program @ BSEC with food, games, favors and screening of holiday movie. Tickets are \$25.00 in advance, \$30.00 at the door, and \$5.00 for children.

We need volunteers to help out with each of the above listed events. Please contact Vandra 718-623-1911 if you would like to participate .

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needy, those that are even at present facing hunger if not starvation, will be neglected. They will need advocates, committed and focused on the severe problems of homelessness, medical neglect, and inadequate nutrition that might not be otherwise given a voice in what will probably become a thicket of other priorities to satisfy "the voters." And most politicians know that the very poor don't vote, especially the homeless. I believe that preparing for what will happen instead of being reactive will enable us to be that needed voice. At the present time, I can't think of a cause more worthy based on what Ethical Culture stands for than to be advocates for the less fortunate.

## FROM THE UN THE US AND THE UN: AN EVOLVING STORY

Dag Hammarskjold, the UN's second Secretary-General said it bluntly: "The UN was not created to take humanity to heaven, but to save it from hell." Realism tells us that the UN is a mirror of the world, which reflects divisions and disagreements as well as hopes and altruistic goals. In the new century it is becoming ever more obvious that no nation can solve--or even escape from the interconnecting complex of world problems alone. No matter how wealthy or how powerful, no nation can build a safer, better world, alone.

Global challenges require global solutions. The UN is the only universal institution formed to deal with these problems. Sometimes the failures of its powerful member states are blamed on the UN. A notable example: American officials blamed the UN for not preventing the genocide in Rwanda, despite the fact that Washington, in the person of Madeleine Albright at the behest of then President Clinton, blocked the Security Council from taking action. The previous Secretary General known in the UN as the SG, has joked that the letters stood for scapegoat.

What do Americans think of the UN? From May 2000, to Feb 2002, both before and after 9/11, the UN received some its best ratings from the American people, with a majority consistently applauding its efforts. When the UN rebuffed the US request for authorization for use of military force in Iraq, American views polled in Feb.2008, had turned sharply negative, down to a "good" rating of only 27%. This low was augmented by bad publicity in the media and misrepresentation of the Oil For Food Program.

Despite significant image problems, the UN still continued to earn Americans' support as a major policy making body. 68% of Americans still wanted the UN to play a major or leading role in world affairs. The UN is generally still viewed favorably for its humanitarian work, efforts to reduce poverty, help for refugees who are victims of natural disasters or political strife, for its mammoth food aid programs, and its impressive work in fighting the spread of disease.

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Some disappointments have continued over time., particularly the failure to halt the genocide in Darfur, the attempt to stop the spread of nuclear weapons in Iran and North Korea, and the UN's limited ability to stop human rights abuses.

However a newer poll in July 2008 shows a significant improvement in the UN's image. There is now overwhelming concern about America's standing in the world, as well as America's failure to work through international institutions. 79% of Americans think that strengthening the UN should be a priority of US foreign policy. Sizeable majorities think the US should participate in a new international climate change treaty, and the International Criminal Court.

80% of voters have abandoned the "go-it-alone" philosophy and believe that working together with major allies and cooperating with international organizations is a wiser strategy for achieving US goals in international affairs. Americans now are beginning to realize that international involvement is essential both in meeting the challenging humanitarian needs and the even more difficult political arena, as well as the pressing issues of energy sources and climate change.

The UN is sometimes the only practical means of response to US needs. As an obvious example, the international framework for the global battle against terrorism was arrived at in a binding Security Council resolution after the 9/11 attack. Without this cooperation and legal authority, Washington would have been forced to negotiate and ratify separate treaties with 191 countries, taking many years for a barely possible task.

Through its specialized separate agencies, the UN has alerted the world about epidemics such as the SARS virus, and the possible pandemic of avian flu. The UN organized research on climate change has brought this issue to US national attention. Here as elsewhere, the public understands that the US cannot go it alone.

The UN's agencies have great expertise in delivering humanitarian aid quickly in both natural disasters and man-made emergencies arising from wars. The US contribution to humanitarian assistance is helped immeasurably by working through the UN. The change in US attitudes should lead to a change in action. We urge that the new administration reflect the growing wish of the American public. As a first step, the US should honor its commitment and pay off its one billion dollar debt to the UN.

**Phyllis Ehrenfeld, President of the National Service Conference of the AEU, and NSC Representative to the UN**

**Dr Sylvain Ehrenfeld, IHEU Representative to the UN**

**The Brooklyn Society  
for Ethical Culture  
(BSEC)**

**Damal Edmond,  
Administrative Director**  
bsecdirector@yahoo.com

**Board of Trustees  
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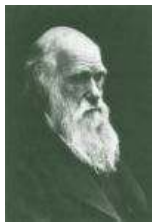
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**Next Newsletter Deadline:  
December 29**

Send submissions to  
bsecnews@gmail.com

Editor: Joel Shatzky  
Proofreader: Vandra Thorburn





## DARWIN'S 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

**'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](mailto:bsecdirector@yahoo.com) if you are interested in helping.



**Newcomer Supper**, Friday, November 21, 2008 from 6:00p.m. to 8:00p.m. If you are interested in finding out more about BSEC, please join us. Contact [carolynmei@aol.com](mailto:carolynmei@aol.com) to R.S.V.P or for more information.



**VERVE! Friday, November 28th**  
**9pm-12:00am**  
**BSEC 53 Prospect Park West**  
**Cost: \$20**

Back to the effervescent sophistication and intrigue of the Harlem Renaissance; Verve offers you a night of elegant entertainment by exceptionally captivating and charismatic performers. For more information, please call 212-462-8800  
*A Collaborative between Well Entertainment and Brooklyn Society for Ethical Culture.*



### **November:**

- 18th: Nancy Richardson**
- 19th: Remi Gay**
- 27th: Martha Gallahue**
- 30th: Joel Shatzky**

### **December:**

- 18th: Sami Jindyeh**
- 27th: Joan Donnen Klips**
- 29th: Hafizur Khan**

**Be Well!**

# President's Report



Greetings all!

Fall 2008 has been a well-spring of new ideas and activities. We continued to be enriched by the programming of our Sunday Task Force. I see it every week in the fun step of our children and the welcoming hearts of our members and friends.

I write today of the important work of our dedicated 2008 Leadership Search Committee. The committee was formed by the Board in June and met every week through September. The committee was made up of an equal number of Board trustees and Society members.

During the first few months the committee devised a Leader job announcement and came up with a process for the work. In July, the Board directed the committee to seek an interim leader. By the end of the summer, 15 resumes were received plus inquiries about the position. After considerable discussion and review, the committee decided to interview five candidates. Two candidates were put forward to the board for consideration. Each brings different strengths to the opportunities we can offer. In each case neither candidate is AEU-certified nor planning to become certified. Thus the committee recommended that the Society's board NOT hire either as an interim clergy leader at this time, but to hire one or both as support for programming and strategic planning through the fall of 2009.

The job description for the possible role (s) is being developed now by the members of the personnel committee. These individuals will not be Leaders (permanent, acting or interim), but may deliver platforms, connect us to voices in the AEU and in local and global communities, participate in board strategic planning activities, and advise the Sunday Task Force on programming. However, by way of contrast to a Leader hire, the role may not include counseling care and other responsibilities.

The search committee also recommended that the Board reconstitute the committee so it may open the search for a permanent leader for our Society to begin in or after January 2010.

The Board of Trustees is in the process of interviewing both of these candidates and depending the outcome of their review we anticipate offering one or both of them a one year agreement. The board values input from the members and thus members will broadly be asked for comments as they hear platforms or interact in other ways with the candidates. Out of consideration for the candidates as they interview, their names are not given here.

With this report, the work of the 2008 Leadership Search Committee has reached its conclusion. The Board will reopen the Leadership Search Committee and reconstitute its membership. Those members of the Society interested in serving on the Search Committee should contact Eda Kapsis and Damal Edmond at [bsecdirector@bsec.org](mailto:bsecdirector@bsec.org).



**Brooklyn Society for Ethical Culture**  
53 Prospect Park West  
Brooklyn, NY 11215-2629