



ETHICALLY SPEAKING

53 Prospect Park West, Brooklyn NY 11215 (718) 768-2972

Volume 94, no. 6

AEU Lay Leadership Summer School July 22-29 Apply Today!

Every other summer, high in the mountains of North Carolina, the Ethical Society "in the clouds" takes form. Twenty-three members from Ethical Societies around the country come together for a week of total immersion in Ethical Culture and the knowledge and skills important to building effective Ethical Societies.

The setting is breathtaking: a mountaintop in a live-oak rain forest, where vistas of smoky blue mountain ridges fading into the distance change each hour of each day as the sun and the elements work their magic.

What takes form there for the summer school week reveals all the best qualities of authentic Ethical community: inspiration, connecting with our Ethical Culture philosophy and history, working together to build and polish organizational skills, appreciation of and working effectively with differing perspectives and ways of doing things, exploration of individual ethical journeys, deep and effective dialogue, extraordinary creativity, friendship, camaraderie, and lots of fun.

Together people learn about the history, philosophy, and contributions of the Ethical Culture movement, the components of effective organizational development, and how to help create an exciting and meaningful future for our Ethical Societies. Many find the skills also transfer to other volunteer and professional venues. For others this has been a life-changing experience.

What each participant takes home, in addition to new and polished skills, is a sense of belonging to something larger than one Ethical Society, often a deeper commitment to their Society and an Ethical way of life, and a network of new friends and colleagues that reaches across the movement.

If you are a lay leader at BSEC (e.g. committee chair or program director) looking for a stronger connection to Ethical Culture beyond the borough of Brooklyn, there's no better way than this. The next Summer School won't take place until July 2002. Contact the office for more information. Applications must be approved by the BSEC Board, and attendance is limited, so if you're interested call now!

What is Membership? by Anne Klaeyen, Membership Coordinator

Not long ago I took a call from a woman who wanted to throw a party in our Meeting House. I told her that she needed to make an appointment with our rental manager and gave her some basic information about the space, including the fee. "If I become a member, can I use the building for free?" she asked.

We currently have fewer than 100 members. We would like to grow. We send this newsletter out to over 1200 people, most of whom have attended some program listed in these pages, participated in an Ethical Culture ceremony (wedding, commitment ceremony, baby naming, memorial), or called us for information and asked to be added to our mailing list. We would be delighted if all 1200 became members. However, we are not a social club offering discounts on building rental fees. So what *does* membership mean? What is Ethical Culture anyway?

If you were to pose these questions to our members, probably each would provide a different answer. For many, Ethical Culture is their religion; for others, it is a community of people for whom ethics is central to their lives; still others make this a place from which they can pursue meaningful social action. The common ground is the desire to encourage the growth of ethical behavior in a caring environment and in the world. The motto inscribed on our meeting room beam reads: *The Place Where We Meet to Seek the Highest Is Holy Ground.*

We ask people who are interested in membership to live with us a while: attend a Sunday Platform, a potluck dinner, a Values & Culture workshop, a concert, an intergenerational festival — any program where they can meet our community in action. Formally, we ask them to attend a newcomer circle and at least two "Foundations of Ethical Culture" workshops. Newcomers interested in membership then meet with the pledge secretary to discuss a financial commitment to the community and with the program director to discuss participation on a committee. Finally, the Board of Trustees votes on their applications for membership.

Ethical Culture Leader Dr. Sheldon Ackley once wrote, "We truly believe that people do not become good by fitting into a pattern prescribed for them by others; they become their best selves, we are convinced, as they find out how they can order a life that has never been lived before to meet crises and challenges that have never existed before. When they do this, they find a new person, one who has a place in our world and our lives that cannot be taken by anyone else." Ethical Culture asserts the worth, dignity and irreplaceability of every human being, and that personal fulfillment can be achieved in a community of similarly striving moral individuals.

Ethical Action: Campaign of Conscience

2/20 Platform on Housing and Community Affordability in Park Slope

Please Note: the Universal Health Care Platform, featuring Dr. Oliver Fein of Physicians for a National Health Plan, has been postponed to March 26.

With the Health Care Platform now moved to March, BSEC is proud to host a platform launching the "Campaign of Conscience" currently being undertaken by local community activists in our neighborhood of Park Slope.

As noted in the December issue of *Ethically Speaking*, BSEC is joining with the Fifth Avenue Committee, concerned local residents, and conscientious landlords in an

attempt to prevent long-term area tenants from being displaced by skyrocketing rents. Charles Horwitz will preside at a platform dedicated to raising everyone's consciousness of an economic situation that could irrevocably transform the diverse fabric of our neighborhood.

If you would like to know how to help, or if you would just like to be more informed about this situation that touches us all, come to BSEC on February 20 at 11am.



**THE BROOKLYN SOCIETY
FOR ETHICAL CULTURE**

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Coffeehouse: Anne Klaeyesen 965-3611

Environment: Kurt Johnson 768-2972

Youth Group: Rita Wilson & Tony Severo

Ethically Speaking is published six to ten times
a year by BSEC. This issue was produced by
Bob Strock, Lisel Burns, Anne Klaeyesen, Remi
Gay, Marshall Dubin, and Martha Hoffman.

The Children's Sunday Assembly

Our children's Sunday program meets every Sunday from 10:00am to 12:15pm. We offer an ethics-centered curriculum and community for children aged 4 to 13 years. Registration is open throughout the school year.

February Curriculum Theme: Roots of Freedom
February is Black History Month. We will tell some of the stories about the Civil Rights movement in this country and explore the idea of freedom. Is freedom a basic human need? How do we find a balance between one person's needs and another's?

Ethical Action Project:

Visiting shut-ins and Winter Buddies letter writing — creating relationships with elders.

PLEASE NOTE: No classes on February 20th.

We have had a busy and successful fall and winter so far. When Halloween fell on Sunday this year, we held a party where the children learned about the origins of the traditions of the holiday and had lots of fun. In November we held our annual Oxfam luncheon which raised \$175 for Oxfam America.

In December, we collected hats, gloves, and sundries, made wrapping paper, and delivered over a dozen boxes of gifts for the CHIPS shelter here in Park Slope. We also learned how families celebrate Ramadan, Christmas, Chanukkah, and Kwanzaa, and held an Ethical Culture Winter Festival.

In January, for our theme of "Time for Reflection", we learned about making resolutions, meditation, and contemplation. We also celebrated Martin Luther King Jr's Birthday with stories, songs and artwork.

Remi Gay, CSA Director

Items for Black History Month

- If you are interested in our new continuing moral discussion group on race (*What should we do and why?*), please contact Sandra or Joel via the office. The next meeting will be on a yet-to-be-determined Sunday at 10am or 1:30pm, with Ventura Simmons from Medgar Evers College.
- Sign up to see *The Meeting*, Jeff Stetson's acclaimed play about an imagined encounter between Dr. King and Malcolm X in a Harlem hotel.
- Contact Annette Bernstein via the office for tickets and the performance date (February 1-15).
- People interested in helping BSEC develop a traveling moral discussion, using the video of Anna Devere Smith's brilliant monologue *Fires in the Mirror*, regarding the deaths and uprisings in Crown Heights in 1991, please contact Lisel.

"Dr. King taught us that you can only achieve important things through struggle, and to achieve right ends, you need right means."

Rev. Wyatt Tee Walker on NY1, 1/16/00

Wednesday Night Discussions

A special edition of *The Creative Process* will take place in the Meeting Room on February 2 at 7:30pm: *Vladimir Nabokov: Author, Scientist, Artist*, with Kurt Johnson and Steve Coates, authors of *Nabokov's Blues*, and Sarah Funke, author of *Vera's Butterflies*. *The Creative Process* normally meets at 8pm every first Wednesday, in the Library.

But Is It Right? First Wednesdays 6:30-8pm. Vanda Bozecevic leads a practical discussion of basic ethical issues and everyday moral dilemmas.

Faith Conversations: Third Wednesdays 7:30-9pm. Chris Jacques facilitates a discussion surrounding issues of faith, belief, and practice in a contemporary humanist context.

Newcomer Workshops and *Core Values Workshops* are every fourth Wednesday, where you can learn more about Ethical Culture and BSEC. *Ethical Culture Wedding Couples* meet on every second Wednesday with Lisel Burns.

Happy Ethical New Year

A Happy New Year to one and all.
We may stagger but we won't fall.
We might attain our greatest desire.
We might even set the world on fire;
Or, better still, we might strive to attain
A life in which giving supersedes gain.
And throughout our years, be they many or few,
I wish for me and I wish for you
The joy of creating more sunshine than strife.
May you drink the sweet juices of ethical life!

Marshall F. Dubin

Two Job Opportunities at the American Ethical Union

Work for the national organization of Ethical Culture (in NYC)! Contact the AEU office at 212-873-6500 [e-mail aeuoffice@aol.com] if you are interested in either of these positions:

AEU Office Administrator (40 hours/week)
Salary commensurate with experience. Major duties include: interfacing with and supporting an AEU overall program/management team; coordinating logistics for all AEU Conferences and workshops; developing an overall calendar of AEU events; maintaining membership data base; supervising all mailings and other general office work and procedures; forwarding information pertinent to the AEU webmaster. Excellent skills in organizing, communicating and follow-up a must. Experience working in a nonprofit organization helpful. Ethical Humanist leanings desirable.

Director of Financial Development (20 hours/week) to be responsible for all aspects of a comprehensive fund-raising program, and to participate as a member of the AEU program/management team. Duties will include the design and implementation of a strategic fund-raising plan; identification of fund-raising opportunities among special constituencies; and recruitment, training and supervision of fund-raising volunteers.

The ideal candidate should have a Bachelor's degree (Master's preferred), 3-5 years corporate and foundation fund raising experience in a nonprofit setting, including successful fund-raising; excellent interpersonal, organizational, and communications skills; and an enthusiastic belief in the mission of the AEU and its growth and development.

Ethically Speaking is written by a number of BSEC members. Views expressed in this publication are always open to friendly discussion. Our newsletter staff, like the membership at large, may vary in their thinking on many issues, yet we are all committed to putting deed before creed, and to strive constantly toward living out, each in our own particular way, the Ethical Ideal of eliciting the best from ourselves and others.

FEBRUARY 2000 BSEC CALENDAR

2/1 – 2/10

Tuesday 2/1

7:30-9PM: *Brooklyn Women's Chorus* directed by Bev Grant. We believe every woman can sing! Join us. 768-2972 for info.

Wednesday 2/2

6:30-10PM: *Pinewoods Folk Open Sing* with potluck supper & snacks. Bring your voice, instruments, friends, neighbors, and family. Free admission.

6:30-8PM: *But Is It Right?* an open discussion focusing on basic ethical notions and everyday moral dilemmas. Led by Vanda Bozecevic.

7:30-9:30PM: *The Creative Process*, a series of discussions with guest speakers in the fields of literature, music and art. Tonight: *Vladimir Nabokov: Author Scientist, Artist*. With BSEC's own entomologist-in-residence Kurt Johnson, plus Steve Coates and Sarah Funke, celebrating the centenary of Nabokov's birth.

Thursday 2/3

7PM: Monthly Board of Trustees Meeting.

7-9PM: T'ai Chi Chuan with J.P. Harpignes. \$12/class; \$40 for 4; BSEC members free.

Friday 2/4

7PM: Y.E.S. Youth Group Meeting. Contact Rita Wilson at 284-0241 or Tony Severo at 854-0710 for information.

8PM: The Good Coffeehouse concert series presents *Lisa's Pieces*, a unique quartet featuring fiddler and composer Lisa Gutkin, with Wayne Fugate on mandolin, Mark Murphy on bass and cello, and Michael Sassano on guitar. Donation \$8.

Saturday 2/5

10-11AM: *The Art of Belly Dancing* taught by Salome. Free to BSEC Members. Call 399-1732 for information.

Sunday 2/6

10AM-12:30PM:

Children's Sunday Assembly.

10-11AM: Parents' Discussion Group.

11AM: Sunday Platform with Leader Lisel Burns: *As For Me, I Have Made My Decision, Popular Opinion Notwithstanding*.

12:30PM: Lunch With the Bunch.

Tuesday 2/8

7:30-9PM: *Brooklyn Women's Chorus*.

Wednesday 2/9

7:30PM: Wedding Couples Workshop with BSEC Leader Lisel Burns. For further information call 783-2298.

Thursday 2/10

7-9PM: *T'ai Chi Chuan*.

2/11 – 2/24

Friday, 2/11

6:30PM: Membership Potluck Supper for new, old, and future members.

8PM: The Good Coffeehouse concert series presents an evening of klezmer jazz with the utterly astounding *Harold Seletsky* and musical friends. Donation \$8.

Saturday 2/12

10-11AM: *The Art of Belly Dancing*.

6-10PM: *Valentine's Day Party* benefiting Camp Amitie (Leogane, Haiti), with the BSEC Community Matchmaking Network.

Sunday 2/13

10-11AM: Parents' Discussion Group.

11AM: Sunday Platform: *Personal Poetry*.

Tuesday 2/15

7:30-9PM: *Brooklyn Women's Chorus*.

Wednesday 2/16

7:30-9PM: *Faith Conversations* – Chris Jacques leads a discussion that addresses, among other things, the question of faith within the context of religious humanism.

7:30-9PM: *Games Galore Night*. Family entertainment with games and light refreshments. Admission \$8 per person or \$6 if you bring your own game. Call Bruce Leibowitz at 336-3683 for information.

Thursday 2/17

7-9PM: *T'ai Chi Chuan*.

Friday 2/18

8PM: The Good Coffeehouse concert series presents Third Friday with the Park Slope Food Coop: *Zen Music Zen Words V* with John Schaefer and James Nyoraku Schlefer. Donation \$8.

Saturday 2/19

10-11AM: *The Art of Belly Dancing*.

Sunday 2/20

10AM-12:30PM: Children's Assembly.

10-11AM: Parents' Discussion Group.

11AM: Sunday Platform: *Campaign of Conscience* with Charles Horwitz.

Tuesday 2/22

7:30-9PM: *Brooklyn Women's Chorus*.

Wednesday 2/23

6:30-8PM: **Newcomers' Workshop:** *Eight Commitments of Ethical Culture*.

8PM: **Core Values Workshop**, with Leader Lisel Burns and Anne Klaeyesen.

Thursday 2/24

7PM: The Richard Price Book Discussion Group discusses *Girls* by Frederick Busch. Call Constance at 331-1137 for information.

7-9PM: *T'ai Chi Chuan*.

2/25 – 3/5

Friday 2/25

8PM: The Good Coffeehouse concert series presents the premiere public performance of *Form Feeders*, a new improvisational trio composed of Scott Miller on clarinet, Kevin Norton on percussion, and Jeffrey Schanzer on guitar. Donation \$8.

Saturday 2/26

10-11AM: *The Art of Belly Dancing*.

Sunday 2/27

10AM-12:30PM: Children's Assembly.

10-11AM: Parents' Discussion Group.

11AM: Annual Y.E.S. Platform.

12:30PM: Lunch with the Bunch.

1-3PM: *Parenting Workshop* featuring the videotape series by parenting authors Elaine Mazlish and Adele Faber.

Tuesday 2/29

7:30-9PM: *Brooklyn Women's Chorus*.

Wednesday 3/1

6:30-9PM: *Pinewoods Folk Open Sing*.

6:30-8PM: *But Is It Right?*

8-9:30PM: *The Creative Process*.

Thursday 3/2

7PM: Monthly Board of Trustees Meeting. All members are encouraged to attend!

7-9PM: *T'ai Chi Chuan*.

Friday 3/3

7PM: Y.E.S. Youth Group Meeting.

8PM: The Good Coffeehouse concert series presents multi-instrumentalist (guitar, bass, cello, and mandolin) *Barry Kornhauser* performing his original compositions with special guest vocalist *Lucia Pulido*, whose solo CD *Lucia* mixes traditional Colombian rhythms with jazz. Donation \$8.

Saturday 3/4

10-11AM: *The Art of Belly Dancing*.

Sunday 3/5

10AM-12:30PM: Children's Assembly.

10-11AM: Parents' Discussion Group.

11AM: Sunday Platform: *International Women's Day* with visiting Leaders from African and other grassroots movements here for meetings at the United Nations, BSEC Leader Lisel Burns presiding.

Don't forget the March 26 auction!

Please contact the office (768-2972)

if you have any services you could

offer or items you would like to donate.

Storage space is also needed!

February Platforms

February 6:

As For Me, I Have Made My Decision, Popular Opinion Notwithstanding

With BSEC Leader Lisel Burns. What does it take to make life decisions independent of popular opinion and prevailing winds? Can we create a setting which helps everyone who comes to BSEC, and takes its mission seriously, to find and answer the life questions they need to make their own big decisions?

February 13:

Personal Poetry

BSEC members and friends share their poetry and reflections in what is always a very intimate and rewarding meeting. Platform Chair Constance Pigozzi presides.

February 20:

Campaign of Conscience

BSEC joins in the effort to prevent housing displacement in its own neighborhood of Park Slope. Charles Horwitz presides.

February 27:

The Annual Y.E.S. Platform

Y.E.S. (Youth in Ethical Societies) is back again this year, to challenge and surprise us.

March 5:

International Women's Day

Lisel Burns presides with leaders of grassroots movements and NGOs from Africa and elsewhere, in New York this weekend for meetings at the United Nations.

Please Note: *the Universal Health Care Platform has been rescheduled to March 26.*

Platforms are held every Sunday morning from 11AM to 12:15PM in the main hall of the Meeting House on Prospect Park West, followed by a convivial and delicious buffet lunch.

BSEC Welcomes New Members

BSEC would like to welcome the following new members to our ranks:

Sandra Cole-McNaught is an educator from Jamaica (in the Caribbean, not Queens). Her 6 year-old son Nicholas is a student at the Children's Sunday Assembly, where her teenage daughter Dana is an assistant teacher. Sandra is interested in community resource exchanges, offering help on healthy cooking and eating in the vegetarian mode. Find her great vegan preparations at the new Good Coffeehouse buffet on Friday evenings.

Irene Baker is a artist/designer and animal lover who has lived in faraway places. She will help us reorganize the Caring Committee this winter, and has joined the Wednesday evening Faith Conversations series.

Roger Kaufmann works in the home healthcare field; his ethical action interest is the Universal Healthcare campaign, and he will also volunteer for the Caring Committee.

Nosheen Hussein lives in Park Slope with her parents and her two sons, Mohammed and Ali. The family practices a liberal form of Islam (influenced "by the Sufi tradition, and our long stay in this country"). Nosheen and Mohammed (a Y.E.S. member) take a liberal, tolerant position on there being good in everyone and in all the religious and ethical traditions. She considers the BSEC philosophy and community an addition to, rather than a substitute for, the Islamic tradition, and remains a practicing Muslim. She has joined the Caring Committee and volunteers in the office.

I have lived on the lip
of insanity, wanting to know reasons,
knocking on a door. It opens.
I've been knocking from the inside!

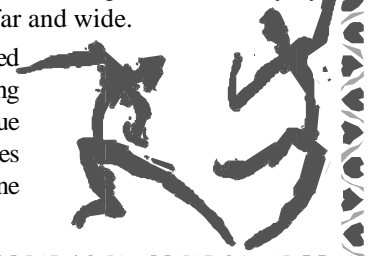
Rumi

Valentine's Day Party 2/12!

Make plans to stop by the Meeting House on February 12 (6-11pm) for a festive Valentine's Day party, sponsored by the BSEC Community Matchmaking Network and Friends of Camp Amitie.

Take the time to renew or pursue some romance! Join couples, singles, and Leogane Haiti's *Camp Amitie* for an informal buffet and dancing (Haitian/Latin), in a benefit for this free, environmentally focused summer camp in Haiti, organized annually by two BSEC Haitian member families and their friends far and wide.

Information will be available on other self-help partners supported by BSEC's Local-to-Global Development Initiatives, including Haiti's peasant bank FONKOZE, and locally, the Fifth Avenue Committee, the Crown Heights Youth Collective, and the Frances Residency. Donations are \$20 (more welcome). Please phone M. Gateau at 768-1282, or e-mail pyo1@aol.com for details.



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