



ETHICALLY SPEAKING

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

Volume 94, no. 8

April Platforms

April 2:

What is a Modern Moral Education?

And what would it look like in an Ethical Society in Brooklyn? BSEC Leader Lisel Burns continues her Ways of Living series.

April 9:

Mrs. Dalloway Does Brooklyn

An examination of the ethics of narrative with Anne Klaeyesen.

April 16:

Annual Spring Festival

Join us for a participatory improvisational mythical theater experience with the Children's Sunday Assembly.

April 23:

Colloquy: Holiday Reflections

April 30:

Peace Site Award

BSEC honors activist Marion Kronheim.

May 7:

What Happened to Standing for Something?

The vice of tolerance, when used as a primary value. Join Lisel Burns and Mohammed Hussein of BSEC's youth group in an open-mike style community discussion.

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. Please stop by!

Leader Notes: From a Heart Place by Lisel Burns

After the Diallo verdict last month I wanted to help people go beneath "guilty or innocent" debates and look at the situation from a heart place. I convened a group in Manhattan, one in Queens, and four in Brooklyn the following week. To each group I asked the same questions and to imagine that their answers were clues to the resolution, not only of this case, but of the deep national problems it reflects.

The three questions were: 1) What issues deep in your heart does this verdict raise? 2) What question could possibly move us toward resolutions? 3) What's a possible strategy based on your issues or question?

Vanda Bozicevic and I charted all sixty or so answers and questions, and quite clearly they converged upon three strategic themes: 1) Facing national patterns around the issues of race and class; 2) Doing real police reform; 3) Participating in a real change of heart.

The next question became how does one effect a real change of heart? And what does it really mean? The "heart" part comes from being aware of what our behaviors really communicate and opening ourselves to new ways of being.

Some of the reflections that I think would help people (starting with white ones) open their hearts on racial issues are the same ones we might use in BSEC: to deeply examine what it means to really be an "ethical" person and to build any community around those tenets.

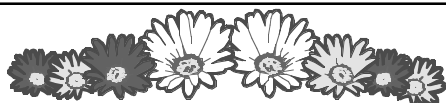
I have come to believe that integrity in an organization usually depends on an inner, community-wide change of heart and behaviors.

I love our family at BSEC and I also think we can grow more effective only by letting go the parts of our "family style" that discourage new or different voices.

In order to make space for such growth, I am asking the Board to clearly separate my Leader's Office from the other business of the Society. What that means is that I will be working out of my home office this spring so to focus more on pastoral work, and Life Direction and Reflection offerings like the upcoming April 21-22 Journal workshop. I'll also be helping Clergy Project and Program Leaders, as well as sponsoring home potluck suppers. (BSEC or larger community service, by the way, will also get you a major discount for the Journal workshop, and free admission if you help recruit others.) Concurrently, Team Leaders and the Board will have space and time to clarify their own Leadership roles and department procedures.

Sometimes giving up old habits can be very trying. As Professor Tucker Farley said at the March 19 Platform, Newtonian constructs and the subsequent stress on one "right (some say white) way" have supported the ability of dominant groups to keep nondominant conversations marginalized until forced to acknowledge them. Learning ways of honoring diverse perspectives, she said, involves letting some things go, starting with our sense of certainty about our own positions, however close they are held, or true they seem to us.

This "letting go" is no small matter. Transition creates instability, a temporary suspension of the old ways and understandings, to make room for the emerging new ways. In its wake it can create an undertow of insecurity. When I was twelve, I was sure my death from understandable grief would ensue directly upon my family's moving to my father's next naval assignment. Though I repeatedly warned my parents of this dire consequence of their autocratic decision, they nonetheless called movers, packed the car with me and my two sisters in it, and we left. In two months I was fine, of course, but I've come to realize that fear and resistance to change comes with the territory of being human. Those who help hold the bridges between the old and the new have my gratitude.



A Work In Progress: Human Rights in Haiti Award-winning Documentary Film at BSEC April 12

The National Coalition for Haitian Rights and Haiti Projects in Partnership are proud to present the Brooklyn premiere of the award-winning documentary:

A Work-In-Progress: Human Rights in Haiti.

The only comprehensive film documenting today's reality in Haiti, *A Work-In-Progress* takes viewers through the fascinating history of the Haitian people's struggle to free themselves from oppression and the challenge to build a society based on universal respect for their human rights.

The screening will be followed by a meeting with the Director, Isabelle Abric.

The film was awarded the Silver Medal in the category of Best Social/Political Documentary at the 2000 Chicago International Film Festival.

The screening will take place at BSEC on April 12, 2000 at 7 pm. For more information, call Charlie Horwitz for HPP at (718) 230-3537 or Merrie Archer for NCHR at (212) 337-0005. You can also visit NCHR's website at www.nchr.org.

BSEC Town Meeting 4/29 12:30pm

**THE BROOKLYN SOCIETY
FOR ETHICAL CULTURE**

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Leader: Lisel Burns

Leader-in-Training: Anne Klaeyesen

President: Glenn Newman

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2nd Vice President: Stephanie Heacock

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Pledge Secretary: Bruce Leibowitz

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Sevitsky, Martha Hoffman

Emeritus: Marshall Dubin, Isabel Ross.

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AEU Rep: Anne Klaeyesen 768-2972

Platform: Constance Pigozzi 331-1137

Sunday School: Remi Gay, director
Tracey Jindyeh, associate director

Building & Grounds Chair: Rita Wilson

Building Manager: Sheila Kosoff 768-2972

Membership: Anne Klaeyesen 768-2972

Board Special Projects: Tony Severo

Peace Site: Bea Rubin 768-2972

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, Joel Cohen, and Remi Gay.

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.

Cancel 3rd World Debt Now!

Park Slope Methodist invites us to join them on a march to Washington on April 9 called *Jubilee 2000*, part of a growing worldwide movement dedicated to the liberation of impoverished countries from the crushing burden of third-world debt. The demonstrations are timed to take place just before the IMF and World Bank spring meetings.

(see www.j2000usa.org)

BSEC Board member *Donna Roberts* is the new Office Administrator for the American Ethical Union. She assumed her new responsibilities this past March. Congratulations, Donna!

VIEWPOINT

The Meaning of Membership: Part Three

by Anne Klaeyesen, Membership Coordinator

I had a lovely conversation the other day with a Friend of Brooklyn Ethical. He is a young father with the primary care of his son. He and his wife had become members after their child's Baby Naming, but recently decided to pull back for a while from full participation. He told me about his friendship with two elderly people in the neighborhood. He does grocery shopping for one and personal exercise training for the other. His involvement with them has been mutually caring and nurturing. Since he is an accomplished musician, we also discussed ways in which he might enjoy becoming involved with our Good Coffeehouse concert series.

I mention this conversation, because it illustrates a discussion we had at our last Board and Lay Leaders retreat on participation in our community. We identified four levels of participation.

The first is where someone is interested in a project, perhaps even happy that it exists, but not enough to make a commitment either to attend or participate. At the second level, someone may attend an event on a regular basis, for example, Sunday Platform, but still not be prepared to take an active role. Someone that says, "I like this project enough to support it," is at the third level, and agrees to make a commitment in terms of time, energy and/or money. The fourth level represents those people who have made a commitment not just to support a project, but to make sure that it

happens. They hold themselves, and allow the community to hold them, responsible for the success or failure of an undertaking.

Any of us can operate at any of these levels, and may operate at different levels at different times in different settings. We need to decide what is best for us, then let those who have taken responsibility know our decision so that they can better plan for the future. We need feel no guilt or remorse, because we have been honest about what we are willing to do — or not do.

I am convinced that Ethical Culture is right for far more people than currently realize it. We affirm the inalienable, indispensable and unique worth of every human being, and we do this without a theology, although some of our members do believe in a personal God and many others are agnostic. "Spiritual" for us is the community we form with each other, our practice of social ethics, and those transforming relationships in which we elicit the best in others and thereby in ourselves.

We welcome newcomers to all of our events at the level of participation that is most comfortable for them. If you cannot attend our scheduled workshops, we will arrange to meet with you individually or in small groups: potluck dinners, a walk in the park, lunch at your office. Let's talk. And let's remember to meet each other where it is most important: in our hearts.

BSEC Board/Leadership Retreat

About twenty-five members and active newcomers joined the Board for the first of the Board and clergy's proposed Town Meeting/Retreats on February 26.

The purpose of these retreats is to expand the input that our lay leaders and staff have regarding operations and program activity at BSEC.

The second half of the meeting was split into three smaller groups, each focusing their discussion on a particular issue. These brainstorming sessions resulted in three cross-disciplinary task forces: communications, long-range fund-raising, and Sunday programs.

The next Town Meeting will be held on Saturday April 29, 12:30-5:30pm. We hope to have more time for small groups, focussing on one or more of these areas: Building and Grounds, the Caring and Sharing Committee, and tools for planning and assessment. If you're taking an active role in these or other areas, or would like to take a more active role in BSEC programs, this is a great chance to take that first step forward with other members of the Society. It's also a pleasant and energizing afternoon with friends.

GOING BLIND

Rainer Maria Rilke

She sat just like the others at the table.
But on second glance, she seemed to hold her cup
a little differently as she picked it up.
She smiled once. It was almost painful.

And when they finished and it was time to stand
and slowly, as chance selected them, they left
and moved through many rooms (they talked
and laughed),

I saw her. She was moving far behind
the others, absorbed, like someone who will soon
have to sing before a large assembly;
upon her eyes, which were radiant with joy,
light played as on the surface of a pool.

She followed slowly, taking a long time,
as though there were some obstacle in the way;
and yet: as though, once it was overcome,
she would be beyond all walking, and would fly.

APRIL 2000 BSEC CALENDAR

4/1 – 4/10

Saturday 4/1

10-11AM: *The Art of Belly Dancing* taught by Salome. Free to BSEC Members.

Sunday 4/2

Monthly Membership Sunday

10AM-12:15PM: Children's Assembly.

10-11AM: Parents' Discussion Group.

11AM: Sunday Platform: *What is a Modern Moral Education and What Might it Look Like in an Ethical Society in Brooklyn?* With BSEC Leader Lisel Burns.

12:30PM: Lunch With the Bunch and April Birthdays Celebration.

1PM: Newcomer Workshop: *Introduction to Ethical Culture.*

Tuesday 4/4

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

Wednesday 4/5

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's guest is Sheri Holman, author of *A Stolen Tongue* and *The Dress Lodger.*

Thursday 4/6

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 4/7

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 an evening of cabaret featuring vocalists Frank and Deborah Surdi, Roberta Jackson, Joe DaVersa, and Connie Sacco, with Roy Feldhausen on piano. Donation \$8.

Saturday 4/8

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

Sunday 4/9

10AM-12:15PM: Children's Assembly.

10-11AM: Parents' Discussion Group.

11AM: Sunday Platform: *Mrs. Dalloway Does Brooklyn* with Anne Klaeyens.

12:30PM: Lunch With the Bunch and Newcomer Circle.

4/11 – 4/24

Tuesday 4/11

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

Wednesday 4/12

7-10PM: *A Work in Progress: Human Rights in Haiti.* A documentary film presented jointly by Haiti Projects in Partnership and the National Coalition for Haitian Rights. Screening followed by a meeting with the director.

Thursday 4/13

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

7:30PM: Community Bookstore of Park Slope presents a reading with Francine Prose, author of the novel *Blue Angel.*

Friday, 4/14

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

8PM: The Good Coffeehouse concert series presents an evening of accordion music with Bluewind recording artists *Kate and Lou Giampetruzzi* and the *Le Nozze di Carlo* ensemble. Donation \$8.

Saturday 4/15

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

Sunday 4/16

10AM-12:30PM:

Children's Sunday Assembly.

10-11AM: Parents' Discussion Group: *Parenting and Ethical Poetry.*

11AM: Sunday Platform: *Spring Festival* with the Children's Sunday Assembly. Join us for a participatory improvisational mythical theater experience.

12:30PM: Lunch with the Bunch.

1:30PM: Million Mom March Rally.

Tuesday 4/18

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

Wednesday 4/19

8PM: *Women's Bodies, Women's Choices.* with Rachel Koenig. Call 768-2972 for info.

Thursday 4/20

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

Friday 4/21 - Saturday 4/22

Intensive Journal Workshop

Fri. 7-10PM, Sat. 9AM - 5PM;
Registration \$145, 768-2972 for info.

Saturday 4/22

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

Sunday 4/23

11AM-12:15PM:

Children's Sunday Assembly.

11AM: Colloquy: *Holiday Reflections.*

12:30PM: Lunch with the Bunch and Newcomer Circle.

4/25 – 5/7

Tuesday 4/25

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

Thursday 4/27

7PM: The Richard Price Book Discussion Group discusses *Walking the Dog* by Walter Moseley. Call Constance Pigozzi at 331-1137 for information.

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

Friday 4/28

8PM: The Good Coffeehouse concert series presents *Local Produce 2000* sponsored by *Spoke the Hub.* Featuring a new one-play by Traci Parks, plus several new collaborative music & dance presentations. Donation \$8.

Saturday 4/29

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

12:30-5:30PM: *BSEC Town Meeting.*

Sunday 4/30

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

10-11AM: Parents' Discussion Group.

11AM: Sunday Platform: BSEC will present its annual *Peace Site Award* to social activist Marion Kronheim.

12:30PM: Lunch with the Bunch.

Tuesday 5/2

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

Wednesday 5/3

6:30-10PM: *Pinewoods Folk Open Sing.*

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

7:30-9:30PM: *The Creative Process.* Tonight: artist Tom Keough.

Thursday 5/4

7PM: *Monthly Board of Trustees Meeting.*

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

Friday 5/5

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

8PM: The Good Coffeehouse concert series presents an evening of traditional American string music with ballad singer *James Reams* and *The Barnstormers.*

Saturday 5/6

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

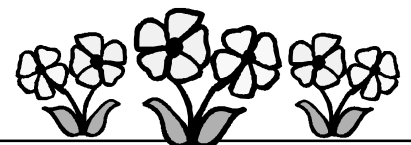
Sunday 5/7

Monthly Membership Sunday

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

10-11AM: Parents' Discussion Group.

11AM: Platform: *What Happened to Standing For Something?* with Lisel Burns and *Y.E.S.* Member Mohammed Hussein.



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.

April Curriculum Theme: Peace as a Personal Responsibility. Can we have world peace if we don't have personal peace? In addition, we celebrate Spring Festival with our intergenerational Mythical Theater during Platform on 4/16.

On 4/23 the CSA program will only run from 11 AM - 12:15 PM.

Ethical Action Project: Arbor Day Planting.

CSA NEWS: In March, we talked about Spring holidays and the ideas of change and hope and heard the story of Purim. March is also Women's History Month, a good time to reflect on the changes in society that have occurred for women. We told the story of Lady Deborah Moody, the first woman Mayor, right here in Brooklyn! We also told the story of Emma Hart Willard who started the first college for women in the United States (1820) in Troy, NY.

We had a visit from Board member Constance Pigozzi. She talked about how attitudes toward education for women had changed since her mother arrived at Ellis Island. Back then schooling was felt to be irrelevant for girls. Constance was the first person in her family to finish high school; and, after a career as an opera singer, she went back to college at 40 and started a whole new career as a teacher.

For Ethical Action, besides our playing host to Queens Ethical Culture Sunday School, several children and their parents visited Isabel Ross, our oldest member at 101, in the nursing home.

— *Remi Gay, CSA Director*

Childrearing

Parents lead
Children run away.

The Sticker Dude

Come join and/or participate with the "Parents-Group-In-Transition" in a special meeting: *Parenting and Ethical Poetry*, Sunday April 16. Sharing poetry and discussion, led by Joel (Sticker Dude) Cohen. "Starting promptly at 9:58am and ending exactly at 11:00am."

Intensive Journal Workshop

Still time to register for April 21-22

Work on a series of guided, reflective writing exercises designed to heighten your attention to images, metaphors, and deeper questions, not only on a personal level, but also on a community and even global scale.

Registration is \$145, discounts available for BSEC members and other community-involved individuals. Contact the office for more info.

Million Mom March News Rally at BSEC April 16

BSEC is building quite a contingent of people who plan to march for responsible gun laws on Mothers' Day in Washington DC.

Here are some key events to keep in mind:

April 16: Rally at BSEC Meeting House
We will open our doors to the community and march organizers for a rally at the Meeting House on April 16 at 1:30PM.

May 13: Washington Ethical Society
WES is holding a rally the night before the big day. They will also be providing hospitality to all visiting Ethical Culture members who participate in the march.

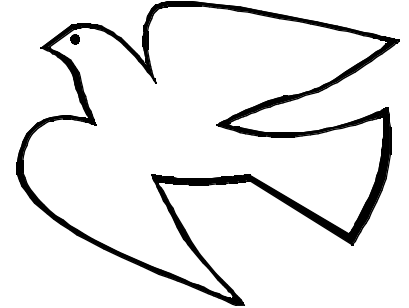
May 14: March on the Capitol!
Join a million other moms as we try to tip the scales in favor of common sense.

Contact Lisel Burns (tel. 783-2298 or e-mail liselburns@aol.com) if you are interested in participating. The MMM website is at www.millionmommarch.com.

Peace Site Award April 30: Marion Kronheim

BSEC was declared an International Peace Site in 1983. Each year since then we have presented the Peace Site Award to an exemplary individual or group whose actions and ideals are particularly devoted to the cause of peace. We are proud to present this year's award to activist Marion Kronheim.

Marion is a longtime BSEC member and former head of the Ethical Action Committee. She no longer lives in Brooklyn, but plans to be in attendance to accept the award. Three individuals will speak in her honor: Bea Rubin, BSEC member; Sonya Ostrom, representing Brooklyn Peace Action; and a yet-undesignated representative from the Metro New York Peace Action Council. The Brooklyn Women's Chorus will perform.



CHANGE SERVICE REQUESTED

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