



ETHICALLY SPEAKING

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

Volume 93, no. 9

AEU News: Assembly Passes By-law Changes

The proposed by-law changes submitted by the AEU Board for approval by the AEU Assembly passed overwhelmingly on April 24th. Two major changes were approved: first, the proposed restructuring of the Board and the dismantling of the current regional system of representation, and second, the proposed change in the apportionment, with the intent of equalizing the amount of financial support made to the AEU by each Ethical Society.

The board was reduced from its current size of twenty-one people to a more group-efficient size of thirteen. Two board members will be appointed by the National Leader's Council, and the remaining eleven will be elected by the AEU Assembly. Terms for AEU board members will be two years in length, to a maximum of seven consecutive terms.

BSEC's current representative to the AEU board, Anne Klaeyen, was elected to the new Board by the full Assembly.

The AEU budget, as submitted by the Board, was also decisively approved by the Assembly. The next Assembly will be held one year from now in New Jersey.

In attendance representing BSEC were Fran Liebowitz, Tony Severo, and Bob Strock. Anne Klaeyen was also in attendance as a member of the AEU Board.

For a personal perspective on the Assembly, see Bob Strock's remarks on page two.

Leader Notes: Rules As If Community Mattered by Lisel Burns

Last month on these pages I raised the need for core questions we can share as the living center of our Ethical Culture tradition in this period of transition. Where do we start? There are so many questions worthy of our attention and central to Ethical Culture's founding commitments: Ethical communities dedicated to promoting ethical living and ethical reformation of the larger society.

This spring, in my role as Program Coordinator, I've been given Board approval for a thoroughgoing evaluation of current BSEC programs and groups, and have set the task of having each of these groups produce written policies before our upcoming Spring Open House. With luck, we'll have a drafted membership handbook in time for the June Membership meeting.

With some groups operating much more informally than others, I know this causes some discomfort for people whose styles are at the oral tradition end of our community, but my belief is that we will not be able to really grow our number of active members until our standards and limits become more clear. Part of that involves setting the boundaries: limits we accept and agree to abide by even if we do not agree with them.

I think that one of the core questions in any democratic community (but particularly a community that projects itself publicly as aspiring to ethical living) must be this: while we ask members to each develop their own moral guides for living an ethical life, what do we do "in common" and "for the com-

mon good" when individual approaches differ? To what do we submit ourselves when we need common standards or limits, but do not want to impose individual opinions or authority upon our members?

From the field of moral education, I think there are helpful insights into the significance of stages of development, and the next steps in this part of our transitional Season. The late Lawrence Kohlberg focused his moral psychological research largely on the stages of moral reasoning that people use while trying to find the "right" thing to do when faced with what they understand as a moral dilemma. Participants and students are asked troubling questions such as: "Faced with a mortally ill spouse, and without the money to pay for a lifesaving medicine available at the local drugstore, what alternatives are morally acceptable?"

The stages of reasoning involved in facing a particular moral dilemma can also be observed as people develop their moral behavior throughout their lives. Five rough stages of moral development have been identified. From the stage one "might makes right" of the youngest children (ditto grown-up dictators), we progress to the rough reciprocity of "taking turns" - first me then you and back again with what resources we have.

Third-stage behavior is informal and pre-bureaucratic, and revolves around family and personally defined community loyalty, with our personal or other tribal ties weighing in more strongly on moral decisions than "the law". The bottom line in the fourth stage is the law: hierarchy, rules, regulations, and procedure manuals belong to this stage of development (where a majority of the citizenry stay, according to moral researchers).

Stage five is where principles such as justice, fairness, equity, and compassion are called upon to justify a moral decision. Civil disobedience, when practiced purely, involves precisely this: by calling into question the rightness of a particular law, one breaks the law based upon a "higher" principle, while at the same time submitting oneself to the proscribed punishment set by the existing authority.

continued on back page...

Mother's Day Platform: Families and Humor

On Mother's Day, Sunday May 9th, at 11AM, Gina Barreca, the author of *Sweet Revenge: The Wicked Delights of Getting Even*, will present a platform on *Humor and Surviving the Family*. Dr. Barreca is a professor of English Literature and Feminist Theory at the University of Connecticut. She is also the editor of *The Erotics of Instruction* and *The Penguin Book of Women's Humor* and author of *Perfect Husbands (and Other Fairy Tales): Demystifying Marriage, Men and Romance* and *They Used to Call Me Snow White, But I Drifted: Women's Strategic Use of Humor*. Deemed a "Feminist Humor Maven" by *Ms. Magazine*, she addresses many groups on diverse gender-difference topics. We look forward to an insightful and amusing morning with Dr. Barreca.

**THE BROOKLYN SOCIETY
FOR ETHICAL CULTURE**

53 PROSPECT PARK WEST
BROOKLYN, NY 11215
(718) 768-2972

Leader: Lisel Burns

President: Charles Horwitz

1st Vice President: Constance Pigozzi

2nd Vice President: Stephanie Heacox

Treasurer: Glenn Newman

Board Secretary: Kurt Johnson

Pledge Secretary: Bruce Liebowitz

Board Members: Charlotte Alper,
Jeannine Anas-Launay, Rita Wilson,
Jean-Jacques Senechal. *Emeritus:*
Marshall F. Dubin, Isabel Ross.

Ethical Action: Charlie Horwitz 230-3537

AEU Rep: Anne Klaeyen 768-2972

Platform: Constance Pigozzi 331-1137

Coffeehouse: Anne Klaeyen 965-3611

Environment: Kurt Johnson 768-2972

House & Grounds: Tony Severo 854-0710

Greeting: Rita Wilson 284-0241

Membership: Stephanie Heacox 768-2972

Peace Site: Bea Rubin 768-2972

Sunday School: Remi Gay 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, Martha Hoffman, Charlie Horwitz, Alex Mogelieff, and Anne Klaeyen.

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.

VIEWPOINT: Reflections on the AEU Assembly by Bob Strock

On Thursday, as the time approached for the first official event, I felt an apprehensiveness growing inside of me. The theme for the entire weekend was *Ethical Humanism for the 21st Century*, and there were going to be a lot of people there with very strong opinions about where Ethical Culture should be heading for the next hundred years or so. My opinions about Ethical Culture itself are subordinate to my personal convictions, inexpressible as they are, about the human race and the world we live in. I was beginning to worry that my opinions, once exposed to critical light, would really have no place in this movement.

I decided that I would not talk very much, but just listen and take notes, asking as many people as I could what they thought should be the role of Ethical Culture's national organization. Well, I ended up doing quite a bit of talking, but I did my fair share of listening as well, and didn't have to ask anyone their opinion of the AEU's role, because that was the question on everyone's lips the entire weekend. And I ended up taking over twenty pages' worth of notes.

One of my big concerns was that this Assembly would be full of very practical-minded individuals, interested in doing their utmost to do good in this world. All well and good of course, but I believe that without a strong spiritual and creative foundation, the best of good works will do little to change the world, and at best will merely ease the pain of ourselves and others. I was continuously greeted with the assertion that spirituality and creativity are central to strengthening the identity of Ethical Culture, not only for the outside world, but for we Ethiculturists ourselves.

The business meetings reaffirmed this sense that the

movement is aware of the necessity of spiritual and creative vision. Shrinking the Board is not intended to take away the voice of the individual Societies, but to strengthen the ability of the AEU to do what a national organization is supposed to do: to establish a national identity and to promote and encourage the growth of Ethical Societies of all shapes and sizes across the country. The vote on the reapportionment and the budget was likewise an affirmation of the collective will on the part of all Ethiculturists to give the AEU the tools it needs make visions into realities.

The workshops showed what great energy is being directed to forging a collective identity, and to awaken us to the deep ethical issues of the world today. I wish I could have attended them all, but I chose to focus on those with a more spiritual emphasis, although you could have attended a completely different set of workshops and come out with a very practical package of insights into how to better improve the state of the world and our fellow human beings who live here with us. We need both. Human beings need both. If we are to survive as a movement, and if the human race is to survive with dignity and joy, we need both the spiritual and the worldly strands, held together by a passionate creativity, sense of humor, and love of life that carries us through our greatest difficulties and lets us relish our greatest delights.

It's impossible to do justice to the experience in this limited space. Just as the AEU Lay Leadership Summer School turned me inwards with an intensity I have rarely felt before, so did this Assembly of truly the best and brightest, not just of Ethical Culture but of the nation, give me the desire to turn this intensity outward and into the world.

Ethical Action Report: Fonkoze Donors' Trip to Haiti

Eleven persons, nine from the New York area, including BSEC's own Charley Horwitz, completed a successful seven-day trip (April 6-13) to Fonkoze Haiti's projects. Leigh Carter, Fonkoze USA's Executive Director, said that the delegation was the most dedicated, flexible group that she has ever led. The group visited Fonkoze's offices and member organizations in Port Au Prince, Leogane, Fondwa, and Jacmel. Haiti Projects in Partnership helped Fonkoze recruit members for the delegation.


The Fondwa Peasant Association (APF) is the largest Fonkoze-funded project, and is located in mountainous southwest Haiti, between Leogane and Jacmal. It has 400 members and is one of the most successful democratically-controlled peasant associations in Haiti. Solely through private loans and grants APF has built the equivalent of a small town with water wells, a road, soil conservation, a school, a bakery, a restaurant, a radio station, a wholesale

food store, a grain silo, a credit union, a 20-person guest house, an orphanage, and a health clinic.

APF experts led workshops on ecology and the environment, energy, education, and the political and economic conditions in Haiti. The delegation took an exhausting hike up and down the mountainside in visiting the APF projects.

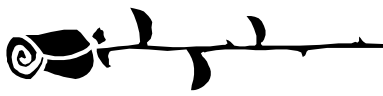
The group met t'marchands (small women merchants) in Leogane and in Jacmal who described how their businesses worked and how Fonkoze loans have helped them. With just a small increase in profits the women said they can now afford to send their children to school.

Right now, because of limited staff and vehicles, Fonkoze can accommodate 15 people per delegation once every six weeks. The NY area delegates said they planned to recruit persons to visit Fonkoze projects this Fall and also next Winter. For more information, contact Charlie Horwitz at 230-3537.



We are not born all at once, but by bits. The body first, and the spirit later; and the birth and growth of the spirit, in those who are attentive to their own inner life, are slow and exceedingly painful. Our mothers are racked with the pains of our physical birth; we ourselves suffer the longer pains of our spiritual growth.

Mary Antin



<http://www.bsec.org>

MAY 1999 BSEC CALENDAR

5/1 - 5/8

SUNDAY 5/2

10 AM - 12:30PM: Children's Assembly.
10 - 11AM: Parents' Discussion Group.
11AM: Sunday Platform: *Time and Death* with BSEC Leader Lisel Burns.
12:15PM: Lunch with the Bunch.

TUESDAY 5/4

7:30 - 9PM: *Brooklyn Women's Chorus* directed by Bev Grant. Call 768-2972 for more information.

WEDNESDAY 5/5

6:30 - 10:30PM: Folk Open Sing with potluck supper & snacks. Co-sponsored by the *Pinewoods Music Society*. Bring your voice, instruments, friends, neighbors, children, and/or a snack to share.

THURSDAY 5/6

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

FRIDAY 5/7

6:30 - 8:30PM: *Ethical Action Committee*.
8PM: The Good Coffeehouse series presents an evening of traditional American string music with ballad singer *James Reams and the Barnstormers*, also featuring Steve Arkin, Bill Christopherson and Carl Hayano. Enjoy foot-stopping, finger picking, heart pumping bluegrass and old time music. Admission \$8 at the door.

SATURDAY 5/8

10 - 11AM: *The Art of Belly Dancing* taught by Salome. Call 399-1732 for info.

5/9 - 5/15

SUNDAY 5/9

10AM - 12:30PM: Children's Assembly.
10 - 11AM: Parents' Discussion Group.
11AM: Sunday Platform: *Humor and Surviving the Family* with Gina Barreca, PhD.
12:15PM: Lunch with the Bunch.

MONDAY 5/10

7 - 8:30PM: Newcomers' and Lay Leaders' Workshop on *Worth and Value*.

TUESDAY 5/11

5-7PM: *Lois Kellerman*: open consultation with all BSEC members taking on lay leadership roles, including greeters, committee members, etc.

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

THURSDAY 5/13

6 - 7PM: *Meditations* with Remi Gay. Guided meditation based on Native American practices to create peaceful mind. Newcomers and drop-ins welcome. Suggested donation \$2-10.

7PM: BSEC Board of Trustees Meeting.

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

FRIDAY 5/14

8PM: The Good Coffeehouse concert series presents an evening of accordions with *Squeezology* featuring Jody Kruskal and LeNozze di Carlo Bob Goldberg on accordion, Gene Caprioglio on guitar, Joel Darelius on Bass, and Paul Diamond on soprano sax. Admission \$8.

SATURDAY 5/15

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

5/16 - 5/22

SUNDAY 5/16

10 AM - 12:30PM: Children's Assembly.
10 - 11AM: Parents' Discussion Group.
11AM: Sunday Platform: *Haiti Flag Day* with Bob Shacochis, author of *Immaculate Invasion*, on the American intervention in Haiti in 1994. Followed by a Hatian crafts and arts sale.

12:15PM: Lunch with the Bunch.

1 - 5PM: *Spring Fair*. Open House with booths, program demonstrations, music, family dancing with Sheila's Boogie, fence art work, and tours of our meeting house.

TUESDAY 5/18

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

THURSDAY 5/20

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

FRIDAY 5/21

8PM: The Good Coffeehouse concert series together with the Park Slope Food Coop presents *The Johnson Girls*, a New York-based a cappella women's group featuring Joy Bennet, Maggie Bye, Alison Kelley, Bonnie Milner, and Dierdre Murtha singing sea chanteys. Admission \$8.

SATURDAY 5/22

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

5/23 - 5/31

SUNDAY 5/23

10 AM - 12:30PM: Children's Assembly.
10 - 11AM: Parents' Discussion Group.
11AM: Sunday Platform: *Children's Sunday Assembly Graduation*.

12:15PM: Lunch with the Bunch.

TUESDAY 5/25

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

WEDNESDAY 5/26

7:30 - 9PM: *The Richard Price Book Discussion Group* will discuss *Pigs in Heaven* by Barbara Kingsolver. Call Constance Pigozzi at 331-1137 for more information.

THURSDAY 5/27

6 - 7PM: *Meditations* with Remi Gay.

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

SUNDAY 5/30

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

10 - 11AM: Parents' Discussion Group.

11AM: Sunday Platform: *Memorial Day Remembrance*.

12:15PM: Lunch with the Bunch.



Membership News

Don't forget the full membership meeting on Sunday June 6, after the platform.

Adult Education: Vonda Bozicevic plans to hold the first session of philosophical explorations. She will preside over a colloquy-style discussion on the topic of Justice. A date has not been set, but might be some time in May. Please contact the BSEC office if you are interested.

Lois and Hal Kellerman are going through transition pains of their own in California. Lois has been suffering recently from some recurrent medical problems, but we were all pleased to see her here out East during the month of April. Lois still plans to be back in Brooklyn May 10-17, for a series of training and mentoring sessions with members of BSEC. Highlights of this visit will include a Newcomers' Workshop intended for people interested in facilitating future Workshops, and an open consultation session for all members taking on leadership roles.

Congratulations to Anne Klaeyesen on being elected to the new AEU board by the national assembly! At the assembly, Anne was also approved to begin formal Leadership training. Best wishes to Anne as she moves forward in her commitment to the Ethical Movement and its ideals.

Membership Meeting
Sunday, June 6
Let your voice be heard.



Spring is a time to jump into the activity of cultivation, while also practicing patience. For good things pop out small and must be carefully tended.

Lois Kellerman

May Platforms

- May 2: *Time and Death***
 Founders' Month in Ethical Culture begins with a platform talk from Lisel Burns on Time, Death, and the relation of a historical perspective to meaning-making. We will also honor the life of BSEC's early and long-time Leader, Dr. Henry Newman.
- May 9: *Humor and Surviving the Family***
 With guest speaker Gina Barreca, PhD, author of *Sweet Revenge: The Wicked Delights of Getting Even*.
- May 16: *Haitian Flag Day***
 With National Book Award Winner Bob Shacochis, author of *Immaculate Invasion*.
- May 23: *Children's Assembly Graduation***
- May 30: *Memorial Day Remembrance***



Leader Notes, continued from first page.

We at BSEC are independent folk; we are always learning more about what ethical living means for each and all of us in the here and now. But I don't think we can rely on each person's distinctive sense of what is right to resolve disagreements or conduct community activities that go on in all of our names. If this moral research is on the right track, I would think that we need to go from our informal, more community and tribal ways, through a period, long or short, of "law and order" stage four, in order to emerge into another form of informality: the stage of principled decision-making backed by an underlying set of rules agreed to by all. Of course no one should be asked to "agree" with a rule he or she disagrees with, but we can be expected to "abide" by a rule that the group has agreed to, whether we agree with its content or not. For example, as an individual I may not believe that pledging is the best way to support society financing; but as a member, I have agreed to abide by the pledge rule, and pay a fair share pledge to BSEC each year.

If we have ethical living at the core of our Community's commitment, we are responsible I think for playing out that commitment in the hows and whys of what we do. I look forward to your ideas for draft policies, and our community editing of them, for the membership meeting the first Sunday in June. When these emerging policies are bound in a membership handbook, and we have a planful, if informal set of priorities for the next few years, we can declare our transition at an end, and open our doors formally for the next stage in Brooklyn Ethical's history.

May 16: Spring Fair and Haitian Flag Day

- Sunday, May 16 promises to be a very eventful day at BSEC. We will be celebrating Haitian Flag Day, with a special platform and observations, and holding our Annual Spring Fair, with booths, program demonstrations, *Sheila's Boogie*, and other activities. And all day long, the meeting house will be a stop on a tour of Historic Brooklyn Buildings.
- Celebration of Haitian Flag Day begins with a special platform address given by Bob Shacochis, author of the new book, *The Immaculate Invasion*. Mr. Shacochis will elaborate on the anarchy he observed while covering "Operation Restore Democracy", through which a United States-led multinational force helped bring former Haitian president Jean-Bertrand Aristide back to power in 1994. His book will be available for purchase after the platform. Presentations on Haitian art and politics will be made throughout the afternoon, and Haitian arts and crafts will be for sale.
- For more information on Haitian Flag Day, please contact Steeve Coupeau, event coordinator and Public Relations Officer for Haiti Projects in Partnership, at the BSEC office or scoupeau@gte.net.
- For more information on the Spring Fair, or if you would like to volunteer and/or participate, please contact the BSEC office at 768-2972 or bsecoffice@aol.com.

Non-Profit Org.
 U.S. Postage Paid
 Brooklyn, NY
 Permit #6318

Brooklyn Society for Ethical Culture
 53 Prospect Park West
 Brooklyn, New York 11215
 CHANGE SERVICE REQUESTED