



Green Belt Leader Wangari Maathai to Speak Sept. 23

BSEC is honored to welcome Wangari Maathai to speak at the opening Platform of our 2001/2002 Season.

Professor Maathai, Kenya's foremost environmentalist and human rights advocate, founded the Green Belt Movement on Earth Day 1977, encouraging farmers (70% of whom are women) to distribute seedlings and plant "green belts" of trees to stop soil erosion, provide shade, and create a source of firewood. To date, the movement has planted over fifteen million trees, produced income for eighty thousand people in Kenya alone, and has expanded its efforts to over thirty African countries, the United States, and Haiti. The Green Belt Movement is an education program that empowers ordinary people to learn

to take individual responsibility and local action that will lead to self and community sustainability. BSEC Member Greta Gladney studied with Professor Maathai and other members of the Green Belt Movement this past June, and Lisel Burns works with Green Belt through the global network GROOTS International.

Professor Maathai will speak at the 11am Platform. A workshop and discussion will follow Lunch With the Bunch at 2pm. Don't miss this opportunity to meet face-to-face with one of the world's great grass-roots leaders.

We can work together for a better world with men and women of goodwill, those who radiate the intrinsic goodness of humankind. To do so effectively, the world needs a global ethic with values which give meaning to life experiences and, more than religious institutions and dogmas, sustain the non-material dimension of humanity. Mankind's universal values of love, compassion, solidarity, caring, and tolerance should form the basis for this global ethic which should permeate culture, politics, trade, religion and philosophy. Without such an ethic, the power game, materialism, and individualism take over. So also would anarchy, egoism, hatred, injustice, violence, and intolerance. We must make our choice, or others, less sympathetic, will make that choice for us.

Wangari Maathai, 4th United Nations World Women's Conference, Beijing, 1999

A Note From the Editor

For those of you who are unaware, BSEC experienced a bit of a financial crisis in the wake of the recent stock market slump and ensuing economic slowdown. Our investments, like most people's investments this year, went south with the market, and we were suddenly hit with a budget crunch that meant a little belt-tightening in all areas. This belt-tightening, as you may have surmised, extended to the newsletter.

This Season, we have decided to reduce costs by limiting the newsletter to two pages, and to include copies in monthly mailings only to members, friends, newcomers, and those willing to give a small donation (\$25 or so), thus drastically reducing the number of recipients

In addition, we plan to expand the use of the website (bsec.org) as a more cost-effective and timely way to publish news, information, and opinions. A redesign is in progress, and a finished product will be seen October First.

BSEC is still financially fit, and will definitely be in good fiscal shape throughout this slow economy, thanks in great part to the hard work and difficult decisions the members of the BSEC Finance Committee.

If you have any questions about the new *Ethically Speaking*, or about the website, or would like to offer help or suggestions, please e-mail me at news@bsec.org. Or, send a note to the office, where my newsletter mailbox is still open.

Wishing the best to all of you this Fall,
Bob Strock, editor

September Platforms

This Season's Platform Theme is *Foundations of Ethical Living: Vision, Action, Practice, and Reflection*. The question of the year is "What is the Good Life?" How do we balance our outward and inward lives, and shape them into a coherent and ethical whole?

Platforms will begin promptly at 11am.

September 23:

The Good Life and its Relation to Local and Global Development: Wangari Maathai

A special platform with the leader of the grass roots Green Belt Movement in Kenya. To be followed by a workshop led by Professor Maathai from 2 to 4pm.

September 30: *What is the Good Life? Balancing Action, Practice, and Reflection*

It is in choosing a practice that we bring action and reflection together. Sharing examples of personal and group practices that allow this delicate balance to be maintained. With BSEC Leader Lisel Burns.

October 7: *The Good Life: Raising the Quality of Human Communication*

With Margo Steinfeld, a therapist in the Imago approach to couples communication. An introduction to the principles of transformational communication, within the context of Ethical Culture practice.

Platforms are held every Sunday morning from 11am to 12:15pm in the main hall of the Meeting House at 53 Prospect Park West, followed by a convivial and delicious buffet lunch. Please stop by!

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● **Fourth Annual Brooklyn Bluegrass & Old-Time Jamboree** ●

● **September 28th & 29th at BSEC** ●

● Brooklyn might seem an unlikely place for an old-time bluegrass music festival, but it will be like a homecoming party when the Good Coffeehouse celebrates its *Fourth Annual Jamboree* on Friday and Saturday, September 28th and 29th at the BSEC Meeting House. The Jamboree brings together musicians and fans of the traditional American music born in the mountains of Appalachia. James Reams, who conceived of the Jamboree and is himself an old-time and bluegrass musician of some renown, said, "We plan to keep things on a small scale. We want people to feel at home and have a good time. The only thing 'big' is the big time we hope everyone has! That's why the Jamboree's motto is: *Just a big old time.*"

● Last year's celebration attracted more than 250 musicians and fans from all across the Northeast. It was held both inside the Meeting House and outside in the garden where passersby, attracted by the music, stopped in and stayed for the day. The jamboree kicks off Friday at 8pm with a concert featuring Copper Creek recording artists *James Reams and the Barnstormers*. Admission to the concert is \$8 at the door or \$7 in advance. Saturday will be a full day, starting at noon and going on until 10:30pm, with activities including music workshops, jamming and song swaps, BBQ & vittles, children's activities, and an evening of concerts by various old-time and bluegrass performers, all for only one dollar for the whole day.

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**THE BROOKLYN SOCIETY
FOR ETHICAL CULTURE**

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Ethically Speaking is published 6-10 times a year by BSEC. This month's issue was produced by Bob Strock, Lisel Burns, Rita Wilson, Tracey Jindyeh, and Maureen Egginton.

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.

SEPTEMBER 2001 BSEC CALENDAR

Sunday 9/16

10am-1pm: Super Sunday. Children's Sunday Assembly and Membership Open House. Special guest Arthur Dobrin.

Tuesday 9/18

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

Wednesday 9/19

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

Thursday 9/20

7:30-8:30pm: Ball Room Dancing Lessons, led by Christina, an international competitive dancer. \$15, discount for BSEC Members. Call (212) 781-7475 for information.

Sunday 9/23

10am-12:30pm: Children's Assembly.

11am: Platform: From Personal Transformation to a Movement with Professor Wangari Maathai, leader of the Green Belt Movement in Kenya.

12:30pm: Lunch with the Bunch.

1:30pm: New Member Pledge Orientation.

2-4pm: Workshop with Wangari Maathai

Tuesday 9/25

7:30-9pm: Brooklyn Women's Chorus.

Wednesday 9/26

7-9pm: T'ai Chi Chuan.

Thursday 9/27

7:30-8:30pm: Ball Room Dancing.

Friday 9/28

8pm: The Good Coffeehouse kicks off the season with *James Reams and the Barnstormers*. \$8 donation.

Saturday 9/29

12-10pm: A full day of American Traditional Music at *The 3rd Annual Bluegrass Oldtime Jamboree*. Donation one dollar!

Sunday 9/30

10am-12:30pm:

Children's Sunday Assembly.

11am: Sunday Platform: What is the Good Life? Balancing Action, Practice, and Reflection with BSEC Leader Lisel Burns.

12:30pm: Lunch with the Bunch.

Tuesday 10/2

7:30-9pm: Brooklyn Women's Chorus.

Wednesday 10/3

7-9pm: T'ai Chi Chuan.

6:30-10pm: Pinewoods Folk Open Sing with potluck supper & snacks.

Thursday 10/4

7:30-8:30pm: Ball Room Dancing.

7:00pm: Board of Trustees Meeting.

Saturday 10/6

10-11am: The Art of Belly Dancing .

Sunday 10/7

11am: Platform: Raising the Quality of Human Communication with therapist Margo Steinfeld.

12:30pm: Lunch with the Bunch.

2-4pm: Couples Communication Workshop.

Super Sunday Sept. 16: Special Guest Arthur Dobrin

Learn all about our Sunday School and membership activities by joining us for breakfast and an orientation.

At 10:30am, our special guest will be long-time Ethical Culture Leader Arthur Dobrin, who will be reading from and discussing his new book, *Teaching Right from Wrong: Fortyx Ways to Raise a Moral Child*.

Our Children's Sunday Assembly meets from mid-September to mid-June. Our program celebrates intercultural and interfaith families with children ages 2-14, with a focus on the importance of ethical living. Registration is ongoing throughout the year.

For more information regarding the Children's Sunday Assembly or the upcoming Open House, contact CSA Director Tracey Jindyeh at 748-7084.

Membership News

Former BSEC member Murray Stillman passed away on Sept. 3. Condolences can be sent to Murray's companion, Gerry Roberts, 462 N. Brookvale Road, Cheshire CT, 06410.

Charley Horwitz now has two grandchildren. Joshua Liam Heuvel Horwitz was born on July 28th in New Paltz, weighing 9 lbs, 6 oz!

Martha Hoffman has begun her year of teaching History at Texas Christian University in Fort Worth. You can write to her at 3905 Country Place #908, Ft. Worth TX 76109. (e-mail m.hoffman-strock@tcu.edu.)

AEU Religious Education/ YES Conference Nov. 9-11

The AEU Religious Education Conference will be held November 9-11 at the Holiday Hills retreat center in Pawling NY, with the theme *Telling (Y)Our Story*, with Fritz Williams, AEU Leader and "storyteller extraordinaire". This conference will be a sharing, hands on time to tell our stories, share what has worked and what we are not so sure of.

The deadline for registration this year is Sept. 30, and late registrations will not be accepted, so act now, contact the BSEC Office if you'd like to attend.

The annual Y.E.S. (Youth of Ethical Societies) Conference for 13-18 year-olds will also be held at the center the same weekend. If you plan to attend the Religious Education conference, and know a teenager or two who you think would enjoy a retreat upstate, invite them along!

Only a couple hours north of NYC, the grounds are lovely with a lake and walking trails. This is a great chance for a family getaway with a plus! The conference fee, housing, and food costs are all reasonable. You may also attend Saturday only, if you like.

Sponsor a Y.E.S. member who might not be able to otherwise attend! Call the BSEC Office for registration forms and for information on sponsoring a teen or Sunday School family.