



Ethically Speaking

October 2004

Volume 99 Issue 2

Brooklyn Society for Ethical Culture · 53 Prospect Park West & 2nd Street · Brooklyn NY · 11215 · 718.768.2972
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2004-2005 Platform Theme

WAGING PEACE Realizing the Promise of Ethical Culture



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Platforms are held Sundays at 11am at the BSEC Meeting House and are free and open to the public.

ALL ARE WELCOME

FROM THE LEADER'S DESK: REINVESTING IN ACTIVISM

In the 2004-2005 Season, we will focus a lot on the interface between the quality of our own lives and the civic projects we engage that weave those lives into the fabric of humanity's efforts to make a better world. This month Joel Cohen's offering particularly intrigues me. Proprietor of Ragged Edge Press, printer and BSEC member, his latest sticker art-piece quotes Catherine Roberts Leach: "Reinvesting in Activism: the trick is to believe so strongly in the possibilities of a better world that your own survival is imperative to achieving it."

This fall we happily add another theme to BSEC Ethical Action programs; "Making Democracy." To start off, we are joining with several other local congregations in a four session book discussion series beginning this month, Tuesday, October 19, 7pm at BSEC. Participants will read and discuss Thom Hartmann's illustrated book, **We the People: A Call to Take Back America**, (a collaboration with artist Neil Cohen). Books are available to purchase through Lisel or at the office.

This Vermont author, whose most recent book is **What Would Jefferson Do? A Return to Democracy**, has also become a progressive talk radio host on the web at 12-3 PM Monday through Friday (information at www.Thomhartman.com). This book is both progressive and persuasive with appeal to a wide range of people. We the People can, in my opinion reach the now millions of Americans whose cultural perspectives leave them wide open to any idea or

policy packaged by the right wing as "an advance of freedom." At the same time, I believe that the same people's need for fairness, honesty and moderation would have them otherwise reject the elitism, lies, and unfairness of the current administration and its policies. For pre and post election conversations, please consider citing some of the following points in Thom Hartmann's rephrasing of a needed declaration of rights for the 21st Century. (See page 4)

Lisel Burns, Clergy Leader

Register for the book discussions with Charlie Horwitz or Lisel Burns at chorwitz@earthlink.net or liselburns@aol.com. ♦ **Tuesdays at 7:00 pm, October 19, 26, November 9 and 16.**

NEW CONCERT SERIES BEGINS AT BSEC IN NOVEMBER

Starting **Sunday, November 7th at 4pm**,

Momenta Concert Series will introduce the Momenta String Quartet to Brooklyn audiences at the Brooklyn Society for Ethical Culture. The program will include works by Matthew Locke (c. 1600) Anton von Webern (1907) Bartok's String Quartet No. 3, (1927)



and world premieres by Ursula Mamlock and John Ebbert. Each concert will try to have works by renaissance composers along with 20th and 21st century music, and other musical groups will also be appearing on the series. Contact Roger Kaufman at 718-972-0468 or Rkaufman33@aol.com for more information. \$10 admission. 50/50 Fundraiser for BSEC.

INTERSPIRITUAL DIALOGUE IN BARCELONA

**THE BROOKLYN SOCIETY
FOR ETHICAL CULTURE**
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Ethically Speaking is published 10
times a Year by BSEC. This month's
issue includes contributions by Lisel
Burns, Maureen Egginton, Roger Kauf-
man, Audrey Kindred, Constance
Pigozzi, Bob Strock, Diane Kirschner,
Tony Severo, Rita Wilson, Kurt Johnson,
Tina Aridas, Melanie Richardson and
Charlie Horwitz

Please send contributions to Maureen
Egginton at brooklynethicalsociety@
yahoo.com.

Unfortunately, space constraints some-
times dictate whether a contribution
can be included.

Along with 8000 others, BSEC members Martha Gallahue, Martha Hoffman and Kurt Johnson attended the Fourth Parliament of the World's Religions at The Forum in Barcelona, Spain, from July 7-13. The theme of the international gathering was Pathways to Peace: The Wisdom of Listening, The Power of Commitment. Martha Gallahue and Kurt Johnson represented InterSpiritual Dialogue (ISD), a project of the AEU's National Service Conference and Martha also represented the Spiritual Caucus at the United Nations.

Martha Hoffman attended with Theatre Group Dzieci, who joined ISD in presenting a program "InterSpiritual Dialogue: the Vision in Practice" on the first day of the Parliament and an "InterSpiritual Ceremony for Peace" on the last day of the Parliament. Dzieci also performed at the Parliament. As a truly "neutral" platform among world religions, stressing the ethics underpinning all the great traditions, Ethical Culture is in a unique position to facilitate dialogue. Many lessons were learned by all in Barcelona, particularly about authenticity of practice and engagement. The diversity of religious experience among those attending, and yet the recognition of the centrality of ethics in the search for peace, was profoundly moving.
Kurt Johnson

SHARING CARING

HOW TO ENJOY GOOD QUALITY OF LIFE IN ONE'S SENIOR YEARS:

It is said that there is a lot of depression amongst the elderly. How can these people avoid depression. Years ago, cardiologists found that the people in the USA with the longest life expectancy lived in Kansas and Nebraska where there was the highest beef consumption. the answer was that there was less stress in those states. Could stress be the evil we should all avoid?

Along with stress avoidance, if people did outreach and said good morning to their local merchants and neighbors and tried to not let the "little things" get them down, not only would stress be avoided, but depression also, and quality of life would improve -- so keep smiling! *Roger Kaufman, Sharing Caring Committee*

UNDER CONSTRUCTION: LUNCH WITH THE BUNCH: EATING AS TEAMWORK



We have been enjoying each others company at Lunch With the Bunch after Platform for many years, which has been prepared, served and cleaned up by a few committed and talented members. After many discussions, a trial plan is being put in place starting in October to simplify Lunch and spread the workload more evenly.

THE PLAN

The 1st and 3rd Sundays will be Potluck which should be relatively simple. 5-6 volunteers from the general membership will be asked to take charge of set up, serving and clean up. The 2nd and 4th (some times 5th) Sundays will be headed up by the working committees of BSEC (i.e. Membership, Finance, Building and Grounds etc.) who will each decide what kind of lunch it would like to provide, and will then make arrangements for set up, serving, and clean up. Committees will choose what they would like to provide and implement it with possible choices of pizza, bagels sandwiches, etc Help coordinating until there are more people who become oriented to the kitchen. Written instructions will be provided on how to make coffee and tea, and what the duties are of each team when they are in charge for the day. Suggestions along the way for improvements are welcome. Please speak with Melanie Richardson, or Tony Severo at melanieannr@verizon.net, anthony-csevero@verizon.net. **Pot Luck: 10/3 & 17- Committees: 10/10, 24, 31**

THE BROOKLYN CHAMBER OF COMMERCE VISITS BSEC & ETHICAL DESSERTS AFTER HOURS

On September 23, BSEC was proud to host a Brooklyn Chamber of Commerce After Hours Event. Over 100 people from all over the city were in attendance on a beautiful late summer evening where small businesses and community organizations met to network in our meeting room and garden. The event show-cased our Programs, landmark building and garden from which we hope to generate rentals for special events to raise money for programs, building repair and maintenance and, of course, to attract new members.

Melanie Richardson, President and Tony Severo, Vice President spoke to the gathering about Ethical Culture's vision, mission and history, and in particular Brooklyn's history. Tony explained that Ralph Jonas, who spearheaded the formation of the Brooklyn Society, and during his lifetime, founded Long Island University, was instrumental in bringing a branch of the City University system to Brooklyn, hence Brooklyn College. Most fitting for the evening's audience, Tony expanded that the same man who founded Brooklyn Ethical Culture, also started the Brooklyn Chamber of Commerce in 1918 and served as it's president through its formative years. By 1927 The Brooklyn Chamber of Commerce was the 2nd largest Chamber in the United States with 7,500 members. It was quite amazing to think we'd come full circle, and the Brooklyn Chamber and BSEC had unknowingly returned to common roots. There was a festive feeling to the event that drew people mostly into the garden decked out with pretty tables, flowers and candles. We received enthusiastic inquiries both for membership and rentals from a sweet sixteen party to a Chamber Member who may want to rent our space for an awards dinner for a non-profit he is in charge of.

Many thanks to Ruth Pikitch who arranged to have wine and beer donated for the event; namely Schneider Vineyards, and the Brooklyn Brewery. Ruth and Constance are monthly After Hours veterans putting a face on the Society and making friends. Thanks to Board of Trustee members Bruce Leibowitz, Rita Wilson, and Kurt Johnson who lent support; and to Clery Leader Lisel Burns who was on hand to answer those difficult questions like, "What do you mean, baby naming?" Board Member Emerita, Constance Pigozzi showed off the building to eager tourists and regaled them with interesting facts and background history. Thanks to our own networkers, Development Officer, Celeste Leibowitz; Operations Manager, Jim Alford; and Rentals Co-Chair, Linda Stallard; and to Maureen Egginton, Board Special Events and Communications Coordinator for putting the event together.

The attendees seemed genuinely happy to be in such a special place, and enjoyed a delicious spread of outstanding cheeses, fruit and charcuterie. And, to top it all off, our brand new member, Rozanne Gold, very generously donated a most magnificent table filled with award-winning cakes and tarts from the very special Greyston Bakery in Yonkers, where she serves on the Board. Greyston has supplied desserts to the White House and makes the brownies for Ben and Jerry's ice cream. But, what makes the bakery very special is that it's part of the Greyston Foundation whose programs include living wage employment through a café and the bakery; affordable housing for formerly homeless people, child care, employment and job training and residential and outpatient care for people living with HIV/AIDS. What more could we ask for - ethical desserts - and they deliver! Go to www.greystonbakery.com to view their sumptuous choices- or call 914-375-1510.

BSEC MEMBERS RAISING THE ROOF

POTLUCK THEATER MATINEE - Saturday, October 23. Join us in attending the play of your choice -- at discount prices. We'll meet at the Duffy Square T.D.F. Half-Price Tix booth, for a matinee show of your choice. A two dollar fee will be collected for BSEC, in addition to the cost of your ticket. Call Joan Klips at (718) 748-1127 for details, and to reserve a seat for you!

CSA & ETHICAL ACTION WAGING PEACE - CSA parent Janice Novet and CSA student Xena Brooks, will lead a workshop on an environmental peace game, The Web from 3-4pm. Charlie Horwitz leads workshops at 12pm: Israel Palestine Crisis: What Local Activist Groups Are Doing About it; and 12:30 Haiti Since Aristede and BSEC members will also be on hand at the Brooklyn Peace Fair, Saturday, October 16th, at the YWCA, 3rd Avenue & Atlantic, 11 am to 5 pm. Admission is free and food will be provided at no charge.

WALKING FOR A CURE - Sunday, Oct 17 - Rita Wilson invites you to join her in the Walk for the Cure for Breast Cancer in Prospect Park. Registration starts at the 9th Street Band Shell at 9am and the walk begins at 10am. Contact Rita at the office or by email at sparklepete@aol.com. People who cannot walk can make a tax deductible contribution by sending a check made out to the American Cancer Society to Rita Wilson c/o the BSEC office.

POETRY PLATFORM - Thanks to Perry Dell for performing his play at Platform in September. The choices from Carl Sanburg's poetry were excellent and the talented performance by our new member, Perry, was very original and many members and visitors enjoyed this unique way of being in-formed on issues of ethics and social justice.

JUST ONE WORLD OF THEATRE ARTS offers playwrights, directors, actors, and stage managers the opportunity to be attached to a Theatre Arts Workshop for original and classic theatrical works from development to production. A unique workshop for various levels of expertise professionals and non-professionals are most welcome. All types, nationalities and ages are encouraged and there will be no auditions or pre-qualifying expectations. Join professional Perry Dell and explore themes dealing with conflicts enhancing democratic principles in an ethical society. Members free - non-members - small donations welcomed. Mondays 7-10pm at BSEC. Contact Perry at perrydell@yahoo.com.

CHILDREN'S SUNDAY ASSEMBLY ETHICS-ORIENTED AND FAMILY PROGRAMMING FOR ALL
SUNDAYS – 10:30AM-12:30PM - ETHICALKIN@HOTMAIL.COM

From: Audrey Kindred, Director, CSA
and Family Programming



Dear BSEC,

Families, children and teachers have had a special September opening for the Children's Sunday Assembly. While old friends have reunited, we've also met and welcomed new friends to our program, and we continue to invite all curious families to visit, explore and join in.

To the broad Ethical membership, please join our outreach efforts by putting a few of our brochures in your bag, to share with your own neighbors and friends as we build our CSA. Let's not keep our gem a secret.

In September, we held a stoop sale, and a homemade lime-ade stand; we took opinion polls of our BSEC neighborhood and ourselves through our Brooklyn Report Cards; we learned about the symbols for Ethical Culture and for Peace; we made picnic lunch for our bunch, painted posters. We marched for Peace together to our Community Partner, Church of the Gethsamene, for an interfaith peace service where a new peace pole was planted in their garden.

October brings us more new experiences, along with the beauty of autumn leaves!

3RD FRIDAY FAMILY NIGHT OUT

On Friday, October 15, 6:30-10pm, we will host our first FAMILY NIGHT OUT. Children of all ages are welcome to come to BSEC's newly renovated basement for a fun evening together on the third Friday of the month. While parents are welcome to stay a bit, this is an opportunity for them to get a night out on the town, or a night upstairs in the Good Coffeehouse hosted by the Food Coop, as the case may be. There is a small fee and pre registration is urged, since space is limited. We'll do lots of projects and games with a primary focus on Peace, as we look forward to.....

Saturday, October 16th: Brooklyn Peace Fair. All are invited to attend our CSA-hosted workshop, at 3pm, and 3:30pm. Led by a budding collaboration between CSA parent

Janice Novet and CSA student Xena Brooks, this workshop invites all to play an environmental peace game, The Web. Also, please visit our BSEC/CSA booth; share your vision of Brooklyn by filling out a Brooklyn Report Card yourself. Get a fun sticker and also get your photo taken with the ethical frog and giraffe who have to work very hard (one leaping, one stretching) "to see eye to eye," as CSA student, Sam Degaris described so well. They remind us how fun and challenging it is to truly communicate well with each other despite our differences.

Drum Roll! Begin the festive day of Halloween with us at CSA, October 31, 10:30-12:30. It's a trick and treat festive fair for ALL. Children and celebrants of all ages, come to invent and create homemade masks and costumes,



songs and stories. It is the perfect day for us all to invite friends into our community, to share our CSA program. All families are welcome to register for a fun and festive season full of reframing the holidays through ethical action, worldly concern, and social outreach. And don't forget to "trick or treat" after the 7th Avenue Halloween Parade at our very own haunted house.

"in the geometry
of knowing
we have no new thing
to tell
only the same old
almanac
january
love one another
february
whatever you sow
you will reap
march...
"bring out the best in others
and thereby in yourself..."

—Lucille Clifton, from *Mercy*
edited and shared by
Janice Novet, Member & CSA Parent

MEMBER NEWS – PLEASE SEND IN INFORMATION YOU'D LIKE TO SHARE

GOWANUS ARTISTS 2004: Robin Feld, BSEC member will be participating in the 5th Annual Gowanus Artists Open Studio tour from 1pm-6pm, **Saturday Oct 23 and Sunday October 24.** There will be a free shuttle bus to take people from one building to another. About 80 artists participating!! My building (543 Union), at the corner of Union and Nevins (nevins is one block further down parallel to 3rd avenue has about 18 artists ... it's a good starting point!!!. Hope to see my friends from Ethical!! Go to www.gowanusartists.com

YOGA FOR THE FAMILY : Benefit from Yoga classes led by our Sunday School Director, Audrey Kindred - Mondays in **October** at 4:30pm at the Society. Sliding scale. Contact Audrey at EthicalKin@hotmail.com.

HAPPY OCTOBER BIRTHDAY WISHES TO: Abbey Scher-5, Nettie Paisley-13, Rose Castro-16, Iolantha Brooks-30 and many thanks to Ruth Pikitch for remembering us and taking the trouble to send out all those cards!



- Thanks to Annette Bernstein for the generous gift of a beautiful vase which now graces the Library.
- Warm wishes to Diane Kirschner's mother, Esther, to get well very soon.
- We're very glad to report that Dorothy Klein is now at home and thanks all who called and visited her.
- Hello to Rozanne Gold who is on the road to recovery, and hopes to be back at Platform very soon.

OCTOBER PLATFORMS, SUNDAYS 11AM

October 3rd-- "Life Reflections" Martha Gallahue, participated in the Parliament of World's Religions in Barcelona this past July as part of our National Service Conference's involvement with InterSpiritual Dialogue on a local, national, and global basis. Is "eliciting the best" a religious practice for those of us who embrace ethical culture as a religion? Hear plans for this Season's activities supporting personal life reflection and self-development of our members and friends. Speakers: Martha Gallahue and Lisel Burns.

October 10th--Heritage Platform--"Defining Moments: Stories From Our Family Trees", Led by Constance Pigozzi, Platform Committee Chair. This annual Platform gives us a chance to get to know each other in different and sometimes surprising ways.

October 17th--"Defining Our Ethical Society-A Community Dialogue" What makes a Platform meeting different from a PTA meeting, a university lecture or a personal development seminar? What, if anything, makes this time special for you? Drawing from the seminars at this summer's AEU Lay Leadership Summer School, Diane Kirschner will lead a group reflection on the original intentions of the Platform and how, today, we can fashion pathways to meaningfulness and create our common ground. With Leader, Lisel Burns.

October 24th-- "Does Public Diplomacy Have a Conscience?" When public diplomacy is true to itself, it can keep lines of international communications open. But when it loses its moral compass, it becomes base propaganda. John B. Brown, Ph.D., a former U.S. Diplomat, will discuss the role ethics plays in public diplomacy and the implications for the United States at this time. Martha Gallahue Presiding.

October 31st-- "The 2004 Elections: BSEC Members and Friends Share Their Values", Led by Charles Horwitz, Chair, Ethical Action Committee of BSEC.

November 7: "Ethical Considerations" What is the ethical culture of our day to day relationships and environments where we have some influence? If (an explicit or implicit) challenge in the ethical movement is to place ethical considerations first in all matters, what resources do we need to find out if we are actually carrying this out with any success? The community reflection will explore ways that we can, as families, workers, and community members, identify and be proactive in raising ethical considerations. With Leader, Lisel Burns.

Two Events Around the Elections

October 17: Sunday 5-8 pm Many Brooklyn neighbors joined by the Ethical Action Committee of the BSEC to co- sponsor a potluck fundraising supper with proceeds (expecting \$50 or more per family) will go to **Project Vote** registering swing state voters. Invite your friends and bring your checkbook! Kids are welcome and art supplies will be abundant. Our goal is a donation of \$50 to \$500 per family. I am a personal co-sponsor along with about 20 others; to rsvp just contact me by email at lisel-burns@aol.com, or 783-2298. Or BSEC; For further information contact: Laurie Kellogg (718) 832-5482 or ssills@igc.org

October 18:

Bring a friend to discuss "**Post Election Strategies**" with a **Panel on Hip Hop Activism** featuring representatives of the Brooklyn based young adult **Union of Pissed Off Voters** who wrote *How To Get Stupid White Men Out of Office*. Reading by authors of *Stand and Deliver*; brand new book on the hip hop activism movement; sponsored by Indigo Cafe an online bookstore and BSEC Ethical Action Committee. Free

RESTORING DEMOCRACY: A DECLARATION OF RIGHTS FOR THE 21ST CENTURY

- ◆ **Human Rights are for Humans; Corporations are not Persons.** We must update the 14th amendment to insert "natural" before persons ... so corporations can no longer claim the "right to lie"...the right to hide their crimes, the right to buy influence and influence elections, and the right to force themselves upon communities that don't want them. ...
- ◆ **We Own our Government and Our Commons** Drowning government in a bathtub as the conservatives recommend may have been a good idea in the Soviet union... the United States is a constitutional representative republic where our government is literally *us*. It was designed to work for us, be owned by us, exist solely by virtue of our ongoing approval, and answer to us....
- ◆ **In a Democratic Republic, Government Must Represent the Majority (will) of the Citizens While Protecting the Rights of the Minorities'** To make American government more democratic, we must join the rest of the world's modern democracies and institute either proportional representation or Instant Run off Voting Systems at local, state and federal levels. ...
- ◆ **A Strong Middle Class is Vital to Democracy**—In 1792 James Madison defined government's role in promoting an American middle class..."by the silent operation of the laws, which, without violating the rights of property, reduce extreme wealth towards a state of mediocrity, and raise extreme indigence toward a state of comfort."
- ◆ **Building a Civilization on Liquefied Fossil fuels and Then Thinking It Will Last Forever Makes No Sense**—... We must institute a Manhattan Project type of effort to create viable energy sources that are not dependent on fossil fuels, and, in the meantime, take immediate steps to reduce the use of and preserve our precious energy supplies before they're exhausted.
- ◆ **We are Part of Nature**—The natural world --including the land, water, air and all living things --is our most vital and essential commons...and therefore must be protected from those who would despoil it for short term profit.
- ◆ **Education is a Human right, Regardless of Station of Birth**—...University education should be free to all who qualify academically... And primary school education should be neither compulsory...nor should it be provided by for profit corporations.
- ◆ **Health care is a Human right and Necessary to Sustain Freedom in a Democracy**-America should join every other industrialized democracy in the world by instituting a single-payer health care system.
- ◆ **America is not a Kingdom and We Don't Elect Kings**...We recommend disbanding the "imperial presidency by ... requiring the President to meet weekly in open and public discussion with all members of congress, as is done in the United Kingdom...
- ◆ **The U.S. Government is an Instrument of Secular Democracy, not a Religious Theocracy, and has no Right in our Churches (or other religious meeting houses), Homes, or Bedrooms**—What we do in private, among consenting adults, is our business and our business only.Similarly the government has no right or business using the language or beliefs of any one of our religions..

THE GOOD COFFEEHOUSE MUSIC PARLOR 30th ANNIVERSARY SEASON

BROOKLYN'S HOME FOR ACOUSTIC ROOTS MUSIC

53 Prospect Park West at 2nd Street in Park Slope, Brooklyn - 718-768-2972

Shows start at 8 PM – (\$10 at door, \$6 for kids, *except where noted)

Oct 1 Traveling Troubadour Series (\$15)*

Paul Geremia (www.fishheads.net/geremia) hails from Rhode Island, but for the past 38 years he has been on the road full-time, thrilling audiences with his virtuoso acoustic blues guitar playing and passionate singing. He is equally impressive on six- and twelve-string guitar and is one of the world's great rack harmonica players. Come see why he's been called a "national treasure."

Oct 15 3rd Friday with the Park Slope Food Coop

Jose Conde (www.joseconde.com) creates fresh Cuban-roots music to soothe a palate hungry for sensuous rhythms. Along with his band, **Ola Fresca**, Conde will play music to dance to. A salsa lesson will start the first set.

Oct 22 Traveling Troubadour Series: *(\$15)

A Colorado native, **Corey Harris** (www.coreyharrismusic.com) is one of the nation's most exciting and authentic acoustic blues performers. His impassioned Delta-style bottleneck playing and singing is augmented by explorations into African and African-American musical idioms.

Oct 29 The Crooked Jades (www.crookedjades.com) are on a mission to reinvent old-time music and revive the days before commercial radio with their soulful sound—brilliant arrangements of obscure old tunes mixed with beautiful original compositions played on an eclectic array of vintage instruments. West Coast pickers with equal parts attitude and respect, they are unlike any other old-time band, performing rowdy dance tunes and haunting ballads with thrilling energy that has audiences on their feet dancing and critics comparing them to everyone from the New Lost City Ramblers and The Pogues to Gillian Welch and The Handsome Family.

WE'RE ON THE WEB AT
WWW.BSEC.ORG

Ethical Culture members join together in Ethical Societies to assist each other in developing ethical ideas and ideals and to work together to improve our world and the world of our children.



**"Always
act to elicit the best in others
and thereby oneself."**

Felix Adler, Founder



A Reflection from
Clergy Leader, Lisel Burns:

Poet Ralph Waldo Emerson's words seem profoundly relevant at this time in America's history:

**"ONE OF THE ILLUSIONS (OF LIFE)
IS THAT THE PRESENT HOUR IS NOT
THE CRITICAL, DECISIVE HOUR."**