



ETHICALLY SPEAKING

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

Volume 95, no. 3

Ethical Action: Haiti Update Fonkoze and the Leogane Network

Fonkoze

BSEC Ethical Action has donated \$250 to the Fonkoze Fund. BSEC Leader Lisel Burns has made a personal pledge of \$100/year (permanently) to the Amos Fund, for the widow and child of the Fonkoze staffer who was kidnapped, tortured and killed this past September. If you or your group would like to add to either fund, please contact Charley Horwitz (212-352-6556).

“The Fonkoze offices continue to operate in Haiti. The courageous and dedicated staff is in need of your continued prayers and support. Fonkoze will continue its critical work in the name of Amos Jeannot.”

-Leigh Carter, Executive Director Fonkoze USA

The Leogane Network

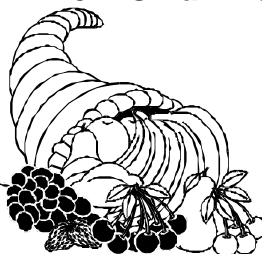
The Leogane Haiti Network is organized by BSEC Board member Marie Yoleine Gateau-Esposito and her colleague James Philomey. This past August two women delegates from the Leogane Network overcame tremendous obstacles to get to the two-week long reforestation and democracy training workshop of the Kenyan Green Belt movement held in Nairobi.

The Leogane delegates went on a shoestring budget limited to travel and lodging monies, raised by Lisel’s group, GROOTS International. This winter they will hold open meetings in Leogane to share the results of the workshop with Fonkoze and other grassroots organizations.

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• **2-3-4 Oxfam Luncheon** •

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• **Help** •

• **Fight** •

• **Hunger!** •

• On Sunday, November 19, after Platform •

• (12:15pm), join us for our annual 2-3-4 •

• Oxfam Luncheon, raising funds for the •

• Oxfam America self-sufficiency program •

• and collecting food for CHIPS, a local •

• Park Slope food bank. Bring 2 cans of •

• food for the food bank, 3 dollars (or more) •

• for Oxfam, and a dish to share for 4. •

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Leader Notes: November Questions by Lisel Burns

In the Neighborhood Women national and GROOTS global networks, I spent a few years helping to develop a values-based support methodology we call the Leadership Support Process. It involves using what we call “vision questions” that hold positive possibilities, contradict predictable obstacles, and ask what support the person needs to move forward on realizing her visions.

What would you do differently if you believed we were all with you? What change in your group’s policies or direction would make the greatest difference for the better?

Support among leaders in these networks starts with asking each other such vision questions and staying with go-rounds to really listen to the answers. Other practices include visiting each other’s organizations, lobbying together for shared concerns, sharing learnings, appreciations, empathy, and truth-telling.

It works. In successful self-help movements, starting with the 12-step programs, I bet it’s not an accident that the meeting rooms are promised as places “where we share our strengths, experiences, and hope.”

The National Leaders Council, our support group and professional association of clergy in the Ethical Movement, meets three times a year for three stay-up-late working and support exchange days. This Fall it sent members a questionnaire on congregational governance and growth, to be discussed at the October meeting. One question I repeat here:

“If you could make only one modification in your Ethical Society to improve its culture, functioning or program, what one change would make the greatest impact?”

I think this question is a vision question, because it assumes that some change we could make in our local Society would effectively move us toward a vision of success, or at least our own notion of that success.

After thinking through several answers to this question it struck me that my most desired change for BSEC would have to be an inner change, one that would change your and my perspectives forever. So if I only had one

change to make, it would be this: I would wish for each of us the knowledge that we are more strength than weakness, more resourceful than wanting, basically *good*, *powerful*, and *totally creative* people with enormous resources already in hand, accessible whenever we are willing to let this awareness sink all the way in.

Then I would count on logic and the inevitable successes from taking this perspective to help us turn the next corner toward our destinations.

In a November election month, I am perhaps oversensitive to the continuing passivity in the citizenry of what presidential candidate Ralph Nader calls “our seriously underdeveloped democracy.” For those who consider my answer to the vision question too subjective a position from which to change the world, consider this: Ethical Culture founder Dr. Adler held that the greatest threat to ethical development was our thinking meanly of others, but even more, thinking so of ourselves.

Businesses actively plan every detail of product, marketing, and profit development; but in civil society—the non-profit sector, groups small as a family and as large as a huge institution—citizens of the most powerful nation in world history settle for passive, audience-like participation. We reject legislation to raise common standards, crying freedom against most attempts to expand our commitments to the common good.

Our national policies dismiss a majority of people in the world by regarding them as possible objects of charity, but not as subjects within the same circle of basic entitlement and ethical obligation in which we stand. Our personal, group, and national culture needs people who are willing to think well of both themselves and of others, in persistent and penetrating ways.

In these times and places, we could use a little reminder that it will be our own resources and commitments, combined with other people’s, that will make the difference in the quality of our lives, and of those lives we can touch in our lifetimes. For this, I think, Ethical Culture was probably invented, and to this project of bringing forth a more ethical culture, please consider yourself both needed and welcome.



**THE BROOKLYN SOCIETY
FOR ETHICAL CULTURE**

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Ethically Speaking is published 6-10 times a year by BSEC. This issue was produced by Bob Strock, Lisel Burns, Anne Klaeyesen, Remi Gay, Marshall Dubin, Rita Wilson, and Martha Hoffman.

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.

<http://www.bsec.org>

**Calling All College Students,
Parents and Alumni!**

For several years Boe Meyerson, Leader of the Essex Society, has served as the Ethical Humanist Chaplain at Columbia University. This year she is assisted by leader-in-training Anne Klaeyesen whose goal it is to expand the chaplaincy to include New York University. Their long-term goal is to develop a program that can be used effectively on campuses across the nation. To accomplish this laudable effort of reaching out to a new generation, they need our help. If you are a college student, parent of a college student or college alumnus/alumna, contact Anne by e-mail (aklaeyesen@earthlink.net), phone (965-3611) or snail mail (430 Sixth Street, 11215). Thank you!

VIEWPOINT

They Call Him the Ethical Jail Bird

The Brooklyn Society for Ethical Culture has been in existence for more than ninety years. During the past fifty years one particular member earned the title of "The Ethical Jail Bird".

His name will be anonymous, not out of shame but of modesty. Actually he is proud of his record. In the course of his long lifetime he has been arrested thirteen times. The offense: "disturbing the peace."

Only one time has he been convicted. His offense: passing out leaflets. The arrest carried a sentence of fifty dollars. Later a local judge dismissed the fine and condemned "the overzealous policeman."

A simple explanation will account for this arrest record. "The Ethical Jail Bird" was arrested each time for violating segregation laws prior to the Civil Rights Act of 1964.

As "The Ethical Jail Bird" explains it: "I have always been law-abiding. I would not take a penny that did not belong to me nor would I inflict bodily harm on man or beast. In truth I would feel sincere regret if I accidentally stepped on an ant in the course of my travels."

Yet he was motivated by Henry David Thoreau, author of the classic essay *On the Duty of Civil Disobedience*. In Thoreau's opinion non-violent opposition to unjust laws was a moral necessity. Thoreau lived at a time when slavery existed in the United States.

The teachings of Thoreau inspired the deeds of Mahatma Gandhi and Reverend Martin Luther King, illustrious predecessors of "The Ethical Jail Bird".

Marshall F. Dubin

Membership News

Lorraine Theodor's son Brian is looking for work to keep him above water as he goes through a difficult period of transition. He has management experience, but is willing to take on any number of situations, including (but not limited to) chauffeuring. Please contact the BSEC office if you'd like to help.

Anyone interested in planning a discussion group to meet on Sunday mornings before platform, please contact Robin Feld (rfeld@hotmail.com or 499-5512).

Jason Dubin, adult son of Marshall Dubin and graduate of the BSEC Sunday School, has been named part-time Assistant to the Leader; he will work on Leader's Office and Membership projects.

If you'd like to keep in touch with Joe and Josie Radosta, here's their new address:

Leisure Park
1400 Route 70, Apt. 401
Lakewood, NJ 08701
(exit 88, Garden State Parkway)
Phone 732-370-0444 (Leisure Park office).

Thanks to a chance conversation Joel Cohen had with a Green Party volunteer, his *Ragged Edge Press* had the privilege of printing over 100,000 fliers on very short notice for the Ralph Nader rally held at Madison Square Garden on October 13. If you were in midtown Manhattan that day, you couldn't have missed the "Nader Rocks" leaflets that were being distributed on what seemed to be nearly every street corner. Over 15,000 people were in attendance that evening.

Robin Feld will be participating in the Gowanus Artists Open Studio Tour, 11/4 & 5, 12-5pm. Some interesting art to see (possibly purchase) and plenty of local artists to interact with. If any BSEC Member purchases one of her works, Robin will donate a percentage of the sale to the Society. Her studio is at 543 Union Street #4a. More information on the tour is available at the BSEC Meeting House, or visit the tour's website at www.gowanusartists.freeservers.com and get a sampling of the art. Don't miss it!

BSEC Environmental Committee Joins City and Scientists in Declaring Emergency

Dr. Kurt Johnson, chair of BSEC Environmental Committee, was one of more than a dozen scientists and conservationists appearing with NYC Parks Commissioner Henry Stern 9/22 in Central Park to declare an "extinction" alert on the beloved Monarch butterfly, which is now beginning its annual migration through New York City to Mexico. As highlighted in a New York Times front page article (9/12), a recently released study of deforestation in Mexico suggested the large orange butterfly, which overwinters there, could lose all of its overwintering grounds within a decade, perhaps sooner. It would then vanish from eastern North America. Dr. Johnson has already authored two reports to be published on the crisis. See www.mastervision.com (click *Monarch Watch 2000*).

NOVEMBER 2000 BSEC CALENDAR

11/1 – 11/11

Wednesday 11/1

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

Wednesday Program

6:30-7:30PM: Quiet Workshop/Reflection.
7:30-8:30PM: Colloquy: *Inner Journey* led by Donna Roberts and Lisel Burns.

Thursday 11/2

7-9PM: T'ai Chi Chuan with J.P. Harpignes. \$12/class; \$40 for 4; BSEC members free.
7:30-9PM: Storytelling with Mary Savage. *Final session and celebration!* \$7-10, free for BSEC members. Call 965-3611.

Friday 11/3

8PM: Good Coffeehouse: fine fiddling with Sam Zygmuntowicz and Bill Christopherson. Donation 8 dollars.

Saturday 11/4

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

Sunday 11/5

Monthly Membership Sunday

10AM-12:15PM: Children's Assembly.
11AM: Platform: *Moral Logic* with BSEC Leader Lisel Burns.
12:30PM: Lunch with the Bunch, November birthdays celebration, Newcomers' Circle.
1PM: *But Is It Right?* An open discussion focusing on basic ethical notions and everyday moral dilemmas.

Tuesday 11/7

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

Wednesday 11/8

Wednesday Program

6:30-7:30PM: Quiet Workshop/Reflection.
7:30-9PM: *Dinner and...?*
 Members and Friends supper, followed by:
 -dance lessons (rsvp liselburns@aol.com)
 -pregnancy group (info: jindyeh@webtv.net)
 Bangladeshi meal by Rashida Meah, \$5.
 Reserve a plate at 783-2298 or bring your own.

Thursday 11/9

7-9PM: T'ai Chi Chuan.

Friday 11/10

8PM: Good Coffeehouse: singer-songwriter, guitarist and veteran social activist Bev Grant. Donation 8 dollars.

Saturday 11/11

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

11/12 – 12/3

Sunday 11/12

10AM-12:15PM: Children's Assembly.
11AM: Platform: *Ethics in the History Classroom* with Martha Hoffman.
12:30PM: Lunch with the Bunch.

Tuesday 11/14

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

Wednesday 11/15

Wednesday Program

6:30-7:30PM: Quiet Workshop/Reflection
7:30PM: *Faith Conversations* discussion series. How do elements of traditional religion apply or not apply to Humanist religion?

Thursday 11/16

7-9PM: T'ai Chi Chuan.

Friday 11/17

8PM: Good Coffeehouse: the *Roberta Picket Quintet*. Donation 8 dollars.

Saturday 11/18

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

Sunday 11/19

10AM-12:15PM: Children's Assembly.
11AM: Wampanoag Festival.
12:30PM: Oxfam 2-3-4 Lunch.

Tuesday 11/21

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

Saturday 11/25

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

Sunday 11/26

10AM-12:15PM: Children's Assembly.
11AM: Thanksgiving Colloquy.
12:30PM: Lunch with the Bunch.

Tuesday 11/28

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

Wednesday 11/29

Wednesday Program

6:30-7:30PM: Quiet Workshop/Reflection.
7:30-8:30PM: Ethical Culture Readings.

Thursday 11/30

7-9PM: T'ai Chi Chuan.

Friday 12/1

8PM: Good Coffeehouse double bill: Ilene Weiss and *Squeezology*. Donation 8 dollars.

Saturday 12/2

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

Sunday 12/3

Monthly Membership Sunday

10AM-12:15PM: Children's Assembly.
11AM: Sunday Platform: *What Do Manners Have to Do With Morals?* with Lisel Burns.
12:30PM: Lunch with the Bunch, December birthdays celebration, Newcomers' Circle.
1PM: *But Is It Right?*

Wednesday Program Weekly Schedule

6:30pm: Quiet Workshop and Reflection.

7:30-9pm: a different program each week

Week 1: *Colloquy*. A traditional Ethical Culture ceremony of reflection, music, and sharing.

Week 2: *Members & Friends Dinner*. A different ethnic specialty each month, followed by smaller groups, including dance lessons in the main hall and a salon-style discussion in the library. Chair massages each month!

Week 3: *Faith Conversations*. A discussion series centering on the question of the place of traditional religious beliefs and practices within the context of a humanist religion.

Week 4: *Ethical Culture Readings*. Read and discuss some of the classic writings by Felix Adler. *Please note: Week 4 in November is 11/29. No Wednesday Program for 11/22.*

Contact the BSEC office for more details and monthly themes. See you on Wednesday!

Children's Sunday Assembly

In October, the theme was *Heroes Are Responsible*. Stories were told of Joseph and his brothers, and Cuchulain the Celtic hero. The 55th Anniversary of the UN was noted. Other stories and activities explored how people can help each other, including collecting for UNICEF. The older classes visited the Refugee Camp Display in Prospect Park. Many thanks to the parents who helped caravan!

CSA Calendar:

11/10-12: Religious Education conference: *Ethical People and How They Get That Way*.

11/19: Join us in the Meeting House at 11am when we host the annual intergenerational *Wampanoag Festival*. Stay for lunch and help us raise money for OXFAM America.

11/26: NO regular classes. Call 768-2972 for any volunteer children's activities that might be scheduled for that day.

November Theme: *Unsung Heroes*. Before the ecology movement, Ethical Culture emphasized that human beings live in context: family, society, culture, and nature. We will examine the quiet actions of many people that save the world such as recycling. Celebrate Thanksgiving at our annual Wampanoag Festival, as we express gratitude to the Native American contribution to our country and the world.

Ethical Action Project: 2-3-4 Luncheon to raise money for Oxfam America. Join us 11/19.

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

Remi Gay, Director

He who suffers for love does not suffer,
for all suffering is forgot.

Meister Eckhart

November Platforms

November 5: *Moral Logic*

Our exploration of paths and resources for an ethical life raises some questions early on. Does it accept larger cultural assumptions and conclusions or does it follow from our own hard-earned assumptions? What is the real logic we are applying to our lived lives? With Lisel Burns.

November 12: *Ethics in the History Classroom*
With Martha Hoffman, Brooklyn College Dept. of History. Reflections on teaching "Western Civ" to a diverse urban population.

November 19: *Wampanoag Festival*
An annual BSEC tradition and ceremony of gratitude. Followed by 2-3-4 Oxfam Lunch.

November 26: *Thanksgiving Colloquy*
Sharing, music, and reflections.

December 3: *Living Our Ideals: What Do Manners Have to do with Morals?*
With a look at expectations regarding manners and civility, and insights from Malcolm Gladwell's recent book *The Tipping Point*. Lisel Burns asks us to look at some consequences of differing attitudes toward people(s) beyond our own doorsteps.

This Season's Platform Theme is *Living Our Ideals: an Exploration of Paths and Resources for an Ethical Life*. 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!

The Good Coffeehouse: Coming Attractions for November and December

The Good Coffeehouse is a unique musical experience that began over twenty years ago with a handful of folk musicians. It has since expanded to include folk, rock, jazz, cabaret, classical, bluegrass, poetry, and experimental theater. The Coffeehouse provides the community with an evening of quality entertainment in a warm, friendly environment while contributing to the maintenance and restoration of its beautiful landmark home at the BSEC Meeting House. Performances are at 8pm every Friday, except when noted. The donation is eight dollars.

11/3 Fine fiddling with Sam Zygmuntowicz and Friends performing music from his CD *Jump! The Trumpets Blow, a Southern Fiddle Suite*. Sam not only plays in a variety of bands, he is also a fine violin maker. Bronx born-and-bred fiddler Bill Christophersen has been featured at coffeehouses, folk festivals, and dance camps throughout the Northeast. Gil Sayer learned to play banjo and guitar and sing from his parents and neighbors in West Virginia. He moved here 24 years ago and has been called "the most authentic old-time singer in the area."

11/10 A special evening with singer-songwriter and veteran social activist Bev Grant, coming to us all the way from 2nd Street in the Slope. For this occasion, she has assembled a fine cast of musicians and singers to help her celebrate the release of *The Best of Broadside 1962-1988* on Smithsonian Folkways Recordings. This 5-CD collection features the music of Bob Dylan, Pete Seeger, Phil Ochs, Arlo Guthrie, Nina Simone, our one and only Bev Grant, and more! Rolling Stone Magazine calls the collection "topical songwriting [as] holy warfare." Do not miss what promises to be a great evening of song, celebration and 'holy warfare'!

11/17 Third Friday with the Park Slope Food Coop featuring the Roberta Piket Quintet. Pianist and composer Roberta Piket brings a quintet of Brooklyn's finest to the Coffeehouse for a set of adventurous, creative jazz. Featuring Michel Gentile on flute, Dave Scott on trumpet, Will Woodard on bass and Jimmy Weinstein on drums. Roberta's latest CD is a trio recording entitled *Speak, Memory*.

11/24 Coffeehouse Closed. Happy Thanksgiving!

12/1 Singer-songwriter Ilene Weiss performs her music with remarkable intelligence, humor and poignancy. Squeezology features Jody Kruskal on concertina and percussion, Paul Friedman on fiddle, Bob Jones on bass and guitar, and Marnen Laibo-Koser on piano, viola and flute.

12/8 Musicians from the New York metropolitan area Ethical Societies in a performance to benefit the Sunday School.

12/15 Third Friday with the Park Slope Food Coop: Matt Mitler and the theater group *Dzieci* perform *A Fool's Mass*, offering a night of buffoonery, choral hymns and chants from the 8th to 16th centuries. BSEC newsletter editor Bob Strock is a member of the group and guarantees that you will be both challenged and entertained by this piece.



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