



From the Leader's Desk: The National Leaders Council: Democracy and Just Matrimony

At the three-day meeting of the National Leaders Council of the Ethical movement at Barnegat Bay on the New Jersey shore, we spent time reflecting on shared hopes and needs for our Leaders Council in a time of great transition in the Ethical Movement and the world.

The Council members develop position papers exploring the philosophy of Ethical Culture when we think the times call for a united voice from the Ethical Movement as a whole. During this meeting we planned position papers on several topics relating to Ethics and the United States Democracy, specifically designed for the national conversation around the 2004 Presidential elections. I am coordinating one with Randall Best and Bob Greenwell, and I welcome your help in developing the thinking for this paper over the next two months or so. The BSEC December 7 Platform will take up the issue of ethics and

democracy in the USA today and present some ways I think we can spread our conviction that a democracy without morally responsible domestic and international policies is elected corruption, too close to plutocracy and an empire-in-democracy's clothing for the conscience of its citizenry.

This fall, we also decided to become more visible and effective in the gay marriage conversation. This month we launch JUST MATRIMONY, an each one teach one networking campaign to raise awareness on behalf of the gay and lesbian couples now excluded from the benefits and responsibilities of legal marriage. When the Just Matrimony brochure is finalized, I plan to share it with every ceremony couple I work with and offer them the opportunity to join with the National Leaders Council in supporting the Just Matrimony fund which will pay for educational and legislative efforts to end this unfairness.

Because Ethical Culture members and leaders have historically supported civil rights and equal opportunity across race, religion, and other backgrounds, this new project of the National Leaders' Council does not demand moral courage in action on my part as it does of clergy whose religious denominations denounce homosexuality as Biblically wrong. At the same time, as someone a Dutch friend once laughingly called "hopelessly heterosexual," it feels good to find a way in which I can act as an ally of gay and lesbian couples: to be in solidarity with them by acting against the situation which is against them.

I can also see a practical way that our combined NLC efforts can ripple outward, both in the awareness these hundreds of conversations with couples a year will certainly create and in the monies we can raise to finance our own and other groups' educational and legislative strategies.

Adopting a goal and at least one good strategy to achieve it is often the step from good willed bystander to activist. In this old civil rights issue finally come to the surface of democratic societies I'm grateful to Curt, Richard, Boe and the other Leaders heading up this effort, and glad, based on the Leader's Council philosophical support for gay marriage developed years ago, we can now add the considerable influence of our members, ceremony couples and their families to the educational and lobbying phase in this historical evolution of humanity's concept of marriage.

- Lisel Burns

November Platforms

November 2 *Elections 2003 and the State of the Union*

Join Congressman Major Owens to reflect on local election issues and current crises including Iraq, Israel and Palestine, Liberia and domestic issues. The Brooklyn Women's Chorus will also be there to celebrate the start of the 2004 Presidential election campaign.

November 9 *Family Conversations: Raising Ethical Awareness*

Recently, students asked about people they admire move directly to their own families and stay clear of community or national leaders. To challenge the apathy, cynicism and hypocrisy of the larger market-oriented culture, it is understandable that we look to our own experience for our moral exemplars. But can we consciously form and nurture stories, songs and traditions in our family and community circles and become the ancestors who pass our hopes, values and insights down the generations through stories that never grow old? With Lisel Burns, Leader. Music by Chris Seymour, vocal and banjo.

November 16 *The Triumph of Social Reforms: Ethical Culture's Early Years and Why They Matter Now*, with Marc Bernstein, Curator of the American Ethical Union Archives

November 23 *Wampanoag Festival*

An intergenerational festival based on a Native American ceremony of gratitude.

November 30 *Thanksgiving Colloquy*

A more meditative Ethical Culture ceremony, with sharing, music and reflections on the theme: "Appreciating."

December 7 *Our Nation's Ethics Will be Our Legacy Also*

Will the 2004 elections be an ending or a new beginning for American Democracy? Join Lisel Burns in reviewing the important issues on which ethical positions should be taken by presidential candidates, and exploring ways we can use our combined resources and voices of conscience regarding the fate of our nation in the 2004 election.

Platforms are held every Sunday morning, 11am-12:15pm, in the main hall of the Meeting House at 53 Prospect Park West, followed by a convivial buffet or potluck lunch.

Wampanoag!

The Children's Sunday Assembly presents an annual BSEC Thanksgiving Tradition: The Wampanoag Festival is based on a Native American ritual and the tradition of reciprocity. Students of the Children's Sunday Assembly and BSEC Platformgoers will bow to the four winds and dance and sing together in a powerful reminder of the abundance of our lives and all the things we have to be grateful for.

**THE BROOKLYN SOCIETY
FOR ETHICAL CULTURE**

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

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Leader: Lisel Burns

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

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.

NSC Activities

Martha Gallahue, who is a member of the AEU National Service Conference at the UN, reports that at least nine Societies are increasing their commitment to linking local activism to global issues through the National Service Conference. Local activists in Brooklyn, New York, Queens, Essex, Bergen, Philadelphia, Northern Virginia, Westchester, and Long Island are working on ways to use our UN connections to develop their ethical commitments.

BROOKLYN PEACE FAIR BECOMES BROOKLYN PEACE DAY

On October 18, the Brooklyn Society for Ethical Culture hosted several hundred Brooklyn residents for a wide variety of informational and artistic activities at the first annual Brooklyn Peace Fair. The terrific success of the event prompted Brooklyn's borough president Marty Markowitz to declare October 18, 2003 the official "Brooklyn Peace Day."

The Peace Fair, co-sponsored by Brooklyn Parents for Peace and BSEC, invited participants to choose among a wide range of workshops, films, lectures, performances, discussions, and activities for adults, teens, and children, all encompassing broad themes of peace and justice. More than 70 community, religious and political organizations, together with elected officials endorsed the Peace Fair. Several endorsing officials, including U.S. Representative Major Owens, State Assembly Members James Brennan and Joan Millman, and City Councilman Bill DiBlasio, joined the gathering to participate in workshops, presentations and activities.

Some of the day's events were informational presentations, including Congressman Owens opening workshop titled "How to Work for Peace in Congress." Others topics were "Palestine is Still the Issue," "Liberia, West Africa, Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow," and "Iraq, Where are We Now?" Cultural offerings included performances by professional storytellers, musicians and dancers and workshops in dance, poetry, drama and art. Children and adults alike created designs for a mural project, mosaic tiles, buttons, t-shirts, windsocks and quilt squares. Other workshops, such as tai chi, yoga, karate, and "being peace" focused on personal growth. Several sponsoring organizations targeted their workshops for teenagers. Games for youth taught about the economics of the Bush administration's budget priorities, role playing about conflict resolution strategies, and a teen open mike "shout out" moderated by professional poets.

Outside the BSEC Meetinghouse, tables from more than 20 groups lined the sidewalk across from Prospect Park, offering buttons, literature and a chance to network. "I began a conversation with the man staffing the table next to mine," said Molly Nolan of Brooklyn Parents for Peace, "only to discover that his group, Class Action Youth Leadership Academy, was doing some of the same work we are in terms of educating high school youth about military recruiting in public schools. Now we are hoping to coordinate our work."

Attendance at the Peace Fair exceeded the expectations of the organizers. Tracey Jindyeh, Ethics for Children Sunday Assembly Director and a co-coordinator of the event, was particularly pleased with the number of families with children in attendance. Wanda Quintana, co-coordinator and a member of Brooklyn Parents for Peace noted, "Participants came from all over Brooklyn, from all ages, races, cultures and religions. It was truly rewarding to see such broad participation and it made all our hard work worthwhile." Bea Rubin, political artist and co-founder of the Peace Site (which has been recognizing peace activists annually since 1983), was thrilled to recognize so many old friends and fellow peace activists she had worked with over the last 40 years and also to see the new generation taking their part in what she described as a "manifestation of the ideals of the Peace Site." A sign made by one four-year-old girl also summed up the sentiments of many participants at the Fair: "Whoever you are if you are for peace, you are my friend."

In addition to Tracey, Maureen Egginton and Charlie Horwitz helped plan the event, along with Brooklyn Parents for Peace. BSEC members Constance Pigozzi, Edith Calabro, Roger Kaufman, Les Lopes, Bea Rubin, and Diane Kirschner pitched in to help and Lisel Burns was a great MC. Thanks also to Poly Prep for letting us use their space for part of the program. This Peace Fair was the "first annual" fair and organizers have already announced next year's date: October 16, 2004. Save the date!

Membership News

We wish a swift recovery to Diane Kirshner's mother, Ethel Kirschner, who recently spent some critical time in Methodist Hospital and to Dorothy Klein, who visited Maimonides hospital for monitoring and tests but is home again.

The Sharing and Caring Committee encourages anyone who is having problems with Housing, Medicare, Medicaid, or other Government programs, etc, to call Roger Kaufman at (718) 972-0468 for assistance. Confidentiality assured.

BSEC treasurer Kurt Johnson will serve on a national AEU task force to review the policy of local society apportionments.

November member birthdays: Donna Roberts (15), Remi Gay (19), Martha Hoffman (22), Martha Gallahue (27), Jim Alford (29).

NOVEMBER 2003 BSEC CALENDAR

Sunday 11/2

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

10-11am: CSA Parents Meeting

11am: Platform: "Elections 2003 and the State of the Union" with Special Guest Congressman Major Owens. Music by the Brooklyn Women's Chorus.

12:30pm: Lunch with the Bunch.

Monday 11/3

7-9pm: *Storytelling Workshop*, with Mary Savage. \$8-12 donation.

Tuesday 11/4

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

Wednesday 11/5

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

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

Thursday 11/6

7:00pm: Board of Trustees Meeting.

Friday 11/7

8pm: Good Coffeehouse. *See back cover for details.* \$10 donation.

Sunday 11/9

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

10-11am: CSA Parents Meeting

11am: Platform: "Family Conversations: Raising Ethical Awareness" with Lisel Burns, Leader

12:30pm: Lunch with the Bunch.

Tuesday 11/11

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

Wednesday 11/12

7-9pm: T'ai Chi Chuan.

Thursday 11/13

7:00pm: Platform Committee Meeting.

Friday 11/14

6:30pm: Newcomers Welcome Dinner. All members welcome.

8pm: Good Coffeehouse. \$10 donation.

Sunday 11/16

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

10-11am: CSA Parents Meeting

11am: Platform: "The Triumph of Social Reforms: Ethical Culture's Early Years and Why They Matter Now," with AEU Archivist Marc Bernstein.

12:30pm: Lunch with the Bunch.

Tuesday 11/18

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

Wednesday 11/19

7-9pm: T'ai Chi Chuan.

Friday 11/21

8pm: Good Coffeehouse: *Third Friday with the Park Slope Food Coop* \$10.

Sunday 11/23

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

10-11am: CSA Parents Meeting

11am: Platform: Wampanoag Festival

12:30pm: Lunch with the Bunch.

Tuesday 11/25

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

Wednesday 11/26

7-9pm: T'ai Chi Chuan.

Friday 11/28 *Good Coffeehouse closed.*

Sunday 11/30

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

10-11am: CSA Parents Meeting

11am: Platform: Thanksgiving Colloquy on the theme: "Appreciating."

12:30pm: Lunch with the Bunch.

Tuesday 12/2

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

Wednesday 12/3

7-9pm: T'ai Chi Chuan.

Friday 12/5

8pm: Good Coffeehouse. \$10 donation.

Sunday 12/7

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

10-11am: CSA Parents Meeting

11am: Platform: "Our Nation's Ethics Will be Our Legacy Also" with Lisel Burns, Leader

12:30pm: Lunch with the Bunch.

Planning is underway for the Holiday Crafts Fair. If you want to reserve a table, or would like to volunteer, contact Linda Stallard as soon as possible. And, of course, come and do your holiday shopping at BSEC on December 13, from 11 to 4!!!

2003 AMERICAN ETHICAL UNION FALL RELIGIOUS EDUCATION CONFERENCE

Friday-Sunday, November 14-16

Conference Center, Stony Point, NY

"RAISING ETHICAL CITIZENS IN A
CONFLICTED WORLD"

Keynote Speaker: Anne Klaeyson, Long
Island Ethical Society Leader

The American Ethical Union Board will hold its meeting November 7/8 in New York, since the originally planned meeting was cancelled due to hurricane. The New Board President is Arnold Fishman of the Philadelphia Society.

BSEC Gets Stage Mention!

"The Beautiful Hills of Brooklyn"

The Makor/Steinhardt Center of the
92nd Street Y (35 W. 67 St)

The BSEC theater group will attend a one-act, one-woman play by Ellen Cassidy on Monday, November 17, 7:30 pm. Based on the journal of the playwright's aunt, Jessie Singer Sylvester, the piece vividly evokes the daily life of an elderly Brooklyn woman, then soars off in surprising directions - reportedly including both the verses of Walt Whitman and the Brooklyn Society for Ethical Culture! Winner of a Moondance Festival Award, the play stars Joanna Merlin and is directed by Amy Feinberg. If you are interested in attending, please contact Annette Bernstein as soon as possible (718 369-3321).

The Learning Company lecture discussion courses will be shown on selected Sunday afternoons, or at 10:00 AM. Contact Stephen Klips at stephenklips@mindspring.com or 783-2298 for November scheduling.

MEMBERS AND NEWCOMERS: DINNER & A CONCERT

Friday, November 14, 6:30pm: Before the Coffeehouse performance of Bluegrass/Klezmer wildness, the membership committee invites newcomers, newer members and any interested members to a welcome supper and informational session. Bring a dish for potluck or contribute \$7.00 for your share of Peruvian ceviche, fish, chicken, rice and beans from Coco Roco! Call 783-2298 by 4pm if you plan to attend so we'll know how much to order. SPECIAL combination of coffeehouse and dinner ticket will be \$15 - a real bargain!

Thanksgiving with BSEC

Members who are interested in spending Thanksgiving Day with BSEC members and friends: Tony Severo and Melanie Richardson are willing to prepare Thanksgiving Day Dinner at the Ethical Society or at a member's residence if it's large enough. For more information and planning, contact Melanie at melanieannr@verizon.net or at (718) 768-1681.

November Good Coffeehouse Details

November 7

Pat Wictor has been winning over listeners with his melodic, sometimes brainy take on roots music. A triple-threat - with great slide guitar, singing and song-writing - Pat is currently touring the Northeast in support of his third RiskyDisc Records release, *Temporary Stay*.

-plus- Jeff Solomon plays cerebral, fun, indie-pop full of twisty rhymes and jazz chords. Alternating between piano and an effects-laden acoustic/electric baritone ukulele (!), this former jazz composition student is quickly carving his own niche in NY's singer/songwriter scene with his breezy onstage humor and songs that really sound new.

November 14

The *Klezmer Mountain Boys* join bluegrass and southern fiddle tunes with klezmer melodies from pre-war Russia and Eastern Europe. Clarinetist Margot Leverett joins forces with today's stars of klezmer and bluegrass to explore the shared musical spirit of two genres worlds apart.

-plus- A multitude of influences affect the haunting fiddling of Sam Zygmuntowicz. His ensemble performs original and traditional string band tunes and songs. Be prepared for a night of musical juxtapositions.

November 21 *Third Friday with the Park Slope Food Coop*

Dave Phelps (guitarist/composer) writes music for a quartet for this concert, with Kate Sullivan on vocals, Michael Sarin, drums, and Alexis Cuadrado on bass.

-plus- Andrew Drury (drummer/composer) recorded his recent CD, *A Momentary Lapse*, with Myra Melford, Mark Dresser, Chris Speed, Briggan Krauss, and Eyvind Kang.

November 28 *Closed for Thanksgiving Weekend*

December 5

Workshops can't teach you to write songs like the ones that *Ellsworth & Hicks* write. It's more than technique; it's real life. "Whether harmonizing, trading instrumental licks, or just exchanging onstage banter, these two settle into their repertoire like a pair of old cats on a windowsill. Their music is cool, observant, and delivered with a baggy-pants soul..." Mark Keating, *Sound Views*

-plus- *James O'Malley* has shared the stage with such notables as Cheryl Wheeler, Jack Williams, Lynn Miles, Louis Taylor and Chuck Pyle. His songs are eloquent hook-laden gems delivered in his own inimitable style. "What puzzles this reviewer most is how an artist this talented is not already an established fixture on the national acoustic music scene." *Music Matters Review*

In the community:

Brooklyn Family Theatre
at the Church of Gethsemane
proudly presents ...

THE WIZ

The Wonderful Wizard of Oz
Pop-Musical

October 17 through November 15
Fridays 8pm, Saturdays 4 & 8pm
and Sundays 5pm

Admission \$12, Reservations recommended:
(718) 670-7205 or

www.brooklynfamilytheatre.com

1012 Eighth Ave at 10th Street, Park Slope

Observing Ramadan

Thursday, November 6, BSEC is cordially invited by Debbie Almontaser of Brooklyn Bridges to join her and the Arab Muslim American Federation to break bread for Ramadan, at Widdi Hall, 5602 6th Ave (Brooklyn) at 5pm. For information and to RSVP, contact Kaled Lamada at 646-251-7948.

Come Hear
Congressman Major Owens
Speak at Platform:
"Elections 2003
and the State of the Union"
November 2, 11:00am
-and-
Vote Your Conscience
on November 4

CHANGE SERVICE REQUESTED

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