



Ethically Speaking

November 2004

Volume 99 Issue 3

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**



NOVEMBER PLATFORMS

7

"Realizing the Promise of Ethical Culture: Ethical Considerations in Our Lives – What Are They and How Do We Put Them First?" With Leader, Lisel Burns & the Brooklyn Women's Chorus

14

"Doing Good: Experiences, Pitfalls and Possibilities." With Robert Belenky, Author and Child Psychologist

21

"Wampanoag Festival:" Intergenerational Thanksgiving Platform. With Remi Gay

28

"Thanksgiving Colloquy: Acceptance." With Constance Pigozzi

December 5

"Realizing the Promise of Ethical Culture: What should be done about gentrification and displacement in Bed Stuy & Surrounding Areas?"

**Ethics For Children, Sundays at
10:30-12:30
November 7, 14 and 21**

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: CAPTAIN, MY CAPTAIN

Ariel Dorfman is a Chilean writer now teaching at Duke University. He has recently written a book about the phenomenon of U.S. global interventions and citizen amnesia about them. Recently posted on my favorite news web site www.commondreams.org is his powerful article noting similarities between his Chilean experience and post 9/11 USA?

"There was something dreadfully familiar." he said, "in the patriotic posturing, the militarization of society, the way in which anyone who dared to be faintly critical was automatically branded as a traitor. ...But worse" he continued, "perhaps than all of this was the erosion of the moral compass of America, the seeming indifference of the seeming majority to the suffering of others... the demonization of an ubiquitous foe who had to be destroyed without second thoughts -- and often without first ones as well; without, in fact, any thoughtfulness at all. That was far more terrifying than the criminal attacks on New York and Washington: To realize that the Chile of strongman Augusto Pinochet was not that far away, not that difficult to imitate, that it was already hovering in the future...."

On the other hand, he is also hopeful, saying " Over the last year, everywhere I have turned in the United States, I have seen signs of an amazing spirit of resistance, another sort of better America mobilizing, citizens not moved by dread but by hope, a vast and plural and creative wave of activism that I had not witnessed since... well, since the year 1970 when my country elected Salvador Allende as our President."

Whatever happens on November 2, I find Dorfman's two-toned vision helpful. I too feel this man's dread about

our country's direction. When torture and "disappearances" of prisoners taken by our forces are successfully reframed as wartime necessities, when government science reports are vetted for loyalty to the Republican Party and alignment with creationist religious beliefs, and the presidential contest is STILL described as "extremely close," I think that our democracy is much more at peril from the state of our own nation than from outside enemies. And at the same time, I am optimistic, excited by the re-energizing of so many people on behalf of a high road vision of American democracy in the last period. I doubt we will see a return to widespread apathy and powerlessness after this election. Too many people of all ages have tasted the possibility of taking back American progressive ideals, to go home in pessimism if George Bush successfully claims victory.

In that case I foresee only more youth and online organizing, more whistle blowing in high places, and the emergence of many large scale vigil-style activities, like the recent American Friends Service Committee (AFSC) national traveling display. There signs and over 1000 pairs of shoes mark Iraqi and U.S. soldiers dead in Iraq, bringing their sorrowful questions to local parks, town plazas and school yards.

From now on I would like to see more people like us talk more plainly about the values and qualities of character we need for integrity everywhere and tell more stories of people in our families and community circles we are proud of. Here I want to appreciate my father, USN (Ret.) Captain David M. Burns, a naval aviator in World War II who just died, on October 24, 2004, at the age of 91, in Camden, Maine.

**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, Roger Kaufman, Audrey Kindred, Constance Pigozzi, Bob Strock, Rita Wilson, Kurt Johnson, Maureen Egginton, Tina Aridas, Charlie Horwitz, Celeste Leibowitz and Diane Kirschner.

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

**December Newsletter Deadline -
Wednesday, November 17.**

Unfortunately, space constraints sometimes dictate whether a contribution can be included.

(From the Leaders Desk cont'd from front page)

President Bush, I wish you had known my father, a moderate Republican, who voted for you once but said he would never do it again. He said he was disappointed at your fiscal irresponsibility. Dad also didn't think you were telling the truth about your tax cuts and special access for big contributors like "Kenny Boy" of Enron just put the fox in with the chickens, like the Mafia scoundrels who stole his (long distance trucker) Uncle Charlirle's

GIVE US OUR PEACE

Give us a peace equal to the war
Or else our souls will be unsatisfied,
And we will wonder what we have fought for
And why the many died.

Give us a peace accepting every challenge -
The challenge of the poor, the black, of all
denied,
The challenge of the vast colonial world
That long has had so little justice by its side.

Give us a peace that dares us to be wise
Give us a peace that dares us to be strong
Give us a peace that dares us still uphold
Throughout the peace our battle against
wrong.

Give us a peace that is not cheaply used,
A peace that is no clever scheme,
A people's peace for which (we) can
enthusie,
A peace that brings reality to our dream.

Give us a peace that will produce great
schools --
As the war produced great armament,
A peace that will wipe out our slums ---
As war wiped out our foes on evil bent.

Give us a peace that will enlist
A mighty army serving humankind,
Not just an army geared to kill,
But trained to help the living mind,

An army trained to shape our common good
And bring about a world of brotherhood.

— Langston Hughes

Charlie's Teamster Union old age pension benefits. He said navy commanders took responsibility for what happened on their watch, period. He had deep faith, but held that faith didn't substitute for the responsibility to make reasoned judgments in leadership. He had deep integrity and his leadership was trustworthy because of it. He put ethical considerations first all his life, though he didn't use those words.

This November at the BSEC we start another holiday season by reflecting on Ethical Culture historical tenets and their applications today in our lives. Founder Felix Adler asked members of the ethical movement to put ethical considerations first in all matters. What does that notion mean in your life?

The poem by Langston Hughes, written in the shadow of another war, is to me a great example of such a stance applied to war and peace. The poem can also be found in the 2004 collection, **Let America Be America Again**, with an Introduction by Senator John Kerry, my choice for the next President of the USA. *Lisel Burns*

November 9: 7pm The EAC book group's last session to discuss Thom Hartmann's book "Making Democracy Work." Everyone is welcome to join even if you haven't read the book. Supper is provided and a \$10 contribution is requested. Please share your ideas for good books or videos to discuss in December. RSVP to Charley at chorwitz@earthlink.net.

CONGRATULATIONS WANGARI MAATHAI

Members and friends may recall that in September 2001, Dr. Wangari Maathai, global heroine, foremost environmentalist and human rights advocate, founder and Leader of the Green Belt Movement in Kenya addressed us at Platform. Dr. Maathai helped our community at that very difficult time in the aftermath of the September Eleven tragedy with her uplifting words of peace. We are happy and proud to announce: **Wangari Maathai - Winner Nobel Peace Prize 2004!**

"Peace on earth depends on our ability to secure our living environment. Maathai stands at the front of the fight to promote ecologically viable social, economic and cultural development in Kenya and in Africa. She has taken a holistic approach to sustainable development that embraces democracy, human rights and women's rights in particular. She thinks globally and acts locally. Maathai stood up courageously against the former oppressive regime in Kenya....She has served as inspiration for many in the fight for democratic rights and has especially encouraged women to better their situation." **2004 Nobel Peace Prize Announcement**

ANOTHER HISTORIC BSEC TIE RENEWED

"It is our duty as men and women to proceed as though the limits to our abilities do not exist. We are collaborators in creation. The future of the earth is in our hands."

That's the quote on the Faultless Starch/Bon Ami Company's letterhead, bearing a strong resemblance to BSEC's ideals and mission.

Just as BSEC recently renewed our ties and shared history with the Brooklyn Chamber of Commerce, we have re-established contact with the Faultless Starch/Bon Ami Company. BSEC now owns the landmark Bon Ami mansion originally built in 1900 for the Bon Ami magnate, William Hamlin Childs. The Childs family owned and lived in the mansion until 1947, when William Childs' son Richard donated the mansion to the Brooklyn Society for Ethical Culture.

Not long ago we sent Gordon T. Beaham, III, Chairman and CEO of the Faultless Starch/ Bon Ami Company, information on the Bon Ami mansion and on the Brooklyn

Society for Ethical Culture. In the letter we outlined BSEC's many activities, as well as the cultural and educational events taking place under the Bon Ami roof. The letter spoke of our shared concern for the environment, and pointed out another common interest: Faultless Starch/ Bon Ami Company supported the Million Mom March, that our Board Member and Communications Coordinator, Maureen Egginton, helped organize.

Mr. Beaham responded warmly, telling us he had not known of BSEC or the mansion's history. He was delighted to hear about our programs and mission, and asked that we continue to share information. We're pleased to have him join our mailing list and look forward to a growing friendship as we continue to explore our shared history. We hope someday on a visit to New York City, Mr. Beaham will visit the Bon Ami mansion and see BSEC in action.

Celeste Leibowitz, Development Officer

BSEC MEMBERS IN ACTION

BSEC ENVIRONMENT AFFAIRS & NYC PARKS DEPARTMENT

BSEC Environmental Affairs held its annual program in partnership with the NYC Parks Department in Central Park, at Belvedere Castle Plaza on International Peace Day, Sept. 21. As usual, the program highlighted world conservation concerns; the speakers were Dr. Kurt Johnson of BSEC, the Counsel General of Mexico, Adrian Benepe (Parks Commissioner of NYC), and Richard Stadin of PBS MasterVision. This was the fifth year of this event.

ANOTHER HISTORIAN IN THE HOUSE: Thanks to Tony Severo for delving into the origins of BSEC and discovering that our BSEC founder also founded the Brooklyn Chamber of Commerce. If you go to the Chamber's web site, you will find an article about us: <http://www.ibrooklyn.com/site/newsevents/whatsnew>. Our events will also be posted regularly on their web site.

DINNER AND A MOVIE: Thursday, November 11 Brooklyn Academy of Music.

Join member Joan Klips for an exciting evening at B.A.M. on Thursday, November 11. First, we'll take in a movie; then, with our B.A.M. Rose Cinema ticket stubs, we get to enjoy a three-course dinner including a glass of house wine for \$21 per person (movie ticket is additional). A discussion of the movie will be held at dinnertime. A fee of \$2 per person will be collected for BSEC. For instance, at BAM Cinematek that evening, there will be a 7:30 pm showing of director Jim Jarmusch's indie film "Permanent Vacation." This film, made in 1981, is Jarmusch's first feature, and it "focuses on a young man wandering thru' a surreal landscape of NYC, populated by outcasts." Call Joan for details at (718)748-1127.

ARTISTS ACTION GROUP FORMING: Friday, November 5 at 6:30pm at BSEC

At the first meeting of the Creative Action Group, a gathering of people from the fields of art, music, dance and theater discussed the possibility of performing a five to ten minute presentation at Sunday Platform once a month. Also, a series of shows combining the arts disciplines beginning with a Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Festival in January 2005. The next gathering to share ideas will be Friday, November 5 at 6:30 - bring a creative friend. For more information contact Pery Dell at Perrydell@yahoo.com or 646-281-2494.

MOMENTA STRING QUARTET: Sunday, November 7th at 4pm

Roger Kaufman kicks off his Concert Series with the Momenta String Quartet. 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. \$10 admission. 50/50 Fundraiser for BSEC. Contact Roger at 718-972-0468 or Rkaufman33@aol.com for more information.

BSEC JOBS COORDINATOR: Vandra Thorburn has volunteered to be our first jobs coordinator. She will make a Sunday Platform Jobs Book, listing BSEC Community Jobs, expecting members to find their best match for the approximately 4 hours per month we all pledge to help BSEC flourish. If you have a job you'd like to pass on, know of a job that should be created, or just want to help on the Jobs Project, please contact Vandra at v.thorburn@verizon.net or Lisel.

SHARING & CARING: The MacArthur Foundation has written a report on aging. If you want to live to be 106 years old with good quality of life, this book should become your bible. More information to come in the next issue of the Newsletter. From Roger Kaufman.

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

Our Children's Sunday Assembly extends love and comfort to Clergy Leader Lisel Burns upon the death of her father.



Wonderfully this fall, our children and family's programs are growing at the Ethical Culture Society. We welcome several very special families that have joined us during this autumn season. To each, let me say, "Please make yourself at home here to dive in and deepen your family's ethical explorations, commitments and practices. Meet the folks in your midst here and consider them allies and resources in this endeavor." To all, a toast to the "cool" season ahead with "F.E.L.I.X. Family Ethical Living is X-citing!" (This acronym salutes Ethical Culture's founder, philosopher Felix Adler.)

Our fall season's broad theme has been Peace. Looking back, it is fun to remember our Peace Walk earlier in October, with colorful signs and songs; the Brooklyn Peace Fair busy with people who care, like we do, about making the world a better place; and "The Web" game workshop at the Fair led by collaborating teammates, student Xena and parent Janice, to help us contemplate how interconnected we all are on Earth.

We recently learned a new peace song with the vocal leadership of student Kevin (who remembered the words even when I couldn't); and we illustrated the song by creating an exhibit in the front hall of BSEC, "Peace Trees in a Forest of Love." We hope you all enjoy it and can appreciate the cooperative teamwork it took to create each tree collaboratively.

Our Fall Festival began Part 2 of our CSA year, with homemade mask making, apple bobbing, and skeleton dances on Halloween morning.

Facing a season ahead that's rife with the pressures of holidays, many families seek alternatives to the highly commercialized and consumer oriented culture. Ethical Culture's Children's Sunday Assembly program offers families a creative, safe and celebratory venue within which to reframe the popular holidays through social outreach, generous action and worldly vision.

In November, let's each spread the word among friends and neighbors about our very special Wampanoag Intergenerational Platform on November 21st named in honor of the Native American Wampanoag tribe, and featuring special guest Remi Gay. We HIGHLY encourage parent attendance to the Intergenerational Platforms. **Note:** On the weekend of November 12, the American Ethical Union invites families and educators to join their Fall Retreat and Conference at Stony Point Resort. This is a wonderful way to brainstorm and learn together about the development of CSA curriculum, and if you're curious about attending, please let me know.

**Also, please note that there will be no CSA on Nov. 28.

** November 14 Platform speaker is a Child Psychologist & Author Richard Belenky.

**3RD FRIDAY FAMILY NIGHT OUT
November 19, 6:30-10pm**

We inaugurated our new program, Family Night Out and it was wonderful fun for all that came! It will continue to be scheduled on the third Friday of each month, so spread the word. Reservations are highly encouraged for this so we can predict the personnel and snack needs.

Children's activities in this structured and supervised "open space" will include: games, stories, songs and movement, art projects and autumn projects,

Every child is welcome. Ages 2-13.
\$15 for one child, \$25 for two;
(discount price of \$10 for members of BSEC and our Children's Sunday Assembly Program)

Join us in the newly renovated basement of The Brooklyn Society for Ethical Culture. Contact EthicalKin@hotmail.com or call Audrey through the BSEC office for reservations at 718-768-2972. Please tell your friends.
Best to All, Audrey Kindred,
Family Programs Director

**INTERGENERATIONAL WAMPANOAG THANKSGIVING
FESTIVAL: NOVEMBER 21, 11AM**

Celebrate with A Native American Ceremony of Gratitude and honor the Native Americans' attitude of thankfulness to the earth, with traditional storytelling, Cherokee songs and dance, "Peace Chant to The Four Directions," "How Raven Made the World," a Forgiveness Ceremony, and Blanket Dance. The Wompanoag were the people who greeted the Pilgrims and helped them live through their first winter. in Massachusetts.



**BSEC's Winter
Crafts Fair Fund Raiser
Saturday, December 18th, 2004
11AM to 4PM**

This is an annual Fundraising event for BSEC and members are asked to help out in any way they can to make it a success. We will transform our beautiful landmark mansion into a gallery of original arts and crafts such as:

**JEWELRY * POTTERY * ART PRINTS * TOYS
*BAGS * PAPER ART * STAINED GLASS **

Contact Linda Stallard to request flyers and forms to pass on to friends who might want to reserve space for a table - or shop for some wonderful items. - Email linda56ny@aol.com who can email you flyers and forms. Prices per table are \$55, and \$35 for the lower level. Committees contact Lisel Burns for tabling information.

KEEP OUR GARDEN BEAUTIFUL

Have you ever attended a wedding, Been to a picnic or taken a house tour of our landmark building here at BSEC? If so, you've probably noticed our spacious garden, an elegant backdrop for any outdoor celebration. After many years of foot traffic, it's clear that we need more than grass seed to make the garden entrance attractive enough for the weddings, parties and other outdoor events BSEC regularly hosts. We need a patio. Work is already underway, and we began with a temporary patio, to be expanded into permanent form soon after. It will cost BSEC \$9,200 to build the temporary patio. Please join our effort to keep our garden beautiful with a contribution to BSEC. Your support will be greatly appreciated!

MEMORIAL PLAQUES STILL AVAILABLE

There are still plenty of spaces available for a plaque in our Garden of Peace and Remembrance memorializing or honoring someone special in your life, or someone you admire. Right now we're selling engraved bronze plaques to be placed on the bricks around the perimeter. To order a plaque, send a check or money order for \$300 to BSEC. You can pay by credit card also. Send the wording for the plaque to Celeste Leibowitz at the BSEC office, or via email to Bruceleib@aol.com. Plaques will accommodate 3 lines of text, and approximately 20 letters per line.

Celeste Leibowitz

In Sympathy



The BSEC Community extends sincerest condolences to Lisel Burns, for the loss of her father, David Burns. Mr. Burns who passed away on October 24, in Camden, Maine. Mourning his loss are his wife, Bird Burns, daughters Lisel, Stephanie, Katybel, and son Robin, along with three granddaughters and one grandson. Flowers were sent from the BSEC Community.

Ethical Culture Grace

For the fruits of field and forest, farm and garden, river and ocean;

For our people who give their lives to rearing and cultivating our food and to transporting it on the highways and waterways of the earth;

For shelter and for raiment;

For comradeship in work; for fellowship in leisure, and for healthy recreation;

For the beauty of nature and art

And for all the blessings of democracy and freedom;

We lift up our thankful hearts.

Shared by Diane Kirschner



ETHICAL ACTION

Next Committee Meeting, Sunday November 21, 1:15pm

VOLUNTEER AT A WOMEN'S SHELTER

Brooklyn Heights Synagogue (BHS), a liberal, progressive congregation, on Remsen Street near Clinton Street, is seeking volunteers one night a year to host homeless women. I have volunteered there for several years and found it extremely rewarding. We serve prepared food for dinner and we make breakfast. We arrive at 7pm, sleep over and depart after breakfast around 7am.

BHS operates throughout the year except during the summer and really fills a great need in our city. I know that you will find this experience worthwhile. Let me know if you would like to volunteer at 718-230-3537 or contact Yigal Rechtman of BHS at 917-566-0020 or rechtman@aol.com.

From Charlie Horwitz



SUNDAY NOV. 14, 2004, 1:15-3:30 PM
DISCUSSING THE ISRAEL/PALESTINE CONFLICT
WANT TO LEARN HOW? COME TO A TRAINING WORKSHOP

Other Voices USA, a New York based coalition of organizations and the Brooklyn Society For Ethical Culture/Ethical Action Committee are co-sponsoring a training workshop for people in the peace camp.

The workshop aims to make us more effective in communicating with those in the silent middle on the Israeli/Palestinian issue. There will be exercises and role playing led by people who work in conflict resolution or are part of Psychotherapists For Social Responsibility. Take-home material will provide some new responses to standard mainstream positions. Techniques will be taught to reach and respect the feelings of fear, anger, and despair underlying the factual content cited by those who hold opposing views.

The event is free and open to the public. However, space is limited so if you would like to attend, email conflictresolutionprogram@afsc.org.

HAPPY NOVEMBER BIRTHDAY WISHES TO:

Erica Hawkins--7, Donna Roberts--15,
Ventura Simmons--15, Nancy
Richardson--18, Remi Gay--19,
Martha Hoffman--22, Martha
Gallahue--27, Jim Alford--29

Apologies to Ethel Kirschner for getting her name wrong in the last issue. We hope you are feeling much better.

HAVE YOU LOST IT?

Maybe we've found it.

The BSEC office has a large box of lost articles -- mainly clothing. Our policy is to keep items we've found for 90 days; after 90 days we'll donate the items to the Salvation Army. Contact us at the office: (718) 768-2972.

Nov 19 3rd Friday with the Park Slope Food Coop Pianist/composer **Roberta Pike** (www.robertajazz.com) leads an amalgam of coop members performing arrangements by band members including Andrew Rathbun on saxophones, Matt Pavolka on bass and Billy Mintz on drums.

Nov 12 Outstanding fiddler **Bill Christophersen** and singer-guitarist **Gil Sayre** offer a rousing set of Appalachian music. **John Leal** has a long history of performances that have earned him admirers of his roots guitar styles.


Nov 5 **Ernie Hawkins** (www.erniehawkins.com), from Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, is a master of Piedmont and Texas style acoustic blues and ragtime guitar. He studied extensively with legendary bluesman Rev. Gary Davis and is one of the few people in the world who can play Davis's complex compositions with an authority that rivals Davis himself. This project is partially supported by a grant from the Pennsylvania Performing Arts on Tour, a program developed and funded by the Vira I. Heinz Endowment; the William Penn Foundation; the Pennsylvania Council on the Arts; and The Pew Charitable Trusts; and administered by Mid Atlantic Arts Foundation.

SATURDAY: Nov 6: 12:30PM SPECIAL EVENT: Ernie Hawkins Guitar Workshop (\$65)

Ernie will teach a workshop on Piedmont and Texas blues styles Sat. from 12:30pm to 3:30pm. Price is \$65. A great opportunity for guitar players to learn from a genuine master. Those interested in signing up, email Ian Zack at ianz90@yahoo.com.

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)

THE GOOD COFFEEHOUSE MUSIC PARLOR 30th ANNIVERSARY SEASON

Felix Adler, Founder
"Always
elicit the best in others and
act to
thereby in oneself."

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.

**Brooklyn Society for Ethical Culture**
53 Prospect Park West & 2nd Street
Brooklyn, NY 11215

CHANGE SERVICE REQUESTED

"The world needs a global ethic with values which give meaning to life experiences.....

Humankind'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."

Wangari Maathai
2004 Nobel Peace Prize Winner