



ETHICALLY SPEAKING

DECEMBER 2004

Volume 99 Issue 4

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



DECEMBER PLATFORMS

5

"Realizing the Promise of Ethical Culture: What Should Be Done About Gentrification and Displacement in North Brooklyn and Surrounding Areas?" With a panel of activists. Followed by a workshop at 1:15 pm

12

Intergenerational Winter Festival with the Children's Sunday Assembly

19

Holiday Colloquy - A more meditative Ethical Culture ceremony with sharing, music and reflection on the Theme, "Ideals."

26

The Society is Closed

January 2, 11am

BSEC's Making Democracy Series: "Talking to Your Aunt Mamie About the Values of Islamic Religion and Muslim Americans." With Debbie Almontaser. Followed by a workshop at 1:15pm.

**Ethics For Children: Sundays at 10:30-12:30
December 5, 12 and 19**

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

ALL ARE WELCOME

HAPPY ETHICAL HOLIDAYS



Even though Ethical Culture is a non-theistic religion, this time of the year all of us wax nostalgic for home and hearth; for Christmas trees, Chanukah candles as well as for symbols from other non-Judeo-Christian religions that remind us of the spirit of the holidays.

Felix Adler, our Founder, celebrated both Christmas and Chanukah because Ethical Culture had no official holidays to call its own, but more importantly he loved the tradition and the meaning behind these occasions.

The spirit of love, generosity, and kindness to all human beings is our credo at all times of the year, yet is most profound at this time, is something all of us, whether deist, atheist, agnostic, or humanist etc., can rally around. I think as Ethical Culturalists we should wholeheartedly embrace these highest of human ideals and join with each other to celebrate what is really a time of renewal – of our humanity, and desire to uplift our fellow humans and aid those less fortunate; of our reverence for life; and of our wish to bring a smile to the face of a child.

We can draw strength from these positive actions, and as we embark on a new year, may our challenges be the active pursuit of peace, the spreading of hope, the offer of forgiveness and the awareness that all life is interconnected.

I wish all of you a healthy, happy and safe holiday season!

Anthony Severo
Vice President, Board of Trustees

The Church of Gethsemane, 1416 Eighth Avenue, Brooklyn, NY 11215

November 21, 2004

Dear Friends,

The members and staff of The Church of Gethsemane extend our deepest thanks to everyone at The Brooklyn Society for Ethical Culture. Your hot lunches for our members were greatly appreciated, especially by those who have been recently released from prison.

Our food pantry is also growing, and your collection of canned goods will help supply our shelves with food for those who are economically disadvantaged. As you know, we also send care packages to our Project Connect members who are in prison. Last year, the boxes you donated supplied gifts to many.

Thank you for your ongoing concerns and generosity for our unique congregation of prisoners, ex-prisoners and their families.

We are very thankful for who you are and what you do for our Brooklyn community and beyond.

*Sincerely,
Liz Alexander, Pastor*

**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, Tina Aridas, Martha Gallahue, Charley Horwitz, Celeste Leibowitz and Linda Stallard. Special thanks to Lisel Burns, Bonnie Loewenstein and Celeste Leibowitz for their excellent proofing!

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

**January Newsletter Deadline
Wednesday, December 15**

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

RELIGIOUS ETHICS

Religious Ethics: A Sourcebook, collected and edited by Dr. Arthur Dobrin, presents the responses from 34 religions and religious denominations on some of today's key moral issues. From Baha'i to Zoroastrianism, religious leaders and thinkers representing their own religion's answer 55 questions from the nature of being ethical to the use of force. There are explanations about the morality of sex and other issues of personal behavior.

This book, the first of its kind, gives the reader a handy cross-reference to compare ethical and moral positions of various religions. Some of the questions addressed in this book are: What does it mean to be a good person? What is the source of ethics? Is killing ever justified? Is abortion allowed? Is genetic engineering acceptable? Should homosexual marriages be allowed by the state? Is smoking allowed?

Arthur Dobrin, Professor of Humanities at Hofstra University in New York, teaches courses in religious ethics and the psychology of ethics, as well as courses in literature. He is the author and editor of 20 books, including poetry, novels and short stories. He and his wife served as Peace Corps Volunteers in Kenya and they have led several educational safaris to that country. Dr. Dobrin presented a symposium on moral education to faculty and graduate students at Nanjing Normal University in China. He is also the Leader Emeritus of the Ethical Humanist Society of Long Island where he served for 33 years as Leader. The book is available through the Long Island Ethical Humanist Society. Telephone 516-741-7304 or E-mail: office@ehsli.org.

WHAT IS A COLLOQUY?

The Colloquy is different in emphasis from our Platform meetings. The Platform meeting format, which reaches back to the days of our founder Felix Adler in the second half of the 19th century, is concerned with reason and inspiration. The Colloquy is concerned with self-reflection and common experience—and depends upon periods of quiet. The Colloquy offers an opportunity to share and reflect in a "safe space" in which participants honestly reflect on their experiences and aspirations without being challenged or questioned. A theme is selected for each one, based on Ethical Culture Leader Arthur Dobrin's book "Spelling God With Two O's."

BSEC offers Colloquies throughout the year, some on Sundays and some at other times. The next one will be held on Sunday, December 19th at Platform time at 11 am. It is entitled: "Holiday Colloquy" and the theme will be "Ideals." Please join us.

*Constance Pigozzi,
Chair, Platform Committee*

END OF YEAR PLEDGES

Please make any payments due on your membership pledges and send them in to the office c/o Ruth Pikitch, Pledge Secretary. Thanks to all who have already done so.

**BSEC'S ANNUAL
WINTER CRAFTS FAIR & FUND RAISER**



Our beautiful landmark mansion will be transformed into a gallery of original arts and crafts. Please post the enclosed flyer.

Contact Linda Stallard to request extra 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 should contact Lisel Burns for tabling information.

There will also be a drop off table for the *www.AnySoldier.com collections for which we need volunteers, so please tell your friends to come by then too. If you can bring food, or staff the food table, or host a BSEC table for a shift of two hours or so please let me know liselburns@aol.com. (*See page 5 for complete information)

AT & AROUND BSEC

TIKKUN CHAPTER FORMING IN PARK SLOPE MONDAY, DECEMBER 6, 7-9PM

Herb Dalin, long-time member of BSEC invites us to join him for a combo Latke & Tikkun party at the home of Eugene Resnick, 140 Sixth Avenue, between Sterling and St. John's Place. Eugene welcomes us to join the discussion and bring a little something to eat or drink. For more information contact Eugene at 718-783-3355 or email eresnic1@hotmail.com.

BOOK DISCUSSION GROUP TUESDAY, DECEMBER 7, 2004 - 7PM IN THE LIBRARY, FREE



"What's the Matter With Kansas? How Conservatives Won the Heart of America" by Thomas Frank. For more information, please contact Charley Horwitz at 718-230-353, or chorwitz@earthlink.net.

ETHICAL ACTION COMMITTEE MEETING: SUNDAY DECEMBER 12, 1:15 PM IN THE LIBRARY. ALL WELCOME!

NEW YORK ETHICAL SOCIETY: REPRODUCTIVE JUSTICE MONDAY, DECEMBER 13TH 2004, 7:00PM, FREE

Undivided Rights: A multi-media presentation incorporating music, video and artwork on the themes of the book, **"Undivided Rights: Women of Color Organize for Reproductive Justice"** featuring the four co-authors, with a reception to follow. 2 West 64th Street, NYC. Presented by Breakthrough, The Ms.Foundation for Women & NYSEC

ARTIST & PHOTOGRAPHER IN RESIDENCE: ANNEMARIE MOGIL



Many thanks to Annemarie Mogil who has been working hard on her art as a photographer. She has been producing beautiful montages of her photographs of members in action at the Society. Different subjects are depicted on several large formatted 11"x17" poster boards; including one capturing members coming together for support during the tragedy of September 11, 2001. These precious moments are a wonderful reminder and a historic keepsake of our community and we are very grateful to Anne Marie for her dedication.

LUNCH WITH THE BUNCH REVISITED

Lunch With the Bunch is a wonderful tradition here at BSEC! It provides a time specially set aside for members and friends to gather for fellowship and conversation; and the people who have been bringing you LWB for years want to see this tradition continue. However, it has become increasingly difficult to sustain the current format because many hours of preparation and clean-up are spent each Sunday by a few members who volunteer consistently. These members are now hoping to pursue other interests and take a different part in the fellowship part of the day.

So, there will be a new format for LWB beginning in December 2004. First Sundays will be potluck--members and frequent visitors are asked to bring a PREPARED food dish (there will no longer be anyone to prepare food in the kitchen). We will provide a list of suggestions based on the first letter of your last name via email. Sometimes you may already have a dish in mind and that is okay!

All other Sundays there will be bagels, breads, coffee and tea ONLY. On these days, if you prefer, please feel free to bring your own brown bag lunch. Tables will be set up and plenty of space and time provided for everyone to visit and get to know each other better!

A BIG thank you to Bonnie Loewenstein and Annette Bernstein for their efforts to coordinate volunteers for the past couple of months and to all those who helped with set-up, serving and clean-up; especially Tony Severo, Bruce Leibowitz, Ruth Pikitch, Selma Richman, and Annette Bernstein. We still need to ask for volunteers, but the time and effort involved will hopefully be greatly decreased.

CELEBRATE



Melanie Anne Richardson and Anthony Severo shared the news of their engagement at Platform on Sunday, November 14. The BSEC community is very happy for them both, and also for ourselves to have something so joyous to celebrate. Much love and many congratulations to you both from your friends at BSEC.

HOLIDAY GIFTS

What can you give to the person who has everything? Now you can quit rummaging through stores or surfing the web trying to find the perfect gift. Whatever your holiday tradition, consider a gift to BSEC in his or her honor. Your honoree will receive a personal note from our President, Melanie Richardson, conveying BSEC's thanks for being your inspiration. A joyous holiday season to all!

Celeste Leibowitz, Development Officer

MOMENTA SERIES CONTINUES

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 12TH AT 4PM

If you missed the first concert, here's another chance to listen to some fine music, eat Turkish Delight, and also raise money for BSEC!

Momenta New Music Presents:

Ned Rothenberg, the sensational composer, improviser and multi-instrumentalist in a rare appearance of his own solo works for clarinet, bass clarinet, alto saxophone and shakuhchi will perform selections from his most recent double CD, "Intervals."

"...his solo outings have a near religious focus to them. You'll be entertained - his improvs are compelling on many levels. And you'll understand how dedication to craft can nurture larger questions of art and approach."

Village Voice music critic Jim Macnie

\$10 donation. Seniors & students \$6
50/50 fund raiser for BSEC. Contact Roger Kaufman at 718-972-0468 for more information.

SMALL GIFTS TO PROFIT BSEC

"Wage Peace" - wear BSEC's theme on your wrist or hold it in your hand - by purchasing a beautiful handmade Guatemalan beaded or woven bracelet and colorfully wrapped pen (\$6, \$4, & \$3 (2 for \$5) respectively).

Support Guatemalan artisans while also supporting BSEC, the recipient of all profits. To contact Diane Kirschner call 718.499.4291 or e-mail kirschnerd@hotmail.com to arrange your purchase.

These items make great stocking stuffers with a message!

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

A LETTER FROM AUDREY

A wonderful fall celebration inaugurated our season on All Hallows' Morn with a creative fair, welcoming new families to join us and explore CSA. CSA parents and children created unique ways to share their talents and their spooky notions by creating booths for ethical fortune telling, apple bobbing, face painting, costume making, pumpkin painting, and trick/treat magic -- not to mention Frankenstein's gruesome touching museum for the very brave. This day starred student Sam, who presented a fun one-man puppet show for all ages. The young children laughed so heartily and Sam later welcomed them to come "backstage" and explore the puppet characters themselves. A hoo-rah and thanks go to all who participated.

November brought the yearly river of runners through our neighborhood with the NYC Marathon. As we contemplate what finishing lines we'd like to set for ourselves at Ethical, what achievements we'd like to pour hard work and focus into together, we salute the efforts of each and every runner. We mini-marathoned our way down to 4th Avenue and cheered runners on, enjoying their diversity and picnicking in the warm fall breeze as we watched them pass. What a fun and inspiring experience.

Recently, a CSA leadership team of myself (CSA Director, Audrey Kindred), CSA teacher Simba Yangala and CSA administrator Fiona Boneham, with children Lochland, Iolanthe, and Xena, attended this year's American Ethical Union conference about children's ethical education. It was an opportunity to meet and exchange ideas with educators from other Ethical Societies. It is heartening to realize that the learning of ethics is indeed happening beyond our front door!

The Wampanoag Intergenerational Platform gave us the wonderful opportunity to reunite with our dear friend Remi Gay, and to pay homage to the Native American peoples whose values enrich the world so greatly, as we contemplated our giving of thanks. We were glad to welcome new families to this annual celebration.

A special thanks for donations of apples and pumpkins also goes to Tree-licious and Phillips Farm of the local Farmer's Market. Thanks also to Uprising Bakery for donations of breads for our gatherings.

HAPPY DECEMBER BIRTHDAY WISHES TO:

Fran Rabinowitz --9
Melanie Richardson --17
Josie Radosta --17
Sami Jindyeh --18
Celeste Leibowitz --26
Joan Donnen Klips --27
Hafizur Khan --29



COME TO OUR

**WINTER FESTIVAL PARTY
DECEMBER 12, 11AM**

In December, we look forward to the CSA's Intergenerational Winter Festival. Gifts are a big theme for many in this holiday time, and we welcome all to bring

- Canned goods as gifts to contribute to those less fortunate in this festive time.
- Also, special small toys that you no longer play with, may be wrapped at the Winter Festival to send to our friends at St. Anne's Orphanage in Kenya.

Themes of all ages holiday celebration will include activities helping us reflect on our real needs and others needs and the real gifts we can create to help meet those needs.

I invite you all to contemplate a special gift: the gift of learning. In doing so, let's celebrate the very special ethical educators who've helped shape CSA in recent years, but who have recently moved on to pursue other commitments. In this celebration, we honor **Tracy Jindyeh and Margit Sheldon**, whom we love very much at CSA.

Beginning In December, another CSA project will include monthly collections of supplies and food for soldiers in Iraq via www.ansoldier.org, and humanitarian aid for families of Iraqis killed or injured through the Friends Service Committee. (See page 6 For more complete details.)

3RD FRIDAY FAMILY NIGHT OUT

December 17, 6:30-10pm

Our new program, Family Night Out, 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.

BSEC REACHING OUT TO SUPPORT OUR TROOPS

Dear BSEC Members and Friends,

Thanks to the enthusiasm and hard work of Dave Robinson, one of my wedding ceremony grooms a while back, BSEC is partnering with Dave to collect supplies and food requested by soldiers in Iraq through the web site www.anysoldier.com. We will have a table outside of the Park Slope Food Coop, 78 Union Street, from 9am-5pm on December 18th asking folks going into the Coop to consider shopping for or contributing some items listed below. Flyers are available at the Society or by email from liselburns@aol.com.

We will need volunteers for some of this time and if you can help please let me know what time slot you could cover. Children can draw or write letters and cards and we will supply materials at the table for them.

BSEC's Winter Crafts Fair: There will also be a drop off www.anysoldier.com table for which we need volunteers, so please tell your friends to come by the Society too. If you can bring food, or staff the food table, or host a BSEC table for a shift of two hours or so, please let me know too!

Leader, Lisel Burns

SUGGESTIONS INCLUDE

Many of our brave military personnel serving in Iraq and Afghanistan often lack the most basic personal supplies such as easily carried non-perishable food and basic household/hygiene items!!! Show them you care - make your support real. For example, current magazines, AA/AAA batteries, canned air, hand sanitizers, razors/blade refills, shaving cream, board games, phone cards (AT&T best value) CDs, DVDs, crossword and find-a-word puzzle books, Krazy Glue, mouse traps, and pen pals, If you were stuck in the middle of nowhere, what would you choose?

FOOD ITEMS

- Powdered, pre-sweetened drink mixes
- Chef Boyardee beefaroni, ravioli, Easy-Mac, in easy-open cans
- Candy, gum, canned nuts, granola bars, trail mix, cereal bars, sports/power bars, Rice Krispie Treats, Sunflower seeds, etc.
- Fruit in easy-open cans and Dried Fruit in bag or can.
- Coffee, instant and regular, and filters.
- Decent can openers.
- Beef Jerky & Ramen Noodles - huge favorites
- Soups, chunky, chicken, beef, etc.
- Tuna canned and packs

PERSONAL ITEMS

- Remember the many women soldiers there! Feminine Products.
- Antibacterial wipes; Wet Ones, Baby Wipes - **lots of these needed!**
- Band Aids, cough lozenges, small packs of Kleenex, combs, paper, pens, envelopes, lip balm, eye drops, q-tips, nail clippers; lotion; sewing kits.
- Eye wash - the cleaning kind - because of all the sand storms
- Small containers of Tylenol, Motrin, etc.
- Small tubes of toothpaste and toothbrushes, floss mouthwash, deodorant, soap, shampoo;
- Gold Bond foot power; Gel Insoles.

PLUS MAIL: Many of our troops never receive any mail. Stop by and write a letter of support to ANY SOLDIER. Bring your kids so they can write their own letters, draw pictures, and find their own way to say thank you to our troops.

Visit the web site www.anysoldier.com for general information and for this neighborhood effort, e-mail brooklynanysoldier@usa.com.

WAGING PEACE: HUMAN RIGHTS



This is an edited extract from the 2004 Sydney Peace Prize lecture delivered at the Seymour Center. November 4, 2004 by Arundhati Roy

Sometimes there's truth in old cliches. There can be no real peace without justice. And without resistance there will be no justice. Today, it is not merely justice itself, but the idea of justice that is under attack.

The assault on vulnerable, fragile sections of society is so complete, so cruel and so clever that its sheer audacity has eroded our definition of justice. It has forced us to lower our sights, and curtail our expectations. Even among the well-intentioned, the magnificent concept of justice is gradually being substituted with the reduced, far more fragile discourse of "human rights."

This is an alarming shift. The difference is that notions of equality, of parity, have been pried loose and eased out of the equation. It's a process of attrition. Almost unconsciously, we begin to think of justice for the rich and human rights for the poor. Justice for the corporate world, human rights for its victims. Justice for Americans, human rights for Afghans and Iraqis. Justice for the Indian upper castes, human rights for Dalits and Adivasis (if that). Justice for white Australians, human rights for Aborigines and immigrants (most times, not even that.)

It is becoming more than clear that violating human rights is an inherent and necessary part of the process of implementing a coercive and unjust political and economic structure on the world. Increasingly, human rights violations are being portrayed as the unfortunate, almost accidental, fallout of an otherwise acceptable political and economic system. As though they are a small problem that can be mopped up with a little extra attention from some non-government organization.

This is why in areas of heightened conflict - in Kashmir and in Iraq for example - human rights professionals are regarded with a degree of suspicion. Many resistance movements in poor countries which are fighting huge injustice and questioning the underlying principles of what constitutes "liberation" and "development" view human rights non-government organizations as modern-day missionaries who have come to take the ugly edge off imperialism - to defuse political anger and to maintain the status quo.

It has been only a few weeks since Australia re-elected John Howard, who, among other things, led the nation to participate in the illegal invasion and occupation of Iraq.

Cont'd ...back page

A LETTER FROM HAITI: By Charley Horwitz

BSEC has partnered with Fonkoze USA, an alternative micro-credit bank for the poor, since 1997. We recently converted a \$5,000 loan to Fonkoze to a grant. Charley has served on the Fonkoze USA board since 1997 when he led a delegation of twenty-one BSEC members and friends to Haiti. Fonkoze' is a Haitian Creole acronym for Fondasyon Kole Zepòl, which means, "The Shoulder-to-Shoulder Foundation".

October 29, 2004: Last Wednesday, before leaving for Fonkoze USA' s annual Board of Trustees meeting in Haiti, we were warned that earlier that day, two Fonkoze drivers had been hijacked, beaten and threatened with death by eight gunmen. They were robbed of money and their truck, but they were eventually freed and fortunately suffered only minor injuries. Although the board unanimously agreed to keep our meeting in Haiti, we changed it from a remote, rural site to a safe place outside the capital, Port Au Prince (PAP).

Since I have served on the Fonkoze USA board, violence has not been a stranger in Haiti, but things have grown much worse since Aristide was deposed last summer. Gunfire is heard everywhere. Armed groups include free-lance gangsters, Aristide' s street gangs (called "chimeres"), a rebel army composed of former soldiers who control Northern Haiti, and UN troops, who don' t disarm gunmen unless they are shot at.

After sporadic gunfire erupts in poor PAP neighborhoods, police erect barricades, impose curfews and arrest and beat young men on the streets. Dozens have been killed, and UN observers have condemned these killings as "police murders." Every few days when violence breaks out, schools and businesses are closed and traffic comes to a halt. Fonkoze staffers who live in these neighborhoods frequently are forced to miss work.

A Haitian-American police officer from Chicago, who is in PAP to train Haitian police, told me that the police are underpaid and corrupt, and that the provisional government of Prime Minister Gerald LaTortue recently hired former Haitian soldiers who are known human rights violators.

The Bush Administration recently announced the ending of the U.S. 1996 arms embargo to Haiti. Haitians are divided about this along class lines. The bourgeoisie favors arming the police because "it levels the playing field," while most intellectuals, workers and Aristide supporters oppose it. As a Fonkoze staffer said, "more guns will mean more Haitians killed. We need economic, not military aid."

Fonkoze has over 4,000 clients in Gonayiv, where four hurricanes and floods up to eight feet high ravaged the region and killed 2,000 people. One Fonkoze client died, over 200 either lost or suffered serious damage to their homes, and 230 lost all or most of their merchandise.

To help these clients, Fonkoze suspended their re-payments and refinanced their loans. Now, the branch has re-opened and most of the borrowers are back in business. One irony is that since CARE and other relief organizations give away free food, street merchants who sell food are out of business.

So far, Fonkoze has collected and distributed over \$25,000 to hurricane victims in Gonayiv with administrative costs limited to less than five percent of the amount collected. As Fonkoze has more branches than any other bank in the country, it is well situated to handle disaster relief. Therefore, because of the Gonayiv crisis, it has developed a model for future disaster assistance programs.

Despite these crises, Fonkoze is alive, well and growing and four new branches were opened this year bringing the total number of employees to 250. In six years Fonkoze has grown to 25,000 borrowers, of whom 96% are women street sellers. This is an increase of 150%. Last year Fonkoze entered into new partnerships with several well-known non-profit organizations committed to reaching the poorest of the poor.

In 2000, Fonkoze applied for a commercial bank license and raised \$2 million from socially responsible US and European investors. Although the government still has not granted the license, Fonkoze established Fonkoze Financial Services (FFS) so as to operate more professionally, like a commercial bank. The loan portfolio has grown 167% and reached \$2.7 million last year. The number of clients has grown 150% and the number of depositors rose to 53,000, a 66% increase from last year. Fonkoze' s loan quality remains high--the number of loans that were overdue for more than one day was less than one percent. Fonkoze is expanding its loan program to reach the ultra poor who previously could not afford to apply for a loan.

In addition to micro-credit, FFS also offers money transfer services and a currency exchange. Fonkoze transferred almost \$5.5 million to clients all over Haiti while collecting only \$25,000 in fees. Last year Fonkoze won an international award for its innovative approach to helping the poor help themselves.

Business development loans increased 350% last year to help pharmacies, bakeries, 45 new small clients and 34 agricultural cooperatives including cocoa, mango and coffee growers. The loan portfolio has increased to over \$600,000. So far, Fonkoze has a 100% repayment rate. To reduce risks, Fonkoze obtained loan guarantees from one of its large, non-governmental partners. Last year, Fonkoze taught 2,300 of its clients literacy and business skills.

Fonkoze is testing a new housing improvement loan program with Habitat for Humanity to enable poor people in the Central Plateau to build a latrine and add a cement floor and tin roof to their homes. Fonkoze also is instituting a new life insurance program for its clients. Because commercial theft or fire insurance policies are not available for organizations like Fonkoze, it has organized a new self-insurance program.

Finally, Fonkoze Director Anne Hastings and Dr. Paul Farmer, founder of Partners in Health (PIH), are organizing a working summit meeting in Haiti to attack Third World problems. PIH is the leading non-governmental provider of rural primary medical care in Haiti.

Cont'd on next page

Letter from Haiti cont'd from previous page

Anne has spoken at BSEC many times and Dr. Farmer is the subject of the book, **Mountains Beyond Mountains** by Pulitzer Prize-winning author Tracy Kidder. They have invited five of the world's most innovative micro-credit experts from Asia, Africa and South America and other countries to Haiti to brainstorm ways to solve the problem of economic dependency for Haiti's most vulnerable.

Dr. Farmer said that "I am tired of bringing people on the edge of death from tuberculosis or AIDS or other diseases to the point where they can become economically active, then watching them suffer because they have no way to make a living." Over the years, when people ask me about Haiti and Fonkoze I respond that Haiti is going to hell in a hand basket but Fonkoze is surviving and growing by leaps and bounds.

Hopefully, one day, Haiti like Fonkoze, will become a success story and fulfill the hopes and dreams of its founders to be a peaceful and prosperous nation for all of its citizens.

www.fonkoze.com

A E U BOARD NEWS

At the day-long AEU Board meeting which took place on November 13 in New York many developments took place which may be of interest.



In the areas of strategic planning, Board Development education continued and John Hartman, Executive Director, laid out a systematic method for financial reporting from each sector of the AEU. This falls in line with a 360-degree accountability strategy that the Leadership Committee is recommending on both local and national levels. For more information on 360-degree financial and personnel accountability please speak to Lisel Burns. Financial records continue to be updated and are available at the AEU office, 212-873-6500.

Several new committees have been formed to permanently continue AEU revitalization. The key new committee is Planning (Matthew Hile, from St. Louis is Chair). Come to the Assembly in northern Virginia from May 27-29th, 2005. There will be items emanating from the planning committee that will be put before the Assembly in May. We now have 21 committees engaged on the national level. The AEU's progress depends upon the volunteer sector of its local Societies.

We hope to have the various committees posted on www.aeu.org very soon for your information.

Finally, clergy Leaders and lay Leaders are collaborating as never before as clergy Leaders continue to offer themselves to serve on these various committees despite their busy schedules. Leader, Lisel Burns has joined the Board Development Committee, chaired by Martha Gallahue, both from BSEC. For more information; e-mail Martha at nsc@aeu.org.

FROM THE NATIONAL SERVICE CONFERENCE OF THE AMERICAN ETHICAL UNION

INTERNATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS DAY · DECEMBER 10

Today, human rights continue to be assaulted on every front. Perhaps the greatest enemy to human rights is poverty. The gap between rich and poor widens throughout the world including the U.S. Let us continue to find ethical ways to close this gap.

We hail the latest AEU Resolution to support the UN Millennium Development Goals, one of the most grounded timelines agreed upon by all countries throughout the world.

(www.un.org/millenniumdevelopmentgoals)

PRINCIPLES

"A little patience, and we shall see the reign of witches pass over, their spells dissolve, and the people, recovering their true sight, restore their government to its true principles. It is true that in the meantime we are suffering deeply in spirit, and incurring the horrors of a war and long oppressions of enormous public debt.....If the game runs sometimes against us at home we must have patience till luck turns, and then we shall have an opportunity of winning back the principles we have lost, for this is a game where principles are at stake."

From a letter sent by Thomas Jefferson in 1798 after the passage of the Sedition Act

Shared by Constance Pigozzi

INDEPENDENCE COMMUNITY FOUNDATION MAKES GRANT TO BSEC

Early in November, an officer of the Independence Community Foundation called to inform us that we would soon receive a \$500 grant in support of our new garden patio. We're very grateful for this gift!

Celeste and Bruce Leibowitz picked up the grant check on Monday, November 15th and brought it to the BSEC office. Our thanks to Marilyn Gelber, Executive Director at Independence Community Foundation, for awarding the grant, and to Kathleen Nelson and Robin Lefkowitz, who welcomed us at the local Independence Bank branch. Ms. Nelson and Ms. Lefkowitz mentioned that they attended the recent Brooklyn Chamber of Commerce After Hours event at BSEC and were pleased and delighted to receive a guided tour of the building with Constance Pigozzi.

Thank you to Finance Committee and Board Member Ruth Pikitch for suggesting we apply. We hope to forge stronger ties to the Independence Community Foundation and it is also our hope that Ms. Nelson, Ms. Lefkowitz and officers of the Foundation will join us at some of our many and varied events. In the meantime, the Independence Community Foundation's generosity is greatly appreciated.

Celeste Leibowitz, Development Officer

Arundhati Roy...*Cont'd from page 6*

As the battle to control the world's resources intensifies, economic colonialism through formal military aggression is staging a comeback. Iraq is the logical culmination of the process of corporate globalization in which neo-colonialism and neo-liberalism have fused. If we can find it in ourselves to peep behind the curtain of blood, we would glimpse the pitiless transactions taking place backstage.

Invaded and occupied Iraq has been made to pay out \$US 200 million (\$270 million) in "reparations" for lost profits to corporations such as Halliburton, Shell, Mobil, Nestle, Pepsi, Kentucky Fried Chicken and Toys R Us. That's apart from its \$US125 billion sovereign debt forcing it to turn to the IMF, waiting in the wings like the angel of death, with its structural adjustment program. (Though in Iraq there don't seem to be many structures left to adjust.)

So what does peace mean in this savage, corporatized, militarized world? What does peace mean to people in occupied Iraq, Palestine, Kashmir, Tibet and Chechnya? Or to the Aboriginal people of Australia? Or the Kurds in Turkey? Or the Dalits and Adivasis of India? What does peace mean to non-Muslims in Islamic countries, or to women in Iran, Saudi Arabia and Afghanistan? What does it mean to the millions who are being uprooted from their lands by dams and development projects? What does peace mean to the poor who are being actively robbed of their resources? For them, peace is war.

We know very well who benefits from war in the age of empire. But we must also ask ourselves honestly who benefits from peace in the age of empire? War mongering is criminal. But talking of peace without talking of justice could easily become advocacy for a kind of capitulation. And talking of justice without unmasking the institutions and the systems that perpetrate injustice is beyond hypocritical.

It's easy to blame the poor for being poor. It's easy to believe that the world is being caught up in an escalating spiral of terrorism and war. That's what allows George Bush to say, "You're either with us or with the terrorists." But that's a spurious choice. Terrorism is only the privatization of war. Terrorists are the free marketeers of war. They believe that the legitimate use of violence is not the sole prerogative of the state.

It is mendacious to make moral distinction between the unspeakable brutality of terrorism and the indiscriminate carnage of war and occupation. Both kinds of violence are unacceptable. We cannot support one and condemn the other.

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DECEMBER PLATFORMS & SPEAKERS

December 5: 11am

"Realizing the Promise of Ethical Culture: What Should Be Done About Gentrification and Displacement in North Brooklyn and Surrounding Areas?" Followed by a workshop with the panel at 1:15pm.

PLATFORM & WORKSHOP SPEAKERS

Nettie Paisley is a BSEC member who lives in Bed Stuy. She is a longtime business educator who runs a business education program on the East side of Manhattan. Nettie is partnering with non-profit groups and tenant associations towards Empowerment in the Bedfor Stuyvesant community. She is also the owner of Southern Comforts, a social enterprise, and is a Reiki Master practicing in Brooklyn.

Celeste Staton is the President of the Atlantic Houses, a high rise public housing development directly adjacent to the proposed site for Bruce Ratner' s Stadium. She is an active member of the ARENA organization and on the Board of the NYC Public Housing Tenant Alliance.

Greg Todd has lived in Brooklyn since 1976; and he recently moved to Crown Heights where he works with community groups. He is a member of the Park Slope United Methodist Church. He worked as a housing development specialist for many years with Brooklyn Ecumenical Cooperatives and currently works for a large realty firm. He will share reflection time with another activist in Crown Heights, **James Caldwell**, who has also served as the President of the 77th Precinct Council for many years.

December 12, 11am

Winter Festival: Intergenerational Celebration with The Children' s Sunday Assembly

Join the students of the Children' s Sunday Assembly for an annual BSEC tradition: an intergenerational, festive and thoughtful celebration of the December holiday season, as we share our diverse traditions, stories, creativity and other gifts that do not need the exchange of money.

December 19, 11am

Holiday Colloquy - A more meditative Ethical Culture ceremony with sharing, music and reflection on the Theme, "Ideals." Led by Constance Pigozzi.

January 2, 2005. 11am

BSEC Making Democracy Series Platform: "Talking to Your Aunt Mamie About the Values of Islamic Religion and Muslim Americans," with Debbie Almontaser. Ms. Almontaser is a Brooklyn-based local and national Muslim leader who was the first recipient of our annual community honor roll award. This award was given to Ms. Almontaser last May on BSEC's Peace Site Sunday for her post-September 11th leadership in a multitude of communities.

The morning program will be followed by a participatory afternoon workshop using role playing to build communications skills across current misunderstandings and distrust, particularly about Muslim people and their beliefs.

▶ DECEMBER 2004

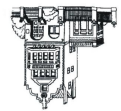
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Human Rights Day,
December 10, 2004

"There need be no
trouble...Treat all men alike....
Give them all the same law...
Give them all a chance to
grow. All men were made
by the same Great Spirit Chief.
They are all brothers. The Earth
is the Mother of all people and
all people should have equal
rights upon it." ~
Thunder Rolling
Down the Mountain,
(Chief Joseph)

CHANGE SERVICE REQUESTED

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



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 in
oneself."**

Felix Adler, Founder

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)

Dec 3 Singer/multi-instrumentalist **Bruce Markow** (www.brucemarkow.com) brings passion, playfulness and well-seasoned craftsmanship to his eclectic song writing, with stirring melodies, engaging stories and colorful lyrics that linger with you long after evening's end.

Jim Roi and **Earl Cantos** have been playing together for several years. Their brand of roots ballads and soulful blues, blends voice, harmonica, and guitar into a style that is simple, heartfelt and down home.

Dec 10 Singer/songwriter **Bev Grant's** work (www.bevgrant.com) is described in *Sing Out* magazine as "unhesitatingly fervent, unflinchingly personal and reflecting the diversity of a real person's musings." She has recorded four of her own CDs and appears on several compilations, including the Grammy-nominated Smithsonian/Folkways *Best of Broadside* album.

Singer/songwriter **Joe Jencks** (www.joejencks.com) is a lifelong folk artist. He stays true to the roots of real folk music.

Dec 17 3rd Friday with the Park Slope Food Coop
Christiana Drapkin (www.christianadrapkin.com) celebrates the release of her new CD, *Songs About You*, featuring jazz standards, be-bop lines, and several original tunes by her long-time teacher and collaborator, Park Slope pianist Charles Sibirsky.

Singer/songwriter and native Park Sloper **Chandra Oppenheim** brings together friends from near and far to play a mix of Bossa Nova favorites, some hidden treasures and some of her own Bossa Novas with a subtle New York edge.

Dec 24 Closed for Holiday

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