



Brooklyn Society for Ethical Culture •
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A CHANGE OF MIND – April '06 Leader's Essay

Recently, someone I met through a memorial ceremony I led several years ago called to tell me of his decision to withhold the corporate documents required for an employee's final filing for green card status.

With my encouragement, this owner of a local contracting business had hired a non-citizen with legal working papers urgently needing employment in his particular labor classification two months before his final green card hearing.

The immigrant's previous employer/sponsor had suffered a sudden bankruptcy and closed up in December 05 which had dropped this man's family (here fifteen years, with three children) into immigration hell. Without employment in the craftsman's specific labor area and an employer willing to file all required papers, the case would now close. Along with it, five years of effort and work for a green card that would bring legal employment and future citizenship status would be lost and deportation fairly certain.

I had thought a long term and fully legal employment match was working for both parties, but at 8 a.m. on the day before the March 17 final deadline, my phone rang. "I won't do it." "It's over," the contractor said.

He had changed his mind. The week before, the new employer's patience had bottomed out with last-minute documentation requests from immigration court and after talking with his accountant, he now pictured his business records being wandered through by Homeland Security or other agency operatives.

He continued, "I told my employee I was sorry. He can continue to work, as he's a good craftsman, but it's finished and my wife will agree."

Knowing too well the desperate situation of the immigrant family at risk, I pushed back a wave of anxiety and took a deep breath. What could I say to this tired and busy man that could possibly reopen his decision making on this matter in the one or two minutes I now had of his attention?

Quite possibly because I recently joined a BSEC practice group, in NVC, (Non Violent Communication) to learn to change my language to better communicate needs and values I hold dear, I took another deep breath. I denied myself permission to judge, urge, or otherwise pressure this person. Instead, I ventured a summary of what I had just heard him say.

Then I asked him what he really felt (frustrated and impatient). I asked what he really needed (reassurance regarding all possible uses and destinations for the paperwork demanded). I asked if he was possibly willing to let me do a day's footwork to try and secure the accurate legal information he had said he would need to reconsider his decision. He said, in a soft voice, "Yes."

It moved fast after the call. Speedy phone referrals from Carol Horwitz (as she's an activist lawyer who knows big-hearted folks everywhere) and BSEC Board member Perry Dell's ex brother-in-law who practiced immigration law on Long Island got me on a fast track to trustworthy information. By noon I called the employer back with the exact information and legal reassurance needed and received the happy news that he would go forward again.

That evening he dropped off the paperwork to me at my favorite Fifth Avenue Bistro, Red Café, and the chef, Mark Shenk, and wait staff, knowing the story, cheered him. Early next morning I met the immigrant family, and we happily turned in four copies of the documents to Immigration Court at 26 Federal Plaza.

So often I am asked, "Just how is Ethical Culture satisfying as a religious community?" Maybe it's the adventure of making ethical choices a little bit better each time. Maybe it's knowing I can call on other people who also want to help out where they can. And maybe it's relying on a humanistic faith in human goodness telling me that all parties to a situation have a kind and fair side when we take the trouble to find out what they feel and need and help find strategies where needs all around the circle can be met.

When I ask people who seem alive with Ethical Culture what being a member means to them in a bottom-line way, they often hesitate to explain but choose instead to tell me a story like the one I just told here. What a simple idea, that moral experience can be our religious experience if we choose it so and that people who help bring about more ethical cultures, (whatever they call that life stance), are actually "family" in a great big ethical movement here and everywhere.

Lisel Burns, Leader

2005-2006 THEME – BSEC: BEGINNING OUR SECOND CENTURY PUTTING ETHICS FIRST

APRIL PLATFORMS

April 2 — "Personal Solidarity: Being With and For a Person Through Illness or Mourning." With Leader, **Lisel Burns**.

What are some ethical and self development issues for people who want to come through for people going through terrible times? What insights do these experiences offer us for the rest of our lives? Live cello with **Martha Siegel**, founder of the chamber group, Brooklyn Brandenburgers, who teaches chamber music and cello at the UN School as well as independently.

April 9 --The Children's Sunday Assembly F.E.L.I.X. Spring Festival, with Audrey Kindred, CSA Director. Celebrate Ethical Heroes and Heroines in our Hall of Fame. Plant seeds for good deeds; share and discover family traditions of spring.

April 16 — Spring Colloquy on the topic, "Surrendering." Led by **Constance Pigozzi**. A more meditative and interactive Ethical Culture ceremony with sharing and music.

April 23 — "The New Story: Living into the Power of Consciousness, Choice and Community." With Sr. Carol D'Angelo, Director of Mission Integration at St. Cabrini Nursing Home in Dobbs Ferry, NY. As "Earth Conscious of Itself," we are called to live in ways that will mutually enhance earth and humans. Do we need to "reinvent" ourselves?

April 30th — "Aging in the Gay Community in Brooklyn" With Edoardo Sanchez, Education Manager, **S.A.G.E.** (Services and Advocacy for Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgender Elders).

May 7 — Putting Ethics First Series: "Fair Compensation All Around - What's Both Right and Possible Today ?" With Lisel Burns. Bring your own real life situations and join this important community conversation with Brooklyn-based fair compensation organizers. Hear about the campaigns having some success addressing the increasing inequities in employee compensation (including non profit organizations like ours.)

Platforms begin at 11 am each Sunday and are free and open to the public.

**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, Audrey Kindred, Constance Pigozzi, Rita Wilson, Tina Aridas, Maureen Egginton, Nettie Paisley, and Helen Engelhardt.

Send contributions to Maureen at
brooklynethicalsociety@yahoo.com.

**May Newsletter Deadline
April 15**

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

SHARING CARING WITH ROGER KAUFMAN

Young or old - you need a medical proxy.

I was with my ex-super who is legally blind at her non-invasive cardiologist for a diagnostic on her pacemaker. Although I have been taking her for years I was asked to sign a confidentiality form.

The Feds are getting more and more exacting on these forms. If you are young or old and should suddenly have to be asked in the E.R. who your medical proxy is when you are unconscious after an accident or a cardio infarction etc., I suggest ALL of us get these forms and carry them with us in our wallets.

An old BSEC friend, new member and lawyer, Ruth Selby, prepared mine. If you have questions about such a form, call Ruth at 718-421-9597 and she can explain such a form in detail. Melanie (who is an RN) can also explain these forms. Aside from a Medical Proxy form you should carry a photo-copy of your NORMAL EKG so that when they take you into the ER after a cardio infarction (heart attack for us novices) the local cardiologist can better figure out how to treat you.

CONTACT THE LEADER'S OFFICE — SMALL GROUPS FORMING

Saturday, April 15, 6:30 pm — Zip Codes Pot Luck Supper at Vandra's home -
For Bed Stuy, Fort Greene, Prospect Heights and Williamsburg -

For more information and to confirm contact - v.thorburn@verizon.net

Save the June 30-July 3 dates for Chicago AEU Assembly with so many workshops and community building. If you would like to join the Leader and a few members, in an affordable trip and stay, contact Rita Wilson in the office, 718-768-2972.

- * Growing Older Together - third Wednesdays, 1 pm
- * Couples Circle and Supper - Saturday evenings - monthly, 5-8 pm
- * Courage to Lead Study Group - being scheduled at homes

MEMBER NEWS

Tuesday, May 9 at 6pm: Member Tom Castelnuovo, recently elected Chair of the Board of a Fort Greene Community Supportive Housing program invites us all to attend a fund raiser at the Brooklyn Museum. "Its always a lot of fun and a deed for need with feed." **Fashion on Fulton and Friends** benefiting Brooklyn Community Housing and Services. For ticket information call 718- 222-1808 x 312 or go to www.bchands.org.

Saturday, May 20, 8pm: P.S. 44 Second Annual fundraising banquet; \$50 per ticket. Nettie Paisley chairs the project and invites our participation again this year. Contact her at www.southcomforts.net.

Dorothy Klein and Charley Horwitz continue their improvement in rehab centers. Carol Horwitz is arranging visits to Charley in the afternoon around 1pm. Call her to schedule if you'd like to go - perhaps with another member. Call Roger to schedule a visit to Dorothy. Linda Stallard recovered from a sudden and scary bout of food poisoning and Ruth Pikitch is still fighting back from a month long very bad cough.

Member Liz Calvin, Director of the USA Office of World Day of Prayer helped to raise an enormous amount of money through their nationwide local services this past March. Checks are still coming in from the myriad of service supporting the work of efforts combating HIV in Africa this year, with liturgy developed in South Africa.

APRIL 9, 1PM "MR. KHARRUBI AND ME"

Life and Ethics Series

Find out what getting personal with the middle east in Brooklyn can mean. Enjoy a story performance by new BSEC member Helen Engelhardt as she spins her tale about an unusual friendship. Helen is also active in cross ethnic work in her Flatbush neighborhood, a Dialogue Project Board member, and a writer, alongside her storytelling artistry. \$5-15 suggested contributions welcome.

YOGA WORKSHOP & CHILDREN'S ARTS & PLAY
Peaceful Yoga with Audrey Kindred. Saturdays 10:15am-12, \$15 (or \$40 for 4 consecutive) with child care option to meet parents' needs: crafts and play for ages 4 and up. (\$10 weekly, \$25 for 4 consecutive weeks beginning April 1) To register, and RSVP for planning purposes, contact Audrey at 718-789 7958. akindred@gmail.com

**ETHICAL CULTURE
ORIENTATIONS**

The Eight Commitments of Ethical Culture Series will begin in April 2006 hosted by the Member-ship Committee.

The series will take place over four Saturdays during the months of April and May.

Contact Melanie or Vandra for further information. This series is good for newcomers and as a refresher for long-time members.

HAPPY APRIL BIRTHDAYS

Linda Stallard--8
Herb Dalin--15
Joel Cohen--17
Emily Newman--18



Charlie Horwitz--19
John Duffy--20
Roger Kaufman--20
Antoinette Wagnerman--20

WWW.BSEC.ORG



APRIL 2006 AT BSEC

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
						1 7:45-9:45am: Tai Chi w/Sy 10-12 Yoga & Kids Arts Play w/Audrey
2 10:30 CSA 11am: Platform 1-3pm BSEC Dia- logue 4-6pm BSEC NVC 3-4 Yoga Audrey \$5- \$10	3 7pm Story- telling Group	4 7-9pm Brooklyn Women's Chorus	5 7-9pm Commu- nity Sing	6 7-10pm Board Meeting.	7 GCH: 8-10pm	8 7:45-9:45am: Tai Chi w/Sy 10-12 Yoga & Kids Arts Play w/Audrey
9 10:30am CSA 11am Platform CSA Spring Fest 1pm L&E Mr. Kharrubi & Me 3-4pm Yoga \$5-\$10 4-6pm BSEC NVC	10 7pm Member- ship Commit- tee	11 7-9pm Brooklyn Women's Chorus	12	13 7-9pm: Platform Meeting	14 GCH CLOSED	15 7:45 9:45 Tai Chi w/Sy 10-12 Yoga & Kids Arts Play w/Audrey 6:30 Zip Code Supper
16 10:30am NO CSA 11am Colloqy 1pm Art Making 4-6pm BSEC NVC	17	18 7-9pm Brooklyn Women's Chorus	19 1pm Growing Old Together (Leader) 7-9 Finance Com- mittee	20 6:30 – Buildings & Grounds Meeting	21 GCH: 8-10pm	22 7:45-9:45am: Tai Chi w/Sy Tepper 10-12 Yoga & Kids Arts Play W/Audrey
23 10am Parent Cir- cle 10:30am: CSA 11am Platform 4-6pm BSEC NVC 30 SUNDAY 10:30 CSA 11am Platform	24	25 7-9pm Brooklyn Women's Chorus	26	27	28 GCH: 8-10pm	29 7:45-9:45am: Tai Chi w/Sy Tepper

CHILDREN'S SUNDAY ASSEMBLY – NEWS FROM AUDREY KINDRED, DIRECTOR

April 9 – The F.E.L.I.X. Spring Festival Family Ethical Learning Is X-
Citing! (Named after Ethical Culture' s founder, Felix Adler.)

CSA gathers at 10:30 to host the 11am platform at BSEC. This is a celebration of the balance between Everyday Practices and Extraordinary Ethical Actions. Contribute to our Ethical Heroes Hall of Fame by hanging a picture of someone your family upholds for ethical guidance. We will plant seeds for good deeds; share and discover family traditions of spring that cultivate harmony, balance, peaceful connection and joy among all ages.

Xena and Tyler, CSA' s eldest students, are leading a FAIR TRADE Ethical Action Project with EQUAL EXCHANGE and looking forward to your sponsorship and support.

In March, Children' s Sunday Assembly took a field trip to Integral Yoga Institute (IYI), and since, we have been exploring both the healthy movements and the ethical principles of yoga. One of those principles is AHIMSA which means doing no harm. We are learning that this starts with yourself, and extends to your treatment of others and the world.

We have been enjoying the Sanskrit language of yoga, learning words like *namaste*, "the truth within me sees the truth within you," and *om shanti* "peace." We learned about IYI' s founder, a great yogi named Swami Satchidananda who worked hard for peace among all faiths (and gave the opening blessing for Woodstock in the 1960s!)

**Parents' Circle—Sunday, April 23, 10am
Coffee and refreshments will be served.**

On March 12, a Religious Education Committee meeting was held, chaired by Pam Mills and attended by Fiona Boneham, Simba Yangala, Audrey Kindred and Lisel Burns. We collaboratively articulated the CSA institutional memory, to lay solid ground from which to grow. There was discussion about structures that maximize input from constituents, and parent meetings were organized for the spring. In discussion it was felt that this articulation by the director would be very helpful for all the parents and so Audrey will present this at the April 23rd meeting. **NOTE: CSA closed on April 16.**

**THE GOOD COFFEEHOUSE MUSIC PARLOR - 31ST ANNIVERSARY SEASON
BROOKLYN'S HOME FOR ACOUSTIC ROOTS MUSIC**



Shows start at 8 PM – (See prices posted beside each performance)

Apr 7 — The Love Handles – Rock & Roll (adults \$10, kids \$6)

Disguised by day as mild-mannered citizens, the Love Handles are a force united to fight the good fight in the name of truth, justice and rock & roll. Playing an eclectic mix of blues, British invasion, Bob Dylan and other boomer classics, they will give your soul much-needed sustenance for these uncertain times. Grab a hold of the Love Handles and let go of everything else.

Apr 14 — CLOSED

Apr 21 — Third Friday with the Park Slope Food Coop (adults \$10, kids \$6)
David Roche & friends.

Apr 28 — Guitarist Nick Katzman – Traveling Troubadour Series (adults \$15, kids \$6)

Blues and ragtime guitarist **Nick Katzman** recorded a series of highly regarded albums in the 1980s for Kicking Mule records, an influential guitar record label. Critics praised him for his virtuoso picking skills and his ability to craft songs that sounded as if they'd been written in the 1920s. A native New Yorker, Katzman now lives in Germany. He's making a rare U.S. appearance.

Contact Justin Stallard if you are a member and would like to volunteer at the Good Coffee House.

The Brooklyn Society for Ethical Culture is a humanist religious organization dedicated to improving the ethical quality of relationships in personal lives and in the world. Affiliated with the American Ethical Union. www.aeu.org

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

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



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

Felix Adler, Founder

BSEC is a member of the American Ethical Union



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To sense that behind anything that can be experienced there is a something that our mind cannot grasp and whose beauty and sublimity reaches us only indirectly and as a feeble reflection, this is religiousness. In this sense I am religious. To me it suffices to wonder at these secrets and to attempt humbly to grasp with my mind a mere image of the lofty structure of all that there is."

~ Albert Einstein, 1932