



# ETHICALLY SPEAKING

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

Volume 93, no. 7

## 86th Assembly of the American Ethical Union April 22-25 New York City

The AEU will be holding its annual assembly this year at the New York Society's home on Central Park West. This is a fabulous opportunity to meet or re-acquaint yourself with Ethicals from all across the country, for a long weekend of learning, action, and fellowship. Workshops will be held on Ethical Culture History and Philosophy, Ethical Action, Humanist Spirituality, and life cycle and group dynamics issues. You will also get a chance to vote on changes to the AEU by-laws. Special events include the presentation of the Elliott-Black Award to Daryl Davis, and a salute to Joy McConnell, the departing director of AEU Growth and Religious Education. On Sunday, April 25, BSEC is cancelling platform and Sunday School so all can attend the events that morning at the assembly in Manhattan. For more information, contact the BSEC office, or the AEU at 212-873-6500.

## Common Religious Principles that Support Social Security

*The following article was excerpted from the February issue of the Washington Ethical Action Office Reports, in recognition of the upcoming debate in Congress and across the country on what actions, if any, should be taken to preserve Social Security.*

The Ethical Culture movement, as a humanistic religious and educational movement, sees Social Security as consistent with our mission to work for a more humane society. Mindful of our traditional support for the principles underlying Social Security, the American Ethical Union recently joined with other religious organizations in cosigning the following statement:

Many of the signatory groups actively supported the creation of Social Security in 1935 and its later expansions because it was in keeping with the principles of justice and compassion that were important to their reli-

gious self-understanding. It is always possible to improve a program such as Social Security and, indeed, many improvements have been made over time. Nonetheless, we agree that the Social Security program as it currently exists is one of the most successful federal anti-poverty programs and has powerfully proved its value to the American people, justifying the hope and investment which brought it into being.

It is our common judgment that the Social Security program needs adjustment but is not in serious trouble at this time. Estimates that have called attention to possible funding problems for the future suggest that this is a time for making modest improvements to Social Security but do not suggest the need for any radical changes. The Social Security system has faced far more difficult problems in the past, and previous generations acted courageously to solve these problems. We are grateful that previous courageous leadership has left us with more modest problems to address.

### Principles:

1. Our common religious heritage leads us to affirm the Social Security program as a primary way the government embodies its role to care for the widow, the orphan, the elderly, and those living with disabilities. Such caring should be a fundamental part of our society and not left to the vagaries of voluntary charity.
2. Social Security retirement benefits should be the bedrock for meeting the needs of the elderly. Individual savings and private pensions should also be strengthened but not at the expense of the Social Security system. This principle reflects our understanding that it is important to encourage both social responsibility and individual initiative.
3. We support the basic concept of social insurance which is the foundation of Social Security. Retirement benefits provide an income floor for workers who have contributed to the common good through their labor. Social Security holds up the importance of strengthening the work force so that generations of workers can both meet

## Night Garden: a New BSEC Treasure

Once upon a time in the dank and dreary garret of an old building, a lonely artist stared forlornly at a blank canvas. Then he looked up, walked to the window, and there beheld a wondrous sight: lamplight dancing among the boughs of the trees in the garden below and spilling onto the carpet of grass. He stood transfixed for countless moments, then returned to his canvas, and painted what he had seen. When dawn cracked through his studio, a painting breathed on his easel. It held all the magic of the night before. It was the *Night Garden*. The End. . .

Well, not exactly. The artist, Tom Keough, is not lonely: he has a lovely wife, a lively son, and lots of friends and neighbors. But he did once have a studio in the attic of the Brooklyn Ethical Culture Society mansion, and he painted the meeting house garden in all its nocturnal splendor. The *Night Garden* now hangs in our library, and we are raising the funds to pay for it, so that we can share its magic with others. You can help us by making a donation or purchasing a copy of Tom's Martin Luther King poster for only \$5. Call the office at 768-2972 for details.

Tom grew up in rural Connecticut and came to Brooklyn to study at Pratt Institute where he received his B.F.A. in 1980. Later he studied art therapy at the New School and oil painting at the School of Visual Arts. During the 1980s, he worked in black and white, pen and ink or printmaking, depicting images of city life, social struggles and modern ironies. His work was not only shown in the Museum of Modern Art, the U.S. Capitol, the Society of Illustrators, the Conference Center in Paris, and private galleries; it was also used to help people working with the homeless, victims of abuse, the disabled and poor, and anti-nuclear and environmental organizations. "I strive to make my art work relate to strong feelings I have about the world I see and the world I hear about. Often it was in response to a problem, but as I grew to know and love my wife, and later our son, strong feelings about the beauty of the world created my paintings."

Tom loves the beauty of the city at night. His images contain a multitude of parts, with many small reflections of color. He wants people to stop and look at the treasures all around them, and not just pass by the street lights and trees on their way to and from the job or the store or the television. *Night Garden* is indeed a treasure!

*continued on page three...*

**THE BROOKLYN SOCIETY  
FOR ETHICAL CULTURE**

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

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**Sunday School:** Remi Gay 768-2972

**Youth Group:** Rita Wilson & Tony Severo

*Ethically Speaking* is published six to ten times a year by BSEC. This issue was produced by Bob Strock, Marshall Dubin, Alex Mogelieff, and Anne Klaeysen.

*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.

**Visit our website!**

<http://www.bsec.org>

## Membership News

Annette Bernstein is starting a theater lovers' group and is arranging for group discount rates. Please give her a call at 369-3321 if you are interested.

For information and updates on the weekly Divorce Support Group, please call Hugh Simmons at 624-5057.

Marie Yoleine Gateau-Esposito and Lisel Burns were in Leogane, Haiti from February 11 - 19 on a solidarity trip for Ethical Action and HPP.

The Spring Fair has been scheduled for Sunday, May 16. Please call Anne Klaeysen at 768-2972 for details.

The Richard Price Book Discussion Group is going strong. In February they read and discussed *Snow in August* by Pete Hammill. On March 17, they will be discussing *In the Time of Butterflies* by Julia Alvarez, and on April 28, they will be discussing *Unto the Sons* by Gay Talese. All are welcome to participate. Please call Constance Pigozzi at 331-1137 for more information.

## VIEWPOINT:

### A Statement from the Committee on Healthcare

Submitted for approval of the Board of Trustees, to be inserted in the next issue of *Ethically Speaking*:

We, the Brooklyn Society for Ethical Culture, resolve that all Americans are entitled to health care. We further resolve that this is a right, not a privilege based on economic circumstance.

To achieve health care for all, we support a Single Payer or Universal Health Care Plan implemented by the Congress of the United States.

Of the twenty-four industrial countries of the world, the United States ranks:

21st in infant mortality  
17th in male life expectancy  
16th in female life expectancy

As a nation, we spend on healthcare:

133% more than Great Britain  
100% more than Japan  
75% more than Germany  
47% more than Canada

And yet we still have *43 million people* with NO health insurance!!

Of the industrialized countries, only the United States has no Universal Health Care system.

Universal Health Care would not only benefit all Americans but would also be a major step toward the recognition of the dignity and worth of all human beings.

Universal Health Care... A MUST FOR THE 21ST CENTURY.

Submitted by:

Larry Sherman

Dr. Abe Lieberman

On behalf of the Committee on Health Care.

### What the Month of March Means to Ethical Culture

March is International Women's Month. This is the time to honor the role of women in America and particularly the role of women in Brooklyn Ethical.

If truth be told, women had very little power in the early years of our Ethical Societies. Felix Adler, though an enlightened man in most respects, had Victorian ideas in regard to women. To him, women were fragile creatures who were designed to be revered and adored but not to give leadership. That concept has certainly changed over the years.

Today, women have a major leadership role in the Brooklyn Society. For many years, our Senior Leader was Lois Kellerman. Today, our Transitional Leader is Lisel Burns. I hope she will decide to become our next long-term Leader.

Women truly play major roles in all parts of our Brooklyn Society. Many of the heads of our most important committees are women. Men continue to have an important role, but it is the women who make up most of the membership and leadership.

This being the month of March, let us celebrate the role of women in verse:

March signifies the beginning of Spring.  
Now all Ethicals say or sing  
Winter is over. The ice has broken.  
Mother Nature provides this token:  
An Earth that is green and decked with flowers,  
Warmer days, sunny hours.  
Men continue their useful role,  
But it's the women who give the soul.

*Marshall F. Dubin*

Those who belong to the orthodox faiths claim that the authority of their faith rests on revelation, and that revelation is given in the pages of books and accounts of miracles and wonders whose nature is supernatural. But those of who have long discarded the belief in the supernatural still are in the presence of revelations which are the foundation of faith. We, too, have our revealed religion. We have looked upon the faces of men and women that can be to us the symbols of that which is holy. We have heard words of sacred wisdom and truth spoken in the human voice. Out of the universe there have come to us these experiences which, when accepted, give to us revelations, not of supernatural religion, but of a natural and inevitable faith in the spiritual powers that animate and dwell at the center of man's being.

*John Lovejoy Elliott  
NYSEC Leader, 1933-1942*

# MARCH 1999 BSEC CALENDAR

**3/1 - 3/7**

**TUESDAY 3/2**

**7:30 - 9PM:** *Brooklyn Women's Chorus* directed by Bev Grant. Call 768-2972 for more information.

**WEDNESDAY 3/3**

**6:30 - 10:30PM:** Folk Open Sing with pot-luck supper & snacks. Co-sponsored by the *Pinewoods Music Society*. Bring your voice, instruments, friends, neighbors, children, and/or a snack to share.

**THURSDAY 3/4**

**6 - 7PM:** *Meditations* with Remi Gay. Guided meditation based on Native American practices to create peaceful mind. Newcomers and drop-ins welcome. Suggested donation \$2-10.

**7 - 9PM:** *T'ai Chi Chuan*, with J.P. Harpignes. \$12/class, \$40/4. Free for BSEC members.

**7PM:** Journaling Support Session.

**FRIDAY 3/5**

**6:30 - 9PM:** YES Youth Group Meeting.

**7 - 9:30PM:** The *Little Friday Night Dinner Buffet* before the concert, only \$7.

**8PM:** The Good Coffeehouse series presents the *Lily White Quintet*.

**SATURDAY 3/6**

**10 - 11AM:** *The Art of Belly Dancing* taught by Salome. 399-1732 for info.

**SUNDAY 3/7**

**10AM - 12:30PM:**

Children's Sunday Assembly.

**10 - 11AM:** Parents' Discussion Group.

**11AM:** Sunday Platform: *Roles & Responsibilities* with BSEC Leader Lisel Burns.

**12:15PM:** Lunch with the Bunch.

**1:30 - 3PM:** Workshop on Roman Catholic Ethics, Tradition, and Story, with Jim O'Callahan.

**3/8 - 3/14**

**MONDAY 3/8**

**7 - 8:30PM:** Newcomers' workshop.

**TUESDAY 3/9**

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

**THURSDAY 3/11**

**7PM:** BSEC Board of Trustees Meeting.

**7 - 9PM:** *T'ai Chi Chuan*.

**FRIDAY 3/12**

**7 - 9:30PM:** *Little Friday Night Dinner*.

**8PM:** The Good Coffeehouse concert series presents an evening of sea songs, sea chanteys and other maritime music.

**SATURDAY 3/13**

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

**SUNDAY 3/14**

**10 AM - 12:30PM:** Children's Assembly.

**10 - 11AM:** Parents' Discussion Group.

**11AM:** Sunday Platform: *The Ecology and Anti-Ecology Movements Are Both Big Business, But What Is the Bottom Line?* with BSEC member Dr. Kurt Johnson.

**12:15PM:** Lunch with the Bunch.

**3/15 - 3/20**

**TUESDAY 3/16**

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

**WEDNESDAY 3/17**

**7:30 - 9PM:** *The Richard Price Book Discussion Group* will discuss *In the Time of Butterflies* by Julia Alvarez.

**THURSDAY 3/18**

**6 - 7PM:** *Meditations* with Remi Gay.

**7 - 9PM:** *T'ai Chi Chuan*.

**FRIDAY 3/19**

**7 - 9:30PM:** *Little Friday Night Dinner*.

**8PM:** The Good Coffeehouse presents *Tomas Rodriguez* and the *Children of the Sun*.

**SATURDAY 3/20**

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

**6 - 9PM:** *Sheila's Boogie-by-the-Park*. Dancing, food and fun for all ages.

**SUNDAY 3/21**

**10 AM - 12:30PM:** Children's Assembly.

**10 - 11AM:** Parents' Circle.

**11AM:** *Intergenerational Spring Festival Platform*. Improvisational mythic theater.

**12:15PM:** Lunch with the Bunch.

**3/21 - 3/31**

**TUESDAY 3/23**

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

**THURSDAY 3/25**

**7 - 9PM:** *T'ai Chi Chuan*.

**FRIDAY 3/26**

**7 - 9:30PM:** *Little Friday Night Dinner*.

**8PM:** The Good Coffeehouse concert series presents *Art Lillard's Heavenly Band*.

**SATURDAY 3/27**

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

**SUNDAY 3/28**

**10 AM - 12:30PM:** Children's Assembly.

**10 - 11AM:** Parents' Circle.

**11AM:** Sunday Platform led by "The Mountain People" aka Alumni from the AEU Summer Lay Leadership Training.

**12:15PM:** Lunch with the Bunch.

**TUESDAY 3/30**

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

*Principles, continued from first page...*

their own needs and contribute to the needs of older generations. We favor improvements that help all generations.

4. We oppose any changes in Social Security that would have a negative impact on low income people and groups that have suffered from discrimination. This nation should be proud of every benefit provided under Social Security, including support for survivors of workers and support for children and adults living with disabilities.

5. We urge that any change in Social Security investment policies should not injure the capacity of the federal government to pursue other positive purposes. The federal government should continue to improve its stewardship of public resources by directing expenditures to purposes that enhance the common good.

This statement of principles is affirmed by the undersigned religious organizations as guidance for engaging in public policy advocacy concerning Social Security. Some of the undersigned groups have additional policy that goes beyond this common list. Some of the groups may not have a specific policy mandate that matches a particular point but find such points to be in keeping with their general policies on economic justice and the stance they wish to take with regard to Social Security.

When the mind is at peace,  
the world too is at peace.  
Nothing real, nothing absent.  
Not holding on to reality,  
not getting stuck in the void,  
you are neither holy nor wise, just  
an ordinary fellow who has  
completed his work.

*Layman P'ang (c.740-808)*

## Brooklyn Society for Ethical Culture

53 Prospect Park West  
Brooklyn, New York 11215

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### March Platforms

**March 7:** *Roles and Responsibilities*

BSEC Leader Lisel Burns continues her First Sundays series on meaning-making. This month's platform will be followed by a workshop on ethics, tradition, and storytelling from a Catholic perspective, with Jim O'Callahan.

**March 14:** *The Ecology and Anti-Ecology Movements Are Both Big Business, But What Is the Bottom Line?*

With BSEC member Dr. Kurt Johnson, chair of the Environmental Committee, entomologist and author.

**March 21:** *Spring Festival*

An annual BSEC intergenerational tradition. "Improvisational mythic theater."

**March 28:** *The Mountain People (aka alumni of the AEU Lay Leadership Summer School)*

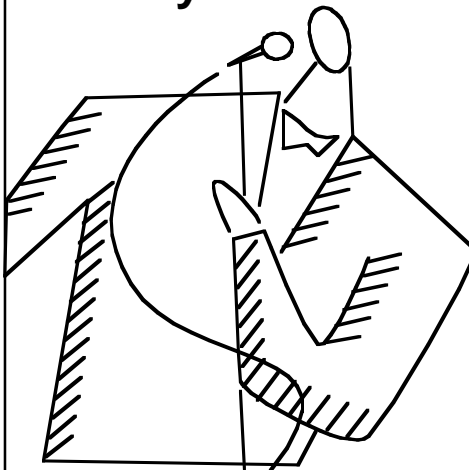
Last summer, the AEU held its biennial Lay Leadership Summer School at the top of a mountain in the North Carolina Blue Ridge. Participants from BSEC will be sharing some of what they brought back with them: lessons learned and perspectives gained.

**April 5:** *Nature's Ethics*

Lisel Burns moves from social to natural meaning-making in her continuing series.

Platforms are held every Sunday morning from 11AM to 12:15PM in the main hall of the Meeting House on Prospect Park West, followed by a convivial buffet lunch downstairs. Please stop by!

### Fridays at BSEC: The Good Coffeehouse



The Good Coffeehouse has been a BSEC tradition for over twenty years; a unique musical experience that combines the best of folk, rock, jazz, cabaret, classical, bluegrass, and poetry into a unique program of local and national artists. Come as an audience member or volunteer! Doors open at 8 PM. Admission is \$8 at the door or \$7 advance sale at Soundtrack, 119 Seventh Avenue. For more information, call 768-2972.

The Good Coffeehouse has something for every musical taste. Catch a rising star or one of your old favorites. Here's the March schedule:

**March 5:** *Lily White Quintet*

With Lily White on saxophones, Michael J. Stephens on piano, Chris Dahlgren on bass, Eric Halvorson on drums, and David Phelps on guitar and effects. White's music skirts the outside edge of jazz music. Her latest CDs are *No Pork Long Line* by Jazz Focus Records and *Somewhere Between Truth & Fiction* by Knitting Factory Works.

**March 12:** *Oceanic Entertainment*

An evening of sea songs, sea chanteys, and other maritime music with Frank Woerner, the Cruel Sisters Alison and Hilary Kelley, and the all-female, mostly a cappella Johnson Girls with Alison Kelley, Maggie Bye, Joy Bennett, Deirdre Murtha and Bonnie Milner.

**March 19:** *Tomas Rodriguez and the Children of the Sun*

Third Fridays with the Park Slope Food Co-op. Tomas y Los Niños combine Brazilian, Latin, flamenco and American influences to create a unique and upbeat international sound.

**March 26:** *Art Lillard's Heavenly Band*

Among the current wave of big bands on the scene today, Art Lillard's Heavenly Band is one of only a handful playing brand new music that's just as exciting and tuneful as the standards of the 30's and 40's. Led by drummer-composer Art Lillard, the band performs a full repertoire of original songs varying in style from swing to sambas, from jazz ballads to bossa novas.

Future Coffeehouses will feature such highlights as folk singer Caroline Horn, artists from The Rising Cafe, Zen Music Zen Words, and the sixth annual *Local Produce '99*. Come on over to the Meeting House some Friday soon and see what you've been missing!