

ETHICAL OUTLOOK

January 2014

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NYSEC ETHICS FOR CHILDREN



Amy Reid, (center) one of the advisors of the Ethics for Children and Ethical Teens Leadership programs. Photos by Audrey Kindred.

On MONDAY, DECEMBER 2, NYSEC participated in Winter's Eve at Lincoln Square for the fourth year. Amy Reid and Audrey Kindred, advisors for the Ethics for Children Sunday program, did a tremendous job planning and coordinating our activity table. The theme was Gratitude. Children were invited to make thank you cards with a template that we provided that says "In a world of gratitude, I thank you for..." There were displays including a

huge world map labeled with the ways people say "thanks" all around the world; a video monitor showing animations the Sunday children made over past seasons; books, flyers, and brochures. There was a raffle drawing of books for those who came and we already have a winner: Congratulations, Nancy Rodriguez! Nancy chose *Respectful Parents/Respectful Kids*, by S. Hart and V.K. Hodson as a prize.

Our thanks go also to NYSEC staff: Leonardo Gibson, Dr. Anne Klaeyssen, and Beth Zucker for their much-needed and appreciated help with the set-up for the event.



Nancy Rodriguez

Continued on page 12

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President's Notes

A N D R A M I L L E R

I'm sure you've already heard this a million times, but Happy New Year! Happy 2014 – such a nicer number than 2013 for some reason.

As usually happens when a new year comes, we think of new beginnings, fresh starts. And here at the New York Society for Ethical Culture, we could use a brilliant new fresh start. Not to take lightly the wonderful legacy of our society of ethical aspirations, nor our community of free thinkers, nor our proud old building and the amazing projects, programs, and good works that are initiated here.

We are the place where people can come with their ideas for the betterment of our world, and we can provide encouragement and our commitment to making those inspirations come true. I am thrilled by the works being nurtured by our Social Service Board – and by the projects and programs our Environmental Stewardship Committee is promoting along with other environmental volunteer groups. It's good to partner with organizations outside of Ethical Culture – and with other EC Societies – to bring about change for the better.

This is not to slight the positive effects for us and for the community of just having fun – like the

hikes and bike rides we do together, or the pot-luck parties, or the local trips and explorations we take with the Ethical Adventures group, or the lively discussion groups led by members and by Leaders, the film series and play readings, and even just lunch on Sundays after our morning meeting.

We're proud of the ways we offer inspiration to lead a more ethical life in our lecture series and we're proud of our Sunday meetings – or the way we keep ourselves informed as good citizens through meeting talks, Advocacy Forums, and other conferences and events.

There's a lot to be proud of. And yet, we need to do more. Our programs tend to appeal to those of us who are considered senior citizens. We're dwindling in number because, though we have amazing Sunday programs for children and teens, we don't have anything to draw young adults. Few look on us as desirable – who wants to hang out with people who remind them of their parents or grandparents – even if they're super fond of them? So between "Ethics for Children" and the rest of us, there's a huge gap in our intergenerational spread.

And that's something we have to address in this new year. The young of today lead entirely different lives from the ones we led in our youth.

Continued on page 7

Ethical Enrichment and Events

Life's Struggles: Personal and Professional Ethical Dilemmas

We are starting a new discussion group, to be moderated by Dr. Terry Perlin, which will address some major life questions and decisions, as well as some everyday dilemmas. This five-session seminar will meet on the second **TUESDAY** of each month, starting on **JANUARY 14**, from **7:00 PM** to **9:00 PM**, in the Adler Study, Room 514. We'll ask questions like: "When would you stand up to a powerful authority, even at risk to yourself?" We'll also ask about some everyday ethical dilemmas such as: "Should you criticize a family member when you feel that he or she has behaved immorally?"

We'll be reading and discussing a number of fiction and nonfiction texts. Since the group will meet monthly, participants should have enough time to read each of them. At the seminar's conclusion, we'll attempt to develop guidelines for personal ethical consistency. Participants are required to obtain the following books: *What Doctors Feel*, Danielle Ofri (Beacon Press 2013); *The Burgess Boys*, Elizabeth Strout (Random House 2013); *Beautiful Souls: Saying No, Breaking Ranks, and Heeding*

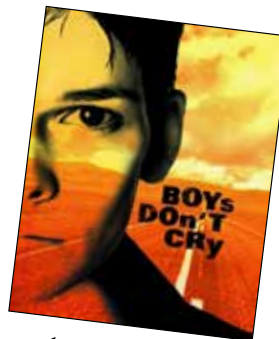
the Voice of Conscience in Dark Times, Eyal Press (Farrar, Straus 2012); *101 Ethical Dilemmas*, Martin Cohen (Routledge 2007, 2nd ed.).

Registration is required. The cost for members is \$25 and for guests, \$50 and payment must be made in full upon registration. For more information, or to register, call Yalitzia Garcia-Krawczyk at 212 874-5210, ext. 118.

Ethics in Film

Chris Everett

Join us on **FRI-
DAY, JANUARY
3**, at **7:00 PM**
(doors open at
6:30 PM), in
Ceremonial
Hall to see
Boys Don't



Cry (1999), directed by Kimberly Peirce and starring Hilary Swank and Chloe Sevigny. I'll be leading our discussion after the movie.

Based on a true story, this drama was adapted from the life of Brandon Teena, born Teena Brandon, a woman who chose to live her life as a man and suffered tragic consequences as a result. A distinguished feature debut for Kimberly Peirce, *Boys Don't Cry* was enthusiastically received in its showings at 1999 film festivals in Venice, Toronto, and New York.

SUNDAY PLATFORM MEETINGS

11:15 am
Ceremonial Hall,
Fourth Floor

JANUARY 5

Doorways New and Old

Dr. Anne Klaeysen, Leader
Tom Weishaar Presides

JANUARY 12

*Relations, Obligations, and
the Quest for Meaning*

Dr. Joseph Chuman, Leader
Patricia Bruder Debrovner Presides

JANUARY 19

MLK Remembrance

*What Martin Luther King, Jr.
Would Say About the Ethical
Culture Movement*

**Abe Markman, panel with
Dr. Phyllis Harrison-Ross,
Nicola DeMarco, and
Barbara Fennell**
Andra Miller Presides

JANUARY 26

*Fostering the Flow of Life:
A Naturalist Rethinks
Ethical Religion*

Curt Collier, Leader
Cheryl Gross Presides

NOT A MEMBER?

**All the more reason
to attend one of our
Enrichment Activities.
Contributions for
nonmembers are usually
only \$5.**

Continued on page 5



Leader's Desk

D R . A N N E K L A E Y S E N

Sleepless in Solidarity

I had to wake up at 4 am, so I had to fall asleep. But I couldn't. I had to fall asleep, so I drank hot cider with a stick of cinnamon and a shot of bourbon. Delicious, but it didn't work. So I read. The novel on the top of my nightstand pile had done the trick before, but it wasn't working. I still couldn't sleep. I could have easily finished the book, but I couldn't. I had to wake up at 4:00 am.

I lay awake in bed, eyes closed, thinking about . . . everything. Nothing escaped my attention; nothing was too small or insignificant to ponder and analyze. A parade of people marched under my eyelids, and every one of them had a story that I was forced to replay, like running a projector on the screen of a darkened and empty movie theater. I was mostly thinking about the workers who would soon be going on strike at fast food restaurants all across the country.

Just relax, I kept telling myself. You're lying down, your eyes are closed. Even if you're not sleeping, you're

relaxing. Only I wasn't. I kept going through the next day's (now *this* day's) agenda:

- Meet clergy colleagues on the corner of 52nd and 8th Avenue in Manhattan at 5:30 am
- Combine forces with workers and community organizers at 6:00 am and head to the McDonald's on Broadway
- Enter restaurant by any means possible and take it over by 6:30 am
- Start the program with Ethical Culture Leader Algeron Black's Invocation and line up the speakers: workers and clergy
- Leave when the police arrive and reconvene on the sidewalk
- Be prepared with living wage chants – and let the politicians speak (but not too much)

Easy peasy. But what if we can't get into the restaurant? What if the police are already there and arrest us? What if no reporters show up? What if I fail? What if?

Enough already! Relax! Oh, yeah, *that's* gonna work. I get up to make some more notes, go to the bathroom. Don't look at the clock! You don't want to know how late it is and how little sleep you're going to get. I have to sleep.

I have to wake up on time. People are counting on me.

But I'm not the only one; I'm part of a team: The Clergy-Worker Justice Table. We all support one another through breakfast meetings, teleconferences, emails and texts. This is not our first fast food action; we are pros. My heart breaks whenever I hear workers tell their stories about walking to work because they can't afford public transportation; long shifts or reduced hours; children to feed, clothe and educate; sleepless nights wondering how to pay all the bills. Sleepless nights, just like this one.

The alarm goes off, and I wake up, so I must have slept after all. What was my last thought before I drifted off? Whose face did I see? Now I see my own in the mirror as I brush my teeth. Soon I'll get dressed, pulling on my Ethical vest over a warm sweater, and head out the door to the subway. I'm ready.

The photographs accompanying this piece document the workers' strike at McDonald's early on Thursday, December 5. When I arrived, two other NYSEC

Continued on page 13

The suggested donation for the film is \$5, which includes snacks and beverages.

Death Café

Join us on **SUNDAY, JANUARY 5**, from **1:30 PM to 3:30 PM**, and on **WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 15**, from **2:30 PM to 4:30 PM**, in Ceremonial Hall. Our moderator is Dr. Barbara Simpson.

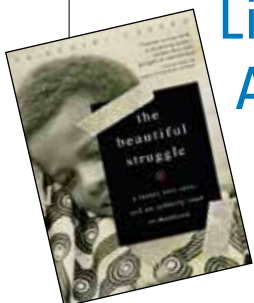
We'll gather in a relaxed and safe setting to discuss death, drink tea, and eat delicious cake. The objective of our meetings is to increase awareness of death and help people make the most of their (finite) lives. Our topics will include, among others, health care proxies, ethical wills, and green burial.

Barbara Simpson holds a doctorate in pastoral counseling and is Bereavement Program Community Outreach Coordinator at Caring Hospice Services.

The suggested donation is \$5.

Ethics in Literature: A Reading Group

Join us on **MONDAY, JANUARY 6**,



1:00 PM – 2:30 PM, in the Elliott Library, Room 507. Leader Dr. Anne Klaeyen will host a discussion on *The Beautiful Struggle: A Father, Two Sons, and an Unlikely Road to Manhood* by Ta-Nehisi Coates.

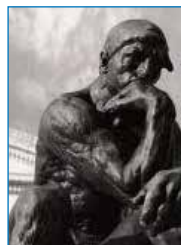
Ta-Nehisi Coates is a senior editor at *The Atlantic*, where he writes about culture, politics, and social issues. This memoir recounts his childhood in West Baltimore and his relationship with his father, Paul Coates, a Vietnam vet and Black Panther, an old-school disciplinarian and new-age believer in free love, an autodidact who launched a publishing company in his basement dedicated to telling the true history of African civilization.

The discussion is free for members, and \$5 for guests.

Wisdom and World Affairs

Come on **TUESDAYS, JANUARY 7 and 21, 6:00 PM – 8:00 PM** (Room 508), to participate

in our philosophical discussion group, moderated by Ken Gans. We cover a wide variety of subjects,



including the fate of humanity, world affairs, and humanism, among many others.

There is no fee for participating in this program.

Ethics and the Theater

Patricia Bruder Debrowner

Come on **FRI-DAY, JANUARY 10**, at **7:00 PM**, to Ceremonial Hall, where



Ethics and the Theater will present a play reading of *The Homecoming*, by Harold Pinter.

A young man brings his wife home to meet the family. Harold Pinter turns this stock sitcom situation into a searing, brutally funny drama. His characters flay one another verbally in a vicious game of one-upmanship that the audience may find uncomfortably familiar. As *New York Times* critic Ben Brantley said in reviewing the 2007 production, "We may not have thought we saw ourselves in *The Homecoming* four decades ago. Now it feels like a mirror."

Richard Van Deusen directs our cast, which includes Geneva Carr and Brian J. Carter. Come at **6:30 PM** for a reception and after the reading

participate in a discussion of the ethical issues of the play led by Betsy Ungar.

The suggested donation is \$5 for members, and \$10 for guests.

A History of Ideas Through Western Art

Join us for this last session on **MONDAY, JANUARY 13**, from **7:00 PM to 8:30 PM**, in the Adler Study, Room 514. Our moderator is Leader Curt Collier.

This will be a whirlwind tour of art history from the pre-Renaissance to the modern age. We will explore how religious ideals, thoughts, and history shaped what we see on the canvas. At the end of the series, you should be able to look at most art and tell when it was created and what influences shaped its unique perspective.

There is no fee for this program.

Writing Workshop Returns

Elaine Berman

This past fall, instead of offering two evening “Joy of Personal Writing” classes, we offered one daytime class on Tuesday afternoons, which we’ll continue this

winter. We’ll also offer our usual Thursday evening class.

The **TUESDAY** class will meet from **12:30 PM to 2:30 PM**, beginning on **JANUARY 14**. The **THURSDAY** class will meet from **6:30 PM to 8:30 PM**, starting on **JANUARY 16**. Both of these workshops will run for ten weeks.

We welcome new members at our workshops — people who want to get started writing, as well as those with experience who value belonging to a group of writers. If you’d like to read pieces by current and past members, visit our website, www.nysec.org/workshop-writers-space.

The course fees are \$160 for members and \$260 for nonmembers. For information, call Yalitzia Garcia-Krawczyk at 212 874-5210, ext. 118.

Adler Reading Seminar



Join us on the third **TUESDAY** of each month starting on **JANUARY 21**, from **7:00 PM to 8:30 PM**, in Room 502, with Leader Dr. Joseph Chuman as moderator.

We’ll discuss the works of Felix Adler and other thinkers whose writings are seminal to Ethical Culture and humanist philosophy.

There is no fee for this, but registration is required.

Ethics in Film: Contemporary Documentaries

On **MONDAY, JANUARY**

27, from **1:00 PM to 3:00 PM**, join Leader

Dr. Anne Klaeyen in the Adler Study,

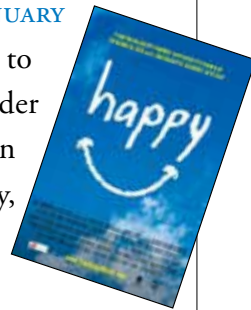
Room 514. We

will be showing

Happy (2011), directed by Roko Belic.

Happy takes viewers on a journey from the swamps of Louisiana to the slums of Kolkata, in search of what really makes people happy. Combining real-life stories and scientific interviews, the film explores the many secrets behind our most valued emotion.

The film showing is free to members and \$5 for guests.



Readings in Deep Ecology

Come on the fourth **MONDAY** of each month beginning on **JANUARY 27 (7:15 PM to 8:15 PM)**. We’ll meet in the Adler Study, Room 514. Leader Curt Collier will moderate.

Each month we’ll explore the writings of famous envi-

NEW YORK SOCIETY FOR ETHICAL CULTURE

ETHICAL

New York Shale Gas Potential

HOW DOES IT COMPARE TO PENNSYLVANIA?



What can New Yorkers expect if high-volume hydrofracking is permitted here?

Analysis of 2700 Pennsylvania gas wells shows that the highest yields are where shale is deepest and thickest. But the Marcellus shale gets thinner and shallower rapidly as it crosses the border into New York, leading to predictions of significantly less production, but with considerable potential damage from frack waste and drill cutting disposal, road damage, compressor stations, and pipelines.

**Thursday,
January 16**

2 West 64th Street

Concert Hall

6:30—9 pm

Suggested Donation \$5-\$10

Doors open at 6 pm

PRESENTATIONS BY

Chip

Northrup

Brian

Brock

Jerry

Acton

Lou

Allstadt

MODERATED BY

Prof. Anthony

Ingraffea

Sponsored by The New York Society for Ethical Culture

Co-Sponsored by: Senator Tony Avella; Assembly Member Linda Rosenthal; City Council Members Corey Johnson and Benjamin Kallos; Women's City club of New York; The Coalition for a Livable West Side; Brooklyn Food Coalition; Green Sanctuary Committee; Community Church of New York; Unitarian Universalist; New York Friends in Unity with Nature; League of Women Voters NYS; Leagues of Women Voters NYC and others.

NYSSEC is a member of the American Ethical Union and the International Humanist & Ethical Union. Entry to our 100-year-old building and meeting rooms is available for most wheelchair users with prior arrangements. Please call ahead (212-674-6210 x 107) for setup of our portable system and plan to arrive one hour before start time.

President's Notes

(continued from page 2)

Some of us remember the days when you listened to the radio – there was no TV. We remember heavy rotary phones. Some of us remember teletype and ticker tapes of stock quotes, even washing clothes without a washer or dryer and hanging them on the line.

But I digress. You get the picture – technology is a big part of the changes from old to new, and some of us are far more advanced technologically than others. But still, few of us run our lives the way our kids do – with last-minute plans through text-messaging, long days at work, socializing through social networks. The last thing to appeal to them is probably a lecture or class or a polite Sunday morning meeting followed by a light lunch.

But they still need Ethical Culture. They don't have time for it, but they need it – I feel it in my bones. There's gotta be a way! Will we find it this year?

ronmental authors.

We'll discuss chapters and selections from the works of Aldo Leopold, John Muir, Wangari Maathai, Michael Pollan, Rachel Carson, Richard Louv, Edward Abbey, and Jane Goodall, among various others. We'll read the selections together and then we'll be discussing the important points the writers were striving to stress. This will be a great way to explore the classic environmental literature.

There is no fee for this new program.

NEW YORK SOCIETY FOR ETHICAL CULTURE

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Sunday Morning Platform Meetings 11:15 am

JANUARY 5



DOORWAYS NEW AND OLD

Dr. Anne Klaeyen, Leader

Tom Weishaar Presides

The month of January is named after Janus, the Roman god of the doorway, and comes from the Latin word for door (ianua), since it opens the door to a new year. This mythological figure is usually depicted as having two faces, since he looks to the past and the future, overseeing passages and transitions. Although we think of time as infinite (ala the space-time continuum), it is a good ethical practice to reflect upon how we have acted and what we have learned, so that we can start a new calendar year with purpose and resolve. I will lead a reflection and offer ways of making resolutions for 2014.

The shared charity is Bedford Hills Prison College Program.

JANUARY 12



RELATIONS, OBLIGATIONS, AND THE QUEST FOR MEANING

Dr. Joseph Chuman, Leader

Patricia Bruder Debrovner Presides

It is often noted that the human being is a “meaning-creating animal.”

Most people in order to feel at home in the universe need to identify with a sense of purpose and significance. They need to feel that they count. For theists, this sense of meaning is often endowed by a divine meaning giver such that each person has his or her divine assignment, so to speak – an assignment that is discovered, or perhaps unfolds as one moves along life’s journey. For humanists, the task is different, perhaps more difficult in that meaning is not prescribed, but needs to be created. Where are we to look? How is this to be done? I will grapple with this existential question in my address of January 12. Until then, may you have very Happy New Year!

The shared charity is AFCECO.

JANUARY 19



MLK REMEMBRANCE: WHAT MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR. WOULD SAY ABOUT THE ETHICAL CULTURE MOVEMENT

**Abe Markman, panel with Dr. Phyllis Harrison-Ross,
Barbara Fennell, and Nicola Antonio DeMarco**

Andra Miller Presides

Dr. King would praise Ethical Culture for its social justice accomplishments. He would also: (1) note with pleasure the ways the movement is signaling like-

minded people of color that they are welcome to consider the Ethical Culture movement their religious home, and (2) he would bring promising news. Due to the pioneering work of social scientists we now have ways to recognize and control the hidden biases most of us harbor. Imagine the joy and freedom we could feel if we could relate to one another with ease and openness and without the fear of saying or doing the wrong thing.

I am most proud of having received our Ethical Culture Society's 2010 Community Service Award, and for the publication of my article on biases. I urge you to read it in preparation for the Platform by clicking on the link below. On reading the article, Richard Kiniry, former Leader of the Ethical Humanist Society of Philadelphia, wrote: "Abe, I wanted to thank you for your article. This is an important effort. Good luck with the discussion . . . your honest attempts at a dialogue could actually get us all to confront the racism we carry inside us."

I have a BA from CCNY and a Master's in Social Group Work from NYU. I worked in inner city settlement houses with youth and the elderly for 60 years. I conceived and co-founded The Neighborhood Self-Help Older People's Project, an innovative and highly successful social service agency in the South Bronx. From the late 1940s to the present, I have been an activist, organizing and leading grass-roots campaigns against police brutality and criminal injustice, and for paid sick leave.

Editor's Note: To be more fully prepared for the Platform, Abe urges you to read "Overcoming Hidden Biases," by clicking on this link: <http://thehumanist.org/march-april-2012/overcoming-hidden-biases/>.

The shared charity is ACLU Human Rights Campaign.

JANUARY 26



FOSTERING THE FLOW OF LIFE: A NATURALIST RETHINKS ETHICAL RELIGION

Curt Collier, Leader

Cheryl Gross Presides

"Any religion which fails to consider the salvation of the rest of creation at least on a par with that of humanity's is no longer relevant." With these words Ethical Culture Leader and environmentalist Curt Collier echoes the dire call of many other naturalists who argue for an immediate rethinking of humanity's relationship to nature. What would Ethical Culture look like if our "humanist-centric" ethic was expanded to include a deeper concern for the natural world as well? And more importantly, how can Ethical Culture remain environmentally relevant in the 21st century?

The shared charity is The Nature Conservancy.

(For this month's shared charities see page 11.)

Early Sunday Mornings 10:00 am (Rooms are subject to change)

JANUARY 5

CHORUS PRACTICE

Led by Pat Debrovner and David Gracia. Ceremonial Hall.

JANUARY 12

COLLOQUY: REALITY.

Dr. Anne Klaeyesen presides. Room 408.

JANUARY 19

CHORUS PRACTICE

Led by Pat Debrovner and David Gracia. Ceremonial Hall.

JANUARY 19

POETRY READING

You are welcome to come, read, listen, and respond to poetry. Perhaps you'll hear the words of a poet you didn't know.

Cheryl Gross presides. Room 508.

Sunday Afternoons 1:30 pm (Rooms are subject to change)

JANUARY 5

DEATH CAFÉ

Moderator: Dr. Barbara Simpson. Ceremonial Hall.

JANUARY 12

ETHICS IN THE NEWS

Mary Ellen Goodman presides. Room 508.

JANUARY 19

LIFE WITH HEALTH

Good fat, bad fat, and the cholesterol controversies, Mary Potter presides. There is a lot of misinformation about cholesterol as it relates to health, especially heart disease. Come and learn about both topics and join us in the question-and-answer period.

Mary has been a licensed Registered Nurse in New York State for over 28 years. She has a Bachelor of Science in nursing from Georgetown University and has studied under many renowned leaders in wellness and alternative health. She has developed an integrated healthcare and lifestyle philosophy that has helped her clients and friends achieve a more balanced and healthy lifestyle. Ceremonial Hall.

JANUARY 26

SUSTAINABLE LIVING SUPPORT CIRCLE

We'll discuss lifestyle choices, our impact on the planet, and ways we can make a meaningful difference. Participants will be asked to keep a log of their choices and to share openly with others in a supportive atmosphere. This course is open for those wanting to make a real commitment to eco-living.

Leader Curt Collier presides. Adler Study, Room 514.

more Ethical Enrichment and Events.....

Thursday Lunch Discussions Noon — Elliott Library, Rm 507

Bring your lunch and join Leader Dr. Anne Klaeyen and Society members from 12:00 noon to 1:30 pm. This month's topic: **NEW BEGINNINGS AND RESOLUTIONS**. Folders with relevant articles will be available from Yalitza Garcia-Krawczyk in the Leaders' office. Join the discussion.

JANUARY 2	"THE 50 GREATEST BREAKTHROUGHS SINCE THE WHEEL" by James Fallows, <i>The Atlantic</i> , November 2013.
JANUARY 9	"GET HAPPY!!" by Jackson Lears, <i>The Nation</i> , 11/5/13.
JANUARY 16	"FROG'S KNICKERS" by Colin Burrow, <i>London Review of Books</i> , 9/26/13.
JANUARY 23	"HEAD COUNT" by Elizabeth Kolbert, <i>The New Yorker</i> , 10/21/13.
JANUARY 30	"THE PERSISTING VISION: READING THE LANGUAGE OF CINEMA" by Martin Scorsese, <i>The NY Review of Books</i> , 8/15/13.

THIS MONTH'S SHARED CHARITIES

BEDFORD HILLS PRISON COLLEGE PROGRAM, Marymount Manhattan College, offers noncredited college-preparatory courses and for-credit courses leading to Associate of Arts degrees in Social Science and Bachelor of Arts degrees in Sociology at the Bedford Hills Correctional Facility, a New York State maximum-security prison for women.

AFCECO (Afghan Child Education and Care Organization) — AFCECO's aim is to bring up the next generation of Afghan citizens, so badly affected by three decades of war, and to help them grow into strong, productive, thoughtful members of society. The girls and boys in AFCECO's orphanages are taught tolerance, respect for diversity, environmental sensitivity, respect for the rights of others, and strong values of integrity, honesty, and caring.

ACLU HUMAN RIGHTS CAMPAIGN. In 2004, the ACLU created a Human Rights Program (HRP) specifically dedicated to holding the U.S. government accountable to universal human rights principles in addition to rights guaranteed by the U.S. Constitution. HRP is part of a reemerging movement of U.S.-based organizations that uses the international human rights framework in domestic rights advocacy.

THE NATURE CONSERVANCY, is a charitable environmental organization in the United States. Its mission is to "conserve the lands and waters on which all life depends." The mission of The Nature Conservancy is to conserve the lands and waters on which all life depends..

Our Ethical Family

MOE-SWE MYINT, MEMBERSHIP ASSOCIATE



The following members are celebrating birthdays in January:

ROSEMARY IRVING.....1/4
ELIZABETH UNGAR.....1/6
HOWARD PARKER.....12/3
WILLIAM CHARLTON....1/13
BONNIE BEAN.....1/14
PHYLLIS KREUTTNER....1/14
STEPHANIE ROSENBLATT.1/14
JOHN HWANG.....1/16
ROBERT BERGER.....1/17
JAMES GARA.....1/24
ED GROSS.....1/31

ETHICAL CARES

The Caring Committee will help you should you fall ill or be incapacitated, whether you're home, in the hospital, in rehab, or in a nursing home. All you need do is call the committee chairperson, STEPHANIE ROSENBLATT, at 212-586-0017, and she'll make the arrangements.

As we welcome a new year, we'd like you to welcome DANIEL JULIN and DAVID MASSEY (Dave) into our Ethical Community. Dave has become a familiar figure in the building since he has been a frequent attendee at our Sunday Platforms, and has participated in Thursday Leader-led discussions and various other programs. Dave likes being with people with whom he can commune, and says Ethical Culture has been a part of his life ever since he was a youngster listening to the Sunday Platforms on radio! Daniel is a software engineer who is drawn to NYSEC for our sense of community, intellectual curiosity, and support for the humanist movement. He loves dogs, New York City, and anything French.

The members of our Ethics for Teen Leaders program are presenting "The Story Bank Project." They want to collect stories and anecdotes from members of NYSEC. They could be about you; your life and times in NY or your memories and thoughts on the Society—the friends you made; the times you had—whatever it is. They want to hear your story and create an archive online that will feature audio recordings. If you are interested in being interviewed, please email EthicsforTeens@nysec.org.

It should be great fun and a superb way to preserve your history for future generations!

The Ethics for Children program is holding an OPEN HOUSE on JANUARY 5 from 11:00 AM to 12:30 PM, with peace-related games and crafts for everyone. You will learn all about enrolling your child in "Animating Hopes and Dreams," a stop-motion course helping children 3-12 years-old develop ideas and stories about the Civil Rights Movement. To attend this information session, RSVP by email to: EthicsforChildren@nysec.org.

Ethics for Teen Leaders and Ethics for Tweens (middle school) are inviting all interested teens and tweens to enroll in "YES in Deed," a season of service and activism; and the "Coming of Age" program with a study of comparative religion through field trips, respectively. The info session for both programs will be held on SUNDAY, JANUARY 12 at 4:00 PM on the 5th floor. If interested, please contact EthicsforTeens@nysec.org.

And let's not forget to put your dancing shoes on for our VAL-ENTINE'S CABARET CONCERT on FEBRUARY 14. It will feature soprano Katherine Howell and members of Ensemble Du Monde performing Mozart and Schubert, and short readings from the language of love, followed by dancing! Of course, there will also be elegant finger food, wine, dessert, and coffee. You can still purchase tickets online at: www.nysec-valentine.eventbrite.com or by sending a check payable to The New York Society for Ethical Culture, c/o

Moe-Swe Myint, 2 West 64th Street, New York, NY 10023. (For more details see page 18).

MORE PHOTOS FROM WINTER'S EVE AT LINCOLN SQUARE



Leader's Desk *(continued from page 4)*

members, Meg Chapman and Elinore Kaplan were already there and quickly learned the chants, falling into line for the march and storming the store with scores of other people. It was pure joy to hear the words of Algernon Black's Invocation repeated back in classic Occupy Wall Street "mike check" fashion and to clear the way for workers' voices to be heard. Here's the link to Democracy Now's video: http://www.democracynow.org/2013/12/15/we_cant_survive_on_725_fast.



Meg Chapman and Anne Klaeyen.



Elinore Kaplan at the living wage rally.



(L-R) Anne and Florence Johnson from United NY.

Member Profile



ELAINE BERMAN, MEMBER SINCE 2003

I have fallen in love again and again at the New York Society for Ethical Culture. Ten years ago I fell in love with the Society itself, an emotion that has not changed. I hope it won't ever change; my life would be much diminished if it did.

A friend thought I might like Ethical, so I went to a Sunday meeting. The platform speaker talked of Ethical as a nontheological religion, and I thought, hey, that's me, non-theological! Wow! I never knew there was a special place for people like me. Carol Rost read a letter of thanks from a prisoner about Ethical's payment for his DNA test. On the wall it said, "Deed above creed." Wow, these are good people!

This was a rough time in my life. I'd recently been laid off by a Wall Street company that I had gone to work for after a long career as a freelance writer. I needed the dotcom salary, so I settled in there and wrote online training for brokers. I'd spent two and a half years at this company with a group of tech and financial people who were not warm and fuzzy even after 9/11, who fought viciously with

each other, and who were definitely not people likely to raise money for convicts' DNA tests.

I joined the Society and soon joined committees. I went to a retreat. Little by little I got to know people, and I liked Ethical people very much. I loved starting to think of myself as a humanist among humanists.

One day I was invited to lunch at a member's home where a group of women asked me questions about myself. I said that I was looking for a place to try teaching writing classes. Barbara Levenson said, "Do it here!" I didn't realize that Barbara could make anything happen at Ethical, but a short time later I was teaching a ten-week writing class. When it was time for a new term, a lot of people were interested in joining, so Barbara said, "Start another class."

Now the two personal writing classes are in their tenth year. Talented people come into these classes; I am excited about seeing them and working with them every week. I love the classes and the people in them – those who have been there for years, new students, and some who have stopped and then returned. I feel more and more confident that we

do good work together.

When we introduce ourselves at the beginning of a semester, I tell how one day my phone rang and a strident female voice demanded, "What makes you qualified to teach writing?" I couldn't think fast enough to answer quickly, so I probably said, "Duh." The caller slammed the phone down. So what does make me qualified?

I studied both playwriting and directing for a year at the Yale School of Drama and, when I left I wanted to be a playwright. There were perhaps one or two woman playwrights produced in those days, as compared with about zero women directors that I knew of, so I thought I was making a wise choice. I spent my twenties earning a living as a secretary (then also producer, then also reader) at theater and television companies. In my thirties I wrote children's plays for the Long Wharf Theater, and that led to writing educational materials.

The next step was writing corporate films. In my forties I learned to write films for sales and customer service training (dialogue!) and then learned instructional design to co-write days-long learning seminars for Xerox Learning Systems and its corporate clients. I did that

work for many years as a freelancer, traveling all over this country and Canada. I also wrote articles and book reviews. As much as I could I kept on with playwriting with a wonderful teacher and workshop. I can't claim fame or fortune as a playwright, but I had enough plays staged and published to keep going and have a wonderful time.

Life experiences have created foundations for efforts at Ethical. I am on the Ethics and the Theater committee, and I have loved being one of the directors of their readings. For a while I did work for a sentencing law journal and was very interested in what happens to young people after prison. That led to a group we had at Ethical for a while that tutored people at an organization called GOSO (Getting

Out and Staying Out).

The chorus offers a good illustration of why I love Ethical Culture. A friend of mine who sings in a chorus has to audition every year, so she and her chorus friends live in fear that they'll be kicked out. At the formation of the Ethical Culture chorus there were no auditions, and there are still no auditions. At Ethical if you want to sing in the chorus you go to rehearsals and sing, and so I did for years with a small, not very great voice, but much joy and enthusiasm.

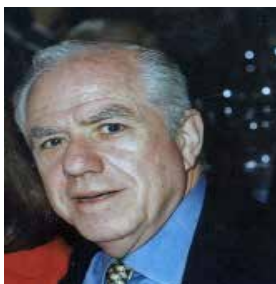
I feel lucky every time I walk into our building. It never wears off. I feel lucky walking into Ceremonial Hall on Sundays and seeing a roomful of people I like, respect and, yes, love. I feel fortunate spending

my time with people who are trying to figure out what is an ethical life in this tough and cynical world and trying to live that life. It can take time to find your place in this community, and bring out your best self, as Felix Adler envisioned, but there is probably a place for everyone who wants to make the journey.

Speaking of love and luck, I've just married member John Gurney, after years together, and, yes, of course, we met at Ethical. We were married quietly at NYSEC in Leader Anne Klaeyen's office.

John has sought his place at Ethical, and it includes a moral philosophy course that he'll be teaching again in March.

Committee Close-Up



BOB BERGER, PLEDGE COMMITTEE

New Programs and New Activities Ahead

I hope 2013 was a good year for you and that 2014 will be an even better one. Ethical Culture is also getting better. We have more programs, more activities, stimulating platforms, and informative talks.

Ethical Culture is a chance to be involved, a chance to be heard, and a chance to pro-

mote ethical action. I hope you are taking advantage of all that EC has to offer.

The new year, 2014, is also the start of a new pledge year. Ethical Culture needs your pledge. Pledges are necessary to keep us alive and keep our building open.

Please, don't only pledge,

but HONOR that pledge – and sooner, rather than later. We expect to finally get our handicapped ramp in 2014 so that we can have easy access for all. We are upgrading our sound systems, thanks to the generosity of two of our members, and we're sprucing up our home as quickly as we can afford to do so.

So please do pledge and try to give more than you did last year. It's the ethical thing to do.

Thanks and Happy Holidays. I look forward to seeing you at "The Society's Meeting House."



The Struggle to Forgive and Be Forgiven

We live with many misconceptions about the nature of forgiveness that keep us from repairing our relationships. A new workshop moderated by Leader Dr. Anne Klaeyssen, "The Struggle to Forgive and Be Forgiven," which addresses this subject, will be offered January through March on the second and fourth THURSDAYS of each month (6:30 PM-8:00 PM) starting January 9, in Adler Study, Room 514.

Forgiveness is not an automatic act but an important process, an ethical struggle that can last a long time and that needs to be understood and honored. It allows us to voice our anger without doing damage, acknowledge our part in what has gone wrong, and see the flaws in ourselves and others as part of our humanity.

This workshop will introduce participants to some key concepts in the process of forgiveness and invite them to examine their own ethical struggle to forgive and be forgiven. It will include articles and documentaries. Registration is required.

The series is free to members and \$50 for visitors.

Compassion & Choices

Join NYSEC and Compassion and Choices of New York as we present "Aid in Dying—a Peaceful, Dignified Way to Die—and an Option all Mentally Competent, Terminally Ill Patients Should Have," on WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 15, 7:00 PM-9:00 PM, in Ceremonial Hall.

Speaker Peter Rogatz, MD, MPH, a founding member and currently Vice President of Compassion and Choices of NY, will discuss the major arguments against aid in

dying, with the purpose of demonstrating that these are not valid, and that support of such a policy is rational and humane. There will be a reception at 8:30 PM, and guests are invited to take food and drinks from the reception table prior to the start of the program.

Dr. Rogatz has served as Senior Vice President of New York Blue Cross and Blue Shield and as Vice President for Medical Affairs of the Visiting Nurse Service of New York. He received his medical degree from Cornell University and a Master's Degree in Public Health from Columbia University.

This is a free program.

NYSEC in Detroit

Nicola DeMarco



Dr. Harrison-Ross (seated front wearing her beret) and behind her from right to left: Dr. Michelle Reid, Medical Director of the Detroit-Wayne County Community Mental Health Agency and keynote speaker Annelle Primm, M.D., MPH, Director of Minority and National Affairs for the American Psychiatric Association.

Dr. Phyllis Harrison-Ross and I traveled together to Detroit, as part of NYSEC/Social Service Board actions to assist the people of that city recently hit by a financial catastrophe.

ETHICS FOR CHILDREN Animating Hopes and Dreams

A stop-motion animation course helping children develop ideas and stories about the Civil Rights movement for children ages 3-12 years old.

OPEN HOUSE:

January 5th 11-12:30pm
Come and enjoy:
Peace Games & Crafts
*please RVSP to attend

DETAILS & DATES:

An 8-Week Session Starting:
January 12th
Sundays 11-12:30pm
\$100 per family

TO REGISTER:

email EthicsforChildren@nysec.org
*registration is required by January 6th

Entry to our 100-year-old building and meeting rooms is available for most wheelchair users with prior arrangements. Please call ahead (212-874-5210 x 107) for setup of our portable system and plan to arrive one hour before start time.



2014 PROGRAMS at NYSEC for TWEENS & TEENS

Enroll in January to begin in February

Ethical Culture welcomes families from all walks of life. Our learning processes remain supportive of diverse perspectives and belief systems, while helping young people develop a strong moral compass.

ETHICS for TWEENS (middle school)

invites enrollment for a "Coming of Age" program with a study of Comparative Religion through field trips.

INFO SESSION:

Sunday January 12th 4PM
5th floor 2 West 64th St.

ETHICS for TEEN LEADERS

invites enrollment for "YES in Deed!" a season of service & activism.



Interested or curious?

CONTACT: EthicsForTeens@nysec.org



Dr. Harrison-Ross organized a gathering of mental health leaders to address the emotional impact that economic depression has on the people. The keynote speaker was Dr. Annelle Primm, a member of All Healers Mental Health Association (AMHA), which collaborates with our Social Service Board. Dr. Primm described the culturally relevant tools used in other cities and countries that she, Dr. Harrison-Ross, and AMHA have developed.

The meeting, on November 21, launched a larger leadership summit scheduled to be held in Detroit that would "bring all areas of leadership to address these needs." President Obama and former Congressman Patrick Kennedy will be invited.



Dr. Annelle Primm keynote speaker addressing those that attended.

Valentine Cabaret Concert

At the New York Society for Ethical Culture

2 WEST 64TH STREET • NEW YORK, NY 10023 • 212.874.5210 • WWW.NYSEC.ORG

"If music be the food of love, play on..." William Shakespeare

Friday, February 14, 2014 at 7:30 pm

Doors open at 7:00PM

Program ends by 11:00PM

FEATURING:

Soprano, **Katherine Howell**

Members of **Ensemble du Monde** performing

Mozart aria *Per pieta...* from COSI FAN TUTTE

Mozart aria *Dove sono...* from MARRIAGE OF FIGARO

Mozart's *Sonata for Violin and Piano* K. 296;
[2nd and 3rd movements]

Schubert's TROUT QUINTET



With short readings from the language of love.

Followed by **DANCING!**

Cabaret-Style Seating

Advanced purchase encouraged

Seating is limited!

\$30 Members and Students

\$40 Guests

At Door (if available): \$50

Purchase tickets online:

www.nysec-valentine.eventbrite.com

Elegant Finger Food

wine, fruit, special dessert,
coffee/tea

Purchase tickets by mail:

(Please provide an email address and make check payable to New York Society for Ethical Culture.)

New York Society for Ethical Culture

c/o Moe-Swe Myint

2 West 64th Street

New York, NY 10023

mmyint@nysec.org

212.874.5210 Ext. 113



NYSEC is a member of the American Ethical Union and the International Humanist & Ethical Union.
Entry to our 100-year-old building and meeting rooms is available for most wheelchair users with prior arrangements.
Please call ahead (212-874-5210 x 107) for setup of our portable system and plan to arrive one hour before start time.

JANUARY 2014

Office hours for the month are Monday-Friday, 9:00am - 6:00pm

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
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Ethics in Film: *Boys Don't Cry* (1999) — January 3

Ethics in Literature: A Reading Group: *The Beautiful Struggle: A Father, Two Sons, and an Unlikely Road to Manhood*, by Ta-Nehisi Coates — January 6

Ethics and the Theater: *The Homecoming*, by Harold Pinter — January 10

Ethics in Film: Contemporary Documentaries: *Happy* (2011), directed by Roko Belic — January 27

<p>10:00 Chorus Practice 11:00 Ethics for Children - Open House 11:15 Morning Meeting 12:45 Brunch/Social Hour 1:30 Death Café</p>	<p>1:00 Ethics in Literature: A Reading Group 6:30 Board of Trustees</p>	<p>6:00 Wisdom and World Affairs</p>	<p>Society Offices Closed New Year's Day</p>	<p>February 2014 Newsletter Deadline 12:00 Leader Lunch Discussion</p>	<p>7:00 Ethics in Film</p>	<p>4</p>
<p>10:00 Colloquy 11:00 Ethics for Children 11:15 Morning Meeting 12:45 Brunch/Social Hour 1:30 Ethics in the News and Teens</p>	<p>7:00 A History of Ideas through Western Art</p>	<p>12:30 Writing Class 7:00 Life's Struggles: Personal and Professional Ethical Dilemmas</p>	<p>1:00 Strength Exercise Class</p>	<p>12:00 Leader Lunch Discussion 6:30 The Struggle to Forgive and Be Forgiven</p>	<p>7:00 Ethics and the Theater</p>	<p>11</p>
<p>10:00 Chorus Practice 10:00 Poetry Reading 11:15 Morning Meeting 12:45 Brunch/Social Hour 1:30 Life with Health</p>	<p>7:00 A History of Ideas through Western Art</p>	<p>12:30 Writing Class 6:00 Wisdom and World Affairs 7:00 Felix Adler Seminar 7:00 Prospective Members' Reception</p>	<p>1:00 Strength Exercise Class 2:30 Death Café 7:00 Compassion & Choice of New York</p>	<p>12:00 Leader Lunch Discussion 6:30 Writing Class 6:30 New York Shale Gas Potential</p>	<p>7:00 Ethics and the Theater</p>	<p>18</p>
<p>11:00 Ethics for Children 11:15 Morning Meeting 12:45 Brunch/Social Hour 1:30 Sustainable Living Support Circle</p>	<p>1:00 Ethics in Film: Contemporary Documentaries 7:15 Readings in Deep Ecology</p>	<p>12:30 Writing Class</p>	<p>1:00 Strength Exercise Class</p>	<p>12:00 Leader Lunch Discussion 6:30 Writing Class 6:30 The Struggle to Forgive and Be Forgiven</p>	<p>7:00 Ethics and the Theater</p>	<p>25</p>

NEW YORK SOCIETY FOR ETHICAL CULTURE

ETHICAL

WE ARE ETHICAL CULTURE,

a community that believes all individuals have inherent worth and
dignity, and a responsibility to strive for ethical growth.

Ours is a nontheistic religion in which deeds and their results matter more than ideology.

We believe that leaving the world better than we found it is the highest good.

Learn more about us at our website — or, better still, visit with us.

You're always welcome.

NEW YORK SOCIETY FOR ETHICAL CULTURE

ETHICAL OUTLOOK

January 2013

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