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Having a great time at our Membership Retreat.

NYSEC Membership Retreat

The annual Membership Retreat back in September was lovely. It was fun, and it was delightful. The weather was cool but nice – and we had these wonderful fleece vests to keep us warm that Tod Whitaker supplied for all who came – with our ETHICAL logo proudly embroidered on them.

The weekend started Friday with a wine–and–nibbles party while we all readjusted to our new surroundings – with great background music

supplied by Tod. We gathered on the sun porch and chattered away before heading off for dinner in the dining hall. We sat at a long table reserved for us. The food was good and plentiful, the desserts simple and delicious.

After dinner Friday night, Leaders Curt Collier and Anne Klaeyesen got us settled into game time – including Texas Hold ‘Em (poker, for those of you who don’t know – and Curt’s favorite pastime);

Russian Rummy (I taught this game, an old family favorite and fun for a large group); jigsaw puzzles (we had two going); movies (Curt brought a great collection) and some of us watched *Some Like It Hot*, and of course we all knew the last line, “Well, nobody’s perfect.” Ah, so true, so true.

Early Saturday morning we were in the special glass-windowed Meditation Room for a

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Member of the American Ethical Union



President's Notes

A N D R A M I L L E R

colloquy session with Anne on peace, which was the theme for the weekend, as September 21 was the International Day of Peace. There were some interesting reflections on what brings peace to us as individuals, and peace in the world, and it was mentioned that working through conflicts was a necessary task to make peace.

After breakfast, we met – again in the beautiful Meditation Room – to do some brainstorming with Anne, Tod, and Elinore Kaplan on the future of NYSEC and Ethical Culture itself. Elinore is preparing an article on this for the next issue of *Ethical Outlook*. It's always inspiring to hear the thoughtful ideas that our membership has for our Society. And it's fun to cogitate all together!

Before lunch there was a choice of either of two sessions – one on poetry of peace, with Cheryl Gross, and the other a wide-ranging discussion on the subject with Mary Ellen Goodman. I participated in the latter, and it was great getting to know the other attendees a little better during our spirited conversation on being peaceful, what frustrates our calm, and other thoughts on the nature of the universe. . . .

After lunch, Ed Gross led us in a caravan of cars to the Stony

Point Battlefield State Historic Site, where a storyteller filled us in on the American Revolution battles, a singer sang old songs, and we visited a few educational exhibits. There was also an old, decommissioned lighthouse in which some of us wormed our way up the narrow winding staircase and through the tiny hole at the top to where the light used to be. There we saw the view out over the treetops, and were told about the lighthouse keepers, especially Nancy Rose, who took over after her husband died and ran the lighthouse from 1857 until her death in 1904. I won't give you the details, but running that old lighthouse was a considerable responsibility and lots of hard work, for which reimbursement was the light keeper's house and \$200 a year.

After that, it was back to the Conference Center for a session on Syria, war, and peace with Leader Joe Chuman – a provocative discussion as we explored the consequences of the shifting of what the United States' response would be and what course we should pursue in the future. There were those of us who lamented all the saber rattling, and those who pointed out that the rattling was necessary to put some strong teeth

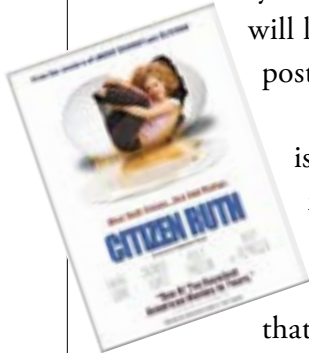
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Ethical Enrichment and Events

Ethics in Film

Chris Everett

Join us on **FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 1**, at **7:00 PM** (doors open at **6:30 PM**), in Ceremonial Hall to see *Citizen Ruth* (1996), directed by Alexander Payne. Afterwards, I will lead our usual post-film discussion.



The divisive issue of abortion is at the center of *Citizen Ruth*, a political satire that attempts to subject both pro-choice and pro-life to equal ridicule.

Laura Dern portrays Ruth Stoops, an irresponsible, unemployed woman who's addicted to inhaling household chemicals and has become pregnant, for the fifth time. After she is arrested for substance abuse, the judge offers to lessen her sentence if Ruth chooses to abort her child.

The donation is \$5, which includes snacks and beverages.

Death Café

We'll meet on **SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 3**, from **1:30 PM to 3:30 PM**, and on **WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 20**, from **2:30 PM to 4:30 PM**, in Ceremonial Hall.

Led by moderator Dr. Barbara Simpson, who holds a

doctorate in pastoral counseling and is Bereavement Program Community Outreach Coordinator at Caring Hospice Services, 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.

The suggested donation is \$5.

Ethics in Literature: A Reading Group

Join us on **MONDAY, NOVEMBER 4**, **1:00 PM – 3:00 PM**, in the Elliott Library, Room 507. Leader Dr. Anne Klaeysen will host a discussion on *The Yellow Birds* by Kevin Powers.

The novel opens in 2004 with the words, "The war tried to kill us in the spring." This is a powerful account of friendship and loss. Twenty-one-year-old Private Bartle and eighteen-year-old Private Murphy cling to life as their platoon launches a bloody battle for the city of Al Tifar in Iraq. Bound together since basic training when Bartle



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SUNDAY PLATFORM MEETINGS

11:15 am
Ceremonial Hall,
Fourth Floor

NOVEMBER 3

Dreamtime Ethics: Religion of Aboriginal Australia

Dr. Anne Klaeysen, Leader
Tod Whitaker Presides

NOVEMBER 10

Resilience, Humanism, and the Affirmation of Life

Dr. Joseph Chuman, Leader
Henryka Komanska Presides

NOVEMBER 17

Felix Adler, Cuba, and My Great-grandmother

Dr. Damien J. Fernandez
Dr. Anne Klaeysen Presides

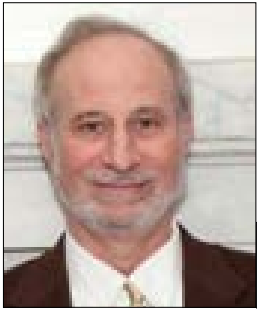
NOVEMBER 24

Why I'm Defecting From the Values War (And Why You Should Too)

Curt Collier, Leader
Monica Weiss Presides

NOT A MEMBER?

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



Leader's Desk

D R . J O S E P H C H U M A N

Ethical Culture in the Marketplace

The past decade has witnessed the proliferation of a multitude of humanist, secular, and atheist organizations—all to varying degrees kissing cousins of Ethical Culture. Perhaps it's an appropriate moment to step back and take a fresh look at how Ethical Culture compares to the burgeoning of humanism in our time. For some, there will appear to be little difference among organizations. For others, whatever differences there are remain determinative and preclude any premature impulse toward amalgamation into a single humanist mega-organization. Count me among the latter. For me, Ethical Culture's distinctiveness is too vital to be lost in the sea of a greater humanist movement. I want to explain why.

What follows is “my Ethical Culture,” honed and refined over 45 years of professional leadership. Ethical Culture is my sole organizational affiliation. It claims my loyalty. It is where I have staked my claim. When I invoke

“my Ethical Culture,” I am not asserting as I have heard some say that “Ethical Culture is a religion in which you believe whatever you want.” Such anarchistic license can only be bought at the expense of intellectual responsibility. In defining Ethical Culture for oneself, we are all obliged to develop our understanding within a context. In other words, our own interpretations need to be shaped by the philosophy of Ethical Culture's founder, what its subsequent leaders and members have believed and how they acted on those beliefs; that is, by Ethical Culture's collective history. All these factors give Ethical Culture an implicit center of gravity, so to speak. And how each person interprets Ethical Culture for herself or himself is an intuitive effort to grasp and articulate this evolving center of gravity.

While I usually don't like efforts at defining Ethical Culture by what it is not, I will break with my proclivities and try to define Ethical Culture by comparison with kindred movements which have burst on the scene, or

are experiencing a resurgence. Three come foremost to mind.

ATHEISM

We have witnessed the emergence of “the new atheists.” Among them we find names such as Sam Harris, Richard Dawkins, and Christopher Hitchens. Intellectually there is little that is new about the “new atheists.” I well recall reading their arguments in Bertrand Russell's writings 40 years ago. The gist of their criticism of religion can be found in the ancients — Epicurus and Lucretius among them. But the “new atheists” are riding the crest of current underlying political phenomena, the most salient being the distaste many people, mostly young, feel at the politicization of religion, most powerfully expressed in the reactionary and narrow initiatives of the evangelical Christian Right. This backlash has greatly increased the number of Americans who now claim “no religion” (upward of 20 percent), and the “new

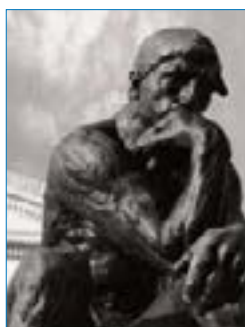
Continued on page 14

made a promise to bring Murphy safely home, the two have been dropped into a war for which neither is prepared.

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

Wisdom and World Affairs

Come on **TUESDAYS, NOVEMBER 5 and 19, 6:00 PM – 8:00 PM**, and add your voice to our



philosophical discussion group, moderated by Ken Gans.

We meet on the first and third **TUESDAYS** of each month, in Room 508, and delve into a variety of subjects: the fate of humanity, world affairs, humanism, etc.

There is no fee for this program.

Humanist Open Mic



Join us on **WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 6, 7:15 PM – 8:45 PM**, in the Adler Study, Room 514, for a celebration of science, ethics, and human progress. The event, co-spon-

sored by the Center for Inquiry New York City, will be hosted by CFI's Raymond Arnold.

If you have any questions, please contact: nyc@centerforinquiry.net.

This is an ongoing program, so be sure to come on the first Wednesday of each month to be entertained, or to entertain us yourself, with a song, story, poem, or other performance art. Beginners are always welcome.

Admission is free.

Adler Reading Seminar



Join us on **TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 12, 7:00 PM – 8:30 PM** (and the

second **TUESDAY** of each month), for a discussion of the works of Felix Adler and other thinkers whose writings are seminal to Ethical Culture and humanist philosophy. The discussion, moderated by Leader Dr. Joseph Chuman, will be held in Room 502.

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

Ethics in Stories From Faith and Folk Traditions

Join us and moderator Leader Dr. Anne Klaeyesen, on **THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 14**, from **7:00 PM to 8:30 PM**, in the Adler Study, Room 514, where we will explore the ethics communicated in myths, parables, and stories from cultures around the world.



Each session will focus on a different aspect of the human experience, this evening our topic will be "Home."

There is no fee for this program.

Ethics and the Theater

Patricia Bruder Debrovner

On **FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 8, 7:00 PM**, in Ceremonial Hall, we



will present a play reading of *The Waverly Gallery* by Kenneth Lonergan. Gladys is an intelligent, independent woman who runs a small gallery in the

West Village. Now in her 80s, she is slipping into the twilight of dementia. As her close-knit family rallies round her, they must come to terms not only with her decline but also with the fragility of their own memories and existence. Richard Van Deusen directs our cast, which includes Alex Bone, Txai Frota, Emily Jon Mitchell, Carol Van Deusen, and Richard Van Deusen.

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 Dr. Anne Klaeyesen.

Suggested donation: \$5 for members; \$10 for nonmembers.

Ethics in Film: Contemporary Documentaries

On **MONDAY, NOVEMBER 18**, 1:00 PM – 3:00 PM, join Leader Dr. Anne Klaeyesen in the Adler Study, Room 514. We'll be

showing *Born Into Brothels* (2004).

Documentarians Zana Briski and Ross Kauffman offer a

humorous and heartfelt portrayal of the resilience of

children and the magic of art to transform the lives of young people living in the brothels of Sonagchi, Calcutta.

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

A History of Ideas Through Western Art



Join us on **MONDAY, NOVEMBER 25**, and the fourth Monday of each month from 7:00 PM to 8:30 PM, in the Adler Study, Room 514. Leader Curt Collier will moderate our sessions.

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, participants 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.

President's Notes

continued from page 2

into negotiations.

Like Friday night, it was back to a relaxed wine-and-nibbles party before dinner, but after dinner we had an hour of sing-along with Bob Berger and me. We had a collection of 16 old-time songs that everyone knew, and I accompanied the singing as best I could with the four chords I know on my ukulele.

It was such fun that I didn't want to stop, except that it was time for fun at the fire with Curt. He told us about how trees pre-dated humans, actually grow out (not up) though they branch up, that they live on carbon dioxide and exude oxygen (making our relationship with them symbiotic), that they can live like forever, and – of course – that they supplied the fuel for our fire. Curt can really make a campfire a great experience!

Sunday morning, for those who didn't sleep in, brought Tai Chi with Rob Hofman, a lovely way to start the day. After breakfast, Anne was our platform speaker on peace. Somehow it seems the subject is so wide-ranging, there's always more to say.

Thanks to all who made this weekend so wonderful – and special thanks to Tod and Elinore for planning and bringing the whole thing off! See the pictures on page 7.



Membership Retreat



Saturday night sing-along – (L-R) Bob Berger, Andra Miller playing her ukulele, Bernette Rudolph, Sy Amkraut, and Anne Klæysen.



(L-R) Susan Horowitz, Sy, Bernette, and Carol Rost.



Back to nature.



Climbing to the Lighthouse – (L-R backrow) Edwin Marshall guest of Sharon Pope, and Sharon, (L-R front) Carol, and Pat Malkin.



Beth Zucker and Chris Everett.

Sunday Morning Platform Meetings 11:15 am

NOVEMBER 3

DREAMTIME ETHICS: RELIGION OF ABORIGINAL AUSTRALIA



Dr. Anne Klaeyesen, Leader

Tod Whitaker Presides

“Tjukurpa” is translated as “dreamtime,” but the people who practice this religion say it contains a much deeper, more complex meaning that explains their existence and guides their daily lives. It is the law of caring for one another and the land that nurtures them. It refers to the past, present, and future all at the same time. I will introduce this ancient tradition through paintings, stories, and music. Together we will explore what meaning it may have for us today as we learn how better to care for our environment.

The shared charity is My Own Books.

NOVEMBER 10

RESILIENCE, HUMANISM, AND THE AFFIRMATION OF LIFE



Dr. Joseph Chuman, Leader

Henryka Komanska Presides

As I recuperate from a difficult surgery, my thoughts have turned to the amazing capacity of the body and mind to restore themselves. Much of this is autonomic. But to a certain degree we can cultivate outlooks and habits that aid our natural gifts for resilience. In fact, the study of resilience has become a new and exciting branch of psychological inquiry. For my talk, I would like to share some of my own insights.

The shared charity is Bergen County Sanctuary.

NOVEMBER 17

FELIX ADLER, CUBA, AND MY GREAT-GRANDMOTHER



Dr. Damian J. Fernandez

Dr. Anne Klaeyesen Presides

This presentation brings together history with autobiography. Felix Adler was among the earliest U.S. supporters of Cuban independence from Spain. Although initially he did not advocate U.S. intervention on the island, by 1898 he endorsed it. His arguments were deeply anchored in humanitarian reasons. By calling for humanitarian intervention, he was defending the victims of the war, including my great-grandmother Calixta. This is their story.

Damian Fernandez has served as Head of School at the Ethical Culture Fieldston School since 2011. From 2008 to 2011 he served as Provost and Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs at Purchase College, SUNY. Prior to that, Dr. Fernandez was Vice Provost and Head of the Biscayne Bay campus of Florida International University, where he also served as Director of Long-Range Planning and Director of the Cuban Research Institute. He was the

recipient of two awards for excellence in teaching and is the author of *Cuba and the Politics of Passion*, among many other publications. From 2006 to 2008 he was the lead investigator on a National Science Foundation project on Latinization and civic engagement in the U.S. In his studies he has specialized in Latin American studies and international relations. He was born in Cuba and raised in Puerto Rico.

The shared charity is Rett Syndrome Research Trust.

NOVEMBER 24 WHY I'M DEFECTING FROM THE VALUES WAR (AND WHY YOU SHOULD, TOO)



Curt Collier, Leader

Monica Weiss Presides

Many of the political and social battles of our time have been classified as primarily a struggle over values: progressive versus conservative, communitarian versus radical individualism, equity versus exceptionalism, populism versus pluralism, and on and on. Couched in this way the cultural skirmishes often revolve around a series of tactics aimed at either convincing opponents that their ideas are wrong or forcing the other side to acquiesce through policy initiatives. But what if change occurs for reasons other than shifts in ideology? To what extent do actions speak louder than words? Ethical Culture has always put an emphasis on deeds before creeds.....perhaps there is more wisdom in that then we give credit.

The shared charity is Groundwork Hudson Valley.

THIS MONTH'S SHARED CHARITIES

MY OWN BOOK, is a non-profit organization that gives brand new books to underprivileged children. Our team members visit kindergarten through third grade classrooms where they read books to children, talk about the benefits of the public library, and let each child choose a book to take home. We put a bookplate on the inside cover of each book with the child's name on it, to cement the idea that each book is the child's very own. We also host special events throughout the year around the country to spread the joy of reading.

BERGEN COUNTY SANCTUARY is a coalition of local congregations and human rights organizations that provides a comprehensive range of services, including housing and education, to political asylum seekers in the United States, many of whom have been held in the U.S. Detention Center in Elizabeth NJ.

RETT SYNDROME RESEARCH TRUST has been supporting and stimulating research since 1999, when Huda Zoghbi identified the genetic cause of Rett Syndrome. In response to this turning point, a small, determined group of parents established the Rett Syndrome Research Foundation to accelerate and intensify scientific exploration. Co-founder and Scientific Director Monica Coenraads set a tone of dynamic exchange, with new approaches, conferences, seminars, and the engagement of extraordinary scientists from diverse disciplines. Progress has been strong and steady, and in early 2007 the Foundation announced that Adrian Bird, Chairman of its Scientific Advisory Board, had successfully reversed the symptoms of Rett in an animal model.

GROUNDWORK HUDSON VALLEY is an environmental justice non-profit that works with communities to improve their physical and social environment. This is done by collaborating on projects, among them: turning dangerous vacant lots into community gardens, planting trees, replacing graffiti with murals, and forming alliances within the community. Some of these projects are done through school programs and many of them are intergenerational. We are dedicated to environmental stewardship and community empowerment. All of our projects engage local residents in hands-on projects, from design to planting. Visit them at <http://www.groundworkhvh.org>.

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

NOVEMBER 3 CHORUS PRACTICE
Led by Pat Debrovner and David Gracia. Ceremonial Hall.

NOVEMBER 10 COLLOQUY: CREATIVITY.
Phyllis Kreuttner presides. Room 408.

NOVEMBER 17 CHORUS PRACTICE
Led by Pat Debrovner and David Gracia. Ceremonial Hall.

NOVEMBER 17 POETRY READING
Bring some poetry to read, perhaps older or recent favorites. Cheryl Gross presides. Room 508.

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

NOVEMBER 3 DEATH CAFÉ: *Día de los Muertos* – Day of the Dead has been one of Mexico's most important festivals since Pre-Hispanic times. It is a time for families to gather and welcome the souls of the dead on their annual visit home. Cem-pasúchil (marigold) flowers, photographs and mementos of the departed adorn special altars. It is celebrated over an entire week with the preparation of foods, dance, music, and special offerings for people who have died. Bring an object or photograph to place on the memory table. Moderator: Dr. Barbara Simpson. Ceremonial Hall.

NOVEMBER 10 ETHICS IN THE NEWS
Mary Ellen Goodman presides. Room 508.

NOVEMBER 17 LIFE WITH HEALTH: THE HUMAN ELECTRICAL SYSTEM: Dr. Barbara Simpson. "How can I help my body heal itself?" Dr. Simpson's presentation will help you find answers. She will discuss: the human electrical system, how it functions, how illness impacts it, and its role in recovery; what flower essences are and how they work; and the link between them and the system. Dr. Simpson has 18 years of training and experience with flower essences, and a Doctorate in Pastoral Counseling (Hebrew Union College, NYC). Ceremonial Hall.

NOVEMBER 24 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...

Thursday Lunch Discussions Noon — Elliott Library, Rm 507

Bring your lunch and join Leader Dr. Anne Klaeyen and Society members in the Elliott Library, Room 507, from 12:00 noon to 1:30 pm. This month's topic: [AMERICA'S YOUTH](#). Folders with relevant articles will be available from Yalitza Garcia-Krawczyk in the Leaders' office. Join the discussion.

NOVEMBER 7	"TRIAL BY TWITTER" by Ariel Levy, <i>The New Yorker</i> , 8/5/13.
NOVEMBER 14	"RIP, AMERICAN DREAM? WHY IT'S SO HARD FOR THE POOR TO GET AHEAD TODAY" by Matthew O'Brien, <i>The Atlantic</i> , June 2013; "IN CLIMBING INCOME LADDER, LOCATION MATTERS" by David Leonhardt, <i>The NY Times</i> , 7/22/13; and "AMERICA'S JOBLESS GENERATION" by Jeff Madrick, NY Review of Books Blog, 9/2/13.
NOVEMBER 21	"THE TWO FACES OF AMERICAN EDUCATION" by Andrew Delbanco, <i>The NY Review of Books</i> , 10/10/13; and "YOU CAN DO ANYTHING: MUST EVERY KIDS' MOVIE REINFORCE THE CULT OF SELF-ESTEEM?" by Luke Eppin, <i>The Atlantic</i> , August 2013.
NOVEMBER 28	Happy Thanksgiving!

WANT TO LEARN HOW TO APPLY FOR GRANTS?

And help your Society in the process? Leader Curt Collier, who is also Deputy Director for Groundwork and has extensive experience in grant-writing and administration, is organizing a group of Society members who will work together to develop a grant fundraising program for NYSEC. The group will explore all aspects of grant fundraising, including presentations by other professional grant writers, visits to foundations to learn about the grant-making environment, discussions on how grants are structured and how to use grants to develop the Society's capacity to do ethical service for the larger community.

Participation will require approximately five hours of work/study/interviews per month, and the ability to read grant applications and write clearly. You must also be able to occasionally travel to other foundations and to Curt's office in Yonkers. Those interested should email Curt directly at curt@groundworkhu.org. Your email should include why grant-writing is of interest to you and list any experience you've had that might apply to the grant-seeking tasks.

This is a great opportunity for those who want to learn grant writing, or how to use grants to further their own ethical action.

Our Ethical Family



MOE-SWE MYINT, MEMBERSHIP ASSOCIATE



The following members are celebrating birthdays in November:

- HENRYKA KOMANSKA...11/1
- HEATHER GRADY.....11/3
- WILLIAM BAKER.....11/7
- SHEILA NAVARRO.....11/7
- AARON BALASNY.....11/12
- SELMA FRIEDMAN.....11/14
- ROBERT EBER.....11/16
- DONNA DAMHORST-
PANG11/17
- ALEXANDER
MOGIELEFF.....11/17
- STEVEN SCHULTZ.....11/17
- VIRGINIA SCHERER.....11/19
- HARRIET BIGUS.....11/21
- RUTH OPPENHEIMER...11/21
- KHOREN ARISIAN.....11/24
- LISA WOODUL.....11/24
- VINCENT NAVARRO.....11/25
- PATRICK ARENAS.....11/28
- DANNY CHORIKI.....11/30

Please welcome our brand new members: [DR. RANDA HAMADEH](#), [DR. PATRICE HASSOUN](#), and their son [TAREK HASSOUN](#).

Dr. Hamadeh is a physician specializing in internal medicine and infectious diseases. She found us on the Internet and has been attending our Sunday Platforms. She is looking for an ethical community for herself, her husband, and her son. Her interests are music, dancing, and cooking. She is fluent in English, French, and Arabic. Dr. Hassoun, a physician in clinical pathology, is Randa's husband and is joining Ethical Culture along with their son Tarek, a student, who is already in our Teen Leadership program.

On Saturday, October 12, NYSEC participated as one of the host venues in



(Photo by Sue Wolf.)

Open House New York. This is a five-borough-wide celebration of architecture and design that aims to engage the public in the city's

built environment by offering free access to hundreds of sites that exemplify New York City's diverse architectural, design, engineering, and cultural heritage. Elinore Kaplan put great effort into marshaling NYSEC members to make this a very successful event. Kudos go to Tour Guides: Marilyn Baker, Dan Hanson, Sheila Kleinwald, Pamela McGhee, Andra Miller, and Sharon Pope; Activities Table Volunteers: Muriel Berger, Carole Chamlin, Elaine Berman, John Gurney, Phyllis Kreuttner, and Peter Houts; and Hospitality Table Volunteers: Tod Whitaker and Carol Van Deusen.

We would like to remind our members again that it is that time of the year to check your records to see whether you've paid your 2013 Pledges and to make sure to send your contributions in as soon as possible. Mark your calendars for the Pledge Party 2014, which will be held on [SATURDAY, JANUARY 11](#) at [5:00 PM](#), in Ceremonial Hall.

We are very sorry to announce the death of [FLORENCE OTTENBERG](#), Life Member of NYSEC. She was born on November 7, 1908, and joined the Society in 1927. She

graduated from the NY Training School for Teachers in 1927 and from Hunter College in 1942. She was a teacher for the NYC Department of Education. Florence married the late Leonard Ottenberg and is survived by their son John Charles Ottenberg, of Lincoln, MA. Florence Ottenberg's funeral was held September 29 at the Rosenthal Memorial Chapel in White Plains; she was laid to rest in Mt. Pleasant Cemetery, Hawthorne, NY.

NYSEC Board member Law'nence Miller and his partner Shaun Sylvester-Williams were married on September 19, after a long and loving 16 years together. They had an informal ceremony officiated by their dear friend Andra Miller and plan to have a formal ceremony and celebration in 2014.



(L-R) Shaun Sylvester-Williams and NYSEC Board member Law'nence Miller.

2013 BEQUESTS TO THE NEW YORK SOCIETY FOR ETHICAL CULTURE

We gratefully acknowledge the 2013 bequests received from former members and friends:

THERESA CERUTI
HARRY McCLELLAND
CLAIRE LANDAU
DANIEL LIEBERMAN
MARY (MOIRA) WHITTINGTON

Their generosity and foresight to keep the Society in their wills strengthens our ability to continue our mission.

STRICT NEWSLETTER DEADLINE POLICY STARTS IN 2014

In an effort to ensure that *ETHICAL OUTLOOK* reaches our readers in a timely fashion, we are instituting a STRICT POLICY REGARDING DEADLINES, starting with the January 2014 issue!

Submissions for an issue – columns, articles, announcements, photos, and ALL other material – MUST BE RECEIVED BY THE DEADLINE DATE MENTIONED IN DEBORAH FOSTER'S MONTHLY REMINDERS, WHICH GENERALLY ARE THE FIRST OF THE MONTH PRECEDING THE ISSUE DATE.

Please follow Deborah's guidelines, and fax your submissions to her at 212-595-7258; email: dfoster@nysec.org; leave your materials at the Society; or mail them to her at the Society, Attention: Deborah Foster.

DEADLINE DATES WILL BE FIRM!
SUBMISSIONS THAT REACH NYSEC AFTER THE DEADLINE DATE WILL NOT BE INCLUDED IN THE ISSUE AND WILL HAVE TO GO INTO THE NEXT ISSUE, IF STILL APPLICABLE.

Leader's Desk (continued from page 4)

atheists” provide intellectual legitimation and defense of this significant demographic shift.

As a non-theistic movement that was founded on ethics and with it the idea that ethics need not issue from a divine source, it is no surprise that Ethical Culture would be attractive to atheists and count large numbers of such as members. But Ethical Culture was never intended to be an atheist organization. The presence of atheists is incidental to its central formulation and essential purpose. And what is it that lies at the center of Ethical Culture?” What does it stand for? And what are the implications issuing from its central commitments? Ethical Culture makes respect for and the realization of Ethical Ideals its centerpiece. And foremost among these Ideals is an intuitive respect and reverence for the indwelling, innate dignity of each woman, man, and child. Ethical Culture’s mission follows from this abiding intuition; namely it is our highest purpose to strive to create a world, both private and public, wherein this dignity will be realized. Hence, a strong social passion and commitment to social justice is constitutive of Ethical Culture. Other implications follow.

Ethical Culture, which construes itself as a religious world-view, is not by defini-

tion anti-religious. We, no doubt, stand opposed to those religious doctrines and actions which denigrate or oppress the human being. But we are ready to make common cause with those moderate and liberal religious groups that share our progressive vision of a just society and a dignified humanity. Atheism, by contrast, and organizations dedicated to promoting atheism, exist to oppose and attack religion, and seemingly little else. While an atheist stance arguably liberates the human mind from superstition and irrationality, atheist groups seem to have no social program, no positive vision of social reform, no commitment to social engagement. Politically atheism can espouse a reactionary politics as readily as it does a progressive one. Beyond its liberatory function, cited above, atheism is a negative philosophy. Ethical Culture, as a humanism based on the active fulfillment of Ethical Ideals, is positive.

SECULARISM AND RATIONALISM

As it is attractive to atheists, so Ethical Culture is such to secularists. That is, to people who see no divine, supernatural, or spiritual reality that stands above or flows through this world. In truth, as Ethical Culture recedes in time and development from Felix

Adler’s Idealism (a philosophy heavily endowed with spirituality, even as it eschewed supernaturalism) and has increasingly appropriated an implicit philosophy of naturalism, it has developed a stronger affinity for secularism. When it comes to managing practical affairs, to politics, to science, or to the economy, Ethical Culture is foursquarely apiece with secularism. But I would argue that life is more than fulfillment of our practical interests. When we stand before the grandeur of nature and engage our sense of wonder, when we humbly reflect on what we do not know, when we consider our finiteness in the face of infinity, we are emotionally moved to a realm which lifts us beyond the merely secular. A philosophy of secularism, while necessary, is not sufficient to satisfy the farther yearnings of the human heart and imagination. It is ultimately one-dimensional, flat, and dry. Ethical Culture allows for and invites speculation about the farther reaches of human existence. In my view, it is deeper and richer than secularism alone.

Ethical Culture cherishes reason. It is a rational philosophy. Honoring human dignity, Ethical Culture concludes that there is no dignity in affirming beliefs that reason tells us are not true. But, however wondrous and necessary (and reason lies at the heart of the scientific method, which has created the modern world) reason is in the final analysis, a tool. Rea-

son is an instrument to help us acquire non-rational experiences, which I would argue human beings cherish most. Reason can help us attain what we want, but it is not the source of what we want. Our deepest yearnings and aspirations originate from our emotions, from the heart. Reason in short, does not provide us with love, compassion, empathy, friendship, forgiveness, atonement, feelings of human solidarity and warmth. Rationalism is essential for Ethical Culture, but it is not sufficient. Ethical Culture is a humanism that encompasses a much greater and enriching swath of the human experience. It proclaims that there is much more to life than reason alone.

UNITARIANISM

Many Unitarians are identified as humanists. But I assert there is considerable distance between Ethical Culture and contemporary Unitarianism. I will focus on just one. Unitarianism, which merged with Universalism in the 1960s, grew out of left-wing Calvinism in the late 18th century. It flourished in Britain and New England. The focus of Protestant Christianity has always been on the salvation of the individual. I argue that contemporary Unitarianism, though it would be unrecognizable (and completely heretical) to its Calvinist forbearers, still sustains the centrality of its Protestant individualism.

Though in the past 200 years, Unitarianism has gone through notable changes, at various times embracing Transcendentalism, humanism, and — in more recent decades — variants of New Age spirituality, its center of gravity has been on the fulfillment of the individual self. Here I stand in critical relation to it. My survey of the titles and content of sermons given by contemporary Unitarian-Universalist ministers reveals an overwhelming preoccupation with the self and exhortation to self-improvement and self-realization. What seems to be strikingly absent to a very great degree is concern with larger social and political issues (yes, there is a nod to racism and a commitment to gay issues).

Ethical Culture has always been committed not only to ethics in the private spheres of life but to social ethics. It recognizes that the very concept of ethics is negated if it is not outwardly and other-directed. Ethics preoccupied with the self is no ethics at all.

This prevailing commitment to social ethics is both necessary and continues to render Ethical Culture unique in the growing panoply of humanist and kindred organizations. It is an outlook and commitment we should not surrender. It is something of which we should be proud and on which we can build.

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. We can do shopping, pick up a prescription or a meal — or help prepare it, bring you to the doctor, or just visit by phone or in person.

All you need do is call the committee chairperson, **STEPHANIE ROSENBLATT**, at 212-586-0017, and she'll make the arrangements.

Stephanie says, "Please don't hesitate. Call me; that's why we're here."

NEW YORK SOCIETY FOR ETHICAL CULTURE

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New York Society for Ethical Culture United Social Services, Inc. Social Service Board

Chairperson's Report
September 24, 2013

A CALL FOR NYSEC VOLUNTEERS

The Social Service Board/Empowering Ethical Elders is calling for members who would like to learn more about the fundraising and grant-writing processes in order to assist the SSB in its EEE activities. Here are some of the myriad responsibilities of those who volunteer. It's hard work, but a satisfying, rewarding activity. If you are interested, please contact the SSB.

Responsibilities:

- Video recording EEE programs, photographing and video recording SSB events
- Editing and posting photos and video from SSB events online
- Promoting EEE programs via flyer drop-offs, postings on community calendars, meet-ups, and listserves
- Designing promotional materials/flyers/brochures/webpage for Supportive Televisiting Services
- Blogging and tweeting about SSB's accomplishments and events
- When we get more families, the right volunteer might be useful helping out with weekend events and greeting families
- Conducting "friendly televisits" to homebound elders or members, either via the Caring Committee or directly through the SSB
- Helping seniors and/or others (such as BPGNY members) to download, install, and test Jabber Video.
- Being available to test Jabber Video when needed for demonstrations
- Helping to supervise the Soccer Team and monitor games
- Meeting with public officials to advocate for soccer game space for children
- Staying as Overnight Volunteers at the Women's Shelter
- Helping to write proposals and applications and do research for these
- Publicity, social networking, and telemarketing for fundraising events, the New Year's Eve Party, Rolling Rollators, and the PHR Award
- Soliciting raffle items for the New Year's Eve Party
- Addressing New Year's Eve Party, Save the Date, and Annual SSB solicitation letters
- Decorations for the New Year's Eve Party
- Door ticketing for the New Year's Eve Party
- Representing SSB at meetings with collaborating agencies
- Representing NYSEC on the CASA Board of Trustees
- Representing NYSEC/SSB at meetings with elected representatives and other public officials to advocate for issues
- Attending city and state conferences/meetings relevant to SSB programs
- Participating in SSB subcommittees — fundraising, grants, proposals, and donations
- Representing SSB at meetings, programs, and events given by SSB collaborating agencies and organizations

Please direct potential volunteers to the official SSB website: www.socialserviceboard.org for more information about the programs. Please ask potential volunteers to contact: info@socialserviceboard.org about their interest.

Sesame Workshop Visits SSB


Members of the Sesame Workshop staff meet with Social Service Board Chair Dr. Phyllis Harrison-Ross, who was a member of the Board of Directors of Sesame Workshop (aka Children's Television Workshop) for 20 years.

They discussed how the SSB's Supportive Televisiting Services can work together with Sesame Workshop to enhance their programming for children whose parents are incarcerated.



(L-R) Brittany Sommer, Curriculum Specialist of Content; Dr. Phyllis Harrison-Ross, Lynn Chwatsky, Vice President of Community Engagement; Dr Frank Corigliano, Postdoctoral Psychology Resident, Supportive Televisiting Services; Rocio Galarza, Senior Director of Community Engagement; and Angela Hong, Project Coordinator of Community Engagement.

Sunday Assembly New York



40 DATES ROADSHOW

Mon. Nov 4, 2013
7-8pm + socializing afterward



Celebrate the fun of being alive!

Sunday Assembly: the best bits of church, with no religion and super pop tunes

See the creators of SUNDAY ASSEMBLY!

Speakers:
Pippa Evans
Sanderson Jones
Anne Klaeyen

Co-Sponsors:

Be Secular.

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 (212-674-5210 x 102) for setup of our portable system and plan to arrive one hour before start time.

Steven R. Gerber - 65th Birthday Concert

A fundraiser for the New York Society for Ethical Culture
in memory of Steven Gerber's life partner, Norma Hymes

Wednesday, November 20th at 8pm
Ceremonial Hall

The West End Duo
Eveline Kuhn, flute;
Arash Amini, cello;
Cyrus Beroukhim, violin and viola
Allison Pohl, soprano
Steven Gerber, composer/pianist

suggested contribution \$20
\$10 for members and students

2 West 64th Street
New York, NY 10023
212.674.5210
www.nysec.org



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Join the Social Service Board For Our 3rd Annual
New Year's Eve Party from 8:30 pm to 1:00 am

SAVE THE DATE

New Year's Eve
Tues., Dec.31, 2013



Yera Son

Orquesta Charanga



8:30pm - 1am - Party \$125
\$95 for NYSEC Members

\$145 at the Door after Dec. 29th
Only Credit Cards and Cash accepted at Door



Includes Finger Food, Live Music, DJ, Cabaret Style Seating,
Open Bar, Rooftop Viewing of Central Park Fireworks, Midnight
Champagne, Prizes, and More



For tickets via Paypal go to: www.socialserviceboard.org
By mail send check, money order or credit card information to address below.

For more information and sponsorship go to info@socialserviceboard.org
or voice mail at 212-874-5210, ext. 143



United Social Services Inc. (SSB),
New York Society for Ethical Culture
2 West 64th Street, Rm. 505
New York, NY 10023
Tel: 212-874-5210



NOVEMBER 2013

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

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
<p>Ethics in Film: <i>Citizen Ruth</i>, by Alexander Payne — November 1</p> <p>Ethics in Literature: A Reading Group: <i>The Yellow Birds</i>, by Kevin Powers — November 4</p> <p>Ethics and the Theater: <i>The Waverly Gallery</i> by Kenneth Lonergan — November 8</p> <p>Ethics in Film: Contemporary Documentaries: <i>Born Into Brothels</i> (2004) — November 18</p>					<p>December 2013 Newsletter Deadline</p> <p>7:00 Ethics in Film</p>	
<p>8:30 Ethics for Children - Field Trip</p> <p>10:00 Chorus Practice</p> <p>11:15 Morning Meeting</p> <p>12:45 Brunch/Social Hour</p> <p>1:30 Death Café</p> <p>1:30 Ethics for Teens</p>	<p>1:00 Ethics in Literature: A Reading Group</p> <p>6:30 Board of Trustees</p> <p>7:00 Sunday Assembly NY</p> <p>40 Dates Roadshow</p>	<p>12:30 Writing Class</p> <p>6:00 Wisdom and World Affairs</p>	<p>1:00 Strength Exercise Class</p> <p>7:15 Humanist Culture</p> <p>Open Mic</p>	<p>12:00 Leader Lunch</p> <p>Discussion</p> <p>6:00 Empowering Ethical Elders</p> <p>6:30 Writing Class</p>	<p>7:00 Ethics and the Theater</p>	
<p>10:00 Colloquy</p> <p>11:15 Morning Meeting</p> <p>12:45 Brunch/Social Hour</p> <p>1:30 Ethics in the News</p>		<p>12:30 Writing Class</p> <p>7:00 Felix Adler Seminar</p>	<p>1:00 Strength Exercise Class</p>	<p>12:00 Leader Lunch</p> <p>Discussion</p> <p>6:30 Writing Class</p> <p>7:00 Faith and Folk Traditions</p>		
<p>10:00 Chorus Practice</p> <p>10:00 Poetry Reading</p> <p>11:00 Ethics for Children</p> <p>11:15 Morning Meeting</p> <p>12:45 Brunch/Social Hour</p> <p>1:30 Ethics for Teens</p> <p>1:30 Life with Health</p>	<p>1:00 Ethics in Film: Contemporary Documentaries</p> <p>7:00 Prospective Members' Reception</p>	<p>12:30 Writing Class</p> <p>6:00 Wisdom and World Affairs</p>	<p>1:00 Strength Exercise Class</p> <p>2:30 Death Café</p> <p>8:00 Steven R. Gerber - 65th Birthday Concert</p>	<p>12:00 Leader Lunch</p> <p>Discussion</p> <p>6:00 Empowering Ethical Elders</p> <p>6:30 Writing Class</p>		
<p>11:00 Ethics for Children</p> <p>11:15 Morning Meeting</p> <p>12:45 Brunch/Social Hour</p> <p>1:30 Ethics for Teens</p> <p>1:30 Sustainable Living Support Circle</p>	<p>7:00 A History of Ideas Through Western Art</p>	<p>12:30 Writing Class</p>	<p>1:00 Strength Exercise Class</p>	<p>Society Offices Closed Thanksgiving Day</p>	<p>Society Offices Closed</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

November 2013

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