

E T H I C A L O U T L O O K

TWO WEST 64TH STREET, NEW YORK, NY 10023 TEL.212 874-5210 E-MAIL OFFICE@NYSEC.ORG

Sunday Morning Meetings
10:30 AM—Ceremonial Hall

August 1

**Literacy for All—Research and
Practice**

Bruce Howlett

Special Ed. Teacher

John Kreuttner Presides

August 8

**The Iron Is Hot: A Last Minute
Pep Talk for Liberals**

Gerald Ranck, Music Director

Dr. Sylvan Wallach Presides

August 15

Ethics of Healthy Living

Katherine Jamieson

Holistic Health Counselor

Stephanie Rosenblatt Presides

August 22

TBA

Dr. Phyllis Harrison-Ross

Dr. Barbara Levenson Presides

August 29

The AEU Is You!

John F. Hartman

Executive Director

The American Ethical Union

Dr. Judith D. Wallach Presides

Annual Report Issue

Senior Leader

Dr. Khoren Arisian

“If we don’t succeed, we run the risk of failure.” —*George W. Bush*

Truer words were never spoken by a sitting President of the United States.

Most religious constituencies aren’t overly successful in attracting people who ordinarily don’t darken the doors of such places. That observation, which is not uniquely mine, would include us, the Ethical Movement. There’s a consistent showing that nearly 90 percent of all congregations in America have 200 or fewer members, with Sunday attendance of 90 percent or less.

Since I’ve been here, four full years thus far, we have annually matriculated about three dozen new members. Rounded off, that total number would be 145, not counting attrition. Currently the signed membership stands at 365 (as of July 1, 2004).

Historically, membership statistics in religious groups have been loosely maintained, and we are no exception. Since we have seldom been demanding of members’ support when it comes to fund-raising on behalf of the Society’s budgeting needs, our overall numbers can be misleading. This past year, for example, we tried to institute modest supper parties for all members so we’d have a chance to talk face-to-face with one another about the overall state of our institution—its physical plant, growth and attendance figures generally, the huge variety of programming, our dwindling endowment, and the cost of some millions of dollars to repair the roof and renovate the auditorium, general morale, and so on. I was frankly puzzled by the strong lay resistance to this hardly novel way of learning about ourselves fiscally; only 25 percent of members responded and participated in these events, but those who did on average doubled their annual giving; in a few cases the increases were even higher. This technique still works!

Recently 150 members who have not contributed for two years or more, and may also have not been coming around to activities with visible regularity, were sent letters requesting that they indicate whether or not they wished to continue their affiliation by paying their fair share (it costs the Society around \$100-\$125 to keep each member on the rolls, including AEU dues and mailings). Let’s posit that only 15 of the 150 want to continue. That means 135 would have to be dropped. This would constitute the most comprehensive culling of our membership rolls in decades. That means our *real* membership is only 230! Since it’s unlikely that many of those who would have to be dropped (terrible phrase!) are among those who’ve joined during the past four years, over 50 percent of our currently active members are relatively new! Thus an average Sunday attendance of 100 or more represents roughly 45 percent of our *actual* membership. These figures, however uncomplimentary, but statistically not at all bad, signify we’re in the mainstream of nearly 90 percent of the congregations in the U.S.!

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Staff

Drs. Judith D. and Sylvan Wallach, Co-Editors
 Selma Friedman, Copy Editor
 Dr. Marc A. Bernstein, Archivist
 Jon Liechty, Reporter
 Frank Susa, Reporter
 Barbara Litke, Poetry Editor
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 Gerald Ranck, Music Director

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Senior Leader
(Continued from page 1)

In about half my newsletter articles, including any annual report, I've always tried to educate congregations with which I've been associated about the institutional environment in which we find ourselves and too often take for granted, as if it didn't matter. Well, it does, as the above figures suggest. And because we are lingering on in this impressive and costly edifice, perhaps not fully appreciating the grandeur we inhabit, we often shield ourselves from hard financial facts, some of us preferring to be spiritually diverted instead by insightful pastoral narratives about the personal life. For the historical moment we're in, that's perhaps an unaffordable luxury.

So taking a cue from George Bush's logic, we can say that if we don't grow significantly faster, we run the risk of sooner or later entering into some sort of lucrative receivership.

Contemporary communications technology has influenced an entire generation that expects its spiritual message these days to be crisp, quick, snappy, and uplifting—in short, “entertaining.” This new century's vital congregation is, therefore, going to have to consist of younger people than the majority of current members, who often have different needs and expectations. Nonetheless, performance may require an audience, but an intentionally gathered community cannot content itself with being merely a passive audience seeking to be entertained.

We could make no greater contribution to the future of this wonderful place than to reinvent it. One form this reinvention might take is to set it up for a fresh phase of rapid yet solid growth for a new generation.

“Reinventing Ourselves”—how might that be for an overall motto for the coming year?

Incidentally, many younger people—about 550-600—showed up on June 30, along with every age range, at our third and most thrilling Advocacy Forum yet. Here's a weekday growth frontier worth watching and nurturing.

Membership

Suzy Frazer

It's been six months of blur – a wonderful blur! It's an honor and a challenge to be your new membership director. I know my illustrious predecessor Ben Bean was and is well-loved by so many. I want to formally thank him for the tremendous amount of advice, care and help he continues to give cheerfully. Also Barbara Levenson for her steady, sage viewpoint and dogged great work. There are many others who helped as I've staggered forward – our superb, good natured staff and very many kind, knowledgeable members and committee chairs – thanks! Not to forget our valiant volunteers in every area – you're the best!

From June 2003 to July 2004 we have welcomed the following wonderful members: Lois Auritt, Lisa Barile-Knox, Diane Bauman, Debra Berg, Elaine Berman, Hope Bernstein, Marc Bernstein, Marlane Bernstein, Dr. Julia Boken, Joyce Brenner, Shirlee Cohen, Rita Dawson, Leslie Doyle, Susanna Frazer, Kenneth Gans, Ruth Garbus, John Hilberry, Mark Hofmaier, Dr. Barbara J. Hunter, Veronica Lewis, Patricia Malkin, Dennis McKevitt, Andra Miller, Daniel Morgan, Dr. Milton Nobel, Ildiko Nyari, Ryan Paulson, Bernice Price, Jirina Ribbens, Marlene

Stowe, Michael Torres, Alan Tucker, Dominic Molloy Venturella, Dr. David Wellen, Ernest Wertheim, and Deborah Yaffe. (If I have inadvertently omitted anyone please let me know.)

We would like to welcome more members and have much greater participation in general. I've had the impression from many callers and visitors that they greatly respect our Society but feel it's an inner circle that they may not be able to enter. That's why I'd like to make our path to membership and participation a lot more accessible and transparent to the public. We're creating a special welcoming brochure on the steps to becoming a member that will be visible and available everywhere! It will also spell out clearly what "pledging" means (and take the anxiety out of it!). We need to remove any mystery/secret club atmosphere to add diversity and new energy to this fabled, worthy institution.

We deeply regret the deaths of the following members since June 2003: Rita Aronowicz, H. Dan Carpenter, Edward and Marion Gottlieb, Jan Jen- nis, Maurine Rothschild, Edith Seiden, and Arthur Simon. We're grateful to have known them and celebrated their lives. They will be greatly missed.

There have been several initiatives to get like-minded folk through our doors and introduce them to Ethical Culture – and to get our name constantly into the public in an exciting way. Some new initiatives: the CULTURED COMEDY CLUB (Watch for its Canny Convention Coverage August 19!), the Advocacy Forums/Circles of Engagement, and the special, advertised 5 week ETHICS for CHILDREN course in the spring. (The fall Ethics for Children starts with a big open house September 12, 212-874-5210 x113)

The Sunday Program will include a new variety of music and speakers. In the fall, we'll meet in the Social Hall after the Sunday meeting – it's much less formal than Ceremonial Hall for those who might want to chat, have coffee, and try us out. Let's be genuinely friendly! – but also sensitive and respectful to newcomers' need to observe and chat without pressure.

We would like your help in updating our membership records. In particular, we are missing many e-mail addresses. This is often the most efficient (and cheapest!) way for us to contact our members. Would you send an e-mail to ethicalculture@nysec.org and include your name if it is not obvious from your e-mail address. Please also include any other changes that we should record – e.g., change of address, telephone number, or emergency contact.

Many members have offered excellent observations and suggestions that were like LIGHTBULBS to me! Please keep it up! And don't forget the fall retreat September 17-19. Call now to reserve your place. 212-874-5210 x113. Glad to be here – Love, Suzy

Archives

Dr. Marc A. Bernstein

Who took advantage of the Society's archives in the past year? Users fell into three groups: members of the New York Society, members of the AEU, and independent researchers.

At the New York Society, archival documents and photos enriched finance, platform, and membership activities, as well as meetings of the Board of Trustees. On the financial front, I made available to Fund Raising Co-Chair Leigh McKay, a quantitative overview of our financial history, along with photos that marked significant

events in the life of the New York Society. These materials were used at fund-raising gatherings for the New York Society. Society platforms, especially our Founder's Day celebration, also drew on materials from the archives. And member Valerie Leiman is already at work on a program for Black History Month next year that will rely on archival information about James Weldon Johnson, activist, writer, and member of this Society, and about A. Phillip Randolph, the labor leader, who spoke here in the 1950s.

Membership Director Suzy Frazer has decided to use a videotape from the archives as a tool for orienting people new to the Society, and the Society's Board of Trustees has turned to dusty by-laws of both of the Society and the Social Service Board to resolve parliamentary issues.

The AEU has turned to our offices for different purposes. In November, I provided approximately forty teenagers from YES (Youth in Ethical Societies) with an historical tour of the building, complete with visits to the auditorium and the Adler study. This was a big hit with the youngsters – and with the adults who accompanied them.

The archives provided the AEU's National Service Conference with materials that will go into a scrapbook celebrating its 75th anniversary. Our photos and documents have also added an historical dimension to the AEU *Dialogue*. Leaders of local Societies have drawn on our materials to prepare for their platforms, and a Sunday School curriculum from the archives is now in the hands of a religious education teacher at the Northern Virginia Society.

In addition to the AEU and the New York Society, the archives serve a variety of independent researchers. A co-president of Fieldston's student

body asked for writings of Felix Adler to help her prepare a Founder's Day address; a Columbia University professor wanted to know the venue of a 1904 Felix Adler speech; and a scholar editing the works of Eustace Haydon, a former Leader of the Chicago Society, wanted many of Haydon's unpublished platforms. These are just a few of the researchers who have turned to the archives as an intellectual resource. In addition, two scholars who drew on our materials in the past completed their manuscripts this year. David Cassidy's biography of J. Robert Oppenheimer will be published this fall; Amy Kittlestom's 2004 Ph.D. dissertation, which locates Ethical Culture in its 19th century religious context, is destined to become a book, perhaps the most important new one on Ethical Culture in some time. Our archives helped to make all this possible.

Please note: I will be suspending my "From the Archives" column for an indefinite period, as I want to return to my book on Algernon Black. I hope that you have enjoyed my tidbits of Ethical Culture history.

Adult Education Committee

Phyllis Kreuttner and Dr. Judith D. Wallach, Co-Chairs

The committee is comprised of Pat Debrovner, Mary Ellen Goodman, Norma Hymes, Sylvan Wallach, and Co-Chairs Phyllis Kreuttner and Judith D. Wallach. Khoren Arisian is Leader Advisor. We have recommended to the Board that a new chair or new co-chairs be appointed to lead the committee for next season. The current co-chairs have enjoyed their responsibilities but are, in a word, tired!

This season's "Foundations of Ethical Culture" course included, as usual,

some minor rearrangement of topics and rotation of speakers with the same basic format. The course was attended by 20 people. As is often the case, when a course varies only marginally from season to season, attendance dwindles over the years. For next season we are planning a two-session course, intended to attract all new and aspiring members, to be given by Dr. Joseph Chuman and Curt Collier, Leaders of the Bergen and Riverdale-Yonkers Societies, respectively.

A splendid course on Lay Leadership was offered, all four sessions presented by Curt Collier. It was promoted at all nearby Societies. However, only about eight people attended on a regular basis, including two from the Brooklyn Society. Therefore, despite the very high quality of the sessions, attested to by the members present, we do not expect to repeat this course during the coming year.

Anne Klaeyesen returned to present "A Humanist Perspective on the Bible II." This three-session course, given in January, was a follow-up to Anne's popular course given last year. The first session was attended by about 60 people, who responded enthusiastically to the presentation and appreciated the printed materials prepared by Anne. The second session was held on the day of a severe snowstorm, yet it attracted about 30 hardy souls. The final session brought in approximately 40 people, whose evaluations indicated that they had found the course highly interesting and informative.

A four-session course on "Islam Through Muslim Eyes" was organized by the well-known Imam Feisal Abdul Rauf and presented by the Imam and other speakers from the American Sufi Muslim Association Society. The course was very popular, attracting both members and nonmembers.

Two Great Books series and the Ethical Culture Reading Discussion Group are included under the Adult Education umbrella; however the committee has minimal responsibility for organizing them. The current Great Books Series V is ongoing, with Kathy McGuire and Ruth Sheridan facilitating and 21 people participating. The Fiftieth Anniversary Great Books Series "Politics, Leadership, and Justice," facilitated by Charles Debrovner and Norma Hymes, has 11 participants. Our Wednesday Afternoon Reading Group (formerly ECRA), is now facilitated by Ileana Silver and May Del Rio Dorfman. It continues to attract a small but enthusiastic group of about five participants. These courses are provided at minimal cost, requiring no paid speakers, and each has a devoted following; thus the low numbers of participants is not a serious concern.

A planned spring course on "Liberal Religion and How it Grew" was cancelled, due to low registration, perhaps, as Dr. Arisian suggested, a victim of our great success in other courses and other activities this season.

Our plans for the 2004-05 season are in formation. As mentioned above, the "Foundations" course will be condensed into two sessions and is very strongly recommended for all new members. The three reading groups will surely continue. Anne Klaeyesen has indicated that she is willing to provide a two-session continuation of her "Bible" course. The committee and Khoren are discussing a course on fundamentalist religions, surely an important area of concern for all of us these days. Your suggestions for the season will gladly be considered, as we could possibly include an additional course or two.

Building Committee

Sheila Kleinwald

First, we regret the resignation of Dr. Ruth L. Cohen as co-chair and extend to her our sincere appreciation for all of her fine work. She will continue as a member of the committee.

The members of the Building Committee are pleased to welcome our new Maintenance Supervisor, Mr. Antony McPherson. He has proven to be capable, industrious, and accommodating, and is working to improve our maintenance procedures as well as the general appearance of our building inside and out.

The major items on our agenda this year were renovating the auditorium, improving building safety, planning for the Jean Somerville Kotkin Memorial Terrace, and painting the lower level women's rest room.

Although we reopened the auditorium for Winterfest Sunday in December, we are still working to optimize the new lighting and audio systems, (including a new assisted listening system) and to learn how to use them most effectively. By the time we return to the auditorium in September, we hope these and all other final touches will all be in place.

Building safety has been upgraded by the addition of a sprinkler system in the auditorium, a state-of-the-art alarm system (flashing lights and siren) throughout the building, aisle lighting in the auditorium, and new emergency lighting in the auditorium and lobby. We have replaced and relocated the fifth floor fire doors next to the elevator to conform to current code requirements, and properly adjusted the existing door checks at the fourth

and fifth floor entrances to the east side stairway so that the doors always close automatically, as required. We consider safety a top priority, and will continue to monitor appropriate matters.

A generous anonymous memorial gift to the Building Committee led to a proposal, approved by the Board of Trustees, to designate the east wall of the lobby as a Memorial Wall. A preliminary design was also approved. We will now be able to receive gifts of a similar nature. We expect to have details available in the fall.

The Jean Somerville Kotkin Memorial Terrace will be a joint project of the Building Committee and the Sunday School. Preliminary plans have been drawn. We are awaiting written confirmation from the waterproofing membrane manufacturer that our work will not void the twenty year warranty on the recently installed fourth floor terrace roof. As soon as we have that letter, we will begin construction of benches, planters, and accessories. We are short on funds, but the parents of our Sunday School program have volunteered to do much of the work, led by Gil Santiago, who is an architect and former chair of the Building Committee. We are also seeking additional contributions to pay for necessary materials and plants. If you'd like to contribute, checks should be marked "For the Kotkin Memorial Terrace" and mailed to the attention of the Building Committee at the Society's address.

We would now like to restore the rest of our 94-year-old building. Mr. McPherson has already undertaken some projects. But many others remain. Now, since we've spent so much money on the two roofs, the exterior waterproofing, and the auditorium, its time

to focus on smaller jobs and on membership talent. So, if you have skills or contacts in any area of construction, woodworking, art, design, crafts, sewing, upholstering, gardening, etc., please send your name, phone, e-mail address and areas of interest to me, Sheila Kleinwald, at the Society. Or call me at 212-751-7255. Please also contact me if you have special access to appropriate furnishings, equipment, or other items you think we could use.

Caring Committee

Les Graifman and Stephanie Rosenblatt, Co-Chairs

During this past fiscal year, the Caring Committee has continued some of its most meaningful projects. We prepared our annual Thanksgiving baskets, participated in a Thanksgiving dinner at St. Paul's through Project Find, and continued to mail cards to ill and homebound members.

We realized this past February that we needed to expand our activities, and Stephanie Rosenblatt and Les Graifman are leading this expansion.

Since February, the Committee has met on a regular basis, established new activities, and welcomed a number of new members. This past June 21st, at an open committee meeting, ten attendees had a spirited discussion about how to care for our members. Several extraordinary concepts were proposed and were eagerly embraced for the new fiscal year.

The Caring Committee's goal is to continue to expand one of Ethical Culture's best traditions—caring for each other! If you have the time to care, please join us. Contact Stephanie at 212-586-0017 or Les at 212-874-7832.

Ethical Action Committee

Christine Swann and Carol Rost, Co-Chairs

Our mission is to organize and motivate members of the Society to be active on issues that affect our international, national, and local communities.

Committee co-chairs are Carol Rost and Christine Swann. Membership is open to all and so attendance varies as the committee forms and reforms. We welcome new members, but we want to express our sincere appreciation to our stalwarts who work with us consistently.

This year we were active on some key issues:

DNA Testing Fund. Last year we provided \$2,500, which enabled a prisoner falsely convicted of rape and jailed for 17 years to be exonerated. This year we held our annual book sale for the fund, which raised \$900, putting us well on the way to helping another prisoner. We will hold another book (and maybe bake!) sale in March 2005 – so please save your books.

Women's Reproductive Rights. The highlight of our support of this issue came on April 25th, when 11 members, some sporting ECS hats and buttons, joined the March for Women's Lives in Washington – the largest and most empowering ever. Our great hope is that we will not have to march again next year. We will however, continue to be active on this issue, working with Naral ProChoice New York.

Tax Reform. As part of protesting the unjust and irresponsible tax cuts and the cutting of basic and much-needed programs to fund it, the committee joined the Fair Taxes for All

Coalition. We subsequently got approval to seek membership for the Society, as well. Following the lead of this strong coalition we will continue to help put pressure on our legislators. As you see from the recent debates and votes, this pressure is having a good effect.

Meeting with Other Societies. In April we hosted a very lively meeting with members of other local Societies that work on ethical action initiatives. Recognizing that our priority is with our own groups, we hope to continue an active discussion and to work on some projects together.

Long-term interests. We continue our support for New Yorkers Against the Death Penalty and the National Coalition Against the Death Penalty. Together with other organizations, we are working again on the October "Weekend of Faith in Action Against the Death Penalty." With the Correctional Association, we will do what we can to oppose the Rockefeller Drug Laws. We are also exploring what we can do in the area of prison reform. In addition, we are currently working on a number of new initiatives.

The Election. We intend to participate in the demonstrations during the Republican Convention and to work on voter registration.

AIDS in Africa. We plan to support a fund raiser, to be held at the Society in September, on this issue. Funds raised will go directly to two sites caring for those infected and affected by the HIV/AIDS pandemic in South Africa.

We are a small, dedicated group, limited by our own available time, and we enthusiastically welcome your participation, whether you want to work on a particular issue or to join us on several issues.

Ethical Humanist Award Committee

Carol Nadell

The Ethical Humanist Award Committee is composed of the following members: Khoren Arisian, Muriel Berger, Jerry Chamlin, Donna Fetonte, Maria Fridman, Mary Ellen Goodman, Barbara Levenson, Jirina Ribbens, and Carol Nadell, our chair.

We had intended to present the award to Mayor Gavin Newsom of San Francisco, for being the first mayor to openly support gay marriages, Leslie Doyle, Society Marketing and Events Coordinator, was extremely helpful in contacting Mayor Newsom's office. Because of the Mayor's schedule, however, no definite date could be arranged, and the committee has decided to seek another candidate.

Suggestions included folk singer and activist Pete Seeger; Richard Foster, chief actuary of the Medicare program; and the 9/11 Widows from New Jersey who spearheaded the effort for the establishment of the independent 9/11 Commission. The committee selected the 9/11 Widows. Jirina Ribbens, who has a connection with the fund raising efforts for the "Victims of 9/11," offered to help, and we will contact Kristen Breitweiser and Mindy Kleinberg, founding members of the September 11th Advocates, the organization started by the New Jersey widows, shortly to see if they, along with Patty Casazza and Lorie van Auken, are available to accept the award.

On October 19th, the Distinguished Community Service Award will be presented to Nicholas D'Agostino for his overriding concern and philanthropic efforts for the welfare of the commu-

nity. The award will be presented at a breakfast, one of the first major Society fund raisers. Proceeds will be shared between City Harvest, a favorite charity of Mr. D'Agostino's, and the New York Society for Ethical Culture. Although a date has yet to be determined, the Ethical Humanist Award Committee will be meeting this summer.

Internet Committee

Sylvan Wallach

The members of the Internet Committee are James Farer, Morton Norman, Tom Weishaar and Sylvan Wallach, chair. Deborah Foster, of the Leader's Office, does a fine job of keeping the Society's home page and the calendar current.

This newly formed committee has been updating and improving our Web site. The newsletters are now current. The Sunday addresses are being brought up to date and presented as straight text rather than in PDF format to make them easily accessible to all.

An important effort of the committee is to make our site accessible to the handicapped. Recently we hired a leading accessibility consultant, Jim Thatcher, to evaluate our site and to report to us on what needs to be done. Additionally, various improvements in the appearance and the functioning of the site are underway.

Membership Growth Committee

Barbara Levenson

The Membership Growth Committee was formed a year and a half ago and challenged to: (1) identify prospective members and to reach out and encourage their participation in Society events, and (2) assist new members during their early months in the Society.

There is now an information table, staffed by volunteers, at every Society event, with information about the Society, flyers describing upcoming events, and sign-up sheets, so we are able to follow up with e-mail, letters, and phone calls. This information is then transferred to our new membership database and we are now able to track and reach out to people from their first visit to our building. This database is a powerful tool for facilitating membership growth, and we ask every group planning an event—large or small—to include an information table in its plans and to solicit contact information. Suzy Frazer will provide you with the necessary materials.

We continued holding receptions for new members, each held in a different member's home, and concluded the season with a reception for all members who have joined in the last year at the home of Carole Chamlin.

Members bring together quotes dealing with ethical humanism by well-known thinkers and writers and choose one to appear in each Sunday's program. This year we hope to put together a book of these quotes to sell to members and guests. Joe Marvel spearheads this effort.

We have recommended new steps to becoming a member and prepared a new membership application form, and we are currently looking at ways the orientation luncheons can be improved. These are all efforts towards making a commitment to the Society a more meaningful experience.

We are the proud sponsors of the successful new Comedy Club, an idea for which we thank Suzy Frazer.

We hope to soon complete a new membership brochure to be handed out to visitors on Sundays and at other Society events.

Members of the Committee include: Ben Bean, Bonnie Bean, Muriel Berger, Holly Bogdanffy-Kriegh, Carole Chamlin, Suzy Frazer, Sheila Kleinwald, Barbara Levenson, Joe Marvel, Carol Nadell and Theresa Schultz.

Newsletter Committee

Sylvan Wallach

The members of the Newsletter Committee are Sylvan Wallach, chair, Selma Friedman, Barbara Litke, Victoria Olds, and Judith Wallach.

Our particular thanks go to Deborah Foster of the Leader's office for the many tasks she does in connection with the newsletter. She is exceptionally competent and efficient, and most appreciated.

The committee has taken two significant steps to reduce the cost of the newsletter.

- Every effort is being made to limit the newsletter to eight pages. The savings in postage and printing, compared with twelve or more pages, are considerable.
- Members are encouraged to receive the newsletter in PDF format, thereby saving postage. Those who receive the newsletter this way are notified by e-mail and the newsletter is sent as an attachment. Further, current and past newsletters are available in PDF format from our web site.

The cost of printing the newsletter is the same up to 1,000 copies. Other than nominal increases in shipping costs, we can order as many copies as are needed up to that limit at no extra cost. At the same time, there is no point in wasting paper by ordering more copies than we can use.

Program Committee

Henryka Komanska and Tom Weishaar, Co-Chairs

The members of the Program Committee are: Henryka Komanska and Tom Weishaar co-chairs, Barbara Levenson, Carol Rost, Christine Swann, and Elizabeth Ungar.

The Program Committee completed the following in the first half of 2004:

Recruiting and vetting organizations that could hold programs at the Society which would align with our mission and attract new members. There were fewer submissions from external organizations during this period. The Program Committee sent several proposals to appropriate standing committees. Events and programs proposed by organizations with which NYSEC has co-sponsored events in the past and desires long-term co-operation (e.g., WNYC, WBAI, the Nation Institute, and *Nation Magazine*) are being sent directly to the Board. The Program Committee also turned down several co-sponsorship requests that didn't align with the mission of the Society.

Facilitating alignment and communication between other NYSEC committees that create public programs. The Program Committee facilitated an All Committees meeting on February 24. The next meeting is planned for the fall.

Vetting internal proposals for the new programs. Proposals for a Writing Workshop (Elaine Berman) and a Comedy Club (Suzy Frazer) were reviewed and recommended to the Board.

Sunday Program Committee

Carole Chamlin

The Sunday Program Committee meets monthly throughout the year to discuss and organize the activities and programs that take place on Sundays, both mornings and afternoons.

The committee is responsible for structuring and scheduling the Sunday meetings, including selection of outside guest speakers and Ethical Culture Leaders who speak about ethical ideals and principles. Participation of greeters, newcomers' hosts, program format, and cafeteria set-up and functioning are the responsibility of the committee.

Starting at 10:30 am, our early morning programs include Colloquy led by Phyllis Kreuttner and Marcella Montaruli; Poetry led by Pat Debrovner; Yoga, under the direction of Henry Bunch; and Reading of Ethical Culture Leaders' writings led by Larry Yates.

We welcome Suzy Frazer, Barbara Levenson, and Andra Miller as new members of our committee and the return of Henryka Komanska from her work-related sojourn in Russia. We are especially appreciative that Andra has taken over the duties of the afternoon program coordinator from Judy Wallach, who resigned from the committee due to other commitments; Andra has continued to promote a substantive afternoon program with increased attendance. The afternoon program has become a sub-committee with Andra as chair. Joe Marvel took over keeping the Schedule of Sunday Programs, also formerly compiled by Judy Wallach.

Last year we were extending our good-bye wishes to Anne Klaeyen

who left us for a Leadership position at the Long Island Society, and this year we are welcoming Kate Lovelady as our half-time intern; Kate has already spoken twice at the Society with well-received addresses.

Khoren continued to provide us with stimulating addresses approximately twice a month on a variety of issues but with an emphasis on the current national political emergency. Other EC Leaders who have added to the diversity of our addresses include Joe Chuman, Curt Collier, Ies Spetter, Fritz Williams and Bart Worden. In addition, our outside speakers have ranged from Bob Gangi on Prison Reform, to David Kaczynski on the Death Penalty, to Paul Krugman on the National Economy.

Additionally, we have continued to schedule a full summer program, starting July 4th and continuing through Labor Day. Again, Jon Liechty will continue our fine musical traditions during the summer season. It was our experience last summer that there was no significant fall-off in terms of attendance and the quality of programs offered, and we expect the same outcome this summer.

One highlight of the spring was the special effort made to celebrate Founder's Day at the behest of Sheila Kleinwald and the Holiday Committee. This event also involved the participation of the Sunday school children under the leadership of Rebecca Mason, who was instrumental in carrying through this transitional year in the life of the Sunday school program and holding together the children of committed families. We also had the pleasure of including these families at our Winter Festival. We thank Pat Debrovner for her help with the children.

Gerald Ranck provided us with music of high professional caliber, and, as planned, arranged the participation of several guest musical soloists who added to the richness of the musical experience as complementary to the tenor of the overall proceedings. One of the new initiatives of this committee is the formation of a Music Advisory Committee. In the future we will expand the repertory to include American folk music and theater tunes and to increase the number of soloists in order to make the experience more colorful and diverse. The committee has also decided to introduce two audience-participation songs, one at the beginning and the other at the end of the program.

The committee has been examining all aspects of the Sunday meeting format in an attempt to streamline the flow of the program, and we welcome suggestions from members in this regard. New initiatives this year include the weekly quotations, which have been selected to coincide with the morning's topic and the Call to Action. It is hoped they will inspire members to accomplish some beneficial political/social action, to leave the meeting with a personal agenda to put into effect.

One extensive change to be implemented next fall is a change in the cafeteria offerings in an attempt to provide lighter, less complicated fare at slightly higher prices, both to increase the dining pleasure of our members and guests and to operate the cafeteria on at least a break-even basis financially. In regard to the latter requisite we also have decided to charge \$2.00 for bagels and coffee during the summer in Ceremonial Hall, beginning at 10:00 am before the 10:30 am meeting. Mary Ellen Goodman will chair a sub-committee we call "Food Services."

Another initiative for next year is to increase the number of addresses by Ethical Culture Leaders in addition to those by our own Senior Leader, in part by inviting some Leaders to speak twice during the year. We are doing this to increase the exposure of these Leaders to the membership and to expand upon the ethical centrality of our Ethical Culture message.

The committee struggles with trying to keep the traditions intact while at the same time fine tuning and restructuring the format to make the total experience of attending our Sunday programs more inspiring, more meaningful, more welcoming, and more warmly proffered.

Thanks to all the committee members who contribute their best efforts on behalf of the Society: Khoren Arisian, Meg Chapman, Suzy Frazer, Alan Gardner, Mary Ellen Goodman, Henryka Komanska, John Kreuttner, Barbara Levenson, Joseph Marvel, Andra Miller, Gerry Ranck and Eva Yachnes.

Have a great summer, and we welcome you back for our 2004-2005 season, beginning September 12th in the Auditorium at 11: 30 am.

Social Service Board

David Leiman, Chair

Election of Officers. In accordance with its Bylaws, the SSB held the annual election of Board Officers on 5/17/04. Elected were David Leiman, Chair; Phyllis Harrison-Ross, Vice-Chair; Kenneth Wernz, Secretary; and Leslie Graifman, Finance Officer.

Advisory Panel. With SSB approval, Les Graifman has enlisted a number of individuals to serve as a resource to the Board for the devel-

opment of proposals to expand its projects and possibly its mission of social service. Led in this effort by Les Graifman, the Panel includes Ira Bravin, James Farer, Faye Joyce, Nikolai Parker, Tom Weishaar, and Fay Radding (not a NYSEC member).

Current Projects. At this time the SSB sponsors six projects:

Shelter for Homeless Women.

Now in its 22nd year, the Shelter is maintained in collaboration with the Partnership for the Homeless and the Olivieri Center for Homeless Women. Board member Maria Feliz Fridman directs this project, coordinating the flow of necessary supplies for the Shelter and the necessary availability of volunteers to stay overnight. Without a volunteer remaining overnight to represent the Board and the Society, the Shelter could not operate.

The Shelter has been operating from Monday through Thursday since September 2003, and since February 2004 has been available on Sunday as well, when students from Columbia University offered to volunteer on Sundays. The Olivieri Center has had a special relationship with our Shelter for a number of years, screening the women it sends to us to assure they are effectively engaged in a rehabilitation program. The same women are regularly sent to our Shelter, and the stability and relative comfort and privacy this arrangement provides are clearly valuable in supporting their functioning.

Once again, the Shelter is expected to remain open during June, July, and August from Monday through Thursday through the combined efforts of our own volunteers and a staff member provided by the Olivieri Center. Maria is grateful to the 40 volunteers, Society members and friends, who support the Shelter. The Olivieri Center has

expressed appreciation to us for the resource we provide. (See letter page 11.) And the Partnership for the Homeless honored the NYSEC for its service with a special plaque, the First Annual President's Volunteer Award, given "in recognition of exceptional service, dedication, and commitment to homeless New Yorkers." The plaque was presented to the Social Service Board, which sponsors the Shelter, by Maria Fridman, shelter coordinator and a committee member of the Partnership, who was recognized for her work with enthusiastic applause. It was accepted by David Leiman, the new chair of the SSB, and a longtime shelter volunteer.

Homeless Artists Program. This is a semi-annual presentation by the Workshop for Homeless Artists and Writers organized by Maria Fridman and Judith Ginsburg of the Unforgotten Voices Creative Workshop. Performances took place on December 19, 2003 and June 11, 2004. The programs always involve a good number of artists and include displays of visual arts, readings, dance and music. An audience of 60 or more enjoyed the workshop on June 11, and the SSB hopes that more Society members will attend these unusual presentations that offer such an array of talent.

Youth Soccer Program. SSB member Henry Bunch is a registered Commissioner of the American Youth Soccer Organization (AYSO) which authorizes him to organize teams of young people to learn to play soccer and to engage them in competitive play under supervision. Henry's project, first sponsored by the SSB in 2000, was to draw children whose families could not afford the cost of uniforms or registration fees into the activities of AYSO. Along with the benefits of the physical activity, lessons of ethi-

cal sports competition and cooperative team effort are learned. The mission of the project has been to keep the children away from drugs, gang involvement and trouble with the law. During this program year, Henry has worked with 30 children in groups ranging in age from 8 to 18. On Tuesdays and Thursdays in the early evening he engages them in training exercises. On Saturdays they play soccer all day.

I.S. 195 Partnership; Reading Enrichment Program. SSB member Maria Cruz is a Special Education teacher at Intermediate School 195. She works with learning disabled-children whose difficulties are often compounded by poverty and a home environment that does little to foster a positive learning attitude. Maria wanted to promote an interest in reading and language arts that would be relevant to a core of her students with particularly deficient skills. She did this essentially by bombarding the children and their family members with reading and audiovisual materials and a variety of treats and trips as rewards for their involvement. Over the past program year, Maria focused her efforts on 18 children in special needs classes and reports that all have shown measurable gains in reading and language arts skills.

Scholarship Project. Responding to the elimination of arts curricula from public school budgets in New York City, SSB member Valerie Leiman proposed this project in 1998 to provide educational outreach to inner city minority students whose families did not have the means to provide educational enrichments. Two types of scholarships were approved by the Board for the following program year (1999-2000). One, a tuition scholarship, was granted for two students

at the East Harlem School at Exodus House, an alternative middle school in Harlem which has an outstanding record of success with children who were in serious danger of failing in their public schools. The other was a grant for two students from the Professional Performing Arts School, a specialized public high school, to receive individual instruction at the Lucy Moses School for Music and Dance. The schools identified the scholarship recipients in accordance with the eligibility requirements. The SSB Scholarship Project, chaired by Valerie Leiman, had the responsibility of monitoring the experience of the students through periodic written progress reports and contact with their teachers and administrators at the schools. With the close of the current program year, scholarship support for our one remaining student at the Lucy Moses School has been discontinued. The two current scholarship students at the East Harlem School have been successful, one moving on to a private high school and the other progressing to a higher grade at the middle school. The Board has approved the support of four students at the East Harlem School for 2004-2005 (at the rate of \$1200 per student). This expansion reflects two successful fundraising events on behalf of the Scholarship Project over the past year, totaling about \$1750.

Supervised Visitation Project. In existence under the auspices of the Board since 1989, the Supervised Visitation Project (SVP) has the distinction of serving as a model for programs that provide this service in many places in New York State and around the country. But while the concept of supervised visitation for non-custodial parents with their children is widely embraced, the manner in which the

program is conducted at the NYSEC is in some important respects unique. For one thing, the spaces in the Society's building available to the SVP are large open rooms, where parent and child can see others engaged as they are, which can ease a sense of isolation and strangeness in the situation. The open space may also invite a child to get up and play with the parent.

A significant feature of the SVP is that there is no time limit for the supervised visitation to continue. Unlike other programs that typically set a limit of several months for a family's involvement, the SVP receives families for as long as they are productively involved, or until the court order for supervision is ended. Finally, the SVP requires that both custodial and non-custodial parents take part in support groups, organized separately, each time the family is seen.

The SVP meets on Saturdays in morning and afternoon sessions at the Society. All aspects of the program are under the supervision of Christine Pagones Hamilton, a licensed social worker, who has directed the program since 1994. Christine receives referrals of court-ordered supervision of non-custodial parents with their children. She screens the families for their appropriateness for the program and submits written reports to the court on the quality of their involvement. Christine provides oversight for the staff who observe parent-child interactions, the leaders of support groups and the occasional volunteers who present themselves. Christine also supervises 10 interns currently, drawn from undergraduate programs in New York City in education, psychology, sociology, and criminal justice.

Over the last program year the number of families enrolled and attending

the SVP has varied from three, early in the year, to 15 later on. Over the year, 299 families were seen in 36 weekly sessions for an average of about eight families per week. The reason for this fluctuation is that the fee charged to a family for each weekly session was discontinued for those unable to pay. Families who had earlier been passed over because of the fee were now seeking the service. Whether three or 15 families are attending the SVP, the resources of the program are available to provide the same standard of service. This program consumes over 75% of the Social Service Board's budget for programs. It is clearer than ever that the SSB needs the assistance of fundraising to maintain the Supervised Visitation Project.

April 28, 2004

Ms. Friedman:

The clients who attend the Shelter Program at the Society for Ethical Culture are participants in the Pathways to Housing program. The purpose of this program is to engage clients with a history of alcohol or substance abuse as they develop and maintain sobriety. The bed site at the society for Ethical Culture provides a safe sober environment for these clients to work on their goals. In addition to attending the bed site the clients engage in individual and group counseling and ongoing assessment.

The support and consistency the clients experience at the Shelter Program has lead to great success. During the last fiscal year seventy-five percent of participants became psychiatrically stable. Sixty percent of clients were drug and alcohol free nine to twelve months after entering the program. Forty-five percent of housing ready or treatment ready participants were placed in permanent housing or long term treatment facilities.

I would like to express my gratitude, and gratitude on behalf of the clients to the staff and members of Ethical Culture, the Social Service Board and its dedicated volunteers for playing a key role in the provision of services to the women from the Olivieri Center. I look forward to the future success of the Shelter Program as we continue to work together to provide this valuable service.

Sincerely,

Liana Lerner, CSW
MICA Coordinator
Antonio Olivieri Center for Homeless Women

Ethical Culture is a humanistic religious and philosophical movement in which people share a core of common values: the worth of each individual, ethics as central to our lives, eliciting the best from each other and doing good in the world.

We seek truth as a growing, changing body of knowledge based on experience, reason and scientific observation, and seek to use it in support of human well-being.

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