

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

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## **Sunday Morning Meetings** **11:15 AM—Music & Reflection,** **Concert Hall (except as noted)**

**December 3**

### **The Companion Paths of Ethical Humanism and Buddhism**

*Anne Klaeyesen*

*Leader, Ethical Humanist Society of Long Island*

Bonnie Bean Presides

**December 10**

### **Letting Go**

*Tony Hileman*

*Senior Leader*

Carol Nadell Presides

**December 17**

### **Winterfest**

*Tony Hileman, Senior Leader*

*Michael Bogdanffy-Kriegh, President*

**11:30 AM—Ceremonial Hall, 4<sup>th</sup> floor**

**December 24**

### **How Felix Adler's Original Vision Is Being Fulfilled Today**

*Dr. Kurt Johnson*

Michael Bogdanffy-Kriegh Presides

**December 31**

### **Goodbye 2006**

*Andra Miller, Trustee*

Sheila Kleinwald Presides

*A Happy and  
Healthy New  
Year to All*

## **We're Having a New Year's Day Party!**

**NYSEC Members and friends** are invited to celebrate New Year's Day, Monday, January 1, 2007 here at the Society.

Join us for an afternoon of fun and friendship, 2:00 pm to 4:00 pm in Ceremonial Hall, 4<sup>th</sup> floor. We'll enjoy snacks, drinks, music, prizes, and lots of good cheer. Tickets are \$15 per person. The party is sponsored by the Membership Activities Committee. For reservations call Suzy Frazer at 212-874-5210, ext. 113, before December 24.

## **President's Notes**

*Michael Bogdanffy-Kriegh*

### **The Tension Between Individual and Community**



I have been giving some thought to the tension that necessarily exists between individual and community in an institution that places a great deal of emphasis on the individual and, for various reasons, tends to attract individualists, or those who pride themselves on their uniqueness and their independence from the mainstream.

Whether or not Felix Adler intended it, it seems to me that Ethical Culture, at least as manifested at the New York Society, has become a loose aggregate of individuals for whom the sense of self is more important than the group. How often do we tell ourselves that trying to organize Ethical Culturists is like trying to herd cats?

It is not surprising. Many of us arrive at Ethical Culture having "escaped" from other religions and structures of authority and belief that made no sense to us. We rebel  
*(Continued on page 2)*

## **Sunday Morning Meetings**

### **December 3—The Companion Paths of Ethical Humanism and Buddhism**

*Anne Klaeyesen, Leader, Ethical Humanist Society of Long Island*

It is not unusual for a newcomer, upon learning about Ethical Humanism at an Orientation, to remark about the similarities between our religion and Buddhism. Both are non-theistic and emphasize compassionate living; both had founders who believed that people must experience and share their own humanity and goodness. There are, of course, some differences in the practices each has developed. Join me for a comparison of these two ethical paths and how they might be integrated.

At 1:30 pm I will present a program on meditation, an ancient practice that focuses our minds. The meditation will be based on the inspiring images expressed by Dr. Felix Adler—using quotations from his work to explore aspects of our humanism, to release our  
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**President's Notes**

*(Continued from page 1)*

against the requirements of blind faith and obedience to the authority of a higher, transcendent power, or we rebel against the authority structures of our childhood family lives.

We who arrive at the doors of Ethical Culture make a very particular choice, away from blind obedience or conformity, and towards the full realization of our individual selves. And this is one of the fundamental tenets of Ethical Culture: that each of us should be entitled to the fullest realization of our individual potential.

And yet, in walking through the doors of Ethical Culture, we are also proclaiming our need for community. We are acknowledging that we need to know that others feel in similar ways and that we require companionship on our life journey.

I wonder how many of us have resolved this tension for ourselves? Take a relatively simple thing like sing-

ing together during our Sunday Platform Meetings. It was difficult to get this going and I know that we are far from completely comfortable doing it. It reminds many of us of the churches and synagogues we left behind. The singing of "hymns" transports us back to a place we don't want to go. But some of the same people I have talked to about this discomfort have also told me that they have come to enjoy it. And I suspect it is the community aspect of it that they enjoy. Still, they worry that those who come to us seeking something different from where they came will be put off by it.

This is symptomatic of a very fundamental dilemma—"To be or not to be," as Hamlet put it. We understand that to be only individual is isolating and self-defeating. We know we need community; we wouldn't be here otherwise. At the same time, we fear the loss of our individual selves in becoming communal. And so, we gather—individuals all—in a kind of uneasy community.

In the end, we have to come to terms with our need for community, and we have to find a way for our unique selves to lose the fear of it. One of the salient points of Ethical Culture is that we need to be in relationship to fulfill ourselves as individuals. I would be interested in your thoughts about community. How should we go about learning to embrace the communal as we do the individual? Write to me at [mbkriegh@msn.com](mailto:mbkriegh@msn.com).

## Sunday Morning Meetings

(Continued from page 1)

thoughts and engage our feelings, and to move with our breath throughout our bodies. Ethical Culture meditative practice does not stay with our individual experiences alone; it connects us to all those participating with us.

I interned at the NY Society in 2001 and 2002, and I'm a graduate of the Humanist Institute. I hold a Doctorate of Ministry from Hebrew Union College.

### December 10—Letting Go

*Tony Hileman, Senior Leader*

This is typically a time of introspection, renewal, and rededication to personal growth, a season when it is appropriate to look forward through the beginning of winter and into a new year.

However, we adopt a pretty complete view of the world quite early in our experience, and life quickly becomes pretty much a zero-sum game in which the acceptance of anything new requires the letting go of something old. That letting go, even of things recognized and accepted as worn and outdated, is often much more difficult than acceptance of the new. How do we let go of a constrained and unserviceable past in order to embrace an expanded and invigorated future?

### December 17—Winterfest

*Tony Hileman, Senior Leader, and Michael Bogdanffy-Kriegh, President*

Though often celebrated in darkness, Winterfest is dedicated to the light of a brighter future. This oldest and grandest of all seasonal festivals is known by many names and has been observed at the time of the winter solstice since the earliest days of humanity.

Unlike other celebrations of the solstice season, Winterfest is not about the life of any single heroic figure. It is about all of us coming together in community to share our common hope for the future, and to share generously the light we find within us and among us. Join us in a celebration of warmth and comfort, of life and growth, and of happiness and joy.

In keeping with the spirit of Winterfest, Social Hour will be extended and include special food and beverages, prizes, music, and a few surprises. Be sure to join us for the celebration.

### 11:30 AM—Ceremonial Hall

#### December 24—How Felix Adler's Original Vision Is Being Fulfilled Today

*Dr. Kurt Johnson, Biologist*

There is a profound similarity between Adler's original vision of Ethical Culture in his *Ethical Manifesto* and other writings such as *Life and Destiny* (1905) and *Reconstruction of the Spiritual Ideal* (1923) and today's explosion of inter-religious, inter-spiritual, and inter-traditional dialogue and cooperation worldwide. Many of his writings nearly duplicate those of Catholic pioneer Wayne Teasdale in his *Discovering a Universal Spirituality in the World's Religions*.

The AEU's National Service Conference has been instrumental in the founding of such organizations as InterSpiritual Dialogue in Action ([www.isdna.org](http://www.isdna.org)), the World Wisdom

Alliance ([www.clubofbudapest.ca](http://www.clubofbudapest.ca)), and the recently established New York Coalition for OneVoice. All of these share a vision similar to Adler's in pointing out that the "common ground" of all religious, philosophical, and ethical traditions is their "shared common values" and ultimate emphasis on transformative ethical behavior.

Dr. Kurt Johnson, an evolutionary biologist and a recognized teacher in the Gandhi-based tradition of Advaita Vedanta in Hinduism, will explore these inspiring developments. Dr. Johnson has been a member of Ethical Culture for over 15 years, as well as a Board member and officer of the Brooklyn Society and the National Service Conference. He is also on the faculty of the Humanist Institute. In 2003, with Wayne Teasdale and others, he co-founded InterSpiritual Dialogue, which expanded worldwide as InterSpiritual Dialogue in Action in 2005 ([www.isdna.org](http://www.isdna.org)). ISDnA, in turn, is a co-founder of the World Wisdom Alliance and the New York Coalition for OneVoice.

### December 31—Goodbye 2006

*Andra Miller, Trustee*

On the last day of the Old Year, it is time to look back and take stock. How'd we do? Were we caring with our friends, did we keep our promises? Were we generous with our "enemies"? Did we remember to bring out the best in others, thereby bringing out the best in ourselves?

What about our duties as citizens? Did we respond to others' tragedies, make our thoughts known to legislators, do our part against global warming and other environmental concerns? What good deeds have we done?

And while we're looking back at 2006, let's take a look further into the Ethical Culture past, revisiting the accomplishments of the heroes of our

religious movement and finding inspiration in the words and deeds of our “Ethical Ancestors.”

We have a rich history of spirited leaders and followers, but along with being proud of their accomplishments we can be proud our own. We can include the small steps we have made this year in our personal and public lives, and the inspiring events, the commendable good works, and the exciting new beginnings we have brought about here at the New York Society for Ethical Culture.

**Note: No Social Hour—Dec. 24 and Dec. 31**—instead of a full lunch, danish and muffins will be provided.

## Early Sunday 10:00 AM

**Dec. 3—Everyday Ethics.** Room 408.

**Dec. 10—Colloquy**—A meditative hour exploring thoughts about a presented subject. Room 408.

**Dec. 17—Poetry Reading**—A peaceful hour with Cheryl Gross reading the poems we especially like. Come to read as well as listen, or just come and listen. Room 408.

**Dec. 24—No program.**

**Dec. 31—Singing Practice**—All voices, big and small, are welcome. Led by Pat Debrovner and Jerry Ranck, we’ll practice the songs we sing on Sunday mornings and get some tips to improve our singing technique. It’s a lot of fun, so join us. Room 507.

## Sunday Afternoon 1:30 PM

**Dec. 3—Meditation with Anne Klaeyesen.**

**Dec. 10—Film, *Iraq for Sale, The War Profiteers***, discussion with Abe Markman.

**Dec. 17—Winter Solstice Celebration,** Social Hall.

**Dec. 24—No program.**

**Dec. 31—No program.**

## Our Ethical Family

*Suzy Frazer*

Please welcome our newest Society members:

**Dr. Majid Ali** is a physician specializing in natural healing who has presented very successful health seminars at the New York Society for Ethical Culture and also on WBAI. His interests include history and philosophy, and he is married to another NYSEC member, Talat Ali.

**Al Miller** first came to NYSEC when he attended the Salmon Rushdie event here with his wife, Paula. The couple also recently took part in Remembrance Sunday and an Orientation led by Senior Leader Tony Hileman. Al and Paula have four children.

**Paula Miller’s** background is in music and education and her many interests include the piano, opera, Italian, German, and Spanish. She is also a board member of the Omega Ensemble (chamber music). Paula was attracted to the New York Society’s free intellectual discussions and rationality. She attended the Society’s Sunday School as a child.

**Michelle Rickborn** has an extensive background in technical theater, film, photography, and audio production. She lived in Florida for many years, but has now returned to New York. Michelle has attended many Sunday Meetings and Social Hours, as well as the recent Remembrance Sunday.

**Michael Sands** is a clinical social worker in private practice and a 20-year member of the National Asso-

ciation of Social Workers. Michael’s interests include singing, various sports, meditation, and spirituality. He was drawn to NYSEC’s philosophy of Ethical Humanism.

### New Director



**Rita Chawla** has joined NYSEC’s staff as Director of Family Programs. Welcome!

### In Memorium

Sadly, we must report the passing of two of our long-time members, who gave unstintingly of their time and talents to further the goals of Humanism.

**Constance Faith Frosch Flynn**, a Society member since 1988, began working in the AEU office as Jean Kotkin’s secretary in 1981; when Jean retired in 1986, Connie worked for Margetha Jones. The AEU office could not have had a more loyal secretary than Connie, who took a special interest in “her” members-at-large, to whom she regularly sent material during the year.

Connie was very involved in housing issues. She lived in a rent-controlled apartment on her beloved 42<sup>nd</sup> Street, across from the Port Authority. Early in the 1980’s when it looked as though rent-regulated housing was in jeopardy, she joined the Clinton Coalition of Concern and also served for several years as the head of the Housing Committee of Community Board 4.

One of Connie’s colleagues from the Coalition recalled the ending of a speech Connie gave at the New York City Board of Estimate in 1984. The last lines of her speech were something like: “I prayed last night for the words of a Shakespeare to let you know what’s in my heart. But I don’t have

the words of a Shakespeare. I can only speak from my heart and hope that you hear it with yours.”

Before Jean hired her for the AEU, Connie had been working as a book-keeper for the Encampment for Citizenship, whose offices were then in the basement of the New York Society building. She had come to EFC via the Fortune Society, an organization started in the 1970’s that was also housed in the basement of the New York Society. Connie, who died on July 18, is survived by her daughter and son-in-law, June and Alan Grutzner, and a brother.

**Fred Garel** served at the Society for many years, from 1956 to 1985, as Maintenance Director and, later, Community Service Liaison. As liaison, Fred did a great deal of outreach to West Side Clergy, shelter coalitions, and the Lincoln Square Neighborhood Center, among other groups, and organized volunteers for the Project FIND/O’Neal Thanksgiving Dinner at St. Paul’s Church. He also brought many groups into the Society, keeping the Meeting House open or providing other space for groups including Seniors for Adequate Social Security, Coalition for the Homeless, Project FIND, the Gray Panthers, U.S. China Friendship Association, and others.

Fred also arranged for NY Senior Action in a Gay Environment (SAGE) to hold its first organizing meeting in the Ethical Culture Meeting House.

In 1985, the year he retired, Lincoln Square Neighborhood Center presented him with the Martin Luther King, Jr., Award for Community Service.

Fred worked very closely with Algernon Black and wrote about those experiences in his wonderful autobiography, *Lighting the Lamps*.

Fred is survived by his wife, Mimi Lamb. A Memorial Service was held on November 19, at St. Mary’s Church.

## PIC Gets Message Out to Candidates

*Abe Markman*

The Public Issues Committee was able to get its message out to candidates before the November 7, 2006 state and national elections. By the time you read this you may feel happy, sad, or so-so about the outcome of the elections. Nevertheless, our work in promoting PIC’s ideas on Iraq, stem cell research, global warming (three of our original five proposals), therapeutic cloning, and other issues is only beginning.

To date, and with great help from dozens of people, we were able to link several of PIC’s pages to NYSEC’s web site; have our pages easily accessed on the October 27 weekly calendar, which was e-mailed to between 2,000 and 3,000 people on the Society’s list serve; and send out a press release to six small local newspapers.

Going forward, we will soon decide whether to bring our two other issues (paid leave-of-absence for family care and child health insurance) to the Board, so that all five of them will be presented to the membership at the May 2007 Annual Meeting. Our sixth issue, on the labor movement, is in development. One of the main avenues for interfacing with the membership on our issues will be via Sunday afternoon programs. On December 10, the 90-minute film, *Iraq for Sale: The War Profiteers*, by Robert Greenwald, will be shown and discussed.

As new members of the National Service Conference of the AEU, we have begun networking with other Ethical Societies, and we plan to contact inter-faith and other organizations whose missions and objectives could prove to be mutually reinforcing.

Special thanks to Deborah Foster and Tom Weishaar, our web-master,

for their tireless work setting up PIC’s web site pages. Tom assures us that with the luxury of time *nysec.org* can incorporate state-of-the-art methods in sending out action alerts. To access our pages, click on: <http://www.nysec.org/sitemap/ethical-action/public-issues-committee/>. It is a tribute to our Society’s leaders, members, friends, and staff that so many people were willing to give their time, talents, good feelings, and good works to this effort.

## Film Forum

*Valerie Leiman*

Join us on Friday, December 1 for the next film in the 2006-2007 series “Reel Justice: Courtroom Dramas,” which will be *Witness for the Prosecution* (1957), directed by Billy Wilder.

A London courtroom drama becomes increasingly engrossing as a convalescent Queen’s Counselor takes on a murder defense and is enmeshed in a web of suspense and trickery.

The film contains smart dialogue, a handful of surprises, and a celebrated performance. Marlene Dietrich is peerless as the wife of Tyrone Power, the alleged killer, and Charles Laughton is at his best as the defense attorney.

Admission is \$3 for members and \$4 for nonmembers—unless you have a discount pass. Money raised will go to the DNA Fund.



*Film historian Richard Bruno leads a discussion at a recent Film Forum*

## Rewarding Relationships

*Patricia Bruder Debrovner*

Central to our Ethical Culture philosophy is our wish to relate to others in ways that will help to bring out the best in each of us. But, how is that done? On Wednesday, December 6, from 7:00 pm to 8:30 pm, the Adult Education Committee will present the first of a three-session workshop, which I will lead, that will offer participants the opportunity to gain the understanding and practical skills that will help them in their efforts to build such rewarding relationships.

Each class will include group discussions as well as hands-on exercises to give participants experience in the communication skills being discussed. The other two classes will be held on Wednesdays, January 3 and 24. Admission is \$25 for the series or \$10 per session for members and \$40 for the series or \$15 per session for nonmembers. There is no charge for members who have purchased discount passes.

## Ethics and the Theater

*Patricia Bruder Debrovner*

Be sure to join the fun when this month's Ethics and the Theater presents Garson Kanin's *Born Yesterday*, on Wednesday, December 13, 7:00 pm to 9:00 pm.

In this great classic comedy, we wonder whether Billie Dawn, the glamour girl mistress of corrupt businessman Harry Brock, will continue to allow Brock's abuse of her and the democratic system, or will, through education and a new relationship, learn to stand up to him and develop her own integrity.

Our outstanding cast includes Maria Demarse, James de Lorenzo, Scott

Willett, John Gurney, John Lovelady, Bernice Cornyetz, and Bob Berger. Elaine Berman will direct the play and Marc Bernstein will be our moderator and lead our discussion of the ethical issues it raises following the reading.

## Microsoft Word Course

*Patricia Bruder Debrovner*

Do you wish you could join the high-tech generation and be computer savvy? Well, your time has come! The Adult Education Committee is pleased to announce that Tom Weishaar will teach a four-session course on Microsoft Word computer skills this coming January. The classes will be held on Tuesday evenings, January 9, 16, 23, and 30 from 7:00 pm to 8:30 pm. The fee for the course will be \$50 for members and \$65 for nonmembers.

Participants will need to bring a laptop computer to the classes. If you don't have one, perhaps you can borrow one from a friend. Call Suzy Frazer at 212-874-5210, ext. 113, to register.

## Lunch Organizer Clones Self

*Sheila Kleinwald*

*New York City, Dec. 1 (Ethical Press International)* EPI has confirmed that Sheila Kleinwald, who coordinates lunch services at NYSEC on Sundays during the popular post-platform Social Hour, has produced a living person from her own DNA. There are unconfirmed rumors that she may have used a corner of NYSEC's kitchen as her laboratory. Ms. Kleinwald said the idea first occurred to her last March, when she had difficulty finding enough people to help serve lunch with the spirit she wished to convey.

Cognizant of the ethical ramifications of the project, Ms. Kleinwald said she had discussed it with the Society's Senior Leader, Tony Hileman, who, she said, joked that he, too, could use a clone. But she provided no hint about the process, which she said is "classified." The young clone, initially named CL One, is now receiving both general education and specific training to qualify her to replace her creator. But for at least several months the two will work in tandem or as alternates. CL One will choose or be given a permanent name by December 3, the day on which she is scheduled to be introduced to the Social Hour diners and to formally begin her duties.

It should be noted that CL One, although a duplicate of her single parent, does not look exactly like her. Ms. Kleinwald did not explain how the differences in outward appearances were achieved, saying only that CL One is a fully human, complete, and independent individual, and that no damaging or painful procedures were used.

## Thursday Writing Workshop

*Elaine Berman*

We will begin a new ten-week semester of "The Joy of Personal Writing," our Thursday writing class, on January 11, 2007. The workshop welcomes both new and experienced writers.

For information call Suzy Frazer at 212-874-5210, ext. 113.

## Recycling Day

Bring your old electronic equipment to 87<sup>th</sup> Street and Columbus Avenue on Sunday Dec. 3, 10:00 am–3:00 pm. A donation of \$1 per item allows Per Scholas to recycle the equipment.

# December 2006

Office hours: Monday-Friday, 9:00 am–6:00 pm  
Shelter: Monday-Thursday, 7:30 pm

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	<p align="center"><b>Great Books:</b> December 6–Bible, <i>The Gospel of Mark</i> Thucydides, <i>History of the Peloponnesian War</i> December 13–Ann Patchett, <i>Magician's Assistant</i> <b>ECRDG: (Ethical Culture Reading Discussion Group)</b> December 20–Blaise Pascal, <i>Penseés</i> (selection) <b>Great Books: "Great Conversations I"</b></p>				1 January 2007 Newsletter Deadline	2 9:30 am and 1:30 pm Supervised Visitation
3 10:00 am–Everyday Ethics 11:00 am–Ethics for Children 11:15 am–Morning Meeting 12:45 pm–Social Hour 1:30 pm–Meditation	4 6:30 pm–Board of Trustees	5 6:00 pm–Men's Group 7:00 pm–Building Rewarding Relationships 7:30 pm–Great Books	6 6:00 pm–Men's Group 7:00 pm–Building Rewarding Relationships 7:30 pm–Great Books	7	8 7:00 pm–Film Forum: <i>Witness for the Prosecution</i> (1957)	9 9:30 am and 1:30 pm Supervised Visitation
10 10:00 am–Colloquy 11:00 am–Ethics for Children 11:15 am–Morning Meeting 12:45 pm–Social Hour 1:30 pm–Film: <i>Lead for Sale: The War Profiteers</i>	11	12 6:00 pm–Women's Group	13 3:00 pm–ECRDG 7:00 pm–Ethics and the Theater	14	15	16 9:30 am and 1:30 pm Supervised Visitation
17 10:00 am–Poetry Reading 11:00 am–Ethics for Children 11:15 am–Winterfest 12:45 pm–Winterfest cont'd 1:30 pm–Solstice Celebration	18 6:30 pm–Social Service Board	19	20 6:00 pm–Socrates Café 7:30 pm–Great Books: Great Conversations I	21	22	23 No Supervised Visitation today
24 10:00 am–No program 11:00 am–Ethics for Children 11:30 am–Morning Meeting 12:45 pm–No Social Hour 1:30 pm–No program	25 <b>Society offices closed</b>	26	27	28	29	30 No Supervised Visitation today
31 10:00 am–Singing Practice 11:00 am–Ethics for Children 11:30 am–Morning Meeting 12:45 pm–No Social Hour 1:30 pm–No program	<p align="center"><b>Happy New Year!!</b> <b>New Year's Day Party</b> <i>Monday, January 1, 2007</i> <b>2:00 PM–4:00 PM</b></p>					

**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.

NEW YORK SOCIETY FOR  
**ETHICAL  
CULTURE** 

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