

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

11:15 AM–Auditorium
(Except as Noted)

December 7

**Reflections on the
Concept Of Worth**

Dr. Bob Berson, Leader

Ethical Society of

Northern Westchester

Curt S. Collier Presides

December 14

**Nonviolent Communication:
An Ethical Practice**

Dr. Anne Klaeysen, Leader

Michael Bogdanffy-Kriegh Presides

11:15 AM–Ceremonial Hall

December 21

**Celebrate Winterfest with our
Sunday School**

Curt S. Collier Presides

December 28

**Rejoicing in Ethical Community
And Commitment**

Dr. Anne Klaeysen Presides

Help Those In Need!

Canned Food Drive thru Jan. 9

Coat Drive thru Dec. 31

For more info call 212-874-5210,
ext. 118.

*A Healthy and
Happy New Year
To All!!*

December Happenings

What are the **ethical issues** our new President, Barack Obama, will face when he takes office? Join us on **Thursdays in December at 12:00 noon**, Room 507, as we explore some of these issues with Dr. Anne Klaeysen, as part of our new **Leader Lunch Discussion series**. (See page 6)

Learn about a **nonviolence movement in Iraq** on **Sunday, December 14, 1:45 pm**, in Ceremonial Hall. There will be a multi-media presentation on LaOnf, the Iraqi Nonviolence Movement, by the September 11 Families for Peaceful Tomorrows. (See page 6)

Let's all celebrate **New Year's Eve** at the NY Society on **Wednesday, December 31, 9:00 pm**, and share the festivities and our wishes for peace with people around the world. (See page 8)

President's Notes

Andra Miller



Well, here we are coming to the end of the year already! It has just whooshed by—a year filled with excitement and hard work and accomplishment, and lots of fun. I trust it was a wonderful year for you too.

Things are certainly looking up for the year ahead. It will be hard to top the excitement of election eve—and the special event Curt planned and managed so wonderfully. I, for one, have never had as much fun on election day in my life.

But we have even more to look forward to. In the year ahead we can expect many more of the charming and insightful discussions and workshops led by Anne. And the new exciting alternative weekly meetings that Curt's planning. And the Advocacy Forums Joe and committee are cooking up.

(Continued on page 2)

From the Leader's Desk

Dr. Anne Klaeysen



Reconcilable Differences?

"Let us summon a new spirit of patriotism; of service and responsibility where each of us resolves to pitch in and work harder and look after not only ourselves, but each other. . . Let us resist the temptation to fall back on the same partisanship and pettiness and immaturity that has poisoned our politics for so long. . . While the Democratic Party has won a great victory tonight, we do so with a measure of humility and determination to heal the divides that have held back our progress."

—from President-Elect Barack Obama's victory speech
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President's Notes

(Continued from page 1)

But that's not all. We've got the Darwin Day Family Festival here next February 7—a huge event that is in the planning stages. Involved are folks from the Long Island, Brooklyn, Rockland, and Westchester Societies, and we're hoping that folks will come from all the local Societies for this super event. We'll be calling on you for your help in managing this Saturday, 2:00 to 5:00 pm event. Curt and Anne will serve as Leaders for this shindig. The ultimate hope is that having something at NYSEC that includes kids will get us some Sunday School and family membership growth.

We're also planning some joint events with WBAI that will feature their on-air personalities—and also a day-long health fair with the station health gurus. More on all this later.

For now, best wishes for a festive holiday season. Best wishes for us all, every one!

Leader's Desk

(Continued from page 1)

"I urge all Americans who supported me to join me in not just congratulating him, but offering our next president our good will and earnest effort to find ways to come together to find the necessary compromises to bridge our differences and help restore our prosperity, defend our security in a danger-

ous world, and leave our children and grandchildren a stronger, better country than we inherited."

—from Senator John McCain's concession speech

The above quotations are heartening indeed. For too long we have been bitterly divided as a nation, polarized into separate camps of blue and red politics, questioning one another's morality and sanity, unable to understand positions so opposed to our own. Can we ever find our way back to one another? Is healing possible?

We have always been a land of diversity and conflict, but we have also upheld high ideals and committed ourselves to democracy, favoring the majority position while honoring the minority's. Republican strategist Ken Mehlman calls the current political environment "hyper-partisanship," a state resulting in a paralyzing inability to confront difficult problems facing the nation, problems like the "three E's" of economy, energy, and environment. We desperately need bipartisanship now; without it, it's like trying to cut a piece of paper with one scissor blade.

What brought us to this impasse—a country split in half by the elections of 2000 and 2004? There are many opinions. Some are political: revised congressional rules made it easier for party leadership to corral their members; interest groups sprang up on the extreme right and left; media outlets took partisan positions and covered the

overly long campaigns 24/7, emphasizing sound bites of negativity. Some opinions are psychological: Jonathan Haidt specializes in the new field of moral psychology, researching the evolution of morality and emotion, and how they vary across cultures. His study of the intuitive foundations of political ideology has led him to search for ways to overcome what he calls “the moralism of the American culture wars.”

How can we get along in a morally and politically diverse society? Here is what Haidt suggests: 1) Recognize that all sides in the debate are morally motivated: “Only when moral motives are acknowledged can intelligent discourse begin.” 2) Try to frame appeals in language that may trigger new intuitions on the other side, e.g., concerted effort to show that gay marriage is about order and stability. His hope is that a fuller understanding of one another will lead to greater tolerance and respect.

To help realize this hope, Haidt created a website called “Civil Politics” at <http://www.civilpolitics.org>, a collaborative effort launched at a bipartisan interdisciplinary workshop on “moralistic politics” held at Princeton University on May 19, 2007. The goal is to promote politics in which opponents are not demonized and cooperation is not seen as a moral failing and in which power and ideas are intensely debated, but opponents are respected as fellow citizens sincere in their beliefs. The first step in finding common ground is recognizing that the other person is acting from moral, rather than venal reasons.

Does this sound familiar to you? It sure sounds like Ethical Culture to me. Our faith is in the natural goodness of all human beings, a goodness that can be called upon when we confront ethical challenges. We choose to attribute worth to others and ourselves and to experience that worth in our relationships, especially

when we disagree with someone. Often a newcomer to our Society will say, “I’m looking for a community of like-minded people.” I understand that desire; we want to be with people who think as we do, who take the same political and social positions we do. It feels comforting and safe. Yet our ethical challenge has always been to embrace a diversity of ideas, to welcome different ways of thinking and feeling, in the spirit of deepening our moral relationships.

Remember that old call to action: “Afflict the comforted and comfort the afflicted.” It is time that we stepped out of our comfort zone, as euphoric as we now feel about this election, and seek to understand those who have opposed us and our ideals. We as a nation have been afflicted by partisanship for too long. Now we must embark, with Obama and McCain, on the long road toward repairing the divisions and healing the wounds of the last eight years.

“I was thinking the other day that I had gotten very vital things from people I hated. Friendship is a gift of the gods, a give and take; but if you accomplish anything with your enemies, it is a tremendous piece of work in itself. If you overcome your aversion that means a great deal.”

—John Lovejoy Elliott, Ethical Culture Leader (1868-1942)

Suggested readings:

Robert Coles, *Lives of Moral Leadership*, Random House, 2001.

Barack Obama, *The Audacity of Hope*, Three Rivers Press, 2006.

Jonathan Haidt, “What Makes People Vote Republican?” on the Edge Foundation website—http://www.edge.org/3rd_culture/haidt08/haidt08_index.html.

Donald W. Shriver, Jr., *An Ethic for*

Enemies: Forgiveness in Politics, Oxford University Press, 1995.

Sunday Morning Meetings

11:15 AM—Auditorium
(Except as noted)

December 7—Reflections on the Concept of Worth

Dr. Bob Berson, Leader

Ethical Society of Northern Westchester

Ethical Culture speaks of attributing worth to every human being. How can we speak and think of worth? How did Felix Adler, the founder of Ethical Culture, use the term? Is there some sort of “evidence” of human worth? Do we have encounters in our own lives that give us any felt experience of human worth? Does the concept of worth inspire us; give us a sense, a source, of ethical energy, endeavor, and hope?

Leader Bob Berson is a graduate of the Sunday School of the Riverdale-Yonkers Society for Ethical Culture and of the Ethical Culture Schools (Fieldston), where he was also a teacher in the Ethics Department. He graduated from Haverford College and has earned graduate degrees at Harvard University (history), Bank Street College of Education (guidance and counseling), Teachers College (higher education), and City University of New York (clinical psychology). A licensed psychologist, he maintains a private practice in Manhattan.

December 14—Nonviolent Communication: An Ethical Practice

Dr. Anne Klaeysen, Leader

It’s never too late to learn a new language, especially when it can improve the quality of your relationships, deepen your sense of personal integrity, and help you communicate more effectively. Nonviolent com-

munication is a language of life—expressing ourselves honestly and hearing others empathically—that Ethical Societies are incorporating into their spiritual practices.

December 21—Celebrate Winterfest With Our Sunday School

(Ceremonial Hall)

Curt S. Collier, Leader, presides

“In the depth of winter, I finally learned that within me there lay an invincible summer.” —Albert Camus

Join us for music, a presentation by the Sunday School children, and a celebration of the Regenerative Power of Life.

Please bring a skein of yarn to donate to our One Stitch In Time project. Hand-knit items will be created and donated for those in need.

December 28—Rejoicing in Ethical Community and Commitment

(Ceremonial Hall)

Dr. Anne Klaeyen, Leader

We travel different roads, up peaks and down valleys, meeting strangers and making friends, suffering losses and celebrating gains. Through it all, we look for life’s meaning and ethical purpose. Sometimes this requires solitude, at other times community. At this last Platform of the year, we reflect together upon the journeys behind us and in front of us. Whether you call Ethical Culture your religion, philosophy, world view, or life stance, what makes this community important to you? How can we continue to deepen and heighten our best selves, to honor our differences and find common ground?

We will participate in a coat drive for NY Cares. Did you know that 90 percent of homeless adults need a new, warm coat each winter because they have no place to keep one over the summer months? It’s not just homeless people who need our help; thousands

of New Yorkers are forced to make a choice between buying a winter coat and putting food on the table, or meeting other basic survival needs. So bring your gently used winter coats to the NY Society. Containers will be provided, and the coats will be distributed to men, women, and children who would otherwise go without.

“To each of us an attribution of worth; from each of us our unique contributions; and for all of us a community of mutual respect, justice, and care.”

—A Concept Map for Ethical Culture, NLC, 1991

New Sunday AM Program

Curt S. Collier, Leader

We are planning to add an additional Sunday morning program at the NY Society in January, to be called **“Earth Rise Service”** to distinguish it from the regular **“Platform.”** The new service will be held 10:30-11:30 am, followed by an Earth Rise Ethical Action component from 11:30 am to 12:30 pm, and at 12:30 pm we’ll have lunch with the larger NYSEC community. There are many reasons for this.

A second gathering will allow us to present the Ethical Culture message through new formats and practices that might be attractive to potential new members who are seeking something different than a traditional Platform. It is not intended to take away from the Platform, nor from the other programs offered at NYSEC. Rather, in conjunction with the Platform, this new program will broaden our outreach and further our ethical mission. The style of the second service will be markedly different. It will use drama and more contemporary music, and will provide opportunities for all participants to

engage in some form of ethical action organized by the group each Sunday.

The themes of this second service will revolve around Felix Adler’s notion that “spirituality is awareness of our infinite interrelatedness.” The program will emphasize our connection to nature and to each other and that through conscious choices to affirm both we make our ethics come alive. It will seek to honor that relational way of being by asking participants to live their lives in such a way as to promote all of Life. Our ethical actions will focus on “habitat restoration,” both for humans and for other forms of life. Most of my day is spent working with communities and government entities in this area. Thus, using my contacts, we hope to create meaningful opportunities for participants to get involved in such efforts as restoring wetlands, creating green spaces for people in urban neighborhoods, educating ourselves and others on green living, removing invasive species from area parks to allow native flora and fauna to flourish, and fostering economic justice by partnering with disadvantaged families to create healthier places to live. We believe that by becoming engaged in bringing forth the life-affirming qualities within others, ours emerge, as well.

This second service will arise organically (no pun intended), meaning that we will create Earth Rise not by simply gathering some Sunday and hoping to bring it to life. Rather, I will be working with groups of people who will each play unique roles in creating a healthy habitat for Earth Rise to flourish. For example, we will bring together musicians and singers who will begin to explore the themes of Earth Rise through contemporary music. But, as importantly, this group will mirror our ideal for ethical liv-

ing by building camaraderie among its members. It will gather not simply to provide music, but to develop into a team that allows the best of each to shine. In a similar fashion, all of the various “teams” will constitute the core of Earth Rise’s spirit. As our goal is also to reach out to potential new members, each team will have a mandate to include newcomers reflecting the diversity of our greater community.

At this point we are looking for volunteers to work with me to help develop the teams, and I have outlined below the focus of these teams. You will be asked to give of your time and talent and, as importantly, to commit to building a team as focused on fostering ethical relationships as it is on accomplishing the task at hand. Volunteers should be committed to the development of Earth Rise and comfortable with its alternative format. You must be equally interested in participating in one of our habitat restoration projects. I realize that Earth Rise’s style might not suit everyone. I believe fully in the diversity of life and know that what inspires some is more of a distraction to others. *Viva la difference!* Of course, anyone can participate in the new gathering, as it is open to all, regardless of their desire to engage in all of the activities.

Here are the various teams and each one’s focus. If you are interested in participating in any of these, please e-mail me at ccollier@nysec.org, or call me at 914-375-2151.

Music Team (musicians and singers)

The music team is responsible for providing contemporary music that emphasizes the relational nature of life. Pop, rock, country, adult contemporary, rap, punk, Caribbean, Afro-Celt, and other forms of music will be explored. If you have talent with electric guitar, drum,

keyboard, bass, or other instruments, we especially need your assistance and we need people with talent in teaching these musical instruments. We are also looking for people who enjoy singing this type of music (solo or choral) to join our chorus, as well as those who can read and teach choral singing.

Aesthetics Team (artists/craftspeople)

Physical beauty is another modality by which to foster an appreciation for Life. The Aesthetics Team will be responsible for creating temporary and free-standing decorative pieces that will enliven Ceremonial Hall. We are looking for those who have talent in painting, floral arrangement, set design, and decorating, as well as textile artists (banners and tapestries).

Habitat Restoration Team

This group will have two focuses, human and nonhuman habitat restoration, and will help to organize in-house and outdoor ethical action projects. I am looking for gardeners, nature buffs, social workers, and hands-on types. We are especially looking for those who want to learn how to identify and remove invasive species and those who want to learn aquaculture. At the other end of the spectrum, we are also looking for people who know how to crochet or knit. Team members must be able and willing to travel outside the Society to help with projects.

Religious Education Team

The second service will be family-friendly. Thus we need individuals who enjoy working with children. Team members will work with our current Sunday School to provide a special “Earth Rise” curriculum that also emphasizes the development of ethical personalities. We need teachers, grandparents, and people with talent in working with youth. Please note that

Earth Rise will not have a “drop-off” Sunday School. Community building is essential to our ethical way of life, and children learn this core principal best by seeing their parents engaged in the life of a community. Only families that are participating in Earth Rise (and newcomer guests) will be allowed to enroll their children in our program.

Drama Team

One of the ways to reach people in our second service will be through short theatrical scenes (doesn’t seem right to call them skits), which touch on some of the powerful themes about ethical relationships. Our goal is to create a “pool” of actors who will work on scenes for scheduled Sundays. We will use these themes to explore our relationship with the broader community and our natural world. Scenes might revolve around dignity, finding one’s voice, affirming diversity, harmony, mutual interdependence, fear of strangers and change, conflict resolution, community building, connection, kinship, and monologues from renowned environmentalists.

Participants will need to commit themselves to the rehearsal time needed to create effective performances. However, as the scenes are short, and as a number of teams of performers will be organized, we are not talking about an extensive rehearsal period. Experienced actors and performers are needed, as well as those willing to commit themselves to the task.

Welcoming Team

Community building is a chief activity for creating an “ethical culture” and affirming the interdependence of all life. This team will help reach out to newcomers and to integrate new members into the life of our Society. We are especially looking for those “connec-

tors” who enjoy meeting new people and introducing them to others. They will also be responsible for follow-up on newcomers to extend to them an invitation to return. Finally, this group will serve as the “ushers” for Earth Rise and assist the Leader and Lay Leaders in organizing the gathering.

“But Curt, don’t these teams already exist?” you may ask, I want to reiterate that this call for volunteers is not meant to take away from our current teams of volunteers. If you are already active on the various groups that serve Platform, I want to encourage you to continue that commitment. We still need groups to help keep Platform viable and working smoothly.

Our goal is to reach out to newcomers and to find meaningful ways for them to participate in the life of NYSEC. Thus, some duplication is inevitable and is fine, as teams are needed for both gatherings. As I said earlier, each Earth Rise team will be mandated to include newcomers—a principal goal of Earth Rise. This will benefit NYSEC by continuing to expand our membership base.

If you have additional comments or questions, please contact me via email at ccollier@nysec.org, or by phone at 914-375-2151.

Early Sunday 10 AM

(Rooms subject to change)

Dec. 7—Singing Practice—Whether your voice is big or small, everyone is 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 always a lot of fun, so join us! Ceremonial Hall—4th fl.

Dec. 14—Colloquy: Hope. Harriet Bigus presides. Room 408.

Dec. 21—Poetry Readings—Join us to read your favorite poems or just to listen. If possible, bring copies of the poems you plan to read. We usually present some background information about the poet. We look forward to seeing you. Cheryl Gross presides. Room 408.

Dec. 21—Singing Practice—Led by Pat Debrovner and Jerry Ranck. Ceremonial Hall.

Sunday Afternoon 1:45 PM

Dec. 14—PIC Open Meeting: PIC is sponsoring a multi-media presentation on LaOnf, the Iraqi Nonviolence Movement, by the group September 11 Families for Peaceful Tomorrows. *LaOnf* in Arabic means “no violence.” *La* (no) + *Onf* (violence). Abe Markman presides. Ceremonial Hall. (*More on page 10*)

Lunch Discussion Post-Election Issues Thursdays, 12:00 Noon

Bring your lunch and join Dr. Anne Klaeysen for a lively discussion about contemporary ethical issues. This month we will explore some of the issues (listed below) facing the new President. As relieved as we all are that the marathon presidential campaign is behind us, overwhelming problems still loom ahead, and it will take the support of every American to solve them. Copies of relevant articles are available in the Leaders’ office.

Dec. 4—Economics

Dec. 11—Education

Dec. 18—Global Climate Change

Dec. 25—No discussion: If you celebrate Christmas, have a very merry holiday.

Board Meeting Highlights

Dr. Sylvan Wallach, Secretary

Our second Board meeting occurred on an auspicious evening, the day before one of the most significant presidential elections in the history of our country. Perhaps the excitement of the next day’s election motivated us to have what was probably the shortest meeting that I can remember—less than two hours!

The meeting was especially significant in another way. It was the first after our three Leaders had taken office. We now have the benefit of three outstanding Leaders: Joe Chuman, Curt Collier, and Anne Klaeysen. It has been a long time since we have had more than one leader. Curt and Anne participated on this great day. Unfortunately Joe was recovering from an operation and could not be with us.

So this has been an exciting time—a presidential election and the election of a Board of Leaders at the Society. And I think most of us will agree that the outcome of both elections is a happy one.

After the usual preliminaries, Executive Director Bob Liebeskind announced that the windows on the fifth floor have been replaced—a badly needed upgrading to our building. He also thanked staff member Julie Blutstein for the exceptional job she did in planning the Election Night Café program, which turned out to be a huge success. About 150 people attended, many of them not members of the Society.

Robert Berger, chair of the Nominating Committee, reported that the committee for nomination of trustees has been formed and will be meeting soon. There will be four vacant positions on the Board.

An ad hoc committee, Sylvan Wallach, chair, is managing the upgrading of our web site. A contractor has been selected

and a motion to allocate \$6,000 for the work was adopted.

Maria Fridman suggested further discussion take place on the size of the Society Board. It was moved that this discussion be tabled until the current Board of 12 experiences its first year. The motion was not carried; three members approved, five opposed, and three abstained. This item will be on the agenda of the December meeting.

Margaretha Jones, chair of the Personnel Committee, has been ill. She requested a new chair be appointed. Henryka Komanska agreed to accept the chair for a three-month trial. Sylvan Wallach and Margaretha Jones offered to assist. It was suggested that Pat Cohen, Jirina Ribbens, and Barbara Levenson, all past Board members, might be willing to participate.

The Board approved naming November, 2008 “Family-Friendly Month.” The Social Service Board and Public Issues Committee cosponsored programs aiming to strengthen family life during the month. These included the Breakfast/Forum Preview; a Supervised Visitation Fundraiser; and a Breakfast/Forum on Paid Sick Leave, with Gale Brewer, NYC Council member, Chuck Hunt of the NYS Restaurant Association, Nancy Ploeger of the Manhattan Chamber of Commerce, and Donna Dolan of the NYS Paid Family Leave Coalition participating. The forum was moderated by Erika Miller of the Nightly Business Report, and included a background presentation by Sherry Leiwant and Nancy Rankin of A Better Balance.

The Trustees also approved the Society’s cosponsoring a program with Girls Write Now (<http://www.girlswritenow.org/gwn>). The program involves girls at risk reading their work and several speakers. It is expected to attract

300-400 participants—girls and their mentors, family, and supporters.

Founded in 1998, Girls Write Now provides a safe and supportive environment where high school girls can expand their natural writing talents, develop independent, creative voices, and build confidence in making healthy choices in school, career, and life. GWN provides at-risk girls with emerging writing talent the unique opportunity to each be matched with a professional woman writer who serves as her personal mentor and writing coach, meeting with her weekly for an entire school year for up to four years. GWN also enrolls each student in a vibrant writing community and professional network. All mentees and mentors gather monthly for genre-based workshops conducted at Teachers & Writers Collaborative, home to the oldest writers-in-the-schools program in the country, in midtown Manhattan. The year is punctuated by public readings, college prep and career seminars, a social action series, and cultural/literary field trips. The magic of the program is reflected in the outstanding writing produced by mentor-mentee pairs, a 65-percent member retention rate, a 100-percent college acceptance rate, an annual anthology by program participants, and the seven-genre portfolios: memoir, poetry, fiction, editing, screenwriting, journalism, and letter writing.

Our Ethical Family

Moe-Swe Myint

Please welcome new members **Joshua Adams** and **Barbara Bernstein**.

Josh is an account coordinator at View Point, an Internet Marketing Technology Company. He read about Ethical Culture several years ago and rediscovered us while planning his wed-

ding (he and his husband, Scott, were married this October in San Francisco). Josh is drawn to the Society because of its nontheistic religious community dedicated to social justice. He has attended our Sunday platforms, Coffee ‘n Chats, and Cultured Comedy Club, and he is already a part of the Membership Cultivation Club. Josh’s interests include theatre, computers, and technology.

Barbara is a computer programmer. She learned about the Society through a friend and she likes the fact that we are not dogmatic. She is interested in history and Spanish, of which she has a beginner’s knowledge.

The next **reception for prospective members** is scheduled for Thursday, December 4.

Member **Barbara Litke**, our drawing instructor, won three awards for her painting and essays in an art competition sponsored by Eli Lilly and the National Coalition for Cancer Survivorship called the Lilly Oncology on Canvas/Expression of a Cancer Journey. The monetary grant was divided between Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center and the Leukemia and Lymphoma Society for further research to find a cure for leukemia.

If you need a new Membership Directory please let me know.

Ethics and the Theater

Patricia Bruder Debrovner

On Wednesday evening, December 3, from 7:00 to 9:00 pm, Ethics and the Theater will present *Trifles*, by Susan Glaspell. This one-act play, first performed in 1916, is seen as an early example of feminist drama. It is loosely based on the murder of John Hossack, which Glaspell covered while working as a journalist for the *Daily*

News. The playwright presents a complex human drama with haunting questions. Did a Nebraska farm woman murder her husband and, if so, why? While the male characters in the play cannot solve the mystery, two female characters do, through their powers of observation and understanding of the human heart. Come see this engrossing drama and participate in a lively discussion of the ethical issues raised in the play, following the reading. Muriel Berger leads the discussion. Susan Horowitz directs our cast, which includes Bonnie Bean, Chris Everett, Barbara Fennell, John Gurney, and Vince Navarro. Admission fee: \$5.

Lay Leadership Workshop

On Monday, December 8, at 7:00 pm, join Dr. Anne Klaeyesen to “Discover the Leader Within YOU,” a workshop for members interested in becoming more active in the Society. We’ll learn—and practice—some fundamentals of lay leadership that will help members better understand the nature of organization and become more effective in their volunteer roles.

One way to truly belong to a community is to dive into its dynamics and experience new ways of living together. This introductory session will include information about listening and giving feedback, group dynamics, skills development, and much more.

For more information and to register, call the Leaders’ office at 212-874-5210, ext. 118.

John L. Elliott Celebration

On Tuesday, December 9, 6:30–9:30 pm, at Hudson Guild, 441 West 26th

Street, the Guild will hold the 51st annual John Lovejoy Elliott celebration dinner, which honors remarkable individuals who make a difference in the Chelsea community by following in Dr. Elliott’s footsteps. In 1895, Ethical Culture Leader Dr. Elliott rented a basement room in Chelsea as a club for neighborhood boys. This was the birth of what would soon become the Hudson Guild Settlement House serving the entire community with classes, child care, employment, and housing.

Every year, Hudson Guild celebrates Dr. Elliott’s legacy. This year the award recipients are Rev. William Greenlaw, Jimmy Pelsey, and Jose Chavez. Join Dr. Anne Klaeyesen at this event by calling 212-760-9800 or visiting www.hudsonguild.org. Tickets are \$35.

The NY Society has placed an advertisement in the dinner journal reading: “The members of the NY Society for Ethical Culture, whom Dr. John Lovejoy Elliott served lovingly and tirelessly for half a century, congratulate the Hudson Guild community and this year’s award recipients on their ongoing work to make ours a better world for all.”

“There is no such thing as a neighbor standing alone: it takes at least two to have any give and take. It really takes more than two. Being a good neighbor is a great thing in all our lives, something that is absolutely fundamental.” –John Lovejoy Elliott

A Practice of Nonviolent Communication

We often speak of “eliciting the best in others and, thereby, in ourselves” without really knowing how to do that. On Wednesday, December 17, at 7:00 pm,

join Dr. Anne Klaeyesen as she leads a workshop on the technique of non-violent communication developed by author, psychologist, and educator Marshall Rosenberg. His technique provides us with a way to connect to the feelings and needs of others, and ourselves, and to live more intentionally compassionate lives.

Please register for this workshop by calling the Leaders’ office at 212-874-5210, ext. 118.

Party Time! Happy New Year!

Want to welcome 2009 at a New Year’s Eve Party that offers both fun and a serious purpose? NYSEC’s Membership Cultivation Club is planning a party for Wednesday, December 31, starting around 9:00 pm, and everyone is invited. The *fun* will include music, dancing, food, and drink (champagne of course). For *fun* and *purpose*, we will sing “Let There Be Peace On Earth,” a coordinated effort that evening by many faith-based and other groups around the world. And for more *purpose*, our Ethical Action chair, Josh Adams, will supply year-end letters or petitions on topics of concern for all to sign.

So, join us for a great time! Wear parkas for watching the fireworks from our roof. Full details, including the cost, will be announced soon.

Stained Glass Windows Benefit

Dr. Ruth Cohen

It was Broadway Off-Broadway on Sunday, October 19! We had an exciting group of artists, singers, and other musical performers at our Café Concert, the Tenth Annual Benefit

Concert for the Stained Glass Windows. And, thanks to all of you and the other benefit subscribers, this was the most successful concert to date. The artists were pleased to be with us—and wrote to the Society to thank you all for being such a receptive audience. We look forward to many repeat performances!

Ethical Blasts From the Past

Words of wisdom from past Leaders:

Here is a lovely passage from John Lovejoy Elliott—

“The love of the human heart is the most real and the most beautiful Of all the realities we know. It is the richest gift of our manhood and womanhood.

It is the bond that joins us together as lovers, as husband and wife, As father and mother, as parent and child, And as friends and neighbors.

Whatever the length of time may be, To have known something of this Is to have experienced the supreme privilege of being human.

The anguish of parting cannot destroy this most real of all realities.

The love has been,
The affection has existed,
The ties have been woven.

Life has been shared, the joys and the sorrows.

This is as real and strong as anything we know.”

PIC of the News

Abe Markman

PIC Launches Paid Sick Days Effort in New York City—Bringing out the best in each other’s positions was the clarion call at the Breakfast/Forum held Thursday morning, November

Celebrating Election Night 2008!

Moe-Swe Myint

Our **Election Night Café** in Ceremonial Hall was a rousing success (see photos below). We had a full house; 150 people showed up to watch the election returns and to cheer their candidates and party of choice. Kudos to Curt Collier for a really great idea, and many thanks to staffers Julie Blutstein and Marlon Rice’s crew and members Pat Berens, Chris Everett, Anne Klaeysen, Andra Miller, Sharon Pope, and Rich Sander for helping to make this a really rocking event!



20. Thanks so much to the great many people who volunteered. A report will be forthcoming.

A Nonviolence Movement in

Iraq—On Sunday afternoon, December 14, in Ceremonial Hall, there will be a multi-media presentation on LaOnf, the Iraqi Nonviolence Movement, by the September 11 Families for Peaceful Tomorrows.

Far below the radar of the corporate media there has been a story unfolding in Iraq that all Americans should know about. It is an inspiring story of courage, hope, and vision in the face of the unimaginable levels of violence, brutality, corruption, and chaos that the Iraqi people suffer every day.

September 11 Families for Peaceful Tomorrows is an organization founded by family members who lost loved ones on 9/11. They have joined together to turn their grief into action for peace. The group is one of the principle promoters of LaOnf in the United States. The NY Society for Ethical Culture is pleased to bring members of Peaceful Tomorrows to share with us the stories and images of LaOnf’s work and discuss how Americans can show support for these courageous activists as they struggle to free and heal their country.

NYSEC Goes Green

Julie Blutstein

The Society has increased its efforts to “Go Green” and Marlon Rice reports that we are working hard to reduce our carbon footprint, protect our planet, and save money. Here’s how:

Cleaning Products—Our cleaning products are now eco-friendly. The main product we use is H2O2. Sound familiar? It’s hydrogen peroxide! It’s tough on dirt, kills bacteria, is far less toxic than the cleaning solutions we

previously used, and has a mild orange scent. We are also using an eco-friendly glass cleaner that is phosphate-free and has biodegradable packaging.

Lighting—We are switching all of our bulbs to compact fluorescent bulbs, which use a fraction of the energy that regular bulbs use. For instance, a 14-watt compact fluorescent burns with the same intensity as a traditional 60-watt bulb, saving energy. Additionally, compact fluorescent bulbs can last up to 10 times as long as other light bulbs. The lighting in our Auditorium is now 100% compact fluorescent and we are continuing to make replacements elsewhere in the building as necessary.

Water—You might have noticed that we recently replaced our water coolers in favor of a water filtration system. The new system filters our tap water and dispenses it hot or cold. In the first six weeks of use, we dispensed approximately 138 gallons of water. That’s equivalent to 27 of the five-gallon bottles the old water coolers used. This means much less non-biodegradable plastic ending up in a landfill!

Overall, we have made great strides to “green” the Society and in the coming months we intend to do even more.

My Summer Vacation

Eva Yachnes

This summer I went to camp for my vacation. OK, so it wasn’t exactly a camp, and I guess retired people don’t really have vacations, since they’re always on vacation, but that’s what it felt like. Where I actually went was the Ethical Culture Lay Leadership Summer School at The Mountain, in North Carolina.

Before I went, I was told that the facility was rustic. To me rustic is bunk beds and outhouses, but that’s not what The Mountain is like. It has comfortable rooms with private baths; in fact, I’ve stayed in hotels that were a lot worse. The only hardship you have is that you have to make your own bed; or not, depending on how you feel about beds. The food is excellent and plentiful, so staying at The Mountain is no hardship at all.

I volunteer at the American Ethical Union office, and a lot of my time there in the weeks before Summer School was spent making copies of material for the students. I didn’t actually spend time reading what I was copying, but I couldn’t help looking at the schedule, which almost made me change my mind about going. The first item was “Warm up” at 6:45 am; the last item, “Day’s End,” closed at 10:00 pm. They had to be kidding! It turned out that the earliest we really had to show up was for the first lecture, on Ethical Culture, at 9:15 am. If you wanted to



Kate Lovelady and Curt Collier blowing bubbles during a break from more serious Lay Leadership activities

eat breakfast, you did have to get to the dining room before 8:30 am, but everything else before the lecture was voluntary. There was also free time built into the schedule, about two hours every afternoon, and almost the entire afternoon on Thursday. Some people scheduled group activities during the afternoon free time, but I mostly took naps, or did some non-school reading. The one activity I did try to get to was Curt Collier's nature walks, which were wonderful.

Other fun things we did were campfires, complete with marshmallows to roast and singing. Some of us explored the nearby town of Highlands, went

panning for gemstones, and tasted boiled peanuts for the first time. There were two places nearby to swim, and hiking trails for the energetic.

Most of the time spent on lectures and activities was concerned with "Organizational Development." We learned about group roles, the stages in group development, the kind of leadership needed at each stage of a group's growth, and other arcane mysteries regarding the growth of organizations as well as something called "Compassionate Communication." We were assigned to OD Groups, Journey Groups, or Day's End Groups. Since the various groups were made up of

people who weren't from our home Ethical Society, we had a chance to spend time interacting with members of the Ethical community from all over the country. The staff also came from several Ethical Societies; I feel fortunate in having had a chance to meet and work with them.

I won't go into detail about the content of our group activities; some were serious, some were playful, some personal. All of them were challenging and gave us a chance for personal growth. It was a wonderful experience and I'm glad I participated in all of the activities, even the ones I balked at when they were first presented.

December 2008

Office hours for the month are: Monday-Friday, 9:00 am–5:30 pm
Shelter: Monday-Thursday, 7:30 pm

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1 January 2009 Newsletter Deadline 6:30 pm – Board of Trustees 6:30 pm – Monday Writing Workshop	2	3 6:00 pm – Men's Group 7:00 pm – Ethics and the Theater 7:30 pm – Great Books	4 12:00 pm – Leader Lunch Discussion 7:00 pm – Prospective Members' Reception 7:00 pm – Thursday Writing Workshop	5	6 9:30 am and 1:30 pm Supervised Visitation
7 10:00 am – Singing Practice 11:00 am – Ethics for Children 11:15 am – Morning Meeting 12:45 pm – Social Hour 2:00 pm – Teen Leadership	8 6:30 pm – Monday Writing Workshop 7:00 pm – Lay Leadership Workshop	9	10 3:00 pm – ECRDG	11 12:00 pm – Leader Lunch Discussion 7:00 pm – Thursday Writing Workshop	12	13 9:30 am and 1:30 pm Supervised Visitation
14 10:00 am – Colloquy 11:00 am – Ethics for Children 11:15 am – Morning Meeting 12:45 pm – Social Hour 1:45 pm – PIC Open Meeting Nonviolent Movement 2:00 pm – Teen Leadership	15	16	17 6:00 pm – Socrates Café 7:00 pm – Developing a Practice Of Nonviolent Communication 7:30 pm – Great Conversations II	18 12:00 pm – Leader Lunch Discussion 7:00 pm – Thursday Writing Workshop	19	20 9:30 am and 1:30 pm Supervised Visitation
21 10:00 am – Poetry Reading 10:00 am – Singing Practice 11:15 am – Winterfest in Ceremonial Hall, 4 th floor	22	23	24	25 Society Offices Closed Christmas Day	26 11:00 am – Ethics on The Air	27 No Supervised Visitation program today
28 11:00 am – Ethics for Children 11:15 am – Morning Meeting In Ceremonial Hall, 4 th floor	29	30	31 9:00 pm – New Year's Eve Party	Great Books: December 3 – Kant, <i>First Principles of Morals</i> Flaubert, <i>A Simple Heart</i> (Complete work) ECRDG: (Ethical Culture Reading Discussion Group) December 10 – Saul Bellow, <i>Mr. Samler's Planet</i> Great Books: Great Conversation II December 17 – René Descartes, <i>Meditations 1 and 2</i>		

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
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