

# 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 and Reflections

In the Concert Hall

May 7

**Annual Membership Meeting**

*Michael Bogdanffy-Kriegh,*

*President and*

*Tony Hileman, Senior Leader*

May 14

**The Moral Implications of Trying**

**Children as Adults**

*Judge Michael A. Corriero*

*Patricia Bruder Debrovner Presides*

May 21

**Founder's Day**

**Will the Real Ethical Culture**

**Please Stand Up?**

*Ed Ericson, AEU Leader*

*Tony Hileman Presides*

May 28

**Something's Rotten in the State**

**of (...): Kierkegaard and Ethical**

**Culture**

*Gerald Ranck*

*Music Director*

*Andra Miller Presides*

### Save the Dates:

**Tuesday, May 9**—Open House—  
Tour of the Society building.

**Sunday, June 4**—New Mem-  
bers Recognition Day.

**Saturday, June 24**—Special  
one-day Retreat at the River-  
dale Society and the Fieldston  
School.

## May Happenings

**Tour of the New York Society Building—Tuesday, May 9, 6:00 pm.** Once again, our archivist, Marc Bernstein, will lead a tour of our beautiful landmark Viennese Secessionist building, with its rich architectural detail and unique sculpture and paintings. (*For more see page 5*)

**History and Roots of Humanism—Wednesday, May 10, 7:00–8:30 pm.,** the third and final session of our course on Humanism. The presenter will be Dr. Joseph Chuman, Senior Leader of the Ethical Culture Society of Bergen County, always a dynamic and knowledgeable speaker. (*Continues on page 4*)

**Founder's Day Celebration: 130 Years of Ethical Culture—Sunday, May 21, 11:15 am.** Ed Ericson, Senior Leader, NYSEC, 1974-1984, asks "Will the Real Ethical Culture Please Stand Up?" A reception during the social hour follows.

## From the Leader's Desk

*Tony Hileman, Senior Leader*



### Ethical Culture's Contributions

In reflecting on 130 years of Ethical Culture, as we do this month, it's appropriate to look back on the contributions of its founder, Felix Adler, especially to the field of liberal religious thought. A lot of that and other remembering will be done in events surrounding Founder's Day, including Ed Ericson's Sunday morning address on May 21, and the reception to follow, as outlined in separate notices. But I want to take this opportunity to highlight something that doesn't get nearly enough credit: Ethical  
(*Continued on page 2*)

## Sunday Morning Meetings

**May 7—Annual Membership Meeting**

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

On this day there will be no regular Sunday Address. We will present reports from our President, Senior Leader, and others. Members will elect candidates for the Board of Trustees and will vote on proposed by-laws changes.

**May 14—The Moral Implications of Trying Children as Adults**

*Judge Michael A. Corriero*

How should a just society judge young offenders? When is it proper to punish a child as a criminal? What form should the punishment take? As the presiding judge since 1992  
(*Continued on page 3*)

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Lynda Kennedy	106
Yolanta Kosmaczewska	104
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**Leader's Desk**

*(Continued from page 1)*

Culture's contribution to the concept of a supreme ethical rule—a Golden Rule, if you will.

Both the ancient and Common Era versions of the prime maxim, or Golden Rule, are “me” centered. Whether stated in the negative, “What is hateful to you, do not to your fel-



Felix Adler

hope in ourselves and in others, foreshadows change, and is energized by an idealism focused on individual worth and the betterment of society—a supreme way of being. It represents a pivotal point in liberal reli-

*The supreme ethical rule of “Act so as to elicit the best in others and thereby in thyself” takes us from “me-ism” to “we-ism” by bringing you into my ethical circle. No longer am I the sole arbiter of what’s right and good for you, but I must take you into account as together we determine what’s best for both of us.*

low man” or the positive, “All things whatsoever you would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them,” they establish “my” standards as the criterion of what’s good for you. If I don’t want it done to me, you shouldn’t do it to me. Or if, in the newer version, it’s okay with me, then it should be okay with you. Neither of these really takes you into account.

In reformulating the sentiment that is hinted at in these maxims, Ethical Culture takes us past them. The supreme ethical rule of “Act so as to elicit the best in others and thereby in thyself” takes us from “me-ism” to “we-ism” by bringing you into my ethical circle. No longer am I the sole arbiter of what’s right and good for you, but I must take you into account as together we determine what’s best for both of us.

This advancement in ethical thinking is bold and profound. It is a concept that bespeaks an informed optimism, reflects a faith in humanity, inspires

giou thinking and expresses a vitality that remains as relevant today as it was at the time of our founding.

Even before establishing Ethical Culture, Felix Adler sent forth a har-binger of his new religion in his one and only sermon to his father’s congregation, Temple Emanu-El, when he said, “...religion not confined to church or synagogue alone shall go forth... laying its greatest stress not on believing but in... acting...” His aspiration found vibrancy and animation in Ethical Culture and continues to inform our lives today.

Just as it is appropriate to ask what Ethical Culture continues to contribute to us, it is also appropriate to ask ourselves what we are contributing to Ethical Culture.

We are currently in the midst of our annual pledge campaign. I want to thank all of you who have made it so successful, and encourage those of you who have not yet pledged to do

so. Only with your ongoing involvement and increased financial support can Ethical Culture continue to make vitally needed contributions to our lives and to our society.

## Sunday Morning

*(Continued from page 1)*

of Manhattan's Youth Part, a special court that has the responsibility of resolving cases of children as young as thirteen who are tried as adults, Judge Corriero has confronted the complex world of troubled children and children in trouble with the law. He will discuss the consequences of the policy of trying children as adults, the issues presented by such a policy and their moral implications, and offer his recommendations for improving our juvenile justice system.

### May 21—Will the Real Ethical Culture Please Stand Up?

*Ed Ericson, AEU Leader*

The Ethical Culture Movement came into being during a crisis of unparalleled government corruption that shook

*Today, on Ethical Culture's 130<sup>th</sup> anniversary, we face conditions very similar to those our founding generation faced.*

a once-popular president. Cutthroat business practices, financial manipulation, the exploitation of labor, bribery and fraud, spoilage of the environment, and a greatly widening gulf between the wretchedly poor and the obscenely rich mocked the ideals of American democracy. Public disillusionment threatened to rend society asunder.

Ethical Culture offered an answer to the social malaise: Right relations in personal, public, and commercial affairs constitute the essential bond of human well being. Without right-relatedness human existence loses coherence and life-energy.

Today, on Ethical Culture's 130<sup>th</sup> anniversary, we face conditions very similar to those our founding generation faced. Indeed, our world crisis exceeds in scope and peril what they experienced. Is our answer to the times as clear and vigorous as theirs?

### May 28—Something is Rotten in the State of (...): Kierkegaard and Ethical Culture

*Gerald Ranck, Music Director*

Without question, the Danish philosopher Søren Kierkegaard was one of the most turbulent as well as important figures in 19<sup>th</sup> century Europe, whose works are credited with founding existentialism and prefiguring postmodernism. What made him controversial was his frontal attack on what he called "Christendom," and towards the end of his short life, he railed against the hypocrisy of the Danish church with as much venom as Luther had spewed at the Catholics (and Jews).

It is in his sense of "speaking truth to power," to engender bringing out the best in the religion he loved and valued, that Kierkegaard continues to speak to the Adlerian ideals that sustain Ethical Culture.

Kierkegaard's meditations on creativity and genius in music (particularly Mozart) are just as relevant—and revelatory. Why is "Don Giovanni" an opera? Why is it in D minor? Why

is Don Giovanni always a baritone? Kierkegaard's answers in his masterwork "Either/Or" offer profound insights into our deepest aesthetic mysteries and, moreover, attempt to elicit a richer understanding of the treasures of an enlightened life that cannot help but bring out the best in us.

Finally, Kierkegaard's vehement call to action to "clean up, purify" the religion he loved and his strident and passionate attacks on hypocrisy and corruption should summon us to rise up and rid our nation once and for all of the stench and stupidity of its current political ways. Something is rotten in the state of — here?

## Early Sunday 10:00 AM

**May 7—Everyday Ethics**—An early morning chat led by Joe Marvel about workplace ethics. Bring coffee if you'd like. Room 408.

**May 14—Colloquy**—A meditative hour exploring thoughts about a presented subject. Phyllis Kreuttner will guide this probing, quiet, and contemplative time. Room 408.

**May 21—Poetry Reading**—A peaceful hour with Cheryl Gross reading poems of which we are especially fond. Come to read, or just to listen. Room 408.

**May 28—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. A little rusty voicewise? It doesn't matter. Please join us in Ceremonial Hall as we raise our voices.

## Sunday Afternoon 1:30 PM

**May 7**—Annual Membership Meeting. No afternoon program.

**May 14**—Ethics in the News—Our discussion, led by Abe Markman, will continue the search for ethical positions to urge on 2006 candidates. We hope to persuade other Ethical Societies and the AEU to join us. Ceremonial Hall.

**May 21**—Founder’s Day Play, “The First Day of the Society for Ethical Culture.” Social Hall.

**May 28**—No afternoon program.

## Our Ethical Family

*Suzy Frazer*

Sadly, we report that long-time members Mary Daugherty and Madeline Greenberg have passed away.

**Dropped:** Diane Bauman, Richard Courtney, and David Wellen.

## Personal Writing

*Elaine Berman*

This spring’s ten-week semester of our popular “Joy of Personal Writing” class began on April 27. The workshop, which meets on Thursdays, welcomes both new and experienced writers. For more information, call Suzy Frazer at 212-874-5210, ext. 113.

## Photography Workshop

*Patricia Bruder Debrovner*

If you want to sharpen your photography skills, join us for an exciting new “hands-on” workshop led by our own Larry Yates. All photographers are wel-



*Dr. Larry Yates*

come, beginning or advanced, digital or film. In eight sessions spread over May, June, July, and August you will learn about composition, natural and artificial lighting, color and black and white, scale and depth, texture and tone, movement, night and low-light shooting, and impact. Larry will also offer some advice about equipment. You’ll find that you will have a lot of latitude for your creativity in shooting your “homework assignments.”

In addition to serving as president of the Manhattan Miniature Camera Club, Larry is vice-president of the Metropolitan Camera Club Council and treasurer of the Cosmopolitan Chapter of the Photographic Society of America. He regularly judges and gives presentations at regional camera clubs. His photos have won numerous awards, both locally and nationally.

Workshop sessions will be held on the following Thursdays (7:00–9:00 pm): May 4, May 11, June 8, June 11, June 22, July 6, July 20, August 10, and August 24. To register, call Judy Wank at 212-874-5210, ext. 118, or for more information, call Larry at 212-864-4572. The cost for the workshop is \$100 for members, \$150 for nonmembers.

## Film Forum

*Valerie Leiman*

Want to look back at life in this great city over the years through the eyes of leading directors and cinematographers? Then our Film Forum series is for you! Join us on Friday, May 5, as we present *Brother From Another Planet* (1984). In this very jaundiced

social commentary, a black extraterrestrial, on the lam from outer space cops, crash-lands his space ship in New York harbor. He struggles ashore at Ellis Island, then makes his way to Harlem, immediately impressing everyone because he lets them do all the talking and he himself doesn’t say a word. Director John Sayles, a MacArthur Foundation Fellow with a degree in psychology, has fun playing one of the alien pursuers. Actor Joe Morton gives the main character a skillful and thoughtful, albeit silent, performance.

Film historian Richard Bruno will again host the evening, beginning with an introduction about the city and the times. After the movie, he’ll lead the usual lively discussion with the audience. Come and have a great time! The doors open at 6:30 pm; the movie will start at 7:00 pm. Admission: \$3.00 for members and \$4.00 for nonmembers; the popcorn is free. So come and enjoy.

## History and Roots of Humanism

*(Continued from page 1)*

Joe will focus on the emergence and evolution of humanist thought in the West and will also discuss humanist tendencies in the ancient world and during the Renaissance. He’ll talk about the European Enlightenment and examine the contribution of Humanism in the 19<sup>th</sup> century and its coalescence into a movement with institutional expression in the past hundred years. He will also look at various anti-humanist challenges today. After the presentation we’ll have a question-and-answer session. Please join us for a lively and informative evening. The cost is \$15 for members and \$20 for nonmembers.

## Open House Tour

*(Continued from page 1)*

We'll meet in Ceremonial Hall at 6:00 pm for refreshments. The tour begins at 6:30 pm, and will last approximately 40 minutes. For more information, or to register, call Suzy Frazer at 212-874-5210, ext. 113.



*Two views of the New York Society's magnificent landmark building*

## Spring Bike Trip

*Henryka Komanska*

Spring is here! Come ride with us on Saturday, May 13, for a four-hour biking adventure leaving from West 72<sup>nd</sup> Street in Manhattan and traveling to Wave Hill Garden in the Riverdale section of the Bronx. This will be a great ride with many points of interest along the way. The cycling distance is approximately 20 miles on mostly flat terrain with a couple of low hills. Most of the ride will be on the Hudson River bike path, and we'll also ride on quiet city streets. You must wear a bicycle helmet to participate.

You don't need to sign up, just show up. We'll meet at 9:30 am, at the Eleanor Roosevelt statue at 72<sup>nd</sup> Street and Riverside Drive. Bring water, a bicycle lock, and money for the garden entrance fee, which is \$5. You can either bring your own lunch or buy lunch at the garden cafe. Rain cancels.



*Our intrepid hikers on an April trip*

## Fall Retreat

*Suzy Frazer*

The annual NYSEC Retreat will take place at the beautiful Williams Lake Hotel Resort and Conference Center in Rosendale New York, in the heart of Hudson Valley. The weekend's cost is \$249 per person double occupancy and \$329 single occupancy. Rates include meals from dinner on Friday through lunch on Sunday. There is also a \$15 surcharge per person to cover tips, etc.

To reserve your place, please call Suzy Frazer at 212-874-5210, ext. 113, or email her at [sfrazer@nysec.org](mailto:sfrazer@nysec.org). Space is first come, first served, so we need to hear from you and receive your \$100 deposit ASAP. Full payment is due by July 1, or the Williams Lake Hotel will not hold the rooms. Last year's Retreat was very popular and rewarding.

Join other members this year as we relax, discuss, laugh, and enjoy nature, local activities, and good company.

## Ethics and the Theater

*Patricia Bruder Debrovner*

On Wednesday, May 24, at 7:00 pm, our Ethics and the Theater group will present *Mrs. Warren's Profession*, by George Bernard Shaw. In this play, a free-thinking young woman must decide whether to accept the financial rewards that her mother earns by running brothels. The 1894 play was written, in Shaw's words, "to draw attention to the truth that prostitution is caused by underpaying, undervaluing, and overworking women so shamefully that the poorest of them are forced to resort to prostitution to keep body and soul together..."

Harriet Bigus will direct and Heather Grady will lead the discussion that follows. Our cast includes Hope Bernstein, Jerry Chamlin, Karen Contreras, John Gurney, John Lovelady, and Ryan Paulson.

## Theater Group Presents:

In February, in honor of Black History Month, our Ethics and the Theater series featured Emily Mann's *Having Our Say*, the story of the famous Delany sisters, who both lived past 100 years of age. Cheryl Gross played

Sadie, Barbara Fennell played Bessie, and Jackie Pope was our moderator.



L-R: Barbara Fennell, Jackie Pope, and Cheryl Gross

## Developing Ethical Political Positions

Abe Markman



The monthly Ethics in the News meetings will continue to refine the group's response to current issues facing our nation. We hope that the stands we

develop on such issues as the U.S vis-à-vis Iraq; the need for active unions and for decent medical coverage; the U.S. response to global warming; the increasing threat to women's right to choose; and logical boundaries for stem cell research will gain the endorsement of the Boards of Directors of the New York Society for Ethical Culture, other Ethical Societies, and the American Ethical Union. The project continues, and we need additional research and input from the membership on these and other issues.

Our leader for the past nine years, Mary Ellen Goodman, has chosen to transfer leadership of the group to me,

and I receive that responsibility with gratitude and humility. She's a hard act to follow. The entire group wishes to express our deep gratitude for the research she has done and for her talent in bringing us complex ethical issues to think through and discuss at our monthly sessions. During the past three months, she has used her considerable talent to help us reach, or come close to achieving, a consensus on these urgent ethical political principles and positions.

Thanks, Mary Ellen, from us all for all you're done, and for continuing to assist us in developing considered responses to the issues of the day.

## Benefit Concert

Dr. Ruth Cohen



Our next Benefit Concert is tentatively set for Sunday, November 19. We thank everyone for your support as we work to restore our wonderful building and look forward to seeing you then.

The latest inspection of the stained glass windows indicated that they are stable and do not need immediate attention. The Stained Glass Windows Fund will be used for the windows any time the need arises. For that reason, the

Benefit Concert Committee is now turning our attention to the much-needed renovation and restoration of the six leather-paneled, brass-studded inner doors to the auditorium, which will provide a much-needed complement to the completion of our auditorium's renovation.

## Robert Fisk at NYSEC

The New York Society's magnificent auditorium recently was the setting for an informative discussion, "On War, the Middle East, and Journalism." On April 7, noted author and journalist Robert Fisk spoke to a full house of members and the public.



Author Robert Fisk at NYSEC

# May 2006

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

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1 <b>June 2006 Newsletter Deadline</b>	2	3	4	5	6
	6:30 pm – Monday Writing Workshop	6:15 pm – Drawing Class	6:00 pm – Men’s Group 7:30 pm – Great Books	6:00 pm – Singing Class 7:00 pm – Photography Class 7:00 pm – Thursday Writing Workshop	7:00 pm – Film Forum <i>Brother From Another Planet</i> (1984)	9:30 am & 1:30 pm Supervised Visitation
7 10:00 am – Everyday Ethics 11:15 am – Annual Meeting 11:30 am – Ethics for Children 12:45 pm – Social Hour	8 6:30 pm – Monday Writing Workshop	9 6:00 pm – Women’s Group 6:00 pm – Open House Tour 6:15 pm – Drawing Class	10 3:00 pm – ECRDG 7:00 pm – History and Roots of Humanism	11 6:00 pm – Singing Class 7:00 pm – Photography Class 7:00 pm – Thursday Writing Workshop	12	13 9:30 am – Bike Ride 9:30 am & 1:30 pm Supervised Visitation
14 10:00 am – Colloquy 11:15 am – Morning Meeting 11:30 am – Ethics for Children 12:45 pm – Social Hour 1:30 pm – Ethics in the News	15 6:30 pm – Social Service Board 6:30 pm – Monday Writing Workshop	16	17 6:00 pm – Socrates Café 7:30 pm – Great Books: Clashes of Culture	18 6:00 pm – Singing Class 7:00 pm – Thursday Writing Workshop	19	20 9:30 am & 1:30 pm Supervised Visitation
21 10:00 am – Poetry Reading 11:15 am – Founder’s Day 11:30 am – Ethics for Children 12:45 pm – Orientation 12:45 pm – Reception 1:30 pm – Founder’s Day Play	22 6:30 pm – Monday Writing Workshop	23	24 7:00 pm – Ethics and the Theater	25 6:00 pm – Singing Class 7:00 pm – Thursday Writing Workshop	26	27 No Supervised Visitation program today
28 10:00 am – Singing Practice 11:15 am – Morning Meeting 11:30 am – Ethics for Children 12:45 pm – Social Hour 1:30 pm – No program	29 <b>Society offices closed</b>	30 6:30 pm – Monday Writing Workshop	31	<p><b>Great Books:</b> May 3 – Locke, <i>Of Civil Government</i> Swift, <i>Gulliver’s Travels</i></p> <p><b>ECRDG: (Ethical Reading Discussion Group)</b> May 10 – Charles Dickens, <i>Oliver Twist</i></p> <p><b>Great Books: “Clashes of Culture”</b> May 17 – TBA</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  
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