

ETHICAL OUTLOOK

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Sunday Programs

August 4

"Iran, the Emerging Struggle for Rights and Civil Society"

Behzad Yaghmaian

Professor of Economics at Ramapo College, New Jersey
Michael Bogdanffy-Kriegh Presides

August 11

"End of Life Issues: Combining the Practical and the Pastoral"

Susan Rose Teshu

Ethical Culture Leader
Anne Klaeyesen Presides

August 18

"The Einstein Files and J. Edgar Hoover's FBI"

Fred Jerome

Author
Dr. Khoren Arisian Presides

August 25

"Workers' Rights and the National Campaign for a Living Wage"

Rabbi Michael E. Feinberg

Executive Director of the Greater NY Labor-Religion Coalition
Dr. Khoren Arisian Presides

WQXR-FM (96.3)

Broadcasts

1st and 3rd Sundays of the month at 7:30 am

August 4

"How Much is 'Good Enough'"

Anne Klaeyesen

August 18

"Music and Politics"

Gerald Ranck

Annual Report Issue

(Annual Report Begins on Page 3)

Sunday Morning Meetings

August 4—"Iran, the Emerging Struggle for Rights and Civil Society"

Behzad Yaghmaian

Behzad Yaghmaian is an international political economist specializing in third world studies. He wrote for reformist newspapers in Iran and has close connections with the student movements there. His articles have appeared in *Counterpunch*. He is currently studying the migration of Muslims from the Middle East and Northern Africa and is the author of the recent book, *Social Change in Iran: An Eyewitness Account of Dissent, Defiance, and New Movements for Rights*.

August 11—"End of Life Issues: Combining the Practical and the Pastoral"

Susan Rose Teshu

Ethical Culture Leader Susan Teshu is also an interfaith chaplain and a professional organizer. With information and caring, she has helped many people prepare for the end of their lives, and believes that this process can enhance one's life and be a gift to loved ones. In both this address and a subsequent workshop on Saturday, October 26, Susan addresses the importance of making sound medical decisions, appointing a trusted health care proxy, and preparing well-organized documentation. Thinking about the end of our lives can be difficult, but it is also important. Susan combines the practical with the pastoral to bring understanding and compassion to this process.

August 18—"The Einstein Files and J. Edgar Hoover's FBI"

Fred Jerome

In the May 7 Science section of *The New York Times*, a full page and a half was devoted to a review of author Fred Jerome's meticulously researched book, *The Einstein Files: J. Edgar Hoover's Secret War Against the World's Most Famous Scientist*. Incorporating material unavailable until pried loose via the Freedom of Information Act, the author culls and integrates data from the world-renowned physicist's almost 2000-page FBI file with the often hysterical history of the period. Fred Jerome reveals how intensely interested Einstein was in the larger society, believing it his duty to deploy his fame to help advance the cause of social justice. A fervent pacifist, internationalist, socialist, and anti-racist, Einstein invoked his immense prestige to denounce Senator Joseph R. McCarthy,

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publicly urging witnesses to refuse to testify before the House Un-American Activities Committee.

Fred Jerome is a senior consultant at the Newhouse School of Communications, Syracuse University. His articles and op-ed pieces have appeared in several publications, including *Newsweek* and *The New York Times*. More recently, he has taught journalism at Columbia, NYU and other Manhattan-area universities. We are thankful to his sister-in-law, Cheryl Gross, for bringing Fred to our attention.

August 25 – “Workers’ Rights and the National Campaign for a Living Wage”

Rabbi Michael E. Feinberg

Executive Director of the Greater New York Labor-Religion Coalition with which our Society is nominally affiliated, Reconstructionist Rabbi Michael Feinberg has served as an educator and activist for over 25 years in social/economic peace and justice movements in the U.S., Britain, Israel, and Central America. His ethical passion is notable, authentic and persistent. Michael, who spoke at the Society on Labor Day Weekend 2000, is a graduate of Cornell, has interned at the King Center for Nonviolent Social Change, and completed a graduate program in Refugee Studies and Human Rights at Oxford University in addition to extensive Reconstructionist rabbinical education, including a stint at Leo Baeck College in London. A member of the New York Board of Rabbis, he will speak to us on the crucial distinction between a living wage versus the minimum wage as the template and fulcrum for advancing workers’ rights nationwide.

Our Ethical Family

Ben Bean & Members

Janet Asimov is home from the hospital and we wish her a quick recovery.

Muriel and Bob Berger’s daughter, Kristina, is co-author of a new book, *Expect Miracles: Charter Schools and the Politics of Hope and Despair*.

Paul Brown, Psychotherapist son of Valerie Leiman, is featured in the 2-part PBS series, *Red Gold*, as “the ideal donor.”

Nickolai Kipp Parker was married to Caroline Mary Rooney this past Spring in Greece.

Virginia Scherer was injured in an accident while visiting her family in Texas. She is now recovering in New York. Our hopes for a speedy and complete recovery.

Sarah E. Wright Kaye wrote *This Child’s Gonna Live*, which received broad critical acclaim, in 1969. The novel tells the story of one woman’s struggle to keep her land and family together amidst the harsh realities of rural black life. To our delight, the book is now back in print.

August Calendar

Newsletter Deadline

Thursday, August 1

WQXR-FM (96.3)

Sundays, August 4 & August 18, 7:30 am

Morning Meetings

Sundays, 10:30 am

Widows and Widowers Support Group

Tuesdays, 6:30 pm

Women’s Chorus

Wednesdays, 6:30 pm

ANNUAL REPORT

President

Michael Bogdanffy-Kriegh

The year 2001-2002 has been a good one for the New York Society. The spirit of our Ethical community is increasingly more positive and forward looking. Membership numbers, attendance at Sunday Meetings, and financial contributions are all up. We've made numerous new friends and have effectively increased our presence in New York City. I'd like to review our accomplishments during the past year and set out an agenda for moving forward that I believe will accelerate the momentum we are experiencing. I think you'll agree with me, it's an exciting time to be a member.

No assessment of the year can ignore the defining moment of September 11, 2001 and the months that followed. A severe shock to the city, the nation, and much of the world, it was an event that challenged all of us in ways too numerous to count. We were all dumbfounded by the sheer magnitude of what happened and spent the following months dealing with it in whatever ways we could. It was clearly a struggle for any of us to do any of the work we had agreed to do. In spite of the horrific nature of the event and the difficulty of the aftermath, I believe we acquitted ourselves well. Our response was thoughtful, questioning, and continuing. And as a community, we embraced one another and helped one another through it. We also reached out to the

community around us, offering to be good listeners and a referral to help when needed. I'm proud of the community we were and continue to be.

In addition to our success in moving through the aftermath of September 11, another remarkable thing is that we went on with the business of being Ethical Culture in a way that has accomplished a considerable amount during the year.

The quality of our programming has been steadily on the rise, and the past year has been no exception. When I review the list of distinguished guest speakers, which included Nadine Strosen, Diane McWhorter, Rabbi Sherwin T. Wine, Barbara Coombs Lee, and Thane Rosenbaum, and remember the talks of Khoren Arisian, Anne Klaeyesen, Jean Kotkin, Gerald Ranck, and Dr. Spetter; it is hard not to think that we have had an embarrassment of riches. Kudos to the Sunday Program Committee, chaired by Carole Chamlin, for their hard work in bringing this richness to you.

Consider also the offerings of the Adult Education Committee, co-chaired by Judy Wallach and Phyllis Kreuttner, an example of which is the Comparative Religions course running now. With speakers such as Robert Thurman and John Stratton, as well as a commendable mix of Movement leaders, learned individuals, and other experts in eastern religions, this course has consistently attracted an audience numbering from 60 to well over 100

participants, up significantly from the year before. This is a major success made possible by the very hard work of Khoren Arisian in collaboration with the committee.

We learned a thing or two about attracting families this year, too. In January, the Sunday School partnered with Anne Klaeyesen to host a square dance. More than 50 adults and children attended the event and all had a very good time. And this spring, member Beth Goldberg organized a concert with the Walkabout Clearwater Chorus that drew over 150 participants, most of them individuals who were new to the Society, and—most notably—predominantly families. I can't tell you how much I enjoyed seeing teenagers laughing and giggling in the rear mezzanine area while their parents were no doubt down front enjoying the music. The lesson was clear. Provide wholesome entertainment at a reasonable price that is of interest to parents and children together, and families will come.

We've also made significant strides in raising the level of awareness of the Ethical Culture Society in New York City. Our public relations efforts have been successful in helping us increase our audiences and make our public face more professional and consistent. The Public Relations Committee, co-chaired by Bob Berger and Les Graifman, and our public relations consultant, Dale Zeidman, have worked hard all year long producing press releases, fliers, radio spots, and ads and placing them appropriately. We've

never gotten so much from our public relations efforts as we have in the past year.

Organizationally we have made some large strides too, particularly in the realm of our finances. I won't say too much on this subject because I don't want to steal the thunder of our treasurer, but I do want to note that financial record keeping at the Society has greatly improved. Additionally, we have reorganized our Endowment Committee under the co-chairmanship of Edith Wullach and Chuck Debrovner. We have made significant changes in the management of our endowment funds and, though investments always fluctuate, it appears these changes have been for the better.

Now about the building. I hope you have all noticed that the scaffolding is coming down! We have completed the exterior repairs to the building and I'm pleased to report the building envelope is now secure. We have also ordered new carpet for the auditorium and begun a refurbishment of the Adler Study, Room 514. With these two projects, we have begun to turn our attention to the interior of our landmark building, and there is a lot of work to do. Thanks to the Building Committee for their tireless efforts under the direction of Gil Santiago, chair until January of this year, and Sheila Kleinwald and Ruth Cohen, co-chairs since that time.

I'd like to acknowledge, too, the accomplishments of Khoren Arisian. In addition to the things I've already mentioned, Khoren has established himself firmly as our philosophical and moral center and has worked tirelessly on our

behalf. He is another one of the pivotal good things that the Society has been blessed with in the past two years.

I want to cite the work of Paula Sheldon, our administrator, who has been here for almost two years and has brought us to a new level of professionalism in the administration of our organization. The challenges of her office are many, and she is often in the role of having to place limits and insist on adherence to policy, which does not always make her popular. However, it does win her my gratitude and the board's. Paula has been a key component in our reaching the place where we are now, one of considerable promise and possibility.

Now, you may ask, how was it possible to have a year where so many things have gone well or been done right. It is in part due to the efforts of all of us, in big ways and small, but, in particular, I think we need to thank the leadership of the Society. I want to say very firmly that we are where we are today because of the tireless efforts of Judy Wallach and Chuck Debrovner, whose leadership sustained us through difficult times and initiated the structural changes that paved the way for this moment with all of its potential. Thank you Judy and Chuck, and thanks to all of you who served on the board or volunteered under their leadership.

As to the work we need to do. As I've said, we stand at a pivotal moment and we have choices to make and a great deal of development work to do.

In planning for the coming year, I have identified five development areas

that need attention, either to keep things moving or to initiate new movement:

- Community presence
- Membership
- Revenue generation
- Fundraising
- Our building

These five areas are interrelated and very much dependent on one another. Let me start with the financial development areas, revenue generation and fundraising, as I think they are the lever that will make additional development possible.

Of immediate interest and importance is the revenue side of financial development. We have learned from a marketing survey we commissioned this year that our building is a revenue generator that is performing well below its potential. How far below? A conservative estimate would be at least 50% and an estimate by no means unrealistic would be 75%. We currently realize approximately \$220,000 to \$230,000 a year from renting our spaces to one-time or limited-time renters. Our marketing survey indicates that we are charging about half what comparable space goes for in other venues. Additionally, we do not market the spaces, and the major spaces are rented well below half the time they are available. As a result, the income potential from the building could be as much as \$1 million a year, exclusive of long-term rentals. This is a huge potential, and to my mind, capitalizing on it is the key to opening numerous doors.

In order to realize this potential, two other areas of development come into play, community presence and

the building itself. The marketing survey tells us that we must refurbish the spaces and increase their use. Refurbishment is the development of the building, and increasing use means getting the word out, marketing ourselves, which will increase community presence. If we do these two things, we will then be able to take the step of raising prices and starting to claim the full revenue generating potential of our building.

As I mentioned earlier, we have begun both the planning and the implementation of interior repairs and refurbishment. In addition to the refurbishment of Room 514 and carpeting for the auditorium, I will propose significant expenditures to the board for refurbishment of the auditorium and an extensive list of needed interior repairs and enhancements. We are expecting to do the auditorium refurbishment next summer and have already raised a promise of \$100,000 from the School towards that end. We are also in conversation with one of our regular renters, Eos Orchestra, about some other contributions to the refurbishment effort.

The Eos connection is interesting for additional reasons. In particular, it is an example of the kind of relationship that can exist between Ethical Culture and a performing arts group that rents our spaces. Music has always been an important component of our experience at Ethical Culture. Communicating musically, as Eos does, reaches another dimension of our being. And because we have an acoustically outstanding auditorium, it is a natural step to

increase the use of this space for musical performances.

By collaborating with a group like Eos we stand to gain. Eos is an exciting and artistically adventurous group with a young and connected audience. We say something about ourselves by being willing to embrace them. I believe we should do a gala opening event when we complete the auditorium refurbishment. Eos has indicated they would be willing to help do that. They have also indicated that they could help us develop our auditorium as a performance venue by helping to find performance groups and helping with applications for arts grants.

Of course this kind of collaboration is not without its costs. These are quid-pro-quo relationships and we would have to measure the cost against the return, but I've gone into some detail here because in general it speaks to a development principal that is important. We do not want to just rent our spaces. We want to rent them, as much as possible, to groups that are synergistic. We want to encourage rental by groups with beliefs and messages that are consistent with Ethical Culture or that serve a different aspect of our humanist spirit. The goal is to raise revenue, raise our visibility, and raise the number of individuals coming to the building who might be interested in Ethical Culture.

In order to encourage this in a planned and effective way, we are proposing the hiring of an events coordinator. An events coordinator would have several responsibilities. He or she would manage the booking and

work with those who rent our space. The events coordinator would work with the membership on the planning of programs and events, and would be charged with being proactive in attracting groups and programs that are consistent with the philosophy of Ethical Culture.

I mentioned earlier another area of financial development, fundraising. This type of revenue generation depends on writing grants, planning fundraising events, developing planned giving and annuity programs, and so forth. It is not as quick a revenue source as the marketing of our spaces can be, but it is important to pursue it, nonetheless. Towards that end, we are proposing putting money into the new budget to hire a grants writer/fundraiser for the second half of the coming fiscal year. The reason for half a year is that we want to start to realize some revenue from space rental initiatives before taking on a significant additional expense.

Regarding our community presence. As mentioned earlier in this report, we have made significant gains in our efforts to develop presence. Through good programming and PR, that presence will continue to grow. Currently, we have a part-time PR consultant who is working with us 30 to 40 hours a month. We will need more PR as we ratchet up our efforts to attract people to the building and develop our presence. We are therefore proposing a permanent PR position at the Society in the new budget.

One additional budget allocation to mention, which is aimed at increasing

presence, is money for web site development. We applaud the efforts of our Internet Committee in developing our web site. It has come a long way. We want to encourage its further development and so we've given the committee a significant increase in its budget line and we are asking that a web site designer be retained to upgrade the site. This move is critical. We need to develop a first-class web site that presents our building and its available spaces, and that projects a sophisticated and competent image to visitors who may have been referred from a site like that of the Eos Orchestra, which has said it would be willing to link its web site to ours.

We have proposals related to increasing revenue and fundraising, fixing up our building, and increasing our community presence, and I've spoken a little about how taking steps in individual areas will have a positive impact on other areas of development. The one area I have yet to speak of directly is membership development.

It should be clear from my words so far that in proceeding with development of community presence, revenue, fundraising, and the building, we are enhancing the environment for attracting and retaining members. This is where providing good, effective programming both at our Sunday Meetings and during the week is important. As more and more people come through the doors, there will be more and more people who see what else we offer or that the Society is involved in. We have to continue to develop high quality programming and, very importantly, visibly do the work of Ethical

Culture. Towards that end, we have in the past year or two revitalized the Ethical Action Committee, which is doing increasingly good work. We are also beginning to build bridges between the full Society and the Social Service Board. The Ethical Action Committee and the Social Service Board are doing the work of Ethical Culture and we need to continue to strengthen them. This, coupled with more of the very good programming we have been doing, and the continued support of the membership by the Membership Committee and the membership coordinator, will begin to make the Society a real center of humanism and community and an exciting place to be.

I hope you agree with me, it's an exciting time to be a member of the New York Society for Ethical Culture.

Senior Leader

And the Year to Come: The Power of Imagination

Dr. Khoren Arisian

I find it almost hard to believe that the Society's immediate past program year went by so quickly! And by the time you receive this issue of the newsletter in early August, we shall be well on the way to preparing for the year ahead. Meanwhile, the 50th anniversary of the founding of the IHEU (International Humanist and Ethical Union) in Holland, close to the Amsterdam airport, will have been held the month before, in early July. Current tensions in the world may well have exerted a dampening effect upon representation

from the Ethical Movement and other IHEU member groups, but I hope not to any significant extent. I myself had originally intended to participate in the observance of this Humanist milestone whose all-encompassing theme was, "All Different, All Equal, Human Diversity, Human Rights, Humanism." In the Netherlands, as in Norway, humanism enjoys a robust public presence, boasting such institutions as The Humanist Broadcast Company and the University of Humanist Studies, the latter located in Utrecht.

A great deal of human energy doubtless must have been siphoned off during the past year in response to an abruptly changed state of affairs worldwide. As journalist Bill Moyers expressed it:

It's a cliché to say that we've changed, too [emphasis mine]. But a man wiser than I said that clichés mean what they say and truisms are true. And things really are different after September 11. We've been overwhelmed with a torrent of breaking news coverage and speculation, and I find myself reaching for context that isn't there, for insights hard to come by. I find myself asking new questions about things I once took for granted [We are consequently] challenged to make whatever sense we can of what's happening around us.

Well put! The ground having distressingly shifted beneath us, we are sorely tested to find new footing. We shall, and we must.

Toward this end we attempted throughout many of the past year's Sunday Meetings to rise, in Moyers' words, to the challenge of "Making Sense of a Changed World" (*Channel*

Thirteen, February 2002, Volume 10, Issue 2). Sunday attendance increased 25% over the previous year, ranging quite widely, between 80 and 300. Nonetheless, new membership growth of close to 40 individuals in 2001-2002 was offset, to a degree, by members' deaths, relocations changes in status to "Friend," and so on, bringing us presently to a membership of 365. We cannot content ourselves with passive growth, however, hence my firm intention to help establish a dedicated membership recruitment task force with strong Board backing in the early fall.

I've projected a series of five presentations for next spring on the general and challenging subject of nontheistic religion, whose titles are given in the Adult Education listings in this newsletter. You can also find here early projections of other fine Society programs that I urge you all to consider taking advantage of as time and energy permit. By the way, this past spring's course of six presentations on Asian religions ultimately attracted 120 enthusiastic registrants, most of them friends and members of our Society, plus a handful of first-time participants largely from the West Side. As presently organized, this huge annual endeavor contributes to our public reputation but little to our membership growth. We need to restructure the way we've been doing this so we can derive greater institutional benefit from the efforts put forth.

While undertakings like the above fall under the rubric—and aegis—of the Adult Education Committee, the Sunday School is a direct parochial expression of Ethical Culture. This

presently small-scale but quality enterprise has been under the tireless and engaging supervision of its capable Director, Curtis Borg, for the last seven years, aided in no small measure this past year by our gifted Leader Intern, Anne Klaeyesen, whose efforts to bring more organizational cohesion to the whole enterprise, especially as it relates to parents, have been notable. Here, too, we need to grow in numbers and in outreach to the community with expanded teacher and parent—and Society—involvement. I heartily support what we aim to accomplish in the ethical education of children, but my active participation has to be quite minimal owing to the simultaneity of our Sunday "platform" religious meeting in the auditorium and the Sunday School class experiences on the fifth floor. Nonetheless, we hope to increase, to the extent it makes sense to do so, the interaction of these two centrally significant Sunday ethical religious programs.

Because of the plethora of activities and committee meetings, many of which I cannot attend, I want to express my gratitude to Society Leader Jean Somerville Kotkin for performing weddings, memorial services and other ceremonial functions, for her occasional Sunday Meeting addresses that are regularly well received (as have been those of Anne Klaeyesen), and especially for sitting in for me (that is, representing me and /or my views along with hers) to keep me abreast of what is transpiring, say, at the Social Service Board, at gatherings of the Westside Clergy, etc. We are also thankful to Anne for her astute pastoral assistance.

Our professional efforts, of course, would come to naught without the responsible, loyal and high-quality dedication of both our support and custodial staff, of our Board and its officers, and of all our concerned friends and members. My personal thanks to each and all of you.

I'm reminded of the classic story, told by Paul McElroy, of a stone cutter hammering away at a seemingly recalcitrant rock. Twenty successive powerful blows appear to have made no dent or difference. Suddenly the 21st blow split the rock in two. That alone didn't produce such a result; the previous 20 blows had cumulatively as much to contribute to the final fracturing of the stone as the 21st. By the same token, so do each of us count equally in making this Society what it is and can be.

Which brings us to the question of imagination: as I've observed the humanist breed that we are, I have to conclude that our intellectual capacity far exceeds the development of our imaginations. I see this as the next great frontier we need to approach. There's an obvious tendency in the Ethical Movement to keep doing things pretty much the same way we've gotten used to doing them. That's safe and reassuring but not good enough. We sometimes forget that what counts in the long run is pursuing the Big Picture and being contemporary about it, not in getting stuck over short-term differences of opinion that we not infrequently allow to stop forward movement towards a worthwhile project. Imagination is what gives us wings to soar, it liberates us to become more

of what we could be. More on this subject as the year goes on.

FYI—I shall take a month’s vacation, or less if absolutely necessary, between mid-July and mid-August. We said farewell at the end of June to Sylvia Anderson, administrative assistant *par excellence* to the Senior Leader’s office for 20 years. We shall all miss her, I, not least, and wish her well as she enters retirement. Her successor is Darlene Lanham, a spirited, delightful and capable young woman whose self-introductory article is published in this special annual-report issue of the newsletter. We look forward to working with her and welcome her warmly to our midst.

Despite the world’s present exacerbated uncertainty, please don’t forget to love your life and to enjoy the summer.

Treasurer

Les Graifman

The work of the Finance Committee is about money. All of us know that without money there is very little we can do. We can’t pay salaries, we can’t pay our bills and we can’t establish a legacy for the next generations of Ethical Culture adherents. So I think it’s pretty important to talk about money, about the recent audit, about how we closed out the last fiscal year and how we are doing so far this year.

But before we get into that discussion, I think it’s also important to say thanks to some members who really loved us a lot. I say loved because they

are no longer alive, but they cared enough about our religion to help the future generations pay their bills. In the last fiscal year we owe our gratitude to Alice Seligman who left us \$400,000. In this fiscal year we owe our thanks to Muriel Novinsky who left us \$85,000, Ruth Warshaw who left us \$71,000 and to Mathilde Christatos and her father, Joseph Pasner, who left us \$307,930. You will see the effect of that loving generosity further on in this report.

The annual audit for fiscal year 2001 has been completed. Our auditors at Conroy Smith appeared before the Board at the March meeting and gave us a clean bill of financial health. The Board reviewed and approved the financial statement, which was completed 6 months earlier than the prior year. In that prior year the audit took longer as we had to have rather prolonged negotiations with the previous audit firm in order to get it done. Thank you, Conroy Smith, for your good work.

Now let’s talk about the last fiscal year, ending last June 2001. Our revenues were \$1,848,260 and our expenses were \$1,524,597. We finished that fiscal year with a surplus of \$323,663. We wound up that year in the black! Even though we projected a deficit of \$208,306. Thank you, Alice!

This year’s operating budget, nearly at its close at the end of June, projected a deficit of \$345,225. That’s a hefty deficit. However, through the end of April we were once again in the black by \$167,777 (before adding in the income from our investments). We hope to be in the black at the close

of the fiscal year. Thank you Muriel, Ruth, Mathilde, and Mathilde’s father Joseph Pasner. You realize, however, that without those very generous gifts mentioned earlier, the color red would be flowing freely. And, as everyone reading this knows, sophisticated New Yorkers much prefer to be in black!

The preliminary budget for the next fiscal year 2002-2003 was prepared by the Finance Committee and sent to all our members on April 8. We had an open budget meeting on April 22, at which 3 members showed up for discussions, which were led by me, Michael Kriegh and Paula Sheldon. We hope more of you will be able to attend the open budget meeting in the future.

That meeting produced some structural changes, which were put into effect. The Board very closely scrutinized the budget on May 13, with voting on the budget taking place at the June meeting. We project a possible deficit of \$240,295 in the new budget, but when we add in the investment income at the end of the fiscal year, June 2003, we hope to be in the black again. And, we look forward to seeing how our new money managers at Morgan Stanley grow our endowment funds this coming year.

In closing, while I thanked some of our members for their largesse established many years ago, I also want to thank each and every one of you reading this. Your pledges and contributions and gifts of time and money are the very core of our existence. We cannot do it without you.

Religious Education Director

Curtis Borg

Current Enrollment and Attendance:

We currently have 13 children enrolled, with at least two who have returned for two or three classes, but have not yet registered. Eight of these 13 children are from member families. Four of the member-family children are attending our program for the first time this year. Though we finished last year with a larger number of older children, our numbers have decreased in this age range but increased in the number of children ages four to eight.

Curriculum Focus: The events of September 11 had a profound effect on our work with the children for the remaining Sundays in 2001. Our curriculum addressed the tragedy in a more direct manner at first. We offered open discussion with the children along with opportunities for them to express their feelings through art projects. Within a month we were utilizing stories through which the children could safely integrate their experiences and build their understanding. Before the holidays the children were given a choice of stories to develop into a play. They chose one in which a destroyed castle was returned to its original beauty and its enchanted inhabitants were brought back to their human forms through selfless effort and sacrifice. These activities all seemed to follow each other naturally. By the time we returned after the winter holidays in January, we felt ready to move into new areas and take on new investigations.

At this point we divided our students into two different age groups and pursued short studies of animal welfare and child labor. However, these were brief and not thoroughly developed, as we wanted to reserve a substantial amount of time to address our “comparative religion” element of the program year.

Given the great potential for misunderstanding of the Islamic world from our western point of view and the current political and military climate, we decided to put a large emphasis on introducing the children to the stories, traditions, and spiritual elements of Islam. Obviously, in such a study there will be greater understanding of the abstractions inherent in spiritual traditions for the older children. However, we feel that for the younger children, we are planting seeds that will develop into understanding through simple familiarity with the symbols, structures, stories, and traditions observed by members of the Islamic community. We won’t know for years whether or not we were successful.

Future Considerations: It is very clear that in the years I have been Director, the pace of family life has increased dramatically. It is remarkable that families maintain their weekly commitment when schedules are so tight. This atmosphere has also made it more and more challenging to find teachers who can commit to thirty-plus Sundays per year that the program requires. In the last two program years, we have had to begin the classes with no other employees than me. We hired this year’s teacher, Alana Greenberg, in early October. She will be moving to

the southwest this summer and we’ll be in the “search mode” once again.

We may have to consider other models. For example, we may have to look to parents and interested Society members to facilitate our Sunday mornings. The model of traditional class time and lessons may need to be reexamined. Most important is the development of community—a sense that the school is a shared project requiring a steady investment and involvement. It is very difficult to continue to be the sole source of curriculum, projects, and direction after almost a decade with the Children’s Program. We must find a way of joining forces and ideas to make all of our efforts more productive and integrated.

Administrator

Paula Sheldon

I have been the administrator since July 2000, and since the day I arrived, I have been so impressed by the time and energy that the members put into making this society what it is today. The commitment that so many of you are willing to extend here week after week has been truly inspirational to me.

We recently had an interior survey of the building done, as well as a marketing survey, to guide us in determining how to best market our rental spaces. These two reports got me thinking about what I and our staff could do to further the goals of the Society and support your work.

The interior survey has shown us that we have much restoration to do on our landmark building, some of which has already started and some already been completed, for example, our roof reconstruction project. Not only did we replace the roof, we also had façade work done that helped seal the building and protect us from leaks.

We have already started restoring the Adler Study (Room 514), with its beautiful views of Central Park. Mike Tomlin, our chief of maintenance, is directing our staff in stripping all the paint, restoring hardware, fixing the windows, moving the air conditioner that is obstructing the view of the park, etc. Mike has promised that in short order the room will be sparkling.

The Study is the room most often used for memorial services and small weddings, as well as a favorite for many of our own events. This restoration should enable us to increase the rental fees by at least 40%, if not more.

There are a number of other restoration projects that we hope will receive Board approval in the coming months. The peeling paint in the auditorium is just one example of what needs to be done in that space.

The Building Committee has worked hard in selecting new carpeting, a project that entails not just picking a color, but also considering durability, ease of maintenance and, of course, the effects on the marvelous acoustics. Thanks to their hard work, we were able to place the order, and the carpet should be installed by this summer.

We are also working on construction of storage rooms for all our tables

and chairs, which are often stored in hallways, not the best place for them. The Building Committee, as well as the Board of Trustees, will have a full plate in the months and years ahead in deciding what work may need to be done, and when.

I realize that all of this will cost money. I also realized that we don't do enough to maximize our income from rental of space rental. So I went to the Board and asked them to commission a marketing survey. The marketing survey identifies some of the areas that we need to work on in order to increase the rental possibilities to help us bring in much-needed income.

This auditorium, with its wonderful acoustics, sits empty far too often. In fact, our acoustics are so special that the Metropolitan Opera has come here from Lincoln Center for recording sessions. With some of the restorations I mentioned and increased marketing and public relations activity, we should be able to raise our per-event rental charge and perhaps double the number of rentals for the auditorium, Ceremonial Hall, Social Hall, and other spaces as well.

One type of event that we do particularly well is memorial services. Memorials are a difficult thing for the bereaved, and our staff goes a long way in making life easier for those in mourning. I often receive heartfelt thanks from family and friends who have planned these services.

In fact, we recently were hosts for the service for Danny Pearl, the Wall Street Journal reporter who was murdered in Pakistan. Mr. Pearl was Jew-

ish, his widow a Buddhist, and both she and the Wall Street Journal editors had very strong feelings that the Society was the only place in New York where they wanted to hold his service. When I told them that we were fully booked on the Sunday they needed, they pleaded with me to see if it could be changed.

I reached out to our lessees that had prior claim on space that Sunday, Vision Church and the New York Youth Symphony. Both groups were immediately cooperative and agreed to rearrange their plans to accommodate this important service. The New York Youth Symphony had to contact 100 of their young musicians to inform them that the rehearsal was being held at another venue. The service proved to be a moving and emotional one and went off without a hitch. We have a unique ability to host memorials, but not all of our community is aware that we do this. We need to let them know.

The marketing survey showed us that while we may be able to raise our rates considerably for events like weddings, receptions, banquets, and fundraisers, it is important to make sure that we identify new markets for these higher rates. I am working with the PR Committee and our PR consultant, Dale Zeidman, to put together the costs for a brochure, and also exploring new avenues to distribute the brochure.

Adding the room rental information to our web site is also a must, plus exploring the possibilities of linkage to other web sites. For example, we are already linked to the Landmark Conservatory's web site, which will be of great value when we have exciting

pictures on our web site along with the rental information.

Of course, one of the most important reasons to increase our rentals is the income, but it is not the most important reason. I feel that everything I do needs to lead back to increasing our membership and helping facilitate development of programming for our members. Let me give you an example about how increased room rentals could add members and increase interest in the Society. Groups like the Eos orchestra and New York Colloquium, frequent renters of this space, would love to offer linkage from their web sites to ours.

It could work like this: when someone reads on Eos's web site that their concert is being held here, they might then be asked to go to our web site for travel directions. There, they could see all of the programs and activities we offer here, like the spring concert that Beth Goldberg produced, or the square dance that Anne Klaeyen put together, or Khoren Arisian's exciting Asian Religions course, to name just a few. They would be able to read our mission statement and learn about our Sunday School. It will be a way to capitalize on the fact that we rent spaces for so many outside activities and get some of those people to come back for our programs and gain new members.

With this kind of coordinated effort, we should be able to increase revenue, raise public awareness of the Society, and help bring about a more robust, growing organization. We have a lot of great programming and we are planning many more exciting programs. We have such value for our community in

so many ways, with so many productive, active members; I want to make sure that I and our staff are doing as much as we can to support all of your hard work.

Membership Coordinator

Ben Bean

Our membership activities were shaped by September 11. Everyone who came for the first time to the Society came looking for something to help them get past the terrible events of last September. We heard it expressed in all our orientation meetings, which were attended by over 50 people, and especially from the 15 who joined our Society and seem to be more involved with our activities. We also lost two of our more active members: Board member Cathy Bagley, who stayed as a volunteer at our Shelter almost every week, and Morton Goldman, a poet and bon vivant.

Our annual retreat at Pawling was a wonderful change from the city and we all got to know each other a lot better, so we are going again on the first weekend of October 2002. The bike trips, the hikes upstate, and the monthly film series with our new movie system give us all a chance to enjoy ourselves and to appreciate our differences (especially the talks at Pawling).

We all seem to be more helpful in collecting books for children and toiletries for the homeless, and helping to serve Thanksgiving dinner. The

food bags for the Senior Citizens Center were again put together with much gusto, and the seniors say, "Keep them coming."

The Interfaith Thanksgiving Service was held at our Society and, once again, it was so good to have so many faiths under our roof. *The Nation* rally was one of the many meetings held here which attracted many of our members. It was a new experience to turn people away from our doors with a completely full auditorium and social hall. The next Society potluck supper should be so crowded!!!

The Society will grow only if you supply the ideas and energy to make things happen here. So put on your thinking caps and let me hear from you.

Archivist

Dr. Marc A. Bernstein

When I took over the archives 18 months ago, I had two main goals: to increase awareness of our collection and to increase its use. Toward these ends I have taken a number of steps. I have made our materials more accessible to both scholars and Ethical Culture members by making my hours more flexible, occasionally coming in on an unscheduled day to meet someone's research needs. I have also added hours during the summer, a time of greater freedom for scholars. I have encouraged e-mail requests for archival information, and at the suggestion of Judy Wallach, I have been writing a bi-monthly column about the archives for the New York Society newsletter.

(continued on page 14)

NEW YORK SOCIETY

2002
Educational

Continuing Reading and Discussion Series

Great Books

October 2002-June 2003

First Wednesdays of the month, 7:30 pm

Members \$30, Non-members \$40

Includes books and refreshments

Approximately 100 pages monthly

Facilitators: Kathy McGuire
and Ruth Sheridan

*indicates complete work

October 2	Schopenhauer	The Indestructibility of Our Inner Nature
	Weber	The Spirit of Capitalism
November 6	Euripides	Medea*
	Molière	The Misanthrope*
December 4	Gibbon	The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire
		Job
January 8 (2nd Wednesday)	Bible	The City of God
	St. Augustine	Caesar and Cleopatra*
February 5	Shaw	Utilitarianism
March 5	Mill	Symposium
	Plato	Of Experience*
April 2	Montaigne	The Federalist
	Hamilton, Jay, Madison	Rameau's Nephew
May 7	Diderot	The Overcoat*
	Gogol	The Tempest*
June 4	Shakespeare	

“The Evil and the Guilty” Fiftieth Anniversary Great Books Series

September 2002-May 2003

Third Wednesdays 7:30 pm

Members \$25, Non-members \$30

Includes texts and refreshments

Readings vary between 30 and 75 pages
except for the two novels to be purchased
individually

Facilitators: Dr Charles Debrovner
and Dr Norma Hymes

September 18	Leo Tolstoy	After the Ball
October 16	Friedrich Nietzsche	On Evil, Guilt, and Power
November 20	Robert Musil	Moosbrugger
December 18	Charles Johnson	The Sorcerer's Apprentice
January 15	Fyodor Dostoevsky	Stavrogin's Confession
February 19	Samuel Taylor Coleridge	The Rime of the Ancient Mariner
March 19	Margeurite Yourcenar	Coupe de Grâce
April 16	John Edgar Wideman	Philadelphia Fire
May 21	To be Announced	

Ethical Culture Retirement Activities

September 2002-June 2003

Second Wednesdays 3:00 pm

Members free

Non-members \$10 for the year

Facilitators Ruth Sheridan
and Ileana Silver

September 11	William Gaddis	A Frolic of His Own
October 9	Don DeLillo	White Noise
November 13	Mikhail Bulgakov	The Master and Margarita
December 11	Dawn Powell	The Wicked Pavilion
January 15 (3rd Wednesday)	Allegra Goodman	Kaaterskill Falls
February 12	Amy Tan	The Bonesetter's Daughter
March 12	Annie E. Proulx	The Shipping News
April 9	Vladimir Nabokov	Pale Fire
May 14	Ian McEwan	Atonement
June 11	Jonathan Franzen	The Corrections

Note: You may join any of the reading groups at any time during the year.

FOR ETHICAL CULTURE

2003 Programs

New and Revised Courses

Foundations of Ethical Culture

October 10-November 7, 2002

Thursdays 6:30-8:30 pm

Members \$35; Nonmembers \$50

Facilitator: Dr. Khoren Arisian, Senior Leader

October 10 Social Roots of Ethical Culture

Dr. Joseph Chuman, Leader

Bergen Society

October 17 Values and Ideals: Our Philosophy

Curt Collier, Leader

Riverdale Society

October 24 Early History of the Movement

Dr. Marc A. Bernstein, AEU

and Society Archivist

October 31 The Post-Adler Years,

Jean S. Kotkin, Leader

New York Society

November 7 The Living Faith: How We Apply
Ethical Culture to Our Daily Lives

Moderator: Dr. Khoren Arisian

Panelists: Ben Bean, Dr. Charles

Debrovner, Anne Klaeyesen,

Carol Nadell, Frank Prescod

A Humanist Perspective on the Bible

Tuesdays, 6:30-8:30, January, 2003

Members: \$20, Non-members: \$25

Presenter: Anne Klaeyesen, Leader Intern

Jan. 14 The Torah: Genesis

Jan. 21 Prophets: The "Literary" Prophets

Jan. 28 The Gospels: Parables

New!

Of Morals and Nontheistic Religion: A Primer

April, 2003, Tuesdays, 6:30-8:30 pm

Members \$35, Nonmembers \$50

Facilitator: Dr. Khoren Arisian, Senior Leader

April 1 The Great 21st Century Divide:

Religion Versus Secularity

April 8 Agnosticism, Free Thought,

and Non-creedal Religion

April 15 Atheism And Secularism:

The Infidel In America and Elsewhere

April 22 Theological Skepticism and Moral

Deism: Prelude To Humanism

in the Modern Era

April 29 Taster's Choice: From Ethical

Idealism to Secular and Religious

Humanism

New!

*What Sculpture is to a
Block of Marble, education
is to an human soul.*

James Addison

*When a man's education is finished,
he is finished.*

E. A. Filene

To register for courses call the Leader's office (212) 874-5210.

(continued from page 11)

Finally, in my public addresses at various Societies, I have been drawing on materials from the archives and suggesting how the history of the movement can inform the decisions local Societies must make today.

As a result, the number of visitors to the archives has increased; members of different Societies are now coming in to use our documents and photos in their Society programs. The number of e-mail requests has increased even more dramatically. I have kept a log of total monthly requests; a year ago such requests were few in number, but now I can't find enough room on the page to enumerate them all.

This good news should not blind us to one overriding problem the archives continue to face: location. Currently in a basement room, where water pipes crisscross the top shelves of our holdings, the collection could be ruined with one leak. Thus, 125 years of our history could be lost in a soggy mess. Even if a leak were not a looming possibility, the archives are stored in a room that is too small for our growing collection. Old treasures are still being discovered, and new materials, whether they are newsletters, platform addresses, or programs from various events, need to be filed. If we do not solve the problem of space soon, we will be in the unenviable position of having to decide whether we must discard an old item in order to keep a new one. Before we face such documentary triage, let's consider finding more suitable quarters for the archives.

Committee Reports

Adult Education Committee

Phyllis Kreuttner and Dr. Judith D. Wallach

Our Adult Education program was again full and satisfying.

The three reading groups continue to be popular. At a recent Sunday Meeting, Ruth Sheridan reported that meetings of both the Great Books group and the Ethical Culture Retirement Activities (ECRA) group are well attended and lively. New people are always welcome. Norma Hymes reported that the Fiftieth Anniversary Great Books Series also continues to attract a good many bibliophiles. The past season's topic was "Identity and Self-Respect," and next year's topic will be "The Evil and the Guilty," a beguiling subject indeed!

These three groups continue year after year with little fanfare, so some book lovers may not realize that they have the opportunity for regular monthly stimulating and friendly interchanges with others who share their love of reading. For those who prefer daytime meetings, ECRA is a Wednesday afternoon program. The two Great Books programs meet in the evening.

By now, our "Foundations of Ethical Culture" course is a fall tradition. While this five-week course attracts many long-time members who enjoy the different perspectives that our pre-

senters offer from year to year, this is a course we strongly suggest that all new members take. It covers the social background in which the Movement arose, the history and philosophy of Ethical Culture, and, in the final session, a panel of members and Leaders who talk about the ways in which they apply Ethical Culture in their daily lives. This past season, 27 members enrolled in the course and evaluated it as highly worthwhile.

Fall also saw the renewal of a course that had not been given for some years: a series for current and upcoming lay leaders. This year we abbreviated the course, in consideration of the very busy schedules of our lay leaders. Called "Skills for Lay Leaders," it attracted about 20 members, whose consensus was that the course, while certainly worthwhile, was uneven from session to session. In the coming season, there will be a follow-up to that course, based on the request of several participants that we do a number of focused, participatory workshops. The 4-session series of workshops will be open to members who have leadership roles in the Society: Board members and chairs of activity committees and groups.

Our spring course was planned and facilitated by Senior Leader Khoren Arisian. Entitled "Asian Religions—A Different Reality," this course attracted a considerable audience of members and nonmembers—127 people were enrolled, although attendance varied

from week to week. For this unusual course, authorities in the various Asian religions were present to make it a most interesting and informative course.

Again, evaluations indicated that there were favorites, as well as less favored speakers; overall, however, the course was greatly appreciated.

For next season, another rich lode of courses is being planned. In addition to the Foundations course and the workshops for lay leaders, there will be a mini-course and a full length course.

A mini-course on "A Humanist Perspective on the Bible" will be presented by Leader Intern Anne Klaeyen. This topic has been requested by members for a number of years, and we are pleased that Anne has agreed to take it on.

For the spring, Khoren will be planning and facilitating a course on non-theistic philosophies entitled "Of Morals and Nontheistic Religion: A Primer."

For details of next season's courses, please see the centerfold of this newsletter.

The Adult Education Committee is comprised of Phyllis Kreuttner and Judith Wallach, co-chairs, and members Pat Debrovner, Norma Hymes, and Jean Kotkin. Khoren Arisian is Leader Advisor, and Curtis Borg is Religious Education Advisor.

Building Committee

Sheila Kleinwald

Among the many changes in the Society this year have been changes in the composition and organization of the Building Committee, which is now co-chaired by Ruth L. Cohen, Ph.D., and Sheila Kleinwald. The committee members are Paul Berman, Anne Gwynn, Mo Malekshahi, Frank Prescod, and Virginia Scherer.

We have watched with a combination of pride, satisfaction, and relief as the roof replacement has been made, along with the installation of a new playground surface and equipment for the Ethical Culture School's students. We have also completed the repair and waterproofing of the limestone façade so we are now able to turn our attention to much-needed interior improvements.

During the past year the Society has received a gift from member Stephanie Rosenblatt to partially defray the cost of new auditorium carpeting. We hope to see the new carpeting installed by the middle of July. Thank you, Stephanie, for your generosity and your fine example, which we hope will inspire other members to think along similar lines.

We also wish to report that the silver wreath commemorative plaque presented to the Society by the Ethical Culture School on the Society's twenty-fifth anniversary has been cleaned, reframed, and hung in the lobby. In addition, the safety side lights at the entrances to the auditorium have been

repaired and reinstalled and new safety treads for the auditorium entrance steps have been selected. New door pulls and security plates that are in keeping with our building's landmark architecture, as well as with our current security needs, are at the top of our current list; and restoration of the Adler study is well underway.

A complete Interior Conditions Survey of the building, which will guide our continuing efforts to restore and upgrade building interior systems and spaces, has been completed. Naturally, all current and future work and installations will be ADA-compliant.

The Building Committee is pleased to announce the upcoming Fourth Annual Benefit Concert for the restoration of our beautiful stained-glass windows. This event is scheduled for November 3, at 2:00 pm. Please call Ruth Cohen at (212) 860-4096 to volunteer your help to make this our most successful effort yet. Just imagine those windows when the sun comes shining through!

Caring Committee

Stephanie Rosenblatt

Materials are available on Sundays in the lobby, and also from the Caring Committee or the Membership Office on the following:

Emergency Forms with personal IDs for members who would like us to be there for them in case of need. This also includes living wills, funeral information, and Society membership. Information on an American Red Cross

presentation on basic safety measures entitled “Meet The Unexpected.” Dorot’s Caregivers’ Connections offers telephone conference calls including support groups for family caregivers of the elderly. Many courses are given by Dorot’s University Without Walls. We are planning to run joint programs with Dorot.

Wallet Safety Suggestions; Caring Committee Information Referral Resource List; Senior Residency Booklet; Health Information Phone Number List; Information on a Lifeline Service for those who are alone.

2001/2002 Projects

We prepared over 70 Thanksgiving food bags for Project Find, the Jewish Guild for the Blind, and our Shelter.

Spring 2002—we collected and subsequently supplied toilet articles to the above organizations. We sent cards and made phone calls to members who were sick or home-bound.

We would be happy to receive your ideas and suggestions for new projects.

Endowment Committee

Dr. Charles H. Debrovner

The Endowment Committee has made two major changes in policy. We will no longer use social acceptability as the criteria for investment choice, and we will no longer be placing our money in a mutual fund. Our funds will be divided among 10 financial advisers at Morgan Stanley, with each investing in his or her area of expertise. Each will

report results to us frequently, enabling us to maintain much closer oversight of our investments with ability to change individual managers, if necessary.

This has not been a good year for endowments in general. We will continue to try to balance growth with safety. The Society can help by eliminating deficits so that the size of the endowment is not diminished annually by being used to finance the deficit.

Ethical Action Committee

Carol Rost

This year has been an active one. The EAC has sponsored numerous letter-writing tables on Sunday, dealing with relevant local and national issues. Regarding New York State, for example, we urged passage of the Women’s Health and Wellness program, repeal of the onerous Rockefeller era drug laws, support for stem cell research. On national issues, members urged the blocking of an ultra-conservative anti-abortion federal judge’s appointment. Our membership actively and happily signed and sealed letters to their representatives on these issues.

We also demonstrated in Albany this March, joining with other groups lobbying state representatives to eliminate the Rockefeller drug laws.

We hold monthly meetings that are generally well attended. We are working on issues related to the death penalty, and will have a fundraiser to sponsor a deserving individual prisoner and pay for his DNA testing, which he

might otherwise not be able to afford, to prove his innocence. This is in conjunction with the Innocence Project, which was recently in the news.

Other issues we cover on an ongoing basis are related to civil rights, living wage, and other topical concerns.

We collaborate with in-house committees and outside groups as we see the need for joint efforts. Look for a collaboration between the New York City Opera and the Ethical Culture Society on the topic of the death penalty. The EAC will chair a discussion of “Dead Man Walking” at our film series in September. Watch for the announcement in the fall.

Ethical Humanist Award Committee

Carol Nadell

Unlike last year, the Ethical Humanist Award Committee has had a rather successful year. We are delighted to announce that the recipient of the Ethical Humanist Award will be Senator Jim Jeffords of Vermont. The committee selected Senator Jeffords after reading his book, *My Declaration of Independence*, which recounts the emotional turmoil, deep convictions, and moral courage the Senator demonstrated in leaving the Republican Party, an action which put the control of the Senate into the hands of the Democrats. The award ceremony was originally planned for this fall, but since the Senator’s schedule has become quite hectic prior to the November election,

the award presentation will be held on Sunday morning, March 9, 2003. This is the first time that the award presentation will be the Sunday Meeting.

On May 30, the committee met and started to brainstorm about the event. Although March seems a long way off, it's never too early to start thinking and planning. It was suggested that perhaps other Society activities might be arranged that relate to the Senator's action, e.g. a panel discussion on the balance of power and all its implications, a screening of a film illustrating ethics in government, a discussion of Caroline Kennedy Schlossberg's *Profiles in Courage*. Meeting with other committee heads will be helpful in implementing some of these ideas.

On January 6, 2002, as part of the Sunday meeting, the first Distinguished Community Service Award was presented to Burton Freeman for his creation, sponsorship, and implementation of "My Own Book Fund" for disadvantaged third graders in the New York City schools. The format of the presentation proved to be quite successful.

On Sunday, September 29, 2002 the Distinguished Community Service Award will be presented again, this time jointly to Michael A. Rebell, the director of Campaign for Fiscal Equity, Inc., and the law firm, Simpson Thacher and Bartlett for providing pro bono counsel to CFE. The Campaign for Fiscal Equity is seeking reform of New York State's educational finance system so that city schools are not short- changed. Maria Fridman has been most helpful in bringing this before the committee and contact-

ing the necessary people. She will be speaking to Mr. Rebell this month.

The committee is extremely cognizant of the importance of publicity for both events and is very interested in working with our publicity person.

Finance Committee

Please see Treasurer's Report, page 8.

Fundraising Committee

Chris Bernhardt

Every member was mailed a pledge card at the start of the year. So far 83 members have pledged a total of \$76,375. These members have already paid \$31,205 of this amount. Another 40 members have not pledged, but have given a total of \$12,538 for this year.

The money we raise helps with the vast array of the Society's expenses, including programming, salaries, and the cost of keeping the building open and in good repair. The Society also pays a fee to the AEU for each of our members, and with the cost of mailings, the Society spends over \$100 per member. We currently have over 300 members on our list, but have only heard from 123 of them. We will be sending out letters in June to remind members both to pledge and to give to the Society.

Last year members contributed \$149,806. We hope that members will be as generous, if not more so, this year, and that we can exceed this amount.

Membership Committee

Barbara Levenson

During the past year, the Membership Committee sponsored a variety of enjoyable and enlightening activities.

Our monthly Friday night Film Forum continued to present rewarding films, and our enjoyment was enhanced by our new professional system featuring a big screen, surround-sound, and DVD capability. In October members attended our annual weekend retreat at Holiday Hills in Pawling, N.Y. Outdoor activities included walks, hikes, and bike trips, many of which were planned and led by Henryka Komanska and Chris Bernhardt. We took an informative tour of the Morris-Jumel mansion, enjoyed a gala New Year's Eve celebration, hosted a dessert reception for new recent members, and held a potluck supper at the Society.

We now set up a book table on the last Sunday of the month in the cafeteria, enabling members and guests to purchase tapes and transcripts of Sunday morning talks and to order selected books from the AEU. This has turned out to be a popular service, which we will continue.

One of our best-attended new activities has been the Tuesday morning Tai Chi classes initiated by Valerie Leiman. If there is enough interest, we also hope to offer seated Yoga classes in the fall.

We have branched out into co-sponsoring events with other groups in the

Society. We worked with Beth Goldberg's group on the Spring Concert and with Anne Klaeyen and the Sunday School on the Klezmer concert.

This year we began calling our new members, welcoming them to the Society.

We are always looking for new ways to make membership in the Society a fulfilling experience and to reach out to prospective members. We meet on the third Wednesday of every month at 6 pm. Our next meeting is set for September 19, 2002. Please join us.

Committee members are: Virginia Scherer and Barbara Levenson (co-chairs), Virginia Arnold, Sheila Kleinwald, Edna Kronberg, Valerie Leiman, Sabine Rosenberg, Theresa Schultz, and Eva Yachnes. Membership Coordinator Ben Bean is our staff advisor.

Program Committee

Henryka Komanska & Christine Swann

The new Program Committee was established in September 2001.

Members are: Christine Swann and Henryka Komanska (co-chairs), Barbara Levenson, Carol Rost, and Tom Weishaar (since April 2002).

One of the objectives of the Program Committee is to be a clearinghouse for new program proposals. As the first order of business, the committee developed a process for evaluation and approval of program applications. The guidelines were approved by the Board

of Trustees in March 2002 and are now in use. The committee handles applications for any new programs not already owned by a standing committee and handles all applications from external groups, including requests for co-sponsorship and donation of free rentals.

The committee does not implement programs itself. Where appropriate, it might recommend that a program organizer work with one of the standing committees to realize his/her idea. Otherwise, the committee evaluates the program and makes a recommendation to the Board of Trustees. The committee has already reviewed several applications for both internal and external programs and has recommended the following programs for approval of the Board of Trustees. Internal programs: the Women's Chorus, the Human Faith Project, 2w64, and Ethics Study.

External programs: Co-sponsorship with Peace Action of New York State of a rally against the new face of nuclear war which, at the committee's recommendation, was handled by the Ethical Action Committee, June 2002. Hosting the New York City Opera Panel Discussion on the Death Penalty in conjunction with the premiere of the opera "Dead Man Walking," September 2002. Providing space for a festival concert "Lifting the Veil" to benefit women and children in Afghanistan, held in May 2002. Nelly Bly and Lois Kellerman authors' evening to discuss their newly published book *Marriage from the Heart: Eight Commitments of a Spiritually Fulfilling Life Together*, April 2002.

In addition, the Program Committee coordinated the Activities Fair on September 16, 2001.

Another objective of the Program Committee is to promote the sharing of information and of a common vision across committees and groups in the Society. To this end, we organized the meeting of all committees May 19, 2002 and plan to hold similar meetings on a regular basis.

Public Relations Committee

Bob Berger

Since June 26, 2001, when Dale Zeidman began working as the PR consultant to the Society, she and the PR Committee co-chair have identified numerous public relations, marketing, advertising, and promotional needs, and have worked diligently to address these needs.

PR and Marketing Objectives

The principal objective of our PR/marketing approach has been to raise the public's awareness of the Society as a vibrant and vital force in the community. To that end, we have designed PR/Marketing campaigns to bring the work of the committees to the attention of the public and to attract the public to the Society. Our overall goal has been to attract new members.

Our coordinated PR/marketing campaigns have included the dissemination of press releases and other information about the Society; the creation of

a branded look for collateral materials produced by the Society (flyers, print ads); and the liberal use of additional media, including public service announcements, print ads, classified ads, and radio spots, to enhance our efforts.

We have also recommended using the Society's web site to further our efforts and creating a brochure to help market the Society's rental spaces. We produced a prototype rentals brochure in August 2001 and suggested enhancements for the web site at that time. We are pleased that these projects are now going forward.

What's Been Achieved

Fifty-two press releases about all aspects of Society life, including Sunday programs and Sunday afternoon programs, music programs, adult education programs, film, the stained glass windows benefit concert, the asbestos crisis, and the Grief Support Network.

Thirty-four flyers supporting the above events. 36 classified ads for *The NY Times*. 11 display ads for *Westside Spirit/Westsider/Chelsea-Clin-ton News/Our Town*. 10 one-minute radio spots on WQXR. 1 public service announcement on WQXR. 2 press kits, one for general information and one about Khoren Arisian.

Mailing and fax lists of press contacts in various media, including: arts, chamber music, children's activities, general citywide interest, education, film, gay, Jewish interest, listings, pop music, public service, religion, senior, and social action.

Audience development list to be used for "papering" (filling) the house.

Plans for the future

We are already planning for public relations/marketing campaigns well into the fall, including:

- Hiring a designer to create a rentals brochure, providing copy, supervising production of the brochure, and eventually disseminating the brochure.
- Identifying and hiring a web designer to create a new web site. We will provide photos and write all copy for the web site.
- Planning and identifying media in which to "pitch" Khoren for radio, TV, and print articles.
- Editing and placing op-ed pieces in Khoren Arisian's name.
- Maximizing publicity surrounding the Ethical Humanist Award presentation to Senator Jeffords.
- Protecting Society interests in planning for the New York City Opera/ Ethical Culture presentation of a panel discussion about the opera, "Dead Man Walking."
- Working with Lee Chew to publicize his talk this summer on gay issues, and building a mailing list of gay organizations in order to promote and publicize the event.
- Publicizing a Sunday Meeting address by Fred Jerome, author of *The Einstein File*.
- Publicizing Social Action activities.
- Calling listings writers at publications so that they will be inclined to list our events.
- Upgrading various mailing lists.
- Identifying promotional possibilities for the Society's programs.
- Creating a brochure on musical activities at the Society.

- Writing and placing feature articles about our homeless shelter and Supervised Visitation Project.

- Writing and placing a feature article about the archives.
- Continuing to create "branded" flyers for all activities at the Society.
- Continuing to publicize all events at the Society via press releases.
- Identifying new outlets for print ads and possibly banner ads on the Internet.

We are pleased with our efforts thus far. We have made inroads into raising awareness of the Society as a viable force in the community. Attendance has increased for nearly all activities. With the creation of a full-time PR marketing position, our ability to publicize the reputation of the Society will be vastly increased.

Sunday Program Committee

Carole Chamlin

The Sunday Program Committee continues to run on democratic principles where each person's contribution is valued and considered. We are comprised of a cross-section of members. They are Meg Chapman, Beth Goldberg, Mary Ellen Goodman, Henryka Komanska, John Kreuttner, Joseph Marvel, Stephanie Rosenblatt, Amy Schwarz, and Judy Wallach, as well as Khoren Arisian, Gerald Ranck, and Anne Klaeyen.

We meet approximately every six weeks to discuss and plan for all activities and programs that take place

throughout Sunday mornings and afternoons.

The committee is responsible for structuring and scheduling the Sunday Meetings, including the selection of outside guests who speak on topics that reflect our ethical ideals. Participation of greeters, program format, cafeteria function and set-ups are our responsibility.

The Early Morning Programs that meet from 10:30 am–11:30 am during the fall through spring seasons include Colloquy, led by Phyllis Kreuttner, Marcella Montaruli, and Larry Yates. Pat Debrovner leads Poetry, and Yoga is under the direction of Henry Bunch. Anne Klaeyesen has assumed the responsibility for conducting a group entitled, “Discussion of Leaders’ Writings.” We thank Frank Susa for leading an Ethics Study Program that moved into an afternoon slot.

We have had a year filled with outstanding addresses. Twice a month our Leader, Khoren Arisian, has presented talks on universal themes that were stirring and thought provoking.

Anne Klaeyesen, Leader Intern, spoke from the platform several times. The Brooklyn Women’s Chorus shared the spotlight with her one Sunday, focusing on Women’s Achievements that helped make our country stronger and wiser. They had us all singing on a sunny day in June, sending us out afterward humming the melody.

Anne’s warmth and enthusiasm were apparent this May when Elena Solli was honored as a Sunday School grad-

uate. Elena was back on the platform in June to offer the opening remarks.

We were treated to a much-needed glimpse of our Sunday School children when Curtis Borg presented them with year-end certificates.

Our own Jean Somerville Kotkin, Dr. Matthew Ies Spetter, Gerald Ranck, and Joe Chuman graced the stage, as did a stellar list of outside guest speakers.

Sundays are greatly enhanced by beautiful music thanks to Jerry Ranck. Jerry is planning to present additional soloists in the 2002-03 year to enrich our programs.

No Sunday is complete without the pleasure of mingling with members and newcomers at lunch. Happily, when Ceremonial Hall is available, we join together in this beautiful room. Food and socializing are an important part of the riches of the day, so when we resume our regular lunch hour in the fall, we are planning a varied menu to tempt the palate.

Afternoon programs have seen an increase in attendance and often reflect the topic of the Sunday Morning address. Many thanks to Mary Ellen Goodman for facilitating the popular “Ethics in the News.” In addition we have offered dance and drama programs, philosophical and political discussions, concerts and music programs.

This summer, as has been our pattern for the past few years, we will meet in Ceremonial Hall at 10:30 am for a more informal morning. Jon Liechty will again be seated at the piano to

round out the morning’s program. Coffee and bagels with time to socialize will be the order of the day.

Attendance on Sundays in the summer at Ethical has been on the upswing. We encourage all to join us at the earlier hour before going off to enjoy the wonders of our marvelous city.

This year has been like no other in our city’s history...in world history. We realized the importance of community and shared responsibility more than in past times. We looked towards the support we gave each other and our Ethical Culture philosophy to shore us up after the devastating shock of September’s events.

Many thanks to all who participate in making Sundays as meaningful as they are. Sundays at the Ethical Culture Society are a team effort. The committee welcomes members’ suggestions. From early in the morning until late afternoon there has been and will continue to be a rich variety of events. Thank you to the members for their dedication and hard work.

SAVE THE DATE

September 22, 2002

is

Autumn Friends & Family Day

Be sure to invite friends and family to attend the Society’s new annual celebration of autumn’s arrival!

Social Service Board Report

Margaretha Jones with Maria Fridman

The Social Service Board (SSB) currently oversees the following programs:

The Shelter for the Homeless (since 1982)

The Homeless Artists and Writers Workshop (since 1983)

Scholarships to two students to receive Music Lessons

English tutoring for one student

Reading Program at PS 195

Supervised Visitation Project (since 1988)

Supervised Visitation Project

On Saturdays from September through July we provide a safe place for children to visit with their non-custodial parents when visitations are Court ordered but allowed only under supervision. We can accommodate up to 18 families for these visits (9 in the morning session and 9 in the afternoon session). Our program demands that both custodial and non-custodial parents attend a support group. This last year approximately 530 such visits took place. The SVP Director does intake interviews with all parties, child(ren) and parents, custodial and non-custodial, and often has to communicate with law guardians and parents' lawyers. She recruits, interviews, trains and oversees the child facilitators, observers, and group leaders, oversees the staff meetings and, when necessary, writes reports to the Family Court. Most of our facilitators are college or

graduate students in psychology, early childhood and social work, fulfilling their internship requirements with SVP. The SVP Director is responsible for interviewing and, if accepted by the SVP, supervision of these students. At the end of each semester, the Director is required to provide student evaluations to the colleges.

This past year the SSB organized a jazz evening to benefit the Supervised Visitation Project. We had fun and we netted \$1,100, of which \$150 was collected at the Klezmer Concert organized by the Society's Sunday School families. A very special thanks goes to the Sunday School parents, Curtis Borg and Anne Klaeyesen.

Shelter for Homeless Women

The Shelter, under the direction of Maria Feliz Fridman, now in its 20th year, is sponsored by the Partnership for the Homeless. The Shelter can house up to ten women referred by the Olivieri Center and is open 5 days a week Sunday through Thursday. We also have the use of two computers for instruction to offer our guests. The Shelter will be closed summer 2002 due to repairs in the building. We expect to reopen September 2002. Overnight volunteers are always needed and we hope that many of our members and friends will contact Maria Feliz Fridman (718) 263-5490 and explore the possibility of assisting

us in this very important Society function.

Many thanks to our dedicated volunteers: **Society:** Ben Bean, Dr. Alice Ladas, David and Valerie Leiman, Marcella Montaruli, Frank Prescod, Virginia Scherer, Frank Susa, Sylvan Wallach, Ken Wernz, and Moira Whittington. **City Church:** Win Jackson, Kate Johnson, Lynn Kimmel, Leah Okimoto, Ann Seton and David Solomon. **Friends:** Briana Blasko, Curtis Borg, Larry Flynn, Paul Knox, Chaster Lane, Amy Lewis, Roland Nicholson, and Tottle and Jamila Williams.

A dinner to honor our volunteers took place on June 4, 2002. The gala evening was attended by many volunteers, Jean Somerville Kotkin, Society Leader, and Anne Klaeyesen, Leader Intern.

Homeless Artists Workshop

The SSB continues to sponsor semi-annual exhibitions by the workshop for Homeless Artists and Writers. Maria Feliz Fridman and Judith Ginsburg, of Unforgotten Voices Creative Workshop, organize these exhibitions. Two of these performances took place 2001-2002, one Dec 12, 2001 and the second on June 5, 2002. The exhibitions, which always involve a good number of artists, a display of visual arts, readings, dance and music, are enjoyed by all who attend. We hope that in the future more Society members will

attend these unusual artistic presentations by creative and talented people.

Thanks to all the volunteers and staff who made the work of the Social Service Board at the Society possible: Maria Fridman, who coordinates the Shelter and the Homeless Artists workshop tirelessly and with an enormous amount of dedication; Valerie Leiman, who oversaw the scholarships and, with enthusiasm, tutored a High School student in English; Maria Cruz, with the special reading program at PS 195 for children and their parents; Ken Wernz, who is able to fix/rebuild old computers which then are donated to shelter guests when they graduate from shelter living into their own place; Les Graifman, who helped us understand our finances better; Lucile Kleiman and Carole Chamlin, who continue to give their expertise and time to the Supervised Visitation Project; our dedicated SVP Director, Christine Pagonos, without whose professional insight and oversight we could not offer the thoughtful program that we provide; Howard Parker, who makes sure that the SSB office works smoothly, writes our minutes, and keeps me on track; Vicky Olds, whose support to the SSB is unwavering and Jean Kotkin, who will help us in our fundraising efforts.

A special thanks to all the SSB members for working with me this year, especially in helping us improve our understanding of our finances and endowment.

For those of you who are newer Society members, here is a very short overview on how United Social Services, Inc. and its Social Service Board are

integral to the New York Society for Ethical Culture and its work. I would be glad to furnish a more comprehensive history for anyone interested.

In 1879, just three years after the founding of the Society, The United Relief Works for the Society for Ethical Culture (URW) was incorporated as an auxiliary arm of the Society. URW coordinated, supervised and expanded the Society's social ethics into action. (Adler used the term social ethics for work to be done for social justice, social action, and social service.) One of the purposes of the URW was to draw to it persons who would support the work of the Society but had no interest in becoming Society members. In September 1943 a certificate of name change from URW to USS Inc. was issued by New York State's Division of Corporations. It is this entity that survives today. Its membership is the Board of Trustees of the Society, and the work is coordinated and supervised by the Social Service Board, as the board of directors of USS Inc. is popularly known. This auxiliary arm of the Society for Ethical Culture has a rich past in working for social change.

I want to close by quoting Felix Adler:

We need to feel that no effort is ever wasted, that no honest reaching out toward the good is vain, that the great All is pressing forward toward a transcendent goal. And there is but a single way to obtain this conviction. It is not possible to enter into the nature of the Good by standing aloof from it – by merely speculating upon it. Act the Good, and you will believe in it. Throw yourself into the stream

of the world's good tendency and you will feel the force of the current and the direction in which it is setting. The conviction that the world is moving toward great ends of progress will come surely to him who is himself engaged in the work of progress.
(from *Life and Destiny*, page 66)

Letter from Darlene Lanham, Assistant to the Leader

Dear NYSEC Members & Staff,

Hello! I am excited to join the Ethical Culture staff, and much appreciate the warm welcome and support that I have received since my start here a few weeks ago. I've been lucky to work alongside a most patient and thorough teacher, Sylvia Anderson, whose proverbial shoes I hope to fill with the same intelligence, diligence and grace; I am grateful to have met her and to have learned from her. I also feel fortunate to have the promise of continued guidance from Deborah Foster and anyone else who can and is inclined to contribute to my success in supporting Dr. Arisian and the Leader's Office. I welcome you, your information and your stories!

Moving here just weeks ago from Dallas, Texas has been an enormous and not-easy adjustment but the warmth of the Society and the importance of this mission have assuaged many of the anxieties associated with such life changes. I hope to reciprocate the generosity, and appreciate the important work of the Society, by demonstrating the following (in addition to my primary administrative duties): to

support solutions and to solve issues that arise in the Leader's Office; to provide support as needed to the Administration's goals for NYSEC; to offer my experience in Event, Facility and Personnel management in an effort to grow the Society as a multi-faceted entity; to constantly connect the blessings of my international upbringing and diversity work (associated with the National Coalition Building Institute) with my role here in the Leader's Office. I also fully intend to learn, live and love in this community!

Again, I am exhilarated to be here, and I thank you for what you may have to offer. I look forward to meeting as many of you as is possible.

Sincerely,
Darlene Lanham

From Around the Country: New (and Old) Ethical Leadership

Fourteen new Adjunct Leaders were certified by the AEU, six from the St. Louis Society trained by Leader Judy Toth, and eight from the Washington Society trained by Leader Don Montagna.

The St. Louis Society has selected Don Johnson as its new Leader to replace retiring Leader Judy Toth. Don was Leader of the New York Society prior to his retirement to North Carolina.

Ethical Culture: Who We Are

The Ethical Society is like a Church in solemnizing marriage, and investing with dignity and sacred significance the last rites over the beloved dead. Those occasions in life when new ties are formed, as in marriage, and when old ties are severed, as in times of bereavement, need an interpreter...the Ethical Society, though its representatives, seeks to interpret these changes. It seeks to interpret them by drawing into view the sacredness in the human relations, the sacredness inherent in them, not borrowed or imported into them from beyond.

Again, the Church has ever been the centre of good works, a reservoir from which the stream of charity has been distributed in manifold channels throughout the social organism. The Ethical Society seeks to be a Church in the same sense. For a long time it was believed that only a Church teaching a distinct creed could support charity. The Ethical Society seeks to demonstrate...that it is a mistake; that a creedless Church, a Church for the unchurched, may be no less effective in the same direction...

In the next place, the Church has been a school of moral idealism. The Ethical Society aims to be that and only that, and to advance upon the Church in the single-minded pursuit of moral ideals. For if we call the Church a school of moral idealism, if we recognize its high character as an agent of moral good, we cannot on the other hand forget, much as we should like to forget them, the moral evils for which the Church is accountable.... It seems to me that if we wish to be fair we must be willing to see both sets of facts; and we must furthermore recognize that, apart from exceptional examples of moral heroism, the Church has infused its moral influence into the lives of ordinary men and women...and this leads me to the consideration of the point in which the Ethical Society differs from the Church.

We do not say that creed is unimportant. On the contrary one should try to think out his own creed. But no one should attempt to force his creed upon others. A common creed should not be the bond of fellowship. Rather it should be clearly understood that morality is independent of creeds.... The Ethical Society, then, is an institution for saving men morally, for helping them to make this effort toward goodness, without having for its basis any accepted common formula or creed. The decisive importance of this deviation from the churches is obvious.

Felix Adler, *The Religion of Duty*

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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