

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

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August Sunday Programs **10:30 AM – Ceremonial Hall**

August 3

Ethics in the News

Mary Ellen Goodman
Society Member

August 10

Poverty and Cultural Diversity: Challenges to Human Health

Dr. Jon Kerner
Assistant Deputy Director,
Division of Cancer Control and
Population Sciences, National
Cancer Institute
Dr. Judith D. Wallach Presides

August 17

Democracy, Endangered Species

Dean Robert B. Tapp
Humanist Institute
Linda Whinery Presides

August 24

Service Learning: What It Is, Why We Need It, and How to Get It

Frank Susa
Society Member

August 31

Responsibilities of Citizenship

Dr. Larry R. Yates
Society Member

WQXR-FM (96.3)

Broadcasts

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

August 3

Spirituality Without God

Kate Lovelady
Leader Intern, North Carolina
Ethical Society

August 17

Born Again: A Personal Conversion

Fritz Williams
Leader, Baltimore Ethical
Society

Annual Report Issue

Senior Leader

Dr. Khoren Arisian



Think Big, But Start Small: A Race Against Time

Virtually a third of our Society's membership was present, participating and voting at our Annual Meeting on May 4th. It lasted well over three hours (!), following which a late lunch was served, allowing 125 or so members to enjoy the warmth of fellowship with one another. That we comfortably surpassed the required quorum number and easily grappled with complicated by-law changes and the presentation of annual reports

both long and short testifies to a quantum leap in our activities, programs, publications, and social outreach—endeavors to which, over the past year, members and friends alike extended their approbation and moral support. If there was a fly in our Ethical Culture ointment on that Sunday in May, it was the blunt assessment that the Society's expenses are now perilously in excess of our pledged contributions and other revenue sources.

I devoted the time allotted to my own report exclusively to a presentation of a proposal for an advocacy forum dealing with the plethora of complexities and developments in light of the Bush Administration's several controversial responses to the horrendous events of 9-11. The ongoing theme with variations of this proposal is, thus, "The Continuing National Emergency." This newsletter article was written on July 1; the organizing meeting for this forum was held at the Society the week before, attended by a number of members (Ilona Sena, Christine Swann, Ruth Garbus, Barbara Levenson, Frank Prescod, Steven Schultz, and Howard Parker) who eagerly volunteered their efforts and expertise. In addition, concerned non-members volunteered their efforts, bringing challenging outside perspectives. These included John Hilberry, Don and Grace Eremin, and outstanding Metro Leaders Curt Collier and Joe Chuman, who will attend as their busy professional and personal schedules permit. (Anne Klaeyesen was not available.)

To keep the staff fully apprised of our intentions and plans, Administrator Paula Sheldon and Events Coordinator Leslie Doyle have been asked to join in this new group's deliberations as often as possible (Leslie was present, but Paula was ill). Our three hour-long discussion proved to be intense, pointed, and fruitful. This new Advisory Board to the Senior Leader met for a second time in late July, and will meet again in late August. The members are all highly intelligent, sharp, well-informed, commendable folks. Let me hasten to add here that this forum is not about me—I'm simply the originator. It's principally about our country and the ethical responsibilities that, as citizens, our humanist faith places upon us.

Even though this whole forum enterprise may prove to be enormous in scope—at once demanding, time-consuming and attention-getting to boot—we shall start small with what we have (probably in November) while thinking big into the future, envisioning

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Ethical Culture: Who We Are

Excerpt from Ethical Affirmation at AEU Assembly
 May 24, 2003, by Bob Greenwell, Leader

Ethical Culture is a *radical* departure for religion. It doesn’t just supplant some other religion’s Theory of Everything with its own new one. It is based on the insight that Theories of Everything are *theories*, and must not be allowed to reverse the rightful order of Ethical Experience first. The Ethical Movement reverses the reversal that so naturally happens for each person growing up. When someone achieves this reversal back to experience first, it’s often felt inside as a breakthrough, an enlightenment. Ethical Culture is a radical departure, of which we should be proud and excited.

Ethical Culture is based on values rather than on beliefs. Think about it. This is truly a radical shift. It means that we must give priority to the actual values we experience, and derive our guiding beliefs from them, not use beliefs to dictate what our experience is.

Accordingly, we start with what is known by all human beings—that the best life is one that is predominantly colored by experiences of caring, honoring, appreciating, achieving, and loving. All of these, even achieving, are relationship-values. We start with these qualities, and we never leave them behind.

For a scientist, to pay attention to the exquisite detail of reality, as observed, as revealed in tests, is an act of reverence. In Ethical Culture, to pray is no more and no less than to pay attention to ethical experience. It’s a funny thing about ethical experience—that experience of the highest qualities possible to us—they always bend us toward action—like breathing in and out, breathing in the joys and satisfactions of ethical qualities in the moments they occur, and breathing out the next steps in action to better our relationships and world.

We sometimes say, “In Ethical Culture you can believe anything you want.” But it’s much stronger to say, “In Ethical Culture, you cannot be committed to any values you choose; you must be committed to ethical values. And you cannot believe anything you want to believe; you may only believe that which, first, is dependent on ongoing ethical experience; second, remains *ever* dependent on what experience reveals of ethical value; and third, is honestly tested in the crucible of others’ experience as you interact with them.

This is my ethical affirmation.

“The Continuing National Emergency” within the philosophic parameters of an ethical humanist mission which signals our general purposes. Meanwhile, a vision statement, representing a summary of what we as a Society aspire to, could be no less helpful. Specific desired outcomes that we want to reach within a reasonable time frame can then be elucidated, with some of the goals listed in our original Strategic Plan of a few years ago providing a sampling of possibilities to consider.

After Felix Adler died in 1933 his longtime devoted associate John Lovejoy Elliott, who succeeded him as Senior Leader, noticed a precipitate decline in Sunday morning attendances and complained to the Society’s trustees of their frequent absence from the pews. Later, Leader Jerome Nathanson had cause to make the same observation in the 1940s. In a bustling secular world the sanctity was fast going out of Sundays, or so it seemed.

As early as 1929 there had already been talk of fending off audience decline by broadcasting the Society’s Sunday “platform” meetings to a broader public. In 1936, as WQXR came into existence with classical music as its principal content, the Society approached the station with a proposal of its own; by 1941 live broadcasts of the Leaders’ addresses, which were characteristically compelling and intellectually edgy, had become a well-regarded feature of WQXR’s programming. In fact, much of it was so radically challenging that the broadcasts were dropped after WWII, only to be resuscitated a few years later. Aired at 11:00 am, by which time a wide-awake audience (!) tuned in eagerly, the Society had full use of an hour’s time.

When I first joined the now long-gone Board of Leaders in 1968, I, too, noticed a Sunday attendance that seldom exceeded a hundred, no matter how engaging the addresses were. However, we had a large and diversified radio audience as compensation, and its response via telephone and snail mail to our live broadcasts was regular and significant. With a membership of well over 1,000 we were extremely active during the week with a considerable number of projects; members were coming and going in the halls at all hours of the day, while Sunday meetings were not generally regarded as important enough to attend.

That situation has changed, much of it for the better! Sunday morning attendance is far more consistent and varied, and much larger. Trustees are no longer a breed apart from the membership at large. However, our huge formal auditorium remains a barrier to changing our ritualistic format to make it more contemporary; the format hasn’t fundamentally changed since the Society was founded. And what keeps us from being more animatedly varied in how we go about expressing our unique religion of ethics – whether anyone wants to believe it or not – is the continuation of our WQXR connection, which we hold onto as if it were our only lifeline to the outside world. Well, it isn’t, and its constantly escalating expense is unjustified. The present half-hour slot locks us in rigidly.

We don’t broadcast our Sunday presentations live anymore, they are taped instead and aired a week or two later. Our listening audience has noticeably dwindled and is mostly elderly, even if appreciative. A young listener recently wrote to us lauding our Sunday addresses for their quality, depth and forthrightness while bemoaning the fact of the program’s unreasonably

early hour for most New Yorkers (7:30 am) and how inappropriately and rigidly it is sandwiched between two theologically conservative half-hour broadcasts – my own views exactly! In short, we are stuck and should get out of the rut we’re in and not renew our WQXR contract. Meanwhile, we print and mail every talk – so long as a script is available – to about 85 subscribers and sell individual copies singly. This all takes up an enormous amount of time and energy of my administrative assistant Brigid Moreno, office word processor Deborah Foster, and myself on a weekly basis.

Since so much more vitality is evident among our members, I could go on about the need to rebuild our Sunday school, speed up our membership growth, and become infinitely more generous in support of our worldly religious movement. Together we can best live, love, act, and contribute to the world’s betterment. In others’ good we find our own; we’re always in a race against time!

President

Michael Bogdanffy Kriegh



As expected, we ended our fiscal year significantly in the red, and are projecting a budget that will be a half million dollars in the red next year.

Our endowments have not fared well in the past year either, though by most measures we have done pretty well in a down market. Doing pretty well, though, means we lost less money than most other institutions did with our investment strategy. In recent months the stock market has begun to rally and we have seen approximately a six percent growth in our portfolio in the past quarter.

Additionally, we have continued to repair and upgrade our building, making up for 20 or more years of deferred maintenance and, in some cases, outright neglect. And because we have not had a successful fundraising strategy in place for many years, the money to fix our building has come almost entirely from our endowments, so we have been spending into a down market, a double whammy.

My expectation is that by the end of next fiscal year, assuming no other changes in our financial picture, our endowments will dip to about two or two and one half million dollars.

The news on membership is less disturbing, but also not something to cheer about yet. We are generally holding our own, as we have been for a number of years, which means we are adding as many members as we lose. This is in spite of a new and well-liked Senior Leader, a couple of good years for programming and some new initiatives aimed at membership growth.

Without question, the biggest success we have had in the past year is with the quality of programming we have presented, the numbers of people who have come through our doors, and, what I think may prove to be most important of all, the partnerships we have developed.

For some time now, I have been painting the vision of our building as a center of community, along the lines of the 92nd Street Y, but oriented towards our ethical humanist message. My main thesis has been that we need to significantly increase our sphere of contact, and that we must use our space and location to do that. Quite simply, if we want to stay in this wonderful but very expensive to maintain building, we must fill it with activity that is either mission relevant or profitable, or both.

We've had some huge successes in that direction this year, and we've developed some important relationships that will serve us very well in the coming years.

Our first breakthrough was a program called No Logo/Pro Logo, which, due to the quick thinking of Paula Sheldon, our administrator, we were able to develop into a co-sponsored event with The Nation Institute, *The Economist* magazine and WNYC radio. The event was a huge success. We had over a thousand people attend, 250 of whom viewed it on closed circuit television in the Social Hall. The event was broadcast the next day on the Brian Lehrer Show, with multiple mentions of Ethical Culture. It was broadcast several times more in the following months, both locally and nationally.

Since that time we have had four additional collaborations with The Nation Institute, each one placing large numbers of people in our Auditorium, including a sold out event featuring Leonard Lopate and Gore Vidal and another co-sponsored program on the role of the United States in the world today with The Nation Institute and *The Economist* magazine which drew almost 2,000 people. Both these events were broadcast on CSPAN with lots of mention of the Society.

This summer we will be meeting with WNYC to plan another No Logo/Pro Logo type program, which will probably take place in November or December and be broadcast on the Brian Lehrer Show.

One of the nice benefits we received from our co-sponsorship of the No Logo/Pro Logo program was a number of free 20-second spots to announce our upcoming events on WNYC. We also concluded a deal with WNYC that will get us more announcement spots in

exchange for use of space in our building for their public meetings.

At this point I'd like to talk about some of the less or not yet apparent things we've been doing to position ourselves to grow and prosper.

It's been obvious that we've been spending a great deal of money on fixing our building up. The list of issues we need to address seems endless, and most of them, unfortunately, are the kinds of issues that are not glamorous or very visible when they are addressed. However, we've been seizing each opportunity of something that has to be done, and using it as one that will also enhance the appearance of the building. And so you will note that in the process of creating more storage space on the fifth floor, we have fixed up the hallway, fixed up the president's and administrator's office, and, as an experiment, allocated some money to refurbishment of the Adler Study.

By the time you read this report, we should have begun refurbishment of the Auditorium, which is arguably at the very center of all our possibilities for the next few years. Indeed, I expect this one project alone to be as important to the long-term health of the institution as any we have undertaken in recent history.

While the complete scope of work is yet to be decided, at a minimum we will be repainting the ceiling, replacing all the cushions and drapes, making improvements in ambient and architectural lighting and adding some theatrical lighting. We will be removing our pipe organ and replacing it with a digital organ, and reinstalling seating long ago ripped out for the pipe organ. Depending on what the cost of all that looks like, I would also like to refurbish as many of the pews as possible, starting with the main floor. We will

also be rebuilding the stage to address some code issues.

To do this work, we have taken a somewhat bold step, and hired a name designer, Jamie Drake. Jamie has recently completed a number of projects for the Bloomberg Administration, including the refurbishment of Gracie Mansion last summer. With the retention of Jamie, we get a talented designer whose credentials will serve us well both during and after the project.

And here is what I expect this refurbishment will do for us. It will radically alter the perception people have of us when they visit for the first time. The Auditorium will no longer be dark and dingy, and with the removal of the pipe organ it will be returned to its former spatial glory. We will no longer have the appearance of an institution whose glory days are behind it. Do not underestimate the effect this change in first impression will have on all those who visit us. This change will significantly enhance our ability to attract new friends and members and more income producing business.

To capitalize on our rental business potential, we have already prepared a wonderful rental brochure and our administration is implementing plans for the marketing of our spaces. I've made it very clear that we must see a significant increase in our rental revenues next winter and spring, and there is no reason to expect that we won't.

The board has also made a commitment to membership growth through the creation of a Membership Growth Committee, chaired by Barbara Levenson, whose primary focus will be on the recruitment of new members, while the Membership Services Committee will remain focused on membership service and retention.

The board has also authorized the purchase of new membership data-

base software, which will allow us to do a better job of tracking not only members, but also people who have expressed interest in us.

This will be the year that we get serious about fund raising. I have reconstituted the Fundraising Committee which now consists of Chuck Debrovner and Bonnie Bean as co-chairs, Leigh McKay as member, and Beth Goldberg as project consultant to the committee. I have charged them with developing a fundraising plan for the Society. That plan is to include a more effective approach to you, our membership, for financial support, the identification and pursuit of grant opportunities, the planning and execution of major fundraising events, and any other fundraising opportunity they can dream up.

A specific fundraising project I have asked them to look at for the coming year is a Gala Fundraising event to re-open the Auditorium. We have the elements of a good fundraiser at least partially in place, an Auditorium that will need some more work, but none the less look a lot better for the event, a name designer doing the work, and a name orchestra that has expressed a willingness to assist with the evening's entertainment.

And finally, the board authorized last fall the hiring of Canfield Designs to redesign our web site. The site should be ready for launching late summer or early fall.

So, with the combination of a refurbished Auditorium, more exposure to the public through programs that are every bit as exciting as the ones we've experienced in the last two years and a number of initiatives aimed at putting us in a better position to build, I have every reason to believe that we will be able to look the abyss in the face without falling into it. By next November,

we will be positioned, as we have not been in a very long time, to begin to capitalize on our message, location and great building.

This means, however, that there can be no excuses. We've given ourselves the tools; we now have to put them to effective use. It will be up to every one of us to contribute whatever we can to complete the job of turning our institution around. Every one of us is capable of contributing to the success of this institution and I expect that every one of us will.

Treasurer

Les Graifman

We have just ended the 2002-2003 fiscal year at the Society. Through May, we had income of \$1,089,883 and expenses of \$1,475,302. The deficit is \$385,419, with June's income and expenses yet to be recorded. The projected deficit in the Board-approved budget was \$240,295, which has now been exceeded, and we may see a final deficit of close to a half million dollars.

Income from the endowment funds at Morgan Stanley will lower the final deficit, but on paper only. Funds to operate the Society are pulled from the endowment money even though the endowment is diminishing rapidly. It is heartening to see a new fundraising effort getting off the ground, and I hope it brings in the money we so desperately need to keep our doors open.

The budget for the 2003-2004 fiscal year has been prepared and is waiting for final Board approval. That budget shows a potential deficit of \$460,000. The Open Budget meeting on April 23rd was attended by five members (four from the Board, and one from the Finance Committee). The meeting produced some good questions and ideas,

which were incorporated in the draft brought to the Board for discussion.

The audit for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2002 was completed on time and without any material events. The audit for fiscal year 2003 is expected to be launched shortly.

Membership Coordinator

Ben Bean

My thanks to all those I call upon to help serve lunch on Sunday and collect our members' money. To all the members who help with orientation and any of the other activities that evolve from the membership, I tip my hat and say that we could not be where we are without your help.

A special note of thanks to Barbara Levenson, who does a lot for the Society by reminding me of what I should be doing to keep everyone fired up about Ethical Culture.

We had eight orientation meetings this past year. More than 100 people attended one of the sessions and 38 people have joined over the last 10 months. These Sunday afternoon sessions give all our prospective members a chance to ask questions and really start to understand us. We are now seeing the effects of the evening co-hosted events, with increasing numbers of attendees at the Society for other events. It is not fun turning people away from these evening events but soon, I hope, I will have the same problems on Sunday mornings.

Several new programs such as the evening dance lessons and the conversation salon started by Mary Domowicz and Robin Burnosky were popular with both our members and those who had never before stepped inside our

doors. Let us try to find additional programs to entice more people to visit our Society. I look forward to getting our chief hiker and biker (Henryka) back from Russia so that we can organize some more wonderful trips to explore the Greater New York area.

I miss the frequent visits in my office by Jean Kotkin, who always would get me fired up to do something for the Society, New York City, or the world. Barbara Riefle always gave me good suggestions on how to reach out to members and those who should be members of our Society. Even with physical difficulties in getting about, George Kartychak was always ready to do whatever he could for the Society, and we miss the descriptions of Broadway shows he gave at the monthly Men's Group meetings.

Membership in the Society will grow only if each of us reaches out to our friends and tells them about the Society. This has been the way we have prospered in the past and this is how we will grow in the future.

Archivist

Dr. Marc A. Bernstein

This past year found the archives busier than ever.

Some fascinating visitors found their way to our crowded quarters: a scholar interested in the 1904 meeting between Felix Adler and the eminent German sociologist Max Weber; an architectural historian working on the period in which our building was erected; a student of 20th century American photography here from Italy to trace the effects of the Ethical Culture School on several photographers; and a number of walk-ins fascinated by the architecture of the building or the idea of Ethical Culture itself.

As always, most requests for archival material or information arrived via the Internet. People doing family histories wanted to know when their great grandparents were members of the New York Society; biographers wanted to learn when so-and-so attended the Ethical Culture School. Those within our movement used the archives most heavily. Recently, Leaders have asked for the papers of Anna Garlin Spencer, reviewed Jerome Nathanson's work on capital punishment, and inquired about the history of Ethical Culture Sunday schools. This year, the archives also became a source of quotations—for opening words, fundraising brochures and, above all, for Anne Klaeyen's installation.

The highlight of 2003, however, came in the form of spoken rather than written words. Generous funding from the New York Society and the American Ethical Union has permitted us to put on compact disc some of the great speeches and events that have enlivened the New York Society in the past 75 years. Want to hear Algernon Black at his best, or Jerome Nathanson? Just make an appointment to borrow one of 14 CDs now in our archives. A selection of the best of this material is now available on one CD that can be purchased from the AEU office for \$10. Happy listening!

Ethics for Children

Curtis Borg, Director

A small busy crew. This would sum up the group of children who made up the Sunday School for 2002-2003. While our numbers were relatively low this year, we maintained an agenda that included participation in the Winter Festival, Family Potlucks, and two stories developed into animated plays ("How Snowshoe Hare Rescued the

Sun” and “Kahasi and the Loon”) and the graduation of long-time Sunday School member, Cassandra Paras.

The total registration for the year was 10 students. Of these, 8 were of member families. We generally have a nearly equal percentage of member and non-member families enrolled. Meetings have been going on since we finished our program year and will continue through the summer regarding enhancing and promoting the children’s program for 2003-2004. The Society has managed to make new arrangements for the use of rooms on the fifth floor, which should offer many possibilities for the Sundays ahead that we have not had for a number of years. Promotion and networking will be a primary consideration as we make our plans during the summer for our September opening. Word of mouth has still been our most potent promotional tool and we encourage members to keep the program in mind as they encounter families who might enjoy joining our ranks.

Wishing All a Restful, Joyful Summer!

Administrator

Paula Sheldon

You’ve already heard and will probably hear more about the need for increased revenue and more members. Membership and revenue, membership and revenue. I try to repeat that phrase to myself several times a day—almost like a mantra. Certainly these are words to live by for all of us who love the Society and want to see it continue and grow long after all of us are gone.

I’ve tried to keep that in mind every day in everything I’m trying to accomplish here. It’s clear, I think, what impact I can have on revenue; it may

not be so clear as to what impact the staff and I can have on membership. While I have no direct involvement in membership growth, much of what I do can have a positive impact on that, so long as our staff and I stay focused—focused on membership and revenue, membership and revenue.

I’ll start with our long-term tenants, the churches. We have a church that worships here on Saturdays, in Social Hall—Worldwide Church of God. They also used 5th floor rooms as classrooms. Our new contract not only raised their rate more than 10% but, perhaps more importantly, also eliminated their use of the 5th floor, making those rooms available for other rentals and our own programs.

We have entered into a lease agreement with another church, Redeemer Presbyterian, which will replace City Church, starting in November when the Auditorium is reopened. City Church’s last day with us was Sunday, June 29. There are several things that are exciting about this new lease with Redeemer: increased rental income, they will be making a major contribution to the refurbishment of the Auditorium, and they will not be using our 5th floor at all. They will use the Y next door for their Sunday school. That means we will have the entire 5th floor to ourselves every Sunday up to the time Vision Church comes in the afternoon. This will give our Sunday school much greater flexibility in planning their programming and will give them much more room to grow. When I attended the AEU conference held at the Brooklyn Society awhile back, I noted something very important. The very few societies that were able to grow their membership had all done it through their Sunday schools. Because I was aware of the needs and concerns of the Sunday School Committee, I was

able to help direct and be a part of the successful negotiation that has led to increased revenue. In the long run, it may help lead to membership growth.

Now let me talk about our one-day rentals—we have recently doubled the rental fee for the Auditorium and we are getting that amount. Now, doubling the rate is fine, but to go along with that, we recognize that increased marketing is necessary—especially since the new rates may drive away some of our old customers. So, we produced a marketing brochure—complete with beautiful color pictures—of all our rental spaces. This brochure was produced by our PR director, Dale Zeidman, who worked closely with the brochure designer and the photographer. Dale is marketing the brochure to music event planners and others who don’t know about the Auditorium but should.

As most of you know, we have hired an events coordinator—Leslie Doyle. One of Leslie’s responsibilities has been to help bring the brochure to the attention of events and wedding planners to make sure that we are tapping into all the markets we can. Of course, when the new website is up and running, that too, will be a very powerful marketing tool for rentals.

We also are joining NYC & Company, the Convention and Visitors Bureau for New York. NYC & Company is *the* resource that event planners around the country use when planning events in New York. We will be listed in their New York resource book and on their website. They have monthly meetings called card exchanges, where event planners and others get together to exchange ideas. Once we join, Leslie will be attending those events regularly to network on behalf of the Society. The cost for joining is \$1,575—quite a lot of money for a small organization

like ours—so Leslie’s idea was to ask the vendors to whom we refer work regularly to consider contributing to that yearly fee. Jean Donnay has generously offered to contribute half of the cost. I am now talking to another vendor to see if they are willing to contribute as well.

The Building Committee is working on compiling the information on banners for the Central Park façade of our building. They will be presenting a proposal to the board shortly. If we decide to have banners, they too, will go a long way in getting us better known.

We will be advertising in *Manhattan Bride* magazine for the first time, which will also include a listing on their website. We hope to increase our wedding business that way. Nowadays when most brides start planning their wedding, the first place they look for information is the Internet. With a listing in *Manhattan Bride* and by having this information posted on our new website, we will come up on every bride’s Internet search in New York. We have also set up a system in which the administration office will receive from the Senior Leader’s office the names and addresses of all those who inquire about officiants for their wedding ceremonies. We will then send all of those couples our new rental brochure with a letter to let them know that we offer the space for their ceremonies and their receptions.

One of the best ways to get our name out, as we have happily discovered, is with our co-sponsored events like the one that was co-sponsored by The Nation Institute and the Society, “An Evening with Gore Vidal.” We have charged for this event and it was sold out. We have had to arrange for a video feed to Social Hall for the overflow. The funds raised by charging for this

event will go directly to the expenses involved in producing the event.

I have been working closely with the Program Committee to establish strong working relationships with other like-minded groups such as *The Nation*, WNYC radio, and others. The hard work of the committee has paid off. We now have other non-profits coming to us seeking co-sponsorship, rather than having to find them.

We have developed a strong relationship with WNYC radio. They have invited us to meet with them this summer to brainstorm about a topic for a co-sponsored forum. They would like to plan one big event with a year with us. Last year we were in the position of trying to be a part of events that were already planned by others; now we will have much more control. By being brought in at the planning stage, we become full and equal partners. One of the main reasons that these two organizations in particular are great partners for us—besides having similar sensibilities—is that they also have similar needs. Both WNYC and *The Nation* need to increase their membership, and we all are looking for younger members. Both groups are able to fill the Auditorium and thus expose hundreds of people to our message who might not otherwise ever have heard of us. WNYC also gives us underwriting airtime credits—free advertising for the Society. They have monthly meetings for which we may be able to provide space in exchange for additional free underwriting time. Each event greatly increases our mailing list, so that in the future, we won’t have to rely on others to fill our Auditorium.

Recently we donated the Auditorium to the Greater New York Black Psychiatrists Association for a forum featuring Dr. David Satcher, former Surgeon General. We had a membership table

in the lobby with signup sheets for our mailing list. I understand from Ben Bean that we got approximately 100 signatures.

For each co-sponsored event, we ask that our Senior Leader be permitted to open the meeting, greet the audience, and tell them a little bit about who we are. We also make an announcement to encourage attendees to sign up to find out about future events.

As many of you know, we recently held a very successful forum here that was produced completely by the Ethical Action Committee. They assembled a stellar panel to speak about civil liberties in time of war. It was a true debate with many different opinions—an exciting, thought provoking time was had by all. Unfortunately, we didn’t get the kind of attendance that the forum deserved. We had about 225 or so—not bad—but we need to do better and we know how! Though they advertise, the way that *The Nation* and WNYC fill this room is primarily through their mailing lists. *The Nation* will send out 10,000 to 20,000 postcards to the names on their list.

We had an exciting meeting with the associate publisher of *The Nation* magazine, sister organization of The Nation Institute. He informed us that for a forum we are producing ourselves—like the Civil Liberties Forum—they would be happy to be a co-sponsor, or at the very least, give us access to their mailing list for a mention in our printed program for the event.

With a generous contribution from a member, I worked with the Membership Growth Committee to purchase a membership database software package that will allow us to manage our list and keep track of each name on the mailing list. We will be able to send out e-mail invitations. We will also be able to communicate with our membership

more easily and cheaply. The database also has a strong fundraising component that will be of enormous aid to our newly reorganized Fundraising Committee. The Membership Growth Committee is working closely with Deborah Foster in customizing the program and it should be operational soon.

As you know, we will be closing the Auditorium this summer from July through October—a total of four months. Michael has spoken to you about the work being done there and about the idea of holding a fundraising gala to mark the reopening. Our production team, comprised of the events coordinator, the PR director, and me, look forward to working with membership to make this gala a fabulous and lucrative event. We are hoping to raise a six-figure sum. The Eos Orchestra has offered to participate, which will obviously contribute to its success.

Michael has talked about the work in the Auditorium. Let me inform you about what's happening in other parts of the building. We have built the necessary storage space on the fifth floor for our tables and chairs. Mike Tomlin and crew have done a beautiful job. Mike has also supervised the enormous task of removing all excess wiring and cable in the building. We had so much cabling in this building, you would have thought we were AT&T! All this excess cable made it nearly impossible for Verizon and other technicians to figure things out when we had a problem with our phones, fax machines, and Internet connection. The technicians would take a look at our mass of wiring and leave, never to return. It sometimes used to take us weeks to get repairs done because of this. Mike and crew have now permanently solved that problem.

Based on the code report we had commissioned, we will be working this

summer on rectifying all the code concerns, making this a safer and more secure building.

We will also install a fire alarm system this summer, in conjunction with the school. It will be a shared system that could, in the future, be made into two separate systems, should we ever decide to do that. We will be sharing the cost with the school on an equitable basis. Our cost may come to approximately a third of the total cost; the school has more floors, so their cost is higher.

We now have a full-time security guard. We are also investigating security camera systems. The cost for such a system is out of reach for us financially at this time, but we will revisit that when we can. Right now the full-time guard has proved to be sufficient for our needs. The presence of a security guard also addresses the serious concerns of the school about security and access to their building.

We are poised ready for growth, and we now have a team in place that will be able to help the membership develop, produce, and promote successful programs and events. This will lead to the increases in revenue and membership we need.

Committee Reports

Adult Education Committee

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

Once again we had a season of popular and successful courses and reading groups.

The three reading groups, two sponsored by the Great Books Foundation, and one, Ethical Culture Retirement Activities (ECRA), founded by Society member Charlotte Brawer, continue to welcome long-time and new participants for lively and thoughtful discussions. The Great Books series facilitated last season by Kathy McGuire and Ruth Sheridan will continue under the same able leadership. Dr. Charles Debrovner and Dr. Norma Hymes, who led last year's "The Evil and the Guilty" series will be leading "Politics, Leadership, and Justice" in the coming season. The ECRA group, whose discussions were facilitated last season by Ruth Sheridan and Ileane Silver, will now be led by Ileane and

May Del Rio Dorfman. You may join these reading groups, the evening Great Books groups and the Wednesday afternoon ECRA group, at any time during the year to enjoy regular monthly stimulating and friendly interchanges with others who share a love of reading.

Our always popular "Foundations of Ethical Culture" was last season and will again be facilitated by Senior Leader Khoren Arisian, with a variety of interesting speakers presenting the various sessions. Member Dr. Larry Yates will be a newcomer to the roster of presenters. 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 presenters offer from year to year, we strongly suggest that all new members take this course. It covers the social background in which the Ethical Movement arose, the history and philosophy of Ethical Culture, and, in the final session, a panel of members and/or

EDUCATIONAL

Continuing Reading and Discussion Series

Great Books, Series V

October 2003-June 2004

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 1	Bible	Ecclesiastes
	Sophocles	Oedipus the King*
November 5	Freud	On Deams
	Kafka	The Metamorphosis*
December 3	Goethe	Faust, Part One
January 7	Kant	First Principles of Morals
	Flaubert	A Simple Heart*
February 4	Hume	Of Personal Identity
	Nietzsche	Thus Spoke Zarathustra
March 3	Dante	The Inferno
April 7	Burke	Reflections on the Revolution in France
	Adams	The Education of Henry Adams
May 5	Shakespeare	King Lear*
June 2	Aristotle	On Tragedy
	Plato	The Republic

Fiftieth Anniversary Great Book Series “Politics, Leadership, and Justice”

September 2003-May 2004

Third Wednesdays 7:30 pm

Members \$25, Non-members \$30

Includes texts and refreshments

Readings vary between 30 and 75 pages

Facilitators: Dr. Charles Debrovner

and Dr. Norma Hymes

September 17	Abraham Lincoln	Second Inaugural Address
	Martin Luther King, Jr.	Letter from Birmingham Jail
October 15	Isak Dinesen	Sorrow-Acre
November 19	Wole Soyinka	Kongi's Harvest
December 17	Thucydides	The Melian Dialogue
January 21	Shakespeare	Julius Caesar
February 18	Amos Oz	Longing
March 17	Lao-tzu	Poetry
April 21	J. M. Coetzee	Age of Iron
May 19	Duong Thu Huong	Paradise of the Blind

Ethical Culture Retirement Activities

September 2003-June 2004

Second Wednesdays 3:00 pm

Members free

Non-members \$10 for the year

Facilitators and Ileana Silver

May Del Rio Dorfman

September 10	George Eliot	The Mill on the Floss
October 8	Henry James	Washington Square
November 12	Robertson Davies	The Cunning Man
December 10	Muriel Spark	Reality and Dreams
January 14	Margaret Atwood	Surfacing
February 11	Fyodor Dostoyevsky	The Idiot
March 10	Barbara Ehrenreich	Nickel and Dimed:
		On (Not) Getting by in America
April 14	Jane Smiley	A Thousand Acres
May 12	Graham Greene	The Honorary Consul
June 9	Ian McEwan	Atonement

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

PROGRAMS

New and Revised Courses

Lay Leadership

September 21, 28; October 5, 19, 2003

Note: No session October 12

Sundays 2:00-4:00 pm

Members of New York and Riverdale Societies \$20

Curt Collier, Leader, **New!**
Riverdale Yonkers Society

You must commit to attend all sessions

Foundations of Ethical Culture

October 7–November 4, 2003

Tuesdays 6:30-8:30 pm

Members \$35; Non-members \$50

Facilitator: Dr. Khoren Arisian, Senior Leader

October 7 History of the Movement
Anne Klaeyesen, Leader,
Long Island Society

October 14 Social Roots
Dr. Joseph Chuman,
Leader, Bergen Society

October 21 Values and Ideals
Dr. Larry Yates,
Member, New York Society

October 28 Social Action
Curt Collier, Leader,
Riverdale Yonkers Society

November 4 The Living Faith: Panel
How We Apply Ethical Culture
to Our Daily Lives
Muriel Berger, Jerry Chamlin,
Phyllis Harrison-Ross, Joe Marvel,
Members, New York Society

A Humanist Perspective on the Bible

January, 2004, Three Thursdays, 6:30-8:30 pm

Members \$20, Non-members \$25

Anne Klaeyesen, Leader, Long Island Society

Jan. 8 Exodus

Jan. 15 Prophetic Vision **New!**

Jan. 22 The Gnostic Gospels

Islam Through Muslim Eyes

February 26, March 4, 11, 18, Thursdays, 6:30-8-30 pm

Members \$35, Non-members \$50

Imam Feisal Abdul Rauf and Speakers from **New!**
the ASMA (American Sufi Muslim Association) Society
Course will cover Islam's creed and rituals, beliefs,
sources of faith, spirituality (Sufism) and topics selected
by the speakers.

Liberal Religion and How It Grew:

A Humanist Perspective

April, 2004, Thursdays, 6:30-8:30 pm

Members \$35, Non-members \$50

Dr. Khoren Arisian, Senior Leader **New!**

April 1 Freethought and Its Pioneers

April 8 The Singular Career of Tom Paine:
Phamphleteer, Political Radical, Deist

April 15 From Transcendentalism to "FreeReligion":
Proto-Humanism in the Making

April 22 Theodore Parker, Emerson's Greatest
Disciple: A Case Study in Ethical Activism

April 29 Is Liberal Religion the Spiritual Counter-
part to the American Democratic Faith?

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

Leaders who talk about the ways in which they apply Ethical Culture to their daily lives.

Our course for lay leaders has, in the recent past, been available by invitation only. Last season's course was a series of workshops intended to hone the skills of current and upcoming lay leaders. In the fall of 2003, an exciting new leadership course will be shared by the Riverdale Yonkers Society and the New York Society. Open to all members of the two Societies, it will take place at the New York Society and be developed and presented by Curt Collier, Leader of the Riverdale Yonkers Society.

A mini-course on "A Humanist Perspective on the Bible" was presented last season by our then Leader Intern Anne Klaeyen to an enthusiastic audience. Anne, now the Leader of the Long Island Society, has agreed to return in January to present Part II of this course.

Our 2003 spring course was planned and facilitated by Senior Leader Khoren Arisian. Entitled "Of Morals and Nontheistic Religion: A Primer," it was enjoyed by a large audience of members and visitors. For next spring, Khoren will organize a course entitled "Liberal Religion and How It Grew: A Humanist Perspective."

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

The Adult Education Committee has been enlarged and is now comprised of Phyllis Kreuttner and Judith Wallach, co-chairs, and members Pat Debrovner, Mary Ellen Goodman, Norma Hymes, Lizzy Soenarjati, and Sylvan Wallach. Khoren Arisian is Leader Advisor, and Curtis Borg is Religious Education Advisor.

Building Committee

Ruth L. Cohen, Ph.D. and Sheila Kleinwald, Co-Chairs

The Building Committee has had a busy and productive year. Among the projects completed were the installation of new Auditorium carpeting; the fabrication and installation of new brass hardware for the building entrance doors; an improved operating system and a new floor for the elevator; and the restoration of the Adler Study (room 514), with the installation of new carpeting. We are currently completing the installation of a new fire alarm system.

In contemplation of the long-awaited renovation and restoration of the Auditorium, the Board of Trustees, at its March meeting, voted initial funding of \$100,000 to begin the project. We have hired the interior designer Jaime Drake, who will be responsible for the design and coordination of the project with other design professionals. The Auditorium will be closed from July through October, during which time we expect regular Sunday programs to take place in Ceremonial Hall or the Social Hall. We have learned that we will be aided in the Auditorium project with financial and in-kind assistance, and we are most grateful to the interested friends of the Society who have agreed to help.

At the reopening of the Auditorium, we look forward to several fundraising events, including a Reopening Gala and our fifth annual musical benefit concert for the Stained Glass Windows Fund. The concert is scheduled for the afternoon of Sunday, November 2. Please save the date.

We are pleased to announce that the Building Committee has received a

\$5,000 gift toward the establishment of a memorial wall and toward a memorial plaque in memory of a Holocaust victim.

During the summer months our maintenance crew will be working on a long list of vital projects throughout the building to improve its usefulness and appearance. Meanwhile, the Building Committee will be updating its short, intermediate, and long-term plans for upgrading various parts of the building as time and money permit.

We are also actively seeking to develop the terrace outside of Ceremonial Hall as the Jean Somerville Kotkin Memorial Terrace. If you are interested in this project, please call Sheila Kleinwald at 212-751-7255.

Caring Committee

Stephanie Rosenblatt, Chair

My chairmanship has come to an end. For the time being, each committee member will serve a two-month period as committee chair.

June:	Stephanie Rosenblatt
July/Aug.:	Marcella Montaruli
Sept/Oct.:	Ben Bean
Nov/Dec:	Pearl Katz
Jan/Feb.:	Faye Joyce
Mar/Apr.:	Stephanie Rosenblatt

Ben and Stephanie are backups.

By the end of the year we hope to have a permanent chairperson. Pearl Katz has joined the committee and is very active. Alan Gardner is another member who may join the committee. There is a stand in the lobby with all—or at least most—of the projects the committee has been working on during the year.

Ethical Action Committee

Carol Rost and Christine Swann, Co-Chairs

We have had a busy and rewarding year, and we made ourselves felt on several key issues. On behalf of the Society, we took a stand against the war in Iraq, in particular by marching in the world rally on March 15. We're very happy with the results of our project to raise money for DNA testing.

One prisoner has already been exonerated and we have raised enough to help another. Each test costs \$2,500. We have already begun receiving contributions for the third test. We continued our support for those seeking repeal of the Rockefeller Drug Laws, working with the organization, Drop The Rock. We also continued a long-standing relationship with New Yorkers against the Death Penalty, persuading the Board to pass a Moratorium resolution, gathering petitions, and attending their fundraisers, the most memorable being a performance of the very moving play, *The Exonerated*.

Events were also a big activity for the committee. We co-sponsored several successful events but we are proudest of our own "Civil Liberties Forum," which brought distinguished speakers with varying viewpoints together for an exhilarating evening.

We continue our letter writing tables, making our voice heard on a range of issues such as women's reproductive rights, the environment, and tax cuts. On the latter we also collected signatures to prevent any further application of the latest cuts.

We are happy to say we have a core group of about 12 regulars on the com-

mittee. We encourage all interested to join us—to work on many issues or to dedicate your time to a few. We are a hardworking committee of people who like to have fun and get important things done.

Next year we will continue to work on all of the projects mentioned above and more—and will do whatever we can to influence the upcoming election. We meet at 6:00 pm on the fourth Thursday of every month. Do join us!

Ethical Humanist Award Committee

Carol Nadell, Chair

The Ethical Humanist Award Committee has had a busy and fruitful year. Our major event was the presentation of the Ethical Humanist Award to Senator Jim Jeffords on Sunday morning, March 9. We added three additional committee members to help with the event: Leigh McKay took charge of the reception, including the food, the decorations, the flowers, and the music (supplied by Kim Jones); Muriel Berger added her creative expertise wherever needed; and Donna Fetonte, having worked on many other Ethical Humanist Awards, provided much insight into the process.

The committee—Khoren Arisian, Jerry Chamlin, Maria Fridman, Mary Ellen Goodman, and Judy Wallach—were a fantastic team. Each member was dedicated to making this as successful as possible.

The Society as a whole pitched in with pride and support, making this truly a community effort. Approximately 550 people attended, with the highest percentage of attendees coming as a result of friends' invitations, an

approach that the committee was successful in implementing.

We as a committee learned a lot from the experience and plan to use what we learned in our planning for the next award. Although we have several ideas for possible future recipients, we are always open to suggestions for the Ethical Humanist Award or the Distinguished Community Service Award. Please contact: Carol Nadell, Chair, Ethical Humanist Award Committee, at the Society with your suggestions.

Finance Committee

Please see Treasurer's Report, page 5.

Membership Growth Committee

Barbara Levenson, Chair

The Membership Growth Committee began meeting about eight months ago. Our challenge was to create methods to grow the Society by identifying prospective members and reaching out in ways that would encourage their participation in other Society events and ultimate membership. We recognized from the beginning that growth could not be the sole responsibility of one committee but required the participation of everyone. Our first effort, therefore, was to prepare a letter that was sent to the entire membership suggesting ways that each of us could make visitors feel welcome and want to return.

There is now an information table, staffed by volunteers, at every Society event, with information about the Society, flyers describing upcoming events, and sign-up sheets, so we are able to

follow up with e-mail, letters, and phone calls. This information is then transferred to our new membership database and we are now able to track and reach out to people from their first visit to our building. This is a powerful tool for facilitating membership growth and we ask every group planning an event—large or small—to include an information table in their plans and to solicit contact information. To assist you, we are purchasing a mobile information cart that will be kept current and can easily be moved from room to room. The cart will be stored in the Membership Office.

We have prepared several pieces of literature to be given to friends and visitors. The first is a wallet-sized card that members can pass out to friends and acquaintances. The card briefly describes Ethical Culture, gives our location, and contains an invitation to join us at a Sunday morning meeting. If you'd like to carry some of these cards, they can be obtained from the Membership Office. We also prepared a color fold-over brochure. The cover contains a photograph of a group participating in an ethical action and the words, "We Believe in Deed above Creed." Inside is a listing of ongoing Society actions and on the back is a brief history of past accomplishments. We have also prepared a one-page handout of upcoming and recent events that is continuously updated.

In March we began sponsoring a monthly reception for new members, each held in a different member's home. These have been very successful and will resume in September.

Members have brought together a list of quotes dealing with ethical humanism by well-known thinkers and writers. These quotes will begin appearing in the Sunday leaflet in the fall. If you

have any favorites, please bring them to our attention.

Now that we have begun the systematic collection of contact information from visitors to the Society, our next step is to develop systematic methods of follow-up and the encouragement of follow-up programming that will make visitors want to return. These concerns will be high on our agenda when we resume meeting in the fall. Members of the committee include: Ben Bean, Muriel Berger, Carole Chamlin, Nick Childs, Beth Goldberg, Fay Joyce, Barbara Levenson, Joe Marvel, John Markunas, Carol Nadell, Christine Swann, David Sutcliffe, and Linda Whinery. We recognize that membership growth is a concern of all of us and we welcome your participation and ideas. We meet on the second Sunday of every month at 10:00 am. Our next scheduled meeting is September 14.

Membership Services Committee

Barbara Levenson

The Membership Services Committee plans and implements programs designed to encourage participation by members and non-members alike and to enhance our sense of belonging in an ethical community. We try to provide enough variety so that there is something for everyone.

Our ongoing monthly Film Forum presents stimulating films that lead to provocative discussions. In cooperation with the Ethical Action Committee, we showed two films dealing with death penalty issues and donated the proceeds to the DNA project. But sometimes we show a movie just for the fun of it, and this season our June film was

Mr. Hulot's Holiday. After our own holiday, the Film Forum will return on September 19.

In season, we offer bike trips, hikes, and walks. We look forward to the return from Russia of Henryka Komanska (our chief hiker and biker) so we can schedule some more wonderful trips exploring the greater New York area.

We offered a second series of Tai Chi courses, expanding from once weekly to once on a weekday and once on Saturday.

On the last Sunday of every month we staff a book table in the cafeteria where members and guests can purchase tapes and reprints of Sunday morning talks and order books from the American Ethical Union.

In November, members were privileged to attend the play *JB*, by Archibald McLeish, adapted by Ethical Culture leader Curt Collier. Prior to the performance, Curt gave an enlightening talk on the meaning of the biblical Job.

As usual, we celebrated New Year's Eve together at a gala party preceded by a concert by our resident Strathmere Ensemble. So many people attended that we nearly ran out of food, but all ended happily with members singing "Auld Lang Syne" and watching the fireworks in Central Park.

Other activities included a potluck supper at the Society, trips to museums, and a welcoming reception for new members following their annual recognition ceremony.

We have several events planned for the summer and early fall. In July we enjoyed a concert by the New York Philharmonic in Central Park; in August we're planning a picnic at Wave Hill; and in September we'll be spending the day in Beacon, New York, at the new Dia Museum.

Our annual retreat will take place September 26-28. Holiday Hills has closed its doors but we've found a wonderful new place—Jeronimo Resort and Conference Center in Sullivan County, New York. So far, nearly 40 people have signed up. We look forward to getting to know each other better in a less hectic environment.

Members of the committee are: Virginia Arnold, Ben Bean, Patricia Behrens, Joy Collins, Latanya Frazier (co-chair), Cheryl Gross, Sheila Kleinwald, Barbara Levenson, Sabine Rosenberg, Virginia Scherer, and Eva Yachnes (co-chair). We're always looking for new ideas and new members. We meet on the third Wednesday of every month at 6:00 pm. Our next meeting is September 17. Join us and let us know what you would like us to be doing.

Newsletter/Internet Committee

Sylvan Wallach, Chair

The Committee consists of two groups.

Newsletter

The Newsletter Group continues to publish the newsletter under the guidance of Judy Wallach, editor. The group has little occasion to meet and its members are consulted as needed on policy issues. Initial layout and other details of publication are ably handled by Deborah Foster, and copy-editing is professionally handled by Selma Friedman.

Four policy decisions were made: Inserts in newsletters, such as separate flyers, are made only when approved by the editor. Any extra mailing costs will be borne by the program submitting the insert. Submissions by non-

members of the Society are published only under unusual circumstances.

The procedure of publishing alternating long and short newsletters has been abolished, because the short newsletters sometimes did not allow for timely publishing of material. Beginning with the September 2003 issue, the normal size of the newsletter will be 8 to 12 pages. The August issue will continue to be the Society's Annual Report.

Distribution of the newsletter electronically, in PDF format, will be available to those who agree to receive it that way once the database of members is complete. There will be a saving in printing and mailing costs.

The newsletter printing and mailing budget, \$18,000 for 2002-2003, was increased to \$20,000 for 2003-2004 to allow for membership growth, additional lobby distribution, and inflation.

Internet

The Internet Group's primary responsibility has been creation and maintenance of the web site. This effort requires a variety of tasks: keeping the home page up to date, posting the Sunday addresses, and creating new pages as needed. The site is undergoing a professional redesign. There is no budget line for the Internet other than redesign, \$20,000 for 2002-2003. However, \$2,000 should be budgeted for the fiscal year 2003-2004 to cover software and maintenance costs.

Program Committee

Christine Swann, Co-Chair

Our year began as usual with the Activities Fair. The committee continues to have as a priority internal com-

munication and joint responsibility for programs. To that end we have instituted regular "All Committees Meetings" which enable and encourage the chairs of all committees and groups to share information about what they are doing and to discuss issues of common interest.

During the past program year, the committee concentrated on building relationships with existing and new partners. As a result, the Society co-sponsored events with several organizations—*The Nation*, The Nation Institute, WNYC, WBAI, the Center for Constitutional Rights, and others.

We have built a good working team with Leslie Doyle, the new events coordinator, to continue and expand these relationships. Leslie is tireless and inventive in doing outreach for the Society, and we have high hopes for many more co-sponsored events covering many more issues. These events are getting the Society's name and what we stand for known and appreciated—and bringing many new, active people into our building.

In the coming year, we also hope to expand the number of Society-initiated programs that will reach members and the general public. We consider new program proposals based on Board guidelines. We would like to encourage you all to give us ideas for new programs—in particular, those you would like to work on. Also, please tell us how we can do better—either on our own programs or those we co-sponsor.

Public Relations Committee

Bob Berger, Chair

The committee has been meeting and contemplating decisions that must be made. We look forward to working

with other Society committees and the Board of Trustees in the coming season. We have created a form for the committees to use when requesting publicity, and we are in the process of developing a system for prioritizing PR needs.

It is important that we promote the Society and Khoren Arisian as resources when opinions on ethical issues are sought. We need to become a frequently heard ethical voice on today's social, economic, and political issues. The committee is developing short- and long-term strategies for making the New York Society for Ethical Culture a known center for ideas, meetings, and ethical action.

Our committee is comprised of Bob Berger, Chair, Jerry Chamlin, Chuck Debrovner, Carol Nadell, Judy Wallach, and new members Muriel Berger, Alan Gardner, and Jirina Ribbens.

Sunday Program Committee

Carole Chamlin, Chair

The Sunday Program Committee meets approximately every six weeks to discuss and plan for all activities and programs that take place on 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, newcomers' hosts, program format, and cafeteria function and set-up are our responsibility.

From 10:30 am to 11:30 am our early morning programs continue with monthly meetings of Colloquy led by Phyllis Kreuttner, Marcella Montaruli, and Larry Yates; Poetry led by Pat Debrovner; Yoga, under the direction

of Henry Bunch; and reading of Ethical Leaders' writings led by Larry Yates.

We are pleased to welcome Eva Yachnes and Alan Gardner as members of our committee and we are looking forward to having Henryka Komanska back with us when she returns from her many months in Russia.

We said our "so-longs" to Anne Klaeyesen who added her thoughtful and helpful ideas for making this past year successful and exciting. We hope that in the near future we can ask Anne to be a guest speaker on a Sunday morning.

Khoren Arisian continued to provide us with outstanding addresses, generally on the first and third Sundays of every month during the fall, winter, and spring seasons.

On the second and fourth Sundays a diverse array of guest speakers addressed us.

We thank Stephanie Rosenblatt for her tireless work in arranging for Mrs. Kofi Annan to present an address on AIDS on a cold January morning. At the request of the Ethical Humanist Award Committee, we presented Senator Jeffords with our prestigious award in March. What a grand Sunday that was! Mary Ellen Goodman introduced U.S. Congressman Maurice Hinchey at a Sunday platform, and we thank her for bringing this clear-speaking public servant to address us.

Many of Ethical Culture's Leaders and members were on hand to present stimulating and thought-provoking addresses that encouraged conversation and discussion over lunch in the "Cafeteria."

Once again, in May, we were treated to the appearance of our Sunday School children at a Sunday Meeting when Curtis Borg presented them with year-end certificates. A highlight was joining in the recognition of Cassandra

Paras' completion of her years attending the Sunday school, with her family and friends there.

Gerry Ranck provided us with grand music and, as planned, we had several guest musicians who added to the richness of the morning activities.

As has been our pattern for the last few years, our summer meetings will be held in Ceremonial Hall at 10:30 am. In this more informal setting, we will have a variety of programs and, at the piano, Jon Liechty will round out the morning with music and songs.

Usually when summer draws to a close we head back down to the first floor, but not this year! On September 7 we will resume our fall schedule at 11:30 am in Ceremonial Hall due to the extensive renovation of our meeting house. Afternoon programs will continue in the fall and, again, these will include discussion, film, music, and drama.

Many thanks to all who participate in making Sunday a great day of the week.

The committee strives to maintain our traditions while going forward with changes necessary for our growth. We welcome your suggestions.

Thank you to committee members: Khoren Arisian, Meg Chapman, Mary Ellen Goodman, John Kreuttner, Joseph Marvel, Gerry Ranck, Stephanie Rosenblatt, Amy Schwarz, and Judy Wallach.

Women's and Men's Groups

Men's Group

Al Denenberg

This group meets the first Wednesday evening of the month to explore issues of importance to each member. Participants seek to support each other, share

Leadership

Richard Kiniry

Leader of the Philadelphia Society, at the Certification Ceremony for New Leaders, Sunday, May 25, 2003

Leaders are born and not made. We are all born leaders. It is just that too many of us can't find our voices. In Ethical Culture we believe in the leadership of all persons. You never stop being responsible for leading, leading your part of life. We believe that this human world is made up of coequal persons. No one has the truth; each person has a voice and should have an equal voice. Each of us should be leading our part of life with our own unique perspective. At times, because of our job or our position, we must exert legitimate authority and lead other people, and at times others must lead, but that doesn't mean that we ever lose our personal authority. Just because some people are arrogant and have big mouths doesn't mean they have more authority. Every person in a group or a relationship has an equal percent of the authority of that group.... Each of us must decide whether to sit back and let others lead or be part of the leadership—involved in the process, putting our spin on life. Life belongs to each of us. We all must lead our part of it.

feelings and concerns, and encourage mutuality, self-awareness and mindfulness, while searching for clarity about individual and Society goals.

Women's Group

Bernice Cornyetz

The Women's Group gained a member and lost a member this year. We

now number nine members, including myself. Our agenda has a specific topic at each monthly meeting. Our members like the idea of preparing to talk about a specific topic in advance of the meeting. This July we did not have a joint Men's and Women's Groups potluck party, as has been our tradition; we postponed it until the end of the year.

Social Service Board

Margaretha Jones, Chair

Thanks to all the volunteers and staff who make the work of the Social Service Board possible.

Homeless Shelter

(September 2, 2002 through May 31, 2003)

The Shelter, under the direction of Maria Feliz Fridman, now in its 21st year, is sponsored by the Partnership for the Homeless. The Shelter can house up to 10 women (the average for the season was eight) referred by the Olivieri Center and is open five days a week, Sundays through Thursdays. This season the City Church assisted us with volunteers Sundays and Thursdays, and we are grateful.

Two computers are available to the shelter guests. We were unable to secure an instructor for this season but hope that we will be able to offer computer instruction this coming season.

During June, July, and August, the shelter will remain open, Monday through Thursday, with a combined overnight staff from the Olivieri Center and our own volunteers. Overnight volunteers are always needed. The City Church will no longer use the Society's space but we hope that several of their volunteers will remain with us. We also hope that many of our members and friends will contact Maria Fridman at 718-263-5490 about assisting us in this very important Society activity. (We need overnight volunteers, housekeeping volunteers, instructors in computer use, etc.)

Many thanks to our dedicated volunteers:

Society members: Ben Bean, Richard Courtney, Chester Lane, David and Valerie Leiman, Amelia Lopatin, Marcella Montaruli, Frank Prescod, Virginia Scherer, Elizabeth Ungar (housekeeping), Ken Wernz (computer), Moira Whittington, Christine Swann (reporting).

City Church members: Dale Davis, Kim Grogg (coordinator), Win Jackson, Kate Johnson, Elder Maxwell, Leah Okimoto, Ann Seton, David Soloman, Lynn Kimel (who provided our Shelter guests with small gifts at holiday time).

Friends: Briana Blasco, Curtis Borg, Larry Flynn, Amy Lewis, Roland Nicholson, Jane Touttle, Jamila Williams.

New friends referred to us by the Partnership for the Homeless as of March 2003: Paul Adamo, Jim Heaney, Betsy Houlton, Kathrina Lear, Joanne Romero,

Mary Shertcliffe, Jean Shum, Bonnie Sims. From Columbia University: Pascale Jean-Louis.

Special Mention: At our volunteer dinner on June 3, our Community Spirit Award was presented to Sarah Gleberman, a fourth-grade student at the Ethical Culture School, for her generosity in donating \$140 to our women's shelter (representing her birthday presents) to honor her brother Charlie's birthday. SSB chair Margaretha Jones presented the award, noting how heartening it is to see such an extraordinary act in this age of consumerism.

Dinner to Honor Our Volunteers at the Women's Shelter

This evening began with Maria welcoming the volunteers, shelter guests, Society members, and staff from the Olivieri Center and the Partnership

for the Homeless, without whom, she stressed, we could not run the Shelter. Maria announced that the Shelter would be open June, July, and August with a combination of staff from the Olivieri Center and our own volunteers. Then the Community Spirit Award was presented to Sarah Gleberman (see item above).

The evening was an expression of gratitude to all the organizations involved—the Olivieri Center, the Partnership for the Homeless, and the Social Service Board, that help make the city a more livable place. Mark Graham, Program Director of the Partnership for the Homeless, thanked the Social Service Board for making his job easier. The Partnership now has 108 shelters and serves approximately 650 people a night. It has introduced an enhanced Volunteer Recruitment and Training Program, which includes an introduction to the issues and programs on homelessness and then places the volunteers in shelters. Mark encouraged us to go to the Partnership's website and join in sending e-mails to public officials on the subject of homelessness.

Steven Hornsby, Director of Programs of the Olivieri Center, described the work of the center as very difficult in these times of fiscal crisis. The Center provides a drop-in site that is an alternative, safer, and more welcoming environment with better access to services. They offer meals, showers, case management, counseling, and medical and psychiatric services. The facility has swelled beyond its capacity.

In thanking the SSB and Maria, Steven described what a difference it makes to a homeless woman to be able to come to a place like the Ethical Culture Shelter. A few of our shelter guests attended, and it was moving to see them and to understand that often their

only privacy is the bag of possessions they carry. To have their own beds and lockers; to be in the kitchen with others; to be in a nice, small, and homey place is a great richness, "my little home four or five days a week until I can get my own home," as one of the guests remarked.

The shelter is a proven pathway to housing. Many guests are no longer with us, having been empowered and encouraged to move on. The evening was a wonderful experience, and the work of the volunteers is beyond thanks. The evening ended with an enthusiastic tribute to Maria for her dedication in keeping the shelter going and for developing a generation of volunteers.

(Article contributed by Christine Swann)

Homeless Artists Workshop—Unforgotten Voices Creative Workshop

The New York Society and the Social Service Board continue to sponsor semi-annual exhibitions by the workshop for homeless artists and writers. These are organized by Maria Feliz Fridman (SSB director) and Judith Ginsburg of the "Unforgotten Voices Creative Workshop." The two events took place in the Social Hall the evenings of December 12, 2002 and June 12, 2003. These exhibitions always involve a good number of artists; a display of visual arts; readings, dance and music, and 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. A review of the December 12, 2002 event by Dr. Larry R. Yates was featured in the Society's February 2003 newsletter.

To All Members

Help us solve a mystery!
We have an heirloom square-cased rosewood Chickering piano. circa 1853, in the Adler Study. From whom? When?

Search your memory. Ask your family. Call us! Write us! Tell us all you know about this beautiful piano. We want to hear from you soon. Thank you. Ruth Cohen for the Building Committee, 212-860-4096.

Supervised Visitation Project (SVP)

Even in very difficult family situations, it is still in the best interest of the child to be able to have some contact with the non-custodial parent. On Saturdays from September through July we provide a safe place for children to visit with their non-custodial parents for one hour and fifteen minutes. These visitations are Court ordered and may take place only under supervision. We can accommodate up to 16 families for these visits (eight in the morning session and eight in the afternoon session). At no time is any child alone with his/her non-custodial parent. Our program demands that both custodial and non-custodial parents attend support groups. This year we have added a parent education component to these groups.

Our SVP Director, Christine Pagonis, oversees this project. She has an MSW and a masters degree in public health. She does in-depth intake interviews with all parties, child(ren) and parents, custodial and non-custodial. She also communicates with law guardians and parents' lawyers. She recruits, interviews, trains, and oversees the visitation facilitators, observers, and group leaders; oversees the staff meetings; and, when necessary, writes reports to the Court. Most of our facilitators are undergraduate 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 she accepts them, supervision of these students. At the end of each semester, the SVP Director is required to provide evaluations to the students' colleges.

Reading Program

Maria Cruz, a special education teacher, heads a reading program at IS 195 for 20 young people. The program allows them to explore commonly known stories, and opens up a world of reading to children who, prior to that experience, have not been interested in reading. This season, the children did illustrations, attended performances, saw movies, and were introduced to classical music. Their parents were involved in reading to the children and met in conferences held to discuss the children's progress.

Scholarships

Under the supervision of Valerie Leiman, the SSB has given scholarships to four students, two at the East Harlem School, one at the Lucy Moses School, and one at the Harlem School for the Arts.

SSB and Fundraising

SSB member Paul Berman challenged us with a matching grant of \$2,500 for the benefit of the Supervised Visitation Project. Thus far, we have raised \$1,425. We invite you to contribute. (Checks should be made out to USS, Inc. and mailed to 2 West 64th Street, New York, NY 10023.)

"A Toast For Vicki"

On June 16, the SSB honored Dr. Victoria Olds for her dedicated work for the Social Service Board and the wider Ethical Culture movement. More than 60 people attended the evening event, among them her daughter Eleanor and her partner, one of her grandsons and his wife, and a longtime colleague and friend. Master of Ceremonies Les Graifman made us laugh, Lucile

Kleiman presented Vicki with a token of our appreciation, and Kim Jones delighted us with music. Seeing Vicki's joy was most rewarding. Our thanks to all who made this evening possible and to those who could not attend but sent in contributions in Vicki's honor. We raised \$1,400.

Is Science Religion?

We are obliged by the deepest drives of the human spirit to make ourselves more than animated dust, and we must have a story to tell about where we came from, and why we are here. Could Holy Writ be just the first literate attempt to explain the universe and make ourselves significant within it? Perhaps science is a continuation on new and better-tested ground to attain the same end. If so, then in that sense science is religion liberated and writ large....

Preferring a search for objective reality over revelation is another way of satisfying religious hunger.... It aims to save the spirit, not by surrender but by liberation of the human mind. Its central tenet, as Einstein knew, is the unification of knowledge. When we have unified enough certain knowledge, we will understand who we are and why we are here.

From *Consilience: The Unity of Knowledge*, by Edward O. Wilson

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