

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

TWO WEST 64TH STREET, NEW YORK, NY 10023 TEL. 212 874-5210 E-MAIL OFFICE@NYSEC.ORG

Sunday Morning Meetings **10:30 AM—Ceremonial Hall**

August 6

Freedom in a Digital Age

Jon Liechty, Society Member

John Kreuttner Presides

August 13

Ethical Dilemmas and Moral Conscience

Amy Schwarz, Society Member

Andra Miller Presides

August 20

The Enemies of Intelligence

Howard Radest, Adjunct

Professor of Philosophy

University of South Carolina

Joseph Marvel Presides

August 27

Arthur Miller's All My Sons

Patricia Bruder Debrovner

Society Member

Elaine Berman Presides

September 3

Liberalism in a Changing World

Abe Markman, Society Member

Eric Volpe Presides

Register Now For NYSEC's Sunday Ethics For Children Program

Beginning Sunday, September 10—Registration forms and more information are available at the Society, on the Youth and Family bulletin board in the lobby. For more details call: 212-874-5210, ext. 106.

Annual Report

Senior Leader

Tony Hileman

The first season for any Leader and community is one of getting to know each other. It is from that perspective that I am writing. I have only been with you for nine months, but that has been long enough for me to get more than an inkling of what a wonderful community this is.

In these troubled and troubling times, any who are dedicated to making the world a better place face many challenges—and I think we'd all agree that we are challenged on many fronts. That is why the promise and encouragement of the New York Society for Ethical Culture is so important to us, as well as to others.

On a very practical level, our programs bring through our doors those who, with varying degrees of awareness, share our view of the world and who are seeking community. With them we have an unspoken but binding agreement that expresses our ethical ideals, a covenant that says that all they need do is come and we will open our arms to them.

Beyond the inspiring and empowering message of Ethical Culture, our chosen community supports us individually and offers that same support to others. Ours is a life stance that has much to offer and it is heartening that we are so tantalizingly close to having that realized and appreciated much more broadly.

I am encouraged by the Trustees' efforts to seek ever better ways to form and maintain authentic community. They are hard at work seeking better, more cooperative ways of being together, more efficient and effective means of representing you who have entrusted them with the governance of your community, and more dependable methods of stewardship of the Society's facilities, assets, and—perhaps most significantly—heritage, which is rich in texture and accomplishment.

In my own efforts to find better ways of affecting our vision of a more humane world, and of expressing the message of Ethical Culture in a language more resonate with the broader culture, I feel welcomed and embraced by a warm and caring community. I am still finding my way through new territory and your understanding and support have been meaningful to Betty and me as we settle into a new routine and a new community.

As you know from my previous comments, I will be spending most of the summer season working away from the Society, concentrating on fulfilling my obligations to the American Ethical Union, reading and writing in anticipation of a heavier speaking schedule in the fall, and, of course, taking some time for rest and renewal. I look forward to the fall season with a sense of optimism and dedication that I hope you share. We have much work to do together, and together we can do it better than any of us can alone.

I look forward to further developing the trust and respect that foster progress as we seek to build a stronger, more open community, deepen our understanding of ourselves and others, and make the world a safe, just, and sustainable place for all.

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President

Michael Bogdanffy-Kriegh

As we close out the 2005-2006 season and begin to contemplate the 2006-2007 season, I think it is important to take a step back and think about the year that has been. A lot has happened and I would say that most of it was good.

Perhaps of greatest significance, we welcomed our new Senior Leader, Tony Hileman. Tony hit the ground running in October and kept on running right up to his return to Washington for a two-month work and rest retreat that was well earned. During the year Tony has not only acquitted himself well from the stage, delivering a number of memorable talks, but has also made himself a fixture in the lobby at the end

We have certainly created an atmosphere that is more welcoming and compelling, and we are making lots of new acquaintances through our various outreach efforts.

of programs and in Social Hall during Social Hour. His warm and friendly touch both during and after Sunday meetings is well appreciated.

Almost as significant an occurrence this year is our first, in a very long time, balanced budget! Although we had budgeted for a deficit slightly in excess of \$100,000, we managed to bring in a surplus of more than \$17,000. During the last three years, our operating budget has gone from approaching half a million dollars deficit to balanced. Although huge thanks are due to Bob Liebeskind, whose tireless efforts to control spending and increase revenue have paid off handsomely, this was also a community effort. We all did our share, from the Board to the membership. I want to particularly thank all the members who reached deep during our pledge drive

and increased their giving to the Society. It has made a difference!

This year saw a continuation of our “big events” programs, most of them presented in collaboration with partners such as the Nation Books and Institute and WBAI. The culmination was the very successful fundraising collaboration with WBAI that brought Amy Goodman, Greg Palast, and Paul Krugman together before a packed house and helped raise nearly \$5,000 for programming initiatives at the Society. Special thanks to Leslie Doyle and Bob Liebeskind for their tireless efforts to organize, coordinate, and generally ensure the smooth sailing of all these events.

And speaking of WBAI, June saw the launch of what we hope will be a monthly series of radio conversations on ethics and ethical culture, using radio time that was donated

to us by WBAI. If you missed it, you can still go to WBAI’s website and listen. Special thanks to Andra Miller, Marc Bernstein, and Dr. Phyllis Harrison-Ross for pulling this together and getting the first two programs produced.

Although it has been a good year and we have plenty about which to be optimistic, it is important to note that there are still challenges ahead. While our financial outlook appears considerably better than it has in the recent past, we are still a fiscally fragile institution. We lack the financial resources to make any substantial repairs to our building (and there are a few that seem to be looming), let alone to be able to manage any kind of large emergency expense. One of our most important priorities will be to rebuild our unrestricted endowment funds.

We also have yet to see our successes result in increased membership. We have certainly created an atmosphere that is more welcoming and compelling, and we are making lots of new acquaintances through our various outreach efforts. Translating that into membership growth, however, remains elusive. As I see it, increasing our membership has a double dividend: it will add vibrancy and energy to our activities and it will increase the income base from membership. Both will help to strengthen the Society and secure its ability to offer future generations a place that values their worth and dignity and elicits their best in the here and now of their time.

These and other challenges notwithstanding, I believe this has been a year of which we can all be very proud. I think we have given ourselves something to build on, and I look forward to a new year in which there is every reason to believe that even better things are possible.

Executive Director

Robert C. Liebeskind

I am very pleased to report that the Society staff, Board, and members have very successfully met the many challenges—in the areas of budget, programs, rentals, our building, and more—presented to us over the past year. I would like to provide you with an update as to what has been taking place at the Society during this period.

I. Staff

The Society's staff has remained fairly constant through this program year. As you are aware, Tony Hileman took on the role of Senior Leader as of October, 2005. Otherwise, the staff remains in place from a year ago.

All of our staff members are very dedicated to the work of the Society

and consistently make themselves available to meet the many needs of this organization. We have a unified team who work very well together. We hold full or partial staff meetings on a regular basis to discuss Society issues; these meetings give staff numerous opportunities to collaborate.

Lynda Kennedy, Director of Youth and Family Services, has resigned, effective July 1, 2006. Ms. Kennedy is completing her Ph.D. studies and preparing for her future. We are very appreciative of the work she has done over the past two years and we wish her all the best. The Youth and Family Committee is putting together staff plans for next season.

II. Programs

We are very proud of the many events, both Society-sponsored and cosponsored, that we have held here over the past year. These have offered interesting and educational news and content to the New York community and have

I look forward to working with our new Senior Leader, Board, and members as we focus on membership growth, program development, and operation of the Society in a fiscally responsible manner.

introduced many new people to the Society. Such programs help us to maintain our visibility and status with the public and we have received a lot of very positive feedback from attendees.

III. Rentals

We continue to be very successful in renting space to outside community organizations, and we have operated over budget in this area for the past fiscal year. The Society has developed many valuable and rich relationships through these rentals, and the groups have presented many important educa-

tional programs. It is a benefit for us to host these programs.

IV. Building

We are housed in an old building that has many needs. I wish to thank the maintenance staff, who work hard every day to keep the building clean and orderly. I would also like to thank the House Committee, chaired by Bob Berger, for its work in managing the building's needs.

While our budget is tight, I would like to note a few things that have been done over the year to keep our landmarked home in proper shape:

- * Upgrade of the lobby: both the security and box office areas have been gutted, painted, and cleaned. This is the first space visitors see as they walk into the building and we are very pleased that it is now much more appealing than it once was;
- * Enhancement to the flooring of the Ceremonial Hall and 4th floor hallway;
- * Replacement of the 4th floor and

basement hot water heaters;

- * Replacement of the entrance-way ramp to assist with handicapped access.

As we move into

a new fiscal year, we will be looking at other projects we need to undertake. Two of these are:

- * Creation of a closet to store chairs and tables in the Social Hall area;
- * A study of our space in order to make it more handicapped accessible.

V. Budget

I am extremely pleased to report that the Society finished the 2005-2006 fiscal year with a surplus of \$17,188. To my knowledge, this is the first time the Society has generated a surplus in many years.

While this is very good news, I believe we still have a great deal of work to do. It will take a major effort to see this experience continue over the next few years and we are hopeful we can do so. However, our current budget for the upcoming fiscal year calls for another deficit. Let us all hope we can continue the success of the past year.

I believe we have an opportunity to move ahead in a very positive manner over the next year. I look forward to working with our new Senior Leader, Board, and members as we focus on membership growth, program development, and operation of the Society in a fiscally responsible manner.

Membership

Suzy Frazer

This has been a wonderful year of vivid changes: Our esteemed Senior Leader (now Emeritus) Khoren Arisian has retired from the Society but is, of course, still active in the Ethical Movement. He and Leigh McKay came back to the Society on Founder's Day and it was grand to see them.

Our new Senior Leader, Tony Hileman, assumed his post in October and since then has met with many members—new and long-term. All the best to him as he begins his first official September with us.

An official welcome to this year's new members: Ivan Augenblick, Frank Berger, R. Lori Berliner, Jeanine Boubli, Alison and Alvin Brehm, Laurie Broza, Janice Buzby, Jayne Connell, Sara Dillon, Linda Enayati, Carole Fuenzalida, Renee Goodstein, John Gurney, Elizabeth and Tony Hileman, Eileen Kelly, Harold Krieger, George Macduff, Foteos Macrides, Linda Moody, Mercedes Payano, Lola Pazos, Roberta Russell, Sheila Schwartz, Lee

Smalley, Larry Stross, Gaetana Tammetta, and Judith Wank.

We've made a special effort this season to ensure that the Sunday experience is a meaningful and welcoming one. Tony and all the speakers have been talking with members and visitors as they exit the auditorium—a personal touch that adds immeasurably to the meeting itself. Thanks for your help to all of our greeters, ushers, and stalwart chiefs of the lobby, Amy Schwartz and Tillman Sanders. And, of course, thank you to the Membership Development Committee and their welcoming (and troubleshooting) team. Again, please keep those suggestions coming in; they are extremely helpful and mostly right-on!

In Memorium: Mary Daugherty and Madeline Greenberg. It is with great regret that we must also announce that Carina Tam, our youngest member at 18, has died after a long illness. Thanks to all who donated blood and other support. We hope to start a fund or scholarship program in her honor.

Membership Activities Committee

Patricia Berens

The two major projects of the committee were the Fall Retreat and the New Year's Eve Party. The retreat last September at Geronimo's in Walker Valley was a great success. Tony Hileman, who had just come aboard as our leader, led a round-table discussion where we all got to know him and his wife, Betty, in an informal setting. It was a very special part of the retreat. Jon Liechty presented a most informative musical program. The weather was lovely and everyone had a good time.

The New Year's Eve party was also a success. Our Social Hall was

decorated tastefully and we ate, drank, talked, and danced until midnight. Then we went to the roof to watch the fireworks over Central Park.

Other activities: Henryka Koman-ska led hikes and a bicycle tour. Jim Hyland and I organized several spring and autumn walks, but unfortunately they were rained out.

The building tour, led by Marc Bernstein, had an excellent turnout. Our Film Forum, organized by Valerie Leiman and Cheryl Gross, with Richard Bruno selecting the films and leading the discussions, was again a great hit, with both members and many non-members in attendance. We have an excellent program of films scheduled for the upcoming season.

The Saturday Retreat in Ceremonial Hall in June and the Sunday, July 2 picnic in Riverside Park were both successful and we will most likely repeat them in the new season.

A reminder: This year's Fall Retreat will be held at Williams Lake Resort, September 29–October 1. The deadline for signing up is approaching.

Membership Development Committee

Barbara Levenson

The purpose of the Membership Development Committee is to design and implement a process through which interested prospective members are encouraged to join the Society, and to continue the process throughout the first year of membership by helping new members become integrated into the Society. Members of the committee are: Ben Bean, Bonnie Bean, Muriel Berger, Elaine Berman, Holly Bogdanffy-Kreigh (co-chair), Janice Buzby, Carole Chamlin, Suzy Frazer, Sheila

Kleinwald, Barbara Levenson (co-chair), Joe Marvel, Carol Nadell, and Christine Swann.

Although people may initially come to our building for a variety of programs and activities, their first meaningful point of contact with the Society is our Sunday morning meeting. For this reason, we are focusing first on our Sunday responsibilities. We have created a Sunday Welcoming Team, whose responsibilities are as follows: to greet visitors in the lobby; orient them about what will be happening at the meeting; escort them, where appropriate, into the auditorium; and help them get seated. Where possible, we will accompany them up front and introduce them to the newcomer host. The team will also provide newcomers with name tags; back up the newcomer host when needed; make sure there are no glitches in the lunch set-up; and serve as circulating hosts during lunch, checking that there are no problems at any tables, and encouraging others to circulate.

The committee has made a number of changes with respect to Sundays. The sign on the newcomer table will now read "Reserved." To minimize distractions to socializing, all lunch-time announcements will be made by the morning's presider. We will encourage all members to wear name tags, which will be taken to Social Hall after the platform to make it convenient for members to put them on. The activity after platform formerly known as "Cafeteria" will now be called the "Social Hour."

We continued to hold new member receptions in members' homes every few months. At the end of the season, we held a reception for all members who had joined during the past year; we also held a new member recognition day in June at one of our Sunday morning platforms.

We are beginning a program we call "mentoring lite," in which a member will contact a new member and be responsible for helping the new member ease his or her way into the Society. We continued to help staff the information table at large Society events, and are currently grappling with finding more effective ways to encourage at least some attendees to return.

Archives

Dr. Marc A. Bernstein

What a year for the archives! It was far from a humdrum period of cataloging and answering e-mails.

This past fall an editor of *O, The Oprah Magazine*, called the Society for an inspiring quotation that might be used in an upcoming issue. She was directed to me. I helped her select a few items, and one, an uplifting passage from Algernon Black, made it into the November issue, where it was illustrated with a photo of a man rescuing Katrina victims. The quotation and the accompanying photo were given an entire page—an entire page in a magazine with a circulation of more than one million—and the New York Society was cited after Algernon Black's name. That kind of publicity is hard to buy, but, in fact, they actually paid us for our contribution.

The fall also saw the first tour of the New York Society's landmarked building, which we expect will be the beginning of a new tradition. I led the large group of nonmembers and members on a room-by-room journey as I discussed the aesthetics and history of our beautiful Meeting House.

I repeated the tour in May, the good weather bringing a larger turnout and permitting a look at the building from the street as well as from inside.

Spring brought our archives Dr. Matthew Spetter's complete set of Ethical

Culture platforms, a fifty-year treasure trove of talks that address everything from the Cold War to the changing relations of the sexes in modern America. These talks are nothing less than a cultural history of the last half-century, and they constitute the greatest addition to our holdings since I took over as archivist in 2001.

The archives have also played a role in helping our new Radio Committee get off the ground. Andra Miller, Dr. Phyllis Harrison-Ross, and Leslie Doyle asked me to join their efforts to take advantage of free radio time offered to us by WBAI. After tentative beginnings, we created "Ethics on the Air," a monthly program of one-hour conversations about Ethical Culture. As archivist, I suggest discussion topics central to our history and philosophy. In the show's first half-hour, Andra Miller and I discussed Felix Adler's supreme Moral Rule; in the second, Dr. Harrison-Ross interviewed a new member of the Society about issues of housing and race. These broadcasts will help us reach a wider public.

Finally, in a platform address during Black History Month, I discussed the Society's one-hundred-year commitment to racial progress, drawing on rare photos from our archives to bring this history to life.

In short, the past year was one in which the archives became increasingly important as a resource for the Society and also became much better known by our members.

Youth and Family Programs

Lynda Kennedy

Sunday Ethics for Children Program

This year, the Sunday school has grown from an average attendance

of three or four children in 2003-2004 and 2004-2005 to an average attendance of eight or nine, and it has not been unusual to have 10 to 12 children on Sundays that do not fall during school breaks or holidays. The students, ranging in age from four to 12 years, have concentrated on caring for themselves, for others, and for the earth. They planted flowers at the side of the Society building, learned to compost with worms and to recycle; kept our Shelter decorated for the holidays; arranged for a "giving tree" to collect gifts for the women who stay at the Shelter; took part in Penny Harvest, Trick or Treat for UNICEF, and the Toy Drive; studied the lives of heroes such as Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and Felix Adler; practiced yoga; and created a lot of terrific art.

American Place Theater Drama Intensive

For the second year in a row, we partnered with the American Place Theater to provide a drama intensive for New York City public school students in grades 6-12. Fifteen students from various schools came together for the entire week of their winter break to learn theater techniques and create a play that they performed for parents, friends, and staff of the Society. Lunch was provided to the students each day. Thanks to the generous support of the Society's Social Service Board, two-thirds of the children were able to attend the program at no cost to their families.

Ethical Family Fridays

This year we hosted two evening events for parents, inviting colleagues from other Societies to share their wisdom. Curt Collier of the Riverdale-Yonkers Society spoke on raising ethical families and Devorah Weinmann of

the Long Island Society addressed the challenges and joys of preparing for and getting through the teen years.

Other Events/Cosponsored Programs

We hosted a storyteller performance and a knitting workshop for the holidays. After several years' absence, the Youth of the Ethical Societies (Y.E.S.) once again spent the night here and toured our building as a prequel to their annual conference. We provided a home to a fledgling yoga company and offered a series of "yoga for tots" classes for young children from the neighborhood.

We cosponsored a performance by the Children's Aid Society Chorus (whose director called the Society "a gorgeous place to perform") and continued our outreach to the community by exploring future collaborations.

Ethics in the News

Abe Markman

Since the beginning of the year, the Ethics in the News group has been transformed into an ethical political action group. We want to become a permanent committee of the Society and we are also exploring the possibility of joining the Ethical Action Committees of the AEU.

Topics on our agenda include: scientific projects that have growing public support but are resisted by the White House, such as stem cell research and global warming (about which John Gurney presented a most informative talk several weeks ago); family and health issues such as paid leave-of-absence and child health protection (about which Jo Ann Mason, Phyllis Harrison-Ross, and myself presented our findings on Sunday, June 25); promotion of the union movement while addressing legitimate concerns of critics; and the war in Iraq

(the Board of Trustees took a stand against going to war and the American Ethical Union has integrated the group's Iraq proposal into a resolution that was approved during the AEU's 91st Assembly, June 30–July 3.

One-page ethical action papers on each of the above subjects are being written. For more information, please contact Abe Markman.

Great Books Group

Dr. Charles Debrovner

The original Great Books Group has completed another stimulating year. For the past nine years, we have been enjoying selections from the Great Books Foundation's 50th Anniversary Series. Our most recent compilation, "Clashes of Culture," completes the series. We will begin new Foundation selections again in September.

We are very anxious to increase the size of our group because our discussions are most stimulating and rewarding when there are many differing opinions of a book and its significance. We invite anyone who would like to escape, however briefly, from the reading required by his or her profession or everyday activities to contact either Norma Hymes or Chuck Debrovner.

Adult Education Committee

Patricia Debrovner

We have had a full schedule of stimulating programs from September 2005 through June 2006. These have included our popular monthly Ethics and the Theater series; a two-part Foundations of Ethical Culture course; a two-part workshop, "The

Struggle to Forgive and Be Forgiven”; a three-part course on Humanism; a workshop for couples who have been married by Ethical Culture officiants, “In-Laws 101: How to Get Along So Everyone Can Live Happily Ever After”; two Meet the Author events; several classes that meet weekly: The Joy of Personal Writing (two groups), Drawing, Anyone Can Sing, and our new Photography Workshop that meets twice a month, June through September.

The Ethics and the Theater play readings, which are followed by discussions, featured Henrik Ibsen’s *Ghosts* and *A Doll’s House*, Arthur Miller’s *Death of a Salesman*, Wendy Wasserstein’s *An American Daughter*, Tennessee Williams’ *A Streetcar Named Desire*, David Mamet’s *Oleanna*, Emily Mann’s *Having Our Say*, Donald Margulies’ *Sight Unseen*, Bernard Shaw’s *Mrs. Warren’s Profession*, and Eugene O’Neill’s *Long Day’s Journey Into Night*. Anne Klaeyesen presented the workshops on Forgiveness and In-Laws 101.

Curt Collier presented a course on the Philosophy and Values of Ethical Culture, and Joe Chuman presented a session on the History and Roots of Ethical Culture for our Foundations of Ethical Culture course. Tony Hileman presented the first two sessions of our three-part Humanism course: Humanist Manifesto III and Meet Our Humanist Family, and Joe Chuman taught the final session on the History and Roots of Humanism.

Our two Meet the Author events featured Joan Mellen discussing her book, *A Farewell to Justice*, and Fawaz Gerges talking about his book, *Journey of the Jihadist: Inside Muslim Militancy*, to a packed audience in Ceremonial Hall. In July, Robert Fuller discussed his book, *All Rise: Somebodies, Nobodies, and the Politics of Dignity*.

We are very happy about the popularity of our Adult Education programs, which are consistently well attended.

Bylaws and Policy Committee

Sheila Kleinwald; Sylvan Wallach; Jim Farer, Chair

What does this committee do for the Society? We review its bylaws and formal policies to keep them up to date and correct and we suggest changes that reflect the evolving processes of the Society.

Bylaws and policy statements are important to every member because they are our guides for what we do here. They facilitate our processes, and protect the voice of every individual, support stability and consistency, and define what we are and how we operate.

We invite you to participate. (1) Please attend a Board of Trustees meeting and see governance in action. Members are welcome and encouraged to attend. We think you will like seeing the way your Board functions. (2) If you have a suggestion about our “rules” or would like to present a motion to the Board, please talk with Sheila, Sylvan, or Jim, and we will work with you. Yes, each member can initiate improvement. We will be pleased to explain how to work your suggestions through the channels of committees and the Board. (3) Think about joining the committee to participate in this important work.

Caring Committee

Ben Bean

Caring for one another is a very important part of our Society and we want the Caring Committee to reflect that.

This past year we have tried to stay in touch with members who do

not attend the platform meetings on a regular basis for reasons of age, health, or other factors. Faye Joyce has made a point of calling members who live out of town, just to stay in touch.

The committee reaches out to members in need. We are pleased that we were able to get volunteers to donate blood and platelets at Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center for member Carina Tam, who died in July.

The Caring Committee has not been as active this past year as we would have wanted, and we are planning to develop a more effective committee in the new season.

Collection Committee

At the November Board meeting, the Trustees voted to begin sharing the Sunday collection with other organizations as a way of expressing our values and commitment to our community and to those in need of our contributions. In selecting the recipients, the committee has made an effort to connect our donations with the content of the speakers’ talk. These have included the international (victims of the Pakistani earthquake and the Save Darfur Coalition); the national (United Negro College Fund and NAACP), and the local (Fresh Air Fund and Fund for Public Schools).

The committee (Tony Hileman, Meg Chapman, Barbara Levenson, and Carole Chamlin) had some initial concern that by sharing the collection, our Society would suffer a loss of revenue. We are pleased to report that quite the opposite has occurred: per person, donations have more than doubled. Because of the nature of our Sunday morning meetings during the summer, we are temporarily suspending the

joint collections, which will resume on September 10, when the meetings are again held in the auditorium. We are proud to be a part of helping our Society to live up to its values.

Ethical Humanist Award Committee

Carol Nadell

This has been a rather frustrating year for the Ethical Humanist Award Committee.

After Geoffrey Canada graciously accepted the Community Service Award, to be presented on May 9, the Committee couldn't seem to connect with his staff. Since we wanted to honor Mr. Canada appropriately, we felt that perhaps the fundraising dinner for the Harlem Children's Zone on April 20 was occupying the staff and, therefore, they couldn't be available. Our Senior Leader wrote to Mr. Canada suggesting a postponement of the award presentation ceremony, until a time that would be more convenient for everyone involved. We look forward to a response, but so far there has been none.

In the meantime, the committee decided to offer the Ethical Humanist Award to Pete Seeger and a letter was sent to him. However, he declined our request most respectfully, saying that he does not accept awards and, at the age of 87, is limiting his activities.

We feel that the Society should have an award celebration at least once a year, whether it's for the Ethical Humanist Award or the Community Service Award. We have a few ideas that we are exploring, but we are also open to suggestions from members. If you have any ideas, please contact Mary Ellen Goodman at melleng33@verizon.net.

Program Committee

Henryka Komanska, Elizabeth Ungar, Co-chairs

This Committee is a clearing house for program proposals. It vets requests for cosponsorship and/or reduced rate rentals from external groups, and presents those it deems consistent with the Society's mission to the Board of Trustees for approval. The Committee evaluates program and event proposals from individual Society members and either directs them to a standing committee that could sponsor the proposed program or, when the event or program is outside the scope of the existing committees, it helps the members present their proposals to the Board. Committee members are: Henryka Komanska (co-chair), Barbara Levenson, Carol Rost, Christine Swann, Elizabeth Ungar (co-chair), and Tom Weishaar.

In 2005-2006, we made positive recommendations to the Board for the following events or programs to be presented at NYSEC: Green Home NYC Forum with Con Edison and Community Energy (May 17); WBAI event—"The New Class War in America," with Greg Palast, Amy Goodman, Paul Krugman, and Randi Rhodes (June 13); New York Salon and the NYSEC Task Force on Corporate Ethics—"Is There a 'Culture of Corruption' in Politics and Business?" (June 21); a request by the Danish Cultural Center for space for 30 Danish students to hold a debate on the death penalty; a request by Willie Mae Rock & Roll Camp for Girls for space to hold two concerts in July and August; and a request by David Waltzer for space to conduct a conflict mediation program. The Program Committee also organized the meeting

of all NYSEC committees that was held on October 17, for the purpose of exchanging information and coordinating activities.

Sunday Program Committee

Andra Miller

The Sunday Program Committee has three main functions: to develop and present the main Sunday meetings, provide the Sunday luncheon "social hour," and plan the early morning and later afternoon programs. All of these programs serve our long-established members and, at the same time, are aimed at drawing in newcomers. Our intent is to present original, educational, and inspiring programs that refresh our Ethical Culture principles.

There were many changes this year for the Committee. Carole Chamlin, committee chair for six years, opted to pass on her baton. The committee approved my appointment to take on the job, and I am thankful for everyone's help as I learn the ropes. Committee members Mary Ellen Goodman, Eva Yachnes, and Meg Chapman have resigned and we miss their good counsel. We also have a few new members, Pat Debrovner (chair of the Music Subcommittee), Abe Markman, and Jon Liechty. They join Carole Chamlin (chair of the Presiders Subcommittee), Alan Gardner (Speaker Approval Subcommittee), Henryka Komanska, John Kreuttner, Barbara Levenson, Joseph Marvel (Committee secretary and schedule keeper), Jerry Ranck, and Christine Swann, all of whom have cheerfully participated in Committee meetings and tasks. Also advising us are Suzy Frazer, Tony Hileman, and Michael Bogdanffy-Kriegh.

Main Programs: From July 1, 2005 to June 30, 2006, we've had 12 talks by our Senior Leader, Tony Hileman; seven talks by other leaders; 20 by members (one from another Ethical Culture Society); and 10 by guest speakers (four of whom were authors). For one meeting, we had an entertainment program by the Harlem Arts Alliance. Speakers' subjects have included current affairs, the arts, history, and, of course, how to lead a more ethical life. In order to maintain the quality of our speakers, we've developed a list of standards and have established a small subcommittee to research prospective speakers and apply our standards in choosing speakers.

Presider Subcommittee: Carole Chamlin has recruited Tony Hileman to help us with training and Jim Farer to help in maintaining the high quality of our presidors. As a result of their efforts, we're very proud of our 24 fine presider/speaker-introducers.

Music Subcommittee: Pat Debrovner, chair, observes that we have come to enjoy singing as a community this year. We now sing twice each Sunday morning, and are sounding pretty good. What's more, we now have a chorus. It evolved from the group that came to our singing rehearsals, instituted last year, which are open to all Society members. The chorus members—Pat Berens, Bob Berger, Elaine Berman, Carole Chamlin, Patricia Cohen, Jim Farer, John Gurney, Jim Hyland, Alex Mogieleff, and Eric Volpe—join Pat on stage to lead the songs each week. We thank our musical director, Jerry Ranck, and Jon Liechty for taking the time to rehearse with the chorus, to teach them new songs, and to coach them on how to improve the repertoire. Singing practice next season will be at 10:00 am

on the second and last Sundays of each month.

Jerry has delighted us with a range of beautiful music and contributes so much to our enjoyment of our Sunday Meetings. We are grateful, as well, for the lovely music that Jon Liechty has offered us on some of our Sundays. The gifted musical guests that Jerry has engaged to join with him (on piano and organ) and grace our stage include: William Blount, playing clarinet; Daire Fitzgerald, cello; Jon Liechty, piano; Beverly Radin, flute; Bill Zito, guitar; and Melton Sawyer, voice.

Morning Programs: Early morning (10:00 am) meetings in the fall, winter, and spring have light, but regular and reliable attendance. The first Sunday is dedicated to Everyday Ethics; the second, Colloquy; the third, Poetry Reading; and the last, Singing Practice (the newest in the program, having been initiated the end of last summer). There may be a change or two to this lineup in the 2006 fall season.

Afternoon Programs: Afternoon programs are eclectic and have drawn audiences numbering from five to 90. They have included movies, discussion groups, workshops, author talks, member readings, health presentations, a yoga class, a concert, a play reading, and speaker panels. Most of these have been suggested and, in some cases presented, by Society members.

Lunch Service: Guided by Sheila Kleinwald, our lunch director, we changed our serving procedure to ease the flow through the service lines. We also have changed the pricing from *a-la-carte* to *prix fixe* and as a result we are coming closer to meeting the cost of the food, which is supplied by Jean Donnay, Catering with Flair. Comments on the quality of the food have been enthusiastically favorable,

and we find the streamlined pay/pick-up process lends itself to the informal sociability that takes place at the dining tables. We are pleased that Sheila's thoughtful planning and quality control means that our new lunch service is working so well.

You are welcome to give your comments on the Sunday programs to any member of the committee, and certainly to the committee chair. We value your suggestions and ideas.

Social Service Board

David Leiman, Chair

The following are reports on the various activities of the NYSEC Social Service Board.

Shelter for Homeless Women,

Maria Feliz Fridman, Director: The NYSEC shelter, now in its 23rd year, is sponsored by the Partnership for the Homeless. It can house up to eight women and is open four days a week, Monday through Thursday. Our guests are referred by the Olivieri Center for Homeless Women.

We were happy to learn that three former guests have moved into permanent supportive housing. According to the Olivieri Center, "All of them had to overcome serious obstacles, and the stability and consistency of Ethical Culture's hospitality helped them to endure and press on."

During the year, students from Columbia University staffed the shelter on Sundays from September through early May and we hope that they will help us again when they return to school in September. We expect that the shelter will remain open through August this year (as it did during 2005) with the combined overnight staff from the Olivieri Center and our own volun-

teers. Our Sunday School has generously contributed refreshments to the shelter guests during holidays such as Thanksgiving, Christmas, and Valentine's Day. The school's second grade "Good Deed Bandits" also contributed goodies for Christmas holiday. The shelter also has two computers that our guests can use.

Amelia Lopatin, Society member and longtime overnight volunteer, has assisted with housekeeping this past season, and Elizabeth Ungar also helped when needed. The Partnership continues to refer volunteers to us. Overnight volunteers are always needed, so interested Society members and friends can contact me.

Homeless Artists Program, *Maria Feliz Fridman*: The Social Service Board continues to sponsor semi-annual presentations by homeless and formerly homeless artists and performers, organized by me and Judith Ginsburg of the Unforgotten Voices Creative Workshop.

This past season, displays of visual arts, readings, and dance and music performances were held in December and June. These events have consistently been very well received and we hope that in the future more Society members will avail themselves of the opportunity to see the inspiring work by creative and talented people. As Dr. Phyllis Harrison Ross said of a recent workshop, "It was very cold and an icy rain was falling, but the warmth from the good feelings and wonderfully talented artists took away all our shivers and chills. There were painters, singers, pianists, poets, rappers, drummers, and tambourine players, all of them first class. The event is a true neighborhood treasure."

Scholarship Project, *Valerie Leiman*: The East Harlem School at Exodus

House (EHSEH) is an alternative middle school serving low-income minority children who are at risk for failing in public school. In 1999, the SSB initiated a project to provide tuition scholarships for two children. Over the years, this project has been further developed by the East Harlem School into a "Sponsor a Child" Program, which has been highly successful in attracting additional tuition grants from the school's board members. The SSB currently provides scholarships to four students.

SSB project directors maintained contact with the students, teachers, and administrators through visits to the school for open house tours and by receiving intensive progress reports twice yearly from the students' teachers. We wanted the children to visit the Society, but that was not done until January 26, 2005, when the EHSEH's Winter Arts Recital was held in the Society's auditorium.

A second visit to the Society took place during the February, 2006, school winter break, when ten students participated in the "Literature to Life" Program, an intensive drama workshop given by the American Place Theater. This was a very special occasion because families of the students came here and saw their children perform an original play they had created.

The School, having recently moved into a new building, requested permission to hold its graduation program in the Society's auditorium on June 17. In connection with this event, our project director arranged for a workshop to be held on April 28 at which the students learned how to create 40 Graduation Program invitations for the EHSEH Board members.

Supervised Visitation Project, *Christine Pagones*: SVP provides a safe,

neutral setting in which contact with an adult (usually the non-custodial parent) can be monitored by a third person to protect the rights of the children. This is a court-mandated service necessary when such contact may present a risk to the children. The families in our program, who come from all five boroughs, are referred by Family Court and must provide a written court order prior to being accepted. I submit approximately four written reports each week on different families to the various courts, judges, and/or law guardians prior to each return court date. The judges rely on these written reports to inform their decisions. Although most of our referrals come directly from law guardians and lawyers, we also receive referrals from social workers, law clerks, social service agencies and clients themselves.

From September through July SVP facilitated approximately 400 visits with many families. The children in our program, ranging in age from three to 13, are of diverse backgrounds and religions. Separate custodial and non-custodial parent support groups are a unique component of our program.

All of the nine to 11 facilitators who are currently working with us weekly are either student-interns or former interns who have remained with the SVP as volunteers. As part of the students' learning experience, I am the field instructor and provide written evaluations to their respective schools. I also supervise the interns and there are weekly staff meetings, which are educational and provide a forum for group supervision. We currently have students from Marymount Manhattan, Hunter, Fordham, Adelphi, and John Jay with the program; they are in undergraduate psychology, social work, or criminal justice programs.

SVP is a member of the New York State Chapter and the National Network of Supervised Visitation, and is a model for programs throughout the city, state, country, and abroad. We have had representatives from Japan, Israel, England, and Australia visit with the intention of establishing SVPs at home.

New Initiatives, Dr. Phyllis Harrison-Ross: In keeping with our policy of increasing SSB collaborations with community groups with similar missions, we have undertaken the following activities:

* We developed 15 funding proposals in partnership with the Northside Center for Child Development and submitted them to 13 foundations, as well as the Bar Association of the City of New York and the Association of Women Judges, New York City chapter. We were turned down by nine foundations to date and are awaiting responses from the remaining four and the two associations.

* SSB partnered with the American Psychiatric Association—Office of National and Minority Affairs; the American Psychiatric Foundation; the National Medical Association; the Black Psychiatrists of Greater New York and Associates; and the Dance Theater of Harlem—Dancing Through Barriers Ensemble to present a Sunday afternoon tea, reception, and ballet performance in Ceremonial Hall.

* SSB partnered with the New York Academy of Medicine—Psychiatry Section, the National Alliance for the Mentally III—New York State Chapter, and the Black Psychiatrists of Greater New York and Associates to present a series of three lectures on mental illness in prison.

* SSB and the NYSEC Board of Trustees cosponsored and hosted a

day-long meeting of the New York State Commission of Corrections Medical Review Board.

* SSB and the Board cosponsored a breakfast salute with the Katrina Mental Health Coalition: “Heroes of Healing.” Randall Pinkston, CBS News, was the master of ceremonies. Honorees included survivors of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita, the World Trade Center disaster of 9/11/01, and the Iraq/Middle East war, as well as healers such as physicians, ministers, artists, and hotel and social service workers in the NYC area who are hosting evacuees, and the Brooklyn Friends School and members of its parents association and faculty.

Response to Hurricane Katrina

Other efforts of the SSB on behalf of victims of Hurricane Katrina who were evacuated to the New York City area include \$1,100 in contributions from the SSB and other Society members and friends to help two families meet some of their needs, and a clothing drive to assist people in preparing to seek employment.

Youth Soccer Program, Henry Bunch:

I have been conducting soccer programs for underprivileged youth since 1990. In 2005, I founded the Queens Soccer Foundation, which provides underprivileged youth with an opportunity to play soccer and learn good sportsmanship, ethical behavior, honesty, cooperation, teamwork, and respect for authority. Its activities include a free afterschool soccer program and summer camp and fundraising and promoting soccer as a worthwhile activity for young people.

* *After-School Program:* This started in October, 2005, and ran through March, when the weather started to get warm. It was held on Mondays at a gym rented from the NYC Board of Education and on Satur-

days at the gym of the Ethical Culture midtown school.

* *Summer Camp:* The Foundation plans to establish a camp, which will give underprivileged young people an opportunity to play soccer and also take supervised trips to museums, art galleries, the zoo, and professional soccer matches.

The Foundation funds its activities through a grant from the Social Service Board as well as donations from the public. Currently we have 96 players registered with the Eastern New York Soccer Association.

Gallery Project, Valerie Leiman: In January, the SSB House Committee requested a “Permission to Proceed” vote by the Board of Trustees on its Art Gallery Project. We are awaiting the response. Here is the background:

In January, the SSB approved a proposal by the committee to develop a small art gallery at the twice-yearly Homeless Artists Workshop of the Shelter Program to house displays of visual arts. We discussed with Bob Liebeskind our using a space at the rear of Social Hall (currently used for storage), and planned to present our proposal to Bob Berger, chair of the House Committee.

In February we presented a small model of a gallery to the SSB, which approved spending \$5,000 for construction of the gallery and selection of the best bid by its March meeting. We showed the proposal and model to Bob Berger, who requested drawings. A Committee of Society member-artists met to discuss the plans, followed by a meeting with the contractor in the Social Hall. Drawings were requested from all Committee members. In March the drawings were collected and sent to Bob Berger, along with the approved contractor’s invoice.

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.

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