

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 Platform Meetings 11:15 AM

December 4–Ceremonial Hall International and Domestic Policy Must Respect Human Rights

*Todd Schwartz, Amnesty
International*
Muriel Berger Presides

December 11–Ceremonial Hall Three Moral Heroes Who Were Also Ethical Culturists

Dr. Joseph Chuman, Leader
Dan Hanson Presides

December 18–Auditorium The Disappearance of Public Lands: Why Our National Parks Are In Jeopardy and What We Will Lose By Their Demise

Curt Collier, Leader
Meg Chapman Presides

December 25–Ceremonial Hall Remembrance Sunday

Dr. Anne Klaeyen, Leader

*A Healthy and
Happy
New Year to all!!*

December Happenings

Join **OUT@NYSEC** and **Gay Men's Health Crisis** here on **Wednesday, December 7, 6:30 pm–8:00 pm** for an informative panel discussion on current research, education, and outreach in the area of HIV and AIDS, in honor of World AIDS day. Panelists will include members of some of the leading organizations working on this issue. Ceremonial Hall. *(See page 8)*

Come on **Friday, December 16, 7:00 pm to 9:00 pm**, when **Ethics and the Theater** will present David Auburn's Pulitzer Prize-winning play, *Proof*. Ceremonial Hall. *(See page 8)*

It's **Party Time** at the Society on **Saturday, December 31, 9:00 pm–1:00 am**, as we welcome in the **New Year** and help the Society help others! We'll laugh, sing, dance, eat, drink, and have a rollicking good time, with live jazz and opera performers, door prizes, a raffle, and a chance to see the wonderful fireworks from our rooftop. It's all for the benefit of NYSEC's many programs. Social Hall. *(See page 8)*

President's Notes

Andra Miller



Thanks to all who came to the October Community Meeting . . . it was great for us to learn about the two new projects voted for development by the Board and also to find out what members think about things in general.

For those of you who missed it, the two projects in development are both educational: **Ethical Living Classes** for the general public, and the **Creative Arts Success Academy**, a high school for kids leaving prison.

Ethical Living is a proposed 10-session, weekday evening course designed for people who are interested in the question of how best to

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From the Leader's Desk

Dr. Anne Klaeyen



Generosity Begins at Home

The end of our "Love Your Society 365 Days a Year" pledge campaign this month gives us an opportunity to evaluate how we fared with setting a minimum pledge of \$365 a year and an ideal pledge of at least two percent of personal net income. (Other faith traditions "tithe" at ten percent.) The results were mixed. Some members raised their pledges closer to the goal; others opted to become "friends" of the Society; still others let us know that they resented the setting of a minimum pledge and resigned their membership. The volunteer members of the Pledge

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 Photojournalism Project: Eric Norlander and Howard Parker
 Social Justice: Robert Gangi
 EEE Program: Rob Hofman, Rosemary Irving, Wally Patawaran, and Mark Zilberman

President's Notes

(Continued from page 1)

live. It will provide a forum for the discussion of ethical issues, and will include simple practices that the students can take into their everyday lives. It will address ethical relationships, such as family, work, and community; and ethical action, such as political or environmental activism. The course atmosphere will be informal and conversational and will make use of existing material (such as Foundations of Ethical Culture, Non-Violent Communication). Additional courses that explore in more depth the subjects touched on in the basic course—such as environmental action, civic involvement or compassionate communication—will give those who wish to continue a long-term learning experience on a semester-by-semester schedule and provide a foundation for engaging in real-world ethical action.

The **Creative Arts Success Academy** is a school for kids caught in the school-to-prison pipeline. Children returning home from secure facili-

ties located far away from NYC have special needs that can't be addressed by regular schools. They require—and deserve—a learning environment that will prepare them for life not only in their local communities, but in the bigger world. We are working with Marlene Williamson, a teacher and NYC Board of Education executive who is spearheading this project, and who is applying for recognition and space from the Board of Education to begin an inaugural class. The role of NYSEC will be to support the new school by helping to seek financing and partnerships for it, and to handle volunteer needs, such as teacher's helper, hall monitor, or office assistant.

Thank you very much to the 30 members who answered the **questionnaire** at the beginning of the meeting. Though many responses were as one would expect, there were some interesting observations. A special thanks to those 14 who signed their questionnaires to indicate they are willing to be contacted about their thoughts or are willing take part in further discussion.

Here's a round-up of the responses:

Ethical Culture exists to: promote compassionate communication and connection, increase the number of people living ethical lives, exchange ideas, and encourage good works. It exists for those who want to think, and for those who don't want religion or atheism but do want ethical development. Also, a few respondents answered they didn't know.

I'm a member because: EC says what I think. Community. Education. Social action. Leadership. Friendship. A chance to make a contribution. Philosophy. Mental stimulation. It's always interesting. Work/life balance. Congregation. Activities. Opportunity to volunteer. Some negatives were: Habit: I can't find anything better. I'm not sure. Several simply said, "It's my religion."

Regarding our **membership mix:** the biggest response was: We need more younger members. But also noted by many was that: We need all kinds, we don't have a rich enough mix. We need a more ethnic mix. We're better than we used to be but we're not great. We're way too old and white. Our mix needs much work. The mix is poor. We need outreach to blacks, Latinos, gays, and immigrants. On the other hand, some comments were that: It is what it is—people choose to attend, join or not. It is open to all. It's great—home for anyone 8 to 108.

Social justice comments were that we need: More activism. Join with other organizations with the same goals. Continue to be socially active. Be more "experiential" than lectures and anecdotes.

Specific topics that were suggested for activism: genetic engineering, fracking, over-policing, campaign finance reform, inequality of incomes, women's equality, response to the attack on government and taxes, homelessness, citizenship issues, sentencing, Occupy Wall Street issues, heighten community awareness

for presidential elections, a press project to promote responsible reporting and confront media bias, and better education. Respondents expressed appreciation for our programs. Comments noted: climate change, juvenile justice, Public Issues Committee, the shelter, and Supervised Visitation, and "Agree with all we've done."

Suggestions emphasized **Publicity** with statements such as: "Make a statement—publicity!" "Reach out—educate the general population about EC and stop relying on others to find us." "Advertise." "Get the word out." "Community outreach." And "Find funding to get out the message of ethical balance and proportion with Force for Change." Respondents also suggested that we: "Work with new members to help them feel part of us." Have more activism. Put pressure on non-thinking public. Improve our connections and relationships, do a more profiled radio show, talk less—do more, have more youth programs, involve the School more, and embrace one another.

Members were loud and clear on suggested **organizational changes** such as: Have the right hand know what the left hand is doing. Not sure there is organization. We are too disorganized. More effort should be made to coordinate events and get the correct information out. There is no clear chain of command. Designate a senior Leader. Reduce committees—structure is too authoritarian. Who is on committees? Also mentioned: Remind members that they have an obligation to the Society and to be active as much as possible. Speed things up; things start late and run late. Only meet in our Auditorium. There is no cross-reference for how

long new members stay. Emphasize Humanism. We need revitalization—new leadership, get more members involved.

Program critiques were: Add diversity, mix it up more—including music. Programs are too many and too repetitious. Be more political. Programs too geared toward the retired. For many events attendance is too low. Do more programs on interpersonal communication and how to build ethical relationships and listen empathetically.

Other ideas: Some of Adler's thinking should be challenged. I don't feel like the Leaders are leading, and two are not around enough to evaluate. Where are the members? I've never seen more than 75 at a time.

What is the **role for Ethical Culture** in NYC? Nonprofit center for ethics. A place for all ages, ethnicities, and persuasions to engage in empathetic connection, discovery, and growth. A voice for Humanism that is heard on a par with other religious organizations. The major religious/ethical place in town. Fill the Auditorium. Make people everywhere know who we are. Establish that success means to be virtuous, not rich. Be a leader in dealing with social issues. Spearhead reglobalization. Bring back a form of the New Deal. Establish a global warming research institute with the same prestige as the Manhattan Project. A driving force with Leaders prominent spokespersons in the news and in the community.

Does it matter that EC is a religion? Important: 9. Unimportant: 17. I don't care: 2. Would prefer secular: 2. Representative responses: To show other religions that they don't have it all. I don't need a religion, but I need Ethical. It's what it means to the individual. Prefer caring community. Religion distorts ethical behavior. EC has a nicer God. We're really a social

club. If it makes people happy to call it a religion, that's good. It's not a religion philosophically. Don't want to be associated with atheists. Secular lacks spirituality—it already feels secular enough. Is there a difference?

Communications: Our newsletter, *Ethical Outlook*, is read by most (22 to 8 nonreaders); flyers are picked up from the fifth floor tables by 25. Everybody reads the flyers in the Sunday folder, 12 would prefer simple listings in the folder, and 17 prefer the flyer inserts. Our website is an information source for 26 respondents; but not for 5. Comments/suggestions include: Overhaul the website. Meet-up messages are annoying—use Facebook. Things are scattered and require searching. Need more and better communication. Newsletter should be shortened—there's overlap. Each newsletter should have a member poem. Website coming along but communications need to be pushed. Make use of free MNN TV. We should be on "Religion and Ethics" and "On Being."

Finally, **other observations** were that we need: young and smart people, better organization and support for presiders, more nighttime programs for working people, better music, more traction with the general public, to grow membership, to go back to a real lunch, to use the building as a place for people to hear each other.

For those of you who missed the meeting but would like to express your opinions, contact me for an email copy of the questionnaire (andramariemiller@gmail.com) or call Moe-Swe Myint 212- 874-5210, ext. 113 for a hard copy. You can mail your response to me anonymously (Andra Miller, 146 W. 16th St., New York NY 10011) or put it or your comments in my mailbox on the 5th floor.

Leader's Desk

(Continued from page 1)

Committee now face the challenge of a new fiscal year, hoping to learn from past experience and to inspire their community to financially support the Society's mission and vision.

As adviser to this committee, I admire the dedication, patience, and compassion demonstrated by its members. They struggle with the ethical issues of membership. What standards should be set? What are the rights and responsibilities of membership? Many people make donations of varying amounts to the Society. Are they all members? No. Most are friends.

There are different levels of participation in any organization. Some people who come through our doors are interested in a single program. They may return for other programs, and they may make a donation. We welcome them as visitors and appreciate their support. Others may come on a regular basis, perhaps every Sunday for the Platform address, or on Thursdays for the lunch discussion. We welcome them as "newcomers" and hope they will consider membership. All newcomers are invited to a monthly reception with at least one Leader, our Membership Associate Moe-Swe Myint, and volunteers from the Membership Committee. Here they are provided with a packet of information, refreshments, and time to ask questions about Ethical Culture. We encourage them to get to know us better and decide whether this might be the spiritual home they are seeking.

This is because for members, NYSEC is a home. Their contributions are in the forms of time, talent, treasure, and training. Together, "from womb to

tomb," we celebrate life's joys, support one another through life's crises, and work to make the world a better place for everyone. Membership is a serious and constant commitment, not an afterthought at the end of the year.

I exchanged correspondence with longtime members who resigned when asked to pledge a minimum amount to the Society. They joined when they were married by an Ethical Culture Leader over 30 years ago but did not participate in the community and did not raise their children here. Occasionally, they made donations and thereby considered themselves members. They resented being asked to become "friends." I wondered why and soon realized that they made no distinction between membership in NYSEC or the Sierra Club or the ACLU, or even the American Humanist Association. "Wouldn't you rather accept our small donation than lose us as members?" they asked. I appreciated that they had been friends for so many years, but they certainly were not members of our community. I sincerely wish they had been.

Two other members resigned when programs they proposed were not accepted in the forms they wished to implement them. Similar programs already exist, and they were invited to participate in those. However, these individuals refused to recognize the legitimacy of the committee responsible for making decisions on behalf of the community and setting standards for the programs we offer to the public. I sincerely hope they will change their minds and enjoy the company of other members who share their interests.

Membership carries rights to vote on matters of concern to the Society (e.g., the budget and election of Trustees)

and to serve on committees and the Board. It also carries responsibilities of financial and organizational support. It is not a license to do whatever one wishes and behave inappropriately. We dedicate ourselves to learning and practicing ethical action. Founder Felix Adler was wise to establish Ethical Culture as a congregational movement that puts deed above creed. He valued, above all, the ethical relationships we form with one another.

Generosity begins at home. To support and grow our Society, we need both members and friends. We may well have more friends than members, because it takes a special commitment to bind one's life to others' lives in a common cause, to share a dream for the future, and to walk together in ethical fellowship.



Leader Dr. Anne Klaeyesen (center) at the Occupy Wall Street interfaith service

Sunday Morning Platform Meetings 11:15 AM

December 4—International and Domestic Policy Must Respect Human Rights

Todd Schwartz, *Amnesty International*

Amnesty International, celebrating its 50th anniversary throughout 2011,

is a grassroots organization that has been at the center of human rights policy, research, and activism since the beginning of the popular human rights movement. In my talk I will describe the organization's life-saving work in the fight for human rights. The motivating belief for activists is that each and every one of us can act and make a difference in this fight; individuals working on behalf of other individuals can change the world. The kinds of violations that are committed against people have evolved over time, as has our understanding of human rights, and Amnesty International has evolved to reflect these changes. Today, AI continues to support prisoners of conscience and campaign against the death penalty and torture, while taking on newer initiatives like ending the abuses that keep people in poverty, and preventing gender-based violence. Ceremonial Hall.

The shared charity is Amnesty International, 5 Penn Plaza, New York, NY 10001. AI is a global movement of more than 3 million supporters, members, and activists in more than 150 countries and territories who campaign to end grave abuses of human rights. Its vision is "for every person to enjoy all the rights enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and other international human rights standards." —AI.

December 11—Three Moral Heroes Who Were Also Ethical Culturists

Dr. Joseph Chuman, *Leader*

Henry Morgenthau Sr. was the American ambassador to the Ottoman Empire during World War I. Before genocide had a name, he almost alone spoke out against the "race murder" of the Armenians. His fervent appeal to the Wilson administration to actively work to end it fell on deaf ears, and Morgenthau left his position despondent at his failure to protect the victimized population.

Florence Kelley was an early and effective crusader for children's rights, the minimum wage and the eight-hour workday and against sweatshop exploitation. She was also a tireless worker at Hull House and the Henry Street Settlement. Franz Boas was the father of modern anthropology. His work transformed his field by attacking the racist and imperialist assumptions on which anthropology had been formulated. He was also a champion of justice outside the academy and worked with W.E.B. DuBois and others to combat racism in society at large.

What did these three illustrious individuals have in common? They were all members of the Ethical Culture Society from which they drew their inspiration. My address will look at the lives and contributions of Morgenthau, Kelley, and Boas and the values for which they stood.

Ceremonial Hall.

The shared charity is Gay Men's Health Crisis, 446 West 33rd Street, New York, NY 10001-2601. GMHC is the world's first and leading provider of HIV/AIDS prevention, care, and advocacy. "Building on decades of dedication and expertise, we understand the reality of HIV/AIDS and empower a healthy life for all. Our mission: GMHC fights to end the AIDS epidemic and uplift the lives of all affected." —GMHC.

December 18—The Disappearance Of Public Lands; Why Our National Parks Are In Jeopardy and What We Will Lose By Their Demise

Curt Collier, *Leader*

Although America still leads the world in park creation, attendance at our National Parks continues to fall. Park attendance by ethnicity also does not reflect the growing diversity of America. These two factors lead

to a troubling trend in our country. Beyond preserving beautiful spaces and protecting biodiversity, parks also yield a variety of cultural benefits, from public health to social and civic advancement. If we lose the parks, we lose an intrinsic part of American culture that will never be reclaimed. Why do we need public lands, and what do we stand to lose if we don't promote them? Auditorium.

The shared charity is Groundwork USA, 22 Main Street, Yonkers, NY 10701. The mission of the Groundwork USA network is "to bring about the sustained regeneration, improvement, and management of the physical environment by developing community-based partnerships that empower people, businesses, and organizations to promote environmental, economic, and social well-being."

December 25—Remembrance Sunday
Dr. Anne Klaeyesen, Leader

All of us are touched by loss. So it is that on this last Sunday of the year, we set aside time to look back before embarking on a new year—to remember our dead, to honor those who have touched our lives so profoundly, and to immortalize them in the way we choose to lead our lives. We face tomorrow with hope made stronger by the lessons we have learned and the love we have shared. Join me in this participatory Platform. Ceremonial Hall.

The shared charity is the Rose L. Walker Fund, National Ethical Service, c/o The American Ethical Union, 2 West 64th Street, New York, NY 10023. The purpose of this NGO is "to promote a consciousness shift toward our comprehensive interconnectedness as we affirm our identity in Ethical Culture. The fund is dedicated to building mutually beneficial partnerships."

**Early Sunday
10 AM**

(Rooms subject to change)

Dec. 4—Chorus Practice—All voices, big and small, are welcome. Led by Pat Debrovner and Jerry Ranck, we'll practice the songs we sing on Sunday mornings and get some tips to improve our singing technique. Ceremonial Hall.

Dec. 11—Colloquy—Intelligence. Abe Markman presides. Room 408.

Dec. 18—Poetry Reading—Feeling inspired by something around you? Find a poem that matches your mood and bring it along and read with us this month. Cheryl Gross presides. Room 508.

Dec. 18—Chorus Practice—Led by Pat Debrovner and Jerry Ranck. Ceremonial Hall.

**Sunday Afternoon
1:30 PM**

(Except as noted)

Dec. 4—Foundations of Ethical Culture. Admission is free, registration is required. To register contact: Yalitza Garcia at ygarcia@nysec.org or phone her at 212-874-5210, ext. 118. Ceremonial Hall.

Dec. 4—Nurturing Minds led by Teen Ethical Leadership. 2:00 pm. Room 514.

Dec. 25—Ethics in the News. Mary Ellen Goodman presides. Room 508.

**Lunch Discussions
Thursdays, 12:00 Noon**

Bring your lunch and join Leader Dr. Anne Klaeyesen and members in the Elliott Library, Room 507, from **12:00 noon to 1:30 pm**. This month's topic will be: **Religion Redux**.

Dec. 1—Room for Debate: "Religion at the Ballot Box," *NY Times*, 10/31/11.

Dec. 8—"In the Clear: On Scientology" by Mark Oppenheimer, *The Nation*, 10/18/11, and **"Scientology and Its Discontents"** by Seth Perry, *The Chronicle Review*, 10/2/11.

Dec. 15—"In Focus: Mormonism in Modern America," an interview in *The Pew Forum*, 5/16/07, and **"A Portrait of Mormons in the U.S."** *The Pew Forum*, 7/24/09.

Dec. 22—"Varieties of Irreligious Experience" by Jonathan Ree, *New Humanist*, September/October 2011.

Dec. 29—"Where Does Religion Come From?" by Heather Horn, *The Atlantic*, 8/11, and **"Where Did Religion Come From"** by Robert N. Bellah, *The Immanent Frame: Secularism, Religion and the Public Sphere* website.

Folders with relevant articles will be available from Yalitza Garcia in the Leaders' office. Please come and join the discussion.

Our Ethical Family

Moe-Swe Myint

Please welcome new members **Elinore Kaplan** and **Bernette Rudolph**.

Elinore is a retired journalist for a community newspaper, in addition to being an editor and copywriter, a library program director, and a teacher. She learned of the New York Society for Ethical Culture from her friend, Lucile Kleiman, and she has participated in our afternoon discussions and other programs. **Bernette** is an artist, art teacher, and therapist. She has attended our Sunday Platforms and afternoon discussions, and also went on the Fall Retreat. She likes the basic ideals of Ethical Culture.

* * *

OUT@NYSEC, NYSEC's newest public program, serving the LGBTQ (Lesbian-Gay-Bisexual-Transgender-Questioning) community, held a workshop on "The Alchemy of Same-Sex Relationships" in mid-October. It was the second in a series of innovative workshops, lectures, and social events designed to foster awareness, wellness, and fellowship. OUT@NYSEC will include programs on health care and spirituality, as well as relationships, parenting, ethics, activism, and outreach. A **Distin-guished Speakers** component will bring well-known authors and artists here for evenings of lively conversation. Two monthly singles nights will offer opportunities for women and men to learn more about our community and each other. We will also be hosting a program for LGBTQ teens as part of the Society's commitment to youth empowerment. Thanks to Director of Special Events **Antonio Pagliarulo** for his incredible energy and effort in bringing this program to the Society.

Sharon Pope organized a Halloween Parade Watch for NYSEC members and friends who had a ghoulish fun time hanging out and watching the parade in the Village.

Members **Chris Bernhardt, Paula Claycomb, Henryka Komanska, Pat Malkin, Carol Rost, Carol** and **Richard Van Deusen**, and **Eva Yachnes** volunteered for **Project FIND's** Thanksgiving Dinner. Every year members of the Society help serve Thanksgiving Dinner to up to 500 seniors in the community and send hundreds of homebound seniors hot meals for that day. Project FIND provides low- and moderate-income and

homeless seniors with the services and support they need to enrich their lives and live independently. This is a great organization with which to get involved if you are interested in donating your time and efforts for a very worthy cause.

* * *

Member News:

The following members are celebrating birthdays in December: **Judith Wallach**, 12/2; **Howard Parker**, 12/3; **Sal Bucak**, 12/4; **Annette Lewis**, 12/5; **Rebe Mirsky Goodman**, 12/8; **Julie Hayes**, 12/8; **Louis Sapir**, 12/8; **Helen Mecs**, 12/9; **Stephen Baker**, 12/16; **Michael Pratts**, 12/16; **Susan Pollet**, 12/17; **Jacqueline Pope**, 12/17; **Donna Fetonte**, 12/20; **Dan Hanson**, 12/20; **Joan Klips**, 12/27; **Terry Perlin**, 12/29; **John Gurney**, 12/30.

Ethical Enrichment

Ethical Mindfulness And Inner Peace

Join Leader Dr. Anne Klaeyesen on **Thursdays, December 1 and 15, 6:30–8:00 pm**. On December 1, guest Gadadhara Pandit Dasa leads a Hindu meditation, and on December 15, Rev. Doyeon Park leads a Won Buddhist meditation.

Ethical Mindfulness and Inner Peace is an exploration of how different traditions cultivate mindfulness and a process of developing a uniquely Ethical Culture approach. Each session will include a meditative experience. Reading materials will be provided. The sessions are free to members and \$5 for guests.

Ethics in Film



Chris Everett

Join us on **Friday, December 2, 7:00 pm** (the doors open at **6:30 pm**), in Ceremonial Hall, to see the 1983 film *Silkwood*, directed by Mike Nichols.

While working at an Oklahoma nuclear power plant, Karen Silkwood (Meryl Streep) becomes exposed to radiation. When the official investigation is tampered with, Karen conducts her own inquiry, but she disappears under suspicious circumstances before its completion. Kurt Russell co-stars in this fact-based drama, which was nominated for multiple Oscars and earned Cher a Best Supporting Actress Golden Globe for her minimalist performance. Andra Miller will lead our post-film discussion. The suggested donation: \$5.

Ethics in Literature Reading Group

Come on **Monday, December 5, 1:00 pm–3:00 pm**, to the Elliott Library, Room 507. Leader Dr. Anne Klaeyesen will host a discussion on *The Fish Can Sing* by Nobel Prize winner Hall-dor Laxness.

This lyrical novel tells the tale of Alfgim, an abandoned child, whose mother gave birth to him in the turf-and-stone cottage of Bjorn of Brekkukot, the fisherman, on the outskirts of what is now Reykjavik. It evokes his boyhood and youth, spent at his grandparents' home in the early years of the twentieth century, a hospitable place where dignified understatement was the norm and where everything from a lumpfish to a Bible had a fixed price that never changed.

Halldor Laxness was born near Reykjavik, Iceland, in 1902 and died in 1998. The undisputed master of contemporary Icelandic fiction, he was awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1955. There is no charge for members; the public's suggested donation is \$5.

Felix Adler's Writings

Join us at the Society for a seminar on **Felix Adler's writings** on **Tuesdays, December 6 and 20, 7:00 pm–8:30 pm** in Room 502. Leaders Dr. Joseph Chuman and Dr. Anne Klaeyesen will guide us in a close study of Adler's writings, with the goal of our gaining a thorough understanding of his thoughts and aims through probing discussion.



For more information, see the Fall/Winter 2011 issue of the **Ethical Enrichment** brochure. The seminar is open to all. Admission is free, but registration is required.

Please contact Yalitza Garcia at 212-874-5210, ext. 118, to register.

Ethics and the Theater

Patricia Bruder Debrovner

On **Friday, December 16**, from **7:00 pm–9:00 pm**, **Ethics and the Theater** will present David Auburn's Pulitzer Prize-winning play, *Proof*. A renowned but mentally unstable mathematician has just died, and his daughter Catherine, who cared for him for several years before his death, tells one of his former students that a

brilliant mathematical proof in what appears to be her father's handwriting is really her own work. Meanwhile, her older sister, who has come for the funeral, is concerned about Catherine's own stability and wants to bring her back to New York to look after her. Is Catherine crazy or a genius? Or are the two inextricably linked? What will happen if Catherine cannot prove her claim? Will doubt destroy love? Auburn's characters must come to grips with these questions and, perhaps something even more difficult, with their answers.

Elaine Berman directs our cast, which includes Alex Bone, Gavi Goldstein, John Gurney, and Jill Usdan. Beverly Newman will read the stage directions. Come at **6:30 pm** for a wine and cheese reception, and after the reading, participate in a discussion of the ethical issues of the play, led by Terry Perlin. The suggested donation is \$5. Ceremonial Hall.

Ethics in Film: Contemporary Documentaries

On **Monday, December 19, 1:00 pm–3:00 pm**, join Leader Dr. Anne Klaeyesen in the Adler Study, Room 514. We'll be showing *Restrepo*. (2010). Sebastian Junger, author of *The Perfect Storm*, teamed with photographer Tim Hetherington and spent a year embedded with the U.S. Second Platoon in Afghanistan, chronicling the hard work, fear, and brotherhood that come with repelling a deadly enemy. Hunkered down with the soldiers in one of the region's most strategic valleys, the filmmakers uncover the dark humor, sleepless surreality,

and constant anxiety of war in this Oscar-nominated documentary.

The film showing is free to members, and \$5 for guests.

OUT@NYSEC

Join us on **Wednesday, December 7, 6:30 pm–8:00 pm** in Ceremonial Hall for "**Different Voices in the Epidemic: A Community Discussion on the 30th Year of HIV and AIDS and How We Can Help**," a panel discussion in honor of World Aids Day. **OUT@NYSEC**, in partnership with Gay Men's Health Crisis (GMHC) will host this timely event featuring passionate professionals in the fields of HIV/AIDS research, education, outreach, and more.

The diverse group of panelists includes: Mark Milano, of AIDS Community Research Initiative of America; Ivan Monforte, of GMHC; Charles W. Shorter, of Ryan/Adair Community Health Center; Carl Siciliano, of Ali Forney Center; and Claire Simon, of Young Women of Color HIV/AIDS Coalition. Moderated by NYSEC Leader Dr. Anne Klaeyesen, this discussion aims to inform and engage our community. Admission is free.

Fun and Ethics

Nicola DeMarco



On **Saturday December 31, New Year's Eve**, you can party like there's no tomorrow, forget all the troubles of the world, and at the very same time help solve those troubles, right here at the New York Society for Ethical Culture! Fun and ethics? "Huh? What? How can that be?" you

say. We say “Yes, we can!!!.. have a great time and enjoy making the world a better place!”

This New Year’s Eve, we’ll ring in 2012 with fantastic live jazz musicians and opera performers, as well as an authentic New Orleans jazz band, open bar, champagne, finger food, dancing, door prizes, a raffle, and a countdown, along with fireworks at midnight seen from our rooftop overlooking Central Park. And, along with all this fun, we’ll know that all proceeds will go to improve and expand the ongoing projects of our NYSEC **Social Service Board**, including: the Womens’ Shelter, the Empowering Ethical Elders Program, our Supervised Visitation program, Justice for Juveniles initiatives, our Youth Soccer League for immigrant children, the Homeless Artists and Writers Workshops, scholarships for underserved kids’ programs, and support of local, national, and international disaster relief efforts.

So, laugh, sing, dance, drink, eat, have a great time...*and at the same time*...help others!! Ethics into action... with zest! The festivities will run from **9:00 pm until 1:00 am**.

Tickets for this fun event are \$75 for members, \$85 for nonmembers (this is a great gift if you cannot make it here yourself), or \$125 at the door. Contact Nicola DeMarco at nickdmarco@hotmail.com for more information (or call 917-374-5220).

Celebrate New Year’s Day!

On **Sunday, January 1, at 11:15 am**, we’re having a special **New Year’s Day** program! The morning will be a

celebration of community, with music, poetry, and a delicious brunch in Ceremonial Hall.

Pat Debrovner will preside, and we’ll hear acclaimed folk musician, singer, and songwriter Pat Wictor perform and lead a community sing-along. Pat’s music is grounded in the country, gos-

pel, and blues traditions of our nation. Pat is an innovative slide guitarist who is loved by audiences for creating fresh and memorable versions of traditional and contemporary songs. He has released five solo CDs, and he is currently touring as a member of the popular folk trio Brother Sun.

University Glee Club

On November 17 we were privileged to host the University Glee Club for a lovely concert. The UGC members donated their time and talent for a fundraiser benefitting the Society. Conductor Francisco Núñez led the 100-man choral group in beautiful songs...some serious, some filled with fun, and a great time was had by all. Smaller ensembles from the UGC added to the program. These songs by the Crickets and the Ten were outstanding as well.

We thank the many participants of the University Glee Club for their exceptional contribution!



(Photos by Beth Zucker)
Conductor Francisco Núñez



University Glee Club raises its voices in song.

Writing Workshops Return in January

Our two popular **Joy of Personal Writing** workshops, now in their eighth year, continue with a 10-week winter term. One workshop meets on **Mondays**, beginning on January 16 (moved to January 17 in honor of Martin Luther King Day); **Thursday** classes start January 19. The classes last from 6:30 pm to 8:30 pm. Watch for the room assignment.

Writers with and without experience are welcome to join and work in a warm and supportive atmosphere that helps everyone write freely and with focus and skill.

The course fees are \$160 for members and \$260 for nonmembers. For more information, please phone Yalitzza Garcia in the Leaders’ office, at 212 874-5210, ext. 118. If you’d like to read some examples of work by current and past workshop writers, please visit our website, www.nysec.org/workshop-writers-space.

NYSEC Teen Adviser Is New Youth Poet Laureate

Congratulations to Ishmael Islam, co-adviser of NYSEC's Teen Ethical Leadership Program, who has been named the 2012 NYC Youth Poet Laureate by Urban Word NYC. Ish and the Youth Poet Ambassadors (finalists in the program) will travel throughout the five boroughs to speak to their peers about voting and civic engagement. They will also embark on a tour of NYC high schools and parks. Ish will also receive a book deal for a collection of his poetry, to be released at next November's poetry competition.



Ishmael Islam reads his poetry at the Cooper Union Poetry Slam (Photo by member Jamie Scott)

Ish took the stage in the Great Hall of Cooper Union at the Urban Word NYC Poetry Competition on Saturday, November 5, and wowed the audience with his poem, "Daydreaming at the Voting Booth." A poet, filmmaker, and graphic artist, he came to NYSEC's attention early this year, when he participated in two Sunday platform addresses – "Martin Luther King Jr. Remembrance" in January and "The Ethics of Poetry" in April. This September, he became our Teen Leadership program's co-adviser, along with Sarah Linton Nurbai. Ish is also half of the Brook-

lyn hip-hop duo HumUni (hyoom-yoo-ni), and has a one-man show, "The Self Spell." He is a Brooklyn native, currently in his last year at Kingsborough Community College.

Urban Word NYC, host of the poetry competition, is founded on the belief that teenagers can and must speak for themselves. The organization has been at the forefront of the youth spoken word, poetry, and hip-hop movements in NYC since 1999, presenting literary arts education and youth development programs in creative writing, journalism, college preparation, literature, and hip-hop. For more information, visit <http://www.urbanwordnyc.org/uwnyc/>.

Daydreaming at the Voting Booth

*A spirit came to me in a daydream
With the voice of a somber firework
Before I asked what the stripes and stars were for
He interrupted,*

"Good sir!"

*That was something pure we once said
Trying to find the sun in so much neon
You forget how we used to do things
You don't stare at the railroad, you make it!
You dream, then you build. That's pure*

*A voice shouts an idea
More come and there's a call to action
We used to call on each other
Then the voices mash
A lone star becomes a constellation
There are vibrations, and it all sounds like—like*

*When mountains move
Or when the railroad is complete
There have been many mistakes, but that's the purity
The lump of hope that snowballs out the avalanche
It all bursts into fireworks
Looks like atoms in the night sky, so pure
Don't you see?
Everything we haven't abused is pure
The vote is pure*

*Remember my friend,
The voice always grants us another chance
To awaken."*

*"Good sir! You're next in line to vote now."
-- And before I even thought to place a ballot
Everything about being here started to make sense*

December 2011

Office hours for the month are: Monday-Friday, 9:00 am – 6:00 pm

| Sunday | Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday | Saturday |
|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|
| | | | | 1 January 2012 Newsletter Deadline 12:00 pm – Leader Lunch Discussion 6:00 pm – Empowering Ethical Elders 6:30 pm – Ethical Mindfulness 6:30 pm – Thursday Writing Workshop | 2 7:00 pm – Ethics in Film: <i>Silkwood</i> (1983) | 3 |
| | Ethics in Literature: A Reading Group <i>Dec. 5 – The Fish Can Sing</i> , by Hallidor Laxness <u>Ethics and the Theater</u> <i>Dec. 16 – Proof</i> by David Auburn <u>Ethics in Film: Contemporary Documentaries</u> <i>Dec. 19 – Restrepo</i> (2010) | | | | | |
| 4 10:00 am – Chorus Practice 11:00 am – Ethics for Children 11:15 am – Morning Meeting 12:45 pm – Light Brunch 1:30 pm – Foundations of EC 2:00 pm – Nurturing Minds | 5 1:00 pm – Ethics in Literature 6:30 pm – Board of Trustees 6:30 pm – Monday Writing Workshop | 6 6:00 pm – Socrates Café 7:00 pm – Adler Seminar | 7 6:30 pm – OUT@NYSEC: “Different Voices in the Epidemic: A Community Discussion...” | 8 12:00 pm – Leader Lunch Discussion 6:30 pm – Thursday Writing Workshop | 9 | 10 |
| 11 10:00 am – Colloquy 11:00 am – Ethics for Children 11:15 am – Morning Meeting 12:45 pm – Light Brunch | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 12:00 pm – Leader Lunch Discussion 6:00 pm – Empowering Ethical Elders 6:30 pm – Ethical Mindfulness 6:30 pm – Thursday Writing Workshop | 16 7:00 pm – Ethics and the Theater | 17 |
| 18 10:00 am – Poetry Reading 10:00 am – Chorus Practice 11:00 am – Ethics for Children 11:15 am – Morning Meeting 12:45 pm – Light Brunch | 19 1:00 pm – Ethics in Film: Contemporary Documentaries 7:00 pm – Prospective Members’ Reception | 20 6:00 pm – Socrates Café 7:00 pm – Adler Seminar | 21 | 22 12:00 pm – Leader Lunch Discussion | 23 | 24 |
| 25 11:15 am – Morning Meeting 12:45 pm – Light Brunch 1:30 pm – Ethical Economics 1:30 pm – Ethics in the News | 26 Society Offices Closed Christmas Day Observance | 27 | 28 | 29 12:00 pm – Leader Lunch Discussion | 30 | 31 9:00 pm – Fun, Ethics: New Year’s Eve Party |

The New York Society for Ethical Culture is a welcoming home for humanists. We've provided nontheistic services in a congregational setting since 1876. We embrace the diversity of our city and invite all to join us in celebrating life's joys, supporting one another through life's crises, and working together to make the world a better place.

Ethical Culture is a religion centered on ethics, not theology, whose mission is to encourage respect for humanity and nature and to create a better world. Members are committed to personal ethical development in their relationships with others and in activities involving social justice and environmental stewardship.

NEW YORK SOCIETY FOR
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