

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 **11:15 AM—Music & Reflection,** **Concert Hall**

February 4 **Science and the Supernatural**

Tony Hileman
Senior Leader

Henryka Komanska Presides

February 11 **Lincoln**

Gerald Ranck
Music Director

Dr. James W. Farer Presides

February 18 **What Passes For Religion**

Tony Hileman
Senior Leader

Bonnie Bean Presides

February 25 **Intelligent Science: What You** **Don't Know Will Hurt Us!**

Dr. Judith D. Wallach
Psychologist

Carol Nadell Presides

*We're very pleased
to report that a new
Ethical Culture
Society flag has
been purchased
and is proudly
hanging over the
front entrance of
our building.*

February Happenings

Intelligent Science—Darwin's *Origin of Species* was published in 1859. But for some, the jury on evolution is still out. On February 25, Dr. Judith D. Wallach will discuss this still controversial issue. (See page 3)

Anyone Can Sing!—Starting February 8 and running for six-weeks, this course which is taught by Phyllis Lynd, will get you up and singing. (See page 5)

President's Notes

Michael Bogdanffy-Kriegh



Challenges and Choices

At the January 2007 Board meeting the House Committee presented an alarming assessment of work that needs to be done on our building. Despite our having spent nearly 3.5 million dollars on renovations and repairs to the building over the past 10 years or so, it seems there are still leaks to repair and windows to restore.

Additionally, our efforts to rent our auditorium for concerts and our own initiatives to present quality public programming have, not unreasonably, brought to light some of our beautiful—but venerable—building's lacks in the way of accommodating the needs of many disabled visitors, who arrive here for these events and find that our accommodations (though we certainly make the effort, sometimes heroically so) are less than best practice.

Most of you know, too, that we recently lost the services of Leslie Doyle, who coordinated and managed the big events taking place in our space. Leslie helped us plan and
(Continued on page 2)

Sunday Morning Meetings

February 4—Science and the Supernatural *Tony Hileman, Senior Leader*

Modern understandings of the world share an uneasy frontier with ancient mythologies. Throughout its history it has been the business of science to make natural the supernatural—to supply answers to questions that had previously been explained only in apocryphal ways. As scientific discoveries broaden our understanding of the physical universe, the origin of its existence becomes less important and the prospect of an afterlife less likely. Ethical Humanists accept this life as all, and enough. Does a pragmatic approach to living open vistas of enrichment or does it shut out emotional fulfillment? Does a naturalistic approach to existence enhance or diminish the meaning of life?

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President's Notes

(Continued from page 1)

organize the public forums that have given us a great deal of fresh name recognition. We have formed a committee to write a job description and recommend to the Board how we might replace her.

However, the recent Board meeting that revealed the work still needed on the building has come and gone, and we now find ourselves in need of a major capital campaign and, conventional fundraising wisdom advises us, a fundraising consultant.

It seems clear to me and most Board members who have focused on this that there is unlikely to be enough money to do both, that is, hire a replacement for Leslie Doyle *and* a fundraising consultant. The Board is rapidly approaching a moment of significant choices. If we embrace the need for another round of construction in the building, we will very likely be shifting resources, both volunteer and staff, away from mission (as any of us understands it or believes it to be) to the building.

However, we ignore the building repair and upgrades at our peril, of course. But we certainly have to pause and give thought as to whether and to what degree the building we are in has been, and continues to be, our "de facto" mission.

Conventional wisdom says that you write a mission statement and then pursue it to function effectively as a business or an organization. The mission statement should be clear and succinct and readily understood by the general public. However, even if this difficult task is accomplished, circumstances and years of decisions propelled by "necessity" can turn a business or an organization away from the mission it thought it was pursuing, and onto a mission that was never intended.

The degree to which our building is our mission waxes and wanes over time. Nonetheless, we are at another critical moment where the decisions we make will affect the balance of resources and where they are directed. I don't think there are easy answers, but I do think that not only the entire Board, but also the entire membership should be aware of this moment and what it means, and make themselves heard if they have thoughts and feelings about it. When missions are being determined, the whole community should turn up.

I hope you will all reach out and talk to Board members about what is going on. It is an important time.

Sunday Morning Meetings

(Continued from page 1)

February 11—Lincoln

Gerald Ranck, Music Director

On the eve of his 198th birthday, it is time to take a fresh look at our 16th president; not only at his towering achievements, most of which are truly deserved, but at his struggles—both political and personal. His maladroit handling of the initial phases of the Civil War and his resorting to extra constitutional authority are in stark contrast

to his rise to political greatness at the war's end. But perhaps his most courageous struggle was with a lifelong crippling depression. His hard-fought victory over this malady is inspiring. Seeing Abraham Lincoln—the whole person, warts and all—should enhance our awe and gratitude for “the Great Emancipator.” Happy Birthday, Mr. President!

February 18—What Passes For Religion

Tony Hileman, Senior Leader

For centuries, the threshold of religion was our acceptance of forces beyond nature and our reliance on them for information about things we do not know and perhaps cannot know. The prophecies of those claiming insight into the forces and mysteries of the universe guided our thoughts, our actions, and our lives.

We no longer suborn intellect to authority, and we've come to recognize that religion consists of involvement as much as contemplation. As our concept of what passes for religion shifts, are there imposters we should be protesting? Have the prophets of yore become the pretenders of today?

February 25—Intelligent Science: What You Don't Know Will Hurt Us!
Dr. Judith D. Wallach, Ph.D.

Darwin's *Origin of Species* was published in 1859. It would be another 66 years until the Scopes Trial pitted Clarence Darrow against William Jennings Bryan to decide the fate of John Scopes, a high school biology teacher charged with the heinous crime of illegally teaching the theory of evolution. (Ultimately, the Tennessee Supreme Court dismissed the case against the teacher on a technicality.) In 1968, in *Epperson vs. Arkansas*, the U.S. Supreme Court invalidated an Arkansas statute that prohibited the teaching of evolution in the public schools. The

issue was still *whether the teaching of evolution was illegal!*

Today the situation is reversed. In January, 2006, the Dover, Pennsylvania School Board rescinded its policy of presenting intelligent design as an alternative to evolution after a federal judge found that the concept was religious and not scientific. The following month, the Ohio Board of Education tossed out a mandate that 10th-grade biology classes include “critical analysis of evolution.” We've come a long way in less than 40 years! But the struggle continues and, as we've read lately, it has leached well beyond biology classes in the public schools.

Now the burning issue in the schools is “intelligent design” vs. evolution. We are told it's only fair to teach both “theories”! And we answer, “Intelligent design is not a theory; it's only an idea.” So far, so good. But can you continue the debate? Humanists, Ethical Culturists, today we need to be scientifically articulate if we want to exert influence in the public arena.

**Early Sunday
10:00 AM**

Feb. 4—Everyday Ethics: “Ethical Methods of Persuasion”—Abe Markman presides. Room 408.

Feb. 4—Singing Practice—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. It's a lot of fun, so join us. Ceremonial Hall, 4th floor.

Feb. 11—Colloquy—A meditative hour during which we explore thoughts about a presented subject. Phyllis Kreuttner will guide this probing, quiet, contemplative time. Room 408.

Feb. 18—Singing Practice. Ceremonial Hall, 4th floor.

Feb. 18—Poetry Reading—Spend a peaceful hour with Cheryl Gross reading the poems we especially love. Come to read or just to listen. Room 408.

Feb. 25—Public Issues Committee (PIC) Meeting. Abe Markman presides. Ceremonial Hall, 4th floor.

**Sunday Afternoon
1:45 PM**

Ceremonial Hall, 4th floor

Feb. 4—Historic Artworks—View a video of African-American art from the Metropolitan Museum of Art.

Feb. 11—Black Poetry—read by members of the Poetry Reading Group: Virginia Arnold, Laurie Broza, Barbara Fennell, Cheryl Gross, Phyllis Kreuttner, Abe Markman, and Frank Prescod.

Feb. 18—Child Health Insurance—Latasha McGriff, Deputy Program Director of the Health Insurance Enrollment Program of the Medical and Health Insurance Research Association of NYC, will speak on this most crucial issue. Presented by the Public Issues Committee.

Feb. 25—Life With Health—Jackie Pope presides.

**Dr. Spetter's
Video Interview**

Patricia Bruder Debrovner

If you missed the interview with Dr. Matthew Ies Spetter, which took place on Sunday, January 7, you can still view it. Chuck Debrovner will



make his video of the interview, which is in our Archives, available to members, by appointment.

Our Ethical Family

Suzy Frazer

Please welcome our newest members:

Marilyn S. Baker is a dancer, trainer, and teacher, who enjoys traveling, cooking, and reading. She and her husband, Bill (also a new member) have two daughters, one of whom attended the Ethical Culture School and Fieldston and was married by a Brooklyn Ethical Culture Leader. Marilyn and Bill are very happy to be joining a group of people with a compatible point of view.

William S. Baker, who is married to Marilyn Baker, is an engineer and manager, as well as an amateur painter. Bill has participated in a number of Society activities, including our Sunday meetings, orientation, and a recent bike trip.

Ella Campi is a lawyer with the firm, Ropes and Grey. Her philosophy graduate studies focused on Emmanuel Kant. Ella enjoys Latin, poetry, and scuba diving. She is drawn to Ethical Culture ideas and activities.



(L-R) Suzy Frazer, Membership Director, with new member Michelle Rickborn

Michelle Rickborn became a member in November.



Another new member, **Richard Sander**, was introduced in the January issue.

Carol Nadell and Richard Van Deusen were married on January 6 here at the Society. Patricia Bruder Debrovner officiated at the ceremony. Congratulations!!



Paul Berman, long-time member of the Social Service Board, shows his project, a set of special greeting cards he created by hand for six residents of the Jewish Home and Hospital, where he is a dedicated volunteer.



Nicholas Childs has had to resign from the Society.

Film Forum

Valerie Leiman

Join us on Friday, February 2, at 7:00 pm, for the next film in our 2006-2007 series "Reel Justice: Courtroom Dramas." We'll be viewing and discussing *The Ox-Bow Incident* (1943), directed by William A. Wellman.

The irony and terrors of mob rule are vividly depicted in this unforgettable drama about three wandering travelers who are lynched when a mob takes the law into its own hands. This

powerful and depressing parable has been studied in recent years by scholars looking at how public memory is formed, how it affects the nature of national memory, and how each culture filters memory through its own history. As usual, our popular film scholar, Richard Bruno, will lead the always informative and lively discussion that follows the film.

Doors open at 6:30 pm and the movie begins at 7:00 pm. Admission is \$3 for members and \$4 for non-members. Popcorn and beverages are included, so come and enjoy a thought-provoking movie and evening.



Richard Bruno leads the discussion following the showing of *Judgment at Nuremberg* on January 5, which attracted an unusually large and enthusiastic audience

Adult Ed Passes

Patricia Bruder Debrovner

Once again, you can purchase a season pass to all of our stimulating adult education programs, from February until the end of June, for \$50.

Come and enjoy our **Ethics and the Theater** play readings, Anne Klaeyen's two sessions on **A Humanist Interpretation of the Bible**, our three-session **Ethics and the Media** course, and any **Meet the Author** events that are held during those five months. You can buy your discount pass at our Sunday cafeterias, or call Suzy Frazer.

Anyone Can Sing!

Andra Miller

This six-week course for current and new students will be taught by Phyllis Lynd, a noted vocal teacher and coach.

Classes will be held on Thursdays, February 8 through March 15, from 6:00 pm to 7:00 pm. The fee for the six-week course is \$120 for members and \$150 for nonmembers.

To register, call Gloria Chandler at 212-874-5210, ext. 117, or fill out and mail the form below, to her at the Society along with payment.

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____

State: _____

Zip: _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____

American Express Visa

MasterCard

Check made payable to NY Society for Ethical Culture

Card #: _____

Exp: _____

Name on card: _____

Signature: _____

A Humanist Look At the Bible

Patricia Bruder Debrovner

Join us on Wednesday evenings, February 21 and 28, 7:00 pm to 8:30 pm, for this two-session exploration, **A Humanist Interpretation of the Bible**, presented by Anne Klaeyen, Leader of the Ethical Humanist Society of Long Island.

On February 21, Anne will focus on *Genesis*. Creationists and “intelligent design” proponents would have us believe that the *Book of Genesis* provides us with all the science we need to know about the creation of the world. However, *Genesis* contains two conflicting creation stories. Which are we to believe? Reading and interpreting these stories as religious mythology gives us a much deeper insight into human nature than any scientific understanding. They can still speak to us today when we learn how to listen to them within their historical context.

On February 28, Anne will discuss Jesus as Storyteller. Great moral teachers use stories, not theology or metaphysics, to communicate with people. They understand that stories work on our hearts, helping us to see ourselves in them and to gain wisdom from them. We will examine some of the stories Jesus told, as recorded in the gospels, both canonical and gnostic (authorized and heretical), and discuss how they affect us today.

Fees—members: \$10 per session, \$15 for the series; nonmembers: \$15 per session, \$25 for the series.

Ethics and the Theater

Patricia Bruder Debrovner

If you haven’t been joining in the fun of attending our monthly play readings and watching members and professional actors playing the roles, this is a wonderful month to start. In honor of Black History Month, we’ll present one of the truly great American plays, Lorraine Hansberry’s *A Raisin In the Sun*, on Tuesday, February 27, 7:00 pm to 9:00 pm. *Raisin* portrays the life of an inner-city black family grappling with conflicting opinions on how to use the insurance money they received as a

death benefit, and whether they should move into an all-white neighborhood.

Ms. Hansberry was only 21 when she wrote this extraordinarily beautiful and moving masterpiece. She was the youngest American, the fifth woman, and the first African-American to win the coveted New York Drama Critics Circle’s “Best American Play” award for it in 1959. Our own Barbara Fennell will join a cast of talented professional actors.

Mark your calendar now, and make a habit of taking advantage of this entertaining and thought-provoking monthly program. If you would like to join the cast of a future play or moderate one of the group discussions about the ethical issues raised, which follow each reading, please let me know. There is no charge.

“Sandwich Gen” Family Values

Abe Markman

Is the discourse about family values entering a more enlightened period and is the “sandwich generation” forging the way? Are the estimated 20 million people sandwiched between their young children and aging parents putting ideological differences aside and working together?

There is growing evidence that issues such as paid family leave, paid sick leave, flex-time, regulated payday loans, subsidized infant care, and child and family health insurance are beginning to be considered more favorably by the public, the press, and policy makers.

The Public Issues Committee (PIC) has chosen two of these issues to promote: paid family leave and child health insurance. In addition to the sandwich generation, their implementation would benefit a huge segment of the popula-

tion, including other family members care-givers, and those cared for: the children, the elderly, and the disabled.

One of the main thrusts of PIC is to find issues that would tend to unify the country. Paid Family Leave and Child Health Insurance are two prime examples because they are two being advocated by those on all sides of the family values issue.

Of course, there are government and business interests that oppose paid leave and child health insurance. In order for PIC to have leverage in supporting these and our other issues we need your understanding and your vote in 2007. To stay up-to-date please come to our monthly Sunday afternoon programs or log on to: <http://www.nysec.org/pic/ideas>. We welcome your comments either in person or in the message box on PIC's cover page: <http://www.nysec.org/pic>.

Women's Shelter Needs Volunteers

We're looking for volunteers to help staff our Shelter for Homeless Women, now in its 23rd year. The shelter, a project of the Social Service Board, houses up to eight women and is open four days a week, Monday through Thursday. The shelter is sponsored by the Partnership for the Homeless, and our guests are referred by the Olivieri Center for Homeless Women.

Having enough volunteers enables us to keep the shelter open all year. If you can stay overnight once a month, you can help people get their lives back on track. Over time, many of the women guests have been able to move into permanent housing, which is very rewarding to all of us.

For more information about volunteering, call Maria Fridman at 212-874-5210 ext. 113.

Caring Committee

Ben Bean

The Caring Committee reaches out to members who have been unable to attend Society meetings and other events because of ill health, age, or incapacity. We phone the member to see how they are, send holiday cards, and let them know that we care.

If you'd like to be part of this effort, which requires that you make about two or three calls per month, please call Suzy Frazer at 212-874-5210, ext. 113, for information or to sign-up. And if you've been unable to attend, and you'd like to hear from a concerned member, call Suzy as well.

"Green" Web Sites

Suzy Frazer

The following is a list of web sites offering a wide range of conservation—and environment-related information.

www.thegreenguide.com provides reviews of household products and information on health and nutrition.

www.energystar.gov offers descriptions of Energy Star-rated appliances and conversion data.

www.acee.org The American Council for an Energy-Efficient Economy offers easy to read information.

www.nrdc.org shows policy papers from the Natural Resources Defense Council on the environment.

www.stopglobalwarming.org lets users join the Stop Global Warming Virtual March and offers consumer tips.

Save the Dates!!

Membership Pledge Party

Friday, March 2, 2007

5:30 PM–7:00 PM

Founder's Day Celebration

Sunday, May 20, 2007

11:15 AM

NYSEC Family Reunion

Reconnect with the past as current and former Leaders, members, and friends come together to celebrate 131 years of Ethical Culture!*

Lunch provided by the Society during Social Hour

*Let Suzy Frazer know if you think of anyone we should invite!

Ringling In New Year's Day

Society members and friends rang in the New Year (for the second time!) at a wonderful, fun-filled New Year's Day party in Ceremonial Hall on January 1. The afternoon was filled with lively conversation, games, food, wine, and prizes, and with great music provided by our own maestro, Jon Liechty. Thanks again to the sterling Membership Activities Committee, whose members were responsible for the day's fun and games. Here's wishing a healthy, fulfilling, and joyous new year to all and peace to the world.



(L-R) Chester Lane, Bonnie Bean, Patricia Berens



(L-R) Bernice Cornyetz, Andra Miller



Valerie and David Leiman



(L-R) Abe Markman, Virginia Arnold, Ben Bean



(L-R) Phyllis Kreuttner, Michael Sands (center), Harriet Bigus

February 2007

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

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<p align="center">Great Books: February 7–Homer, <i>The Iliad</i> ECRDG: (Ethical Culture Reading Discussion Group) February 14–Zadie Smith, <i>White Teeth</i> Great Books: “Great Conversations I” February 21–Walt Whitman, <i>Out of the Cradle Endlessly Rocking</i></p>				1 March 2007 Newsletter Deadline 7:00 pm–Thursday Writing Workshop	2 7:00 pm–Film Forum: <i>The Ox-Bow Incident</i> (1943)	3 9:30 am and 1:30 pm Supervised Visitation
4 10:00 am–Everyday Ethics 10:00 am–Singing Practice 11:00 am–Ethics for Children 11:15 am–Morning Meeting 12:45 pm–Social Hour 1:45 pm–Video of African- American Art from MMA	5 6:30 pm–Board of Trustees 6:30 pm–Monday Writing Workshop	6	7 6:00 pm–Men’s Group 7:30 pm–Great Books	8 6:00 pm–Anyone Can Sing 7:00 pm–Thursday Writing Workshop	9	10 9:30 am and 1:30 pm Supervised Visitation
11 10:00 am–Colloquy 11:00 am–Ethics for Children 11:15 am–Morning Meeting 12:45 pm–Social Hour 1:45 pm–Black Poetry read by Poetry Reading Group	12 6:30 pm–Monday Writing Workshop	13 6:00 pm–Women’s Group	14 3:00 pm–ECRDG	15 6:00 pm–Anyone Can Sing 7:00 pm–Thursday Writing Workshop	16	17 No Supervised Visitation
18 10:00 am–Poetry Reading 10:00 am–Singing Practice 11:30 am–Morning Meeting 12:45 pm–Social Hour 1:45 pm–Child Health Insurance	19 Presidents Day Society offices closed	20 6:30 pm–Monday Writing Workshop	21 6:00 pm–Socrates Café 7:00 pm–A Humanist Inter- pretation of the Bible 7:30 pm–Great Books: Great Conversations I	22 6:00 pm–Anyone Can Sing 7:00 pm–Thursday Writing Workshop	23	24 9:30 am and 1:30 pm Supervised Visitation
25 10:00 am–PIC Meeting 11:00 am–Ethics for Children 11:30 am–Morning Meeting 12:45 pm–Social Hour 1:45 pm–Life With Health	26 6:30 pm–Monday Writing Workshop	27 7:00 pm–Ethics and the Theater	28 7:00 pm–A Humanist Inter- pretation of the Bible			

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