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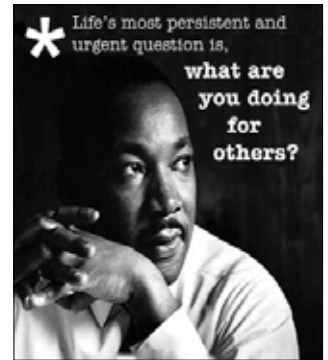
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# RECLAIMING THE LEGACY OF DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR.

On November 2, 1983, President Ronald Reagan signed a bill making Martin Luther King Day a federal holiday as of January 20, 1986. The proclamation read, "This year marks the first observance of the birthday of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. as a national holiday. It is a time for rejoicing and reflecting. We rejoice because, in his short life, Dr. King, by his preaching, his example, and his leadership, helped to move us closer to the ideals on which America was founded. . . He challenged us to make real the promise of America as a land of freedom, equality, opportunity, and brotherhood."

Today there are myriad ways to honor the memory of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., including interfaith commemorations, service projects, and marches. This year, I chose to join a group of young activists and community organizers who drew attention to issues of persistent racial injustice, especially in police enforcement and criminal justice. The deaths of Michael Brown in Ferguson, MO, and Eric Garner in Staten Island, NY, and the decision of the respective grand juries not to indict the police officers who killed them, brought together, under the banner of The Gathering for Justice (<http://www.gatheringforjustice.org/>), a social justice organization founded in 2005 by Harry Belafonte, a diverse task force calling themselves Justice League NYC, whose demands include passage of transparency rules called the "Right to Know Act," an end to NYPD's "Broken Windows" policing tactics, and juvenile justice reform.



*Continued on page 2*

For tickets call 212-874-5210, ext. 117.

### NOT A MEMBER?

All the more reason to attend one of our Enrichment Activities. Contributions for nonmembers are usually only \$5.

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# Leader's Desk



DR. ANNE KLAEYSEN

## Reclaiming the Legacy of Dr. King *(continued from page 1)*

These young civil rights activists, here in NYC and across the country, are unlike traditional leaders, having more in common with the Occupy movement than with the NAACP. While they respect Dr. King, most don't see him – or his movement, with its oratory, top-down organization, misogyny, and Christianity – as a model to be copied. The people I met, including Carmen Perez, a protégé of Belafonte's who helped form Justice League NYC; Tamika Mal-lory, Community Affairs Director for local Radio 103.9; and Linda Sarsour, executive director of the Arab-American Association of NY, inspired hundreds of people to join them on January 19 for a march from 110th Street and Lenox Avenue to United Nations Dag Hammarskjold Plaza on East 47th Street. We were young and old, of many origins, faiths, and colors; united in the hope of realizing the dream Dr. King expressed in 1963 of judging people not "by the color of their skin but by the content of their character." The day before, at NYSEC's annual MLK Remem-brance platform, we welcomed Kira Shepherd, newly appointed Executive Director of The Black Institute, another young civil

rights leader whose interview with me you can view at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Hwbu-HMcTQw>.

According to Peniel Joseph, director of Tufts University's Center for the Study of Race and Democracy, "There's no one iconic leader now. Instead you have thousands of young people who brought other people into the street. They're Millennials [defined as being born between 1977 and 1992]. They didn't come through a conventional civil rights organization." As the rapper Tef Poe put it at a St. Louis rally: "This ain't your grandpar-ents' civil rights movement." This younger generation communicates through speeches, as well as art, music, and social media. They are impatient with the spotlight-grabbing of their elders, choosing to organize direct and peaceful actions that call upon diverse coalitions.

To answer "life's most persistent and urgent question" of what I am doing for others, I stand with today's young leaders. I support them and will give them a platform. With their inclusive and horizontal organization structure, with their creative devotion to human rights, they are inspiring not only their generation but all generations. They are our hopeful future. ☺

# Ethical Enrichment and Events

## Great Books Discussion Group

Elinore Kaplan

We'd love for you to join us for this season of the Great



Books Discussion Group, led by Larry Schiff. The discussions are always stimulating.

We meet on the first **WEDNESDAY** of each month (unless that's a holiday) from **7:00 PM** till **9:00 PM** in the Elliott Library, Room 507, located on the 5th floor. We read excerpts from the Great Books, usually 40-70 pages. For **FEBRUARY 4**, we'll be reading *Civilization and Its Discontents*, considered the most important work by Sigmund Freud. In it, Freud explains the majority of our conflicts as being between the individual's instinctive quest for freedom vs. society's demand for conformity and the repression of instinct. It should lead to a fascinating discussion!

To participate all you need do is read the monthly selections (ideally twice) and jot down some questions you have.

To learn about the Great Books Foundation and the discussion process, visit the website, <http://www.meetup.com/Manhattan-Great-Books-Discussion-Group/>. In the first paragraph of the box entitled

"What is our Great Books Reading Discussion Group and how do we work?" click on "Great Books" (it's in red type). That's the link to the website page where you can order the Great Books Reading and Discussion First Series and Reader Aid (it's \$28.95). In the information bar on the left side of our meet-up page, you can click on "Our Calendar" to see the monthly readings scheduled for the year.

New members often share with us what the discussions mean to them. One said:

*"What a delight to be among bright people who respectfully and articulately share in a careful examination of what was written. The discussion is downright energizing."*

Do come on **FEBRUARY 4**, and join us in another Great Discussion! If you have any questions phone Larry Schiff at 917-749-0695, or email him: [Larry@larryschiff.com](mailto:Larry@larryschiff.com).

*There is no charge for members, and for guests it is \$5 per session.*

## Wisdom and World Affairs

Join us on the first and fourth **TUESDAYS, 6:00 PM – 8:00 PM**, in Room 508, for



## SUNDAY PLATFORM MEETINGS

11:00 am

Ceremonial Hall, 4<sup>th</sup> Floor

### FEBRUARY 1

*White Privilege: A*

*Wake-up Call*

**Dr. Anne Klaeysen, Leader**

*Dr. Kathleen O'Connell Presides*

### FEBRUARY 8

*Religion, Satire, and the*

*Limits of Speech*

**Dr. Joseph Chuman, Leader**

*Tom Weishaar Presides*

### FEBRUARY 15

*Ethics, Experience, and*

*Epiphany: A Journey from*

*Understanding to Action*

*On Inequities*

**Jon Kerner, Ph.D.**

*Dr. Anne Klaeysen Presides*

### FEBRUARY 22

*The Rights of Nature*

**Curt Collier, Leader**

*Monica Weiss Presides*

a philosophical discussion moderated by Ken Gans. We'll cover a wide variety of subjects: the fate of humanity, world affairs, and Humanism, among many others. Come, and share your opinions.

*There is no fee for this program.*

## Ethics in Film

Chris Everett

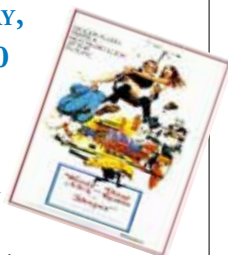
Join us on **FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 6, 7:00**

**PM** (doors open at **6:30 PM**), in Ceremonial Hall

to see *Sleeper* (1973), directed by Woody Allen. I'll be leading our discussion after the movie.

A clarinet player who also runs a health food store is frozen and brought back in the future by anti-government radicals in order to assist them in their attempts to overthrow an oppressive government. When he goes off on his own, he begins to explore this brave new world that has orgasmatron booths to replace sex and confessional robots.

*The suggested donation for this film is \$5, which includes snacks and beverages.*



## Ethical Death Café

Join us on **SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 8**, from **1:30 PM to 3:30 PM**, and on **WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 25**, from **2:30 PM to 4:30 PM**, both in Ceremonial Hall. Our moderator is Rev. Dr. Barbara Simpson, who holds a Doctorate in pastoral counseling and is the Bereavement Program Community Outreach Coordinator at Caring Hospice Services.

The objective is to increase awareness of death and help people make the most of their (finite) lives. Topics include health care proxies, ethical wills, and green burial.

*The suggested donation is \$5.*

## Ethics and War

Join us on **TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 10** for a six-session course from **7:00 PM to 9:30 PM**, in Ceremonial Hall. Our moderator will be Dr. Terry Perlin. (This course, which meets on the second Tuesday of the month, started on January 13.)

At our meetings we will investigate several of the complex ethical issues that arise in situations of war. Using examples from histor-

ical and contemporary wars, our meetings will rely upon participant discussion rather than lectures. Among the topics for consideration:

- Is there such an entity as a "just war?"
- When, if ever, is "torture" morally permitted during wartime?
- What are the responsibilities of combatants to civilians in wartime?
- How is conscientious objection to particular wars to be addressed by governments?
- Under what situations, if ever, may military personnel intentionally disobey orders from their superiors?
- How are various religious views of war, and of peace, to be understood?

Participants will be responsible for obtaining the following texts: *The New American Militarism: How Americans Are Seduced by War*, 2013, by Andrew J. Bacevich, and *Crimes of War 2.0: What the Public Should Know*, 1999 (revised and expanded), by Anthony Dworkin (editor), Roy Gutman (editor), and David Rieff.

Registration is required and space is limited. To register, email Yalitzza Garcia-Krawczyk at [ygarcia@nysec.org](mailto:ygarcia@nysec.org), or phone her at 212-874-5210, ext. 117.

*The cost for members is \$25, and for guests it is \$50.*



## "Cracking the Codes: The System of Racial Inequity"

Come to a documentary and discussion with Leader Dr. Anne Klaeyesen on **TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 10, 1:00 PM – 2:30 PM** and **THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 12, 6:30 PM – 8:00 PM** in the Adler Study, Room 514.

Director Shakti Butler presents moving stories from racial justice leaders, including Amer Ahmed, Michael Benitez, Barbie-Danielle DeCarlo, Joy DeGruy, Ericka Huggins, Humaira Jackson, Yuko Kodama, Peggy McIntosh, Rinku Sen, Tilman Smith and Tim Wise. These stories invite viewers to talk about the causes and consequences of systemic inequity. We will use a conversation guide developed by World Trust: Social Impact Through Film and Dialogue.

*The cost is free for members, and \$5 for nonmembers.*

## Ethics and the Theater

Patricia Bruder Debrovner

On **FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 13**, at **7:00 PM**, in Ceremonial



Hall Ethics and the Theater will present a play reading of *Intimate Apparel* by Lynn Nottage, directed by Gregory Taylor. It is 1905, in New York City. Thirty-five-year-old Esther believes herself too plain to attract a suitor. She dreams instead of using the money she has saved from sewing luxurious ladies' undergarments to open a business – a beauty parlor for black women like her, where they can be pampered and respected. Then a long-distance correspondence with a man working on the Panama Canal upsets her vision of the future, bringing both hope and risk.

Come at **6:30 PM** for a reception and after the reading participate in a discussion of the ethical issues of the play, led by Leader Dr. Anne Klaeyesen.

*The suggested donation is \$5 for members and \$10 for guests.*

## Adler Reading Seminar

Join us on **TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 17**, from **7:00 PM** to **8:30 PM**, in Room 502, with Leader Dr. Joseph Chu-



man as our moderator. We'll discuss the works of Felix Adler and other thinkers whose writings are seminal

to Ethical Culture and Humanist philosophy.

To register email Yalitzza Garcia-Krawczyk at [ygarcia@nysec.org](mailto:ygarcia@nysec.org), or phone her at 212-874-5210, ext. 117.

*There is no fee for this program, but advance registration is required.*

## Readings in Deep Ecology

Join us on **MONDAY, FEBRUARY 23, 7:15 PM – 8:45 PM**, in the Elliott Library, Room 507. Curt Collier, Leader, will moderate.

We'll explore selections from famous environmental authors. Chapters and selections from the works of Aldo Leopold, John Muir, Wangari Maathai, Michael Pollan, Rachel Carson, Richard Louv, Edward Abbey, and Jane Goodall, among others, will be offered. We will read the selections together and then discuss the important points the writers were striving to uphold. This is a great way to cover classic environmental literature.

*There is no fee for this.*



## Coming Soon – "More Reasons To Be a Member of NYSEC"

S A N D I S A C K S , NYSEC Member

Hello All,

I am a relatively new member of the New York Society for Ethical Culture and continually thrilled to participate in its varied programs. There are so many meaningful, growth-enhancing, and entertaining opportunities at NYSEC. I feel driven to spread the good word so that others might avail themselves of the Society's plentiful offerings.

Please help me by submitting one or two sen-

tences addressing a reason you enjoy NYSEC. If you have many reasons to share, please list them each in one to two sentences. Include your name, years of membership, and a photo of yourself, if possible. I will attempt to include all submissions in future columns, which will run periodically throughout the year. Remember, "a joy shared is a joy doubled!"

I will get the ball rolling.....

"Ethics in the Theater is so well done – both entertaining and thought provoking."

"Leader Lunch Discussions are on a broad range of topics, and I enjoy hearing ideas and feelings shared by all the participants. Anne chooses fascinating articles for us to read in preparation for the meetings."

"For me, the most significant take-away from the Death Café is that we can make all stages of our lives matter."

Please email your submissions to me, at: [sandisacks@gmail.com](mailto:sandisacks@gmail.com), or leave them at NYSEC's office. ☺



## Ethical Action Committee Holds Open Meeting

A N D R A M I L L E R , NYSEC Member

The newly forming Ethical Action Committee, chaired by Daniel Julin and Andra Miller, held an open meeting on January 4. Thirty people attended to bring their thoughts on what they saw as the duties of the committee and to suggest actions that the committee

should either join or sponsor. With many thanks to Elinore Kaplan, who served as notetaker for the meeting, here is a summary of her minutes:

In a discussion of what we should consider ethical action, suggestions included informing the public via forums and other programs

designed to present information on important issues, joining in demonstrations and marches, writing letters, and making our building available for meetings and presentations by groups whose missions we support. Also, we should coordinate and collaborate with other organizations and

## Ethical Action...continued

interest groups, including the American Ethical Union and other Ethical Culture Societies, as well as our own Social Service Board.

As any projects or events the committee takes on require time and effort to administer and produce, we need to focus our energies on one or at most two efforts at a time. Our Society's recent background includes, among others, programs to foster criminal and juvenile justice and efforts to bring low-wage workers some relief (paid sick-time). These efforts should be continued, such as working to set decent minimum wages in New York. A vital issue at this time is, of course, the threat of climate change, and for that reason, we already have a highly active and productive Environmental Stewardship Committee; the two committees can work together when needed. Some of the additional ideas for Ethical Action projects included free public transportation, changing the money system to promote human rights, joining in with the Moral Mondays movement, and fundraising for and restarting the super-

vised-visiting program.

It is clear that the issues taken on by this committee will need leadership by committee members or other volunteers. In other words, we will need a person to serve as each project's overseer or spearhead while we are planning, publicizing, and producing actions or programs. The Ethical Action Committee's job is to provide support, guidance, and personnel – and to act as a clearinghouse for outside projects in which volunteers may want to become involved.

Volunteers who have signed up to join the co-chairs in the organization and operation of the committee are: Pat Cohen, Virginia Arnold, Marilyn Braveman, Elaine Berman, John Gurney, and Pamela McGhee.

Aside from work on Society committees and programs, those in attendance reported personal involvement in work for: Afghan Federation for Children's Education, Artists' Collective, RiseUp.Net, Sporatorium, Action Switchboard, American Ethical Union, Project Dorot, The International Center, Museum of Natural History Artists, Million Trees,

Interfaith Coalitions, AEU Ethical Action, Citizens Union, Threshold Choir, organizations mentoring children and formerly incarcerated teens, NY Cares, AEU Committees, National Ethical Service, Future Ethical Societies, Riverkeeper, political campaigns and fundraising, Wikipedia, Domestic Violence Survivors Shelter (teaching English as a second language), Veterans for Peace, geriatric counseling, interfaith counseling, supervising interns at Supportive Televisiting Services, and mentoring at Big Brothers Big Sisters of NYC. Those seeking volunteer work on their own are welcome to check with this committee on these opportunities.

Any suggestions or observations are welcome and can be submitted to either of the two chairs, Andra Miller ([andra-mariemiller@gmail.com](mailto:andra-mariemiller@gmail.com), 646-363-0025) or Daniel Julin ([djulin@gmail.com](mailto:djulin@gmail.com)). The Ethical Action Committee will next meet at **1:30 PM** on **SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 1** in Room 502. Anyone interested may attend. 🌀

# Sunday Morning Platform Meetings 11:00 am

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FEB. 1

## WHITE PRIVILEGE: A WAKE-UP CALL



*Dr. Anne Klaeysen, Leader*

*Dr. Kathleen O'Connell Presides*

People with white skin in western societies, where they are the dominant group, enjoy privileges that they are carefully taught not to recognize. These come in an invisible package of unearned credits and assets passed on generation after generation. Unlike the parents of children of color, who explicitly explain the rules of society with its limits and dangers, parents of white children needn't explain a thing. Their children grow up in a culture that affirms their worth and freedom, assuming the universality of their experience, seeing themselves as "normal" and others as "different." It is high time – indeed the time was long ago – to unmask and unpack this societal concept that feeds racism and perpetuates inequality.

*The shared charity is World Food Program.*

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FEB. 8

## RELIGION, SATIRE, AND THE LIMITS OF SPEECH



*Dr. Joseph Chuman, Leader*

*Tom Weishaar Presides*

The horrific massacre at the offices of the satiric magazine *Charlie Hebdo* in Paris raises a complex of questions as to causes and how to respond. Among them are whether religion deserves any special immunity from ridicule. Whether freedom of speech is exclusively a legal matter or whether prudence in exercising freedom of speech is warranted and to what extent. As humanists we are strongly dedicated to both free speech and respecting the dignity of human beings. How are we to assess these values when they conflict as they ostensibly do when employed for satirical purposes? Does the massacre in Paris reflect a "clash of civilizations" or was it and kindred initiatives a product of a constructed political ideology? How are we in the West to respond? I will be looking at these questions in my address of February 8.

*The shared charity is World Food Program.*

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FEB. 15

## ETHICS, EXPERIENCE, AND EPIPHANY: A JOURNEY FROM UNDERSTANDING TO ACTION ON INEQUITIES



*Jon Kerner, Ph.D.*

*Dr. Anne Klaeysen Presides*

Translating knowledge of ethical humanism into action came primarily from my six-week experience at the Encampment for Citizenship in 1965 in Berkeley, California. Above and beyond the educational programming, my transformation from an intellectual interest in societal inequality to social action stemmed from our community life. Living and learning with youth from different socioeconomic and cultural backgrounds, and different cities and countries, whose views were so very different



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from my own, provided me with both the confidence and the motivation to turn my education and my career towards redressing what Martin Luther King Jr. dubbed "the most shocking and inhumane" inequality of all.

Born in New York City in 1950, and registered as a Canadian-born on foreign soil by my mother, Jean Somerville Kotkin, I was immersed in ethical humanism from an early age – through nursery school to sixth form, in the Ethical Culture schools, the NY Society for Ethical Culture Sunday School, and as a participant and later a group leader in the National Ethical Youth Organization.

In 1965 I was a participant in the Encampment for Citizenship (EFC) in Berkeley, California, and later I was a member and chair of the EFC Board; now I am a member of the Alumni Association.

*The shared charity is Encampment for Citizenship.*

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**FEB. 22**

## THE RIGHTS OF NATURE



***Curt Collier, Leader***

*Monica Weiss Presides*

Democracy has always been about the expansion of rights. Movies like *SELMA* remind us that this has never been easy for humans to conceive and understand and, unfortunately, the right to “life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness” is still seen as expressly a human attribute. And yet, there is a legal basis for the expansion of rights to the nonhuman. Do we need a bill of rights for Nature and is it something that we must pursue in order to save the planet? What would this bill of rights contain, and how practically could it be construed and enforced?

*The shared charity is Groundwork USA.*

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### THIS MONTH'S SHARED CHARITIES

**WORLD FOOD PROGRAM** — Fighting hunger worldwide, the World Food Program is the largest humanitarian organization in the world and the food aid arm of the United Nations system. Food aid is one of the many instruments that can help to promote food security, which is defined as the access of all people at all times to the food needed for an active and healthy life. The policies governing the use of WFP food aid are oriented toward eradicating hunger and poverty, ultimately eliminating the need for food aid.

**ENCAMPMENT FOR CITIZENSHIP** — EFC is a nonprofit organization that conducts residential summer programs for young people of widely diverse backgrounds. The Encampment prepares young people to be informed, responsible, and effective global citizens through experiential learning and through living in a diverse, democratic community.

**GROUNDWORK USA** — Dedicated to changing places and changing lives, Groundwork USA is a national organization with local roots, engaging local businesses, residents, and government officials to revitalize neighborhoods and transform community liabilities into community assets.

## Early Sunday Mornings 9:45 am (Except as noted)

(Rooms are subject to change)

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- |                    |   |
|--------------------|---|
| <b>FEBRUARY 1</b>  | <b>MINDFULNESS</b><br>Led by Leader Dr. Anne Klaeyen, Room 408.   |
| <b>FEBRUARY 1</b>  | <b>CHORUS PRACTICE</b><br>Led by David Gracia and Pat Debrovner. 10:00 am. Ceremonial Hall.                                   |
| <b>FEBRUARY 8</b>  | <b>COLLOQUY: SELF-DISCIPLINE</b><br>Phyllis Kreuttner presides. Room 508.   |
| <b>FEBRUARY 8</b>  | <b>CHORUS PRACTICE</b><br>Led by David Gracia and Pat Debrovner. 10:30 am. Ceremonial Hall.                                   |
| <b>FEBRUARY 15</b> | <b>POETRY READING</b><br>Come celebrate the new year with poems you are longing to share.<br>Cheryl Gross presides. Room 508. |
| <b>FEBRUARY 15</b> | <b>CHORUS PRACTICE</b><br>Led by David Gracia and Pat Debrovner. 10:00 am. Ceremonial Hall.                                   |
| <b>FEBRUARY 22</b> | <b>CHORUS PRACTICE</b><br>Led by David Gracia and Pat Debrovner. 10:30 am. Ceremonial Hall.                                   |
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## Sunday Afternoons 1:30 pm (Except as noted)

(Rooms are subject to change)

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|-------------------|---|
| <b>FEBRUARY 1</b> | <b>SUNDAY ASSEMBLY</b><br>2:00 pm. Ceremonial Hall.   |
| <b>FEBRUARY 8</b> | <b>ETHICS IN THE NEWS</b><br>Abe Markman presides. 12:45 pm, sixth floor school cafeteria.<br>Ethics in the News is sponsoring an informal contest to select the five most ethical persons in public life today. Nominations will be accepted during our 12:45 pm meeting on the second Sunday of each month, during lunch.<br>There will be special seating for the hard-of-hearing.<br>In order not to compete with the Academy Awards, our contest winners will be announced during the March 8 session. |
| <b>FEBRUARY 8</b> | <b>ETHICAL DEATH CAFÉ</b><br>Moderator: Rev. Dr. Barbara Simpson. Ceremonial Hall.<br>A gathering in a relaxed and safe setting to discuss death, drink tea, and eat delicious cake.  |
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**FEBRUARY 15**      **LIFE WITH HEALTH: BED BUGS – FACT, FICTION, AND PREVENTION**  
John Kreuttner presides. Ceremonial Hall  
Guest speakers Mike Hanna, K9 Handler and Inspector for Discovery Dogs, and Richard Kane, Pioneered/Created the Bed Bug Prep Industry. They will talk about the city's problems with bed bugs and how to save your home and your sanity if and when these nuisances come to visit.

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**FEBRUARY 22**      **SUSTAINABLE LIVING SUPPORT CIRCLE**  
Leader Curt Collier presides. Ceremonial Hall.  
We'll discuss lifestyle choices, our impact on the planet, and ways we can make a meaningful difference. Participants will be asked to keep a log of their choices and to share openly with others in a supportive atmosphere. This course is open for those wanting to make a real commitment to eco-living.

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## Lunch Discussions      **Thursdays, 12:00 noon – 1:30 pm** Elliott Library, Room 507

Bring your lunch and join Leader Dr. Anne Klaeyen and Society members. This month's topic is: **DIFFERING PERSPECTIVES**. Folders with relevant articles will be available from Margaret Determann in the Membership Office. You can now access all of the Leader Lunch readings on our website at <http://www.nysec.org/leader-lunch>. Come and join the discussion.

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**FEBRUARY 5**      **"EUROPE IS UNDER SIEGE"** by Jeffrey Goldberg, *The Atlantic*, January 2015; **"WAKING UP TO THE NEW AL-QAEDA"** by Ahmed Rashid, *The NY Review of Books*, 1/12/15; **"FREE SPEECH AND THE MAGNA CARTA"** by Robin Wright and **"UNMOURNABLE BODIES"** by Teju Cole, *The New Yorker*, 1/19/15.

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**FEBRUARY 12**      **"DARWIN DAY CELEBRATIONS EVOLVE WITH PARTIES, PROCLAMATIONS"** by Kimberly Watson, *Religion News Service*, 2/11/14; **"PUBLIC'S VIEWS ON HUMAN EVOLUTION"** by *Pew Research: Religion & Public Life Project*, 12/30/13; **"EVOLUTION AND ETHICS, REVISITED"** by Gertrude Himmelfarb, *The New Atlantis*, Spring 2014; and **"IN DARWIN'S FOOTSTEPS"** by Jonathan Weiner, *The NY Times*, 8/4/14.

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**FEBRUARY 19**      **"LINCOLN'S BOYS"** by Joshua Zeitz, *Smithsonian*, February 2014.

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**FEBRUARY 26**      **"THE WORLD IS NOT FALLING APART"** by Steven Pinker and Andrew Mack, *Foreigners*, 12/22/14; and **"A CLIMATE OF FEAR"** by Roger Cohen, *The NY Times*, 10/27/14.

# Our Ethical Family



The following members are celebrating birthdays in February:

- ELINORE KAPLAN..... 2/2
- VINCENT BRANCATO.....2/4
- MICHELLE AINSWORTH....2/7
- BERNETTE RUDOLPH.....2/7
- KEN GANS.....2/8
- PATRICIA BERENS.....2/11
- ELLEN KIRSCHNER.....2/11
- KRISTIN PARKER.....2/9
- MICHELE COSTABILE  
DONEY.....2/17
- KENNETH LASHINS.....2/17
- ROGER MICHAELS.....2/18
- LOUETTA RILEY.....2/20
- EDWARD FINFER .....2/25

## ETHICAL CARES

The Caring Committee will help you should you fall ill or be incapacitated, whether you're home, in the hospital, in rehab, or in a nursing home. All you need do is call the committee chairperson, **STEPHANIE ROSENBLATT**, at 212-586-0017, and she'll make the arrangements.



**MARGARET DETERMANN**,  
Assistant to the Leaders for  
Membership Development

Congratulations to Abe Markman, whose son Michael Markman is having a show of his artwork at the Dwyer Cultural Center (258 St. Nicholas Ave. at 123rd St.) until February 28. Michael has had his artwork displayed in galleries throughout the United States, including the NYC Parks Department Gallery. If you'd like to see Michael and his "Mind, Body & Soul" show he will be doing a presentation called "Surviving the Storm" at the Center on **FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 6**, from **6:00 PM to 8:00 PM**, and participating in a panel discussion, "Art in Education," on **FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 20**, from **6:00 PM to 8:00 PM**. Please call the Membership Office (212-874-5210, ext. 113) for more details.

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Speaking of art, Bernette Rudolph is also having a

showing of her work at the Pleiades Gallery in Chelsea. Part of a group exhibit titled "The Small Works Show," Bernette's piece "Search for Friends" was viewed on January 20 and will be on display through **TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 13**. The Gallery is at 530 West 25th St. (between 10th and 11th Avenues), 4th floor. Gallery hours: **11:00 AM – 6:00 PM**, Tuesday through Saturday.

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Dr. Maria Fridman is a great-grandmother! Granddaughter Carrie and husband Greg Winkler (who were married by Dr. Anne Klaeyen) are the proud parents of beautiful Blye Winkler.

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Longstanding member Pearl Katz and former Music Director Gerald Ranck are both at DeWitt Rehabilitation & Nursing Center and would appreciate visits. Dewitt is located at: 211 E. 79th Street (between 2nd and 3rd Avenues) Visiting hours: **11:00 AM – 9:00 PM**; telephone 212-879-1600.



# Letter to the Editor

## The Role of Grand Juries

I have to object to the accusations of "failure" against two grand juries in the cover article in the January issue of *Ethical Outlook*.

Grand juries evaluate evidence presented to them and make a decision based upon that information. That is their function. They are only to consider that evidence and it is, in New York anyway, the district attorney who chooses that information and the way of presentation.

There is also the obligation to protect the innocent and the civil rights of all, and to my mind police officers are citizens and have their own civil rights, as well as being public servants. They may not all be perfect but neither are we, or anyway neither am I. They also do a job that is necessary and can be very dangerous, and we should not forget that they face situations most of us run away from.

An indictment means that the defendant and his or her family, and others, go through extreme emotional hardship, and likely financial hardship too. They should be reasonably protected from that. An indictment means, without adequate evidence, that the accused can be found "not guilty" in a trial and never be able to be


tried again for that crime. A nonindictment, in New York State (to my memory), does not exclude the possibility of reindictment and trial at a later date when better proof may be available.

From what I personally read of these cases I do not believe that a case for indictment was made. This was particularly true for New York Police Officer Panteleo, in my view. Mr. Gardner was resisting arrest; I believe the Medical Examiner said that the pressure of the other officers on Mr. Gardner's back contributed to his death, but those other officers were given immunity and Officer Panteleo stood alone facing the charges. This was not very ethical in my view. I also did not feel that Officer Wilson in Missouri should have been indicted based upon the evidence that I read of and saw in

the papers and other media.

If there is to be an indictment, it could be against our society (the one we live in, not the one we belong to on Central Park West) that we permit so many young Americans grow up without the education to enable them to succeed. And this is so much more prevalent among African-Americans and others of color than among my fellow Caucasians. How we, as a society, can help to foster moral and ethical growth is harder to see but must also be addressed.

The march on December 13 calling for human rights and reforms is fine. That it is born in the accusation of failure against juries is not a justifiable reason and is disrespectful of our fellow citizens who served on these juries.

*Vincent Brancato, NYSEC  
Member and Trustee* 

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# News from the American Ethical Union



## AEU Award Voting List Deadline Is February 6

*Andra Miller*

The **NEW YORK SOCIETY** proposed Sandra Steingraber for the **ELLIOTT-BLACK AWARD**, which will be bestowed at this year's Assembly in Albany on June 27. Steingraber is the cofounder of New Yorkers Against Fracking, has a background in biology, and is an author (*Living Downstream*), and writer on climate change, ecology, and the links between human health and the environment. She won the Heinz Award for her ability to make scientific research compelling to a wide audience, which has been a hallmark of her career. Steingraber was hailed by *Sierra* magazine as the "New Rachel Carson." She was sentenced to 10 days in jail for civil disobedience in defense of Seneca Lake in New York's Finger Lake District and in opposition to the underground storage of liquid petroleum gas there, a process threatening to the area's viticulture and farming.

The Elliott-Black Award goes to people or organizations that have exhibited exceptional moral courage in actions that reflect the values of Ethical Culture. Recipients in the past have

included the Southern Poverty Law Center, Robert Gangi of the Police Reform Organizing Project, Frances Fox Piven, New Jerseyans for Alternatives to the Death Penalty, the Committee to Protect Journalists, Kathy Kelly, The Innocence Project, Dr. Matthew Ies Spetter, Dr. Helen Caldicott, Karen Silkwood, and Earl Caldwell, among others.

Nominations for this year's award by other Societies are listed below. You are welcome to weigh in on either Ms. Steingraber or, if one of those listed below gets your vote, call or email Maggie Determann at: 212-874-5210, ext. 113, or [mdetermann@nysec.org](mailto:mdetermann@nysec.org).

**AUSTIN SOCIETY:** The **WORKERS' DEFENSE FUND** is an advocacy organization devoted to improving the lives of low-paid workers, undocumented immigrants, and vulnerable members of the community through education, direct help, moral support, and lobbying the legislatures to pass more humane laws. The Fund has a significant influence locally in Texas, but has also received national attention when its Executive Direc-

tor, Cristina Tzintzun, was interviewed on TV by Alec Baldwin. Companies, particularly construction companies, exploit these workers with poor and dangerous working conditions and by not paying promised wages. The Fund works to outlaw these practices and has many examples of their success.

**BALTIMORE SOCIETY:** **LAWRENCE D. EGBERT, MD**, was Medical Director of the **FINAL EXIT NETWORK**, which provides knowledge and support to individuals with terminal illness who feel their standard of living has become unbearable and wish to have control over their deaths. The members of the Network provide guidance and emotional support, but do not offer physical assistance in dying to avoid violating state laws while still helping those with terminal illness who choose to take this step. Because of this work, several states are introducing Death with Dignity legislation.

**BERGEN COUNTY SOCIETY:** **ANNIE GRIFFITHS** is a photographer with *National Geographic* magazine. She is also the

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## News from the American Ethical Union *(continued)*

Executive Director of Ripple Effects Images, which is devoted to helping organizations around the world that work to empower women and children living in poverty. Griffiths has put herself at considerable risk photographing in dangerous areas so that she can use those images to tell the stories of these women living on the edge. In order to gain their trust, she embeds herself in their communities.

**BROOKLYN SOCIETY: JANINE DEITZ** was a cofounder of the **HOPE DINNER** 22 years ago. Each month, Deitz raises the funds, shops, cooks, and contributes the lion's share of food toward the **HOPE DINNER**, which serves between 75 to 100 people with HIV/AIDS. Deitz has created a community of people who come together each month to celebrate and advocate for each other. The Brooklyn Society applauds her spirit, as she provides so much more than food to the people who come to these dinners. In the community and at its Society, she provides a much-needed safe haven for those with AIDS/HIV and their advocates.

**PHILADELPHIA SOCIETY:**

**MEDEA BENJAMIN**, one of the world's leading anti-war activists, has advocated for human rights for over 20 years. While she is well known for cofounding both the women-led peace group Code Pink, and the human rights and fair trade advocacy organization Global Exchange, Benjamin has also authored eight books, including *Drone Warfare—Killing by Remote Control*. Yet she may be best known as the most easily recognizable protester in Washington. She and her groups have organized huge rallies, engaged in civil disobedience, traveled to war zones to get first-hand experience and information, and gone on hunger strikes to call for withdrawal of our troops from Iraq and Afghanistan. She works with women from the affected countries, has met with families of Guantanamo prisoners and helped bring these families to the US to testify before Congress. She brought humanitarian aid to Gaza many times under difficult and dangerous circumstances, and was deported from Bahrain and also was arrested, beaten, jailed, and deported from Egypt for her support of

human rights.

**ST. LOUIS AND MID-RIVERS SOCIETIES: MILLENNIAL ACTIVISTS UNITED (MAU)**, a young activists' collective formed after the shooting of Michael Brown in Ferguson, Missouri, is a grassroots movement to end racial injustice and police brutality in America. MAU has been protesting in the streets and organizing peaceful civil disobedience, and has traveled from Ferguson to the White House, where a cofounder of the group met with the President. Using social media, the organization has energized thousands of individuals – many of whom had no previous interaction with social justice – and has raised their message to a national stage. During their nightly protests, MAU activists have faced police in riot gear, been arrested and held unlawfully by police, and some beaten badly. Throughout, MAU has remained peaceful and on message: black lives matter, our current justice system is unjust, and each person is responsible to

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## News from the American Ethical Union *(continued)*

*Karen Elliott,  
AEU Board Member,  
Member, Baltimore  
Ethical Society*

My Thoughts – In the summer of 1996 I attended the first Lay Leadership Summer School organized for lay leaders in Ethical Societies by our national organization, the American Ethical Union. At that time, I had been a member of the Baltimore Ethical Society for about four years (and had served on its Board for that same number of years). I had minimal experience dealing with people on the national level. I had met Leader Joy McConnell once or twice, as I'd been active in the ethical education of our youth, and I may have attended one Ethical Education conference (at that time called "Religious Education") before coming to LLSS. But there was a lot I did not know about the Ethical Union before, and even after, Summer School.

Beginning in 1997 I made it a point to attend every AEU Assembly, in part so that I could reconnect with people from Summer School (what an

incredibly rich and transformative experience that was!) and each time I attended the Assembly, I learned a little more about the national organization that supports our Societies as well as being made up of our Societies. I met people who were active with committees such as ethical education, ethical action, and even information technology (my own professional field). I learned about the amazing work that our "sister" organization, now called the National Ethical Service, does at the United Nations as a registered and well-respected NGO (non-governmental organization). I heard people talk about how they had infused their lives with ethics – sometimes in simple, everyday things but also responding ethically with such bravery in the face of potential financial loss or even physical danger, that I left each Assembly newly inspired to do my best to live an ethical (as well as an Ethical) life.

Sometimes I was asked (as an individual or as part of a group) to consider

working on the national level. Once or twice I agreed to, for specific short-term tasks, but mostly I said "no." I was busy in Baltimore, raising a child as a single mother, supporting my "home" Society, doing additional work in my community that I felt was important and a meaningful part of my ethical life. I didn't see how I could fit that much more time into an already jam-packed day to do anything in my spare time other than try to catch up on my sleep or my time with family and friends or my writing life. But finally, 14 years after I attended Summer School in the beautiful mountains of North Carolina, I said "yes" to national service with the AEU. I ran for and was elected to our Board of Directors for the first time four years ago and I've never looked back.

I am someone who mostly lives life without regrets or "what ifs," but as I write these words I wonder what wonderful experiences I might have missed out on by saying "no" for all of those years. As I learn more and more about the Ethical Movement – both its history and its people, past and



## News from the American Ethical Union *(continued)*

present – I am continuously re-inspired and invigorated by the thoughts of what our Movement has helped to create in this world, and of what we can offer to it today. Our society is in need of ethical education for all ages – and in need of frequent reminders of the truth in Felix Adler's adage that we "Act so as to bring out the best in each other" because in doing so we become so much more our own best – more compassionate, more focused on living our values,

and more one of those people who contribute a positive presence in their daily lives as a benefit to the entire world.

As our world has developed the internet and other technologies to bring together people who physically are miles and cultures apart, the Ethical Movement's emphasis on relationships and the attribution of human worth to each individual can help to create a new

worldwide community of people who together and individually are working to make our shared world a better place. Our Ethical Societies provide a place in which people can do that work. And our Union – the American Ethical Union – can provide the network and shared resources to support more and more Societies in the important and fulfilling work of building a better, more ethical world. ☞

## Felix Adler Q & A



Last month a Fieldston student, Zack Semler, worked on a project about founder Felix Adler. His mother, Tracy Chutorian Semler, serves on the Ethical Culture Fieldston School Board, and suggested he contact Ethical Culture Leaders. The following are his questions, answered by Leaders Joe Chuman and Anne Klaysen:

*1. Do you consider Felix Adler a radical?*

We know that some people do consider him one, but our thesis is that he is NOT a radical—he was a visionary and pragmatist

who took existing structures and ideals and implemented them in amazing ways.... what do you think?

Felix Adler was a religious, not a philosophical, radical and a political reformer. He was a visionary, but certainly not a pragmatist, which philosophy was founded by John Dewey (who sent his children to the school but did not become an Ethical Culture Leader). Ethical Culture was a creation of its time, at the end of the 19th century, a time of great social upheaval, which also inspired the Social Gospel and Settlement House movements. Adler was a

highly creative visionary and reformer. Philosophically, he was an Idealist, a philosophy that was largely abandoned in the early 20th century. As a neo- or latter-day Transcendentalist (he named his son Waldo after Ralph Waldo Emerson.) who taught at Columbia University and founded the eminent NYC Philosophy Club, he chose not to keep up with the new philosophies of humanism and pragmatism.

*2. In what ways does the work of Felix Adler show itself in the work of NYSEC today?*

NYSEC, as well as the American Ethical Union, a national federation of

## Felix Adler Q & A (continued)

Ethical Societies, are loyal to Felix Adler's congregational structure and Sunday platform format. It is perhaps sociologically interesting that we are consistent in sustaining much of what he put into place and remain loyal to Ethical Culture's commitment to social ethics. We have lapsed into neither supernaturalism nor atheism; our message is still clearly "Deed Before Creed."

There has been no categorical degradation of his original vision; indeed it continues to inspire and motivate us.

*3. How "present" is Felix Adler in the daily work you and your colleagues do—both philosophically and practically?*

We remain "in dialogue" with our founder, with some deference, but not complete concurrence. Adler set Ethical Culture into motion and trusted future generations to carry it on. His philosophical autobiography, *An Ethical Philosophy of Life*, invites readers into his thinking and encourages us to develop our own personal philosophies. Today no Ethical Culture Leader (professional clergy) subscribes to his Idealistic philosophy, having long ago embraced Deweyan Pragmatism and Naturalist Humanism, as well as recognizing our important leading role in religious humanism. Nonetheless, we remain loyal to his vision of the supremacy of ethics, and this informs all of our work.

*4. What grade do you think Felix Adler would give the Ethical Culture movement today? In what ways would he feel it is succeeding, and in what ways failing?*

We concur that Dr. Adler would give the school he founded an F and would be very disappointed that only a veneer of progressivism has been maintained. His hope was that every Society would have a school; only NYSEC and BSEC succeeded, at least for a while. Adler was a high-minded elitist and patrician who practiced a "top down" activism that differed from the "barricades" activism practiced by John Dewey, which, to a large degree, we still practice today. At its founding and for at least the first generation, NYSEC's members were in the socio-economic upper class; today we are solidly middle class. He was able to envision a project, then call upon deep pockets to fund it. Our strategy today is grassroots, and we join social justice and inter-faith coalitions. Although he was a valued and sought after speaker at traditionally Black colleges, e.g., Fiske and Emory, and convened the first Congress on Race Equality, Adler was not as directly involved as his colleagues, in particular John Lovejoy Elliott, founder of Hudson Guild Settlement House, and Algernon Black,

who came to prominence after Adler's death in 1933. Adler was a man of contradictions: for example, while he valued women, he did not give them leadership roles. Anna Garlin Spencer and Jane Addams, early feminists and Ethical Culture lecturers, lost patience with him and developed their own projects. Although he was a German Jew, unlike others of his "class," he didn't dismiss Jewish immigrants from Eastern Europe as "the great unwashed" or "Yiddish-speaking socialists" and often visited the Lower East Side to encourage them to form political clubs to work for their own interests.

*5. Felix Adler had "his head in the clouds, and his feet on the ground." Where do you think the balance was – in the clouds, or on the ground, and why do you feel this?*

Adler would not concede to this dichotomy. For him, the "Ideal was Real." It influenced and elevated the material world. He employed a philosophy in which the real world is permeated with the ideal. His creativity mixed heaven and earth.

### **Anne followed up with this:**

I would like to revisit your fourth question because I don't think that Adler would issue any grades. His vision encompassed so much of life, including a planned community called Sunnyside Gardens in Queens ([http://www.placeinhistory.org/projects/sunnyside\\_gardens/?page=6](http://www.placeinhistory.org/projects/sunnyside_gardens/?page=6)).

## Felix Adler Q & A (continued)

Columbia University student Esther Lifshitz wrote an excellent thesis, "Let Our Little People Go Free: Felix Adler's Campaign for Social Justice in the Progressive Era" ([http://history.columbia.edu/undergraduate/theses/Lifshitz\\_thesis.pdf](http://history.columbia.edu/undergraduate/theses/Lifshitz_thesis.pdf)).

Sadly, much would disappoint Adler today. After WWI, he gave a series of lectures in Oxford on "Reconstruction of the Spiritual Ideal." So devastating was this war that he had to

reconsider all of his beliefs about humanity. He had to return to his ideal and reconstruct it in light of that experience. Part of my personal dialogue with him is wondering what he would make of world affairs since his death in 1933 – and what role he would play. Adler played on the world stage, not only in NYC; his sermons were regularly published in *The NY Times*, and he commanded a wide audience.

Knowing that his idealist philosophy was eclipsed by pragmatism and humanism, he dedicated himself to the school and social reform. He dearly loved Fieldston. If you haven't visited Adler's modest grave, I suggest that you and your class visit Mount Pleasant Cemetery (<http://www.mpcem.org>). Our colleague Curt Collier is a wonderful guide. 🐦

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

# FEBRUARY 2015

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
<p><b>Great Books:</b> <i>Civilization and Its Discontents</i>, by Sigmund Freud — February 4</p> <p><b>Ethics in Film:</b> <i>Sleeper</i> (1973), by Woody Allen — February 6</p> <p><b>Ethics and the Theater:</b> <i>Intimate Apparel</i>, by Lynn Nottage — February 9</p>						
1 9:45 Mindfulness 10:00 Chorus Practice 11:00 Ethics for Children 11:00 Morning Meeting 12:45 Brunch/Social Hour 1:30 Newcomers' Reception 2:00 Sunday Assembly	2 <b>March 2015 Newsletter Deadline</b> 6:30 Board of Trustees	3 12:30 Writing Class 6:00 Wisdom and World Affairs	4 7:00 Great Books Discussion Group	5 12:00 Leader Lunch Discussion 6:30 Writing Class	6 7:00 Ethics in Film	7
8 9:45 Colloquy 10:30 Chorus Practice 11:00 Ethics for Children 11:00 Morning Meeting 12:45 Brunch/Social Hour 12:45 Ethics in the News 1:30 Ethical Death Café	9 1:00 Appreciative Inquiry 7:00 Newcomers' Reception	10 12:30 Writing Class 1:00 Cracking the Codes 7:00 Ethics and War	11	12 12:00 Leader Lunch Discussion 6:30 Writing Class 6:30 Cracking the Codes	13 7:00 Ethics and the Theater	14
15 9:45 Poetry Reading 10:00 Chorus Practice 11:00 Morning Meeting 12:45 Brunch/Social Hour 1:30 Life with Health	16 <b>Society Offices Closed Presidents' Day</b>	17 12:30 Writing Class 7:00 Felix Adler Seminar	18	19 12:00 Leader Lunch Discussion 6:30 Writing Class	20	21
22 10:30 Chorus Practice 11:00 Ethics for Children 11:00 Morning Meeting 12:45 Brunch/Social Hour 1:30 Sustainable Living Support Circle	23 1:00 Appreciative Inquiry 7:15 Readings in Deep Ecology	24 12:30 Writing Class 6:00 Wisdom and World Affairs	25 2:30 Ethical Death Café	26 12:00 Leader Lunch Discussion 6:30 Writing Class	27	28

NEW YORK SOCIETY FOR ETHICAL CULTURE

# ETHICAL

WE ARE ETHICAL CULTURE,

a community that believes all individuals have inherent worth and  
dignity, and a responsibility to strive for ethical growth.

Ours is a nontheistic religion in which deeds and their results matter more than ideology.

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