

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*

March 4 **Life Is Not A Zero-Sum Game**

Tony Hileman
Senior Leader

Christine Swann Presides

March 11 **Women of Ethical Culture**

Jone Johnson Lewis
Leader, Northern Virginia
Ethical Society

Dr. Judith D. Wallach Presides

March 18 **August Wilson**

Stephen McKinley Henderson
Tony Hileman Presides

March 25 **A Life Story**

Fritz Williams
Leader, Baltimore Ethical
Society

Joseph Marvel Presides



NYSEC's landmark building

March Happenings

August Wilson, playwright—On March 18 Stephen McKinley Henderson will read from August Wilson's *Joe Turner's Come and Gone*. Mr. Henderson, an award-winning actor and academic (State University NY, Buffalo), will discuss Wilson's work. (See page 3)

Labor Today—On March 11 NYSEC's Public Issues Committee will present Stanley Aronowitz, Ph.D., Distinguished Professor, CUNY Graduate Center. (See page 4)

From the Leader's Desk

Tony Hileman, Senior Leader



This World Is What We've Made It

Gandhi's saying, "You must be the change you want to see in the world," works both ways. In saying that the world reflects the way we are, he was also saying "Look at the world and you're looking in the mirror." That may be a sobering thought, given the state of the world today, but it's also a hopeful and empowering one. While ours is a crowded and disputatious world, and is becoming more so all the time, there is something meaningful we can do about it.

Estimates vary, but at the time of the founding of the United States, global population stood at less than one billion. At the time of the founding of the New York Society for Ethical Culture one hundred years later, it was around 1.4 billion, an increase of about 50% in one century.

And then came the explosion: over the next century global population nearly tripled to 4 billion, and over the past generation it has risen to 6.5 billion!

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Sunday Morning Meetings

March 4—Life Is Not A Zero-Sum Game

Tony Hileman, Senior Leader

We often speak of a richer, broader life, of becoming more fully human. But we just as often see ourselves as bit players in a zero-sum game of shifting advantages, one in which any advancement is fleeting and more the result of chance than intent or effort. Ethical Culture is a lifescape that institutionalizes the ideal of perfected living and brings like-minded individuals together in quest of self, social development, and cultural improvement. Our aim is to make the world a better place for us and for others. Is ours a futile endeavor or is it humanity's best hope of breaking the zero-sum deadlock in which our world is mired?

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Leader's Desk

(Continued from page 1)

Global population growth peaked at an annual rate of 2.19 percent in 1963, a pace that had our numbers doubling every 32 years. It has eased somewhat since then to 1.14%, a doubling every 61 years, but that's not much comfort. Estimates are that by the time this new century of ours is half over there will be 9.4 billion people competing for Earth's resources.

We have proven amazingly resourceful, if you'll excuse the pun, at managing renewable resources, increasing harvest yields at a rate that outpaces even the peak of population growth. But we haven't done nearly so well with earth's finite bounty. We remain challenged by equitable distribution of the plenty and prudent use of the scarce, and the potential for ecological disaster and human suffering increases with our numbers.

That's a sad enough state of affairs, but lately I've also been thinking about

how global crowding affects us personally, socially, and culturally. There's a line, I think from *Paint Your Wagon* that goes something like, "You don't have to love your neighbor to leave the so-and-so alone." That was said of a different time and a different place. There's a world of difference between the serenity of being alone in wide open spaces and the bitterness of being lonely in a crowded place. The one leads to contentment, the other to resentment.

Ironically, our increased closeness has all too often turned us inward, into ourselves and into loneliness, rather than outward into an enhanced sense of community. It is difficult—if that be the word—in the crush of urban crowding to leave others alone or to be left alone by them. As we live closer to and with each other, our differences are magnified and intensified.

I believe that we have reflected those difficulties back onto the larger landscape and they have come to affect our global culture—a culture for which we ourselves are responsible.

A developed sense of self is healthy, but when the division between “self and other” becomes a division of “us and them” something has gone wrong. Loving your neighbor isn’t mandatory and is sometimes more than we can manage. But a peaceful semblance of it is better than resolving exaggerated differences by hitting or warring.

I began by saying that this state of affairs is both sobering and hopeful. The understanding that we can impact and change our global culture is empowering. Our world need not be the way it is and we need not be the way we are. With that knowledge comes a duty, a duty to act better toward those with whom we differ. By opening ourselves and embracing the diversity that surrounds us, by accommodating closeness with those unlike us, by welcoming that which has been dividing us, we not only change ourselves, we change our world.

This world is what we’ve made it. By becoming more peaceful in our daily interactions we can make tomorrow’s world more peaceful, more cooperative—a world in which we face our greater challenges together. And that would be a happy state of affairs!

Sunday Morning Meetings

(Continued from page 1)

March 11 – Women of Ethical Culture

Jone Johnson Lewis, Leader

Jone Johnson Lewis, Leader of the Northern Virginia Ethical Society, will honor Women’s History Month with some explorations into the lives of women who have historically found inspiration and support in Ethical Culture (some in the New York Society), and the ways in which their participa-

tion has been welcomed (or not) by Felix Adler and others. Some of what she says is sure to surprise you!

Ms. Lewis is a Unitarian minister, a web writer, and a teacher. She has studied women’s contributions to history and culture around the world and in different eras. She finds “a rich resource of role models and ideas to give me more hope and some cautionary notes for the future of humanity.”

March 18 – August Wilson

Stephen McKinley Henderson

Mr. Henderson, an actor, will begin with a reading from Wilson’s *Joe Turner’s Come and Gone*, a speech of Bynum the Conjuror. Then, by analyzing that speech and events at which he was present or which Wilson related to him, he will attempt to reveal something of the reverence with which Wilson regarded human generosity.

A member of the LAByrnth Theater Company and the Actor’s Center, Mr. Henderson has extensive Broadway credits, including Wilson’s *King Hedley II* and the revival of *Ma Rainey’s Black Bottom*. He was also a member of the award-winning ensemble of Wilson’s *Jitney*, which won the 2002 Olivier Award for Outstanding Drama of the London season. He is a Fox Fellow, a tenured member of the State University of New York at Buffalo, and former Chair of its Department of Theater and Dance.

March 25 – A Life Story

Fritz Williams, Leader

When he describes his responsibilities as Leader of the Baltimore Ethical Society, Fritz Williams always mentions storytelling. “I began telling stories,” he says, “to illustrate the points I was trying to make in my talks and presentations. But increasingly, stories are becoming the main thing, the

essence of what I have to say, and the analysis and explanation that precede and follow them are mostly commentary.” This talk is a close-up look at Mr. Williams’ understanding of the central place of the story in our lives.

Fritz Williams is Leader of the Baltimore Ethical Society. A former parish priest in the Episcopal Church, he has also worked for more than 30 years as a writer and producer for public television stations in Harrisburg and Detroit.

Mr. Williams is especially loved for his down-to-earth narrative style of speaking and for his “When I Was a Kid” stories based on his own childhood. He is a graduate of Muhlenberg College (AB) and the Philadelphia Lutheran Theological Seminary (M.Div.), and he has a Th.M. in Hebrew Bible and Septuagint from Princeton Theological Seminary.

Early Sunday 10 AM

Mar. 4 – Everyday Ethics. Room 408.

Mar. 4 – Singing 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. It’s a lot of fun, so join us. (Ceremonial Hall)

Mar. 11 – Colloquy—topic, “Beauty.” Harriet Bigus presides. Room 408.

Mar. 18 – Singing Practice. (Ceremonial Hall)

Mar. 18 – Poetry Reading—A peaceful hour with Cheryl Gross reading the poems of which we are especially fond. Come to read and listen, or just come and listen. Room 408.

Mar. 25 – PIC (Public Issues Committee Meeting). Abe Markman presides. (Ceremonial Hall)

Sunday Afternoon 1:45 PM

(Ceremonial Hall, except as noted)

Mar. 4—Chamber Music of David Loeb—with Vickie Chen, cello; Loeb Barry Fader, oboe; Stanley Hoffman, violin and viola; Erika Komori, violin; Jon Liechty, piano; Simeon Loring, clarinet; Gerald Ranck, piano, and Paul Smith, guitar.

David Loeb studied composition with Peter Pindar Stearns at the Mannes College of Music in New York, and later studied traditional Japanese music with Shinichi Yuize. He began teaching at Mannes in 1964 and currently teaches composition, theory, analysis, twentieth-century techniques, orchestration and East Asian music. Many of his works have been recorded, mostly in a continuing series of anthology CDs from Vienna Modern Masters.

Mar. 11—Labor Today. Stanley Aronowitz, Ph.D., Distinguished Professor, CUNY Graduate Center, will speak on “The Future of American Labor.” This important talk is being presented by the Public Issues Committee. PIC is a recently approved standing committee that works to identify and promote Society positions on vital national issues. (See related story on page 5.)

Mar. 18—Working With Inmates of Rikers Island. Presented by Mark Goldsmith, President of Getting Out and Staying Out.

Mar. 25—Community Meeting. (Social Hall)

Our Ethical Family

Suzy Frazer

Congratulations!

Jirina Ribbens, a Trustee of NYSEC, and **Christopher James Archer**, a

New York City teaching fellow, were recently married at the Society in a secular ceremony officiated by an inter-faith minister, a friend.

The story of their meeting and courtship is, as Jirina says, “a true New York romance.” All the best to you both!



Jirina Ribbens and Christopher James Archer arrive at the Society for their wedding

Meeting Other Members

We’ve had many opportunities this season to meet and connect with new, new-ish, and longtime members, and there will be many others.

At the Feb. 18 Sunday morning meeting we informally welcomed and introduced new members. We had a chance to get to know each other better afterward, at the lively Social Hour that followed.

On Feb. 23, the Younger Members Group organized a Meet-up/Mixer, with the excellent, and much-appreciated, help of new member Rich Sander. We’ll have another of these popular Meet-ups again soon. ALL are welcome, so please join us!

Another important way to connect with other members is by attending our semi-annual Members Community Meeting. The spring meeting will be held on Sunday, March 25, right after Social Hour (1:30 pm). Come and learn about NYSEC’s latest initiatives, challenges, and successes, and share with us and each other your concerns and suggestions. Let’s all be there!

A Word of Thanks

Dr. Matthew Ies Spetter

Recently, the mail brought me greetings from the Social Service Board. This is to express my warm thanks.

There are so many ties with my fellow members that bind me to the Society, and also to so many personal feelings of shared concerns. I am not only thinking of all the social actions we have pursued, but I am also thinking of each of us doing what we could for human commitments, and of the celebration of solidarity to uphold the worth of all persons.

I am not only thinking of all the social actions we have pursued, but also of each of us doing what we could for human commitments....

I was called to the Society and the Ethical Culture schools in 1951. Religious humanism at that time, as much as today, had crucial tasks, not just social or political ones, but above all to hold high the caring heart in times in which the life of the soul was—and is—so much mutilated.

It has been a privilege indeed to be given the trust of the pastoral functions: to name so many babies, to officiate at so many marriages, to be of counsel, and to accompany those families at times of death, in the hours of our deepest vulnerabilities.

Our movement is still small. But I have met people of sterling character and devotion to the visions of hope for lives that find purpose and solace in what we share.

Your message means much to us, especially at this period of our lives when issues of health challenges impose their daily realities. To all of you, my warm gratitude.

Ethics in Film

Cheryl Gross

Join us on Friday, March 2, at 7:00 pm, for the next film in our 2006-2007 series, "Reel Justice: Courtroom Dramas." This month we'll watch and discuss the acclaimed classic courtroom drama, *Twelve Angry Men* (1957), directed by Sidney Lumet.

The movie is based on the play by Reginald Rose and is Lumet's film directorial debut. Viewers are treated to excellent performances by an all-star cast including Martin Balsam, Ed Begley, Lee J. Cobb, Henry Fonda, Jack Klugman, E.G. Marshall, and Jack Warden. The setting is a starkly bare New York City jury room, where the all-male jury deliberates the death-row verdict of a young man accused of stabbing his father to death. Based on the evidence presented during the trial, eleven members of the jury are confident it is an open-and-shut case. They are eager to vote "guilty" and go home. Henry Fonda (Juror #8, Mr. Davis) is the lone holdout. Once he raises doubts, character delineations are drawn more deeply and members of the jury begin moving to different stances.

Join us as we watch this film and discuss the insights it offers into our own thinking patterns and what governs how we draw conclusions and ultimately come to decisions. Film historian Richard Bruno will again lead the informative and lively discussion that follows the film. The doors open at 6:30 pm and the movie will be shown at 7:00 pm. Admission is \$3 for members and \$4 for nonmembers.

Art and Awareness

Barbara Litke

Spring is coming, and so is NYSEC's popular eight-week drawing course,

which begins on Tuesday, March 20, 6:00 pm to 7:45 pm, and runs through Tuesday, May 8. These classes are taught by Barbara Litke, a professional artist and teacher whose paintings have been exhibited throughout the tri-state area. They are designed to enable participants to express themselves freely in a variety of art media—pencil, charcoal, and pastels on paper.

By studying still-life setups for line, form, and composition, we'll gain a new awareness of the essence of objects and discover fresh ways of looking at things. No previous drawing experience is required, and artists at all levels are encouraged to embark on an adventure in art that can take you beyond the studio! Join the class and jump-start your creative growth.

For further information, or to register, contact Gloria Chandler, Administration Office, at 212-874-5210, ext. 117. The course fee for members is \$75; for nonmembers, \$125.

Ethics and the Theater

Patricia Bruder Debrovner

Our March play reading will feature one of Edward Albee's great plays, *A Delicate Balance*, on Wednesday, March 28, 7:00 pm to 9:00 pm. This play won the Pulitzer Prize, as well as the Tony Award. It brings to life the attempts of an older couple to maintain the uneasy peace of their life together when their married daughter and life-long friends all try to move into their home at the same time!

Our talented cast will include Jerry Chamlin, Pat Debrovner, John Gurney, Victoria Rauch-Lichterman, Marge Linney, and Linda Moody, and our director will be Elaine Berman. Don't miss out on the fun!

PIC Presents Positions

Abe Markman

The Board "confirmed" the Public Issues Committee's positions on Iraq, stem cell research, therapeutic cloning, and paid family leave. These are now the official policies of the New York Society for Ethical Culture.

Nevertheless, in order to give us greater leverage in promoting them, confirmation or ratification by the membership is vital. Therefore, at the Annual Meeting in May, in addition to the election of Trustees, we will be asking for your vote on these policies.

Why PIC and Its Initiatives Have Earned Your Confirmation:

- Cited as a contributor to the AEU's Resolution on Iraq—Chicago Assembly, July, 2006;
- Approved as a standing committee—September, 2006;
- Set up interactive page: <http://www.nysec.org/pic>—October, 2006;
- Joined National Service Conference of the AEU—November, 2006;
- Conducted Action Alert directed to candidates for national elections—November, 2006;
- Positions on Iraq, stem cell research, global warming, and paid family leave adopted by the Board—January, 2007;
- Joined the Paid Family Leave Coalition—January, 2007;
- Conducted another Action Alert on Iraq—January, 2007;
- Completed proposal on Child Health Insurance to be submitted to the Board—March, 2007.

Tests Ahead:

Pre-Annual Meeting presentations and discussion of our proposals at the following upcoming events:

Sunday School

Rita Chawla

Our Sunday School is up and running, with 12 registered students split into two classes—one for pre-K to first grade and another for elementary to middle school (6- to 13-year-olds). The younger children are learning ethics and values through activity and art-based lessons, using topics that aim to develop basic, foundational human values such as honesty, friendship, generosity, and sharing. The older children are learning about the major religions of the world. In the past couple of months, they studied the Eastern religions and took field trips to the Sivananda Yoga Vendanta Center and the Rubin Museum. They are gaining a wonderful appreciation and respect for religious diversity and are having fun exploring the world around them.

Our social service projects have included raising money for UNICEF (the children collected \$120 through “trick-or-treating” and \$214 with the help of NYSEC members), collecting pennies for the Penny Harvest program, and supporting our women’s shelter whenever possible.

We are excited to have a staff of three teachers, which enables our program to grow and develop. Our newest teacher, Jamie Cid, teaches the pre-K to first-grade class, and Olga Shmukler is our assistant teacher. The parents are very involved in the school’s programs, volunteering whenever needed. We invite you to spread the word about our ethics classes to interested parents.



Learning is an exciting activity at NYSEC’s Sunday School



Teacher Rita Chawla leads a lively discussion

PIC Presents Positions

(Continued from page 5)

- Community Meeting—March 25, and
- Sunday afternoon meeting, April 8.

If PIC’s initiatives are confirmed with your vote, we vow to promote a wide range of social actions based on ethical principles.

SSB Keeps In Touch



(L-R) Members Barbara Litke and Lucile Kleiman create greeting cards to be sent to members who haven’t been able to attend Society activities, as an SSB project

Seen Around the Society



Winterfest 2006 — a festive Sunday Morning Meeting celebrating the Winter Solstice



April Art Show Seek Entries

Andra Miller

Have you a work of art or craft that you would like to show at our April 15 Art Show? We will display work on tables, easels and via slide show for our afternoon program that Sunday. The idea for this exhibit came up during the discussion after the Sunday afternoon show last February of Benny Andrews and Romaine Bearden videos. At that time several artists were encouraged to commit to bringing in their work. Join them! Call Andra Miller at 212-627-3944 if you are eager to show and share.

March 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>March 7 – Montesquieu, <i>The Principles of Government</i> Machiavelli, <i>The Prince</i> <u>ECRDG: (Ethical Culture Reading Discussion Group)</u> March 14 – Bernard Malamud, <i>Dubin's Lives</i> <u>Great Books: "Great Conversations I"</u> March 21 – Alexis de Tocqueville, <i>Democracy in America (selection)</i></p>						
4	5	6	7	7	9	10
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 – Concert of David Loeb's Music	6:30 pm – Board of Trustees 6:30 pm – Monday Writing Workshop		6:00 pm – Men's Group 7:30 pm – Great Books	7:00 pm – Thursday Writing Workshop	5:30 pm – Membership Pledge Party 7:00 pm – Ethics in Film: <i>Twelve Angry Men</i> (1957)	9:30 am and 1:30 pm Supervised Visitation
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
10:00 am – Colloquy 11:00 am – Ethics for Children 11:15 am – Morning Meeting 12:45 pm – Social Hour 1:45 pm – Labor Today	6:30 pm – Monday Writing Workshop	6:00 pm – Women's Group	3:00 pm – ECRDG	7:00 pm – Thursday Writing Workshop		9:30 am and 1:30 pm Supervised Visitation
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
10:00 am – Poetry Reading 10:00 am – Singing Practice 11:00 am – Ethics for Children 11:15 am – Morning Meeting 12:45 pm – Social Hour 12:45 pm – Orientation 1:45 pm – Working with Inmates of Rikers Island	6:30 pm – Monday Writing Workshop 6:30 pm – Social Service Board	6:00 pm – Drawing Class	6:00 pm – Socrates Café 7:30 pm – Great Books: Great Conversations I	7:00 pm – Thursday Writing Workshop		9:30 am and 1:30 pm Supervised Visitation
25	26	27	28	29	30	31
10:00 am – PIC Meeting 11:00 am – Ethics for Children 11:15 am – Morning Meeting 12:45 pm – Social Hour 1:45 pm – Community Meeting		6:00 pm – Drawing Class	7:00 pm – Ethics and the Theater			9:30 am and 1:30 pm Supervised Visitation

Ethical Culture is a humanistic religious and philosophical movement in which people share a core of common values: the worth of each individual, ethics as central to our lives, eliciting the best from each other and doing good in the world.

We seek truth as a growing, changing body of knowledge based on experience, reason and scientific observation, and seek to use it in support of human well-being.

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