

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
In the Concert Hall

November 5

Let's Talk—The Lost Art of
Conversation

Tony Hileman

Senior Leader

Christine Swann Presides

November 12

Why Americans Do Not Vote

Professor Frances Fox Piven

Dr. Judith D. Wallach Presides

November 19

Happiness—The Eternal Quest

Tony Hileman

Senior Leader

Dr. Charles H. Debrovner Presides

November 26

Other Lands Have Dreams

Kathy Kelly

Andra Miller Presides

November Happenings

Membership Community Meeting—Sunday, November 5, 1:30 pm, with Senior Leader Tony Hileman, President Michael Bogdanffy-Kriegh, and committee heads in Social Hall. Get to know what NYSEC is up to!

Stained Glass Windows Benefit Concert—Sunday, November 19, 2:00 pm in Ceremonial Hall. Mark your calendar and join us for the 8th Annual Benefit Concert for our stained glass windows. We'll be presenting a sparkling array of new compositions, emerging composers and artists, and new music written especially for our own Jon Liechty.

From the Leader's Desk

Tony Hileman



A Humanist Identity

The Society's annual fall retreat, held this year on the pastoral banks of Williams Lake in the Catskills, was a wonderful experience, as Suzy Frazer's separate report, on page 6, details. Those who weren't able to attend missed an opportunity to share a deep sense of community with others. Unfortunately, I was only able to stay for part of the retreat, as I had to return to the city to speak Sunday morning, but for me the highlight was the opportunity to sit in a circle and talk.

It's a deep and powerful experience to just sit and speak openly with others you enjoy and respect. It is amazing how quickly wisdom and agreement arise in an open and trusting atmosphere. We formed our conversation around questions that arose from the

(Continued on page 2)

Sunday Morning Meetings

November 5—Let's Talk—The Lost Art of Conversation

Tony Hileman, Senior Leader

Ethical Culturists are in agreement that our world needs changing, that disputes and differences need to be overcome through care and togetherness. The simplest way to come together again is to begin talking to each other about what we really care about. Deep, meaningful conversations, the kind that can heal and bind, take time—time to listen non-judgmentally, time to agonize with others, time to daydream together, and time to share our imagination, our fears, and our courage. How do we recover the lost art of conversation? How do we begin talking to each other about the things we value?

November 12—Why Americans Do Not Vote

Professor Frances Fox Piven

(Continued on page 3)

Save the Date!

NYSEC's

New Year's Eve

Party

on

Sunday, December 31st

More soon...

Contents

Sunday Programs 1
 November Happenings 1
 From the Leader's Desk 1
 Sunday Morning Meetings 1
 Early Sunday 3
 Sunday Afternoon 3
 Our Ethical Family 4
 Film Forum 4
 Ethics and the Theater 4
 Art in Autumn 4
 Public Issues Committee 5
 Thanksgiving Day 5
 Volunteers Needed 5
 "Green" Web Sites 5
 Fall Retreat 6
 Calendar 7

Staff

Selma Friedman, Editor
 Dr. Marc A. Bernstein, Archivist
 Jon Liechty, Reporter
 Barbara Litke, Poetry Editor
 Deborah Foster, Production

Michael Bogdanffy-Kriegh, President
 Tony Hileman, Senior Leader
 Dr. Khoren Arisian, Leader Emeritus
 Robert Liebeskind, Executive Director
 Rita Chawla, Director of Family Programs
 Leslie Doyle, Director of Marketing & Special Events
 Susanna Frazer, Membership Director
 Sheleigah Grube, Assistant to the Senior Leader
 Gerald Ranck, Music Director

New York Society for Ethical Culture
 2 West 64th Street, New York, NY 10023
 Phone: 212-874-5210 Fax: 212-595-7258
 Email: office@nysec.org
 Website: http://www.nysec.org

Staff Directory

Marc Bernstein	ext. 112
Gloria Chandler	117
Rita Chawla	106
Leslie Doyle	144
Deborah Foster	115
Suzu Frazer	113
Sheleigah Grube	118
Tony Hileman	119
Yolanta Kosmaczewska	104
Deirdre Lance	138
Robert Liebeskind	116
Maintenance	109
Marlon Rice	107

**NY Society for Ethical Culture
 Officers:**

Michael Bogdanffy-Kriegh, President,
mbkriegh@msn.com
 Barbara Levenson, Vice President,
bar.lev@verizon.net
 John Kreuttner, Treasurer,
jkreuttner@nyc.rr.com

Trustees:

Dr. James W. Farer, *jfarer@earthlink.net*
 Dr. Maria Fridman
 Dr. Phyllis Harrison-Ross, *phrmd@yahoo.com*
 Margaretha Jones, *marjones@nyc.rr.com*
 Henryka Komanska, *henryka@verizon.net*
 Andra Miller, *andramm@juno.com*
 Carol Nadell, *carol@selectivecasting.com*
 Christina Nargolwala, *cnargolwala@yahoo.com*
 Jirina Ribbens, *jirinar@aol.com*
 Steven Schultz, *ss16538@aol.com*
 Christine Swann, *swann.cm@verizon.net*
 Dr. Sylvan Wallach, *swallach@i-2000.com*

Leader's Desk

(Continued from page 1)

one-day membership retreat here at the Society early last summer, and then just followed the conversation as it found its own direction.

When it came to the matter of identity, both for our movement and our Society, there was surprising agreement. And by "identity" I mean a succinct presentation that communicates who we are and what we stand for to those not acquainted with us—those of a marketing bent might call it "branding." We held and expressed different perspectives, to be sure, but our agreement on both aspects of identity, movement and Society, were nearly unanimous from the start.

Our Society has a rich and textured legacy that is part of the fabric of New York City itself. We are known here and our name, The New York Society for Ethical Culture, resonates with a broad spectrum of people who may not be well acquainted with us or with Ethical Culture but who have a positive impression of who we are. Given that iconographic impression of the Society, it is not surprising that no one present advocated altering our name to include "Humanist," as other Societies have done. However, the sentiment that we should more openly identify as Humanist, both as a Society and as a movement, was nearly as strong and uniform.

To better understand just what that means we turned to the definition of Humanism as it appears in the opening paragraph of *Humanism and Its Aspirations*, the third Humanist manifesto, drafted and released by the American Humanist Association in 2003: "Humanism is a progressive philosophy of life that, without supernaturalism, affirms our ability and responsibility to lead ethical lives of personal fulfillment that aspire to the greater good of humanity."

That's Humanism in a long sentence or a short paragraph, but it's all there—our willingness to accept growth, improvement, and progress; our naturalist outlook; our belief in both the capability and necessity for human beings to live ethically; our recognition that personal fulfillment is tied to our social nature; and our goal of more fulfilled living for all. It's a description that applies equally well to Ethical Culture and has led many in our movement to use the term Ethical Humanism interchangeably with Ethical Culture. All three of those words—"ethical," "culture," and "humanism"—come with encumbrances. Like so many others in our lexicon, words like "religion" and "spirituality" mean different things to different people in different contexts. But in our search for words that communicate to those other than ourselves we have few choices, none of them pure.

Felix Adler recognized this difficulty over a century ago when, in speaking of spirituality, he said, "If there were another word in the language to take its place, it would be well to use it. But there is not. We must use [it] despite its associations and abuse." And so it is with humanism. As it says on our website, just below "The New York Society for Ethical Culture," we are "a humanist religious community." I felt that deeply at our fall retreat.

Sunday Morning Meetings

(Continued from page 1)

This is a period of intense conflict in the United States, over both domestic and foreign policy. Understandably, many people are looking to the mid-term elections of 2006 and, even more so, the presidential election of 2008, for a resolution of these issues. We have to work on electoral politics, but we should also understand the huge constraints we confront in trying to make electoral politics work for democratic ends. This talk will draw on American history to illuminate those constraints, and to suggest the conditions under which they are sometimes overcome.

Professor Piven received her Ph.D. from the University of Chicago in 1962, and has written extensively on U.S. politics, including: *Why Americans Still Don't Vote, and Politicians Like It That Way*, Beacon Press, 2000; *The Breaking of the American Social Compact*, New Press, 1997; *Regulating the Poor*, Vintage, 1993; *The New Class War*, Pantheon, 1982; and *Poor Peoples' Movements*, Pantheon, 1977.

She is the recipient of the American Sociological Association Career Award for the Practice of Sociology (2000) and the Mary Lepper Award of the Womens' Caucus of the American Political Science Association (1998), among many other national awards.

November 19—Happiness—The Eternal Quest

Tony Hileman, Senior Leader

Happiness has fascinated and frustrated humanity at least since Aristotle posited it as the purpose of life some two and a half millennia ago. While there's general acceptance that happiness is an emotional state that feels good, that's where the agreement

ends as cultures, religions, scientists, psychologists, and philosophers have continually debated its nature and how, or even whether, it should be pursued. Is happiness something that happens to us or something we can seek and attain? Were thinkers, from the ancient philosophers to the modern pragmatists, right in saying that happiness, by whatever definition or understanding, is, was, and ever shall be the ultimate human quest?

November 26—Other Lands Have Dreams

Kathy Kelly

Believing that "where you stand determines what you see," Kathy Kelly shares with us some of her myriad experiences as a pacifist in war zones, most recently in Lebanon and Iraq. Co-founder of Voices for Creative Non-Violence, Kathy's frequent travels around the United States, her long involvement with communities of conscience who use direct non-violent action to confront the U.S. military-industrial complex, and her relentless optimism in believing that individuals can make a difference inform her sharp analysis of the current challenges facing people of good will.

She helped initiate Voices in the Wilderness, a campaign to end the UN/US sanctions against Iraq. For bringing medicine and toys to Iraq in open violation of those sanctions, she and others were threatened with fines and long-term imprisonment; eventually the organization was fined \$20,000 instead of the threatened \$163,000, but it has refused to pay.

Voices in the Wilderness has organized various delegations to visit Iraq, particularly during the beginning of the "Operation Shock and Awe" warfare in 2003. Kathy has visited Iraq 22 times since January, 1996, and during the first

two weeks of the Gulf War she was part of a peace encampment on the Iraq-Saudi border called the Gulf Peace Team.

Kathy's resume also includes numerous prison sentences for civil disobedience. Her book, *Other Lands Have Dreams: From Baghdad to Peking Prison*, is available through Counterpunch or Voices for Creative Nonviolence.

Early Sunday 10:00 AM

Nov. 5—Everyday Ethics. Room 408.

Nov. 12—Colloquy: A meditative hour exploring thoughts about a presented subject. Room 408.

Nov. 19—Poetry Reading: A peaceful hour with Cheryl Gross reading the poems we especially like. Come to read as well as listen, or just come and listen. Room 408.

Nov. 26—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.

Sunday Afternoon 1:30 PM (except as noted)

Nov. 5—Membership Community Meeting. Social Hall.

Nov. 12—Film: *Wal-Mart: The High Cost of Low Price.* (A Brave New Theatre film.) Ceremonial Hall.

Nov. 19—Benefit Concert. Ceremonial Hall, 2:00 pm.

Nov. 26—William Sweet, author of *Kicking the Carbon Habit*, speaks on global warming. A book signing follows. Ceremonial Hall.

Our Ethical Family

Suzy Frazer

Please welcome our new members:

Jennifer Ellen Frank is an interior designer who uses the principles of *Feng Shui* in her work. She was attracted to the Society for its philosophy and sense of community. Jennifer is enrolled in Elaine Berman's writing class, and is also the coordinator of the Harlem Community Block Association.

Marvin Liebman is also a member of the Philadelphia Ethical Culture Society, where for five years he attended and participated in many of its activities and humanist programs. He works in grant administration and management, and his interests include museums, music, travel, history, and sports.

Carlos Martinez is retired from his career as a high school teacher. His current interests include the arts, handball, biographies, and ballroom dancing. During the 1960s Carlos attended the Encampment for Citizenship in Puerto Rico with Algernon Black. This wonderful experience drew him to membership in NYSEC.

Eric Norlander and his wife, Meredith, were recently married by our own Senior Leader Tony Hileman. Eric works as a production manager and enjoys biking, camping, theatre, movies, and photography and has attended our Sunday Meetings, talks, and concerts. He would like to meet and work with other like-minded people.

Lorna Sass is a cookbook author who has written widely on food-related subjects. She is interested in jazz, gardening, theater, and cabaret. Lorna came to the Society through our evening events and looks forward to being part of a vibrant community.

Barry Snider is an actor, director, and writer. His interests include reading, travel, fishing, and carpentry.

He has attended many of our special events and is also a member of the ACLU and the Southern Poverty Law Center. Barry and his wife, Irma, were married here at the Society in 1979.

Congratulations to Jirina Ribbens

Jirina Ribbens, a Trustee of NYSEC and Chris Archer were married here at the New York Society on Saturday, September 30th. We wish both of you great happiness!

Film Forum

Valerie Leiman

Join us on Friday, November 3, for the third film in our 2006-2007 series, "Reel Justice: Courtroom Dramas." We'll see *The Caine Mutiny Court Martial* (1954), directed by Edward Dmytryk, and afterward we'll discuss it with film historian Richard Bruno and each other.

In this classic film, jealousies and frustrations among Naval officers (played by Van Johnson and Robert Francis) on a peacetime destroyer come to a head when the paranoid and very unpopular Captain Queeg (Humphrey Bogart) panics during a typhoon and is relieved of his post. During the resulting court martial and its aftermath, the two officers learn some painful truths about themselves.

Admission is \$3 for members and \$4 for nonmembers—unless you have a discount pass! Popcorn and beverages are included, so come for a good movie, good talk, and a great evening.

Ethics and the Theater

Patricia Bruder Debrovner

This month Ethics and the Theater will present a reading and discussion of the play, *Substance of Fire*, on Wednesday,

November 8, 7:00 to 9:00 pm, by the talented young playwright Jon Robin Baitz. This deeply compassionate play dramatizes the struggles of a book publisher, who is a holocaust survivor, to maintain his high literary standards, even at the expense of his responsibility to his three adult children and of the viability of his increasingly insolvent firm.

Our cast includes Carole and Jerry Chamlin, Maria Demarse, and Craig Jorczak, and we are pleased to welcome back guest director Nancy Robillard. Betsy Ungar will lead our discussion. Call Suzy Frazer at 212-874-5210, ext. 113, to register.

Art in Autumn

Barbara Litke

It's fall again, and our very popular drawing classes have burst into colorful bloom. The emphasis for this eight-week session will be on accepting challenges, taking risks, exploring nature's beauty, and raising awareness.

All but one member from the past course (a new NYSEC member), returned to repeat the course—and not because they were "left back." To the contrary, these talented students (members and nonmembers) progressed so quickly that they were able to show that "repeat" does not mean "left behind."

In art, "repeat" means forging ahead with one's personal aesthetic vision and taking one's perfected skills along.

*Bring a
Friend to
NYSEC
on Sunday*

Public Issues Committee

Abe Markman

With the Board of Trustees' endorsement at the October meeting, a three-step transformation of our committee has been completed. We have changed from Ethics in the News to the ad-hoc Strategic Ethical Action Committee, to our present status of a standing committee—the Public Issues Committee, or PIC.



Public Issues Committee Members: (front row-left to right) Bernice Cornyetz, Lee Loshak, Carol Rost, Pat Berens, Muriel Berger (back row-left to right) Alan Gardner, Maria Fridman, Phyllis Kreuttner, Bob Berger, Abe Markman, Phyllis Harrison-Ross

In order for us to be able to promote our ideas before the November 7 state and congressional elections, the Board also endorsed our positions on Iraq, global warming, stem cell research, and therapeutic cloning. If you log-in at www.nysec.org/pic/ you will find our three ideas and nonpartisan sample letters you can send to candidates for the U.S. Senate and for state governors.

We are taking other steps, as well, before the November elections, including sending a press release to local newspapers and letters to candidates, irrespective of party affiliation. We have also launched a membership educational campaign in preparation for the May, 2007 Annual Meeting. Membership approval will give us leverage in the 2008 elections. Toward that end, Dr. Charles H. Debrovner gave two highly informative talks on stem cell research and cloning in October. After this November's elections, we will continue our series of Sunday afternoon (1:30 pm) programs.

Schedule:

Nov. 12—Film: *Walmart: The High Cost of Low Price*. (Our position on labor is being researched and this film will help in that task.)

Nov. 26—Talk and book signing by William Sweet, author of *Kicking the Carbon Habit*.

Thanksgiving Day Volunteers Needed

Barbara Litke

Again this holiday, the Ethical Culture Society will combine our community efforts with those of Project Find.

We need volunteers to help serve a festive Thanksgiving Day meal to senior citizens or just to seat people as they arrive at the Church of St. Paul the Apostle, on West 60th Street and Amsterdam Avenue. We also need volunteers the day before, any time from 12:00 noon to 5:00 pm, to set up tables for the holiday celebration.

It's always a delight to chat with the people who attend, as well as to join in the dancing, or simply to enjoy the music. The meal will be served early (11:30 am) so there shouldn't be a con-

flict with anyone's plans for their own Thanksgiving dinner later in the day. You'll just have two celebrations! We also need drivers to deliver Thanksgiving Day meals to the homebound living on the West Side between 23rd and 100th Street. Drivers will be issued a special Police Department letter for their windshield that morning.

For additional information, contact Barbara Litke, Project Coordinator, at 212-586-2593.



“Green” Web Sites

Suzy Frazer

The following is a list of web sites offering a wide range of conservation 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.

Fall Retreat Tackles Vital Issues

Suzy Frazer

By Friday evening on September 29th, 24 members had arrived at the Williams Lake Resort and Conference Center in Rosendale, New York, for our annual weekend Fall Retreat and we enjoyed a spectacular sunset.

At the evening “Meet and Greet” in the conference room, Tony Hileman, Senior Leader, offered a warm welcome, after which we socialized with drinks, sodas, and hors d’oeuvres. We then received packets with schedules, a sheet of four questions to mull over for the following day’s forum, and information about local sights. We had a lovely dinner in the dining room on the lake, followed by puzzles, word games, deep conversations, strolls, and lots of laughter.

The next day, I led a group in exercises for posture, stretching, and breathing outdoors, while in the conference room Tony Hileman led a Colloquy on “Authenticity.” After breakfast several people hiked through the beautiful countryside with Jim Hyland. Lunch brought us all back together and it was good to keep switching tables to meet and talk with new people. During the afternoon, we held our forum in the conference room, and Tony Hileman led an interactive workshop at which we focused on some key issues that had come up at our one-day retreat in June. A lively debate ensued on the four issues: our name; our assimilation of new members; head vs. heart—the “warmth” factor; and the possibility of adding a more contemporary meeting on a week night, as other organizations now do. Another point that was raised was a need for an “Activist 101” course, so that those who feel we should be doing more in the community and the world can be guided to such opportunities.

After another social hour and dinner, we were treated to a superb impromptu performance of *The Sunshine Boys* by our own thespians, Bob Berger and Jerry Chamlin. Who knew?! More entertainment followed, with puzzles, games, free time, etc., and a session of “Sing Your Brains Out,” organized by Elaine Berman.

On Sunday, our morning exercises were rained out, but we had an excellent Colloquy, led by Abe Markman, on the theme of “Turning Points in Life.” After a break we began our Sunday Morning Meeting with Sheila Kleinwald as president. The meeting, in a circle format, featured Elaine Berman and Jim Farer as speakers, with thoughtful comments all around, and closed to the stirring sounds of Aaron Copland’s “Appalachian Spring.” The hotel served us a final Sunday brunch, after which we left for the city and home. Here’s to another rewarding, probing, and fun weekend next year!



(L-R) Eileen Kelly, Bob Berger, Jim Farer, Cheryl Gross, and Muriel Berger



(L-R) Eric Volpe and Tony Hileman



(L-R) Jim Farer explains the workings of an abandoned mine to the group



(L-R) Mary Ellen Goodman, Carol Nadell, Eric Volpe, Jim Farer, Elaine Berman, and Carol and Jerry Chamlin

November 2006

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

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	Great Books: November 1 – William Shakespeare, <i>Hamlet</i> ECRDG: (Ethical Culture Reading Discussion Group) November 8 – Primo Levi, <i>Monkey's Wrench</i> Great Books: "Great Conversations I" November 15 – Michel de Montaigne, <i>Of Friendship (and) Of Solitude</i>		1 December 2006 Newsletter Deadline	2 7:00 pm – Thursday Writing Workshop	3 7:00 pm – Film Forum: <i>The Caine Mutiny</i> <i>Court Martial</i> (1954)	4 9:30 am and 1:30 pm Supervised Visitation
5 10:00 am – Everyday Ethics 11:00 am – Ethics for Children 11:15 am – Morning Meeting 12:45 pm – Social Hour 1:30 pm – Membership Community Meeting	6 6:30 pm – Board of Trustees 6:30 pm – Monday Writing Workshop	7 6:00 pm – Drawing Class	8 3:00 pm – ECRDG 7:00 pm – Ethics and the Theater	9 7:00 pm – Thursday Writing Workshop	10	11 9:30 am and 1:30 pm Supervised Visitation
12 10:00 am – Colloquy 11:00 am – Ethics for Children 11:15 am – Morning Meeting 12:45 pm – Social Hour 1:30 pm – Wal-Mart film	13 6:30 pm – Monday Writing Workshop	14 6:00 pm – Drawing Class 6:00 pm – Women's Group	15 6:00 pm – Socrates Cafe 7:30 pm – Great Books: Great Conversations I	16 7:00 pm – Thursday Writing Workshop	17	18 9:30 am and 1:30 pm Supervised Visitation
19 10:00 am – Poetry Reading 11:00 am – Ethics for Children 11:15 am – Morning Meeting 12:45 pm – Social Hour 1:00 pm – Orientation 2:00 pm – Benefit Concert	20 6:30 pm – Monday Writing Workshop 6:30 pm – Social Service Board	21	22	23  Thanksgiving Day Society offices closed	24 Society offices closed	25 No Supervised Visitation program today
26 10:00 am – Singing Practice 11:00 am – Ethics for Children 11:15 am – Morning Meeting 12:45 pm – Social Hour 1:30 pm – Global Warming	27 6:30 pm – Monday Writing Workshop	28	29	30 7:00 pm – Thursday Writing Workshop		

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.

NEW YORK SOCIETY FOR
ETHICAL
CULTURE 

TWO WEST 64TH STREET, NEW YORK, NY 10023-7179

FIRST CLASS MAIL
U.S. POSTAGE PAID
NEW YORK, NY
PERMIT No. 5686