

E T H I C A L O U T L O O K

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Sunday Morning Meetings **11:15 AM—in the Auditorium**

January 2

The Terrible, Beautiful Mess of Life

Kate Lovelady

Leader Intern

Carol Nadell Presides

January 9

Caring: The Healing Aspect of Religious Humanism

Dr. Matthew Ies Spetter

Leader Emeritus

Joseph Marvel Presides

January 16

Church and State: Where Do We Go After Election 2004?

Susan Jacoby

Director, Center for Inquiry, NY

Dr. Khoren Arisian Presides

January 23

In a Different Light: Turning Points, Ethical Belief, and Charlie Chaplin's Walking Stick

Dr. Khoren Arisian

Senior Leader

Dr. Judith D. Wallach Presides

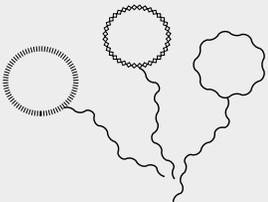
January 30

Red, (White), and Blue: Is Political Reconciliation Ethically Necessary?

Gerald Ranck

Music Director

Robert Berger Presides



Happy New Year

From the Leader's Desk



Dr. Khoren Arisian

From One Year to the Next: Reinventing the Way We Grow (Part I)

There may be political anxiety in the country at large, nonetheless a palpable sense of positive change is in the air at our New York Society as we enter 2005, a year which bids fair to be a time of growth for us. Let me explain.

An often under-appreciated aspect of strategic planning is recognizing the need for two types of visioning for the future: *divergent* thinking and *convergent* thinking. As I've tried to observe over the years, voluntary boards and non-profit managers tend to be primarily convergent-oriented; professional leaders and staff tend, for the most part, to be divergent-oriented. The latter strive to see things with fresh eyes and hear things with fresh ears, catching uncommon nuances in a wide variety of different yet relevant options and ideas. The former, in contrast, are accustomed to envisioning the usual fare, except that they'd perhaps like more of it, but better conceived and presented than previously.

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Sunday Morning Meetings **11:15 AM in the Auditorium**

January 2—The Terrible, Beautiful Mess of Life

Kate Lovelady, Leader Intern

We must acknowledge, celebrate, and mourn the highs and lows of life together, rather than staying safely in the intellectualized middle ground. I hope that many of you can and will join us for this Sunday Meeting about humanist inspiration and the arts, and I look forward to your response.

January 9—Caring: The Healing Aspect of Religious Humanism

Dr. Matthew Ies Spetter, Leader Emeritus

Ethical Humanism sees the essential task of religion as the shared quest for decent lives in a caring human community. It attempts to assist us in building healing aspects in life and so to rescue our ability to find some joy in our part in this world.

Caring is an emotional activity, not just for the present but also to express a perspective of hope. Part of our ability to heal is determined by the edge of hope for betterment. Our basic trust in each other's worth is the religious ground of our essential partnership.

Sunday, January 16—Church and State: Where Do We Go After Election 2004?

Susan Jacoby, Director, Center for Inquiry, New York

Many of you will recall our first Advocacy Forum on March 31 of last year, when Susan Jacoby gave an eloquent account of her response to the topic, *The Unholy Alliance of Religion and Politics: A Danger to Democracy?* An independent scholar, Susan

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**Ethical Culture: Who We Are
 Our Beginnings**

On May 15, 1876, at Standard Hall in New York City, Felix Adler, founder of the Ethical Movement, gives an address in which he proposes a new movement in which prayer and ritual will be excluded, freedom of thought and belief will be respected, and “all may meet, believers and unbelievers,...in action...that common ground where we may all grasp hands as brothers united in mankind’s common cause.”

Adler has been deeply impressed by the plight of the poor and the squalid conditions in which they live. New technologies are drawing rural families and immigrants to American cities, where they live in the slums. Their lack of adequate housing, health care, and education have especially moved Adler. His passionate dream is to organize projects which will help ameliorate these conditions.

In 1877, an Ethical Culture Society is organized by Adler’s supporters, and Adler is appointed as Lecturer. A Certificate of Incorporation is filed in the State of New York. Adler, within several years, turns his efforts to building a permanent religious movement at the Ethical Culture Society, a movement that will embrace and vigorously implement an action plan. He envisions individuals participating interdependently in the great task of helping “to create the perfect man, to incarnate him more and more in ourselves and others.”

And it is from this vision that Adler’s concept of universal worth derives. “Every man, however humble, is worthy of reverence because, in his limited sphere, he can be a beneficent, forward-working agent, he can help a little to create the perfect man.”

Leader's Desk

(Continued from page 1)

These two types of thinking, with their differing views of future programming, activities and outreach, are by no means mutually exclusive. Tradition and novelty sooner or later challenge each other: board, committee, and executive-level tasks are normally parceled out with the intention of improving the quality of what has worked satisfactorily in the past even if it isn't working particularly well or getting sizable results in the present. When an organization such as ours is simply running in place while providing just enough energy to get its leaders to envision where it should be, say, in the next five years as opposed to the next month, its avatars may be lured more toward the minority option of divergent visioning, rather than toward the majority preference for convergent thinking. Whereupon the unfamiliar suddenly sounds promising and new vistas beckon. What to do? The "trick" here is to match people as wisely as possible with tasks to which they are best suited in light of future possibilities so far only dimly apprehended.

I believe that, as an ethical community and a humanist educational and religious institution, we have reached such a crossroads. We should rejoice at the opportunities before us. For example, our Advocacy Forums, based on the democratic premise of principled partisanship, not moral neutrality, and dedicated therefore to a public critique of the concerted dangers posed by the agenda of the American right, were chiefly designed to be uniquely responsive to the electoral issues of 2004. I wanted somehow to integrate our programmatic success with consequent growth in the number of people

willing to support the future of our ethical humanist enterprise.

We managed to attract large, eager crowds; several hundred individuals have indicated a continuing interest in our purposes and overall philosophic outlook. With an extra fillip from those attending the new monthly Cultured Comedy events, plus other smaller lists of people who've come around one or more times, we have a growing number—now nearly 1,000—all of whom will be invited to a special evening of provocative interactive discourse about how they can get involved, perhaps as Society Associates (a proposed new designation of institutional affiliation midway between Members and Friends). The Board will have been the first to hear about this at its December 6 meeting. We hope to challenge the most committed and curious of our many visitors to join us in the shared adventure of reinventing the way an institution like ours can grow and become influential in affecting public opinion. In turn we shall elicit our guests' interests, needs, and desires so that we enable one another to ask what we can do together to advance the cause of the common good in these unprecedentedly demanding times (the date—Friday, January 28, at the Society).

Such a prospect exemplifies divergent thinking outside the box of our usual assumptions. If 10 percent of those invited choose to enter into a flexible arrangement of mutual value as suggested here, a whole new generation of future long-term full-time members could be in the offing. We must bring new publics into our midst, encouraging them to mingle and share information and inspiration on a regular basis so that the New York Society's various aims, purposes, pro-

grams, outreach activities, and social justice initiatives ignite one another, resulting in a burst of synergistic expansion. We can make it happen, but only if we keep cultivating the common spiritual ground between us to which Felix Adler provided the main key: "Always act to elicit the best in others and thereby in oneself"—and further, we might elaborate, in the world at large. Let us, then, so act that our reach always exceeds our grasp—else what's a world for?

Sunday Morning Meetings

(Continued from page 1)

is the author of five books, a Pulitzer Prize finalist, and a contributor to *The Washington Post*, *Harper's*, *The New York Times*, and numerous other publications. Her most recent work, *Freethinkers: A History of American Secularism*, published this year, has already been hailed as a virtual masterpiece.

Ms. Jacoby lives in New York and is Director of the Center for Inquiry. We warmly welcome her to our Sunday platform for the first time, when she will tackle anew, in light of the 2004 elections, the ever-knotty subject of church and state in America, a nation that remains a work in progress precisely because we are an ongoing experiment in democracy.

Sunday, January 23—In a Different Light: Turning Points, Ethical Belief, and Charlie Chaplin's Walking Stick

Dr. Khoren Arisian, Senior Leader

The difference between a tipping point and a turning point is hard to tell. Be that as it may, what I want to emphasize in this particular address is how we as individuals confront major

changes or crises in our lives that either catch us by surprise or that we intuitively anticipate. Turning points that we confront rather than evade carry the possibility of serving us as significant learning experiences, however painful or pleasurable they may be. Whenever we truly learn, we truly grow and no longer are entirely what we were before the transforming event that has jolted us for good or for ill. Some degree of quantum perception is operating here.

In other words, we somehow alter the world by our response to an abrupt change or step in our life odyssey, whether in regard to knowledge, information, or self-scrutiny; hence such phrases as “quantum jump” or “quantum leap.” Words from Russian novelist Nicolai Gogol are pertinent: “And from that day forth, everything was changed and appeared in a different light....” Which suggests that we have probably freed ourselves to become more of what we choose to become.

Sunday, January 30—Red, (White), and Blue: Is Political Reconciliation Ethically Necessary?

Gerald Ranck, Music Director

Red states, blue states: are we regressing to the blue and grey states of 1860? Political polarity has been inflamed by the politics of personal destruction to the point where we are metaphorically slamming doors in each others’ faces, rather than attempting to establish common ground on which to build a constructive dialogue for the common good. This certainly threatens the health of our democracy; but does it also threaten the integrity of our commitment to the ideals of Ethical Culture? Some thoughts about these questions and some modestly offered solutions.

**Sunday Afternoons
1:45 PM**

- Jan. 2: “Ethics in the News,” Mary Ellen Goodman, discussion leader
- Jan. 9: Readings by Elaine Berman’s Advanced Writers’ Workshop
- Jan. 16: Video, *Every Mother’s Son*, Abe Markman, discussion leader
- Jan. 23: *Roe v. Wade (1/22/73)*—Movie, *Citizen Ruth*, Carol Rost, discussion leader
- Jan. 30: “Natural Alternatives for Flu Protection,” Dr. Arlene Donar (<http://www.naturopathic.org>)

**Sunday Afternoon
Program January 16**

Abe Markman

On Sunday, January 16, there will be a showing of the film, *Every Mother’s Son*, co-produced and directed by Tami Gold and Kelly Anderson. In their words, “Every Mother’s son is an intimate portrait of three women who feel they have paid the ultimate price for the aggressive policing that swept American cities during the 1990’s—they each lost an unnamed child at the hands of law enforcement.... And, though they are all from different backgrounds, they come together and learn to organize in their communities and speak out throughout the United States about the need to rethink and reform policing.”

After the movie, we will discuss how the mothers were joined by an aroused city whose massive rallies and direct action produced some significant breakthroughs in policing, how Al Sharpton was able to overcome a highly controversial past to become a very effective leader, and how the

movement caused Mayor Rudolph W. Giuliani to alter his policies and how it impacted on his political career.

The Lower East Side Call for Justice, whose members stood side by side with the mothers, contributed to the purchase of the film.

**Ethics for Everyday
Living—First
Sundays, 10:30-
11:15 AM**

Kate Lovelady

Is there an ethical dilemma or issue in your life on which you would like to gain greater perspective? Or are you simply looking for a place to explore the more personal, emotional side of ethical living? This new pre-platform monthly group was created as a place for members and friends to share the frustrations and joys of trying to live an ethical life, and to learn from each other’s perspectives and experiences. You don’t need to have a burning dilemma in your life to take part—suggested monthly themes also spark the discussion. February’s suggested theme is Diversity: Its challenges and gifts.

**Intergenerational
Sunday Morning
Program, First
Sundays at 11:15 AM**

Kate Lovelady

Beginning Sunday, February 6, our Youth and Family Programs will offer a new format on the first Sunday of every month. This format, called “Ethical Explorations,” first developed by Curt Collier at the Riverdale-Yonkers Society, will explore ethical topics through music, story, dialogue, and hands-on learning. Although this is intended as a family-

friendly experience, non-parents are also encouraged to participate. We will begin and end our meetings as a group, with separate activities for children and adults during the rest of the session. Everyone is welcome.

Ethical Explorations will be facilitated by Lynda Kennedy, Rebecca Mason, and Kate Lovelady, and we are looking for members and friends with an interest in experiential learning who would like to take part in this exciting new way of creating Ethical community. Please contact Lynda or Kate at the Society if you are interested in helping out.

Family Programs

Lynda Kennedy

We have had a busy few months! The children attending the Sunday Ethics for Children Program spent October exploring Central Park, including the work of the Wildlife Conservation Society, which runs the zoo. We even had Jonathan Ellers, of the zoo's Wildlife Theater, come to the Society to speak with us.

Because we wanted to focus on deeds, the children also took on several service projects. For Halloween, they "trick-or-treated" for UNICEF, raising money to help children around the world. With the help of NYSEC members and staff, they also raised over 70 pounds of pennies for the Penny Harvest program, which funds services for the homeless. The children also enjoyed decorating the bags that the Caring Committee used to distribute food donations it collected for those in need. Performer Ryan Paulson came in to keep us singing while we worked, and we've been having a great time!

In addition to Sunday School, in the new year we will be offering evening family programs developed with Kate Lovelady, and a drama workshop for teens in partnership with the American

Place Theater. Rebecca, the children, and I would like to thank everyone who came to dance at the Harvest Hoedown, and everyone who made donations to support the Sunday School and Family Programs. Happy New Year!

Harvest Hoedown, November 7



Carol Chamlin and daughter Rebecca Mason

Kudo for November 14 Video Program

Valerie Leiman

On a chilly November Sunday afternoon, every chair in the Adler Study was filled in anticipation of the program, *DNA: the Secret of Life*. The program included a video followed by a scintillating discussion led by Kathleen O'Connell and Chuck Debrovner.

Questions from the audience ranged from the applications of genetic research to degenerative diseases such as Alzheimer's, Parkinson's, and arthritis to pre-fertilization issues. A lively exchange of opinions took place regarding the role of ethics in research with humans and with genetically altered plants.

Our Ethical Family

Suzy Frazer and Members

December was a wonderful month for members and friends to get together! We held a large Orientation and a new member reception at the home of

Muriel and Bob Berger. Our thanks for their gracious hospitality.

New Members

Talat Ali was born in Pakistan and came to the US as a child. She currently works in a medical office. Talat has attended many NYSEC events, forums, our Cultured Comedy Club, and Sunday Meetings, often with her friend, member Sheila Kleinwald. **Lynne Barrow** was attracted to the Society by its social activism and programs. She has attended several events and an orientation, and she is a participant in Elaine Berman's personal writing class.

News of Members

Selma Friedman, our long-time *Outlook* copy editor, has left her position as Managing Editor of the Commitment Newsletter/Manager of Donor Stewardship for NYU School of Medicine/NYU Medical Center. Selma, a professional writer, editor, copyeditor, and project manager, after a brief holiday, is searching for a position that will exploit her talents and experience. **Andra Miller** has been certified

as a Humanist Celebrant by the Humanist Society of the American Humanist Association. Along with Pat Debrovner, Alice Ladas, and Judy Wallach, she is now qualified to conduct weddings, memorial services, namings, etc. Congrats, Andra!

Deaths

Member Linda Meyer brought to our attention the death of **Ruth Larson**, who had been ill for a long time. Linda said that all who knew Ruth remember her as a wonderful person and friend. **Janice Stone**, a long time member, died in November. We are trying to obtain more information.

Amy needs your help!

Amy Schwarz

We need to be a team of three or four members to share the job as Coordinator of the Sunday Morning Meeting Greeters. To find out what this involves, please contact me at 212-666-5219 or schwarz@frick.org. Thanks for your help.

Caring Committee

To our wonderful Sunday school students: Many thanks to all of you for the great job you did decorating the Thanksgiving bags. The people who received the bags loved your work.

The Society for Ethical Culture—and in particular the Caring Committee—wish to express our gratitude to **The Turkish Kitchen** for the restaurant's generous contribution of 70 bags for our Thanksgiving project of providing food items, donated by our members, to the Lincoln Square Senior Center, The Jewish Guild for the Blind, and our Women's Shelter.

Stephanie Rosenblatt

Happy New Year to all our members and friends! This new year will bring many challenges which will test us and

our abilities to reach out to our community and to each other. Protecting our ethical community is today more important than ever.

The Caring Committee devotes its energies to the social and health needs of our members. We also participate in community outreach during major holidays.

In the coming year, we will continue our preventive health education series. To date we have addressed the subject of traumatic anniversaries and how they affect us. We have also discussed the medicines we take and how to take them more safely. Watch for our announcements of new topics each month.

We are continuing to call and write to ill or homebound members. The aging process presents all of us with new challenges, and the Caring Committee continues to seek ways to help our members cope. We especially need more active volunteers to broaden and enrich this vital outreach activity. Please consider volunteering!

If you have been coping with these issues on your own and think we can help you, please call Stephanie Rosenblatt at 212-586-0017 or Les Graifman at 212-874-7832 for a confidential chat. Each month we have a "New Concepts" discussion, and we are open to new ideas. *Milton Nobel*

Cultured Comedy Club

Suzy Frazer

Joe Raiola regaled us with his very funny, insightful one-man show about the first amendment, "The Joy of Censorship," on November 18. There was no show during December, but the very popular Cultured Comedy Club will return on Thursday, January 20 with a great show in our cabaret-style basement called "The Blue Inaugural," featuring Randy Credico, politi-

cal impressionist and activist heard regularly on WBAI and seen on "The Tonight Show." The performers will be announced. Be there for what promises to be a great experience!

Ethics and the Theater

Pat Debrovner

During February we will be celebrating the world of live theatre with a special series in which we will explore ethical dilemmas that playwrights and actors have dramatized. One of the plays we'll explore had a production last season at the Mint Theater, and its artistic director has agreed to lead our discussion.

Each Tuesday evening in February, from 7:00 to 9:00, we will feature a different, specially selected play and, to add to the fun, participants (if they wish) will get to read aloud key scenes that highlight the moral conflicts that the characters are struggling with, issues that stir our interest and passion, such as whether a community is willing to suffer financial ruin in order to protect its citizens from environmental dangers, whether to destroy a father's illustrious reputation by revealing that it has been built on a lifetime of lies, whether winning a presidential nomination is worth resorting to character assassination. Mark your calendar and plan to join us for a fascinating experience!

Film Forum

Cheryl Gross

Join us for our January Film Forum on Friday, January 7 as we view *Tucker, The Man and His Dream* (1988). The discussion following will be led by Richard Bruno.

The January film in our year-long series, *Movies That Mean BUSINESS*,

takes us into the automobile industry as we grapple, once again, with ethics in American business. Preston Tucker (Jeff Bridges) designs the “car of the future,” but is put out of business by the major auto companies. The setting is the 1940’s and the director is Francis Ford Coppola (*The Godfather*). Richard Bruno always places the films in an historical perspective and offers us a rich background in American entrepreneurial practices. Members and non-members in the audience always ask fascinating questions and offer incisive comments. Don’t miss this exciting film discussion.

Doors open at 6:30 pm and the movie begins at 7:00 pm. Admission is \$3.00 for members and \$4.00 for non-members, and includes popcorn and beverages.

Special Evening Orientation

Suzy Frazer

For all of our Advocacy Forums supporters, Friday, January 28, 6:30 pm in the Social Hall. After the discussion, enjoy an informal celebration with refreshments and music by Nora McCarthy and the Society band.

Highlights of the November Board Meeting

Sheila Kleinwald

Finances. Executive Director Robert Liebeskind reported that we are still operating with a significant year-to-date deficit, due to unpaid pledges as well as lower rental revenue and higher expenses than anticipated. His report on rental prospects for the coming year, however, was more optimistic. At the recent pledge party, we received

27 pledges for 2005 totaling \$77,260. Net proceeds from the Community Service Breakfast honoring Nicholas D’Agostino totaled \$10,576. The October 28 Comedy Club special event drew approximately 300 people and netted \$461.23.

Senior Leader. Following the December 7 Advocacy Forum, Khoren Arisian plans to focus on increasing Society membership. He will be on leave from mid-December through mid-January for health reasons. Michael Bogdanffy-Kriegh suggested that the Advocacy Forums might continue even if Dr. Arisian plays a reduced role. The spring religion course, “Religious Fundamentalisms of Our Time,” will take place on four Tuesdays beginning in April.

Nominating Committee. Since no petitions were received from the membership at large, the Board chose the remaining members of this year’s committee to nominate Board candidates for the 2005 election. The committee members, all current Board members, are Bonnie Bean, Robert Berger, Charles Debrovner, Margaretha Jones, Barbara Levenson, Frank Prescod, and Christine Swann (Chair).

Other Business. The Board approved a proposal to co-sponsor a program entitled “Undivided Rights: Women of Color Organize for Reproductive Justice” on December 13. The Board approved the amended agreement negotiated with the school for an amended lease and license of space. We will present our WinterFest honoree, Dr. Matthew Ies Spetter, with a token of our esteem and recognition. A special Sunday collection will be dedicated to the charity of his choice. The Board authorized an expenditure of up to \$11,000 for urgently needed improvements to the sound system in our Auditorium.

Recruiting Candidates for AEU Board

Modified from Dialogue, Winter 2004-2005

The American Ethical Union is recruiting candidates for the AEU Board of Directors. New board members will take office immediately following the Assembly in Northern Virginia May 27-29, 2005. Nominations are made by a petition of 10 AEU members.

The Board is composed of 13 members. The delegates at the Assembly will elect 11 members. Two directors are chosen by the National Leaders’ Council. Each director serves until the election at the next Assembly. The Board meets approximately five times per year. While these meetings are normally held in New York City, it is hoped that in the coming year we will rotate the meetings to various Society locations around the country. The meetings are usually held on Saturdays. Directors may request financial help from the AEU for costs related to travel, room, and board.

Any member of AEU (members of Societies and members-at-large) may submit a Director Candidate Application which includes the signatures of 10 members to qualify for candidacy to the Board of Directors. The fully completed application must be received at the AEU Office by 5:00 pm on March 31, 2005. All those submitting valid applications will be nominated and voted on by the delegates to the 2005 AEU Assembly in Northern Virginia. The Mission Statement and Board of Director Position Description are included with the application. **For an application form,** contact John F. Hartman, AEU Executive Director at the AEU office, 212-873-6500 or jfh@aeu.org.

January 2005

(Office hours for the month: 9:00 am–6:00 pm)

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Great Books Jan. 5–Marx, <i>Alienated Labour</i> Bible, <i>Genesis</i> ECRDG: (Ethical Culture Reading Discussion Group) Jan. 12–F. Scott Fitzgerald, <i>Tender is the Night</i>						1 No Supervised Visitation program today
2 10:30 am – Ethics for Everyday Living 11:00 am – Ethics for Children 11:15 am – Morning Meeting 12:45 pm – Cafeteria 1:45 pm – Ethics in the News	3 February 2005 newsletter deadline 6:00 pm – Board of Trustees 7:30 pm – Shelter	4 7:30 pm – Shelter	5 6:00 pm – Men's Group 7:30 pm – Great Books 7:30 pm – Shelter	6 7:30 pm – Shelter	7 7:00 pm – Film Forum	8 9:30 am & 1:30 pm Supervised Visitation
9 10:15 am – Colloquy 11:00 am – Ethics for Children 11:15 am – Morning Meeting 12:45 pm – Cafeteria 1:45 pm – Readings	10 6:00 pm – Grief Support Group 7:30 pm – Shelter	11 6:00 pm – Women's Group 7:30 pm – Shelter	12 3:00 pm – ECRDG 7:30 pm – Shelter	13 7:30 pm – Shelter	14 8:00 pm – SSB Fundraiser – Isadora Duncan Dance Foundation	15 No Supervised Visitation program today
16 10:30 am – Poetry Reading 11:00 am – Ethics for Children 11:15 am – Morning Meeting 12:45 pm – Cafeteria 1:45 pm – Video	17 Society Offices Closed 7:30 pm – Shelter	18 7:30 pm – Shelter	19 7:30 pm – Shelter 7:30 pm – Great Books: "Happiness & Discontent"	20 7:30 pm – Shelter 8:00 pm – Cultured Comedy Club	21	22 9:30 am & 1:30 pm Supervised Visitation
23 10:30 am – Yoga Meditation 11:00 am – Ethics for Children 11:15 am – Morning Meeting 12:45 pm – Cafeteria 1:45 pm – Roe v. Wade	24 6:30 pm – Social Service Board 7:30 pm – Shelter	25 7:30 pm – Shelter	26 7:30 pm – Shelter	27 6:00 pm – Grief Support Group 7:30 pm – Shelter	28 6:30 pm – Orientation	29 9:30 am & 1:30 pm Supervised Visitation
30 10:30 am – Coffee Hour 11:00 am – Ethics for Children 11:15 am – Morning Meeting 12:45 pm – Cafeteria 1:45 pm – Natural Alternatives	31 7:30 pm – Shelter	Great Books: "Happiness and Discontent" Jan. 19–Reynolds Price, <i>Endless Mountains</i>				

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ETHICAL CULTURE 

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