

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–Auditorium

January 4

Reclaiming Ethical Spirituality

Dr. Anne Klaeysen, Leader

Curt Collier Presides

January 11

Should Religion be Immune From Criticism?

Dr. Joseph Chuman, Leader

Dr. Charles H. Debrovner Presides

January 18

We Have a Dream:

Honoring Martin Luther King and Barack Obama

Dr. Anne Klaeysen and Marlon Rice

January 25

Is Ethics Getting in the Way of Saving Our Planet?

Curt Collier, Leader

Patricia Bruder Debrovner Presides

January Happenings

On **Wednesday, January 14, 7:00 pm**, in Room 514, led by Dr. Anne Klaeysen, we'll explore the **Foundations of Ethical Culture**. (See page 7)

Come to the benefit for the **Girls Write Now Annual Winter Pair Reading** on **Saturday, January 17, 5:00 pm**, in the Auditorium—to hear collaborative works by high school girls and their mentors, professional women writers. (See page 8)

Join other NY Society members on **Friday, January 23, 6:00–8:30 pm**, at our **2009 Pledge Party**. (See page 7)

President's Notes

Andra Miller



Happy New Year! Hope you're enjoying the start of 2009. I'm writing this at the beginning of December, so I can only surmise that the New Year's Eve party and fireworks viewing went spectacularly well.

Jumping the month of January and moving right on into February, we're getting ready for the local societies to gather here for our big Darwin Day Family Festival on Saturday, February 7. We need your help.

As one of the young children's activities, we will have them construct animal "fossils" using cardboard tubes from paper towels, plastic, foil, gift wrap, and even toilet tissue. Please save, collect, bag, and bring your tubes in to the reception desk. They'll be painted white and turn up as the skeletons of creative and fanciful animals.

(Continued on page 2)

From the Leader's Desk

Dr. Anne Klaeysen



Living the Life We Choose

"For me, with certain rapturous exceptions, literature is the moral life."—Cynthia Ozick, from her essay "Innovation and Redemption: What Literature Means"

"She's promiscuous. She's in five book groups."—One book group member to another in the caption of a *New Yorker* cartoon by Peter Steiner

I'm down to one book club now: a group of mothers who met many years ago while waiting for our children to pour out of P.S. 321 in Brooklyn. Our favorite books were novels but, finding less time to read, we gravitated to short story collections and regaled each other with memories of our favorite books. We decided early on not to meet in our homes,

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Help Those In Need!

Canned Food Drive
Through January 9

For more info call
212-874-5210, ext. 118.

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 Phyllis Harrison-Ross and Vincent Montaruli
 EBAY Project: Eric Norlander and Michelle Rickborn

President's Notes

(Continued from page 1)

We'll also need help for the day (2:00 to 5:00 pm), so if you like kids, call me to sign up to assist in the young folk's "game room" (Social Hall). As you and the kids will be involved in games and crafts activities, very casual dress is in order.

Involved so far in the planning are folks from the Long Island, Suffolk, Brooklyn, Rockland, and Westchester Societies, and they're planning on trooping in by car, train, and maybe even bus for the celebration. Anne Klaeysen has volunteered as Leader-host for this shindig and will be giving out booklets of her hilarious collection of evolution cartoons. I want *all* of you here as well, to give a big welcome from the New York Society. And while you're thinking about it, call your friends to bring them and their kids in too. We'll have a flyer on the event soon—with the admission price of \$10 for adults and no charge for children.

While the kids are being entertained in the Social Hall, their parents and other folks will be gathered in the Auditorium, listening to fascinating speakers and being entertained by Curt Collier, who will be playing Jon Stewart in

"interviews" with numerous historical figures about Darwin and evolution. This is a not-to-be-missed experience!

Also not to be missed is the M.C.-ing by Joe Chuman, as well as our invited speakers: Arnell Dowret (host of "Equal Time for Free Thought" on WBAI, member of the Secular Humanist Society of New York, and contributing author to *Toward A New Political Humanism*), who will speak on how the naturalistic explanation of life brings ideas that benefit us all; John Teehan, (associate professor of philosophy at Hofstra University and the author of *The Evolutionary Basis of Religious Ethics*), who will speak on the ramifications of an evolutionary psychology for religious and moral beliefs; and Rev. Tom Goodhue (Director of the Long Island Council of Churches and author of *Curious Bones* and two other books on evolution), who will talk about Mary Anning, a pioneering paleontologist whose work inspired Darwin.

Though it might sound somewhat intellectual and maybe even dry, let me assure you that these are engaging and fascinating speakers. You will not be bored.

We're now working on publicity to draw in as many people from

the neighborhood and the city as we can handle. We're not only celebrating Darwin's 200th "birthday," we're showing off Ethical Culture to New York and its environs. This will be an exciting day and I hope you will be a part of it.

Leader's Desk

(Continued from page 1)

preferring instead neighborhood restaurants with big round tables, good acoustics, and cuisine that our children hated. Fathers with our young children in tow would sometimes walk by and wave to us through the windows.

With three librarians in the group, we are never at a loss for books to choose. We can tell our history by the list of books we have read and discussed over the years. What we share is not just a love of literature but also a belief that literature is important, that it is, as Cynthia Ozick wrote, "the moral life." Writers and their characters make choices, some ethical, others decidedly not, and many that are ambiguous. These are the stories that we carry around with us, mulling them over, wondering what we would do in similar situations, hoping we would make the right choices.

When I studied pastoral counseling, I became familiar with Irvin Yalom's work. He is a psychiatrist who found, as he grew up in the inner city of Washington, DC, a refuge in fiction, "a source of inspiration and wisdom." His first writings were scientific contributions to professional journals, followed by textbooks on group therapy and existential psychology. After his students told him that his books, full of therapy vignettes, read like novels, Yalom wrote *When Nietzsche Wept*, a book that he calls a "teaching" novel, joining history and fiction to imagine the beginning

of psychoanalysis by bringing the doctor Josef Breuer and the philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche together in Vienna to create the "talking cure."

What I have been carrying around with me since reading this book is Nietzsche's fictional challenge to Breuer (Whom he never actually met, though they had mutual friends.): "eternal recurrence." He asks, "Have you consummated your life?" In other words, has Breuer lived his life or been lived by it? Has he chosen it or did it choose him? Has he loved his life or regretted it? Nietzsche gives him a thought experiment that he introduced in his book, *Human, All Too Human*:

"Josef, try to clear your mind. . . . What if some demon were to say to you that this life—as you now live it, and have lived it in the past—you will have to live once more, and innumerable times more; and there will be nothing new in it, but every pain and every joy and everything unutterably small or great in your life will return to you, all in the same succession and sequence—even this wind and those trees and that slippery shale, even the graveyard and the dread, even this gentle moment and you and I, arm in arm, murmuring these words? . . . Listen to me, my friend, listen to my words—this is the most important thing I will ever say to you: 'let this thought take possession of you, and I promise it will change you forever!'

. . . Do you hate this idea? Or do you love it? . . . Live in such a way that you love the idea!"

What a powerful challenge! Breuer is stunned. He hates his life and the

choices he has made, a life that he feels has been thrust upon him, full of responsibilities and choices that were made for him.

I won't spoil the story for you by revealing how he works this all out. I will, however, pose the same questions: Are you living the life you have chosen? Have you found meaning in your relationships and your life's work? Would you willingly live this life again? If not, take the time to reflect upon your choices. Winter is a good time for that. When the cold wind and snow keep us inside, instead of turning on the television and surfing for a movie, instead of distracting ourselves, let us turn inward and find the meaning that is waiting to be illuminated.

Sunday Morning Meetings

11:15 AM—Auditorium

January 4—Reclaiming Ethical Spirituality

Dr. Anne Klaeysen, Leader

Ethical Culture founder Felix Adler frequently used the language of spirituality: words like "holy," "sacred," "divine," and "soul." He told us to "conceive of progress spiritually." Yet we have become uncomfortable with this language, ceding it too readily to theistic communities, fearful of what supernatural visions we may be conjuring. "What a great loss!" says Leader Anne Klaeysen, who will speak on the necessity of developing authentic Ethical Culture spiritual practices.

January 11—Should Religion be Immune From Criticism?

Dr. Joseph Chuman, Leader

The United States remains the most religious society in the industrialized world.

Historically, and in our time, many—if not most—people believe that religious faith is the bulwark of moral values.

Hence, for them religion can be nothing but good, and for many, religion is surrounded by a cordon of protection, an immunity from criticism that no other human discipline of commitment can claim.

But is this immunity warranted? Humanists, of course, have their doubts, and many would deny that religion can claim any special status for itself. But this still raises a cluster of important theoretical and practical questions? Among them is where to draw the line. Certainly, our humanism requires respect. No one can defend being gratuitously disrespectful of other people's deeply held beliefs. Tolerance is on the agenda. But does tolerance require total forbearance in the face of beliefs that we might consider irrational, bigoted, or even dangerous?

Joe Chuman's address will prompt thought and reflection on these questions. In addition to being a leader of NYSEC, he has a doctorate in religion from Columbia University and has taught religion courses at Columbia, Barnard College, and the Macaulay Honors College at Hunter College.

January 18—We Have a Dream: Honoring Martin Luther King and Barack Obama

Join Marlon Rice and Leader Dr. Anne Klaeysen in honoring the memory of Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., and celebrating the inauguration of Barack Obama with readings, images, music, and dance.

January 25—Is Ethics Getting in the Way of Saving Our Planet?

Curt Collier, Leader

The same country that practically gave birth to the environmental movement;

that fostered the likes of Aldo Leopold, John Muir, and Rachel Carson; that created the first national parks is also one of the biggest polluters in the world. The United States' approach to ecology is complicated by our 19th century moral views on the natural world.

Curt Collier will explore how our thoughts and feelings on the environment emerged, and how they both help and hinder our efforts to restore and preserve our majestic country.

**Early Sunday
10 AM**

(Rooms subject to change)

Jan. 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 very rewarding, so join us! Ceremonial Hall—4th fl.

Jan. 11—Colloquy: Spirituality. Phyllis Kreuttner presides. Room 408.

Jan. 18—Poetry Readings—Join us for our January poetry reading. Last month we chose works by D. H. Lawrence, Edna St. Vincent Millay, Rainer Maria Rilke, Pablo Neruda, and Wallace Stevens. We invite you to read a poem or simply listen. If possible, bring copies of one of the poems you will be reading. We usually introduce the poem being read with a few words about the poet. Cheryl Gross presides. Room 408.

Jan. 18—Singing Practice—Pat Debrovner and Jerry Ranck will lead the session. Ceremonial Hall.

**Sunday Afternoon
1:45 PM** (Except as Noted)

Jan. 4—Taking Stock: Composing an Ethical Will, with Leader Dr. Anne Klaeysen. Room 514.

An ethical will is an ancient tradition for passing on our values to family, friends, and future generations. Legal wills bequeath valuables; ethical wills bequeath values.

The stories, insights, and wisdom we impart can mean much more than any material possessions we leave behind. Leader Anne Klaeysen explains how the reflective process of composing an ethical will (with words, music, and/or images) can be an important way of becoming more fully alive.

Jan. 11—PIC Open Meeting. Topic to be announced. Abe Markman presides. Room 514.

Jan. 18—Lecture on the Symbolism of Flowers and Fruit in Caravaggio's Art to benefit SSB's Supervised Visitation Program. 2:00 pm. Ceremonial Hall. (*See page 9*)

Jan. 25—Life With Health. Phyllis Kreuttner and Jackie Pope preside. Room 514.

**Lunch Discussion
Professional Ethics—Part 2
Thursdays, 12:00 Noon**

Bring your lunch and join Leader Dr. Anne Klaeysen in the Elliott Library for a lively discussion about contemporary ethical issues.

This month we continue to explore the area of professional ethics. What is proper email etiquette? Have we lost personal privacy to cyberspace? Lawyer jokes are funny, but are they fair? What about jokes; is everything fair game and nothing sacred? Finally, what are the ethics of economic recession? There are so many questions;

let's shed some light on them together. Subjects for the month include:

Jan. 8—Computer Technology

Jan. 15—Law

Jan. 22—Comedy

Jan. 29—Business and Finance

Copies of relevant articles for participants are available in the Leaders' office.

Our Ethical Family

Moe-Swe Myint

Please welcome new members:

Eva Barnett, Flannery Cleaver, Margaret Murphy, Matthew H. Sherman, Dan Hanson, and Monica Weiss.

Eva works as a human rights lawyer. She is a member of the NY State Bar Association with a diploma in international humanitarian assistance. She has been involved with the Global Alliance for Social Justice for three years and is being considered for its Steering Committee. She has also been a member of *Groupe de Travaux Contrats Internationaux* for five years. Eva has lived in France and Switzerland and is fluent in French. She enjoys fringe theatre and foreign films.

Flannery works in advertising. She has been involved with Big Brothers/Big Sisters for five years and has been a volunteer with New York Cares for 10 years. Flannery enjoys traveling, reading, and volunteering.

Margaret is an educator and the Assistant Director of the Instructional Technology Support Services at John Jay College, CUNY. She belongs to the Yeats Society of NY, the Kennedy Society of North America, and the Appalachian Mountain Club. She likes gardening and attending Lincoln Center's activities.

Matthew is a financial planner at Forest Hills Financial Group, Inc. He

is attracted to the humanist values the Society holds. Matthew's interests are in fitness, finance, cars, martial arts, and humanism.

Dan is a law librarian at Davis Polk and Wardwell. His interests include reading, traveling, soccer, history, theater, and politics. Dan and his wife, Monica Weiss, were members of the Queens Ethical Society for many years and also members of the Long Island Ethical Society.

Monica is an elementary public school teacher in NYC with a BA in elementary/early childhood education and a BS in environmental education. She belongs to the UFT/AFT and is training to be an arbitrator for the UFT Grievance Committee. She is also an EC Officiant. She and her husband, Dan Hanson, were married by Algernon Black in 1981, as her parents were in 1951. Monica speaks Portuguese, enjoys music and theater, and loves to travel.

* * * * *

Congratulations to **Phyllis Harrison-Ross, MD**, Chair of the Social Service Board, who has been confirmed by the NYS Senate as Commissioner and Chair of the Medical Review Board of the NYS Commission of Corrections. This is a historical first for many reasons, and we look forward to her taking up this most powerful post in state government.

Congratulations and sincere thanks to **Virginia Arnold**, winner of our Election Night Café 50/50 drawing. She has generously donated her prize money to SSB's Supervised Visitation Program.

Congratulations also to **Eric Norlander** and his wife, Meredith, whose daughter, Lola Lake, was born on Dec. 14.

Helen Mecs, David Leiman, and Valerie Leiman worked together on November 26 at St. Paul the Apostle

Church, setting up Thanksgiving Dinner tables for 400 needy elderly participants in cooperation with ProjectFind. That organization's staff welcomed them as long-time volunteers from Ethical Culture. The professional florist especially voiced her appreciation for their conscientious efforts in following her instructions.

In Memoriam

Victoria Olds, a member since 1989, died on November 11. She served as Trustee (1992-94); Chair, SSB; Chair, Task Force on Multicultural Diversity; Member, Program Committee; Alternate Delegate to the AEU Board; Student, Humanist Institute; and former Delegate, UN International Humanist and Ethical Union. A Memorial Service was held on Saturday, December 6, here at the Society. *(See photos below)*



Some of the guests at Dr. Victoria Olds' Memorial Service



(L-R) SSB Board Members Maria Fridman and Margaretha Jones, with another Society member

Member **Sarah (Jinx) Sapir Eisen** died on November 15. Her memorial was held at her home, Kendal at Hanover, in New Hampshire on December 30. Condolences may be sent to her brother, NYSEC member Louis Sapir, at Kendal at Hanover, #271, Hanover, NH 03755. Jinx became a member in January 1945, after learning about the NY Society at the Eleanor Roosevelt Sunday Club. Her husband, Isaiah, was at one time a member, and her daughter, Margaret Jill, attended both the Society's Sunday School and the Ethical Culture School, where Jinx served as Chair of the Board of Governors. Her list of activities in Ethical Culture is long, including serving on the NYSEC Board, a variety of Society and AEU committees, and the National Service Conference.

Ethical Culture Leader **Dr. Matthew Ies Spetter's wife, Sylvia**, died the night before Thanksgiving after a valiant struggle with cancer. Dr. Spetter served the NY Society for many years and is now retired and living at 2105 Kendal Way, Kendal-on Hudson in Sleepy Hollow, NY 10591, where condolences may be sent. Sylvia was a professional pianist, and her children are organizing a memorial concert in the auditorium of Kendal-on-Hudson for Sunday, January 4, at 3:00 pm.

Remembering Vicky

Valerie and David Leiman

A woman often teasingly referred to by her Social Service Board colleagues as: Doctor of Determination, Steel Magnolia, and the Little Giant, this



Dr. Victoria Olds

pint-sized lady, **Dr. Victoria Olds** (known informally as Vicky) was an active member of NYSEC for many years, and also served as Chair of the Society's Social Service Board.

Vicky's energy level was remarkable, even many years after her retirement from New York University's Social Service Department. This was demonstrated by her enthusiasm in learning many new things, including how to play poker under the tutelage of Society friends; enjoying "taking her turn" to entertain the members of her cluster in her charming apartment; insisting on using her walker when attending the New York City Ballet; in her eighties during an out-of-town Society retreat, learning to play *bocci* and beating all of the younger, seasoned players; and in one of her stances as a "committed revolutionary" joining another member in a suit protesting the Society's Midtown School action, which resulted in costing the Society \$5,000.

Vicky was pint-sized only in the physical sense, and she remained a fervent believer in the humanist tradition of Felix Adler.

Gifts to NYSEC

Henryka Komanska

Donation to Honor Society Veteran

The New York Society for Ethical Culture has received an anonymous donation of \$200 in celebration of Donna Fetonte's birthday in December.

Donna has been a member of the Society for over 50 years. She worked for many of the Society's past leaders, served as a membership coordinator for many years, and after retiring from her job she graciously volun-

teered her services to the Membership Committee. Donna knew all the members personally, and her gracious and warm manner made her beloved to the many who came in contact with her. She is currently residing in a retirement home in Texas.

Ethical Culture Now on Facebook!

Dr. Anne Klaeysen

Join Facebook and connect online with other NYSEC members and Ethical Culture members across the nation. It's easy: just visit www.facebook.com and create a profile. Then look for the NYSEC and Ethical Culture groups and join the conversation. It beats playing solitaire any day!

Writing Workshop Winter Semester

Elaine Berman

Ethical Culture's ongoing Thursday writing workshop, "The Joy of Personal Writing," will begin its ten-week winter semester on January 22. A few places are still open and both new and experienced writers are welcome to participate. The class meets from 7:00 to 9:00 pm. For more information, call Gloria Chandler at 212-874-5210, ext. 117.

You can read essays by workshop members at www.nysec.org. Just click on the Table of Contents and scroll down.

Reunion Planned: Calling All Campers!

Did you attend the Encampment for Citizenship in your youth? Are you interested in reconnecting with others who

did? If so, please contact Leader Dr. Anne Klaeyesen at aklaeyesen@nysec.org or 212-874-5210, ext. 118.

Anne has been hearing from Encampment alumni and is planning a reunion at the NY Society for a Saturday this spring. Stay tuned for more details about this walk down Memory Lane and a chance to catch up with fellow campers.

SAVE THE DATE!



Pledge Party 2009

Friday, January 23
6:00 pm - 8:30 pm



Join us for dinner,
live entertainment, and
a special welcome for
our new members.



*Help us build NYSEC for
the future.*



INVITATION TO FOLLOW
BY MAIL



RSVP to Moe-Swe Myint at
212-874-5210 ext. 113 or
mmyint@nysec.org

Foundations of Ethical Culture

Dr. Anne Klaeyesen, Leader

Everything you always wanted to know about Ethical Culture, but were afraid to ask! Let's get the New

Year off to a good start with an introduction to (or refresher on) the foundations of Ethical Culture.

We'll meet on Wednesday, January 14, at 7:00 pm, in Room 514, with Leader Dr. Anne Klaeyesen and guest speakers. Bring your burning questions, and all will be answered. This class is recommended for all new members and for long-time members who would like to deepen their understanding of Ethical Culture.

Please register with the Leaders' office so we'll know how many handouts to prepare.

Ethical Blasts From the Past

Here are some words of wisdom from past Leaders:

Invocation

*This is the call to the living,
To those who refuse to make peace
with evil,
With the suffering and waste of the
world.*

*This is the call to the human, not the
perfect,
To those who know their own prejudices,
Who have no intention of becoming
prisoners of their own limitations.*

*This is a call to those who remember
the dreams of their youth.*

*Who know what it means to share
food and shelter,
The care of children and those who
are troubled,*

*To reach beyond the barriers of the
past*

Bringing people into communion.

*This is a call to the never-ending spirit
Of the common man, his essential
decency and integrity,*

*His unending capacity to suffer and
endure,
To face death and destruction and to
rise again
And build from the ruins of life.*

*This is the greatest call of all
The call to a faith in people.
To believe in freedom, we have to
believe in people.*

—Algernon Black in *Unburnt Offerings*

NYSEC Advocacy Forum to Return

Dr. Joseph Chuman, Leader

Among the most significant public programs the New York Society has produced over the past decade, the Advocacy Forum, in my opinion, was at the top of the list. The Forum was a series of high-profile events conceptualized and brought into being by my predecessor, Khoren Arisian. It was intended to strike back against the excesses of the religious right and its secular allies during the middle years of the current administration.

The Forum was planned in 2003 and executed in a series of well-crafted and broadly promoted evening programs in 2004. Because of the high profile of the participants each of the programs packed the 800-seat Auditorium. Paul Krugman, Ambassador Joseph Wilson, Benjamin Barber, Susan Jacoby, Todd Gitlin, and Barry Lynn, among other notables, were featured panelists.

Reviving the Advocacy Forum is among my primary duties in my new position as a Leader of the New York Society. Whereas a critique of the conservative dynamics and programs was the guiding rubric of the Advocacy Forum in 2004, with Barack Obama's

victory many sense that a new political wind is blowing, which has opened up fresh opportunities for progressives. Building upon this new ethos, those of us who are planning this series of the Advocacy Forum are working under the rubric of “Reviving American Ideals.”

We are dedicating our initial event to “Obama and the Imperial Presidency.” As many know, the incumbent administration has augmented the power of the presidency at the expense of Congress. Civil liberties have been trampled, and human rights violated as the Bush administration has transformed torture into a component of the “War Against Terrorism.” Barack Obama arguably inherits the most powerful presidential office in modern history. What is he willing to do with that power? What should he do?

The initial Advocacy Forum will take place in late March or early April, the first of three such programs tentatively planned for 2009. Among proposed panelists are Jonathan Mahler, a writer for *The New York Times*; Michael Ratner, President of the Center for Constitutional Rights; Jane Mayer, a columnist for the *New Yorker* and author of *The Dark Side*; and Senator Russell Feingold of Wisconsin, a former honoree of the New York Society.

Please consult *Ethical Outlook* and our website for further information.

PIC News: In Case You Missed It...

Abe Markman

Barack and Michelle Obama, our soon-to-be President and First Lady, have voiced strong support for Paid Sick

Leave. In case you missed our November 20 Breakfast/Forum on the subject, here is the link to the video of the event, with many thanks to Chuck Debrovner and Tom Weishaar: <http://www.nysec.org/2008/11/20/pic-paid-sick-days/>.

In addition, here is what Ethical Culture’s archivist, Marc Bernstein, had to say about the PIC-sponsored event: “*The session represents an effort, rare in recent years, for Ethical Culture to serve as an honest broker between conflicting sides on an issue that is likely to be proposed as legislation.*”

A second breakfast, at O’Neal’s Restaurant, was held in December. Joining Phyllis Harrison-Ross and me were Council Member Gale Brewer and NY State Restaurant Association Vice President Chuck Hunt. Much thanks to Michael O’Neal for arranging this at an off-hour. The purpose was to explore some of the issues raised at the first breakfast.

If you attended the November 20 event or viewed the video of it, we would welcome your comments on PIC’s message board: <http://www.nysec.org/sitemap/ethical-action/public-issues-committee/>. If you do send a comment, please let us know whether we can use your name in the forthcoming report about the event.

T-Day Parade Watch

Janice Buzby

On Thanksgiving morning the Society hosted a Macy’s Thanksgiving Day Parade Watch. It was an exciting morning for our 44 guests, 13 of them children. We plied them full of bagels and lox, pumpkin bread, juice boxes, fruit, and plenty of other refreshments and let them watch the parade from

our roof and from the windows in Ceremonial Hall. We met neighborhood people and extended families of some members, and some new people were introduced to us. I especially enjoyed watching the kids run around Ceremonial Hall, excited by the parade and open space.

I’d like to thank the volunteers Law’nence Miller, Shaun Carson Sylvester-Williams, and Beth Zucker, and, though they were not official volunteers, Andra Miller, Chris Everett, and Moe-Swe Myint were all very helpful. All profits are going to the Building Fund and the preliminary numbers show we will be able to contribute over \$1,100—pretty good for a fun-filled family event.

NYSEC Cosponsors Girls Write Now Benefit Reading

Julie Blutstein

We are thrilled to be cosponsoring the Girls Write Now Annual Winter Pair Reading on Saturday, January 17, from 5:00 to 7:00 pm in the Auditorium.

Girls Write Now is a creative writing and mentoring organization for at-risk high school girls with emerging writing talent. The program pairs each girl with a professional woman writer to serve as her mentor and writing coach. The pairs meet weekly for an entire school year and some participants continue in the program through four years of high school. Participants are given a safe and supportive environment to expand their natural writing talents, develop inde-

pendent creative voices, and build confidence in making healthy choices in school, career, and life.

The reading will feature original collaborative works written and performed by mentor-mentee pairs as well as a special guest speaker, Judy Blundell, the 2008 National Book Award Winner (Young People's Literature), for *What I Saw and How I Lied*.

The event draws a crowd each year and will be of particular interest to young people. Tickets are \$10 for NYSEC members; \$20 for nonmembers. Proceeds benefit Girls Write Now and NYSEC. We hope you can join us for this inspiring evening!

SVP Fundraiser: Caravaggio's Art



Dr. Snjezana Smodlaka, Ph.D, will present a Power-point lecture on the symbolism of flowers and fruit in Caravaggio's art on Sunday,

January 18 at 2:00 pm, in Ceremonial Hall. Light refreshments and a discussion will follow.

Dr. Smodlaka's fascinating talk will benefit the SSB's Supervised Visitation Program, (<http://www.nysec.org/social-service-board>), a free program aiding NYC's families.

To register in advance, send \$15 to USS, Inc., NY Society for Ethical Culture; tickets at the door: \$20.

Speaking Out: Members Voices

From time to time, we'll publish articles by NY Society members. If you'd like to share your thoughts about Ethical Culture or any other subjects, please write to Dr. Anne Klaeyen, Leader, at the Society. We'd like to hear from you!

Articulating Action

Josh Adams

As a new member of the Society, I'm sure my story is not that different from many of yours. As a matter of fact, through our discussions I know that they are strikingly similar. I grew up in a dogmatic religious community. In my case it negatively affected my life and, as a gay man, I was forced to be something other than myself.

Years after leaving Orthodox Judaism I found myself at the New York Society, at home amongst a community of open-minded individuals. The prospect of being a part of a group that was dedicated to "the ideal that the supreme aim of our lives is to create a more humane society" and had a long history of social justice programs was exciting.

This driving force of Ethical Culture is what drove me to join and to get involved. Through discussions with prospective members I know that this component is what leads many to find the Society and seek membership.

Knowing that the Society had been involved in the formation of many great social justice and public service programs such as the District Nurse Service (now the Visiting Nurse Service), the Workingman's School, the NAACP, and the Hudson Guild, and that the Public Issues Committee and Social Service Board continue this tradition, I was sorry to hear that the Ethical Action Committee was inactive. The Society is in need of innovative, less long-term hands-on projects. After speaking to Andra and other members I volunteered to help bring this vital component back.

This holiday season saw the renewal of this Ethical Action Committee, putting ethics into action through our participation in the City Harvest canned food drive, and decorating the homeless shelter. I look forward to working with Anne, Curt, and Joe to continue bringing new social justice activities and projects to the Society. I have also spoken to the Public Issues Committee and Social Service Board on ways to collaborate to make a bigger impact in the projects each group maintains.

As we relaunch Ethical Action please let me know of any issues, topics, or programs important to you. You can find me at social hour most Sundays or email me at jiadams@gmail.com. I look forward to many successful programs in the months to come.



SSB's Supervised Visitation Program Benefit a Success

Valerie Leiman

On the evening of November 14, a standing-room-only audience gave a standing ovation for *You Were the One*, a double-bill drama about supervised visitation, to benefit the Supervised Visitation Program of the Society's Social Service Board. The presentation was followed by a question-and-answer panel; a musical cabaret featuring piano music and song; and a feast with refreshments, drinks, and lots of lively conversation. Some of the approximately 80 attendees at the event are pictured below. (Photos by Howard Parker)

The presentation was a rousing success, and the money raised helped us meet the goal of our \$25,000 SVP matching grant, generously donated by Paul Berman.

The Supervised Visitation Program, founded in 1989, is the only program in New York City providing court-ordered supervision to families in cases of domestic violence and other situations, at no cost. The program allows noncustodial parents to meet with their children on a weekly basis in a safe environment.



Dr. Phyllis Harrison-Ross, Chair of the Social Service Board, and newly appointed Commissioner and Chair of the Medical Review Board of NYS Commission of Corrections



Dr. Ivan Quervalu, newly elected Vice Chair of the SSB, and Andra Miller, Society President



(Front, left) Valerie Leiman; (center) the daughter of Prof. Dorothy Carter of Bank Street College (who was an actor in the program); and (right) Prof. Carter; (background) Sabine Rosenberg



Margaretha Jones and Paul Berman

January 2009

Office hours for the month are: Monday-Friday, 9:00 am-6:00 pm
Shelter: Monday-Thursday, 7:30 pm

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	Great Books: January 7 – Hume, <i>Of Personal Identity</i> Nietzsche, <i>Thus Spoke Zarathustra</i> ECRDG: (Ethical Culture Reading Discussion Group) January 14 – Nathan Englander, <i>Ministry of Special Cases</i> Great Books: Great Conversation II January 21 – Nikolai Gogol, <i>The Nose</i>					
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
10:00 am – Singing Practice 11:00 am – Ethics for Children 11:15 am – Morning Meeting 12:45 pm – Social Hour 1:45 pm – Taking Stock: Composing an Ethical Will	6:30 pm – Board of Trustees	6:00 pm – Socrates Café	6:00 pm – Men's Group 7:00 pm – Prospective Members' Reception 7:30 pm – Great Books	12:00 pm – Leader Lunch Discussion		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 – PIC Open Meeting			3:00 pm – ECRDG 7:00 pm – Foundations of Ethical Culture	12:00 pm – Leader Lunch Discussion		No Supervised Visitation program today
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 2:00 pm – SSB Benefit Lecture	Society Offices Closed Martin Luther King Jr.'s Birthday	6:00 pm – Socrates Café 8:00 pm – 25 th Anniver sary Concert - Gerald Ranck	7:30 pm – Great Conversations II	12:00 pm – Leader Lunch Discussion 7:00 pm – Thursday Writing Workshop	11:00 am – Ethics on the Air	9:30 am and 1:30 pm Supervised Visitation
25	26	27	28	29	30	31
11:00 am – Ethics for Children 11:15 am – Morning Meeting 12:45 pm – Social Hour 1:45 pm – Life with Health	6:30 pm – Monday Writing Workshop		6:00 pm – Discussing Ethical Issues Group	12:00 pm – Leader Lunch Discussion 7:00 pm – Thursday Writing Workshop		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.

NEW YORK SOCIETY FOR
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