

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

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## **Sunday Morning Meetings**

**11:15 AM–Auditorium**

### **March 2**

#### **Moral Courage: The Pilot Light of Ethical Action**

*Tony Hileman, Senior Leader*  
Bonnie Bean Presides

### **March 9**

#### **Common Ground: The Earth as Humanist Icon**

*Hugh Taft-Morales*  
Andra Miller Presides

### **March 16**

#### **Infinite Interrelatedness: The Metaphysics of Ethics**

*Kate Lovelady, Leader, Ethical Society of St. Louis*  
Dr. James W. Farer Presides

### **March 23**

#### **Einstein, Mozart, and Ethical Culture**

*Gerald Ranck, Music Director*  
*(Jon Liechty, guest pianist)*  
Patricia Bruder Debrovner Presides

### **March 30**

#### **Unity and Diversity**

*Andra Miller, President*  
Chris Bernhardt Presides

The **Memorial Service** for **Dr. Sheldon Ackley**, NYSEC's beloved former Leader, will be held here at the Society on Sunday, March 9, at 2:00 pm, in Ceremonial Hall.

## **March Happenings**

**Conversation With the Leader–Wednesday, March 5, 6:00 pm**, Senior Leader Tony Hileman invites all members to discuss their thoughts on the future of Ethical Culture. *(See page 5)*

**Annual Pledge Party–Friday, March 14, 6:00–8:00 pm.** *(See page 6)*

**Dedication of Jean Somerville Kotkin Memorial Terrace–Sunday, March 23, 2:00 pm.** Dr. Anne Klaeyesen will speak and we'll also hear remarks by Dr. Matthew Ies Spetter.

## **President's Notes**

*Andra Miller*



As we move on into the year, it is clear to me that we have made good progress in the seven months since the new officers took charge. To remind you, your officers are Andra Miller, President; Margaretha Jones, Vice President; Steve Schultz, Secretary; and Bob Berger, Treasurer. With the rest of the Board and the help of the staff, we're energetically carrying out the tasks of administration and governance of the New York Society for Ethical Culture.

One of those tasks is setting up a program to bring in the pledges of our members for 2008. A team of Trustees headed by Heather Grady is planning pledge campaign activ-  
*(Continued on page 2)*

## **From the Leader's Desk**

*Tony Hileman, Senior Leader*

### **Restoring Justice**



*"While opinions concerning right and wrong vary, there has never yet been found a people who do not realize that something is right and something else wrong, and who do not feel mystically, mightily, inexplicably bound to do the right and shun the wrong."–Felix Adler*

The internal moral compass of which Adler spoke, and on which most of us rely in determining what's fair and what's not, has been failing us. What once seemed "second nature" to us now requires close examination and thought. Part of the difficulty is that the decisions themselves are becoming more trying. Optimistically, it can be argued that along with a sharper sense of what's right and what's wrong comes the challenge of right versus right.

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 Dr. Marc A. Bernstein, Archivist  
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 Barbara Litke, Poetry Editor  
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 Rita Chawla, Director of Family Programs  
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 Gerald Ranck, Music Director  
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**United Social Services, Inc.  
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 Margaretha Jones, Vice Chair  
 David Leiman, Immediate Past Chair and Financial Officer

Paul Berman  
 Henry Bunch  
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 Program and Board Development, David Leiman, Chair

**Working Groups' Coordinators:**

DNA Project: David Leiman  
 Scholarships: Valerie Leiman  
 Soccer Program: Henry Bunch  
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 Women's Shelter: Dr. Maria Fridman  
 Homeless Artists Workshop: Dr. Maria Fridman  
 Brochure Update: Lucile Kleiman and Margaretha Jones

**President's Notes**

*(Continued from page 1)*

ities—and you will be hearing about them soon, if you haven't already.

So far, 10 members have committed to a pledge amount for this year, and seven have already paid their 2008 pledge. This is out of a current total of 223 members. As one member told me, "The money we give is for the ongoing operations through the year, so I pay my pledge in the beginning, so that what isn't spent now can earn the Society interest for its expenses through the year."

I have to say that I don't do it that way. I pay weekly, with a check in the Sunday donation basket. Some of us don't have the funds in a lump sum to give at the beginning of the year, and can give more by doing it piecemeal. I have a request for you, however. We find that when small amounts are given on a regular basis by credit card, the amount the Society receives is severely eroded because of the charges levied per transaction by the credit companies. If you can make your pledge contributions by writing checks, it would benefit the Society much more than doing it by credit card—that is, unless those credit card amounts are big-time! If you

can't increase your credit card monthly amount, can you make larger payments on a quarterly basis? In any event, you'll be hearing soon about making your 2008 pledge.

Several members have expressed concern about the recruitment of a new Leader, as Tony Hileman will be leaving the first week of October. I would like to reassure you that the Board is actively engaged in setting a procedure for the search. We've discussed the options with leadership representatives of the American Ethical Union, and they have assured us that taking our time and doing it right is of the utmost importance. We agree, of course. They also said that they stand ready to fill in any gaps for speakers or counselors. So please be confident that the process is working and we will not be cast adrift.

Now, for some fun stuff. The new Membership Cultivation Committee (MCC, full name: "Membership Cultivation, Motivation, and Retention Committee") is proposing the following activities: a meeting with the Map Society; a half-day performance of Louis Carroll's *Alice in Wonderland* in concert with the Ethical School, if possible; a "Welcoming Training" session; a lay-led series of eight class/discussions on the history and philosophy of

Ethical Culture; a history book discussion group; a free book and magazine circulation shelf and table in the Social Hall on Sundays; and more special filipps for our members. The MCC meetings are open to members and guests; look in the Sunday brochure for the next meeting date (the time is always 7:30 pm), or talk with any of the committee members: Sy Amkraut, Janice Buzby, Sue Dye, Chris Everett, Hugh McGuire, Helen Mecs, Law'nence Miller, and Rich Sander.

Our new Development and Communications Director, Julie Blutstein, is delighted with her office and is busy adding her personal touches, but she's busier looking into the possibilities for grants and other fundraising opportunities; firming up our relationships with partner organizations like WBAI, WNYC, The Nation, and others; and becoming knowledgeable about Ethical Culture and our Society. She's excited, as are the rest of us, with all the possibilities for accomplishing wonderful things here at the New York Society for Ethical Culture. And we're very happy to have her aboard.

Here's to the fine year we're going to have! And thanks to each of you for the part you play in making our future.

## Leader's Desk

*(Continued from page 1)*

There's some truth in that, but mostly I think our slow slide from justice has been driven by three factors, none of which constitutes a cataclysmic event: extremism that justifies the unjustifiable, a seemingly pragmatic apathy, and a need for equanimity in a troubled world.

Radical ideology, both religious and political, permeates public debate

and action. Extreme arguments and beliefs have been used to justify killing, immorality, and lawlessness in the name of various conceptions of religion and country. Reason and compassion are trampled as powerful crusading factions go about imposing god and government on the unwilling.

Across the spectrum of relations, from commercial to personal, the concept of "unfair" has given way to that of "undiscovered." Whatever you can get away with goes. Fleece your business partners, betray stakeholders in commerce or community, crib on an exam—it's all okay, so long as you don't get caught. The attitude that "everybody does it so I have to, too" has resulted in an apathy toward even simple moral concepts like "don't lie, don't cheat, don't steal."

Is it any wonder that amid the surrounding moral chaos we go to great and ill-advised lengths to maintain peace and equanimity in our personal lives, that we place peace above justice in our relations with others?

All this didn't happen overnight and it won't be rectified tomorrow, no matter how hard we try. But it isn't going to cure itself, either. It is the posture of Ethical Culture that the solution rises from the bottom up. Our prime moral postulate—act so as to elicit the best in others and thereby in thyself—is based on the understanding that our culture is made up of the small, almost imperceptible ethical acts that occur individual-to-individual.

Our personal interactions impact our broader relationships which, in turn, affect public behavior which, in turn, can restore the balance of peace and justice in the national and global arenas. It all begins with us. Justice, especially on a small scale, requires

transparency. That means being honest with each other even when it risks disagreement that can threaten our personal peace.

This is an election year and one thing we each can do is demand just such openness, honesty, fairness, and justice from those we elect. In return, those elected need to trust the electorate enough to exhibit these traits boldly and consistently. That takes moral courage, it takes integrity, and it takes dignity, all things we have a right to demand of those who put themselves forward to lead.

The restoration of justice to our lives and to our world begins with the decisions we make. It is time we decide to "do the right thing" ourselves and, at the very least, demand that those in whom we place our trust "shun the wrong."

## Sunday Morning Meetings

**11:15 AM—Auditorium**

**March 2—Moral Courage: The Pilot Light of Ethical Action**

*Tony Hileman, Senior Leader*

We live in a world wracked by ideological extremism both religious and political; a world divided by insolence, intolerance, and instability; a world characterized by tyranny, totalitarianism, and terrorism. Spurred by unjust social conditions, people of strong and undeviating conscience have responded with moral courage.

Righting social wrongs was one of the founding inspirations of Ethical Culture and remains an expression of our ethical religion today. Moral courage is the pilot light of ethical action—it burns low and steady within us, ever ready to ignite social action that can

restore justice to our public and private lives—for ourselves, for our community, for our nation, and for our world.

*“Suddenly and surprisingly we can become an example to others—and those others to us. They hand us along, become a source of moral encouragement to us, arouse and stir us, and move us to do things when we might otherwise not be provoked, and they have the will to act in pursuit of purposes we have come to regard as important.”*

—Robert Coles, *Lives of Moral Leadership*

**March 9—Common Ground: The Earth as Humanist Icon**

*Hugh Taft-Morales*

Reflecting on the first photograph of the earth taken from beyond the moon, Archibald MacLeish wrote in *The New York Times* that it was an image with whose help “man may discover what he really is.” It reveals a truth that we ignore at our own peril: “To see the earth as we now see it, small and blue and beautiful in that eternal silence where it floats, is to see ourselves as riders on the earth together, brothers on that bright loveliness in the unending night—brothers who see now they are truly brothers.”

This image, generated by rational science yet emotionally and aesthetically inspiring, offers common ground to people of diverse philosophical perspectives. Not only does it remind all human brothers and sisters of our interconnectedness, it reflects a profound philosophical link between beauty and fragility. The image of the earth reflects the existential limitations central to human existence, and should continue to serve as a humanist icon—an enduring, sacred symbol worthy of spiritual devotion.

Hugh Taft-Morales taught philosophy and history at the Edmund Burke School

in Washington, D. C., for 19 years. He left teaching in the summer of 2006 to train for leadership in Ethical Culture. He is also in a three-year leadership certification program with the Humanist Institute. Hugh served on the Board of the Washington Ethical Society (WES) from 2002 to 2006 (the last year as president of the Board) and served as WES Pledge Chair the following year. He also served for two three-year terms on the American Philosophical Association’s Committee for Pre-College Instruction and wrote a booklet published by the APA, *So You Want to Teach Pre-Collegiate Philosophy?*

**March 16—Infinite Interrelatedness: The Metaphysics of Ethics**

*Kate Lovelady, Leader, Ethical Society of St. Louis*

The founder of Ethical Culture, Felix Adler, defined spirituality as humans becoming aware of our “infinite interrelatedness.” Ethical Culture’s assertion of universal human worth grew out of a long discussion in philosophy about human nature that asked: How are we different from other animals? Are we more than material beings? On what can we ground our beliefs in worth and dignity and human rights? Adler’s struggle with these issues will lead us to perhaps the hardest question in ethics: What is our ethical responsibility to others, and how do we live with that sense of responsibility and use it to inspire us?

Kate Lovelady is a product of the New York City public school system and graduated Phi Beta Kappa from Northwestern University with a degree in poetry. She enjoyed a brief career in publishing and was named the first poet laureate of Carrboro, North Carolina, where she also discovered Ethical Culture. After attending the

American Ethical Union Lay Leadership Summer School in 2000, she became inspired to pursue professional Ethical Culture leadership. She studied pastoral counseling through the Post-Graduate Center for Mental Health in New York and humanist thought and leadership through the Humanist Institute and Humanists in Leadership Training. After internships at the Riverdale-Yonkers Society for Ethical Culture; NYSEC; and the Ethical Society of Austin, Texas, in 2005 she became Leader of the Ethical Society of St. Louis, currently the largest in the nation. She is also on the staff of the AEU summer school.

**March 23—Einstein, Mozart, and Ethical Culture**

*Gerald Ranck, Music Director (Jon Liechty, guest pianist)*

Apart from his towering achievements as a scientist of Newtonian caliber, Albert Einstein was a profoundly wise poet-philosopher who played the violin; spoke and wrote voluminously on music, art, and religion; and championed the inherent dignity and worth of every human being. In many ways, he epitomizes the near-ideal representation of what I understand Ethical Culture to be all about. We will celebrate this unique human being (the “Mozart” of science) with music by three of his favorite composers for piano duet (Bach, Mozart, and Schubert), and offer a brief examination of his remarkable imagination.

**March 30—Unity and Diversity**  
*Andra Miller, President*

When members are asked why they chose Ethical Culture, a common response is that they enjoy the pleasure of coming to meetings and spending time with “like-minded” individuals.

Does limiting our socializing to people who believe as we do make for a full life? Not according to Dr. Felix Adler. When explaining one of his favorite descriptions of the human universe, he spoke about “the Ethical Manifold,” a concept that presents “the importance of holding fast to diversity as indefeasible,” while at the same time “stressing the unity.” It is this concept that Adler said is the first principle and rule of ethics, a pattern from which he derived Ethical Culture’s main guide to conduct, “the Supreme Moral Rule.” This talk will explore the value of unity, uniqueness, and diversity as presented by Adler and how his ideas fit into our world today.

In addition to serving as NYSEC’s President, Andra Miller is on the American Ethical Union Board and is also chair of AEU’s Board Development Committee. She trained for Society volunteer work at the Lay Leadership Summer School of 2004. She has since presented an address on Felix Adler’s “Supreme Moral Rule” at this Society and also at the Ethical Culture Society of Bergen County, as well as a talk, “Goodbye 2006,” on the activist legacy of the New York Society for Ethical Culture.

## Conversation With the Leader

*Tony Hileman, Senior Leader*

Our next dialog will take place on **Wednesday, March 5, 6:00 pm**, when we will focus on the religious posture of Ethical Culture in its early years, and how that intent informs our Movement today. All members are invited to come and share your thoughts on this and other important aspects of our ethical life together.

*“If we put aside the materialistic explanations of morality, and see the majesty, the inexplicable augustness of it, we shall find that, in the moral life itself, in the moral experience itself, we possess religion.”—Felix Adler, *The Religion of Duty*, 1905*

## Early Sunday 10 AM

**March 2—Singing Practice**—Whether your voice is big or small, everyone is welcome. Led by Pat Debrovner and Jerry Ranck, we’ll practice the songs we sing on Sunday mornings, and get valuable tips to improve our singing technique. It’s a lot of fun, so join us! Ceremonial Hall.

**March 9—Colloquy: “Courage”**—Phyllis Kreuttner presides. Room 408.

**March 16—Poetry Readings**—In celebration of Women’s History Month, we will be reading poems by women. Won’t you join us? Cheryl Gross presides. Room 408.

**March 16—Singing Practice**—Ceremonial Hall.

**March 23**—No program.

**March 30—Coffee ’n Chat.** Room 408.

## Sunday Afternoon 1:45 PM (Except as noted)

**March 2—PIC: Speaker Judith Karpova, former U.S. Human Shield: Five Years Later.** Five years ago, writer and computer consultant Judith Karpova traveled to Iraq as part of the Truth, Peace, and Justice Human Shield Project to protest the impending war and to meet, protect, and write about ordinary Iraqi people. The group included nearly 400 people

from 30 countries. The U.S. Treasury Department has been prosecuting Judith since her return. Eric Volpe presides. For more information go to <http://www.nysec.org/sitemap/ethical-action/public-issues-committee/>.

**March 9—Memorial Service for Dr. Sheldon Ackley.** 2:00 pm, in Ceremonial Hall.

**March 16—Life With Health.** Jacqueline Pope presides. Room 514.

**March 23—Dedication of the Jean Somerville Kotkin Memorial Terrace.** Ruth Cohen and Sheila Abrams Kleinwald preside. 2:00 pm. Ceremonial Hall.

**March 30—Community Meeting.** Room 514.

## Board Meeting Highlights

*Sheila Abrams Kleinwald*

At the February 4 Board meeting, the Trustees welcomed our new **Director of Development and Communications**, Julie Blutstein. Julie will work on fundraising, community connections, cosponsored programs, publicity and marketing.

We are still looking for a person to fill the **Membership Associate** position. In the meantime, Suzy Frazer continues to assist us on a part-time basis.

Dr. James Farer and Dr. Phyllis Harrison-Ross were approved as co-chairs of the **Finance Committee**. Dr. Harrison-Ross reported that committee members are studying the topic of Society endowments.

A representative of our auditing firm reported that the audit of our **2007 financial records** showed them to be in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles.

Dr. Patricia Cohen, chair of the **Nominating Committee**, informed the Board of the Society's by-laws requirement that two of the five trustees to be elected this spring be people not currently on the Board.

There was discussion about the criteria for choosing a new **Leader**, followed by consideration of the process for developing a search committee. The consensus was to choose a committee of two trustees and five members-at-large. A letter will be sent to Society members to explain the process and request their participation.

Heather Grady will chair this year's **Pledge Committee**. The other members are Bob Berger, Maria Fridman, and Margaretha Jones. It was noted that we suffer because many of our members contribute far less than the typical membership donation to similar organizations. Also, members may not be aware that the first hundred dollars of every pledge must be remitted to the American Ethical Union. Members should be informed that Sunday collection contributions are meant to be in addition to the membership pledge amount (unless placed in an envelope specifically marked as pledge money and signed by the member.)

Tony Hileman is scheduled to speak about how Ethical Culture informs the moral life at the Williams Residence, on Wednesday, February 27.

**House Committee** chair Bob Berger reported that the total "greening" of our building is not financially possible without a great influx of money. We are implementing greener elements and procedures as we are able to do so. Our ancient and complex heating system is still being studied to see how we can improve it.

The **Sunday Program Committee** will be reorganized for next season.

**Reports to the Board** by the Senior Leader, the President, the Executive Director, the Treasurer, other staff members, and various committee chairpersons are transmitted by email and available in print at the beginning of each Board meeting.

Interested members are welcome to attend Board meetings, which usually take place on the first Monday of the month in the Adler Study, Room 514, at 6:30 pm. But there are exceptions. To verify the date of a particular month's meeting, call Gloria Chandler at the Society, 212-874-5210, ext. 117, 9:30 am to 1:30 pm, or 2:30 to 5:30 pm.

## Pledge Party!

*Julie Blutstein*

Please join us at NYSEC's 2008 Pledge Party on Friday, March 14, as we make plans for an exciting year ahead. We'll have hors d'oeuvres, drinks and entertainment. Ceremonial Hall, 6:00-8:00 pm. Please RSVP by March 10, to Suzy Frazer, 212-874-5210, ext. 113, or [sfrazier@nysec.org](mailto:sfrazier@nysec.org).

## New Director of Development and Communications

*Julie Blutstein*

As the new NYSEC Director of Development and Communications, my primary role will be advancing awareness of and raising funds for the Society and its programs.

I have over a decade of experience in the nonprofit community, working for several organizations on fundraising, special events, and communications.



*Julie Blutstein*

Most recently, I served as the Foundation Manager for the Toy Industry Foundation, the philanthropic arm of the North American Toy Industry. I raised money for children in need, managed all of the foundation's communications efforts, and led a toy drive initiative that brought in millions of dollars in toys for children throughout North America. Previously, I produced large-scale fundraising events for organizations including the Children's Storefront, the International Rescue Committee, and the Partnership for the Homeless, as well as various other major nonprofit organizations.

I'm really excited to be part of the NY Society family and I look forward to working with you.

## Our Ethical Family

*Suzy Frazer*

Several members and friends turned up at the February 2 **Cultured Comedy Club**, which was very successful and right on! Another Comedy Club will no doubt be held before the presidential election by popular demand!

The next **Orientation** for newcomers will be held on Thursday, March 13, at 6:00 pm. If you know of any members who may be interested in attending, please let them know about it.

Member **Donna Pang** (who also works for the AEU) was struck by a van on February 1. She is now at home recovering as of Friday, February 15. The Caring Committee has arranged for flowers to be sent to her, and we'll give you more information about her condition just as soon as we have it.

**P.S. to all members.** Please let me know if you need to receive an updated Member Directory.

## Membership Survey Results

*Henryka Komanska*

Every few years, we survey our members about the Society's various functions. We have completed the 2007 survey, for which we received nearly 100 replies, and we thank everyone who participated. The first thing we learned is that we need to do a better job of publicizing our many activities; some of them were unknown to some respondents. The following are just a few survey findings, but please be assured that your Board of Trustees has carefully reviewed the full report and your concerns are being taken into account in its plans and actions.

One result of the report has been that there now is a table staffed by a member of the Board at the Social Hour (hurray to Dr. Phyllis Harrison-Ross for organizing and steadfastly supporting this). It should now be easier for members to make their ideas known to the Board. Please stop by and share your concerns and/or ideas with a Board member.

Our strength and vitality as a community depend on how well we do on what matters to us as members. You told us that the greatest opportunities for improvement are in increasing collaboration with other organizations, helping members in personal and ethical growth, guiding ethical behavior, helping visitors see "what's in it for them," providing members with opportunities for involvement in programs, and increasing diversity in membership (including having a sufficient number of younger members).

Younger (18) and older (54) respondents had similar concerns. However, younger members gave lower ratings

to how much Sunday addresses guide ethical behavior, whether there is sufficient opportunity for ethical action, and having an adequately diverse membership. This younger group gave more importance to the leader's qualities of "inspiring to ethical action" and "promoting enthusiasm and community."

These survey findings have been shared with the Membership Cultivation Committee and will influence our programming. If you are interested and have the skills necessary, or would like to develop them, that would help us address these areas. Please talk to any of the Board members and committee chairs about this; most of them attend Sunday meetings regularly. You can also find their names on our website, [www.NYSEC.org](http://www.NYSEC.org), or call the Leader's office for information.

The survey respondents' comments showed a real desire to participate fully in all aspects of the Society and the perception that in some areas the members may be too cliquish. Clearly, there is a need for better communication regarding ways in which individuals can take part in Society activities, programs, and decisions. For example, all members can attend meetings of the Board of Trustee (6:30 pm, first Monday of the month) and are given an opportunity to give their input into the discussion. Our biannual Community Meetings are meant to provide a regular forum for discussion among members and the Board. The Board is looking to all members for ideas, proposals, and actions that would provide greater opportunities for both old and new members to get involved and for greater cohesion within the Society.

There was also great interest in outreach to and greater involvement

with the larger community and for special events with like-minded organizations. The qualities required in a Leader also called for such an involvement. Many respondents wrote of the need to reach out to younger people and to develop programs of interest to this age group. Interestingly, many respondents did not appear to be familiar with the work of the Social Service Board and Public Issues Committee, which address crucial social and ethical action issues from different perspectives. As a result of this finding, Social Service Board members now have an information table every Sunday during the social hour. You will also be pleased to learn that the Sunday School Committee is developing a program for teens and that Rich Sanders of the Membership Cultivation Committee is developing a proposal for an evening program for younger people.

The survey provided rich feedback regarding our Sunday programs. Responses ranged from wanting "less of a church orientation" to having a more "lively, emotional, profound service." There is interest in hearing more diversity of views by speakers ("too much preaching to the converted; our assumptions should be challenged"). All of this feedback was shared with the Sunday Program Committee. Copies of the full report are available on request from Pat Cohen.

## NY's Rockefeller Drug War: The Human and Fiscal Price We Pay

Join us on Thursday, March 6, at 7:00 pm, in the Auditorium, for a panel dis-

cussion and call to action cosponsored by NYSEC, The Women's City Club of New York, and Drop the Rock.

The event will spotlight 2008 as the 35<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the signing of these draconian drug laws. Organizers from Drop the Rock will talk with members of the audience about becoming involved in the campaign's efforts. Speakers will include NYS Assembly Member Jeffrion Aubry, Albany County District Attorney David Soares, Correctional Association of NY Executive Director Robert Gangi, and community activist Cheri O'Donohue. Admission is free, although donations will be accepted.

## Film Forum

*Sue Dye*

Our popular monthly Film Forum series will return on Friday, March 7, 7:00 pm. I will serve as moderator.

Our first film will be *The Gods Must Be Crazy* (1980), hailed as a classic comedy about Africa, which subtly challenges the belief that white civilization has all the answers. It offers an eclectic combination of slapstick, gentle humor, and wonderful music, beautifully photographed and woven into a delightful story about the adventures of a bushman as he journeys to return a Coke bottle he believes one of the gods has dropped from heaven.

The admission fee of \$5.00 will include refreshments.

## The State of Science Education

On Saturday, March 15, we'll present a talk by renowned scientist Richard Dawkins on "The God Delusion" and

the state of science education. This free public lecture is cosponsored by NYSEC; the Center for Inquiry—New York City; Atheists, Agnostics, and Freethinkers; and Columbia Atheists and Agnostics. It will be held in the Auditorium at 7:00 pm. For more information, call 212-504-2945, or contact [nyc@centerforinquiry.net](mailto:nyc@centerforinquiry.net).

## WBAI Talk: Right vs Power

*Andra Miller*

We've all heard the term, "to pull rank." It means to prevail in a disagreement not because of a superior argument, but because of claiming personal superiority—the "I'm right because I've got the power" argument.

Dr. Robert Fuller, author of two books on the subject, *Somebodies and Nobodies* and *All Rise*, will discuss what he calls "rankism" on WBAI (99.5 FM) on March 28, at 11:00 am. Dr. Fuller believes that this is the chief remaining obstacle to achieving liberty and justice for all, and proposes a "dignitarian" society in which rankism is no longer tolerated.

Tune in to learn how the politics of dignity can put the "we" back into "We, the people." According to Dr. Fuller, the next natural step in the progress of democracy is the building of a dignitarian society. Raising our consciousness about rankism helps clear up confusion in our personal dealings with others.

## PIC in Action

*Abe Markman*

Since October 2006, the Society has adopted seven new positions introduced by PIC. Here is an action report.

I. Opposition to the War in Iraq. We provided significant input to the text of the resolution on the war adopted at the AEU's 2006 Chicago Assembly. Ethical Society members participated in four anti-war marches, and several action alerts were posted on the EC weekly events calendar, which is seen by about 2,500 people each week.

*Movement noted:* Although the US is still mired in Iraq, the war has become largely unpopular, affecting congressional and presidential elections.

II. Opposition to Taking Military Action against Iran. NYSEC's resolution against taking military action against Iran was printed in the National Service Conference newsletter. An article for submission in the AEU Dialogue is being written. Two action alerts were posted.

*Movement noted:* A December National Intelligence Service Estimate indicated that Iran had halted efforts to develop a nuclear bomb in 2003.

III. Global Warming. The Ethical Culture Society's Global Warming position is being considered for adoption at the April 2008 AEU Austin Assembly. In addition, we introduced Ethical's House Committee members to an energy efficiency expert. Action alerts were posted.

*Movement noted:* New federal legislation was passed aimed at raising vehicle fuel economy standards and reducing energy consumption. Consideration of energy efficiency at Ethical is in an early stage. Success may depend on cooperation with the school, and an infusion of money to match a state grant.

IV. Stem Cell Research. Action alerts were posted.

*Movement noted:* Congress passed enabling legislation, but it was vetoed.

V. Child Health Coverage. A “snail” mailing was addressed to NY Senators aimed at increasing the number of children eligible to be enrolled by raising the acceptable income level of their families from 200 percent of the poverty level to 300 percent. Significant but informal lobbying with elected officials took place.

*Movement noted:* There are two situations here. Congress passed enabling legislation twice, but it was vetoed twice. But Governor Elliot Spitzer is working on a state law that would enroll children in families at 400 percent of the poverty level. Notwithstanding, the Social Service Board invited a nonprofit agency to enroll the children it serves in S-CHIP.

VI. Paid Family Leave. In December three NYSEC members joined a Paid Family Leave lobbying campaign in Albany. Several action alerts were posted. Abe Markman gave a platform address last September and in December he was interviewed on the “Ethics on the Air” program by Dr. Phyllis Harrison-Ross about this and other family-friendly issues.

*Movement noted:* Legislation passed the NY Assembly and is pending in the NY Senate.

VII. Paid Sick Leave. The Paid Family Leave Coalition is considering a campaign to pass a Paid Sick Leave bill in the New York City Council. If such a campaign is started, PIC will join that effort.

*Movement noted:* Paid Sick Leave passed in San Francisco, and legislation is pending in several states.

Keep tuned, because by the time you read this, a month will have passed, and there will be more news.



## How the Brain Works—A Talk

Noted psychologist and neuroscientist, Dr. Kamran Fallahpour spoke to a large audience here on January 27. He discussed the workings of the brain and described today’s assessment and treatment techniques.



## Save the Dates!

### Earthquake Talk

On Wednesday, March 12, at 6:30 pm, Mark Monmonier, distinguished professor of geography will speak on Mapping Hazards in America: Earthquakes, Coastal Storms and Sea Level Rise, using a variety of maps.

The talk, in Ceremonial Hall, is free and open to the public.

### Award Presentation

On Sunday, April 6, at 11:15 am, the New York Society for Ethical Culture will present its Community Service Award to Michael O’Neal, New York City restaurateur.

The ceremony will be held in the Auditorium, and a reception will follow in Social Hall.

## Upcoming AEU Events

### April 17–20 AEU’s 2008 Assembly, Austin, Texas

Join members from across the country, in Austin, to socialize, learn, teach, and celebrate our history and our ethical values.

For more information call the AEU at 212-873-6500.

### August 9-16 AEU Lay Leadership Summer School

This is one of the Ethical Movement’s most successful programs, and 2008 will mark its twelfth year. We hope you will attend.

Brochures giving more information are being sent to Ethical Societies.

## Ring in the New Year!

A New Year's celebration doesn't just happen once. Here at the NY Society, we also celebrate on New Year's Day. On the afternoon of January 1, members and their friends partied again, with lively conversation, food, wine, games, prizes, and lots of good cheer.



*Members and friends celebrated New Year's Day at our party in Ceremonial Hall*



*Patricia Bruder Debrovner is a triumphant raffle winner*



*New member Joan Klips — Welcome!*



*Party decorators Bonnie Bean, Barbara Levenson, and Michelle Rickborn, consult with NYSEC's own Jason Vasquez of our maintenance staff*

# March 2008

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
<p><b>Great Books: March 5–Mill, Utilitarianism</b> Plato, <i>Symposium</i></p> <p><b>ECRDG: (Ethical Culture Reading Discussion Group)</b> March 12–Jose Saramego, <i>Blindness</i></p>						
2 10:00 am–Singing Practice 11:00 am–Ethics for Children 11:15 am–Morning Meeting 12:45 pm–Social Hour 1:45 pm–PIC: Judith Karpova speaker	3 <b>April 2008 Newsletter Deadline</b> 6:30 pm–Board of Trustees 6:30 pm–Monday Writing Workshop	4	5 6:00 pm–Men's Group 6:00 pm–Conversation With The Leader 7:30 pm–Great Books	6 7:00 pm–Thursday Writing Workshop 7:00 pm–NY's Rockefeller Drug War Panel Discussion	7 7:00 pm–Film Forum	8 9:30 am and 1:30 pm Supervised Visitation
<b>9 Daylight Saving Time Begins</b> 10:00 am–Colloquy 11:00 am–Ethics for Children 11:15 am–Morning Meeting 12:45 pm–Social Hour 2:00 pm–Memorial Service for Dr. Sheldon Ackley	10 6:30 pm–Monday Writing Workshop	11 6:00 pm–Women's Group	12 3:00 pm–ECRDG 6:30 pm–Mapping Hazards in America	13 6:00 pm–Orientation 7:00 pm–Thursday Writing Workshop	14 6:00 pm–Pledge Party	15 9:30 am and 1:30 pm Supervised Visitation 7:00 pm–Richard Dawkins
16 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 1:45 pm–Life with Health	17 6:30 pm–Monday Writing Workshop	18 6:00 pm–Drawing Class	19 6:00 pm–Socrates Café 7:30 pm–Great Books: Great Conversations I	20 7:00 pm–Thursday Writing Workshop	21 6:00 pm–Ethics on the Air (WBAL-99.5 FM)	22 No Supervised Visitation Today
23 11:00 am–Ethics for Children 11:15 am–Morning Meeting 12:45 pm–Social Hour 2:00 pm–Dedication of the Jean Somerville Kotkin Memorial Terrace	24 6:30 pm–Social Service Board	25 6:00 pm–Drawing Class	26 6:00 pm–Ethical Culture Today?	27	28	29 9:30 am and 1:30 pm Supervised Visitation
30 10:00 am–Coffee 'n' Chat 11:00 am–Ethics for Children 11:15 am–Morning Meeting 12:45 pm–Social Hour 1:45 pm–Community Meeting	31			<p><b>Great Books: Great Conversations I</b> March 19–Saul Bellow, <i>Seize the Day</i></p>		

**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  
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