

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—(Except as noted)
Auditorium

March 1

**Failure Is Impossible: The Life
And Work of Susan B. Anthony**

Dr. Anne Klaeysen, Leader
Muriel Berger Presides

March 8

Obama, the World Citizen—and Us

Dr. Joseph Chuman, Leader
Chris Everett Presides

March 15

**The Women Are Coming!—
The Brooklyn Women's Chorus**

Dr. Anne Klaeysen Presides

March 22—11:30 AM

SpringFest 2009

Curt Collier Presides

March 29

**The Human Comedy (How Can We
Be Committed to Human Dignity
And Worth After We Take A Careful
Look Around Us?)**

Dr. Howard B. Radest
*Dean Emeritus of the
Humanist Institute*

Dr. Judith D. Wallach Presides

*Bring a
Friend on
Sunday*

March Happenings

In a follow-up to our December workshop on **Nonviolent Communication**, on **Sunday, March 1, at 1:45 pm**, in Ceremonial Hall, Leader Dr. Anne Klaeysen will lead us in creating a practice group to help us learn and incorporate the principles of nonviolent communication in our lives. (See page 5)

On **Sunday, March 8, 11:15 am**, in the Auditorium, Dr. Joseph Chuman will speak about President Barack Obama and his world view and explore what the President's personal identity suggests about our national identity. (See page 4)

Join us on **Wednesday, March 25, 7:00 pm**, in the Auditorium, for the first of our revived **Advocacy Forums**, a series of informative panels on public issues. Moderated by Leader Dr. Joseph Chuman, our distinguished panelists will focus on the abuses of power during the Bush administration and what the Obama White House needs to do about them. (See page 7)

President's Notes

Andra Miller



So, here we come into March—and when this month is over, we'll be a quarter of the way through the year. Oh my, my, how time does fly.

I'm taking a breather this month, relaxing after the efforts involved in working with five other Societies to put together last month's Darwin Day Family Festival. Here at the New York Society, we seldom emphasize "family" and I, for one, enjoyed seeing the 45 happy children we had at the event, as well as having members of other area Societies celebrating here with us in New York.

(Continued on page 2)

From the Leader's Desk

Dr. Anne Klaeysen



Hail to the Nonbelievers!

"For we know that our patchwork heritage is a strength, not a weakness. We are a nation of Christians and Muslims, Jews and Hindus, and nonbelievers. We are shaped by every language and culture, drawn from every end of this Earth."

—President Barack Obama, Inaugural Address, January 20, 2009

"Believe or disbelieve as ye list—we shall at all times respect every honest conviction. But be one with us where there is nothing to divide—in action. Diver-

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President's Notes

(Continued from page 1)

I think we need to step up the family angle, as there are lots of kids in the neighborhood who need the super classes that Rita Chawla, our Director of Family Programs, and her assistant, Jamie Cid, conduct every Sunday under the guidance of our Leaders. Meg Chapman and her committee, the Sunday School/Family Programs Committee, are busy thinking up new ways to entice new families to join our Society, and are certainly open to any suggestions you have about special events they could plan—or ways to increase publicity for their programs.

We welcome your ideas throughout our Society—and so that you'll know to whom to talk, let me introduce (and again thank) our committee chairs (if you were at the February 15 Community Meeting, you met many of them): *Audit, Bylaws*, and co-chair of *Finance*, Jim Farer; *Awards*, Jerry Chamlin; *Building and Nominating*, Bob Berger (*House Subcommittee*, Bonnie Bean); *Caring*, Virginia Scherer; *Co-Sponsored Programs*, Betsy Ungar and Barbara Levenson; *Endowment* and co-chair of *Finance*, Dr. Phyllis Har-

ison-Ross (*Bequests Subcommittee*, Ruth Cohen); *Ethical Action*, Josh Adams; *Ethical Action Communication*, Eric Norlander; *Internet*, Tom Weishaar; *Newsletter*, Selma Friedman; *Personnel*, and *Scholarship* co-chair, Henryka Komanska; *Pledge Drive*, Heather Grady; *Public Issues*, Abe Markman; *Scholarship*, Joe Marvel, co-chair; *Sunday Programs*, Leaders (Subcommittees: *Music*, Pat Debrovner; *Greeters*, Amy Schwarz; *Newcomers*, Carol Rost; *Program Quotes*, Muriel Berger and Carole Chamlin; *Charities*, Meg Chapman; *Lunch* co-chairs, Sheila Kleinwald, Eva Yachnes, Alex Mogieleff, Moira Whittington and Helen Mecs; *Younger Members*, Janice Buzby; and finally, the new *Program Coordination* chair, Sheila Kleinwald.

In addition to the above, there are the Leaders' committees: Joe Chuman's Advocacy Forum Committee and the various groups Curt Collier has formed to organize our new Earth Rise Meetings (at 10:30 a.m. Sundays, which started last month). So, you see we have a whole lot of exciting volunteer action going on.

Furthermore, though not a committee, but an important adjunct to our Society (as most of you know), we have The United Social Services,

governed by its Social Service Board, whose Chair is Dr. Phyllis Harrison-Ross. All of our ongoing service projects are under their aegis.

We members of the NY Society's Board appreciate the contributions that all the people on our committees and the SSB make to the life of our Society. Because part of your involvement here should include volunteering, I encourage you to ask me about joining a committee. Also, I am developing a list of those of you who are available from time to time for brief-service volunteering. If you are willing to be called when we need someone to stuff envelopes or take on other hour-or-two administrative sorts of tasks, please ask me to add your name to our list of on-call volunteers. Feel free to call me at 212-627-3944.

A new ad hoc committee has been formed to plan a celebration of the 100th Anniversary of the October 23, 1910, dedication of our wonderful building. We want an all-out, huge and exciting event, involving neighbors, local businesses, and all of you. Please give your suggestions for this gala to the Building-100 Anniversary Committee members: Janice Buzby, Meg Chapman, Maria Fridman, Phyllis Harrison-Ross, Sheila Kleinwald, and Frank Prescod.

My special thanks to all who volunteered for the Darwin Day Family Festival. They were: Janice Buzby, Darnell Dawson, Dan Hanson, Henryka Komanska, Helen Mecs, and Matt Sherman on Lobby duty; Carole Chamlin, Barbara Levenson, Law'nence Miller, and Heather Grady (and her daughter, Jemana Theis, and her friend, Tory Brewster) on kids' program duty. I was lax on keeping track of those who volunteered, so apologies to anyone I haven't listed. Please let me know if I left you

out. Anyway, the event was a huge success (see story on page 8).

By the way, the Ides of March is not a bad thing, as suggested by Shakespeare's witches in *Macbeth*. It's simply March 15, five days after my birthday—and don't you forget it! Happy Spring!

Leader's Desk

(Continued from page 1)

sity in the creed, unanimity in the deed! This is that practical religion from which none dissents."

—Dr. Felix Adler, Ethical Culture Founding Address, May 15, 1876

No, he didn't. Yes, he did! President Barack Obama included us! He opened his arms wide on Inauguration Day and acknowledged us as fellow Americans. Shall we tell him that we *are* believers? That we believe in humanity, in the capacity of people for goodness, in a sacred web of human relationships? Through some incredible process of nature, we are here: a conscious, reflective, meaning-making species with a reverence for life and all its possibilities. We are hard-wired to look for patterns and purpose in a random universe. For some people that impulse finds expression in belief in a supernatural deity; for others, it is directed toward finding a better way of living within a diverse community.

I believe that Obama knows that. He understands the subtlety and nuance of belief. His mother, after all, was a humanist, and his grandfather encouraged him to attend a Unitarian church so he would "get five religions in one." But he also

understands that too many Americans are not tolerant of differences. They judge others according to their belief in God—not in the God of many faces and no face or the God of many names and no name, but in their particular brand. Several states still have provisions in their constitutions that forbid "non-believers" from holding public office. For example, in Maryland there is "no religious test . . . required as a qualification for any office of profit or trust in this State, other than a declaration of belief in the existence of God." I want to know which God this is.

According to the Pew Forum's U.S. Religious Landscape Survey, most Americans have a non-dogmatic approach to faith, an openness to a range of religious viewpoints reflecting the great diversity of religious affiliation in this country. Six in ten adults believe in a "personal God" with whom they can have a relationship, but one in four—including half of Jews and Hindus—perceive God as an "impersonal force." And while almost 70 percent of Americans say they are certain of God's existence (whatever form it takes), more than 22 percent are far less certain. The survey also found that 16.1 percent of Americans are unaffiliated with any religion. That's a significant number.

So Obama, unlike past presidents perhaps as far back as the Deists and humanists among our founding fathers, sees everyone and reaches out to everyone. Like Felix Adler, he respects every honest conviction and seeks common ground with those who would work with him to create a better world for all. We Ethical Culturists may not worship a supreme being, but we do engage in what Felix Adler called "*worship*," an act of choosing to

attribute worth to every person, of eliciting the distinctive excellence in others, thereby eliciting our own unique qualities. It is through worship that we create communities of caring and loving people.

After hearing President Obama's welcoming words, I visited the White House web site and sent him a congratulatory email. My postscript read: "How about, for your *next* inauguration, inviting a humanist to give the benediction?" Hail to the Chief!

Sources:

President Barack Obama's Inaugural Address, at <http://www.whitehouse.gov/blog/inaugural-address/>.

U.S. Religious Landscape Survey conducted by Pew Forum, at <http://religions.pewforum.org/comparisons>.

Sunday Morning Meetings

11:15 AM—(Except as noted)
Auditorium

March 1—Failure is Impossible: The Life and Work of Susan B. Anthony
Dr. Anne Klaeysen, Leader

Susan B. Anthony, friend and neighbor of Frederick Douglass, dedicated her life to universal suffrage. She grew up in a progressive Quaker home, where women were encouraged to express themselves, and grew into the role of teacher, reformer, and public speaker. She died before receiving the vote herself, but inspired many women to carry on the fight: "I shall have to stir you and others up. How can you not be all on fire? I really believe I shall explode if some of you young women do not wake up!" Leader Dr. Anne Klaeysen explores Anthony's life and relationships.

March 8—Obama, the World Citizen—and Us

Dr. Joseph Chuman, Leader

Barack Obama is an iconic figure, not only because he is our first African-American President, but also because his identity extends more broadly than the confines of the American nation. In a speech given in Germany last July, Obama proclaimed, "I am a citizen of the world" and in the first interview of his presidency, which he gave to the *al-Arabiya* news service, Obama stated, "I have Muslim members of my family. I have lived in Muslim countries."

Obama is very much a figure fitted for our times. In his personality, identity, and outlook he is a piece with a globalized world. A question we can reflect upon is, What does Obama's personal identity suggest with regard to our national identity? What does it say about how we view ourselves as individuals? Are we comfortable, as Obama seems to be, in traversing different cultures? In our world, which has grown much smaller, need we be? In its exploration of identity, both national and personal, this address will provide some provisional answers to some very consequential questions.

March 15—The Women Are Coming!—The Brooklyn Women's Chorus

Dr. Anne Klaeysen presides

The Brooklyn Women's Chorus, under the direction of singer-songwriter and cultural activist Bev Grant, returns to the NY Society with new songs and stories celebrating the lives and loves of women.

March 22—SpringFest 2009—11:30 AM

Curt Collier presides

The NY Society for Ethical Culture presents SpringFest 2009. This special event, celebrating the return of spring, will feature fun and fellowship activities for the whole family. The program will be led by Curt Collier, and will feature special musical performances by Music Director Gerald Ranck at the piano; Wynne Bennett, from our Earth Rise gathering, on guitar; and Max Zbiral-Teller, also from Earth Rise, on the hammer dulcimer. The program will also include the Ethical Society Chorus, led by Pat Debrovner.

In keeping with the Society's mission of ethical activism, participants are asked to bring vegetable seeds (in unopened packages) to be distributed by Groundwork Hudson Valley on behalf of the Society to community gardens throughout the area. Popular seeds include beans, squash, corn, lettuce, carrots, radishes, cucumbers, and peppers.

March 29—The Human Comedy (How Can We be Committed to Human Dignity and Worth After We Take a Careful Look Around Us?)

Dr. Howard B. Radest

This will be a reflection on the consolations of humanism in a time when events move so fast that reflection seems like a luxury. As we face what will likely be a genuine rebirth of democratic values in our country, we also face two wars, a near-depression, a vigorous and sometimes vicious right-wing in religion and politics, etc. Keeping all of this in perspective isn't easy. But that's what Dr. Radest will explore in his talk.

Dr. Radest, now retired to West Caldwell, NJ, is Dean Emeritus of the Humanist Institute, a member of the

Council of Ethical Culture Leaders, and a former member of the Board of the Association for Moral Education. He is a member of the Highlands Institute for American Religious and Philosophic Thought, served as ethics consultant to Hilton Head Hospital, and was Chair of its Biomedical Ethics Committee; most recently he was Adjunct Professor of Philosophy at the University of South Carolina-Beaufort. He was Director of the Ethical Culture Fieldston School, Professor of Philosophy and Director of the School of American Studies at Ramapo College, and the founder and first chairman of the University Seminar on Moral Education at Columbia University.

Dr. Radest is the author of several books on ethics, including, among others, *Toward Common Ground* (Ungar, 1968); *Can We Teach Ethics?* (Praeger, 1989); *The Devil and Secular Humanism* (Praeger, 1990); *Humanism With a Human Face* (Praeger, 1996); *From Clinic to Classroom—Medical Ethics and Moral Education*, (Praeger, 2000); *Ethics and Public Health in a Time of Terrorism* (Center for Preparedness, School of Public Health, U of SC, 2006); and *Bioethics and the Catastrophic Event* (Lexington Press, 2009, in process).

Early Sunday 10 AM

(Rooms subject to change)

Mar. 1—Singing Practice—All voices, big and small, are welcome. Led by Pat Debrovner and Jerry Ranck, we'll practice the songs we sing on Sunday mornings and get some tips to improve our singing technique. It's a lot of fun, so join us! Ceremonial Hall.

Mar. 8—Colloquy: Change. Harriet Bigus presides. Room 408.

Mar. 15—Poetry Readings—We invite you to come and read a poem, or simply listen. Readers and listeners join in responding, as thoughts and feelings are stirred by the poems. Cheryl Gross presides. Room 408.

Mar. 15—Singing Practice—Led by Pat Debrovner and Jerry Ranck. Ceremonial Hall.

Mar. 29—Coffee 'n Chat. Room 408.

Sunday Afternoon 1:45 PM

Mar. 1—Nonviolent Communication: Creating a Practice Group, with Leader Dr. Anne Klaeyesen. In December 2008, Dr. Klaeyesen offered a workshop on the technique of non-violent communication developed by Marshall Rosenberg, "Introduction to Nonviolent Communication: An Ethical Practice." Many who attended asked for follow-up sessions, so at this workshop we'll explore creating a practice group that will learn and review key concepts, develop fluency in using the process, and support participants in their commitment to nonviolent communication. If you plan to attend, it would be helpful to purchase copies of Rosenberg's book, *Nonviolent Communication: a Language of Life* (Puddle Dancer Press), available in bookstores and online at www.PuddleDancer.com or www.NonviolentCommunication.com. Please register by calling the Leaders' office at 212-874-5210, ext 118. Dr. Anne Klaeyesen presides. Ceremonial Hall.

Mar. 8—PIC. Charles Debrovner, MD, will lead a discussion on **Stem Cell and**

Therapeutic Cloning Research. Abe Markman presides. Ceremonial Hall.

Mar. 15—Life With Health: Being a Member of Your Health Care Team. When you're given a questionnaire to fill out at a doctor's office, are you uncertain of the doses of your medications or the dates on which you had surgery? Do you carry with you a list of this important information? When talking to your doctor in the examining or consultation room, can you remember what symptoms or incidents you've experienced since your last visit?

Keeping an ongoing record of our medical history can be a valuable help to our physicians. Pat Debrovner will offer ideas of how to go about being an informed and responsible patient (location to be announced.)

World Religions Part 1: Walking The Talk

On the first three Wednesdays in March, at 6:30 pm, in Ceremonial Hall, we will hear from three people who are on spiritual journeys within their respective faith traditions. We have had presentations in the past that explored the history and dogma of different religions in an abstract fashion. This series will emphasize the personal: How do these people experience their lives as religious? How do their beliefs inform their actions?

March 4—Buddhism, with Jeffrey L. Chilton, Buddhist monk and counselor at Adelphi University's Student Counseling Center.

March 11—Christianity, with Rev. Osagyefo Uhuru Sekou, National Coordinator, Clergy and Laity Concerned

about Iraq—Harlem, NY. Rev. Sekou is the author of the critically acclaimed *Urbansouls*, which takes a refreshing approach to the spiritual crisis in America. He served on the platform committee for the National Political Hip Hop Convention in 2004 and is a Professor of Preaching at the Seminary Consortium of Urban Pastoral Education in the Graduate Theological Urban Studies Program in Chicago.

March 18—Judaism, with Dr. Carol Ochs, Director of the Graduate School and Adjunct Full Professor of Jewish Religious Thought at Hebrew Union College, New York. Her research, writing, and teaching fall into three categories: Jewish spirituality, comparative religion, and Jewish feminism. In addition to teaching spiritual guidance, Dr. Ochs serves as spiritual guide to rabbinic, cantorial, and Doctor of Ministry students.

Lunch Discussion World Religions Today— Part 1 Thursdays, 12:00 Noon

Bring your lunch and join Leader Dr. Anne Klaeyesen in the Elliott Library. This month, to coincide with our Thursday evening series on comparative religions, we'll explore some contemporary issues in religion around the world. Copies of relevant articles are available in the Leaders' office.

**Mar. 5—The Pope and the
Holocaust Denier**

Mar. 12—Islam in Iraq

Mar. 19—Nonbelievers and Doubters

Mar. 26—Chinese Religiosities



Our Ethical Family

Moe-Swe Myint

Please welcome new member **Michele Costabile Doney**, who is the Coordinator of Math and Science Tutoring at John Jay College of Criminal Justice. Michele was involved with the Long Island Society while she lived there, and she started attending our Sunday Platforms when she moved to the city. She enjoys swimming, chorus, and independent films.

* * *

Everyone who was at the **Pledge Party** on January 23 had a grand old time. This event was held not only to remind our membership of their financial obligations to the Society but also to provide an opportunity for all our members, long-time and new alike, to come together as a community and enjoy good food, drinks, company, and conversation (for a look at the festivities, see page 10.) Leaders Dr. Anne Klaeyesen, Dr. Joseph Chuman, Curt Collier, and the Society's Treasurer, Heather Grady, gave impassioned speeches about how important it is for members to not only share their time and talent, but also their treasure.

Our newest members—those who joined the Society since January, 2008—were formally introduced to the membership at large, to celebrate their becoming a part of the New York Society for Ethical Culture, and were presented with small gift of appreciation. Lively music was provided by the Crickets, an *a cappella* men's chorus, and members danced to piano music provided by Kim Jones, Margaretha's very talented husband. Sheila Kleinwald coordinated the catering of food from Jean Donnay. Sheleigah Grube and Maria Fridman deserve special

thanks for their generous help pre-, post-, and during the event. And, last but not least, kudos go to all the Pledge Committee members for their time, their effort, and their ideas; without them, this event could not have been as successful as it was.

* * *

A reminder to all members: please send in your pledge cards if you haven't already, and thank you!!

* * *

A lovely wine and cheese reception preceded **Ethics and the Theater's** presentation of *The Glass Menagerie*, by Tennessee Williams, on January 28. Susan Horowitz directed the play, Pat Berens narrated, and Alex Bone, Pat Debrovner, Craig Jorczak, and Clare Paterson acted in various roles. Afterward, Muriel Berger led the audience in a lively discussion of the play's ethical issues.

* * *

The next **Prospective Members Reception** is scheduled for Thursday, March 5, at 7:00 pm.

* * *

Finally, we have sad news: former member **Mona Roset**, who joined the Society in 1954, died on January 14. Dr. Bernice Cornyetz recalls that Mona was an enthusiastic member of the women's group at the NY Society. She had some difficulty getting to the monthly meetings, but when she came, she participated actively. Her best friend was Francesca Joelson, who shared some of her interests, i.e., the fashion industry. After Francesca's death, Mona experienced her loss acutely. For the past five years she battled health problems, including emphysema and lung cancer, but she had a great determination to live, and she did, until it was no longer possible. She was 81 at the time of her death. We shall miss Mona very much.

Brooklyn Botanical Garden Walk

Henryka Komanska

To help us prepare for a more vigorous hike in April, let's start the hiking season with a brisk walk in the Brooklyn Botanical Garden on Saturday, March 21. Meet Chris and me at Verdi Park (72nd St. and Broadway) at 9:30 am. We'll take the Seventh Ave. No. 2 subway to Eastern Parkway. Wear comfortable walking shoes and bring a few dollars for refreshments in the Garden's cafe. Rain cancels.

Advocacy Forums Revived—Begin On March 25

Dr. Joseph Chuman, Leader

After a hiatus of five years, the NY Society is reviving our Advocacy Forum series of 2004, perhaps the most notable public achievement of the Society in the past decade. These public forums filled our Auditorium with lively and informative discussions of public issues relating to the abuses of the Religious Right and related events during the Bush administration. Our guests included such notables as Ambassador Joseph Wilson, Amy Goodman, Richard Clarke, Benjamin Barber, and many others. NYSEC's Advocacy Forums were a powerful expression of Ethical Culture's historic prophetic and progressive mission in New York City.

With the changes in the political climate, this revived series will focus on restoring American ideals. The first forum is dedicated to the topic, "Obama

and the Imperial Presidency" and will take place on Wednesday, March 25, at 7:00 pm, in our Auditorium. It will focus on abuses of power during the previous administration and what needs to be done by the Obama White House to redress these transgressions of executive authority. Panelists will include Michael Ratner, President, Center for Constitutional Rights; Elizabeth Holtzman, former Brooklyn D.A. and author of *The Impeachment of George W. Bush*; and Lewis Lapham, former editor of *Harper's* magazine.

The Advocacy Forum has received broad sponsorship from the Center for Constitutional Rights, Nation Books, and *Harper's*. Follow-up workshops are being planned to carry the ideas presented forward into the activist arena. The forum will also present opportunities for meeting fellow progressives, and book signings. Please get the word out to your friends about these exciting and important events. Details about our second forum, to be held on June 17, will be announced.

Ethics and the Theater

Patricia Bruder Debrovner

On Friday evening, March 27, 7:00 to 9:00 pm, Ethics and the Theater will present David Lindsay-Abaire's play, *Rabbit Hole*.

This poignant yet very funny play portrays the effects of a young child's death on his family and on their relationships, both with one another and with others in their lives. With gritty, sometimes grim humor, it explores how we deal with guilt when there's really no one to blame and how we bal-

ance the pain of reminders of our loved ones against the pleasures they give us.

There will be a wine and cheese reception at 6:30 pm preceding the reading. Come and join in the lively discussion of the ethical issues raised by the play that will follow the reading, led by Leader Dr. Anne Klaeyen. Susan Horowitz will direct our cast, which includes Betsy Ungar, Dan Hanson, Bonnie Bean, Maria Demarse, and Craig Jorczak. Our narrator will be Clara Malekshahi. Suggested donation: \$5.

PIC Launches News Club

Abe Markman

Do you keep up-to-date with the news? Do you like to study issues and then kick them around with other informed and friendly people? If you said yes, then you might be interested in joining our new PIC of the News Club.

We're planning to have monthly "discussions in the round" on how those PIC initiatives that have been adopted by NYSEC are faring in today's new political era. (Other related topics may be considered as well.) The motto for the series is: Prepare, Inquire, Contribute—or "PIC," which ordinarily stands for the Public Issues Committee, the sponsor of this series.

The only requirement to join the club is to make a commitment to read about the topic of the afternoon, as you would if the topic were a book club selection.

These four sessions will be held at 1:45 pm in various locations. To date, three facilitators have been scheduled and the remaining one will be announced shortly:

March 8—Charles Debrovner, MD, leads the discussion on **Stem Cell and Therapeutic Cloning Research**, Ceremonial Hall.

April 12—**The Imperial Presidency** with Dr. Joseph Chuman, Leader of the Bergen County and New York Ethical Culture Societies. Room 514.

May 10—Pat Cohen, Ph.D., will lead our discussion on **Health**. Room 514.

June 14—**Forum, PIC Issues in the Obama Era**. We'll meet in Room 514.

New Program Council

Sheila Abrams Kleinwald

Having three new Leaders means having three times the number of programs, activities, and special events. At least, it looks as though that's where we're headed, and that's a good thing.

To successfully *become* a larger Society, we have to *operate* like a larger Society, and that includes the way we organize and schedule our many programs.

Therefore, we are instituting a Program Council, composed of the chairpersons of all committees and groups that regularly or periodically schedule activities or events at the Society. They will meet to share ideas, collaborate, and support each other. The Council will meet on the fourth Monday of each month. By the time you read this, the appropriate participants will have had their first full meeting.

Watch for further announcements about how the Program Council will work with members to develop and schedule future programs.

Ethical Endings: A Follow-up

Dr. Anne Klaeyson, Leader

If you were unable to attend my workshop on Ethical Endings last month, do not despair. Folders with helpful information on health proxies, living wills, and other important papers, are available in the Leaders' office. Please stop by and pick up copies. You can also make an appointment with me by calling 212-874-5210, ext. 118, to discuss any concerns you have about this process. Putting the end of your life in order truly is an ethical action.

Comedy Club Covers MidEast Peace

Julie Blutstein

On Saturday, January 31, a large crowd gathered in the Social Hall for *Standup for Peace: the Two-Comedian Solution to Middle East Peace*. The program, presented by the Cultured Comedy Club, brought together Scott Blake-man, a Jewish-American comedian, and Dean Obeidallah, a Palestinian-American comedian, for an evening of comedy and conversation about the Israeli/Palestinian conflict.



(L-R) Comedians Scott Blakeman and Dean Obeidallah provide serious fun

Scott and Dean began the program onstage together and warmed up the

audience. Then, each did a solo set that included jokes about their families and their religious and ethnic backgrounds and highlighted the similarities and differences between them. According to the comedians, "This kind of humor offers hope—because if you could hear peace, it would sound like laughter."

The standup sets were followed by a thought-provoking discussion with audience members about the current state of Israeli/ Palestinian relations from the point of view of everyday people, rather than "talking heads" or politicians.

Stand Up for Peace began in 2002 as a series of benefit shows for Seeds of Peace, a nonprofit organization dedicated to empowering young leaders from regions of conflict with the leadership skills required to advance reconciliation and coexistence. Since then, this dynamic duo has performed more than 75 shows at colleges, theaters, Jewish and Arab community centers, and temples across the United States.

The event brought many new faces to the Society, drawn by the immediacy of this topic and the innovative use of comedy to encourage civil conversation around a highly charged issue.

Darwin Day a Huge Success

Andra Miller

"Let's have a Darwin Day celebration!" was the appeal sent out to local Societies back in April of 2008 by Sharon Stanley, of the Ethical Humanist Society of Long Island, and me. Those who responded began a series of telephone conferences, and we developed a plan to bring together the area

Societies for a family event—designed also to attract families from the local community and expose them to Ethical Culture. Our goal was to have a good time, and meet and say “Hi” to people inside and outside of the Ethical Culture circle. We planned to celebrate the 200th birthday of Charles Darwin on Saturday, February 7, and talk about the development and the outcome of his revolutionary evolution thesis.

Those of us involved in finding the speakers, designing a program for the children, and carrying out our plan were delighted with its success. There were 130 adults at the Auditorium program, and 45 children happily involved in games and crafts downstairs in Social Hall. Our printed program listed the events and their times so that parents could attend the adult program and still check in, when interested, on the children’s activities.

And, by the way, thanks to all of you who saved paper tubes for “fossil” construction. Some very amazing fossils were created by the children (see below).

See page 2 of the January issue of *Ethical Outlook* for names of all the speakers. I had my own favorites—and



Adults and children worked together to create “fossils” and other craft projects

I’m sure that others had theirs. We all were delighted with the lively leadership of Anne Klaeyesen and Joe Chuman; the hi-jinks of “Dr. Ly More, Ph.D.,” Curt Collier; and the entertainment by “Darwin,” Richard Milner. Also surprisingly entertaining were the short readings from *The Origin of Species* by John Rennie and Matthew Chapman.

As the first such event held at the New York Society, as far as any of us can remember, there was a great deal to learn. One might call this a pilot project. We now know what changes we would make next time for example, (a shorter program, with more time for socializing), and what we would more closely monitor.

The planning team (from Bergen County, Brooklyn, Long Island, New York, Rockland, and Suffolk) has scheduled a debriefing session to discuss the possibilities and desirability of making this an annual event—and an even bigger and better one! If you’d like to be involved in this exciting project, please let me know.

The event was videotaped by several people. Stay tuned for when and how tapes will be available.



The NY Society Cares!

Dr. Anne Klaeyesen

Thanks to our members and friends, we were able to deliver eleven bags of coats to NY Cares, to be donated to cold and needy New Yorkers. Good work, folks!

Ethical Blast From the Past

Anna Garlin Spencer, NYSEC Associate Leader (1851-1931)

“It is not alone the fact that women have generally had to spend most of their strength in caring for others that has handicapped them in individual effort; but also that they have almost universally had to care wholly for themselves.”

Calling All Encampment for Citizenship Alumni!

Dr. Anne Klaeyson, Leader

Encampment alumni, pull up your socks, put on your shoes, grab your camp mementos, and run over to the NY Society for Ethical Culture on Saturday, May 16, 7:00 to 10:00 pm, in Ceremonial Hall, for a Camp Reunion.

It’s been a while, but you’ve kept in touch over the years by phone, email, snail mail, and Facebook. Now, it’s time to get together in person, so, come over and catch up. We’ll have drinks and light refreshments and a table on which to display your photos, scrapbooks, souvenirs, etc. Check Facebook and MeetUp for invitations and RSVP to my attention at the NY Society: aklaeyesen@nysec.org or 212-874-5210, ext. 118. Don’t miss this!

NYSEC's 2009 Pledge Party!

Longtime as well as new members sang, danced, and showed their support for the New York Society at our January 23 Pledge Party. Below are some of the happy revelers.



(L-R) Dr. Maria Fridman and Dr. Anne Klaeysen



Dr. Charles Debrovner and Patricia Bruder Debrovner



(L-R) Carol Rost and Dr. Ruth Cohen



Carol Nadell Van Deusen and Bob Berger



Heather Grady and Josh Adams



(L-R front) New members: Elise Everett, Darnell Dawson, and Chris Everett;



(L-R) Dr. Anne Klaeysen, Patricia Cohen, and Margaretha Jones

(L-R front) Cheryl Gross, a guest, and Dr. Aaron Balasny; background: Talat Ali



Alex Mogieleff and Sheila Kleinwald



(L-R) Cheryl Gross and Phyllis Kreuttner



March 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
1 10:00 am – Singing Practice 10:30 am – Earth Rise 11:00 am – Ethics for Children 11:15 am – Morning Meeting 12:45 pm – Social Hour 1:45 pm – Workshop on Nonviolent Communication	2 April 2009 Newsletter Deadline 6:30 pm – Board of Trustees 6:30 pm – Monday Writing Workshop	3 6:00 pm – Socrates Café	4 6:00 pm – Men's Group 6:30 pm – World Religions 7:30 pm – Great Books	5 12:00 pm – Leader Lunch Discussion 7:00 pm – Thursday Writing Workshop 7:00 pm – Prospective Members' Reception	6 8:00 pm – Nation Co-sponsored Event	7 9:30 am and 1:30 pm Supervised Visitation
8 10:00 am – Colloquy 10:30 am – Earth Rise 11:00 am – Ethics for Children 11:15 am – Morning Meeting 12:45 pm – Social Hour 1:45 pm – PIC News Club	9 6:30 pm – Music for All Seasons 6:30 pm – Monday Writing Workshop	10	11 3:00 pm – ECRDG 6:30 pm – World Religions	12 12:00 pm – Leader Lunch Discussion 7:00 pm – Thursday Writing Workshop	13	14 9:30 am and 1:30 pm Supervised Visitation
15 10:00 am – Poetry Reading 10:00 am – Singing Practice 10:30 am – Earth Rise 11:00 am – Ethics for Children 11:15 am – Morning Meeting 12:45 pm – Social Hour 1:45 pm – Life With Health	16 6:30 pm – Monday Writing Workshop	17 6:00 pm – Socrates Café	18 6:30 pm – World Religions 7:30 pm – Great Conversations II	19 12:00 pm – Leader Lunch Discussion 7:00 pm – Thursday Writing Workshop	20	21 9:30 am and 1:30 pm Supervised Visitation 9:30 am – Brooklyn Botanical Garden Walk
22 11:00 am – Ethics for Children 11:30 am – Morning Meeting–SpringFest 12:45 pm – Social Hour	23 6:30 pm – Monday Writing Workshop	24	25 6:00 pm – Discussing Ethical Issues Group 7:00 pm – Advocacy Forum	26 12:00 pm – Leader Lunch Discussion 7:00 pm – Thursday Writing Workshop	27 11:00 am – Ethics on the Air 7:00 pm – Ethics and the Theater	28 9:30 am and 1:30 pm Supervised Visitation
29 10:00 am – Coffee 'n Chat 10:30 am – Earth Rise 11:00 am – Ethics for Children 11:15 am – Morning Meeting 12:45 pm – Social Hour	30	31 8:00 pm – 25 th Anniversary Concert – Gerald Ranck	<p>Great Books: March 4 – Burke, <i>Reflections on the Revolution in France</i> Aristotle, <i>On Tragedy</i> <u>ECRDG: (Ethical Culture Reading Discussion Group)</u> March 11 – Jhumpa Lahiri, <i>Interpreter of Maladies</i> <u>Great Books: Great Conversation II</u> March 18 – Edgar Allan Poe, <i>The Fall of the House of Usher</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
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