

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

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Sunday Morning Meetings 11:30 AM—Auditorium

May 2
Annual Meeting
Michael Bogdanffy-Kriegh
Society President

May 9
Citizen Mom: Reclaiming
“Mother’s Day for Peace”
Kate Lovelady
AEU Leader-in-Training
Khoren Arisian Presides

May 16
Founder’s Day Celebration
Sheila Kleinwald, Coordinator
John Kreuttner Presides

May 23
The Problems—and Promise—of
American Democracy Past and
Present: A Fresh Look
Professor L. Vern Bullough
Faculty Member, Humanist
Institute
Khoren Arisian Presides

May 30
Grappling With Extremist
Religious Expression
Members’ Sunday
Steven Schultz Presides

*Invite
a Friend
on
Sunday*

May Happening

Sunday, May 16, we celebrate Founder’s Day. Please see page 4 for details.

President’s Notes

Michael Bogdanffy-Kriegh



At a dinner gathering not long ago I was asked about why I’m a member of Ethical Culture, and how it relates to my view of the world in which we live. This is not always an easy question to answer. I had been talking a bit about my perspective on the “Universe,” and to those gathered it seemed depressing. I wasn’t fully on my game that night so the following day I wrote a better explanation of my point of view and sent it with apologies to the host.

My universal point of view is grounded in the observation that life exists and persists and has done so for a very long time. I further count on the probability that the universe is teeming with it. If the universe teems with it, then it truly is an important event. If not, it will be all too easy for life to disappear entirely without registering as much more than a footnote unless there really is a “god” looking after things. I find that to be the least likely answer.

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Sunday Morning Meetings

May 2—Annual Meeting
Michael Bogdanffy-Kriegh, Society President

On this day there will be no regular Sunday Address. You will hear reports from our President, Senior Leader, and others. Members will elect candidates to the Board of Trustees and will vote on proposed by-laws changes.

May 9—Citizen Mom: Reclaiming “Mother’s Day for Peace”
Kate Lovelady, AEU Leader-in-Training

A celebration of Mother’s day, originally an anti-war holiday, that presents a brief overview of the history of the holiday, as well as a discussion of the often-undervalued contributions of mothers in building strong communities and teaching ethical values. This talk is in part a personal reflection in response to the struggle of Kate’s own mother, and the struggle of many women of her generation, to feel “legitimate” in the eyes of a status-conscious society.

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Ethical Culture: Who We Are
 From “AEU Clipping Service,” Stan Wayne

In a profounder sense than we had ever fathomed, we are members one of another. No one can attain their full stature alone. Their highest good is a common good, which is not lessened, but enriched by being shared. For it consists in the effort to liberate and exalt life in all. The person who has truly come home to himself or herself, has come home to humanity.

Ethical religion claims for all people freedom for growth. It challenges every authority that would fetter the human spirit; arraigns every form of power, ecclesiastical, political, social, economic or other that defaces people. The supreme task is to so transfigure human relations in the light of widening knowledge and deeper love of the right; that society shall no longer be the expression of conflicting egoisms, but shall be organized for unfolding the spiritual life of all its members. To lift people’s eyes and turn their will toward that vision, is the purpose of the Ethical Movement.

Henry S. Golding

Golding moved from England to the United States, from Episcopalianism to the British and later American Ethical Movement, and from the insurance business to Leadership in Ethical Culture. At the invitation of Felix Adler in 1921, Golding visited the United States to lecture at various Ethical Societies. In 1925, he was elected an Associate Leader of the New York Society, a post he held until his death in 1931. (Adapted from *Toward Common Ground*, Howard B. Radest)

President's Notes

(Continued from page 1)

So, my choice is that the universe teems with life and consequently life is significant. But arriving at that place means I must recognize that there isn't anything necessarily special about human beings, except to other human beings. It is possible that, in a universe that teems with life, we will be unique, the most advanced, capable and successful life form anywhere. But again, I think that to be the less probable reality.

Consequently, I give up any perception that we are unique and special in the universe, and accept that at some point in time we will encounter other intelligent life. The next question I ask myself is, do I have any reason to believe that our encounter with intelligent life elsewhere will go any better than, for example, the encounter between Europeans and North American Indians did? I don't know that it will, but my faith gives me reason to believe that advancement of intelligence and species will mean the advancement in the positive tending of relationships at all levels.

As far as I can tell, the most important determinant of our future is the present content of our relationships with one another and (updating ethical culture to the present day) with our planetary environment. And this is something we have control over. The beauty of Ethical Culture to me is that not only do we believe that the content of our relationships is the most important thing in the conduct of our lives, but we are also charged with the responsibility to continuously act so as to improve that content.

Sunday Morning Meetings

(Continued from page 1)

Many of us will remember Kate's delightful address here on "Spirituality Without God" a year ago. She will become a half-time intern with NYSEC starting in September. She will also be on the staff of the AEU's Lay Leadership Summer School. Kate is a student at the Humanist Institute, and is enrolled at the Post Graduate Center for Mental Health. We eagerly anticipate her internship with us, and to hearing her on this Sunday.

May 16—Founder's Day Celebration

Sheila Kleinwald, Coordinator

Please see announcement on page 4.

May 23—The Problems—and Promise—of American Democracy Past and Present: A Fresh Look

Professor L. Vern Bullough

Faculty Member, Humanist Institute

Was the Constitution really set up by the founders of the Republic with a government "more or less designed to fail," asks our distinguished guest speaker. Not much of consequence can get accomplished nationally unless all three major branches of the federal government—executive, legislative, and judicial—work in concert. A parliamentary democracy is far more participatory and vibrant and gets work done faster compared to the largely empty chambers of the Capitol where our legislators normally raise their issues; little real debate takes place, and speaking past one another serves as a substitute. Most legislation is shaped in conference committees between House and Senate. The founders of the nation were clearly very suspicious of the twin extremes of popular democracy

and a strong central government. Both have nonetheless grown in size, visibility, and power in the last 100 years. No wonder there's so much gridlock and polarization. Given these factors, what, then, might be some implications for the future governance of the country? Without a strong central government, civil rights and liberties cannot be effectively enforced. Yet, as the case of the Bush Administration attests, such a government can also become oppressive.

Vern L. Bullough is State University of New York Distinguished Professor Emeritus. A historian and sociologist, he is the author or editor of more than 50 books, has contributed chapters to approximately 100 others, and has spoken and given presentations around the world. He was a founder of the first fair housing group in the U.S., and has long been a board member of various ACLU affiliates. Dr. Bullough is also a long-time humanist; a co-president of the International Humanist and Ethical Union, one of the founders of the Council for Secular Humanism of the Center for Inquiry; and a laureate in the Academy of Humanism. He has served as a Dean of SUNY College in Buffalo for ten years.

May 30—Grappling With Extremist Religious Expression Members' Sunday

In these times of rampant religiosity, many of us have the experience of being the unwilling audience for such intrusive speech on the part of a co-worker, relative, friend, or acquaintance. Under such circumstances, what's an Ethical Culturist to do?

Announcing

A Special Sunday in May

On **Sunday, May 16**, we will celebrate the founding of the Ethical Culture movement and the birth of the New York Society for Ethical Culture.

There will be a special morning program and birthday party at lunch, followed by a very unusual session of Ethics in the News.

If you have not yet made your reservation for lunch, please do so now.

Call Gloria Chandler at 212-874-5210 ext. 117.

We want to be sure we have enough chairs, tables and birthday cake, so your reservation is very important.

Caring Committee

Les Graifman

Because We Care

In this time of lessening social services and vast movement of money to support a war, who cares about us? Are we content to be left behind when politicians spin the “No One Left Behind” tune in public and sing a different song behind the scenes?

No, we’re not. The Caring Committee puts deed above creed, and works to give help and moral support to those in need.

How much do you know about the committee’s work? Here are some of our activities:

- Calling and sending cards to ill or homebound members
- Helping to prepare health care proxies and emergency contacts
- Grief support group led by member Les Graifman

- Thanksgiving baskets for the Jewish Guild for the Blind and Lincoln Square Neighborhood Center
- Thanksgiving Dinner managed by Project Find’s volunteers at St. Paul’s
- Care packages; last year we collected and delivered toiletries for Lincoln Square Neighborhood Center, the Jewish Guild for the Blind, Project Find’s Coffee House and the shelter residents at the Society.

With a renewed sense of our mission to reach out, we are planning a number of new projects, including:

- Establishment of a caregiver support group
- Co-sponsorships with other outreach groups
- Healthcare information and guest speakers
- Visits to nursing home patients
- Reading for the blind
- Caring call: a daily call to verify well-being
- Assisted tours (to be established).

We take matters into our own hands to see to it that our members and friends are not left behind. We realize that there is so much we can do to help. After all, if we don’t reach out and care for each other, who will? Please support our efforts by joining us – besides the help you will be giving, you will get great satisfaction. For more information, please call Les Graifman at 212-874-7832.

A Limerick

Valerie Leiman

Spring weather keeps changing the scene;
 Warm sun and blue skies in-between
 Cold rain, freezing snow
 She turns with a blow
 That’s capricious, obnoxious and mean!

Riverside Park Walk and Talk

Valerie Leiman

Save the date to join the team of Henryka and Chris, Kathleen and Tom, David and Valerie on another Walk and Talk in Riverside Park, Saturday, May 15 at 12:30 pm. Riverside Park, designed by Frederick Law Olmsted, represents an urban park design gem, and winds along flat surfaces always in sight of the majestic Hudson River. As we walk, we’ll talk about unusual landmarks such as Hamilton’s pink limestone fountain; the equestrian statue of Joan of Arc; the Villa Julia mansion, now a yeshiva; the Hiroshima peace statue of Buddhist monk Shinran-Shonin; the ASPCA’s memorial to fire horses; mosaic benches representing work of the eccentric Spanish architect, Antoni Gaudi; and other unexpected public delights.

Henryka and Chris will offer an extended walk to the northernmost tip of Manhattan Island as a challenge to intrepid Ethical Culturists.

News Flash!!!!

We will be starting a new monthly club here at the Society



Comedy Culture: Standup at Ethical will feature New York’s top political and social comedians—every *third Thursday* in the Social Hall. We’ll feature different comedians every month, skewering

current events and social issues! These savvy satirists have performed and/or written for *Comedy Central*, *Late Night with Conan O'Brien*, *Saturday Night Live*, and *Late Show with Dave Letterman*, in addition to appearing at top clubs around the country. All net proceeds will go to the Women's Shelter at the New York Society for Ethical Culture.

Come to the inaugural show on Thursday, May 20; the doors open at 7:30 pm, and the show starts at 8:00 pm. Admission for members is \$15 at the door and includes two free drinks. (Non-members, \$20.) The show ends 9:30 pm, and we'll have an informal reception and a chance to mingle with the performers. Plan to come and invite your friends.

The first show will feature a great political comedy duo, **Scott Blake-man** and **Dean Obeidallah**, who have garnered terrific reviews for their two man show, *Stand up for Peace!* For more information call Suzy Frazer at 212-874-5210 x113.

Film Forum

Cheryl Gross

Membership Services Committee

Dirty Pretty Things

Discussion leader, Richard Bruno

Join us for our May Film Forum, on Friday, May 21, when the Ethical Culture Film Forum once again welcomes as our discussion leader Richard Bruno, who led a great discussion of Elia Kazan's film, *On the Waterfront*, for the January Film Forum.

Thoughts of modern London arouse images of theaters, castles, Shakespeare, tours, and a comfortable hotel where one can relax with a full English breakfast. But, in the film, *Dirty Pretty*

Things (2002), director Stephen Frears (*My Beautiful Laundrette*) shows us another side of the city. This is the dark, almost invisible, side of London, a city of illegal immigrants, some well educated, from Europe, Asia, and Africa, who are desperate to make a living and are ever fearful of being deported. As we witness the daily exploitation of the workers and their responses with an indomitable spirit, Frears weaves another story through the film. It is the story of two illegal immigrants, a hotel clerk and a hotel chambermaid, who become caught up in a very dirty business involving human body parts. Who, if anyone, will protect the rights of these "invisible" people? Join us for the film and a spirited talk with Richard Bruno.

Doors open at 6:30 pm and the movie begins at 7:00 pm. Admission: \$3.00 for members and \$4.00 for non-members; popcorn and beverages are included. We look forward to seeing you there.

Editorial

Last month you read in this newsletter that our long-time member Maurine Rothschild had died. Her life was extraordinary, and I thought you'd like to know a little about it. This is from her sister-in-law, Barbara Michaels: "In 1948 she and her husband, Robert, invited Mr. & Mrs. Jerome Nathanson and some other neighbors in Riverdale to meetings in their home to discuss and eventually establish what became the Riverdale-Yonkers Society for Ethical Culture. Maurine and Bob remained members of that Society as well as of the New York Society, where Bob has served on several of its committees. After their two children graduated from the Fieldston School,

Maurine joined the Fieldston faculty, where for seven years she taught history and for part of that time also served as Assistant Principal."

Maurine first traveled to Africa at the age of 74—the purpose: to help women and children overcome violence and discrimination. At 81 she made her eighth trip to Africa. She was devoted to art and transformed the Farnsworth Museum of Rockland, Maine from a small town museum into a growing institution "with the highest professional standards and practices." She served on the Maine State Commission of the Arts and Humanities and the board of the College of the Atlantic in Bar Harbor, where she and Bob endowed a scholarship.

Her career began in her activity at the League of Women Voters in New York, after which she became associate editor of the Foreign Policy Association. She was on the Advisory Board of the Bunting Institute of Advanced Study at Harvard. In 2000 she received an honorary award in Durban, Africa for "women who made a difference in the lives of other women."

She died on February 20 at the age of 84, leaving her husband, Robert, a son, Peter, and three grandchildren.

(Material adapted from *The Boston Globe*, February 27, 2004)

The National Service Conference

Martha Gallahue

The National Service Conference of the American Ethical Union invites you to join us in celebrating its 75th anniversary with a luncheon at the New York Society for Ethical Culture on Saturday, May 29, 1:00 pm–4:00 pm. Our guest speakers will be Jeffrey

Advocacy Forum: The Unholy Alliance Between Politics and Religion: A Danger to Democracy, March 31



James Farer
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Nicola Whiteley
Graphics Designer

Khoren Arisian
Senior Leader
New York Society
(at lectern)

Joseph Chuman
Leader, Bergen
Society

Susan Jacoby
Author/ Director
Center for Inquiry
Metro New York

Barry Lynn
Executive Director
Americans United
for Separation of
Church and State

Lewis H. Lapham
Author/Editor
Harper's Magazine

Huffines, Co-Chair of the Faith/Ethics Based Caucus for the International Criminal Court, and Diane Williams, founder of the U.N. CONGO (Commission of Non-Governmental Organizations) Committee on Spirituality, Values, Ethics and Global Concerns. We will pay special tribute to Rose L. Walker, retiring President of the National Service Conference. Rose will be honored for 50 years of devoted service to the AEU and in particular for her work at the U.N. through the National Service Conference. Call Lucile Kleiman at 212-724-3362 to RSVP or for more information.

Our Ethical Family

Suzy Frazer

New Members:

Lois Auritt was born in Philadelphia and received an MFA in Art from Columbia University. She has lived in Rome on a Fulbright scholarship and currently works in creative art therapy. She has volunteered at several hospitals and neighborhood associations, where she met our member Virginia Scherer. Lois was attracted to the Society because of its ideas on morality and social action.

Dominic Molloy Venturella has a background in philosophy, psychology, and history and has been a lecturer and editor. His interests include operatic singing, acting, comedy, and writing. He "very much enjoyed" our course on Islam and looks forward to participating in other activities and meeting other members.

Ernest Wertheim is a graphic designer whose interests include cycling and travel. He is also a fluent German speaker. A friend, member Patricia Malkin, introduced him to the Society, and he most recently attended our highly successful Advocacy Forum.

May 2004

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

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<p>Great Books May 5 – Shakespeare, <i>King Lear</i> May 12 – Graham Greene, <i>The Honorary Consul</i> ECRA: (Ethical Culture Retirement Activities) May 19 – Duong Thu Huong, <i>Paradise of the Blind</i></p>						
2 10:15 am – Leaders' Writings 11:00 am – Ethics for Children 11:30 am – Annual Meeting 1:00 pm – Annual Luncheon	3 June 2004 Newsletter Deadline 6:00 pm – Board of Trustees 7:00 pm – Writing Workshop 7:30 pm – Shelter	4 7:30 pm – Shelter	5 6:00 pm – Men's Group 7:30 pm – Shelter 7:30 pm – Great Books	6 7:00 pm – Grief Support Group 7:30 pm – Shelter	7	8 9:30 am & 1:30 pm Supervised Visitation
9 10:00 am – Membership Growth 10:30 am – Colloquy 11:00 am – Ethics for Children 11:30 am – Morning Meeting 12:45 pm – Cafeteria 1:45 pm – "Mothers Memoirs"	10 5:00 pm – Caring Committee 7:00 pm – Writing Workshop 7:30 pm – Shelter	11 6:00 pm – Women's Group 6:00 pm – Program Committee 7:30 pm – Shelter	12 3:00 pm – ECRA	13	14	15 12:30 pm – Riverside Park Walk 9:30 am & 1:30 pm Supervised Visitation
16 10:00 am – Sunday Program Ctm 10:30 am – Poetry Reading 11:00 am – Ethics for Children 11:30 am – Founder's Day 12:45 pm – Luncheon 1:00 pm – Orientation 1:45 pm – Founder's Day	17 6:30 pm – Social Service Board 7:00 pm – Writing Workshop 7:30 pm – Shelter	18 7:00 pm – Grief Support Group 7:30 pm – Shelter	19 6:00 pm – Membership Services Committee 7:30 pm – Politics, Leadership, and Justice 7:30 pm – Shelter	20 7:30 pm – Comedy Culture Club 7:30 pm – Shelter	21 7:00 pm – Film Forum	22 9:30 am & 1:30 pm Supervised Visitation
23 10:30 am – Yoga Meditation 11:00 am – Ethics for Children 11:30 am – Morning Meeting 12:45 pm – Cafeteria 1:45 pm – Afternoon Film	24 7:00 pm – Writing Workshop 7:30 pm – Shelter	25 7:30 pm – Shelter	26 7:30 pm – Shelter	27 6:00 pm – Ethical Action Committee 7:30 pm – Shelter	28	29 No Supervised Visitation program today 1:00 pm – National Service Conference Luncheon
30 10:30 am – Coffee Hour 11:30 am – Morning Meeting 12:45 pm – Cafeteria	31 Society office closed Memorial Day 7:30 pm – Shelter					

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.

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