

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–Music & Reflection** **in the Auditorium**

May 1

Annual Membership Meeting

Michael Bogdanffy-Kriegh
Society President

May 8

Has the Government of the **United States Become Faith-** **Based?**

Edd Doerr
President, Americans for
Religious Liberty
Carol Nadell Presides

May 15

Founder's Day Celebration: **Past, Present, and Future**

Michael Bogdanffy-Kriegh,
Khoren Arisian, and others

May 22

God Bless You—or Not: The **Theory and Practice of Non-** **theism**

Anne Klaeyesen
Leader, Ethical Humanist Society
of Long Island
Dr. Khoren Arisian Presides

May 29

War and Death—Peace and **Love—A Memorial Day Program**

Jon Liechty & Gerald Ranck

May Happening

Monday, May 16, at 7:00 pm—The Ethical Humanist Award will be presented to **David Kaczynski**. Ceremony free and open to the public. Reception to follow. Please see page 3 for details.

From the Leader's Desk



Dr. Khoren Arisian

The Bonds of Fellowship: Reinventing the Way We Grow (Part III)

"We cannot live for ourselves alone. Our lives are connected by a thousand invisible threads, and along these sympathetic fibers, our actions run as causes and return to us as results."—Herman Melville

When I first discovered Ethical Culture while researching the subject of "ethics" for a paper due in an undergraduate college class, I was, quite frankly, thrilled. Nothing is more demanding of our character than developing a sound moral basis for decisions we make and relationships into which we enter. Such, for Felix Adler, was life's key spiritual quest. When he raised the question, "...is it possible to preserve one's serenity in the supreme trials of life," he responded in the affirmative. "It is possible...if we have formed the habit of asking on every occasion, *what is it right to do now* [italics mine]?" No easy answers here!

Ethical Culture, at its root, is about changing lives, our own, to begin with, which then may serve as an example others may choose to enact (not emulate) according to their own lights and instincts. There's no transforming purpose in joining an ethical movement if you believe you've long since "arrived" as a fully matured person and have nothing further to learn. Those who choose to believe that have little, if anything, to contribute, either. Come as you are, I say, but always be prepared to be changed through deep interaction with others—one hopes, of course, for the better!

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Sunday Morning Meetings

11:15 AM—Music and Reflection in the Auditorium

May 1—Annual Membership Meeting

Once a year, our usual Sunday Meeting gives way to this important event. It is an opportunity for members to learn about the state of the Society and to elect new trustees. We welcome and encourage new members to attend and to absorb the democratic process of the Society while getting to know people.

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Staff

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 Yolanta Kosmaczewska 104
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 Marlon Rice 138
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Leader’s Desk

(Continued from page 1)

The overall bond of any idealistically created community is friendship. The deeper the fellowship we cherish and that enriches us, the more mutual the trust, the less resort to gossip and deceitfulness. At that point we’re ready to grow afresh, to empower ourselves and one another, to seek excellence in whatever we set out to achieve as a community.

Consider here Handel’s justly renowned oratorio, *Messiah*. The composer wrote it in a matter of weeks during a controlled frenzy of creative inspiration. This oratorio consists of a quarter million musical notes! Some of these notes are “pauses,” resting places where momentary silences offer the opportunity to let the rich resonances of what has just been played elevate and deepen us simultaneously.

There are no superfluous notes in Handel’s *Messiah*. Every pause is as important as every note that is sounded. By the same token, every program that we conceive at our Society, every social action we undertake, every decision we make, should be sought in light of the overarching aim to do it well because whatever is worth doing is *worth* doing excellently and purposefully, and not because there’s an empty spot in some calendar of events to be filled.

Thus, if universities endure to the extent they’re genuinely devoted to the consideration of ideas that count, then Ethical Societies last and prosper to the extent we as members are radicalized to reach for the root of what is truly at stake in some aspect of the human enterprise that moves us, caus-

ing us to seek out a carefully planned way of active response. So it is that the educational thrust of a progressive movement like ours is to learn how to become capable of changing society so that it conforms more closely with those moral ideas that are pertinent to the condition to be remedied, and which are at the same time consonant with our communally expressed philosophy of life. (Whew!)

Strategic plans, in short, are fine as far as they go, but the real test of their relevance is their effective practical implementation. We might well think here of institutional stewardship in terms of vigorous engagement, of being in vital relationship to what cries out to be done within our premises and without. In other words, what shall we do with what we already have, and how can we gather still more resources in order, as Adler once put it, “to save ourselves alive”? By which he meant, in order “to do our part in the world.” Melville’s words come back to us: “We cannot live for ourselves alone...our actions run as causes and return to us as results....”

Endnote: This is my last formal newsletter column, as Michael Kriegh’s presidential message will follow in the June issue. I shall, of course, contribute my annual report for the special August issue. These five years have, psychologically, gone by very fast, yet we’ve accomplished much together. It’s been a privilege, and an exciting time, to have been with you aspiring good folks. To quote the UN’s first Secretary General, Dag Hammarskjold: “For all that has been, thanks. To all that shall be, yes.” Ethical Culture must ever be about saying “yes” to life.

Sunday Morning Meetings

(Continued from page 1)

May 8—Has the Government of the United States Become Faith-Based?

Edd Doerr, President, Americans for Religious Liberty

Edd Doerr has been President and Executive Director of Americans for Religious Liberty since 1982. He is also Senior Editor of the organization's newsletter, *Voice of Reason*. From 1995 to 2003 he served as President of the American Humanist Association. The author of 24 books, Edd Doerr is a board member of the Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice.

Separation of church and state is perhaps the most important implied cornerstone of the Constitution and thus of the American Republic. Today that cornerstone is gradually crumbling, its diminution imperiling religious freedom. Such a state of affairs cannot long be tolerated. Edd will demonstrate how several strands are inextricably linked: tax-based support for private schools and charities; the intrusive return of religion in public schools; the cultural issue of male dominance in conservative religious families; the dubious status of personhood when one is in a vegetative state, as exhibited by legal skirmishes surrounding the Terri Schiavo case; and the contemptuous disregard for truth-telling in matters of science and biology on the part of a post-modern right-wing administration that prefers fantasy to fact.

To counter this avalanche of breathtaking faith-based manipulation, the formation of a powerful and aggressive national committee is perhaps called for. In the afternoon, Mr. Doerr will

Ethical Humanist Award 2005

Carol Nadell

The New York Society for Ethical Culture instituted the Ethical Humanist Award in 1970 to honor individuals who have acted with extraordinary moral courage, without regard for the sanction or acclaim of their peers or of society, and whose actions have had broad humanizing implications.

Past award recipients have included **Mario Cuomo** for his stand against the death penalty, **Orlando Letelier** for his pursuit of democracy in Chile, **Senator Paul Wellstone** for his courageous opposition to welfare reform legislation, **Senators John McCain** and **Russell Feingold** (jointly) for their efforts in reforming campaign financing, **Jeffrey Wigand** for his courageous actions in revealing tobacco company research and policies harmful to the public good, and **Senator James Merrill Jeffords** for following his conscience and changing his lifelong party affiliation when he disagreed with the direction of his party.

Our 2005 honoree will be **David Kaczynski**. David will be honored for his courage in recognizing and identifying his brother, Ted Kaczynski, to authorities as the Unabomber, and for his continuing activism against the death penalty in New York State.

The award will be presented on Monday, May 16, at 7:00 pm at the Society. The ceremony is free of charge and the public is invited to attend. Please join us for this moving recognition. A reception will follow in the Social Hall. For those who wish to attend the reception, there will be a charge of \$35.00 to cover expenses. Reservations are required for the reception. Please call 212-874-5210 x117 or email Gloria Chandler at gchandler@nysec.org by May 9.

Honorary Committee Members include:

Khoren Arisian, Senior Leader, New York Society for Ethical Culture
Forrest Church, Senior Minister, All Souls Church
Mario Cuomo, Former Governor, New York
Renny Cushing, Executive Director, Families for Human Rights
Rev. Dr. James E. Fitzgerald, The Riverside Church
Robert Gangi, Executive Director, Correctional Association New York
Reverend Jimmy Lim, Program Director, Counsel of Churches for the City of New York
The Very Reverend Dr. James A. Kowalski, Dean, The Cathedral of St. John The Divine
Liz Krueger, NY State Senator
Ruth Messinger, Executive Director, American Jewish World Service
Peter Neufeld, Co-Director, Innocence Project
JoAnne Page, Executive Director, The Fortune Society
Sister Helen Prejean
Barry Scheck, Co-Director, Innocence Project
Russell Simmons, The Founder of Def Jam Records and Phatt Farm Apparel
Ronald Tabak, Counsel of Skadden Arps Slate Meagher & Flom LLP
Dr. Judith D. Wallach, Activist against Death Penalty

discuss prospects for such a development during a wide-ranging conversation with members and visitors, to be held after lunch from 1:45 to 3:00 pm in Room 514.

May 15–Founder’s Day

For details of this gala event, see page 7.

May 22–God Bless You–Or Not: The Theory and Practice of Non-theism

Anne Klaeyesen, Leader, Ethical Humanist Society of Long Island

We live in a nation where the overwhelming majority of people believe in a supreme being. By contrast, we often say that Ethical Humanists believe in a supreme way of being, or ethics. We leave belief in God up to the individual, taking a non-theistic stance as an organization. But what does that really mean for us? How is it realized in our relationships with one another?

Anne Klaeyesen is Leader of the Ethical Humanist Society of Long Island. She served as Leader Intern at the New York Society from September 2001 to January 2003. This month she received her Doctor of Ministry from Hebrew Union College.

May 29–War and Death–Peace and Love–A Memorial Day Program

Jon Liechty and Gerald Ranck, Music Director

We will present a Memorial Day music and poetry program featuring the poetry of Wilfred Owen, immortalized in Benjamin Britten’s *War Requiem* and the music of Franz Schubert. Jon Liechty will join Gerald Ranck in a performance of Schubert’s great F-minor Fantasy for piano duet.

Unforgotten Voices

Maria Feliz Fridman

Friday, June 10, at 8:00 pm, the New York Society for Ethical Culture, the

Social Service Board, and Unforgotten Voices directed by Judith Ginsburg, a creative workshop, will present works by a collective of visual and performing artists who are or have been homeless. Please join us for an inspiring evening. Admission is free and refreshments will be served.

From a review by member Larry Yates, Ph.D.: “An evening wasted with destitute, depressing strangers? **Not so.** I spent it with fellow humans who love life and who respect themselves and others.”

Sundays 1:45 PM

- May 1: Annual Meeting continues
- May 8: Church/State Discussion, Edd Doerr
- May 15: Founder’s Day Celebration
- May 22: Book Sale
- May 29: Ethics in the News, Mary Ellen Goodman



Jon Liechty

The Membership Committee

Invites your attendance at a program in support of the Fall Weekend Retreat

Jon Liechty presenting “A Reading Program–Analysis and Performance of Music by Ludwig van Beethoven”

Sunday, June 12, at 1:45 pm
Ceremonial Hall

Admission: Members \$10; Non-Members \$15

The New York Society for Ethical Culture proudly presents pianist Jon Liechty, recipient of grants from *Meet the Composer* and from the Honors Division of Indiana University.

Jon Liechty has performed in Baku, Azerbaijan, London, Brussels, Vancouver, and many U.S. states. He is a founding member of the Saba Ensemble, performing on the CD, *Saba, Breeze of the East*. Mr. Liechty is an active lecturer, performer, and composer, whose compositions have been performed at Carnegie Hall’s Weill Recital Hall in New York City; the Midwest Composer’s Symposium, Oberlin, Ohio; the Contemporary Music Festival, Terre Haute, Indiana; and the Sound in the Land Festival in Waterloo, Ontario.

Mr. Liechty holds degrees from the Indiana University School of Music in Bloomington, Indiana. Articles describing his compositions have appeared in *New Music Connoisseur* and *Azerbaijan International*.

Ethical Explorations:

First Sundays Multi-generational Service, 11:15 AM–5th floor

Kate Lovelady

May 1–Mother’s Day

This month’s Ethical Explorations meeting is in honor of Mother’s Day (officially May 8). The children’s circle will be using art activities to express their appreciation for the mother figures in their lives, while the adults’ circle will explore our relationships—both the positives and the negatives—with our mothers and motherhood. Everyone is welcome: younger and older people, families, singles, and empty nesters. If you’ve ever had a mother, please join us for this lively and participatory experience.

Board of Trustees

March 7, 2005

Sheila Kleinwald

The March Board meeting was the first for which the staff reports of both the Executive Director and the Membership Director were emailed to all trustees prior to the meeting. The goal, to cut down on verbal reporting and shorten the meeting, was achieved. There seemed to be general agreement to expand the practice to all future staff reports, using the actual meeting time to clarify or air only questions felt to require open discussion. Other matters could be handled this way as well. But since only trustees are on the list, everything so handled becomes, in effect, a secret meeting—something the Board may have to consider, since Board meetings are officially open to all.

The Leader’s report on the Ethical Edge program, which is the new version of Dr. Arisian’s Advocacy Forum

series, led to a discussion of how to handle the large overflow crowds at these popular events. Ways are being sought to improve access for Society members in particular.

A bequest last year, intended to enable us to provide scholarships to children (presumably to attend the Ethical Culture Schools), is requiring an amendment to our charter to add to its purposes “providing and/or administering scholarships for deserving students in such areas of study as shall be compatible with the Society’s purposes.”

Members of the Leader Search Committee are: Charles Debrovner (chair), Muriel Berger, Carole Chamlin, Meg Chapman, Henryka Komanska, Barbara Levenson, Andra Miller, and Michael Bogdanffy-Kriegh (Ex-Officio).

In the Nominating Committee report, given by Robert Berger for Christine Swann, this year’s candidates for the Board were named. All were approved.

Film Forum

Cheryl Gross

On Friday, May 6, our own Film Forum will be showing *Other People’s Money* (1991), part of our series, *Movies That Mean Business*. The film stars Danny Devito (*Taxi*) as “Larry the Liquidator,” a corporate raider who initiates a hostile takeover of a New England wire and cable business. Owner Andrew Jorgenson (Gregory Peck) asks his attractive lawyer daughter (Penelope Ann Miller) to help protect the company. Larry is smitten with her. Join us as we watch legal maneuvering, romantic chases, and small-town business come up against Wall Street tactics. Directed by Norman Jewison (*Moonstruck, A Soldier’s Story, Fid-*

eler on the Roof, and In the Heat of the Night).

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

Youth and Family

Lynda Kennedy

Our Sunday Ethics for Children program officially comes to an end on Founder’s Day, May 15. It has been a busy, enjoyable year for all concerned, and I have loved getting to know our kids and their families.

In lieu of our usual Sunday School programming, for the month of June we will be hosting a four-Sunday series of drama and storytelling. Each Sunday, participants will work with Rebecca Mason and me, with assistance from Suzy Frazer (who, in addition to being Membership Director at NYSEC, is a Department of Education Certified Teaching Artist for Public Schools), to build confidence and expression through drama and games and explore ethical themes through the enactment of Aesop’s Fables. Dates: June 5, 12, 19, and 26, from 11:00 am to 1:00 pm, 5th floor.

We have two Ethical Family Friday sessions left this season. On May 13 we will discuss “Winners Without Losers: Competition and Kids,” and on June 3 our topic will be “Safe in the City: Promoting Safety Without Promoting Fear.” Both sessions run from 6:00 to 7:30 pm and are held on the 5th floor. Fees are: \$20 per family for Society members and \$25 per family for non-members.

For more information on any of our Youth and Family programming, give me a call at 212-874-5210 x106.

Our Ethical Family

Suzy Frazer and Members

New Members

Patricia Cohen is a Ph.D. research professor and specializes in Psychiatric Epidemiology at Columbia University. She loves music, gardening, and ballroom dancing. She had been looking for a like-minded liberal organization and has attended our Sunday meetings and the Comedy Club and taken our Ethics and the Theater course.

Dan Frazer is a professional actor who has appeared in the theater, movies, and television for several years (including *As the World Turns* with our own Pat Bruder Debrovner). Always a political progressive, he's attended our Comedy Club, Forums, and the Ethics and the Theater course. Dan is also the father of our own Susanna Frazer.

Heather M. Grady has worked to promote human rights and international development in her 13 years at Oxfam, including experience in Asia, the Middle East, and Africa. She speaks Chinese, Vietnamese, and some Arabic. A graduate of Smith College, Heather's interests include travel, politics, and creative writing. She has two daughters.

Alma E. Guinness is a retired book editor. She began attending the Society two years ago for the Gore Vidal interview and has since come to a number of Advocacy Forums, Nation debates, and other events. She worked with Leigh McKay on the dissemination of

The Fear Factor Advocacy Forum film to religious organizations in Ohio and Pennsylvania. Alma joined EC because she feels the Society shares her sensibilities.

Bahram Maskanian is a songwriter and a democratic activist who has special training in computer programming. He is promoting several initiatives on voting rights and other issues on his well-respected website. His interests include music and the Persian language. Bahram has attended several NYSEC forums and is attracted to community building.

Dr. Jackie Pope, formerly a member of the Society, has recently been attending events and lectures at the Society. A part-time professor of political science at Stockton College of New Jersey, Jackie is especially interested in urban issues.

Nneka Pope joined the Society several years ago, but let her membership lapse last year. We are delighted to welcome her back. Jackie Pope's daughter is an events planner at the Columbia University School of Law. She has expressed an interest in helping to plan events for young members of the Society.

Adriana Ricci is a marketing expert at Godiva Chocolatier. She has been attending our Advocacy Forums and our Forum friends get-together. She recently took in the first Ethical Edge presentation on Social Security.

Eric Volpe works as a rail operations analyst, his hobbies include

trains, film, and music. He is president of the Hudson County Alliance/Community Activism organization and was drawn to NYSEC because it is concerned with issues he cares about. Eric has attended our forums, get-togethers, and Sunday meetings.

Eric Weynand first heard of the Society through an ad for a talk in the *New Yorker*. He has since attended a *Nation* debate, Sunday morning meetings, and an orientation luncheon. Welcome Eric, you're currently our youngest member and we invite you to bring your friends.

Dr. Sondra Kathryn Wilson is a professor and writer at Harvard University, with special training in research and as a historian. Her interests include reading, cooking, collecting rare books, gardening, and French. She knew of the Society through family members John B. Nail and James Weldon Johnson, who were members. Sondra is drawn to NYSEC's progressive social agenda, and although she works in Cambridge, she plans to attend when she can and meet other members.

News of Members

Kris Berger, daughter of **Bob and Muriel Berger**, was married on March 26. Congratulations to the family and best of luck to the newlyweds!

Jerry Chamlin's daughter-in-law died after a long illness. We extend our deep sympathy to the family.

Our 129th Birthday

And we want all our members, friends, and neighbors to celebrate with us!

Because

We're Inviting The Neighbors!

Don't miss this chance to meet and welcome the people who live in our neighborhood.

The Date: Sunday, May 15

Time: 11:15 am to 12:45 pm

The Place: Auditorium of the New York Society for Ethical Culture

2 West 64th Street, New York, NY 10023

Drama, music, and words from our President and our Senior Leader.

Refreshments will be served in the lobby.



GALA holiday luncheon and birthday party

1:00 pm in the Social Hall

Please make your lunch reservations early to assure your place.

Adults: \$15.00. People aged 6 to 12: \$6.00. People under 6 years old: No Charge.

Please send check or money order to the address above, Attn.: Gloria Chandler

Checks, cash and money orders also accepted in person Mon.-Fri. 9:30 to 4:30.

Please list your phone no., names of all people for whom you are reserving, & children's ages.

"Friends & Family" tables may be reserved for eight to ten people.

May 2005

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

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1 10:15 am – Ethics for Everyday Living 11:15 am – Annual Meeting 11:15 am – Ethical Explorations 12:45 pm – Cafeteria 1:45 pm – Annual Meeting continues	2 June 2005 newsletter deadline 6:30 pm – Writing Workshop 7:30 pm – Shelter	3 7:00 pm – Meditation Group 7:30 pm – Shelter	4 6:00 pm – Men's Group 7:30 pm – Great Books 7:30 pm – Shelter	5 6:00 pm – Singing Class 6:15 pm – Drawing Class 7:00 pm – Writing Workshop 7:30 pm – Shelter	6 7:00 pm – Film Forum	7 9:30 am & 1:30 pm Supervised Visitation
8 10:30 am – Colloquy 11:00 am – Ethics for Children 11:15 am – Morning Meeting 12:45 pm – Cafeteria 1:45 pm – Conversation with Edd Doerr on Church/Slate	9 6:00 pm – Board of Trustees 6:30 pm – Writing Workshop 7:30 pm – Shelter	10 6:00 pm – Women's Group 7:00 pm – Meditation Group 7:30 pm – Shelter	11 3:00 pm – ECRDG 7:30 pm – Shelter	12 6:00 pm – Singing Class 6:15 pm – Drawing Class 7:00 pm – Writing Workshop 7:30 pm – Shelter	13 6:00 pm – Ethical Family Friday	14 9:30 am & 1:30 pm Supervised Visitation
15 10:15 am – Poetry Reading 11:00 am – Ethics for Children 11:15 am – Founder's Day 1:00 pm – Luncheon 1:45 pm – Founder's Day Celebration	16 7:00 pm – Ethical Humanist Award 7:30 pm – Shelter	17 6:30 pm – Writing Workshop 7:00 pm – Meditation Group 7:30 pm – Shelter	18 6:00 pm – Orientation 7:30 pm – Shelter 7:30 pm – Great Books: "Happiness & Discontent"	19 6:00 pm – Singing Class 6:15 pm – Drawing Class 7:00 pm – Writing Workshop 7:30 pm – Shelter 8:00 pm – Comedy Club	20	21 9:30 am & 1:30 pm Supervised Visitation
22 10:30 am – Yoga Meditation 11:15 am – Morning Meeting 12:45 pm – Cafeteria 1:45 pm – Book Sale	23 6:30 pm – Writing Workshop 6:30 pm – Social Service Board 7:30 pm – Shelter	24 7:00 pm – Meditation Group 7:30 pm – Shelter	25 7:30 pm – Shelter	26 6:15 pm – Drawing Class 7:00 pm – Writing Workshop 7:30 pm – Shelter	27	28 No Supervised Visitation program today
29 10:30 am – Coffee Hour 11:15 am – Morning Meeting in Ceremonial Hall 12:45 pm – Bagels 1:45 pm – Ethics in the News	30 Society offices closed 7:30 pm – Shelter	31 6:30 pm – Writing Workshop 7:00 pm – Meditation Group 7:30 pm – Shelter	Great Books May 4 – Tocqueville, <i>The Power of the Majority</i> Simmel, <i>Individual Freedom</i> ECRDG: (Ethical Culture Reading Discussion Group) May 11 – Cynthia Ozick, <i>The Puttermesser Papers</i> Great Books: "Happiness and Discontent" May 18 – David Malouf, <i>Questions for an Imaginary Life</i>			

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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