

# 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  
Platform Meetings  
11:15 AM—Ceremonial Hall**

**May 6**

**Jane Addams: Pacifist, Feminist,  
And Global Citizen**

*Dr. Anne Klaeyesen, Leader*  
Bonnie Bean Presides

**May 13**

**For Humanists, Can Anything  
Be Sacred?**

*Dr. Joseph Chuman, Leader*  
Dr. Kathleen O'Connell Presides

**May 20**

**Fear, Desire, and Free Will**

*Michael Bogdanffy-Kriegh*  
Dr. Anne Klaeyesen Presides

**May 27—Memorial Day Weekend**

**So What's Wrong With  
Entitlements?**

*Curt Collier, Leader*  
Tom Weishaar Presides

## May Happenings

Let's welcome the merry month of May with an evening of wonderful music by Bach on **Tuesday, May 1, 8:00 pm**. Gerald Ranck will present the final program in his **birthday concert series** for the benefit of NYSEC. Auditorium. (See page 6.)

On **Friday, May 4, 7:00 pm**, **Ethics in Film** presents *2001: A Space Odyssey*, Stanley Kubrick's 1968 science fiction masterpiece that explores the mysteries of space and human destiny. The film won an Academy Award for its stunning special effects. After the showing, join our discussion. Ceremonial Hall. (See page 7.)

On **Sunday, May 20, 1:30 pm**, NYSEC's **Life with Health Committee** will sponsor a free talk on **Hearing Health** by Leader Curt Collier, who will discuss in depth a wide range of hearing problems and ailments, as well as options for dealing with and alleviating hearing loss. He'll share his expertise with us. Room 508. (See page 4.)

## President's Notes

*Andra Miller*



When I first joined NYSEC, back in April of 2003, Ben Bean, then the staff membership person, asked me if there were any committees I'd be interested in joining. I said that I'd be interested in joining an environmental protection committee, having been actively involved for several years as a member of the Watershed Protection Committee of the Sierra Club. He said, "We don't have an environment committee, do you want to start one?" and I said no, not at the moment.

*(Continued on page 2)*

## From the Leader's Desk

*Dr. Anne Klaeyesen*



### The Next Generation of Humanists

On Wednesdays during the academic year, I take the No. 1 train up to 116<sup>th</sup> Street and go to my office in Earl Hall on the Columbia University campus. Since August, 2010, I have served the Ethical Humanism Chaplaincy there as religious life adviser, and last year was chosen by my colleagues to co-chair Columbia's United Campus Ministries. What a vibrant community it is! I have participated on discussion panels, taught classes, and collaborated on interfaith programs; dished up ice cream and handed out chaplaincy bracelets at freshman orientations, and, of course, met with individual students.

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*American Ethical Union*

*97<sup>th</sup> Assembly*

*June 14—June 17*

*(See page 9 for details)*

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**Staff**

Selma Friedman, Editor  
 Jon Liechty, Reporter  
 Barbara Litke, Poetry Editor  
 Deborah Foster, Production  
 Andra Miller, President  
 Dr. Joseph Chuman, Leader  
 Curt Collier, Leader  
 Dr. Anne Klaeysen, Leader  
 Dr. Khoren Arisian, Leader Emeritus  
 Robert Liebeskind, Executive Director  
 Yalitzta Garcia, Assistant to the Leaders  
 Moe-Swe Myint, Membership Associate  
 Antonio Pagliarulo, Director of Special Events  
 Gerald Ranck, Music Director  
 Marlon Rice, Facilities Manager  
 Beth Zucker, Manager of Communications

New York Society for Ethical Culture  
 2 West 64<sup>th</sup> Street, New York, NY 10023  
 Phone: 212-874-5210; Fax: 212-595-7258  
 Email: office@nysec.org  
 Website: <http://www.nysec.org>

**Staff Directory**

Gloria Chandler ext.117  
 Joseph Chuman 145  
 Curt Collier 145  
 Deborah Foster 115  
 Yalitzta Garcia 118  
 Anne Klaeysen 119  
 Yolanta Kosmaczewska 104  
 Robert Liebeskind 116  
 Maintenance 109  
 Moe-Swe Myint 113  
 Antonio Pagliarulo 106  
 Marlon Rice 107  
 Beth Zucker 144

**NY Society for Ethical Culture**

**Officers:**

Andra Miller, President,  
[andramariemiller@gmail.com](mailto:andramariemiller@gmail.com)  
 Heather Grady, Vice President,  
[heathergradynyc@gmail.com](mailto:heathergradynyc@gmail.com)  
 Tom Weishaar, Treasurer,  
[tom.weishaar@gmail.com](mailto:tom.weishaar@gmail.com)  
 Janice Buzby, Secretary,  
[janice345@verizon.net](mailto:janice345@verizon.net)

**Trustees:**

Bob Berger, [bobandmuriel@mindspring.com](mailto:bobandmuriel@mindspring.com)  
 Margaret Chapman, [md.chapman@earthlink.net](mailto:md.chapman@earthlink.net)  
 Nicola DeMarco, [nickdmarco@hotmail.com](mailto:nickdmarco@hotmail.com)  
 Chris Everett, [chrisanddelise@hotmail.com](mailto:chrisanddelise@hotmail.com)  
 Dr. Phyllis Harrison-Ross, [phrmd@yahoo.com](mailto:phrmd@yahoo.com)  
 Henryka Komanska, [henryka@verizon.net](mailto:henryka@verizon.net)  
 Law'nence Miller, [lawncem@gmail.com](mailto:lawncem@gmail.com)  
 Dr. Terry Perlin, [perlintm@muohio.edu](mailto:perlintm@muohio.edu)

**President's Notes**

*(Continued from page 1)*

Well, that moment was a long time ago, and in all those years, I've never managed to accept the challenge of starting a committee centered on the environment, so you can imagine my delight when a group of concerned members decided to get one going, the Environmental Stewardship Committee. It's temporarily chaired by Paula Claycomb, and includes Patrick Arenas, Bonnie Bean, Vince Brancato, Pat Cohen, Curt Collier, Renée Goodstein, Mary Houts, Henryka Komanska, Abe Markman, and Monica Weiss.

They jumped right in and planned (1) a fundraising concert of folk music in honor of Earth Day, (2) a talk on the global warming crisis "and how to solve it," and (3) a program on the dangers of hydraulic fracking of shale to release natural gas. Those programs done, the committee members are now staking out their goals for the future—we can expect some real definitive action on the environmental front from those committed activists, and I am so happy they are here and energetically pursuing the ways we can all protect the environment.

Are you coming to Jerry Ranck's last "birthday present" concert on May 1? What a wonderful series he has given us to celebrate his 70<sup>th</sup> year on this earth.

This final one features Jerry himself on the harpsichord playing all sorts of music by Johann Sebastian Bach—who, by the way, didn't quite make it to 70 (1685-1750). We'll be hearing the deep and powerful *Chaconne*, moving preludes and fugues, and finally several of the amazingly inventive and delightful *Goldberg Variations*. Thank you, Gerald Ranck, and happy, happy birthday!

Hey, are you also coming to the American Ethical Union's 97<sup>th</sup> Assembly in Albany, June 14-17? Don't miss it! The theme this year is "Humanizing Criminal Justice," and we'll be hearing from such notables as Ernest Drucker, Ph.D., Senior Research Associate at John Jay College of Criminal Justice (his talk: "A Plague of Prisons"). We'll also be hearing Nkechi Taifa, JD, Senior Policy Analyst, Criminal Justice and Civil Liberties for the Open Society Foundation; and Jeffrion Aubry, State Assemblyman; and Brian Fisher, Commissioner of the New York State Department of Correctional Services. He'll speak on the Hudson Link for Higher Education in Prison, with a Q&A session with the Executive Director of Hudson Link. There will be prison ministers, music and drama coaches, directors of in- and out-of-prison programs for youths and adults, formerly incarcerated people, experts on how to volunteer, and on and on.

Check the brochure on the AEU website ([http://aeu.org/library/articles/2012\\_Assembly\\_Brochure.pdf](http://aeu.org/library/articles/2012_Assembly_Brochure.pdf)) so you'll know everything. There will be many celebratory events, so don't think it will just be heavy stuff—we'll have lots of fun!

The highlight of this event is the presentation of the Elliott-Black Award to the man the New York Society nominated, Bob Gangi, of The Urban Justice Center, and a longtime nationally-known advocate for police and correctional reform. For Ethical Culture Society behind-the-scenes super volunteers, there is the Ana Garlin Spencer Volunteer Award, and two of the winners will be our Dr. Ruth Cohen, she of the many fundraising efforts, instigator of the annual Stained Glass Window concerts, and steward of the lunchtime \$1-for-the-kitchen baskets; and our Stephanie Rosenblatt, who has served on the Board for NYSEC, hosted Society events, and, among the many tasks she's taken on in her long lifetime as a volunteer, served as the German/English translator at Roosevelt Hospital, and obtains free tickets from Carnegie Hall and Lincoln Center to give to Fulbright scholars who come to the city from other nations. Congratulations ladies, and thanks for all your wonderful volunteering!

Say, enjoy your May!

## Leader's Desk

*(Continued from page 1)*

Especially dear to me is the Columbia Humanist Society, which started taking shape in November, 2011. Fear not, members of the NY Society! Though young people may not rise early on Sunday mornings to join us for Platform services, they do gather late at night to discuss humanism, and travel to other neighborhoods on weekends to perform community service.

Undergraduates Frangell Brasora Fortuna and Michael Taylor Winsor learned about me from a graduate teaching assistant in a religion class and visited my office last fall to strategize about forming a club that would appeal to "like-minded" colleagues. I introduced them to my children, who grew up in the Brooklyn Society, and over the winter holidays, they socialized with young people from several societies in the metro NYC area. By January, 2012, Fran and Michael were on Facebook and Twitter proclaiming: "Columbia Humanist Society (CHS) is a Columbia University student organization serving humanists, freethinkers, and anyone else who wishes to learn about humanism and secularism." However, even in the age of internet social networking, paper fliers plastered on bulletin boards all over campus are still needed, so it took a few weeks to pull together students to draft a constitution, prepare a budget, and elect officers.

So now, in addition to Wednesdays, I often attend meetings with this wonderful group of students on Tuesday evenings and recently joined them in Brooklyn's Prospect Park for a community clean-up. The accompanying photograph shows CHS students at a soup kitchen in Harlem.

In an article for the American Ethical Union online newsletter *Dialogue*, Fran recently wrote about CHS: "We celebrate our diversity because we understand that our differences are reflections of the world around us. We strive for a greater community that is not limited by categories or attributed standards, but is freed by our willingness to learn from one another and the acknowledgement that we are one, though being many."

Other humanist chaplaincies are active on the campuses of Harvard University in Cambridge, MA; Rutgers, the State University of New Jersey; and American University in Washington, DC. The Center for Free Inquiry NYC has organized students at New York University and Bronx Community College, and the Secular Students Alliance has chapters on college and high school campuses all across the country. Children who grew up in Ethical Societies and attend college or are in their 20's are members of Future Ethical Societies (FES) and hold annual conferences over Memorial Day weekend. This year they are gathering at the Ethical Humanist Society of the Triangle in Chapel Hill, NC.

Take heart: The next generation of humanists is already here.



*Students at shelter kitchen.*

## Sunday Morning Platform Meetings 11:15 AM

**May 6—Jane Addams: Pacifist, Feminist, and Global Citizen**

*Dr. Anne Klaeyesen, Leader*

Founder of Hull House Jane Addams once said, "Nothing could be worse than the fear that one had given up too soon, and left one unexpended effort that might have saved the world." Surely she neither gave up nor left any unexpended effort to make the world a better place.

Learn more about this ethical heroine who was also an Ethical Culture lecturer at the Chicago Society and won the Nobel Peace Prize in 1931 for a lifetime of dedication to humanity.

The shared charity is Encore.

**May 13–For Humanists, Can Anything Be Sacred?**

*Dr. Joseph Chuman, Leader*

In the religious life, a central conception, as well as a focus for reverence, has been “the sacred.” Ethical Culture seems to affirm this when inscribed in our Meeting House is the motto “The Place Where People Meet to Seek the Highest is Holy Ground,” understanding that “holy” and “sacred” are synonyms.

But how seriously should humanists, who disavow another world beyond this one, take the idea of the sacred? Is it merely a metaphor, or can it be understood as something more objective, more real? Another way of asking this question is: “Can there be a secular understanding of the sacred?” Behind these questions is the broader issue of in what way Ethical Culture can be understood as religious. It is a question that has been with us since our origins, and I will attempt to shed some light on it.

The shared charity is Fresh Air Fund.

**May 20–Fear, Desire, and Free Will**  
*Michael Bogdanffy-Kriegh*

I have long believed that some degree of free will is necessary for a humanist stance in the world. Science, however, has steadily questioned whether or not we have it and the current picture painted of how the brain works is one of a collection of processing modules that have evolved over an unimaginably long time, are dedicated solely to the survival of our genes into the next generation and do their work without our conscious

awareness. Do our fears and desires rule our behavior, leaving us to explain to one another after the fact why we did something, or is there more to it than that? This talk will explore the interplay between our basic driving emotional states, our conscious minds and our engagement in a social world, and how an enlightened humanist stance has been at the center of progress towards less violence and more tolerance across the spectrum of humanity.

**Michael Bogdanffy-Kriegh** is an honorary Trustee, having been President from 2001 to 2007. He has also served as Vice President and Secretary of the Board, Chair of the Ethical Action Committee, Chair of the Building committee, and Chair of the Strategic Planning Committee.

Michael has his own architectural practice; projects include 262 affordable homes and also a Community Center for St. Jerome’s Church in the Bronx and a lead-free safe house under construction in Brooklyn. He has presented two technical papers on space station design at industry conferences and space station designs he collaborated on with his mentor, Michael Kalil, are now part of the Museum of Modern Art’s permanent collection.

The shared charity is the Rose Walker Fund.

**May 27–So What’s Wrong With Entitlements?**

*Curt Collier, Leader*

Rhetoric regarding our rights as citizens often changes with the political winds. Recently, the panoply of conservative voices has challenged the existence of entitlement programs, likening them to thinly veiled communism. Our right to Social Security, Medicare, Medicaid, unemployment compensation, and other safety net systems is once again deemed

“un-American.” What was the thinking behind entitlements, and what were the social conditions under which they arose? Can we afford them as a nation, and do we “deserve” these benefits?

These and other questions will be explored during this Platform.

The shared charity is Fisher Houses.

**Early Sunday  
10 AM**

(Rooms subject to change)

**May 6–Chorus 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 tips to improve our singing technique. Ceremonial Hall.

**May 13–Colloquy–Habits: Good and Bad.** Phyllis Kreuttner presides. Room 408.

**May 20–Poetry Reading**—Bring your poems and read with us. Listen as others read works of poets new to you or perhaps some older favorites. Cheryl Gross presides. Room 508.

**May 20–Chorus Practice**—Led by Pat Debrovner and Jerry Ranck. Ceremonial Hall.

**May 27–Psalms of the Land.** Curt Collier presides. Ceremonial Hall.

**Sunday Afternoon  
1:30 PM**

(Rooms subject to change)

**May 6–Annual Membership Meeting.** Ceremonial Hall.

**May 13–Ethics in the News.** Mary Ellen Goodman presides. Room 508.

**May 20–Life with Health–“Hearing Health.”** Join Curt Collier, Leader, as he discusses our ear, hearing,

and common auditory system ailments, including such topics as wax impaction, otosclerosis, middle-ear infections, and balance disorder. He will also discuss hearing loss and how to choose the right hearing aid. NYSEC Leader Curt Collier has worked for many years as an audiologist, and taught audiology at Texas Tech University and Texas A&M Kingsville. He was director of the audiology program at the University Health Science Center in Lubbock, Texas, and is published in *Ear and Hearing*, a peer-reviewed medical journal.

A question-and-answer period will follow. This free seminar is sponsored by the Life with Health Committee, Co-Chairs Phyllis Kreuttner, Cheryl Gross, and Dr. Jackie Pope. Ceremonial Hall.

**May 27—Memorial for Sylvan Wallach.** 2:00 pm. Ceremonial Hall.

## Lunch Discussions Thursdays, 12:00 Noon

Bring your lunch and join Leader Dr. Anne Klaeyen and members in the Elliott Library, Room 507, from **12:00 noon—1:30 pm**. This month's topic will be: **Science**.

**May 3**—New Planets—articles by Dennis Overbye in *The New York Times*: “**Kepler Planet Hunter Finds 1,200 Possibilities**,” 2/2/11; “**Hot on Trail of ‘Just Right’ Far-Off Planet**,” 12/2/11; and “**Search Resumes for Evidence of Life Out There**,” 12/5/11.

**May 10**—“**Out of Contact**” by John Terborgh, *The NY Review of Books*, 4/5/12.

**May 17**—“**We’re Underestimating the Risk of Human Extinction**” by Ross Anderson, *The Atlantic*, March 2012.

**May 24**—“**The Possibilian**” by Burkhard Bilger, *The New Yorker*, 4/25/11.

**May 31**—**Physics**—“**Overcoming ‘Physics Envy’**” by Kevin A. Clarke and

David M. Primo, *The New York Times*, 3/30/12; “**Science on the Rampage**” by Freeman Dyson, *The NY Review of Books*, 4/5/12; and “**Where Do Space and Time Come From?**” by George Musser, *Scientific American*, 4/12/12.

Folders with relevant articles will be available from Yalitza Garcia in the Leaders’ office. Please come and join the discussion.

## Our Ethical Family

*Moe-Swe Myint*

Please welcome our newest member, **Danny Choriki**. Danny is an information technology professional and operations executive working in the online publishing industry. He is a founder of *LunaFarmer.com*, which develops social media games. He has also worked as a consultant for several companies and government agencies. Danny is interested in computers, web technology, social sciences, and philosophy.

\* \* \*

Bravo to the **Environmental Stewardship Committee** and its members for their tremendous work and success in bringing the **Earth Day Concert** at NYSEC on April 21 to fruition. This was a wonderful evening of music by the Walkabout Clearwater Chorus and Red Molly. The concert aimed to raise funds and awareness to help support the environmental organizations: Clear Water, America’s Flagship Environmental Organization; The Nature Conservancy’s LEAF program; and Million Trees NYC.

\* \* \*

**Socrates Café**, hosted by Ken Gans on the first and third Tuesday of each month, will be known from now on as **Wisdom and World Affairs**. The schedule remains the same; the upcoming May sessions will be on the 1<sup>st</sup> and the 15<sup>th</sup> of the month. Come and join Ken and friends for stimulating discus-

sions on humanism and basic philosophical questions of life.

\* \* \*

The reinvigorated **Caring Committee** is being chaired by member **Stephanie Rosenblatt**, who had chaired the committee for over two years in the past. Please let her know of your concerns regarding member health and welfare issues or if you want to serve with her on the Committee. She can be reached at 212-586-0017. We wish to express our deep gratitude to former Chair **Virginia Scherer** for her many years of generous time and effort looking after our members’ welfare. Thanks so much, Virginia!

\* \* \*

On behalf of everyone at NYSEC, I want to give a shout-out to **Carole Chamlin** and **Pat Debrovner** for taking on the duties of lunch coordination since we moved to the Fieldston Cafeteria for Sunday Brunch. And, of course, **Sheila Kleinwald** and her lunch crew, who coordinated Sunday Brunch in the Social Hall for so long and so well and made it such a pleasant experience deserve several rounds of applause for their years of dedication.

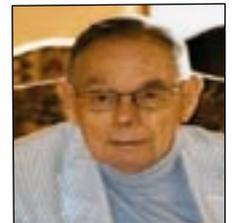
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### In Memoriam

It is with great sadness that we mourn the loss of two longtime, dedicated members of the New York Society for Ethical Culture, who were integral to its life and activities.

#### Sylvan Wallach

A Trustee of the Society from 2005 to 2009, **Sylvan Wallach** died on April 12 at the age of 98, at home, surrounded



*Sylvan Wallach*

by his large and loving family. We will celebrate his life on **Sunday, May 27**, at **2:00 pm** in Ceremonial Hall.

For many years, Sylvan was the sole editor of our newsletter, taking a hands-on approach to all aspects of its production. He was also Chair of the Society's Internet Committee, creating our first website. He served on the Building Committee and the former Men's Group, and was also a welcoming presence at our Sunday morning meetings and a volunteer cashier at our Sunday lunches. No task was too great or too small for him.

Sylvan held a Ph.D. in mathematics from John Hopkins University and was Professor Emeritus in Mathematics at C.W. Post College, publishing numerous papers in his chosen field.

An enthusiastic tennis player, he played doubles games through age 96! During the last ten years, he resumed his earlier interest in chess and played at the local JCC, at the 92<sup>nd</sup> Street Y, at his home and at a friend's home, as well as online with players all over the world. His other passions included photography, for which he created a darkroom wherever he lived, and playing the piano. In addition to his many interests, which he pursued avidly, Sylvan was always a very involved father and grandfather, loving, supportive, and very interested in his children and grandchildren, their activities, their loves, and their ideas. To the end of his life, he was often visited by generations of his progeny and took special joy in playing with the little ones, his great-grandchildren. Loving husband of Judith D. Wallach (former NYSEC President and an honorary Trustee), devoted father of the seven children in their blended family, and joyful grandfather and great-grandfather, Sylvan's warmth, intelligence, and kindness will be greatly missed.

\* \* \*

**Frank Byron Prescod**

Our esteemed member **Frank Byron Prescod** died on Saturday, April 7. Frank was 81 years old.



He was the only son of Frank *Frank Byron Prescod* and Gertrude Prescod, who were emigrants from Guyana, South America. His father started a business that Frank joined as a young adult. A native-born New Yorker, he loved Harlem. One of his teachers and early mentors was the noted poet Countee Cullen.

Frank always had a kind word and sound advice for young and old alike. His wide-ranging intellect and sense of humor charmed hosts of friends and acquaintances. Frank was truly a man of service, and he exemplified the care and concern to which we all aspire. A 40-year member of the New York Society for Ethical Culture, Frank was elected three times to the Board of Trustees and served as Chair of innumerable NYSEC Committees. Among his most notable contributions were his weekly overnight supervisory stays at our Women's Shelter, critical to keeping this vital service to the community open, orderly, and operating. In 2003 NYSEC honored Frank for his efforts with a testimonial dinner.

Frank was also a member of the New York Civil Rights Coalition; Mentoring USA, a program created to support at-risk youths; Black Psychiatrists of Greater NY and Associates; and the Frederick Douglass Alumni Association. As award-winning members of the Black Retail Action Group (BRAG) recognized for business achievement in 1985, Frank and his friend and partner Stanley Armstrong were jointly recognized by BRAG for their achievements

in business. He was also a former member of the Board of Trustees of the Fortune Society, an organization dedicated to helping formerly incarcerated persons re-enter society.

Frank is survived by his large and loving family—son and daughter, granddaughters, great-grandsons, daughter-in-law, stepdaughter, son-in-law, and the love of his life, Barbara Marie Fennell.

\* \* \*

**Member News:**

The following members are celebrating birthdays in May: **Richard Van Deusen**, 5/1; **Caroline Joy Debrovner**, 5/1; **Eva Yachnes**, 5/2; **James Farer**, 5/9; **Tom Kennedy**, 5/9; **Eva Barnett**, 5/13; **Carole Chamlin**, 5/15; **Pamela McGhee**, 5/22; **Irena Polkowska Rutenberg**, 5/25; **Dina Soraya Gregory**, 5/25; **Gary Mizal**, 5/27; and **Alice Ladas**, 5/30.

**OUT@NYSEC**

On **Tuesday, May 1, 7:00 pm**, in Ceremonial Hall, Mark Matousek presents "Ethical Wisdom for the Gay Soul: What to do with Animal Self?"

What standards, boundaries, and choices of conduct do we enforce, or aspire to, in our off hours? The challenge of how to make ethical choices when the animal self is dominant remains murky. How we navigate these decisions defines our quality of life. Mark Matousek, memoirist, teacher, and author of *Ethical Wisdom: Searching for a Moral Life*, will delve into these questions and then open the floor for discussion (90 minutes). Suggested donation: \$15.

**Gerald Ranck And Friends**



The final concert in Jerry Ranck's 70<sup>th</sup> birthday series—a gift to the Soci-

ety—will be presented on **Tuesday, May 1, at 8:00 pm** in the Auditorium. Jerry will play the harpsichord, performing Bach’s *Chaconne, Preludes, and Fugues*, and *Goldberg Variations*.

The charge for this benefit concert for members, seniors, and students is \$15; for all others it is \$25.

## Faith, Money, and Reform

Join us on **Thursday, May 3, at 7:00 pm** in the Auditorium for a panel discussion, “**The Moral Imperative of Campaign Finance Reform**,” cosponsored by Common Cause/NY and NYSEC. Panelists include: **Imam Feisal Abdul Rauf**, Chairman, Cordoba Initiative; **Rabbi David Saperstein**, Director, Religious Action Center; **Rev. Dr. Alison Boden**, Dean of Religious Life, Princeton University; and **Dr. Anne Klaeyen**, NYSEC Leader. Special advance copies of Imam Feisal’s new book, *Moving the Mountain*, will be available for purchase and signing.

The event is free and open to the public, but space is limited, so please register as soon as possible: online: [www.commoncause.org/ny/FaithMoneyReform](http://www.commoncause.org/ny/FaithMoneyReform), by e-mail: [nyoffice@commoncause.org](mailto:nyoffice@commoncause.org), or by phone: 212-691-6421.

## Join NYSEC for Great Jazz

Come for an evening of **Duke Ellington’s music on Friday, May 11, 8:00 pm** in Ceremonial Hall. Hear renowned jazz pianist Lenore Raphael and her trio, Hillard Greene on bass and Rudy Lawless on drums, along with internationally acclaimed saxophonist Ray Blue, and special guest Jerry Mandel on tenor sax.

General admission tickets are \$20; for members, seniors, and students tickets are \$15. For tickets, contact: <http://nysecjazz.eventbrite.com>.



Lenore Raphael



Ray Blue



Jerry Mandel

## Ethical Enrichment

### Ethics in Film

Chris Everett

Join us on **Friday, May 6, 7:00 pm** (doors open at **6:30 pm**), in Ceremonial



Hall, to see *2001: A Space Odyssey*, (1968). Stanley Kubrick’s quiet masterpiece probes the mysteries of space and human destiny.

While investigating the appearance of mysterious monoliths throughout the universe, astronauts David (Keir Dullea) and Frank (Gary Lockwood) battle their ship’s intelligent computer, HAL-9000. This epic sci-fi drama based on Arthur C. Clarke’s story, *The Sentinel*, was nominated for four Academy Awards and won for its stunning special effects. The suggested donation is \$5. Afterward, join me in our post-film discussion.

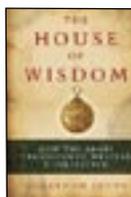
*House of Wisdom: How Arabic Science Saved Ancient Knowledge and Gave Us the Renaissance*, by Jim Al-Khalili.

The Arabic legacy of science and philosophy has long been hidden from the West. Inspired by the Koranic injunction to study closely all of God’s works, rulers of the Islamic empire funded armies of scholars, who gathered Persian, Sanskrit, and Greek texts in the capital, Baghdad, and translated them into Arabic. British-Iraqi physicist Jim Al-Khalili unveils that legacy to fascinating effect by returning to its roots in the hubs of Arab and Persian innovation that would advance science and jumpstart the European Renaissance.

There is no charge for members; the public’s suggested donation is \$5.

### Ethics in Literature Reading Group

Come on **Monday, May 7, 1:00 pm–3:00 pm**, to the Elliott Library, Room 507. Leader Dr. Anne Klaeyen will host a discussion on *The*



### Felix Adler’s Writings

Come for the final two sessions on **Tuesdays, May 8 and 22, 7:00 pm–8:30 pm**, in Room 502.



This month we will read and discuss John Dewey’s long essay, “A Common Faith.” If Felix

Adler is the father of Ethical Culture, Dewey may well be its stepfather. Since Adler's death in 1933, Ethical Culture philosophy has moved from Transcendental Idealism to Pragmatic Humanism. Learn about that transition.

Leaders Dr. Joseph Chuman and Dr. Anne Klaeyesen will guide us in a close study of Adler's writings, with the goal of our gaining a thorough understanding of his thoughts and aims through probing discussion. Please contact Yalitza Garcia at 212-874-5210, ext. 118, to register.

## Building Ethical Relationships

Two sessions remain in this series, **Thursdays, May 10, and 24, 6:30 pm–8:00 pm**, in Room 507, moderated by Leader Dr. Anne Klaeyesen, and Pat Debrovner.

Relationships don't just happen; they're made—and nurtured with loving care. To bring our best selves to others and elicit their best, we need empathy and social skills. This workshop explores the nature of relationships and the ways in which we can better connect to one another.

Admission is free, but registration is required. To register, please contact Yalitza Garcia at 212-874-5210, ext. 118, or email her at [ygarcia@nysec.org](mailto:ygarcia@nysec.org).

## Ethics and the Theater

Patricia Bruder Debrovner

On **Friday, May 18, 7:00 pm to 9:00 pm**, **Ethics and the Theater** will present Brian



Clark's play, *Whose Life Is It Anyway?* Ken Harrison lies in a hospital bed, able to move only

his head, from side to side. A sculptor, whose hands have been both his living and his life, Ken chafes at his imprisonment in a frozen body, but still more against a medical establishment that infantilizes and patronizes him. With the only weapons at his command—fierce intelligence and mordant humor—he battles for the right to be fully human and decide his own fate. But is he really capable of making that decision? Might acceptance, impossible to envision now, come with time? These are difficult questions that Brian Clark and his characters confront head-on.

Susan Horowitz directs the cast, which includes Bonnie Bean, Jerry Chamlin, Ken Gans, John Gurney, Dan Hanson, Natalie Kropf, David Lee, Vince Navarro, Antonio Pagliarulo, Terry Perlin, Jamie Scott, Elizabeth Ungar and Tom Weishaar, with Carole Chamlin as narrator. Come at **6:30 pm** for a wine and cheese reception and, after the reading, participate in a discussion of the

ethical issues of the play led by Dr. Charles Debrovner. The suggested donation is \$5. Ceremonial Hall.

## Ethics in Film: Contemporary Documentaries

On **Monday, May 21, 1:00 pm–3:00 pm**, join Leader Dr. Anne Klaeyesen in the Adler Study, Room 514 as we watch *Forgiving Dr. Mengele* (2006), directed by Bob Hercules and Cheri Pugh.

During the Holocaust, Eva Mozes Kor and her twin sister, Miriam, were selected for a series of horrifying genetic experiments at the hands of the infamous Dr. Josef Mengele. Ironically, because of these experiments, the girls were able to survive Auschwitz; much of their family did not. In this documentary, Kor returns to Auschwitz on a quest to heal her wounds with an astonishing and controversial act of forgiveness.

The film showing is free to members, and \$5 for guests.

## Save the Dates!

The **Photography Arts Club** will meet on **Sunday, June 3, 1:45 pm**, in the Adler Study, Room 514. Dr. Charles Debrovner will present a program on “High Dynamic Range Imaging” in photography. (See registration form below).

**Arts and Culture Program: Photography Arts Club**

**Registration Form**

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

Member of NYSEC: yes \_\_\_ no \_\_\_

I understand that my registration includes participation in all Club programs and that my photos will be included in its Gallery.

Membership in this Club is free to members of NYSEC and is open to non-members on payment of a \$20 registration fee.

Non-member registration fee is hereby enclosed: yes \_\_\_ no \_\_\_

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

## AEU Assembly Comes to Albany

The American Ethical Union's 97<sup>th</sup> Assembly will be held in Albany, NY, **June 14 to June 17**, with the theme, "Creating Communities of Hope and Justice." Friday's program will focus on "Our Ethical Culture Societies"; Saturday's events will focus on "Humanizing Criminal Justice."

To help you plan ahead for this momentous event and to register online, you can visit the AEU's website, [www.aeu.org](http://www.aeu.org), for a link. If you have questions regarding the Assembly, please call the AEU at 212-873-6500, or email L. Miller at [lmiller@aeu@gmail.com](mailto:lmiller@aeu@gmail.com), or Donna Pang at [donna.aeu@gmail.com](mailto:donna.aeu@gmail.com).

*From time to time Ethical OUTLOOK will publish "Op-Ed" articles from members on a variety of issues.*

## Police Officers Reflect Our Racial Bias

*Bart Worden, Leader, Ethical Culture Society of Westchester*



*Around 200 people turned out for a rally at the Thomas H. Slater Center in White Plains on November 30, 2011, protesting the killing of Kenneth Chamberlain by police during a confrontation at his home. Photo by Peter Carr, The Journal News.*

It seems the country is waking up to racial bias in law enforcement. This awareness has taken too long to save the lives of Danroy Henry Jr. and Ramarley Graham, unarmed youths shot and killed by police in Thornwood and New York City, respectively, or Trayvon Martin, the unarmed Florida teen shot dead by a neighborhood watch volunteer.

This awareness comes too late as well for Kenneth Chamberlain, the 68-year-old White Plains resident who was killed by city police who responded to his medical alert call.

It appears that at least some law enforcement personnel in our country may be color blind—at least in the sense of their inability to perceive the uneven justice doled out to people of color. They are not aware, apparently, of the harshness of their responses to African-Americans and Latinos compared to their treatment of Caucasians. They do not factor in how their own fears about personal safety may color their perception of the dangerousness of others when they are preparing to use lethal force. They don't take into consideration how afraid someone whom they perceive as a perpetrator may be when approached by law enforcement officers.

But let's face it: our law enforcement is a reflection of ourselves. Our own attitudes, opinions, misperceptions, and apprehensions are what drive the behavior of law enforcement. Our obsession with personal safety, our fear of people who don't look like us, our inattention to the lives of anyone who is not perceived as "our kind" lay the groundwork for racial bias and provide a sustaining environment for that bias.

### A Medical Alert

Consider the case of Chamberlain, the former Westchester County correction officer whose medical alert sounded sometime around 5:00 am on November 19. Mr. Chamberlain, African-American and reportedly "known to the police," did not answer when the medical alert operator tried to reach him, so she called for emergency response. The police arrived at his door but he did not open it. Instead, as has been widely reported, he said through the door that the call had been a mistake, and that he was fine and not in need of assistance.

He asked the police to go away. They did not leave, however, but continued to bang on the door, insisting that he open it.

According to counsel for Mr. Chamberlain’s family, and his survivors—they have addressed community forums and participated in numerous media interviews in which they have recounted their version of the fatal encounter, based in part on evidence shared with them by the District Attorney’s Office—this continued for about an hour. Because the medical alert’s two-way speaker phone was on, there is a recording of the conversation Mr. Chamberlain had with the police at his door, and this recording has been shared with Chamberlain family members and counsel.

This means, as the Chamberlain attorneys have noted, there is a recording of a police officer calling Mr. Chamberlain a racial slur at some time before the police broke down his door. That means, too, that there is a recording of him asking why they have their guns drawn and saying that he believed the police were there to kill him. It also means there is a recording of the operator offering to contact his son, who lives a few minutes away, and a police officer telling the operator that they don’t need assistance with mediation.

It is still unclear why the police were so intent on gaining access to Mr. Chamberlain’s apartment. They were called for a medical emergency, not a crime, and he was clearly awake and alert and able to say he did not need or want assistance. So, why they felt the urgency to break down his door, Tasers at the ready, is also unclear. Since the Tasers have video

cameras that recorded the breaking of the door and discharging of the stun devices, there is a video in existence, seen by the family and their lawyers, that shows Mr. Chamberlain some eight feet away from the door, standing in his underwear with his hands at his sides when the door was broken open. On the audio recording there we hear someone saying to turn off the video, after which the video stops. The firing of bean bags (reportedly done because the Taser shots failed to knock Mr. Chamberlain down) and the fatal shooting were not captured on the video.

**Bias as a Factor**

If you don’t believe the killing of Kenneth Chamberlain to be a racially biased incident, I would like to know your reasoning. Perhaps there is more information that has not been made public by the White Plains police, but why would that be so? One would think that in four months’ time at least that much would have been disclosed. The matter is due to be presented to a grand jury later this month and it is hoped that all available recordings will be reviewed in their entirety. But regardless of the outcome of the proceedings, can we not, at the least, acknowledge that something went terribly wrong on that fateful day, and that there needs to be a re-evaluation of the use of lethal force by law enforcement? And can we not admit that, had Mr. Chamberlain, who had served in the Marines, been Caucasian, the events would probably have unfolded in very different manner?

As a concerned citizen—and I sincerely hope that you are—you can do something positive right away to promote better understanding: write

a letter to your local law enforcement entity and request information on the department’s protocols for the use of force. Ask, as well, for information about the department’s efforts to connect with people in the community, especially with African-Americans and Latinos.

And while you are out finding a mailbox, spend some time on the street and encourage others to send letters, too. Until we become part of the solution we are bound to be part of the problem. Let us not remain silent about these matters.

**Women’s Shelter Needs Volunteers**

The Ethical Culture Society has provided shelter for up to seven women every night, from Thursday to Sunday all year ‘round.

Since 1982, the Shelter has never been forced to close due to lack of volunteers. Without volunteers we would have to close our Shelter, thus depriving women whose only alternative would be to sleep in a chair for the night.

We ask little of your time—a commitment of only one night a month. Please try to arrange your calendar to experience a satisfying connection. For further information please contact the ECS membership office, at 212-874-5210, ext 113.

Dr. Maria Fridman, Director of the Ethical Culture Shelter would like to thank the Society members and friends for their constant dedication to the Shelter.

# RETREAT UPDATE

## **NYSEC Annual Members' Retreat**

September 14<sup>th</sup> – 16<sup>th</sup>

*Never done before: surprise Saturday night program*

There is currently a waiting list for rooms with private baths.

Still available:

- A few more rooms with shared baths
- Allison House: which includes 4 rooms, 2 baths, a kitchen and a living room; less than a 2-minute drive from the main dining room

For more information contact  
Moe-Swe Myint (Sun -Wed): 212.874.5210 x113  
(\$100.00 deposit per person holds your place.)

# May 2012

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  <b>June 2012 Newsletter Deadline</b>  6:00 pm – Wisdom and World Affairs 7:00 pm – OUT@NYSEC 8:00 pm – Gerald Ranck and Friends	2	3  12:00 pm – Leader Lunch Discussion  6:00 pm – Empowering Ethical Elders 6:30 pm – Thursday Writing Workshop 7:00 pm – Faith, Money, and Reform	4  7:00 pm – Ethics in Film: <i>2001 A Space Odyssey</i> , (1968)	5
6  10:00 am – Chorus Practice 11:00 am – Ethics for Children 11:15 am – Morning Meeting 12:45 pm – Brunch/Social Hour 1:30 pm – Annual Meeting 2:00 pm – Teen Leadership	7  1:00 pm – Ethics in Literature	8  7:00 pm – Felix Adler Seminar	9	10  12:00 pm – Leader Lunch Discussion 6:30 pm – Building Ethical Relationships 6:30 pm – Thursday Writing Workshop	11  8:00 pm – West 64 <sup>th</sup> Street Jazz	12
13  10:00 am – Colloquy 11:00 am – Ethics for Children 11:15 am – Morning Meeting 12:45 pm – Brunch/Social Hour 1:30 pm – Ethics in the News 2:00 pm – Teen Leadership	14  6:30 pm – Board of Trustees	15  6:00 pm – Wisdom and World Affairs	16	17  12:00 pm – Leader Lunch Discussion 6:00 pm – Empowering Ethical Elders 6:30 pm – Thursday Writing Workshop	18  7:00 pm – Ethics and the Theater	19
20  10:00 am – Poetry Reading 10:00 am – Chorus Practice 11:00 am – Ethics for Children 11:15 am – Morning Meeting 12:45 pm – Brunch/Social Hour 1:30 pm – Life with Health 2:00 pm – Teen Leadership	21  1:00 pm – Ethics in Film: Contemporary Documentaries 7:00 pm – Prospective Members' Reception	22  7:00 pm – Felix Adler Seminar	23	24  12:00 pm – Leader Lunch Discussion 6:30 pm – Building Ethical Relationships 6:30 pm – Thursday Writing Workshop	25	26
27  10:00 am – Psalms of the Land 11:00 am – Ethics for Children 11:15 am – Morning Meeting 12:45 pm – Brunch/Social Hour 2:00 pm – Memorial for Sylvan Wallach	28  <b>Society Offices Closed Memorial Day</b>	29	30	31  12:00 pm – Leader Lunch Discussion 6:30 pm – Thursday Writing Workshop	<b>Ethics and the Theater</b> May 18 – <i>Whose Life Is It Anyway?</i> by Brian Clark	



TWO WEST 64TH STREET, NEW YORK, NY 10023-7179