

ETHICAL OUTLOOK

August 2021

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IT TAKES A VILLAGE

ELINORE KAPLAN

On March 3, 2020, the NYSEC Board of Directors held its monthly meeting. According to the Minutes regarding the President's Report: "A task force has been established with the charge of researching and advising on the best practices for dealing with the Coronavirus pandemic. Liz has appointed Scotty Embree Chair of the Covid-19 task force." The Society by nightfall had publicly announced the temporary closing of the building to members, to renters, and to the general public.

DEALING WITH THE CRISIS

That was a week *before* the World Health Organization declared a pandemic and ten days before the U.S. declared COVID-19 a national emergency. Scotty, herself a PhD, proposed creating a task force of Society members who had medical expertise—Bonnie Bean, MSW; Chuck Debrovner, MD; Jim Farer, DDS; Kathleen O'Connell, PhD Nursing; Carol Portlock, MD; and Jesús Torres-Velasquez, PhD Biology—to guide the trustees and staff in their considerations. Within a day and ever since, the task force was in action researching, reviewing, and issuing guidelines for the Society to follow as staff returned to the building

and later, when renters and the school resumed limited activities, keeping the place running and making it safe for all. No small task! The guidelines, continuously refined, were shared with other Ethical Societies.

Supporting Scotty's cadre, the Personnel Committee—led by co-chairs Bill Baker and Steve Serling—organized the COVID-19 Staff Implementation Team, which met weekly to figure out how to put the guidelines into action. There were so many protocols regarding ventilation, cleaning, and access, plus the impetus to meet the distinct needs of the various building users and renters. The Implementation Team, with the help of the Board's Executive Committee and advisors, ensured operations were organized and coordinated.

NYSEC's administrative staff saw to it that we stayed on track. The work held many challenges that they scrambled to meet with nary a bump in the road. Most of our administrative staff easily adapted to an all-remote work model. Bookkeeper Yolanta Kosmaczewska, who has a much more difficult workstation to transfer remotely, came daily, riding the nearly-empty trains, to continue paying staff, vendors, and bills; record

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SUNDAYS AT THE SOCIETY

AUG
29

ON THE EXHALE

A play by Martin Zimmerman

A PLAY BY
MARTIN ZIMMERMAN

Pat Debrovner, Producer

Presented by Ethics and the Theater

The play was inspired by the Sandy Hook shootings. Its title is the advice given to marksmen when to squeeze the trigger. The sole character is a single mother of a second grader. That's all you need to know. Except, it's not what you expect.

11am | Ceremonial Hall

THEME OF THE MONTH:



LOOK FOR THEME-RELATED PROGRAMS IN THESE PAGES.

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FROM THE LEADER'S DESK

DR. RICHARD KORÁL

OUR PLANETARY FUTURE

Summertime! And the livin' could definitely be easier! Climate change could deliver something positive but, so far, it hasn't. No one would mind a few palm trees in Brighton Beach. But instead, we're seeing triple-digit temperatures in the northwest and monsoon rains here in the east. As I write this in July, there are almost 400 fires burning in California. Who could have imagined 113 degree temps—not in Death Valley—but in British Columbia?

“*The urgency of the moment impels us to look for models to help us visualize the future, both the better and the worse, among possible outcomes for Earth.*”

Not since the Cuyahoga River in Ohio burst into flames in 1969 was there such a graphic demonstration of how we can undermine our own environment with unguided development. Shrinking glaciers, subsiding lands, and persistent droughts show that humans can impact the earth for better or for worse.

The urgency of the moment impels us to look for models to help us visualize the future, both the better and the worse, among possible outcomes for Earth. Hence, the next NASA space probes will try to see what happened to our neighbor Venus.

Venus, while appearing pretty in the evening sky, is Earth's evil twin. It is about the same size as the Earth, is the same age, and was built with the same materials. So query, how did its atmosphere become all carbon dioxide? Why is it 900 degrees at the surface with crushing pressure? The clouds of sulfuric acid are so thick that it has been virtually impossible to see what the surface looks like. Does Venus

model a possible future for our planet? Or does it reflect a fundamental difference in the two planets that makes it truly alien?

To better understand conditions on Venus, NASA is preparing to send two probes in the late 2020's. One is called DAVINCI+, short for “Deep Atmosphere Venus Investigation of Noble gases, Chemistry, and Imaging plus.” It will enter the atmosphere and measure its composition while

the planet and study its geology, tectonics, and gravity variations.

It would certainly be instructive if the ruins of past civilizations are detected. But the likelihood is that no sign of life, even microbial life, will be found. On Earth, we measure the carbon dioxide levels in the parts per million, while on Venus it comprises 97% of their atmosphere. It is hoped that such an extreme example of a runaway greenhouse effect can serve to trigger the imagination of those still unconvinced of the work we must do to preserve an Earth that sustains us.

By the time VERITAS and DAVINCI+ beam back their findings in the 2030's, our CO2 emissions must already be cut by half and we should have bought electric cars to replace our gas guzzlers. Until then, we'll still have to exercise the discipline to take charge of our future and reduce, reuse, and recycle. Who would want to be a Venutian?

taking pictures on the way down. The other is called VERITAS, which is short for “Venus Emissivity, Radio Science, InSAR, Topography, and Spectroscopy.” That one will orbit





AUDREY KINDRED

Youth & Family Programs Coordinator

To **RSVP**, please contact Audrey at:
youngethicalexplorers@gmail.com.
For more information about all of our youth
programming, please visit ethical.nyc/youth.

August 1 | 1:30–3pm | Location TBD

1st SUNDAYS for ALL

All ages meet to share and learn. Join us!

“LEADERSHIP”

Preparing for her arrival, we will write and illustrate letters to introduce ourselves to Dr. Nori Rost, Acting Leader, and welcome her into our Ethical fold. Ethical NYC members are invited and encouraged to attend! Please RSVP.

**YEE will not be meeting in August,
except for our FIRST SUNDAY gathering.
Have a wonderful month!**



Little Island is the recently opened, privately subsidized (with \$260 million from Barry Diller) installation that replaced the old Pier 54 on the Hudson at 15th Street. The arresting structural design is by Englishman Thomas Heatherwick, now well known for Vessel, the “adult jungle gym” that forms the centerpiece of the Hudson Yards development. Landscaping is by Signe Nielson, the best-known landscape architect in New York, who created the master plan for Hudson River Park and many other projects. Little Island also contains performance venues and food sites. Admission is free until noon, \$10 after.

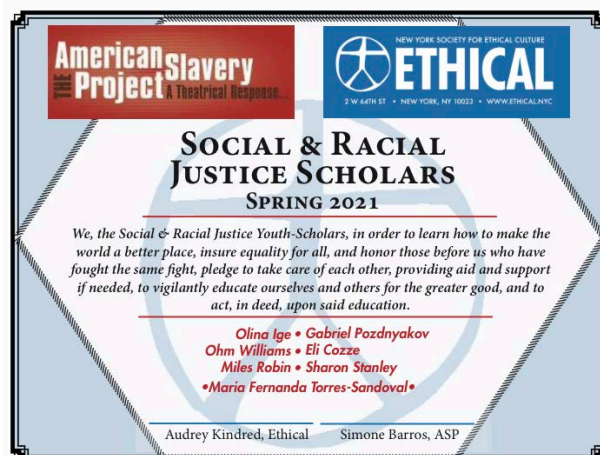
Details: We’ll meet at Ethical and take the M11 bus at W.62 St. to 15th St., then walk one block west to the entrance. The Island has already become quite popular, with long waiting lines. Investigating before Aug. 18, we may propose an earlier departure time and announce it by email. Please prepare for hot weather.

RSVP by August 10: Bob, rbumcrot65@gmail.com
or Howard, howard@rosesquared.com

Wednesday, Aug. 18 | 9:30am
(Rain date: Friday, Aug. 20)

SOCIAL & RACIAL JUSTICE SCHOLARS YOUTH PROGRAM

AUDREY KINDRED



In March, the New York Society for Ethical Culture (NYSEC) teamed up with the American Slavery Project (ASP) to offer a unique and ambitious spring program via Zoom: The Social & Racial Justice Scholars (SRJS), free for teens and tweens, along with a nationwide call-out to AEU’s Youth of Ethical Societies (YES). Simone Barros of ASP and I buckled down with seven studious, serious, amazing learners.

We were privileged to be working with Simone, who produced ASP’s “Reverberation Plays,” audio dramas (plays for radio). An award-winner in her field, Simone creates moving image and soundscapes for film and theater, has had her plays staged in commercial theaters, is an audio book director, and has done postproduction work for such noted filmmakers as Ric Burns, Sam Pollard, and Spike Lee. She teaches filmmaking at Pratt and co-teaches dramatic writing at Manhattan Theatre Club’s Stargate program.

Topics and material were sourced from the “Reverberation Plays,” ASP’s visually meditative audio plays which had been broadcast through Ethical Culture for the whole community. (Those of you who watched and listened to these plays know the material was very sophisticated.) Sections of 5-10 minutes in length were parsed out for youth-appropriate listening. These dramatized segments launched discussion.

Through this work, participants faced really powerful topics, often for the first time, including the racial wealth gap, the roots of racism in America, eu-

Continued on p.7



ETHICAL ENRICHMENT

WEEKDAY PROGRAMS

Most of our programs are open to the public. Newcomers are always welcome. For an updated listing of all programs, visit our Zoom programs at the Ethical Online Live! website, <https://ethical.nyc/live>. We also email a Weekly Program Schedule, where, for applicable programs, you will find the topic and suggested reading of the week and other additional information.

SCHEDULE CHANGE! Some of our programs have moved to earlier time slots. Look for the asterisk. *

MONDAY
TUESDAY
WEDNESDAY

MANAGING IN THE TIME OF COVID

COVID-19 has created challenges for all of us. Retired oncologist Carol Portlock will review recent articles including new science of interest. Clinical psychologist Frank Corigliano will address your concerns about managing day-to-day during this trying time.

Dr. Frank Corigliano moderates 1st & 3rd Mondays

Dr. Carol Portlock moderates 2nd & 4th Mondays

Mondays | *11:30am – 12:30pm

ETHICS IN THE NEWS

Join in the lively give-and-take on compelling issues and current events. Weekly topics and suggested readings.

Joe Fashing moderates

Tuesdays | *11am – 12pm

This program is on hiatus until September.

MEDITATION

Midweek meditation for relaxing body and mind.

Larry Hurst moderates

Tuesdays | 5 – 5:45pm

CAMARADERIE & GOOD CONVERSATION ON ISSUES PHILOSOPHICAL & NEWSWORTHY

We aim to illuminate the philosophical concepts and values that underlie the contemporary issues on which we focus in our discussions.

Joe Chuman, Leader, moderates

3rd Tues. | Aug. 17 | 7 – 8pm

ETHICAL AFFINITY GROUPS

SOCIAL JUSTICE

American Indian Community House
Amnesty International
Feminist Freethinkers
League of Women Voters
My Own Book
Police Reform Organizing Project

ENVIRONMENTAL

350NYC
Drawdown NYC
Climate Reality Project
Food & Water Watch
Beyond Plastics

WEDNESDAY

EXPLORING ETHICAL HUMANISM

Eastern Antecedents of Humanism

These discussions of Ethical Culture beliefs and practices explore the history, ideals, and current interests of the Ethical Society community and our place in the philosophical/religious firmament.

Leader Richard Koral moderates

1st Wed. | Aug. 4 | *11am – 12pm

GREAT LITERATURE DISCUSSION

Read the selected works in advance and share your thoughts and observations.

Gunther Tielemans moderates

1st & 3rd Wed. | Aug. 4 & 18 | 7 – 9pm

8/4: *At Swim-Two-Birds*, Flann O'Brien

This 1939 novel tells the story of a college student who lives with his curmudgeonly uncle in Dublin. When not in bed or reading, he is composing a novel about a second-rate author, Trellis, whose characters ultimately rebel against him. Figures of Irish myth make Trellis pay for his bad writing. Hilariously funny and inventive, this is a masterpiece of Irish literature, included in *Time* magazine's list of the 100 best English-language novels from 1923 to 2005.

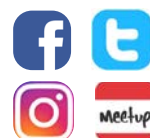
8/18: *The Bell*, Iris Murdoch

A lay community of people is encamped outside an abbey. A new bell is being installed when the old bell, a legendary symbol of religion and magic, is rediscovered. Things begin to change while the wise Abbess watches and exercises discreet authority. This funny, sad, and moving novel is about religion, sex, and the fight between good and evil.

Coming up:

Père Goriot, Honoré de Balzac

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**ETHICAL
CULTURE**
AND SPREAD
THE WORD



Find us on Facebook
[@NYEthicalSociety](https://www.facebook.com/NYEthicalSociety).

Tell your friends you're
here – [#EthicsInAction](https://twitter.com/EthicsInAction).

POETRY CIRCLE

★ Share poems of your choice. We'll discuss a line, a word, an image. Send your poems in advance, so they can be shared on screen: ethicaloutlook@gmail.com.

Elinore Kaplan moderates

*2nd Thurs. | Aug. 12 | 11am – 12:30pm

STORYTELLING CIRCLE

One of the oldest traditions around the world is storytelling—folktales, fairytales, historic tales, family tales, etc. Bring a story and we'll gather 'round the virtual campfire. Your topic suggestions are welcomed.

Doris Hart moderates

1st & 3rd Thurs. | Aug. 5 & 19 | 5 – 6pm

ETHICS AND THE THEATER

★ Our play-reading program will be back as a Sunday Platform on August 29. (Details on p.1)

COLLOQUY

Larry Hurst: "Assimilation"

Share your reflections on the topic based on quotes, parables, poems, etc. presented by the moderator. There are no right or wrong answers, just your individual response shared in a contemplative atmosphere.

Bob Berger facilitates

3rd Thurs. | Aug. 19 | 2 – 3pm

THOUGHT SALON

Are you searching for the opportunity to "think out loud" in a respectful and supportive space? Do you love asking questions instead of taking things at face value? Do you want to become a more reflective thinker? We revive the lost art of conversation and fine-tune our critical thinking skills, opening our

minds to new perspectives and possibilities! Dilemmas, brief readings, life's questions, and personal experience are used as a catalyst for dialogue.

Limited to 20 participants; NYSEC members only. If you would like to join the group or sample a session, please email Maggie at mdetermann@nysec.org.

Sandi Sacks moderates

4th Thurs. | Aug. 26 | 11am – 12pm

GETTING TO KNOW YOU

Dialogue Partners TBA

In this session, a pair of "dialogue partners" respond to questions about growing up, career, interests, adventures—including one about their experience at Ethical NYC, followed by a Q&A. For members, the programs are recorded each month, constituting an archive in the Members Section of the website. If you'd like to be a dialogue partner, email Elinore Kaplan at ethicaloutlook@gmail.com.

Larry Hurst & Elinore Kaplan moderate

4th Thurs. | Aug. 26 | 2 – 3pm

PROACTIVE MEDITATION & DEEP LISTENING

★ In this guided experiential session, we first take time to relax body and mind in order to sense how we really are in each moment. We allow ourselves to focus on listening deeply and empathically for what may be calling for our attention. We stay present with that. This proactive approach to meditating can open up fresh ideas and connections. Larry is a certified trainer and workshop leader with the International Focusing Institute.

Larry Hurst moderates

Fridays | *11:30am – 12:30pm



THE AEU 106th ASSEMBLY

Catch what's coming up as well as recordings of much of what you've missed. The Assembly culminates on Sunday, August 8 with an All-Society Sunday Platform (*see p.7*). Topics include "The Wastefulness of Racism," "The Truth About America's Financial System," and this one, "Ethical Culture: Its Place in Contemporary Humanism," by our own Richard Koral. As part of every annual assembly, the AEU bestows the Anna Garlin Spencer award to recognize lay members from AEU-affiliated Ethical congregations for their significant volunteer contributions. This year's NYSEC recipient was Elinore Kaplan.

Register at <https://aeu.org/event/106th-annual-assembly/>.

SUNDAYS AT THE SOCIETY

BAGELS & COFFEE | 10 – 11am

Join us early during the summer for our social hour. Chat with each other and enjoy complimentary bagels and coffee.

PLATFORM TALKS | 11 – 12:15pm

Join us to hear informed and inspiring speakers, including our own Leaders, while enjoying music provided by David Gracia, our Music Director.

**AUG
1**



THE JOY OF BEING GENEROUS: EIGHT MONTHS OF NYSEC'S FOOD INSECURITY INITIATIVE DURING COVID

JANET & HOWARD ROSE

Barbara Carlsen presides

In late October of 2020, NYSEC members Janet and Howard Rose began a food insecurity initiative. Acting on behalf of the Ethical Action Committee and honoring the Ethical Culture tenet of deed, it was a simple project that grew enormously to ultimately a collection of over five tons of food.

Join Janet and Howard as they share this incredible journey. Learn about all of the participants — from the volunteers who organized their residential buildings to the managers who ran months-long drives. Share the enthusiasm of students who set up a pantry in their East Harlem high school, and finally, the food pantry organizations who received and distributed the desperately needed donations.

JANET and HOWARD ROSE are both members of NYSEC. Janet co-chairs the Ethical Action committee, and Howard serves on our Board and is co-chair of the Membership and Building committees. Before retiring and moving to the city, Janet taught English for 26 years and Howard taught Vocational Graphic Arts for 27

years at the same New Jersey high school. Simultaneously, both were also professional potters, selling at quality craft shows for several years, which led them to incorporate as Rose Squared and present craft shows for more than three decades.



While residing in New Jersey, Janet served on the board of Homesharing, an organization that addresses homelessness by pairing those in need with those who have homes to share. She also served on the Hillsborough Library board for 10 years, the last two as President. Howard was on the board and executive board of Temple Beth-El in Somerville, NY. Together they served as co-chairs of the Temple's Membership committee.

ity? Let us recognize underlying ethical values that animate efforts, throughout our history, to create “a more perfect union,” to elicit goodness from diverse peoples, to find and demonstrate hope.

We gather today virtually from across the country and around the world, something that was inconceivable when our nation began or when Felix Adler founded Ethical Culture in 1876. Let us envision together and commit to building a nation of equity, decency, and compassion.

ANNE KLAEYSEN, NYSEC Leader Emerita; **ROBERT BERSON**, Leader, Northern Westchester Society; **GREG BONIN**, **CHRISTIAN HAYDEN**, **LOUISE JETT**, and **SARAH TIELEMANN**: Leaders-in-Training; **ELIZABETH COLLIER**, Chair, AEU Leadership Committee

young **ETHICAL** 1st SUNDAYS for ALL
explorers 1–3:30pm | See p.3

**AUG
8**



SOURCES OF HOPE: VALUES FROM OUR PAST AS WE BUILD THE FUTURE

AEU ALL-SOCIETY PLATFORM

This 106th Assembly of the AEU has addressed “the whole truth about America,” where history has been triumphant for some and traumatic for others. How do we understand and reconcile such dispar-

**AUG
15**



WHY WE COME: RETHINKING OUR IMMIGRATION CRISIS

DR. MIGUEL DE LA TORRE

Monica Weiss presides

The current immigration crisis on our southern borders has little to do with migrants seeking a better life. Its causes can be traced to the 1840s. Dr. De La Torre is an immigrant—once an undoc-

SHARED CHARITY OF THE MONTH:



Harlem Mothers S.A.V.E. (Stop Another Violent End) works to educate the community, to support partners and legislation for sensible gun laws, and to remedy the effects of gun violence and promote ways to reduce gun deaths in their community. They perform as advocates and spokespersons for families in their time of need after a gun incident. They have year-round programs working with kids and youth to develop community leaders for this purpose.

umented immigrant—because of U.S. domestic and foreign beliefs and policies, from Manifest Destiny to Gunboat Diplomacy. Because we fail to recognize the causes of our current immigration crises, we fail to develop proper ethical and moral solutions.



DR. MIGEL DE LA TORRE focuses his academic pursuits on social ethics within contemporary U.S. thought, specifically on how religion affects race, class, and gender oppression. He is the recipient of the 2020 American Academy of Religion's Excellence in Teaching Award and the 2021 Martin E. Marty Public Understanding of Religion Award. Dr. De La Torre is Professor of Social Ethics and Latinx Studies at the Iliff School of Theology in Denver. He wrote the screenplay for the award-winning documentary film, *Trials of Hope and Terror*. A Fulbright scholar, he has taught in Indonesia, Mexico, South Africa, Costa Rica, Cuba, and Germany, and has authored over 100 articles and published 41 books (five of which won national awards). Dr. De La Torre served as the 2012 President of the *Society of Christian Ethics*, as Director of the American Academy of Religion, and sat on the editorial board of the Academy's *Journal*, as well as having been Co-founder and Executive Director of the Society of Race, Ethnicity, and Religion, and founding editor of the Society's *Journal*.



ALLYSHIP: LEADING WITH COLLECTIVE WORK IN MIND

DR. DWINITA MOSBY TYLER

Barbara Carlsen presides

In this Zoom presentation, Dr. Tyler will provide a roadmap for leading, working, and serving with “allyship” in mind. According to Wikipedia, “Allyship is the practice of emphasizing social justice, inclusion, and human rights by members of an ingroup to advance the interests of an oppressed or marginalized outgroup. Allyship is part of the anti-oppression or anti-racist conversation, which puts into use social justice theories and ideals.” Dr. Tyler will provide tips, techniques, barriers, and future-thinking strategies to advance a system where collectiveness is the norm.



DR. DWINITA MOSBY TYLER is the Chief Catalyst and Founder of The Equity Project, an organization designed to support organizations and

communities in building diversity, equity and inclusion strategies; and The HR Shop, a human resources firm that supports non-profits and small businesses. She is the former Senior Vice President and Chief Inclusion Officer for Children's Hospital Colorado, the first African American woman to hold that position in the organization's 100+ year history. Dr. Tyler is also the former Executive Director of the Office of Human Resources for the City and County of Denver, the first African American woman to hold that position in the 63+ year history of the agency. She holds a Doctorate in Organizational Leadership, a Master of Arts degree in Management and a Bachelor of Science degree in Education, is accredited by the Georgetown University National Center for Cultural Competence, and holds a Cornell University Diversity & Inclusion certification. Dr. Tyler is nationally recognized for her equity work with non-profit, community, government, and corporate organizations.

AUG 29

ON THE EXHALE



See p. 1 for details.

Check out our channel.

You Tube

[YouTube.com/NYSEthicalCulture](https://www.youtube.com/NYSEthicalCulture)

SOCIAL JUSTICE SCHOLARS (Continued from p.3)

genics, college loans, labor and its compensation or lack thereof. And finally, participants grappled with the very delicate processes involved when humans in various situations face and attempt to solve ethical dilemmas.

The grand finale was on Juneteenth!—acknowledged this year as an official federal holiday. The students met ASP Co-founder and Producing Artistic Director, Judy Tate, and she told them about the roots of her work and why she is so determined to make sure that we all can examine “the past in the present.”

The students ended their program series by examining many oaths, including that of the American Slavery Project, and Ethical Culture's mission statement. The result of this exercise was that they created their own Ethical oath, printed on the certificates they were awarded:

We, the Social & Racial Justice Youth-Scholars, in order to learn how to make the world a better place, ensure equality for all, and honor those before us who fought the same fight, pledge to take care of each other, providing aid and support if needed, to vigilantly educate ourselves and others for the greater good, and to act in deed upon said education.

Sharon, the senior member of our group, hailing all the way from

the St. Louis Society, shared her reflections: “It's been amazing getting to meet with other people that care about and have worked in social and racial justice! It's also been great getting to learn about things that you wouldn't normally learn about in a standard school curriculum, such as how eugenics happened in the US too, not just Nazi Germany. Or learning about the African Burial Ground in New York. I was also happy to learn about the American Slavery Project. I love what they are doing and I'll be keeping an eye out for more of their work!”

Marifer, who has grown up within Ethical NYC, said: “SRJS lets us talk about very serious issues of the past and present, about the crappy things we have done, and helps us learn how to stand up to these issues, all with engaging conversations, and creative audio plays.”

David Ige and Sylvie Fan, parents of our newest participant, Olinas, shared this reflection: “We have found Olinas' participation in YEE a beautiful complement to work being accomplished in her school. Contextualization of material, and hands-on experience gained through actions and thorough discussions with peers are all realized in age-appropriate style. Dinnertime chatter gets a big lift from the many questions brought up. Looking forward to continuing on the journey!”

CONGRATULATIONS TO THE SCHOLARS!

ETHICAL OUTLOOK August 2021 **7**

IT TAKES A VILLAGE *(Continued from p. 1)*

budgetary changes introduced by Covid-related purchases; and keep accurate accounts for every dime that flows in and out of the Society. (As always, Yolanta also cared for the Society's many plants.)

Facilities Manager Leonardo Gibson instituted new procedures with his crew to maintain a clean and safe building, showing up to shovel snow and salt iced sidewalks, adjusting maintenance priorities to address Covid-sensitive issues, and working with vendors and contractors. They helped Ethical Fieldston reopen safely. (The school held daily classes in the Adler Study and Elliott Library as well as other spaces in our building.)

Membership Coordinator Maggie Determann began compiling and sending daily Ethical Inspirations. These soon became something many of us looked forward to every day. Maggie communicated with the membership extensively, keeping our Ethical family informed and engaged, and continues to be a vital player in developing our reopening plans.

Executive Director Bob Liebeskind probably holds the staff record for participating in the most Zoom meetings during this time, using them to keep ongoing communication between the Board, committees, staff, the Ethical Culture school, vendors, and more.

Office Manager Yalitza Garcia-Krawczyk worked closely with various committees and assumed new responsibilities exclusive to Covid regulations, such as managing a tracking registry for visitors and renters. Yalitza continued designing new banners with important messages about issues prioritized by our Ethical community, and later resumed her production and layout work on *Outlook*.

Communications Coordinator Ed Beck must have cloned himself. He coordinated the swift transition to remote access for staff, got us all Zooming almost immediately, and co-hosted every meeting and program until some of us learned to do it ourselves. Ed became a one-man tech center—adjusting the computerized functions, coordinating the audio and visual, and accomplishing a dozen other vital tasks. As Steve put it, “From Zoom meetings to Sunday Platforms that are now hybrid, Ed did it all.”

GETTING AHEAD OF THE GAME

Our devoted committees developed a new level of efficiency via virtual meetings. The

work inside the building and throughout the community didn't stop. Rather, it grew in new ways!

Capitalizing on the empty-building time, the Building Committee—co-chaired by Bill B. and Howard Rose—enlisted our invaluable maintenance crew to tend to important repairs that enhanced the place beautifully. Some changes will be obvious when you return, starting with our new Ethical Culture flag at the main entrance and the signage over and plaque beside the newly named Adler Hall. There are also new plaques at the entries to the Adler Study and the Elliott Library, plus a sign and plaque for the Algernon Black Ceremonial Hall, thanks to the work of our Branding, Signage & Décor Subcommittee.

The Finance (Joe Fashing, chair) and Rentals (Jim Farer, chair) committees expended enormous effort. Our budget is mainly determined by rentals, so it's vital that the building is appealing to potential renters—not just the surface appearance, but all the workings behind the scenes, like the pipes, the heating and air-conditioning systems, and so much more. Much appreciation is owed to Leo and his crew, Anwar Bramble, Mark Henry, and Curtis Redding, for tending to the Meeting House and preparing for a safe reopening. Meanwhile, new expenses were incurred with structural improvements and Covid-related purchases that ranged from hundreds of disposable masks and gloves to new ventilation and sanitizing equipment, plus a costly new air-conditioning system.

For more than a year the Caring Committee (co-chairs Bob Berger and Beth Everett) hosted a daily Zoom “Living Room,” enabling members and nonmembers to just drop in when they felt the need or desire. Bob B. tells us, “In this time of social isolation, members and nonmembers came and shared the sense that others were in the same position they were. Our committee also made biweekly calls to members and staff that were greatly appreciated.”

Meanwhile, the Communications Committee helped devise the pandemic signs, had input to the website content (for example, in the Member's Section, see the “How to” video about Colloquy with Ellen McBride interviewing Arthur Dobrin, and the growing collection of “Getting to Know You” videos), scheduled our banners, oversaw

“*After this experience, I, along with so many, treasure our Ethical Culture family more than ever.*”

programs, and published a new digital version of *Outlook*—a collaboration between Ed and myself until Yalitza resumed as Production Manager.

The Membership Committee was able to hold New Attendee Receptions and even reported new members joining! Now they're busily planning special social and fun events, starting with an “It Takes a Village—an Ethical Village” celebration. Their Fund Development Subcommittee helps see to it that we can continue to fund all that makes us a family—the programs and parties, luncheons and speakers, awards and receptions. For more than a year there has been no income from programs—they have all been free online. And there certainly was no pledge party, but what was truly inspiring was how many members gave more and pledged earlier, recognizing the impact of this severe revenue loss. We have a \$150,000 goal for the year, and, eight months in, we're only halfway there, so keep those pledges coming!

CARRYING ON!

Kept alive also was our mission of helping to make this world a better place—of thinking and acting beyond ourselves, and into our local and national community. The Ethical Action Committee, together with the 4th U, co-sponsored a “Calling In” workshop with Standing Up for Social Justice (SURJ), and a book discussion of *Caste*. On a national level, Janet Rose and Carol Van Deusen spearheaded our participation in the Reclaim Our Vote campaign and, with the support of the AEU, got many other Ethical Societies across the country involved right up to the presidential election.

The committee and member volunteers, with Janet at the helm, participated in the Reclaim Our Vote (ROV) post-carding campaign to support the passage of the For the People Act (sadly not even considered by the Senate) and participated in two call relays with 4th U to address “Less is More” legislation on behalf of parolees and “Invest in Our New York,” which addressed the state budget—both of which passed.

And the Roses created their Food In-

security Initiative, organizing collections of donations of food and other items that they picked up and delivered to food banks and shelters. A number of our members organized collections in their buildings. Donors were grateful for the opportunity to contribute and feel useful in this time of need.

The Sunday Programs Committee, co-chaired by Monica Weiss and Barbara Carlsen, kept a full roster of engaging Platform speakers. Monica is particularly grateful to the presiders, “who stepped in for the whole year to provide continuity and a sense of connection and community: Barbara, Kathleen O., Steve, and Sarah Sprott, along with Leader Richard Koral and Maggie. They had a particularly important role in creating a real sense of community, helping members and guests feel a connection to Ethical Culture through their warmth and personal reflections. They reflected back our struggles, our frustrations, and our hopes, and provided something constant and safe and welcoming as we navigated a year of distance and technology.”

Monica also thanks Music Director David Gracia “for jumping through hoops at times to provide beautiful, thematic music selections, invite guest performers, and pre-record musical segments to continue amplifying the spoken message with various styles and genres of music.” She highlights “the recognition due to Maggie for all of her work to make sure the speakers were prepared to actually appear each Sunday, and Ed for facilitating many technology issues that required attention and expertise—the expected, and especially the unexpected ones—all tended to with patience and good nature.”

Enormous appreciation goes to Audrey Kindred, our wondrous Youth and Family Programs Coordinator. She didn’t miss a beat! Ever resourceful, Audrey kept our Young Ethical Explorers busy and engaged with Zoom and in-person programs on of Deepali Srivastava. On top of that, she collaborated with Judy Tate of the American Slavery Project (ASP) to develop the “Social & Racial Justice Scholars” series. (Judy also brought us Zoom performances of ASP’s

Reverberation Plays.)

Sunday Platforms and programs are the lifeblood of the Society. Although Covid forced several programs to halt, Pat Debrovner and her team rallied, by spring presenting Zoomed Ethics and the Theater play-readings. (This month they’re back live! See Sundays at Ethical, August 29, p. 7.)

From all corners of the Society members showed dedication, foresight, enthusiasm, energy, responsiveness, and resourcefulness. Almost immediately, Frank Corigliano and Carol P. arranged to keep us informed with “Managing in the Time of Covid,” and Larry Hurst gave us calm when we needed it most with a new Meditation program, and he and I collaborated to invite pairs of members to dialogue in “Getting to Know You.” Doris Hart, a folktale devotee of many years, instituted the “Storytelling Circle.” Joe Fashing kept “Ethics in the News” going. Gunther Tielemans didn’t miss a “Great Literature Discussion.” Bob Berger, who facilitates our Colloquies, elicited moderators. Janet and Howard kept the “Roundtable” going.

Leaders Joe Chuman and Richard K. continued their programs, “Camaraderie and Good Conversation” and “Exploring Ethical Humanism,” and developed an excellent five-part series, “Pathways to Ethical Culture” (watch the video recordings on our website). Richard’s Community Circles stayed the course. Sy Amkraut jumped in with “Debating the Issues of the Day.” I kept the “Poetry Circle” on track. Sandi Sacks developed one, then another, and now her stimulating “Thought Salon.” As soon as weather and vaccinations permitted, our Ethical Adventures’ Easy Walkers team, Bob Bumcrot and Howard, had us out, in Central Park, along the Hudson, and this month to Little Island (see p.3). Oh, how special and welcome those in-person outings were!

Leader Richard K. worked overtime, participating in most committee meetings, lending his legal advice in many instances, and being there for members in his pastoral role. Leader Joe C. kept us in the news, welcomed as a contributor to Washington

D.C.’s *The Hill*. Richard and Dick Van Deusen joined other interfaith organizations to work on the planning committee and have NYSEC sponsor a Mayoral Forum. (For a full listing of all the Society committees and members, visit our website.)

MOVING FORWARD

All these efforts brought us a wider audience, more participation, and new connections with members of Societies across the country. NYSEC members who couldn’t have physically attended even if we were open and in-person were able to happily join us. Many newcomers discovered us and became regular program attendees. We plan to continue offering some programs in the hybrid format for our growing Ethical community.

Always guiding the ship, navigating its waters, was our stalwart, apparently tireless President, Liz. We all saw Liz regularly at our Sunday Platforms, welcoming us, updating us on various goings-on, and keeping our spirits up. Behind the scenes, many of us were aware of her day-to-day (often excruciatingly long and arduous days), as she coordinated just about every aspect of operations and programming. Liz met with every committee. It wasn’t just a matter of seeing to it that things got done. There was the encouragement, empathy, and just the “being there” for all of us that was so vital, and Liz was there for us all the way.

Oh yes, it takes a village. And what a village! We rose to the challenge together. I’m so grateful and proud to be part of the New York Society for Ethical Culture village! Let’s celebrate. Join us in the building for Sunday Platforms. Check our events calendar for live activities and programs beginning in September—and, most especially, to meet and welcome our new Acting Leader, Dr. Nori Rost for her first official Sunday Platform on September 12!

After this experience, I, along with so many, treasure our Ethical Culture family more than ever. However invaluable it’s been to have had Zoom, we’re all thrilled at the prospect of being together in-person again at the Society. See you soon!



Update

2021 Member Pledges



Help! Early in the year, so many dedicated members had conscientiously—and often generously—risen to the challenge that we were exhilarated. But, here we are, only halfway to our goal, and more than halfway through the year. Your commitment to the Society is especially needed now as we move back into our building with in-person, live programs. We depend on member pledges to support our programs and events. (Thank you, **Ruth Cohen** and **Frank Corigliano** for pledging just in time for this issue.) Please step up now and make your 2021 pledge.



OUR ETHICAL FAMILY

This month, we're covering Our Ethical Family in the feature story, "It Takes a Village — An Ethical Culture Village."

BUT — for our next issue, tell us about you and your family. What have you been doing? Gone anywhere? Had any celebrations — births, graduations, weddings, etc.? Share the news.

Correction: Last month we shared a photo of Susan Needles and her dog Amigo, now happily ensconced in Arizona, but not Tucson as we wrote. Susan is in Phoenix.

Happy Birthday to...

SUSAN NEEDLES.....8/3	CAROL VAN DEUSEN.....8/19
ANITA RAO.....8/6	LILY FRIEDMAN.....8/20
NICOLA DEMARCO.....8/7	MINDY RHINDRESS, SONDRA STEIN, and JANE UNGAR.....8/29
LESLIE DOYLE.....8/10	
JOHN LOVELADY and LIZ SINGER.....8/11	

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ABOUT OUR PROGRAMS:

COLLOQUY

ELLEN McBRIDE

Spelling God with Two O's, by Arthur Dobrin, retired Leader of the Ethical Culture Society of Long Island, was first published in 1993. It was updated and republished in 2009, and it is available for purchase at Ethical. You can take a look at it on our book table on Sundays or check it out online. *Spelling God with Two O's* was developed at the Long Island Society, evolving from a group Arthur led that met regularly to reflect and meditate on the many questions of life.

Today the book serves as the basis of our Colloquy program, in place here at the New York Society for Ethical Culture and many other of the Societies. At each session we share and develop our thoughts on making a moral life. The Leader or moderator of the month has a pre-chosen topic and sits with participants around a table. Sometimes there is music as we take our seats. Often the moderator opens with a poem. The subjects of the colloquies can range from subjects as deep as "Mortality" or seemingly mundane as "Working." (You'll find many more colloquy topics in the book.)

Moderators vary in how they handle the session, but there are rules. The major rule is that there is no conversation or crosstalk. We do not respond



or answer each other, though one person's thought may spark another. We speak in the first-person: "I think," "In my experience." It is personal. It is your reflection, not a conversation — on the subject.

The moderator may start the session with a poem or a parable on the subject, then start subsequent two or three rounds with quotations or anecdotes. The moderator might also choose to pose a question on the subject. Participants are free to talk or pass their turn. Usually the session ends with poetry or music.

Those who've participated in Colloquy for more than two decades and those who are newcomers to the program value these reflective sessions, these opportunities to pause and consider important aspects of our lives in a comfortable atmosphere.

For more on Colloquy, please take a look at the book and also the video recording, "About Colloquy," where Arthur Dobrin and I discuss this program. You will find it in the Members section of our website.

COMMUNING WITH NATURE...YEE Coordinator Audrey Kindred and Deepali Srivastava led a field trip to Van Cortland Park, during which the kids did some keen observing and writing about what they saw and heard. Later in the month, they visited Strawberry Fields in Central Park. Sidd took the opportunity to strum his guitar for El and Marifer. And at the John Lennon Imagine circle, Deepali, El, Marifer, and Gris did as Lennon's words suggest we do: "Imagine all the people livin' life in peace."



SUNDAY LIVE!

Each week we see more of our Ethical family showing up to Platform talks. In early July, there

were 30 participants. Our delightful group singing was led by David Gracia, Barbara Carlsen, and Maggie Determann. Before and after the talk we enjoyed socializing over bagels and coffee.



CELEBRATING OUR LEADERS... More than a hundred years nameless, our auditorium has been named Adler Hall, and next to the entry is a plaque about funder Felix Adler. There are new plaques next to the Adler Study and the Elliott Library (named for John Lovejoy Elliott). More will soon be mounted for the Algernon Black Ceremonial Hall.



REACH FOR THE STARS...

Our roving, photography-hobbyist, member David Vassar, took this inspiring photo of a mural as he bicycled through Astoria.



ART & PLEASURE...

After having to reschedule both of our Art Walks on the Hudson in Riverside Park due to rain three times each, we made it. Each culminated in a delightful lunch, the first out on Pier I at W. 72nd Street, and the second at Ellington in the Park at W. 105th. Three time's a charm!



ETHICAL

We are Ethical Culture NYC,
a humanist community dedicated to ethics, social justice,
and education since 1876.

We celebrate life's joys, support each other through life's crises,
and work to make the world a better place.

Join us for hundreds of community and cultural programs
where people meet to explore and embrace ethical living.

Learn more about us at our website, www.ETHICAL.nyc —
or, better still, visit with us. You're always welcome.

NEW YORK SOCIETY FOR ETHICAL CULTURE

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