

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

May 1–Auditorium
Music, Philosophy, and Evil
Gerald Ranck, Music Director
Jamie Scott Presides

May 8–Ceremonial Hall
**Humanism: Ideological,
Spiritual, Radical**
Dr. Joseph Chuman, Leader
Andra Miller Presides

May 15–Ceremonial Hall
**Community–Building
For Nonviolence**
David Kaczynski
Shariem Merritt
Dr. Anne Klaeysen Presides

May 22–Auditorium
Founder’s Day
**Beyond Belief and Disbelief:
Felix Adler’s Radical New Vision**
Curt Collier, Leader
Clara Malekshahi Presides

May 29–Ceremonial Hall
Memorial Day Observance
Dr. Anne Klaeysen, Leader

*Bring a Friend
on Sundays*

May Happenings

On **Thursday, May 5, 6:00 pm**, **Empowering Ethical Elders** will present a talk on “**Love, Sex, and Dating for Seniors**” by **Judith White, MS, LCSW**, a certified group psychotherapist. Elliott Library, Room 507. (*See page 7*)

If you love to sing, and would like to try singing along with NYSEC’s **chorus**, here’s your opportunity! Join the members on **Saturday, May 14, 9:30 am–2:00 pm**, for a day of rehearsing familiar songs and learning new ones to add to our Sunday morning repertoire. Auditorium. (*See page 7*)

On **Thursday, May 19, 6:00 pm**, **Leader Dr. Anne Klaeysen** will lead a workshop on how to **prepare an ethical will** that, unlike the usual standard will, communicates your personal values to your family and friends. Come and learn more at this **Empowering Ethical Elders** program. Elliott Library, Room 507. (*See page 8*)

President’s Notes

Andra Miller



Compared to all the activity we had last year, it seems kind of quiet this year. I’m feeling lazy on this sunny April day—actually the eighth anniversary of my joining NYSEC. Imagine, eight years membership and, now that I think of it, half of them as Society President. By the time my presidential duties come to a close, I’ll be so used to “presidenting,” I won’t know what to do!

Well, that’s not entirely true. I have all sorts of ideas about what I’d like to do when I’m free to do whatever I want. I won’t go into them all now, but I’ll just say they are projects I’ve mentioned from time to time but haven’t been able to convince others to take
(Continued on page 2)

From the Leader’s Desk

Dr. Anne Klaeysen



An Ethical Practice of Fasting

On the morning of my fourth day of fasting, I felt a little shaky, but recovered when I thought about how I would break my fast that evening at a dinner to benefit Hudson Guild, a settlement house founded by Ethical Culture Leader Dr. John Lovejoy Elliott in 1895 to address the needs of immigrant families in Chelsea. I went about my business, attending a United Campus Ministry meeting at Columbia University, strolling around the campus before meeting with a student, then checking email before heading downtown. On the walk from the subway to the banquet,
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Staff

Selma Friedman, Editor
 Jon Liechty, Reporter
 Barbara Litke, Poetry Editor
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 Andra Miller, President
 Dr. Joseph Chuman, Leader
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 Rita Chawla, Director of Family Programs
 Yalitza 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 64th 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
 Rita Chawla 106
 Joseph Chuman 145
 Curt Collier 145
 Deborah Foster 115
 Yalitza Garcia 118
 Anne Klaeyesen 119
 Yolanta Kosmaczewska 104
 Robert Liebeskind 116
 Maintenance 109
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President's Notes

(Continued from page 1)

on. And spearheading things, making things happen, are not so much a president's lot as is just helping to keep all the boats afloat.

One ship I'm sorry to see run out of steam at the moment is a Social Service Board program, one of which we've all been proud: the Supervised Visitation Project. As you know, this is a weekly service for those who, because of court orders, can only see their families while supervised by social workers. This "pay what you can" service, which the SSB had in place for 24 years, was costly—it included the salary of the social worker and security staff—and finally it was necessary to close the service due to lack of funds. That's the bad news. The good news, however, is that the SSB is working to re-establish and even expand this service in partnership with The Osborne Association of New York, an organization working to find alternatives and opportunities for individuals who have been in conflict with the law. The hope is that this collaboration will expand into other areas, with new projects for volunteer and staff service.

Ever on the move, another project the SSB has started came about when the NYSEC Finance Committee discovered an endowment fund with the specific direction that a social worker be hired to work with senior citizens. SSB devised a program called "Empowering Ethical Elders," applied for funding, was granted their proposed budget, and now has hired two social workers to trade-off in doing twice monthly programs. More details on this new series are on page 7. There's way more than this happening through the Society's action arm—keep an eye on the SSB!

Next month is the AEU Assembly—June 16-19 in Columbus, Ohio. I've got my plane ticket and my room reservation, and I'm signed up to attend the following sessions: Peace-Building Initiatives That Spell Success, Creative Adult Programming, Promoting Economic Justice, and Challenging Privilege. But more than the learning sessions, there's the chance to see old friends and make new ones from all around the country—and to share stories and ideas. There'll be special events, including the talk by the head of the National Peace Academy at the National Ethical Service luncheon (our own Jackie Pope is President of the

NES), the Friday night dinner with musical entertainment and an Ethical Trivia game, the special Saturday luncheon presenting the Anna Garlin Spencer Volunteer Award (to our own Pat and Chuck Debrovner—yay!), and the Elliott-Black Award dinner on Saturday night.

If you, too, are planning to attend the AEU Assembly, please let me know. And if you aren't—think again—it's a lot of fun and you'll meet some fantastic people. Brochures are available on the fifth floor hall table or on the web at http://aeu.org/library/articles/2011_Assembly_Brochure.pdf.

Leader's Desk

(Continued from page 1)

I thought about the choices I had made: first to fast and now to eat again. That was, of course, the most important point. How do we who have the power to make choices for ourselves influence those who have the power to make choices for others who have no power at all?

At a press conference on March 28, a large coalition of interfaith and advocacy organizations announced a broad-based movement of fasting, prayer, and advocacy, in response to budget cuts proposed by Congress that would disproportionately hurt Americans living in poverty. After visiting the website listed below, I decided to join them. I was in very good company and eagerly read the statements of my fellow fasters, adding my own comments. Here are the goals outlined by Tony Hall, Executive Director of Alliance to End Hunger and a former U.S. congressman who often, during his 24 years of service, called upon “the conscience of the Congress”:

1) Reminding people about the status of vulnerable people in the United States and around the world.

In America over 45 million people live in poverty, including 15 million children, the highest poverty rate since 1960. Fifty

million people live in food-insecure households. Around the world, 925 million people suffer from severe hunger and malnutrition, and 2.1 billion live on less than \$2 a day.

2) Focusing public attention on the devastating effects that Congress' proposed cuts would have on vulnerable people.

In the name of deficit reduction, some in Congress are calling for irresponsible cuts to vital domestic and international anti-poverty and -hunger programs. Suggesting that the budget can be balanced on the backs of poor people not only ignores the two largest slices of America's budget—entitlements and military spending, it also betrays a fundamental lack of conscience.

3) Forming a CIRCLE OF PROTECTION around programs benefiting the most vulnerable people here in America and around the world.

An invitation to join in fasting, prayer, and personal sacrifice to form a circle of protection around programs that, if cut, would most severely hurt vulnerable people.

At the Hudson Guild banquet, I savored the appetizers floating around the room on platters, grateful that the caterer had considered vegan and vegetarian diets; sipped from a glass of wine; and mingled with fellow supporters of a community that still takes seriously its mission to serve the needs of generations of immigrants in Chelsea. I drew attention to the NYSEC journal ad as it flashed across a huge electronic screen, reminding people of our shared history.

As I basked in the glow of a successful evening (tens of thousands of dollars were raised to continue the Guild's worthy programming.) and a

full stomach, I reflected upon the experience of having fasted even for a short time. At the height of the Civil War in 1863, President Abraham Lincoln issued a proclamation calling the nation to a day of fasting, prayer, and what he called “national humiliation” for the national sins of slavery and war. Today the moral stakes are again high. A budget mirrors society's ethics, and the one Congress has developed is a “national humiliation.” The voices of the poor and hungry have been drowned out in the screaming matches of partisan politics. Women's health is used as a pawn in a game of competing social values. Public education continues to fall far behind as school districts starve their teachers. Diversity is still vilified rather than celebrated in too many places. And the science of global climate change is relegated to arbitrary belief in an effort to deny its disastrous consequences. Surely it is time again to call our nation to at least one day of fasting, reflection, and national humiliation.

HungerFast.org is a growing movement of those committed to fasting, prayer, and personal sacrifice to protect vulnerable people from budget cuts that lack conscience. To learn more, visit www.hungerfast.org.



Leader Dr. Anne Klaeysen and Executive Director Robert Liebeskind were interviewed by the local West Side Spirit newspaper. Here's the accompanying photo

Sunday Morning Platform Meetings 11:15 AM

May 1—Music, Philosophy, and Evil

Gerald Ranck, Music Director

Human history has been replete with various forms of evil, showing itself as expanding and dismaying brutality. The Crusades, the Inquisition, the French Revolution's descent into terrorism, the savage displacement of Native Americans, slavery, and on and on. What was thought at the time to be the climactic extreme of human evil—the genocide of European Jewry—may yet be just another plateau. This address confronts evil (prejudice, discrimination, and violence) as it has infected our serious art. We will consider composer Richard Wagner (whom I shall defend!), and philosopher Martin Heidegger (whom I shall prosecute). I wish to warn us all that our growing political polarity and our burgeoning cultural illiteracy are dangerous facilitators of more esthetic evil infestation. It is our solemn duty to attend to our liberty and justice systems with tolerance—but most urgently, with “*eternal vigilance.*” (Thomas Jefferson). Auditorium.

May 8—Humanism: Ideological, Spiritual, Radical

Dr. Joseph Chuman, Leader

Ethical Culture has long been identified with humanism. Some use the term synonymously. Felix Adler, who laid down the vision for Ethical Culture and was its seminal philosopher, did not think they were synonymous. In fact, he didn't like the term “humanism” at all. From my perspective, it depends on what you mean by “humanism.” For today's address I plan

to discuss this ongoing debate in Ethical Culture, and lay out my view that Ethical Culture has radical implications for those who subscribe to it that humanism lacks. Ceremonial Hall.

May 15—Community-Building For Nonviolence

David Kaczynski, Shariem Merritt

David Kaczynski and Shariem Merritt will discuss community organizing for nonviolence in a post-abolition environment. Mr. Kaczynski is the Director of New Yorkers for Alternatives to the Death Penalty. He will discuss the organization's expanded mission, which focuses on finding common ground among members of law enforcement, crime victims' groups, mental health providers, clergy, and community activists. Mr. Merritt, Director of the SAVE program of the Schenectady Boys and Girls club, will discuss his program, which seeks to engage at-risk youth to promote community transformation and empowerment.

David is the brother of convicted Unabomber Theodore Kaczynski. Shariem, after serving time in state prison for selling drugs, has dedicated his life to giving back to his community. He is a member of the Steering Committee of Schenectady's Community Empowerment Partnership, which was formed in 2009 after a cluster of suicides involving four young women of color—all students at the local high school. Ceremonial Hall.

May 22—Founder's Day Beyond Belief and Disbelief: Felix Adler's Radical New Vision

Curt Collier, Leader

Felix Adler was a remarkable visionary. Standing on the shores of a new frontier in human advancement, Adler laid the foundation for a bold new reli-

gious movement that rocked traditional theism to its core while challenging the assumptions of secularism. The result was a revolutionary new approach that we are only now beginning to grasp. What did Adler propose, and how could this daring way of life transform our world?

We will also hold a **Recognition Ceremony** for our Sunday School students. Auditorium.

May 29—Memorial Day Observance

Dr. Anne Klaeysen, Leader

Originally known as “Decoration Day” because of the practice of decorating soldiers' graves, and proclaimed as a ritual of remembrance and reconciliation after the Civil War by General John A. Logan in 1868, “Memorial Day” became an official federal holiday in 1971, to be observed on the last Monday in May. While it still commemorates the women and men who have died serving in the U.S. military, and many towns host parades down Main Street, this holiday also marks the unofficial beginning of summer and a long weekend devoted to shopping. In a participatory program with readings and music, I will explore the various meanings of Memorial Day. Ceremonial Hall.

Blasts from the Past

Treasures can be found in Membership Associate Moe-Swe Myint's office, and they are there for the taking! Since we have become more of an online Society, we have forgotten that some of our Leaders' platform addresses are still available in hard copy. As one of the New York Society's members recently said, “I see people on the subway reading the Bible, the Koran, and other religious tracts. I, too, would like to be

able to read something from my religious community.”

And you can do the same! Here are just a few of the many tantalizing titles that are available:

Don Johnson: “Integrating Charity and Justice,” “Ethics and Economic Systems,” and “Food for Thought: The Deeper Meaning of Eating.”

Bob Kaufman: “The Creative Aspect of Failure,” “Thomas Jefferson: The President Who Rewrote the Bible,” and “The Spirituality of an Atheist.”

Dr. Ies Spetter: “Against the Odds: The Need for Militant Humanism,” “The Hunger in Our Hearts,” and “Lincoln’s Legacy to America.”

Jean Somerville Kotkin: “Women of the Ethical Culture Movement,” “In Praise of Festivals,” and “What Constitutes Holy Ground?”

Dr. Khoren Arisian: “The Faith of a Reformer: Emerson at 200,” “Benjamin Franklin: The First Ethical Humanist,” and “What Are You Waiting For? Living in Tumultuous and Cynical Times.”

We are also adding to the collection with platform addresses from our current Leaders, Dr. Joseph Chuman, Curt Collier, and Dr. Anne Klaeyesen.

Contact Moe-Swe Myint, Membership Associate, at 212-874-5210, ext 113, or mmyint@nysec.org for more information about these addresses.

Early Sunday 10 AM

(Rooms subject to change)

May 1—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 some tips to improve our singing technique. It’s a lot of fun, so join us! Ceremonial Hall.

May 8—Colloquy—“**Ethical Conscience.**” Bob Berger and Abe Markman preside. Room 408.

May 15—Poetry Reading—Come and bring your favorite poems. Listen! Read! Enjoy! Cheryl Gross presides. Room 508.

May 15—Chorus Practice. Led by Pat Debrovner and Jerry Ranck. Ceremonial Hall.

May 29—Coffee ‘n Chat. Room 408.

Sunday Afternoon 1:45 PM

May 1—Annual Membership Meeting—for all members, especially if you’ve been a member for longer than three months, as that qualifies you to vote. We need 20 percent of the membership to be present to make the meeting official, so please make every effort to do your “civic duty” and come. There can be no absentee ballots or proxy voting. Ceremonial Hall.

May 8—Ethical Economics Exploration Group. Leader Curt Collier presides. Ceremonial Hall.

May 15—Life with Health: “Them Bones, Them Bones, Them Dry Bones.” Often referred to as the “silent epidemic,” osteoporosis is a global problem that is increasing in significance as the population of the world both increases and ages. More than 75 million people in Europe, Japan, and the United States have osteoporosis, and most have an estimated lifetime risk for wrist, hip, and vertebral fractures of around 15 percent, very similar to that of coronary heart disease. The World Health Organization has recently identified osteoporosis as a priority health issue, along with other major noncommunicable diseases. Join Dr.

Charles “Chuck” Debrovner as he discusses ways to protect ourselves and what our treatment options are.

Dr. Debrovner is a Clinical Professor at NYU School of Medicine. He attended Yale University and received his MD degree from NYU. He specialized in gynecology and infertility for 43 years. Two years ago, after he retired from clinical practice, he became the Associate Director of the Appignani Bioethics Center at the United Nations. He is the Medical Coordinator for Obstetrics and Gynecology at the NY State Department of Health’s Office of Professional Medical Conduct. He is a past President of the NY Society for Ethical Culture and has served on its Board continuously for over 20 years. Ceremonial Hall, 2:00 pm.

May 22—Ethics in the News. Mary Ellen Goodman presides. Room 508.

May 22—Ethical Economics Exploration Group. Leader Curt Collier presides. Ceremonial Hall.

May 29—Soldiers of Conscience—a documentary film that profiles eight American soldiers stationed in Iraq, four who decide not to kill and become conscientious objectors, and four who believe in their duty to kill if necessary. All of them grapple with the morality of killing in war, not as a philosophical problem, but as soldiers experience it. Leader Dr. Anne Klaeyesen presides. Ceremonial Hall.

Human Rights: The Idea of Our Time

On **Tuesdays, May 3, 10 and 17 from 7:00 pm to 8:15 pm**, join Leader Dr. Joseph Chuman for a discussion of the issues relating to the theory and practice of human rights and the role

of grassroots activists in advancing the human rights project. Members: free; Nonmembers: \$10 per session. Elliott Library, Room 507.

For more information or to register, contact Yalitza Garcia in the Leaders' Office at 212-874-5210, ext. 118, or email her at ygarcia@nysec.org.

Lunch Discussions Thursdays, 12:00 Noon

Bring your lunch and join Leader Dr. Anne Klaeyen in the Elliott Library, Room 507, from 12:00 noon to 1:30 pm. This month we will celebrate **Founder's Day** with discussions of some of the Platform addresses of past Ethical Culture Leaders.

May 5—"The Vision of Felix Adler," Horace L. Friess (1951).

May 12—"Unsung Heroines: The Women of Ethical Culture," Jean Somerville Kotkin (2002).

May 19—"How Much Is Good Enough?" Dr. Anne Klaeyen (2002).

May 26—"Religion and Religious Violence," Dr. Joseph Chuman (2002).

Folders with relevant addresses will be available from Yalitza Garcia in the Leaders' Office. Please come and join the discussion.

Our Ethical Family

Moe-Swe Myint

Please welcome new members **Louetta Riley** and **Patricia Rodillo**.

Louetta is a retired teacher with a master's degree in counseling. She was a member of the Ethical Culture Society in Los Angeles since 1966, and joined Ethical Society Without Walls (ESWOW) in 2007 when the LA Society disbanded. Louetta comes to NYC frequently and has taken part in

various activities at NYSEC. She is a member of the American Association of University Women in Tahoe City, CA, and also belongs to the AAUW in NYC. She likes to travel, dance, walk, and participate in outdoor activities.

Patricia is a software project manager. She moved to NYC and was drawn to our humanism. She has served as a member of the Board of Spring House, NJ, a transitional home for unwed mothers.

* * *

NYSEC's **Advocacy Forum** hosted a standing-room only event on March 22. **Leader Dr. Joseph Chuman** interviewed author and journalist Chris Hedges about his recent book, *Death of the Liberal Class*. Kudos go to everyone on the Membership Committee, especially **Patrick Arenas**, **Paula Claycomb**, and **Renee Goodstein**, for volunteering at the event and handing out membership packets; staffers **Emily Newman** and **Yalitza Garcia** for coordinating and stuffing the bags; and Special Events Director **Antonio Pagliarulo** for keeping things under control, as always.

At the **Advocacy Forum** on April 12, **Leader Dr. Joseph Chuman** interviewed James T. Kloppenberg about his book *Reading Obama: Dreams, Hopes and the American Political Tradition*.



(L-R) James T. Kloppenberg and Dr. Joseph Chuman

* * *

Members **Stephanie Rosenblatt**, **Lucile Kleiman**, and **Ellen McBride** hosted small social gatherings for afternoon tea on March 12 and 26, and for lunch on April 16, respectively. Newcomers and members alike enjoyed good food and interesting conversation along with great company. Everyone had a lovely time thanks to the generosity and graciousness of Stephanie, Lucile, and Ellen.

We've had seven of these small social gatherings so far since the middle of last December and we plan to have more. If you are interested in hosting one of these events at your home, please let me know. This is a great way to connect with newcomers and to reconnect with members in an intimate and welcoming setting.

* * *

Member News

The following members are celebrating birthdays this month: **Richard Van Deusen**, 5/1; **Caroline Joy Debrovner**, 5/1; **Eva Yachnes**, 5/2; **James Farer**, 5/9; **Tom Kennedy**, 5/9; **Allan Tucker**, 5/9; **Eva Barnett**, 5/13; **Carole Chamlin**, 5/15; **Neil Sukoff**, 5/16; **Elaine Heller**, 5/17; **Pamela McGhee**, 5/22; **Irena Polkowska Rutenberg**, 5/25; **Dina Soraya Gregory**, 5/25; **Sujata Patel**, 5/26; **Gary Mizal**, 5/27; **Alice Ladas**, 5/30. Happy Birthday, everyone!



New members **David Lee** and **Dina Gregory** with their son **Cassian**, at a recent **Younger Members** event

Newcomers' Reception

A warm welcome to all visitors and newcomers to NYSEC! Every month Membership Associate Moe-Swe Myint and Leader Dr. Anne Klaeysen host a reception to offer information and hospitality to those interested in our Ethical community. If you are interested, or know people who are, please invite them and join us on **Tuesday, May 17, at 7:00 pm**, in the Adler Study, Room 514.

For more information, or the dates of future receptions, contact Moe-Swe at 212-874-5210, ext. 113.

Ethical Enrichment

Ethics in Literature: A Reading Group

On **Monday, May 2, 1:00–3:00 pm**, in the Elliott Library, Room 507, Leader Dr. Anne Klaeysen leads a discussion on *The Puttermessenger Papers: A Novel* by Cynthia Ozick (1998).

Attorney and NYC bureaucrat Ruth Puttermessenger (butter knife) is Ozick's most memorable character, perhaps even her alter ego. In this set of stories, Ruth moves out of her orderly life to face domestic and municipal chaos. After being unceremoniously demoted, then dumped by her lover, she goes into a trance and awakens to discover that she has created a golem, just like the great rabbi Judah Loew of Prague, with whom she will transform New York into a veritable civic paradise. However, things end unexpectedly—and badly.

The New York Times called *The Puttermessenger Papers*, "so intelligent, so finely expressed that, like its main character, it remains endearing, edifying, a spark of light in the gloom."

Come and participate in a lively conversation about the ethical issues raised in the book. There is no fee for members; for nonmembers it is \$10.

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 *Starman*, a 1984 sci-fi love story from John Carpenter. Jeff Bridges—who received an Oscar nod for his work—plays Starman, an alien who crashes on Earth and takes the form of a recently deceased man in order to evade the authorities. On seeing the image of her dead husband before her, widow Jenny (Karen Allen) is frightened, but eventually Starman wins her trust, and her affection, and she agrees to help him return to his home planet.

After the film, we'll have our usual lively discussion of the ethical issues raised, led by Jamie Scott. The suggested donation is \$5.

Ethics and the Theater

Patricia Bruder Debrovner

On **Wednesday, May 25, 7:00 pm to 9:00 pm**, in Ceremonial Hall, **Ethics and the Theater** will present Horton Foote's one-act play, *Prisoner's Song*. It takes place in 1927: John Murray, who has struggled with a drinking problem and been out of work for a number of years, has come to Harrison, Texas, with his wife, Mae, hoping to find work in the booming oil business. An old friend of Mae's father, Luther Wright, who made a fortune when oil was discovered on his farm, knows most of the important men in town and offers to connect John with them. His main interest, though, is in

talking with Mae about his daughter, with whom she went to college and who died young, a tragedy from which Luther has never recovered. Both men are prisoners, Luther of his grief, John of his fear of running out of money before he can find a job, and release for either seems as distant a hope as the wish expressed in the title song: "If I Had the Wings of an Angel, Over These Prison Walls I Would Fly."

I will direct our cast, which includes Bonnie Bean, Dan Hanson, Anne Newhall, and Tom Weishaar, with stage directions read by Beverly Newman. 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 Leader Dr. Anne Klaeysen. The suggested donation is \$5.

* * *

"Gotta Sing!"

The NYSEC chorus invites everyone to join them on **Saturday, May 14, 9:30 am–2:00 pm**, in the Auditorium for a day of rehearsing familiar songs and learning new ones to add to our Sunday morning repertoire. If you love to sing and have thought about becoming a member of our chorus, this is your opportunity to sing along and experience the joy the members share.

Empowering Ethical Elders

Join us on **Thursday, May 5, 6:00 pm**, in the Elliott Library, Room 507, to hear **Judith White, MS, LCSW**, speak on "Love, Sex, and Dating for Seniors." Ms White, a certified group psychotherapist and an AASECT-certified sex therapist, is a member of the Analytic Group Faculty of the Postgraduate Center for Mental Health and a supervisor at the National Insti-

tute of the Psychotherapies. In her psychotherapy practice, she specializes in working with men and women of all ages regarding their relationship and sexuality concerns. She conducts sexuality workshops for mental health professionals and the lay public. Light refreshments will be served.

* * *

On **Thursday, May 19, at 6:00 pm**, join Leader Dr. Anne Klaeyesen for a participatory workshop on **composing a meaningful and lasting ethical will**. Elliott Library, Room 507.

A legal will disposes of one's valuables; an ethical will communicates one's *values* to family and friends. Every ethical will is as unique as the person writing it. Given today's technology, it may not even be written. It might be in the form of a CD, a DVD, a musical collection, or a photo collage; there are no limitations on one's creativity. Some of the common themes in ethical wills are personal beliefs, spiritual reflections, hopes for future generations, life's lessons, expressions of love, forgiving others, and asking for forgiveness.

Admission is free, and light refreshments will be served.

Any Ideas for Ethical Action?

Is there a cause about which you feel strongly; strongly enough to suggest that members of all the Ethical Culture Societies join you in doing something about it? There is power in numbers, and it is important that we all support each other when action is called for.

If you want the American Ethical Union Assembly to adopt your idea, either email your proposal to andramariemiller@gmail.com or

send it to Andra Miller at 146 W. 16th St., New York, NY 10011, and we will make sure your call to action is heard. The deadline for submission is May 10. To view prior resolutions for action, go to: <http://aeu.org/library/byresolution.php?case=resolutions>.

LGBT Equality And Justice Action

Empire State Pride Agenda

The Empire State Pride Agenda is New York's statewide lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) civil rights and advocacy group. Its mission is to win equality and justice for LGBT New Yorkers and their families.

On **Monday, May 9**, join Leader Dr. Anne Klaeyesen, a member of Pride in the Pulpit, and activists from across the state in Albany to call for equality and justice. This is the Pride Agenda's **annual advocacy day**, bringing the statewide movement together in Albany. Activities will include a rally, workshops, caucuses, and an opportunity to speak directly with legislators about the issues that matter to LGBT New Yorkers and their allies.

For more information, to register for the trip, or offer your support, visit <http://www.prideagenda.org>. Fees are \$25 for registration only and \$45 for registration and transportation by bus. Whether or not you're able to be there, you can still have an impact by making a donation to the Equality and Justice Day scholarship fund.

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Human Rights Campaign

The Human Rights Campaign (HRC), the nation's largest national lesbian,

gay, bisexual, and transgender civil rights organization, represents a grassroots force of over 750,000 U.S. members and supporters. It envisions an America where LGBT people are assured of their basic equal rights and can be open, honest, and safe at home, at work, and in the community.

Leader Dr. Anne Klaeyesen will be participating in the **HRC's Religion and Faith Program** in Washington, DC, **May 22–24**, and will join hundreds of religious leaders from across the country to hold a Capitol Hill press conference and to lobby members of Congress.

You can help by sharing with Anne your personal letters or stories that she can take with her to Washington, DC. Send your emails to aklaeyesen@nysec.org.

National Day Of Reason

The purpose of the National Day of Reason, which this year is set for **May 5**, is to celebrate reason—a concept all Americans can support—and to raise public awareness about the persistent threat to religious liberty posed by government intrusion into the private sphere of worship.

This is a far more inclusive observance, humanists argue, than the National Day of Prayer. The statute that established that National Day calls on the President to annually designate one day, other than a Sunday, “on which the people of the United States may turn to God in prayer and meditation at churches, in groups, and as individuals.” Last April that statute was ruled as violating the U.S. separation of church and state. U.S. District Court Judge Barbara B. Crabb wrote of the 1952 statute creating the

National Day of Prayer that its “sole purpose is to encourage all citizens to engage in prayer, an inherently religious exercise that serves no secular function.” To learn more about this issue, visit <http://www.nationaldayofreason.org>.

Save the Dates!

AEU Assembly

The **American Ethical Union’s 96th Annual Assembly** will be **June 16-19** at the Columbus Airport Marriott in Columbus, OH.

Please visit www.aeu.org, or register at <http://www.regonline.com/americanethicalunionbr96thannualassembly>.

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New Humanist Institute Class

The **Humanist Institute** exists to equip humanists to become effective leaders, spokespersons, and advocates in a variety of organizational settings, including within the humanist movement itself. It explores humanist values and trains future leaders, including our current NYSEC Leaders.

The Institute’s upcoming **Class 18** will start this **December**. To apply, go to: www.humanistinstitute.org. If you have any questions that aren’t answered on the website, call or email Leader Dr. Anne Klaeysen, at 212-874-5210 ext. 118, or aklaeysen@nysec.org. Anne and Carol Wintermute serve as co-deans of the Humanist Institute. Mentors for the new class are: Rev. Ann Fuller, UUA minister and graduate of Class 15, and John Shook, Director of Education and a Senior Research Fellow at the Center for Inquiry.

The late Jean Somerville Kotkin, Ethical Culture Leader and founding

member of the Institute, noted, “*The Humanist Institute stands for my life’s work and what it has meant at its best. I recognize how little one individual in one lifetime can mean in the totality of generations. But I know that through*

the Institute’s graduates my values will live on, that the world will be a better place for human beings, with some lessening of fear and hate and some increment of good in people’s struggle for a better life.”

AHA 2011 Conference Highlights

Dr. Anne Klaeysen

As a teenager, I never collected celebrity autographs, but as an adult and avid reader, I collect books that authors have signed. Therefore, the best part of this year’s **American Humanist Association (AHA) Conference** in Cambridge, MA, April 7–10, for me was listening to authors and having them write, “To Anne, with best wishes” and their names in my copies of their books.

Biologist and notorious atheist Richard Dawkins spoke eloquently on “the perils of personification,” which contrasted the use of metaphors by scientists to explain difficult concepts and the abuse of them by theologians to perpetuate literal belief in religious myth. Then he signed his book, *The Greatest Show on Earth: The Evidence for Evolution*. Historian Bart Ehrman, of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, received AHA’s Religious Liberty Award, regaled the audience with a discussion of the contradictions and falsifications found in the Bible, and then signed my copy of *Jesus, Interrupted*. Novelist and philosopher Rebecca Goldstein received the Humanist of



Richard Dawkins



Rebecca Goldstein and Bart Ehrman

the Year Award, talked about the influence of philosopher Baruch Spinoza on her life, and signed two books: *36 Arguments for the Existence of God* and *The Mind-Body Problem*. Lest you think that I did nothing else productive at the conference, I joined colleagues Harvard Chaplain Greg Epstein and Rutgers Chaplain Barry Klassel for a panel discussion, “The Future of Humanist Chaplaincies,” and recruited students for the Humanist Institute, which I serve as co-dean with Carol Wintermute.

For more information, visit www.americanhumanist.org.

Join Encampment for Citizenship (EFC) colleagues
for a weekend of fellowship,
renewed friendships and forward thinking

at

Reviving the EFC –
Continuing the Struggle for
Human Rights and Justice

May 27–30, 2011, Charlotte, NC
Holiday Inn-Charlotte

Thanks to support from the Dan Lucas Memorial Fund, current plans include a "Cultural Evening" on Saturday night, with a civil-rights sing-along, dancing and other activities. Feel free to bring your musical instrument!

Cost: Before May 25, 2011: \$100/person, payable by check or by credit card using PayPal.
After May 25 or at the event: \$150/person, payable by cash or check only; RSVP still must be made.
To attend, register by going to:

www.EFCAlumni.com

Make hotel reservations by calling 704-335-5400 or 1-800-HOLIDAY. Be sure to mention the **EFC Alumni Association** to get our special conference rate (\$129/night). Some rooms are sharable. Accommodations are not included in conference registration.

Charlotte, NC, is very family-friendly, with lots for spouses/partners and children to do while you enjoy the EFC event. For information about local attractions in Charlotte, go to: www.hellocharlotte.com. Family members are welcome to attend the Saturday Cultural Evening.

To keep up with ongoing **EFC Alumni Association** activities, just go to our website:
www.EFCAlumni.com

The **EFC Alumni Association** also has a Facebook page:
<http://www.facebook.com/home.php#!/group.php?gid=2381986793>

May 2011

Office hours for the month are: Monday-Friday, 9:00 am – 6:00 pm
Shelter: Monday-Thursday, 7:30 pm

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1 10:00 am – Chorus Practice 11:00 am – Ethics for Children 11:15 am – Morning Meeting 12:45 pm – Sunday Brunch 1:45 pm – Annual Membership Meeting	2 June 2011 Newsletter Deadline 1:00 pm – Ethics in Literature 6:30 pm – Monday Writing Workshop	3 6:00 pm – Socrates Café 7:00 pm – Human Rights: The Idea of Our Time 7:00 pm – Sahaja Meditation Program	4 2:00 pm – Photography Club 7:00 pm – Black Film Forum	5 12:00 pm – Leader Lunch Discussion 6:00 pm – Empowering Ethical Elders 6:30 pm – Thursday Writing Workshop	6 7:00 pm – Ethics in Film: <i>Starmann</i> (1984)	7 9:30 am – NYSEC Chorus – “Gotta Sing!”
8 10:00 am – Colloquy 11:00 am – Ethics for Children 11:15 am – Morning Meeting 12:45 pm – Sunday Brunch 1:45 pm – Ethical Economics	9 6:30 pm – Board of Trustees 6:30 pm – Monday Writing Workshop	10 7:00 pm – Human Rights: The Idea of Our Time	11 7:00 pm – Dr. Jill Bolte Taylor	12 12:00 pm – Leader Lunch Discussion 6:30 pm – Thursday Writing Workshop	13	14
15 10:00 am – Poetry Reading 10:00 am – Chorus Practice 11:00 am – Ethics for Children 11:15 am – Morning Meeting 12:45 pm – Sunday Brunch 2:00 pm – Live with Health	16 1:00 pm – Ethics in Film: Contemporary Documentaries 6:30 pm – Monday Writing Workshop	17 6:00 pm – Socrates Café 7:00 pm – Prospective Members’ Reception 7:00 pm – Human Rights: The Idea of Our Time	18	19 12:00 pm – Leader Lunch Discussion 6:00 pm – Empowering Ethical Elders 6:30 pm – Thursday Writing Workshop	20	21
22 11:00 am – Ethics for Children 11:15 am – Morning Meeting 12:45 pm – Sunday Brunch 1:45 pm – Ethics in the News 1:45 pm – Ethical Economics	23 6:30 pm – Monday Writing Workshop	24	25 7:00 pm – Ethics and the Theater	26 12:00 pm – Leader Lunch Discussion 6:30 pm – Thursday Writing Workshop	27	28
29 10:00 am – Coffee ‘n’ Chat 11:00 am – Ethics for Children 11:15 am – Morning Meeting 12:45 pm – Sunday Brunch 1:45 pm – Documentary film: <i>Soldiers of Conscience</i>	30 Society Offices Closed Memorial Day	31 6:30 pm – Monday Writing Workshop	<p>May 2 – <i>The Puttermesser Papers: A Novel</i> by Cynthia Ozick</p> <p>Ethics in Literature: A Reading Group</p> <p>May 16 – <i>Into the Arms of Strangers</i></p> <p>Ethics in Film: Contemporary Documentaries</p> <p>Ethics and the Theater</p> <p>May 25 – <i>Prisoner’s Song</i></p>			

The New York Society for Ethical Culture is a welcoming home for humanists. We've provided nontheistic services in a congregational setting since 1876. We embrace the diversity of our city and invite all to join us in celebrating life's joys, supporting one another through life's crises, and working together to make the world a better place.

Ethical Culture is a religion centered on ethics, not theology, whose mission is to encourage respect for humanity and nature and to create a better world. Members are committed to personal ethical development in their relationships with others and in activities involving social justice and environmental stewardship.

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