



LEADER'S MESSAGE

MAKING AND SUSTAINING AN ETHICAL COMMUNITY

WHAT DOES IT TAKE TO MAKE AND SUSTAIN AN ETHICAL COMMUNITY? Simply put it takes caring, openness and purposefulness. Any community needs caring since communities are, at heart, about the relationships among the community's members. When caring is prevalent community members feel the love and appreciation that buoys the spirit, bringing warmth and comfort to all. When caring is not well elicited relationships can become frayed and tentative, and the community's energy lags.

Openness is important, too, as that is a key element for rejuvenation. Openness manifests itself as readiness to experience the new and different, welcoming of the stranger and curiosity about what lies outside of one's comfort zone. When openness is strong community members show interest in learning about and experiencing life beyond what is familiar. When openness is limited, the world outside can appear threatening and worrisome, newcomers may be greeted with reservation or suspicion.

And community will not survive without purpose. Purpose is what brings people together in the first place. Purpose is what inspires people to rise above, to struggle for better, to take on challenges. When purposefulness abounds, a "can do" attitude prevails and confidence runs high. When purposefulness wanes, aimlessness and negativity can set in.

What I find particularly inspiring about caring, openness and purposefulness is that these are elements of life that we can do something about and with which we can experience success. Don't see enough caring around you? Take the first step toward caring for others. With caring one thing very often does lead to another. Wish things were a bit newer, fresher and more interesting? Open the door and go exploring – there's so much going on that there's bound to be some interesting stuff out there. And have you

kept your passion at bay or lost track of your sense of purpose? Don't give in to realism. Take a chance on your idealism.

And here's the thing – the reasons for action far outweigh reasons against acting. I say this because we are basically intelligent, thoughtful and caring people living in a world that is not immediately threatening. We're not rash, out of control folk who might bust up the place. Probably our biggest hurdle is fear of disappointment – and we can get over that. If we try and fail, so what? It's not likely that we'll be drawn and quartered over it. If we fail we can usually dust ourselves off and try again or try something else.

Ironically, this may be a time when not counting on the promise of an afterlife is actually helpful – we don't have a lot of time to lose and so ought to have a good sense of urgency. And if things go badly, life is short and our suffering will be time limited – and, besides that, our contributions can really make a difference in our lifetime and in the lifetimes of those who'll come after us.

Before you are numerous opportunities to create the community you would like to be a part of—opportunities for caring, openness and purposefulness. Bring your passion, your skill and your dreams and let's work together to build – and savor – an ethical community.

*Welcome New Members
Phyllis, Lanny, Geoff!*



Courtesy of Geri Friedman

LONG TERM PLANNING, SO FAR: What Do You Think?

(SEE PAGE 4)



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BOARD OF TRUSTEES

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Stan Snegroff, Vice President
Maggie Voltaire, Treasurer
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Jason Sadler
Oliver Swift
Michael Yellen
James Young

COMMITTEES

Caring Lucia Meyerson
& Ruthanne Worden
Ethical Action Oliver Swift
House & Grounds Lori Fedio
& James Young
Leadership Support James Young
Membership Zo Halton
Nominating James Young, Chair
Nursery School Richard Koral
Ad-hoc Long Range Planning Comm.
Bart Worden,
Colleen Kapklein,
Richard Koral,
Amy Fuller,
James Young
Diane Berman
Oliver Swift
Platform Bridget McGraw
Pledge Michael Yellen
& Barbara Finiguerra
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The Page:

Submissions, comments, etc.;
Please contact Liz Grippe
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A Humanist Fellowship

SUNDAY PLATFORM & Sunday School 10:30 A.M.

- April 06** "Best Foot Forward: What We Can Do to Bring Out the Best in Others and Ourselves," Bart Worden
Regular Sunday School
- April 13** "Development: Sustainable AND Ethical,"
Jim White
Regular Sunday School
- April 20** TBA
Regular Sunday School

**About Our Speakers:****Bart Worden**

Bart has served as Leader of the Ethical Culture Society of Westchester since 1998. Bart also currently serves as the Executive Director of the American Ethical Union.

See his bio at: <http://ethicalsocietywestchester.org/leadership/>

**Jim White**

James White was born and raised on a farm in Virginia. He is married and has two sons, two grandsons and a granddaughter. He earned his B.A. Degree from Harvard University, his M.A. in teaching the emotionally handicapped from Columbia University Teachers College and his J.D. from New York Law School. He achieved leadership certification from both the American Ethical Union and The Humanist Institute.

Mr. White served as Leader of the Essex Society for Ethical Culture in New Jersey for eight years. He is currently the Leader at the Riverdale-Yonkers Society of Ethical Culture.



*Arts Festival
Shivani, flute.
Sara, guitar
Photos:
Geri Friedman*



APRIL 2014 EVENTS

Most Sundays
9:30 A.M.

Colloquy, *self-reflection and meditation on a chosen subject within a nurturing, protected group environment.* Leader's study

Many Sundays
10:00 A.M.

Community Sing, Informal song circle. Bring your love of singing, any instruments and songs that you love. (This gathering will happen when there is no chorus rehearsal). Contact Jeff Grippe for more information.

Wednesday, April 1
7:30 P.M.

Board Meeting



Tai Chi Schedule (weekly)
Saturdays at 9:30 A.M. , \$10/class
RSVP: Lenny Meyerson, 914 720-7092

Sunday, April 6
12 NOON

Newcomers' Information Session,
Leader's Study.

Thursday, April 10
7:00 P.M.

NOT Ladies Night Out, Imperial Wok, 736 North Broadway, North White Plains (Telephone: 686-2700)

Wednesday, April 16
7:30 P.M.

Men's Night Out, Trattoria Vivolo, 301 Halsted Avenue, Harrison (Telephone: 835-6189) RSVP Oliver Swift.

Friday, April 18
7:30 P.M

Community Circles, Community Circles are a small and friendly discussion on a subject matter, sometimes philosophical and sometimes ethical. We meet in members' homes, enjoy light refreshments, and share our thoughts and concerns, experiences and ideas. Please contact Stan Snegroff, TessSnow@aol.com for more information or to RSVP.

Monday, April 21
8:00 PM

Book Discussion Group, *The Glass Palace* by Amataw Ghosh
At the Swifts' home. RSVP to Bev and Oliver, 914 761-8981.



First Sunday Sharing; The Fortune Society

The Fortune Society is a nonprofit social service and advocacy organization, founded in 1967, whose mission is to support successful reentry from prison and promote alternatives to incarceration, thus strengthening the fabric of our communities.



Arts Festival:
Francesca sings, Matt drums, Caden explores,
Barbara and Stan dance.
Photos: Geri Friedman

LONG TERM PLANNING, SO FAR: What Do You Think?

Inspired by the income from the easement and the need to set guidelines for its management, and then broadening the project from there to look at how we can best use all our resources to fulfill our Ethical purpose, the Team of 5 working on long range planning has developed a list of our Society's top priorities as we move into our future. The team's final document can only be as good as the input we get from all Society members, however, so we are eager to continue hearing from anyone interested in contributing to the process.

The whole process began with a workshop last fall on Envisioning Our Future. The results of members' work that day pointed us toward nine themes of importance to our Society, from "Revitalize Sunday School" and "Enriching social fabric through fun activities" to "Serving outside communities" and "Strengthening internal ties," which emerged from a number of more specific strategies and activities discussed that day. (Copies of the summary of that day are available on the table in the lobby, and if you'd like the full report from the workshop via email, just ask.) The Team of 5 used those themes to create a somewhat more formalized version, "Goals and Objectives," in keeping with a strategic plan model designed for nonprofit organizations.

Those goals, and the measurable "objectives" for each that are meant to help us keep track of our progress in concrete ways, were presented in a mini-workshop after platform on March 30. The group that day worked to set priorities among the goals – both in terms of what is theoretically most important for the Society to do, and what areas have the most members interested in actually working on them. What follows is a revised version of those goals and objectives, now somewhat streamlined and roughly in order of priority (though that is not an exact science).

The Long Term Planning Team is now seeking feedback from all members who want to give it but weren't in attendance on the 30th. Watch your email (or, regular mail) for your chance to weigh in on your priorities so all can be accounted for in setting our priorities. There will also be a "town hall" style meeting after platform on May 18 (save the date!) to allow for fuller and less structured discussion than we had time for at the mini-workshop in March.

A full strategic plan will be ready in time for our Spring Membership Meeting (June 6). Please take a look at the current version of the "goals and objectives" section, below, and share your thoughts. It's the only way we can all be sure the final plan takes everyone's views into account on the way to forging our unified vision.

Connecting to the Larger Community, Making the World a Better Place, and Taking Care of Ourselves

Plans for the next one to three years in the life of our Society – and how to measure our progress.

What We Are Aiming To Do:

Grow and maintain membership and increase diversity.

How Will We Know When We Succeed?

Weekly attendance averaging 60.

What We Are Aiming To Do:

Nurture community ties among members, increase engagement of members, improve integration of new members.

How Will We Know When We Succeed?

- Majority of members active on a team of 5.
- Increased Sunday morning attendance among current members and majority of members participating in activities outside of Sunday mornings.
- Process in place for integrating new members into community.
- Process in place for staying in touch with older members who can't attend regularly.
- Several social events scheduled each year.

What We Are Aiming To Do:

Be a strong and significant force in the larger community, participating in – and presenting ethics as a model for addressing – the most important issues.

How Will We Know When We Succeed?

- More partnerships with other community organizations, including joint projects, sponsoring outside events, and hosting community organizations' activities in our building.
- Increased enrollment in Nursery School from its increased visibility of Nursery School as a valuable source of non-religious, non-academic preschool education.

What We Are Aiming To Do:

Strengthen and develop Sunday School for vitality, growth, and experiential focus.

How Will We Know When We Succeed?

- Sunday School enrollment and attendance increased.
- Youth Group established.
- Several experiential projects scheduled for Sunday School – ethics-in-action opportunities.

(Continued on page 6)



Sunday School Corner

NEWS FROM THE SUNDAY SCHOOL

Senior Ethics

Lilly Schulz, Sunday School Director

This past winter, the Senior Ethics class visited The Coachman, a family shelter in White Plains. The Sunday School students helped the children living at the shelter make dream catchers. They used twigs, yarn, feathers, beads and plastic jewels to make their artistic creations. Afterwards, they shared snacks and beverages together. It was a great way to spend a winter afternoon.



Courtesy of Lilly Schulz



Junior Ethics

By Ruthanne Worden

The Society's annual Arts Festival provided the inspiration for the topics discussed in our recent Junior Ethics class. We have read the books *Emily's Art* (by Peter Catalanotto), *the dot*, and *ish* (both by Peter H. Reynolds), and *When Picasso met Mootisse* (Nina Laden). Our discussions have included big philosophical topics such as "What is Art?", "Evaluating Art" and "Art Expertise", as well as the nature of contests, perfectionism, friendship and conflict resolution raised in the stories we've read. Naturally, we have made some Art ourselves, which you can see some of on our Sunday School bulletin board!



Dale McGowan at SEC

The New York Society for Ethical Culture hosted a regional meeting for people interested in ethical education for children, and several ECSW members were in attendance.

The meeting included a presentation by our new National Director for Ethical Education, Dale McGowan, who spoke about a number of ideas and trends in ethical education that will likely be part of the American Ethical Union's program for ethical education.

Dale noted that there are cultural trends that are favorable to a humanist approach to ethical education. A growing number of young adults say they do not belong to a religious organization, but still believe that raising ethical kids is important and have the need for support and community in raising their children. Ethical Societies who have programs that are already geared toward ethical education and not toward indoctrination may be poised to succeed well with this population.

Recent research in how children learn and develop has shown the importance of strong and secure emotional attachments with a consistent caregiver to moral development. Dale emphasized the importance of children learning to work through problems and challenges with their peers – opportunities that are often lacking in our culture's current highly structured activities for children and the common practice of grouping children all of the same age together. He promoted greater use of experiential learning opportunities in our ethical education programs which he said would be much more effective than a traditional didactic approach.

The second part of the meeting was a conversation with the participants (who represented seven Ethical Societies) about the successes and struggles for ethical education programs in their Societies. The discussions will continue as Dale will be leading a workshop at the National Assembly in May and hosting the Ethical Education Conference in November.

—Bart Worden

The Terror Trials — Federal Court vs. Military Tribunals ECSW 3/30/14

By Phyllis Rodriguez

The trial of Suleiman Abu Ghaith, former spokesperson for Al Qaeda and son-in-law of Osama bin Laden, concluded with a guilty verdict on three counts of conspiracy in Manhattan federal court on March 26, three weeks after it began and less than 13 months after his apprehension in Amman, Jordan. Attorney General Eric Holder is quoted in the *NY Times* (3/28/14) as saying that he “never doubted the ability of civilian court to administer justice swiftly” . . . and that “it would be a good thing for the country if this case has the result of putting that political debate to rest.” Mr. Holder is referring to the ideological/political debate between supporters of military tribunals vs. federal civilian courts when trying alleged terrorists.

In the opinion of Sen. Dianne Feinstein, chair of the Senate Intelligence Committee, “This successful prosecution again shows that the criminal justice system is not just a valid way to prosecute Al Qaeda terrorists, but a better and more reliable way.” (*Los Angeles Times*) She feels that trying some of the Guantanamo detainees in federal court as well is long overdue.

On the other side, Sen. Lindsay Graham feels that Mr. Abu Ghaith should have been interrogated by military intelligence as an “enemy combatant” in order for the government to obtain more vital information. While complimenting the judge and jury he stated, “We’re not fighting

a crime here; we’re fighting a war.” But Karen J. Greenberg, director of the Center on National Security at Fordham University Law School, observes that the “normalcy, . . . lack of drama, . . . the way that the judge handled it in terms of pointing to the law at every turn” demonstrates that federal court is the proper venue for the majority of terrorism trials. (*New York Times*) At his sentencing trial on September 8, a jury of his peers will decide if he should receive life in prison or a lesser sentence.

On the other hand, Khalid Sheikh Mohammed, et al, have no trial date in sight after eleven years in detention, eight of those years at the Guantanamo Bay prison camps. Pre-trial hearings have been taking place since their arraignment in May 2012. The military prosecution claims to want a speedy trial, but the two sides are very far apart on issues of attorney-client privilege, to what extent documents relating to the five defendants should be classified, and some of the basic rights of the accused as stated in our Bill of Rights. If and when these defendants are sentenced, they could receive the death penalty from a six-person jury composed of military officers chosen by the judge. If constitutional law is not followed, the five capital defense teams will not be able to provide their clients the best defense possible. That is something we should be very concerned about.

If we don’t have the same standard for all people accused of capital crimes regardless of their race, creed, political views, etc., or whether they are tried in civilian or military courts, we will erode everyone’s rights. I believe that our values are being put to the test.

(Long Term Planning, continued from page 4)

What We Are Aiming To Do:

Provide excellent stewardship of building and grounds, and of finances.

How Will We Know When We Succeed?

- Written priorities, timeline, and financial plan for maintenance of infrastructure.
- Design plan created and underway to improve aesthetics of building and grounds to provide an attractive, comfortable, welcoming, functional environment.
- Increased use of building by community groups.
- Improved pledge campaign process moving Society toward covering 80% of budget from member contributions.
- Investment guidelines set by active team of 5 for finance, including defining for ourselves ethical or socially responsible investing.

What We Are Aiming To Do:

Put ethics into action by working for social justice and providing direct aid in the community.

How Will We Know When We Succeed?

- Service project or fundraiser scheduled at least every other month, in addition to monthly special offering.
- Service project or fundraiser involving children in Sunday School scheduled at least every other month, including visits to Coachman Family Shelter.
- Established social justice theme to work on through the year with at least one major annual event.
- At least one social justice action or event per year which children in Sunday School can participate in.

What We Are Aiming To Do:

Optimize our “people power,” volunteer and professional.

How Will We Know When We Succeed?

- Increased engagement of members, in teams of 5: no Society function is being managed by one person, solo, without assistance, support and backup.
- Active teams of 5 working on Inreach (Platform planning, Sunday morning logistics (i.e. setting up sound system), Sunday School, congregational caring, social

(Continued on page 7)

HIGHLIGHTS OF MINUTES

BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING, MARCH 04, 2014

Leaders Report:

- Bart showed the Board the 98% completed new web site which is that close to going live. It includes a calendar function that is linked to the google calendar.
- *New Jim Crow* book discussion program is ready to go, Bart and Maggie will be co-facilitating, one of nine groups around the county being organized.
- “Community Voices Heard” had a community discussion at the Slater Center in December, and they are having these programs in several towns around the county. Engaging with this group is an opportunity to get involved in their issues. Bart invited them to use our Meeting House as a public center. A meeting on poverty will take place here on March 25 @ 7:00 p.m.
- On Thursday, Bart will be speaking at a dinner at the Andalusia School, an event which is related to the Islamophobia group event.
- AA has decided to meet elsewhere on Friday nights.
- Jone Lewis, who is serving as the interim leader in Brooklyn, asked if we would host a NVC program of four weeks. There may be a cost for materials and her time. If there is interest, she will come. Someone will have to take the lead to get this going.
- Nursery School is promoting a “screen free day.” Lilly is getting something up about that.

Treasurer’s Report:

Pledges received - \$35,132 vs. \$33,056 last year at this time. Colleen asked for a clarification of how the interest on the escrow fund is reflected in the monthly statement.

Membership:

Lanny Spalding and Geoffrey Smith submitted applications for membership. Stanley moves, Jim seconds, membership approved unanimously.

(Long Term planning, continued from page 6)

- events, finances), Outreach (growing membership, website/social media, PR, community connections), and Service (Ethical Action, or Ethical Action and Social Justice).
- Professional staff well-supported.

What We Are Aiming To Do:

Ensure a vibrant, educational, inspirational, connecting Sunday morning experience.

How Will We Know When We Succeed?

- Starting on time each week.
- Increased attendance among current members.

Committees:

- Membership Committee needs more members.
- Sunday School organization is problematic, with uneven attendance that makes it difficult to plan and manage. A renewed RE committee would help develop a plan and a strategy.
- Budget committee. Colleen asks for whomever will participate on a budget committee to draft a budget for next year. Jim and Maggie volunteer.
- Nominating Committee needs to get cracking and draw up a slate for the Spring Membership Meeting.

Miscellaneous Items:

For Dale McGowan’s visit on March 23, a flyer is being prepared for distribution to invite the general public to our Platform. Also, we are drumming up interest in going to the City to attend his workshop on Ethical Education at the NY Society in the afternoon. Greg sent out publicity.

Coffee before the Platform: Colleen asks that we each mention to someone else that the coffee is available early, in order to publicize this initiative.

Rehabilitation Through the Arts: there are people who would make a collection for their benefit this Sunday. We will have a box for donations

AEU Assembly, YES Weekend and Lay Leadership Summer School. The Board expresses interest in making grant money available to help people attend. People have to step forward and express interest in going.

New Members Party will be combined with the Spring Festival, Sunday April 27.

An African-American Humanist group of 5 families asked to use our Bldg for a meeting once a month. We want to express our encouragement and welcome them, would like to know how many people would attend, how many children, whether Haber Room would be appropriate.

Respectfully submitted,

Richard Koral, Secretary.



What We Are Aiming To Do:

Communicate effectively with the world outside our walls.

How Will We Know When We Succeed?

- Increased website traffic; Facebook “likes,” comments, and posts; MeetUp activity; and digital and social media presence and interactivity in general.
- Increased mentions in traditional media.

— Collen Kapklein, President

A Humanist Fellowship

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*“Every child is an artist.
The problem is how to remain
an artist once we grow up.”
— Pablo Picasso*

