

AMERICAN ETHICAL UNION

DIALOGUE

FALL 2013

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

<i>Save These Dates</i>	2
<i>Be the Difference, Not the Bully</i>	2
<i>Teens Explore "Utopia"</i>	3
<i>Wedding News</i>	4
<i>Notes From Your AEU</i>	4
<i>AEU 21st Century Fund</i>	5
<i>From the UN</i>	6-7
<i>Ethics in Engineering</i>	8
<i>Remembering a Dear Friend, Susan Goldfrank</i>	8
<i>Wall of Remembrance</i>	9
<i>Meet our Communications Coordinator</i>	9
<i>Climate Change</i>	10

LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, BART WORDEN

We are facing a future of both possibility and peril.

What does it take to make a Movement? What will it take to realize our Movement in these times? These are central questions facing the American Ethical Union as we enter our 124th year. When the AEU was formed in 1889 there were just five Ethical Societies: New York, Chicago, Philadelphia, St. Louis and London. Now we have twenty-two Societies in the union—which includes four of the original five—and we are facing a future of both possibility and peril.

On the peril side of the equation, we are living in a time when fear and distrust are strong and when security and hopefulness are difficult to sustain. There is a good deal of suspicion of organizations

and growing concerns that political and financial maneuvering of leadership will lead to abuse of powers and taking undo advantage of the people. We distrust our leaders and fear our neighbors—and perhaps we would be foolish not to. After all, who is truly looking out for us?

So that is where the possibility side of the equation comes into play. Our dedication to realizing the unique worth and dignity of every person and our intention to always behave in ways that will elicit the best in others are just the tonics our culture needs to overcome its malaise and get on a positive track for the future. So what will it take to realize that?



As the AEU's Executive Director it is incumbent on me to find ways for the Movement to go forward effectively

and with energy. I have developed a plan with the board of directors that focuses on three main areas: connecting with member Societies, building up the technical and programmatic resources of the union, and developing a strong public presence for the AEU.

My first year was very focused on the first area, connecting with member Societies. I spoke at eighteen Ethical Societies between September and June and got to meet a good portion of the Movement face-to-face. My assessment after all those visits is that our Societies all

See pg 2

Support New AEU Website

Our new website will be easier to use for new and returning visitors! It will include a new logo, history of the Ethical Culture Movement, current projects and discussions, and ways to get more involved.

At 2013 AEU Assembly, Executive Director Bart Worden was thrilled to announce that support for the website was quickly growing due to generous members. Leader Anne Klaeyen and her husband Glenn Newman joined an anonymous member in establishing a matching donation of \$2,000. By the end of the weekend, about \$500 was collected from members inspired to contribute. You can support the website too. Mail a check to: AEU, 2 West 64th Street, New York, NY 10023 or call 212-873-6500 with your credit card information.

Thank you for your support and we look forward to sharing our new website with you soon!

LETTER FROM AEU PRESIDENT, RICHARD KORAL

Ethical Culture is where Humanism comes alive and fosters meaningful

What does my Ethical Society mean to me? Why am I here? What would I miss if it were gone?

These were questions pondered at a recent retreat held outside of Philadelphia by members of eight Societies and three Leaders who presently comprise most of the AEU Board. Posed starkly in this way, these questions asked everyone to assess the core relationship they have to this community. The answers that emerged collectively drew a striking picture of the wholeness and richness that each person had experienced by being

See pg 3



Save These Dates

Board Meetings

Individual members of member Societies are always welcome to attend AEU board meetings.

November 16 @NYSEC 9am

January 18 @NYSEC, 9am

March 22 @NYSEC, 9am

May 1-4 @ AEU Assembly

American Ethical Union Assembly 2014

May 1-4. Chicago, IL

Join us next spring for a great program to energize Ethical Culture. More information coming soon.

Future of Ethical Societies (FES) Conference 2014

May 23-26. Philadelphia, PA

Connect with young adults across the Ethical Culture Movement for an energetic and exciting weekend full of discussion and action. More information coming soon and visit us on Facebook.

Lay Leadership Summer School

July 12-19. The Mountain, NC

The week-long curriculum includes the religious, philosophical, and organizational history of Ethical Culture; leadership skills for groups and organizations, including compassionate communication and conflict-management; and personal development. There are many opportunities for participants to get to know one another, learn about other Societies and have fun! More details coming soon.

Letter Exec Dir from pg 1
have a strong core of committed and determined people who are working hard to make their Societies strong. At the same time, there is a fair amount of stress over the challenges our Societies are facing and concern over the size of our congregations and over the difficulties many Societies have had in growing and sustaining membership.

I worked with AEU staff and volunteers on the second area by developing proposals that will make additional programmatic and organizational resources available to our member Societies. We identified the needs and interests of the Movement

and have begun to reinvigorate our committees and programs in response. We also have begun to address the third area, developing a strong public presence for the Movement. Emails to members, letters to editors and press releases have been going out and we have pursued a more vigorous use of social media through Facebook and Twitter.

For my second year as ED, I am excited to focus more on the third area. I have already begun to engage with organizations who may be future partners for programs and services. A new website for the AEU is under construction that will help us promote ourselves

and make communication to the larger world more effective, and I am developing skills as a representative of AEU to the larger public.

A Movement, if it is to be more than a gesture, needs many hands and hearts working together—I encourage you all to continue your work with efforts that have been fruitful, voice requests for assistance with the tough areas, and listen to and work with your fellow member Societies to share your successes. Let's work together to ensure a bright and lively future for our Movement!

BE THE DIFFERENCE, NOT THE BULLY

Aimee Neumann, *AEU Religious Education Director*

The American Ethical Union Religious Education Committee hosted the annual Fall Conference and Family Weekend Nov. 1-3 in beautiful Stony Point, New York. Our theme was “Be the Difference, Not the Bully: Building Ethical Community.”

Friday night we joined Alan Berger for intergenerational games. Then kids got to know each other and adults shared what they would like to get out of the conference. Children’s programming ran on Saturday, interspersed with yoga, an intergenerational scavenger hunt, and our famous talent show.

Parents, teachers, and RE directors attend from around the country to share “best practices,” collaborate on new

curriculum, and discuss how to stay connected throughout the year. On Sunday we had Platform and farewell activities.

Our goals this year were to work on defining Ethical Religious Education, setting standards, and identifying successful practices for founding, expanding, and improving Ethical Sunday Schools. We began this work on a national level at the Fall Conference.

Recent activity on our busy list-serv includes inquiring into the history of Ethical Sunday Schools, discussing the word “religious” and a move away from the label “Sunday School” at

some Societies. We discussed how children are grouped for Sunday School. One society uses a “sorting hat” like in Harry Potter to group the kids. To join the chat, email aneumann.aeu@gmail.com. We’d love to hear your creative ideas and questions.

The AEU was able to award two scholarships to the RE Conference this year. Thank you to those who support the AEU for making scholarships possible!



Letter AEU Pres. from pg 1
part of an Ethical Society. These were experiences found nowhere else. Here are examples of what was said:

- I discovered how my son had developed a rich moral sensitivity through his Sunday School experience.
- I had the opportunity to work closely with others on a creative project.
- I met my wife at my Society.
- I found others to collaborate on a service project that was important to me.
- As I came of age in my Society I was granted the opportunity to say something of importance to me and I was listened to.
- When my father died, the Society members pitched in and contributed to a meaningful and fitting memorial that I'll never forget.
- I have so little family; at festivals, the Society fills in for my family.
- I originally intended to go into the ministry, but I couldn't find a congregation that I could really be a part of until I found Ethical Culture.
- My Society fulfills my need for a spiritual home. It is where I can express my unique spirituality.
- When I was married I had to move a great distance and I felt cut off and

alone. The Society offered me a committed community.

- I have a firm core of beliefs and my Ethical Society was the only place that could comfortably accommodate my point of view.

It is remarkable how a small sample of people could generate such a broad range of perspectives. Each of these examples reflects a point of connection, a particular way in which people have found meaning within the community that we call Ethical Culture. When taken together, they depict a rich village of unique individuals, each with unique needs, gifts and aspirations. Collectively, they reflect a creative and caring community that gives back more than what we ever invested in it.

Robert Fulgham, the *All I Ever Needed to Know I Learned in Kindergarten* author, once wrote, "We associate with other people like us to affirm ourselves. We come for people reasons, not professional reasons. Loneliness is one great burden of being a solitary human being. To spend time in the company of others who have our concerns, values, interests or beliefs is to get confirmation of who we are – to feel connected to a larger image of ourselves."

It is sad to see that others do not have the opportunity to participate in a Society like those of Ethical Culture. To those people self-described as non-theist, agnostic, or atheist who are alienated from traditional congregations because the theology demands too much compromise with intellectual honesty, I want to yell out, "But we're right over here!" When I see one or another article that breathlessly reports some small, vain attempt to organize a non-theist assembly I want to shout out, "Hey, we've been doing this for over a hundred years!"

We have to do more shouting. Whenever there is a blog or article about how odd and interesting a non-theistic meeting group might be, let's send back a comment saying indeed, how good it is and that it is already happening at Ethical Culture. Whenever we have an opportunity to express a role for a Humanist viewpoint, let's point out that here is where Humanism happens. That is because Ethical Culture is where Humanism comes alive and where it fosters the rich, diverse and meaningful connections so clearly reflected at our recent retreat.

TEENS EXPLORE "UTOPIA"

Trish Cowan, *YES Coordinator*

What would your perfect world look like? That's the question that our teens tackled this November when they came together for the annual Youth of Ethical Societies (YES) conference. The theme of "Utopia" was fitting, as this is the time in our young people's lives when they're defining their character, fine-tuning their beliefs, and beginning to really shape their lives. It's so exciting to watch!

YES assembled November 7-10 in Washington, D.C. We had our pre-conference activities at the Washington Ethical Society and in DC before heading to YMCA Camp Letts for the heart of the conference. The weekend is always full of meaningful conversation, public speaking, supportive sharing, and contagious laughter. We welcome all teens in grades 9-12 and are happy to work with teens not linked to a particular Society.

This year's officers in charge of planning and running the conference are Isa (President), Aaron (Vice President), Caitlyn (Treasurer) and Mulenga (Secretary). If you have any questions about YES, please feel free to contact Trish Cowan, YES Advisor, at trishhotze@sbcglobal.net or 314-680-3348. The officers and Society reps would like to thank the AEU for its generous support of our annual conference. You're helping to grow awesome ethical humanists in the process!



Congrats to Law'nence Miller and his husband Shaun Sylvester-Williams!

Law'nence Miller, AEU Administrative Director, and Shaun Sylvester-Williams were married on Sept. 19, after a long and loving 16 years together. They had an informal ceremony officiated by NYSEC member and dear friend Andra Miller. Formal ceremony and celebration are planned for 2014.

Leader Lois Kellerman was quoted in August 16, 2013 New York Times article Before Saying "I Do," Define Just What You Mean:

Writing your own vows, Lois Kellerman says, is like making homemade cookies.

"If you can find the right ingredients, the right words in the case of vows, it is almost always better," said Ms. Kellerman, a former leader of the Brooklyn Society for Ethical Culture who has officiated at hundreds of weddings...

Ms. Kellerman, an author of "Marriage From the Heart," a book about how to build a healthy and enlightened marriage, encouraged couples to write vows together and to polish them like silver.

"For vows to work properly, they have to be carefully reviewed, discussed, pulled apart, put together again until an 'aha' moment arrives when the couple feels the rightness of what they'll be saying together," she said.

NOTES FROM YOUR AEU BOARD

Karen Elliott, *AEU Board Member*

The AEU Board met by phone on August 8 and in person on September 7 while having a planning retreat at Pendle Hill near Philadelphia.

AEU Executive Director Bart Worden is focusing on his role as spokesperson for the Movement as well as looking for opportunities to work cooperatively with other groups in ways that will benefit all involved. He is posting on Facebook and Twitter regularly. He led a group at the March in Washington, D.C. in August to commemorate the 50th anniversary of Martin Luther King, Jr.'s "I Have a Dream" speech. The group proudly displayed a banner that resembles the new AEU membership cards.

The AEU office continues to work on projects as well as providing support for the on-going work of the Movement. The project to preserve and properly index and digitize the AEU Archives continues, although it involves much more than was thought at the beginning. Part of the reason for this is the sheer volume of material and the amount of work needed for fragile older works to be properly preserved to make their information easily accessible.

The Presidents Council, supported by the AEU, will have a second in-person meeting this year in November (the first was at the Assembly in June) in which Presidents from Ethical Societies come together and discuss best practices, current challenges, and ways to help their Societies function better. AEU Staff have set up a Dropbox for the Society Presidents, which contains helpful information about the AEU and documents the Presidents will share with each other. The Presidents also share information via an e-mail list-serv and they plan to have some teleconferences throughout the year.

Work has begun on a new AEU website with a more uniform look and feel, more content, easier ways to find information, and simpler

maintainability. Working closely with the chosen contractor (Gui Visions, LLC) will be Law'nence Miller, AEU Director of Administration, and Emily Newman, AEU Communications Coordinator, whose job has expanded to include more responsibility for the website as well as continuing her existing responsibilities for AEU Dialogue, Facebook and Twitter postings, and e-mail campaigns.

The AEU Board and Executive Director are reviewing AEU Committees to improve and revitalize them. Significant time at the recent Board retreat was spent looking at Committees from various points of view and targeting several critical committees to receive a more extensive review and some reimagining. First we will focus on Membership, Communications, Religious Education, and YES (Youth in Ethical Societies).

Planning is in progress for the 2014 Assembly (in Chicago May 1-4), and also for the 2015 Assembly (location and date to be announced). The National Leaders Council is continuing to provide much of the programming for the Assemblies, so we will have more thought-provoking and inspirational speakers and workshops.

During the Board retreat, we spent time learning and brainstorming about fundraising, and received an in-depth look at the budget courtesy of Treasurer Tom Weishaar. Tom has pioneered ways of showing the budget that make it easier and simpler to see what's happening but sometimes it's helpful to "muck around in the details" to really understand. There is always time during Assembly for you to ask Tom questions about the budget and the budget process.

The Board retreat started out with an exercise that helped to remind us of why we were there. We each talked about time in our lives when belonging to the Ethical Society really meant something to us. It

was difficult to limit ourselves to just one time! People mentioned the experience of doing social justice work together, the person-centered ceremonies, working together to create things, meaningful relationships with those having shared values, acceptance of outsiders by members, festivals, the Society acting as their family, the "religious but not spiritual" environment as well as a place for those who are "spiritual but not religious," and members not just caring for each other but caring about and supporting each other during difficult times. One person said, "When I came to Ethical it was like 'wow' there are other people in the world who believe what I believe." It became obvious that we on the Board are truly grateful for what we've been given by our Societies and by being a part of the entire Ethical Culture Movement, and that's why we're here – to help others find their own meaningful experiences as part of what Baltimore's Leader Emeritus Fritz Williams calls in one of his published talks "A Religion for the 21st Century."

A frequent topic for Board discussion is ways in which the AEU can nurture the growth of the Movement and of Societies. Supporting the revitalization of its Membership Committee is one, and another is sponsoring a study to look at what kind of experience younger humanists would like to find in us (see the Board Notes in the Spring 2013 issue of Dialogue for more details on this). We find ourselves with a product that is being recreated by others and touted as a new thing – humanist communities of caring individuals that replace the functions of a traditional religious institution in people's lives. Why aren't the people who are joining these various new humanist communities joining those who have over a century of experience of being in a non-theist community? The staff, Board, and Leaders are working to make the Ethical Movement more visible, and you can help. Take the time to talk with friends or neighbors about your Society and why you belong to an Ethical Society and/or to the Movement.

ANNOUNCING THE AEU 21ST CENTURY FUND FOR GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT



Richard Koral, *President, AEU Board*

Now that the finances of the AEU have returned to stability and our budget is balanced, it is time to raise our horizons once again and strive to fulfill our aspirations for this Movement. We are the keepers of a unique and special legacy that was forged by courageous and dedicated forebears. It is now our job to rejuvenate it for a new generation and to pass it on.

Ethical Culture is home to the rare communities of real Ethical Humanism and that fact demands of us a duty—it is for us to ensure that its message is heard and that its influence resonates throughout the larger society. We must assure the continued vitality of our Societies and, in order to accomplish that, we must cultivate the skills and the leadership that our Societies need.

Everyone has read the polls and surveys that tell us that a significant and growing percentage of the population is religiously unaffiliated and generally discouraged by organized religion. This might not be simply because society at large is atomizing into so many separate, disaffected, alienated, and aloof individuals. A part of the explanation is likely to be that many people are simply abandoning the religions of superstition. Many others come from mixed traditions and are less beholden to older ways. But the search for meaning remains an important aim of the examined life. Many of these people are

potentially our people who are seeking communities like ours.

It is time now to awaken our creative spirits and shift the project of the Ethical Movement into the next higher gear. That, of course, requires funding. It is for the purpose of renewed growth that we announce the formation of the AEU 21st Century Fund which will be devoted to the growth and development of the Ethical Culture Movement. This will be an unrestricted fund to underwrite such vitally needed projects and activities as the following:

- mobilizing outreach and promoting Ethical Culture to the wider world;
- fostering the formation of new Circles and Fellowships;
- modernizing practices across the Movement and reinventing traditions to remain relevant to new generations;
- training a new generation of Leaders to serve our Societies;
- building and maintaining communications on digital and emerging platforms;
- continually updating and developing curricula for lifetime learning and ethical education;
- supporting Societies to realize their mission in service to communities;
- sponsoring workshops, training programs, and conferences;
- supporting academic studies in ethics and philosophy; and

- supporting our Executive Director with resources.

This may all seem very ambitious, but the Ethical Culture Societies must serve as models of Ethical Humanism in action—and they can. There is little on this list that our Movement has not excelled at during some time in the past. But, if it is ever to do so in the future, it will require active rejuvenation. Riding on past momentum is not enough. We owe this effort to our forebears in honor of the foundation they built and we owe it to the next generation that looks to us as stewards of this legacy.

Please send your contributions to the AEU 21st Century Fund by writing your check to the American Ethical Union, at 2 West 64th St., New York, NY 10023, directing your contribution to this Fund. Bequests and structured gifts can also be directed to this Fund. We want to create a fund of sufficient size to generate earnings for use on these projects. However, the money is not meant to sit idle, either, and it should be available for use to invest directly in the growth of the Ethical Movement.

Find out more about the AEU 21st Century Fund by emailing me at richardlkoral@optonline.net, Bart Worden, Executive Director, at executivedirector.aeu@gmail.com, or Scott Walton, AEU Vice President and Finance Chair, at sns@swwalton.com.

FROM THE UNITED NATIONS: INTERNATIONAL DAY AGAINST HOMOPHOBIA

May 17th, 2014 will focus on the rise of hate crimes against LGBT people throughout the world.

Dr. Sylvain Ehrenfeld, *IHEU and the National Ethical Service, and representative to the UN*
 Dr. Reba Goodman, *Ethical Culture Society of Bergen County*

Homosexuality remains a criminal offence in more than 70 countries and is an important human rights issue. Every year on May 17th the UN marks the day as International Day. This year the focus is on the rise of hate crimes against Lesbians, Gay men, Bisexuals, and Transgender people in many parts of the world from New York to Brazil, from Honduras, Turkey to South Africa. May 17 was selected because on this date in 1990 the World Health Organization no longer classified homosexuality as a diagnosis condition. The American Psychiatric Association removed homosexuality from the list of mental disorders much earlier in 1973.

A worldwide survey in 2013, by the Pew Survey, reports that anti-gay sentiment persists in much of the world. Not surprisingly, the results of the PEW survey demonstrate a division in acceptance of gays: countries in Africa and the Middle East strongly oppose any tolerance, while at the same time tolerance is growing in Europe, the United States, Canada, and parts of Latin America.

An expected result is that acceptance of homosexuality is much higher where religion is less central in peoples lives. Whereas, in poorer countries with high levels of religious belief, few believe

that homosexuality should be accepted by society. In Russia and China, on the other hand, where religion tends to be less central, gays have yet to gain acceptance. In Russia 16% and in China 21% of people show acceptance.

A recent report entitled "Making Love a Crime" produced by Amnesty International, indicates homophobic attacks in Sub-Saharan Africa have reached dangerous proportions. Homosexual acts are increasingly criminalized across the continent with some governments seeking to impose harsh penalties. In the last five years, South Sudan, Burundi has introduced harsh laws against homosexuality. In Uganda, Liberia and Nigeria there are bills before Parliament that ask for increasing existing penalties. In Nigeria, where sodomy is punishable by jail, the House of Representative passed a bill criminalizing gay marriage, same sex "amorous relations," and even membership in a gay rights group.

An alarming human rights violation is developing in Russia where President Putin has essentially declared war on homosexuals. He has signed many anti gay laws; e.g., allowing police officers to arrest tourists and foreign nationals they suspect of being gay or pro gay and detain them for up to 14 days. Mr.

Putin signed another anti gay bill that classifies homosexual propaganda as pornography. The law is broad and vague, inviting misuse and harassment.

Punitive laws and discrimination have serious health consequences. The Executive Director of the UN program on HIV/AIDS said that the stigma and discrimination faced by Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, or Transgender people was hampering an effective medical response to the disease. When people are stigmatized because of sexual orientation they are less likely to access the HIV services they need, leading to new HIV infections and AIDS deaths.

The UN has initiated a major education campaign "Free and Equal" to combat violence against gays and the widespread discrimination in the workforce, education, and health sectors. A number of celebrities have pledged their support. The campaign will release a variety of material in multimedia. Changing attitudes is never easy but it is possible. Hopefully, this campaign will begin the process. It is important to support Amnesty International's campaign to combat anti-gay discrimination and promote laws against human rights violations.

The American Ethical Union joined an amicus brief with the American Humanist Association, American Atheists, Secular Coalition for America, Center for Inquiry, and several other organizations on the case of *Town of Greece v. Galloway*. It is a critical case from a church-state separation perspective, as it is the first time in 30 years that the Supreme Court has addressed the issue of official prayer at government meetings. If you would like a PDF of the brief, email dialogue.aeu@gmail.com.

FROM THE UN: CROSSING THE RED LINE

Should the world stand by if governments brutalize its own people?

Dr. Sylvain Ehrenfeld, IHEU and the National Ethical Service, and representative to the UN

Dr. Reba Goodman, Ethical Culture Society of Bergen County



This article was written prior to the UN Security Council resolution, accepted by the Syrian government, to admit UN experts to collect and destroy its chemical arsenal.

The use of chemical weapons is a grave breach of a longstanding international law. Now, however, chemical weapons have been used in the brutal civil war in Syria. This breach of international law raises difficult political and moral issues: what do we do?

The decision is affected by the Security Council of the United Nations which is immobilized by the Russian veto power. Russia has recently made an offer to be discussed later. At this moment in history, the UN can only help with the massive refugee problem. More importantly, a non-response to the use of chemical weapons is tantamount to turning a blind eye to growing human rights atrocities and jeopardizing other international conventions and treaties as well. The major problem is that military intervention, contemplated by the President of the United States, has very little support due to very real issues of uncertain consequences. On the other hand, doing nothing also has possible serious consequences.

After Iraq and Afghanistan we are fed up with war. Based on information of weapons of mass destruction that did not materialize in Iraq, we are highly skeptical of the authenticity and accuracy of intelligence reports regarding Assad's role in the use of chemical weapons. There are unanswered questions regarding the use of chemical weapons by "rebels."

For these reasons and others to be mentioned, the authors of this article are not in agreement and we have

decided to lay out some of the reasons for Intervention and non-Intervention.

Reasons for NON-Intervention:

Military interventions have been shown historically to result in unintended consequences, for example killing civilians. Thus, the civil war could worsen and increase the already terrible refugee problem. The US government is thinking of a limited strike. What is that? Why should that act as a deterrent? The Syrian government may respond with further chemical attacks. What do we do then? It may strike other countries in the region – widening the war.

The US may then be on a slippery slope of getting deeply involved in a civil war. The US government has not spelled out the end game. Because of Iraq, there is still skepticism about who is responsible for the chemical attack.

Reasons for Intervention:

There are certainly risks in intervening. The risks in not intervening could embolden Iran in its nuclear ambitions and encourage the Syrian regime to let loose more lethal chemical attacks. Civilian casualties would be accelerated and there would be even more refugees seeking safe haven. There would be extreme regional instability.

Should the world stand by if governments brutalize their own people? Why didn't the European powers intervene when the Nazis, before the Second World War, brutalized and slaughtered German Jews and many others? In fact, in the Nuremberg trials at the end of the war the Nazi defenders were actually tried for atrocities they committed during,

but not before, the war. The world did nothing in the Armenian genocide. A more recent example is the failure to intervene in the Rwandan genocide in 1994. A subsequent UN inquiry concluded that 2,500 troops could have prevented the massacre of 800,000 Tutsis.

View of Sylvain Ehrenfeld – There are risks in intervening as well as risks in not intervening. In this case, it's a difficult call. Ultimately, the moral case is that we must stand up when countries violate basic international laws and brutalize their people. In each case, one must consider the human cost. Because we can't intervene everywhere does not mean we should intervene nowhere.

View of Reba Goodman – There is no such thing as a limited strike. What are the limits? It is clear that the citizens of the US, as represented by members of Congress, are leery and unwilling to get involved in yet another intervention at any level. The number of refugees is mounting; the medical system is working against unbelievable odds, with a lack of medications and medical help.

Russia proposed that Syria's chemical weapons be put under international control. Syria has agreed. Unfortunately, it required a threat of a military strike. Is it a delaying tactic? Can some of the weapons be hidden? Most experts think it will be difficult especially during a brutal civil war.

If this comes to pass it will be a great victory for upholding international law. It will revitalize the UN Security Council where much of the negotiations will go on.

ETHICS IN ENGINEERING

Dr. Carolyn S. Ryan

Ethical Society Without Walls

Ms. Siv Ilengin is a project engineer working mainly in the New York City area. She deals with a variety of organizations, entities, and individuals for building construction oversight and must handle seemingly endless ethical issues throughout the process.

The various agencies bid on contracts before the project begins. When dealing with hundreds of millions of dollars for a given project, remaining fair and competent is an important skill. The bidding becomes extremely competitive, increasing the challenges and conflicts of interest. It is important to acknowledge a conflict of interest formally. This includes describing it in written form, presenting a resolution, showing how the provision of services will be delivered, and planning how to proceed. Ms. Ilengin encountered a conflict of interest because she had a personal relationship with one of the bidders on a project that she was to oversee. In her small field the chances are great that the people involved may know each other in one form or another. It is important that issues are communicated and dealt with in an appropriate manner that upholds the best interests of all involved.

Another area of ethical concern is in dealing with changes in contracts. One must negotiate all of the changes that are involved in having multiple parties connected with a contract. The contractors are likely to overestimate costs or the duration of the project. The construction manager, as the owner's representative, will underestimate to attempt to negotiate a better deal. Their motivation to do this can be high. If the contractor and construction manager are unable to agree to a cost during negotiation, the construction manager (under the direction of the owner) can direct the contractor to proceed at a certain price the construction manager identifies. The contractor, then, must perform the work. The only way for the contractor to protest is through a legal dispute.

In Ms. Ilengin's field, there are many guidelines and protocols in the field of building construction and engineering due to the very nature of the risky and dangerous situations that arise. Safety is above-all the overarching theme of the guidelines about ethical practice. For example, in spite of tight time constraints, it is important to advocate for the direct construction workers. Advocating may mean offering breaks, especially in extreme weather conditions. By offering more frequent breaks, the direct construction workers

can be more productive and the tasks tend to be better produced as a result.

Dealing with parties and stakeholders involved creates more situations. For example, detours in road construction and other changes in traffic conditions often arise as a result of a building construction project. New patterns in traffic produce new conflicts for the relevant entities, as well as businesses and residents in the area. Scaffolding may hide a once well-advertised business. Roads can be closed completely. A very important aspect to Ms. Ilengin's work is making data-based and ethical decisions. By reviewing data, she finds that best practice decisions must be made that affect various parties. In addition, there are community research programs designed to take into consideration the many entities affected by a given building construction project and to make decisions that would provide the best overall outcomes. The bottom line is that ongoing evaluation and reconsideration is necessary in order to produce the best results.

Ms. Ilengin's work is extremely challenging and she is very motivated and enthusiastic. She enjoys having a permanent product at the end of a building construction project that remains for years to come.

REMEMBERING A DEAR FRIEND, SUSAN GOLDFRANK

Susan Rose, *Dean of Leadership Training Program*

Susan Goldfrank died on September 17 after a serious illness. She spent her last weeks surrounded by loving and devoted family and friends. Susan even got to welcome the birth of her newest grandson, on Sept. 9.

Susan served as President of the AEU in the 1990s and served twice as chair of the Leadership Committee. She served multiple terms as President of the Ethical Society of Northern Westchester where she was a very long-time member.

Susan believed deeply in the need for the Ethical Movement to have well-trained certified Leaders as well as well-trained lay leaders. It was during her presidency that the first session of the Lay Leadership Summer School was held in 1996. Susan was an ardent supporter of active partnerships between lay and professional leaders in Ethical Culture.

Susan practiced eliciting the best in others as she collaborated with people on the Leadership Committee and in the AEU.

She was an insightful, collaborative leader, who led by example with good cheer and humor. She always shared credit for achievements with the team who worked with her in so many endeavors.



Not only was she dedicated to Ethical Culture, but she contributed to the world in many ways, including spending many decades as a hospice volunteer.

WALL OF REMEMBRANCE

Let us live truly while we live, live for what is true and good and lasting.

Compiled from various sources including the Societies' newsletters

Leon Bellin (*Chicago*) – Leon Bellin, a longtime member of the Ethical Humanist Society of Chicago who retired to New Mexico and California several years ago, died last spring. As a lifelong art teacher, he brought his students for a practicum experience with Chicago's Sunday School children. He served on the search committee and found their building and recommended its purchase in 1996.

Alison Brunell (*Brooklyn*) – We mourn the sudden and tragic death of our member Alison (Ali) Brunell. Ali suffered a brain hemorrhage on July 20 and died on July 21 without regaining consciousness. Ali was born on June 16, 1944 in Springfield, MA. She was a passionate actress and teacher, working most recently as a professor at CUNY-College of Staten Island. Ali was also fun-loving. At our picnics, she loved to play a red-nosed clown she named Sassafras. Member Annemarie Mogil is donating a beautiful sassafras tree which we will plant in our garden in the fall, in memory of Ali and her playful Sassafras.

Ali's death came as a terrible shock and loss for all of us. She had recently joined with members at Ethical and other activities, where she was so lively and vibrant. It is hard to believe that she is gone. On Sunday, August 4, at the beginning of an Ethical Culture workshop, 20 members and friends gathered in a circle to share our thoughts and memories of Ali, who joined BSEC three years ago. It was wonderful to learn of her many fine qualities that we had experienced and appreciated during these years. She was always very thoughtful and would ask questions which made us all think more deeply about what we believed and how we were doing our ethical work.

Helen Jacobs (*Bergen*) – Helen Jacobs died gracefully in her home in Paramus on August 11. She and Steve (2007) were married for 57 years, and were founding members of the Bergen Society. A lifelong artist from a family of noted artists, her artwork has decorated the Society's wall for years.

Morris Nessenson (*Chicago*) – Morris Nessenson died on May 12th, at the age of 96. Morris was retired from the restaurant supply business. Our belated condolences to his wife, Mae.



American Ethical Union marched on Washington for the 50th Anniversary of Martin Luther King, Jr's speech. About 60 members representing 10 Societies rallied with our new banner!

Meet the AEU Communications Coordinator



Emily Newman

The American Ethical Union is proud to announce that Emily Newman is our new Communications Coordinator. Along with producing the *Dialogue*, as she has since June 2011, she will continue to promote the AEU on Facebook and Twitter, develop and maintain the AEU website, create email campaigns, and coordinate more outreach opportunities.

Emily grew up in the Brooklyn Society for Ethical Culture and now is a member of the Future of Ethical Societies as well as an Executive Board member of the National Ethical Service. She earned a MA in Professional Writing from Carnegie Mellon University. She looks forward to developing a strong Communications Committee to increase connections amongst Societies and the public.

If you would like to work with Emily on communications (or simply have some sweet and encouraging words to share), please email her at dialogue.aeu@gmail.com. Also add this email to your Society's mailing list so she can help promote your programs.

Write for the *Dialogue*—We are accepting submissions for Winter 2014!

Send submissions to dialogue.aeu@gmail.com by Wednesday, December 25, 2013. Please include a headshot and relative images with your submission when possible.

If you are interested in writing but do not know what to write about, become a reporter for the *Dialogue* and get assigned a topic or event.

CLIMATE CHANGE: THE FUNDAMENTAL SOCIAL JUSTICE CHALLENGE OF OUR TIME

Jeanne Brunson, *Ethical Humanist Society of Long Island*
 & volunteer presenter for the *Climate Reality Project*

"Our religion is ethics." In service of that philosophy, the AEU proudly supports action for social justice. Climate change is a global crisis threatening social justice everywhere, with the potential to render moot all other causes we hold dear. It is time for the AEU to tackle this greatest ethical issue of our time.

As we already know all too well, damage from stronger and more frequent storms can affect any of us at any time, but the impoverished and disenfranchised are inordinately affected by the devastation of climate disruption. Floods, droughts, and heat stress lead to crop failures and rising food prices felt by those already struggling to feed their families. Air and water contamination disproportionately affect the health of poor communities near industrial areas, while increases in disease vectors indicate a global health crisis. Species extinctions are occurring at a higher level than at any time in the last 65 million years, and at a faster rate than in any mass extinction event in geologic history. Entire island nations are fighting for their right to exist in the face of rising seas. Impacts observed today are the result of carbon dioxide and

carbon dioxide-equivalent pollution from decades ago; the full impacts of what we have burned already have yet to be realized.

Without concerted action, our grandchildren will know only a world of unprecedented desertification, intensifying food and water shortages, abandoned coastal cities, massive population displacement, and violence over basic resources within ever-shrinking livable areas.

These impacts carry financial and human costs borne by us all. Meanwhile, taxpayer-subsidized fossil fuel industries collect record profits and spend millions lobbying to maintain the status quo. This is not the ethical world we strive to create.

As humanists, we take a rational, evidence-based approach to our world and the choices we make. In the face of overwhelming scientific evidence and the very real potential that we are creating an unlivable world for our children and grandchildren, we must recognize that our only ethical choice is action, and take hope from the opportunities before us.

- We can divest the

American Ethical Union and member Societies from fossil fuel companies, and pressure our local municipalities and pension funds to do the same. This is both a moral imperative and a wise financial move, given the vast reserves of fossil fuel assets that will be stranded when the world realizes we cannot afford to burn them.

- We can lobby for a carbon tax that directs revenue toward renewable energy and tax relief for those who cannot afford higher energy and food prices.
- We can power our homes and meeting places with renewables, taking advantage of tax rebates, or demanding such rebates where none exist, and explore new financing options through solar and wind companies, some of which now require no up-front costs.
- We can organize, participate in, or support protests and demonstrations against new fossil fuel infrastructure like fossil fuel power plants and the Keystone XL and other oil and gas pipelines, and call publicly for a ban on extraction and transport methods prone to poisonous leaks and spills.
- We can reach out to organizations like the Climate Reality Project, 350.org, and Citizens Climate Lobby to find creative ways to lend our support to their efforts.

AMERICAN ETHICAL UNION

2 West 64th Street, 4fl New York, NY 10023
 212-873-6500
office@aeu.org

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Richard Koral, President
 Scott Walton, V. President
 Tom Weishaar, Treasurer
 Jan Broughton, Secretary
 Jone Johnson Lewis, NLC Pres
 Anne Klaysen, NLC V. Pres
 Lisel Burns, NLC Alternate
 Carol Bartell
 Hank Gassner
 Ken Karp
 Laura Stark Steele
 Julia Julstrom-Agoyo, FES Rep
 Emily Newman, FES Rep Alt
 Bart Worden, Board ex-officio

STAFF

Bart Worden, Executive Dir.
 Lawrence Miller, Dir. of Admin.
 Donna Pang, Admin. Assistant
 Aimee Neumann, Natl Dir. of RE
 Trish Cowan, Natl YES Coord.
 Emily Newman, Comm. Coord.
 Susan Rose, Dean of Leadership Training

Thank you to Richard Reichart, our *Dialogue* Copy Editor!

- We can write op-ed pieces and letters to the editor calling out public denials of science and advocating for any of the above solutions.

Let us commit to meaningful action, right now. Whether we succeed or fail, I want to be able to tell my son that I lived the tradition of "Deed before Creed" and did everything I could to protect his future.