~ FEBRUARY’S THEME—Making a Living ~

Sunday, February 2, 11 a.m. Platform
“Inspiring Each Other, Part 2”; James Croft, Outreach Director
Music: Ethical Voices Chorus and Community

The Ethical Society of St. Louis is the largest Ethical Society—and one of the largest Humanist congregations—in the world. We don’t often reflect on our status as a major Humanist cultural institution, but in this Platform—the second of our annual Pledge Drive Platforms—we will look at how our Ethical Society is inspiring the Humanist movement more broadly, and how we could play a bigger role in the future.

Join Us After Platform on Sunday, February 2 for an Inspiring Lunch!

We are celebrating YOU, our inspiring members and friends, on Sunday, February 2! This year’s pledge theme is “Inspiring Each Other.” So this year’s pledge lunch is on US! After Platform, enjoy pizza, salad, and dessert provided by the Ethical Society to honor our Ethical supporters and mutual fan club. We will have vegetarian and vegan pizza options with a giant salad for the gluten-averse.

Child care will be available. Bring your completed pledge commitment form or send it in ahead of time. If you can help with setup or cleanup, please contact Stephanie Sigala, pledge chair, stephanie.sigala@sbcglobal.net.

See you there! Ethical would not be Ethical without YOU!

P.S. Just a reminder to bring a canned good for our ongoing food drive.

Sunday, February 9, 11 a.m. Platform
“A Beacon of Hope: St. Louis Through the Eyes of Immigrants and Refugees”;
Anna E. Crosslin, International Institute of St. Louis
Music: Shudi and Hannah Wang, piano

Is the American Dream still alive for our region’s immigrants and refugees? While many foreign-born arrive in St. Louis with economic, educational and cultural assets, what resources are essential to restore hope and dignity to those foreign-born newcomers who are victims of persecution or war? Join Anna Crosslin, president & CEO of the International Institute of St. Louis, where staff, volunteers, and the wider community have welcomed thousands of immigrants and refugees and helped them find their best path toward self-sufficiency and successful integration.

Split Collection: Half of today’s *undesignated collection will be donated to the International Institute of St. Louis; www.iistl.org. (*Note: If you pay your membership pledge through the collection, write “pledge” on your check, and it will not be divided.)
Sunday, February 16, 11 a.m. Platform
“Ethical Issues in Making a Living”; Kate Lovelady, Leader
Music: Kristen Goodman, guitar and voice
There are many ethical questions related to the topic of making a living, and we’ll explore several of them in this Platform: Is meaningful work a human right? To what extent should education and work serve the economy, and to what extent should an economy serve education and workers? How much should you weigh ethics when choosing how to make your living? And how does your spending rate affect your ability to make ethical decisions related to work?

Sunday, February 23, 11 a.m. Platform
“IRL: Finding Realness, Meaning, and Belonging in Our Digital Lives”; Chris Stedman
Music: Janet Evra, jazz
What does it mean to be “real” in the digital age? As more people leave the institutions that once helped many of us find meaning and belonging—opting out of religious communities and civic organizations—and move their search for realness to the internet instead, it’s easy to worry. After all, we hear over and over that our digital lives are “fake,” even though so much of who we are and what we do for work and play now happens online. Alternately, others say that technology will make us fuller, better versions of ourselves, if we just put our faith in it. But perhaps neither group gets it exactly right. Perhaps the internet is a new tool for understanding and expressing ourselves, and that the not-always-graceful ways we use this tool can reveal new insights into far older human behaviors and desires. In this talk, author and activist Chris Stedman will invite us to consider the ways we use the internet to fulfill the essential human need to feel real. The digital search for meaning and belonging presents challenges, he will argue, but also myriad opportunities to become more human.

Chris Stedman is the author of Faitheist: How an Atheist Found Common Ground with the Religious (2012) and the forthcoming IRL: Finding Realness, Meaning, and Belonging in Our Digital Lives (2020) and has written for The Guardian, The Atlantic, Pitchfork, BuzzFeed, VICE, and The Washington Post. Formerly the founding executive director of the Yale Humanist Community, he also served as a humanist chaplain at Harvard University and is currently a fellow at Augsburg University. Learn more at chrisstedmanwriter.com.

Youth Group Dinner Dance and Online Silent Auction!
The Youth Group Dinner Dance is Saturday, February 22, 6-10 p.m. The theme this year is the Wizard of Oz. There will also be an accompanying silent auction running up until that night. To bid online for the items in the Youth Group Silent Auction, just do the following:
1. Go to ethicalstl.org.
2. Select “Our Congregation.”
3. Select “Calendar.”
4. Select “Youth Group Dinner Dance—Wizard of Oz February 22.”
5. Select “Youth Group Silent Auction.”
6. View the items and send your bids to dennis.roach6@gmail.com.

Bad Weather Policy
Decisions to close the Society building are based on MoDOT and weather warnings. Whenever possible, cancelation of Sunday meetings will be made the night before to get the word out to everyone. Sunday cancellations will be shared through the Ethical Society website and Facebook page; channels 2, 4, and 5 (and their websites); in an email to the membership; and on the “events” extension on the Society phone system (314-991-0955 x 224).
9:45 Forum on February 2—Warm Up with the Power of Song

In the depth of winter, come join us to warm up your voice, your spirit, and your body by singing the American Ethical Union songbook and more, with Ethical Society Music Director JD Brooks. You can also learn the community songs we'll all be singing at Platform that morning. A fun Forum for all!

9:45 Forum on February 9—Doing the Work for More Ethical Government

In a previous Forum, we talked about political resistance in the form of direct action. In this Forum, we discuss ways we can work to rebuild our government to better align with our ethical sensibilities. Included will be an explanation of how the presenter, Ross Blanton, a self-described introvert, came to enjoy knocking on voters’ doors and found political involvement as a powerful antidote to feelings of helplessness and frustration. Come get inspired!

9:45 Forum on February 16—Ethical Society Volunteers at the International Institute

For the last couple of years, several people from the Ethical Society have served as volunteers at the International Institute. When people come to the United States as refugees, they have a steep learning curve to find their way in our society. The role of the International Institute is to provide guidance and support to these people as they make a new home in a new country. Much of the volunteer activity Ethical Society volunteers have done has been just a few hours on a one-time basis. Other volunteer work has included being a regular helper in a classroom.

Some of us have mentored two families who have come here from Africa. We have showed them how to shop for food, to use a laundromat, to navigate public transit, and other aspects of daily life. We have become trusted friends of these new neighbors and have greatly enriched their lives—and they ours.

Come to the 9:45 Forum on February 16 to learn more.—David Brown, Chair, International Institute Team.

Upcoming Science Fiction Book Club Meetings, 4th Mondays

Our Science Fiction Book Club meets 4th Mondays, 7-8:30 p.m., in Kate Lovelady’s office. All are welcome to any meeting, even if you have not finished the book (but be prepared for spoilers!).

February 24. The Best of All Possible Worlds by Karen Lord. From the publisher: “A proud and reserved alien society finds its homeland destroyed in an unprovoked act of aggression, and the survivors have no choice but to reach out to the indigenous humanoids of their adopted world, to whom they are distantly related. They wish to preserve their cherished way of life, but doing so may mean changing their culture forever. Working together to save this vanishing race, a man and a woman from two clashing societies will uncover ancient mysteries with far-reaching ramifications.”

Keep up with the club through the Ethical Society Science Fiction Book Club on Facebook.

Young Ethical Ladies “Galentine’s Day” Brunch

Please join the YELs for a Galentine’s Day brunch! We use an inclusive definition of “ladies” and we welcome transwomen and non-binary people who are female-identified. We’ll be meeting at Ethical Society at 11 a.m. on Saturday, February 15 for a potluck brunch. If you have any questions please contact Michelle Simkins at simkinm2@gmail.com. We hope you can come kick it, breakfast style!

Welcome to New SEEK Director, Kat Weir

The Ethical Society is thrilled to welcome Kat Weir as our new Sunday Ethical Education for Kids director. Kat’s creative energy and enthusiasm for knowledge shine through our programming for children and youth. Through her long and storied history in education, theater, non-profit management, service leadership, funeral directing, event planning, and co-parenting two spectacular secular humanist teens, she has compiled a curious but incredibly effective “toolbox” which she brings with much delight to the Ethical Society. Kat will lead our congregation in cultivating young people’s innate capacity and passion for experiential learning, critical thinking, and ethical decision making. When Kat is not directing our SEEKers, she can be found being relentlessly competitive at trivia nights, listening to true crime podcasts, exploring St. Louis’s endless bounty of culture, and daydreaming about where to travel next. Say hello on a Sunday, or contact Kat at kweir@ethicalstl.org.
TWA Talk

The Tuesday Women’s Association (TWA) meets in the Becker Room (except where noted) on Tuesdays beginning at 10 a.m., August through June. After the morning programs, all are invited to stay for a brown-bag lunch followed by news of members, roundtables, and/or mah jongg at 12:30 p.m.


February 11. (Lecture begins at 10:45 a.m. in the auditorium) International Relations Lecture Series. “Triple Threat of Global Warming: Ecological, Environmental, and Humanitarian Crises.” Speaker: Dr. Thomas E. Lovejoy. Dr. Lovejoy coined the term “biological diversity” and played a central role in the establishment of Conservation Biology as a science. He helped establish, and since the 1970s has headed, a large-scale experiment to study the effects of deforestation on the diversity of animal and plant species in the Amazon. This work has guided the planning of conservation areas in the region. Lovejoy has advised three U.S. presidents on climate change. From 1987 to 1998 he served as an assistant secretary for the Smithsonian Institution in Washington, D.C. From 1999 to 2002, he served as chief biodiversity adviser to the president of the World Bank. Currently Dr. Lovejoy is a Senior Fellow at the United Nations Foundation and professor at George Mason University. Introduction by Dr. Peter H. Raven, eminent botanist and former director of the Missouri Botanical Gardens. Committee: Deanna Stevenson (TWA) & Jeannie Webdell (AAUW).

February 18. Quarterly Business Meeting.


Men’s Discussion Group, Tuesday Mornings

Each Tuesday from 10 a.m. until noon the Men’s Forum gathers in the Hanke Room: the first hour a formal program is presented, followed by a general meeting. Participants are invited to stay after noon for a brown-bag lunch. All are welcome, whether a member of the Ethical Society or not. Just bring an open mind and a small cash donation for the hot drinks and snacks that are usually available.


February 11. TWA International Forum at 10:45 a.m. in the auditorium. See above.

Panel on Democracy, Gun Violence, and Abortion—February 20

WE REFUSE TO BE SILENT, sponsored by ProgressWomen, is an event on Democracy, Gun Violence, and Abortion. It will take place at the Ethical Society on Thursday, February 20, at 6:30 p.m. There will be a panel discussion featuring authors Sarah Kendzior (The View from Flyover Country: Dispatches from the Forgotten America) and Dr. Jonathan Metzl (Dying of Whiteness: How the Politics of Racial Resentment is Killing America’s Heartland), and journalist Charles Jaco, moderated by Kim Norwood, Washington University School of Law Professor. There will be a book signing and opportunity to meet the panelists following the program. Tickets are $10-75. For more information and tickets, see https://secure.actblue.com/donate/refusetobesilent.

Register Now for “Ethical Humanism Yesterday and Today” Seminar, April 25-26

Want a more intensive experience to understand Ethical Humanism—where it comes from and where it is today? Want to spend a weekend getting to know other members, delving into questions of history, religion, philosophy, and how an institution works to realize its values? Join James Croft and Kate Lovelady, Saturday April 25 and Sunday April 26 (which will include attending Forum and Platform—you don’t have to miss them!), for a weekend of workshops, discussions, and activities. Free, limited to Ethical Society members. Pre-reading will be strongly encouraged but not required. For information and registration, contact Kate (klovelady@ethicalstl.org).
Monthly Black Lives Matter Vigil

Every second Sunday, Society members and friends gather on Clayton Road to uphold the dignity and worth of every person and support the movement for black lives. Join us on Sunday, February 9, at noon, for fifteen minutes or stay for the full hour. We have signs and scarves to share, and please remember to dress for the weather.

Great Books Reading and Discussion Group in February, Walt Whitman

The Great Books Reading and Discussion Group will meet for its next session on Thursday, February 13, when the group will discuss Walt Whitman’s poem “Out of the Cradle Endlessly Rocking.” Our meetings are held on the second Thursday of every month (through May) in the Ethical Society Board Room at 7:30 p.m. The group reads selections from the anthology Great Conversations 1. Copies of the anthology can be ordered from the website of the Great Books Foundation, https://store.greatbooks.org/colleges-book-groups/discussion-group-favorites/great-conversations-1.html. If you are interested in joining this reading group, please contact Alan Easton at ameast89@yahoo.com.

Tai Chi for Arthritis and General Health

This winter, we are learning tai chi for arthritis, a short sun style tai chi form developed by Dr. Paul Lam, an Australian family physician and winner of several tai chi competitions. Though Dr. Lam originally developed it for arthritis, it is good for everyone. It is an enjoyable and rewarding form to do. This particular form has been the subject of research and demonstrated that it has significant health benefits. You can find information at https://taichiforhealthinstitute.org/. As well, we will learn numerous tai chi practices, chi kung, tai chi basics, and Taoist meditation.

Tai Chi meets most Tuesdays (see calendar), 5:15-6:30 p.m., in the Hanke Room. Everyone is welcome; participants do not have to be Ethical Society members. We ask for at most a $5 donation to support the Ethical Society.

Don Beere has been learning, practicing and teaching tai chi for over 40 years. He taught it as a credit-bearing course while a faculty member at Central Michigan University, and he sponsored 21 yearly tai chi workshops led by three different tai chi masters—Hubert H. Lui, Dr. Zaiwen Shen, and Chungliang “Al” Huang. Don has been a certified tai chi for arthritis instructor. You can see his background at www.donaldbeere.com.

Divorce and Separation Support Group

On the Second Thursday of every month at 7 p.m. in Leader Kate Lovelady’s office, a self-led group of Ethical Society members and friends gathers to provide help, support, and encouragement to anyone going through the difficult and painful process of divorce and separation. The group is open to all. Contact Rich Feldenberg (richard.feldenberg@health.slu.edu) for more information.

Board News

Taking Stock

With the turning of the new year just behind us, goals have been on many of our minds. It’s the perfect time to take stock, evaluate, and regroup. In an effort to do just that here at the Society, I want to share some progress on our strategic plan. Keep up the great work!

I. Member Experience

Kate and James are working on expanding our adult education opportunities with another weekend seminar, this one focused on Ethical Humanism. SEEK has been undergoing many changes in an effort to improve the program. We are happy to welcome Kat Weir as the new SEEK Director, and we’re excited to see what she has in store.

II. Outreach

James held two big outreach events in December: “Star Wars and the Hero’s Journey” and “Harry Potter and the Sacred Text.” These events centered around pop culture had a great energy and enthusiasm. And if you haven’t checked out our new “Ethics and Chill” podcast, you’re missing out!

III. Diversity

We have had many ADA improvements in the last few months in the auditorium and around the building. These modifications help provide a more welcoming space for diverse groups. Our Diversity and Inclusion Committee has continued their important work and will be reaching out to other groups in the Society to share their ideas.

IV. Sustainability & Growth

The Board has been working hard to review our investment policy and make strides in this financial area. Looking toward sustaining our building and grounds, Facility Coordinator Terri Arscott is reviewing plans for repairing and improving our parking lot.

Amanda Verbeck, ESSL President amandav530@yahoo.com
Around the Building and Around the Grounds

It's February, the month of love . . . And gratitude for those who are always willing to lend a hand, give a boost. We appreciate and thank all the volunteers who help with projects around the building and grounds! The month of February will be a whirlwind of activity. The floors and carpeting will be sparkling! As we gear up for the spring activities, remember to share and spread “love” to your friends, family and your fellow volunteers!

If you have an hour or two to help, check out the bulletin board next to the kitchen downstairs. We can always use a helping hand around the building with weeding, small repairs, and simple maintenance projects. You can read a brief description of several small projects and choose the one that's right for you. If you “know-how and can-do,” please contact Facility Coordinator Terri Arscott: twscott@ethicalstl.org or 991-0955 x211.

Group Art Show for David Ottinger, Jane Linders, and Christine Ilewiski

This Ethical Society gallery group show will run through March 9. Here are statements from the artists:

David Ottinger. “As a student I was enthralled with two topics, art and psychology. At times I try to bring the two together in the same conversation. Though I taught figure drawing, painting and art history for decades, I am still enchanted with the idea of bringing psychology and painting together in a way that tries to define the moment when an individual makes a decision or comes to a realization about a dilemma or idea.”

Jane Linders is an award-winning photographer whose prints are in numerous national and international collections. Linders has exhibited her work everywhere from her hometown in St. Louis to the Smithsonian Museum in Washington D.C. She is a tireless image maker who mines the oddities of roadside America.

Christine Ilewiski. “My work has reflected my experience as a woman, a mother, a wife, a sister, a daughter; a domestic, intimate life. Landscape has almost always been the background to my narratives, but in my most recent work it seems to have become my center—a place of reflection, a still point from which everything else revolves. These landscapes are bubbling up from a subconscious stream, a ‘river’ of relationships. With a studio overlooking the Mississippi, the mighty river runs through all my work.” Christine is also the founder/director of the nonprofit Faces Not Forgotten.

Save the Date! People Power Potluck on Sunday, March 8

The Lay Leadership Development Committee is hosting an informational potluck following the March 8 Platform. Please stay tuned for additional forthcoming details in the weekly email blasts, post-platform announcements, and listings in the weekly email to members.

Save the Date! Trivia Night on Saturday, March 21

Saturday, March 21 will be the Ethical Society’s second annual Trivia Night. The theme is “Are You Smarter than a Fifth Grader?” It’s not too soon to talk to your friends and put together a table of 8. Cost will be $20/person, prepaid, or $25 at the door. More information and details on how to register will be forthcoming soon.

A Special Free Opportunity to Hear Great Opera Voices, Saturday February 1

The Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions (MONC) is a program designed to discover promising young opera singers and assist in the development of their careers. It is the longest-running audition program in the country, beginning with the Auditions of the Air in the 1930s. It currently takes place annually in twelve regions throughout the US and Canada. On Saturday, February 1, 1 p.m., the MONC Midwest Region will hold auditions at Ethical Society of St. Louis. Regional auditions are only held in St. Louis once every four years. The afternoon is open to the public at no charge. The singers that day will be the recent winners from the districts that comprise the Midwest Region. Three judges, all opera professionals, will select the winning contestant to advance to the late-February National Semi-Finals in NYC on the stage of The Metropolitan Opera.
Ethical Society of St. Louis February 2020 Calendar

Saturday, February 1
3 p.m. We Thinks Good philosophy discussion. February’s topic: Transgender Theory. Butterfly Room.

Sunday, February 2
8 a.m. Ethical Mindfulness Practice. Foyer.
9:45 a.m. Colloquy. Board Room.
10 a.m. SEEK begins. Becker Room.

Monday, February 3
5 p.m. Yoga. Hanke Room.

Tuesday, February 4
9 a.m. Ethical Mindfulness Practice. Kate Lovelady’s office.
10 a.m. Tuesday Women’s Association. See page 4.
10 a.m. Men’s Forum. See page 4.
Tai Chi is not meeting this week.
7 p.m. SOS Secular Sobriety. Coming of Age Room.

Wednesday, February 5
Chorus will not meet this week.

Friday, February 7
6:30 p.m. Good Eatin’ meatless potluck. Becker Room. No RSVP necessary. All are welcome!

Sunday, February 9
8 a.m. Ethical Mindfulness Practice. Foyer.
9:45 a.m. Colloquy. Board Room.
10 a.m. SEEK begins. Becker Room.
5:30 p.m. Second Sunday Dinner Theater. Becker Room.

Monday, February 10
5 p.m. Yoga. Hanke Room.
6:30 p.m. Current Events. Youth Group Room.

Tuesday, February 11
9 a.m. Ethical Mindfulness Practice. Kate Lovelady’s office.
10 a.m. Tuesday Women’s Association. See page 4.
10 a.m. Men’s Forum. See page 4.
5:15 p.m. Tai Chi. Hanke Room. See page 5.
7 p.m. SOS Secular Sobriety. Coming of Age Room.

Thursday, February 13
7 p.m. Divorce and Separation Support Group. Kate Lovelady’s office. See pg 5.
7:30 p.m. Great Books Discussion Group. Board Room. See page 5.

Saturday, February 15
11 a.m. Young Ethical Ladies. Galentine’s Day Brunch. Hanke Room. See page 3.
3 p.m. We Thinks Good philosophy discussion. February’s topic: Transgender Theory. Hanke Room.

Sunday, February 16
8 a.m. Ethical Mindfulness Practice. Foyer.
9:45 a.m. Colloquy. Board Room.
10 a.m. SEEK begins. Becker Room.
12:30 p.m. Just Write writers group. Visitors Open House Room.

Monday, February 17 ~ Office Closed
5 p.m. Yoga. Hanke Room.

Tuesday, February 18
9 a.m. Ethical Mindfulness Practice. Kate Lovelady’s office.
10 a.m. Tuesday Women’s Association. See page 4.
10 a.m. Men’s Forum. See page 4.
Tai Chi is not meeting this week.
5:15 p.m. Tai Chi. Hanke Room. See page 5.
7 p.m. Science Enthusiasts Club. Becker Room.
7 p.m. SOS Secular Sobriety. Coming of Age Room.

Wednesday, February 19
7:30 p.m. Ethical Chorus Rehearsal. Auditorium.

Thursday, February 20
6:30 p.m. We Refuse to Be Silent. A panel on democracy, gun violence, and abortion. Auditorium. Ticketed event, $10-75. See page 4.

Saturday, February 22
6 p.m. Youth Group Dinner Dance. Becker Room.

Sunday, February 23
8 a.m. Ethical Mindfulness Practice. Foyer.
9:45 a.m. Colloquy. Board Room.
10 a.m. SEEK begins. Becker Room.

Monday, February 24
5 p.m. Yoga. Hanke Room.
7 p.m. Sci-Fi Book Club. The Best of All Possible Worlds by Karen Lord. Kate Lovelady’s office. See page 3.

Tuesday, February 25
9 a.m. Ethical Mindfulness Practice. Kate Lovelady’s office.
10 a.m. Tuesday Women’s Association. See page 4.
10 a.m. Men’s Forum. See page 4.
Tai Chi is not meeting this week.
7 p.m. SOS Secular Sobriety. Coming of Age Room.

Wednesday, February 26
Chorus will not meet this week.
The submission deadline for the Connection is always the 15th of the preceding month.
Email items to klovelady@ethicalstl.org.
or bring or mail them to Ethical Society of St. Louis; Attn: Connection