Special Information for (Another) Pandemic Edition

Where to Find the Latest Information on Ethical Society Programs and Activities
Obviously, the ongoing pandemic situation is very fluid. Ethical Society of St. Louis is adapting as quickly as possible, providing programming and facilitating opportunities for members and friends to connect online. There are a growing number of activities available through Zoom.

For up-to-date information on Society activities, please watch for the weekly members’ email, and regularly check the web site and Facebook page. For SEEK information, check the “Seek This Week” email and the SEEK Facebook page.

Zoom Information
During the pandemic, we are providing numerous ways for people to continue to connect via Zoom conferencing. Click here to watch a video by Social Media Manager Louise Jett on how to join a Zoom meeting and how to navigate the Zoom interface.

Joining a Zoom gathering requires you either to download the Zoom program on your computer, tablet, or phone, or call into (929) 205-6099. You do not need to create a Zoom account or pay any money to participate in Zoom meetings. Our code for all ESSL meetings is 384 422 5785—that’s ETHICALSTL spelled out on a phone. If you’d like assistance, email James (jcroft@ethicalstl.org) or Louise (ljett@ethicalstl.org), and they will be happy to help.

Building Closed
As long as the local orders to stay home continue, the Ethical Society building is closed until further notice. Thank you to all our employees and members for your incredible diligence and support during this emergency.

Member Support in an Extraordinary Time

Volunteer Callers
Member volunteers are calling everyone in our membership directory to check in and see how folks are doing, and to make sure everyone knows about our online meetings. If you would like to help with this effort, contact James Croft, jcroft@ethicalstl.org.

Outreach to Seniors by the Committee of Concern
During this health emergency, the Committee of Concern is doing additional outreach to our members 75 and older. If you are a member of any age in need of support, and/or if you would like to join the Committee of Concern in supporting our seniors and other members, please contact CoC chair Jeanette Langton at jeannet-telangton@gmail.com.

Pastoral Counseling
Leaders Kate Lovelady and James Croft are still available for one-on-one pastoral counseling conversations, by phone or Zoom. Please contact either or both to schedule a chat: klovelady@ethicalstl.org; jcroft@ethicalstl.org.

Member Relief Fund
This is a nerve-wracking time in many ways, particularly for those who have lost jobs and income. Government and community programs on the local, state, and national level are being put in place to provide financial support in this crisis. The Society also has a fund to provide emergency financial aid to members.

To apply for member relief, please contact Kate at klovelady@ethicalstl.org. If you are in a position to make a donation to help support members in financial crisis, please send checks made out to the Ethical Society of Saint Louis, with “Member Relief Fund” in the memo line; thank you!

New to the Ethical Society? Join Our Virtual Visitors Open House on Zoom!
Visitors are always welcome to attend meetings and events at the Ethical Society of St. Louis, and that remains true for our current Zoom meetings on Sundays and throughout the week. Whether you’ve attended the Society in person or an event on Zoom yet or not, if you’d like to know more about the Ethical Society—its history, beliefs, community, activities, etc.—there’s an opportunity to meet with members twice a month, Wednesdays from 6 to 7 p.m. The upcoming “Virtual Visitors Open House” dates are May 13 and 27. Just go to Zoom.us and enter the meeting ID 384 422 5785, or see above for more information about using Zoom by computer or phone. We look forward to meeting you!
**Sunday Platforms ~ 11 a.m. on Zoom**

**May 3, Ethical Society Youth Group; “The Wisdom of Youth”**

May 10, Sayer Johnson, Executive Director, Metro Trans Umbrella Group;
“Shades of Blue: One Trans Man’s Journey with Bravery, Parenthood, and Patriarchy”
Music: Yin Xiong, cello

**May 17, James Croft; “Life After Covid”**
Music: James Farquhar, cello

**May 24, Remembrance Sunday**
(Please contact Kate Lovelady to share a memory or tribute to a deceased loved one at this Platform.)
Music: JD Brooks and Caroline Hixson, piano and organ

**May 31, Kate Lovelady; “Enough”**
This will be Kate’s last platform, and last day as Leader
Music: “Greatest Hits” Videos

**Kate’s Memory Book**

As a farewell gift for Kate, we are compiling a book of special memories from members and friends. What will you remember from Kate’s time at the Society?
- Share one specific memory or story about how Kate touched your life.
- Keep it short and sweet... no more than a paragraph.
- Write it as though you are writing a letter directly to Kate.
- If you have a related photo to share, please attach it as well.
- Deadline: May 15

Please send your letter to Stephanie Sigala (stephanie.sigala@sbcglobal.net) by May 15. If you have any questions, please contact Amanda Verbeck (amandanv630@yahoo.com).

**“Being Human” Discussions, Thursdays at 6 p.m.**

Who am I? Why am I here? What’s going on? All of us ask these questions sometime in our lives. Ethical Humanism’s answers are drawn from a rich tradition of thought throughout the ages. Ethical Humanists seek to infuse our lives with a set of values, without looking to a single text or teacher for answers—we create those answers for ourselves. James Croft will be offering sessions of his “Being Human” class on his Thursday evening Zoom sessions at 6 p.m. Each session includes a short presentation, guided discussion, and a simple “homework” activity.

**Little Women Chosen for One Book “Lite”**

While we are all hunkered down and practicing social distancing, let’s have a community read! Society members are invited to participate in One Book Lite, by reading the classic, Little Women, by Louisa May Alcott, over the next month. Copies of the book are available in the public domain in a variety of places (eg, [http://www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/514](http://www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/514)) and non-readers can check out the 1994 and/or 2019 film versions instead. We hope that you enjoy experiencing this classic tale of four sisters growing up and becoming their authentic selves. Stay tuned for future information about online discussions in May. Questions? Please reach out to Krystal White or Bob Pickard.

This lighter version of One Book is intended to be a counterpart to the “heavier” selection of *Falter*, which is about climate change and other existential threats to humanity. Discussions of *Falter* will begin at the end of summer. We encourage all members to read both books and become involved in the group discussions.
**Proposed Bylaws Changes for Annual Meeting Vote**

Greetings from the Board Governance Committee! We have two proposed bylaws changes for the membership to review and vote upon at the Annual Meeting on Thursday, May 14. For your reference, the Bylaws and the Society Policy Manual are both available at [https://ethicalstl.org/our-congregation/governance/](https://ethicalstl.org/our-congregation/governance/).

Replace “Executive Leader” with “Ministry Team Leader”: Sections 2.1, 2.4, 4.2, 4.3.

The Ethical Society Policy Manual and the Bylaws have differing naming structures for the exact same position. According to the Bylaws, Kate Lovelady is the “Executive Leader;” according to the Policy Manual, she is the “Ministry Team Leader.” The Governance Committee recommends changing the Bylaws language from Executive Leader to Ministry Team Leader, so that the job title is consistent throughout the Society materials. The Board proposes changing the wording in all four places in the Bylaws where an Executive Leader is mentioned: Bylaws Sections 2.1, 2.4, 4.2, and 4.3.

**Members Vote Out Trustees: Section 5.4.**

The Bylaws do not have a mechanism for Society members to remove Trustees from the Board. The Ethical Society supports democratic principles and, as such, should have a way for the membership to remove Trustees, if needed. The Governance Committee recommends adding this language to Section 5.4: “In addition, an Officer or Trustee may be removed by a two-thirds vote of the Active Membership attending a regular membership meeting or Special Membership Meeting, called either by the Board or by 15 Active Members of the congregation.”

Please share your thoughts or questions with our Governance Committee Chair, Krystal White, and come prepared to vote on these two proposed Bylaws changes at the Annual Meeting.

**Nominations for the Board of Trustees**

This year’s Nominating Committee is proud to recommend two strong candidates for Board service for the May 2020-May 2023 term.

**President Track: Mary Ellen Stanton.** Mary Ellen has been a member of the Society for three years. Previously, she was a member of the Northern Virginia Ethical Society (NoVES) for thirty-three years. She and her husband, Andy, joined NoVES so that their then-three-year-old daughter would experience a Sunday School that reflected their ideals and beliefs. Their daughter is long grown, but they stayed with NoVES—where, throughout the years, Mary Ellen served on the Sunday School and Caring Committees; as an officiant (she celebrated over 130 weddings as well as memorial services and baby-namings); and on the NoVES board as a member-at-large, secretary, assistant treasurer, vice president, and president. She also helped NoVES through a Leader transition. On the national level, Mary Ellen has attended multiple AEU Assemblies, allowing her to meet many members of other Ethical Societies.

Mary Ellen is a retired teacher. Andy is a retired government attorney. They have been married for forty years. Their daughter, Claire, is a children’s librarian in Nashville, TN. Mary Ellen and Andy have both loved their time here with the Ethical Society of St. Louis. They belong to several Society groups and have found members to be very warm and welcoming.

**Secretary/Trustee: Katie Borders.** Katie has been a member of the Society for five years. She and her family originally joined to give her young sons a strong ethical education, but having grown up in the Lutheran church, Katie found that she enjoyed being a member of a congregation of like-minded people. She’s been involved in numerous ways—on the Trivia Night Team, the A/V Team, and as secretary of the SEEK Council.

Katie is a stay-at-home mom, writer, and activist, holding a leadership role in the Missouri chapter of Moms Demand Action for Gun Sense in America since December 2016. She recently had her first short story published in an online literary magazine. She enjoys reading, board games, podcasts, musicals, and many other aspects of being human. She lives in Webster Groves with her husband, Heath, and their two sons, Ben and Samuel.

The Nominating Committee is also proud to recommend a strong candidate to serve out the remaining two years for Kayla Vaughan, who has stepped down from Board service.

**Nathan Schrenk.** Nathan and his spouse, Kathy, have been married for 21 years and have three children, Arthur (14), Noah (12), and Helen (7). As a child, Nathan lived in the St. Louis area, but he spent most of his adult life in the San Francisco Bay area, working as a software developer. Kathy and Nathan moved from California to Kirkwood in 2013, found the Ethical Society in 2015, and joined as members in 2016. Nathan enjoys reading (sci-fi, history, misc.), podcasts, maker culture, computers and online culture, occasional video games, CrossFit, and spending time with family.

**View the Current Art Exhibit Online**

The photography exhibit by Jim Rhodes remains up at the Society, and while the building is closed, you can enjoy it from the comfort of your home using this link: [https://www.dropbox.com/sh/watherovduozejc3/](https://www.dropbox.com/sh/watherovduozejc3/).
Board Notes

Annual Membership Meeting
Like many things these days, our upcoming Annual Membership Meeting will look a bit different. This year, we will gather together online via Zoom instead of in person. Unfortunately, this means we will miss sharing our tasty dessert potluck. But if you plan accordingly, you can have your own sweet treat at home during the meeting.

The meeting date and time is still Thursday, May 14 from 7 to 9 p.m. We will review the past year, plan for the upcoming year, and vote on our Board nominees, budget, and bylaws changes. We are required to have at least 10% of our membership present, so please plan on joining us for this important gathering! I promise to do my best to make it both informative and enjoyable.

In preparation for the meeting, I encourage you to check out the annual report ahead of time. We have changed the format of this as well to make it much shorter and more accessible. Voting will also take place electronically this year. The same online ballot may be used to vote at the meeting or as an absentee ballot. If you prefer to mail in your ballot, a pdf version is also available for download. You can download, review, and access the annual report and ballot at https://ethicalstl.org/annualmeeting.

If you have any questions about the Annual Membership Meeting, please let me know. I look forward to seeing you there!

—Amanda Verbeck, Board President

American Ethical Union Update

The AEU has focused its efforts on supporting member Ethical Societies nationwide during the pandemic. Of particular relevance to ESSL members are its Community webpage and Virtual SEEK program. Available at aeu.org/ethical-community/, the Community page features a calendar of online events hosted by various Ethical Societies in which all individuals are invited to participate, and a forum where individuals can post questions and share resources. Virtual SEEK is an inter-Society ethical education program that features two-week "challenges" based around Ethical Culture themes and culminates in a one-hour virtual meeting via Zoom. You can learn more about Virtual SEEK by visiting the ESSL SEEK Facebook page (https://www.facebook.com/EthicalSocietyStLouisSEEK/) or emailing the Ethical Education Listserv (ethical-education-list@aeu.org). In addition, the AEU is providing resources to support its member Societies on an organizational level. To learn more about these efforts, check out regular updates from Executive Director Bart Worden at aeu.org/category/this-week/ or contact ESSL member and AEU Board Secretary Casey Gardonio-Foot (cgardonio-foot@aeu.org).

“We Thinks Good” in May and June—Happiness and Science

Join host Michelle Ciurria and special guests for presentations and discussions on a variety of philosophical topics. The workshop is designed for newcomers, so don’t be shy!

May’s theme is Happiness. Meetings in May are on the 1st, 3rd, and 5th Saturday at 3 p.m.


May 16, Philosophy of happiness; Jason Chen, clinical bioethics fellow at Ohio State University Wexner Medical Center. Jason received his PhD in philosophy from Saint Louis University in 2019 and is the founder of the "We Thinks Good" group.

May 30, Philosophy of happiness; Michelle Ciurria, philosophy professor at UMSL and author of "An Intersectional Feminist Theory of Moral Responsibility."

June’s theme is Science. Meetings in June are on the 2nd and 4th Saturdays at 3 p.m.

June 13, Research on the philosophy of cognitive science; Gualtiero Piccinini, curator’s distinguished professor at UMSL and the author of “Physical Computation: A Mechanistic Account.”

June 27, Philosophy of science; Rich Feldenberg, pediatric surgeon and associate professor in the Department of Pediatrics, Division of Nephrology, at SLU School of Medicine. Rich has published several popular science articles in online magazines and founded the Science Enthusiasts’ Club at the Ethical Society.

TWA on Hiatus Beginning May 11

The Tuesday Women’s Association will have its last spring meeting on May 5 at 10 a.m., when it will hold its Annual Business Meeting, on Zoom, before adjourning for the summer. We look forward to seeing everyone again in person, and we will try to move as many of the deferred programs as we can into our next program year.

Science Fiction Book Club on Zoom in May

Our Science Fiction Book Club meets 4th Mondays, 7-8:30 p.m. All are welcome, even if you have not finished the book.

Our next discussion will be Monday, May 25, at 7 p.m. on Zoom. The book is the novella And Shall Machines Surrender by Benjanun Sriduangkaew. Keep up with the club through the Ethical Society Science Fiction Book Club on Facebook.
Virtual Travel Club in May on Zoom—Patagonia and Antarctica

Be sure your calendar is marked for the Virtual Travel Club’s “virtual” meeting on **Friday, May 8, at 7 p.m.** Using Zoom, Matthew Hile will share his recent trip to Patagonia and Antarctica. Feel free to enjoy a snack and your favorite beverage in the comfort of your own home while you join us via technology. And also feel free to invite friends from all over to join us via Zoom.

Great Books on Zoom in May

The Great Books Reading and Discussion Group will meet online using Zoom for its next session on **Wednesday, May 13 at 7:30 p.m.** (Usual date has been moved because of the Society’s Annual Meeting.) The group will discuss the play “The Enemy of the People” by Henrik Ibsen. 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](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.

Member News

Condolences to the family, friends, and community of **Eve Ellis**, who died peacefully at home surrounded by family on March 29. Eve had been an active member of the TWA and was known for her sweet and thoughtful nature. An obituary with details of Eve’s life is available at [https://www.schrader.com/obituary/evelyn-ellis](https://www.schrader.com/obituary/evelyn-ellis). Memorial plans will be shared as they become available.

Condolences to the family, friends, and community of **David H. Kaplan**, who died on April 18 at the age of 96. David joined the Ethical Society in 1978 and was an outspoken atheist from a secular Jewish family. After serving in World War II, he studied aeronautical engineering and spent his career as a helicopter designer, pilot, and aviation writer; he designed the first patented quadrotor helicopter. He recently moved to Massachusetts to be closer to family. There will be a memorial service at the Ethical Society at a later date.

If you would like to remember an Ethical Society member, family member, or friend who has died, on Sunday, May 24, we will have our annual Remembrance Sunday Platform online. Please contact Kate Lovelady if you would like to share a memory during the Platform.

Men’s Forum on Zoom

The Men’s Forum is experimenting with Zoom on a personal account (at least for now). If you’d like to join the discussions, please email Kent Forrest at mcfriend-ly@gmail.com. The schedule is as follows:

- **Tuesdays, 4-4:40 p.m., Discussion of news article, letter, or current event**
- **Fridays, 4-4:40 p.m., Open discussion with an open bar : )**

We need YOU! (Really!)

It’s a crazy year. The Pledge Campaign for 2020-21 should be over by now. Is it the distancing or the unpredictability of the future? Maybe you are at home trying to wait it out. Here at the Ethical Society, it seems that some people’s pledge forms have been “lost in the mail”; or maybe the dog ate it. If that pesky envelope is still down at the bottom of your “to do” list, we’d love to hear from you. If you need to postpone your commitments for now, just let the office know. (You aren’t alone.) Just know that we DO need you! After the office reopens call (314) 991-0955 x214 and talk to Nancy Jelinek about your plans. You may also email her anytime at njelinek@ethicalstl.org. Thank you!

Faltr by Bill McKibben Chosen as Ethical Society One Book for 2020

The One Book Project group has selected Bill McKibben’s book *Faltr* to recommend to the Ethical Society membership to read over this summer. *Faltr* addresses climate change as well as other existential and humanist issues.

The Society has arranged for Left Bank Books to make copies of *Faltr* available at a discount to our members. (Left Bank is offering curbside pickup.) Get a copy and enjoy a serious author delving into the crucial topics of our age.
Safe Cycling with the Ethicyclists—Trying Again for May

Postponed from April: Cycling lends itself to healthy social distancing of at least six feet; the Ethicyclists will strictly adhere to these guidelines while riding and during breaks. However, please note that safety rules may be updated and the ride rescheduled. Saturday, May 30, the Ethicyclists will meet at 8342 Delcrest Dr. in U City at 9:15 a.m. and leave promptly at 9:30 a.m. The ride will pass through downtown Clayton to Wydown Blvd. and into Forest Park. We’ll cycle around the CWE a bit before coming back into the park and finishing the 6-mile loop. After leaving the park, our group will take a little known path through Washington U. and over the Forest Park Parkway to the U City Loop. We’ll wind through Ames Place and Kingsbury Blvd. and see some past and present homes of Ethical Society members. The ride is about 18 miles with roughly an hour and 45 minutes of riding time. Bring water, sunscreen, sunglasses, spare tube, and a helmet. For more information, contact Joe Corrigan (314-753-5538; japglecorr@att.net). To join the Ethicyclists email list, contact David Brown at david@thebrowngreens.com.

Food Insecurity, Operation Critical for Operation Food Search

We’ve made a tremendous impact in our community in the past few years with our partnership with Operation Food Search (OFS)—3,965 total pounds of food contributed since August 2017! That’s the weight of an average American vehicle! Now we are all facing new challenges. How do we keep helping? With our building temporarily closed, our blue barrel is sitting empty. Here are five ways to keep the positive impact in our community going:

1. DONATE MONEY through Gift-a-Meal. Due to a matching incentive, right now every dollar you give provides $20 dollars in food and services: https://interland3.donorperfect.net/weblink.aspx?name=ofsearch&id=154.

2. ROUND UP ON PURCHASES through the Change Maker app, which allows you to donate your change on any purchase, just like rounding up at the register. You control the limit to as little as $5 per month.

When $5 feeds someone for five days, a few cents can change a life.

DONATE FOOD: OFS welcomes food donations at its warehouse. Non-perishable food and household supplies can be dropped off at OFS at 1644 Lotsie Blvd., Overland, MO 63132, M-F 8:30 a.m.-6 p.m. See list of Most-Needed Items and Not-Accepted Items. Please do not donate food if you have been near anyone who has been sick in the last two weeks, or if anyone in your household has travelled outside our region in the past three weeks. OFS encourages social-distancing when visiting the warehouse, remaining six feet away from others. Food can be placed in the blue bins inside the OFS vestibule.

4. VOLUNTEER as an OFS Ambassador. That could mean showing a friend how to download the Change Maker app or enlist kids at home in writing or drawing Hope Notes for OFS to post on social media. Just take a photo of their inspiring messages or art, and OFS will share them so that others know there are people who care. Additional volunteer needs may evolve, so please contact OFS if you would like to be added to the list of those standing by to help

5. SHARE: OFS’s Emergency Response 2020 page has the most current information about its work, how to get help, and how to give help. Follow OFS on social media and share posts. You never know who might see them and be inspired to get involved.

Facebook: Operation Food Search
Insta-gram: opfoodsearch
Twitter: opfoodsearch

—Gayle Wilson Rose

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The submission deadline for the Connection is always the 15th of the preceding month. Email items to klavelady@ethicalstl.org.