



The 93rd Assembly
of the
American Ethical Union

Hosted by the Ethical Society of Austin
at the
Wyndham Garden Hotel
3401 South Interstate 35
Austin, Texas

Thursday, April 17 - Sunday, April 20, 2008

Where We Live . . .
*An exploration of issues and ideas that
affect where and how we live.*



The 93rd Assembly of the American Ethical Union

Hosted by the Ethical Society of Austin

April 17 - 20, 2008

Assembly Meetings

Tuesday, April 15 Assembly Committee

Tuesday - Thursday,
April 15 - 17 National Leaders' Council

Wednesday, April 16 Volunteers

Thursday, April 17
& Saturday, April 19 Presidents' Council

Thursday, April 17
& Sunday 20 AEU Board Of Directors

Thursday,
April 17 National Service Conference

PROGRAM

Thursday, April 17

8:00 am - 9:30 pm - Registration and Concierge for assistance with tours and activities; Exhibit Room open; Committee meetings.

8:00 am - 4:00 pm - AEU Board of Directors meeting - open to all

1:00 - 4:00 pm - Presidents' Council meeting

6:30 - 9:00 pm - Opening reception

8:00 - 9:00 pm - Keynote - Michael Estes: "Atheists, Freethinkers and the Civil Rights Movement 1901-1950." Contrary to the later, more well-known incarnation of the movement, which had strong ties to the black church, many atheists, freethinkers and religious skeptics were prominent in this earlier period. Mr. Estes has been involved in the Free Thought Community for nearly 20 years, is currently a member of the Atheist Coalition of San Diego. Finishing a sabbatical from his career as a Quality Assurance Software Engineer, he studied the intersection of Free Thought, Civil Rights and Church and State separation.

9:15 - 11:00 pm - National Service Conference meeting

Friday, April 18

8:00 - 9:00 am
Colloquy/meditation

8:00 - 6:00 pm
Registration and Concierge for assistance with tours and activities; Exhibit Room open.

9:15 - 11:45 am
AEU Business Meeting.

12:15 - 2:15 pm
National Service Conference Luncheon, "Challenges of Climate Change" with Gerald R. North, Distinguished Professor of Meteorology and Oceanography and holds the Harold J. Haynes Endowed Chair in Geosciences, Texas A&M University, College Station, Texas.

HOTEL INFORMATION & REGISTRATION

WYNDHAM GARDEN HOTEL
3401 South Interstate 35
Austin, Texas

Our special hotel rate is \$97 per night
(before tax) for 1-4 occupancy;
Pool side Suites are \$139 per night.

To make hotel reservations:

PHONE: 1-800-wyndham (1-800-996-3426)

Reservations must be made by March 20, 2008.

Any reservations received after this date will
be honored on a space available basis.

Our special hotel rate will be available for 3 days before and 3 days after the conference.

Please state that you are attending the AEU
Assembly. Also be sure to sign up for "Wyndham
By Request" so you will receive free internet and a
free welcome beverage of your choice.

2:30 - 4:00 pm — Workshops

* **Working Session: AEU Business Meeting** (discussion of issues offered for voting / approval).

* **What Every Member Should Know about Ethical Culture Philosophy**, People join Ethical Societies for a variety of reasons. What do they learn about Ethical Culture philosophy itself? Join Jone Johnson Lewis, Randall Best and Hugh Taft-Morales in a panel discussion about the philosophy of Ethical Culture, which is based on the intrinsic worth and goodness of the individual, the universal character of moral law and the imperative to apply ethical principles to modern society, and which transcends denominational boundaries, rejects theological distinctions and unifies its members through their ethical deeds.

* **Society Membership Growth & Development**, with Tom Hoepfner & Hank Gassner of the AEU Membership Committee, and others. How to improve society membership growth programs, attract & welcome visitors, conduct newcomer orientation and involvement programs, and incorporate new and established members into society activities.

* **Biocentric Ethics**, with Curt Collier. Unlike Classical ethics, biocentric ethics focuses on attitudes and character rather than moral rules, and unlike traditional ethics, it is nonhierarchical and much more inclusive of the natural world. Join a discussion of biocentric ethics and work to rethink the human-nature relationship.

4:30 - 6:00 pm — Workshops

* **Ethical Mindfulness**, with Randal Blain. A class in Ethical Mindfulness, an adaptation of the meditation practices of Thich Nhat Hanh, in the light of Ethical Culture philosophy and ideals.

* **Ethical Decision Making Throughout a Lifetime**, with Future of Ethical Societies member Max Romano and his friends. Many of us make decisions based on our judgment of what is 'ethically correct' at any given time, but our ethical reasoning changes over the years as we learn new things and sometimes forget old things. Join in an inter-generational structured discussion of the ways in which each of us changes our 'ethical perspective' throughout our lives and how people can work together across generational gaps to come to ethical agreement.

* **Society Operations: A Nuts and Bolts Approach**, with Scott Walton, Harry Strickholm, and others. A workshop on financial management and fiduciary responsibility, including developing policies that protect your Society's fiscal health.

* **Communication Skills in Ethical Society Life**, with Jone Johnson Lewis, Leader of Northern Virginia Society, and others. A workshop in which participants will be introduced to a simple process that can help them to communicate more deeply, effectively, and compassionately, based on the work in Nonviolent Communication (aka Compassionate Communication) of Dr. Marshall Rosenberg. We'll also explore ways that the process can be used to help an Ethical Society grow and thrive: ethical action, caring and community-building within the Society, individual development, parenting and couples communication workshops, and outreach classes that help bring our values to the wider community.

6:30 - 7:30 pm

Reception - Meet the AEU Director, Staff, and Officer Candidates

7:30 - 10:30 pm

Hill Country Supper and Dancing

Saturday, April 19

8:00 - 9:00 am

Colloquy/meditation

8:00 am - 7:00 pm

Registration and Concierge for assistance with tours and activities; Exhibit Room open

10:15 - 11:30 am

Platform - Kate Lovelady and Randall Best.

12:00 - 1:30 pm

AEU Luncheon, honoring and recognizing supporters of Ethical Culture

2:00 - 3:30 pm - Workshops

* **Working Session: AEU Business Meeting** (discussion of issues offered for voting / approval).

* **Out of the Box: Brainstorming to Reinvigorate Ethical Culture**, presented by Hugh Taft-Morales. The workshop will present a broad range of ideas to reinvigorate Ethical Culture gathered from throughout the movement – addressing our philosophy, governance and communication process. Workshop participants will then brainstorm further ideas in small group dialogue and whole group sharing, which will be shared with AEU leadership.

* **Creating Congregations of Generous People**, with Michael Durall. This is not a money talk, but rather a program on how to create enduring Societies that will stand the test of time. This seminar renders a new look at what membership means in our Societies, suggests ways to increase membership in your Society, examines why Societies should create generous people and pass this legacy on to our children and grandchildren, and how to expand service and outreach to the wider community.

* **Ethical Culture Officiant Continuing Education** with Tom Hoepfner, Joanne Hoepfner and others. Current Ethical Culture Officiants can use this workshop as a forum for exchange of practical information and advice about performing ceremonies and for discussion of solutions to difficult situations.

4:00 - 5:30 pm - Workshops

* **Religious Education: The Difference Between a Philosophy Group and an Ethical Society**, presented by the AEU RE committee. Ethical Societies provide community through which individuals pursue ethical lives together. Opening the pursuit of ethics to families makes the discussion of ethics more meaningful. Ethical communities include naming ceremonies, coming of age ceremonies, weddings, memorial services, intergenerational activities, and religious education for all ages. Only by welcoming families can we ensure the survival and growth of ethical societies.

* **An Ethical Humanist Religious Approach to Living**, with Richard Kiniry. Ethical Culture has through the years been a Movement that emphasizes concern for social, political and cultural issues. While personal living has also been addressed through those years, this workshop will attempt to integrate the personal and social into one understanding of life. It will present one Leader's perception of an Ethical Humanist religious world view and offer opportunities for participants to question and shape their own world view.

* **Society Membership Growth & Development** with Tom Hoepfner and Hank Gassner of the AEU Membership Committee, and others. A workshop on how to improve society membership growth programs, attract & welcome visitors, conduct newcomer orientation and involvement programs, and incorporate new members into society activities. (repeated)

* **Ethics in Pop Culture - the Ethics of Harry Potter** with Amy Anderson of Northern Virginia, L Miller of NYSEC, & J Scates of Austin. There are many lessons about character, ethics and values in the Harry Potter stories. Join us for readings, reflections and discussion of the events and choices that shape and reveal values and character in the Potter stories.

* **Presidents' Council**, current presidents (vice presidents & president-elects) meet to continue sharing the information and expertise held within our collective membership and creating best practices for our Ethical Societies.

6:30 - 10:00 pm

Reception and Elliott Black Dinner and Award Ceremony - The Elliott Black Award was established in 1971 to honor two long-term and highly esteemed Leaders of the New York Society for Ethical Culture, the late John Lovejoy Elliott and Algernon D. Black. It is given by the American Ethical Union as a recognition and tribute to an individual or organization in the larger community who has made a significant contribution to society at personal risk and hardship.

Sunday, April 20

8:00 - 9:00 am

Colloquy and meditation

8:00 am - 6:00 pm

Registration and Concierge for assistance with tours and activities; Exhibit Room open.

9:15 - 11:45 am

AEU Business Meeting.

12:00 - 1:30 pm

Liberation Festival Luncheon (a Humanist Seder) and Closing Ceremonies

2:00 - 5:00 pm

AEU Board of Directors meeting -- open to all.

If you are unable to attend the AEU Assembly this year in Austin, Texas you may want to contribute so that someone else might attend. To do so please send a check marked "Assembly Contribution" to the AEU office at 2 West 64th Street, Suite 406, New York, NY 10023-7183

This is the only national meeting held within Ethical Culture every year. Your support would be greatly valued.

REGISTRATION FORM - PLEASE PRINT

Please complete and return by March 31, 2008 along with your payment, to the American Ethical Union, 2 West 64th Street, Suite 406, New York, NY 10023-7183. **Please keep a copy of this registration form for your records.**

NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

PHONE: (day) _____ (email) _____

HOME SOCIETY: _____

CHILDREN IN ATTENDANCE: (1) _____ (2) _____ (3) _____

I AM NOT ABLE TO ATTEND BUT WOULD LIKE TO MAKE A CONTRIBUTION TO THE ASSEMBLY IN THE AMOUNT OF \$ _____

PARTICIPANT LIST

____ Please list my name, address, phone, email, Society name in the Assembly Participant List.

____ I wish to be listed by Name and Society only. ____ No, I do not wish to be listed.

WORKSHOPS

Please select the workshops and activities that you wish to attend. If this registration form is being used for you & your spouse/partner, please check 1 box for each .

Friday, April 18th

9:15 - 11:45 am

AEU Business Meeting

12:15 - 2:15 pm

National Service Conference Luncheon

2:30 - 4:00 pm

- Working Session: AEU Business Meeting
 What Every Member Should Know about Ethical Culture
 Philosophy
 Society Membership Growth & Development
 Biocentric Ethics

4:30 - 6:00 pm

- Ethical Mindfulness
 Ethical Decision Making Throughout a Lifetime
 Society Operations: A Nuts and Bolts Approach
 Communication Skills in Ethical Society Life

6:30 - 7:30 pm

Reception - Meet the Candidates

7:30 - 10:30 pm

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12:00 - 1:30 pm

AEU Luncheon

2:00 - 3:30 pm

- Working Session - AEU Business Meeting
 Out of the Box: Brainstorming to Reinvigorate EC
 Michael Durall - "Creating Congregations of Generous People"
 Ethical Culture Officiant Continuing Education

4:00 - 5:30 pm

- Religious Education
 An Ethical Humanist Religious Approach to Living
 Society Membership Growth & Development (repeated)
 Ethics in Pop Culture - the Ethics of Harry Potter

6:30 - 10:00 pm

- Reception and Award Ceremony
 Elliott Black Dinner

Sunday, April 20th

9:15 - 11:45 am

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12:00 - 1:30 pm

Liberation Festival Luncheon & Closing Ceremonies

2:00 - 5:00 pm

AEU Board of Directors Meeting (open to all)

Program Packages (Accommodations Not Included)			
	<u>Prior to 3/20</u>	<u>After</u>	<u>Total</u>
Complete Package (with meals)	\$495.00	\$525.00	_____
FES/YES Complete (with meals)	\$300.00	\$325.00	_____
Essential Package (without meals)	\$345.00	\$365.00	_____
FES/YES Essential (without meals)	\$75.00	\$100.00	_____
<u>Day Rates</u>			
Friday (meals & workshops)	\$200.00	\$225.00	_____
Saturday (meals & workshops)	\$200.00	\$225.00	_____
*Complete Package includes your registration, admittance to all workshops, Thurs reception, Fri, Sat & Sun lunches, Fri & Sat dinners.			
*Essential Package includes your registration, admittance to all workshops & receptions but does not include meals.			
	___Vegan	___Vegetarian	
Food Allergies	_____		
Sunday (meals & workshops)	\$100.00	\$110.00	_____
TOTAL			\$ _____

ASSEMBLY 2008 PAYMENT FORM

I enclose my check payable to the American Ethical Union in the amount of \$ _____

Please charge my credit card \$ _____

Credit card (**circle one**): VISA / MasterCard / Discover / Diners Club / American Express

Credit Card Number: _____

Expiration: _____ (mm/yy)

Card Security Code (CSC): _____

(The charge cannot be processed without this code. On most cards, the CSC is three digits long and printed on the back of the card, usually in the signature field. An AMEX CSC is the four digits on the front of the card, above the account #.)

Name on Card: _____

Billing address including Zip Code: _____

Your phone number: _____

Cardholder's Signature: _____

(All information must be provided if you are using a credit card).

NOTES: (special needs/requests) _____

Excursions

The city of Austin has many exciting activities and sites that may be of interest to you during your leisure time at the Assembly. The Wyndham Garden Hotel's Concierge and Ethical Society of Austin members will be on hand to assist you with arranging bus, carriage, electric bike, amphibious vehicle and walking tours of Austin, Congress Bridge bat watching, the Ladybird Johnson Wildflower Center, Zilker Botanical Garden, the State Capitol and the University of Texas to name a few. Tours, short trips and activities will be available beginning on Tuesday, April 15 and ending on Saturday, April 19.

Administrator: Please contact Law'nence ("L") Miller / Donna Pang at the American Ethical Union. Tel: 212-873-6500; Fax: 212-362-0850 if you have questions about registration or the program.

Accommodations: Wyndham Garden Hotel, 3401 South Interstate 35, Austin, Texas. Our special hotel rate is \$97 per night (before tax) for 1-4 occupancy. Pool side Suites are \$139 per night. To reserve a room please call: 1-800-wyndham (1-800-996-3426) prior to March 20, 2008; please be sure to mention that you are attending the AEU Assembly and to sign up for Wyndham By Request, so you will receive free internet and a free welcome beverage of your choice. Our special group rate is only available by calling 1-800-996-3426. Any reservations received after March 20th will be honored on a space available basis at the most available rate. Rates can NOT be changed.

Parking: Available at the hotel for guests at no charge.

Flights: Austin is served by the following airlines: Southwest, Jet Blue, Delta, Frontier, Northwest, American, Continental, US Air & United. **The Wyndham Garden Hotel offers complimentary airport shuttle.**

The Train: Amtrak offers 10% off for Assembly participants. Our fare code is: **X21Q-922**. Contact Amtrak at (800) 872-7245 to get these fares.

Exhibits: Tables will be \$40 each; Half Tables will be \$25. Flyers to be included in registrants' packets will cost \$30 per flyer. Please contact the AEU for further information and arrangements before 4/1/08.

Refund Policy: A 25% administrative fee will be charged for cancellations before March 20, 2008. After that date, the cancellation fee will be 50% on all full and partial packages (except documented medical emergencies).

The program is subject to change without notice.

Questions... Special Needs... If you have any special needs, please notify the AEU office as soon as possible.

Participant List: There will be an Assembly participant list, but participants must give permission to be listed; so be sure to do so on the registration form.

Program meals include: Thursday evening reception; Friday, Saturday and Sunday luncheons; Friday supper & Saturday Elliott-Black banquet. All meals will include vegan & vegetarian options.



**The American Ethical Union
2 West 64th Street
New York, NY 10023**