

# E T H I C A L O U T L O O K

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**Sunday Morning  
Platform Meetings  
11:15 AM  
Ceremonial Hall**

**December 2**

**Tax and Social Justice: If They  
Are Related How Best Can  
We Act?**

*Krishen Mehta*

Dr. Anne Klaeysen Presides

**December 9**

**Death, Grief, and Love**

*Dr. Joseph Chuman, Leader*

Monica Weiss Presides

**December 16**

**Reflections on Trying to Live  
Ethically in a Globalized  
World**

*Heather Grady, Vice President*

Meg Chapman Presides

**December 23**

**The Anti-Consumerist WinterFest**

*Curt Collier, Leader*

Andra Miller Presides

**December 30**

**Remembrance Sunday**

*Dr. Anne Klaeysen, Leader*

## December Happenings

We all know it's important to stay fit and strong! Come on **Sunday, December 16, 1:30 pm**, when **Life with Health** presents Rob Hoffman, a geriatric care manager for the past 16 years, who will describe to us how we can get stronger and stay stronger. He'll talk about the benefits of weight lifting, Tai Chi, Chi Gong, Yoga, stretching, breathing using our diaphragm, and other activities to help us get in shape—and stay there! (*See page 5.*)

Come on **Monday, December 31**, to NYSEC's **New Year's Eve Party**, hosted by the **Social Service Board**. The festivities will begin at **8:30 pm** with a "Salute to the Platters" concert. We'll have finger food, an open bar, dancing, and a DJ; we'll watch the Central Park fireworks from our rooftop, toast the new year with champagne, and have a chance to win prizes. (*For more details, see page 11.*)

## President's Notes

*Andra Miller*



November 8-12 was a big, long "Ethical" weekend, what with the session of "Compassionate Communication" on Thursday; "Time Stands Still," by our Ethics and the Theater group on Friday; the "Taste of the States" potluck on Saturday; the presentation of our Ethical Humanist Award to Irshad Manji on Sunday; and the Advocacy Forum discussion with Massimo Pigliucci and Dr. Joseph Chuman on Monday. I hope you managed to get to one or more of all those amazing events. And my thanks to everyone involved in planning and producing them. I'm very proud of our Society.

*(Continued on page 2)*

## From the Leader's Desk

*Dr. Anne Klaeysen*



### Lessons from Sandy

The superstorm that rocked our world last month brought out the best and the worst in humanity. Even as volunteers from near and far prepared to make their way to ravaged areas in New York and New Jersey, a Staten Island mother of two young sons lost her grip on them as water pounded their car and swept them away from her. No one behind the doors on which she knocked would help her look for them or let her call 911. She spent that storm-tossed night on the front porch of an empty house, and the next day rescuers found her children's bodies.

What lessons have we learned? And, if we have learned anything, will we actually change our behavior?

*(Continued on page 3)*

**Save the Date!!**

**New Year's Eve Party  
Monday, December 31**

*(See page 11 for details)*

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**President's Notes**

*(Continued from page 1)*

Another important event (amongst those listed on the previous page and the others throughout the month) was the NYSEC Board meeting on the 4<sup>th</sup>. Your Trustees spent time deeply involved in thinking about the most important aspects of our mission and what we should be setting as our goals for the next several years. Here's a short report on that brainstorming:

First, we thought about the aspects of our Society and our mission that are *indispensible*. We listed five: (1) we cultivate our own personal ethics, (2) we foster and sustain the worth and dignity of all beings and welcome those of different backgrounds, (3) we support the moral growth of children, (4) we do outreach by working with other organizations (such as the work the Society and our Social Service Board [the SSB] did for the Juvenile Justice events), and (5) we are able to educate ourselves and the public while finding the ethical responses to the issues of the day.

With these in mind, we identified the programs we feel are most effective. One is our religious service each Sunday, which leaves out theistic references and encourages emotional/ethical growth. Another is the SSB, our action arm, which runs numerous programs for the disadvantaged. We

also recognize the importance of our Society's many valuable discussion and information programs.

That brings us to what is missing: what should we add into the mix, what should we focus on in the coming years? We are already adding the SSB program of televisiting—helping families be together when a parent is away in a hospital or prison. And we continue to encourage the development by Marlene Williamson of the Creative Arts Success Academy, a school for youth who are released from jail—teens who are not welcome back in the regular public school system. We continue to support the alliance against hydrofracking—to guard our water supply and protect our state's countryside—and our Environmental Stewardship Committee is active in helping us all take part in protecting the earth and its ecosystems. In the works is a plan to offer program space to alumni organizations in the city, capitalizing on the great program done last September by the Stanford New York Alumni with Mayors Cory Booker of Newark, NJ, and Julian Castro of San Antonio, TX.

Among our new ideas: we should concentrate on our criminal justice reform advocacy and build on the juvenile justice work we've already done. To start with, we propose working with such organizations as the Police Reform Organizing Project of

the Urban Justice Center to find more effective ways for the police to work in their assigned communities, ways that don't include arrest quota systems with discriminatory and demoralizing stop-and-frisk actions.

Also, we are concerned about the ethical education of the next generations. There is a lack of attendance in many, if not most, Sunday Schools in the nation, yet the moral education of our youth is imperative (along with their education in schools) if we want to have a nation that remains "free." The Leaders are working with educators to look into this issue, with the idea that Ethical Culture can help lead the way to developing a well-grounded citizenry of the future.

We'll ask you to help in these projects, and will welcome your ideas and concerns as we develop our plans and strategies. Please feel free to talk with any of the Trustees (listed at the top of page 2) about your views.

And, don't forget to get your tickets to SSB's New Year's Eve Concert and Party; it will be great! (See page 11 for details). I hope to see you there.

## Leader's Desk

(Continued from page 1)

Human nature is unlikely to change. Those who rush to the scene of a disaster will continue to do so; those who cower behind closed doors will stay hidden. And those who lose lives and property will always suffer. How can we, as an intentionally ethical community, make a difference? Here are three areas that deserve our attention:

### Global climate change

The debate in the scientific community is not over whether humans have changed the climate, but, rather, the impact this change has had and what measures can be taken to stop it. Three years ago, the NYC Panel on

Climate Change made a prediction in its report: "In the coming decades, our coastal city will most likely face more rapidly rising sea levels and warmer temperatures, as well as potentially more droughts and floods, which will all have impacts on New York City's critical infrastructure." While we look to other cities like Venice, London, Rotterdam, and Tokyo, where there are sea walls, levees, and wetlands, flood plains, and floating city blocks, we realize that we are far behind—and paying dearly for it.

Sandy may well be a modest preview of dangers yet to come, especially if we continue to burn fuels that pollute the air with heat-trapping gases. The journal *Nature Climate Change* suggested that no matter how quickly we cut this pollution, we are unlikely to keep the seas from climbing less than five feet. To see the possible impact on your home, visit *SurgingSeas.org*, which posts maps and analyses for every low-lying coastal community in the contiguous United States.

It is incumbent upon us to learn the facts, to pull others out of their denial, and to promote every effort to reduce our dependence on fossil fuels and use clean energy.

### Occupy Sandy

"Just after [political writer] Thomas Frank declared Occupy [Wall Street] dead, killed by its own fascination with process and language, I walked into St. Jacobi Church in Sunset Park Friday and saw so many familiar faces, not sitting around debating about the revolution, but doing hard, necessary, practical work to feed and clothe and support swathes of the city reeling from the superstorm." —*Sarah Jaffe*

The National Guard, Red Cross, and FEMA (Federal Emergency Management Agency) raced to storm-ravaged areas and found veterans of the Occupy

movement already there, coordinating the delivery of basic necessities and filling a void where these establishment first-responders fell short. Volunteers immediately developed relationships with local neighborhood organizations and got to work. Here's what you can do to support their ongoing efforts: Donate supplies that people really need through Occupy Sandy's "Wedding Registries" at <http://interoccupy.net/occupysandy/wedding-registries/> where coordinators on the ground post what they need, and you buy the items on Amazon to have them shipped to the various locations.

### Politics

Asked on "Fox News" whether then presidential candidate Mr. Romney might tour damage of his state, Governor Chris Christie was dismissive: "I have no idea, nor am I the least bit concerned or interested. I have a job to do in New Jersey that is much bigger than presidential politics. If you think right now I give a damn about presidential politics, then you don't know me."

Democracy requires an engaged citizenry; it's not enough to vote in elections. According to Michael Kimmelman ("Vetoing Business as Usual After the Storm," *NY Times*, 11/19/12), the problem we now face "is not technological or, from a long-term cost-benefit perspective, financial. Rather it is the existential challenge to the messy democracy we've devised."

For example, over the years, authorities in New York and New Jersey have allowed heavy development of at-risk coastal areas, and federal flood insurance is a way that taxpayers subsidize building and rebuilding in places destined for future storms. Making changes that will undoubtedly upend lives and restructure communities means not only untangling miles of red tape, but also finding new ways of living together.

Together, as an ethical community, we can learn more, advocate for necessary changes and engage our neighbors in creating a society that meets the needs of everyone

## Sunday Morning Platform Meetings 11:15 AM

### **Dec. 2—Tax and Social Justice: If They Are Related How Best Can We Act?**

*Krishen Mehta*

What can be done to ensure that our financial institutions and multinational companies are not above the law? Why do these groups use tax havens so extensively, and is such use in the public interest? Is our legislative structure adapted to the interests or needs of these groups? To what extent are the developed nations, the US included, part of a system that deprives both rich and poor nations of much-needed tax revenues? If tax and social justice are related, can some remedial steps be taken? These challenges will be addressed. Ceremonial Hall.

Krishen Mehta is co-chairman of the Advisory Board of Global Financial Integrity at the Center for International Policy in Washington DC. He is on the Asia Advisory Council of Human Rights Watch, and on the Board of Aspen Institute's Business and Society Program. Krishen has been interviewed on issues of tax justice by the Carnegie Council for Ethics in International Affairs, and has published in various newspapers and journals.

He is currently an adjunct professor at American University, and is a regular speaker at the GMAP program of the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy at Tufts University.

The shared charity is the Mayor's Fund to Advance New York City.

### **Dec. 9—Death, Grief, and Love**

*Dr. Joseph Chuman, Leader*

With the election season past, I want to turn my attention to an issue of concern to the personal lives of all of us. We have all lost to death beloved relatives and friends. We have also suffered the pain of the loss of fellow members of the Ethical Culture Society, some of whom we may have known for years. All religions take it upon themselves to respond to death. Ethical Culture, though it has no prescribed way with regard to mourning, nevertheless puts forward values that can enable us to cope more effectively at the death of loved ones. I will explore some of these values and approaches toward death and grief. Ceremonial Hall.

The shared charity is the Mayor's Fund to Advance New York City.

### **Dec. 16—Reflections on Trying to Live Ethically in a Globalized World**

*Heather Grady, NYSEC Vice President*

I spent about 20 years of my life studying and working in developing countries, in different religious and political contexts. I will share some personal and professional reflections and questions about what constitutes ethical action, given how increasingly interconnected and volatile our world is. Ceremonial Hall.

Heather Grady is Vice President for Foundation Initiatives at the Rockefeller Foundation. She oversees the Foundation's grant making through initiatives on issues ranging from climate change, agriculture, and health to transportation, impact investing, and employment, and through additional programmatic areas including program-related investments, and philanthropic sector activities.

Ms. Grady was Managing Director of Realizing Rights: the Ethical Globalization Initiative, founded by former Irish President Mary Robinson. Throughout her career Ms. Grady managed international development and humanitarian programs with Oxfam Great Britain and other global organizations, living and working in a diverse range of settings, including Viet Nam, China, Egypt, Sudan, and the Gaza Strip. She is a member of the Global Philanthropy Committee of the Council on Foundations and the Global Task Force on Universal Health Coverage, and a Board member of the Business and Human Rights Resource Center and NYSEC.

The shared charity is the Mayor's Fund to Advance New York City.

### **Dec. 23—The Anti-Consumerist WinterFest**

*Curt Collier, Leader*

Is consumerism consuming you? Do you dream less of Black Fridays and more of Green Sundays? Are you sick of "stuff?" Want to feel good again about not buying junk? We've been fed a lie that spending is good for the economy, but is that really true? Can we have a stronger economy without maxing out our credit cards, buying products destined for the refuse bin, or laying waste to our planet? Come, celebrate an anti-consumerist holiday of light...and life! Ceremonial Hall.

The shared charity is the Mayor's Fund to Advance New York City.

### **Dec. 30—Remembrance Sunday**

All of us are touched by loss. So it is that on this last Sunday of the year, we set aside time to look back before embarking on a new year—to remember our dead, to honor those who have touched our loves so profoundly, and immortalize them in the way we choose to lead our lives. We face tomorrow with hope made stronger

by the lessons we have learned and the love we have shared. Join Leader Dr. Anne Klaeyen in this participatory service in Ceremonial Hall.

The shared charity is the Mayor's Fund to Advance New York City.

## Early Sunday 10 AM

(Rooms subject to change)

**Dec. 2—Chorus Practice:** Led by Pat Debrovner and Jon Liechty. All voices, big and small, are welcome. We'll practice the songs we sing on Sunday mornings. Ceremonial Hall.

**Dec. 9—Colloquy: Hope.** Harriet Bigus presides. Room 408.

**Dec. 16—Poetry Reading:** As we close out 2012, come and share the lines of poetry that have inspired you. Cheryl Gross presides. Room 508.

**Dec. 16—Chorus Practice—**Led by Pat Debrovner and Jon Liechty. Ceremonial Hall.

**Dec. 30—Coffee 'n chat.** Room 408.

## Sunday Afternoon 1:30 PM

(Rooms subject to change)

**Dec. 9—Ethics in the News.** Mary Ellen Goodman presides. Room 508.

**Dec. 16—Life with Health—Still**

**Around? Better be Strong.** Rob Hoffman, a geriatric care manager for the past 16 years, will tell us how to get stronger and stay stronger for a longer life ahead. Learn about activities like weight lifting, using your own body weight; Tai Chi and Chi Gong for better balance, physically and mentally; Yoga and stretches for limbering up; and breathing, using your diaphragm, for easier walking up stairs—and all of this in a fun and stimulating way!

Rob earned a Masters degree in psychology at the State University in Groningen, the Netherlands, and is certified by the National Academy of Certified Care Managers and the American College of Sports Medicine. Ceremonial Hall.

**Dec. 23—Sustainable Living Support Circle,** led by Leader Curt Collier—for those seeking to live more in harmony with the natural world. Participants will be asked to keep a log of their choices and to share them.

This course is for those wanting to make a real commitment to eco-living. Admission is free. Ceremonial Hall.

## Lunch Discussions Thursdays, 12:00 Noon

Bring your lunch and join Leader Dr. Anne Klaeyen and Society members in the Elliott Library, Room 507, from **12:00 noon to 1:30 pm.** This month's topic: **Post-Election Issues** (and make-up from 11/1).

**Dec. 6—"Separating the Pseudo From Science"** by Michael D. Gordin, *The Chronicle Review*, 9/17/12, and **"The Accidental Universe: Science's Crisis of Faith"** by Alan P. Lightman, *Harper's Magazine*, 12/11.

**Dec. 13—"Should We Have a New Constitutional Convention?"** by John Paul Stevens, *The NY Review of Books*, 10/11/12.

**Dec. 20—"The Next Four Years: Avoiding a Standoff"** by Paul Volcker and **"A Victory Over Suppression?"** by Elizabeth Drew, *The NY Review of Books Blog*, 11/6/12.

**Dec. 27—"Tax Time: Why we Pay"** by Jill Lepore, *The New Yorker*, 11/26/12.

Folders with relevant articles will be available from Yalitza Garcia in the Leaders' office. Join the discussion.

## Our Ethical Family

*Moe-Swe Myint*

Congratulations to NYSEC Board member and Chair of the **Social Service Board**

of United Social Services, Inc. **Dr. Phyllis Harrison-Ross!** She has been chosen by the New York State Department of Health to be among the honorees being recognized at the 2012 World AIDS Day Commissioner's Award Ceremony for her participation in the AIDS Institute Local Correctional Facility Initiative, focused on elimination of mother-to-child transmission of HIV. Each year during World AIDS Day, the department recognizes individuals and groups who have made a significant contribution to people living with HIV/AIDS. Dr. Harrison-Ross is being recognized for developing a video and educational material that have been sent to every jail, prison, and other type of lock-up in the state. The ceremony will take place in Albany, NY, on December 5.



*Dr. Phyllis Harrison-Ross*

\* \* \*

Members **Bonnie Bean** and **Pat Berens** have been organizing wonderful fun and educational **Ethical Adventures** to many interesting places around town. On November 3, Bonnie and a group of other "adventurers" visited the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture in Harlem to view the exhibition "Gordon Parks: 100 Moments," celebrating the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the birth of Gordon Parks, the renowned photographer, writer, and filmmaker. Although only six people were able to make it after the hurricane, they all had a great time at the Center, followed by a delightful lunch at the Red Rooster. Ethical Adventures' next trip will be on Satur-

day, December 1, when the New York Historical Society's exhibit, "New York During WWII," is on the docket. Admission is \$15 for adults and \$12 for seniors. The group is planning to go to Scarlatt's restaurant (right down the block from the museum) for lunch after the exhibit. If you'd like to participate, please see Bonnie Bean and Pat Berens for details.

\* \* \*

A round of hearty applause goes to members **Tod Whitaker** and **Marilyn Baker** for their very successful planning and coordination of the potluck dinner on November 10. It was billed as "A Taste of the State(s) of America: A Post-Election Get-Together," and members, friends and families, and everyone in our Ethical community was invited to bring a dish that represents a regional cuisine to share while discussing various topics of philosophical, political, and/or personal interest. From the grapevine comes word that we have quite a number of excellent cooks among our membership! Speaking of cooking, member **Dr. Ruth Cohen** wants you to know that the Ethical cookbook she's been working on with **Patrick Arenas**, *Garden of Eating. A Community Cookbook*, is almost ready for production; you are more than welcome to pre-order it through her. It promises to be a treasure trove of interesting and tasty recipes.

\* \* \*

The **Environmental Stewardship Committee**, with **Paula Claycomb** at the helm, is keeping very busy with their letter-writing campaigns to various government officials on environmental issues. They set up a table before the Sunday Platform the last week of October asking attendees to write to Governor Cuomo requesting that he support a moratorium on hydraulic fracturing for the extraction of natural gas until 120 days after the federal EPA issues its report on the

effects of the practice on water quality and public health. **Peter Houts** created a poster drawing people to the letter-writing table, and **Mary Houts**, **Virginia Arnold**, and **Abe Markman** helped gather signatures from members and nonmembers. Thanks for all your help, and thanks also to the rest of the committee members for their continuing work to protect our environment: **Andra Miller**, **Curt Collier**, **Henryka Komanska**, **Monica Weiss**, **Pat Cohen**, **Patrick Arenas**, **Renee Goodstein**, and **Vince Brancato**.

\* \* \*

To round out this year of noteworthy events here at the Society, the **Social Service Board** is getting ready to host another blowout **New Year's Eve Party** to welcome the year 2013! It's going to be an evening of fun and entertainment with a "Salute to the Platters" concert; an open bar; finger foods; dancing, with a DJ; viewing of the fireworks in Cen-

tral Park; and door prizes. We guarantee that you'll not only have fun, but you'll also be doing good—because the proceeds will benefit such programs as our **Women's Shelter**, **Soccer Team Project**, **Supervised Televisiting Program**, **Empowering Ethical Elders**, **Disaster Relief in Haiti**, and **scholarships**. So get your tickets early before they are all gone! Contact: [info@socialserviceboard.org](mailto:info@socialserviceboard.org).

\* \* \*

**Member News:**

The following members are celebrating birthdays in December: **Judith Wallach**, 12/2; **Howard Parker**, 12/3; **Sal Bucak**, 12/4; **Annette Lewis**, 12/5; **Reba Mirsky Goodman**, 12/8; **Louis Sapir**, 12/8; **Helen Mecs**, 12/9; **Joseph Weber**, 12/10; **Michael Pratts**, 12/16; **Susan Pollet**, 12/17; **Donna Fetonte**, 12/20; **Dan Hanson**, 12/20; **Barbara Gold**, 12/24; **Joan Klips**, 12/27; **Terry Perlin**, 12/29; and **John Gurney**, 12/30.

## Ethical Humanist Award

On Sunday November 11, NYSEC recognized author, activist, educator, and reformer **Irshad Manji** with its highest honor, the Ethical Humanist Award. Many members and nonmembers came to listen to a fascinating and inspiring conversation between Ethical Leader **Dr. Joseph Chuman** and Ms. Manji, who is a founder and director of the Moral Courage Project at NYU's School of Public Service, as well as founder and President of Project Ijtihad, a charitable organization promoting a "tradition of critical thinking, debate, and dissent" in Islam, among a "network of reform-minded Muslims and non-Muslim allies." Afterwards NYSEC President **Andra Miller** presented the award to Ms. Manji. The event concluded with a lovely catered luncheon in Ceremonial Hall. Kudos to the Award Committee, **Beth Zucker**, **Amy Schwarz**, **Matias Santiago**, **Jamie Scott**, **Paula Claycomb**, and **Tod Whitaker**, for making this event a success. We would also like to thank Kenneth R. Lash-



*Irshad Manji being interviewed by Leader Dr. Joseph Chuman*

ins for his very generous donation of the funds towards the purchase of tickets and for the Project Ijtihad “in honor of Ms. Manji receiving the Ethical Humanist Award and to show great expression of support and appreciation for a truly remarkable person.”



(L-R) Irshad Manji holding the Humanist Award which was presented by Andra Miller, President.



Irshad Manji (center) with committee members Dr. Judith Wallach and Chris Everett.

## Ethical Enrichment

### Ethics in Literature: A Reading Group

Join us on **Monday, December 3, 1:00 pm–3:00 pm**, in the Elliott Library, Room 507. Leader Dr. Anne Klaeysen will host a discussion of *Moving the Mountain: Beyond Ground Zero to a New Vision of Islam in America* by Imam Feisal Abdul Rauf.

Drawing from his personal experiences, Imam Feisal writes on behalf of disenfranchised Muslims around the United States who are spiritual, moderate, and patriotic. Born to Egyptian parents in Kuwait, Imam Rauf was educated in England and Malaysia, became a US citizen in 1979, and received a degree in physics from Columbia University. In this book, he explores the beliefs, aspirations, and ambitions, both spiritual and political, of American Muslims in a post-9/11 world.

There is no charge for members; the public’s suggested donation is \$5.

### Adler Reading Seminar

Join Dr. Joseph Chuman, Leader, on **Tuesday, December 11\*** from **7:00 pm to 8:30 pm**, in the Leaders’ office, Room 502. Dr. Chuman will host the Society’s group on the works of Felix Adler and other thinkers whose writings are seminal to Ethical Culture and humanist philosophy. There will be assigned readings for each session, and light refreshments will be served.

\*The schedule is subject to change. Please contact Yalitzza Garcia at 212-874-5210, ext. 118, or email her at [ygarcia@nysec.org](mailto:ygarcia@nysec.org) to confirm the date of the meeting before you plan to attend. Admission is free, but registration is required.

### Compassionate Communication

Join moderator Dr. Anne Klaeysen and guest facilitators on **Thursdays December 13 and December 27, 6:30**

**pm–8:00 pm**, in the Adler Study, Room 514, for workshops aiming to help us improve and sustain our relationships.



Relationships don’t just happen; they’re made—and nurtured with loving care. We’ll explore the nature of relationships and the ways in which we can better connect to one another. The workshops are free to members; for guests, \$5 a session. Registration is required. To register, or for more information, contact Yalitzza Garcia at 212-874-5210, ext. 118 or [ygarcia@nysec.org](mailto:ygarcia@nysec.org).

### Ethics and The Theater



Patricia Bruder Debrovner

On **Friday, December 14**, from **7:00 pm to 9:00 pm**, **Ethics and the Theater** will present a reading of the play *Race*, by David Mamet. Henry and Jack have a problem. The two lawyers—one black, the other white—must defend Charles, a wealthy white man, who has been accused of raping a young black woman. From their point of view, the case is a lose-lose proposition: whether they get their client off or not, they look bad. The reason, of course, is race. Race, together with the associated differences in privilege and opportunity and the guilt and shame these differences instill, shapes not only the choices Henry and Jack make about their defense of Charles but also the lawyers’ relationships with each other, with their client, and with their young black female associate. Will race, in the end, trump questions of innocence, victimhood, and justice?

Richard E. Van Deusen directs. Come at 6:30 pm for a reception and after the reading participate in a

discussion of the ethical issues of the play, led by Dr. Anne Klaeyen.

The suggested donation is \$5. Ceremonial Hall.

## Ethics in Film: Contemporary Documentaries

On **Monday, December 17, 1:00 pm–3:00 pm**, join Leader Dr. Anne Klaeyen in the Adler Study, Room 514. We'll be showing *Constantine's Sword* (2007). Based on James Carroll's book, this documentary by filmmaker Oren Jacoby examines the history of anti-Semitism in the Catholic Church and the link between the US military and the Christian right, from Constantine's reign in the fourth century to today's evangelical base at the Air Force Academy.

The film showing is free to members, and \$5 for guests.

## Winter Writing Classes Continue

*Elaine Berman*

This past fall, instead of offering two evening **Joy of Personal Writing** classes, we started a daytime class, on Tuesday afternoons, which we'll continue for the coming winter semester. We'll also offer our usual Thursday evening class. The **Tuesday class** will meet from **12:30 pm to 2:30 pm**, beginning on **January 15**; the **Thursday class** will meet from **6:30 pm to 8:30 pm** starting on **January 17**. Both workshops will run for ten weeks.

As always, we welcome new members at our workshops—people who want to get started writing, as well as those with more experience who value belonging to a group of writers.

If you'd like to read pieces by current and past workshop writers, please visit our website, [www.nysec.org/workshop-writers-space](http://www.nysec.org/workshop-writers-space).

The course fees are \$160 for members and \$260 for nonmembers. For more information, call Yalitzia Garcia at 212-874-5210, ext. 118.

## Committee Close-Up: The Advocacy Forum

*Dr. Joseph Chuman, Leader*

The **Advocacy Forum** was created by Khoren Arisian, my predecessor at the New York Society for Ethical Culture (NYSEC). During Khoren's second tenure as Leader of the Society in the 1990s (he had also served as Leader in the late 60s and 70s), the conservative administration of George W. Bush, fueled by the power of the religious right, severely challenged the progressive ideals to which Ethical Culture has been dedicated. It was Khoren's intention to have NYSEC provide a strong and clear voice to stand in opposition to the politics emerging from the administration in Washington.

The Advocacy Forum, which brought together luminaries from both the academic and political fields, provided that voice. The organizing committee for the Advocacy Forum in those days was large, comprised of people both inside and out of the Society. When Khoren asked me to serve on the organizing committee, I was pleased to do so, recognizing the importance of its mission. We were also very fortunate to have secured the talents of Leslie Doyle, who was then on the NYSEC staff. Leslie brought a treasure trove of contacts with her, as well as a powerful sense

as to those notables who could attract significant audiences.

The events put on under the banner of the Advocacy Forum were impressive. For example, a program entitled "One Nation Divisible: Where Do We Go From Here?" featured Richard Clarke, Greg Palast, and Amy Goodman, among others. Another forum, "The Fear Factor: The Political Use and Abuse of 9/11 in 2004," brought together a panel that featured Nadine Strossen of the ACLU, the ethicist Peter Singer; and two other luminaries.

I moderated two of our forums. One, "The Unholy Alliance Between Politics and Religion," included Lewis Lapham of *Harper's* magazine, writer Susan Jacoby, and Barry Lynn of Americans United for Separation of Church and State. Perhaps the high-water mark of the Advocacy Forum in those days was "Can America Be a Democracy and an Empire, Too?" On the panel were Professor Benjamin Barber, political writer Todd Gitlin, and Ambassador Joseph Wilson. Our Meeting House was filled to capacity, no doubt owing to Wilson's presence—not long after his wife, Valerie Plame, had been infamously "outed" as a CIA agent by operatives working under Dick Cheney. The atmosphere was electric and I was pleased to be part of the event.

When the Search Committee of the Society invited me to apply for a position as a NYSEC Leader, together with Curt Collier and Anne Klaeyen, I said what I most wanted to do was to try to revive the Advocacy Forum, believing then, as I still do, that our Society needs to serve as a major public voice for progressive values in New York City.

Over the last several years, we have continued to create public events on current issues, with some variation in format. We have held forums on

health care, on the scourge of torture, on an assessment of the Obama presidency in mid-term, on the nature of right-wing populism, the resurgence of misogyny, and much more. We have featured such notables as Jim Hightower, Michael Ratner of the Center for Constitutional Rights, Elizabeth Holtzman, Melissa Harris-Perry, President Debora Spar of Barnard College, Lewis Lapham, Chris Hayes of The Nation and now MSNBC, and many others.

As a change of pace, we have had smaller events involving interviews with noted writers including Deborah Jacoby on aging; two *New York Times* reporters on their book on the war on terror; history department chair at Harvard James Kloppenberg, on his illuminating text “Reading Obama”; ex-CIA agent Nada Prouty on her book *Uncompromised*; and a capacity-crowd interview with Chris Hedges on his volume “The Death of the Liberal Class.” Undoubtedly our most elaborate event was an all-day job fair at the Meeting House organized by Leslie Doyle, who generously lent her time and skills to the effort. More than 20 firms were represented, more than a thousand job-seekers lined the sidewalk waiting to get in, and the fair was reported on by a major TV network.

In the decade since the first Advocacy Forums, competition for the public eye has grown more intense, and it is harder to attract larger audiences, no matter how informative or excellent the programs we produce. The proliferation of news on the Internet, cable television, and other new media has caused us to enter into relations with cosponsoring organizations such as The Nation, Demos, and the Stanford Alumni Association, which produced a marvelous Leadership forum in September, featuring Mayors Corey



Mayor Corey Booker



Mayor Julian Castro

Booker and Julian Castro. It is a partnership we look forward to mobilizing again in the future.

We followed up in November with Professor Massimo Pigliucci of Lehman College, who defended philosophy and science as we discussed his new book *Answers for Aristotle*.

The conversation continues.....

## Photography Arts Club

*Peter Houts and Valerie Leiman, co-chairs*

The Society’s **Photography Arts Club** is open to all NYSEC members free of charge, and open to nonmembers on payment of a fee. The benefits include participation in any program offered by the club, access to the website for display of photographs, and occasional photo shoots.



*This Photography Arts Club mobile containing a string of 3D models of Japanese Origami Flying Peace Cranes was created by Valerie Leiman during Sandy’s visit.*

## Ethical on Exhibit Call for Photos

*Elinore Kaplan*

### Shutterbugs United!

Commencing now, we are holding our first annual Ethical Members’ photography exhibit. By annual, we don’t mean once-a-year, we mean **ALL** year. And, by “Ethical Members” photography exhibit we mean the photos are to be **OF** Members, **BY** Members. As part of their ongoing efforts to retain and recruit members, the **Membership Growth Committee** wants to celebrate Ethical—who we are and what we do, how greatly involved we are, and how very much we enjoy it all and one another.

And what better way to show it than in photos? Photos of us in a discussion group, at a potluck dinner or jazz concert, at a Platform Meeting, on an outing, at the shelter, working in committee... whatever. We’ll post those photos **EVERYWHERE**—in the newsletter, on our website, and on our very walls.

It’s a snap, really. Just bring your camera or your cell phone (if it’s got decent resolution) to any and all Ethical events you attend, and start snapping. Ideally, you’ll be able to download them at the computer and send them to Beth Zucker at [bzucker@nysec.org](mailto:bzucker@nysec.org), or come in and we’ll help you. Of course, if you’re really a “techie,” you’ll make the photos bright and clear in Photoshop or iPhoto, or whatever you use. But the rest of us will just send them in and leave the adjusting to the pros.

What’s really important, though, is that you provide the caption information: what was the event and who’s in the photo (standard form calls for naming names from left to right, top to bot-

tom). Don't trust yourself to remember later; write down that information at the time you shoot. Okay, everyone: Lights, Camera, Action! We'll publish some of the first entries in our very next *Ethical Outlook*. Smile. Click!

## Why I'm Happy Mitt Romney Lost

*Curt Collier, Leader*

For some of us, the recent presidential election brought a sigh of relief, not only because the candidate we supported won, but he won by a big margin. Many of us remember the eight years under George Bush when we saw reversals in human rights, unnecessary wars, scapegoating of minorities and immigrants, and attacks against our rapidly diminishing Social Security net and environmental protections. This left many of us feeling alienated, dismissed, and disenfranchised.

I could give many reasons why I didn't support Mitt Romney. Chief among these were his kowtowing to the anti-environmentalists and his anti-science leanings. Currently several bills are before Congress that would open our nation's pristine public lands and arctic waters to more drilling, mining, clear-cutting, and hunting. While it's been proven time and again that none of these measures would benefit anyone save a small minority, and would do more harm than good, had the Republicans won the presidency, greedy self-interest and political payback would most likely have won out over reason. A prime example of this is Romney's support for the ridiculously unnecessary and ill-conceived Keystone Pipeline. Despite overwhelming research as to the ecological damage brought by this pipeline and the highlighting of the lies regarding

its economic and employment benefits, Romney still argued for it.

As an environmentalist, I could never support such short-sighted thinking. There are, of course, numerous other issues dear to my heart, including bolstering our Social Security network and strengthening education, which also drove me to vote Democratic. (Frankly, I often vote Green, but in this election I felt Obama deserved my support, notwithstanding some of his anti-environmental stances.)

Yet despite my progressive and environmental values, these aren't the main reasons I'm happy Romney lost. While the issue only got short shrift during the hyped-up election season, I still can't get the notion out of my head of Romney, while a senior in his private high school, leading a pack of boys chasing a so-called "effeminate" classmate who had dyed his hair down the hall and cutting his hair off with scissors (a story corroborated by others who remembered the event well). It's not that I can't forgive such youthful brutishness and stupidity. Who hasn't done regrettable actions as a youth goaded on by tremendous peer pressure? But that Romney doesn't recall the incident? I frankly found that shocking and frightening.

While having no memory of the event, he claimed that this was probably nothing more than high school "hijinks and pranks," for which he apologized. I can accept that young men (and women) do incredibly cruel things, and would have given Romney a pass. But what I can't get out of my mind is that he doesn't remember the event. This alone defined for me why Romney should not win the presidency, nor hold any public office; he lacks a conscience, a terrible shortcoming for anyone, let alone someone running for the highest office in the country.

Oh sure, it can be argued that it was a different time, that such events were commonplace back in the day, and because of that, Romney should be forgiven for blanking out the incident. I don't buy that argument. While I may have blindly made derogatory remarks that I regret in my past that were common for white southerners and no doubt caused pain, surely I would have remembered a screaming, crying individual fending off an attack. Yet, he can't remember wielding scissors above an innocent victim? Because Romney seemed incapable of even remembering this incident, I believe he is unworthy of the highest office in this nation. A president with no conscience is a terrible thing.

## Caring Committee

*Stephanie Rosenblatt*

The Caring Committee feels it would be good if members were to give an emergency contact—particularly if they live alone—so that we can possibly be of help.

Anyone who feels so inclined please let the Caring Committee know in time for our next meeting, which is scheduled for December 9.

## Save the Date!

**"Let's Get Ethical!"**

That's the theme of NYSEC's 2013 Pledge Campaign, which gets underway with NYSEC's 2013 **Pledge Party on Saturday, January 26, from 5:00 pm to 7:00 pm**, in Ceremonial Hall.



# New Years Eve Party



December 31<sup>st</sup>, 2012

**Join the Social Service Board at the New York Society for Ethical Culture for the Welcoming of the New Year  
2 West 64<sup>th</sup> St. NYC, 8:30pm to 1am**

Make your reservations now by getting your tickets at [www.socialserviceboard.org](http://www.socialserviceboard.org) and click PAYPAL on the bottom.



**Open Bar including Midnight Champagne, Finger Foods, DJ Dancing, Table Seating, Roof Top Viewing of Fire Works in Central Park, Door Prizes.**



**Featuring the World Famous "A Salute to the Platters" in Concert and Party** →

An Evening of Entertainment to Benefit the Women's Shelter, SSB Children's Soccer Program, Empowering Ethical Elders, Disaster Relief in Haiti, Supervised Televisiting Program, and Scholarships.

For checks send the form below by Dec. 29<sup>th</sup>. For more information: [info@socialserviceboard.org](mailto:info@socialserviceboard.org).



Tickets are:  \$40 for Concert       \$85 for NYSEC Members (Party and Concert) with their guests at \$100  
 \$100 Party and Concert       I am unable to attend but can donate: \_\_\_\_\_  
\$125 at the door after Dec. 29<sup>th</sup>

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone/Cell: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Total Enclosed: \_\_\_\_\_ **Attach name(s) of guest**

Make check to: United Social Services, Inc.  
and Mail to: c/o NYSEC, Ms. Beth Zucker  
2 West 64<sup>th</sup> St. Rm. 505  
New York, NY 10023  
(212) 874-5210 ext 144



NEW YORK SOCIETY FOR ETHICAL CULTURE  
[www.socialserviceboard.org](http://www.socialserviceboard.org)  
*Putting Our Ethics Into Action*



# December 2012

Office hours for the month are: Monday-Friday, 9:00 am–6:00 pm  
Shelter: Monday–Thursday, 7:30 pm

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Ethics in Literature: A Reading Group</u> Dec. 3 – <i>Moving the Mountain: Beyond Ground Zero to a New Vision of Islam in America</i>, by Imam Feisal Abdul Rauf</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><u>Ethics and the Theater</u> Dec. 14 – <i>Race</i>, by David Mamet</p>						<p>1</p> <p>12:00 pm – Ethical Adventure Trip – NY Society Historical</p>
<p>2</p> <p>10:00 am – Chorus Practice 11:00 am – Ethics for Children 11:15 am – Morning Meeting 12:45 pm – Brunch/Social Hour 1:00 pm – Teen Leadership</p>	<p>3</p> <p><b>January 2013 Newsletter Deadline</b></p> <p>1:00 pm – Ethics in Literature: A Reading Group 6:30 pm – Board of Trustees</p>	<p>4</p> <p>12:30 pm – Tuesday Writing Class 6:00 pm – Wisdom and World Affairs 7:00 pm – Advocacy Forum</p>	<p>5</p> <p>1:00 pm – Strength Exercise Class</p>	<p>6</p> <p>12:00 pm – Leader Lunch Discussion 6:00 pm – Empowering Ethical Elders 6:30 pm – Thursday Writing Class</p>	<p>7</p>	<p>8</p>
<p>9</p> <p>10:00 am – Colloquy 11:00 am – Ethics for Children 11:15 am – Morning Meeting 12:45 pm – Brunch/Social Hour 1:00 pm – Teen Leadership 1:30 pm – Ethics in the News</p>	<p>10</p> <p>7:30 pm – The Gershwin Theatre</p>	<p>11</p> <p>12:30 pm – Tuesday Writing Class 7:00 pm – Felix Adler Seminar</p>	<p>12</p> <p>1:00 pm – Strength Exercise Class</p>	<p>13</p> <p>12:00 pm – Leader Lunch Discussion 6:30 pm – Thursday Writing Class 6:30 pm – Compassionate Communication</p>	<p>14</p> <p>7:00 pm – Ethics and the Theater</p>	<p>15</p>
<p>16</p> <p>10:00 am – Poetry Reading 11:00 am – Chorus Practice 11:15 am – Morning Meeting 12:45 pm – Brunch/Social Hour 1:00 pm – Teen Leadership 1:30 pm – Life with Health</p>	<p>17</p> <p>1:00 pm – Ethics in Film: Contemporary Documentaries 7:00 pm – Prospective Members' Reception</p>	<p>18</p> <p>6:00 pm – Social Service Board 6:00 pm – Wisdom and World Affairs</p>	<p>19</p> <p>1:00 pm – Strength Exercise Class</p>	<p>20</p> <p>12:00 pm – Leader Lunch Discussion 6:00 pm – Empowering Ethical Elders 6:30 pm – Thursday Writing Class</p>	<p>21</p>	<p>22</p>
<p>23</p> <p>11:15 am – Morning Meeting 12:45 pm – Brunch/Social Hour 1:00 pm – Teen Leadership 1:30 pm – Sustainable Living Support Circle</p>	<p>24</p>	<p>25</p> <p><b>Society Offices Closed Christmas Day</b></p>	<p>26</p> <p>1:00 pm – Strength Exercise Class</p>	<p>27</p> <p>12:00 pm – Leader Lunch Discussion 6:30 pm – Compassionate Communication</p>	<p>28</p>	<p>29</p>
<p>30</p> <p>10:00 am – Coffee n' Chat 11:15 am – Morning Meeting 12:45 pm – Brunch/Social Hour 1:00 pm – Teen Leadership</p>	<p>31</p> <p>8:30 pm – New Year's Eve Concert 9:30 pm – New Year's Eve Party</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Ethics in Film: Contemporary Documentaries</u> Dec. 17 – <i>Constantine's Sword</i> (2007) – by James Carroll</p>				

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