

ETHICAL OUTLOOK

January 2021

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SUNDAYS AT THE SOCIETY



JAN 17

AN OLD WHITE WOMAN TALKS ABOUT RACISM

DR. ANNE KLAEYSEN, LEADER
Sarah Sprott presides



FROM THE LEADER'S DESK

THE CHALLENGE OF IRRATIONALITY

JOE CHUMAN

For the moment democracy has been retrieved, and we can breathe a sigh of relief. Joe Biden will be sworn in, and the process of rebuilding America can begin. But knotty and ominous problems continue to loom. More than half of Republicans have claimed that Trump won the election and Biden's victory is a product of a rigged process. This is not much different from claiming that the earth is flat.

Tens of millions of people with whom we share this country embrace beliefs that are unmoored from facts and evidence. In an often cited adage, Daniel Patrick Moynihan said, "You are entitled to your opinion. But you are not entitled to your own facts." As long as people are committed to revising their proffered facts in the face of evidence, engagement in a common search for truth is possible. If not, an unbridgeable societal divide confronts us. This is the state we are in.

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JAN 24

THE RISE AND FALL OF AMERICAN DEMOCRACY: A 2020 ELECTION POSTMORTEM

RENALDO PEARSON
Steve Serling presides

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FROM THE LEADER'S DESK

JOE CHUMAN

THE CHALLENGE OF IRRATIONALITY

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In a recent article in *The Atlantic*, Barack Obama stated that we are in an “epistemic crisis” wherein large swaths of the public have no commitment to the truth. Obama’s view is that this crisis has become more dire in recent years, and the media – talk radio, cable news and the internet, (which silos and intensifies exclusively held beliefs) – are major drivers. We have entered the world of alternative facts, flourishing extremist ideologies, and the proliferation of counter-factual and bizarre conspiracy theories. As Obama notes, unless there is an agreement on facts the “marketplace of ideas” on which democracy is based cannot last.

In very general terms, the project of the 18th century Enlightenment, preceded by the Age of Science, was to check and constrain belief based on impulse, feeling, and sense experience, and replace it with the illuminations of reason. Spinoza opined that ideas and beliefs that emerge from the senses alone and trade in images were often vague and imprecise and led to error. For Spinoza, who wrote the first major critique of religion, this yielded superstition. Solid, reliable knowledge arising from the processes of reason (think logic and mathematics as the models) was the corrective.

It is simplest to believe that the sun rises in the east and sets in the west because our senses tell us so. But reason, augmented by science, brings us to the corrected conclusion that the sun is stationary (for these purposes) and the earth rotates under it. That the sun rises may bring us more immediate gratification in that what we see straight on is what we get, but it is wrong. In the Middle Ages, it was taken as true that the earth occupied the center of the universe, and the sun, moon, and planets revolved around Earth in perfect circles. Why? Because we here on Earth are the culmination of God’s creation and the center is a privileged locale. Why circles? Because the Creator is perfect and the circle is a perfect form. Beyond the orbits of the planets were the stars embedded in crystalline spheres that, like other celestial objects, rotated around the earth every 24 hours. And what propelled the stars? It was obvious – invisible angels! With

the coming of the Enlightenment and Isaac Newton, angels were replaced by celestial mechanics and the theory of gravitation. Again, the Enlightenment project replaced belief originating from the immediate gratification of satisfying the senses with the more laborious, but more truth-rendering, process of reason.

In general terms, this Enlightenment project, vested in the authority of reason, is slipping away, being replaced once more with the tyranny of emotion and feelings as the arbiters of belief. If it feels right and good, believe it!

“Large swaths of the public have no commitment to the truth.”

We live in a time of explosive imagery and the allure of immediate emotional gratification. Contemporary entertainment, bombastic media, and digital technologies appealing directly to the impulsive at the expense of sober reflection and thoughtfulness overwhelm the processes by which reason, and the truths derived from it, are spawned. Thus our “epistemic crisis.”

America has always had a fascination with strange and outlandish ideas that we can trace back to before the Republic’s founding. For its contemporary manifestation, we need to look for more proximate sources.

The “counter-culture” of the 1960s, or at least parts of it, may be to blame. Then, it was fashionable to hold that intellectualism and cognitive activity were an impediment to “feelings,” which, in their immediacy, were construed to be more authentic. It was the age of “flower power,” a time to “tune in, turn on, and drop out.” It was the era of extraordinary musical and artistic expression on popular levels, all explicitly sensate. A defining feature of the zeitgeist was to be “anti-establishment,” a moniker that could include rarefied thought as well as stodgy ideas, along with the institutions of power and authority.

But there were more potent sources for the emergence of feeling over thought which

have brought us to where we are. I look to the 1980s and the triumph of capitalism, the divination of the free market, and the idolization of the corporate and business culture. Symbolically, it began when Ronald Reagan removed the solar panels that Jimmy Carter had installed on the roof of the White House as emblematic of our need to protect the environment over the expansion of greed.

Hand in hand with the corporate revolution was the valorization of materialism. The accumulation of wealth, consumerism, bling, more entertainment – increasingly adolescent — owning more and more things, was nothing to be ashamed of. It was a virtue. It permeated the culture.

This transition in our culture engendered a superficiality of values. The impulsive and meretricious superseded the thoughtful, the sober, the reflective. The love of ideas, the cultivation of the life of the mind, education itself — unless it could lead to a job and remuneration — was of diminishing importance in the collective values driving American life. It was a formulation that embraced immediate gratification at the expense of more serious endeavors.

It was not far from there to a devaluation of expertise, knowledge, and the authority of truth. In depreciating the authority of knowledge and reason, and opening space for the supremacy of impulse and feeling, such saving and civilizing attributes became relativized. One’s opinion, emergent from impulse, was as good as facts that need to be subjected to laborious tests of evidence. Why bother? The easier path feels good. It is an environment that invites extremism and conspiratorial ideas unmoored from the deeper strata of reality.

This is where we have arrived. How to get beyond it is another column.



Justice January! YEE will meet on zoom and/or in person, depending on circumstances.
To participate: contact YoungEthicalExplorers@gmail.com



AUDREY KINDRED

Youth & Family Programs Coordinator

To RSVP, please contact Audrey at youngethicalexplorers@gmail.com. For more information about all of our youth programming, please visit ethical.nycyouth.org.

First Sunday Intergenerational Event

Happy 2021.... As the future welcomes us, we will explore how fantasy can grow into reality by sharing our wildest Justice Dreams.

Jan. 3 | 1:30 - 3pm

"Dear Dr. King, if you could see us now...."

A birthday gathering for Dr. King.

Jan. 10 | 11am - 12:30pm

The Amnesty Write for Rights letter-writing campaign

Guest leader, Deepali Srivastava of *Writefully Ours*, leads write.amnestyusa.org/instructions. We will write letters to demand governments stop injustices that have intensified under COVID.

Jan. 17 | 11am - 12:30pm

Bias-awareness Workshop

Dr. Bentley Gibson of The Bias Adjuster leads YEE via zoom.

Jan. 24 | 11am - 12:30pm

"Hank and Fred", a story of interracial friendship, by Wendy Kindred

Reading followed by discussion with the author.

January 31 | 11am - 12:30pm



February's First Sundays Intergenerational Event: "Black Inventors and Contributors," with Dr. Bentley Gibson

Children, please come prepared to present research about a black inventor or contributor to society. You will share what you learned by "Being Them."

Each child presenter speaks as the person you've researched — and can bring a prop that helps represent that person. The inventors and contributors will be entered on a time/space map to make connections about history, and interactive stories will emerge from this jigsaw-style learning.

All Ethical members are invited to attend!

ABOUT OUR COMMITTEES SUNDAY PROGRAMS COMMITTEE

Monica Weiss, Chairperson

This is the first in a series informing members of the committees we have, the members and mission of each, and what they're doing. If you'd like Outlook to feature your committee, please contact Larry Hurst, Associate Editor, at larry.hurst@focus-in-touch.com.

Mission: This committee organizes and monitors all Society activities that take place on Sundays. This includes early-morning activities, social hour and lunch, and afternoon programs. We select guest speakers, coordinate music, and choose shared charities for the Platform meetings. We plan the flow of the platform, organize greeters and presiders, and coordinate with leaders to plan intergenerational festivals and celebrations.

Members: Pat Debrovner, Steve Serling,

Sarah Sprott, Liz Singer, President; Richard Koral, Leader; Maggie Determann, Membership Coordinator; David Gracia, Music Director

As I write this, several weeks before publication of the newsletter, there's no way to know what will have happened to the ship of democracy that we're sailing on as it navigates the biggest storm ever. It appears to be stronger and more resilient than it feels at times, although it's taken the battering of a lifetime and will certainly take years to rebuild. Hopefully we will build it back better. The problems we face become enormous opportunities if we have the sense and the wisdom to make them so. I have been particularly grateful for the way our community has held together through this very challenging time, even as we gather weekly on Zoom for our Platform meetings.

I'm especially grateful for the people on the Sunday Program Committee who have

come together each month to navigate ways to create an inspiring and meaningful Sunday program that I look forward to each week. Starting with Ed, who now works on Sundays, too, making sure that our virtual space is accessible to everyone who wants to show up. Thank you to David for finding ways to bring his beautiful music to us from his living room while his little ones are entertained out of sight and earshot. This is no small feat; the stresses of working from home with children is enormous for those who are doing that. Thank you to Richard for his Leadership and words of comfort and wisdom that reflect what we are all feeling and experiencing as we appear on the screen in little boxes from our dining room tables or favorite comfy chairs. Thank you to Maggie for always being on the other end of our emails and for keeping track of all of the speaker details and calendar updates. And thank you to our presiders, Steve, Sarah, ... *Continued on page 9*



ETHICAL ENRICHMENT

WEEKDAY PROGRAMS

All these ongoing programs are open to the public. Newcomers are always welcome. For an updated listing of all programs, visit our Zoom programs at Ethical Online Live! website, <https://ethical.nyc/live>. We also email a Weekly Program Schedule, where, for applicable programs, you will find the topic and suggested reading of the week, and other additional information.



THE CARING COMMITTEE LIVING ROOM

Drop in for a chat and a friendly face.

Mon. – Fri | 10am-1pm

MONDAY
TUESDAY
WEDNESDAY

MANAGING IN THE TIME OF COVID

COVID-19 has created challenges for all of us. Frank and Carol will address your concerns about managing day to day during this trying time.

Dr. Carol Portlock, oncologist, moderates 1st & 3rd Mondays. Dr. Frank Corigliano, clinical psychologist, moderates 2nd & 4th Mondays

Mon. | 2pm

ETHICS IN THE NEWS

Join in the lively give-and-take on compelling issues and current events. Weekly topics and suggested readings.

Joe Fashing moderates

Tues. | 2pm

MEDITATION

Midweek meditation for relaxing body and mind.

Larry Hurst moderates

Tues. | 5 - 5:45pm

CAMARADERIE & GOOD CONVERSATION ON ISSUES PHILOSOPHICAL & NEWSWORTHY

We aim to illuminate the philosophical concepts and values that underlie contemporary issues.

Joe Chuman, Leader, moderates

3rd Tues. | Jan. 19 | 7 - 8pm

ETHICS, FAIR TRADE, AND YOU: Topic TBA

We discuss how our everyday choices and purchases affect the many environmental and social issues facing the world today. Sessions include a short presentation on topics such as human trafficking and exploitation, overconsumption and waste management, cause-related marketing and propaganda, body positivity and clothing size standards, conscious consuming, and certifications. Sessions end with actional items/homework.

Andrea and Carla are co-founders, and Leigh is a member, of the NYC Fair Trade Coalition, a grassroots organization that promotes fair trade businesses and retailers in NYC.

3rd Tuesdays | Jan. 19 | 6:30 - 7:30pm

WEDNESDAY

DEBATING THE ISSUES OF THE DAY

Discuss significant events of the week.

Sy Amkraut moderates

Wed. | 11am

EXPLORING ETHICAL HUMANISM

These discussions of Ethical Culture beliefs and practices are for newcomers and long-time members alike. We explore the history, ideals, and current interests of the Ethical Culture community and our place in the philosophical/religious firmament.

Leaders Dr. Joseph Chuman and Dr. Richard Koral alternate as moderators

1st & 3rd Wed. | Jan. 6 & 20 | 2 - 3pm

GREAT LITERATURE DISCUSSION

Read selected works in advance, and be prepared to share your thoughts. Based on what we find in the text, we enrich each other's understanding and interpretation.

Gunther Tielemans moderates

1st & 3rd Wed. | Jan. 6 & 20 | 7 - 9pm

CONNECT WITH
ETHICAL CULTURE
AND SPREAD
THE WORD



Find us on Facebook
[@NYEthicalSociety](https://www.facebook.com/NYEthicalSociety).

Tell your friends you're here -
[#EthicsInAction](https://www.facebook.com/hashtag/EthicsInAction).

Jan. 6: *If On A Winter's Night A Traveller*, Italo Calvino
This remarkable novel leads you through many different books including a detective adventure, a romance, a satire, an erotic story, a diary, and a quest. Italo Calvino was one of the most joyful and imaginative writers of the 20th century.

Jan. 20: *Frankenstein*, Mary Shelly
Victor Frankenstein plunders graveyards for the material to fashion a new being which he shocks into life by electricity. But his botched creature, rejected by his maker and denied human companionship, sets out to destroy all. This gothic tale is a devastating exploration of the limits of human creativity.

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POETRY CIRCLE

Share and read poems. We'll listen and discuss — a line, a word, an image. Send your poems in advance, so they can be shared on screen with participants: ethicaloutlook@gmail.com.

Elinore Kaplan moderates

1st Thurs. | Jan. 7 | 2 – 3pm

STORYTELLING CIRCLE

One of the oldest traditions around the world is storytelling — folk tales, fairy tales, historic tales, family tales, etc. Bring whatever story you choose, and we'll gather 'round the virtual campfire and listen. Your topic suggestions are welcomed.

Doris Hart moderates

1st & 3rd Thurs. | Jan. 7 & 21 | 5 - 6pm

DEATH CAFÉ

Founded in London, England and now in 73 countries across the world, Death Café seeks “to increase awareness of death with a view to helping people make the most of their (finite) lives.”

Rev. Dr. Barbara Simpson moderates

2nd Thurs. | Jan. 14 | 11am - Noon

NEW POTPOURRI: Memorable Moments

This is now an open time slot — for you to fill. Share whatever you like — recipes, games (we could play Trivial Pursuit!), hobbies (show us your paintings, photos, etc.), share a favorite anecdote, view and discuss a TED talk.

Elinore Kaplan moderates

2nd Thurs. | Jan. 14 | 2 - 3pm

COLLOQUY: Decency

Share your reflections on the topic based on quotes, parables, poems, etc. There are no right or wrong answers, just your individual response shared in a contemplative atmosphere.

Bob Berger facilitates, Joe Fashing moderates this session

3rd Thurs. | Jan. 21 | 2 - 3pm

NEW TIME ETHICS AND THE THEATER

Patricia Bruder Debrouner, producer

SEVEN, by Paula Cizmar, Catherine Filloux, Gail Kriegel, Carol K. Mack, Ruth Margraff, Anna Deavere Smith, Susan Yankowitz

A collaboration of seven award-winning women playwrights, **SEVEN** is based on interviews with courageous women leaders who have triumphed over huge obstacles to create major changes in human rights in their home countries.

2nd Thurs. | Jan. 14 | 7 - 8:30pm

GETTING TO KNOW YOU

Carol Portlock and Abe Markman

In this session, a pair of “dialogue partners” converse, responding to questions (about growing up, career, interests, adventures...) including one about their experience at Ethical NYC. Attendees add to the conversation. Get to know our Ethical Culture family. If you'd like to be a dialogue partner, email Elinore Kaplan at ethicaloutlook@gmail.com.

Larry Hurst & Elinore Kaplan moderate

4th Thurs. | Jan. 28 | 2 – 3pm

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PROACTIVE MEDITATION & DEEP LISTENING

In this guided session, we take time to relax body and mind. This proactive approach to meditating can open up fresh ideas and connections. Larry is a certified trainer and workshop leader with the International Focusing Institute.

Larry Hurst moderates

Fri. | 2 - 3pm

SUNDAYS AT THE SOCIETY

PLATFORM TALKS | 11 – 12:15pm

Join us to hear informed and inspiring speakers, including our own Leaders, while enjoying music provided by David Gracia, our Music Director.

PLATFORM PLUS | 12:15 – 12:45pm

After Platform Talks, enjoy this purely social half-hour to chat with each other.

JAN 3



DISCRIMINATION DRESSED AS PROTECTING CIVIL RIGHTS

ALICE SCHAFFER SMITH

Barbara Carlsen presides

The 1965 Voting Rights Act resulted in a massive increase in voting and voter registration amongst people of color, non-English-speaking citizens, those with disabilities, especially in the states and counties covered by the Voting Rights Act. In 2013, after *Shelby County v Alabama* ruled the formula for the covered states unconstitutional, those states reverted to their former vote suppression tactics dressed up in protecting the integrity of the vote. My talk will focus on how some of us fought back.



ALICE SCHAFFER SMITH founded National Voter Corps (NVC) in November 2016 after watching vote suppression deny citizens their right to vote. National Voter

Corps is a national, non-partisan, umbrella organization which successfully has connected volunteers with non-partisan organizations to fight voter suppression and work towards 100% voter participation. After being required to resign her IBM position as a systems engineer (due to pregnancy), once her two daughters were in school, she went to Golden Gate University Law School. Her legal career spanned 36 years as in-house lawyer in information technology companies in California and England. Smith continues to be active in human rights organizations including Greater Good Haiti, Human Rights Watch, League of Women Voters, Amnesty International, and the ACLU of Northern California.

JAN 10



THE QUEEN'S GAMBIT AND THE UNDOING OF SOCIAL STEREOTYPES

DR. JOSEPH CHUMAN, LEADER

Maggie Determann presides

The Queen's Gambit is the most popular series that Netflix has ever produced — and deservedly so. It is a beautifully and meticulously crafted production and tells a most unusual and intriguing story. Based on a novel written in the 1980s, it takes place in the 1950s and early 60s and tells the story of a girl who is orphaned, deeply traumatized, yet reveals herself to be a chess genius. The protagonist, Beth Harmon, is driven, lonely, and inscrutable, yet fascinating. There is irony in a woman becoming a champion in a world populated exclusively by men. But *The Queen's Gambit* is more than the story of a young woman. It surprises us by upending stereotyped assumptions we are accustomed to make about women, men, and the world in which there may be more goodness to be found than we often assume. I will speak about the social messages this marvelous series conveys, that I found ironic, uplifting, indeed liberating.

Of the very many addresses I have given, I have based very few on specific books and never on a television series. This talk is an exception. If you haven't seen *The Queen's Gambit*, I strongly recommend you do—but I warn you, in this talk there will be many spoilers.



JOE CHUMAN has been a Leader of the New York Society for Ethical Culture since 2008. As an activist, Dr. Chuman has worked on behalf of human rights and civil liberties

and in opposition to the death penalty, as well as many other progressive causes. He founded the Northern New Jersey group of Amnesty International in 1974, and currently serves as president of the Bergen County Sanctuary for Asylum Seekers, founded by the Ethical Culture Society of Bergen County, which provides services for asylum seekers who are released from federal detention.

JAN 17



AN OLD WHITE WOMAN TALKS ABOUT RACISM

DR. ANNE KLAEYSEN, LEADER

Sarah Sprott presides

I grew up in a village on the Erie Canal east of Rochester. Everyone was white. The first Black person I met was Terry, who joined my third-grade class when his family worked on a local farm during harvest season. We became friends, but he did not stay long. Migrant workers must follow the crops. A decade later, I met a second Black person. Priscilla was my freshman roommate at SUNY Albany. We became friends, too, but grew apart after that first year. Now that I am much older, and challenged by the work of anti-racism, I wonder about them. How did they navigate the mostly white spaces where I met them? Did I fail them? How do I confront white supremacy, in all its blatant and subtle forms, today?



ANNE KLAEYSEN is Leader Emerita of the NY Society for Ethical Culture, Humanist Chaplain at New York University, and Ethical Humanist Religious Life Adviser at Columbia University. She serves on the boards of the Ethical Culture Fieldston Schools and The Encampment for Citizenship. Anne holds a Doctor of Ministry degree in pastoral care and counseling from Hebrew Union College.



RENALDO PEARSON serves as Chief Diversity Officer and Director of External Affairs for RepresentUs, the country's largest grassroots anti-corruption campaign that builds cross-partisan coalitions to advance electoral reforms state by state to unrig the system. In 2018, the movement celebrated more pro-democracy and anti-corruption wins at the local and state level than at any point in U.S. history. In 2019, Pearson received a National Citizen Leadership Award, following a 700-mile #Democracy911 walk that declared a state of emergency on corruption and the state of democracy in America and helped to secure the pledges of a record 17 presidential candidates to #FixDemocracyFirst if elected in 2020.

as well as congestion pricing, the \$3-Billion Restore Mother Nature Bond Act, the Accelerated Renewable Energy Growth & Community Benefit Act, and several other pieces of legislation to reduce emissions from the transportation and buildings sectors. She also helped secure increased State funding for water infrastructure and New York City funding for parks and open spaces.

Previously, she served for more than 11 years at the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation in various roles, having been elevated to Chief of Staff following her role as Assistant Commissioner of Intergovernmental and Legislative Affairs. As DEC's Chief of Staff, she was instrumental in advancing the agency's legislative priorities, including reform of the State's Brownfield Cleanup Program and a 10-year, \$1-billion Superfund authorization. Ms. Tighe was a primary negotiator for the landmark \$2.5-billion Clean Water Infrastructure Act, the incorporation of the Climate Change program into New York's historic \$300-million Environmental Protection Fund, three successful Constitutional Amendments, and the most comprehensive electronics recycling law in the country. She oversaw DEC's policy development, helped run the nearly 3,000 employee agency, and served as a key member of the organization's leadership team.



THE RISE AND FALL OF AMERICAN DEMOCRACY: A 2020 ELECTION POST-MORTEM

RENALDO PEARSON
Steve Serling presides

In February 2018, Renaldo Pearson gave a speech at the inaugural Unrig the System Summit in New Orleans, where he outlined a new framework for the democracy movement that he calls "The 7 Deadly Sins of American Democracy." His speech anchored the first day of the largest annual cross-partisan gathering of democracy reformers in the country. Global think tank and government corruption watchdog Transparency International has since credited his new framework for becoming "a touchstone for thousands of anti-corruption and pro-democracy activists around the country." In his talk, he will present this framework in the context of an anti-democracy decade that started with the Supreme Court's 2010 Citizens United and 2013 Shelby decisions -- making his generation the first to witness America become less democratic -- and culminated with the historic 2020 election, as he invites the audience to explore whether we should now be conducting a postmortem for American democracy itself.



VOTING FOR THE ENVIRONMENT

JULIE TIGHE
Richard Koral, Leader, presides

Julie Tighe will discuss the importance of voting for and engaging with elected officials on the environment. The New York League of Conservation Voters (NYLCV) Education Fund educates, engages, and empowers New Yorkers to be effective environmental advocates. Julie Tighe is President of NYLCV and its Education Fund, which is the only non-partisan, statewide environmental organization in New York that takes a pragmatic approach to fight for clean water, healthy air, renewable energy, and open space.



JULIE TIGHE, President of NYLCV and NYLCVEF since 2018, oversees the organizations' policy, political, development, programmatic, and communications teams. Due in part to the League's and her advocacy, the State enacted the Climate Leadership & Community Protection Act -- the nation's most progressive climate law;

OUR SHARED CHARITY FOR JANUARY

Goddard Riverside Community Center serves more than 20,000 people each year through programs on the Upper West Side and throughout Manhattan. They work for a fair and just society where all people have the opportunity to make choices that lead to better lives for themselves and their families.

Did you know we have our own YouTube channel?



Go to [YouTube.com/NYSEthicalCulture](https://www.youtube.com/NYSEthicalCulture)



Monumental Women: YEE families visited Central Park to see the wonderful and new sculpture of the three outstanding suffragists — Sojourner Truth, Susan B. Anthony, and Elizabeth Cady Stanton. (Most fitting, since this year marked the centennial of the ratification of the 19th amendment, that gave women the right to vote.) As Youth & Families Coordinator Audrey Kindred describes, “We talked about these women as sacred ethical ancestors and imagined their dialogue. A memorial cloth for the late Ruth Bader Ginsberg brought layers to the discussion, and our young ones collected wildflowers to place on the cloth. A jazz band played next to the statue. We continued on to the Great Lawn to sit and talk about representation and democracy.”



DIWALI, THE FESTIVAL OF LIGHT...Back in the building for the first time since the pandemic began, Ethical youth celebrated the Indian “Festival of Light,” Diwali, in Ceremonial Hall.



We played a meditation game which is also an ethical tool to guide the mind’s walk through time. It is adapted from Native American Haudenosaunee Great Law of Peace, using the seven generations principle of ethical decision making.

YEE encourages you, dear readers of any age, to make yourself a similar card deck and walk the walk, with your decisions, asking, “How will my current decision affect descendants seven generations from now?”



Ethical NYC’s December building banner

GENEROSITY —“It Takes a Village” and Deserves Recognition

By Janet Rose

During these politically challenging times and the past nine months of dealing with Covid-19 and its accompanying losses for so many, generosity takes on even greater meaning.

I have seen generosity in all of its incarnations... the generosity of spirit, of time, and of money. Two campaigns Howard and I spearheaded revealed just how much the residents of Manhattan are willing to step up.

Starting in April, with Carol Nadell Van Deusen’s participation in the beginnings of the Reclaim Our Vote efforts in Manhattan, brought to her by Sandy Radoff, many of us at Ethical began writing postcards to voters in high-suppression states in the South. That sanity-saving activity at the height of our “stay at home” time morphed for me into packaging for the Interfaith Coalition, which included 4th U and St. Barts.

Packagers — Brie Magar of 4th U, Miriam Schneider of St. Barts, and Brian Kramer, co-chair of 4th U’s Social Justice Team (and who basically put his life on hold to become the computer guru for local and national ROV, twice sending 2.5 million addresses to volunteer writers throughout the US) — embody the essence of the generosity of time and spirit.

Beginning small, my packaging efforts grew from 3,000 cards a week to 10,000 by mid-September, with almost 200 volunteer writers. That success was only possible with a

team of intrepid bikers:

Anthony Pulgram, Blaise Baron, Eljat Feuer, Tony Weida, Harv Bebi, Alina Larson, Hae Soo Kim, Andre Tulet, and Jonathan Reis; and walkers: Betsy Malcolm and Debbie Von Ehrens, as well as

drivers: Steve Marcus and Eileen Jarrett (co-chair of 4th U’s Social Justice Team) delivering the packets. They stepped up time and again, week after week.

Betsy Malcolm walked many miles to deliver well over 40 packets weekly from 64th up to 98th on the UWS. Our team eventually delivered to the Village and Brooklyn, thanks to Brooklyn biker Andre. Now do you see the accuracy of my saying “it takes a village” in the title of this article?

It is with a feeling of accomplishment and gratitude that I am able to report that this generous team packaged and delivered over 125,000 cards for the Presidential election and another 55,000 cards in November for the Georgia Senate runoff. That generosity extends to all of the writers who gave of their time and money to participate in the ROV campaign. Kudos to them all.

Generosity is also embodied in the Food Insecurity Campaign we have been organizing



since late summer by simply offering residents of Manhattan buildings the opportunity to make a difference for their neighbors in need. For one specified hour on a specified day, we have our van outside the building of that day, we park our van and safely collect residents’ donations. We’ve collected at more than a dozen buildings, some of which are repeats, since the residents want to continue to do more to help others.

Seeing, up close and personal, the impact participating in this campaign has on the building organizer, residents who bring out the bags of food, and the volunteers at the receiving end at the West Side Campaign Against Hunger on Broadway and 86th, and most importantly, knowing those who wait weekly on line for food for themselves and their families are being supported, brings home just how much generosity matters.

If you want to learn more about how you can generously participate in this important campaign, contact me at jrose@nysec.org.

SUNDAY PROGRAMS COMMITTEE... *Continued from page 3*

Kathleen, and Barbara, who have stepped up to continue to be a warm and welcoming presence each Sunday, reminding us of how important we really are to one another.

January Theme: Elections, Voting, and Democracy

We’ve decided to bring closure to the insanity of the past four years and the recent election cycle by talking about elections, voting, and democracy. We will be celebrating by hearing from Alice Smith, Founder and CEO of the

National Voter Corps, (1/4), a group focused on engaging voters, that was instrumental in supporting the Reclaim Our Vote effort that many of our members have participated in under the leadership of Janet Rose of the Ethical Action Committee. Renaldo Pearson is Chief Diversity Officer and Director of External Affairs for RepresentUs (1/11), the nation’s largest grassroots anti-corruption campaign, bringing together conservatives, independents, and progressives to pass anti-corruption laws across the country. Julie Tighe,

President of the NY League of Conservation Voters (1/25), will close out the month of guest speakers sharing the important work that environmental and climate-minded people (like us) must take up to ensure that we hold our leaders accountable for promises they have made and legislation they have passed.

Please join us in the new year for engaging speakers and topics, and feel free to offer suggestions for either as we push on into a more hopeful space in the coming months. And, please stay safe.



MEET OUR STAFF

By Larry Hurst

MAGGIE DETERMANN,
MEMBERSHIP COORDINATOR

What attracted you to the Society?

When I was invited to interview for my position of Membership Coordinator, I began to research NYSEC. I read about NYSEC's mission "to encourage respect for humanity and nature and to create a better world," and the attraction was immediate. This was an organization that would allow me to live in alignment with my own personal values. I was and still am captivated by the Society's devotion to the philosophy we are here to take care of one other. This is also what inspired me to become a member myself. I also liked the fact that NYSEC allows their employees opportunities to pursue their own passions and bring them into the workplace.

How would you describe your role?

My role is multi-faceted; some days I am wearing at least three different hats! Primarily, though, I would say that my role is to maintain a cohesive connection between the internal workings of the Society and the membership itself. This involves building connections and encouraging communicating throughout the membership that will foster feelings of being part of the big family that keeps the Society robust and flourishing.

Has the pandemic changed your responsibilities?

The pandemic has in some ways made my job busier than it was before. Transitioning to all on-line activities took hard work and was a learning curve for all of us! Thankfully, the dogged determination of our members, especially our program leaders, carried the day and we are still here, going strong.

In what way(s) do you sense that our Membership is evolving?

We seem to be attracting a younger demographic. In 2019 and the beginning of 2020, we had new members who were in their 30s, some with young children.

Finally, Maggie, what are the big passions in your life?

My passions include singing and taking care of my two big loves, Michael and Mimi. That's my dear husband, Michael and my darling dog, Mimi.



Are you one of our "Multi-generation Members"? If so, we're looking for you! How do you qualify: — easy. Was one or both of your parents a member of an Ethical Society? Maybe one or both of your grandparents? Do you have a son or daughter who's the member of a Society? Did any of you perhaps also go to Ethical Culture Fieldston and subsequently become a member?

There have been and continue to be 2nd, 3rd and yes, 4th generation members. If you fall into one of those categories, please let us know. It will be of interest to those of us who just happened upon the Society rather than having it somehow in our heritage. Contact Associate Editor, Larry Hurst: larry.hurst@fo-cus-in-touch.com.

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HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO...

SEAN IAN ROBIN	1/4	MAGGIE KEOGH	1/18
ELIZABETH UNGAR	1/6	JAMES GARA.....	1/24
MATTHEW BENSON.....	1/7	HOWARD ROSE.....	1/25
BONNIE BEAN	1/14	ROSEMARIE BRANCATO.....	1/27
BOB BERGER.....	1/17	ED GROSS.....	1/31

CLIMATE CHAT

Monica Weiss, Co-chair,
Environmental Stewardship

To all of you who were regular attendees of our monthly Sunday Climate Chats, here's a bit of an update so you know we still care, we can still be informed and involved, and we can take action. The community of climate activists and groups has been hard at work since March despite Covid. Our environmental affinity groups have relied on Zoom for weekly meetings, updates across the movement, opportunities for engagement, and even some "on the street stuff." Here's some news and references to help keep you up-to-date.

- President-elect Biden has made climate change a high-priority issue. The timeline for enacting real solutions is very short and the setbacks of the past four years are enormous. A recent *New York Times* article outlined how the strong connections of former government appointees who have worked for private industry and cycled back into government can create serious conflicts, especially

when those appointees come from firms like BlackRock, which invests in the very fossil fuels that are hastening our planetary disaster. Groups like Sunrise have taken the lead in opposing a business-as-usual approach to appointments in a new administration. I recently attended a BlackRock demonstration (masked and distanced) to oppose the nomination of Brian Deese to head the National Economic Council. Early in the Obama administration, Deese was deputy director of the Office of Management and Budget, and then deputy director of the National Economic Council, as well as a senior economic advisor to President Obama. Deese then became Global Head of Sustainable Investing at BlackRock.

- On TV: Jonathan Scott's "Power Trip" on Independent Lens: www.pbs.org/independentlens/videos/jonathan-scotts-power-trip-trailer/.
- Our favorite meteorologist, Jeff Berardelli, on CBS Morning is leading the way in connecting weather and

climate. (Jeff spoke at a Sunday Platform at Ethical).

- Literature: *All We Can Save: Truth, Courage, and Solutions for the Climate Crisis*: provocative and illuminating essays from women at the forefront of the climate movement.
- Our Environmental Affinity Groups on the Web: Visit the websites of our environmental affinity groups — 350NYC, Drawdown NYC, Climate Reality NYC, Food and Water Watch, as well as Beyond Plastics (Judith Enck, President of the organization, spoke at a Sunday Platform). They continue to impact climate policy and promote actions big and small that can be done from home.
- Youth and Climate Change: Check the website of the Sunrise Movement. And watch this beautiful TED video with climate activist Xiye Bastida (she was a speaker at our Sunday Platform, alongside VP Al Gore): www.globalcitizen.org/en/content/xiye-bastida-ted-talk/. Stay connected and stay tuned.



ETHICAL ESSENTIALS QUIZ

This is the question posed last month – and the answer (there was no winner):
John Lovejoy Elliott founded Hudson Guild in the 1890's, and a big part of that endeavor was a school. What was the special mission of that school?



Answer: It was a school for apprentice printers. In 1911, John Lovejoy Elliott teamed up with Arthur Blue, a union printer, to create a vocational printers' school and an avenue into good paying jobs for the boys in the Chelsea neighborhood. Together, they got the printers union and a group of printing employers to donate \$1,000 each to get the program going. It was very successful and was ultimately absorbed into the NYC Education system. Elliott became such a trusted figure in the printing industry that he was asked to arbitrate industrial disputes.

January Question: The Ethical Society helped to start numerous endeavors that became independent institutions. One that was the Society's own creation was a hospital that remains prominent in its unique field of service. What is that hospital?

Clue: Often answers can be found in the Our History section of About Us on our website. Email your answer to Larry Hurst, Associate Editor: larry.hurst@focus-in-touch.com

ETHICAL

We are Ethical Culture NYC,
a humanist community dedicated to ethics, social justice,
and education since 1876.

We celebrate life's joys, support each other through life's crises,
and work to make the world a better place.

Join us for hundreds of community and cultural programs
where people meet to explore and embrace ethical living.

Learn more about us at our website, www.ETHICAL.nyc —
or, better still, visit with us. You're always welcome.

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