

# ETHICAL OUTLOOK

February 2021

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## LOCAL HEROES THE VACCINE APPOINTMENT ASSISTANCE TEAM

Three friends on the Upper West Side have created the Vaccine Appointment Assistance Team (VAAT), a service in which people who are comfortable navigating the web will help those who might have difficulties. They will sign up for you while you're on the phone with them. (There is a phone number the city provides for helping people sign up for city vaccine sites: 877-829-4692.)

In signing up his family and friends, Jeremy Novich, an UWS psychologist, found the process to be challenging for people who may not be tech-savvy. He and his colleagues decided to help out by offering their services to others. VAAT is open to anyone from New York City, and they'll talk you through the process over the phone.

To sign up for help, [fill out this form online](#) or call 501-510-0251 and leave a message, and they'll get back to you.

To volunteer to help other people, email VAAT at [vaccineassistance@gmail.com](mailto:vaccineassistance@gmail.com).

The information in this article appeared in the *West Side Rag* on Jan. 19, 2021.

## SUNDAYS AT THE SOCIETY



FEB  
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### THE QUEEN'S GAMBIT AND THE UNDOING OF SOCIAL STEREOTYPES

DR. JOSEPH CHUMAN, LEADER

*Maggie Determann presides*

*\*This talk was originally scheduled for Jan. 10.*

*The Queen's Gambit* is the most popular series that Netflix has ever produced — and deservedly so. It is a beautifully  
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### IN DEFENSE OF CONFUSION

JOSHUA HALBERSTAM

*Richard Koral presides*

Confusion, deep-seated confusion, is presently the

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**BLACK HISTORY MONTH**

**THEME OF THE MONTH**

LOOK FOR THE THEME-RELATED PROGRAMS IN THESE PAGES.

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# FROM THE LEADER'S DESK

RICHARD KORAL

## LAURELS ARE NOT FOR SITTING



February is Black History Month, a time during which we can reflect not only on past history, but on unfolding history as we witness its creation. Black History Month began as a way of remembering important people and events in the history of the African diaspora. But in addition to events of the past, it offers an opportunity to reflect on the unique time we are living through right now. We are experiencing an inflection point in American history, and the way we proceed from here will impact the viability of our experiment in participatory democracy and our ideals about freedom and equality.

2020 saw an awakening of outrage over the serial killings of unarmed Black people by police in different parts of the country and the broadening of the Black Lives Matter movement in response. Demonstrations held in support of BLM in countless cities and towns across the country were attended by a remarkable number of racially diverse participants. These actions represented a broad awakening for many people. The message was conveyed far and wide that the structure of policing, governance, and corporate domination that undergirds American society remains deeply racist and that only by acknowledging that fact and by purposefully overcoming it in all facets of our community life will we build the just and equitable society we claim to be – and deserve to be.

At the same time, with the presidential election of 2020 we saw the culmination of a troubling trend in which racial tropes were paraded out like in the old days, and white supremacist and proto-fascist groups were emboldened. Polls are telling us that a significant percentage of the public believes that the presidential election itself was a fraud. This is yet another example of this troubling resurgence of racist impulses.

This election had more security and scrutiny than any election in history because of anticipated foreign interference, and effectively no fraud could be found. Those who objected, however, pointed to the votes cast in the urban districts in the swing states and sought to have them discarded. They sought to delegitimize the votes of mostly African American voters and to bar them from the tally. This shameless effort to throw the election has historic roots with racism at its core.

The fight for racial justice continues, and we at the New York Society for Ethical Culture are part of that movement. But the problem is not only out “there” in states and districts other than our own. It is also here in our own City and even in ourselves.

“ *We need to examine our own roles in a racially unfair system, and to strive to contribute to its reform.* ”

As a predominantly White community we can ask ourselves how we may subconsciously and inadvertently erect barriers to inclusion.

Our Ethical Society and the Ethical Culture Movement have been active and engaged at the forefront of the struggle for racial justice since the founding 145 years ago. But for all that our founders and ancestors did, the challenge persists, and we cannot sit on laurels earned in the past. What more shall we do in order to build the civilization we aim to be? We need to examine our own



roles in a racially unfair system and to strive to contribute to its reform. The reward will be the realization of values we hold dear.

Our Ethical Action Committee is developing new actions we can take, including an upcoming workshop sponsored by SURJ (Stand Up for Racial Justice) on reaching out and “calling in” the people in our lives who show themselves insensitive to, or collaborating in, injustice. Other programs will follow through which we can educate ourselves and grow awareness. I hope many of us will participate and learn to recognize the contours and lineaments of a race-based social organization and how to improve it starting with our own. It isn't enough to be good in our hearts while passive in our deeds. We have to be affirmatively anti-racist in our actions to move history forward.

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AND SPREAD  
THE WORD

   

Find us on Facebook  
@NYEthicalSociety.  
Tell your friends you're here –  
#EthicsInAction.

## February — Fairness and Friendship

YEE will meet on Zoom. To participate contact [YoungEthicalExplorers@gmail.com](mailto:YoungEthicalExplorers@gmail.com).



**AUDREY KINDRED**

*Youth & Family Programs Coordinator*

To RSVP, please contact Audrey at [youngethicalexplorers@gmail.com](mailto:youngethicalexplorers@gmail.com). For more information about all of our youth programming, please visit [ethical.nyc/youth](http://ethical.nyc/youth).

**First Sundays | Feb. 7 | 1:30 - 3pm**

**BLACK INVENTORS & CONTRIBUTORS**

**Special guest host: "The Bias Adjuster," Dr. Bentley Gibson**

An intergenerational gathering fostering positive "bias adjustment" in support of Black lives. Participants, please research a black inventor or contributor to society and present by "Being Them" — speaking in the "I"-voice as the person they've researched, with a prop that helps represent that person. On a time/space map, YEE will make connections about history, and interactive stories will emerge from this jigsaw-style learning.

All ages of Ethical members and families are invited to attend! So are those from other Ethical Societies. So are families from other faith communities valuing ETHICS! Come, and invite a friend. In your RSVP, provide the name of the individual you will present.

**Feb. 14 | 11am - 12:30pm**

**LOVE: Love of Humanity!**

YEE will examine this ethical value, workshopping through rings of awareness and empathy from the innermost rings to the great outer rings.

**Feb. 21 | 11am - 12:30pm**

**Ethical Expression: Interracial Stories, Interracial communities.**

YEE will be sharing inspiring books and creating our own!

**Feb. 28 | 11am - 12:30pm**

**Planting a Seed of Intergenerational Friendship**

**"Mystery Buddies!"**

YEE members will adopt an elder pen pal, a "Mystery Buddy." YEE will create personal introductions without revealing who they are. Partnering children with older Ethical Members, YEE plants the seeds of intergenerational friendship. Ethical Mystery Buddies will pen-pal through the YEE mailbox.

With guided writing prompts, children (with family assistance if needed) and adult participants will commit to writing letters. Using a "mystery mail" process we will get to know each other through stories. By springtime, we'll be ready to Zoom together in a "Reveal Party" of partnerships that can lead to life-long, community-building friendships.

## THE *Voice* of ETHICAL

The Voice of Ethical Culture is expressed in multiple ways. Within our building, the mission of Ethical NYC and, in fact, the Ethical Culture Movement, can be seen and heard in our Sunday Platforms, in the many discussion programs, in the activities of our youth group, Young Ethical Explorers. And our voice is heard in our actions, within and way beyond our walls — locally and nationally — when we march, make calls, send letters and cards, volunteer in response to member and community needs, as well as when our Leaders and members speak out and are interviewed and quoted. Our "voice" is also out there, right on our building, in the tablets engraved on our exterior wall, and the banners hung there for all passersby and visitors to see.

**LOOK UP**

Every month we honor a particular theme. Sometimes, as in February, it coincides with what is being observed nationally. Thus, February is Black History Month, and hanging on our building wall on Central Park West is a big, bold "Black Lives Matter" banner. But you'll also notice that some of our programs are related to this theme of the month. For example, this month's Ethics and the Theater play-reading will be *American Son*, by Martin Demos (read more about it on p. 5) The Poetry Circle will be reading works by Black poets.

*...Continued on page 11*



# 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

### 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. | 2-3pm

### 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. | 2-3pm

### 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 the contemporary issues on which we focus in our discussions.

*Joe Chuman, Leader, moderates*

3rd Tues. | Feb. 16 | 7 - 8pm

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Find us on Facebook  
[@NYEthicalSociety](https://www.facebook.com/NYEthicalSociety).  
Tell your friends you're here -  
[#EthicsInAction](https://twitter.com/EthicsInAction).

WEDNESDAY

### DEBATING THE ISSUES OF THE DAY

Discuss significant events of the week.

*Sy Amkraut moderates*

Wed. | 11am-12pm

### EXPLORING ETHICAL HUMANISM

Joe and Richard will be moderating a new, exciting, and important program in this time slot. Check our Events Calendar and Weekly Program Schedule for information.

*Leaders Joe Chuman and Richard Koral, alternating moderators*

1st & 3rd Wed. | Feb. 3 & 17 | 2 - 3pm

### GREAT LITERATURE DISCUSSION

Read the selected works — great novels and novellas — in advance, and be prepared to share your thoughts and observations, discussing the aspects of interest to you by referring to and reading specific related text to the group. Based on what we find in the text, we enrich each other's understanding and interpretation.

*Gunther Tielemans moderates*

1st & 3rd Wed. | Feb. 3 & 17 | 7 - 9pm

Feb 3: *Hedda Gabler*, Henryk Ibsen

This tumultuous and sweeping play centers around a woman contending with her own dissatisfaction, trapped with a husband and a home she does not want, at the turn of the 19th century. Considered by many a heroine as complex and tragic as to rival Hamlet, Hedda, finding her life in disarray after the sudden appearance of her husband's rival—her former lover, Eilert—is consumed by jealousy toward Eilert's new paramour, and triggers the chain of events that will lead to the play's ultimate, shocking conclusion.

Feb 17: *Middlemarch*, George Eliot

Against the backdrop of the proposed Reform Bill, the new railroads, and scientific advances, this quiet drama of ordinary lives is played out by the novel's complexly portrayed characters—until the arrival of two outsiders further disrupts the town's equilibrium. Every bit as powerful and perceptive in our time as it was in the Victorian era, *Middlemarch* displays George Eliot's clear-eyed, yet humane understanding of characters caught up in the mysterious unfolding of self-knowledge.

Next up are *If On a Winter's Night a Traveler*, by Italo Calvino and *Frankenstein*, by Mary Shelley.

THURSDAY

## POETRY CIRCLE

Share and read poems. We'll listen and discuss — a line, a word, an image. This month we'll feature some poetry by noted Black poets. Send your poems in advance, so they can be shared on screen with participants: [ethicaloutlook@gmail.com](mailto:ethicaloutlook@gmail.com).

*Elinore Kaplan moderates*

1st Thurs. | Feb. 4 | 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. | Feb. 4 & 18 | 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

## POTPOURRI

This mixed bag will feature games (we could play Trivial Pursuit!), hobbies (show us your paintings, photos, etc.), favorite anecdote (such as the best trips we've taken, viewings and discussions of a TED talk, and more.) Come join the fun and share what you will!

*Elinore Kaplan moderates*

2nd Thurs. | Feb. 11 | 2 - 3pm

## ETHICS AND THE THEATER



*Patricia Bruder Debrowner, producer*

*American Son*, by Christopher Demos-Brown

It's 4 a.m., and a white man and Black woman wait in a Miami police station for news of their son. He's been involved in a traffic stop, but no one seems to know where he is or if he's alive. As the morning wears on, tensions rise, revealing seemingly unbridgeable chasms between Black and white, police and civilian. Following the playreading, Betsy Ungar will lead an audience discussion of the ethical issues of the play.

2nd Thurs. | Feb. 11 | 7 - 8:30pm

## COLLOQUY: PLAY

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

*Bob Berger facilitates, Dr. Richard Koral, Leader, moderates today*

3rd Thurs. | Feb. 18 | 2 - 3pm

FRIDAY

## 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

## WORDS OF WISDOM

“The responsibility of those who exercise power in a democratic government is not to reflect inflamed public feeling, but to help form its understanding.”

— Felix Frankfurter, 1958

# 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.

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pbs.org

## TALKING TO OUR KIDS ABOUT CLIMATE CHANGE

HARRIET SHUGARMAN

*Steve Serling presides*

Our children today are facing the challenges of a warming world head on. They have a right to understand the realities of the climate crisis and what it means for them – and so, the adults in their lives have a responsibility to provide that knowledge as best they can. Join us as Harriet Shugarman, climate educator, economist, and author of the 2020 book, *How to Talk to Your Kids About Climate Change, Turning Angst into Action*, shares her unique insights and some best practices for having these meaningful conversations.



HARRIET SHUGARMAN is the Executive Director of ClimateMama, an on-line community that reaches individuals in over 110 countries and all 50 states. As

a leader and mentor with The Climate Reality Project, Harriet established the Climate Reality New York City Metro Chapter, serving as its first chair. Her book: *How to talk to Your Kids About Climate Change, Turning Angst to Action* was published last May.

Selected as a 2020 New York City Climate Hero and a 2019 featured speaker at the Global Engagement Summit at the U.N., Harriet is an influencer and connector in the climate movement, having worked for more than 25 years with governments, international organizations, and educational institutions on climate and sustainability issues as an economist, policy analyst, informal educator and adjunct professor, including 13 years as a representative of the International Monetary Fund at the U.N. She serves on numerous boards that address climate, public policy, youth, gender, and justice, including as Board Chair of Young Voices for the Planet. Harriet was the recipient of the prestigious Climate Reality 2017 Green Ring Award. She is profiled in former U.S. Vice President Al Gore's book: *An Inconvenient Sequel, Truth to Power*. Harriet's writings on climate solutions appear in international, national, and regional publications on-line and in print.

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## THE QUEEN'S GAMBIT AND THE UNDOING OF SOCIAL STEREOTYPES

DR. JOSEPH CHUMAN, LEADER

*Maggie Determann presides*

*...Continued from page 1*

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.

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npr.org

## IN DEFENSE OF CONFUSION

JOSHUA HALBERSTAM

*Richard Koral presides*

*...Continued from page 1*

only mature, rational point of view to maintain. Modern advances in science and technology only further underwrite this uncertainty about so much in our lives — from our sense of selves to our ethical beliefs. Raised in a profoundly traditional Chassidic world where convictions were unquestioned, along with my training as a professional philosopher, I'm especially sensitive to the need for doubt — and, therefore, often dismayed by the certitudes I also find in the secular world I now inhabit. This is also true with regard to our ethical certainties, as I will explore in this discussion.



JOSHUA HALBERSTAM is a Professor at Bronx Community College/CUNY, where he teaches communication and philosophy. Previously, he taught at Teachers College, Columbia University, and New York University. He has published widely in the areas of epistemology, ethics, and the philosophy of religion. Dr. Halberstam's most recent book is *The Blind Angel: New Old Chassidic Tales*, a translation of Chassidic tales from the Yiddish. He is also author of the novel, *A Seat at the Table*, which traces the development of a young man raised in a contemporary Chassidic world. Dr. Halberstam lectures regularly at educational and organizational venues and has been a frequent guest on television and radio.

Did you know we have our own YouTube channel?



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

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## SAVORING DELIGHT

*Richard Koral, Leader, presides*

Beauty is alive in the faces, the places, and the objects around us. We need to stop and recognize it from time to time, even when the world seems to turn hostile and unwelcoming. Let's explore the way we resonate with life and the universe.



DR. RICHARD KORAL is one of our clergy Leaders at the NY Society for Ethical Culture. He is also serving as part-time Leader for the Ethical Humanist Society of

Long Island. Richard studied at the Humanist Institute and holds a Doctor of Ministry in interfaith pastoral counseling from the Hebrew Union College. He also holds degrees from New York University and The New York Law School. Richard is a long-time member of the Ethical Culture community, having been a member of the Society in White Plains for many years. He served as its president in the late '90's, early 2000's. He has also been active with the American Ethical Union, our national federation; he served on its Board and was its president from 2012 to 2015.

## OUR SHARED CHARITY FOR FEBRUARY

Heifer International, whose mission is to end hunger and poverty in partnership with the communities they serve. Their programs support entrepreneurs around the world, creating lasting change. It begins with a seed investment of livestock or agriculture, followed by mentorship to help project participants build a business, and ultimately to gain access to supply chains and markets. These families are able to earn a living income and continuously lift up their communities as they train the next generation of leaders.



# ETHICAL ESSENTIALS QUIZ

*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?*

This was the January Question. Don't be lazy; look it up and be a winner and one factoid wiser!

We don't have a winner yet -- but you can still send us the answer before the next *Outlook* issue.

Clue: Most often answers can be found in the "Our History" section of About Us on our website.





The American Ethical Union calls upon federal, state, and local authorities to expand the implementation of compassionate release policies for sick and elderly people from correctional facilities and immigrant detention centers, and to ensure that prisoners are given high priority for receiving vaccinations for COVID-19.

The U.S. criminal justice system incarcerates more people than any other nation in the world. Our country also leads the world in the length of prison sentences, resulting in the incarceration of progressively more elderly individuals. Moreover, the harsh conditions faced by people who are incarcerated—with many spending months or years in solitary confinement or facing violent abuse from other prisoners or from those who guard them—have compounded the impact of imprisonment. As the conditions in prisons are traumatic, imprisoned people tend to age at a faster rate than those not incarcerated and frequently develop severe health issues.

These concerns are compounded by the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. According to the Marshall Project, “by Dec. 1, at least 227,333 people in prison had tested positive for the illness, a seven percent increase from the week before, though new cases may have been undercounted due to limited testing in some states over the Thanksgiving holiday.” The report indicates that prison staff have also been hard hit: “Since the start of the pandemic, more than 56,496 prison staff members have tested positive—with new cases at an all-time high the week of Nov. 24.”

Many of those incarcerated are elderly and/or have serious health issues that put them at significant risk for infection.

We are saddened by reports of COVID-19 infections

rapidly spreading within prison systems, where unhygienic conditions are rampant, adequate medical care is scarce, and social distancing is impossible; and we applaud efforts to bring about the compassionate release of vulnerable prisoners from state and federal detention facilities.

Those efforts fall far short of what is needed, however. While current standards for compassionate release vary from state to state, 49 states and the federal prison system make it possible for individuals

“Of the 10,940 federal prisoners who applied for compassionate release from March through May [2020], wardens approved 156.”

who are incarcerated for nonviolent offenses and are elderly or have severe health issues to be released from prison. Unfortunately, the great majority of those who are eligible are not released.

According to a Marshall Project report, requests for compassionate release are rarely approved: “Of the 10,940 federal prisoners who applied for compassionate release from March through May, wardens approved 156. Some wardens, including those at Seagoville in Texas and Oakdale in Louisiana, did not respond to any request in that time frame, according to the data, while others responded only to deny them all.”

That report looked only at the federal prisons; it did not include the tens of thousands of individuals who are eligible to apply for compassionate release in state correctional facilities and detention centers, nor did it include individuals who were convicted of offenses not covered by the standards but who pose no risk to society. There is no recourse for these individuals but to

remain in these dangerous conditions.

For the elderly and people with compromised health, remaining incarcerated may well amount to a death sentence. The continued incarceration of sick or elderly people under these conditions, as well as that of nonviolent offenders, serves no public safety purpose and undermines community efforts to minimize disease transmission. Our prisons and detention centers must do much more to make compassionate release a reality for the frail and elderly.

There is hope that the development of effective vaccines will lead to containment of the COVID-19 pandemic. We must, though, appreciate the extreme vulnerability of people in prisons

and detention and ensure that they are given a high priority once vaccines are available.

In an opinion letter to CBS News, social justice advocates Ashish Prashar and DeAnna Hoskins wrote: “As we approach 300,000 pandemic-related deaths in the United States, we can’t forget that the five largest Covid-19 clusters are in prisons. While federal officials say that corrections staff should receive high priority for a vaccine, they have not advocated for the 2.2 million individuals they care for daily.”

As we grapple with a deeply flawed criminal justice system during a global pandemic, the American Ethical Union advocates for the just and ethical treatment of imprisoned individuals. We call on federal, state, and local governments to accelerate the processing of requests for compassionate release of at-risk prisoners from correctional facilities and immigrant detention centers and press for identifying those who are imprisoned as a high priority for receiving vaccination against COVID-19.



**2021 Virtual  
Encampment  
for Youth 15-18**  
**July 5-28, 2021**

*“Applying to The Encampment was one of the best decisions I’ve made. I learned that I am a capable leader, and someone who can make change. You meet amazing people who want to make change, and who will do anything to help you do it. EFC was the best way to spend my summer, because I was able to do something fun, yet intellectual.”*

— Nicholas, 2020 Encamper

Want to make a difference in your community and learn how to become a stronger agent of change? Start now by applying for the 2021 EFC Virtual Encampment!

At the 2021 Encampment you will:

- Get a deeper perspective on social justice issues.
- Meet activists and civic leaders.
- Learn more about how your community works and how you can make change where you are.
- Participate in a multicultural community of peers from across the nation who will

share their communities with you.

- Use arts to express your perspective on social justice concerns.
- Receive four months of follow-up support to develop an action plan.

**Deadline for applications is March 1, 2021.**

**MORE THAN A SUMMER PROGRAM**

In 2021, you get four months of follow-up support for your idea to make change.

Encampment for Citizenship  
P.O. Box 1210  
Aptos, CA 95001

*(See EFC photos on page 10)*



## ABOUT OUR COMMITTEES:

# COMMUNICATIONS

BY LARRY HURST AND ELINORE KAPLAN, CO-CHAIRS



**Mission:** This committee works on the public presentation of Ethical NYC—communication within and beyond—with the aim of creating greater awareness of the Society among members, potential members, and the public through clear and consistent messaging, branding and publicizing of our programs, events, members, aims, and accomplishments. This includes coordinating communication in the areas of public relations, advertising, print, audio/video, social media, and the website, as well as between and among Ethical committees and staff.

Did you say you'd love to see a particular article in *Ethical Outlook*? Talk with anyone on the Communications Committee. How about having a Member Handbook telling members all about the Society? That was suggested a while back; we saw to it that it was written and illustrated and has been in the Members' Section of the website for a couple of months now. Check it out. Did you want to suggest a public relations release to social media about one of our special events or ethical action undertakings? At this point in this paragraph, you should know the answer: contact one of us on the Communications Committee. That would be Larry and myself, and either of our members, Ellen McBride and Howard Rose, plus our vital staff liaisons,

Ed Beck, Communications Coordinator and Yalitza Garcia-Krawczyk, Office Manager. At all of our meetings, ex officio, are Liz Singer, President, and Richard Koral, Leader.

"Well," you say, "Aren't those monthly banners that hang out on our building wall on Central Park West an important part of our communicating to the public?" Yes, indeed! That's part of the job of our Branding, Signage, & Décor subcommittee, manned by Howard, Marion Burns, and Steve Serling, along with Yalitza, our primary graphic designer, and Elinore. And we do more than the banners. Here's what we do:

**Mission:** It is our responsibility to ensure that the Society's branding is apparent and consistent, employed appropriately in our promotional materials as well as those produced by affiliated organizations/co-sponsors. We make decor recommendations to encourage consistency with the branding and authenticity of style within our historic building, aiming to create a welcoming space for members and visitors while increasing awareness of the Society's mission and work. We also oversee permanent installations and custom signage throughout the building. In addition, we strive to work with committee

## WHICH COMMITTEE WILL YOU JOIN?

Being a member of Ethical Culture entails being a participating member, getting involved. And one significant way you can do that is by joining a committee. On our website home page, click on the "hamburger" (the three short stacked horizontal lines at the top right), then on "Our Community," and then "Committees." Contact the chair of the committee that interests you to ask to attend a meeting to learn more about them so you can considering joining. All committees and chairs are listed in the Members' Section on our website, along with our Member Directory.

**chairs, event and program moderators, and others regarding the importance and use of branding.**

As if we didn't already have a full plate, when the pandemic hit and we moved to virtual meetings, the Communications Committee took on our interim programs. We contact all our program moderators and provide the information to Ed for our website Events Calendar and the Weekly Schedule emails. And we welcome your suggestions for additional programs. Here's one idea: is there anyone who'd like to moderate a weekly or monthly Photographers Club

“If you're interested in joining the CC and contributing to our work, contact us.”

program in which we share our photos? We've got a few members who are enthusiastic photographers, and others of us who enjoy seeing their photos and maybe learning more about them.

If, as a member of the Society, you think you might be interested in joining the Communications Committee and contributing to our work, contact either of us co-chairs.



## WELCOME

A warm welcome to our newest members, husband and wife **Aaron Heisler** and **Alexandra Martin**. Alexandra's mom, Dixie Martin, was a member of Ethical in the 80's, and Alexandra was in our Children's Program. Alexandra has been a museum educator, art educator, teacher, and school administrator. Aaron, a former actor, singer, and dancer, is an adjunct professor at Baruch College, and a consultant at 8 of 9, a company that transforms complex financial regulations into sustainable tech solutions.

## CONDOLENCES

It is with deep regret that we report the deaths of two dear members of our community, **Peter Houts** and **David Massey**. Peter was a member of NYSEC since 2011 and Dave since 2014. Both were a special part of our Ethical family and will be missed. Some of you may well remember David who was always an ardent contributor at our Ethics and the Theater playreading discussions. Peter, in addition to serving on committees, headed a photography club at the Society. Member Mary Houts will hold a memorial for Peter when we are once again able to meet in person. An online memorial is being planned by Dave's daughter, Dr. Carla Massey, on a date to be determined.

## HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO...

ELINORE KAPLAN.....	2/2	HELEN ANDERSON.....	2/16
VINCE BRANCATO .....	2/4	MICHELE CONSTIBLE DONEY.....	2/17
GUNTHER TIELEMANS.....	2/5	ROGER MICHAELS .....	2/18
MICHELLE AINSWORTH.....	2/7	BOB GANGI & EDWARD FINFER .....	2/24
KEN GANS & STEPHEN JAMES.....	2/8	STEVE SERLING.....	2/27
PATRICIA BERENS.....	2/9		

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Clockwise from top left: EFC alum Bernice Hightower at a 2020 Get-Out-the-Vote rally in New Jersey; 2018 Encampment, Jackson, Mississippi; 2020-21 Pesticide-Free Soil Project intern, Moncerrat at the regenerative agriculture project in Camarillo, CA; 2019 Encampment, Camarillo, CA.



*“Growing up, I got one perspective, but in the Encampment, I got to see what peers from different backgrounds are doing and feeling. It’s one thing to hear about Black Lives Matter in social media, but it’s so powerful when you hear what people are really going through — it changes you as a person.”*

— Moncerrat, 2020 Encampment, 2020-21



In January our theme was Justice, and the banner on the building was Humanize Criminal Justice. Again, there were programs related to the theme of the month, including Ethics in the News discussion. In fact, the Young Ethical Explorers theme for the month was Justice January. And the AEU Statement, posted on the AEU website in December, was another tie-in.



Photos by Howard Rose

### KEEP LOOKING UP...

On the exterior wall of our building on Central Park West, there are two important vertical tablets. They flank the banner we hang monthly. The tablet on the left says “The Society for Ethical Culture Founded in the City of New York May 1876.” So, a cornerstone (yes, there is one, at the base of the building at the corner of W. 64th) wasn’t sufficient. A proud declaration was placed in bronze lettering to proclaim the presence of the Society.

Still, a “proclamation” of the existence of the Society did not suffice. There is a second tablet several feet to the right.

This one says, “Dedicated to the ever-increasing knowledge and practice and love of the right.” That’s one mighty big commitment on the part of our founders and their followers and holds to this day.

## Dr. Khoren Arisian (1933-2021)

Dr. Khoren Arisian, Senior Leader of the New York Society from 2002-2005, has passed away. Khoren was an ardent Humanist and activist who worked passionately for human and civil rights throughout his career. He spoke out against McCarthyism and for LGBT rights. He marched in Selma. He co-founded the Humanist Institute for new humanist leaders and was involved in creating the North American Commission for Humanism, a coalition of national humanist organizations.

At NYSEC, Khoren created the widely popular Advocacy Forums — public programs at which well-known individuals spoke out on the issues of the day, often filling our 800-seat auditorium. He developed one of New York City’s largest adult education programs, drawing hundreds of participants to our meeting house, and he co-founded a Prison Reform Task Force. His Sunday Platform talks were always well attended. Khoren published hundreds of articles and edited professional journals.

Khoren had been a minister at a UU Society in Iowa City and another in Sarasota, Florida, and at the first Unitarian Society of Minneapolis before serving as Leader for the Boston Society of Ethical Culture. He and his wife, Leigh came to New York in the late 1960s and joined NYSEC. He returned to the pulpit in Minneapolis for a time, returning to New York in 2002, whereupon he became a Senior Leader, and served until 2005. When he retired, Khoren and Leigh moved to Lambertville, New Jersey.

# 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](http://www.ETHICAL.nyc) —  
or, better still, visit with us. You're always welcome.

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