

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

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## **Sunday Morning Meetings**

**11:15 AM—Auditorium**

### **September 7**

#### **Must Humanists Be Polite?**

*Dr. Howard B. Radest*

*Past Adjunct Professor of Philosophy*

*Andra Miller Presides*

### **September 14**

#### **Barack Obama and the Prospects for a Post-Racial America**

*Dr. Manning Marable*

*Professor of Public Affairs*

*Bonnie Bean Presides*

### **September 21**

#### **Reason and Reverence: A New Religious Humanism**

*Rev. Dr. William R. Murry*

*Eric Volpe Presides*

### **September 28**

#### **The Art of the Fall**

*Stephen Marino, Editor*

*Joseph Marvel Presides*

## **Benefit Concert**

Mark your calendar:

### **Tenth Annual Benefit Concert for the Stained Glass Windows**

**October 19, 4:00 pm**

If you would like to support this event, please call 212-860-4096, leave a message and your name and telephone number, or call the Membership office at 212-874-5210, ext. 13.

## **September Happenings**

**Must Humanists Be Polite?—Sunday, September 7, at 11:15 am**, in the Auditorium, hear Dr. Howard B. Radest, Past Adjunct Professor of Philosophy, University of South Carolina, reflect on the “new atheists,” Sam Harris, Christopher Hitchens, Richard Dawkins, and Daniel Dennett, and ask, “Is civility possible and desirable?” (*See below*)

**Barack Obama and Prospects for a Post-Racial America—Sunday, September 14, at 11:15 am**. As the presidential election draws near, Dr. Manning Marable, Professor of Public Affairs, History, and Political Science, Columbia University, will speak on this most timely subject. (*See page 3*)

## **President’s Notes**

*Andra Miller, President*



Calling all volunteers! Calling all volunteers! Actually, I want you to call me if you’d like to help out at the Society on a short-term project. We need to number and list all of the architectural drawings that are rolled up in the overhead cupboard of the Executive Director’s office—one person to perch on the ladder and unroll each drawing to find out what it is, and another to record the information on a master list. If you’d like to help out, call me at 212-627-3944 and leave a clear message if I’m not in. Next month I’ll be asking for volunteers on a longer-term project. Stay tuned . . .

*(Continued on page 2)*

## **Sunday Morning Meetings**

**11:15 AM—Auditorium**

### **September 7—Must Humanists Be Polite?**

*Dr. Howard B. Radest, Past Adjunct Professor of Philosophy at the University of South Carolina*

Dr. Howard B. Radest reflects on the so-called new atheists, Sam Harris, Christopher Hitchens, Richard Dawkins, and Daniel Dennett, a group that Susan Jacoby calls “the devil’s party, i.e., the passionate atheists.” At a time when dogmatic and fundamentalist religious belief and conduct challenge the courtesies of dialogue and respect between diverse parties, is civility now possible and desirable?

*(Continued on page 3)*

**Contents**

Sunday Programs 1  
 September Happenings 1  
 President's Notes 1  
 Sunday Morning Meetings 1  
 Early Sunday 4  
 Sunday Afternoon 4  
 Board Meeting Highlights 4  
 Our Ethical Family 5  
 Teen Ethical Leadership 6  
 Drawing Classes 6  
 Fall Writing Workshop 6  
 Supervised Visitation Project 6  
 AEU Condemns Violence 7  
 PIC: Have You Heard? 7  
 NYADP Expands Mission 7  
 What Is Race? 8  
 Honoring Our Volunteers 8  
 Hudson Guild Art Exhibition 9  
 Staff Luncheon 10  
 Calendar 11

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 Collegiate Church and Carpenter Kids Collaboration  
 Phyllis Harrison-Ross and Vincent Montaruli  
 EBAY Project: Eric Norlander and Michelle Rickborn

**President's Notes**

*(Continued from page 1)*

The Board had its planning retreat to review our accomplishments this past year and renew our commitments to increasing membership, increasing pledge amounts, and finding funds for our building (and equal access) and our programs. As we're in a sort of limbo until the new Leader is on board, we did not do a lot of brainstorming about new programs or events—those need to flow from a solid strategic plan based on a solid financial and organizational base, and they need the guidance of a strong Leader. But we did work on planning the plan.

And speaking of the Leader, the Search Committee is nearing its goal: to bring inspirational, charismatic, caring leadership to the New York Society. Naturally, the selection must be approved by the Board and then by you, our membership. You'll be notified soon of a special membership meeting to present the results of the committee's work, so stay tuned! I'd like to thank those committee members at this time: Carol Nadell Van Deusen and Bonnie Bean, chairs; Jerry Chamlin; Chris Everett; Chuck Debrovner; Sheila Kleinwald; and JoAnn Mason. Thank you for your

devotion to the task set before you—and thank you for all your fine work.

We're all sort of in a retreat mode at the moment (looking forward to the member retreat in October), as we are enjoying some beautiful summer days. A birder friend of mine invited me to walk with her through Central Park to her favorite bird-watching spots. Everything was so unbelievably deep green it was surreal, as if we were in a movie in which all the colors were enhanced in some far-out photo lab. We sat on a stone bench in a small thicket and watched starlings happily washing themselves in a small pool, wings fluttering as they danced around to scoop up the water. It occurs to me that this is in a park most of us often walk by, but don't walk through often enough.

So last Sunday, after our main meeting, a few of us ambled over to the Ballfields Café to enjoy the lovely weather, have lunch, and talk about many things. It was a great way to start the afternoon—how lucky we are to have a park across the street from us. The word "blessing" comes to mind. Blessing: a thing conducive to happiness or welfare. When I count my blessings, among them are you—who are the New York Society for Ethical Culture. Thanks for being such a great group of friends.

## Sunday Morning

(Continued from page 1)

Dr. Howard B. Radest was Adjunct Professor of Philosophy at USC-Beaufort. He is a consulting member of the SC Medical Association Ethics Committee; a consultant to the Center for Preparedness, School of Public Health, USC; Dean Emeritus of the Humanist Institute; a member of the National Council of Ethical Culture Leaders, and a former member of the Board of the Association for Moral Education. Dr. Radest is a member of the Highlands Institute for American Religious and Philosophic Thought, serves on the Advisory Committee of the Appignani Center for Bioethics, and is a Senior Fellow of the Center for Inquiry.

### September 14—Barack Obama and the Prospects for a Post-Racial America

Dr. Manning Marable  
Professor of Public Affairs

The 2008 presidential election is the most crucial national election since 1968, when the deaths of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., and Robert Kennedy led to the election of Richard Nixon and the beginning of conservative domination of the presidency for four decades. This talk analyzes three critical issues: (1) an assessment of the presidential candidacy of Illinois Senator Barack Obama to date, what Obama represents politically and in terms of public policy, and how he would probably govern if elected; (2) an analysis of Obama's "nonracial" campaign—his slogan is "Race Doesn't Matter"—and an assessment of his statements about race; and (3) a comment on the necessity for America to transcend its racial divide, and how a democratic culture might help to eradicate racial bigotry.

Dr. Manning Marable is Professor of Public Affairs, History, and Political

Science and Director of the Center for Contemporary Black History at Columbia University. He is the author and/or editor of 25 books, including *Seeking Higher Ground: The Katrina Reader* (2008); *Racializing Justice, Disenfranchising Lives* (2007); *Living Black History: How the African-American Past Can Remake America's Racial Future* (2006); and *The Great Wells of Democracy: Race in American Life* (2002). Dr. Marable is currently completing a major biography of Malcolm X.

### September 21—Reason and Reverence: A New Religious Humanism

Rev. Dr. William R. Murry

Viewing humanism under the larger umbrella of religious naturalism adds greater depth to humanism's understanding of human nature, of the path to truth, of spirituality, and of ethics, and at the same time it answers some of the criticisms that have been directed at humanism over the years. This talk will explore a new humanism grounded in the perspective of religious naturalism, and will deal with such questions as: What do we mean by sin and evil in a humanist framework? What, if any, is the role of the emotions in the search for truth? What does a naturalistic spirituality look like? And, can we be moral without God?

The Rev. Dr. William R. Murry is immediate past President of the Meadville Lombard Theological School in Chicago, a Unitarian Universalist seminary affiliated with the University of Chicago; minister emeritus of the River Road Unitarian Universalist Congregation in Bethesda, MD; and also the author of two books: *A Faith for All Seasons: Liberal Religion and the Crises of*

*Life, and Reason and Reverence: Religious Humanism for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.*

### September 28—The Art of the Fall

Stephen Marino, editor

The notion of "the Fall" is one of the more complicated and fascinating events of human experience. The idea has powerful associations in western culture because we see so many forms of it enacted throughout human history. The biblical fall out of Paradise is the "Ur" event of Judeo-Christian culture. The ashes of fallen, once-mighty, civilizations are scattered throughout millennia. The fall of human beings—the great and powerful—or even the fall of the common person—is particularly fascinating to us. We are attracted to the fall on whatever grand or small scale it takes because perhaps we know the same thing can happen to us.

Today's talk will focus on how the fall is demonstrated in both art and life. Many of the great plays of western dramatic literature illustrate characters who fall. Audiences fixate on how these characters, as flesh and blood human beings, contend with their fall from power, their fall from grace, or their fall in morality and ethics—whether the fall is self-inflicted or a result of circumstance.

Stephen Marino is the editor of *The Arthur Miller Journal*. His work on Arthur Miller has appeared in *Modern Drama, the Journal of Imagism, the South Atlantic Review, and Miller and Middle America: Essays on Miller and the American Experience*. Mr. Marino is the editor of *The Salesman Has a Birthday: Essays Celebrating the Fiftieth Anniversary of Arthur Miller's "Death of a Salesman"* (University Press of America, 2000) and the author of *A Language Study of Arthur Miller's Plays, The Poetic in the Colloquial* (Edwin Mellen Press, 2002).

## Early Sunday 10 AM

**Sept. 7—Singing Practice**—Everyone is welcome, regardless of whether your voice is big or small, at these very enjoyable sessions. Led by Pat Debrovner and Jerry Ranck, we'll practice the songs we sing on Sunday mornings and get some good tips on how to improve our singing technique. It's a lot of fun, so join us! Ceremonial Hall—4<sup>th</sup> fl.

**Sept. 14—Colloquy: Love.** Virginia Arnold presides. Room 408.

**Sept. 21—Poetry Readings**—Spend a peaceful hour reading and listening to the poems we especially like. Please bring your own favorites to read, or just come and listen. Cheryl Gross presides. Room 408.

**Sept. 21—Singing Practice**—Led by Pat Debrovner and Jerry Ranck. Ceremonial Hall—4<sup>th</sup> fl.

**Sept. 28—Coffee 'n Chat** with Society President, Andra Miller. Room 508.

## Sunday Afternoon 1:45 PM

**Sept. 7**—No program.

**Sept. 14—PIC Open Meeting.** Abe Markman presides. Ceremonial Hall—4<sup>th</sup> fl.

**Sept. 21—Life With Health.** Phyllis Kreuttner and Jacqueline Pope preside. Room 514.

**Sept. 28**—No program.

## Board Meeting Highlights

*Sylvan Wallach*

The August 4 Board meeting was long and the executive session intense, with many important matters discussed. We

can include only the highlights here. Any member can read the full Minutes; just ask at the Executive Director's office, where you will likely be greeted by Gloria Chandler, assistant to the Executive Director. Also note that all members are welcome to attend Board meetings and to participate. We try to make democracy work.

**President Andra Miller's Report** begins with congratulations, and if you'll pardon my immodesty, the first was for me. "Thanks to Sylvan Wallach for volunteering to add to his secretarial duties by assisting me in tracking down new members for service on committees. Another kudo to Sylvan for his hit-of-the-film star performance in the independent movie, *Take-Out*." This movie was about a young Chinese man smuggled into this country and his attempt to work off his urgent payment to the smugglers by making more than the usual number of deliveries. My bit part was one of many customers.

Andra also thanked Jim Farer for his work in Rwanda and said that "His experience has made him committed to volunteering even more to help out there."

The report noted that the song we sing often, "Let There be Peace on Earth and Let it Begin With Me," is being promoted by The Maui Peace Action and is to be sung on December 31 right before midnight all around the world. Read about "The World Peace Sing" on this website: [www.mauipeace.org](http://www.mauipeace.org). Andra's sister told her that there will be a party in Hawaii celebrating as many different ethnicities as they can round up that night, and Andra proposes that it would also be a great project for NYSEC.

Andra included a report on the WBAI program of July 3. "Michael Bogdanffy-Kriegh was a superb guest and had his facts in line for an interest-

ing talk on the carbon footprint situation. Have you checked yours out?"

Also note that the Staff Luncheon was a success, that a team (Julie Blutstein, Tom Weishaar, and Sylvan Wallach) is working on streamlining the website, and that Sheila Kleinwald was appointed Program Coordination Chair.

**Executive Director Robert Liebskind's Report** gives us the good news that we have received formal approval from the New York Landmark Preservation Commission to replace 14 of our windows on the fifth floor. Oak Construction has been awarded the contract and has ordered the windows. I expect this work to take place over the next several weeks and to be done by the end of the summer. He also reported that our hard-working in-house staff is painting Ceremonial Hall. The staff is planning to paint the lobby and Social Hall before the end of the summer. All pews in the orchestra seating of the Auditorium will be stained.

Lincoln Center and the Juilliard School will be presenting concerts here at the Society from October, 2008 through January, 2009. Both have indicated they would like to continue to work with us in the future, after Alice Tully Hall reopens.

Further, Bob gave us the exciting news that we have developed a relationship with the Asian Artists Orchestra, which will be using our hall four times over the next half year. They will perform twice in the early afternoon and twice in the evening. They gave one concert here last year, to which several members were invited; they spoke of it very highly. The orchestra is interested in developing a long-term relationship with us and performing additional concerts here in the future. They would like to offer Society members free tickets to their concerts and will provide me with a large number of complimentary tickets for each of their concerts.

Finally, Bob mentioned that Pauline Kravath and Beth Zucker were elected to membership in the Society.

At this juncture, the Board of Trustees meeting was temporarily adjourned and a meeting of United Social Services, Inc., was opened. Dr. Phyllis Harrison-Ross, Chair of the corporation, recommended that Dr. Ivan Quervalu be elected a director. He brings impressive talents. The USS meeting then adjourned and the meeting of the Society Board resumed. Perhaps a word of explanation would be helpful here. There is a separate corporation, United Social Services, Inc., which was created to carry out social services. The members of the corporation are the Trustees of the Society. The directors of the corporation constitute the Social Service Board.

**James Farer, co-chair of the Finance Committee**, mentioned the organization, Partners for Sacred Places, [www.sacredplaces.org](http://www.sacredplaces.org), which helps religious institutions obtain funds for rehabilitation of their buildings and provides other assistance; we will explore their services.

As you undoubtedly know, we rent out our Auditorium and other spaces for concerts, religious meetings, and various other purposes. Jim introduced Maria Bowen, a consultant who was hired to study our rental program and make recommendations on improving our services. She thought it useful for us to hire a rental manager. Following discussion, a motion to hire a rental manager was presented, but the motion was tabled until the September Board meeting.

An **Executive Session** of the Board was called to discuss a personnel issue as well as to accept a progress report from the Leader Search Committee, approving its recommendation.

Finally let me thank Sheila Kleinwald, who started this column and has written it until now. I only hope I can maintain her high standards.

## Our Ethical Family

*Moe-Swe Myint*

**Please welcome our new members:**

**Pauline Kravath** learned of NYSEC from her friends, and decided to come in and find out for herself after reading about a program on the board outside our building. She has attended various Public Issues Committee programs and is attracted to Ethical Culture by its commitment to all of humanity. She is retired but enjoys writing and likes to annoy elected officials!

**Beth Zucker** was introduced to NYSEC by Rich Sander and Massimo Pigliucci. She has attended many Sunday meetings and events and says she is drawn to Ethical Culture by its ethics and activism. Her interests include photography and participating in various Meetups. She also organizes her own Jazz Meetup around town. Beth works as a customer service manager.

Our members kept busy with exciting and worthwhile projects all summer long. Here are some of their activities: **Janice Buzby**, with the help of other members, staffed a table in front of the Time-Warner Building in May to get the word out about the Society and in June to gather signatures for a petition against torture. She, along with other Society members, staffed the NYSEC information tables once again for the "Lincoln Square Makes Music" event. Janice plans to do more "tabling" in support of various important issues in the future, so get in touch with her if you want to participate in this very worthwhile effort.

**Sy Amkraut** and **Sue Dye** staffed an information table outside Social Hall on Sundays all through June to encourage other members to post their flyers and to alert them of current and future events at the Society.

\* \* \* \* \*

**Ethics and the Theater** presented a well-attended public reading of Robert Penn Warren's *All the King's Men*. Carole and Jerry Chamlin, Pat Debrovner, James de Lorenzo, Maria Demarse, John Gurney, John Kreuttner, Alex Mogieleff, Ailene Quon, and David Waltzer were intrepid actors, with Jesai Jayhmes directing. Afterward, Betsy Unger led a lively group discussion.

After many rehearsals, the choral reading of the Declaration of Independence was presented to the public on July 4 by Jesai Jayhmes and a passel of Society members in Central Park. They gave six presentations in various park locations. Jesai and his cohorts will continue with the public performances throughout the city right up until Election Day. Members and nonmembers are welcome to join this group.

We received a tremendous response to our **2008 Fall Members' Retreat** announcement; many members have already signed up and we are now taking reservations for the waiting list only. Thanks to Janice Buzby, Sheila Kleinwald, Andra Miller, and Bob Liebeskind for putting the whole package together. If you have any ideas to share about activities for the Retreat, please let us know.

\* \* \* \* \*

**And last, we have this sad Obituary Notice to post:**

**Leonard Fondiller**, a member of the New York Society for Ethical Culture since 1944, died on April 15, at age 89. A memorial service was held at the Bergen Ethical Society. He and his wife, Caroline, who met through the NY Society and were elected Life Members in 1996, were married in 1954 by Leader Jerome Nathanson. They were founding members of the Queens Society for Ethical Culture. Leonard is survived by Caroline, their three children and four grandchildren.

## Teen Ethical Leadership

*Rita Chawla*

Our new Teen Ethical Leadership Program is a series of dynamic, interactive workshops that aim to inspire ethical leadership and social activism in teens, ages 13-16. Using a youth-centered approach, the students are engaged by the enjoyable process of “doing.” They learn about the art of leadership through group activities, role-playing, simulations, challenge games, case studies, community service, journaling, and reflection. The upcoming 10-week session will begin on September 21 and run to November 23 on Sunday afternoons, from 2:00 to 4:00 pm.

The program’s goal is to provide teens with the foundation, tools, and techniques for ethical leadership, which is based not only on knowledge and skills, but also broad vision, integrity, and good character. The participants will develop confidence by learning new skills and will become role-models for other teens. They will learn how to value themselves as talented individuals with great potential to improve society. We believe that their shared experience with other positive, like-minded teens will sustain their motivation for personal growth and self-development for years to come.

Workshop topics include: \*Self-confidence and Positive Character Traits; \*Effective Leadership and Team-building Skills; \*Good Listening and Communication Skills; \*Awareness of Social Justice Issues; \*Engagement in Social Action. The schedule: 2:00-2:30 pm: social time, with pizza and snacks; 2:30-4:00 pm: workshops and group activities. Admission is free. For more information e-mail [rchawla@nysec.org](mailto:rchawla@nysec.org), or call 212-874-5210, ext. 106.

## Drawing Classes

*Barbara Litke*

Autumn drawing classes led by Barbara E. Litke will begin again on Thursday, September 18 (6:00-7:45 pm). Classes will be held here at NYSEC, and will continue for eight weeks. Relax in an atmosphere of artistic challenges that will become an adventurous learning experience. Whether you consider yourself a beginner, dabbler, or experimenter, your individual style will be identified as you progress. Please contact Gloria Chandler, Administration Office, at 212-874-5210, ext. 117, to register. Class size is limited.

## Fall Writing Workshop

*Elaine Berman*

Ethical Culture’s Monday and Thursday ten-week writing workshops, “The Joy of Personal Writing,” will begin in early October. There are still places open in the Thursday class, which will meet from 7:00 to 9:00 pm, beginning on October 2. Both new and experienced writers are welcome. For information, call Gloria Chandler at 212 874-5210, ext. 117.

Read the essays of workshop writers at [www.nysec.org](http://www.nysec.org). Click on Table of Contents and scroll down.

## SSB Supervised Visitation Project

*Helen Mecs and Andra Miller*

Dr. Phyllis Harrison-Ross, president of our service arm, United Social Services, reports that one of the most needed services the USS provides, the Supervised Visitation Program, is

itself in need of financial support. “The program has been costing \$60,000 a year to run,” she explains, “and in the twenty years we’ve offered this service, we funded it thorough withdrawals from endowment funds. Those funds are now quite limited and will be gone in several years if we continue. We need to find other ways to pay for this program.”

The \$60,000 includes salaries for the licensed social worker who supervises and administers the program and for a security guard who protects it, stipends for two intern student-observers who are group leaders, and \$14,000 for liability insurance.

Fortunately, a member has offered the program a matching grant of \$25,000. That \$25,000 gets the ball rolling, and if the rest of us donate enough, it becomes \$50,000, or over 80 percent of the money needed. With this grass roots support, the Board of USS (the Social Service Board) will find grant sources for the additional \$10,000.

There is dire need for the work of this project, a model program that originated here, but is being replicated in other cities. It is the only free program providing court-ordered supervision in the city. This supervision is needed because of domestic violence, abuse, neglect or the threat of a parent’s abduction of a child. For parents who need to see their children on a weekly basis, the \$100 charged elsewhere is an unaffordable sum.

Here’s how it works: Each Saturday, a group of children, ages 3 to 13, are brought by their 16 custodial parents to a room at the Ethical Culture School. In a safe, neutral, supervised setting they visit with their non-custodial mothers or fathers.

While children visit with their non-custodial parent, the group of custodial parents meets with a staff member to

help each other, discuss particular issues and problems, and develop parenting skills. Non-custodial parents also meet after they see their children. The staff encourages children who are afraid, and the program is arranged so that a child's parents do not meet on arrival or during the visit. Success is measured when visits no longer need to be supervised or can be supervised by a relative, or the parents are able to arrange their own visits safely.

The Supervised Visitation Program, founded in 1989 by members Judith Wallach and Edith Levitt, does much more than provide space, security, support, and supervision. It provides hope for parents who love their children and need to see them. It provides connection for an estranged family.

We are rightly proud of this service, one of several community services provided low-income families by United Social Services.

The program needs your support. Please send a generous donation, as every dollar you contribute is doubled by the matching grant. Send your check to United Social Services, NYSEC, 2 West 64<sup>th</sup> Street, New York NY 10023.

## AEU Condemns Violence

The following are excerpts from a press release issued on July 31 by the AEU in response to recent violence that left several innocent people dead or wounded.

"The American Ethical Union, a progressive religious organization representing a federation of ethical societies across the United States, abhors the use of violence anywhere in the world, most especially in a religious setting involving youth and children. The Ethical Culture Move-

ment is saddened by the recent killings of innocent people in Knoxville, Tennessee. The AEU applauds the courageous and ethical actions of the congregants of the Tennessee Valley Unitarian Universalist Church, who overpowered the gunman who had killed two adults and wounded at least seven others.

"We stand in support of other religious organizations who lend their voices locally, nationally, and globally to oppose violence."

## PIC: Have You Heard?

*Abe Markman*

Following PIC's summer showing of *At the Death House Door*, we learned that New Yorkers Against the Death Penalty's mission is changing. (See third column on this page for a brief statement about its expanded mission.) Funds to cater the breakfast came from summer movie contributions. The second movie shown was *Sir! No Sir!* which documented the untold story of soldiers in uniform and on the battle field protesting the Vietnam War.

We also learned that in every state without the death penalty, except one, homicide rates are lower than in states with the penalty. The exception is Michigan. Susan Schindler, local coordinator for the New Yorkers Against the Death Penalty, did the research.

Alex Vitale, the Brooklyn College professor who was so impressive when he spoke to us recently about the labor movement, is coming back for a platform address! He will talk about his book, *City of Disorder: How the Quality of Life Campaign Transformed New York Politics*. Keep the date open—Sunday morning, October 12.

**Save the date:** On Thursday morning, November 20 at 8:00 am PIC, with the help of the Paid Family Leave Coalition, is holding a breakfast/forum on paid sick leave. To date we have lined up New York City Councilwoman Gale Brewer, two members of the coalition, and Chuck Hunt, Executive Vice-President, NYS Restaurant Association, as panel members. We are seeking other panelists with varying points of view.

It is true that hundreds of thousands in New York go to work sick rather than lose a day's pay. It is also true that small businesses would have difficulty substituting for absent workers. We see the role of an Ethical Culture Society as a medium for bringing out the best in all of the parties with the hope of achieving a mutually beneficial result.

## NYADP Expands Mission

*David Kaczynski*

New Yorkers Against the Death Penalty's expanded mission has evolved out of much brainstorming with our staff and Board. We've concluded that in order to hang on to abolition in the long-term, we need to pursue meaningful alternatives to the death penalty. The premise is that if legislators, law enforcement officials, and murder victims' family members focus on rational and effective crime policy, the death penalty will become increasingly irrelevant.

We are still working to flesh out our newly defined mission with the help of our lobbyist and through meetings with some of our historical group allies. A more formal and detailed plan will emerge from our Board/staff retreat in

September. We are also contemplating a name change to “New Yorkers for Alternatives to the Death Penalty.”

In effect, we aim to look forward without forgetting from where we came. We feel this approach is the best way to simultaneously secure our hard-won victory (looking backward) and promote crime policy that is rational, rather than reactive (looking forward).

## What Is Race?

*Andra Miller*



*(L-R) Karen Helm, speaker, and Andra Miller, presider, after the July 6 meeting*

Stating that race is not a biological phenomenon but a social construct, Karen Helm, a Board member and Officiant of the Baltimore Ethical Society, gave an insightful and thought-provoking talk at the platform meeting on Sunday, July 6.

Afterward, she was besieged with questions from those who wanted to talk more about the need to undo conditions that cause about one-fifth of our population to be in degraded positions because of the way our institutions operate, as well as because of our country’s irrational and unethical traditions and customs.

To develop her thesis, Ms. Helm drew on her background working in urban housing development, running a community mental health facility, advocating for health services for Aboriginals in Australia, serving as

president of the Victoria State YWCA, and serving as vice president of the San Francisco Chapter of the National Organization for Women.

## Honoring Our Volunteers

*Maria Feliz Fridman*

Ceremonial Hall was the site of the Society’s annual Volunteers Dinner, a festive celebration held on Thursday, June 12. Senior Leader Tony Hileman and Maria Feliz Fridman, Homeless Women’s Shelter Coordinator, welcomed the many Society members and friends who volunteer, and paid tribute to them and to the organizations that sponsor us in serving our shelter guests—all vital to keeping our shelter up and running and giving our guests a place to stay and helping them find more permanent homes.

Also in attendance and enjoying the festivities were Andra Miller, President of the Society and an overnight volunteer; Dr. Phyllis Harrison-Ross, Chair of the Social Service Board; and Robert Liebeskind, Executive Director. Maria thanked Wanda Manigault, who represented the Partnership for the Homeless; Judy Vicinanza, Program Director of the Antonio Olivieri Center; Heather Edmonson, Rehabilitation Coordinator; and Case Manager, Elizabeth Antwi.

Wanda Manigault of the Partnership recognized the Society and the SSB for their invaluable efforts and presented each with a plaque. Judy Vicinanza of the Olivieri Center addressed the attendees about the importance of the shelter in the lives of our overnight guests and how very much they appreciate the volunteers’ work. They make a difference in the lives of the guests,



*(L-R) Society members Dr. Maria Fridman and Dr. Phyllis Harrison-Ross, Chair, SSB*

Judy said, making them feel at home and making the program possible. Five of our shelter guests thanked the Society and presented two bouquets of roses, giving one rose to each volunteer in appreciation. “They are the friendly hands that have enabled the New York Society for Ethical Culture and United Social Services, Inc. (the SSB) to operate the shelter for the past 26 years,” Judy said. We have wonderful news: we’re very happy to report that three of our guests, Angela G., Margaret M., and Flora W., have been able to move into more permanent housing during the past season, September 2007 through May 2008.



*Elam (Judith Ginsburg’s son) and Judith at the volunteer’s dinner*

This year’s festivities also highlighted the achievements of Judith Ginsburg, who for over 20 years has coordinated the Homeless Artists

Workshop, a bi-annual event that brings together and celebrates the talents of homeless or formerly homeless artists. That program is sponsored by the Social Service Board and coordinated by Maria Fridman. Wanda Manigault, of the Partnership, presented a special plaque to Judith, whose son was present to enjoy the celebration.

**The volunteers:**

Our deepest appreciation goes to our volunteers and partner organizations. Society members who attended included Jerry and Carole Chamlin; Barbara Levenson; Sabine Rosenberg; Moira Whittington (honorary volunteer); Talat Ali; Bonnie Bean; Suzy Frazer and her husband, Mark Hofmaier; Lucile Kleiman; Barbara Litke; Carol Nadell Van Deusen and her husband, Richard; and Chris Everett.

Our shelter volunteers (who stay overnight and do housekeeping and other related chores) who attended included Ben Bean, Chester Lane, Andra Miller, Sabine Rosenberg, Marcella Montaruli, David and Valerie Leiman, and Frank Prescod. Members who also volunteer at the shelter, but were not able to attend, included Margaretha Jones, Pat Cohen, John Hwang, Virginia Scherer (honorary volunteer), Jane Ungar, and Society friend Pauline Kravath (now a member).

Society friends who attended the dinner were: Mimi Lamb; Vincent Montaruli (husband of member Marcella Montaruli); Stephanie Podmore (daughter of Maria Feliz); Barbara Fennell (friend of Frank Prescod); Jane Toutle; Grace Campagna; Deborah Titus; Elder Maxwell; Diana Glantecnik and her mother, Leah Freeman; Jim Heaney; Ed Fitzgerald and his wife, Bridget Smith; and Sheleigah Grube. Society friends who weren't able to attend were Win Jackson, Jonna McElrath, and Robert Davies.

Olivieri Center staff who were at the dinner were: Judy Vicinanaza, program director; Heather Edmonson, rehabilitation unit caseworker; and Elizabeth Antwi. Five of our overnight guests also attended. The Partnership for the Homeless was represented by Wanda Manigault. Those who were not able to attend from Columbia University were Lauren Biggs and Adam Smith, who coordinate Sunday activities during the school year.



*(L-R) Society member Chris Everett stands with volunteer Bridget Smith and Society President, Andra Miller, at the festive dinner*



*Back row: Olivieri Center's Judy Vicinanaza with three guests. Front row: (L-R) two of our guests with Heather Edmonson and Elizabeth Antwi*

## Hudson Guild Art Exhibition

*Valerie Leiman*

Ethical Culture art enthusiasts enjoyed the festivities at the 11<sup>th</sup> Annual Hudson Guild Art Exhibition. The event was held at the center named for Dr. John Elliott, a previous Senior Leader at the New York Society, who also was founder and President of Hudson Guild Neighborhood House. Many Society members enjoyed the Art Jam Exhibition at Hudson Guild's John Elliott Center Gallery One, on July 31.



*Back row: (L-R) Members Elizabeth Jacobs and Marcella Montaruli; Front row: David Leiman and Annette Sawyer, who is holding Valerie Leiman's award-winning entry—a multimedia 3-D collage in Plexiglas, which will be on display at the Elliott Center Gallery until Sept. 24*



*(L-R) Society members Abe Markman, Virginia Arnold, Cheryl Gross, David Leiman, Moe-Swe Myint (Membership Associate), and member Elizabeth Jacobs*

## Staff Luncheon

Smiles were evident all around at the June 20 luncheon that the New York Society for Ethical Culture and Social Service Boards held for our staff. This was an opportunity to express the Boards' appreciation for all of the hard work and dedication provided by the 20 members of our staff over the past year. In addition all of the staffers received certificates recognizing their efforts.



*(Clockwise L–R) Deborah Foster, Marc Bernstein, Bob Liebeskind, Yolanta Kosmaczewska, Maria Fridman, Howard Parker, Gloria Chandler, David Leiman, Julie Blutstein, Bob Berger, Sheila Kleinwald, Jerry Ranck, Lucile Kleiman, and Sheleigah Grube; (Foreground L-R) Andra Miller and Phyllis Harrison-Ross*

# September 2008

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
	1 <b>Society Offices Closed Labor Day</b>	2 <b>October 2008 Newsletter Deadline</b>	3 6:00 pm – Men's Group 7:30 pm – Great Books	4	5 11:00 am – Ethics on the Air (WBAI-99.5 FM)	6
7 10:00 am – Singing Practices 11:00 am – Ethics for Children 11:15 am – Morning Meeting 12:45 pm – Social Hour 1:45 pm – No program	8 6:30 pm – Board of Trustees	9	10 3:00 pm – ECRDG	11	12	13
14 10:00 am – Colloquy 11:00 am – Ethics for Children 11:15 am – Morning Meeting 12:45 pm – Social Hour 1:45 pm – PIC Open Meeting	15	16	17 6:00 pm – Socrates Café	18 6:00 pm – Drawing Class	19	20 9:30 am Supervised Visitation
21 10:00 am – Poetry Reading 10:00 am – Singing Practice 11:00 am – Ethics for Children 11:15 am – Morning Meeting 12:45 pm – Social Hour 1:45 pm – Life with Health 2:00 pm – Teen Leadership	22	23	24 6:00 pm – Discussing Ethical Issues Group	25 6:00 pm – Drawing Class	26	27 9:30 am Supervised Visitation
28 10:00 am – Coffee 'n Chat 11:00 am – Ethics for Children 11:15 am – Morning Meeting 12:45 pm – Social Hour 1:45 pm – No program 2:00 pm – Teen Leadership	29	30	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Great Books:</b> September 3 – Sophocles, <i>Oedipus the King</i>* <b>ECRDG: (Ethical Culture Reading Discussion Group)</b> September 10 – Michael Chabon, <i>The Yiddish Policeman's Union</i> * Complete work</p>			

**Ethical Culture** is a humanistic religious and philosophical movement in which people share a core of common values: the worth of each individual, ethics as central to our lives, eliciting the best from each other and doing good in the world.

We seek truth as a growing, changing body of knowledge based on experience, reason and scientific observation, and seek to use it in support of human well-being.

NEW YORK SOCIETY FOR  
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