



THE ALLIANCE ALERT **November-December 2022**

**The Women's Alliance of the
Unitarian Church of All Souls, Inc.**



MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

By Christine Goodwin

Now that it is November, and the holidays are fast approaching, it seems that this year has flown by. We had hoped 2022 would bring a return to our normal routine, but continuing construction at All Souls requires adjustments. Our monthly meetings will be on Zoom for the foreseeable future. In anticipation of return to in-person monthly meetings, we had changed our meeting dates to the third Wednesdays of the month at 12:00 noon, which was our regular meeting date and time for many years. We will keep that scheduled time, but on Zoom for now, and hope for a return to in-person luncheons in Reidy Fellowship Hall as soon as construction is complete and the elevators are accessible. In the meantime, the best way to meet in person is to join the monthly outings to enjoy NYC culture or one of the Special Interest Group (SIG) activities such as a movie or concert or play.



The Women's Alliance has several end of year tasks such as the election of officers (see more in this issue of The Alert), finalizing the Budget for 2023, and deciding on a list of charitable organizations that will receive year-end donations from the Women's Alliance upon approval by the Executive Board. Another year-end activity is recommending women for the Clara Barton Sisterhood Award through an application process. The Clara Barton Sisterhood is administered by the Unitarian Universalist Women's Federation, and at All Souls it is bestowed at the beginning of the new year by one of our ministers.

Con't . . .

REMINDER: ELECTION DAY IS TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 8

Be sure to vote and make your voice heard!

Please reach out if you need help with in-person voting in the General Election. WA member Sandy Fisher has graciously offered to help you find the help you need. Contact her at sfisher535@aol.com or 646-675-3608.

Every voter in New York, New Jersey and Connecticut can avoid the crowds with Early Voting through Sunday, Nov. 6.

For those needing more information about voting, WA member Jane Colvin suggests going to vote411.org. The site offers personalized voting information including your poll sites and voting hours for both Early and Election Day voting, as well as a sample of the ballot you will encounter.

Message from President, con't . . .

The award is named for Universalist Clara Barton, founder of the American Red Cross, who was active until well into her 80s. In order to honor her example, women who are 80 or older and who are active in their congregations and/or communities are honored and awarded a Clara Barton Sisterhood certificate. While the Women's Alliance is blessed with many talented and active members, we don't necessarily know the members' ages.

If you know a WA member who would qualify and you would like to nominate her (or yourself) for this award, please contact Winnie Olsen at winingo993@gmail.com or 570-228-1952, so we may begin the application process.

Recent Clara Barton Sisterhood members have been:

- 2021 – Mary Ann Van Osdol
- 2020 - Mary Geissman, Mary Dugan
- 2019 - Sandra Ekberg, Marilyn Mehr
- 2018 – Maureen Marwick, Peggy Montgomery

We hope this year we can share a truly thankful Thanksgiving with family and friends and celebrate a joyful Hanukkah and Christmas.

Finally, I wish you all a most happy holiday season and a blessed New Year!

SOME RECENT WA EVENTS

See pp. 7-8 for more



WA members explored parks and art and breathtaking views during a September 15 outing to Battery Park City, just before parts of the southern tip of Manhattan will be closed for two years. From l to r: Mary Geissman, Sandy Ekberg, Victoria Kimbrough, Lydia Dinkelmann, Judy Staples, and Alix-Marie Hall. Not pictured: Alice Clark.



Seven of us explored “the cultural event of the fall” (The Washington Post) on October 12: “Cataclysm: The 1972 Diane Arbus Retrospective Revisited” at David Zwirner’s gallery in Chelsea. Afterwards, Judy Staples, Alix Hall, Sandra Fisher, Mary Geissman, and Maureen Marwick (seen here l to r) enjoyed lunch *al fresco*. Gerda Artes and Joyce Elderfield also joined the outing.

WOMEN'S ALLIANCE UPCOMING EVENTS

NOTE ON EVENT PARTICIPATION: The Executive Board encourages all members to participate in Women's Alliance activities. However, as some outings require the use of staircases, walking long distances or crossing uneven terrains, any member with physical limitations should use good judgment before registering. The Board asks that such members speak with the outing leader and consult the visit site to determine how able they will be to get around; further, it is strongly recommended that they bring a companion to help them. Because outing leaders are responsible to a group of attendees, they cannot assist an individual on an outing, unless, of course, an emergency arises. By participating in WA outings, attendees agree they have read this statement and will follow its recommendations.

Wednesdays through December 7, 12:45 p.m.

Music Special Interest Group (SIG) at Alice Tully Hall, Lincoln Center

Juilliard's Wednesdays at One concerts are free with open seating. No ticket is required. WA member Mary Geissman plans to attend all the concerts listed below. If you wish to join her, meet in the lobby of Alice Tully Hall at 12:45 p.m. Lunch following the one-hour concert at a nearby restaurant. For more information, contact Mary at 646-238-7280, migeissman@gmail.com

November 2 — Lab Orchestra plays Korngold, Rachmaninoff, Tchaikovsky & Prokofiev

November 30 — Music for Piano

December 7 — Honors Chamber Music

Thursday, November 10, 11 a.m.

"Edward Hopper's New York" at Whitney Museum of American Art

The exhibition is a comprehensive look at Hopper's life and work, from his early impressions of New York in sketches, prints, and illustrations to his late paintings. It brings together many of Hopper's iconic pictures as well as several lesser-known yet critically important examples. The exhibition offers a fresh take on this formidable figure and considers the city itself as a lead actor.



Museum admission: \$25, seniors \$18. Outing leader Sandra Fisher is a member of the Whitney and can purchase tickets in advance for 50% off. Let Sandra know by noon on November 8th so she can purchase discounted tickets and you can reimburse her on the 10th upon arrival at the Whitney. Whitney Museum, 99 Gansevoort St. (in Meatpacking District), south of W. 14th Street near the entrance to the High Line. Face coverings are strongly recommended.

Lunch will follow at 1 p.m. at a nearby reasonably priced restaurant.

RSVP: Museum, lunch or both? Include cell and email to Sandra at sfisher535@aol.com.

Fridays, November 11 and December 9, 7-9 p.m.

Play Reading Special Interest Group (SIG) at New York Society for Ethical Culture

Ethics and the Theater, the long-running staged reading and discussion series, features performances by professional actors; a Broadway play, condensed to one hour; and a moderated, open discussion about the ethical issues raised and explored in the work.

Admission \$10, New York Society for Ethical Culture, Ceremonial Hall, 2 W. 64th St. Look for more information in emails from Chris Goodwin.

November 11 — "Hillary and Clinton" by Luca Hnath

December 9 — "Good People" by David Lindsay-Abair

Wednesday, November 16, 12 p.m.

Membership Meeting on Zoom

The Rev. Dick Leonard, Minister Emeritus of All Souls, will be interviewed by WA member Sandra Ekberg. We look forward to hearing Dick share pivotal moments of his life and how he approached them in a way that helped him regroup, move on and reach his commendable age of 95 years. There will also be time to socialize and a brief business meeting, including a report from the Nominating Committee and the election of future officers, who will begin a two-year term at the WA Annual Meeting in February, 2023. Barbara Reed, Chair of the Nominating Committee, would like to thank the committee: Anne Brewer, a current member, and Mary Geissman, a former member. They have presented the following slate of officers:

- For President, Chris Goodwin for a second term
- For Treasurer, Mary Geissman for a first term
- For Corresponding Secretary, Carol Schneider for a first term

Thursday, November 24, 11:30 a.m. - 1:30 p.m.

Thanksgiving Day potluck lunch at All Souls, Reidy Friendship Hall

Join All Souls friends and bring your favorite holiday dish to share. Feel free to bring a friend and please RSVP at info@allsoulsnyc.org. \$10 suggested donation to help cover expenses.

Thursday, December 8, 11 a.m.

New-York Historical Society (two exhibitions)

"The Salem Witch Trials: Reckoning and Reclaiming"

Even after 300 years, Salem's witch trials remain a defining example of intolerance and injustice in American history. The extraordinary events of 1692-3 led to the deaths of 25 innocent people, the vast majority of whom were women. This exhibition includes tangible fragments from the past that illuminate the real lives of Salem's residents. It seeks to ask: In moments of injustice, what role do we play?

"Black is Beautiful: The Photography of Kwami Brathwaite"



One of the minds behind the "Black Is Beautiful" movement, Brathwaite has long deployed his photography as an agent of social change. His 1960s collective also sought to address how white conceptions of beauty and body image affected Black women. This exhibition features stunning studio portraits and behind-the-scenes images of Harlem's artistic community, as well as dresses from the era, offering a long-overdue exploration of Brathwaite's work.

Museum Admission: \$22, seniors \$17. More details to come. The New-York Historical Society, 170 Central Park West @ 77th Street. Face masks are recommended.

Lunch will follow either at the museum or at a nearby restaurant.

Leader: Susan Hoehn. RSVP to Susan at mshnyc50@gmail.com, 347-752-8562.

Women's Reading Group (SIG)

Second Tuesday of each month, 7:00 p.m. on Zoom

- November 8: *Everything Good Will Come*, by Sefi Atta
- December 13: Poetry readings
- January 10: *Come Fly the World*, by Julia Cooke
- February 14: *The Old Drift*, by Namwali Serpell

For more information, contact: christina.black50@gmail.com

WA MEMBER PROFILE

Carol Schneider is our newest member of the Board

By Alynne Wesson

“C’est la guerre” is Carol Schneider’s breezy response to the latest adversity. She speaks with the patience and wisdom of someone who experienced hardship at an early age — her mother died when she was very young, and she chose not to live with her father after he remarried — and also as someone who learned very early that she needed to make the best of it, not rely on the charity of others, and, importantly, care for herself as well as others. These are lessons likely to serve her well as the new corresponding secretary for the Women’s Alliance.



Back in the 1960s, Carol dropped out of day classes at City College and took night classes so she could work during the day and pay her rent. Eventually she dropped out of college altogether to work full-time in advertising, having entered the field as a clerical worker and then risen to media planner and director. After 18 years she was making so much money her firm let her go to hire someone else at a lower salary. So she started over, this time working for Gary Null, the radio and television host and alternative medicine advocate. You may have seen “Gary Null: How to Live Forever” during PBS pledge weeks. As she had done 18 years earlier, Carol got her foot in the door with clerical work, and then soon became Null’s line producer. After five years they parted ways over salary matters, but he remains an inspiration.

This time starting over, Carol reversed her pattern of career progression, ending up in clerical work rather than using it to get a foot in the door. Having finished her college degree during years of full-time employment, she went to work at the Harlem elementary school P.S. 149 Sojourner Truth, first as a teacher. She discovered teaching was not for her, and then chose to become a secretary at the school. The job was a better fit, more interesting than she had expected, and eventually she was able to retire in 2014 with a coveted DOE pension.

Following Null’s example, Carol continues to read a great deal about health and even writes about it, and exercises pretty much daily. You can still read her column “MOTHER Nature’s Remedies” (<https://www.edgarcaycenyc.org/books-a-remedies/mother-nature-s-remedies>) on the website of Association for Research and Enlightenment of New York Edgar Cayce Community, though the organization’s brick-and-mortar center closed its doors during the pandemic. Carol takes a regular sun salutation-based yoga class online; she attends three exercise classes at 92NY every week; and she walks in the city as much as she can. She eats a plant-based diet and laughs that she hasn’t smoked since 1983, when she was still in her 30s and banned from smoking during a yoga retreat.

It all seems to pay off. She has a lyrical voice and her sylph-like appearance brings to mind a ballet dancer. Somehow it seems fitting that she is a self-described “crazy ballet lover” who recently attended a dress rehearsal at American Ballet Theatre.

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Con't . . .

At All Souls, which Carol and her husband Mike joined in the late 1990s, she became interested in Buddhism, which has become an important part of her life. She also takes part in Marianne Carroll's Enlightened Aging Book Club every other Wednesday, and now, in the last year, she has joined the Women's Alliance. Her new board appointment comes on the heels of significant commitment to the WA; for months she took her laptop for Sunday visits to a WA member in rehab, and together they would tune into the Sunday service. She looks forward to getting to know that member even better and to finding out about all the WA has to offer.



SMALL IS BEAUTIFUL

SIGs are a great way to socialize

While the Alliance continues to grapple with fallout from the pandemic and construction at All Souls in order to schedule monthly meetings and special events, members who wish to gather in small groups continue to have great options. In addition to the monthly outings, which usually involve a walking tour or a visit to a gallery or museum, Special Interest Groups (SIGs) offer programs for small groups; they can usually be enjoyed sitting down, and some of them can be enjoyed year-round.

WA's music lovers rely on the Music SIG to be on the lookout for affordable, high-quality programs of classical (mostly), folk and jazz music. "Almost everything we've done is free," says Mary Geissman, who started the group about five years ago. Recent programs have included Juilliard presentations at Alice Tully Hall, and, in summer, outdoor concerts at Lincoln Center and the Naumburg Bandshell in Central Park. Getting a good seat at an outdoor concert is never a problem because one intrepid soul will arrive early to "reserve" seats for WA members. And, when they are available, TDF discount tickets to daytime concerts by the New York Philharmonic are purchased by Mary, who is happy to do the legwork. Some members opt to gather after the concerts for coffee or counter-service food. "It's a really good opportunity to socialize," says Mary. "There is a core group that always comes, but there are always new people to meet."

An Alliance survey conducted a couple years ago showed members rated "going to movies" together as one of the things they most wanted to do. And indeed, the Film SIG is one of the most popular groups in the WA. Lately it's been taking advantage of \$10 late-morning, sparsely attended screenings, most recently seeing the thought-provoking "Tár" with Cate Blanchett. Maureen Marwick, who leads the SIG, jovially confides that members spent a lot of time explaining that film to each other at the optional, moderately-priced lunch that followed. She says Film SIG attendance is down since the pandemic, from about 12-14 to 8-10, but it remains "a very good way to meet people. Not just the same people, though there is a small core group. We talk about what we're doing and where we're going."

Sandy Ekberg started the Play-Reading SIG several years ago and keeps us up to date about the Ethics and the Theater series at New York Society for Ethical Culture. Broadway plays there are condensed to one hour and performed in staged readings by professional actors. They are followed by an open discussion about the ethical issues explored in the work. Tickets are \$10 and sometimes the SIG will meet for supper before the show.

Con't . . .

The Women's Reading Group SIG moved to Zoom in spring 2020 and has been running strong ever since, even in summers. "It's a devoted bunch," says Christina Black, a 10-year (give or take) member who has followed Mary-Ella Holst as organizer of the group. Some members now tune in from their country houses and even from across the country. Together they read and discuss fiction, non-fiction, and poetry by women. Recent selections include "The Doctors Blackwell" (Janice Nimura), "Beloved" (Toni Morrison), and "God in Ruins" (Kate Atkinson). Meeting times and reading material are listed in the Alliance Alert.

Judith Kozloff leads the sorely missed Bridge SIG. "The friendly, nonjudgemental afternoon bridge game is temporarily suspended due to lack of a space," she writes. "The internal building works at All Souls have rendered any available rooms a scarce commodity. We hope to start again in January. Players with some experience are welcome, including players whose knowledge of conventions is rusty. If interested, please contact Judith Kozloff (212-289-0410) for updates on time and place when these are fixed."

Be on the lookout for emails from Chris Goodwin for announcements about SIG events that cannot be scheduled far enough in advance to appear in the Alert. And please note that additional SIGs can be started by any member who has a particular interest and would be willing to share with others. For example: Knitting, Walking, Cooking, (other ideas??).



WA member Joan Flesch brought the important work of Women for Afghan Women, the world's largest organization supporting Afghan women, to our attention by organizing the program for our October 19 membership meeting. Sadaff Baseer and Laura Marks of WAW's New York Community Center spoke to us via Zoom.

Alliance Alert Staff

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On September 20, the WA Welcome Back Party was celebrated in person for the first time in three years! It was great to see many people old and new. Other church groups, including the Deacons, All Souls Historical Society, The League, and Welcoming Congregation, joined WA for the festivities.



The Women's Alliance (WA) is a membership organization. If you are interested in learning more about WA and its various programs and events, please email WomensAlliance@AllSoulsnycorg.

The Women's Alliance - supporting values of friendship, equality and justice