



# American Philosophical Practitioners Association

APPA  
The City College of New York  
160 Convent Avenue  
New York, NY 10031  
[www.appa.edu](http://www.appa.edu)

## Celebrating APPA's First Decade, 1999-2009

### Summary 2008 | Ahead 2009

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### Dear Members and Friends of APPA,

First, if belatedly, on behalf of APPA's Directors and Officers, I extend to you our very best wishes for the happiest of holiday seasons, and for the coming year.

This June of 2009, APPA will celebrate its 10<sup>th</sup> year of existence. APPA was conceived by five philosophers, in Philadelphia, in late December 1998, over coffee in the Reading Market, not far from the Liberty Bell. Between December 1998 and May 1999, we crafted APPA's constitution, evolved its structure, and articulated its mission and vision. In June of 1999, we launched our website and began accepting members.

Now in our tenth year, APPA is the second-largest philosophical association in the world (smaller only than the APA, founded 1905). APPA has more than 750 members in dozens of countries, including more than 200 certified practitioners across the Americas, UK, Europe, Israel, and East Asia. The influence of philosophical practice continues to wax in many domains, from national to international, from educational to political.

### National Scene

In the American university system, philosophical counseling and philosophical group work for undergraduate students are slowly but surely taking root. Pioneers of this internal transformation include Nim Batchelor at Elon University in North Carolina, Steve Best at the University of Texas (El Paso), Kate Mehuron at Eastern Michigan University, Andrew FitzGibbon and Kathy Russell at SUNY Cortland, Lauren Tillinghast at NYU, and J. Michael Russell at Cal State Fullerton. Several of our Certified Practitioners are (or have been) Department Chairs, practicing philosophy transparently and in some cases with the official sanction of their institutions. If, as foreseen, I become Chair of Philosophy at The City College of New York this autumn, I shall resume my perennial quest to establish an M.A. program in Philosophical Practice there.

Several American psychiatrists are also collaborators in, or commentators on, philosophical practice. Dr. Tom Firnberg, a practicing psychiatrist in California and an APPA-Certified Practitioner, recently earned an M.A. in Philosophy at Biola University, and avidly seeks to bring philosophical counseling to Biola. Dr. Ron Pies, a psychiatrist at Tufts, has published a delightful book on Stoicism, Buddhism and other philosophical applications to counseling, a review of which was published in APPA's Journal (vol 3.3). Dr. Irvin Yalom, a well-known author and pioneer of existential psychiatry, continues his engagement with applied philosophy in a forthcoming novel on Spinoza.

**APPA is a non-profit educational corporation. APPA members apply philosophical systems, insights and methods to managing human problems and ameliorating human estates.**

Public awareness of philosophical counseling is still growing modestly but steadily in the USA; while in Asia, Europe and Latin America it is receiving considerable media exposure. *In 2008, APPA's website attracted more than 10,000 visitors per month, most of whom were seeking philosophical services.*

In addition to generic public interest in philosophical counseling, there has also been a trickle of special interest over the years, in the form of letters from inmates of the US correction system. In response, APPA has launched a program called "Philosophy Inside", in which APPA-Certified Counselors engage (anonymously) in a cycle of monthly correspondence with inmates, for a period of one year. The program is being coordinated by Ernest Courant, [ernest.courant@appa.edu](mailto:ernest.courant@appa.edu)

A year ago, I sent out an "SOS" to you, the membership, as we were obliged to take over the reins of our Journal's publication from Taylor & Francis. Thanks to your enthusiastic response, we attained our publishing goal in 2008, bringing out three fine issues: Vol. 3.1 (March), Vol. 3.2, (July), and Vol. 3.3 (October). Our subscriber-base is on the increase, and we plan to publish Vol. 4 (3 issues) in 2009.

I would especially like to thank Lauren Tillinghast (Managing Editor), Troy Camplin (Reviews Editor), Greg Goode (Technical Consultant), and Tom Griffith (Legal Consultant) for their invaluable collaboration. Seamus Carey (Associate Editor) continues to work on generating institutional subscriptions, starting with his own Manhattan College's Counseling Center. *I take this opportunity to urge our academic and professional members to prevail upon their institutions (libraries, etc.) to subscribe as well.*

### **International Scene**

Internationally, 2008 was a very good year indeed for APPA. Here is a summary of developments in Argentina, Sweden, India, Japan and China.

In Argentina, APPA-Certified Philosophical Counselor Giselle Monges has a weekly radio program in Buenos Aires, in which she applies philosophy to the everyday lives of her large urban audience. BsAs has a population of roughly 12 million, and is the most psychoanalyzed city outside New York. Thus philosophical practice has been hugely popular there. Giselle also runs philosophical workshops at the Borges Cultural Center. She is a great asset to the APPA, and a highly visible practitioner in Argentina.

In Sweden, a pilot project was implemented in 2008 that offers philosophical counseling and Socratic dialogue at Rehabstation, a state-of-the-art clinical medical setting for spinal-cord-injured and newly-diagnosed MS patients. This initiative was undertaken in collaboration with Dr. Claes Hultling, Dr. Richard Levi and the Spinalis Foundation. The project could become a template for implementation at other similar facilities. There are more than 400,000 MS patients and more than 250,000 spinal-cord-injured patients in the US, a good many of whom would benefit from applying philosophy to their lives. Hundreds of philosophical practitioners could become service providers to these patient populations.

In India, APPA was introduced to political, business and cultural leaders at an extraordinary conference in Mumbai, in June. Billed as "Responsibility to the Future," the event was organized by Sundeep Waslekar, President of Strategic Foresight Group, India's leading think-tank. Needless to say, the proponents of peace, prosperity and philosophical well-being who assembled in Mumbai in June are moral antipodes of the terrorists who targeted Mumbai in November. I stayed in both hotels that were later attacked – the Oberai and the Taj Palace – and patronized the Leopold Café (another terrorist target). Let us extend our deepest condolences to the victims, their families, and to all Mumbaikers.

Mumbaikers whom I know are tolerant and courageous people, whose virtues cannot be compromised by bullets and bombs. On a brighter note, APPA has a new member in Northern India (Rajasthan), namely K.L. Sharma, who is not only working to establish a philosophical counseling practice in his hometown of Jaipur, but has also founded a gerontological association for aging Indians. As India modernizes and secularizes, philosophical practice may merit a noble reincarnation in Indian culture. [http://www.strategicforesight.com/conference\\_reports.htm#ConferenceonResponsibility](http://www.strategicforesight.com/conference_reports.htm#ConferenceonResponsibility)

In Japan, the APPA has been introduced to millions of readers, mostly women, thanks to a dialogue with Daisaku Ikeda, which is currently being serialized in *Pumpkin*, a monthly women's magazine. Daisaku Ikeda is President of Soka Gakkai International (SGI), a lay organization of Nichiren Buddhists with more than 12 million members worldwide. He is a renowned Buddhist scholar, author, educator and founder of Soka University (Tokyo) and Soka University of America (Aliso Viejo, CA). President Ikeda's dialogues with intellectual, scientific and political leaders (e.g. Arnold Toynbee, Linus Pauling, Mikhail Gorbachev) have been published in many languages. Our dialogue, on philosophy for the 21<sup>st</sup> century, will be published as a book (initially in Japanese) later in 2009. Meanwhile, thanks to Daisaku Ikeda's interest and SGI's organization, philosophical practice and the mission of the APPA have been introduced to, and are being well-received by, an engaged Japanese readership. <http://www.daisakuikeda.org/index.php?mid=news&idnews=246>

In China, APPA currently has two certified practitioners in East Asia: David Tai Wai Wan in Hong Kong, and Jinnam Yi in Seoul. This number could increase substantially in the near future, owing to new initiatives in Taiwan, and in China. I will visit Taipei this summer, to offer a 3-day orientation to philosophical practice at Fu-Jen Academia Catholica. In mainland China, APPA-Certified Counselor and Consultant David Malloy (University of Saskatchewan) has been invited to the University of Hunan as Principal Investigator at its newly-established Research Institute for Multiculturalism and Applied Philosophy. David will be representing the APPA in Hunan as well. Beyond this, APPA has been introduced to the highest levels of Chinese political, business and cultural leadership, at the annual Global China Business Meetings (Frankfurt 2007, Barcelona 2008). These meetings are organized by Dr. Frank-Jurgen Richter, President of Horasis, A Global Visions Community. <http://www.horasis.org/>

### APPA's First Decade, 1999-2009

Looking back, having started "ex nihilo" in 1999, we have accomplished a lot in our first ten years.

- APPA has hundreds of members, in more than 40 US states and 35 countries.
- APPA's Forum, moderated by Chris Johns, is a network of unique philosophical resources.
- APPA's Journal has successfully transitioned from hard to soft copy, and we look forward to publishing future issues and volumes.
- APPA's professional certificate continues to be sought-after by aspiring philosophical practitioners world-wide.
- Clients trust APPA's reputation, and seek out APPA-Certified practitioners on a preferential basis. APPA's website attracted more than 120,000 visitors in 2008.
- Inquiries from potential clients as well as from aspiring practitioners continue to pour in from all quarters, and especially from the Latin world – Spain, Portugal, Italy, Brazil, Latin America.
- Andrea Messineo, a Certified Counselor and APPA's versatile Communications Manager, handles a plethora of queries in fluent Italian and Spanish, in addition to impeccable English.
- APPA has become known to European and Asian political, business and cultural leaders, and its existence has minutely but definitely helped counter-balance America's declining image abroad.

APPA is 100% member-driven and 100% member-supported. In legal terms we are a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization; in fiscal terms, a tax-exempt public charity. The City College of New York is our mailing address, and our web domain is a coveted “.edu”. We operate with the explicit authorities of the New York State Department of Education, and the New York State Department of State. That said, we are not beholden to any government, corporation or religion. Rather, our mission and vision reflect a global educational organization, rooted in philosophy.

APPA is a peaceable association of thoughtful people who apply philosophy to their lives, and who also help others to do so. APPA's reputation and influence are growing in stature, well beyond our relatively modest numbers and meagre material resources. Thanks to many beneficial philosophical activities engaged in by our members, APPA's impact on people and philosophical cultures is significant and profound. Only ten years old, APPA is a precocious organization with a promising future.

APPA's maintenance and due diligence entail a good many complex operations. Some of you already know, while others may not have realized, that APPA incurs an array of monthly and annual expenses. These include legal fees, bookkeeping fees, accounting fees, insurance premiums, website hosting and authentication fees, various State and Federal agency fees, communications costs, office supplies, and part-time office help. While I happily donate the many hours required to oversee APPA's vital operations, APPA relies on you—its members—to renew your annual dues and thereby fuel our engine. APPA depends squarely on your loyal support, year in and year out. Please read on, to see how you can continue to help us grow.

### **APPA's Next Decade, 2009-2019**

Our Annual General Meeting, celebrating our first decade and launching our next decade, will take place in New York this June 2009, on Saturday June 13. We will announce the meeting place and provisional program as soon as possible. We sincerely hope you will participate.

In June 2009, I will have served 10 years as APPA's President. My current term will expire in 2011. If APPA's Directors so desire, I will gladly and proudly continue to serve in this capacity, provided that APPA's membership also expresses its strong support.

Success engenders obligation. APPA's successes give rise to many duties. During the past decade, I have donated as much time as possible to APPA—in addition to being a Professor at City College, an author, and a philosophical practitioner. APPA's Directors, Officers and volunteers generously donate their valuable time as well, but even so there are always many things that could or should be done, and often too few people or resources to do them. For example:

- We need to upgrade our website, and to enlist or hire a skilled webmaster.
- We need to offer more programs, especially for auxiliary members.
- We need to establish an online bookstore featuring APPA authors.
- We need to publish more frequent newsletters.
- We need to boost our Journal's subscriptions, especially institutional ones.
- We need to translate our Newsletter and other broadly-disseminated documents into Spanish, Italian, Portuguese and—ideally—into Japanese and Mandarin as well.

APPA can and will accomplish these things, and more: *if you support us*. Here are four ways in which you can vitally support us.

**First and foremost:** Please renew your memberships. <https://www.appa.edu/renew.htm>

We have not increased our dues in 10 years, and will not do so, if enough members renew. If you have questions about your membership status, please contact Beth Adams, Memberships Manager, [beth.adams@appa.edu](mailto:beth.adams@appa.edu)

**Second:** Please subscribe to our Journal. You can do this on the renewal form. Those of you with institutional affiliations, please request that your institution (e.g. library, center, etc.) subscribe as well. Institutional subscriptions: <https://www.appa.edu/isubscribe.htm>

**Third:** Please contribute to our Journal, and/or to our Newsletter. If you're a scholar, submit a Journal article to [lauren.tillinghast@appa.edu](mailto:lauren.tillinghast@appa.edu) . If you're doing something newsworthy, we'll report it in our Newsletter. Send news items to [admin@appa.edu](mailto:admin@appa.edu) .

**Fourth:** Please make a donation to APPA. All donations are 100% tax deductible, and incentives are offered as well. Donate today: <https://www.appa.edu/donations.htm>

If you, our members, show solidarity and support in 2009, we will create an auspicious beginning to APPA's second decade. **Renew! Subscribe! Contribute! Donate!** Please play your parts, enabling me to play mine. Together we will further philosophical practice globally, via its premier vehicle: APPA. Thank you one and all for being part of APPA's first, and next, decades.

Very best regards,



Lou Marinoff  
Founding President, APPA  
[lou.marinoff@appa.edu](mailto:lou.marinoff@appa.edu)