



ETHICAL CULTURE

M O N T H L Y

VOLUME 30 NUMBER 8

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APRIL 2011

APRIL PLATFORMS

April 3 CW2 Adam Sternglass

"Memories of a Jewish serviceman in Afghanistan"

CW2 (Chief Warrant Officer Second Class) Adam Sternglass, who lives in Elizabeth, came back from Afghanistan on medical leave. He will discuss his decision to enlist at 18, inspired by stories from vets from WW I to Vietnam, over the objections of his parents. He will describe his interactions as a Jewish soldier with Christian fellow servicemen, and with Moslems, and with a German contingent in Kabul, as well as various experiences as an American serving in Kuwait and Afghanistan and — back home — doing outreach in Elizabeth, as a soldier on a bicycle.



"After graduating from Great Neck South Senior High School in 1978, I joined the Navy for four years. I was in the engine room. As a young sailor, I was in the South Pacific and Japan. My favorite Sea Story was in the Philippines when I was 20. The locals stood around me and thought I looked like Jesus — I had a beard then. In college, I stayed in the Navy Reserve for two years. I did a weekend a month while at SUNY Buffalo. The VA paid most of my tuition.

"I came back into military service in 2000 while I was earning good money as a computer tech. I worked on Wall Street and assorted consult-

ing firms. I returned for extra money and retirement; I had already done six years, I told my wife. I did a weekend a month. After September 11, I have had three Mobilizations as well as little call-ups in the States. I did port security in NYC. I was in Alabama for two months. Since 2002, I have spent a total of 3 ½ years away from home. I have a wife and three children. In my three MOB's, I've been to the Mediterranean, Germany, Kuwait, Iraq and Afghanistan."

April 10 Arnold Cohen and Nancy Zak, *"The State of Affordable Housing in NJ and the nation"*

With Governor Christie saying he will kill the Council on Affordable Housing and the federal government proposing major cuts to HUD programs, what is happening to affordable housing? Arnold Cohen and Nancy Zak, who have worked on housing issues in New Jersey for over 20 years, will discuss the impact of the latest state and federal actions and what we can do about them.



30 years. She has been involved as an organizer with a variety of citywide issues, including affordable housing, tenant rights, city budget issues, planning, zoning and environmental concerns. On the neighborhood level, she has been active in environmental clean up, neighborhood planning and quality of life issues for the Ironbound

community. She published a tri-lingual neighborhood newspaper, "Ironbound Voices," for over twenty years. One proud accomplishment was coordinating a successful park preservation effort for Riverbank Park, a 100-year-old Olmstead park which was threatened with demolition, through a volunteer community group called SPARK (Save the Park at Riverbank). Nancy lives in Newark with her husband, Newark native Arnold Cohen, and her daughter Beth.

Arnold Cohen is Policy Coordinator of the Housing & Community Development Network of NJ, responsible for coordinating the Network's public policy advocacy and education activities. Mr. Cohen joined the Network in 1994, prior to which he worked in organizing grass roots and statewide public policy campaigns in the areas of affordable housing, early childhood education, health care and environmental justice. In addition to his work at the Network, Mr. Cohen sits on the boards of the Coalition for Affordable Housing and the Environment and the Mercer Alliance to End Homelessness and is a member of the Anti-Poverty Network Steering Committee.



April 17 Martha Gallahue, *"Will the Nations Face Up To Climate Change?"*

Martha Gallahue will share her reflections from her participation in the last Climate Change Confer-

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Ethical Culture Society of Essex County



Martha Gallahue, *Interim Leader*
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EC Monthly newsletter writers/contributors:
Elaine Durbach, *platforms*; Anja Moen,
Howard Gilman, *editor/graphics*

Editor's note

The newsletter invites you to submit articles, announcements, commentary, etc. for publication. ITEMS MUST BE RECEIVED BY THE EIGHTH OF THE MONTH FOR INCLUSION IN THE FOLLOWING MONTH'S EDITION. Items should be no more than 150 words, preferably submitted via email to the editor (gilman.howard@gmail.com). Items can also be delivered to: Editor, Ethical Society Newsletter, 516 Prospect St., Maplewood, NJ 07040. Please call the office, 973-763-1905, and leave word especially if your item is time-sensitive.

Editor reserves right to edit for length, clarity and content. Opinions offered in this publication are those of the authors.

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ence in Cancun as to the state of the nations in addressing this critical topic. She will offer several “open doors” that some countries are pursuing and recommend a couple of steps that civil society can take to help them become more decisive.

April 24 — “The Religious Celebrations of Spring”

A panel with Meredith Sue Willis, Lisa Novemsky, Elaine Durbach and others will lead a discussion on our personal responses to the spring reli-



gious celebrations, Passover and Easter, with all their traditions and associations — of belief, moral teachings, and gustatory delights (e.g. chocolate eggs and crunchy matzoh). Members are invited to bring their favorite seasonal snacks and some of the symbols cherished by their families.



ANNOUNCEMENT

The honoring dinner for Dick and Nancy Bohn will take place May 7th at 6 p.m. at the Society building. Invitations will be in the mail and all the details will be contained therein.

— Susan Kennedy

Educating World Citizens at 7 and 8 Years of Age

Thanks to all the many members who responded to my call for extra greeters to welcome an expected group of parents to attend the above-named Platform. Indeed, we did have a new group of parents, some with children, who seemed impressed with the electrifying presentation. Thanks also to Gabe Norstein for his competent baby sitting.

— E. Betty Levin, for the Board

Knowing My Name

Some members of our Society are justifiably puzzled why I have suddenly added an “E.” to the front of my name. The following poem offers some explanation.

Mother named me, born after
an older girl-child died —
“call her ‘Sister’”

After mother died, my new mother
told the teacher as I started school —
“call her ‘Betty’”
— not knowing I was birth-certified
with a 3rd and different name — ‘Enid’

Through many labored seasons
of tending my garden
I’ve come to know

The toiler who hybrids the plant
can best do the naming

The poem explains the derivation but not “why now?” As many of you know, at age 85 I am writing my memoir. This process sharpens memories, meaning, a sense of self. Thus, I submit this offering.

— E. Betty Levin

Report from the UN:

WATER, SANITATION AND THE UN

There are about a billion people without clean water and 2.5 billion without adequate sanitation. This silent humanitarian disaster is a major concern to the UN. Unlike wars and natural disasters it does not make media headlines, yet unsanitary water claims more lives through disease than wars claim through guns.

One hundred and one UN staff members died in the devastating earthquake in Haiti. Nevertheless, UNICEF was ready with its emergency WASH (water, sanitation and hygiene) program. Along with food and shelter, safe water and sanitation are high priorities in emergency situations as there is danger of

an outbreak of diarrhea, cholera and other diseases.

UNICEF, partnering with a local water-purification and distribution company, distributed 2.6 million liters of drinking water daily to over half a million people in the capital Port-au-Prince and other cities. Every day at least 150 trucks, each filled with 5000 liters of water, are sent out to 200 distribution points. Also, water purification tablets and family water kits are provided. UNICEF is working with partners to install 30,000 latrines in the next six months.

The WASH emergency interventions

have been used in many emergencies such as the earthquake in Indonesia, Darfur and the major 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami.

Is there enough water in the world? Is it a question of scarcity?

Some commentators trace the global challenge in water to rising population and the resulting increase in demand. A major UN report rejects this view. It says that the scarcity at the heart of the global water crisis is rooted not in physical availability – water is, after all, a basically renewable resource – but in flawed water management arising from poverty and inequality. In short, the

water crisis is a political problem.

There are great inequalities in access to clean water and sanitation. In high-income areas of cities in Asia, Latin America and Sub-Saharan Africa people enjoy access to several hundred liters of water a day delivered into their homes at low prices by public utilities. Meanwhile, slum dwellers and poor households in rural areas of the same countries have access to much less than 20 liters of water per day.

Agriculture is the main use of water. In water-stressed parts of India, wealthy farmers use irrigation pumps to extract

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PRESIDENT'S REPORT

It was heartwarming to see the turnout for the Special Meeting of the membership of the Ethical Culture Society of Essex County on February 20th. We have a great group of members!

At the Special Meeting we decided to go ahead with step one of a search for a new leader. We selected a three member nominating committee that will in turn propose members for a search committee to be voted on at our annual meeting on May 15th. The nominating committee is made up of Dick Bohn, Barbara Cotler, and Andy Weinberg.

We also adopted a change in the Bylaws to let our officers and trustees serve six years in their position instead of just four whenever the membership of our Society is less than fifty at the time of the election.

Looking ahead to the search committee and our seeking of a new Leader, I would suggest that to get the Leader we need we must know how we want our Society to develop and grow into the future. Here are some of my thoughts:

We need to reach out and become more known by our community. We can do this by continuing to pursue, develop, and enrich our partnerships with community groups with whom we share common values and goals, such as the Arts Unbound, Community Coalition on Race, the Community Food Bank of New Jersey, IRATE & First Friends, the South Mountain Conservancy, South Mountain Peace Action, and Valley Settlement House. These partnerships give our Society a clear profile in our community that we can build upon.

We also have platforms every Sunday that are

both informative and inspirational, and we can continue to expand the publicity for them.

All of these activities can be done under the slogan we have used on our press releases, "Building community through shared ethical values." I personally like the slogan, but we should review it and come to agreement on its use.

If we want to grow we must develop a Sunday School. I believe it should reflect our ethical values through arts, science, activism, and play. We should offer the program in partnership with the families who want to have their children in our Sunday School. My goal for us is to start it next September with the beginning of the new program year. But this will not happen unless we put in the time and effort to make it happen.

The more we are active together, the more we want to be together. Ethical Culture Society is a very emotional thing for me. When I came to my first platform I felt like I had come home.

We need information and inspiration from being active, but we also need togetherness and friendship. And by taking part in our activities together we build strong bonds.

We have huge challenges ahead of us for our small Society, but I believe we can do great things together and in partnership with others who share our goals and values.

I look forward to discussing all of this with you in formal and informal meetings in the weeks ahead. I believe it all points to our need for either a part or full time Leader with strong inspirational abilities and administrative skills.

See you at Platform!

— Anja Moen



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the needy and books for children.

ETHICAL CULTURE SOCIETY OF ESSEX COUNTY NEWSLETTER · APRIL 2011

UN Report, *continued from page 3*

water from aquifers 24 hours a day while their poorer neighbors depend on the vagaries of rain.

People living in rich countries are only dimly aware how clean water fostered progress in their own countries. Just over a hundred years ago London, New York and Paris were centers of infectious diseases. Child death rates were as high as they are now in much of Sub-Saharan Africa. The sanitation movement and sweeping reforms changed this picture by spending the money for sewage systems and the required infrastructure for clean water. By one estimate water purification explains much of the great mortality reduction in the US in the first third of the 20th century. In Great Britain the expansion of sanitation contributed to an unprecedented increase in life expectancy of 15 years in the four decades after 1880.

One UN report states that the toilet and the latrine, which helped revolutionize public health in the wealthy countries, are the most underused tools to combat poverty and disease. The report blames governments for paying little attention to water and sanitation and seriously underfunding programs for improvement. In developing countries, without regulation, more than 90 per cent of sewage and 70 per cent of industrial wastewater is dumped untreated into surface water.

Water resources often cross political boundaries without a passport, whether in the form of rivers, lakes or aquifers. This hydrological interdependence raises issues of conflict and cooperation. Some have raised the spectre of water wars. The facts are otherwise. Conflicts over water do arise and give rise to political tensions, but most disputes are resolved peacefully. The permanent Indus Water

Commission which oversees a treaty on water sharing survived and functioned during two wars between India and Pakistan. Another example is the low-level water cooperation between Israel and Jordan which began, under UN auspices, in the early 1950s when the countries were still at war. In 1994 they created a Joint Water Committee for coordination, sharing and dispute settlement — an arrangement that survived some acute tensions.

The message of this, and many other examples, is that the most hostile enemies have the capacity for cooperation on water.

Since the world is ever more interdependent let's hope that the necessary cooperation in water is a model in other areas. ■

Reporting on developments at the UN by Dr. Sylvain Ehrenfeld, IHEU and National Ethical Service of the AEU representative to the UN with Temma Ehrenfeld, freelance writer based in New York City.