



ETHICAL CULTURE

M O N T H L Y

VOLUME 32 NUMBER 7

Visit our web site: www.essexethical.org

MARCH 2013

MARCH PLATFORMS

Platforms begin at 11 a.m. All are welcome. Platforms are subject to change without notice. For information, call 973-763-1905. Visit our web site: www.essexethical.org

March 3 Dr. Margaret Brisco, “*Memories of a Woman Doctor*”

Dr. Margaret Brisco began her career as a doctor and then a gynecologist at a time when there were few women in the field, and even fewer with foreign credentials. She will describe some of the struggles she faced, practicing in Newark and Nutley, on her own behalf, and to improve women’s health care, and how things have changed.



Dr. Margaret Brisco, who was born in Italy and qualified there as a doctor, was one of the earliest women to do a medical residency and internship in Newark. She rose to become chief of Obstetrics and Gynecology at Clara Maas Hospital. She also wrote a number of books, including *Childbirth — a Unique Experience*, and her latest, a memoir, *The Way It Was — Memories of a Woman Doctor*, as well as two novels, *Women in Transition*, and *Metamorphoses*. The mother of a son and daughter, she lives now in Essex Fells.

March 10 Carolyn Dorfman, “*Dance, as a medium of memory and universal communication and connection*”

Carolyn Dorfman, whose dance company of the same name is celebrating its 30th year, will use a multimedia presentation to share how she uses dance as a way to communicate and educate, to celebrate the human story in its full range and to preserve and honor culture and her-



itage. A child of Holocaust survivors, her work speaks to the commonality of the human experience and illuminates how art can inspire and connect people from all walks of life and different backgrounds.

Known as a creator of evocative dances that reflect her concerns about the human condition, Dorfman is interested in creating “worlds” into which the audience can enter. Since founding her company, Carolyn Dorfman has created more than 60 works for her 10 member ensemble, which appears at major theaters, dance festivals, universities and schools regionally, nationally and internationally.

A Michigan native, Dorfman received her BFA in Dance from the University of Michigan and her MFA from New York University Tisch School for the Arts. Dorfman has been designated a Distinguished Artist by the New Jersey State Council on the Arts (NJSCA), which has granted her six Choreography Fellowships, (most recently in 2011). She received the Prudential Prize for Non-Profit Leadership and Jewish Women in the Arts Award for Dance from the Jewish Community Center of Metropolitan Detroit and the Janice Charach Epstein Gallery.

March 17 *The Humanist Way, Part II*

Martha Gallahue will pursue some themes in *The Humanist Way*. We will build upon a few themes offered in the Platform delivered by Zia Durrani on January 27th, notably death and grief. We will focus upon Chapters 5 and 6, “Spiritual Values of Ethical Humanism” and “The Secret of Moral Creativity.” Special invited guest: Member Zia Durrani. The book is being reordered and will be available for members

and prospective new members free of charge at this time.

March 24 David Harrison, “*The State of the Environment and what YOU can do about it*”

Topics will include air quality, climate change, recycling and trash disposal, water conservation, vehicular



pollution, local efforts and alternative energy. Given the limited time, I will spend the bulk of the time on the solutions; simple actions and habits that individuals and families can adopt to make a difference — suggestions which in most cases also save money.

This is a very interactive presentation, not a lecture and every participant always learns something — in fact I guarantee every participant will take away at least one revelation and will likely be compelled to start, change or discontinue at least one habit.

My main mission as an environmental activist is to educate the public about our environmental challenges, without any political or commercial bias. There is a ton of misinformation to break through. I also suggest actions that we as individuals, and together as a community, can do to decrease our environmental impact and repair some of the damage. We can also save money and serve as fantastic role models to our children in the process.

I moved to Short Hills with my wife and 3 sons in 1997 after living abroad the previous 8 years in Sydney, Hong Kong and Tokyo. By day, I work in financial services. One factor which intrigued me while living in the midst of different cultures is differences in

Ethical Culture Society of Essex County



Martha Gallahue, *Interim Leader*
Boe Meyerson, *Leader Emerita*

Andrew Weinberger, *President*
Zia Durrani, *Vice President*
Martin Cotler, *Treasurer*
Rosalie Sussman, *Secretary*

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Betty Levin
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EC Monthly Platforms Editor
Elaine Durbach
Editor/graphics: Howard Gilman

Editor's Note

Newsletter articles, announcements, etc., not to exceed 150 words in length, must be received by the FIRST of the month for inclusion in the following month's edition. Submit items to: Howard Gilman, newsletter editor; preferably via email at: gilman.howard@gmail.com. Items can also be dropped off at 15 So. Pierson Rd., Maplewood; or, if you put something for the newsletter in the EC office's mail slot or in the mail, please give me a call at (973) 763-3914 to be sure I know about it, especially if your item is time-sensitive. — *Editor*

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

Ethical Culture Society
of Essex County,
516 Prospect St.,
Maplewood, NJ 07040
973-763-1905

Our web site:
www.essexethical.org

...act so
as to elicit
the best
in others
and in
ourselves

habits pertaining to purchase, consumption, re-use and disposal of goods. When it comes to caring for our environment, we can learn a lot from each other.

March 31 Colloquy on Travel, "What we learn about home by going far away"

Everyone is invited to share their most telling memories of journeys abroad. Bring pictures and souvenirs if you like. The discussion will focus on the experiences that have meant most to us — for their revelatory impact, how they changed us or simply for the pleasures involved.

Mark Your Calendars for March

Folk Friday at Ethical Mar. 8. Sing-along and jam with friends 7:30 p.m. second Friday of each month, September through June at the Ethical Culture Society, 516 Prospect St., Maplewood. Bring acoustic string and rhythm instruments, join in playing, singing or listening. Bring some refreshments to share. Folk Fridays have expanded to invite all crafts people in the society to come and listen to music while doing crafts. Everyone is invited! (*Led by Lisa Novemsky*). Contact: lnovemsky@comcast.net or (973) 763-8293.

Please take the opportunity to visit the **Sandy Relief Fund Arts Show on display until June** in the Platform room, proceeds to benefit storm victims. Check website for dates for **Film Series** beginning in March and **Slow Foods** and ECSEC will join together for at least one event.

LEADER'S COLUMN

Facing the Future as a Peace Learning/Peace Building Center

Recently, two Platforms offered by members challenged me to reflect upon ourselves as a Peace Center in terms of our goals and resources. Sharing reflections upon our primary introductory text *The Humanist Way* by Edward Ericson, Zia reminded us that ethical culture is a way of life that lends significance to all that we do from birth to death. Through her personal search, she



shared her own experience of "being peace" in ethical culture. Gus, in his Platform, offered us an acronym to illustrate an integral growth and education model: S (science), T (technology), E (education), A (art), M (math). Calling it the da Vinci Model, he extended it to include an intelligent approach to activism. Both speakers as we know, walk their walk in service to the Society.

Observation one (our primary resource): through increased programming, we are bringing in more neighbors. Each program was in varying ways an ethical conversation about building peace founded in the service of sharing ourselves. Between the Sandy Storm Relief Art Show, Birgit Matzerath's Bach Series, Third Saturday Arts, Essex Time Exchange meet, Folk Fridays featuring Indian cooking, a joint meeting with Columbia High School Gay/Straight Alliance Spectrum and ECSEC members, a visit by Brendan Gill, our newly elected Freeholder, we estimate that nearly 100 persons who have never before come into our doors participated in these programs. We are grateful to Gus, Lisa, Birgit and Sue for the development of these meetings. We are always grateful to Elaine for the excellent Platform that invariably brings in new visitors and Marshall for his wide open door policy as he tends the building. We appreciate Rob who is enlivening our sign outside, to several newcomers in the community who are in reflection about joining our membership as well. Check our website frequently to stay updated. As Leader, I am inspired by the generous expression of a leadership that is shared cooperatively among so many of us in this community.

Observation two (our goals): increasing Relevant Articulation of the Message via Members. Shared leadership is one of the goals of effective peace — where everyone has a place at the table, a place that challenges us to become more than what we can become when we try to do it alone. Shared leadership isn't new at this Society. As we continue to coordinate it through appreciation and relevant inquiry, however, we model a 21st century way of living that synthesizes leadership in a coherent and cohesive system. When Rob, Betty, Karen, Zia, Anja, Gus, Alan, Sue,

I and others share our wisdom and experience via the ethical culture way, we grow more articulate ourselves about our goals, about why we are here. As we ourselves model the way of peace affirmatively and playfully through service, we cannot help but inspire the message. Thriving as a community is inevitable! More than that it is invigorating and fun. As we acknowledge what we have not yet achieved, let us build together through what we already share.

SOCIAL ACTION COMMITTEE

Meeting with Brendan Gill, Essex County Freeholder

Social Action Chair Meredith Sue Willis, Ethical Culture Leader Martha Gallahue and Board members Betty Levin and Zia Durrani met with Essex County Freeholder Brendan Gill on January 14, 2013 at the Society.

Sue welcomed Mr. Gill, Leader Martha Gallahue introduced him to principles of Ethical Culture, and Betty Levin spoke of our organization as one of the earliest Peace Sites in the country. Mr. Gill talked a little about his own background, growing up in Montclair with discussions of public policy and social justice at his family's dinner table, which led him to seek a life in public service.

The meeting centered on sharing concerns and information about the immigration detainees being held in Essex County in the county jail and in Delaney Hall, a private facility managed by Community Education Center, which was the subject of a series of scathing articles in the New York Times about conditions in their New Jersey halfway houses (not including Delaney Hall). We discussed both broad issues of how housing immigration detainees is very profitable to Essex County, and issues of humane treatment of de-



tainees, specifically the high expense of phone cards and difficulties with bringing in outside visitors.

Mr. Gill reported that the Essex facilities are far more modern and physically acceptable than the deplorable former warehouse facility in Elizabeth, but it was also agreed that there are still many complaints and problems about the treatment of individual detainees.

We also learned that the basic contract for immigrant detainee housing is between Essex County and ICE (Immigration & Customs Enforcement), and that this contract has been very lucrative for the county. Several hundred detainees are housed in the county jail; several hundred more are housed in Delaney Hall.

Mr. Gill kindly offered to facilitate setting up and to attend a meeting with Freeholder Rufus Jones, who is the head of the Freeholder committee on these issues. We may, after meeting with these Freeholders individually, then go to the "public speaks" portion of a Freeholder meeting (Wednesdays at 7:00 in the Hall of Records, or, occasionally, around other parts of the county) to express our concerns.

The Social Action Committee is extremely grateful to Mr. Gill for taking time to have this exchange with us.

Correction/Clarification

Betty Levin submitted an idea, printed in February's newsletter, "to 'give back' to the well-being of our country, particularly to our children," proposing that "social security recipients be requested to accept a 1% reduction in annual payments, with its tenure and other details to be determined."

Betty writes: "We had a serious misunderstanding in the editor's note — that people should telephone 'if they agree.' Absolutely not! I welcome open discussion. Perhaps my idea can stimulate other approaches." [973-763-1033]



Preparing for AEU Assembly!

Inspiring Action: Making a Difference
[by Hugh Taft-Morales, BES Leader]

Ethical Culturists from around the country will be gathering June 13 to 16, 2013, at Mason Inn Conference Center & Hotel in Fairfax, Virginia, for the American Ethical Union 2013 Assembly.

Here's a peek at a couple of reasons why you should put this AEU Assembly on your calendar:



Our own Emil Volcheck is working to coordinate a Capital Hill day with the Secular Coalition for America (SCA). Emil was impressed by SCA staffers when he attended a lobby day they hosted last year. The event we are planning for this summer will enable Ethical Culturists and members of other SCA groups to join together for a training session and a trip to the Capitol to speak with legislators about our shared humanist concerns. We could discuss Ethical Culture's position on separation of church and state, and the importance of defending the constitutional rights of all Americans regardless of theistic perspective. If you would like to help shape this day of political activism, or work to help choose the issues we bring to the Hill, contact me or Emil now.

The AEU Conference itself will include a host of intriguing workshops, great music, the National Ethical Service luncheon, the Elliott-Black Award dinner, an inspirational platform, and more! Given our 2012 Assembly in Albany that focused on criminal justice reform, many 2013 workshop sessions will follow up with practical strategies for humanizing the justice system on a local and regional basis.

And this just in: one of my favorite political activists, Maryland State Senator Jamie Raskin, will speak on "One Nation under the Constitution: Defending the Separation of Church and State and a new Constitutional Patriotism."

ETHICAL CULTURE SOCIETY OF ESSEX COUNTY

516 Prospect Street
Maplewood, New Jersey 07040

Phone: 973-763-1905
Email: ecsec.nj@gmail.com
Website: www.essexethical.org

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We continue to collect children's books, canned and boxed foods, and toys for distribution by the Parenting Center in Maplewood.



ETHICAL CULTURE SOCIETY OF ESSEX COUNTY NEWSLETTER · MARCH 2013

(from page 3) Senator Raskin, also a professor of law at American University, championed the victorious same-sex marriage crusade this year. Years ago when this effort began, he offered a religiously-motivated colleague a widely-circulated lesson: "People place their hand on the Bible and swear to uphold the Constitution; they don't put their hand on the Constitution and swear to uphold the Bible." Meet him in Fairfax this summer!

The AEU Assembly also affords Ethical Culturists from all over opportunities to socialize — we are, after all, a movement built on relationships. Let's make the most of them! Personal connections help us all strategize about the future of Ethical Culture. Make new friends, and gain insight into how all of our local societies can flourish. I know that I've found that after each of the assemblies I have attended, I return home with

Essex Time Exchange Progress

Now fifty-three members have exchanged eighty-six hours. Twenty-five people ranging in age from 2 months to octogenarians, both new and experienced members of the Essex Time Exchange, convened at Ethical Culture on Ground Hog's Day to meet each other in real time and to swap services. It was an informative event wherein folks were introduced to each other and matched needed services with eager providers. Mathilde Ben-

veniste, who serves as the coordinator, led the group through a hands-on online tutorial on the use of the computer to list and search for member services, and communicate with other time bank members.

According to the rules of time banking, no money changes hands in these transactions. It is a friendly exchange of services, measured in hours only. The Essex Time Exchange is a project that was originated here and is supported by our social action committee.

All are welcome to join!

renewed hope for our movement and important connections through which I've gained support in my development as a Leader.

More information about the Assembly will be coming soon. Consider offering your time, talent, or contacts

so that our region's gathering can be one of the best ever. Help with organization, workshop collaboration, and speaker invitations are our most immediate needs. Hope to see you there!

Contact Martha Gallahue at: marthagallahue@me.com. •