



ETHICAL CULTURE

M O N T H L Y

VOLUME 33 NUMBER 3

Visit our web site: www.essexethical.org

NOVEMBER 2013

NOVEMBER 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

Nov. 3 Bill Graves, “Protecting Whistle Blowers in NJ”

Bill Graves will talk about the Conscientious Employee Protection Act of New Jersey (CEPA) & the various court cases dealing with its application. There is other New Jersey law based upon the N.J. Constitution & Supreme Court case law dealing with it. He will give a broad non-technical outline of the CEPA and will talk generally about how it works and what a whistle blower should do to be protected by it. Bill will also relate the experiences of Mr. Boswell, a former public defender, and Boswell’s feeling that it is a last resort.

Bill Graves was admitted to the N.J. Bar in 1966 and was an Assistant Deputy Public Defender in the N.J. Public Defender Office for about 17 years. During that time, he was part of a team of experienced attorneys assigned to represent defendants charged with capital murder and tried four death penalty cases. Bill later joined the N.J. Attorney General’s Office. As a Deputy Attorney General, he represented the N.J. Bureau of Securities. The Bureau’s assignment was to protect NEW Jersey residents from penny stock fraud & other predatory practices. Bill was also the City Attorney & Law Director for the City of Hoboken for several years.

Nov. 10 Rob Agree, “How my mother’s childhood in Nazi Germany taught me moral authority”

Rob Agree will speak about his mother’s youth (birth to age 19) as a

Jew in Nazi Germany. She was among the very last German Jews to legally emigrate — after the War started in 1939. It is also a lesson about moral authority, and how Rob learned it from her.

Rob says: “How I learned moral authority from my mother is a long story (come hear it on November 10th), but it’s enough to say that it was her behavior in my lifetime, combined with my understanding of her early experiences with the rise of Nazism that provided the lessons. She was born in 1920 in a small farming town in central Germany. She lived there, under growing persecution, as Hitler rose to power. Her family was chased out in 1936 (the town was officially Judenrein) and they moved to Frankfurt where they lived through Kristalnacht, finally emigrating after the start of the war in September 1939. They were literally among the very last German Jews to legally do so. My mother and her brother recorded several hours of their memories in the 1980s, and my talk is based on these recordings.”

Rob Agree is Ceremonial Leader of the Congregation for Humanistic Judaism of Morris County, a former public school teacher and administrator, a three-year resident of Maplewood and a member of Essex Ethical. He is married to Melissa, and they have three grown sons.

Nov. 17 Martha Gallahue, “Aging and Spiritual Practice: what is the Connection?”

Martha will draw upon her personal friendships with older friends who continue to engage in larger social issues at the same time they maintain a

spiritual practice. Not all her friends identify as religious or share the same ethnicity or culture. She will identify what they seem to share and how it influences their preparations for dying.

Martha Gallahue, ESEC Leader, also serves as Leader and Main Representative for National Ethical Service, an affiliate organization of the AEU. National Ethical Service is founding member of Global Movement for the Culture of Peace at the UN, a coalition of 16 other organizations dedicated to provoking governments to implement the goals of the UN Charter for Peace. On September 6, GMCOP brought together over 600 civil society members from 40 different countries to a day-long High Level Forum on the Culture of Peace convened by the 67th President of the General Assembly.

Nov. 24 Hilding Gus Lindquist, “The Transformative Power of Art: Freeing the Art Spirit in each of us”

The essential existential characteristic of a human being is our mind, the brain-body continuum of acquired memory capable of applying that memory in new ways. And that, my friends, is art.

Self-directed mental and physical activity is our reason for existence, sublimely said in French, our *raison d’être*.

The joy brought by awakening a passion for whatever it is that engages us from within is our reward, and the motivation for pursuing our passion.

The “gift of the art spirit” is the freedom to self-direct our mental and physical activity in the creation of whatever motivates us. It pulls us into learning how to do it better. It awak-

Ethical Culture Society of Essex County



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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

ens the passion that has created the world we know as ours and will create the new worlds to come.

It is why “freedom” is the fundamental principle of human society, and working out how to maximize our own freedom while minimizing its impact on the freedom of others is the fundamental purpose of our “political arrangements.”

A longtime friend of ECS, Hilding “Gus” Lindquist lives in Maplewood. Gus worked as a research data administrator and, for over twenty years, worked developing administrative computer programs. He draws on life experiences from developing administrative systems for a diverse set of organizations. He has also devoted many years to social activism. Since retiring a few years back, he has turned to creating cultural programs dealing with art, music, drama, and poetry.

Social Action Committee

The SAC is now meeting the first Sunday of most months after platform.

Coming Soon

Diane Beeny reported that the Friday night movie program she is spearheading has begun. She plans the next one for November, then January. She hopes to move to monthly showings at some point.

For dates, please check the calendar posted on our website (www.essexethical.org).

Ethical Issues Nov. 1 — Short discussions, Q&A and readings

Martha will host one more evening on Ethical Issues, Friday, November 1.

Ethical Culture's Message is both timely and transcendent. At the same time, it often suffers the challenge of “translation” in a world that seeks easy answers to life's complex problems. Two fundamental and universal principles drive the ethical culture movement: that the moral imperative is based on “right relationship” in all spheres of human endeavor; the other that all life is sacred and is not best expressed in dogma either secular or religious.

7:30 to 9:30 p.m. on **Friday, Nov. 1**, Leader Martha Gallahue will guide as we continue to explore how these two principles

work with special focus upon the topic, “*The Greater Whole of Which We Are All a Part*” (Earth Charter, par.16). This series is open to the public and can be attended free of charge in part or as a whole.

Folk Friday at Ethical Nov. 8

Sing-along and jam with friends, 7:30 p.m. second Friday of each month now through June, at the Ethical Culture Society, 516 Prospect St., Maplewood. Bring acoustic string and rhythm instruments, join in playing, singing or listening (*led by Lisa Novemsky*). 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! Email lnovemsky@comcast.net or call (973) 763-8293. — *Lisa Novemsky*

From the UN — Child Labor

Child labor is a consequence of poverty and is rampant throughout the world. Millions of children are engaged in some form of hazardous and/or exploitative labor. Most children work to support their families. They work at jobs that impact negatively on their health, education and physical and mental wellbeing and development. For example, Suresh is a young boy who works in a mine in Meghalaya in Northern India under very dangerous conditions. Suresh says he earns \$40 a week in a country where two thirds of the population lives on less than \$15 a week. He gives the money to his family. He said he has seen people die; “I hurt my back once when mud fell in, but I still had to work the next day. How can we not work, we have to eat!”

In Tanzania, Adam works in a gold mine which is known to be one of the most dangerous forms of child labor. In Morocco, Latifah was recruited when she was 12 to work in Casablanca as a domestic worker. She hoped it would offer her a better life, but instead she has suffered beatings, verbal abuse and an 18-hour work day.

But, it should be noted, child labor is also a serious problem in developed countries. In the United States, for example, hundreds of thousands of children work as hired laborers

in agriculture. These children are excluded from child labor laws that protect children in other jobs. Agriculture is a dangerous occupation. Children work with sharp tools, heavy machinery and dangerous chemicals. It is estimated that approximately 500,000 children pick almost a quarter of the food produced in the US! A shameful statistic.

There is, however, some progress. Since 2000 the number of child laborers worldwide has decreased by one-third; from 248 million to 168 million, according to a recent estimate by the International Labor Organization (ILO). Although this progress is encouraging, the number of children still engaged in child labor is staggering. Many still work under hazardous conditions including mines, working with chemicals and pesticides in agriculture. Many work as domestic servants and are especially vulnerable to exploitation and abuse. Such horrendous conditions are reminiscent of the early days of the Industrial Revolution.

Since 1900 child labor in the US has increasingly come to public attention and become a focus of reform. In 1904 Jane Addams, Lillian Wald and Felix Adler, progressive reformers, formed the National Child Labor Committee in an effort to eliminate child labor. Felix Adler, who also founded the Ethical Culture Society movement was chairman of this committee for a number of years. The committee dramatized the plight of working children. They lobbied for laws and pioneered the techniques of mass political action. Ultimately the use of child labor declined during the New Deal era due, in part, to a high unemployment, which led to opening jobs previously held by children to unemployed adults. The notorious exception to this very day is the exploitative use of child labor in agriculture.

Organizations actively working on the issue of child labor include UNI-

CEF, the ILO and Human Rights watch. In Bangladesh UNICEF, ILO and the Bangladesh garment manufacturers and exporters association have formed an agreement to end child labor in the country's garment factories. Hopefully it will be enforced. As an incentive, child workers will receive a stipend to attend school.

In Brazil, UNICEF has helped to return children to school. Brazil has pioneered a program which pays families a monthly allowance for keeping their children in school and for taking them for regular health checkups. Other countries such as Chile, Mexico, South Africa, Turkey and Morocco, have adopted similar measures.

Protecting and supporting children is important. They are our future and represent our vision for the years to come. To quote Nelson Mandela, "There is no keener revelation of a society's soul than the way it treats its children."

Dr. Sylvain Ehrenfeld, the IHEU and National Ethical Service representative to the UN and Dr. Reba Goodman member of NES and ECSBC.

LEADER'S MESSAGE

Peace is the "wholeness of right relationship with ourselves, others, other cultures and institutions, nature and the greater whole of which we are all a part." (para.6 The Earth Charter).

Some years ago, David Bohm, theoretical physicist, contributed to the understanding of field theory, which I've been thinking about recently. In very simple terms, field theory opens doors to the power of thought to influence our surroundings. During the last two months at ESEC, we held at least 10 events on the topic of peace, a theme that offers an alternative to our polarized political environment

So, why did we choose this field of thought and why do some of us choose to continue to seek harmony through art exhibition, through dismantling racism through cooking, through re-

flection on the core message of ethical culture? Maybe, it is because we can no longer settle for inner peace. Rather, we live in a world that is calling us to construct peace as is Malala Yousafzai, the 15 year old who is dedicating her life to education for girls. We are never too old to contribute to the greater good.

As our political system endures repeated breakdown, we might call upon ourselves to focus harder in asserting our faith in humanity's ability to wage peace as our September 29th speaker, Levi Bautista, urged us to do. We do that by filling our minds with those who are working toward reconciliation in conflict. What was our right relationship during the last governmental shut down — to condemn the ideologues or to look to those who were working to end it — for example? We have not come up with answers but the shared learning among those of us who have participated is instructive. We are learning that our ESEC Peace Center will become what we make of it. Certainly we can honor already how the Arts — music, painting, poetry, memoir writing — are already cornerstones at this time. Look as well for our participation in the city program where walls for public expression will take place. Gus and Marshall are to be congratulated for this effort.

Bohm warned of the dangers of rampant reason and technology, advocating instead the need for genuine supportive dialogue which he claimed could broaden and unify conflicting and troublesome divisions in the social world. Dialogue does not only take place with words but with actions, with programs, with religions who choose to dedicate themselves to the construction of peace.

Some of my friends at the UN greet each other with the phrase, "May Peace prevail on earth." And in these times, I extend to you the same greeting.

— Martha Gallahue

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.



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