



ETHICAL CULTURE

M O N T H L Y

VOLUME 31 NUMBER 3

Visit our web site: www.essexethical.org

NOVEMBER 2011

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

November 6 Susan Rose (Teshu), *"A Year of Living Ethically"*

We all want to live our lives as ethically as possible, but really, how do we do that on a day to day basis, how do we sustain living ethically? No Impact Man and others have undertaken specific projects, changing their behaviors for a year, or more. What can we, in



Ethical Culture learn from their work?

Susan Rose is an Ethical Culture Leader serving as the Dean of the Leadership Training Program of the American Ethical Union and as the Leader of the Ethical Society Without Walls (ESWoW), the American Ethical Union congregation serving people who are not able to attend Ethical Culture Societies in person.

Susan is a lifelong Ethical Culturist, growing up at the Brooklyn Society for Ethical Culture. She was a member of the Ethical Culture Society of Essex County for ten years. Susan had many roles, including serving as president during a time of great growth at Essex. She also served as a representative to the AEU Board for five years and served as the liason between the Board and the AEU Membership Committee.

The experience of being such an active lay leader at Essex, combined with her participation in what is now the Human Faith Project, led Susan to pursue Ethical Culture Leadership. She was certified as a Leader in 1999.

Susan lives in Cambridge, MA and is the proud mother of two wonderful young adults.

November 13 Tina Weishaus, *"Our Choice: Sustainable Future or Climate Catastrophe"*

Tina Weishaus is a nurse psychotherapist and global warming educator. As she says, she is concerned about the health of individuals, society and the planet, and as a result is committed



to educating people about the dangers we all face from global warming/climate change. She was trained by

Vice President Al Gore in 2006 and then again in 2010, and has done hundreds of programs throughout New Jersey — like the one she will present to us at ECS — on the science, impacts and politics of global warming.

Tina is a Mastered Level RN, Clinical Nurse Specialist in Psychiatric and Mental Health Nursing, and has a private practice in Highland Park, NJ.

November 20 Martha Gallahue, *"Social Media and Social Change"*

Martha Gallahue will discuss digital innovations for social change and its implications for ethical culture. She will explore what blogging and Twitter have to do with bringing out the best in others as a way to bring out the best in ourselves.

Martha will share her observations of other peace builders who are doing this today. She works with interns at the UN who are getting



the message out on Climate Change through social media.

November 27 Anja Moen, *"Thanksgiving Colloquy: Did the Native Americans make a mistake?"*

A look into the self-interest or self-sacrifice of generosity. As we understand it, their generosity didn't exactly pay off for those Native Americans who entertained the settlers at that first Thanksgiving feast. But often it does.



Anja Moen will lead our discussion into the way generosity plays out in our own lives and in the world around us.

SAVE THE DATES

November 11 Folk Friday

2nd Friday of the month, November 11th, 7:30–9:30 p.m., coordinated by Anja Moen and Lisa Novemsky

Community Quilting & Other Folk Arts

Do you want to create your own square in our ECS quilt? Knit? Crochet? Then come to Folk Friday at 7:30 p.m. on the 2nd Friday of every month from October to June, 7:30 p.m. in the parlor.

See you there! —Anja

November 17, 18, & 19 **2nd Annual Eclectic Chaos** **Art Show and Auction**

Coordinated by Gus Lindquist and Rosalie Sussman. The Eclectic Chaos schedule is as follows:

Thursday, November 17

6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.

Receive and store art pieces.

(continued next page)

Ethical Culture Society of Essex County



Martha Gallahue, *Interim Leader*
Boe Meyerson, *Leader Emeritus*
James White, *Leader Emeritus*

Anja Moen, *President*
Lisa Novemsky, *Vice President*
Martin Cotler, *Treasurer*
Susan Kennedy, *Secretary*

Trustees:
Fred Sebastian
Rosalie Sussman
Betty Levin
Allen Parmet
Zia Durrani

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 FIRST 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.

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

NEW! — info@essexethical.org

Our web site: www.essexethical.org

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

Attention members! Please submit your email addresses to NEW! — info@essexethical.org to receive newsletter and other special event notices.

(continued from page 1)

Friday, November 18

10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.

Receive and set up art pieces

2:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m.

Public viewing of art show.

7:00 p.m. to 9:30 p.m.

Meet & greet party with the artists, plus poetry and play readings.

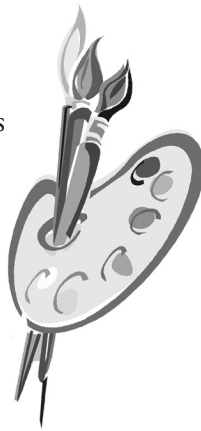
Saturday, November 19

10:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m.

Public viewing of art show.

7:00 p.m. to 9:30 p.m.

Play readings, continued.



LEADER'S MESSAGE

From Martha Gallahue

We are well into our 2011-12 season as we welcome new members, explore new initiatives that interface with the needs of the community and raise up the voices of long time members of Essex Society such as Mary Barbiarz and esteemed members of Maplewood, including David and Mary Brancaccio. Our Platforms have hosted many new visitors some of whom are developing an interest in knowing better who we are and what we stand for.

This brings to mind the core "creed" in ethical culture, that we bring out the best in others to bring out the best in ourselves. We might ask ourselves what does that look like in our ever evolving world where we cannot be sure whether our contemporary culture is keeping pace with earth's inevitable evolution. Some may say that our culture today is devolving. I think bringing out the best in others has grown more complex.

When Adler laid out this core principle, he intended us to begin our life journeys in the personal as the key to evolving civilization. That is why we are called ethical culture. In a spiritual monograph written in the early 1930s, he stated his belief that our personal journey required the practice of reflection, of detachment and of identification. Adler himself spent entire summers in the Adirondacks pursuing deep reflection including profound

conversations with thinkers such as Ralph Waldo Emerson. By detachment, he meant that as we engaged fully in life pursuing learning in all its human forms, we develop the ability to set our opinions aside in order to listen deeply and grow more attuned to the views of others as a way of growing ourselves. And by identification, he recognized that the practice of empathy is core for us to leave our windows of comfort in our own pursuit of transformation.

As he encouraged diversity, he sought to nurture in us true appreciation that we in ethical culture would learn to walk in the other's shoes. That we would not only do unto others as we would do unto ourselves, but that we would do unto others as others would have us do unto them.

"...the core 'creed' in ethical culture, that we bring out the best in others to bring out the best in ourselves."

Today, the challenge is to apply our fundamental creed to social, political, culture and ecological spheres. How do we bring out the best in others in each of these spheres? Today, personal commitment demands that we find ways to cooperate for the sake of taking collective action. Collective action thrives in a rich diversity of perspectives when we develop the art of empathic appreciation. Collective action is the process taken by countries looking for democracy. Collective action is emerging in this country to address our increased poverty and resistance to proactive responses to climate change.

This year, I ask you to join with me as we explore what this looks like at Essex Society for Ethical Culture, in Maplewood, New Jersey, as one Society in a national movement determined to transform American culture in ways that promote the well being of all earth unto the seventh generation. This is a big quest, but together as we take one step at a time, I ask for your best selves to guide the journey.

—Martha Gallahue

Freedom of Information

The murder of journalists in Russia, the jailing of bloggers in China and the crackdown on the media in Iran, remind us that freedom of expressions is under duress, even in an era of expanding global communications.

Of the 44 journalists who were killed worldwide in 2010, 8 died in Pakistan making it the deadliest country for reporters, according to the Committee to Protect Journalists. Also, Honduras, Mexico and Indonesia were dangerous places to work in 2010. The killers are rarely brought to justice.

At a time when technology is changing the way people around the world gather and receive information, when international news organizations are cutting back and closing bureaus, freelancers, local reporters and online journalists are more important than ever. They are also more vulnerable. About 90 percent of journalists killed each year are local journalists covering local stories.

Freedom of the press is a vital moral issue intrinsically connected to human rights and is recognized in article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. UNESCO, the UN Education Scientific and Cultural Organization monitors and promotes freedom of the press.

“...freedom of expressions is under duress, even in an era of expanding global communications.”

Unfortunately, according to Freedom house’s freedom of the press index, only 17 percent of the world’s people live in countries that enjoy a free press and 43 percent, that is 2.8 billion people, live

in countries with a press that is not free.

A very disturbing development is that the General Assembly and the Human Rights Council of the UN passed resolutions that call for restrictions on what people can say or write about religion, especially Islam. These resolutions were initiated by the 56 members of the Organization of Islamic States. The concept is vague and subject to different interpretations. Poland passed a law requiring Polish media to “respect Christian values” violation of which may result in a prison term. Some governments use these laws to delegitimize minority groups, dissidents and other divergent views under the pretext of maintaining “social harmony.”

A notorious example, journalist Mohageg Nassab had to flee Afghanistan because his newspaper, *Women’s Rights*, dared to call for a stop to the stoning of women. As a result, he was convicted of insulting Islam and sentenced to death.

One amazing development is “libel tourism.” To get around America’s strong first amendment protection, plaintiffs have been suing both British and American writers in London, where defamation standards essentially assume that the offending speech is false and the author must prove the contrary to fend off the suit. The enormous cost of litigation exerts a chilling effect on open debate. Often, self-censorship becomes the preferred course. Fortunately the US has taken a stand and enacted the Speech Act, which will make it more difficult to enforce libel judgements against US journalists.

The mushrooming growth of the internet has aroused hopes for increasing freedom.

Some examples of the struggle between oppressive governments and its people in the electronic media are in China and Iran. In china, where many millions are online, the government has erected massive firewalls. Even

so, ultimately severe force was used to suppress a budding demand for more freedom. In Iran, during the green revolution technologies like Facebook, twitter and blogs were used to organize street protests. The revolt was massively put down. The Iranian police followed the electronic trails left by activists, which resulted in thousands of arrests. Cybersurfing officers can now compile dossiers on dissidents without street surveillance and phone taps of the pre-net world.

“Some governments use these laws to delegitimize minority groups, dissidents and other divergent views under the pretext of maintaining ‘social harmony’.”

In Tunisia, opponents of the regime succeeded in using the social media. Their example stirred revolt in Egypt. The attacks and detentions of journalists and media people in Egypt testify to the importance of information.

While regimes try to block social media websites, many have found countermeasures by using softwares called *proxies* and *freagate*. The genie is out of the bottle and ultimately governments will be unable to suppress the global communication technology. We need information to make decisions. What we do not know can hurt us. ■

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.

From Your President ...

Happy Thanksgiving to all!
See you at platform —Anja

ETHICAL CULTURE SOCIETY OF ESSEX COUNTY

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Remember to bring ...
We are continuing to collect food for
the needy and books for children.

ETHICAL CULTURE SOCIETY OF ESSEX COUNTY NEWSLETTER · NOVEMBER 2011



New Members join ESEC

Interim Leader Martha Gallahue, President Anja Moen, and Membership Chair Barbara Cotler welcomed two new members into the Society during the October 2nd Platform. A ceremony of welcome included a circle of members present at the Platform.

Our new members are native New Yorkers Rob Agree and Melissa Biren who moved to Parker Avenue in Ma-

plewood last year from Chester, NJ. The parents of three grown sons, Rob is an educator and Melissa a labor/employment arbitrator and mediator.

Rob and Melissa stated, "We are lifelong followers of the principles of the ethical culture movement, and founders/leaders of the Congregation for Humanistic Judaism of Morris County. We look forward to stimulating participation in the Essex Ethical community for many years to come."

