



ETHICAL CULTURE

M O N T H L Y

VOLUME 31 NUMBER 10

Visit our web site: www.essexethical.org

SUMMER 2012

JUNE 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

June 3 Anja Moen and Zia Durrani, "Women in war, women in crises"

The Board has decided to sponsor a woman in a war zone through the organization Women for Women International which helps women survivors of war rebuild their lives. In 1993, the founder, Zainab Salbi, started her work in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Since then the organization has helped more than 316 thousand women survivors of wars through education and access to income-generating opportunities.

Zia and Anja will describe this organization and the situation of women in war zones, also discussing two books we have studied: *Half the Sky*, by Nicholas D. Kristof and Sheryl Wu-dunn, describes women's crises around the world, giving inspiration and steps for action; and *A Thousand Sisters*, by Lisa J. Shannon, about a struggle to live a meaningful life and help other women, particularly women in Congo, the worst place on earth to be a woman.

June 10 Dr. Francesca Bremner, "The Conflict in Sri Lanka and How Americans Can Help End It"

The Government of Sri Lanka and the Tamil rebels in the north of Sri Lanka have engaged in a bloody war for a separate state for Tamils for the past 30 years. The government of Sri Lanka ended the war in 2008 with a massacre of 40,000 civilians and the internment into camps of more than 200,000 civilians. The rebels on the other hand used the civilians as human shields in an effort to stop the rampaging army from destroying them.

The war is over, yet the toll on the civilians continues with militarization of the north in which the Tamil civilians have lost their voice. This talk explores the roots of the conflict and opens the discussion on how citizens in the USA could push for the rights of the civilians in the north of Sri Lanka. The US government has taken a stand on the human rights violations by bringing a resolution at the UN which holds the government responsible for processes of reconciliation. The talk will open the door to a discussion of the questions, how can we, as citizens of an organization interested in human rights, monitor the progress of this matter? And how could we activate the Department of State to hold the Sri Lankan government accountable for the rights of Tamil civilians in the north?

Dr. Francesca Bremner (Ph.D., Columbia University) is an independent international researcher for organizations and counts amongst her clients the Asian Development Bank, The United Nations, The US Department of State and the German Government. Francesca is Sri Lankan born and has lived in the USA for 25 years, and has over ten years of experience working in the war zones in the north of Sri Lanka.



June 12 The Second Tuesday group
12:15–1:30 p.m. at the Society over a brown bag lunch. This will be the last meeting of the group until the fall. As a courtesy please RSVP to Betty at 973-763-1033 if you plan to attend.

Thank you — *Esther Barcun*

Platforms resume in September.

Essex Time Exchange Update

Our Ethical Culture society is an incubator for the newly launched time exchange under the auspices of the social action committee.

The Essex Time Exchange (formerly "time bank") provides a reciprocal service exchange. Examples of services are mentoring children, helping neighbors with house improvements or caring for an ill neighbor. The time one spends providing services earns "time credit" that one can spend to receive services from fellow Time Exchange members. We expect that this practical exchange of services will build community. Let all who are interested, come and join us.

Since the launch in March, we are happy to report that via the Internet, we are ready to process membership applications and service exchange transactions. See <http://www.hourworld.org/bank/indexnew.htm?hw=1036> for a description of the Essex Time Exchange. You will also find a link to this description on the application page: <http://www.hourworld.org/bank/Join.php?hw=1036>. To apply for membership to the Essex Time Exchange, we request that each person submit the names of two personal references to give us all an added level of safety and security. Once your application is processed, you will receive instructions on how to begin to use our system to give and receive services.

Please feel free to invite your friends to join us as well. We look forward to exchanging our hours with you! For more information contact: Essex.Time.Bank@gmail.com

— *Steering committee members*
Mathilde Benveniste, Martha Gallahue,
Jackie Hershops, Lisa Novemsky

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:
Rosalie Sussman
Betty Levin
Allen Parmet
Zia Durrani

EC Monthly newsletter writers/
contributors: Elaine Durbach, Anja Moen.
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.

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

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

LEADER'S MESSAGE

Reflections and Appreciation at ECSEC Season's End

by Martha Gallahue

How quickly our 2011-2012 season has passed. For me, it was (on occasion) "the best of times and the worst of times" that our band of nearly 40 members and over 40 friends experienced this year. The worst of times was reflected in the sudden loss of Fred Sebastian, our Board member and Office Administrator, who died suddenly at the end of October. Dying itself is hard enough but not being able to say good-bye was hardest in losing him. We mourned the passing of Gerry Stillman and Ted Seagull and endured our fair share of prolonged illnesses that required rehabilitation. We continue to send concerns for the best care for Freda and Seymour Fink Armstrong, for Alan and Zara Parmet, and Hilding Lindquist to be sure.



The best of times included addition of new members, Diane Beene, Melissa Biron, Myron Kurtz, Nadelin Dworkin and Rob Agree. New and old friends showed up regularly at Platforms. Elaine Durbach coordinated Platforms brilliantly as did Sue Willis chair our Social Action Committee. Eight members and four leaders (Sue Willis, Betty Levin, Hilding Lindquist, Karen Bokert, Mira Stillman, Zia Durrani, Anja Moen, Mary Barbiarz, Susan Rose, Richard Koral, Howard Radest and Jim White) delivered Platforms. Marnie Valdivia, Susan Graves and Molly Gilman, who participated in our Sunday programs returned and reminded us of joyous times in the past. We are ever grateful for the full community participation in Sunday hosting of after-platform goodies. Whenever we see Molly and Jeanine Rosh, we know the singing will be splendid. We appreciated our members and friends who offered support and encouragement to us: Charlotte Germain, Alice Gilman, Gloria Torrice, Sylvia Kramer, Eva Bouzzard and Jerry Lipton among others.

Programming this year included monthly gatherings of Folk Friday led by Lisa Novemsky that included quilting bees, and Satur-

day Arts led by Gus that continues to inspire with members' art work on our walls. For the community, we launched a Time Exchange and conducted a Humanist Seder. By my count and very unofficial, three to five guests shared the Platform experience with us weekly. Sometimes, the rooms were overflowing. And yes, AEU representatives stopped by to visit us and show they care for what we do. We might show our appreciation as well in attendance at the AEU Assembly in June.

Small groups flourished led by Esther Barcun and Calvin Chatlos. Anja and the Board once again steered the ship in a caring devoted manner always seeking to bring out the best in us. The building was beautifully managed by Marshall Norstein as Rosalie Sussman saw that additional cleaning and refurbishing took place. Marty Cotler was once again an able steward of our finances. Other committee chairs, Barbara Cotler, Betty Levin, Hilding Lindquist and Dick Bohn, performed beautifully. Special thanks to Gus, Anja, Marty, Nancy Bohn, Lisa and Jeanine Rosh for assistance in filling in for office duty while we work to replace this position; and to Howard Gilman for his work on our Newsletter. We are grateful to Andy Weinberger for agreeing to be our President once again. Martha considered it a privilege to serve as Leader performing her duties of monthly Platforms, presiding and supporting organizational development. She was deeply honored to participate in the public service offered by the Coalition on Race, our Sister organization and to share a Platform with Jackie Fox, Director of Valley Settlement House in West Orange. For some, our Society is a second home, the locus for friendship and mutual support.

And what does it all add up to? For me, a Society is always an ethical life practice. Sometimes, it's a matter of "keeping on keeping on" ... it's the center for news and views from and about each other. Fundamentally, it is designed to be a House of reflection where moral development is inspired in us in this complex world. In the future, it can be a hotbed of creativity if we choose to make it so, a Peace site capable of becoming a Peace Center in the community where youth programs flourish. These things take time, attention and



skilled resources. Who's to say we can't grow into these dreams. The biggest asset we have to build upon is the shared leadership among us where the majority of members contribute their time and talent for the good of the whole, where together we continue to grow and develop resilience in the times when our environmental, economic and political systems are stressed. No one of us has the answers but together we have the potential to grow and be an ethical presence in the community of Maplewood. Hats off to us all!

EDWIN R. LEWINSON
Memorial service held at Ethical Culture Society

[From Star-Ledger obituary, April 13]
 A memorial service was held Saturday, April 14 at the Ethical Culture Society for Edwin R. Lewinson, 82, who died on April 10 at his home in South Orange.

Ed was a peace and justice activist, professor emeritus of history at Seton Hall University and a former prisoner of conscience.

Born in Detroit, Mich., he earned a Ph.D. in history from Columbia University. He taught history at Seton Hall University for over 30 years, retiring in the 1990s. Over the years, he traveled to Korea, Cuba and Iraq to pro-

mote understanding between peoples.

Blind from birth, Ed fought against many forms of discrimination. He worked to advance civil rights with the Congress on Racial Equality (CORE) and many other organizations. In 1949, he was arrested during a "sit-in" to desegregate the Greyhound Bus Terminal in Washington, D.C. In 2008, he served three months in federal prison for protesting a U.S. military program at Fort Benning, Ga., that was linked to human rights abuses in Latin America.

Ed also worked to increase accessibility for blind people, and in 1966 was a plaintiff in a lawsuit in New York State that opened jury service to blind people. In the 1980s, he served as president of the New Jersey chapter of the National Federation of the Blind.

He was active on behalf of many civic causes through local organizations, including: the New Jersey Peace Action Education Fund, Peoples Organization for Progress, South Mountain Peace Action, South Orange Lions Club, International Action Center and the School of the Americas Watch.

He put into practice his belief that: "Social change only happens if people organize, unite, and take action." He showed outstanding determination in overcoming many obstacles in his life, and worked to right wrongs as he saw them in society. He faced life head-on,

with a selfless, lighthearted attitude, infectious optimism and irrepressible sense of humor.

Decades of political activity on the front lines of the struggle

[From People's Organization for Progress]
 Ed Lewinson crossed the line at the School of the Americas demonstrations in 2003 and 2004 and 2005. Ed's message to all Americans: First of all, to stop the war in Iraq. To stop the war, to cooperate internationally, to stop torture everywhere, to stop building American bases and to help countries in whatever way help is needed. Demonstrate in the streets to support candidates that really oppose the war and against funding of the war.

Ed Lewinson had decades of political activity on the front lines of the struggle. Although blind from birth, Ed had always been determined to participate fully in political struggles and in all aspects of life. He had been a political activist for almost 60 years and had been arrested numerous times for sit-ins and civil disobedience actions and participated in hundreds of picket lines, demonstrations and rallies.

An article in the February 19, 2008 Star Ledger — "A clear vision of justice: Retired Seton Hall professor spends his life fighting for human rights" — described how Ed was inspired to become an activist early in *(continues)*



ETHICAL CULTURE SOCIETY OF ESSEX COUNTY

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*The newsletter resumes in
September. Have a great
Summer!*

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ETHICAL CULTURE SOCIETY OF ESSEX COUNTY NEWSLETTER · SUMMER 2012

(from page 3) life. Born and raised in Detroit, he attended the only school in the area that offered a Braille class. It also was predominantly black, and Lewinson's first lessons in civil rights came from listening to the stories of his classmates. In 1949, at age 19, Ed participated with Congress of Racial Equality (CORE), pioneering civil rights organization, in the sit-ins and struggles to desegregate the Bus Terminal in Washington DC, when there were separate waiting rooms and black people had to move to the back of the bus to travel further south.

In the early 1960s, Ed participated in sit-ins to desegregate restaurants along the Route 40 Baltimore-Washington corridor. In Brooklyn he participated in actions to desegregate housing and he was part of the earliest struggles of 1199 to organize hospital workers.

Ed had always refused to define himself as handicapped. He defined

himself as a human being who happens to be blind. He was determined to challenge all forms of discrimination and to stay politically active on many issues and struggles because, as Ed said, "Social change only happens if people get organized."

Ed Lewinson was a great man who lived a life well lived.

[From Bob Manley's remarks, April 14]

As he had done many times, in many parts of the world, Ed helped blaze a trail for sightless people and for people discriminated against on any basis. I remember a time in Mexico City, where Ed was to present a paper, Ed and his Seeing Eye dog Nelson set out afoot for the Sandborn restaurant but on arrival were told firmly that Nelson was not welcome. Ed went straight to the U.S. Embassy. A few phone calls to the Mexican government later, Sandborn's assured Ed and Nelson that they

were most welcome there. Another story is about Ed's last seeing eye dog, Hooper, a large and wonderful fellow of Irish breeding, who retired at the age of about 12 and lived thereafter with Ed's family in Michigan.

Ed had gone to Cuba with Pastors for Peace and when the visit was about to end, the group was taken to the place where Fidel Castro would thank them for having come and bid them farewell. On arrival at the designated location, Hooper was advised that for security reasons he could not be with the group when it met with Fidel. Word got to Fidel about this and he told security to let Hooper in. Thereafter, there were photos of Fidel with Hooper, with Ed no doubt in the photos. After the photos were taken, Fidel made the following statement, forever enshrined in history:

"Hooper is always welcome in Cuba."