



ETHICAL CULTURE

M O N T H L Y

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MARCH 2011

MARCH PLATFORMS

March 6 Amy Blake, *“Educating World Citizens at 7 and 8 Years of Age”*

This conversation will introduce you to a teacher who is passionate about modeling and teaching “big ideas” through all aspects of the curriculum.



Using literature, reading, writing and the arts, Amy is hoping to model and grow “global citizens,”

children with an honest desire to know and think deeply.

She believes the world will change if we just ask three questions as a “big umbrella” for everything: Is it safe? Is it kind? and Does it show respect? Take the personal and put it into the philosophical and we are all on a level playing field.

Amy Blake is a second grade teacher at Hartshorn Elementary School in Short Hills, New Jersey. *[This is the teacher and school where Betty Levin did her peace program.]* She believes that if children (adults as well) were taught how to ask the big ethical questions and internalized the inquiry process we can change the world.

Through Philosophy for Children’s inquiry circles, the curriculum and the arts, Amy creates a classroom where peace is learned, valued, and nurtured with the hope of all students taking and using this education as they walk forward in their lives.

March 13 Antonia Messina and Michael Moroch, *“The origins of flamenco”*

How did the gypsy pogrom from India through Egypt to Southern

Spain lead to this passionate music and dance? Flamenco is an expression of self-worth, vitality and independence. What makes flamenco “flamenco” — unique stylizations in music, singing and dance.

There will be demonstrations of guitar, singing and dance.

Antonia Messina is a Maplewood resident and long-time performer and teacher. She started studying when she met a California gypsy in Rome, Italy in the 1980’s and hasn’t stopped since. She teaches and performs locally and in NYC.

Antonia is a mother of three and in her spare time practices law as a criminal defense attorney in NYC. She was featured in *More* magazine, “Firsts over 40”, and the *NJ Star Ledger*, “I Am New Jersey.” To learn more go to VivaFlamencoNJ.com

Michael Moroch (guitarist) started by playing folk guitar and banjo but quickly became a convert to flamenco after moving to Madrid in the 1960’s. Ever since he’s played for a variety of dancers including Jorge Narvarro and Antonia Messina. He plays regularly for Antonia’s classes and performs locally in clubs and restaurants. Go to michaelmoroch.com for more info.



March 20 Martha Gallahue, *“Women: Can’t Live Without ‘Em”*

What is the current scene with women today in culture, in ethical culture, the family and with ourselves. Martha Gallahue will offer some reflections that come from her experience as a daughter, mother, sister, psychotherapist and at the UN. She will talk about Women for Peace and why women make good peacebuilders. She will include the history of the National Women’s Conference and how it has become National Ethical Service.



March 27 Bob Manley, *“Global Responsibility and Human Consensus: A 10,000 Year Perspective”*

That is the working title of Bob Manley’s book, now in progress. He will discuss the work of the Center for Global Responsibility, of which he is the founder and president. It’s “tag line” is “Advancing thought and action for dealing with major problems and opportunities facing humankind.” Its major concerns are: ending hunger and poverty; advancing respect for human rights, especially for women and girls; protecting the environment and conserving non-renewable resources; achieving peaceful settlement of disputes and conflicts; and supporting more democratic, transparent, non-corrupt, efficient and effective governance at all levels from local to global. (www.globallyresponsible.com)

Robert H. Manley’s studies included political theory, international relations, comparative politics, world history, political theory, the economics

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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

Ethical Culture Society of Essex County



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

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

of international trade and international law.

Bob has had substantial teaching and research experience in the public policy area and he has been fortunate to spend considerable time in various parts of the world. In teaching political theory, Bob has taken a comparative approach, focusing on the work of important figures from various parts of the world, both leading figures in the so-called "western" canon and important leaders who had made significant contributions in African political thought. The global-level political thought approach became an important base for Bob's current work on globally responsible political thought and public policy.



SOCIAL ACTION COMMITTEE

Excerpts from the minutes, January 23, 2011 — Attending: M. Sue Willis, Chair; Barbara Cotler; Marty Cotler; Martha Gallahue; Gus Lindquist; Lisa Novemsky

We began with a few reports and discussions, including the Ethical Culture Society having a table at the Community Coalition's Martin Luther King event on January 17, 2011. A lot of people took information and a couple signed up for the contact list.

Next, Sue passed around the thank you letter from Sister Regina of IRATE/First Friends for the stationery we sent for inmates at the Elizabeth immigration detention center.

We also discussed subjects and possible language for a carding in the next few weeks, and Martha offered to come up with some environmentally oriented ones.

Lisa conveyed a report on absent member Betty Levin's peace activities, which recently included reading peace-related stories to second graders in a Millburn school. She also

has planned a presentation of her free Imagine Peace workshop at the Valley Settlement House in Orange.

Gus reported on a long term plan to create an association between the Essex Society and that same Valley Settlement House through a gardening club/planting project to take place at our society for our members, and possibly be extended to the Settlement House. This project might be a long term way to bring diverse neighbors interested in gardening into the Society.

We set our next meeting for Sunday, March 20, 2011 after platform.

— Meredith Sue Willis

TRIBUTE

This tribute is to Lisa Novemsky, our vice-president and a genuine Ethical Culturist in how she lives her life. She responded sensitively to my need early one Sunday morning. I had been taken to the emergency room of Overlook Hospital by the First Aid Squad with a sprained ankle. When I needed transportation home with a stop at the pharmacy for meds, she responded immediately and brought me home. And she's so matter-of-fact about it all. Thank you again, Lisa. We are indeed a fine community. A modest donation is being made to our Tribute Fund in her honor.

— E. Betty Levin

P.S. My foot is healing nicely.

FROM THE AEU

FES Conference — Save the Date!

This year's Future of Ethical Societies (FES) conference will take place in Brooklyn, NY, during Memorial Day weekend (May 27-30). FES will be staying at the New York Loft Hostel & Hotel, just a short commute from the Brooklyn Society. FES's annual conference is a way for FES members to reconnect with old friends, welcome new members into the group, and explore a new community and Ethical Society. As part of FES's commitment to giving back to

the communities it visits, the members of FES will be assisting in several Brooklyn community gardens during this year's conference. In addition to community service, FES members also explore the area they are visiting, and New York City has no shortage of sightseeing opportunities. The weekend will round out with Sunday Platform at the Brooklyn Society which will be presented by FES. If you are interested in more information regarding this year's conference, want to know ways you can become involved in FES or the conference, or know a 17-28 year old adult that might be interested in participating in FES's conference, please contact Jessica Blumberg at jblumbi@gmail.com.

FROM THE UN

UN Human Development Report

Since 1990, the UN has published a development report keeping track of human wellbeing. Early on it was realized that human welfare cannot be evaluated by money alone. Income is of course crucial: without resources any progress is difficult. Yet, we must also consider whether people can lead long and healthy lives and have the opportunity to be educated. For this purpose, the human development index (HDI) was created which combines income, life expectancy and education to assess human wellbeing.

There has been much progress since 1990. The world's average HDI has increased almost 20% (and 40% since 1970) reflecting large improvements in life expectancy, school enrollment, literacy and income. For example, average life expectancy around the globe jumped to 70 years up from 59 in 1970.

The report points out that the in-

dex relies on national averages which often conceal lopsided distributions in income, health and education. The last 20 years have also seen increasing inequality between countries and importantly within countries. China, for example, based on income alone is by far the biggest gainer in development over the past 40 years. Its economy has grown by an average of 8% a year but those income improvements have not always been matched by advances in life expectancy, health and education. As a result China is only 79th in terms of improvement in life expectancy and schooling. Income inequality in China has skyrocketed and in the countryside extreme poverty still exists. Similarly, India has seen a growing middle class but about 42% of people are still extremely poor and average life expectancy is 64 years.

Human development research, confirmed by the report, shows the lack of significant correlation between economic growth and improvements in health and education in low and mid-

dle level countries. The 2010 report provides a succinct summary. Equity and the HDI are systematically related. Countries that do well on the HDI tend to be more equitable. The result is consistent with research showing that reducing inequality — both in the population as a whole and across gender and other groups — can improve outcomes in health and education as well as economic growth.

Globally more people have improved their lives. However, the startling and troublesome fact is that the number of desperate poor, about 1.3 billion, has remained the same over the years. Where do these “bottom billion” live?

The usual assumption has been that the poor live in poor countries. This was true in 1990: then over 90% of the world's poor lived in the world's poorest places. Many of the fragile failed states, about 50 of them, had civil wars and often dysfunctional governments. A recent study by the British Institute of Development Studies has shown

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PRESIDENT'S REPORT

March, 2011

As most of you know I have been away for an extended vacation on a sunny beach in Mexico. I haven't missed the weather here, but I have missed all of you.

We are a small group of Ethical Culture Society here in Essex County. Still, every Sunday at 11 AM we are able to present a great Platform for anyone who would like to participate. I know I have missed out on the inspiring and informative talks given by experts and activists in their fields while I was away. I am always amazed at what Elaine Durbach-Norstein arranges for us. I also know I have

missed out on interesting questions and comments because our Platforms are created so that the audience can actively participate.

As I was thinking about all of you I realized how active many of us are in our Society, and how we all do our part so that even if some of us might be away for awhile, some might be ill, we can always be sure that come Sunday at 11 AM we will gather together to be informed and inspired.

I am happy to be back, energized, and ready to do as much as I can on my part. See you at Platform!

— Anja Moen



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the needy and books for children.

ETHICAL CULTURE SOCIETY OF ESSEX COUNTY NEWSLETTER · FEBRUARY 2011

UN Report, *continued from page 3*

an important change over the last 20 years namely that three quarters of the 1.3 billion very poor people now live in middle level countries. The increased wealth of these newly risen middle level countries has not filtered down to the very poor. Some of these countries are India, China, Nigeria, Pakistan and Indonesia. Persistent poverty is often a political problem due to lopsided distributions of wealth, health and educational resources.

The World Bank, not the most progressive institution, came out with a significant report in 2006 providing detailed evidence that high levels of economic and political inequality leads to economic institutions and social arrangements that systematically favor the interests of an elite with



more influence. Such institutions, it states, undermine a country's potential for growth and poverty reduction. In short, vast inequalities, aside from being immoral, is as a practical matter also bad for the economy. Coming from the World Bank this is surely a remarkable statement.

There are programs to help the poor. One innovative one is CCT (conditional cash-transfer programs). These schemes give stipends and food

to the poorest if they meet certain conditions such as their children attending school, their babies are vaccinated and children get regular health checks. Ten years ago there were only a handful of such programs. Now they are on every continent — even New York City has one — and they benefit millions. The program started originally in Brazil and has spread to such places as the Philippines, Bangladesh, Cambodia and Pakistan. These programs are not a panacea but are still very helpful.

Ultimately, extreme maldistribution is immoral, bad for the economy and unsustainable. ■

Dr. Sylvain Ehrenfeld, representative to the UN of IHEU and National Service of the AEU and Temma Ehrenfeld freelance writer based in NYC