



ETHICAL CULTURE

M O N T H L Y

VOLUME 31 NUMBER 8

Visit our web site: www.essexethical.org

APRIL 2012

APRIL 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



April 1 E. Betty Levin, “*The Wisdom of Aging*” is a workshop highlighting the accumulated internal wisdom from many years of living and learning. This vital perspective can illuminate new ideas of living meaningfully.

The workshop is interactive, meditative and promotes participants discovering aspects of themselves they may have neglected, forgotten or find yet to be discovered.

Betty tells us, “I have been presenting this workshop for over 15 years at many senior centers and conferences. Participants number from 50 to 200 with males comprising about 10% of the group. As an adjunct to the workshop, I provide a bibliography.”

E. Betty Levin has been a member of the Ethical Culture Movement almost all her adult life and a member of the Essex Society for over 50 years. During this period, she has served as president, on the Board of Trustees and as a Sunday School teacher. Currently, she is active in the Peace Movement, having supported Lou Kousins, who was its founder in 1982. Presently, she chairs the committee in the process for selecting a Memoria to mark our site, the first ever. In 1963, she created our Creative Arts Workshops, later becoming the Educational Center for which she served as Director for 10 years.

Together with Alice Robinson-Gilman, they have reintroduced the Human Faith Group to the Society which begins March 10, to be facilitated by our Dr. Calvin Chatlos, a humanist psychiatrist.

Betty’s two daughters, Janet and Wendy, are both graduates of our Sunday School and Janet is mother of two daughters, also graduates of Ethical Culture Sunday Schools (Garden City, L.I.): Stephanie and Samantha are thus third generation Ethical Culturists, devoting their adult lives to those ideals. Stephanie, a graduate of Stanford Law School, serves as a public interest attorney in New York City and Samantha is currently choosing a medical school and has a special interest in serving the medical needs of Hispanic communities.

Betty still works as a private practice psychotherapist, for the past 37 years. She has been founder and past president of the N.J. Association of Women Therapists where she has been honored for her “wisdom and contributions to the creativity and development of the Association.” She has also had 3 invited articles published in professional journals.

April 8 Steve Sklar, “*If it’s broke, don’t fix it: Immigration law update*”



Steve Sklar, the immigration lawyer who speaks periodically to Essex Ethical on immigration issues and wider social policy issues, will update us on recent immigration law and immigration policy developments in the run-up to the next Presidential election. As usual, he will give us the immigration lawyer’s skewed and twisted perspective, a blend of cynicism and idealism

typical of those blessed (or doomed) to practice law in this surreal area of endeavor. This talk will cover:

- *Oh, No, Not New and Improved:* why the concept of “new and improved” strikes terror in the hearts of immigration lawyers and employers of foreign labor, among others. Exhibit A will be recent Byzantine developments in certain temporary, seasonal workers’ visas, known as H-2B visas. These will make clear that the U.S. Department of Labor continues its policy of bludgeoning to death a visa application process that is already beleaguered beyond belief. This topic will provide the ancillary public service of dissuading attendees from embarking on the practice of immigration law.

- *Looking a Gift Horse in the Mouth (or the Cloud Around the Silver Lining):* the limited value of certain benefits, recently proposed by the Obama administration, for aliens hoping to legalize their status in the U.S., and how these are a bit more light than heat and can be viewed (partly, if not entirely) as a play for the Latino vote that avoids the political risk of significant benefit to the foreign-born. Due respect will be given to the actual benefit to aliens implicit somewhere within the gift.

- *The Culture of No Is Still Alive and Well:* How another recent policy gift to would-be immigrants, the policy known as “prosecutorial discretion,” whereby Immigration & Customs Enforcement has recently avowed to prioritize its push for removal of aliens to target, first and foremost, only those with criminal histories worthy of the term, turns out to be something that exists more on paper than in practice.

- *On a Positive Note:* In keeping with his perverse need not to (*continues*)

Ethical Culture Society of Essex County



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

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EC Monthly newsletter writers/
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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.

purvey unremitting cynicism and negativity, Steve will end up with a few heart-warming tales of decency demonstrated by some of the men and women who are employed by the Federal government and tasked with enforcing immigration law. In which we will learn that your adversary can, at least sometimes, be a better friend to you than the judge, and on the other hand, even a conservative judge can be a better friend to you than your own cynical self. We will try to channel the spirit of the late, great John Mortimer, the creator of *Rumpole*, during such reflections.

Steve Sklar, who lives and works in Maplewood, has been practicing immigration law for 17 years. Groan about it as he will, it is the best job this erstwhile film and video production person and one-time, would-be corporate lawyer has ever had. When not practicing law, he spends his time at the piano on what he calls "The Jazz Learning Curve." He has also been visible about town longboarding, though he is currently taking a hiatus from that activity in order to attend physical therapy.

April 15 Martha Gallahue, "Web of Life in Ethical Culture"

Martha Gallahue will preview authors Dan Siegel, MD, Stan Deetz and Thomas Barry to illustrate how in the 21st century we might articulate Adler's conviction on the personal, political and ecological spheres that all life is sacred and interconnected. She will highlight the Rio+20 Conference to take place in June and events planned for Earth Day on April 22nd.

Martha Gallahue is an Ethical Culture Leader serving both National Ethical Service at the UN and Ethical Culture Society of Essex County in Maplewood, N.J.



April 22 Richard Koral, "The Certainty of Uncertainty. What is your capacity for ambiguity?"

Mr. Koral will talk about the lack of certainty in what we know and the decisions we have to make as well as the life we live — all with incomplete understanding. Some people can

abide uncertainty far better than others.

Richard Koral is a long-time member of the Westchester Ethical Society and was its president from 1997-2002. He is also a Leader in Training, studied at the Humanist Institute and is a candidate for Doctor of Ministry at Hebrew Union College. He practiced law for many years in the field of commercial and insolvency law.



April 29 Barbara Lipton and Zia Durrani: "Travels to Gujarat, India"

In January of this year, ECS Board Member Zia Durrani, ECS Friend and former member Barbara Lipton, and Judy and Karin Anderson spent several weeks travelling in Gujarat, India. Zia is a native of Kashmir, India, and for Barbara, who used to teach the art and architecture of ancient India, this was her 10th trip. But neither had been to Gujarat.

Gujarat consists of two large land bulges extending out into the Arabian Sea in the far west of India. It is east of Pakistan, south of Rajasthan, and just north of where the Indian coastline descends to the Indian Ocean. Gujarat is considered a relatively well-off Indian state with industry as well as farmland, paved roads (questionable!) and high employment. The population is predominantly Hindu, Muslim and Jain.

The women's primary reason for visiting Gujarat was its renowned handicrafts, especially the textiles. Known for excellent embroidery and ingenious use of embedded small mirrors, for block prints, and for its extraordinary patola (or double ikat) weaving, among other skills, Gujarati textiles are considered among the finest in India. As well, Gujarat contains ruins from one of the oldest cultures in the world, the Indus Valley Civilization, dating to ca. 2,400 BC. And it is the site of ingenious and unusual "step wells,"

beautifully carved stone wells descending up to 9 stories in an attempt to find water in the desert.

Zia and Barbara will describe some of the highlights of their journey along with photographs and will show samples of a few of the fabulous textiles they brought home with them.

LEADER'S COLUMN

by Martha Gallahue

Leadership and Visionary Decision-Making

In our polarized world of today, we are reeling from the erosion of effective leadership. Some of the problem lies in our assumptions that leadership is for others, not ourselves. Some of it lies in our failure to appreciate what good leadership truly is, which ultimately is about making decisions. While effective leaders don't always get it right, they do make decisions with the view toward doing better. Good leaders make decisions from the limited place in which they find themselves and take one step at a time toward that which creates more well-being, flexibility and harmony for all. More importantly, leaders will make decisions in the context of a vision for the common good.

I have had the privilege to reflect upon leadership two weekends in a row at Boulder, CO, with The National Peace Academy (www.national-peaceacademy-us.org) and at the National Leader's Council in Buckeystown, MD. Both groups focused on the same elements that make for good Leaders. Both groups identified respect in conflict, collaboration in grounded vision, and creativity in situations where there is sometimes no roadmap for decision-making. Both groups also focused on making decisions in the context of vision. Our President Anja Moen is such a leader.

In our Society, Gus Lindquist also modeled good leadership when he filled in for a Platform speaker, and spoke

STATEMENTS OF AFFIRMATION

Below are the affirmations offered by Barry Klassel at his March 4 platform.

1. We have no father who art in heaven: we are alone, TOGETHER.
2. We belong in the world — our history is the history of the universe — our family is all humankind
3. Everything does not happen for a reason or as part of a plan. Everything that happens is an opportunity ... to see things more clearly, to question further and to change for the better.
4. Suffering is part of the fabric of our lives; don't elevate it or sanctify it; minimize it and work to overcome it.
5. Take every opportunity to make life better for self and others.
6. Meaning is something we each must decide for ourselves, individually — what to believe, what is real, who to trust, is based on our experiences.
7. We must be aware of how vulnerable we are, as well as what our strengths are. Some say, "I bow to the god in you"; I say, "I bow to the precious, vulnerable, mortal human being that you are."
8. Laugh, laugh, laugh at the absurdities and craziness of life.
9. Treasure the few moments we have, because death is final.
10. Celebrate our differences and also realize how much we all have in common.
11. Recognize your gifts, your talents, and give them to others.
12. Most of all, appreciate this chance to write the story of your own life.

Barry says he'd love to hear any comments. [Barry Klassel, Certified Celebrant, Humanist Chaplain at Rutgers University — rutgershumanist@gmail.com]

about the beneficial aspects of visioning to create better outcomes in our Society. Betty Levin that day reminded us we are the first Peace Site in the country and we might raise our visibility in the community by promoting peace building with appropriate programs such as non-violent reconciliation. This Platform prompted me to appreciate how ECSEC might implement their inspiring recommendations.

Toward this goal, on March 10, ECSEC hosted a Time Bank launch in the community to create models of cooperation and community building. In doing so, we spoke to those in attendance how Felix Adler, our Founder, taught the social nature of our moral development. Further, we are reviving in Fred Sebastian's honor, a film series based on peace building. Finally, we plan to hold at least two mini-World Cafe's in April and May before our annual meeting to begin thinking

together about the treasure we sit on in ethical culture and how we might share our treasure in the community. I hope you will join with me during the Spring to represent these efforts.

There is a wisdom teaching in many religious traditions. The teaching states that we cannot find ourselves without first losing ourselves. This is a statement about generosity, about sharing what we hold dear at some self-sacrifice. I urge us all to give ourselves more readily to broadening our outreach in Maplewood not only for community well-being but for our own deepening commitment to the message of ethical culture.

The Second Tuesday facilitated sharing group will continue to meet, noon to 1:30 p.m., over a brown bag lunch at the Ethical Culture Society. The next two meetings will take place on April 10 and May 8. This group is free and available to our *(continues)*

ETHICAL CULTURE SOCIETY OF ESSEX COUNTY

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(continued from page 3) members and friends. As a courtesy, please call 732-287-8728 if you plan to attend so we can notify you if there are any changes or cancellations. Thank you,

— Esther Barcun

Folk Friday, April 13



Bring instruments and come to sing. Or — as in *“and/or”* — come and work with us on our community quilt. Or bring your knitting. Or your crocheting. Or your wood carving. It’s a song and craft night at Ethical Culture. Second Friday of the month, April 13, 7:30–9:30 p.m., coordinated by Anja Moen and Lisa Novemsky.



“Household Cats as Pet Therapists” was the topic Feb. 26th when Margaret and Bill Edwards discussed how their cats visit with people in nursing homes, adult day care centers, hospice and humane education programs; and described the qualities they bring to this special service work. Two of the cats came along with them to demonstrate ‘paws on’ for those in attendance. Margaret and Bill have been involved with their cats in pet therapy since 2000. They are affiliated with the Delta Society’s “Pet Partner” program, St. Hubert’s Animal Welfare’s “Paws for People” program and the Love on a Leash Foundation.

3rd Saturday Arts, 7:30 p.m., Saturday, April 21

April’s program for 3rd Saturday Arts will be announced in the April Platform program and by email.