



ETHICAL CULTURE

M O N T H L Y

VOLUME 23 NUMBER 4

Visit our web site: www.essexethical.org

DECEMBER 2003

Leader's Message

Dear Members and Friends,

Every Sunday morning I tell you all that we are a religion whose members commit themselves to honoring the worth and dignity of every person. Yet what do we mean by the worth of each person? How can we say that each person has worth? How can we say that a cruel and sadistic person deserves to be honored? What is this worth which we honor? Whatever it is, can we say it is actually worthy if it does not include moral value? Honoring people who act morally is easy. Respecting those who habitually act immorally is problematic and complex. If we are a religion based essentially on ethics, how can we respect and honor people who do not act ethically?

Traditional monotheistic religions solve this problem by saying that the worth and dignity (high status in the



"...what do we mean by the worth of each person?"

order of being) that we ascribe to all humans is based on the fact of their being children of God, made in the image of God, and chosen to have preeminence over all other creatures. Thereby such religions establish universal human preeminence upon humanity's special relationship to God. Such an approach is not open to us as humanists or as agnostics. Yet it is not clear that this approach actually solves the problem since the very existence of evil in the world created by an omnipotent God is equally a problem among believers.

The problem for humanists is many sided: intellectual (what is worth?), emotional (how can one feel respect for immoral people?), and practical (how can one act respectfully toward people who act immorally?) If these questions interest you, come to our Platform meeting on Dec. 7 when I will address this topic.

Till then, Boe

Boe's Platform Address on December 7 will be "Do You Have to Be Good to Be Worthy?"

This will be an exploration of the meaning of human worth. Does having worth mean you are moral? Does the ability to behave morally imply that you have worth? What are the challenges involved in bringing out the best from the worst? ■

[For more information regarding platforms and presenters for December, see pg. 4]



Fundraiser Events

The members offering the following events are contributing their time, talents and treasure. You can show your appreciation and support for the Society by attending these events:

Dec. 13 Pot Luck/Auction/Sing-along

Jan. 9 Trivial Pursuit

Feb. 7 Sterling Duo – Concert

Mar. Theater Party:

"Proof" – The Strollers

Apr. Dinner – Mira & Jerry Stillman

May 15 Azalea Display – Betty Levin

Jul. Gourmet Lunch – Boe Meyerson

ENTERTAINMENT BOOKS

Need a gift for someone out of town? We can order books for most major cities in the U.S. that will be shipped for an additional \$5. **THE SALE ENDS DECEMBER 31.** We need your help to reach our goal of 104 books to earn over \$500. Order those extra books today. They are available at the Society every Sunday morning or contact Nancy Bohn 973-762-0513. We will deliver them to Maplewood and surrounding areas.

Be sure to save December 13th

There will be great comradery at the **POT LUCK** and **SING-ALONG**, as well as terrific bargains at the **SILENT AUCTION** — gift certificates from local merchants, jewelry, household items, etc.

For information regarding fundraising events, contact the committee: Nancy Bohn, Jill Fox, Louisa Lubiak, Jeanine Rosh. ■

Ethical Culture Society of Essex County



Boe Meyerson, *Leader*

Ted Seagull, *Assistant Leader*

Jim White, *Leader Emeritus*

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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 e-mail to the editor (howardgilman@netscape.net). 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.

For those interested in receiving their copy of Ethical Culture Monthly by First Class Mail for a charge of \$10/year or \$5/half year (beginning in January), call the office, 973-763-1905, and request our First Class Mail Special.

Ethical Culture Society
of Essex County,
516 Prospect St.,
Maplewood, NJ 07040.

Visit our web site:
www.essexethical.org

Notice to Members: Volunteers Are Needed



There are vacancies on many committees and the Society needs the help of every member. If you feel there is anything you can do for our society, please call me at (973) 377-7172.

—Susan Kennedy

Telling Fact from Fiction

“Since no decisive victory is possible, it does not matter whether the war is going well or badly. All that is needed is that a state of war should exist. The splitting of the intelligence which the Party requires of its members, and which is more easily achieved in an atmosphere of war, is now almost universal, but the higher up the ranks one goes, the more marked it becomes. It is precisely in the Inner Party that war hysteria and hatred of the enemy are strongest. In his capacity as an administrator, it is often necessary for a member of the Inner Party to know that this or that item of war news is untruthful, and he may often be aware that the entire war is spurious and is either not happening or is being waged for purposes quite other than the declared ones: but such knowledge is easily neutralized by the technique of doublethink. Meanwhile no Inner Party member wavers for an instant in his mystical belief that the war is real, and that it is bound to end victoriously.”

George Orwell, 1984, Chapter 17

From Around the AEU

Stan Wayne/AEU Clipping Service

**ARNOLD FISHMAN, President,
Philadelphia Society**

I do not believe in god:

I believe in humanity.

I do not believe in heaven;

I believe in Earth.

I do not believe in a hereafter;

I believe in now.

I do not believe in the Bible;

I believe in Darwin.

I do not believe in revelations:

I believe in figuring it out.

I do not believe in a divine plan;

I believe in free choice.

I do not believe in infallibility:

I believe in learning from my mistakes.

I do not believe in always getting it right;

I believe in trying hard.

I do not believe in propriety;

I believe in integrity.

I do not believe in winning;

I believe in accommodation.

I do not believe in hitting;

I believe in talking.

I do not believe in getting even;

I believe in charting my own course.

I do not believe in being bitter;

**I believe in the understanding
of experience.**

I do not believe in perfection;

I believe in personal growth.

I do not believe in sainthood;

I am far from holy.

I do not require perfection in others; but

I do demand their respect.

FREDERICK DOUGLAS

If there is no struggle, there is no progress. The struggle may be a moral one or it may be a physical one or both; but it must be a struggle. Power concedes nothing without a demand. It never did and it never will.

WALT WHITMAN

This is what you shall do:
Love the earth and sun and
the animals.

Despise riches. Give alms to
everyone that asks. Stand up for
the stupid and the crazy.

Devote your income and labor
to others.

Hate tyrants.

Argue not concerning God.

Have patience and indulgence
toward people.

Take off your hat to nothing
known or unknown or to any
person or number of people.

Go freely with powerful unedu-
cated persons and with the young
and with the mothers of families.
Read these leaves in the open air
every season of every year of your life.

Re-examine all you have been
told at school or church, synagogue,
mosque or in any book.

Dismiss what ever insults your
soul.

Your very flesh shall be a great
poem and have the richest fluency
not only in its words but in silent
lines of its lips and face and between
the lashes of your eyes and in every
motion and joint of your body.

DANTE

He who sees a need, and waits
to be asked for help, is as
unkind as if he had refused it.

EMILY DICKINSON

Truth is such a rare thing,
it is delightful to tell it.
(truth-telling)

If I can stop one heart from
breaking, I shall not live in vain.

If I can ease one life the aching; or
cool one pain; or help one fainting
robin into his nest again; I shall not
live in vain. ■

Gala Silent Auction / Pot Luck Supper & Sing-along

*A Fun Filled Fund Raiser Event—
Something for Everyone!*

**Saturday, December 13th, 2003
at 6:00 p.m.**

*at the Ethical Society
516 Prospect St./corner Parker Ave.
Maplewood, NJ • 973-763-1905*

Oil Painting, Theater Tickets, Gift Certificates,
Art Work, and much more
Place your bid and take home treasures

Bring your favorite dish

No admission fee



ETHICAL CULTURE SOCIETY OF ESSEX COUNTY

516 PROSPECT STREET
MAPLEWOOD, NJ 07040
(973) 763-1905

www.essexethical.org

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ETHICAL CULTURE

M O N T H L Y

DECEMBER SUNDAY MORNING PLATFORMS

*Platforms begin 11 a.m. All are welcome. Platforms are subject to change without notice.
Sunday School 11 a.m.–12:15 p.m.*

December 7 – Boe Meyerson: Do You Have to Be Good to Be Worthy?

December 14 – Jim Quigley: Ethics and Energy!

December 21 – Festival with the Sunday School and Others

December 28 – Open Discussion led by Doris Rados

December 7 – Boe Meyerson: Do You Have to Be Good to Be Worthy?
[See pg. 1]

December 14– Jim Quigley: Ethics and Energy! Jim Quigley earned his B.A. in social service from Cleveland State University, an M.A. in international relations from Ohio University, and an M.S. in appropriate technology and Ph.D. in city and regional planning from the University of Pennsylvania. He has been a member of the faculty in environmental sci-

ences at Portland State University (Oregon) and an adjunct at the State University of New York-Stony Brook and at Ramapo College of New Jersey. Jim's work has also included the role of research associate at the Center for the Biology of Natural Systems headed by Barry Commoner at Queens College, City University of New York, and programs manager for the Society of Environmental Journalists. He served in VISTA (*Volunteers In Service to America*) as a juvenile caseworker; and worked as a Peace Corps Volunteer on a Pacific atoll. He has a son, David, and resides in East Orange, NJ. His father, Harold Quigley, served as a leader in the Ethical Humanist movement for 25 years.

December 21 – Festival with the Sunday School and others

December 28 – Open Discussion led by Doris Rados ■

At Essex Ethical:

Family Night Dec. 5

7:30 pm every 1st Friday

Folk Music Dec. 12

7:30pm every 2nd Friday

Philosophy Group Dec. 14, 28

9:30–10:30 a.m. every 2nd and 4th Sunday

Poetry Series Dec. 15

7:30 p.m. every 3rd Monday.

Contact: Tom Obrzut,
(973) 275-0929.

Public Affairs Forum Dec. 19

7:30 pm every 3rd Friday

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/Sing-along

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Mar. Theater Party: "Proof"
– The Strollers

Apr. Dinner
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May 15 Azalea Display
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Jul. Gourmet Lunch
– Boe Meyerson

*[For more information regarding
Fundraiser Events — see pg. 1]*

Platform Committee to Meet January 11, 2004!
Come after platform to look over what is still open this season and also to begin to think about next year.