



# ETHICAL CULTURE

M O N T H L Y

VOLUME 26 NUMBER 6

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FEBRUARY 2007

## LEADER'S MESSAGE

*I was invited by the Maplewood Township Committee to give the Benediction at the close of the meeting. I would like to share those words with you.*

### **Boe's Benedictions for Maplewood Township Committee Reorganization Meeting 1/1/07**



*Boe Meyerson*

Friends, I offer you two benedictions today: one for our town council and one for us all.

### **For our town council**

May you who are entrusted with the health and integrity of our community enjoy the support and gratitude of the community you serve.

May you never fear to be unpopular in the service of justice, fairness and humanity.

May you listen to each other and to those you lead and may you lend your ears to those whose words are challenging.

May you tend to the needs of the most needy and least empowered.

May you have insight and foresight and may your finest goals become reality.

### **For us all**

These are the words of Isaiah (ch. 55, v. 12):

"May you go forth with joy and be led forth with peace:

May the mountains and the hills break forth before you into singing,

And all the trees of the fields clap their hands."

## THE PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Were you at our Sunday Platform party on December 24th? It was more of a salon, some heartfelt discussions of past and new celebrations: Winter Solstice, Christmas, Hanukkah and Kwanzaa. 20 of us joined the circle for sharing, caring and marking a unique time. The Membership Committee provided sumptuous refreshments, another community-building event. As a climax, to celebrate Kwanzaa, we did some West African drumming to a Babatunde tape.

Come join us for more of these "salon-type" events; warm, personal, a sense of togetherness. It happens at our colloquies also; the 3rd Sunday of each month, 9:30 a.m. in the parlor. In the December Colloquy, we were so involved that the discussion continued right up to Platform time. Future Colloquy dates are: February 18, March 18, April 22, May 20 and June 17 (Fathers Day). I look forward to seeing you.



*Betty Levin*

— Betty Levin

## FUND-RAISING EVENTS

### **Trivial Pursuits evening**

There may still be time to sign up for the February 23 event — The Trivial Pursuits challenge, at Jeanine Rosh's at 7 p.m.

We begin with some hot cider and crunchies, then play for laughs, and end with dessert and drink. Donation is \$15. Limited to 10 people.

Snow date is March 2.

### **Coming in April**

On Saturday, April 14 at 7:30 p.m. soprano Marjorie Berg and pianist John Pivarnik will perform "Songs of Contemplation". The program will feature the Hermit Songs of Samuel Barber, and the Four Serious Songs by Johannes Brahms, as well as piano music of Brahms.

Marjorie Berg is no stranger to the Ethical Society. We first met her as guest artist with the Stirling Duo, then in her own concert presentations here at the society. She has been a soloist with the Baroque Orchestra of North Jersey, The Masterwork Chorus, Harmonium Choral Society, New Jersey Concert Opera, and The Stirling Duo. She has also been a guest soloist at Ogden Memorial Presbyterian Church in Chatham, and St. Mary's Abbey at Delbarton, St. Rose of Lima Church and Christ Church in Short Hills.

John Pivarnik is Organist and Music Director at Christ Church in Short Hills. His undergraduate degree in piano performance is from Susquehanna University, and his graduate study was at Temple University.

He studied vocal accompanying at Cologne Musik Hochschule in Cologne, Germany, and most recently he studied at the Franz Liszt Piano Academy in Hungary.

The evening begins with crackers and conversation, then the concert, followed by dessert and discussion

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# Ethical Culture Society of Essex County



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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 email 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.

Ethical Culture Society  
of Essex County,  
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**...act so  
as to elicit  
the best  
in others  
and in  
ourselves**

## Events, continued from page 1

with the artists. What an evening of music and mingling! Suggested donation is \$20. Call now to reserve your tickets.

### **The Merry Month of May — Soup and Strollers May 6 at 2 p.m.**

The Maplewood Strollers present 'The Violet Hour'. It's that time — that wonderful New York hour when the evening's about to reward you for that day — Denis (Denny) McCleary explaining the title for his colossus of a novel to his friend John Pace Seavering — and by extension, the title for Richard Greenberg's play about a fateful day in their lives. The greater the participation, the less it will cost. Help bring up participation. Come to the platform and stay for lunch and the show.

Mark the date on your calendar.

Also coming in May, Betty Levin's amazing Azalea display. More information to follow.

### **White Elephant Sale**

The date is set for Saturday June 2nd. We can't stress enough how important this event is to our income. It's our most lucrative event — an opportunity for everyone to recycle and reclaim some space for yourselves. Spend a little time going through drawers and closets to make room and make some money for the Society. We will begin collecting soon — so get ready to create lots of extra space at home by passing along those unused treasures — to bring happiness to someone else (you know, just buying can make one happy) and bring funds to the society. Who knows what treasures you will uncover!

Call the office or Jeanine (973-258-9395) for information and reservations.

—*Jeanine Rosh*

## PLEASE NOTE

**Attention members! Please  
submit your email addresses to  
[ethicalessex@netscape.com](mailto:ethicalessex@netscape.com)  
to receive newsletter and other  
special event notices.**

## LETTER

For a very readable book which may give you hope for the future read *The Trouble with Islam Today*, New York, St. Martin's Press ©2003, by Irshad Manji who is a moderate practicing Moslem and has nice things to say about Israel. It is an open letter to Moslems.

—*Barbara Cotler*

## TRIBUTE

Congratulations to Doris Rados who has celebrated her 80th birthday. She declines a formal party but in recognition of our financial stresses at our Society, asks that contributions be made to the Society to commemorate her landmark birthday. Again, congratulations to you, Doris, and thank you for your sensitivity to our Society's needs. May your years be healthy and joyful.

—*Betty Levin*

## FROM THE UN

### **Assessing The UN**

A global consciousness is emerging — a recognition that the world is increasingly interconnected. Global problems do not need passports to cross national boundaries. Only collective action can respond to them. Still, the UN has been attacked, by both the right and the left. From the conservative or nationalist perspective, the UN is a threat to sovereignty. On the left, the UN is viewed as a tool for Western domination. Because the UN is a federation of nations, often with conflicting interests, there is a built-in tension between the insistence on sovereignty and internationalism.

A new Secretary-General took the helm at the beginning of the year — a good time to look at the UN through the lens of humanism. The founding charter begins by affirming faith in fundamental human rights, the worth of the human person, and the equal rights of men and women. The UN embodies our hopes, yet it is a human institution in the real world, with inevitable conflicts within its 192 member states.

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The idea of a federation of nations working collectively is not new. Much earlier than the failed League of Nations, in 1795, Immanuel Kant wrote a work called *Perpetual Peace* which outlines a federation of states (Republics) resolving conflicts by discussion based on international law and under terms of a founding charter. An idea whose time has come.

The UN has negotiated 172 peaceful settlements. in El Salvador, Cambodia, Macedonia, Mozambique ... the list goes on. UN peace operations have helped uphold cease fires, promote and conduct free and fair elections, oversee troop withdrawals and maintain political stability. Currently, 18 peacekeeping operations are in action.

The World Health Organization has eradicated smallpox and is close to eradicating polio. Since 1995, an 80% immunization rate has saved 3,000,000 children a year. Famine relief is a major activity. In 1997, the UN High Commission for Refugees gave food, shelter and medical care to 2.2 million refugees, mostly women and children.

The UN monitors earth, air, sea and space, the world's newest dimension. Curbing global warming and efforts to protect the ozone layer, demand an international approach, as does control of over-fishing and environmental pollution.

Programs for the education and advancement of women have proved effective. As one example, raising women's literacy has reduced child mortality in developing countries.

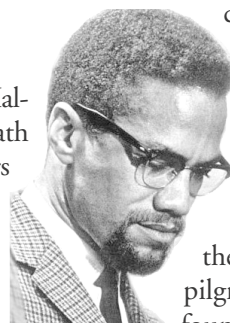
Some of the UN's failures have been highly visible. The UN has not always stopped ethnic cleansing and genocide. Atrocious crimes against humanity have taken place in Rwanda, Cambodia, Srebrenica and now the ongoing carnage in the Darfur region of Sudan. The principal cause of the UN's fail-

**February is Black History Month**, a celebration that has existed since 1926 when Harvard Scholar Dr. Carter G. Woodson, determined to bring Black History into the mainstream public arena, organized the first annual Negro History Week.

### Malcolm X

On February 21, 1965, Malcolm X was shot to death by Nation of Islam members while speaking at a rally of his organization in New York City.

The son of a murdered black nationalist, Malcolm Little was imprisoned in 1946 on a burglary conviction. In prison he encountered the Nation of Islam, which advocated African-American nationalism and racial separatism. Malcolm entered into an intense program of self-education and took the last name of X to symbolize his stolen African identity.



After six years, Malcolm left prison and became an effective minister of the Nation of Islam in New York City's Harlem area. A fiery orator, Malcolm X advocated self-defense and the liberation of African Americans "by any means necessary."

In the early 1960s, he began to develop a more outspoken philosophy than that of Elijah Muhammad, whom he felt was lacking in his support of the civil rights movement. In March of 1964, Malcolm formally left the Nation and, in April, made a Muslim pilgrimage to Mecca, where he was profoundly affected by the absence of racial discord among orthodox Muslims.

Upon his return to the United States, Malcolm founded the Organization of Afro-American Unity, which advocated black identity and held that racism, not the white race, was the greatest foe of the African American.

*[www.history.com/minisites/blackhistory]*

ure has been lack of will of the major powers.

Still there are surprises. In the last 15 years, more civil wars ended through negotiation than in the last two centuries. Largely this has happened because of the UN. Some of these settlements fall apart, creating the danger that civil war will recur. In order to focus attention and preventive help for these dangerous and contagious trouble spots, the UN has established a Peace Building Commission.

The UN is promoting the idea that extreme poverty is the denial of a basic human right. Too many people in the world suffer from hunger and curable disease, as well as poverty that creates a life without hope. However there has been improvement. Today, the number of people in absolute poverty, less than \$1 a day, is an unforgivable 1.3 billion, 20% of the world's population. This number has stayed the same since 1950, when the total of the world's population was much smaller. The percent of absolute poor in 1950 was an astounding 50%. Today, more people are living beyond the margins of extreme poverty.

There is still much work to do. At mid-century, poverty and hunger seemed inevitable, an act of nature and essentially unalterable. Up to the present the UN has functioned as the world's emergency room. Now largely because of the UN's spotlight, it is clear that hunger and poverty can be eliminated by collective action. Given the inherent conflict between the will for sovereignty of the nations and the pressing need for international action to ward off chaos, major tensions will continue. To paraphrase the words of the poet, the world is slouching toward cooperation. There is good reason to expect that the nations will increasingly turn to regional cooperation and more openly to the UN.

So, finally, two cheers for the UN. The third cheer will be reserved for a time when the public, governments and the UN will succeed in preventing genocide and all crimes against humanity.

— Phyllis Ehbrenfeld, Representative to the UN for the National Service Conference of the American Ethical Union; Sylvain Ehbrenfeld, Representative to the UN for the International Humanist Ethical Union

# ETHICAL CULTURE SOCIETY OF ESSEX COUNTY

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## ETHICAL CULTURE

### SUNDAY MORNING PLATFORMS

**February, 2007**

Platforms begin at 11 am. All are welcome. Platforms are subject to change without notice. Sunday School 11 am–12:15 pm. Youth of Ethical Societies (YES): contact Society office.

#### **Feb 4 Boe Meyerson, Leader:**

##### *“The Israeli-Palestinian Agony”*

There are multiple factors which historically and currently have functioned to sustain and aggravate the conflict between Israel and Palestine. There are also factors which can function to mitigate and diminish the conflict. This address will explore these factors.

**Participatory Programs:** On Sunday February 11 and 25 at 9:30–10:30 a.m. Boe will be conducting our Fellowship Circles during which participants will be addressing themes of common interest as we explore the arts of living a meaningful and fulfilling life.

#### **Feb 11 Lynn Miller:**

##### *Complementary and Alternative Medicine: An Overview*

The presentation will provide an introductory overview of this burgeoning area of medicine including a comparison of complementary and alternative modalities, history, utilization and related beliefs. A short video clip of the PBS special, “The New Medicine” will also be shown.

Lynn Robin Miller, J.D., C.Y.T. serves as the Director of Education for the Institute for Complementary &

Alternative Medicine (ICAM) of the University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey.

Ms. Miller earned a B.A. in Psychology and English, and a J.D. from Albany Law School of Union University, and was awarded the “Williams Prize” upon graduation. A certified yoga teacher since 1988, Ms. Miller completed a two-year post-graduate program in Holistic Studies and Comparative Psychology at the Himalayan International Institute.

In addition to building a private law practice, Ms. Miller continued to receive training in mind/body modalities, becoming a Wellness Educator, Life Coach and Corporate Trainer. She has taught yoga, mediation, wellness, self-care and stress management in a variety of educational and corporate settings including hospitals, colleges, prisons, manufacturing plants and high-tech corporations.

Ms. Miller has also been active in her community, co-founding two community holistic organizations, Morning Star, Inc and Stonehedge Gardens, Inc. As an attorney, Ms. Miller served as a court-appointed arbitrator, and previously as an assistant counsel to the Speaker of the New York State Assembly, the Department of Economic Development, and NYC Charter Revision Commission. As a former legal advisor to the “I Love NY” tourism campaign

and other key economic development programs, Ms Miller is the author of several laws, including a section of the New York City Charter which was passed in voter referendum.

#### **Feb 18 — to be announced**

#### **Feb 25 Sue Willis and a leader from the Coalition on Race:**

*The state of race relations in South Orange and Maplewood, and efforts to build a truly integrated community*

The Community Coalition is a private nonprofit organization with a diverse membership of individuals who live and/or work in Maplewood/South Orange coming together to sustain our towns as communities of choice for all. We envision a community that is truly inclusive and racially integrated – free of segregation in housing patterns and community involvement.



#### **Coming in March: Fred Profeta**

*The Greening of Maplewood from Top to Bottom.* Fred Profeta is the mayor of Maplewood. The mayor’s talk will deal with the various initiatives to introduce environmentally sound practices in the town.

