



ETHICAL CULTURE

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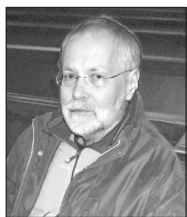
Visit our web site: www.essexethical.org

FEBRUARY 2013

FEBRUARY 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

Feb 3 Hilding “Gus” Lindquist, “Art as Cohesive Coherence: The da Vinci Model”



We would suggest that immersion in an art project or event that engages/focuses our mind also creates a synchronistic field of coherence. From our own experience, this immersion draws us into the creative rhythm of action applied to an “object set,” mind response (thought), leading to action, leading to mind response ... a dance of cohesive coherence (the sticking together of integrated diverse elements) of objects, actions and thoughts ... bringing conscious awareness of and in the creative process ... along with satisfaction, joy, and a sense of one’s own capability to create positive results in one’s own world that are personally rewarding, and thereby its own motivation to continue.

My hypothesis is that immersing/focusing the mind — the brain/body arena — in/on “the creative processes of the mind with the expectation of creating (bringing into existence) something new out of what already is,” is the epitome of human existence: the awareness of self as an actor in the cosmos.

Hilding “Gus” Lindquist lives in Maplewood. He draws on life experiences from developing administrative systems for a diverse set of organizations. Gus currently coordinates programming for the Senior Club of Maplewood and for 3rd Saturday Arts here at the Ethical Culture Society; curates the Sandy Relief Fund Art Show,

also here at the Society, as well as two small exhibits by Eva Bouzard-Hui at L&J Motors, and Teresa Helmkamp at Scoops & Soups, in Maplewood.

Feb 10 Steve Sklar, “Your Call Is Important to Us, or, Fun with Bureaucracy”

The theme of Steve Sklar’s talk is: Things have gotten out of hand with bureaucracy in America. More specifically, Steve looks at the commanding role played by bureaucracy — The Age of Rule by Robot — in America today, and what (little) we can do about it.

Topics will include: The Automated Telemarketing Call; Programmed Friendliness (Examples: “Have you dined with us before?” and “Welcome to Wells Fargo”); Identifying the Robot Behind the Person: Communication via Script; You Cannot Get Even by Switching Carriers; And finally: Fighting Back, Staying Human.

In the concluding portion, Steve will examine tactics and techniques that have been used successfully by actual people to “get over on” (to use the technical Brooklyn term) automatons in people’s clothing. In which we learn why it is the comedians in this society who shall lead us forward in the fight to remain human.



Steve Sklar is a Maplewood-based immigration lawyer with supplementary background in film & video production and longboarding. He has earned a Bachelor’s Degree in Biology from Yale and a degree in law from Boston College and is therefore without any special expertise whatsoever that would render him uniquely qualified to give this talk.

Feb 17 Martha Gallahue, “Is it Time for the Secular and Religious Worlds to Be Friends?”

Martha will share her experience of Inter-Faith Dialogue at home, in family, in our neighborhoods, within the Ethical Culture Movement and at the UN among nations.

Martha Gallahue, interim leader at our Essex Ethical Society, received her Master of Arts Degree in Comparative Religion from Columbia University/Union Theological Joint program. She became a certified Ethical Culture Leader in 2009 and has been tracking the interrelation of interspiritual movements since 1998. She serves on the faculty as Edu-Learner with the National Peace Academy in the United States and is Leader with The National Ethical Service, the voice of Ethical Culture at the UN.

Feb 24 Guest panel, “Not so strange after all: A glimpse into the humanist heart of some very modern culture”

A trio of presenters, including Gabe Norstein, will give our members a glimpse of the humanist lyrics in the music of one of the most successful modern singing duos, Macklemore and Lewis. We hope also to have art and dance represented.

Gabe Norstein, 18, has grown up at the Ethical Culture Society, literally. His father manages the building and his mother chairs the platform committee. Gabe himself is a heavy metal enthusiast who has been trying to show them for years that the culture of his generation often has just as much depth and ethical awareness as that of his elders.



Ethical Culture Society of Essex County



Martha Gallahue, *Interim Leader*
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Elaine Durbach
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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.

Ethical Culture Society
of Essex County,
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973-763-1905

Our web site:
www.essexethical.org

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

Mark Your Calendars for February Programs at Ethical

Realtime swap meet for Essex Time Exchange, Saturday, Feb. 2, 3–5 p.m. Please bring a snack or dessert to share, a service to offer and one to request. — *Lisa Novemsky*

Extended Indian-flavored Folk Friday at Ethical Feb. 8. Indian food arts and classical Indian singing will enhance Folk Friday at Ethical Feb. 8:

3 p.m. Learn Indian cooking

5–7 p.m. Indian festivities with food

7:30 p.m. Sing-along *led by Lisa Novemsky*.

Sing-along and jam with friends 7:30 p.m. second Friday of each month, September through June at the Ethical Culture Society, 516 Prospect St., Maplewood. Bring acoustic string and rhythm instruments, join in playing, singing or listening. Bring some refreshments to share. Folk Fridays have expanded to invite all crafts people in the society to come and listen to music while doing crafts. Everyone is invited! Contact: lnovemsky@comcast.net or (973) 763-8293

Please take the opportunity to visit the **Sandy Relief Fund Arts Show on display until June** in the Platform room, proceeds to benefit storm victims.

Social Action Committee — The next meeting is set for **Sunday, Feb. 10**.

Birgit Matzerath, Bach Music Series

Last Spring, Birgit Mazerath proposed presenting a Bach program for the benefit of both members and the community at large and this initiative was approved by the Board by consensus. We invite all members to enjoy Birgit's contribution.



Johann Sebastian Bach *The Well-Tempered Clavier, Book 2*

Birgit Matzerath, Piano

Join the Ethical Culture Society of Essex County and pianist Birgit Matzerath on a listening journey through Bach's magnificent and inspiring music. Experience the joy of listening to music together. Discover balance in your life through music. Share experience with others.

Bach Music Series Schedule

at Ethical Culture Society, 516 Prospect St, Maplewood

Fri, Feb 1, 7:30 p.m.	<i>Introductory Lecture</i>
Sun, Feb 3, 10:15 a.m.	<i>No 1–4, BWV 870-873</i>
Sun, Feb 17, 10:15 a.m.	<i>No 5–8, BWV 874-877</i>
Sun, Mar 3, 10:15 a.m.	<i>No 9–12, BWV 878-881</i>
Sun, Mar 17, 10:15 a.m.	<i>No 13–16, BWV 882–885</i>
Sun, Mar 31, 10:15 a.m.	<i>No 17–20, BWV 886–889</i>
Sun, Apr 14, 10:15 a.m.	<i>No 21–24, BWV 890–893</i>
Sat, Apr 20, 6:30 p.m.	<i>WTC 2, BWV 870–893</i>

(The concert on April 20 is part of the Ethical Culture Society's Third Saturday Arts series.)

The duration of the mini-recitals on Sunday mornings is approximately 30 minutes. We encourage you to listen to at least one piece of your choice every day in between the sessions. A link to the recording and a possibility to share experience will be available. All are open to the public, admission free, donations welcome, proceeds to be shared by the Maplewood Public Library and ECSEC.

Birgit Matzerath holds degrees in Piano and teaching music and english from Hochschule fuer Musik, Cologne, and the University of Cologne in Germany. She taught piano and chamber music for more than twenty years at community music schools in the Cologne area, gave solo recitals and appeared frequently as a collaborative pianist.

Since 2009, Ms Matzerath has been teaching privately in Maplewood, NJ and in New York City. She is also a composer and writer. Her Blog "Music, Life, and Other Challenges" can be found at "<http://musiclifeandotherchallenges.blogspot.com>"

Letter [Email sent 1/7/13 to Pres. Obama]

As a senior citizen, I am proposing to **GIVE BACK** to our country and society. My concern is that my current social security payments may be depriving our children, who are our country's hope and future, the supportive programs they deserve.

Although our Social Security Trust has been

independent of our national budget, not contributing directly to its horrendous magnitude, I, as both a humanist and grateful American, eagerly desire to “give back” to the well-being of our country, particularly to our children.

To break the impasse, I propose that social security recipients be requested to accept a 1% reduction in annual payments, with its tenure and other details to be determined. I believe this has the potential of both maintaining the well-being of our elders and also promote investing wisely and humanely in the future of our children and grandchildren, those already in need and those yet unborn.

I hope other senior citizens with similar attitudes would support such a proposal. Respectfully, — *E. Betty Levin*
[Betty suggested this idea as a private citizen, not as an official position of the Ethical Society. Phone her at (973) 763-1033 if you agree or email with name, address and phone number.]

Freedman NYTimes Piece

An article in the December 28th *NY Times* written by Samuel G. Freedman required a response. To paraphrase the author, “The net effect [of Freedman’s words] can be to leave humanists feeling frozen out and defensive.” (You can read the full text at http://www.nytimes.com/2012/12/29/us/on-religion-where-are-the-humanists.html?_r=0). Here is what was sent to the *Times* by Bart Worden, Executive Director, American Ethical Union (the Federation of Ethical Societies):

Bart Worden’s response to article: “In a Crisis, Humanists Seem Absent”

Samuel G. Freedman’s article, “In a Crisis, Humanists Seem Absent,” certainly raises a number of questions for humanists and practitioners of ethical religions. I find it hard, though, to get past Freedman’s question about the “nones” (Americans who say they have no religious affiliation) being absent from the dealings over the Newtown,

CT shootings. The implication, that serious organizations get themselves in the news around crises, is at odds with what I expect the families and the Newtown community needed in the weeks following the tragedy. The comfort of familiar faces and gifts of quiet and anonymous support would have, I imagine, been much preferred to the media press that ensued.



Are humanists absent from the crisis? Many humanistic organizations, my own included, have long ago stepped into the fray to promote peaceable living and to call for limitations on the prevalence and availability of lethal force. We have been, and we are, showing up, Mr. Freedman, and we are in it for the long haul. — *Bart Worden*

A Worldwide Valentine Greeting

Sometimes when so much polarization exists in the world, we might be reminded of the good things going on in the world.



In the last 30 years, The United Nations has become the largest forum for peacebuilding initiatives worldwide. One such event is the World Interfaith Harmony Week, first proposed at the UN General Assembly on September 23, 2010 by H.M. King Abdullah II of Jordan. Just under a month later, on October 20, 2010, it was unanimously adopted by the UN and henceforth the first week of February will be observed as a World Interfaith Harmony Week.

Other groups of goodwill are now included in the calendar event and this year, I am honored as Leader at Ethical Society of Essex County, to represent National Ethical Service, the NGO associated with Ethical Culture at the UN, during this event held in

the General Assembly Hall on February 14th. I have been working with United Religions’ Initiative as a spiritual humanist for over 10 years. It was affirming to hear a Lutheran Minister, in Seattle, Washington, speak during her Christmas sermon of the need to reduce the divide between the secular and religious inspiration. She urged us to highlight our shared values and expressions of good will.

The World Interfaith Harmony Week is based on the pioneering work of The Common Word initiative. This initiative, which started in 2007, called for Muslim and Christian leaders to engage in a dialogue based on two common fundamental religious Commandments; Love of God and Love of the Neighbour, without nevertheless compromising any of their own religious tenets. The movement has grown in response to the urgent need to end inter-religious strife. This week will allow for these groups to become aware of each other and strengthen the movement by building ties. Last year there were over 300 events held throughout the world. — *Martha*

IN MEMORIAM

Dr. Matthew Ies Spetter

We’ve received the sad news that Dr. Matthew Ies Spetter died on December 30 at his home in Sleepy Hollow, NY. Dr. Spetter was Leader *Emeritus* for the Riverdale Yonkers Society for Ethical Culture for whom he served for 40 years and was also Leader *Emeritus* for the New York Society for Ethical Culture. A memorial service is planned for the early spring. — *Bart*

Susan Rose, writing in the online *Ethical Society Without Walls* newsletter, quotes Dr. Spetter:

“... in the Ethical religion, hope is not an illusion. We each live in history, not in general, but in the here and now in particular. Our own life is always at

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We continue to collect children's books, canned and boxed foods, and toys for distribution by the Parenting Center in Maplewood.



ETHICAL CULTURE SOCIETY OF ESSEX COUNTY NEWSLETTER · FEBRUARY 2013

(from page 3) stake and that poses the deepest spiritual issue of our entire existence. Hope is a gift which requires our total involvement. It is not sentimental, not passively “hoping for the best.” The hopeful person is an emotionally active person, for hope does not come gift-wrapped. The heart of the matter is always that we each must find our own help and that does not come over the bargain counter. On the contrary, hope depends upon our response to life. It is the burden and promise for people like ourselves, not intellectual giants, but people who want to base their lives upon what we can understand and upon what our hands can find to do. Hope resides in that which is as yet unawakened in us, pregnant within us, what we can urge into birth by deepening our lives. That is the religious humanist position and it can provide us with a sense of confidence about our place in life.”

Here also are excerpts of Dr. Spetter’s Platform Address, “Reasons for Hope,” given in 1986:

“To us as liberal religious people, hope lies in the awareness of an inner vitality. A vitality we can choose to put to work, a vitality we can make function. To us, hope must be justified by what we will labor for and if needed, suffer for. Such hope can be distilled out of our own resources; we need not wait for distant gods or for neat intellectual abstractions. The choices, the vitality, the hope, are ours by what we decide to do with our lives, our triumphs and our failures; our sunny days and the days of our tears. That is our basic assumption.”

“Destinies are written not in the far-off yonder, but in the concrete here-and-nows. That is the liberating message of hope from Ethical Culture as a religion. It pits the human spirit against cynicism and pessimism.”

“...If we want the more hopeful aims, we must believe in their necessity.”

“...Our parents who gave us life, also gave us sustenance to become loving and beloved persons in our own right. That requires a lifelong being wide-awake to what makes life worth living. It is that way as well with us if we do not allow our roots, our primary affections to be throttled by fear and aggression. We are, after all, free to trust, free to choose. It is that very possibility, that inner need that can redeem us.”

“...Liberal religion is made of a tough fiber. It has overcome challenges far greater even than what we face in our days. Be of good courage and abide by what you have faith in, and your commitment will come back to you in vision, in dedication and as generous guidance for your lives.” ●