



# ETHICAL CULTURE

M O N T H L Y

VOLUME 26 NUMBER 10

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JUNE 2007

## LEADER'S MESSAGE

Summer is almost upon us. Since childhood, that season for me has always been a time for refreshment, reinvigoration, and renewal. It is a time for recreation and also for reflection. I look forward not only to personal renewal but also the renewal of our Ethical Society. By the time you read this, we will probably have already had our General Membership Meeting. I hope we will have met the challenges posed then.



Challenges and problems are commonly greeted with dismay and sometimes despair. Yet in life, it is often such challenges which when honestly and forthrightly met can serve as an engine of growth, innovation, and rejuvenation. Many creative innovations have evolved from crisis or serious problems. Over the past year my thoughts have been preoccupied with concerns about our need for renewal. In this endeavor all can play a part. In recently surveying many of our members. I have learned much about your ideas concerning ways we can create more engaging and fulfilling experiences for ourselves and the larger community in which we live. Let us join together to recreate and renew this beloved community. — *Boe Meyerson*

## PRESIDENT'S LETTER

This is my final president's letter for the season, the topic stimulated by the extraordinary Platform of April 29 which evoked much excitement and discussion. There seems to be incentive to continue the discussion. The topic? Difficulties being experienced by many Ethical Societies within our movement.

This was the 16th talk on this topic given by Martha Gallahue to various societies. She is president of The Ethical Culture Society of Brooklyn, president of the National Service Conference of the American Ethical Union and she represents the Ethical Culture Society at the UN.

So we are not alone. Her platform discussed the difficulties at the Brooklyn Society, not necessarily unique just to that Society. They suggest dialogue and paths for our Society to consider:

- not all members need to be committed to social action or administrative work.
- an alignment of a shared vision is an excellent starting point.
- No member is to be considered

“superior” compared to the contribution of another.

At the Brooklyn Society, a fresh division of activism and governance is working well for them. That part of the block with which they were struggling was largely dismantled. They were assisted in this clarification by a consulting group, The Alban Institute.



We have much to discuss. I suggest we use some of our summer sojourn to gather at one another's homes (a picnic, pot luck, etc.) to continue the dialogue and come up with some proposals for our Society. I would hope that a member with e-mail would serve as coordinator for these summer dialogues but we need everyone's input.

I shall be able to help also. I may even have my own e-mail by then! Let's start talking, listening and creating new ideas and energy to make our Society more viable and exciting. I await your calls — 973-763-1033. — *Betty Levin*

## FUND-RAISING NEWS

### Last Events of the Season

For information or reservations, please call the office, or contact Jeanine Rosh.

### White Elephant Sale at Society

Saturday, June 2, 9 am to 3 pm. 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 are collecting everything (including clothing and books) now, 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! The fund-rais-

ing committee needs your help with the sale. We need people to work the sale, as well as set up and clean up. You know the routine. Let us know you'll help. Call the office or Jeanine at 973-258-9395.

### Gourmet Lunch at Boe's June 9

“Here's to the Ladies (and Gentlemen) who Lunch”, especially at the Gourmet Lunch at the Lake, *(continued on page 2)*

# 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](mailto: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.

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of Essex County,  
516 Prospect St.,  
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Visit our web site: [www.essexethical.org](http://www.essexethical.org)

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

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

## FUND RAISERS (continued from page 1)

Saturday June 9 at Boe's house. On a beautiful deck overlooking a spectacular view of this peaceful mountain lake setting, we come once a year to refresh our spirits and partake of the best darn food (and beverages) you've ever tasted. Swimming, canoeing, walking and just sitting are included. Conducive to solving world crises, as well as a few of our own, the view alone is worth the \$20 donation. Rain date: Sunday June 24. [Boe's "Gourmet Lunch & Fun in the Sun" 12-5:00 p.m. · \$20 · Minors Free · Rain date 6/24 · 30-36 Guests.]

## Leana & Gloria's Italian Night June 23

Our Gloria Torrice and her daughter Leana will host an Italian dinner fund raiser at Leana's home in West Orange. Seating is limited, so reserve early. Transportation is available. ["Savory Italian Summer Dinner" · 6 pm · \$20 · 8 guests] — *Jeanine Rosh*

## TRIBUTES

The Society wishes to thank all the members who sent monetary contributions in memory of **Marion Josephson**. Also, to Betty Kogen, Bonni Kogen Brodnick and Pamela J. Kogen Morandi for their generous contributions.

Thank you to Lou Matuyza in appreciation of the Society's support of **Matthew LeClaire** and his kind words that "he is courageous and so is your organization".

In April — Happy Birthday to **Jerry Kaplan** from J & P Shaw.

A belated Happy Birthday to **Doris Rados** from Andy & Sue, Marty & Barbara, Dick & Nancy and Jeanine.

Congratulations **Andy Weinberger** for being named the Doctor of the Year in December 2006, from Bob & Patty and Marty & Barbara.

— *Nancy Bohn*

## FROM THE UN

### Population: More Elderly, Fewer Young

Two trends are transforming the world. In most countries, rich and poor, people are living longer and women are having fewer children. The aging of the world's population is unprecedented. The sixty and over age group may become a quarter of the world's expected population by 2050, a tripling of up to two billion. Yet if present fertility trends continue, by 2050, the world's population will stop increasing and will level off at nine billion, up from the current 6.7 billion.

This leveling off depends on the assumption that the drop in the fertility rate will continue. Clearly, international family planning programs are vitally needed. About 200 million women living in families in less-developed countries lack safe and effective family planning services, resulting in unintended pregnancies, and many maternal and infant deaths. Family planning is inextricably connected to the fertility rate and its effects on population growth. Small changes in the fertility rate will have very large effects on population numbers years later. As an example, if the fertility rate only remains the same, rather than continuing to drop, world population

will rise to nearly twelve billion instead of the projected nine billion.

Every two years the UN revises its estimates. This updating is of great importance because demography has enormous implications for the way people live, implications which are often overlooked. Most of the total growth will be in the poorer parts of the world, a jump from today's 5.4 billion to about eight billion. Yet in the developed world — our world — population will remain largely unchanged, about 1.2 billion. This number would have dropped further if not for immigration, badly needed both for labor and to financially support the growing elder population. Yet, increasingly, immigrants are resented, particularly in Europe, less used to the mixing of different cultures.

Even with immigration, by 2050 in 46 richer countries, including Germany, Italy and Japan, the total number of people is expected to be lower than it is today. Population is shrinking. For the first time in history, the number of children under 15 will be less than the numbers of people over sixty. A different world.

In the US the crossover of more elderly than young will come in 2015, much sooner than in the developing world, where it is predicted

to happen in 2045. The labor force, social security, pensions and most importantly health systems will be greatly affected. Enough numbers of young people will be needed to help pay for these services.

The balance between the fertility rate and the survival rate is a partnership dance that can be helped to go smoothly by policies geared to a planet for all ages. As a bad example, the Bush administration has in recent years reduced its support for international family planning programs. The 2008 budget has even deeper cuts, with burdensome and unnecessary restrictions. Congress may restore these cuts, and this should receive strong support. For those countries worried about population decline, the Executive Director of UNFPA, the UN Population Fund, points out that the struggle between the demands of career and child rearing can be eased by paid parental leave, flexible work schedules, and good, available daycare.

A world for all ages can be had if we choose.

— *Phyllis Ehrenfeld and Sylvain Ehrenfeld*

## **New Jersey Peace Action at 50 honors founders**

*by Hugh R. Morley (excerpt), <http://www.northjersey.com>*

In 1957 an advertisement appeared in The New York Times that featured Dr. Benjamin Spock calling for an end to nuclear energy testing. Sarah Mesrobian, now of Hillsdale, saw it. Ester Liss, now of Paterson, saw it too. Each was spurred into action. They called a telephone number on the advertisement. And between them they made history of sorts, forming an organization dedicated to fighting the spread of nuclear weapons and energy.

On Sunday, the two women were among eight founders honored at the 50th anniversary of the organization — New Jersey Peace Action. About 300 organization supporters gathered to savor past campaigns, marvel at how the organization has remained strong and galvanize support for the future. Today, Peace Action's mission has mushroomed to encompass a variety of anti-war issues. The organization has a mailing list of about 5,000 people, said director Madelyn Hoffman. ([www.njpeaceaction.org](http://www.njpeaceaction.org))

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## THE RENEWAL OF ETHICAL CULTURE

### **Martha Gallahue Reflects on her April 29 Platform**

**A** title I considered using for the Platform at Essex was "Truth in Advertising", truth here referring to the truth of our vision in Ethical Culture, and advertising, in deciding upon our branding which we consistently model both in our personal lives and in the world at large.

For me, Ethical Culture is well into the first phases of renewal as witnessed in our summer school lay leadership programs and the growth of our Society Without Walls. In our local societies it is taking place as well.

In Stage I, we learned that our governance structure must be proportionate to the size of our community. Governance is always in service to the mission. The smaller your community the fewer staff you need. This takes us to the role of Leader which may differ in different settings. I recommended that you set up a very intentional reflective process whereby you openly shared a dialogue, in a collegial way, with your Leader. This is now taking place in the Washington Society and will soon

take place in Brooklyn. Outside consultation may be very helpful. The envisioning may begin with the eight commitments. As member consciousness grows about our shared purpose in Ethical Culture, the role of Leader will emanate.

Finally, I observed that in all societies there seems to be a pattern where negative discourse gets the most attention. This ultimately will defeat the radiance of our vision and I recommended systems like appreciative inquiry or non-violent communication as a way of redirecting our focus in affirming ways.

Another aspect of the talk was to reflect a bit upon our branding and I suggested that we become models of our message. What works for me is to choose engagements that closely parallel Ethical Culture's. I mentioned that all projects around the Millennium Development Goals or the Culture of Peace are examples in themselves. While social justice is certainly basic to our idealism, actual choices for engagement that highlight values may be even more important for the outside world

to understand what we are about. I used the example of why I would choose to support The International Criminal Court over Human Rights Watch. Thus, while both of them use legal instruments to pursue human rights, I believe that the ICC is very intentional about equalizing the ethic of accountability between heads of state and ordinary citizens. I wondered aloud whether our humanistic thrust has become too individualistic to survive in the milieu of globalization. The biggest issue ahead of us is actually the environment and I wondered whether humanists could confront the prospect of earth rights.

So, I feel great optimism for the renewal of Ethical Culture so long as we appreciate the importance of affirming discourse, intelligent strategizing built upon appropriate systems and modeling our Ethical Culture brand in all that we choose in the world.

Essex seemed so lively and warm. I had a most enjoyable visit.

— *Martha Gallahue*  
[*Martha Gallahue is President of AEU's affiliate, The National Service Conference, and President of The Brooklyn Society for Ethical Culture.*]

# ETHICAL CULTURE

## SUNDAY MORNING PLATFORMS

**June 3 Boe Meyerson, Leader,** *“Discovering Bangladesh — An Interview with Dr. Douglas Proops.”* Dr. Proops has just recently returned from a three year stay in Bangladesh with his wife and children. His wife, Judy Graeff, was there working for the UN. He worked as a physician. Bangladesh has been going through many struggles recently and in the past. Boe will be inquiring about his and his family’s diverse experiences and challenges.

Dr. Proops is the Director of Epidemiology at the Bureau of Tuberculosis Control in the NYC Department of Health and Mental Hygiene.

*Boe Meyerson is Leader of the Ethical Culture Society of Essex County and Humanist Chaplain at Columbia University.*

**June 10 Tony Hileman,**

*“The Tao of Ethical Culture”.* The Tao Te Ching is one of the oldest religious texts, dating back some 2,600 years. It is one of the most translated, studied, and, I believe, inspiring documents of all time. As evidenced in the opening line of the first of its 81 short chapters — “The Tao that can be told is not the eternal Tao” — it is at the same time accessible and opaque. The same can be said of Ethical Culture, easy to understand from the inside but often per-



plexing from without. What can we as Ethical Humanists learn from the Tao of Lao-tzu, the way of the old master? What does this ancient text have to offer the modern world?

Tony Hileman has been the Executive Director of the American Humanist Association (AHA) since 1999. As Tony often expresses to Humanist and non-Humanist audiences alike, “the need for a strong Humanist voice in the national dialogue has never been greater than it is today.”

Tony began his first career in business, renovating large homes into multiple-unit residences in his native Indianapolis, and then developed a chain of small retail shops in central Indiana. He and his wife, Betty, spent a number of years living in Europe where Tony began his second career in wire service journalism working in Europe, the Middle East and Northern Africa for United Press International and then back in the US for Agence France Presse. He then began his next career as an independent consultant, first in the field of journalism and then more broadly. He eventually specialized as an executive coach helping individuals achieve personal as well as professional success while simultaneously discovering the vast numbers of people who support a Humanist life stance similar to his own.

June, 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.

**June 17 (Last Sunday of the season) Summer Brunch and Colloquy.**

Boe will lead a discussion on the year we’re concluding and visions for the summer ahead for the society and ourselves.

### INSTRUCTIONS FOR LIFE

1. Take into account that great love and great achievements involve great risk.
2. When you lose, don’t lose the lesson.
3. Follow the three R’s: Respect for self, Respect for others and Responsibility for all your actions.
4. Remember that not getting what you want is sometimes a wonderful stroke of luck.
5. Learn the rules so you know how to break them properly.
6. Don’t let a little dispute injure a great relationship.
7. When you realize you’ve made a mistake, take immediate steps to correct it.
8. Spend some time alone every day.
9. Open your arms to change, but don’t let go of your values.
10. Remember that silence is sometimes the best answer.
11. Live a good, honorable life. Then when you get older and think back, you’ll be able to enjoy it a second time.
12. A loving atmosphere in your home is the foundation for your life.
13. In disagreements with loved ones, deal only with the current situation. Don’t bring up the past.
14. Share your knowledge. It is a way to achieve immortality.
15. Be gentle with the earth.
16. Once a year, go someplace you’ve never been before.
17. Remember that the best relationship is one in which your love for each other exceeds your need for each other.
18. Judge your success by what you had to give up in order to get it.
19. Approach love and cooking with reckless abandon.

—The Dalai Lama (2005)