



ETHICAL CULTURE

M O N T H L Y

VOLUME 29 NUMBER 7

Visit our web site: www.essexethical.org

MARCH 2010

SUNDAY MORNING PLATFORMS

Mar 7 Alice Baldwin-Jones, *“The Bahá’í Faith.”* Alice Baldwin-Jones will present an overview of the Bahá’í Faith, its principles and administrative structure, situating the Bahá’í Faith in its historical context as a way of explaining why Bahá’ís are persecuted in Iran.



Alice Baldwin-Jones is a Bahá’í and is a resident of South Orange. She is a doctoral candidate in the Applied Anthropology Program at Teachers College, Columbia University and an Adjunct Lecturer at CCNY.

Mar 14 Sandy Spekman, *“Technology and Resources for Those Who are Hearing Challenged.”* Sandy Spekman will talk about hearing loss statistics (see *“Hearing Statistics”*); hearing assistance technology, such as infrared and FM units (demonstration FM will be passed around the audience); and resources in the community such as captioned movies and theatre, community organizations, such as HLAA (Hearing Loss Association of America).



Sandy Spekman is a teacher of the deaf and hard of hearing with Hearing Education Services, NYC Department of Education, and works as an itinerant (13 schools a week) teacher in the Bronx. She is also deaf herself, using a cochlear implant (which she has had for ten years) and a hearing aid. She is active with the Hearing Loss Association of America in several capacities.

Ms. Spekman has lived at 328 Meadowbrook Lane in South Orange since 1985, when her son was two months old and her daughter was 2 years old.

Mar 21 Paul Konye, *“African Art Music: An Art Form In Search of Identity & Expressive Outlet.”* African art music is defined as a category of African music which expresses the traits, peculiarities and characteristics of African indigenous music through Western music notation and its attendant peculiarities. Although expressed in Western notation, it remains essentially African.



Dr. Paul Konye is a musicologist, composer, conductor, and a violinist. He is currently Associate Professor of Music at Siena

College. He was born in Lagos, Nigeria, and his musical education spans three continents—Africa, Europe and North America. Dr. Konye is the author of *African Art Music* and as a composer, one of his primary interests is to highlight the essence of African art music. Some of his latest compositions include *Migrations: A Global Portrait* and *Tone Poem for Africa*.

College. He was born in Lagos, Nigeria, and his musical education spans three continents—Africa, Europe and North America. Dr. Konye is the author of *African Art Music* and as a composer, one of his primary interests is to highlight the essence of African art music. Some of his latest compositions include *Migrations: A Global Portrait* and *Tone Poem for Africa*.

Mar 28 Marnie Valdivia, *“The Strength of the Olive Branch: Joint Grassroots Palestinian and Israeli Peace Organizations.”*



Marnie Valdivia will be discussing the grassroots peace movement in Israel/Palestine and why joint organizations are so vital to grassroots peace building. Her talk will focus on 5 particular organizations (Windows for Peace, *Neve Shalom/Wahat al-Salaam*, Combatants for Peace, Open House, and the Bereaved Families Forum)—their history, focus of operation and composition; the successes and limitations of such organizations and finally, their overall impact in the peace process. Ms. Valdivia hopes to demonstrate that these organizations make an impact by creating a culture of peace — in line with the ideas Anne Creter outlined on Jan. 17.

Marnie Valdivia is from Belmar, NJ. She is a senior at Drew University (Religious Studies with a minor in Middle Eastern Studies) involved in the Peace Builders, a student group on campus affiliated with Drew’s Center on Religion, Culture (continued on next page)

HEARING STATISTICS

compiled Apr 6, 2009 by the National Institute on Deafness and Other Communication Disorders (NIDCD), <http://www.nidcd.nih.gov/health/statistics/quick.htm>:

- Men are more likely to experience hearing loss than women.
- Of adults ages 65 and older in the United States, 12.3 percent of men and nearly 14 percent of women are affected by tinnitus.
- Approximately 17 percent (36 million) of American adults report some hearing loss.
- There is a strong relationship between age and reported hearing loss: 18 percent of American adults 45-64 years old, 30 percent of adults 65-74 years old, and 47 percent of adults 75 years old or older have a hearing impairment.
- About 2 to 3 out of every 1,000 children in the United States are born deaf or hard-of-hearing. Nine out of every 10 children who are born deaf are born to parents who can hear.
- Approximately 15 percent (26 million) of Americans between the ages of 20 and 69 have high frequency hearing loss due to exposure to loud sounds or noise at work or in leisure activities.
- Only 1 out of 5 people who could benefit from a hearing aid actually wears one.
- More than 112,000 people worldwide have received cochlear implants. In the US, roughly 23,000 adults and 15,500 children have received them.
- Approximately 4,000 new cases of sudden deafness occur each year in the US. Hearing loss affects only 1 ear in 9 out of 10 people who experience sudden deafness. Only 10 to 15 percent of patients with sudden deafness know what caused their loss.

Ethical Culture Society of Essex County



Boe Meyerson, Leader Emerita
Jim White, Leader Emeritus

Board of Trustees
Terri Suess, President
Lisa Novemsky, Vice-President
Marty Cotler, Treasurer
Trustees:
Freda Fink-Armstrong
Susan Kennedy
Betty Levin
Fred Sebastian
Dick Bohn
Rosalie Sussman
Gladys Smith

EC Monthly
Howard Gilman, Editor/Graphics

Editor's note

The newsletter invites you to submit articles, announcements, commentary, etc. for publication. ITEMS MUST BE RECEIVED BY THE EIGHTH 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 (gilman.howard@gmail.com). 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,
516 Prospect St.,
Maplewood, NJ 07040
973-763-1905
ethicalessex@netscape.com

Our web site: 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 to receive newsletter and other special event notices.

and Conflict. Her area of concentration is Islam, Judaism, Arab-Israeli conflict, and grassroots peace movements and peace building.

Mar 12 Folk Friday at Ethical

Singalong with friends Lucky, Dusty, Rusty & Tio Pete, every second Friday of the month at the Society. No admission fee. Bring acoustic string and rhythm instruments, join in playing with us; bring some refreshments to share. Ethical Culture Society, 516 Prospect St., Maplewood; 7:30 p.m. (973) 763-1905 or 763-8293; lnovemsky@comcast.net [*Please note:* For this and the remaining winter months, call Lisa to check ahead.]

Please Note These Events at ECS

Mar 19 "Nicotine Bees," a documentary film "with clear evidence of causal links and firm statements from experts who have not previously spoken out." Presented by Maria Colicio, Maplewood Beekeeper, 7:30 p.m. Donations go to support NJ Organic Farmers and the Ethical Culture Society.

Mar 20 3rd Saturday Arts Salon, program and time to be announced.

Mar 27 Concert for Haiti, 7:30 p.m., classically-trained pianist, teacher, composer and writer Birgit Matzerath performs works of Bach, Beethoven and Schumann. Donations will go to Doctors Without Borders and for musical instruments and instruction at schools in Haiti. —Terri Suess

Apr 24 House Sale to Benefit Society

As a woman of a certain age, I'm cleaning out my house in preparation for whatever. The trinkets, kitchenware, art books, linens and possible collectibles are too nice to just discard so I'm selling them at a house sale to benefit our Ethical Society. All proceeds to the Society minus advertising expenses. But I need help, just as you good people pitched in when we had our traditional Society White Elephant sale almost every spring.

In consultation with others, I have set the date for Saturday, April 24th, rain date April 25th. Can volunteers come early on the 24th to tag the items and possibly on Friday the 23rd, depending on the weather, and of course, serve as salespeople on the day of the event? Fortunately, I have a large driveway

and could also use some large tables brought from the Society? Please call me with your "yes" and your Ethical generosity.

—E. Betty Levin, (973) 763-1033

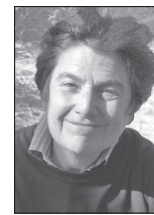
June 5 Hold the Date

We shall have a rededication of our Peace Site on Saturday, June 5th. Watch for additional details. —Terri Suess

Message from Boe

The Case for Legalizing Drugs

What do you think are the most serious threats to the wellbeing of peoples and nation states throughout the world? Many



would say nuclear holocaust, or global warming, etc.. I certainly would concur. However, I would add another threat: the illegality of certain forms of drug use and possession. Now you may well say with some justification, "What a ding bat idea is that!" I believe your response is understandable given the lack of information about the disastrous effects of the so called "War on Drugs."

I believe that no drugs should be made illegal. Currently the US incarcerates millions of Americans for illegal possession of narcotics and other drugs. We incarcerate people for possession of marijuana. Yet we do not ban the sale or use of alcoholic beverages. This is so despite the fact that alcohol has been shown to significantly decrease self control and support aggressive behavior among those who's self-control is poor or compromised. There is no evidence that marijuana supports or stimulates aggressive behavior and there is abundant evidence that, if anything, it prompts silliness, conviviality and loquaciousness.

Some people argue that some drugs, such as heroin, can become severely addictive. This is true. But the use of heroin does not reduce normal inhibitions and often induces a relaxed and decidedly "laid back" condition unlike the effects of alcohol which definitely releases inhibitions.

Now what are some of the negative effects of the war on drugs? To begin with, the phrase is a misnomer. It is not a war on drugs

but on drug users. By making it illegal, we create an artificial criminal class. We also promote organized crime. Criminal organizations such as the mafia make a fortune selling cocaine and other drugs.

The illegality of a drug makes it a high cost item. The more expensive the drug, the more desperate drug addicts with minimal income will become. Hence we develop the promotion of criminal activity through the banning of drugs. Make no mistake about it. The mafia makes a fortune and so do the Taliban. It's their bread and butter. Meanwhile we spend a bloody fortune incarcerating people whose sole crime is using banned substances and who otherwise would be law abiding citizens.

Stupidity hath made its masterpiece!

— *Boe*

U.S. Department of Peace Cabinet Level Bill

“promote domestic tranquility”

“Peace” is defined in the Preamble to the U.S. Constitution — and yet we Americans are totally ignorant of this gift in the fundamental formation of our country! The U.S. Department of Peace Cabinet Level Bill was introduced in the House of Representatives several years ago but few if any know of it. I questioned everyone I encountered last week, several doctors, my hairdresser, the workmen coming to fix my broken garage door — nobody heard of this potentially powerful bill. One of my physicians had the good sense to be shocked by his ignorance, proclaiming how well read he is.

Let's you and me change this posterous lack of awareness! Here's what we can do:

1. Join the national conversation about the bill, the first Tuesday of every month (March 2nd upcoming) at 9 p.m., by calling 712-432-1601. At the “interrupt,” the access number is #470821. Please check the web site



Anne Creter and Betty Levin

each month to confirm the current telephone number although it has remained the same for several months.

2. Come to our study group to be conducted by Martha Gallahue, lecturer on the Department of Peace Bill and UN representative for the National Service Conference, an Ethical Culture Society National Service Organization (NGO), one of the earliest to the United Nations, to be held on Sunday, March 14th at 1:30 p.m. after Platform at my home. Registration required due to limited space in my living room. Questions will be answered and any reservations you may have will be addressed. Please call to make a reservation for this study group, (973) 763-1033. Light refreshments will be served. If you have already signed up at a Sunday Platform meeting, you are considered already registered and don't have to telephone.

Check out The Peace Alliance website, www.thepeacealliance.org. Let's spearhead this exciting movement!

— *E. Betty Levin, Board Member*

FROM THE UN

Children's Rights

Since the 1980s, advocates for children have increasingly agreed that children need rights protected by international law. Charity is not enough to protect children around the world. International law exists: November 2009 was the twentieth anniversary of the adoption by the United Nations General Assembly of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the first legally

binding agreement setting standards for the care, treatment and protection of all persons below age eighteen. The treaty covers child labor, child marriage, child soldiers, juvenile justice, trafficking, violence against children as well as the fundamental right to birth registration, to acquire a name and a nationality. Embodied in law violators can be held accountable.

More countries have ratified this human rights treaty than any other. About 70 countries have incorporated children's codes into national legislation based on the conventions provisions. The US has, unfortunately, not ratified this treaty. American law reflects many of the provisions and ratifying the Convention would send an important message of humanity to the world.

As part of the treaty, the UN established the Committee on the Rights of the Child to which countries have to provide regular reports. These reports allow us to track global progress.

While many problems remain, there has been progress in the past two decades. The number of under-five deaths fell from 12.5 million in 1990 to less than 9 million in 2008. The number of children out of primary school declined from 115 million in 2002 to 101 million in 2007. Currently, around 84 percent of children, of the appropriate age, are in primary school. Immunization programs and vaccines have saved millions of lives and helped reduce global measles deaths by 74 percent since 2002.

The declaration spurred many developing countries to register all births. Still, an estimated 51 million were born but not registered in 2007 and one in four developing countries register only half of their births. Unregistered children are legally invisible. They risk losing access to medical care, education and passports, and as adults the right to marry, vote, open a bank account or to inherit.

Child labor is both a cause and con-

(continued on next page)

ETHICAL CULTURE SOCIETY OF ESSEX COUNTY

516 Prospect Street
Maplewood, New Jersey 07040

Phone: 973-763-1905
Email: ethicalessessex@netscape.com
Web site: www.essexethical.org

NONPROFIT ORG.
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
UNION, NJ
PERMIT NO. 395

Please Help Us Help Those in Need

Bring canned or boxed food items for the food pantry box in our front hall.

ETHICAL CULTURE SOCIETY OF ESSEX COUNTY NEWSLETTER · MARCH 2010

(continued from page 3) sequence of poverty. Children miss school when they work. UNICEF estimates that 150 million children between ages five and fourteen are working, mainly in agriculture. Brazil has helped some 27 million citizens climb up to the middle class since 2002 in part by paying a monthly allowance to families who keep their children in school and take them for regular health checks. Inspired by this success, it has promoted adaptations in almost 20 countries including Chile, Mexico, South Africa, Turkey and Morocco.

More than a third of women aged twenty to twenty-four report that they were married by age 18, often much younger and sometimes without their consent. The average age of first marriage is very gradually increasing in many countries.

At any one time, more than a mil-

lion children are being held by the justice system, usually for offences such as running away from home, truancy, living on the street, alcohol abuse or illegal immigration. In Myanmar, children are legally responsible by age seven. Five countries have executed a child since January 2005.

The US has about 2000 people under age 18 serving life sentences, which violates the convention if they do not have possibilities of parole. In 2005, the US Supreme Court declared the death penalty unconstitutional for juveniles and recently announced it will consider the constitutionality of life sentences for minors in two Florida rape and robbery cases. In one, the crime was committed by a thirteen year old.

How we treat children and the vulnerable is an important gauge of the humanity and hopefulness of our culture. Children are the future and represent

our vision for the years to come.

Much work still needs to be done. The United Nations will continue to push countries to protect children's rights, providing the bedrock for better lives.

Dr. Sylvain Ehrenfeld, representative to the UN from the International Humanist Ethical Union and the National Service Conference of the American Ethical Union and Temma Ehrenfeld

Children's Books Wanted

We are collecting used or new children's books for young children who live in poverty in Maplewood and South Orange, toddlers to 10 years old, with a special emphasis on the earlier years through grade 2. Early exposure to books and reading transforms lives. The books we collect will be brought to the Parenting Center for distribution among needy families. Thank you,

Mira Stillman, (973) 762-5152