



ETHICAL CULTURE

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Visit our web site: www.essexethical.org

MAY 2006

LEADER'S MESSAGE

Dear Members and Friends,

It's quite rare for me to find myself in agreement with every conservative legislators. But this has happened recently regarding some aspects of conservative objections to a recent immigration bill introducing a guest worker provision and liberal measures to deal with the status of illegal immigrants that was pending in Congress in April. On the whole, they apparently (although this was disputed by their critics) had no objection to the basic content of the bill. Rather, those objecting to it proposed two amendments: the first would require the Department of Homeland Security to certify that US borders were secure before creating the guest worker program, and the second would bar any legalization of status to those immigrants who had deportation orders or who had been convicted of either a felony or three misdemeanors.



I am in favor of a guest worker program and am in favor of a legalization program

for illegal immigrants in the US. The measure is both just and humane. However, unless we secure our borders, especially the Mexican border, we will continue to have the same humanitarian problems the guest worker program is

designed to solve. Desperate people exploited by people smugglers will continue to risk their lives to come to the US. Illegal aliens will continue to be exploited by employers who know they can get away with paying less than the minimum wage and treating them inhumanely. It certainly would require both time and money to secure the borders. Also, perhaps there is legitimacy to the claim that the undertaking is of such a magnitude that the amendment virtually kills the legislation. However, there is no reason such an amendment could not be modified so that the legislation would be terminated after a certain period if the border was not certified as secure. Regarding the other amendment, it seems patently illogical to welcome onto a path to citizenship those illegal aliens who commit crimes (felonies). On the other hand, the provision regarding the "three misdemeanors," is totally ridiculous. Many illegal immigrants are most likely to be forced to act in ways leading to charges of vagrancy or loitering, etc. It is illogical to exclude those persons since their desperate situation frequently entails such behavior.

And so, to my surprise, I find myself allied (albeit partially and with qualifications and possibly for different reasons) with those I so seldom find common cause. Go figure!
— Boe

FUND RAISER EVENTS

White Elephant Sale Saturday May 20

It's time to get really excited about gathering your items for the white elephant sale to be held on Saturday, May 20. Save the day to come and help at our most profitable fund raiser. Take a cabinet or two and dedicate yourself to downsizing your treasures to those you really must keep. Have you used it in the past 2 years? If not, put it in a box and when it's full, bring it to the Society. Please bring your clean usable items now. One person's throwaways are another person's treasures. The dollars add up quickly. Ask

your neighbors for some good items, stuff them into your trunk and bring them here. If you know someone who is moving, ask them what they can give us — It's tax deductible! People always need furniture, so if you are in doubt, DON'T throw it out — give it to us. Bring it all to the society now. We're accepting everything INCLUDING clothes and linens at this time. If you have large items, call us. We'll try to arrange for a pick-up. When in doubt, call the office. We're depending on you! We also need help to set up and dismantle — please call Nancy or Jeanine to volunteer.

Luncheon at the Lake

June 24th marks the date for Boe's spectacular event at the lake. Ask someone who has attended — the food is super delicious — what a great way to begin the summer! There's plenty of room on the big deck overlooking the lake, complete with awning for sun or shower. Hiking and swimming for the bold and daring, and napping in the breeze for the rest of us! There's always a songfest — shout out your favorites — and lots of witty stories, as well as hugs for friends and new people to meet and enjoy. Can we count on you? Call the office or Nancy, Jeanine, Louisa or Jill for reservations and transportation.

Ethical Culture Society of Essex County



Boe Meyerson, 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 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.

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

YOUTH GROUP

On an early Sunday morning, our small, but enthusiastic youth group made a trip to Newark to volunteer in the soup kitchen at the Goodwill Mission. Anne Francois, Joseph Bensman (both are high school seniors), and myself as advisor, arrived at the center and got right to work. After signing the volunteer book and hanging up our coats, we began chopping about 15 bunches of celery for the celery soup. We also toasted 100 English muffins in preparation for the serving of breakfast. When the doors



opened, we began to serve heaping plates filled with scrambled eggs and cheese, grits, sausage and bacon. The line was long and moved as quickly as we served. After about an hour, the line stopped and it was time to do some cleaning. All the tables needed wiping and the floor was mopped. As we headed out the door to go back to our comfortable life, the kitchen workers were beginning to prepare for the next meal.

Workers at the Goodwill Center are people who had been their down on luck, drug or alcohol abusers, or in jail and were now in the process of getting their lives together. It was an enlightening experience for all of

us and a pleasure to meet some of these people. All expressed gratitude to us for our volunteering.

Anne's reflections: "The volunteering at the Goodwill Mission was an unforgettable experience. It was heartbreaking

and traumatizing to see

the amount of people in need."

Joseph's reflections: "Today's service at the Goodwill was good. It was a good morning that the people rarely get: a nice start with a big breakfast. It's quite an experience to see people in such a sad state, but every little thing we do counts. People notice. I love to see their smiles and to be able to say 'You're welcome.' It's all part of the fight."

—Jill Fox

GERONTOLOGICAL THOUGHTS FOR SPRING

Recently, we have been stunned to hear of the sudden and tragic loss of 12 retirees (10 from a single senior community in Middlesex County, N.J.) who were killed in a bus accident in Chile. They were part of a larger group traveling on a cruise to South America, who decided to contract on their own for a private trip to Lauca National Park in the Andes. They had left the beaten path, chosen to take a risk greater than that involved in cruising, in order to see something exceptional and new. They anticipated the awe and wonder that fills us when we have the opportunity to be in contact with the spectacular beauty of nature — to observe the glory of the world. They died on the return trip to the cruise ship.

None of us knows how our end will come, or when, for the process of living continues

until we die. These individuals were mostly energetic, focused, some even fundraisers for their Jewish Temple, B'nai B'rith and Women's American ORT.

We vary in our capacity (physical, financial, etc.) to travel far and wide to see new sights. But the stars are over our heads, grass and flowers under our feet, many places to go and people to meet. This group said "yes" to life. May they rest in peace. Our condolences to family and friends. To those who perished, our gratitude for showing us the way.

—Joyce Jackson (mental health clinician, UMDNJ, member of the Ethical Culture

Society 12 months) and

Betty Levin (psychotherapist in private practice, Millburn, N.J., member of the Ethical Culture Society 45 years)

Congratulations and Happy 90th Birthday to our long-time member, Anita Roberts! Thanks for all your good work over the years to make living conditions for tenants so much better; teaching English to newcomers; and for all you have contributed to our Society. We are hoping that Anita will be part of Betty Levin's Elder Wisdom Project and that more recollections of a life well lived will be shared in the near future. All of our best wishes to you, Anita —*Terri Suess*.



Society members, friends and family gathered April 1 (a day early) for a luncheon to celebrate and to honor Anita Roberts. Photos — Andy Weinberger

Calendar (continued from page 4)

terested society members. The group meets on the second and fourth Sundays of each month, before platform. All interested in studying the history and philosophies of humanism are invited.

Third Friday, May 19 **Movie Night:** The award-winning film, **“Gandhi”**.

Annual Meeting, Sunday, May 21. Mark your calendars for the Ethical Culture Society of Essex County's annual meeting set for 1 p.m. at the Society. All society members are invited to review the year, elect new officers, set the new budget, and plan for next year. This society belongs to each of us and it can't run well without every one of us! See you there!

—*Terri Suess*

Sunday, July 16 at 11:30am, there will be a Memorial Service for Phil Gluck-Sosis. Phil was a long time member of our Society and an excellent published poet. Phil's wife, Suzanne, who lives in New England now, will be coming. She will also be placing his ceramic plaque (made by Mahasin) in our Peace Garden. —*Boe*

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Highlights of a year that flew

What's any “society” made up of? People: you and me. Our Ethical Culture Society is only a microcosm of our larger society. Perhaps we are skewed a bit by our interests in and dedication to “ethics” and “humanism”, but still, our society, like the larger society, has shown this year we are only as great as our people.

And we, members of our society, have out-done ourselves this year with exceptional platform programming, work on peace; environmental and immigration issues; with cultural programming and discussions; with fundraising/fun-raising events and with a new Sunday Morning discussion group focused on “The Humanist Way”.

We have enjoyed potlucks, movies, singing and forums together and we have welcomed the wider community. We have hosted community meetings and groups who needed places

to meet. We also donated to disaster relief for tsunami victims, for the miners, for South Mountain Peace Action and for Afghanistan. At some points in the year, we even did some admirable publicity and outreach -- yet more is needed. Our reader board has been one of the best ways of consistently attracting others. Our website has been another. And the monthly newsletter went out regularly each month this year to keep members and friends informed of our events.

Everyone has stepped forward to greet and provide refreshments on Sundays after platform presentations. People have given generously to keep the heat on in the building. And people have pledged generously to keep our society functioning. Others have kept the minutes, the books and the calendars, have maintained and improved our building, and have been most generous with their ideas, efforts and time.

As I conclude the year as President of the Ethical Culture Society, I would like to personally thank each one of you who has contributed so much to making our society run and to impacting the wider society. Thanks, especially to each of the committee chairs and members and to each of the society's board members. A special thanks goes to our Leader, Boe Meyerson, for her enthusiasm, dedication and insight.

Next year, as we prepare to welcome new officers and board members, I would urge every one in the society to identify your own strengths and interests and to contribute them - generously! Make sure you get involved. Only you can keep our society thriving as a refuge in stormy seas; only you can make things happen. We are only as good as the contributions of each one of us.

With best regards,

—*Terri Suess, President*

Ethical Culture Society 2005–2006

ETHICAL CULTURE SOCIETY OF ESSEX COUNTY

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ETHICAL CULTURE

SUNDAY MORNING PLATFORMS

May, 2006

May 7 Bart Worden, *“Eliciting the Best: Partnerships that Promote Ethical Ideals”*



The address explores ways in which we can develop “ethical partnerships” with others and how such partnerships help us live in accordance with ethical ideals.

Bart Worden is the Leader for the Ethical Culture Society of Westchester in White Plains, New York. Bart is the President of the National Leaders Council of the American Ethical Union and member of the AEU Planning Committee. He earned degrees in Philosophy of Religion and Social Work. For nine years he has served as a social worker and psychotherapist for adults with psychiatric disabilities at The Guidance Center’s Rochelle House day treatment program as Director and Assistant Executive Director.

His wife, Ruthanne introduced him to the Ethical Society twenty years ago. Their older son, Gary, is a graduate of the Sunday School and their younger child, Jeff, is in the Upper Form class.

May 14 Boe Meyerson, *“One God, Many Problems; The Moral Hazards of Traditional Monotheism”*

Traditional monotheistic faiths (Christianity, Judaism, Islam) have traditionally been lauded for their capacity to introduce uniform ethical standards into human conduct. In this respect (at

least from the western point of view), polytheistic religions were seen as incapable of providing a universal, authoritative ethical system. Yet bloody campaigns inspired by monotheistic absolutism have played a devastating role throughout human history from the biblical times through the Medieval Crusades and the contemporary jihad. The relationship between theology and religious war will be explored in Boe’s address.

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

May 21 Jeffrey Rubin, Ph.D. *“Human Flourishing in a Time of Peril”*.

Dr. Rubin practices psychoanalysis and psychoanalytically-oriented psychotherapy in NYC and Northern Westchester. He has taught at various psychoanalytic institutes and universities including The Postgraduate Center for Mental Health, the C.G. Jung Foundation, the Object Relations Institute, the Harlem Family Institute, Union Theological Seminary and Yeshiva University.

He is the author of *Psychotherapy and Buddhism, A Psychoanalysis for Our Time*, and *The Good Life: Psychoanalytic Reflections on Love, Ethics, Creativity and Spirituality*. A long-term practitioner of meditation and yoga, he is

interested in how they can enrich the therapeutic process.

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.

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• **Annual Meeting, Sunday, May 21**, 1 p.m. (*details in “Calendar” below*)

May 28 Memorial Day: *Members’ tributes to loved ones*

June 4 Boe Meyerson interviewing Steve Sklar: *“U.S. Immigration Policy: Just? Humane? Beneficial to Whom?”*

Boe Meyerson is Leader of the Ethical Society of Essex County and Humanist Chaplain at Columbia University. Mr. Steve Sklar is an Immigration Attorney who has been practicing in Maplewood for the past 12 years. Boe Meyerson will interview him regarding his challenging experiences representing immigrants and his views on U.S. policy.

CALENDAR

First Friday, May 7, the **First Friday Pot Luck**, will be held from 7 to 9 p.m. at the Society. Bring a main dish, salad or dessert for six. Come and hang out, enjoy a wonderful meal and good music! Everyone welcome.

Second Friday, May 12 **Folk Singing** at 7:30 p.m. with Lisa Novemsky.

Second and Fourth Sundays, May 15 and May 28, from 9:30 to 11 a.m. **“The Humanist Way” study group** has been started by our leader, Boe Meyerson, and in- (*continued on page 3*)