



ETHICAL CULTURE

M O N T H L Y

VOLUME 22 NUMBER 2

Visit our web site: www.essexethical.org

OCTOBER 2002

Leader's Message

DEAR MEMBERS AND FRIENDS OF ESSEX,

Imagine the following. A nation (called *X*) which some have called a rogue state with nuclear capability announces that it reserves the right to engage in a preemptive nuclear or non-nuclear first strike against any nation with nuclear or other unconventional weapons when it believes such a nation poses a grave risk of attacking itself, its allies or any other state. Nation *X* makes it clear that it is prepared to act on its fears alone without producing evidence of the nature of any imminent threat posed by the other nation and without that nation making any specific provocations, threats, or warnings of first strike intentions. In so doing Nation *X* is prepared to risk the lives of its own combatants and the lives of its enemy's civilians. It also makes it clear that it will act without regard to approval of the United Nations or even its closest allies or even its enemy's neighboring states which are potential or past victims. Then Nation *X* identifies Nation *Y* as the object of its fears, claiming that nation *Y* poses grave risks of attack

against its allies and or neighbors and begins hostilities with the aim of neutralizing *Y*'s capabilities. Nation *X* itself is not a target of *Y* and no potential target of *Y* has openly requested the assistance of *X*.

Can you think of anything going on right now which bears any resemblance to this hypothetical scenario. Can you identify Nation *X* and Nation *Y*?

What lies behind such behavior on the part of Nation *X* or its government officials? What kinds of thinking promotes such action or even plans for such action? Do individuals think in this way or only groups? What remedies are available to correct such thinking? Who can guide us?



If these questions interest you, come to our Sunday Meeting on Oct 6 at 11 a.m. when I will give an address on the "Wisdom of Spinoza." I believe this gentle 18th century philosopher, beloved by Goethe and Coleridge, has much to offer us in the wild world of the 21st Century. Till then,
—Boe

Bulletin Board

■ Ethical Culture Chorus

Join us singing *in harmony* under the masterful, engaging and enjoyable leadership of Jeanine Rosh.

With a repertoire of traditional folk, show tunes and songs reflecting peace and social justice, the Chorus will be rehearsing once weekly on Thursday evenings 7-9 p.m. at the Ethical Culture Society.

Everyone is welcome.

■ Book Club at the Society

Two more exciting book discussions are planned during the next few

months. We'll meet on September 22 at 1 p.m., when Jack Tiner will lead a discussion on Helen Keller's *The Story of My Life*.

The we'll meet again on November 3 at 1 p.m. to discuss a portion of Milton's *Paradise Lost*. Because Book I is so crowded with allusions to Classical literature and is so difficult, we decided to begin with Books II and III. Though Milton's great poem is in glorious verse, it reads like a novel. Don't be afraid to try it. You will be amply rewarded.

Please join us — everyone is welcome.



STILL TIME FOR STONES

There is still time to order "memorial" or "honoring" stones

for inclusion in the Meditation Garden to be dedicated next month.

Completed stones are on display at the Society. Donations are; small stones (approx. 7 inches) \$25, deluxe (12 inches) \$35.

Contact Mahasin Nor-Pomarico as soon as possible at 973-761-8511 to place your order. Don't miss out on this unique opportunity.

—Mahasin Nor-Pomarico

Ethical Culture Society of Essex County



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Ted Seagull, *Assistant Leader*

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EDITOR'S NOTE

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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 e-mail to the editor but can also be delivered to the office, att: 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,
516 Prospect St.,
Maplewood, NJ 07040.

Visit our web site:
www.essexethical.org

Letters/Member News

Phil Sosis Page on website

Dear Ethical Friends,

There is an in-process page up at <http://www.essexethical.org> with photos and information about our late friend Phil Sosis. If you have a favorite poem of his or a memory, please feel free to email it to me (MSueWillis@aol.com) for inclusion on the site. —Sue

Ezie Cotler, son of Abby and Don and grandson of Barb and Marty Cotler, has completed summer basic training and is now a cadet at the U.S. Military Academy at West Point. We know that with his fine values he will be a good influence in whatever he does. —Barbara Cotler

New Novel by Meredith Sue Willis Published!

The West Virginia University Press has published *Oradell at Sea*, the eleventh book by Essex Ethical Culture member Meredith Sue Willis. The book features an engaging woman named Oradell Greengold whose personality was forged in a West Virginia coal mining camp. At the time of this novel, she is aging, unexpectedly wealthy, and trying to avoid excitement as she takes a cruise through the Panama Canal. When shipboard emotions run high, Oradell has to decide whether or not to get involved. Willis's stories have appeared in many magazines, and her collection *In The Mountains of America* was praised in the *New York Times Book Review*, which said, "Ms. Willis...provides a[n]...important lesson on the nature and function of literature



itself." Her children's novel, *Marco's Monster*, was an *Instructor* magazine best book, and her books about writing are used by creative teachers all over the country. She teaches novel writing at New York University and does school visits for the New Jersey State Council on the Arts and the Newark Museum. She is a past president of the Essex Society and present Co-chair of the Platform Committee and Chair of the Social Action Committee. She lives in South Orange with her husband, board member Andrew B. Weinberger, and their son Joel, a senior at Columbia High School.

Annual Commemoration of Horror of Nuclear War: Hiroshima Day

On August 6, 1945, nuclear weapons were used for the first time, resulting in over 100,000 fatalities. Three days later another 40,000 died at Nagasaki.

Subsequently, Japanese survivors — *Hibakusha* — organized to stand as witness to the horror of nuclear weapons. For the past 14 years, *Hibakusha* have come to New Jersey during this period for public programs to promote the end of nuclear weapons. This year, a series of such events were held in Plainfield, Elizabeth, Roselle, Westfield, Newark and Montclair between August 7–9. Significant organizing for these events was done by incoming Ethical Society member Terri Sues.

In Plainfield, the Ethical Chorus, along with Solidarity Singers and the Children's Choir of Rose of Sharon Church, sang. Plainfield's Mayor Al McWilliams made a proclamation and Freeholder Lewis Mingo and Police chief Ed Santiago welcomed the visitors. Santiago had been involved in the 2000 caravan from Boston to Washington to honor all civil-

ian casualties of all wars. In Elizabeth a tree was planted to honor the dead at Hiroshima. Dr Victor Sidel, past President of the Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War denounced the Bush Administration for favoring the targeting of non-nuclear states with nuclear weapons and for encouraging a new arms race in space.

Hibakusha Koji Hayashida, 66, reiterated the call for peaceful conflict resolution. Sympathy for the survivors of the 9/11 events in New York and Washington was expressed by Fumie Kakita, 46, daughter of a Nagasaki *Hibakusha*. She also urged continuation of the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty.

Patty and I have been privileged to host the *Hibakusha* at our house during the past several years. They raise funds for this trip, receive no support from the Japanese national government, though some from Hiroshima and Nagasaki. This year we also hosted the daughter, son-in-law and granddaughter of Mr. Hayashida. Yoko is a professional actress and dancer in New York and is very proud of her father's activities.

Our Social Action Committee was a co-sponsor of all these events. There will be a marking of the occasion for peace — and bringing about a Culture of Peace — at the November 10 Platform, with Betty Levin leading the way.
 —*Bob and Patty Bender*



As a new year of Sunday School begins, we recall the graduation of Anne François and Nora Proops, on June 23, 2002. It is always a special day when students graduate from our Sunday School/Ethics for Children program. These wonderful young people presented projects they had worked on during the Sunday School year.

Quotes

(about the "Under God Controversy")

"...let's ask the question: 'What or who is God?'

...Recognition that 'God' doesn't mean just one thing would itself be a step in the right direction in this society. Who knows, we might even get a few teachers to complain if they find themselves sweating for an answer."
 —*Paul La Clair*

(On the anniversary of the events of last September 11)

"We are reminded of what is truly important in life: family, love, duty, how to die.

...Among many lessons, September 11 reminds us that those dying in intractable suffering are entitled to freedom in cutting short such suffering."

—*Winthrop Drake Thies, LL.M., Pres., Hemlock Society of NJ, Inc*



ETHICAL CULTURE SOCIETY OF ESSEX COUNTY

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Sunday Morning Platforms

*Platforms begin at 11 a.m.
All are welcome. Platforms are
subject to change without notice.
Sunday School 11 a.m.–12:15 p.m.*

October 6 — Boe Meyerson: The Wisdom of Spinoza. This address will explore Spinoza's moral philosophy and his idea of human liberation. These concepts will then be applied to contemporary moral and political issues. Boe is not only the leader of our Essex Ethical Culture Society, but also the Humanist Chaplain at Columbia University in New York City.

October 13 — Larry Hamm: Racial Profiling. Larry Hamm, a powerful speaker and committed activist for social justice in New Jersey, is the founder and chair of the People's Organization for Progress, based in Newark. He and his organization have been devoted to ending racism and seeking economic justice for all for more than 20 years. He speaks throughout the state on issues of freedom and equality. As a student at Princeton University, he led the fight to get the university to divest itself of holdings in South Africa. In

1978, he started a group of three or four students that led to the occupation of Nassau Hall for three days by 200 students. Their protest against apartheid eventually did lead to divestiture, and Larry continued to be a statewide leader in the anti-apartheid movement of the late 1970s.

October 20 — Sylvia Kramer: Poetry, the Healing Art. Sylvia Kramer, author, poet, and lecturer, conducts poetry workshops at universities, nursing homes, and mental health centers in the New York-New Jersey metropolitan area. She also practices poetry therapy, presenting programs on many topics, but always centering on human development and life enhancement.

There is an excellent Growth and Development Conference put on by the AEU Membership Committee to be held at the Brooklyn Society on the weekend of November 2nd. I will be attending and can provide transportation to anyone who wants to go with me.

—Susan Kennedy

October 27 — The Creative Process: Composer Mario Lombardo interviewed by Joe Gluck. Violinist Joe Gluck will interview composer and pianist Mario Lombardo.



Mr. Lombardo and Mr. Gluck will perform Mr. Lombardo's latest work for violin and piano.

Mr. Lombardo, born in Elizabeth, New Jersey, began studying piano at the age of nine and composing at sixteen. Mr. Lombardo is the composer of more than 200 songs, 4 musicals, and many works for piano, chorus, concert band, and orchestra. His music has been performed by orchestras in Chicago, Boston, Detroit, Cincinnati, New Jersey and many other places here and abroad. Named Musician of the Year for 1994 by the New Jersey State Conference of Musicians, he resides in Cranford with his wife Adele.

Nov. 3 — Boe Meyerson: Of War & Peace: The Challenges We Now Face

Nov. 10 — Marjorie Cohen: Study Circles