



ETHICAL CULTURE

M O N T H L Y

VOLUME 31 NUMBER 2

Visit our web site: www.essexethical.org

OCTOBER 2011

OCTOBER 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

Oct. 2 Mary Babiarz, *“Variations on a Theme — the life of a professional musician”*

Mary Babiarz will give us a “back-stage” tour of the life of a professional musician, with history, stories, performance and more.

Mary plays violin, viola and piano. She is a member of the Paper Mill Playhouse Orchestra, has performed with the Johnny Mathis Orchestra, the New Jersey Symphony Orchestra and actively freelances in the New Jersey/New York area.



Mary is Director of the Stirling Strings Chamber Music Workshop, a monthly workshop for amateur string players held at the Ethical Culture Society.

She is a coach for the New Jersey Youth Orchestra and was co-director of 4 STRINGS! — A Summer Chamber Music Academy for Young String Players. She is a music teacher for “Stepping Stones”, a preschool in Livingston for children with Down Syndrome, and was the recipient of the 2007 “Volunteer of the Year” Award given by ARC of New Jersey.

Mary is a Maplewood resident and maintains a private teaching studio for violin and viola.

Oct. 9 Jim Walsh, *“Keeping our water supply safe”*

It is not often that we think about water because it is readily available from our tap for cooking, cleaning, drinking and gardening; however, water prob-

lems are at our door step. We will explore our connection to water and how things like fracking, electricity, privatization, water bottling and agriculture are impacting this relationship.

Jim Walsh is the New Jersey Director for Food & Water Watch (www.foodandwaterwatch.org). Jim is a



Photo: Marnie Balisalisca

dedicated political organizer with over ten years experience working in local and national movements to empower communities to work for social, racial and economic justice.

Oct. 16 Martha Gallahue, *“Non-violent direct action as an ethical means to promote social justice”*

When does civil disobedience become a legitimate means to express disapproval with government policy? Why is such a tactic arising in response to government policy on the environment? Martha Gallahue was one of over 1,200 people arrested during the Tar Sands Action that took place in front of the White House, August 20th-September 3rd. The Action was led by Bill McKibben, founder of 350.org.

Martha Gallahue chairs the NGO Working Group on Climate Change within the Committee on Sustainable Development at the UN. She is an AEU Leader serving as main representative for the National Ethical Service of the AEU and is interim consulting leader at the Ethical Culture Society of Essex County.

Oct. 23 Marnie Valdivia, *“The Middle East and Sustainable Eco Solutions”*

Marnie Valdivia, who spoke at Ethical in March 2010, was in Egypt



earlier this year and witnessed some of the “Arab Spring” for herself. She will be speaking about the relationship between food and water insecurity and the inevitability of conflict, and the significance of environmental development in peace building efforts. Also, there will be some time allowed to give people the opportunity to ask any questions about her time in Egypt during the January 25 revolution.

Marnie Valdivia is from Belmar, NJ. She is a graduate of Drew University (Religious Studies with a minor in Middle Eastern Studies) with concentration on Islam, Judaism, Arab-Israeli conflict, and grass roots peace movements and peace building.

Marnie is currently the Global Program Support Intern at CNFA, an agriculture aid development firm in Washington, DC, and is a first year student in the Middle East Studies program at the George Washington University, with a professional specialization in Sustainable Development and the Environment.

Oct. 30 Betty Levin and Karen Bokert, *“Day of the Dead Celebration”*

Betty and Karen will lead us in a



special pre-Halloween event, honoring the dear departed, Mexican-

style. They invite everyone to bring photos of beloved people who have died and an object you associate with that person. There will be music and an atmosphere of remembrance with

(continued next page)

Ethical Culture Society of Essex County



Martha Gallahue, *Interim Leader*
Boe Meyerson, *Leader Emeritus*
James White, *Leader Emeritus*

Anja Moen, *President*
Lisa Novemsky, *Vice President*
Martin Cotler, *Treasurer*
Susan Kennedy, *Secretary*

Trustees:
Fred Sebastian
Rosalie Sussman
Betty Levin
Allen Parmet
Zia Durrani

EC Monthly newsletter writers/contributors:
Elaine Durbach, *platforms*; Anja Moen.
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
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NEW! — info@essexethical.org

Our web site: www.essexethical.org



Attention members! Please submit your email addresses to NEW! — info@essexethical.org to receive newsletter and other special event notices.

candles and special decorations and a chance to share memories of that person and the significance of the chosen object.

Karen Bokert — ECS member, artist and yoga teacher — studied art in Mexico years ago. Karen says, "I did a lot of traveling around Mexico and one of the most memorable trips was to the island of Janitzio in the middle of Lake Patzquaro in the State of Michoacan. We students traveled there to spend the night on the island, which is a cemetery, and to keep vigil with the friends and family of those buried there. They bring food, pictures of the departed, guitars and candles, and simply sit by the grave sites all night long in a beautiful vigil. The candlelight can be seen for miles around as it lights up the sky.

"Ever since that powerful experience ... I have tried in some fashion to remember those dear to me who have left us and I am delighted to assist in creating a Day of the Dead simulated ceremony at Ethical along with Betty Levin."

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

From Your President ...

Irene came and went, making us all realize that it is no small thing being without power and water — even for a brief time. With all the science and technologies of the now 21st century to understand and discover almost more than we want to know about ourselves and our world, we are still hit with natural catastrophes with their harmful effects. We seem to be more vulnerable than ever.



Irene also reminded us of our own strength. When Irene hit, she hit communities. As a community, powerful forces like Irene can be overcome. It is as our own smaller community that we try to build Ethical Culture Society into a place where we can learn and challenge ourselves while we try to better the wider community we live in through our actions.

For us it is not enough to develop convictions, we also want to act.

For example, through learning about the

world from our various platforms, we choose what we want to spend our time doing through our Social Action Committee. We believe in differences in creed but unity in deed.

If you want to study with us, seek meaningful information at our platforms, or just get together for a good song and craft night, we have it all! As a community even a force like Irene can be dealt with and overcome.

See you at platform — *Anja*

LEADER'S MESSAGE

From Martha Gallahue

Dear Members and Friends,
Please know of my concern for each one of you as together we experienced Hur-



ricane Irene. Her impact continues due to flooding and long term clean up. I know that the quality and safety of your water was a particular concern in Maplewood.

Such major events demonstrate what is truly important to address both personally and in our communities. Irene inspired great numbers of folks to be generous, eager to share information and responsive to special needs of persons impacted by the storm.

Yet our President and the media refuse to connect the increase of extreme weather events with the too rapid rate of climate change. Our hurricanes originate in the Saharan desert and as the planet warms, these deserts become drier with more wind storms that nurture them. Thus, wetlands become wetter with increasing floods. We know that the major contributor to all of this is the warming of the planet due to dangerous levels of carbon dioxide in the air which now exceeds 390ppm. Do we also know that the safety limit was exceeded when carbon dioxide ex 350ppm (ratio of carbon dioxide to oxygen)? Earth has had these conditions before. Humans have never experienced what will be up ahead.

Because of our elected Leaders' continued refusal to address this looming issue, Bill McKibben, founder of 350.org, organized

a two week sit-in from August 20th–September 3rd, to protest the Keystone Oil Pipeline. This pipeline will carry oil from an area known as Tar Sands in Canada and is the second largest industrial project ever developed. This project requires 1700 miles of pipelines to send oil to this country thus further increasing our dependence upon fossil fuel and delaying the inevitable switch to alternative energy of which there is

Our future depends upon our capacity to promote well-being of “the greater whole of which we are all a part.”

an abundance. I participated in this sit-in called The Tar Sands Action, on Friday, August 26, and was arrested for my act of civil disobedience along with 54 other people in front of the White House. Further arrests continued into early September. You can google Tar Sands Action for more information.

This was my first act of civil disobedience. I chose to be arrested in hopes that this Action will awaken more Americans to the great harm that we continue to perpetrate upon our environment and each other through our refusal to prioritize alternative energy and promote a green economy. The Keystone project represents to date the most corrupt and destructive industrial project ever because it further pillages indigenous lands, desecrates a vast area called Tar Sands, and perpetuates American denial of the harm caused by our over consumption of and dependence upon fossil fuel. Only President Obama’s refusal to sign a permit will prevent the pipeline from going into operation.

We are at the close of the industrial

age as we continue to reap the benefits of the wise technology that has come from it. Now, we need to welcome a new ecological age, where human co-creation takes place in harmony with nature and comprehensive inter-relatedness with all life is practiced. Our future depends upon our capacity to promote well-being of “the greater whole of which we are all a part.” (Earth Charter). It is a new age of integration where transforming choices rooted in ethical behavior must take precedence. While individuals were not participating in civil disobedience on Saturday and Sunday, Hurricane Irene spoke for us by bringing 20% of the United States under one “umbrella”. Her message is an opportunity to become more mindful of our present collective behavior.

Let us not lose this moment to choose activism that is transformative. I hope that I stood in your name on August 26th.

Looking forward to more connection with you this year.

—Martha Gallahue

GUEST COMMENT

Weighted Voting at the UN General Assembly

Second of two articles by Myron W. Kronisch, member of the Board of Editors of the NJ Law Journal and Vice Chairman of the Center for War Peace Studies.

In an earlier Op-ed, reform of the Executive branch of the UN, the Security Council, was discussed. For the General Assembly (GA) to enact rules that will be binding and effectively implemented by the Security Council (SC) one must start with the understanding that the GA is not yet a legislative body. Thus, it was most appropriate for former Secretary General Kofi Annan to call for “radical reform” of the major organs of the UN in a September 2003 speech before the GA. In response, the Center for War/Peace Studies (CW/PS), a small think

and action tank, proposed creation of legislative power with weighted voting in the GA, a plan known as the Binding Triad (BT).

Under the present one member one vote (OMOV) system in the GA, China, with a population of 1.3 billion, counts no more than Tuvalu, with a population of only 11,000. This system has worked since 1945 because the GA has never been more than a meeting place for diplomats authorized only to run the internal affairs of the UN and to make non-binding recommendations. Limited legislative power for the GA to address only global problems such as Global Warming, Nuclear Proliferation and Terrorism would utilize weighted voting fair to all nations.

Under the Articles of Confederation, Congress was not a legislature but like the GA today, a diplomatic body. It had to request contributions of money and troops from the thirteen states. The U.S. had no executive branch and no judiciary. To create legislative power in 1787, weighted voting was utilized: the Connecticut Compromise successfully proposed a Senate based on equality of each state and a House of Representatives which reflected each state’s population. In the UN, a third factor to be weighted would be each nation’s contribution to the UN budget.

Resolutions utilizing the BT would begin with OMOV. A computer would instantaneously report whether the resolution had support on all three legs of the Triad: (1) two thirds of the nations present and voting; (2) nations representing an agreed upon majority of the world’s population; and (3) nations representing an agreed upon majority of the UN budget. The GA’s present ability to pass non-binding resolutions and to control the internal affairs of the UN, including the budget, by the OMOV would be retained. No member nation would have more than a vote of *(continued next page)*

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the needy and books for children.

ETHICAL CULTURE SOCIETY OF ESSEX COUNTY NEWSLETTER · OCTOBER 2011

(continued from page 3) 15% on either the population or the contribution leg of the Triad. [See cwps.org for the full text of the BT Monograph.]

Two prominent Americans, President Bill Clinton and the late Walter Cronkite, have spoken about the form the United Nations should take in the new century. In October 1999 Clinton addressed the first global conference on federalism in Ottawa attended by representatives of all nations with federal systems throughout the world. He saw “[T]he whole concept of federalism emerging internationally... In a way we become more of a federalist world when the United Nations takes a more active role in stopping genocide.” Clinton asked “[W]hat... is the arrangement of government most likely to give us the best of all worlds — without pretending that we can cut all the cords that bind us to the rest of humanity?... I think more and more and more people will say, “This feder-

alism, it’s not such a bad idea.”

Later that month Mr. Cronkite received an award at the UN. He said, “Those of us who are living today can influence the future of civilization. We can influence whether our planet will drift into chaos and violence or whether through a monumental educational and political effort we will achieve a world of peace under a system of law where individual violators of that law are brought to justice... We need a system of enforceable world law... This should include... adoption of a weighted voting system for the General Assembly.”

In the not too distant future we can expect serious attention to UN reform at the White House. If successful, this will result in the “structure in place” the President spoke of in Prague. It will make possible international law binding not only on nations but on individuals. This is an idea whose time has come. ■

SAVE THE DATES

Folk Fridays

2nd Friday of the month, starting October 14th, 7:30–9:30 p.m., coordinated by Anja Moen and Lisa Novemsky

Community Quilting & Other Folk Arts

Do you want to create your own square in our ECS quilt? Knit? Crochet? Then come to Folk Friday at 7:30 p.m. on the 2nd Friday of every month from October to June. We start on October 14th, 7:30 p.m. in the parlor. See you there! —Anja

3rd Saturday Arts Night

Tracey Woods, Artist — 3rd Saturday of the month, October 15th, 7–9 p.m., coordinated by Gus Lindquist and Rosalie Sussman

New children’s art program :

Two Saturdays in October — 15th and 29th — 10 a.m. to 1 p.m., coordinated by Anja Moen