



ETHICAL CULTURE

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FEBRUARY 2014

Feb. 2 Audrey Kindred, “What It Takes to Start an Ethics for Children Program in an Ethical Culture Society”

Audrey Kindred, long-time participant in Ethical Culture, has been embedded in ethical culture’s religious education for children on both national and societal levels for over 15 years. Former director of religious education at Brooklyn Society for Ethical Culture, she now leads the Ethics for Children team at New York Society for Ethical Culture. She is a “teaching artist” in the New York City system. Her approach is holistic and integral with children’s emotional development. She has organized events with children in the community such as the neighborhood March for children on International Peace Day in Park Slope, Brooklyn, NY; Happy Bones Festival; and The Nurture Festival, to name a few.

Audrey Kindred explores and teaches PEACE: Practices in Ethics, Arts, Creativity, Energy. Her own studies in Non-Violent Communication and Yoga have grounded her creative teaching practices in a deep sense of wellbeing and nurture.

Studies of dance and early childhood studies at Bennington College laid primary ground work, leading to many years of choreography, performance, community organizing and program development, through Movement Research. Now, a long-time Bent on Learning teacher, she has taught yoga to children of diverse ages and needs. Through her own “Peaceful Yoga” programming she has also taught adults in many venues. Through working deeply with the kinship between yoga, ethics and creativity, she has been creating a curriculum titled “The Ethical Body.” Kindred’s blogs can be linked to from:

akindred.blogspot.com. She can be reached at: akindred@gmail.com.

Feb. 9 Lisel Burns, “‘Bystanding’ vs. Acting as Principled Partners, to Help Those in Need”

Using decades of working with community development and grassroots community leaders — local to global — and three years of post-quake collaborations in Leogane, Haiti, four times annually with former BSEC partner Brooklyn/Haiti NegesFoundation.org, Leader Emerita of the Brooklyn Ethical Society Lisel Burns will speak on partnership as ethical action. When/How do people resist the temptation to rationalize the role of “bystander” and act as principled partners with people targeted by disaster or social ills of human making. Participants are encouraged to reflect upon their own efforts to be reliable partners and the forces internal and external which can make this role a challenging ethical situation.

Lisel Burns is Clergy Leader Emeritus of the Brooklyn Society for Ethical Culture (www.bsec.org) and links Leadership and Legacy Projects of the National Congress of Neighborhood Women USA to the global efforts of Groots International (www.groots.org) and other networks in Huairou Commission grassroots campaigns (www.huairou.org). She helps link local social and economic justice efforts to grassroots-led community development initiatives around the world.

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Immigration reform has been on the agenda of many in Washington for years. While the U.S. Senate passed some reform measures

some time ago, there have been roadblocks in the House of Representatives. Speaker Boehner has said it is time for the Congress to move forward with reform and so there is hope that reforms will take place this year. This will have tremendous implications for those who have been in the United States without status (many people would call these individuals “illegal,” a term which I despise), but would also create significant opportunities for those who are highly educated and skilled, to live and work in the United States.

Ian Grodman has been an attorney for over twenty years, initially representing insurance companies and risk managers in litigation, currently assisting clients with the challenges of immigration law. Ian specializes in the legal issues faced by foreign nationals wishing to participate in work, business or academics within the United States. He has represented foreign investors as well as professionals seeking appropriate visas to allow them to work in the United States. He is very familiar with the roadblocks normally encountered within each of these categories, as well as with the issues faced by undocumented workers.

Feb. 23 Martha Gallahue, “The Power of Collective Ceremony”

Martha Gallahue will share her experience upon her return from the Dhar-masuya Mahayaga in Palakkad, India, (February 3–18). The objective of this ritual of many days is to “stabilize the mind of human beings,” to bring peace on the individual and social levels, and to make a universal level of consciousness available to everybody. It will be attended by spiritual leaders from East and West.

Ethical Culture Society of Essex County



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Editor's Note

Newsletter articles, announcements, etc., not to exceed 150 words in length, must be received by the FIRST of the month for inclusion in the following month's edition. Submit items to: Howard Gilman, newsletter editor, preferably via email at: gilman.howard@gmail.com. Items can also be dropped off at 15 So. Pierson Rd., Maplewood; or, if you put something for the newsletter in the EC office's mail slot or in the mail, please give me a call at (973) 763-3914 to be sure I know about it, especially if your item is time-sensitive. — *Editor*

Editor reserves right to edit for length, clarity and content. Opinions offered in this publication are those of the authors.

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Our web site:
www.essexethical.org

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

LEADER'S COLUMN

Towards Global Citizens

As religious leaders such as Pope Francis receive continuing media visibility in their leadership roles, it may raise the question as to how ethical culture fits into the religious landscape altogether. By itself, it may not fit at all. If we choose to see ourselves through the Humanist lens, however, and include those eastern traditions, we might note that we represent nearly 10% of the world's population. That is hundreds of millions of people!

According to Wikipedia, "Religious humanism is an integration of humanist ethical philosophy with religious rituals and beliefs that center on human needs, interests, and abilities. Though practitioners of religious humanism did not officially organize under the name of 'humanism' until the late 19th and early 20th centuries, non-theistic religions paired with human-centered ethical philosophy have a long history." Ethical Culture, Jewish humanism and universalist Unitarianism were the core articulators of this emergence in the West.

Today, according to Kurt Johnson, co-author of *The Age of Interspirituality*, the country is trending toward the "spiritual but not religious" category among the younger groups. These are the non-joiners who formerly might have identified with a religion. I have often thought that ethical culture has for too long conducted its primary dialogue between the secular and religious humanists instead of the "spiritual but not religious" groups. It seems to me, and I have experienced this in my work at the United Nations, that secular and religious humanists work exceedingly well with one another around social justice issues, particularly in the areas of human rights and religious freedom. Such work is to be honored and respected. Let that be enough.

Ethical culture's contribution today may well be in that field of thought often described as a new consciousness brought on by globalization. This new consciousness is based upon a global human solidarity where we shift away from national self-interest to global self-interest. Many of the "spiritual but not religious" folks recognize this trend

toward global civilization. This will be the consciousness required to insure a sustainable world. In February, Inter-faith Harmony Week is celebrated at the United Nations (www.worldinterfaithharmonyweek.com).

Our youth member Lucy Schmitz spoke for all humanists world-wide from the podium of the General Assembly last year on Valentine's Day. What a symbolic expression of who we are. I encourage us to continue to share the powerful Platform programming at ESEC this season in light of this emerging identity as global citizens. Let not Lucy's representation of us remain symbolic but let it continue to stand for our own greater participation in the worldwide common good.

— *Martha Gallahue*

Social Action Committee Meeting

Sally Pillay of IRATE/First Friends will give us training for visiting immigration detainees at the Newark jails. No commitment required!

The training will take place immediately after the platform, in lieu of our next regular meeting, **Sunday, February 2, 2014.**

Social Action Committee meets first Sunday of each month, immediately after platform. Everyone is welcome.



We urge you to mark your calendars for the showing of the documentary film, "**Fixing the Future,**" **Feb. 23, 3 to 5 p.m. at The Loft, SOPAC, in South Orange,** presented by our local time bank, Essex Time Exchange. Admission is free.

In this documentary (www.fixingthefuture.org), David Brancaccio (of public radio's Marketplace and NOW on PBS) visits people across America using innovative approaches, such as the new popular movement of Time Banking, to reinvent the American economy. Directed by Emmy-award-director Mary Olive Smith.

Opening remarks by David Brancaccio Live! Join us for a panel discussion after the

movie to find out how you can be part of time banking by joining your local time bank www.EssexTimeExchange.org

Refreshments: Please bring a snack to share with 5 people. Per South Orange Health Code, bring only packaged goods (e.g. packaged cookies, nuts, fruit) or non-alcoholic drinks.

From The UN — Peacekeeping and Mediation Update

The United Nations was founded in 1945, after the horrors of World War II. One of the all important purposes of the UN is the maintenance of international peace and security. Over the years the UN has helped end numerous conflicts, many in politically explosive situations, often through action of the UN Security Council.

When diplomacy fails and conflicts break out, the UN mediates. If a peace agreement or a cease fire is arranged, the UN organizes a peacekeeping force to monitor the agreement.

The UN is not a world government, does not have its own military force and depends on contributions from member states.

The UN's Security Council creates and defines the details and clear rules of engagement of the peace mission. Peacekeeping troops, known as blue helmets, participate under terms carefully negotiated by their government and remain under overall authority of these governments while serving under UN operational command. The authority to deploy peacekeepers remains with the Security Council and the governments that volunteer them as does responsibility for pay, discipline and personnel matters.

Because of the Cold War, in the first 40 year of the UN's history, only 13 peacekeeping missions were organized. During the 1990's, after the end of the Cold War the focus was more on internal conflicts rather than inter-state conflicts.

Since the end of the Cold War there

has been a rapid increase in the demand for peacekeeping missions as well as a greater willingness to use them. Currently there are 111,000 personnel serving in 15 missions. Since 1948 there have been 68 missions with a total fatalities of 3,100. Last year 111 personnel were killed.

Unfortunately, the Security Council doesn't always provide adequate resources, money or well-trained personnel to carry out complex and over-ambitious mandates.

Recently, the UN peacekeeping operations have come under fire. Let's examine the criticism and also how successful these operations are.

Does Peacekeeping and mediation work? There have been a number of studies. There have been successes and of course failures. The Rand corporations in 2005 studied eight UN-led missions and found that seven brought sustained peace.

A 2005 UN report was cited in a recent CNN crossfire discussion. The report claimed that since the end of World War II, the UN has overseen 172 successful peacekeeping missions and negotiations. Examples include ending the Iran-Iraq war, facilitating of the withdrawal of Soviet troops from Afghanistan and ending civil wars in Lebanon, El Salvador and Guatemala. It has also used diplomacy to avert imminent wars. The program host investigated and reported the claim mostly true. There have been tragic failures such as Rwanda and Srebrenica.

Criticism • Recent reports have highlighted serious problems with peacekeeping missions. Haiti has filed a lawsuit charging the UN with gross negligence in starting a serious Cholera epidemic. Nepalese members of a peacekeeping force, infected with Cholera from their home country, spread the disease through reckless sewage disposal. This is a case of extremely bad oversight.

Next, Transparency International UK, a London-based organization

that monitors corruption, reported cases of peacekeepers' bribery, theft and unauthorized sale of equipment. They urged the UN to investigate and be more vigilant. If this is true it is a very serious charge.

Finally, there are the outrageous sex abuses, especially in the Congo. It is important to understand that this is a sovereignty issue in which each country insists on control over their troops and must take responsibility to monitor their soldiers. The UN has a zero-tolerance policy for sexual abuses but some contributing countries are lax in controlling their soldiers. This is a very serious situation and must be corrected.

Some of these problems could be mitigated with a recurrent idea of the creation of a standing well-trained UN force that can respond quickly to an unfolding crisis. This would not be a UN army. Some member states, given the history of colonialism, are suspicious that it may erode their sovereignty.

Why is the world interested in Peacekeeping? The answer is partially humanitarian to relieve suffering and also chaos is a travelling epidemic for crime, disease, refugees and general instability crossing borders.

If the UN doesn't do it who will?

Dr. Sylvain Ehrenfeld, the IHEU and National Ethical Service Representative to the UN and Dr. Reba Goodman member of ECSBC.

Folk Friday Feb. 14, 7:30 p.m.

Sing-along and jam with friends Second Friday of each month through June, at Ethical Culture Society, 516 Prospect St., Maplewood. Bring acoustic string and rhythm instruments, join in playing, singing or listening. Bring some refreshments to share. Folk Fridays have expanded to include crafts people to come and listen to music while doing crafts. Open to all comers, all ages, everyone is invited! Email lnovemsky@comcast.net or call (973) 763-8293. — Lisa

ETHICAL CULTURE SOCIETY OF ESSEX COUNTY

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We continue to collect children's books, canned and boxed foods, and toys for distribution by the Parenting Center in Maplewood.



ETHICAL CULTURE SOCIETY OF ESSEX COUNTY NEWSLETTER · FEBRUARY 2014

SUNDAY 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



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