



ETHICAL CULTURE

M O N T H L Y

VOLUME 23 NUMBER 7

Visit our web site: www.essexethical.org

MARCH 2004

Leader's Message

Dear Members and Friends,

When Mr. Kay, the U.S. Inspector for the search of Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD) in Iraq, made his dramatic revelation that it is now clear to him that there were no WMD in Iraq at the time we decided to go to war, there were doubtless many informed Americans who simply said "Ho Hum, hardly a revelation." While as it is admittedly difficult to say with absolute certainty that there were in fact none whatsoever, it was very easy to say that there was insufficient evidence to



make the claim with a high level of confidence. (It was insufficient to convince the UN Security Council whose members could not be immune from the fear of being attacked by nuclear weapons.) Then using this as the justification for war is even further questionable. We had no doubt about Pearl Harbor. We do not convict criminal defendants on anything less than the standard of "beyond reasonable doubt." Yet we have gone to war and taken thousands of lives on evidence that does not even approach the criminal standard.

Then why did we not wait for the evidence to come in through further inspections? Why the rush? Could it involve the aim to complete the war before the next election? Wars based on questionable motives that drag on have a negative effect on re-electability.

Given the recent revelations of Mr. Kay, however, the issue before us at this time, however, is the question of the culpability of the Chief Executive for having lead us into a war based on false justifications.

The response given by the President in blaming the Intelligence agencies for the lack of solid intelligence is a

bit like the child who says my younger brother told me to do it when caught by a parent. Consider the President's response to the furor raised by the revelation of the falsity of the claim about Iraq having attempted to purchase high grade uranium from Nigeria made by him in his State of the Union Address. He simply blamed the CIA whose Director obediently took the fall for his boss by taking responsibility despite the fact that the record showed that the CIA had warned him that the claim could not be verified. In a similar vein, the New York Times editorial on February 1 sites an initial supporter of the war (a previous National Security official) who, prior to the onset of the war, had learned from CIA officials about their complaints of unusually challenging responses and negative reactions to information contradicting the existence of WMD in Iraq by high level government officials. Furthermore the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace noted a vast change in the tone of CIA reports which were previously presented with "cautious qualifications and caveat," as opposed to the "more alarmist" tone of the current administration.

The CIA was not always so co-opted. After the Afghanistan war when Bush started talking about Iraq being a haven for Al Qaida, the CIA's director contradicted his claim. He became remarkably less vocal thereafter.

If Bush was committed to going to war regardless of the facts regarding WMD, what then was his motive? While there may be several, I would opt for one: oil resources, a power base in the middle east at a time when the oil resources in surrounding countries are in danger of becoming unavailable to us because of their increased vulnerability to popular or extremist revolt.

What's your opinion?

Best, Boe

Mark your calendars

March 13 Theatre Party

(see "Proof", pg. 2)

April 17 Russian Dinner at Mira Stillman's house. Sounds delicious. Please sign up ASAP. Limited seating

May 1 Poetry and Dessert at Sylvia Kramer's. An evening of poetic exploration and plenty of laughs.

May 8 White Elephant sale. We are accepting items for the sale now and up until a week before. Please designate your items as "White Elephant sale". Clean items please, otherwise

we will have to wash them. Also, much help is needed at the sale.

May 15 Mountain Azalea Display, cocktails and snacks at Betty Levin's.

July 7 Gourmet Lunch at Boe's home. If you weren't there last year, ask someone who was! The spread is unbelievable!

Ethical Culture Society of Essex County



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Ted Seagull, *Assistant Leader*

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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 e-mail 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.

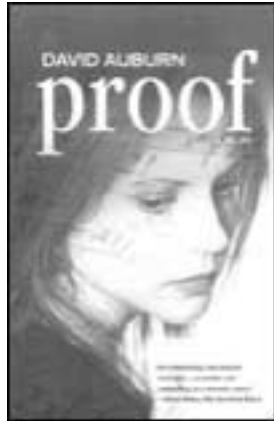
Editor reserves right to edit for length, clarity and content. Opinions offered in this publication are those of the authors.

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,
516 Prospect St.,
Maplewood, NJ 07040.

Visit our web site:
www.essexethical.org

Stroller's play "Proof" to be March 13th Fundraiser



This year our annual Strollers play evening begins at the Society with dessert and beverages, followed by the Strollers presentation of the play "Proof". This Pulitzer Prize winning play by David Auburn, explores the unknowability of love — why it is that lives get stuck, and how elusive the truth can be. It's a play about scientists whose science matters less than their humanity. What an opportunity we have to see quality theater with quality company (that's us!) Please help us help the society and give yourself a treat. **We need 20 people for this to be profitable, so sign up now.**

For more information or reservations call the society office at 973-763-1905 or Jeanine Rosh at 973-258-9395.

Quote

JOSEPH CHUMAN

If you are looking for salvation which will guarantee you a place in Heaven, Ethical Culture cannot offer you this.

If you are looking for a clearly delineated path by which to achieve perfect bliss, perfect freedom, and total transcendence, you won't find it here.

If you are looking for association with a clearly defined community with a deep reach of history that goes back thousands of years, you won't find it here either, although the humanistic ideas for which Ethical Culture stands are very ancient.

If you are looking for a worship experience, or an ecstatic religious experience, you won't find it here.

If, in the process of ethical search, you wish to be assured that there is a divine plan established for the world which can serve as a guide for your actions, Ethical Culture, in all honesty, cannot provide that either.

But if you are looking for a philosophy which will always keep before you the idea that human life and human dignity are of inestimable value, then Ethical Culture can offer you that.

If you want a philosophy which will affirm all those values which have at their core liberty, equality, justice and fundamental human rights, then you have found a home in Ethical Culture.

In this morally corrupting world, if you are looking for a standard of ideals by which to critique all that is degrading, demeaning, exploitative and dehumanizing, Ethical Culture will do that for you.

Ethical Culture will not give you the moon; it is merely the finger that points the way. The specific steps along the path are your own to discover and develop.

If you are looking for a philosophy which proclaims faith in the human future, Ethical Culture invites you to participate in helping to create that future.

And lastly, Ethical Culture invites you to live the strenuous life and dares you to confront an open universe in which, to great measure, the meaning you find will be the meaning you create.

But it encourages you to do so, not in isolation, but rather in community with others who share the same vision and have committed themselves to the same journey.

[from Stan Wayne/"Around the AEU"]

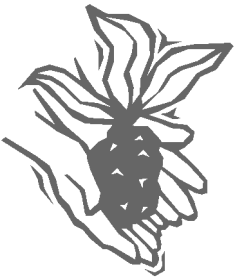
Bulletin Board

Need A Little Help?

Child Card — Elder Care — Errands — Cleaning or Shopping. Call the office for information: (973) 763-1905. —Gigi

Wanted: Lovers of Earth and Peace

We want to plant our Ethical Culture Peace Garden this spring, late March or early April, weather permitting. If you can help with landscaping ideas, planting materials or labor — all are welcome! Please call Betty Levin, (973) 763-1033.



Quotes

FELIX ADLER

• “I look to a time when all the relations of human beings toward one another, shall be spiritualized. One person influences another, life smiting on life, with a view to eliciting the hidden riches in the life of the other.”

• “No other boon can any one receive from another than to be helped to think well of one self. Spiritual appreciation, appreciation of the inner self (despite the mask) is the greatest of gifts. To manifest this appreciation is the greatest of arts.”

• “We grow in the attempt to help others to grow. Every human being is valuable, because in all dwells the same spiritual life.”

[from Stan Wayne/“Around the AEU”]

Speak Out

WNBC’s Pat Battle

Those who were present at the interview with WNBC’s Pat Battle on Sunday, January 25th, were not only treated to her insightful remarks concerning the media, but also her suggestion that we be more aggressive in stating our complaints to the station management.



Do you feel that there is not enough coverage of “good news stories” — events showing the small and large positive events of human endeavor? Do you feel that government actions are not seriously challenged? Is the reporting truly fair and balanced? Have you stopped watching the news because it is so negative? Have you stopped watching the news because you get tired of being fed drivel?

If so, please contact the following people at WNBC with your complaints. Your input is valuable and important. Together we can make a difference.

Here are the contacts at NBC:

Barbara Johnson, News Director

WNBC-TV
30 Rockefeller Plaza, 7th floor
New York, NY 10112
Barbara.Johnson@nbc.com

Dan Forman, Vice President News Operations

WNBC-TV
30 Rockefeller Plaza, 7th floor
New York, NY 10112
Dan.Forman@nbc.com

—Mary Babiarz

PLATFORMS (continued from page 4)

women’s contributions to history and culture, I find a rich resource of role models and ideas to give me more hope and some cautionary notes for the future of humanity. I hope you’ll join me in exploring women’s heritage.”

March 21, Kurt Collier

Kurt Collier, leader of the Ethical Society of Riverdale, studied philosophy in college, intending to be a rabbi. He spent time on a kibbutz in Israel, but moved away from the language of theism toward science, and took a Master’s degree in clinical audiology. Our of a desire to work in a community, however, he sought out Ethical Culture and is now leader of the Riverdale Society, as well as working on a dissertation in Pastoral Counseling at Hebrew Union.



March 28, Ben Cotton

“Are Your Children At Risk? — Profiles of Child Rapists.” How shall we deal with child sex abuse in our society? Ben “Buddy” Cotton is the New Jersey director of SNAP, Survivors Network of those Abused by Priests.



ETHICAL CULTURE SOCIETY OF ESSEX COUNTY

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ETHICAL CULTURE

M O N T H L Y

MARCH SUNDAY MORNING PLATFORMS

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

March 7, Leader Boe Meyerson Interviews Professor Nabil Marshood on the Palestinian-Israeli Conflict

March 14, Jone Johnson, Ethical Culture Leader

March 21, Kurt Collier, Leader, Ethical Culture Society of Riverdale, NY

March 28, Ben Cotton: “Are Your Children At Risk? — Profiles of Child Rapists.”

March 7, Leader Boe Meyerson Interviews Professor Nabil Marshood on the Palestinian-Israeli Conflict

Dr. Marshood is a Professor of Sociology at Hudson County Community College where he teaches courses on race and ethnic relations and sociology of religion. He serves on the Board of Directors of the New Jersey Division of the United Nations Association of America. He is the author of a book dealing with Palestinians. He received his Master's Degree from the Hebrew University in Jerusalem, his Doctorate from Columbia University, and was a Fellow at Princeton University engaged in Post Doctoral studies. He was raised in Israel within the Israeli Palestinian community.

March 14, Jone Johnson Lewis

Jone Johnson Lewis is an Ethical Culture Leader, Unitarian Universalist minister, web writer, and teacher who has researched women's history around the world and in different eras with a special interest in 19th century social reform and religion. Jone has been an adjunct faculty member at Meadville/Lombard Theological School, a faculty member of the Humanist Institute, and a training instructor and department director in the private sector. She has authored web sites on many topics, mostly education-related, including a quotations site and sites on Ethical Culture, famous Unitarian Universalists, and on the American Transcendentalists. She says: “In studying
(continued on page 3)



At Essex Ethical:

Family Night Mar. 5

7:30 pm every 1st Friday

Folk Music Mar. 12

7:30pm every 2nd Friday

Philosophy Group Mar. 14, 28

9:30–10:30 a.m. every 2nd and 4th Sunday

Poetry Series Mar. 15

7:30 p.m. every 3rd Monday.

Contact: Tom Obrzut,
(973) 275-0929.

Public Affairs Forum Mar. 19

7:30 pm every 3rd Friday

Fundraiser Events:

March 13 Theater Party: “Proof”

– The Strollers (*see story, pg. 2*)

April 17 Russian Dinner

– Mira Stillman

May 1 Poetry and Dessert

– Sylvia Kramer

May 8 White Elephant Sale

May 15 Mountain Azalea Display
with Cocktails – Betty Levin

July 7 Gourmet Lunch

– Boe Meyerson

For information regarding fundraiser events, contact the committee; Nancy Bohn, Jill Fox, Louisa Lubiak, Jeanine Rosh, or call the office. ■