



ETHICAL CULTURE

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MAY 2007

LEADER'S MESSAGE

May Day in the Year 2007

In addition to the joy of the Spring season and the experience of nature's re-awakening, the first of May for me and many others also recalls the hope of a better, more just and more compassionate world. It has been a very long time since the first socialists put forth their vision of a more egalitarian and just society. Unfortunately those nascent dreams were later to usher in the nightmare of the Soviet Union's totalitarian regime.



Yet I do not surrender to cynicism and do not give up the hope of a more just world. Scientific progress may at some point make it easier to achieve. But a renewed idealism will be harder to engender in a world engineered by economic exploitation of the poorest nations. The old colonialism is gone but has been replaced by other international economic institutions which perpetuate a very old system. Despite all the idealism in the new European Union, Europe stands firmly with the USA in being unwilling to decrease price supports for its own agricultural products and thereby prevents the poorest nations from competing in the one area in which they could effectively compete.

So when I see those little green things start to sprout, "my heart leaps up" but then falls low when I think what "man has made of man." Yet despair and gloominess are not the way to go. It has been said, "When the going gets tough, the tough get going." Well perhaps it is true also for the great-hearted who are so because of their compassion as well as their courage. So "When the going gets gutted, the great-hearted gutsy ones get going."

May the earth warm your heart and mind and bring fresh vision to you.— *Boe*

PRESIDENT'S LETTER

This month I am writing a very different letter. The memorial service for long-time member Marion Josephson was joyous, heart-warming, funny, full of touching moments through the loving care of her only offspring, daughter Amy Watkinson, who traveled up from North Carolina to Marion's spiritual home here at the Ethical Society for the service. But at the same time, my dearest friend of 45 years died of a massive stroke, not often taking enough pleasure for herself. But she had extraordinary values, like an Ethical Culturist, fervently read our newsletter and followed our ethical journey here at the Society. Her greatest pleasure was family and at every major holiday she gathered together with warmth and caring all the nieces, nephews, cousins with the hope that they would remain connected to one another long after the elders have passed on. This she hopes is her legacy.



Though we are an aging population, at any stage of life, it seems to me that we need to be more aware of our important relationships. While there is still time to affirm what is vital, to resolve misunderstandings, to make peace.

Many people, even gerontologists, are not sufficiently familiar with Elisabeth Kübler-Ross's lesser-known book, *Death: The Final Stage of Growth*, explains it well. We need not wait that long to make peace. And for a delightful book on that topic, for utter joy, pick up Art Buchwald's *Too Soon to Say Goodbye*. — *Betty Levin*

A list of **Updates and corrections** to your Essex Ethical Society Member & Friends directory is available so you can make corrections directly to your copy. If you've not received your directory (released October 2006), just ask on your next visit, or send us an email (ethicalessex@netscape.com).

FROM THE UN

WORLD HEALTH REPORT 2006

Asklepios, the ancients' god of health, had two daughters, Hygeia and Panakeia. Hygeia is the caregiver who promotes wellness, and Panakeia is the healer who treats illness. The UN is committed to both, and clearly, both are needed. The UN agencies WHO and UNICEF have had remarkable success in treating major diseases and making medical treatment available in areas that have little or none, homage to Panakeia. In the less immediately obvious spirit of Hygeia, the UN deals with public health and the problems resulting from deficiencies in clean water, sanitation and sufficient food. Public health measures are the step-child of medical care, taking a secondary place to the more obvious and dramatic needs of treatment of illness. Because they reduce the chances of illness arising, rather than direct treatment for illness already existing, their benefits may seem *(continued on page 2)*

Ethical Culture Society of Essex County



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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.

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

Attention members! Please submit your email addresses to ethicalessex@netscape.com to receive newsletter and other special event notices.

FROM THE UN *(continued from page 1)*

less urgent, more abstract and remote. Yet this remoteness is deceptive.

In recent years, research devoted to chronic poverty has discovered that the general health of people in very poor countries greatly affects their economic and social progress. Every year WHO publishes a report on general health conditions, focusing on one chosen issue of importance. The 2006 report highlights the seriousness of the increasing shortage and unequal distribution of health workers worldwide, as well as the inadequate numbers of primary health clinics, the first safeguard of health.

57 countries have a serious shortage of life-saving childhood immunizations, safe pregnancy measures, prevention for HIV/AIDS, malaria and TB. The shortage is great — 4 million additional doctors, nurses, midwives, and medical managers are needed. At least 1.3 billion people worldwide lack access to health care, because no workers are available. The shortage is global, and the need is greatest where countries are most severely wracked by poverty and disease. Sub-Saharan Africa has 10% of the world's population but 25% of the world's burden of disease, and 3% of the world's health workers. There has been an extraordinary and welcome rise in giving, both public and private, the Bill Gates Foundation and the Clinton efforts are notable. Yet this money has gone mostly to tackle specific diseases, overlooking the less dramatic but more basic needs of public health.

Today, the top three killers in most poor countries are maternal death around childbirth, pediatric, respiratory and intestinal infections, leading to death from pulmonary failure or uncontrolled diarrhea. Where are the lobbies for these conditions?

In richer countries, a rise in chronic health problems in an ageing population has led to an ever-growing demand for health workers. Higher salaries in rich countries and poor working conditions in the underdeveloped countries drive thousands of health workers to seek jobs abroad each year. This brain drain has severe consequences for the developing world. Out of 60 million people in the global health workforce, 1 out of every 3 is employed in the US and Canada, where more than half of the world's health resources are found.

We already know that in the US, one out of five physicians are foreign trained. The American Medical Association estimates that if current trends continue, by 2020 the US could face a looming shortage of up to 800,000 nurses and 200,000 doctors, unless the US and other wealthy nations radically increase salaries and domestic training programs for physicians and nurses. In the US, Congress pressured by private health care sectors has provided immigration exemptions for many health care personnel, aggravating the brain drain.

Why don't we have enough nurses? It is not for lack of applicants. Nursing schools reject more than 150,000 applicants each year, mostly because of a lack of openings caused by a shortage of teachers. Too few people want to be nursing professors when the salaries for full time nurses are higher. Yet Congress refuses to provide federal support for under-funded nursing schools that could make the country self-sufficient in trained personnel for the time being.

Paradox upon paradox — how we can turn success into failure. A complex and very costly global campaign against measles has been very successful, saving 2.3 million lives since 1999. It is a dramatic story. Vaccinators have scaled Himalayan peaks in Nepal, waded through Cambodian paddy fields, canoed up the Congo River and ridden camels across Somalia to immunize children. An amazing achievement! But these programs must be redone every 3 to 4 years. Such an extraordinary international effort cannot be repeated. Only local clinics can do the task. In Africa in particular, national health systems are often too poor to take on this responsibility.

Yet poverty alone is not the principal cause. A recent report shows that newly wealthy India has not succeeded in helping poor families to feed their children. The collapse of health services in a completely lopsided pattern of growth has left half of the children under 3 clinically underweight, a sign of severe malnutrition. This is happening in spite of a rapidly growing economy and a government financed program intended to help poor people feed their children. Mothers need well-baby clinics and simple training.

UNICEF calls the programs very disappointing. What it reveals is a dramatic gap in primary health care. The message is clear. Let us not slight Panakeia, but Hygeia should not be the neglected stepsister.

— *Phyllis Ehrenfeld (Rep. to the UN for the National Service Conference of the AEU), Sylvain Ehrenfeld (Rep. to the UN for the IHEU)*

LETTER

Let's not absolutely rule out appropriate "regime change" where ethically mandated

by Winthrop Thies (March 7, 2007)

Dear Friends:

In the Q&A following Leader Boe Meyerson's March 4 talk on the current Iraq situation and how we might ethically get out of it, I questioned her broad assertion that "regime change" not effected through the UN is always unethical.

There is a weakness in over generalizing from specific difficult situations. We fought the cold war, including the Korean War (successfully, but at great cost) on account of "the lesson of Munich". Such supposed "lesson" also informed our involvement in Vietnam. Then the supposed "lesson" of Vietnam affected our policy in later years, while we ignored success against insurgencies by the British in Malaya, the Philippines against the Huks, the French in Algeria (although they eventually left). And our own success in putting down the Philippine insurgency under Aguinaldo a century ago, at the cost, I remind you, of some 4,300 Americans slain.

Some took my comments as a defense of the current Bush administration. Not so. They were merely intended as a corrective to laying down a dubious general ethical rule.

Yes, as an ideal matter the world community would end the horrors of a tyrannical regime through UN action. Alas, the very imperfect instrument

that is the UN (with egregious misrepresentation and the veto, etc.) fairly precludes this in many cases — while horrific conditions crying out for immediate relief yet continue. I point to Darfur today. And think back to the horrors of Idi Amin and Pol Pot. Met with UN ineffectuality the straightforward and ethical move would be for a few good nations to send in an allied force to replace the current lawless Sudanese regime. Alas, on account of the supposed "lesson of Iraq" we and like-minded nations will not do that.

That regime change is fully licit when a government be sufficiently tyrannical is well established. Throughout history the right of an oppressed people to replace a tyrant (by assassination or otherwise) has long and repeatedly been affirmed. Hence the general rejoicing at the fall of a tyrant, with the cry: *Sic semper tyrannis!*

If it be settled that an oppressed people may ethically so act, what does it matter that the means to effect an ethical act come from external forces? A few top German officers came close to slaying Hitler in the (alas) failed assassination attempt of July 20, 1944. The War dragged on for near another year, with millions more slain, maimed, raped, rendered homeless, etc. Had the effort to kill Hitler been mounted by a band of Allied secret agents would the act have been any less ethical?

Yes, immoral governments on occasion may use the rubric "legitimate regime change" as a cover for imperialist aggression. But that a principle may be misused does not render it illegitimate. We recall the settled maxim *Abusus non tollit usum*: "the abuse of something does not bar its proper use."

Accordingly, it is error to lay down a general rule that regime change not effected through the UN is always unethical.

Plainly, I invite dialogue (from Boe and others) on this.

Sincerely, Winthrop Drake Thies

FUND RAISERS *(continued from page 4)*

Azalea's in May Saturday May 12, Betty Levin will be hosting her well-remembered "Flowers of May" Open House from 1 to 4 pm. If nature cooperates, the flowers should be in full bloom; if not, *we* can blossom and grow in an afternoon of tasty morsels and mingling. Donation is \$15. Please call Jeanine to reserve your spot.

June White Elephant Sale Meet us on Sat. June 2 from 9 am to 3 pm at the Society for our version of *Antiques Road Show*. What great treasure will you buy (or sell)? Don't keep anything in your home that does not speak to you, say who you are — give it to Ethical, to find its rightful owner. We can't stress enough how important this event is to our income. It's our most lucrative event, an opportunity for everyone to recycle and reclaim some space for themselves. Spend a little time going through drawers and closets to make room and make some money for the Society. We are collecting *now, everything*, including clothing and books. Get ready to create lots of extra space at home by passing along those unused treasures. Bring happiness to someone else (you know, just buying can make one happy) and bring funds to the Society. Who knows what treasures you will uncover!

Dinner with Leana and Gloria Sat. June 23 at 6 pm, our Gloria Torrice and her daughter Leana have offered to host a dinner fundraiser at Leana's home in West Orange. Seating is limited, so reserve early. \$20 donation. Transportation is available.

Help needed! The fund-raising committee needs help for the concert, Betty's Azalea event and for the sale. If you can donate a snack or a dessert for the concert, please call us. We need people to work the sale as well as set up and clean up. You know the routine. Let us know you'll help. Call the office or Jeanine, 973-258-9395.

ETHICAL CULTURE SOCIETY OF ESSEX COUNTY

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ETHICAL CULTURE

SUNDAY MORNING PLATFORMS

May 6 Boe Meyerson *“Eugenics: An Ethical Issue in Modern Biotechnology.”* The ethical issues presented by new developments in biotechnology give rise to consideration of ethical issues which touch on challenges relating to eugenics and the bio-engineering of human beings. These challenges will be explored. (*Boe Meyerson is the Leader of the Ethical Culture Society of Essex County and Humanist Chaplain at Columbia University.*)

May 13 Louisa Lubiak *“Mother’s Day Round-Robin.”* Louisa Lubiak will lead a participatory colloquy on mothers and mothering. Bring a poem, reading or personal anecdote to share on what mothering means to you. “Mama exhorted her children at every opportunity to ‘jump at de sun.’ We might not land on the sun, but at least we would get off the ground.” — *Zora Neale Hurston*

Louisa is an Ethical Culture Society member, an environmentalist and a naturalist who draws her inspiration from the subtle, and sometimes not so subtle, lessons of Mother Nature. She celebrates the seasonal holidays based on the Celtic wheel of the year with the Earth-Based Spirituality Circle of the Morristown Unitarian Universalist Fellowship. Louisa is a long-time resident of South Orange and Maplewood, a graduate of Columbia High School, has a B.A. degree in Earth Science from Kean University in Union

and currently works for the NJ Department of Environmental Protection in Trenton.

May 20 Nancy and Dick Bohn *“Our Antarctic Adventure.”* Longtime Ethical Culture Society members Nancy and Dick Bohn will be describing the perils and pleasures of their trip this winter



to the icy wastes of Antarctica. Retired now for 15 years, the Bohns have continued to pursue their passion for travel and discovery. Nancy writes, “We have traveled extensively in our married life, beginning in 1957 when we lived in Mexico for 3 months during our student years. Other foreign residencies included Greece for four years, England for four years and Panama for six years. Beside Antarctica, two of our other most special trips were to Bhutan and Vietnam.”

May 27 Anna Kisselgoff *“Dance Today in Context.”* Ms. Kisselgoff will explore how dance developed as an art form in this country with no dance tradition, and the interaction between society and artists.

Anna Kisselgoff was chief dance critic of the *New York Times* from 1977 to 2005 and continues to contribute to the *Times* after leaving the paper last year. She has reviewed modern dance, ballet, folk dance, tap,



May, 2007

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.

Asian classical dance, Michael Jackson, ice dance and the rodeo at the 1988 Olympics. A graduate of Bryn Mawr College, she holds an MA in European History and an MS in Journalism, both from Columbia University.

EVENTS / FUNDRAISERS

Pastry / Poetry Party April 23 at 7:30 pm, Sylvia Kramer, a master teacher, is hosting an evening at her home of poetry, refreshment for body and soul. This is a very laid back evening; no pressure, you can listen to poetry or try your hand at it! If you think you’ve never written anything poetic, you’re probably mistaken but this is a painless, pleasurable experience. Great fun and poignant insights. \$15 donation.

The Merry Month of May, May 6 at 2 pm **Soup and Strollers**, The Maplewood Strollers present *The Violet Hour*. “It’s that time — that wonderful New York hour when the evening’s about to reward you for that day,” Denis (Denny) McCleary explaining the title for his colossus of a novel to his friend, John Pace Seaver, and by extension, the title for Richard Greenberg’s play about a fateful day in their lives. The greater the participation, the less the cost. Help bring up participation. Come to the platform and stay for lunch and the show. Mark the date on your calendar. (*continued on page 3*)