



ETHICAL CULTURE

M O N T H L Y

VOLUME 29 NUMBER 9

Visit our web site: www.essexethical.org

MAY 2010

SUNDAY MORNING PLATFORMS



May 2 Solidarity Singers' *Second Annual ECS May Day Sing-Along.* The Solidarity Singers will celebrate the Workers' Holiday with songs of labor and the continuing struggle for justice. There will be familiar songs and/or songs with easy to learn choruses.

Jean Romstead says: "This year we will highlight the effects of the current financial crises on workers and non-upper-class people in general. We have sung at rallies and protests this year in front of banks who are reluctant to lend but eager to foreclose on peoples' homes. We will share some of those songs. We will also do some great songs of labor history past, some of which are unfortunately quite relevant to today."

May 9 Mother's Day Colloquy, led by Betty Levin. While only some members are mothers, all have had or still have mothers and some more than one. We all have powerful ideas about what "mothering" means to us. This is a chance to dip back into those waters, to share our insights, to celebrate or commiserate or re-imagine what mothering can mean. If so inspired, bring photographs or other mementos. As Betty Levin points out in her essay in this newsletter, Mother's Day had its roots in the goal of caring for all who needed it. Let's see if "mothering" still evokes that ideal.

May 16 Annual Meeting of the *Ethical Culture Society Membership.* All members are invited to attend the Annual Meeting of the Ethical Culture Society of Essex County. Hear a brief re-cap of the year just past and help make plans for the year ahead. We will vote on the budget and for our Board of Trustees for the coming year.

Enjoy refreshments and a chance to catch up with friends at 10 a.m. The meeting will start promptly at 10:30 a.m. and will conclude by 12:30 p.m.

May 23 Aghanistan — *conditions on the ground, and what can be done to help.* Speakers to be announced.

May 30 Memorial Day *Discussion.* If we could shape the upbringing of the children of this country, what would we most want them to learn from the past? This is our chance to celebrate the people and the experiences that have meant most to us, the values we find most valuable, and to consider what we want to see carried forward.

Platforms begin at 11 a.m. All are welcome. Platforms are subject to change without notice. For information, call 973-763-1905.

EVENTS IN MAY

Peace Energy Family Day! Saturday, May 1, 12 noon to 4 p.m. Bring the whole family. Enjoy Chips the Clown, Lilouise the Clown — and learn what you can do for world peace and to foster energy efficiency at home! Games, refreshments, prizes!

Reception/Bon Voyage in honor of our member Gladys (Smith) and her new husband, Paul Konye — to wish them well and happy journeys, Sat-

urday, May 8, 7:30 to 10 p.m. Please join us for this happy occasion. Music, refreshments.

Azalea Flash! The bountiful azaleas will be cascading down the mountain in my backyard again this year and I am now well again to host an Open House fundraiser, 1:30 to 4 p.m., Mother's Day, May 9. Plan to arrive immediately following Platform to 117 Sagamore Rd., Millburn. For a donation of \$16 (tax deductible), you can see a panoramic view of azaleas, enjoy light refreshments and mingle with interesting folks. Children are welcome, no charge, but do exercise caution around my shallow pool.

Volunteers needed to help set-up and tidy-up afterwards; call 973-763-1033. All members are requested to bring one container of cold juice. — E. Betty Levin

Singing for Peace Children's Music Network and Essex Ethical Culture invite you to a day of workshops for musicians, teachers, parents, grandparents, friends and family, Saturday, May 22.

1 p.m. Workshops
4:30 p.m. Potluck early dinner
5:30 p.m. Family sing-a-long
Ethical Culture Society, 516 Prospect St., Maplewood, NJ 07040, 973-763-8293 (Lnovemsky@comcast.net)

Save The Date: Saturday, June 5 Re-dedication of Ethical Culture Society as the world's first peace site!

Please Note

We are continuing to collect children's books, canned and boxed foods, and toys for distribution to poor families by the Parenting Center in Maplewood. —*Thank you, Mira*

We are seeking donation of a copy machine for the office. —*Thanks, Lisa*

Ethical Culture Society of Essex County



Boe Meyerson, Leader Emerita
Jim White, Leader Emeritus

Board of Trustees
Terri Suess, President
Lisa Novemsky, Vice-President
Marty Cotler, Treasurer
Trustees:
Freda Fink-Armstrong
Susan Kennedy
Betty Levin
Fred Sebastian
Dick Bohn
Rosalie Sussman
Gladys Smith

EC Monthly
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
of Essex County,
516 Prospect St.,
Maplewood, NJ 07040
973-763-1905
ethicalessex@netscape.com

Our web site: www.essexethical.org



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

Origins of Ethical Culture

Felix Adler, our founder, was born in Alzey, Germany in 1851. His parents emigrated to the United States in 1857. They lived in a pleasant neighborhood near Stuyvesant Square in NYC. His father was called to be the Rabbi of Temple Emanuel. Felix attended Columbia Grammar School and later Columbia University where he graduated in 1870. Later he studied abroad at the University of Berlin where he developed a deep interest in Philosophy. After that, he was to complete his graduate studies at Heidelberg where he received his doctorate in Semitic studies. Shortly thereafter Adler became a professor at Cornell University where he taught Philosophy and Hebrew and Oriental Literature.



Adler was very influenced by the Ethical Philosophy of Immanuel Kant. He soon came to the conclusion that what was needed in religion was "Diversity in the Creed and Unanimity in the Deed." This could serve as the common ground uniting all religions. When he delivered his first sermon at his father's Jewish Congregation, at Temple Emanuel, he stressed the idea of "Deed before Creed." In short, he was to uphold the primacy of ethical action and education above all creeds including his own. He went further to uphold the idea that ethical knowledge and action was more important than credal fidelity. He was convinced that the true role of religion would be to support ethical education and action. Credal fidelity was secondary. His father's congregation could not support this approach. They loved him. They respected him but they would not call him to be their Rabbi. Nevertheless several members were ready to follow him and accepted his ideas.

These few members were to form the core of his new organization which grew very rapidly from the onset. His accomplishments were impressive: He established a Free Kindergarten which eventually evolved into the Ethical Culture Fieldstone Schools, a District Nursing service which became the Visiting Nursing Service. He helped to start the Legal Aid Society and the Child Study Association. In short order, new Ethical Societies were

established in Philadelphia, Chicago, and St. Louis. The New York Society doubled its membership within one year.

Such was the birth of the religion of Ethical Culture. — *Boe Meyerson*

PEACE REPORT

Study (Imagine Peace) about the Department of Peace Cabinet Level Bill presently in Congress held at the home of Betty Levin, facilitated by her and Martha Gallahue, clergy leader with the American Ethical Union and a main representative at the United Nations with their affiliate organization, The National Service Conference of the American Ethical Union, also Tricia Idrobo, former Essex Ethical Culture member and former NJ Coordinator of the Department of Peace Campaign, held on Mar 14. See photo and articles on our bulletin board.

Be About Peace organized by Paul Surovell held Mar 24 at the Maplewood Memorial Library on "Israeli-Palestinian Peace," lectures by Ori Nir, spokesman for Americans for Peace Now and Hussein Ibish, Senior Fellow at the American Task Force on Palestine. Over 100 attendees.



"Strength of the Olive Branch," platform address Mar 28 by Marni Valdivia (seen above with her parents, Gabe and Jackie Valdivia), senior at Drew University, on the various Peace organizations in Israel, herself a founder of "Peace Builders" at Drew.

Marni won the scholarship she went to Washington to be interviewed for right after speaking to us. "The interview was amazing, very challenging and a wonderful experience. And I won the scholarship so I am officially a DACOR Bacon Foundation Fellow. My parents and I are very excited."

National Conversation on the Department of Peace Cabinet Level Bill; first Tuesday of each month at 9 p.m. Do call to participate in this history-changing bill, Apr 6, May 4, Jun 1, Jul 6, Aug 3, Sep 7, Oct 5, Nov 2, Dec 7. Phone number is 712-432-1601, access #470821. The phone number has remained the same for many months. If any difficulty, check the website www.ThePeaceAlliance.org.

Upcoming — **Program on The National Peace Academy** presented by Dr. Dot Maver, Executive Director of the Academy, an educator and peace builder, formerly of the Campaign for a US Department Peace Bill and campaign manager for Kucinich For President 2004. She is also known for her softball revolutionary fast-pitch hitting technique, *The Maver Method: Secrets of Softball Hitting Success*, and co-author of the book *Conscious Education: The Bridge to Freedom*. The program is scheduled for Friday, 8 p.m., May 14 at the Ethical Culture Society. The presentation should prove to be highly informative and present an opportunity to ask deeper questions about the Department of Peace Bill.

— E. Betty Levin, Board Member

Mother's Day

Most of us probably have not known the roots of Mother's Day. Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony first expressed a unique form of mothers' caring during the Civil War by attending to those wounded on both sides of the conflict. They continued their compassionate caring for others in need after the war ended. These activities were regarded as a kind of Mother's Day.

Around the turn of the century, the florist industry and others approached Congress to formalize a Mother's Day and the 3rd Sunday in May was so recognized. It continues to be celebrated by providing pleasure and comfort to the mothers of our nation, a total de-

parture from the extraordinary deeds of Stanton and Anthony whose awakening of the populace eventually but belatedly resulted in women achieving the right to vote.

In discussing these origins with Elaine Norstein, our program director, she mentioned her talks with many altruistic women (as part of her journalism work with the NJ Jewish News) on what influenced them to contribute generously to society. Most proclaimed they learned this kind of giving from their own mothers.

This information sparked a poignant memory of my own mother, albeit my stepmother, Evelyn. In my own childhood, Evelyn was devoted to the Hillman L. Jacobsen Day-Night Nursery where children were cared for when their own mothers could not. She had been an avid fund raiser, contributing scarce money to her devoted cause. Once yearly, a collection was held on the street with coin boxes to collect donations. Evelyn got up as early as 4 a.m. to be on the street corner to attract the commuter, rushing to work, collecting his contribution. Afterwords, we gushed with pleasure as to how heavy the can was, was it even heavier than last year's collection?

At the monthly meetings of the nursery, my mother occasionally allowed me to accompany her to have the experience of taking the bill she thrust into my hand to the president of the organization who would announce my mother's contribution. A philanthropist in training! However, what I loved most about attending those meetings was the fragrance of the freshly-brewed coffee from old-fashioned urns as I entered the meeting room.

Memory of this fragrant odor was

reawakened in me many years later as I entered a psychoanalyst's office for the first time, as a deeply troubled woman, to explore with him the meaning of my desperately unhappy marriage where I had everything money could buy but none of the satisfactions. There again was that wafting coffee fragrance, prepared for patients. I knew I was in a safe place to find the answers I needed.

Please forgive this "stream of consciousness" but perhaps it will contribute to the source of your givingness in life.

For more information about the story of Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony, consult Not For Ourselves Alone, by Geoffrey C. Ward and Ken Burns.

[At our celebration of Mother's Day at the Ethical

Society several years ago, we were informed of the day's origins, and we honored our members who are both mothers and social activists. An article and photo appeared in the local News-Record. Among those so honored were Alice Robinson-Gilman, Susan Teschu (now a leader with Ethical Society Without Walls) and yours truly.]

— E. Betty Levin, Board Member



In Touch with AEU

The American Ethical Union has been on the move locally, nationally and internationally, magnifying the voice of the Ethical Movement in a host of arenas. This has been a very energizing and uplifting season for the American Ethical Union and its Affiliate Organizations.

AEU's Global Outreach

Copenhagen Summit – In December, the National Service Conference of the American Ethical Union participated in preparations leading up to the Copenhagen Climate Change Confer-

(continued on next page)

ETHICAL CULTURE SOCIETY OF ESSEX COUNTY

516 Prospect Street
Maplewood, New Jersey 07040

Phone: 973-763-1905
Email: ethicalessessex@netscape.com
Web site: www.essexethical.org

NONPROFIT ORG.
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
UNION, NJ
PERMIT NO. 395

Please Help Us Help Those in Need

Bring canned or boxed food items for
the food pantry box in our front hall.

ETHICAL CULTURE SOCIETY OF ESSEX COUNTY NEWSLETTER · MAY 2010



From top left, classical pianist Birgit Matzerath after the Concert for Haiti that she presented, with Betty Levin and Birgit's student, Miles Codey, a student at Columbia High School. Center, Hilding Lindquist coordinates our third Saturday Art Salons and a readers' theater. At right, the Baldwin piano donated by Jack Tiner, and new chairs, artfully arranged by our caretaker, Marshall Norstein. What a wonderful venue for recitals and concerts! Please call the office if you know of any professional musician who would care to present a program.

— Terri Seuss

In Touch with AEU

(continued from page 3)

ence with the NGO Working Group on Climate Change at the United Nations. Their talking points can be referenced on nationalserviceaeu.org/Archives.

The Parliament of World Religions— Also in December, the American Ethical Union sent Leader Anne Klaeyesen to represent the Ethical Movement

at the Parliament of World Religions in Melbourne, Australia. Since 1893, when the Parliament marked its first formal gathering of representatives of eastern and western spiritual traditions, it has convened in Chicago twice, most recently in 1993, then in 1999 in Cape Town, South Africa, followed by 2004 in Barcelona, Spain and 2009 in Melbourne, Australia. The American Ethical Union has participated in the

Parliament of World Religions since 1893 to cultivate harmony among the world's religious communities and to foster engagement with the world to achieve a just, peaceful and sustainable world. The next Parliament will be held in 2014. In the interim, we encourage you to participate virtually on PeaceNext, the official social network for the Parliament of World Religions at peacenext.org.