



# ETHICAL CULTURE

M O N T H L Y

VOLUME 28 NUMBER 3

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NOVEMBER 2008

## SUNDAY MORNING PLATFORMS

**Nov. 2 Leader Barbara (Boe) Meyerson,** *“Thanksgiving and Native Americans: Have We Repaid Our Debt of Gratitude?”*

All of us are familiar with the paintings and tapestries depicting the Pilgrim’s first Thanksgiving with Native Americans. The Pilgrim’s greatest debt of gratitude was owed — aside from their God — to the Native Americans who initially treated them with kindness and gave them the support without which the Pilgrims would not have survived.

Both native-born Americans and immigrants, past and present, share that debt of gratitude. Those Native Americans treated them with kindness and gave them the support they needed to survive. Have we, the descendants of Pilgrims and of immigrants, given due thanks and repaid the debt in full? Or are we not actually in greater debt because of our abuse of those people since the Mayflower landed on these shores? Have we not repaid them with persecution over these many years?

*Boe is the Leader of the Ethical Culture Society of Essex County. She is also the Humanist Chaplain at Columbia University.*

**Nov 9 Roger Fox,** *“Saving Democracy — a Post-Election Analysis”*

Community organizer Roger Fox will draw from his extensive experience as an organizer to provide us with a perspective on the Nov. 4 showdown. He will look at issues like “caging,” voter suppression, ease of registration,

absentee voting, polling place access, early voting, and transparency of elections results, and how those factors vary from state to state.

Fox is a community organizer and a taxi driver. He says, “My parents took me to hear RFK speak in upstate NY, October 1967. I first became involved politically in 1972, I knocked on 7,000 doors for George McGovern. 2004 found me spending the month



of October in Florida with the Kerry Campaign. I am a 2005 Camp Wellstone political training grad. 2005 I founded the Essex County Task Force on Voting, marshalling assets statewide to lobby against the purchase by Essex of the Sequoia Advantage voting machines. As you might guess, we lost. Since then I have been involved in many campaigns, from school board to Congress to Senate races. I have recently been studying the 1930 midterms, comparing them to the 2006 midterms, and then 1932 to 2008, as far as election results, economic policy, tax policy, education & Labor rights.”

**Nov 16 Kal Wagenheim,** *“Inside Out: Voices from New Jersey State Prison.”*

Kal Wagenheim, born in Newark, N.J., is a journalist (formerly with *The New York Times*), author and translator of eight books, and nine plays and screenplays. His plays *Bavarian Rage*, *Coffee With God* and *We Beat Whitey Ford* have been produced off-

off-Broadway, and in several colleges and high schools. His biography of Babe Ruth was a Playboy Book Club selection and was adapted for



an NBC-TV film. *Cuentos: Stories From Puerto Rico*, a collection of 12 stories, in original Spanish, with English translation on facing pages (a book he edited and in part translated), has just been issued by Markus Wiener Publishers of Princeton NJ. He taught journalism and creative writing as Adjunct Associate Professor at Columbia University’s Writing Division, School of the Arts (1977-2006) and as a volunteer directed a monthly creative-writing workshop at New Jersey State Prison in Trenton NJ (2001-2006). He is a member of PEN American Center and The Dramatists Guild of America. Details on his web site: [www.kalwagenheim.com](http://www.kalwagenheim.com)

**Nov 23 Dawn Williams,** *“The Creative Imperative: Why the World Needs Creative People.”*

It is important to our individual well-being as well as that of the collective society that we allow a more central space for creativity and more fully



embrace our creative selves. Creativity is often seen as a “soft” skill that does not really matter when it gets down to the bottom line. We need to begin thinking differently, for creativity is what helps us solve the problems of the world and it is most likely what will help us save the world. *(continued)*

# Ethical Culture Society of Essex County



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Jim White, Leader Emeritus

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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 (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](http://www.essexethical.org)

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

Attention members! Please submit your email addresses to [ethicalessex@netscape.com](mailto:ethicalessex@netscape.com) to receive newsletter and other special event notices.

Dawn L. Williams has served as a student affairs administrator at colleges and universities throughout the country. Her most recent position was as dean of campus life and student affairs at Drew University, where she currently serves as an adjunct professor in the Masters of Arts in Teaching program. Dawn earned an Ed.D. in Higher and Adult Education from Teachers College, Columbia University, a M.Ed. in Counselor Education at The Pennsylvania State University, and a B.A. in Psychology from Illinois State University, Normal, Illinois. She has many interests, art, New York City, and exploration among them. Dawn lives in South Orange with her husband James VanOosting.

**Nov 30 Boe Meyerson** will lead a discussion group (*topic to be announced*).

SOCIAL ACTION  
COMMITTEE MEETING  
**Sunday November 9, 2008 at 10:00 a.m.**  
*Note pre-platform time!* — Sue Willis

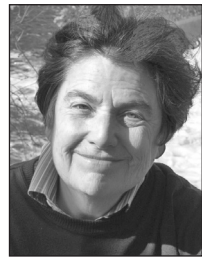
PRE-SCHOOL OPEN HOUSE  
**Spread the Word!**

The South Orange/Maplewood Community Coalition on Race spearheaded by Ethical Culture member Lisa Novemsky will be offering its seventh annual open house for pre-school families in the Columbia High School cafeteria on November 11, 2008 from 7:00 p.m. until 8:30 p.m. There will be day care and pre-school providers represented as well as a talk on kindergarten readiness from a professional in the South Orange Maplewood School District.

## LEADER'S ARTICLE

### Bailout vs. Real Change

When the U.S. Government gives giant Banking Corporations (and other corporate players) huge bailouts, it is only solving half the problem. No number of rescues will save Wall Street without serious restructuring and increased regulation. Alas Adam Smith's marvelous "invisible hand" has serious tremors. The "invisible



hand" is supposed to regulate the market and achieve equilibrium through the interactions of supply and demand. Yet we have seen chaos ensue before during the great depression and we see it now as the market teeters on the verge. The free play of the market is a fine instrument for creating wealth. But more is needed to maintain stability and avoid catastrophe as we learned in the Great Depression. But it now appears that we may not have learned it well enough and that our leaders have forgotten the need for appropriate regulation.

If you are a Banker and you know you can sell all your mortgages for great profit and few questions asked, you will be strongly motivated to obtain as many mortgages as possible regardless of whether the mortgagee is qualified to repay it. The reasoning is simple. There was an enormous market for buying mortgages. There are many buyers looking to scoop them up and sell them to others. You profit and therein ends the tale? Not exactly.

The mess we are in is the product of such irresponsible mortgage buying and selling. The end result will not be pretty. The invisible hand is all tied up.

Therefore we must also have much greater regulation of the market to prevent the irresponsible and wreck less behavior of those who are all too ready to pass the buck. We need real change.

— Boe Meyerson

## PLEASE MARK YOUR CALENDARS

**Poetry Workshops led by Sylvia Kramer** the 1st Tuesday of each month at 7:30 p.m.

**Ethical Philosophy Lecture / Discussions led by Boe Meyerson** (M.A. in Philosophy from Columbia Univ.), 2nd and 4th Sundays at 1 p.m. following the Social Hour after Platform Meetings. The focus will be on exploring different Ethical theories.

**Public Affairs Forum led by Boe Meyerson**, 1st and 3rd Sundays of the Month at 1 p.m. following the Social Hour after Platform Meetings. The focus of each discussion will be on current issues and events which raise ethical issues and/or are likely to have significant impact on our lives or the lives of others. Participants will be invited to make recommendations regarding the issues to be covered.

If you are interested in attending any of these programs, please call the office (973-763-1905) or e-mail the office (ethicalessessex@netscape.net) to register for the course. Just give your name and phone number or e-mail address and state which course(s) you wish to attend. Non-members and friends are welcome as well as members. There is no fee.

For information about **T'ai Chi Chih classes** at our Society, call Betty Levin, registrar, at 973-763-1033. Also, consult the Ethical Culture Web site, [www.essexethical.org/TaiChi](http://www.essexethical.org/TaiChi).

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## FROM THE UN

### Health and the Millennium Goals

At the start of the new century, world leaders and representatives of 189 countries gathered in a summit meeting at the UN. Their purpose, springing from a global consciousness,

## WHAT FUND-RAISING COMMITTEE?

Good question! We have no Fund Raising Committee, therefore we have no fund raisers. We need at least 4 people to get going on this very crucial source of funds. So far we are 3 months into the new year, and no plans have been made for any fund raisers. We have lost our "White Elephant" sale, due to lack of participation. We generated about \$1300 from this event, not to mention the recycling of so many good things. We need people to commit to handling at least one event each year. Last year with Nancy's help, I co-coordinated 2 concerts, a play afternoon and several dinners and such, however, I am not willing to do this alone again.

So we have some decisions to make. Each event was an opportunity for a get-together, with shared ideas and sheer fun! Maybe this too has run the gamut. Maybe just kicking in a few hundred dollars each would fill in the gap. I don't think so.

If you participated last year and enjoyed the experience, why not volunteer to do an event this year. We can still make this work. Call me if you are concerned about the fund raiser/get-together dilemma. We CAN make a difference.

— *Jeanine Rosh*

was to make commitments to help promote the well-being of the entire world. They decided on eight goals, to be reached by 2015, planning them to be achievable, affordable, and measurable. From an ethical perspective, it was a dramatic event and a revolutionary commitment to reduce extreme poverty, increase primary education, reduce child mortality and disease, and promote maternal health. They also committed themselves to providing the basic minimum for civilized living, sanitation and clean water. These goals can be monitored and have mobilized actions by governments, who can be accountable and held to their word. Three of the goals focused on health, specifically on the health of the world's poorest people.

Statistics from the Industrial Revolution in Europe and the United States provide valuable information on the importance of public health measures. Data from England, Wales and Sweden tell us that in 1700 the

average male lived just 27 to 30 years. Yet by 1971 male life expectancy had reached 75 years. More than half of that achievement had occurred before 1900. Most of the decline in death from infectious diseases occurred prior to the age of antibiotics. The great improvement came earlier from public health measures providing sanitation and clean water.

In rich countries people have the illnesses of advanced societies, cardiovascular disease and cancer, where medical intervention is very important. In poor countries people die mostly from infectious and respiratory diseases. Modern medical care is obviously important and much needed, but especially in poor countries, it must be combined with public health measures.

Popular wisdom has always held that the health of a population automatically improves as a result of economic growth. Is prosperity the creator

*(continued)*

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516 Prospect Street  
Maplewood, New Jersey 07040

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

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## ETHICAL CULTURE SOCIETY OF ESSEX COUNTY NEWSLETTER · OCTOBER 2008

**From the UN** (*continued from page 3*)  
of health? Or does health promote prosperity? Research has shown that economic development, most particularly in poor countries, depends very much on the general health of the population. Health can be the horse that pulls the cart — not as has been previously supposed, only a consequence, but also a cause. Thinking in concrete terms it becomes more obvious — the prevalence of disease and disability and early death damages family life, hurts community life, and inevitably makes a country less productive and poorer.

The link between health status and social well-being was recognized by the German leader Otto von Bismarck in 1883 when he enacted the first national health insurance program. Recently there has been a welcome and unprecedented increase in financial support for health care in developing countries. Between 1997 and 2002, the amounts donated ranged from \$6 to 8 billion from the Gates Foundation and the Global Fund for Malaria, TB and HIV/AIDS.

The vast majority of the funds has been allocated to specific disease projects, not the less glamorous improvements needed for population health.



Little or no funding is designated for preventive measures, primary care services, the all-important training of local community workers to perform some of the simple tasks which have been shown to have enormous success. Malaria is a great killer of African children. Yet this disease is preventable and entirely treatable if treatment is given early. Highly effective medicines, notably the Chinese

herbal extract of artemisinin, can cure the disease if given within the first few hours of fever. It is effective, cheap and can be given by anyone.

Rushing children to a hospital far away, often over difficult or barely existing roads, is a recipe for more disease, not cure. Research coordinated by WHO has demonstrated that pneumonia, the number one killer of young children, can be treated in homes as well as in hospitals, perhaps even more safely, as in the hospitals they can be exposed to other infections.

Another example of an extremely cheap and simple method to reduce the horrifying childhood death rates for diarrhea is oral rehydration therapy—clean water with a mix of sodium and glucose—a treatment that any mother can be taught to give. Many

lifesaving interventions of simple, safe, inexpensive and highly effective treatments are not available. 10 million young children and pregnant women continue to die for lack of access to these simple treatments. More than 1 billion people suffer from disabilities caused by neglected tropical diseases which have simple low cost solutions. These are extremely disturbing facts. In the words of Aldous Huxley, “facts do not cease to exist because they are ignored.”

The World Health Organization is promoting the revitalization of primary health care in communities. A separate campaign to strengthen primary health care around the world is named “15 by 2015.” They are requesting donor organizations to allocate 15% of their disease-specific funding towards sustainable comprehensive primary health care, accessible and affordable to everyone ([www.15by2015.org](http://www.15by2015.org)). Because of escalating costs everywhere and a tremendous shortage of trained health workers, the importance of prevention and primary health care continues to grow.

— *Phyllis Ehrenfeld, President of the National Service Conference of the AEU & NSC Representative to the UN; Dr Sylvain Ehrenfeld, IHEU Representative to the UN*