



ETHICAL CULTURE

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NOVEMBER 2010

NOVEMBER CALENDAR OF PLATFORMS & EVENTS

Nov. 7 Rebecca Doggett · *“We Can’t Stop Now.”* Rebecca (Becky) Doggett, community activist and innovator of community development programs, will engage us in a conversation about what she sees as our future in social justice activism.



Becky Doggett recently retired as Senior Fellow with the New Jersey Institute for Social Justice, a nonprofit that does statewide research and advocacy work in economic justice and prisoner re-entry. She helped to develop programs and policies related to economic development. Most notable is her work in establishing the Newark/Essex Construction Careers Consortium, a pre-apprenticeship program that has succeeded in qualifying African-American and Latino men and women from the greater Newark area. Over 300 graduates are now working in union construction apprenticeships or have achieved journey worker status.

Becky holds a BA from Upsala College and MA from New York University. She resides in East Orange with her husband Joseph Thomasberger, has 1 daughter, 3 stepchildren and 3 grandchildren.

Nov. 14 Dennis Percher · *“The Mission and Programs of the South Mountain Conservancy: The Challenges and Rewards of Stewardship for Essex County’s Largest Park.”* The Conservancy is a volunteer organization dedicated to preserve, protect and enhance the now 2110-acre South Mountain Reservation and promote its sustainable use

through education and public service. Dennis was instrumental in getting



Essex County to undertake a 2003 ecological and infrastructure study and long-term management plan, and he wrote Green Acres and Recreational Trails grants, many matched by County Open Space Trust Funds, that provided more than \$1 million for trail and infrastructure restoration, and additional acreage. Dennis is involved in the Conservancy’s efforts to reconstruct and build new trails and forest regeneration, being one of the champions of the unprecedented 20-year forest regeneration program which began in 2009 to reseed the understory and restore the aging forest canopy.

Dennis has lived in Maplewood for 25 years.

Nov. 21 platform with **Martha Gallahue** will start earlier, at 10:30 a.m. followed at 11:45 a.m. with a **Memorial for Jack Tiner**.

10:30 a.m. **Martha Gallahue** *“Democracy and Trust: The Way to Peace,”* A thanksgiving reflection. When the



native Americans encountered the first white settlers in American, their first instinct among most tribes was to co-exist. The indigent groups lent skills about planting and hunting that saved many lives. What might have happened in this country had these early encounters led to the development of

mutual trust and a truly democratic process among these groups? Is it too late for modern Americans to rediscover those seeds of peace?

Nov. 21 Memorial for Jack Tiner 11:45 a.m. Martha Gallahue will introduce the speakers. Members of Jack’s family will be in attendance.

Jack Tiner, long time member and dear friend of the Society, passed away on October 6th at the age of 87. We



will remember Jack for his enormous generosity in all his work, and his insight and deep knowledge of everything he was engaged in, such as the environment and his love of art.

Jack was quiet, but both witty and insightful. The ethical values he always brought to our causes were deeply felt and carried out. He took care of our building and was generous in giving us funds to keep it up. Jack donated his beautiful grand piano we now enjoy.

We have missed Jack since he left for his new home in Virginia and we are deeply saddened by his death.

Anyone wanting to share some memories about Jack will be welcomed to speak. If you would like to help out please contact Anja Moen or Lisa Novemsky.

Nov. 28 Boe Meyerson will lead a *Thanksgiving Colloquy* on the Sunday following the holiday.

The platform will take the form of a discussion on what “thanksgiving” means



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 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.

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Attention members! Please submit your email addresses to NEW! — info@essexethical.org to receive newsletter and other special event notices.

in our humanist community. As ever, there is no knowing where that could take us, but we can explore topics like expectation and gratitude, and how we strike a balance between appreciation and creative discontentment.

Message from the President

Dear Members and Friends,

It's Thanksgiving month and the time to reflect on all the good things that have happened to us this past year. I am very grateful to serve the Society as president with the help of Lisa, Susan, and Rosalie as co-presidents.

We are off to a good start. I have so much pleasure and fun spending more time with you at dinner or lunch on a personal level, or sharing together at our events.

As many of you know, I am in Alaska as I write this, and as I look forward to this Thanksgiving with you, I am reminded of those past Thanksgivings spent in Fairbanks when my family lived there. The public schools my two children attended always had some sort of costume party in celebration of the holiday. I was very surprised when our Athabascan (Native Alaskans) neighbor's children wanted to dress up as Pilgrims. At the time I didn't think so much of it, other than to be surprised ... and acknowledge how cute they looked.

But now visiting Anchorage Museum's brand-new addition where the Smithsonian has given back many Native Alaskan artifacts and where the stories of the many different Native tribes of Alaska are being told, I think about how we stole the meaning of their culture from their children as shown by my neighbor's children choosing the costume of another heritage.

The addition to the Anchorage Museum is a huge step towards honoring the Native peoples of Alaska. Many of the elders filmed and viewed there have great hopes for the future of their culture because Native Alaskan young people are learning old skills — yes, including basket weaving — and are keeping the languages alive and in use.

This Thanksgiving, I will reflect as much on Native Americans as I do on Pilgrims as we acknowledge the worth of everyone and seek “to act so as to elicit the best in others—and thus in ourselves.” Peace, — *Anja*

NOVEMBER EVENTS

Nov. 12, 7:30 p.m. Folk Friday at Ethical

Sat. Nov. 13, 7 p.m. Richard Alston, pianist, will perform piano compositions by Franz Liszt in a **Concert with Commentary** at the Ethical Culture Society of Essex County.

Richard Alston has appeared in recitals and performed as a soloist with orchestras throughout the United States and Europe. A native of East Orange, N.J., he received his Bachelor and Master of Music Degrees from the Juilliard School of Music, in New York.



After receiving a standing ovation at the Brevard Festival for his performance of the Tchaikovsky Piano Concerto No.1, Richard made his New York debut performing with the Symphony of the New World, under the direction of Everett Lee at Lincoln Center's Avery Fisher Hall. Over the years he has performed at the Weill Recital Hall and Alice Tully Hall in New York City, as well as an outstanding portrayal of “Jasbo Brown” in the Metropolitan Opera revival of “Porgy and Bess”. A guest artist with the New Jersey Symphony in commemoration of the birth of William Grant Still, Richard has been the subject of a PBS television documentary “Classically Black” in which he performs piano compositions by composers of African descent.

Fri-Sat, Nov 19-20 · The 3rd Saturday Arts Night will hold its first — and hopefully annual — **50/50 Art Show and Auction** to raise money in support of programs for the children of families we serve at the Ethical Culture Society. 50/50 means we divide the proceeds equally between the artists selling their work and the Society.

Featured artists include: Yasmeen Anderson, whose photography can be seen at www.yasmeenphoto.com; Karen Bokert, whose work currently hangs at ECS until the show; Eva Bouzard-Hui, whose website www.bouzardhuiart.com acquaints you with the range of her work; Barbara Krates Cotler, whose offering of work will provide a rare opportunity for the public to add her pieces to

their collections; Liana Francesca, award winning beer journalist and crafter; Teresa Helmkamp, whose crushed paper with polyurethane work (as well as everything else she does) is part of many NYC area collections; and Gloria Torrice, whose rich legacy of abstract expressionist textiles was spawned in her studies at Columbia University, Hans Hoffman School of Painting and the New School.

Viewing starts 2 p.m. Friday, Nov 19, continues through a wine and cheese tasting party (tickets will be available in advance and at the event) Friday starting at 7 p.m., then viewing again on Saturday from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., with the auction starting at 7 p.m. that evening. During the viewing periods the items may be purchased for their listed prices and silent bids with deposits may be submitted. Not all items in the art show will be offered for auction. — *Hilding "Gus" Lindquist*

Peace Site Rededicated

Rededication of our Peace Site, launched by a vital Platform address by Martha Gallahue on "Peace Building," now propels peacebuilding to a verb, an active one (see below). Indeed, the celebration included Solidarity Singers, a peace mime by our own Louisa Lubiak, a viola performance of a Bach prelude, and some fine lectures on the Peace Academy, the "Envision" Peace Museum and a keynote by Lynn Elling, Founder of World Citizens, Inc. — this 90-year-old senior who flew down from Minneapolis to speak at our celebration — charmed the day. He inspired me to take my efforts further. As Ghandi said, "If we are to have peace in our world, we have to start with the children." Thus, I am expanding my peace workshops to include the younger generation. I am in touch with an elementary school in Pa-



Peace Site Rededication



erson that is already peace conscious. More plans are being discussed, to be brought in due course before our Board of Trustees.

Come join this new emphasis on peacebuilding at our Society. Your energies and caring matter. Where would the ACLU, Visiting Nurses Association and first free kindergartens be today if Ethical Culture members had not inspired to give it momentum?

More about Lynn Elling, successor to Lou Kousin who founded the Peace Site Movement: Lynn expanded Lou's vision to introduce the Nobel Peace Prize Festival, held at Augsburg College each March, where the Peace Prize Laureate is honored. This March 4, President Obama will be thus honored. Such a large attendance is anticipated that the Mall of America is being considered for this auspicious event.

Thanks to my conscientious committee for making this celebratory event a momentous one — Diane Beeny (who designed, created and unfurled the Peace Rededication banner), Zia Durrani, Anna Nelson, President of NJ Peace Action Paul Surovell, Roslie Sussman, Sue Willis, and a special thank you to former president Terri Suess (she was the gal behind the video camera), who originated the idea for a rededication. We couldn't have done it without you, Terri! The committee also wants to express their appreciation for all the extra work done by Marshal Norstein in setting up the Peace Garden for the event and to Gus

Lindquist and Lisa Novemsky for their hard work in making the event a success.

Again, Ethical Culture folks, come join this exciting new development, give new meaning to your lives and those of your children and grandchildren. — *E. Betty Levin*

Tributes and Member Notes

Congratulations to Nancy and Dick Bohn, long time members, on celebrating their 55th wedding anniversary. May you continue to enjoy satisfying, adventuresome and healthy years together.

Congratulations to Sylvia Kramer on the Bar Mitzvah of her grandson, Jayden, in Burlington, Vt. May he continue as successfully on his path to adulthood.

Thanks to Karen Bokert — for encouraging our front door be refinished, it's inherent beauty now revealed.

Charlotte German fell and broke her hip and is now at Inglemoor for rehabilitation. Her family reports that she is doing well. — *Betty Levin*

From the UN: Inequality and Millennium Development Goals

Ten years ago, the world's leaders pledged to achieve universal primary education and reduce poverty, hunger, and child and maternal mortality — all by 2015.

These bold, moral pledges, by the world community, is one of the most inspiring endeavors of current times.

The goals they set concentrate on global averages, which hide the huge differences between countries. For example, in Nigeria 77 percent of the population lived on less than \$1 a day in 2008, up from 49 per cent in 1990. In Ethiopia, the same figure dropped to 16 per cent from 60 per cent, according to a recent study by the Over-

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seas Development Institute, a British research group. There are also huge differences within countries. A national average can hide the suffering of groups that are discriminated against in anti-poverty programs. Progress depends on narrowing inequality, sending resources into slums and remote rural areas and creating jobs for the poor. Ethiopia focused on its poorest rural population. Inequality is much less in Ethiopia than in Nigeria.

Organizations within the United Nations have acknowledged the importance of inequality. The Geneva-based United Nations Research Institute for Social Development, for example, has argued that the UN is ignoring the critical role of jobs and income inequality in its strategy to fight world poverty and hunger. Many leaders have resisted dealing with the hot potato of inequality and would rather

deal with averages. It is often a matter of politics and fair government.

A recent report by UNICEF documents that one million spent on young children in the most remote disadvantaged areas—rather than on people who are easier to reach, the current strategy—would save 60 per cent more lives. UNICEF advocates training more local community health workers in remote villages, urging the poor to seek care, and covering transportation costs to hospitals. One suggestion is to build houses near urban hospitals where rural women can stay before delivery.

The latest United States census tells an important story about inequality here. Most of the wealth created since the 1970's went to the richest Americans. The median income (adjusted for inflation) has scarcely improved since 1970. Wages have stagnated and inequality has risen dramatically. In the 1970's the top 1 per cent of earn-

ers made 8% of all income. In the late 1990's it was 15%. By 2007 the richest 1% of the population was taking in more than 23%.

President Johnson's War on Poverty proved that social policy directed at the poor can work. The poverty rate fell dramatically in ten years. Inequality in the United States today is no longer sustainable. Robert Reich, former Labor secretary, concluded: consumers can't or won't buy enough to keep turning the economy around. There are limits to how much people can borrow and how many more hours they can work. The recession may be officially over, but as long as unemployment is high—and inequality sky-high—the economic future for most Americans is in danger. ■

Dr. Sylvain Ehrenfeld, International Humanist and Ethical Union and the National Ethical Service of the American Ethical Union representative to the UN and Temma Ehrenfeld freelance writer based in New York City