



ETHICAL CULTURE

M O N T H L Y

VOLUME 30 NUMBER 1

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SEPTEMBER 2010

SEPTEMBER CALENDAR OF PLATFORMS & EVENTS

Sept. 12 • Anja Moen, our new president, will lead a season-opener colloquy on innovative thinking, and new ways to strengthen our fellowship and our community.

As nature winds down and the days shorten, we humans rebound from our summer lethargy and come together again to explore fresh possibilities, drawing creative energy with the cooler air. With Peace as the common thread linking our platforms this year, what can we do to make this a mellow and fruitful Fall season? Anja will be inviting everyone to write what they'd like to see accomplished on paper "leaves" to adorn a (non-shedding) idea tree, to keep that inspiration in view.



Sept. 19 • M. Sue Willis, Zia Durani, and Mira Stillman: *Nine Lives*, by William Dalrymple

Mira, Zia and Sue will outline the rich content of this book, subtitled "In Search of the Sacred in Modern India." Dalrymple is basically a travel writer, but of a very different kind. He writes about places interwoven with the history of the place. In this book there are nine chapters about individuals or groups of people who in their lives on earth are trying to achieve nirvana and connect with their particular deity. There are dancers, singers, idol makers, even a nun. Dalrymple covers a vast canvas of Indian communities, and their religious practices. What

makes it interesting is that he lets the people talk and present their viewpoint rather than describe them.

Zia Durani was born and raised in Kashmir, India, where she lived until 1963. Educated in India and England, she was a teacher of English in a women's college in Srinagar, her home town, until she married and left Kashmir to live briefly in Madras, and then moved to London. Zia came to the US in 1976, and lived in various places before coming to South Orange. When she lived on Long Island, Zia was involved with the local theater group. She has taught ESL in New York, Oregon and New Jersey. Zia has three children. Her two girls live in New Jersey, and her son lives in Kansas. At present Zia is a member of the Adult School Board of Trustees and is also involved with their ESL program.

Mira Stillman was born in Poland in the small Jewish town of Belkhatow. She survived World War II in the USSR and subsequently came to the U.S. in 1945. An M.A. in Russian literature from Columbia University and a Ph.D. in English literature from Drew University prepared her for the teaching she did at Rutgers and Drew University. She taught writing, and courses in English and World literature. In the nineties, she organized a tutoring program for local schools and an early environmental group. She has recently finished a book about the first thirteen years of her life. She lives with her husband in Maplewood.

Meredith Sue Willis, novelist, teacher, and native of West Virginia, is a past president of the Essex Ethical

Culture Society. Her new books are *Ten Strategies to Write A Novel*, from Montemayor Press, and *Out of the Mountains*, a collection of Appalachian short stories, from Ohio University Press.



Sept. 26 • Martha Gallahue: "Essex Society: A Peacebuilding Peacelearning Community". Celebrating International Peace Day on September 21st, we will explore why IDP matters both within ourselves and in our Maplewood community.

Martha Gallahue is an Ethical Culture Leader who has worked at the United Nations as the Main Representative for The National Service Conference of the American Ethical Union and for the global United Religions' Initiative. She has given Platform talks at fifteen ethical culture societies throughout the country. She now resides in New Jersey with her spouse Elizabeth Alexander.



Before Platform, Martha will be at Essex 9:30 a.m. to begin a series of training sessions for whomever is interested — the first topic: *Becoming a Welcoming Community*.

Rededication of our Peace Site

September 26th is our important date, marked by a special Platform address by Martha Gallahue, a

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.

Ethical Culture Society
of Essex County,
516 Prospect St.,
Maplewood, NJ 07040
973-763-1905

NEW! — info@essexethical.org

Our web site: www.essexethical.org

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

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

lunch (contributed by all of you)*, the Solidarity Singers contributing their services, sparkling speakers highlighted by Madelyn Hoffman, Director of NJ Peace Action, founder of the Peace Site movement, community singing led by our own Rosalie Sussman and Lisa Novemsky with songs you all love (“May There Always Be Sunshine,” “Last Night

I Had The Strangest Dream,” the former also with Russian words as sung by Soviet students visiting our Society in 1989 as part of an exchange Roundtable). Also, the unveiling of our banner by Diane Beeny declaring us to be the first Peace Site ever! Come join us for a rousing and memorable celebratory day.

Peace actions often take heartening turns if our consciousness remains with peace. With a heavy heart, I left N.J. the week the hibakusha from Japan make their annual visit here to commemorate the dropping of the A-bomb. As you know, hibakusha are survivors of that horrendous happening. My absence was due to a creativity conference for therapists in Santa Fe, New Mexico. What I didn't realize is that Santa Fe is only 40 miles from Los Alamos where the bomb was built. On the August 5th anniversary, a boisterous demonstration appeared on the Plaza, an evergreen outdoor community center park, marching, singing, lasso-twirling young people making their passions known. I joined in, singing along, interviewed, photographed, even making a speech with the mike they gladly thrust in my face, enthusiastically supporting their efforts “from the East.”

I trust you humanists from all locales will joyously help rededicate our Peace Site. See you there!

— E. Betty Levin, Director, Peace Activities

*For potluck lunch, if your last name begins with A-G, please bring a main course; K-P bring a salad and rolls; R-W bring a dessert and cold beverages. Please bring amount sufficient for at least 6 people. Thank you.

Dear Friends, Relatives and Gentle People,

Our son, Michael, has leukemia. We are searching for a DNA match for a bone marrow transplant to save his life. The procedure for the transplant is not very complicated. We know a woman who donated twice, saving two lives. Finding the match is the problem. We are begging everyone we know to register with the National Marrow Donor Program (<http://www.marrow.org/JOIN/index.html?src=tabjoin>). Mike and his family are suffering. Please send this message to all those on your email list, the membership lists of your congregations, clubs and organizations and all your relatives and friends. The most likely match to Mike would be a person of east European Jewish ancestry but there are not enough people with this background on the registry. Don't hesitate!!! We are waiting to hear from you that you care enough to save our son. DO IT NOW! With love and hope,

— Barbara and Martin Cotler

Folk Fridays at Ethical

September 10, 7:30 p.m.

Sing along with friends Lucky, Dusty, Rusty & Tio Pepe at the Ethical Culture Society [lnovemsky@comcast.net, 973-763-1905]. Folk Fridays are the second Friday of the month when we meet and sing and play music. It is a fun time and we also invite anybody who likes to do crafts to join us. We have planned to make a community quilt this year. If you want to sing or just listen or help with the quilt: Welcome! We meet at 7:30 pm. — Anja Moen

Third Saturday Art Night

September 18, 7–9:30 p.m.

Every third Saturday we will have the Third Saturday Art Night at the Society. We have different artists tell about their work in a small salon setting with conversations that everybody is engaged in. It is an exciting way to meet an artist in a very personal way.

Also, a 50-50 Art Auction fundraiser is planned for December — details to follow.

For the group, Anja Moen

Ted Seagull

To the dear members of Ethical Society,

Thanks again to many of you who have written such kind and caring notes to my dad, Ted Seagull, in the recent months. As you've heard, unfortunately, he is not able to respond to you himself because of the decline in his health. I read everything to him and he certainly appreciates the messages.

Over many years, Ted has told me how

meaningful his experiences with the Ethical Cultures group and its philosophy has been for him, and so thanks to all of you he's got lots of memories of vital times.

Please feel free to communicate via my email address (saraline@rcn.com).

Best regards, Sara Seagull

FROM THE U.N.

Millennium Development Goals 2010

In the year 2000, the member states at the UN undertook an ambitious challenge to meet the basic needs of the globe. They set eight goals to be achieved by 2015. These goals, for the worlds well being, are designed to free a major portion of humanity from the shackles of extreme poverty, hunger, illiteracy and disease. They also established targets for achieving gender equality and the empowerment of women.

The plan was designed to be affordable, measurable and doable. Progress can be monitored.

This promise is not based on pity or charity but on solidarity, justice and the increased awareness that we are increasingly dependent on one another for our shared prosperity and security.

The UN will meet in September 2010 for a full review on where we are now, what has been learned and how to use these lessons for the next 5 years.

Where are we now ?

Progress on Goal 1, extreme poverty reduction, has been uneven. In 2008 there were still 1.4 billion people living in extreme poverty, less than the 1.8 billion in 1990. However, China accounted for much of the decline. In 2009, an estimated 55 million more people will be living in extreme poverty than anticipated before the economic crisis.

Brazil is an instructive exception. Social progress in Brazil was remarkable. The number of poor fell significantly. At the same, Brazil's notoriously unequal income distribution has been

Memorial for Doris Rados on Saturday, October 16, 2-4 p.m.

After a long battle with leukemia, Ethical Culture Society Honorary lifetime member Doris Rados passed away at St. Cloud Health Care Center on Monday June 21. Doris was 82. As a final act of giving, Doris has donated her remains to medical research at UMDNJ.

Raised in Brooklyn, NY, Doris lived in South Orange for 50 years. She worked as a special education teacher with the Newark public school system, and later worked with the Union County Educational Services Commission. Her desire to help others was also



demonstrated in her service as a literacy volunteer and as a member of various service-oriented committees.

She was a true lover of all the arts and was also a poet and had her work published in "Rising," an anthology of The South Mountain Watchung Poets. Doris was also a peace activist and an active member of The Ethical Culture Society of Essex County. She is survived by her children, Andy, Martha, and Henry

Rados. A special woman — she will be missed.

Send condolences to: Martha Rados, 501 W. 123 Street, Apt. 10-D, N.Y., N.Y. 10027.

reduced. The progress stems from jobs and higher income economic growth. Better social services accounts for a big share in the fall in inequality. Social policy matters.

The encouraging trend in hunger since the early 1990's was reversed in 2008 due to higher food prices.

There are some successes. Major improvements were made in Goal 2, education. In the developing world as a whole, primary education enrollment was up. In some countries crossing the 90% threshold. Also, more girls are in school. Death of children under 5 years declined steadily world wide — around 9 million in 2007 down from 13 million in 1990.

There has been some progress in Goal 5, reducing maternal mortality. The maternal death toll world wide dropped from 526,000 in 1980 to around 343,000 in 2008. While encouraging, the number of unnecessary deaths is much too large. Deliveries attended by skilled health workers in developing countries have increased since 1990, but is still inadequate.

The Save the Children Annual State of the World's Mothers recently ranked the best places to be a mother. Norway

was the best, Afghanistan at the bottom of the 160 countries listed. The US did not fare well; it was 28th, below Greece, Portugal and many western European countries. The chief reason cited by the report was that despite advanced medical technology, more young mothers die, either in childbirth or in the years after because American working mothers get less maternity leave and lower benefits. Social policy matters.

There has been insufficient progress in Goal 3, promoting gender equality and empowerment of women. Redressing gender inequality is one of the most difficult tasks almost everywhere, with serious implications for many of the other goals. A root cause of gender disadvantage and oppression lies in societal attitudes, cultural norms as well as power structures.

Women and girls make up 60% of the worlds poorest people and two-thirds of the worlds illiterates. Yet, with education and empowerment they can lead healthy lives, lift themselves and their families out of poverty and disease, have fewer children and healthier children who are more likely to attend school themselves.

There is overwhelming evidence
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ETHICAL CULTURE SOCIETY OF ESSEX COUNTY

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ETHICAL CULTURE SOCIETY OF ESSEX COUNTY NEWSLETTER · SEPTEMBER 2010

(continued from page 3) that women's empowerment through schooling and employment opportunities has the most far reaching effects on the lives of all — men, women and children. It reduces child mortality and is more influential than economic growth in moderating fertility rates. Amartya Sen, Nobel prize winner in economics, points out that while some districts of India have high fertility rates, others with more gender equality already have fertility rates lower than the United States and Britain.

Gender equality has received serious resistance from many institutions and countries. Thirty years ago the UN adopted a Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), which has been ratified by 186 member states. The US has not ratified and some states resist implementation.

CEDAW has had some positive

effects. Some 22 member states have asserted their right not to implement some provisions. For example some have balked if it conflicts with their "family code". The United Arab Emirate stated that it will not implement provisions contrary to Sharia law. Many countries and most Moslem countries have significant reservations to CEDAW that nullify their commitment to gender equality.

Ultimately, full partnership of men and women is vital to the achievement of the Millennium goals.

In summary: 1. Economic growth, when it creates jobs, is important but can be insufficient for progress; 2. Gender equality and empowerment has been shown to be essential for progress; and 3. Social policy matters. ■

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

We Are Collecting Food for the Needy! Please bring your nonperishables to the box in the lobby of the Society building 10 a.m.–8 p.m. Popular items include: canned tuna, chili, vegetables, fruits, hearty soups with protein. Mira Stillman has arranged for a volunteer to pick up the food from our food box to be distributed to needy families in our immediate area.

Please Bring Books for Children to the Society! We are also still collecting new and gently used books to be distributed to needy local families through the Parenting Center. Picture books are especially requested, but all books appropriate for children kindergarten through fifth grade welcomed. Leave them in the small room off the parlor.

We are seeking donation of a copy machine for the office.

— Sue Willis / Social Action Comm.