

FOCUS

NEWSLETTER OF THE ETHICAL CULTURE SOCIETY OF BERGEN COUNTY (ESTABLISHED 1953)

Volume 56 • Number 10

June 2008

Board and Committee Chairs Approved at May Membership Meeting

Installation Dinner and Selene Katz Awards on June 14

The slate of nominees for the Board of Trustees and Committee Chair positions was unanimously approved at the Spring Membership Meeting, May 18, 2008. [See page 6 for a list of the names.] The Minutes of the Membership Meeting are posted on the Society's Web site at www.ethicalfocus.org (also available from the office).

The outgoing members will be honored and the incoming members will be installed at a potluck dinner on Saturday, June 14, at 7:00 pm at the Society's meeting house.

Please call **Susan Lesh** to coordinate the food (201.825.836.7030). Cold soft drinks, dessert and coffee will be provided. You may BYOB (wine may be best; if beer, bring your own coolers).

In addition, the Selene Katz awards will be announced.

This is also a great socializing event!

—BOB GORDON



A Few Volunteers Still Needed to Staff Shelter

People have been generous about volunteering as cooks or overnight hosts to staff the Family Shelter at St. Cecilia's Church in Englewood between Saturday, June 21 and Tuesday, June 24. **But we still need 1 overnight host on June 22 and 1 on June 24. We also need 1 cook on June 24.**

The sign-up sheet is available every Sunday after the platform or call **Scott Harris**: 201.530.9177, or the Society's office.



Paul Raynault, a Man for All Seasons — We Will Miss Him

It is with great sorrow that we report the death of Paul Raynault on June 19, 2008, at the age of 67. Paul was an active member and generous supporter of the Ethical Culture Society for many years.

Paul lived in Englewood, NJ with his wife, Shelley, who is also active in the Ethical Culture Society. Their twin daughters, Lauren and Morgan, who are graduates of the Ethical Culture Sunday School, live at home. In addition, Paul is survived by his adult children: sons David and Mark and daughter Lynn.

Paul founded the *Student World Assembly* in 2003, achieving his vision for an international forum where students discuss and take action on global issues. Since its inception, the organization has emerged as a leading international student organization promoting grassroots education, democratic participation and action. The SWA has recruited 17,000 members from approximately 1,400 schools, representing over 150 countries.

"Paul was a Renaissance man and a gentleman of the first order," Englewood Mayor Michael Wildes said [emphasis is mine].

Google Paul's name to find a number of lengthy obituaries delineating all his accomplishments.

—BOB GORDON



We've Been Dedicated

As our Leader points out in his column in this issue, the formal ceremony for recognizing our Dedication Walk was described as "uplifting" and "strong on the spirit of togetherness." We were honored by the attendance and kind words of Teaneck's Mayor Elie Katz (who has a paver), Senator Weinberg (who has a paver) and Katharine Archibald (who has a paver – in the AEU's name).

Gus Preschle raised the idea initially, as Finance Chair. It was seized upon by his successor, **Deborah Watsky**. Deborah did it all, with help at various times from **Azar Gordon** and yours truly. There were quite a few chores to oversee and manage, from choosing the paver styles, soliciting the orders and managing the process from inscriptions on paper to inscriptions in "stone," layout design, and actual installation. And did I mention angst?

The truly special series of inscribed pavers in the area from the steps towards the entry doors, was generously underwritten by **Eleanor Faulkner-Harrison**, who conceived of having the children of the Sunday school, and the staff, offer suggestions for the inscriptions that were used.

Dedication, Cont'd. on page 6

Coming Events

JUNE 2008

1 Sun	11:00am	Platform & Sunday School
2 Mon	7:00pm	Socrates Café
3 Tue	7:30pm	Board Meeting
8 Sun	11:00am	SUNDAY SCHOOL GRADUATION
14 Sat	7:00pm	INSTALLATION DINNER (potluck) and Selene Katz awards
15 Sun	11:00am	Platform & Sunday School
	3:00pm	PHOTOGRAPHY APPOINTMENTS
16 Mon	3:00pm	PHOTOGRAPHY APPOINTMENTS
21 Sat	9:30am	Program Council
22 Sun	10:30am	Summer Platform (summer schedule begins)
29 Sun	10:30am	Summer Platform

JULY 2008

1 Tue	7:30pm	Board Meeting
6 Sun		NO PLATFORM PROGRAM
13 Sun	10:30am	Summer Platform
19 Sat	9:30am	Program Council
20 Sun	10:30am	Summer Platform
27 Sun	10:30am	Summer Platform

What is a Liberal Arts Education?

According to Hobart College (my alma mater), "Our mission is simply based: that men and women who have thought about and know about what is meant by justice, piety, goodness and beauty are more apt to act that way in their lives."

Let it be so for all, and especially us EC humanists.

—BOB GORDON

SCRIP

It's the same as cash when you spend it, except the supermarkets sell Scrip to us at a discount so that you spend face value dollars and we net 5% from all coupons. It's free money!

Buy Scrip as often as you can, after Platform, or by phone, or mail your order to **Tracey Kelley**.

Phone: **201.641.3234**

Mail: **346 Main Street, Ridgefield Park, NJ 07660-1228**

Include your name, the store where you shop, the amount of Scrip you want and a postage-paid return envelope if ordering by mail. Checks should be made payable to "The Ethical Culture Society of Bergen County."

Pathmark cards – \$25 denominations

ShopRite, Stop and Shop and **Kings:**

– \$50 and \$100 denominations

Member News

➤ Our condolences to **JIM GRIFFIN**, who just lost his youngest sister, Noreen Boylan (from lung cancer). She lived in Florida.

➤ We are sorry to report that Woody Kozin died this past weekend in Florida. Woody and his wife, Marilyn, were members of the Ethical Culture Society prior to moving to Florida. Cards and letters from their friends in the Society would be appreciated. The Kozin's address is: 9649 Shady Brook Drive, Suite 102, Boynton Beach, Florida 33437. A memorial service is planned for October — details will come later.

MEN'S LUNCH GROUP

The group meets monthly at Louie's for lunch and conversation at 1 pm on the last Friday of the month. Call **Roland Dumont** at 201.796.7458 for more information.

WOMEN'S MONTHLY LUNCHEON

We plan to meet for lunch on **Friday, June 27**. If you want to attend, please call **Margaret Hirshfeld** at 201.261.7636.

CARING COMMITTEE

The Caring Committee provides support to our members. Please contact **Jim Griffin** (201.692.1461) or **Helene Farber** (201.836.0590) with news about members and their families or requests for support.

NEW E-MAIL ADDRESS FOR THE SOCIETY

We are migrating the Ethical Culture Society's e-mail address to "gmail," which is supported by Google. The new address is **bergenecs@gmail.com**. Return mail from the office will come from **admin@ethicalfocus.org** (but it all goes through gmail). We will continue to maintain the old e-mail address at **bergenecs@sbcglobal.net** for several months, but we would appreciate it if you would update your address books with the new e-mail address.

Building Committee: Please don't "borrow" equipment without permission. Some items belong to Rhymes & Reasons.

—BOB GORDON

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The Ethical Culture Society of Bergen County is a member society of The American Ethical Union (www.aeu.org), which is a member organization of The International Humanist and Ethical Union

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From the Leader

JOSEPH CHUMAN, Ph.D.

This has been a challenging year for our community, and in a way that reaches deep, a sad year. During the past season, we have lost a significant number of our members to death, as we had the year before. As the poet, John

Donne, eloquently noted, each death diminishes us, for we are all bound together. And in our small community, perhaps we feel the loss even more. We have lost spouses and friends, lives never to be replaced. We need to all feel grateful for what we have received and continue to receive.

Beyond the sadness occasioned by so many deaths, in some cases of people whom I have known for more than 30 years, I am personally sustained by what I see. Rather than blanketing our community with collective despair, I see tremendous strength and renewal, which, admittedly, I even find surprising. The energy in our group, and our commitment to one other and to the purposes of Ethical Culture, remain unabated.

There are many wonderful and inspiring signs of this energy, and the seriousness of purpose which marks the dedication of our membership. I remember back to our Commitment Dinner last December, which is as much about personal devotion to Ethical Culture as it is about financial giving. Those who spoke did so from the heart about the deep and abiding significance that this community holds for them over the course of decades. Our Skills Auction in April was a great success in more ways than the impressive funds that it raised. Our chairperson, who did most of the preparatory work, had to withdraw toward the end for personal reasons. A team stepped in at the last moment to do the set up and bring the event to an extraordinary conclusion. It is the sense of mutual support, and willingness to come forward, which speaks to the resilience of the community. Then there was the dedication of our new walkway, which features scores of inscribed pavers. I personally like this project for many reasons. Among them is that it provides an opportunity to commemorate loved ones, and those who gave so much to our lives and our community. The inscribed bricks also provided terse elements of ethical wisdom and meditative thoughts for members and for those passing by. The dedication ceremony itself was brief and uplifting, short on

words, but strong on the spirit of togetherness.

All of this and much more speak to the resilience of our community, especially against the background of a trying year. It also points the way toward the future. Our community life is pulled between the inspiration of its ideals and the affirming experiences with each other, on the one hand, and the demands of building and sustaining our institution on the other. Unfortunately, the fruits of the former cannot be realized without investment in the mundane, practical, and sometimes tedious demands of the latter.

Our greatest institutional need, if we are to sustain a flourishing group life, is, as it long has been, to attract new members to our community. Though we have remained stable for a long time, bringing in new folks as others leave us, I continue to believe that robust growth is possible for us. The responsibility for this cannot rest with our membership committee alone, but needs to be a felt commitment of the group as a whole.

We are facing some real challenges. Among them is the fact that Teaneck is not the same town it used to be. While

“Perhaps you will make a point this summer to reach out to a friend or acquaintance and let them know about Ethical Culture and our community, and what a good thing it is.”

increasingly diverse, I have long argued that it is no longer an especially “progressive” community. Increasingly, we will draw new members from other parts of Bergen County and beyond.

But there are other dynamics moving in our direction. I have been happily surprised that the level of discourse in this exciting presidential campaign has been very intelligent. No one has said that they prefer Barack, Hillary or John, because it would be swell to share a beer with them. Could this signal that America is moving beyond its enchantment with anti-intellectualism? Maybe. I would hope so. If it is, it will signal well for Ethical Culture. But, of course, salubrious environmental conditions are not enough to ensure our growth. We need to build on it through a program of concerted outreach.

Perhaps you will make a point this summer to reach out to a friend or acquaintance and let them know about Ethical Culture and our community, and what a good thing it is.



PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

LOOKING BACK, LOOKING AHEAD

As I reflect on my tenure as President, I am harsher on myself, hopefully, than others of you may be. I feel I have just begun to get my arms around this job, and I think I could really do it up right, with more time.

Unfortunately, having self-knowledge of my weaknesses vs. being able to improve are two different matters, and time is up anyhow, so perhaps it is better to look forward ... and I can avoid the public mea culpas.

There is, palpably, a lot of vigor in our Society. New initiatives are being regularly proposed ... and pursued. Here are some:

- Rainbow Warriors, the summer day camp on our premises, is set for this August. It is a huge undertaking, with enormous potential impact for the future.
- WVNJ announces our special events.
- We get regular airtime on WBAI.
- We have a new blog on our Web site.
- There are more and more hot links to our site from other web spaces.
- We are creating a file of photos of all (or most) of our members.
- The Religious Education Director has crafted many creative ideas to better integrate the generations. Some of these will become evident in the coming season.
- Our financial records and reporting get more and more comprehensive and detailed, yet the data are more accessible.

The audit for 2007 (which will be finished this summer) will yield a "cookbook" to guide ensuing audits. It will result in a consistent, dependable method and record for closing and starting annual balance sheets.

There are many other ideas. What it demonstrates is that we are not a stagnant, retrograde or unchangeable group. It is truly exciting!

Certainly, we have our problems. I will get more personally involved with two of them some time after June.

We began revamping the Constitution & Bylaws almost three years ago, but it was left to lie fallow. It is time to memorialize the experimental bifurcation of the management of the Society when we created the Program Council, and to bring other aspects of the document up to date.

Our computer systems (software) and databases need upgrades, together with wider knowledge in their use and maintenance. If it were easy, it would have been done by now, so I'll need help.

Our physical assets (translation: the building and grounds) exact a burden in maintenance. I have a very, very long list of needs and druthers. It includes upgrades to the sound system; implementing digital video recording of Platforms and other events, to enable podcasts from our Web site; new gutters; new rugs; a renovated lobby; improvements to lighting ... and much



more. All that, not to mention the onus of "regular" maintenance — the frequent fix-it tasks. We have been able to best most of the water intrusion issues, notably with low-cost solutions. The one remaining problem requires installing a French drain along one basement wall. Funds have been reserved and work could be complete before the end of June. The total outlay for the water rectification solutions will be way below the staggering sum we were at first given to anticipate. Whew!

Our Leader continues to exemplify an outside-our-community presence. In fact, it seems to me he's accelerating, locally, regionally and indeed, nationally. With-

in the Society, I wonder how many realize the extent to which Joe is involved in all the committees and the "work" of the Society ... the things that keep us going. We are the beneficiaries of all that, and we get erudition too! Joe's Platforms never fail to be outstanding, informative and instructive!

Sadly, we recognize the passing of a number of our long-time friends. The memorial services Joe provides are beyond compare. Without excess, we learn how fine those lives have been, sometimes hearing details we'd never known. Joe exalts their lives in the most fitting way. I am hereby requiring that he outlast me, for who could do me better when my time comes?

There is another aspect about the Leader that is under the radar. We have a Leadership Advisory Committee that serves as an intermediary for issues, coming from either side, involving the Leader and the membership. One committee member came to me recently to ask if the committee was defunct because it hasn't met! Indeed, without an issue, there is no need to meet!

Although not without its problems as a project, the Dedication Walk, with its engraved pavers, has become an attractive success. I never fail to think of that line in the TV serial, *The 'A' Team*, spoken after everything has gone wrong but the good guys win in the end anyhow: "It's nice when a plan comes together." It took a village to help to make it happen and all the purchasers (members and non-member friends as well) can take pride and credit for their contributions. [The project is discussed at length in another article: see **Dedication**, Page 1]

For BECS, I look forward to even more creativity, and to growth in numbers and finances.

As for my new trusteeship at the AEU, I intend to make my participation useful for growth both at the national level and at Bergen. Wish me well.

I have had a chance to grow, personally, these past three years ... a wonderful experience. Thanks for working so well with me, for lending your support, and for letting me try my hand at this Presidency business. Because I have such a high regard for our group, collectively and individually, this has been a labor of love, and an honor to have been able to serve.

—BOB GORDON



Summer Platforms for 2008 Will Run June 22 - August 24 at 10:30 am

The Ethical Culture Society's Program Council has put together an interesting array of platform programs for this summer. The platforms will run from June 22 through August 24. Summer platforms begin at **10:30 am** and generally end around 11:30 am. Also, there will be **no platform program on July 6 or August 31.**

There are no speakers at the summer platforms. Instead, various committees of the Society plan discussion programs, facilitated by members, which they believe will be of compelling interest to different segments of the membership and to the public at large. The summer schedule is listed below.

June 22: Socrates Café

Facilitator: **ROB CANTOR**

Socrates Café provides an opportunity for interesting discussions of philosophical questions we all share. Topics are suggested by the people attending the session, and one topic is selected by majority vote. In the process of exploring the topic, the group is exposed to a wide range of ideas, alternative views and mental stretching. Underlying each discussion is the opportunity to refine your critical thinking skills.

June 29: Maxed Out America: Now What?

Facilitators: **THERESA FORSMAN and LEIGH ROUMILA**

This topic continues along the theme of a 2007 summer platform. In it we discuss the philosophies particularly espoused in the three books: *Maxed Out: Hard Times in the Age of Easy Credit*, by James D. Scurlock; *Voluntary Simplicity: Toward a Way of Life That Is Outwardly Simple, Inwardly Rich*, by Duane Elgin; and *Your Money or Your Life: Transforming Your Relationship with Money and Achieving Financial Independence*, by Joe Dominguez. Not necessary to read these books, although they're certainly interesting reading.

July 13: Community Circle: On Vacations

Facilitators: **DIANA AND ED GROSS**

We will share descriptions of our favorite vacations and consider together what are the elements that make for a good vacation. We'll also discuss the importance of vacation time, the benefits we derive and whether those benefits help us in our quest to be better, more ethical people.

July 20: Socrates Café [See June 22.]

Facilitator: **TERRI KARP**

July 27: Human Rights in China

Facilitator: **DAN ROSENBLUM**

As we approach the Beijing summer Olympics, the Social Action Committee sponsors a platform on human rights in China, a topic that spans such concerns as treatment of internal dissidents, policy toward Tibet and ethnic minorities, support

for repressive regimes abroad such as Sudan and Myanmar (Burma), and working conditions and production quality control. We will distribute an article covering some of these matters before the platform and use that as our springboard for the platform discussion.

August 3: Community Circle: Getting Ready for the November Elections

Facilitator: **LINDA BENNETT**

How do we figure out what really matters this election season from an ethical point of view? What is it that the government should be addressing? What are you most concerned about?

August 10: Listening Is an Act of Love

Facilitator: **LEIGH ROUMILA**

Based on a book by the same name, this platform continues the theme of a 2007 summer platform. By listening to each other's stories, we honor and celebrate one another's lives and experience our history, hopes, and humanity. Possible topics: When did you first fall in love? What are you most proud of? What have you learned in life? What was the happiest moment of your life? The saddest? Do you have any regrets? What does your future hold? Is there something about yourself that you think no one knows? How would you like to be remembered?

August 17: Helping Kids Deal With Bullies

Facilitator: **ALLISON COOKE**

How serious and widespread is the bullying problem? How seriously can it damage children? Who are the typical bullies and their targets? How much is/isn't being done by parents, teachers and school administrations to address the bullying problem? How can we teach children to recognize and respond to bullying?

August 24: How Can You and Your Family Become More Eco-friendly?

Facilitators: **SUSAN LESH AND LISA REPASKY SANDHUSEN**

This platform will give practical tips on steps you and your family can take to preserve our environment. You don't have to

Always Wanted to 'Be in Pictures'?

Sign up for a Photo for
ECS's New Photo Directory
Portrait Sessions Are Scheduled
for June 15 and 16

Maybe you've had the experience of being engaged in conversation with someone whose name you just can't recall. Or the acquaintance you have to greet with a hearty, "Hi...you!" To help avoid this problem — and to help both new and long-time friends and members get to know each other better — the Membership Committee is working with Lifetouch, Inc. to produce high-quality photo directories for our Society, including an online version.

It costs nothing to get a professional photo taken of you and your family. **In fact, you'll receive a free directory book and an 8x10 color photo just for keeping your portrait appointment,** and there's no obligation to make a purchase. We hope to have ALL of our members shown in our directory, and the more sittings we schedule, the more benefits the Society will get (such as a large wall directory for our meeting house). Of course, there will be an opportunity to buy your favorite photos in a variety of sizes and finishes.

Signing up is easy — just follow the link on the Society's Web site (www.ethicalfocus.org) or go directly to: <http://www.appointment-plus3.com/ap/ethicalfocus/index.php?page=10>. (The dash is included in the address.) Select your time slot between 3:00 and 9:30pm on Sunday, June 15 or Monday, June 16.

Professional photographers will turn our meeting room into a temporary studio. Even people who don't want to be included in the photo directory can have professional-quality pictures taken, so you might want to tell your friends and family about this great opportunity. Questions? Can't sign up online? Call me (Eric Sandhusen) at 646.369.8240.

—ERIC SANDHUSEN



feel overwhelmed by saving the earth; any step is a positive one toward change. Many of our Sunday School parents and staff will be attending, so come meet them and find out what the Ethical Culture Sunday School is all about.

In Memorium...

Bea Zeidel, a Tribute by Her Daughters



Our mother, Bea Zeidel, died on April 18, 2008. This brief piece, however, is to celebrate her life and to describe the person that she was. Bea was a Brooklyn girl, born and raised; the youngest of seven siblings. Although she had a difficult childhood that was filled with deprivation, she made friends and found work and met and married Julie Zeidel, all by age 21!

She worked in a war plant in Queens, cooked for large groups of kids at summer camps (self taught), which allowed her children to attend at a discounted price, ran her own business in Teaneck for many years, and even worked as a concierge at the Classic Residence (in Teaneck) when it first opened.

She and Julie got to travel to many countries on vacation, including Cuba and Russia, and we like to think that they would have made a great diplomatic team to help improve international relations over the years.

She was a great hostess both at her own parties and at many events over the years at Ethical Culture. The Society has been a second home to the Zeidels for a long time. We had large family seders there for a number of years, as well as birthday parties and anniversary celebrations. For this reason the memorial service on May 10th was so meaningful for us. Joe Chuman's remarks were beautiful and touching; they really captured the essence of Bea. We were glad that so many members of Ethical Culture, family, friends and colleagues could attend. Bea and Julie loved the Society, so their memorial services there were a labor of love.

Our mom was the embodiment of the expression: "When life gives you lemons, make lemonade." She made a great lemonade, and she will be greatly missed.

—SUSAN AND BETH ZEIDEL



New Board Members and Committee Chairs

The new Board members and Committee Chairs approved at the Spring Membership Meeting on May 18, 2008, are listed below.

<i>President</i>	Ed Gross	<i>Promotions & Publications</i> ..	Barbara Griffin*
<i>Vice-President</i> ...	Ken Karp	<i>Social Action</i>	Scott Harris
<i>Secretary</i>	Benoise Turnier*	<i>Religious Education</i>	Shirley Glickman*
<i>Treasurer</i>	Theresa Karp*	<i>Adult Education</i>	- open -
<i>Building</i>	- open -	<i>Family Programming</i>	David Bland*
<i>Finance</i>	Eric Sandhusen	<i>Social Affairs</i>	Susan Lesh
<i>Membership</i>	Leigh Roumila*	<i>Youth Activities</i>	Ron Schwartz
<i>Program</i>	Azar Gordon*	<i>Festivals</i>	Susan Lesh*

* Incumbent

In addition, the membership approved the following committee nominations:

Nominating Committee: Peter Kelley, Shirley Glickman and Sarah Jack.

Recognition Committee: Eleanor Faulkner-Harrison and Ron Schwartz.

Leadership Advisory Committee: Gloria Smith and Martin Goldenberg.

The Board of Trustees will make additional committee appointments.

George Bush Supports The Ethical Culture Society of Bergen County

It is a first: government backed humanist religion! Or it will be, when our members receive their Economic Stimulus government checks. That is because, in the spirit of tithing, you will send one-tenth, off the top, as extra one-time donations to BECS.

The irony is irresistible (and it's found money anyhow). Please do so. Do it first thing. Mark the memo line on your checks: "Tithe."



—BOB GORDON

Dedication, CONT'D. FROM PAGE 1

Another major contributor was **Marvin Mausner**. Effectively, he underwrote the construction

costs for one of the two walkways. It is a shame he could not see the fruits of his contribution. He and Laura were honored at the ceremony, and you will see that the walk contains four pavers in his name.



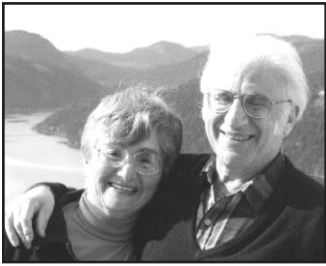
This is a living memorial; additional pavers can be purchased and installed simply by replacing blank ones. The office will try to accumulate additional orders into groups of 10, which makes purchases economical. Paver order forms are in the lobby credenza, else see the Administrative Director about ordering.

Contractor issues have delayed the finishing touches: last-minute new paver orders not yet installed, paver replacements for typos, and railings for the steps. We'll get there, promise.

As a final thank you to all contributors, Certificates acknowledging purchases were distributed to donors. Let us know if you have not received yours.

—BOB GORDON





From the UN: *The World Food Crisis*

The tsunami-like shock of soaring world food prices following the increase in the demand for oil is a dramatic illustration of the interconnectedness of the world. An additional 100 million people of already vulnerable populations have been plunged into poverty and hunger. Even in affluent USA, the poorest fifth of the population spends about 15% of the family budget on food. A Nigerian family spends 73%. Not much left! Food riots have broken out in Haiti, Egypt, Somalia and other poor countries.

The President of the World Bank, Robert Zoellick, has warned that as many as 33 countries are at risk of social unrest. Sometimes there is not enough food; sometimes food is available, but the poor cannot afford to buy. With the increase of malnutrition and hunger, disease spreads — and travels.

Why is this happening? The interconnectedness of world resources has a number of causes. Oil prices are rising because of a growing worldwide demand for energy from the newly prosperous middle classes in the huge populations of China and India, as well as other mid-level countries. More cars on the streets; more meat on the table. Animal protein uses up large amounts of grain for food.

Government subsidizing of biofuels such as ethanol has caused land formerly used for growing food to be diverted to energy needs. This is often wasteful since these biofuels use up much energy in production. But the damage doesn't stop there. Domestic farm support by the US, Japan and the European Union benefits large agribusiness with highly mechanized production at the expense of poor countries who cannot compete in price or productivity. In 1960, Africa was an exporter of food. Today, the continent imports 1/3 of its grain. Rising costs of energy and fertilizer can only make this discrepancy worse. Speculation in international markets is the estimated cause for 30% of the increase in food prices.

The increase in production of biofuels — the response to the growing demand for oil — is having profound and disturbing effects. Only recently thought of as a solution to the limits on oil resources, the rush to biofuels is having unexpected consequences. More than 20 countries are planning to boost production of biofuels over the next decade. President Bush has signed an energy independence bill mandating the

use of 36 billion gallons of agrifuel by 2022, a five-fold increase over present levels. The US government subsidies for ethanol and biodiesel will be \$13 billion this year and will approach \$100 billion in the near future. The US plans to triple maize production for the booming ethanol industry, which is converting enormous amounts of food into fuel, 81 million tons in 2007, 114 million tons in 2009 — 30% of the entire US grain harvest.

WE ARE GROWING FOOD TO FEED CARS INSTEAD OF PEOPLE.

The shockwave of rising prices has come faster than anyone predicted. President Bush has proposed an increase in food aid, with a plan to buy a quarter of the food from local farmers in countries already receiving aid. This is welcome and an improvement, though the donation still undermines local agriculture. The plan still requires mostly food purchased in the US and transported in US ships.

The UN has responded quickly to this rising and worsening international crisis. The Secretary General has established a top-level task

“We are growing food to feed cars instead of people.”

force to tackle immediate food shortages and escalating prices. In a recent speech, he blamed some of the problems on “the new craze of biofuels derived from food products.” He urged instead research and investment in a new “green revolution for increase in crop yields.”

The UN's World Food Program (WFP) already feeds 70 million people in about 80 countries. WFP sends out 30 ships on the high seas, 5,000 trucks on the ground, and 70 aircraft delivering food to the hungry. WFP is an amazing operation!

The UN's Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) has developed a \$1.7 billion program to provide seed for farmers in poor countries. This program is building both supply and productivity by expanding support for local small farmers.

WFP depends on voluntary contributions from nations, organizations and individuals. If you want to help, log onto www.wfp.org. Above all, what is needed is far-sighted planning. The poor are suffering from the energy decisions of the rich. It is to our own self-interest and a political necessity to respond to this moral challenge.

—**PHYLLIS EHRENFELD**, President of the National Service Conference of the AEU & NSC Representative to the UN

—**DR. SYLVAIN EHRENFELD**, IHEU Representative to the UN





Sunday Programs in June “The Platform”



The Ethical Culture Society of Bergen County offers a different Platform program every Sunday. Please note that Platform program times will *change* for the summer. All are welcome.

June 1, 11:00 am: Round Table Discussion

Moderator: **Bob Gordon**, President, Bergen ECS

Bob will lead an exchange of thoughts on current news and issues — local, national and/or international — and maybe concepts and ideals. Attendees decide.

June 8, 11:00 am: Graduation: Rite of Passage

Please join us in honoring Sam Rosenblum, son of Elaine Fondiller and Daniel Rosenblum, and Fred Stevenson, son of Valarie Astor and Tyler Stevenson, as they go through their “rites of passage” ceremony marking their graduation from the Ethical Culture Society’s Sunday School.

June 15, 11:00 am: Cocooned No More: Arab and Muslim Americans Unveiled

Interviewer: **Dr. Joseph Chuman**, Leader, Bergen ECS

Interviewee: **Dr. Aref Assaf** of the American Arab Forum

Presenter: **Terri Karp**

Dr. Joseph Chuman will interview Dr. Aref Assaf of the American Arab Forum.

June 22, 10:30 am: Socrates on Sunday

Facilitator: **Rob Cantor**, Member, Bergen ECS

Welcome to Socrates Café, the place to be if you are interested in engaging in stimulating discussion. Topics are chosen by those attending.

June 29, 10:30 am: Maxed Out America: Now What?

Facilitators: **Theresa Forsman** and **Leigh Roumila**, Members, Bergen ECS

“Maxed Out America: Now What?” continues along the theme of a 2007 summer platform. In it, we will discuss the philosophies particularly espoused in the three books: *Maxed Out: Hard Times in the Age of Easy Credit*, by James D. Scurlock; *Voluntary Simplicity: Toward a Way of Life That Is Outwardly Simple, Inwardly Rich*, by Duane Elgin; and *Your Money or Your Life: Transforming Your Relationship with Money and Achieving Financial Independence*, by Joe Dominguez. Not necessary to read these books, although they’re certainly interesting reading.

The Ethical Culture Society of Bergen County welcomes people of all races, ethnic origins, religious backgrounds, and sexual orientations. The Society has a barrier-free front entrance.

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

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