



The Ethical Humanist

The Newsletter of The Ethical Humanist Society of Long Island

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Comment:

From Our Religious Director



Calvin Dame.

On January 16th the invited speaker for our Platform was Cynthia Sucich who is the Director of Communications for the Interfaith Nutrition Network, commonly referred to as the INN. The INN, as I expect most of you know, runs a soup kitchen. Last spring when this Platform topic was suggested, I heard some resistance, "Oh, we always do the INN!" So, I thought this might be a Platform I could miss. I've visited soup kitchens, after all, helped at soup kitchens, given to soup kitchens, talked about soup kitchens. I know that there is hunger in our communities; what more did I need to know?

Turns out it was among the best Platforms I've attended. It was informative, moving, thought provoking and challenging. Just like a Platform should be, I thought!

First, the facts, which many of you may already know: the INN serves meals for *eight thousand* people each week in a network of nineteen soup kitchens, provides for *ninety* people in three emergency shelters and *twenty five* families and *nine* single veterans in long term housing.

But it wasn't facts that made the program, it was the singular gifts of the speaker, Cynthia Sucich. Ms. Sucich was friendly and engaging, by turns amusing and serious. And mostly, she was a great story teller. It is easy, she reminded us, to drive by poverty and not see it. It is easy to look the other way.

The people who use our services are our guests, and we are grounded in this principle: that everyone who walks in our door be treated

with dignity and respect, Ms. Sucich said.

And, she reminded us, each of our guests has a story. The person you see pushing a grocery cart? They may have three Olympic medals in that cart. It has happened.

Nobody wakes, she said, and wakes up one morning and thinks, "Today I'm going to start going to a soup kitchen." People do not choose poverty, people are thrust into poverty by events. And each person has a story, and each of those stories, as we come to know them, can remind us that we are more alike than unlike, that it is circumstance and not worthiness that dictates where we might be eating.

Ms. Sucich's address was a gift, for me and I expect for others who were in attendance. Her gift was to connect us to our common humanity and to reawaken our compassion. It is easy to be overwhelmed; it is easy to become inured to the needs around us. It is a gift to be able to say, "I can help!"

I know that EHSLSI has supported the INN over the years, and I felt a renewed resolve to contribute. The CEP is still collecting winter gloves and hats. Ms. Sucich said, "Stop by the dollar store, five pairs of gloves will keep five pairs of hands warm!" And on March 19 I'll join the CEP to attend an open house at the INN.

I'm still thinking about that Platform, still feeling connected, still thinking of ways to help. I'm glad I decided to attend.

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HAVE YOU MAILED IN YOUR 2011 PLEDGE OR DONATION TO THE EHSLSI?



Joan Bader honored with Society's Neufeld Award



Joan Beder Presented with Muriel Neufeld Award



On January 9, 2011, Dr. Joan Beder was presented with the Muriel Neufeld Award for her long years of service to the Ethical Humanist Society, and honored at a luncheon immediately following

the presentation. The Muriel Neufeld Award, the highest honor bestowed by the EHSLI, is awarded to long time members who have made significant contributions to the Society. Dr. Beder became only the fourth person selected as a Neufeld Award recipient in the sixty year history of the Society. In over thirty years of membership, Joan has served as Board President, Vice President, Lay Leader, and contributed to numerous Society Committees. She was also a long time member of the AEU's Leadership Training Committee. Her contributions to the Society cannot be overstated and this honor is well deserved.

CEP NEWS



Ellen Braunstein, Director of Religious Education

In this cold snowy first month of 2011, the CEP has joined the larger EHS community to light candles of Hope, and Love on 1/9 and to listen to an inspired talk by Cynthia Sucinch about 28 years of outstanding service given by the INN for countless needy Long Island people. We have made new year's resolutions, planned for our Darwin Day science fair projects and begun rehearsing a Dr. M.L. King skit that we hope to present to the 2/6 platform. In addition, we'll continue discussing our reactions to President Obama's 1/12 speech at Tucson and the four COA students will continue their separate sessions for their Coming Of Age projects.

Please join us 3/19 and one other Saturday, (8:30/12:00 date TBA) when we expect to return to the M. Brennan INN for actual volunteer work. Also please continue to contribute hats, scarves mittens, gloves, personal care items, towels, non perishable food and even other household goods (small appliances, etc.) to bring to the INN.

YES Update

Since getting back from the National YES Conference in Chicago, our teen group has been laying low and getting ready for the months ahead. We held our annual YES Alumni Potluck Fun night on Thanksgiving weekend, which was a very fun night! Otherwise we have been planning for our annual YES Platform, to be held on March 6th. This year's topic will be on gender and sexual identity. As always, you can look forward to a multi-media presentation that gives the teens' perspective on a major social issue. We also plan to be involved in Darwin Day, the Teen Art, Music and Poetry Festival, and of course the annual YES Pasta Dinner on May 21st.

Upcoming CEP Events

- 1) - 2/6 - Dr. M.L. King Jr. skit performance at the platform
- 2) - 2/20 - Darwin Day Science Fair - intergenerational
- 3) - 3/13 - CEP guest speaker environmental advocate, radio show host, Patti Woods - will help us brainstorm our Earth Day project and the adult community is invited to join us.
- 4) - 3/19 - SATURDAY, 11:00/12:00 - 'Fundraiser' visit to the Mar Brennan INN (10 minutes from EHS)

JANUARY BOARD MINUTES

1) The Sprintzen's will be hosting a party on Sunday February 13, at 2:00 p.m. to welcome recent newcomers to the Society.

2) Felicia Madjedi brought to the Board, a letter which she wishes some of us to read and consider, regarding her feelings about her activities at EHS. It was decided that three Board members and Calvin will consider her letter.

3) The Website Workers (Liz, Alison, Tara) demonstrated some of the work which they have done in the past months. It was

unanimously agreed that it really looks great

4) Water Tower work to be done will require use of a bit of our EHS land for a while, for supplies and storage. Wayne will lead any negotiations with Garden City Water.

5) Financials and 2011 budget were discussed. Classification of restricted funds as "assets" is necessary because the Society must oversee these monies. They are a part of the calculation of the budget, although restricted in use; checks to these funds come to EHS, and we are responsible

for such oversight. The budget was approved by the Board, and will be presented for voting at the General Membership meeting January 30th.

6) Jim brought up the use of the building for teenage concerts. We shall have to think about additional oversight, by perhaps another responsible Board member

7) Tara discussed additional activities of the YES group, eg., a monthly activity joining with the other members. In January they will work with Ethical Friends of Children to provide a new crib, equipped by all of us with small extra donations on Sundays.

SOCIAL ACTION

The Ethical Society has purchased a crib for Ethical Friends of Children, and we created an "interactive crib" (a large red bin) that will remain out in the lobby for the next several Sundays. We are asking members to bring in donations to fill up the crib. Ongoing needs include: cribs, strollers, car seats, children's clothing, diapers, and more. Let's make a big push to help out families in need! For more information on Ethical Friends of Children or donations, contact Jim at 516-798-8525.

Save the date for Thursday, February 10th from 6-8pm, when the Long Island Coalition for the Homeless (one of our building's tenants) presents their annual "Have a Heart for the Homeless" candlelight vigil to raise awareness about the homeless and the great need for affordable housing in our area. They will also be collecting new/unused baby items, non-perishable food, cleaning supplies and toiletries to distribute to LI's homeless and at-risk families. The event will be at Farmingdale College's Plaza and Multi-Purpose Room (Roosevelt Hall).

Our Society was listed as a supporter of a peace rally that was held at Hempstead High School on January 19th. The rally was organized by Sergio Argueta of S.T.R.O.N.G. Youth, who spoke at the YES Pasta Dinner two years ago. Rather than use "peace" to mean no war overseas, here peace meant ending violence on the streets of Long Island. Over 1000 young people and members of the public attended the rally. The program was truly powerful, with over a dozen young speakers telling their personal stories on the negatives of gang violence. Many told stories of family members who had died, while others told of their plight to overcome time spent in jail or near-death experiences. Though many of the speakers mentioned the perceived glory and appeal of joining a gang, the message was that animosity through these created differences is senseless and only leads to violence, prison and death. The program featured a model County jail cell, while images of Martin Luther King, Jr. and Gandhi also graced the stage with quotes, respectively, saying: "Forgiveness is not an occasional act. It is a permanent attitude," and "Non-violence is not for cowards, it is for the brave, the courageous."

The Ethical Players present the Nobel Prize winner Harold Pinter's most controversial and compelling play:

THE HOMECOMING

at The Ethical Humanist Society of Long Island
38 Old Country Road
Garden City, NY 11530
516 741-7304

Saturday, June 11, 18, 25 at 7:30 PM
Sunday, June 12, 19 at 2:30 PM

Donation--\$20

Directed by Ken Schwartzman

Cast (in alphabetical order)

Larry Bellman
Judy Rosemarin
Ken Schwartzman
John Torres
Lance Wangel

AROUND THE AEU

5) - 4/24 - Earth Day - intergenerational Spring Fest

On January 16th, the **AEU** held a Strategic Planning Meeting at the New York Society. The purpose of this meeting was to discuss ways in which the AEU could better help member Societies in the future. Almost 30 members and Leaders of Ethical Societies from around the NYC area participated in the discussions.

On January 16th, the **Ethical Culture Society of Westchester** held their annual Day of Deeds, which featured an Environmental Fair after the Platform talk given by Colin Beavan. Colin is the founder and Executive Director of the No Impact Project, an international environmental non-profit dedicated to empowering citizens to make choices which better their lives and lower their environmental impact.

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

Simply put, we need your help. We need helpers for Darwin Day, the Teen Music, Art, and Poetry Festival, and we need backstage assistance for a play. Most importantly, we need a new Editor for the Ethical Humanist, the monthly newsletter of the EHSLI. If you can help out, please let Phyllis know.

OUR TIMES COFFEEHOUSE – February 18th

BURNING BRIDGES CLEARY

Burning Bridget Cleary took form on St. Patty's day of '06 when Genevieve Gillespie joined forces with the father-daughter duo, Lou and Rose Baldino. The combination sparks a blaze of Celtic sound that is perceived way beyond the sum of its parts! The girls front the band with their fiery fiddles, bringing a lively flair of youthful intensity and exuberance to traditional tunes. Lou's guitar bestows the dynamic rhythm and bass end, tastefully embellished with distinctive chording. Canadian native, Peter Trezzi, completes this compelling combination with the beat of the African djembe.

Weaving in some choice vocal numbers and building the energy with some spirited stepdancing, Burning Bridget Cleary has wowed packed audiences at the Scottish-Irish Fest in Green Lane (2006 and 2007), the Celtic Classic (2006, 2007, 2009, 2010), the 2007 Celtic Winter Classic, the Mayfair Festival of the Arts (2008, 2009, 2010), the Spring Gulch Folk Festival (2008), the Shawnee Mountain Celtic Fest (2008), The Philadelphia Folk Festival (2009), and the Tin Angel (2009), and many more popular venues. Rose and Genna met seven years ago at Granny McCarthy's Irish music sessions in Bethlehem PA- both have been first-place trophy winners in the Celtic Classic fiddle competitions. Their debut CD, Catharsis, was released in September, 2006. Their second production, "Everything is Alright", was released in November 2008, and won "2009 Album of the Year" on Boston-based CelticRadio.net.

EVENTS WITH CALVIN

The Wednesday Brown Bag Lunch: What with weather, travel and illness, January has been a challenge for the Wednesday lunch, though we have had some good discussions. This coming month, I have another commitment on February 2, a discussion leader and topic will be announced. February 9 we'll take a look at Creationism as Science. February 16th participants are invited to bring a poem that has particular significance. On February 23rd we'll discuss an ethical dilemma. Plan to join us! Calvin

The Ethics Cafe: Discussions are underway with Barnes & Nobles about moving the Ethics Cafe to their site. More news as it unfolds! Until further notice we'll plan to meet at the Society. On **February 9** we will use Paul Krugman's January 14 NYT's article "A Tale of Two Moralities:" to discuss fiercely competing ideas of government and taxes.

You can read the article at:
<http://www.nytimes.com/2011/01/14/opinion/14krugman.html?scp=6&sq=paul%20krugman%20column&st=cse>.



Why We Joined EHSLI The Stanleys

I was raised in a reformed Jewish family and went to the local temple and attended Sunday school there for 6 years. I loved the folklore of the bible and the ritual of the ceremonies and prayers. I loved the music and the songs. But I had a few issues as well; I never liked that “chosen people” stuff. I had a whole lot of questions, one being why the Jews didn’t believe in Jesus when it seemed to me that most of the world did believe in him.

My mother, whom I love very much, was quite disturbed by my questions. She told me it was “anti-Semitic to ask that question. But as a child, fierce with “Christmas Envy” I wanted to know why the Jews didn’t believe what seemed to be what the majority of the world, or at least my world believed. I didn’t realize until I became a teacher that asking questions was good, a sign of intelligence.

I spent much of the time in my twenties and thirties being very turned off by religion. I saw religion was the cause of all the world’s wars and

prejudices. I dabbled in New Age stuff, like crystals and numerology. I even had a “past life regression.” Native American folklore appeared to make the most sense to me, take care of the earth and each other. But I did not know of any tribe I could join.

When Chris asked me to marry him, I accidentally found EHS. It was 1995 and we wanted to find a meaningful ceremony for our wedding day. Since he was raised as Catholic and I was raised Jewish, we were looking to marry and start a family and I guess we wanted a congregational community for Gabriel.

I had passed this place over hundreds of times, back and forth to work and I had no idea what our green sign meant; for some reason a Humanist society reminded of the Humane society, as in the ASPCA.

The first time I was here was for a meeting of the Nassau Gem and Mineral Club, who had rented the building, I picked up the pamphlets and when I returned home, I showed Chris the brochures I had picked up and exclaimed, “I’ve found what we were looking for.” One would think this would be great way to attract new members, but apparently not.

In 1998, David Harmon married us in an incredibly moving ceremony which many of our friends still speak about. Since Chris and I have friends and family from many different culture and backgrounds,

David’s choice of poetry and quotes were meaningful to everyone. We started coming regularly shortly after that.

What convinced Chris and I to join was the YES group and the various other youth programs that has been available here. Fourteen years ago, when we joined, we attended a platform that the YES group sponsored. I don’t remember what the platform was about. We were so impressed with these young adults; teens who were so intelligent, creative, musical, scientific and ethical! Chris and I wanted to raise a child like these young people.

An interesting outcome of membership has been the incredible opportunities we’ve had to grow and learn; experiences I wouldn’t have experienced. I’ve been reading and discussing ideas that have really helped me grow intellectually, emotionally and spiritually. I’ve attended workshops and activities that helped sharpen my larger, life’s view, to figure out my “guiding star.” I’ve done a platform talk twice. I was in two professional plays, thanks to of Ken Schwartzman’s encouragement and influence. I never thought I would be brave enough to do either of those things.

Each month we will try to publish a member article on how and why they joined EHSLI. Please email Phyllis with your story.

EHSI PLATFORM SCHEDULE

February – June 2011

February

- 6 Journalist from LI Press: *Growing Up Gay*
- 13 Calvin Dame: *How Can I Help?*
- 20 Dr. Victor Schuster: *How Science Works*
- 27 Favorite Songs: Sunday school, FES, Members

March

- 6 YES Group presentation
- 13 Samantha Fredrickson, Esq., Director, NYCLU/Nassau
- 20 Calvin Dame
- 27 Abby Kenigsberg: *Media Ethics*

April

- 3 Calvin Dame
- 10 Dianna Coleman, Long Island Activist
- 17 Dr. David Harmon
- 24 Earth Day Celebration

May

- 1 Founders Day Celebration
- 8 Calvin Dame
- 15 Dr. David Sprintzen
- 22 CEP – Coming of Age Ceremony
- 29 TBA

June

- 5 Recognition Day Celebration
- 12 Calvin Dame
- 19 Closing Sunday

Check other Society sponsored events online at:

<http://www.meetup.com/Ethical-Humanist-Society-of-Long-Island>

DARWIN DAY – A CELEBRATION OF SCIENCE FOR ALL AGES

February 20, 2011 at EHSI 11-3pm

Abo

The Ethical Humanist
 The Ethical Humanist Society of Long Island
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