



# The Ethical Humanist

The Newsletter of The Ethical Humanist Society of Long Island

Vol. 61, No. 8 -- APRIL 2011

## From Our Religious Director



*Calvin Dame  
Religious Director, EHSLI*

It has been a year since I first began to work with and get to know folks at EHSLI, and one result of that is, having experienced them last year, my anticipation of the the Society events of the next three months is deeper and richer: the Teen Arts Festival, the Spring Festival a.k.a. :Earth Day, Founders Day, Recognition Day, the Ethical Players! I'm excited because I've shared most of them once already and have an appreciation of what gifts each brings to the life of the society.

And I am excited by the planning that is also underway for next year! A decision by Board will extend Sunday programming through the summer months, and there is considerable excitement gathering for an all society retreat in the fall! Both of these are a sign of health and enthusiasm for our community.

There are many ways that I am more comfortable than a year ago: I've gotten to know more people, I have a better sense of the rhythms of the year, I have a deeper appreciation of the strengths of this community!

There is still much to learn, still I am still pleased with the opportunity to work with you and to work for the values we share as Ethical Humanists.

And while I have, in many ways, settled in, as my position here is half-time we are all still exploring what that means and how best to use my time and experience. This question is kept in mind in conversations with the Board and with my Advisory Committee, Linda Napoli, Mel Haber and Jim Lo Presti. I think we are doing well, but if you have any thoughts or questions on this, talk with me or with one of the committee members.

One area that could use a mention is pastoral care. My seminary training included a hospital based Clinical Pastoral Education unit and I was an on call Chaplain at Maine General Hospital. And, of course, I provided pastoral care and pastoral counseling in years as a parish minister. As this year has unfolded, more people have made use of this aspect of my work, still I thought it important to mention. This is a part of my work with you.

When might you talk with your Religious Director? When something upsetting happens, when you are knocked off balance by any of life's contingencies. When you are ill or when someone you love is ill.

When you are facing a difficult decision, or when a big change looms. Or, when you know of someone in the circle of the society who might benefit from a sympathetic ear. Or when you just want to talk, even if you are not sure why. Let me know, I'd be happy to talk with you.

## EVENTS WITH CALVIN

### Ethics Café

**April 13, 2011:** "Does Evil Exist?"

Spinoza said that the difference between good and evil is merely one of personal inclinations. Is this true? How do we understand evil?

### The Wednesday Lunchtime Discussion Group schedule:

**April 6, 2011:** Dangers to Democracy in the Arab World

**April 13, 2011:** Does Evil Exist?

**April 20, 2011:** Spring Poems

**April 27, 2011:** An Ethical Dilemma

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**IN THIS ISSUE**

From The Religious Director.....	1
Events with Calvin.....	1
Gabriel Stanley.....	2
CEP News.....	2
Yes Pasta Dinner.....	2
YES Update.....	3
Board Minutes.....	3
The Homecoming.....	4
Our Times Coffeehouse.....	4
Platform news.....	4
Founders Day.....	4
Spice Events.....	5
EHSLI Fall retreat.....	6
Platform Schedule.....	6

**HAVE YOU MAILED IN YOUR 2011 PLEDGE TO EHSLI? YOUR SUPPORT IS NEEDED FOR OUR SURVIVAL.**

## Ethical Humanist Society of

### Long Island

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Affiliated with the American Ethical Union, a Federation of Ethical Culture Societies

*The Ethical Humanist Society of Long Island is a religious community dedicated to fostering humanist beliefs and values and to improving the human condition through individual and collective action.*

## The Ethical Humanist

Page 2

Save the date for Saturday, May 21st for the 17th Annual YES Pasta Dinner! We are very excited to invite Society members and friends to the YES group's premier event for the Society, and we're hoping for a HUGE turn out this year! The event includes a tasty buffet meal prepared by YES members and volunteers, a keynote speaker from a social justice organization that relates to the group's topic of gay rights, and great entertainment. The dinner starts at 6:00pm and the event is \$12 for adults and \$8 for



### YES PLATFORM March 2011

Breaking Barriers:  
Gay Teens in America



*Ellen Braunstein, Director of Religious Education*

### CEP NEWS

We were impressed by the Mary Brennan INN's large, thoughtful scope of operations, attention to detail and overarching respect and care on our 3/19 'Friendraiser' tour. Cynthia Succinth, (Platform speaker) greeted us warmly, as did teens and other volunteers. In addition to our three hefty bags of clothes, food and personal care items, we learned that children and adult books and household items are also helpful. For those of us with busy Monday - Friday work schedules, occasional volunteering at several soup kitchens on school holiday weeks and one Saturday per month is fine. We can also coordinate cooking a homemade dinner at our homes for 25 to deliver to a men's shelter (a Thanksgiving plan?) Please contact me or the INN directly for more info.

Our 3/20 guest speaker, Patricia Wood (environmental educator and advocate) zoomed in on the dangers of

plastics that inundate our planet. Before you purchase another plastic bottle of water (rather than reuse a metal thermos), know that unrecycled ones are polluting our USA landfills with two and a half million containers an hour! One recycled bottle provides six hours for a sixty watt light bulb and better yet, plastic, a new product made entirely out of a whole (non genetically modified) corn plant, may hopefully begin to replace plastic.

### Gabriel Stanley

For my **Coming of Age** project for next year, I will be collecting school supplies from now until the end of the school year to donate to the INN for children that will need them for the next school year. There will be a list of needed items on the welcome table. If you have any donations, please put them in the box in the lobby.

**The needed items are:** No. 2 Pencils, Pens, Highlighters, Markers, 24-crayon packs, Pencil Cases, Pencil Sharpeners, Erasers, Scissors, Glue Sticks, Marble Notebooks, Loose Leaf Paper, Spiral Notebooks, Binders, Dividers, Rulers, Pocket Folders, Calculators, and Student Planners.

## MARCH BOARD MINUTES

**PRESENT:** David Sprintzen, Wayne Outten, Tara Klein, Joan Beder, Alison Pratt, Carole Smith Pincus, Jim LoPresti, Deborah Strube

**GUESTS:** Calvin Dame, Daniel Harding

**1. YES trip to New Orleans:** Over the Spring break, our YES group will be going to New Orleans, along with the Washington, DC YES group, to help Katrina victims rebuild housing. We agreed to fund our YES group \$650

**2. Garden City tower:** Starting in the spring, Garden City will use the area now covered with grass and trees next to the water tower, which is our property. Wayne spoke to a representative from Garden City and asked him to agree to pave the area after they complete their work; we could use the paved area for an additional parking lot. It's likely we will get what we want.

**3. Snow removal:** In the fall, we'll revisit the high amount we currently pay for snow removal--about \$1,000 per storm--to see if we could a cheaper rate.

**4. Review of our budget:** We asked what the \$12,735 funds transfer amount was for.

*[A day after the Board meeting, Don told us that amount was for a wire transfer to the Sema Academy from their funds, not from an EHSLI account.]*

**5. Use of the building:** At a recent concert in the auditorium, there was damage to our property, and a fight between concertgoers occurred. In the future, to prevent damage to our property and reputation, we will require those who rent our property for heavy-metal-type concerts pay for two security guards. *[A day after the Board meeting, Don told us that the cost to renters will be an extra \$50 per hour starting an hour before the concert to one hour after. Phyllis has a company for this.]*

**6. Founders Day:** The Sprintzens will be honored on May 1 this year. Deborah Strube will ask for volunteers to handle invitations and fliers.

**7. Summer platforms :** We agreed to have platforms during the summer. At least four people said they would do platforms: David, Joan, Carol, and Calvin. Calvin volunteered to coordinate presenters/discussion

leaders.

**8. Fall retreat:** We want to have a fall retreat on the last weekend in September(9/30-10) for all members. Calvin and Tara will coordinate getting th place and handling all arrangements. *[A day after our meeting, Tara wrote that she and Calvin booked us at the Pocono Environmental Education Center for that weekend.]*

**9. Attracting new members:** We are currently doing good things: we have a great new Web site and our advertising is comprehensive. Also, we have been doing a good job greeting and tracking visitors.

**10. Committees:** The Caring committee needs to be invigorated. In the future, Carol will be assisted by both Jim and Calvin. The Platform committee needs to reconvene to improve Sunday platforms.

**11. Open House:** Alison will request money to cover expenses for an Open House meeting in August. Calvin will work on organizing this event, which is a follow up for visitors who come to our Society. It will occur on the Sunday in August that Calvin delivers a platform.



Tara Klein, YES Advisor

### YES NEWS

On March 6th, the YES Group presented their annual platform to the Society, titled "**Breaking Barriers: Gay Teens in America.**" Dan, MacKenzie, Mayra, and Ryan participated in the platform, and worked hard to put on a strong program. They covered gender and sexual identity

and the struggles teens face by being different, including extensive sharing about their personal experiences in their schools. Other topics included statistics on gay youth, including high suicide and alcohol abuse levels; legislation such as the repeal of Don't Ask Don't Tell and gay marriage laws throughout the country; bullying stories that have led way to viral video campaigns such as "FCKH8" and "It Gets Better"; and the positive influence of fame and pop culture. The teens also created a short video documentary interviewing teenagers at the mall to get different perspectives and experiences with gay teens on Long Island. The group concluded with some action items that you can still do: first, go to [pflag.org](http://pflag.org) and sign the "straight for equality pledge," located on the right side of the screen. Second, join us at the LI Pride Parade and rally on Sunday, June 12th in Huntington. The rally starts at noon and the parade starts at 1pm. Finally, stay tuned for action on legalizing gay marriage in New York State this year!

. *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

**TEEN ART, MUSIC AND POETRY FESTIVAL**

**April 16, 2011 1 – 4:30pm**

**A benefit for Ethical Friends of Children**

**Event is free! Suggested donation: \$5 or a baby item**

*The Ethical Humanist Society of Long Island  
38 Old Country Road  
Garden City, NY 11530*

**VOLUNTEERS NEEDED**

Simply put, we need your help. We need helpers for 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**

Our Times Coffeehouse will be at the Ethical Humanist Society of LI on **Friday**, April 15<sup>th</sup> @ 8pm. The featured artist is **Mad Agnes**. *Mad Agnes's harmony-driven performance offers an eclectic mix of contemporary singer-songwriter material with influences of classical, Celtic, folk/rock, PDQ Bach, and a touch of street theatre. Their lyrics, vocal intricacies and instrument prowess make their music "music for thinking people."* For more information visit [www.ourtimescoffeehouse.org](http://www.ourtimescoffeehouse.org).

**TATTOO BLUE**

Tattoo Blue, a local rock blues band, was scheduled to perform a benefit concert for EHSLI on March 26<sup>th</sup>. Unfortunately, Hal Spergel, lead guitarist for the group, suddenly became ill and passed away a week before the concert. Our heartfelt sympathies go out to his family and many friends.

**PLATFORM NEWS**

EHSLI will have a full schedule of Platforms this summer. In past years only Colloquy was held throughout the year. In the next few weeks we will have a calendar prepared listing the summer Platform speakers. We think it will be a great way to spend your summer Sunday mornings.

**FOUNDERS DAY**

**May 1, 2011**

It is the time of season at Ethical Society, for our Founders Day celebration where we will be honoring two very special people - David and Alice Sprintzen. Please let Phyllis know if you will be attending.

**Yes to New Orleans**

For the first time this April, the YES group will join the Washington Ethical Society on their annual **Spring Break trip to New Orleans**, where we will help rebuild homes that were destroyed in Hurricane Katrina in the St. Bernard area! We are very excited! Thanks to the generosity of some of our members, we collected \$210 during our platform that will help finance the trip. If you'd like to make a donation, please contact Tara at [YES@ehsli.org](mailto:YES@ehsli.org). Any little bit helps!

## Spring Forward to ....SPICE Events

The following are the new, exciting, and the great, "tried & true" SPICE events:

### Facebook lesson & tutorial:

Does it drive you crazy that you don't know how to use Facebook for personal or professional use? Please join us, and if you have a laptop bring it, & learn how to set up Facebook, during the presentation. There will be a break when coffee and cake will be served.

**Date-** April 2, 2011

**Time-** 3 P.M.

**Hosts-** Linda Joe and Lisa Drewucki

**Number of participants-** unlimited

**Cost-** \$15

### A SPECIAL MUSEUM TOUR and ATTENDING A PARADE

We start the day with a private tour of the New-York Historical Society's permanent collection of American culture. Some of the items we'll see in include original Tiffany lamps, early American furniture, American sculpture, a sampling of watercolors by John James Audubon and a nice selection of the museum's extensive collection of American ephemera. If time and interest allow, we can also have a tour of the Grateful Dead or other exhibits and then break for lunch at a local restaurant. Your admission the museum will be provided. The cost of lunch is on your own.

For those so inclined, after lunch we'll travel to 6<sup>th</sup> Avenue and 56<sup>th</sup> Street or so to watch the Tartan Day Parade. This annual celebration of Scottish-Americans is one of the smaller parades in New York. However, there are excellent bagpipe bands, marching West Highland terriers and an occasional dancer or two. The parade is free and a must if you like bagpipe music.

Alan and Marianne will provide specific directions to the museum and meeting place about a week before the event.

**Date-** April 9, 2011

**Hosts-** Maryanne and Alan Cohen

**Cost-** \$12

**Time and Place-** to be announced

### A SPECIAL BOOK DISCUSSION

Back by **popular demand:** Arthur will read and hold a discussion based on two additional short stories from his collection "The Harder Right," which be accessed at [arthurdobrin.wordpress.com](http://arthurdobrin.wordpress.com)

**Date-** Saturday May 7, 2011

**Time-** 2 P.M.

**Hosts-** Lyn and Arthur Dobrin

**Number of Participants-** 10 adults

**Cost-** \$15

### The Music of Harold Arlen

Harold Arlen wrote the music for many famous songs, and yet his name is not nearly as famous as other composers of his time. In this Spice, I will try to justify why his name should be better remembered. Think of such songs as "Over the Rainbow," "Come Rain or Come Shine," "I've Got the World on a String," "It's Only a Paper Moon," and "Stormy Weather." The music for all those songs was written by Harold Arlen. To sing them, I'll have such people as Judy Garland, Lena Horne, Frank Sinatra, Ella Fitzgerald and Ethel Waters. You'll even get to hear Harold Arlen, himself, sing a few of his songs. After the program, we'll have coffee, dessert, and scintillating conversation.

**Date:** TBA

**Time:** 7:30 pm

**Maximum:** 10 people

**Hosts:** Mel and Barbara Haber

**Phone:** 718-279-3143

**Cost:** \$15

The SPICE Committee is very pleased to have arranged these spring events. Please join us for as many of these events as possible, as it is a wonderful way to socialize with fellow Society members. You will have the ability to learn and expand your horizons, and help contribute much needed money. (Fall events will be announced in the near future.)

**SPICE Rules:** After the platform there will be sign up sheets on the bulletin board. You can always sign up by calling Phyllis at the Society Office at (516) 741-7304. Note: When you sign up for an event, you are pledging to the SPICE committee that you are donating a certain amount of money to the Society. No refunds will be issued unless an event is canceled or a new date is selected for which you are unavailable. If an event has a limited number of people that can attend, and there is waiting list, you can also get a refund, if requested. If the SPICE events have unlimited participants, non Ethical members are cordially welcome. If however, there is a limited amount of people that can attend, non Ethical members are welcome, only if space allows.

Pat Spencer, Alice Sprintzen, and Lorraine Abrams

