



The Ethical Humanist

The Newsletter of The Ethical Humanist Society of Long Island



Vol. 62, No. 8 -- April 2012

From Our Religious Director



Calvin Dame
Religious Director, EHS LJ

Self Help: the Felix Adler Version. In March, with Linda Napoli's help, I ran an orientation course for those new to Ethical Humanism. We structured session which were helpful to participants and which, I think, will serve as a foundation for future study.

As I prepared for the sessions I was struck a number of times by what I have come to see as Felix Adler's (Ethical Culture founder) particular version of self help. Adler, most of us know, was particularly concerned with the practical aspects of religion or philosophy. "Deed Before Creed" is the motto he bequeathed to us. But any reading of his work makes it abundantly clear that he was concerned with individual growth, as well. Not quite a New Ager, he was none-the-less focused on the individual and the improvement of our character.

What is particular to his vision, and out of step with so much that passes for self-improvement, in his time and in ours, is his insistence that our own growth as human beings is always in relation to other human beings. Adler said, "We grow in the attempt to help others grow. To care for anyone else enough to make their problems one's own, is ever the beginning of one's real ethical development."

There is probably no better window on Adler's powerful vision of human potential than his oft quoted instruction to "Act so as to elicit in others the distinctive, unique qualities in them. Bring out what is uniquely best in their character and thereby bring out the best in yourself."

So, it is good to know that as Ethical Humanists we can proudly take our place in the marketplace of the self help and human potential movements that are so popular. We just have to keep in mind that in our version self help is centered in helping others.

— Calvin O. Dame, Religious Director

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HAVE YOU MAILED IN YOUR 2012 PLEDGE TO EHS LJ? OUR SURVIVAL DEPENDS ON YOU!

Events with Calvin

Wednesday Lunch Discussion Group

April 11: The complications of forgiveness
Lunch discussions begin at noon.

Ethics Café

April 11: The War on Women
The Ethics Café begins at 6:30 PM

Community Singing

April 18: For those who would just like to sing a bit, and want to help plan the Sunday Community Song.
Community Singing begins at 6:30 PM

Jan Damm's Clowns without Borders

April 15: Many of you know that Calvin's son, Jan Damm, is a professional circus performer and some of you may know that in September 2012 he travelled to Haiti with Clowns without Borders, bringing laughter, performing and teaching circus skills to children and youth workers. Following the Playback Theater Company's presentation, Jan will extend the theater flavor of the day with a circus performance. The performance will be free, of course, but he will accept donations to support his upcoming Clowns without Borders trip to Indonesia. Adult amusing and kid friendly. More at



<http://clownabroad.blogspot.com/>.
Performance begins at 1:00 PM

Kids In Deed



Many thanks to our parents and members who contributed to the bake sale we held on Darwin Day – and thanks to you hungry sugar-lovers who bought! We raised \$70 to donate to Sema Academy. We wrote letters and did some self-portraits for the students there, with the hope that we might receive a letter back as they tell us about their school experience. Jordan had the great idea of including a map of New York to show them where Garden City is.



Kira

We spent a lesson recently on philanthropy... a big word that literally means "love mankind" ("phil" = love; "anthro" = man). The children were quick to identify ways in which we can love mankind, through gifts of material things like food, clothing, toys, and books, through an attitude of respect, gratitude, and kindness to others, through the efforts we make to help others, and by bringing our individual skills to projects that can benefit other people. We were able to categorize these things as "time, talent, and treasure"—the three "T's" of philanthropy.



Ian

We then put together some gift bags to give to needy children to give to their mothers for Mother's Day. Each gift bag contained hotel-sized toiletries and a bracelet. The 20 bags will be donated to the Coalition Against Domestic Violence in Bethpage. They have children's counselors who will be able to distribute the bags to the children whose families are the most in crisis. I'd also like to thank "anonymous" who donated the toiletries, and who always has a kind heart.

We will have a busy April, except for April 8 when we are off. April 1 is the Spring Festival. On April 15 we will be in the audience with the Improv Theatre Group as they perform heritage stories. April 22 is our Bayside Marina Clean-up, and on April 29 we are hosting a voter registration drive in Hempstead.

For those of you who follow Twitter, I am now tweeting for the Kids In Deed class. Follow me [@KidsInDeed](https://twitter.com/KidsInDeed). It's a good way to get the word out beyond our four walls.

I was happy to welcome back Dora and Casey to a recent class—we haven't seen them for a while and hope they can come often. Our little class is growing! Meanwhile, Gabe, Jordan, Kristen, Deirdre, Ian, Kira, Rebecca, and Pauline are coming on a regular basis. Each child brings his or her own special light to the class. They are a wonderful group of kids.



Alison Pratt,
KIDS IN DEED Director



K.I.D.'s with gifts for needy children to give to their mothers for Mother's Day

YES!

You may not see them every week, but our teen group has been hard at work over the last few months, and it has really paid off. YES, which stands for Youth of Ethical Societies, presented the Sunday Meeting on March 4th with the title “YES We Can Be Equal.” With eleven teen speakers, a documentary film, multi-media presentations, topics including prisons, human trafficking, and privacy and free speech on the Internet; an ethical rap, and a teen musician; this was certainly an impressive Sunday Meeting.



Preparing the Presentation

The planning process began shortly after the New Year, when the teens brainstormed topics and ideas. They decided to continue with the theme from this year’s National YES Conference in Frost Valley of inherent human rights, with a starting-off point of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. From there they came up with a list of about a dozen issue areas that related to human rights, then narrowed it down to three and broke into groups. We spent some time during meetings discussing each issue, and then the teens did independent research to get their final presentations together. When we finally pieced it all together we found that we had such a wealth of information, and each presentation was detailed, personal, and in-depth.



Filming at the mall

On top of these pieces, the teens once again decided to create a short video documentary. They created a list of questions based on our topic, and traveled to Roosevelt Field Mall one Sunday to film unsuspecting shoppers. Un-

fortunately the mall security wasn’t too pleased with us this year and wouldn’t let us film (or stand) in the mall. We ended up going outside, and afterwards had an in-depth analysis on the legality and morality of what had happened. Ethics are all around us! We also filmed some Society members.



Setting up for the presentation

The content of the presentation can best be described in a transcription of the closing song, a rap written and performed by two of our teens, Reid Hetzel and Eric Morgenstern on page 6 of this newsletter.



YES Group after the presentation:

As a graduate of the YES program, I can testify that what makes this group special is that it is designed to foster leadership and build skills by letting the teens guide the direction and activities of their own group. YES is different from school: the advisor doesn’t lecture, but rather provides guidance and advice, and lets the teens think and explore for themselves. (What 9th grade teacher would so eagerly support their students when they ask to do an in-depth project on human trafficking? I’m not sure but my instinct says not many.) The success of our Sunday Meeting is a testament to the success of that model. The teens are so excited to be a part of this group, and they will continue to feel connected to the Ethical movement as they grow up.

Interested in YES? Contact us at YES@ehsli.org.



— Tara Klein, YES Adviser

Goings on at EHSIJ and Around

Spice Event — It's a Fun(d) Raiser: The High Line is now one of the most popular touring places in N.Y.C. & we are so fortunate to have Alan Cohen to lead us. Stroll the High Line and Chelsea **Saturday, April 21.** Meet at the 30th Street entrance, on the High Line (between 10th and 11th Avenues) at 10:30 AM (go upstairs to the High Line itself). **Hosts: Marianne and Alan Cohen.**

The High Line is New York City's newest and hippest park. This former elevated freight railroad line has been converted into a 1.4 mile or so walkway with interesting views, meadows, water features, beautiful plantings and numerous opportunities to people watch. We can stroll the High Line, stop to take pictures and admire the plantings, perhaps buy an ice cream or other snack. While part of the old rail bed (from 30th to 34th Streets) still awaits reconstruction as a park, we will walk from 30th Street to Gansevoort Street. When we are done strolling (we can stop and sit and ogle if we like) you may choose to spend the family fortune in a trendy fashion boutique, or we can all go out and get a burger. For those who want to spend more of the day in Manhattan, we can visit several art galleries in Chelsea.

The High Line is wheelchair accessible. It's a great family outing! The High Line is open to the elements, so please be prepared with a hat or sunscreen if you use them. There are water fountains (at least one musical one), or bring your own water; restroom facilities are available. If it is raining we will need to reschedule. Donation---\$15, Number of participants---unlimited. Contact Phyllis in the office to sign up for this exciting event. Contact Marianne and Alan at (212) 717-8332 or Marianne.Cohen@hholt.com with questions. The SPICE Committee is Pat Spencer, Alice Sprintzen & Lorraine Abrams.

The SPICE Committee is looking for volunteers to host a SPICE event in their home. It would be MUCH appreciated. If you have any ideas for SPICE events please e-mail Pat Spencer, Alice Sprintzen or Lorraine Abrams. Thanks.

Visit EHSIJ Online!

EHSIJ Website: <http://www.ehsij.org>

EHSIJ on Twitter: www.twitter.com/ehsij

K.I.D. on Twitter: www.twitter.com/KidsInDeed

EHSIJ on Meet-up:

<http://www.meetup.com/Ethical-Humanist-Society-of-Long-Island/>. This site lists a full schedule of our events. Support us by becoming an EHSIJ meet up member.

Leader emeritus Arthur Dobrin is blogging weekdays at arthurdobrin.wordpress.com

Photos — picasaweb.google.com/LIEthical

Sunday Meetings

April 1: Spring Festival

April 8: Calvin Dame

Setting out from Here

April 15: Playback Improv Theater Company will be performing "Immigration"

April 22: Poetry Readings by David Harmon, Ken Schwartzman, and Chris Stanley

April 29: Russell Neufeld

Long Island Gangs and the Death Penalty

Sunday Meetings begin at 11:00 AM

Sunday Colloquies begin at 9:30 AM

Teen Art, Music, & Poetry Festival: on March 31, 1—5 PM. You've never been? Come! We need YOU to attend and experience the wonderful talent that will be filling our hall with art and music. Please make every effort to be there, and bring a friend! It's a joyful experience. You can read a review of last year's festival at <http://gardencity.patch.com/articles/teen-arts-festival-at-the-ethical-humanist-society>.

Annual Food Drive: Members of the EHSIJ are collecting food items for **INN (Interfaith Nutrition Network)**. Please bring in non-perishable food items to the basket in the lobby.

Movie Group: The next movie group meeting will be Saturday, April 28, at 2:30 PM. The movies to be discussed TBA.

The Caring Connection: our commitment to taking care of those of us who are sick or in need. We encourage involvement from all, as this is core to who we are as Ethical Humanists.

Special Sunday Morning Event on April 15th: The Playback Improv Theater Company will be performing "Immigration" for the April 15th Sunday meeting of the EHSIJ. Their talented cast uses music, dance and improvisation to transfer the stories of the audience into theater. We have invited other interested Long Island organizations to join us and hope that all of you will bring guests. If you, your family, friends or neighbors were immigrants and can say a few words about the experience, it will make for a very exciting morning. The performance will begin at 11 AM. Refreshments to follow. Muriel Neufeld, Pat Spencer ---- Program Coordinators



Goings on continued on Pg. 5

The Biggest Secular Event in History

The Reason Rally Rocked: On Saturday, March 24th the biggest secular gathering ever took place on the National Mall in Washington D.C. An estimated 20,000 atheists, agnostics and sympathizers showed up on a rainy Saturday to hear a variety of interesting secular speakers, poets, comedians and musicians from the hilariously irreverent Tim Minchin to the more seriously studious Richard Dawkins. Several members of the EHSLSJ attended the rally.



Chris Stanley and Gabriel at the Reason Rally

The event's theme was that secular voters should make themselves more visible. According to recent polls, secular America amounts to 16% of the U.S. population and is the fastest growing "religious" denomination. However, the religious



The EHSLSJ contingent: Chris, Gabriel, Jordi, Bill, Marivic and Sylvia

right has grown more dominant in political discourse and there seems to be a sense among the general public that one needs religion to have morality. It is nearly impossible for an open atheist to get elected to public office and politicians still routinely dismiss atheists as "un-American." As humanists, whether religious or not, we know atheists can be as moral and ethical as theists. Our motto "Deed before Creed" is precisely a testament to that sentiment.

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More Goings on



Continued from page 4

Irving Sheraga passed away on March 15th. Ann and Irving were active members of the Ethical Society up until a few years ago when they could no longer drive and had no way of participating in the activities of the society, which they greatly missed. We are looking for volunteers to give Ann rides to the Sunday Ethical Society meetings some weeks. She lives in Syosset. If you are able to give her a ride, please contact Phyllis at Ethical-Society@optonline.net or call (516) 741-7304.

Thank you

Sponsor a Coffee Hour: for \$15 and, with advanced notice, have your name and message added to the Sunday Meeting bulletin! Please contact Phyllis at ethicalsociety@optonline.net.

Exercise Classes for Seniors: Classes for seniors are led by instructor Sue Salko. Classes meet 9:30 AM - 10:30 AM every Monday, Wednesday and Friday. Classes are geared to the needs of participants while addressing flexibility, balance, strength and endurance. Bring light weights, stretch bands (are available from instructor), wear comfortable clothing and sneakers. Suggested contribution: \$5 per class. For more information on class dates and times, email Sue at Sue.Salko@yahoo.com and for information about Sue, please visit her website: www.SueSalko.com.

Free Yoga Classes: led by Sylvia Silberger, Vinyasa-style yoga Wednesdays 5:30-6:45 PM and a Gentle/Restorative yoga Wednesdays 7-8:00 PM. Email Sylvia at matsbs@yahoo.com if you are interested in attending so that she can inform you of changes and cancelations. Please note that the times have been switched.

Ethical Friends of Children wish to thank **Marty Fink and the staff of Cardiovascular Medical Associates** of 975 Stewart Avenue, Garden City for holding a successful coat drive for us, we asked for their help and they readily responded. We are lucky to have such good neighbors.

An Ethical Rap

Written by Reid Hetzel and Eric Morgenstern

There are many things wrong
 In this strange planet
 Why don't you pick up a paper
 And read all about it,
 read all about it, read all about it

This raps gon' be tremendous
 But the prisons are horrendous
 People commit suicide
 We know that's bad, you and i,
 So Say goodbye cuz people die
 Now we see, eye to eye
 Something's gotta change
 And its not out of our range

There are many things wrong
 In this strange planet
 Why don't you pick up a paper
 And read all about it
 Read all about it, read all about it

now we go to trafficking,
 Such a big issue, its gon' make you cry
 Take a tissue!
 So many people gettin' sold
 So many kinds of every race, day to day, what
 to say, it ain't ok,
 OH!!!!!!!!!!!!

There are many things wrong
 In this strange planet
 Why don't you pick up a paper
 And read all about it
 Read all about it, read all about it

Lastly is the Internet
 A pretty new issue
 So many restrictions
 That We don't know what to do
 Employers check our statuses
 And schools can check our tweets,
 Music oft' gets pirated
 Cuz people need their beats

There are many things wrong
 In this strange planet
 Why don't you pick up a paper
 And read all about it
 Read all about it, read all about it

Yo

Ethical productionz in the house
 We'll be back soon
 Don't miss us too much
 Peace out, homies

Note from the Editor

Newsletter Editor: Sylvia Silberger

Please send suggestions for additions to future EHSIJ newsletters and comments to

Sylvia Silberger
 96 Vermont Avenue
 Hempstead, NY 11550
matsbs@yahoo.com



Submissions due by the 15th of the month for the next month's newsletter.



Sylvia Silberger and Bill Larsen
Yosemite National Park

March Board Meeting Minutes

ETHICAL HUMANIST SOCIETY OF LONG ISLAND MINUTES OF THE MARCH 7, 2012 BOARD MEETING

PRESENT: Don Morgenstern, Wayne Outten, Liz Seegert, Tara Klein, James LoPresti, Alison Pratt, Deborah Strube, Susan Feifer

ABSENT: Mel Haber, Carol Pincus

GUESTS: Sharon Stanley, Marriele Robinson of LIPC

1. **Power Up Communities:** Marriele Robinson from LIPC gave a presentation on the Power Up Communities campaign. The program offers home energy assessments and improvements with rebates and financing. Besides helping people get energy efficient homes, we can get a \$300 rebate for EHSIJ for each referral.

2. **Charity Walk:** Sharon Stanley presented plans for us to join with the Free Thought Movement/Foundation Beyond Belief in a charity walk on October 12, 2012. We have signed up as a team to raise money for Leukemia with other Humanist groups.

3. **Encouraging Members to Join AHA:** Sharon Stanley also discussed the value of our members joining the AHA so that EHSIJ can be listed as an AHA chapter and have access to their speakers.

4. **Finances:** The Board reviewed the monthly financial reports.

5. **Room Rentals:** The Board discussed the possibility that the Coalition for the Homeless would be moving out and the need to find new tenants.

6. **Heating System Repairs:** Don discussed the need for the replacement of the heating system boilers and the moving of the main gas line feeding the building. After discussion the Board approved having the repairs done by the cheaper of the two quotes received.

7. **Support for Choice:** The Board approved a motion to support the Reproductive Health Act and to join One Voice to Save Choice – a coalition of organizations supporting the Act. Susan and Pat will serve as liaisons.

8. **Social Action Committee:** The Board discussed the need to revitalize the Social Action Committee.

9. **K.I.D.:** Alison reported on the K.I.D.s program.

10. **YES:** Tara reported on the YES group and reviewed the YES Sunday Meeting that the teens gave on Human Rights.

11. **The Web:** Liz reported on IT and PR and how the hits on our website are up.

12. **Summer Schedule:** Calvin will begin to schedule the Summer Sunday Meetings.

Submitted by Don Morgenstern

The Biggest Secular Event in History, Continued

Continued from page 5

The point of the Reason Rally was that if more “closeted atheists” came out, atheists could not be dismissed as irrelevant and people would recognize their friends and neighbors who are atheists and are, in fact, moral.

Some of the speakers at the rally were incredibly poignant.



Sylvia Silberberg and Sharon Stanley come out

Two of the speakers I found most striking were Taslima Naseen and Nate Phelps. Taslima Nasreen spoke about her work for gender equality, human rights, her 18 year exile from her homeland of Bangladesh, and why she believes religion contributes to the ills she fights so hard against. Her exile itself was the will of religious extremists. Nate Phelps,

son of Fred Phelps, the leader of the infamous Westboro Baptist Church, the group that protests almost everything with inflammatory hateful signs, including soldiers’ funerals and sites of school killings, spoke about his journey to break away from his father — first finding less extreme versions of his religion and finally embracing atheism. Although the religions Taslima and Nate came from are not representative of all religion and there are many religions that hold the same humanist values of most of the atheists at the rally, one could understand through their talks how the dogma of religion can corrupt one’s values.

The rally received good media coverage before an afterwards. The day before I left NPR referred to it as the Atheists Woodstock and even Fox News acknowledged its existence. Overall, despite the rain, the rally was a wholly, but godless success.

— Sylvia Silberberg

Opt-Out of Paper Newsletter Mailings

To save resources and postage costs, we encourage you to email Sylvia at matsbs@yahoo.com if you would be satisfied with an email-only version of this newsletter rather than a paper copy.



Ethical Humanist Society of Long Island

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<http://www.ehsli.org>

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



*An Ethical Culture Society
Affiliated with
The American Ethical Union*

Create a Caring World

The Ethical Humanist

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