



# The Ethical Humanist

The Newsletter of The Ethical Humanist Society of Long Island

Vol. 62, No. 10 -- June 2012



Calvin Dame  
Religious Director, EHSLI

## From Our Religious Director

In June we come to the end of what we might think of as the regular year at the Ethical Humanist Society. Despite the fact that it would be hard to find a farmer amongst us, the rhythms that play through our lives are still strongly agrarian: we are inclined to break for the summer and then gather again in the fall!

As it happens, we have made adjustments to those inclinations. While, understandably people are set to relax, to travel, to kick back, to recreate, still a community's need for connection remains, and our concern for the world continues. The Colloquy will continue to meet, and last summer we were

### Events with Calvin

#### Wednesday Lunch Discussion Group

June 6: How Can We Help?

Lunch discussions begin at noon.

#### Ethics Café

June 13: The Complexity of Charity: How Can We Help?

The Ethics Café begins at 6:30 PM

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**HAVE YOU MAILED IN YOUR 2012 PLEDGE TO EHSLI? OUR SURVIVAL DEPENDS ON YOU!**

### Did you know?

Helga Katz's 90<sup>th</sup> birthday is June 26<sup>th</sup>! Helga and her husband Leopold have been members of the EHSLI for many years. She is celebrating her birthday early with 40 friends and family members. Helga is doing well and keeping herself very busy by continuing to exercise, walking and helping hospice and Alzheimer patients. In general, she remains very active. She loves where she lives and she is still the hostess with the mostest -- befriending new people and making them feel comfortable. She wrote a book and it's been rumored that her first batch sold out. We at the EHSLI wish Helga a *very* happy birthday!

able to offer a great series of Sunday Meetings through the summer months, less formal but still thoughtful and engaging. We will do the same this summer, and the (great) schedule is almost complete.

In the meantime, we have an engaging month ahead. First, we have a chance to celebrate and marvel at our children and their progress at the annual Recognition Day. Then, speaking on "Ethical Wisdom" I want to explore for us the unique vision and challenges of an ethical humanist perspective. June 17<sup>th</sup> brings Howard Radest, an eminent and accomplished Ethical Humanist thinker. And the 24<sup>th</sup> is Transition Sunday, formerly known as Closing Sunday (but no more!), when we'll celebrate our community and share a meal.

See you soon!

— Calvin O. Dame, Religious Director

## Weill Social Action Grant

### Weill Student Social Action Grant Winners!

We are pleased to announce the spring 2012 winners of the Weill Student Social Action Grant. Students from Westhampton Beach High School's National Honor Society will be refurbishing a children's playroom at Community Hous-



ing Initiative's Hampton Bays shelter, adding fresh paint, a mural, and buying new toys. Below are Lydia Frenzel-Sulyok, Augusta Greenbaum (club president), Carolyn Prill, and Michael Polan holding the certificate of congratulations.

Spread the word about the grant! Our biannual award of \$500 is open to middle and high school students of Nassau and Suffolk counties who want to make the world a better place. Grant applications are available on our website under "social action."

— Alison Pratt



## YES in New Orleans, Spring Break 2012

From April 1-7, members of the Long Island Ethical Society's teen group (YES) traveled to New Orleans on a service trip. Along with the D.C. Youth Group, YES helped rebuild homes that were damaged in Hurricane Katrina.

For five days members piled up in a white van from 8 AM to 5 PM and drove to two houses that were assigned to our group. We worked with the St. Bernard Project and their AmeriCorps volunteers. One of the houses we worked on was not owned by anyone, but was being rebuilt to be offered as affordable housing. The larger house we work on was owned by Teresa Ross, who suffered from contractor fraud after trying to rebuild her house after the hurricane. Her story was moving – after losing over \$20,000 she started to work on the house herself. But the house kept getting broken into. People would steal the copper wire in the walls and other supplies. She decided the only way to keep it safe was to stay there herself. So she stayed – for a year – in a gutted house with no electricity nor plumbing. When St. Bernard Project got her call, she was bumped to the top of the list. They gave her a trailer next to the house so she could be there on her property. She was there every day saying hello to us and thanking us. She gave the group a lot of motivation to work hard, knowing we weren't just building a house, but a home.

When we weren't mudding (spackling), laying floors or painting, we were exploring the city. We went to see the levees, in particular the area where they broke. Driving through the ninth ward really gave the group a taste of reality as we saw that the conditions were still in ruins. Driving down bumpy streets, there was a disturbing pattern of house, house, empty lot with only a foundation, empty lot, weeds, house, and weeds. Another evening we went to the French Quarter and got a taste of the southern city. Ironically, as a group we got Mexican food for dinner – but it was delicious! Everyone had a great time just walking and getting souvenirs. By the end of the day everyone tired and sun burnt!

We stayed at Camp Restore, a volunteer camp run by a Lutheran church. We stayed there with other groups of teens also doing service work. We had to be the biggest group of vegetarians there!

Altogether, we had a great time. It truly was an experience to be remembered and enjoyed. We want to thank everyone who made this trip possible! It was a trip that really fit the definition of what Ethical Humanism is – helping others, no matter the difference or the distance. We hope to return next year!

Written by Margaret Mann, with Daniel Harding and Tara Klein

## FOUNDER'S DAY HONORED CHRIS AND SHARON STANLEY

*Below is the text of Alison Pratt's Founder's Day Speech*

When Steve, Reid and I walked in the door of the Ethical Society five years ago, we didn't know anyone and weren't sure we would stay. Sharon and Chris were among the first people to greet us. Reid had an immediate friend in Gabriel, and Steve and I met a friendly couple who shared a point of view on life that we recognized as dedicated, caring, committed, and, like us, irreverent.

Chris and Sharon embraced us as a new family and were always willing to share conversation and good times, whether it was dinner at their home, a swim in their pool, or an evening at a bar where we listened to a rock band of school teachers singing for a fundraiser for breast cancer. I'd like to add, too, that without Chris Stanley, Steve and I would still be trying to figure out how to connect the wires of our new t.v. and set up the remote control. Thank goodness for Chris and his technical expertise. Chris has saved the Society from many silent mornings without music or a microphone because none of us seem to be able to master the equipment. He didn't set up the sound for today's event—but the day's not over yet and I'm sure he'll jump in to help with something.

For me, as a newcomer, one measure of a group is to look at what music is celebrated in the songbooks. Initially, I had no idea who had packed our community singing books with songs from the 60s, music that I loved. Of course, that was Sharon, who had been in charge of organizing the community singing portion of our Sunday mornings for a few years and really got it rolling so that now it is an integral part of our Sunday mornings. Sharon and Steve had an immediate rapport around music and it wasn't long before Sharon was inviting Steve to play guitar with her in the community singing. I know that Steve felt an extra welcome here when Sharon shared the fun of playing music for the Society on Sunday mornings.

As much as Sharon has contributed to the Society with music, an even greater contribution has been through education. A few years ago, Sharon took over teaching the Sunday school when a teacher we had wasn't doing the job. I sat in a few times as participating parent. I was impressed by the gentle way she listened to each child and made sure that everyone was included in the discussion. She also used creative ways to impart information. I particularly remember one large bulletin board the children made of comparative religions. Major religions were depicted with basic beliefs, symbols, and figureheads. Judaism had Moses, Islam had Mohammed, Christianity had Jesus, and Ethical Culture had Arthur Dobrin. I think Felix Adler would have ap-

proved of Sharon's way connecting the kids to our philosophical orientation!

One of Sharon's lasting and most successful contributions has been Darwin Day. Started by Dr. Robert Stephens of Stanford University in 1993, Humanist groups around the country began to celebrate a day of science and reason around the time of Darwin's birthday on February 12th. Sharon embraced the idea, but with a twist: every other Darwin Day celebration in the country has been an academic type of event for adults. Sharon made it a day for children, in which we celebrate science and naturalistic explanations of the universe. We have had wonderful Sunday morning speakers talk about the process of science, followed by science projects by the kids, science themed games and crafts, and guest scientists who have taught us about marine life or astronomy. Darwin Day has made a big impact in the community. We have visitors from around the region who learn about our desire to protect the planet by implementing ethical decision-making about the earth and its resources, as well as endorsing science as the best way to understand ourselves and the universe. To my knowledge, it is the only Darwin Day in the country designed for children. We have just celebrated our 4th annual Darwin Day event, and we have Sharon Stanley's vision to thank for that.

Sharon's commitment to humanism doesn't stop at our four walls. She actively learns about and promotes humanism on a national level. Concerned about how young parents can raise secular children in a religious world, she was the first in our group to recognize the work of Dale McGowan, author of *Parenting Beyond Belief*. Sharon writes blogs for the *Parenting Beyond Belief* website and magazine articles for the *American Humanist Association* magazine. In March, Sharon, Chris, and Gabriel attended the Reason Rally on the National Mall. Her latest goal is to connect our Society with other local humanists. (We know they're out there!) To that end, she has connected us to the Light the Night walk-a-thon for Leukemia and Lymphoma that is being co-sponsored by the American Humanist Association. The walk is in October, and we hope to meet other like-minded people while we raise money for this worthy cause.

Sharon and Chris, we thank you for your steadfastness to the Society, for your creative thinking, and your dedication to the humanism. The Founders' Day honor is richly deserved.

Alison Pratt  
Director, Kids In Deed



## Goings on at and Announcements from EHSLI

**Our Times Coffee House:** On June 15<sup>th</sup>, [Burning Bridget Cleary](#) will be performing for Our Times Coffee House at the Ethical Humanist Society of Long Island. Show starts at 8 PM, but come early — doors open at 7:15 PM. Suggested donations for this performance: Adults \$15, Seniors (65 & Up) & Students (w/school I.D.) \$12, Children (under 12) \$6. (very young children are free). Visit [www.ourtimescoffeeshouse.org/](http://www.ourtimescoffeeshouse.org/) for more information.



**Free Yoga Classes:** led by Sylvia Silberger will continue through the third week in June, Wednesdays — Vinyasa-style yoga 5:30-6:45 PM and a Gentle/Restorative yoga 7-8:00 PM. Email Sylvia at [matsbs@yahoo.com](mailto:matsbs@yahoo.com) if interested.

**Movie Group:** The movie group will be meeting on Saturday, June 26<sup>th</sup> at 2:30 PM. The movies to be discussed are *Elles & The Best Exotic Marigold Hotel*. After an interesting & lively discussion, we will be dining at a neighborhood diner. Please join us! I'm sure you'll agree it's fun & stimulating. How can you go wrong?

**Folk Dance Returns:** Lois Blatt will be teaching Folk Dance classes on July 11<sup>th</sup> and every Wednesday in August from 9:00 AM — 11:00 AM. Folk Dancing is fun and great exercise. International circle dances from Greece, Israel, Europe and Balkan countries will be taught. Classes are \$5 per session. Call Lois at 516-536-8755 if you plan to attend.

### Visit EHSLI Online!

**EHSLI Website:** <http://www.ehsli.org>

**EHSLI on Twitter:** [www.twitter.com/ehsli](http://www.twitter.com/ehsli)

**K.I.D. on Twitter:** [www.twitter.com/KidsInDeed](http://www.twitter.com/KidsInDeed)

**EHSLI 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 EHSLI meet up member.

**Leader emeritus Arthur Dobrin** is blogging week-days at [arthurdobrin.wordpress.com](http://arthurdobrin.wordpress.com)

**Photos** — [picasaweb.google.com/LIEthical](http://picasaweb.google.com/LIEthical)

## SPICE Event

— **Authentic English High Tea:** Please join Pat Spencer and experience what an authentic English Tea is like. There will be finger sandwiches, little cakes and various teas. It will be brought to a higher level because you will be served from bone china cups, and a silver tea service. You will be in the warm atmosphere in Pat's home, surrounded by good friends. Wearing a hat will add to the experience. They could be from plain, fanciful or outrageous. (Gloves and or spats optional.)

DATE	Sunday July 22, 2012
PLACE	98 5 <sup>th</sup> Ave. Hicksville
TIME	3:30 PM
MAXIMUM	10 adults
DONATION	\$18

To sign up please call Phyllis at (516) 741-7304, or stop in the office. If more than 10 people sign up, names will be chosen at random one week prior to the event. Don't miss out what promises to be a great experience, sign up now!

**Exercise Classes for Seniors:** Exercise classes for seniors will not be meeting during the summer. Sue expects to continue the classes again in September. For more information, email Sue at [Sue.Salko@yahoo.com](mailto:Sue.Salko@yahoo.com) and for information about Sue, visit her website: [www.SueSalko.com](http://www.SueSalko.com).

**Sponsor a Coffee Hour:** for \$15 and, with advanced notice, add your name and message to the Sunday Meeting bulletin! Please contact Phyllis at [ethicalsociety@optonline.net](mailto:ethicalsociety@optonline.net).

## More EHSLI Goings on and Announcements

Continue from page 4

Patricia Spencer suggested we make room for a free "classified" section in the Newsletter. These classifieds should be for things you'd like to give away for free, or to request things you need. I will accept friendly (and clean) personals, as well. Please send classifieds to [matsbs@yahoo.com](mailto:matsbs@yahoo.com) by the 15<sup>th</sup> of the month for the subsequent month's newsletter.

— Sylvia Silberger

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

**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.

**Suggestions for Sunday Speakers:** If you have heard any speakers recently, whom you would like to recommend to the Sunday Committee, based on their excellence and subject matter including ethical issues, for the committee to consider for next season, please submit their names and means of contact to us. Please send suggestions to the office to be forwarded to committee members.

### SPICE

The SPICE committee would very much appreciate it if someone would volunteer to give an in service lesson on how to navigate Craig's List & e-Bay. It probably be the most convenient on a Sunday about 1 PM at the society. It would take approximately an hour & a half of your time. If someone from the youth group can help us out with this project, that would be GREAT! Please contact Alice, Pat or Lorraine if you are willing to do this.

## June Sunday Meetings

June 3: Recognition Day

*Children Summarize What They've Done Over the Year*

June 10: Calvin Dame, Religious Director

*Is There Such a Thing as Ethical Wisdom?*

Talk Summary: Would it be different in some way from any other kind of wisdom? Would we simply we know it when we see it? Can it be learned? Can it be taught? I want to address these and other questions at our June 10 Sunday Meeting

June 17: Howard Radest, Leader

*Tea Parties — Can Democracy Survive Them?*

Talk Summary: Pessimism is everywhere. We have seldom been as divided and as angry at we are today. To be sure, there are real problems – millions without jobs; a growing gap between rich and poor; mistrust everywhere -- of government, of religion, of education; an economy out of control. In this maelstrom, the Tea Party is symptomatic, a mix of populism and opportunism, an agglomeration of right wing Republicans and Christian dogmatists, of left-wing Democrats and frustrated liberals; self righteous movements, they agree on the negative. But democracy cannot survive without civility and toleration, without an educated and critical public, without a common commitment to the public good, without a sense of the "loyal opposition." These are our values. What then is our duty in this time of dismay?

June 24: Transition Day

*We transition to the summer program schedule*

There will be a membership meeting and then a lunch after the Sunday Meeting.

**Sunday Meetings begin at 11:00 AM**

**Sunday Colloquies begin at 9:30 AM**

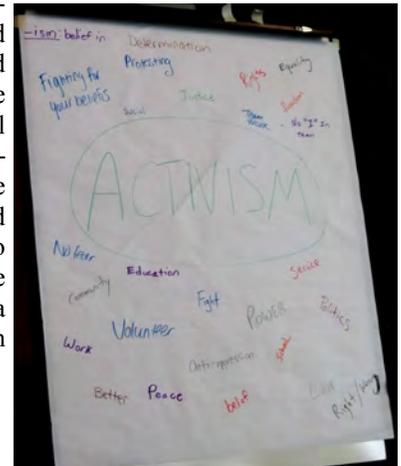


## YES Update

After returning from a fun and successful New Orleans rebuilding trip, and with the success of the Teen Art, Music, and Poetry Festival behind us, YES has been inspired to take even more action and work to make a difference this Spring.

In April, we joined the children and their families at the Bayside Marina beach clean-up, where we collected several bags of trash that had washed ashore during the winter. We also gathered one day in the Hempstead Stop &

Shop to host a voter registration drive. We had forms in English and Spanish, and we were able to register a small handful of new voters. Most people who walked by were either already registered or were not eligible to vote in the U.S., so we decided it would be a good idea to try again in



Activism chart created by YES



MacKenzie and Ryan at the beach clean up.



Maggie, Ryan, MacKenzie, Eric, Reid, Tara at the beach clean up

the Fall at a different location, like a college campus. Still, with a few new people registered the event was a success!

On May 20<sup>th</sup>, Anita Halasz from the Long Island Chapter of Jobs With Justice came to speak to YES. Anita ran an engaging training that gave the teens the tools and confidence to become better activists. They reviewed skills like how to effectively research a topic, the difference between an issue and an underlying problem, the challenges and the importance of speaking out to others, and how to escalate with different types of actions. The teens really enjoyed the training and look forward to using those activism skills in their schools and communities.

— Tara Klein, YES Director



Anita from Jobs With Justice talking to YES about Activism

## Note from the Editor

Newsletter Editor: Sylvia Silberger

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

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96 Vermont Avenue  
Hempstead, NY 11550  
[matsbs@yahoo.com](mailto:matsbs@yahoo.com)



Submissions due by the 15<sup>th</sup> of the month for the next month's newsletter.



Sylvia Silberger and Bill Larsen  
Yosemite National Park

*Sylvia Silberger*

## May Board Meeting Minutes

### ETHICAL HUMANIST SOCIETY OF LONG ISLAND

#### MINUTES OF THE MAY 2, 2012 BOARD MEETING

**PRESENT:** Wayne Outten, Pat Spenser, Liz Seegert, Alison Pratt, Jim LoPresti, Mel Haber, Deborah Strube, David Sprintzen, Don Morgenstern

**ABSENT:** Tara Klein, Carol Pincus

**GUESTS:** Calvin Dame

**1. President's Report:** The Coalition for the Homeless will move out, but they aren't sure when. Liz will create and set up a craigslist ad to rent this space. The full amount we could rent their space for is \$1,800. They've paid what they could afford for the three rooms, which is much less than \$1,800. There is a 4<sup>th</sup> room available but that is the office that used to be rented by The LI Alliance. Jim LoPresti will meet with members of various organizations to learn ways of improving how Ethical Friends of Children functions, including getting money. Don suggested we have a special meeting open to anyone in the Society to discuss (1) defining our vision and (2) joining together with other humanist organizations.

Don also discussed the impasse with the AEU regarding how much we owe them. We actually owe them \$50,000. They proposed our paying them a flat amount of \$50,000 over a ten-year period to settle our debt. We would continue to pay them \$800 per month based on our current number of members, as well as on our income. Board members agreed to pay the AEU \$50,000 over twenty years, rather than ten. The \$50,000 we owe the AEU does not include interest because that interest has been waved by the AEU.

**2. Financials:** We need to be careful about future expenses because of recent expenses of \$13,000 for boiler and lighting repairs, as well as the loss of rental income from the Coalition for the Homeless. To raise money, we plan to ask Patricia

Shih to do a fundraising concert for kids, preferably over the summer.

**3. Elections:** Joan Beder and Lois Blatt agreed to be on our Board next year. Carol Pincus and Tara Klein will no longer be on the Board from September on. Officers will remain the same for next year.

**4. KIDs Report:** See previous weekly email for details.

**5. Liz's report:** Visits to our Web site were flat, but holding steady during the month. Pat Spenser was able to get money for our Family Emergency Fund from some of her friends. Liz suggested that Pat send her an email about our Fund so that Liz can publicize it.

**6. Other Business:** As to summer planning, Calvin has almost completed recruiting presenters for our summer Sunday platforms. Also, we chose a new Weill grant winner.

Regarding a new sign, we need to decide what type of sign we want and what information we want on it; Pat, Alice Sprintzen and Sue will meet with the Mineola Sign Company, which has done work for us before, to discuss these matters. Wayne suggested we get a sign that has room for our weekly events and contains our logo. We all agreed that the sign needs to be readable from passing cars. Our insurance will cover some of the costs for the new sign. In addition, we hope to get about \$1,000 from the vandal, as well as that same amount from the group that rented our auditorium on the night the sign was damaged.

**The meeting ended at 9:25 p.m.**

**Minutes submitted by  
Mel Haber, Board secretary**



Saturday, April 21<sup>st</sup> Alan Cohen hosted another wonderful SPICE event: we walked the High Line in Manhattan, followed by lunch and a walk around the trendy Meat Packing District and Chelsea Market. Alan had done his home work and gave us information and photographs about the Hi Line and the buildings adjacent. Here are a few more photos of the event. A great day was had by all.  
— Pat Spencer



## **Opt-Out of Paper Newsletter Mailings**

To save resources and postage costs, we encourage you to email Sylvia at [matsbs@yahoo.com](mailto: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**

Phone: 516-741-7304

Fax: 516-741-7305

[Ethicalsociety@optonline.net](mailto:Ethicalsociety@optonline.net)

<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**

The Ethical Humanist Society of Long Island

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