From Our Religious Director

With advent of our revamped website I have been strongly encouraged to blog, which is to say, write about what I am thinking about. I am not a natural blogger, but I strongly feel that a website blog can provide a valuable connection to a first time reader visiting our site to get a sense of what we are about. And, as I expect not all members regularly check the website, I thought I would share two recent blogs here. They're what I've been thinking about!

Blog 2-22-11 Darwin Day 2011!!!

This past Sunday we just held our third annual intergenerational Darwin Day at the Society. It was grand! Our speaker for the morning, Dr. Victor Schuster engaged all ages in an interactive address on "How Science Works." The stage was filled with science projects and following the platform there were science experiments and great games! Responding to our publicity, we welcomed a half dozen or more families with children. It was a great day for the society and a great celebration of science!

As an example of who we are as a religious/philosophical group, it was unparalleled. We are hoping the visitors had a good time and that we will see them again, but the lesson that seems apparent is that we need to make it clear that we are a people who embrace science in our quest for meaning and community.

What's discouraging to me as that this so sets us apart. It is still nearly unbelievable to me that in 2011 so many people in our country deny evolution and embrace the idiocy of Intelligent Design or Creation Science. I am discouraged at each instance of local schools under assault for teaching real science. Why would any parent fight to keep their child ignorant?

I was watching a liberal talk show the other day with a conservative congressman on the panel. He was well spoken and his positions made some sense until he denied the central scientific concept of the modern world? How can you even talk with someone who denies the scientific world view.

A congressmen is discouraging enough, but another guest, a wickedly funny comedian and social commentator who expertly punctures bombast and hypocrisy, got a bit squirrelly when the talk turned to evolution. No, he said, I guess I don't believe in evolution.

What? You know, the world is difficult, we have problems to the left of us and the right of us, we seem to make progress and fall back in our efforts to live out our best hopes and dreams and values. The least we can hope for, it seems to me, is that we center ourselves in the scientific method. Whatever you may want to believe, the earth revolves around the sun, not the other way around.

At EHS LI every day is Darwin Day.

Blog 2-14-11 Humanism Flourishes!!!!

I have ridden for eighteen days, along with the rest of the world, and on a roller coaster of emotion as the people of Egypt have come alive to lay claim to their government and their dignity. I have been gripped with fear, moved to tears and swept with relief and joy as this nation has risen up and unseated a despot!

The slow and contradictory response of our own government has been criticized by many voices, and while I may have hoped for something more stirring, I hesitate to join in that chorus. What do I really know about the dynamics at play? But I find myself in agreement with one observer, that the slow response of the United States to the unfolding events allowed something important to occur: the revolution (if that is the word), has been accomplished by the Egyptian people themselves, not handed to them or even facilitated by any outside forces.

There has been a lot of comment that social media such as Facebook, Twitter and Google are responsible for this uprising and for the events in Tunisia. No doubt they played a crucial role, but they are tools only. The changes have been brought about through the intelligence, bravery and hope of the Egyptian and Tunisian people.

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DARWIN DAY 2011

Could you name that bone - like the longest one in our body - the femur. And would you think that in a Darwinian 'survival of the fittest' game, creatures with knives and forks would gather more food (beans) than those with spoons? These were just two of the many interactive moments in the EHS's Stand up for Science Darwin Day, celebrated 2/20 during the Platform and afterwards with a great CEP science fair.

Dr. Victor Schuster presented an evolving situation to help us relate the scientific method to 'everyday life', when we eliminate initial hypotheses as they prove themselves false. This dramatically demonstrated how science works. Eric Morgenstern and Chloe Agostino performed the opening and closing music.

After many delicious lunch choices, EHS members and visitors viewed nine terrific CEP science projects, dissected owl pellets, dug for fossils, and had their faces imaginatively painted by Chloe of Agostino Arts. Other options included Predator/Prey B-I-N-G-O, and a graffiti wall to wish Charles Darwin a happy 202nd birthday. It was an exciting event to appreciate John Dewey's instructive wisdom that "every great advance in science has issued from a new audacity of imagination".

Upcoming CEP Events
- 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.
- 3/19 - SATURDAY, 11:00/12:00 - 'Friendraiser' visit to the Mar Brennan INN (10 minutes from EHS)
- 4/24 - Earth Day - intergenerational Spring Fest

Which is where humanism comes in. I have watched these marvels unfold and felt a renewal of my faith as a humanist. No religion, no political party, no ideology, no commercial interest, no outside government can claim responsibility for the rising up of the Egyptian people to claim their dignity, their freedom and their future! As clear as I have ever seen it, it has been the living out of those principles that humanists hold: that people everywhere have an inherent dignity, that freedom is a human right, and that we have within ourselves the capacity to forge our own future.
**FEBRUARY BOARD MINUTES**

**PRESENT:** Jim LoPresti, David Sprintzen, Mel Haber, Don Morgenstern, Tara Klein, Alison Pratt, Wayne Outten

**GUESTS:** Calvin Dame

1. **Financials:** Finances look okay. However, our snow removal expenses have been high, at least $1,000 per storm.

2. **General Membership meeting:** Since there was no quorum for the January general membership meeting, we had to postpone it. It will now be held on Sunday, February 27, after the platform.

3. **Weill grant:** Alison has already received a few responses from people who want to apply for a grant.

4. **Social action topic of the month:** Tara suggested an anti-guns event, based on ideas presented at a recent Sunday platform. We’ll do something, but it will probably take a few months to get off the ground. A more immediate tie-in will be with Darwin Day, and Calvin will work with Tara and the Social Action Committee on it. David will try to get a speaker for adults on Darwin Day who will make a presentation in the Board Room after the platform.

5. **Interactive crib:** We should try to get more stuff for the crib by removing it and putting it back at a later date.

6. **Newsletter:** We should continue putting information about members in the newsletter. Also, we need a newsletter editor to replace Sue Feifer and Don, her temporary replacement.

7. **Our Web site:** It is now up and running. Many thanks to Liz, Alison, Tara and others who worked on it.

8. **Teen Arts Festival:** We almost got a group, the Andy Foundation, to be involved in our Teen Arts Festival. However, the head of that foundation decided not to support our Festival after she had a meeting with us.

9. **Attracting and retaining members:** How can we attract members? That question has been one we’ve asked through the years. Although we have run ads in local newspapers and parents magazines, we haven’t yet been successful in drawing parents with young children, or even older people. We decided to continue to run ads through Darwin Day, and then pull the ads to use the money for other things.

10. **Awards ceremony:** We decided to have an awards ceremony in the future for members who have done a lot of work for our Society.

11. **Future topics:** We discussed:

   1. Staying open over the summer to maintain continuity and to attract members.
   2. Having a retreat for members in the fall. Calvin will look into possible places.
   3. Ways of increasing membership. Calvin mentioned four methods, which deserve to be discussed in detail.

The meeting ended at 8:55 p.m.

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**YES NEWS**

On February 10th, the YES Group attended the LI Coalition for the Homeless’s annual candlelight vigil, "Have a Heart for the Homeless" at Farmingdale College. Over 1200 were in attendance to show their support for the homeless. The teens heard first-hand stories of overcoming homelessness, and the event included donations for those in need.

The YES group is currently gearing up for a busy spring, including our platform on March 6th, the Teen Art, Music and Poetry Festival on April 16th, and the annual YES Pasta Dinner on May 21st. YES members are also very excited to join the Washington Ethical Society’s teens on a home rebuilding project in New Orleans over spring break! We are still working out the details for this trip, but we will definitely be doing some major fundraising so stay tuned. Mark your calendars and support our teens!
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

OUR TIMES COFFEEHOUSE

March 18, 2011

NICK ANNIS

Nick Annis is an award-winning songwriter, but he is also admired by folk fans for the storytelling talent that makes his performances so memorable. Audiences return to hear him deliver spoken word pieces in the style of brilliant songwriter storytellers like Gamble Rogers, John McCutcheon, and Dave Carter. Drawing on his diverse background and Greek roots, Nick crafts “true” stories and timeless accounts of humanity.

Drilling for oil in the Midwest.
Selling ice cream from a truck.
Running a bakery.
Starting points for just a few stories Nick Annis deftly weaves between and through song and performance banter. One man medicine show? Itinerant philosopher? Come to a show and find yourself on an unexpected and welcome journey.

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

EVENTS WITH CALVIN

Ethics Cafe
The February Ethics Cafe addressed the snow delayed topic complexities of truth telling and lying, so on March 9 we will use Paul Krugman’s January 14 NYTs 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. Given the unfolding budget confrontations, this article remains timely.

The Wednesday Lunchtime Discussion Group schedule:
March 2: Union Busting
March 9: 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. I will have copies available ahead of time.
March 16: Poetry Session: bring a favorite poem
March 23: Ethical Questions
March 30: To Be Announced

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 EHS LI. If you can help out, please let Phyllis know.
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 6th Avenue and 56th 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

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

**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:** May 21, 2011  
**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) 741-7303. 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 a waiting list, you can also get a refund, if requested.

Pat Spencer, Alice Sprintzen, and Lorraine Abrams
EHSLI PLATFORM SCHEDULE
February – June 2011

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:

TATTOO BLUE CONCERT
On Saturday, March 26, 2011, at 8:00 p.m., “Tattoo Blue” is performing a benefit concert for EHSLI. “Tattoo Blue” is a local Long Island band who plays traditional and rock blues songs from “Stormy Monday”, to “Jesus Left Chicago” and “Chain of Fools.” Suggested donation will be $10 per person.

The Ethical Humanist Society of Long Island
38 Old Country Rd., Garden City, NY 11530

MARCH 2011
DATED MATERIAL PLEASE RUSH