From Our Religious Director

What makes a good Sunday Meeting? What parts of the Sunday program are most important to you? I've been asking people these questions since I arrived, and in the time ahead I would like to deepen those conversations, because the vitality of the Sunday Meetings both reflects and sustains the vitality of our Society. So, to start, I would like to hear from you about what works for you, what you like best. And, I want to create opportunities for conversations in groups to think about the Sunday program.

What is important to you on Sunday: music, time to reflect, the address, poetry, the milestones, the collection, the announcements, the coffee hour?

What kinds of topics or programs are of the most interest: explorations of ethics, developments in science, history, social action, social service, poetry or literature, reflections on spiritual or personal development? Something else?

And which special programs do you like: Darwin Day, the seasonal festivals, the YES program, Remembrance Sunday? Should we do more special Sundays, should we do less.

This is an important conversation for us to have, to better understand who we are now and to set a course for the future. And, it is a conversation that will take some time. As a start, I'll convene a discussion on November 6, following the coffee hour. I encourage anyone who can to take part. It is good to be thinking about this, it is even better to be talking together about this essential component of our common lives.

Of Interest ...

On November 1st, our Religious Director, Calvin Dame, will serve on a panel discussing Our Responsibilities To The Earth and Others, as part of the President's Symposium 2011: on Ethics, Civility and Leadership at The College at Old Westbury. Other panelists include Mr. Nayyar Imam, President of the Islamic Association of Long Island, Sister Margaret Smyth, North Fork Spanish and Apostolate, and Mr. Arvind Vora, Chairman, Long Island Multi-Faith Forum. The symposium is free and open to the public. However, attendees are asked to register for the conference to ensure that adequate seating and support if available. Register by phone: 516-876-3202, or by email: rsvp@oldwestbury.edu.

Questions regarding the symposium: 516-876-3207.

HAVE YOU MAILED IN YOUR 2011 PLEDGE TO EHSLI? OUR SURVIVAL DEPENDS ON YOU!
Secular Parenting in a Religious World

I was raised in a Reformed Jewish home and my husband was raised in a Catholic family. We were engaged and looking to be married in a ceremony that was moving and meaningful. We also were planning to start a family. Since we were both “religious cynics,” we were looking for something to believe in. Neither of us wanted to join the neighborhood temple or church, although we visited a few. In my mind, religion has created many, many more problems than it has solved. Most of the world’s wars are in the name of “God” or some other fanatic religious beliefs. History is filled with examples of too many gruesome deaths that have occurred in the name of religious belief.

Who knew that I was a “Humanist” and I didn’t even know it! I had never heard the word before I walked into the Ethical Humanist Society of Long Island. This place fit our needs perfectly. It was a congregational community that focuses on social action and ethical relationships. In addition, it was fortunate that we lived close to a Humanist society that already had a well-established children’s program. One of the adjunct leaders was happy to spend time with us, helping to pick excerpts and poetry that captured our feelings for this momentous occasion. We had that meaningful ceremony we were seeking. Many of our friends still speak about how lovely our wedding ceremony was, even 15 years later.

We joined the Ethical Humanist Society shortly after our wedding. We entered a community of social, political and intellectual people. Most importantly, we were members of a place where people worked purposefully toward a common goal; to make the world a better place for all people. As our involvement grew, my family branched out to activities on the national level and we made many friends from ethical societies all over America.

After our son was born, people’s questions and comments were quite telling. Apparently, it was “ok” that we were in what most people considered an “alternative religion” while we were two married adults, but once I became pregnant people questioned our decisions. Specifically, one family member asked, “So, what are you two going to do now that you are having a baby?” I replied, “We are already doing it! We attend on Sunday mornings and our child will attend the secular, children’s Sunday program.”

I believe that Humanism is the only truly “inclusive” world view. It is not my goal to convince theists to change their minds and become Atheists, another world view I have embraced. My wish is that instead of concentrating on “whose God is the ONE,” we all would concentrate on helping our neighbors here and abroad. I wish more organizations would spend time teaching their children how to truly love, instead of teaching hatred of those whose belief systems are not the same. We found that something we can truly believe in when we discovered Humanism.
Goings on at EHSLI

**Exercise Classes for Seniors:** Classes for seniors are led by instructor, Sue Salko.

**Senior Exercise Class schedule:** Monday-Wednesday-Friday 9:30 - 10:30 AM

Classes are geared to needs of participants while addressing flexibility, balance, strength and endurance.

*All are welcome!!* Bring light weights, stretch bands (are available from instructor), wear comfortable clothing and sneakers. Suggested contribution: $5 per class.

**November Movie Group Discussion** is scheduled for Saturday, November 26th, 2:30-4:30 PM.
The movies are TBA — check the EHSLI website.

**Our Times Coffeehouse:** Our Times Coffeehouse will be at the Ethical Humanist Society of LI on **Friday,** November 18th @ 8 PM. The featured artist is **Frank Solivan and Dirty Kitchen.** This group combines the energy of a hardcore traditional band with a more modern and contemporary folk-influenced sound as they present their acoustic based bluegrass music. A “must hear” for you bluegrass fans out there, as this is a band that may be the next big thing. For more information visit [www.ourtimescoffeehouse.org](http://www.ourtimescoffeehouse.org).

**Winter Festival:** The EHSLI Winter Festival will be on **December 18th** (notice the date correction from the mailed newsletter). Members are encouraged to bring **new wrapped toys and holiday necessities** to the festival for the Ethical Friends of Children to donate to needy children and their families for the holidays.

**YES Pasta Dinner:** YES will be holding a pasta dinner on Saturday, December 10 from 6-10 PM.
Cost is $9 for students and $12 for everyone else.

**Ken Schwartzman Update:**

Ken has been recovering well. He made an appearance at the Sunday platform on October 30 and on November 6!

**Free Yoga Classes:** led by Sylvia Silberger will be held on Tuesdays: A Gentle and Restorative from 6:45 PM– 7:45 PM and a more rigorous Vinyasa-style yoga from 8 PM-9 PM.

**Piano Fundraiser Off to a Great Start!** A few weeks ago we launched a fundraiser for our beautiful 1916 Steinway piano, which is in much need of repair. The repairs are expensive: we are told it will run between $15,000 and $20,000 to bring it back to the proper concert condition. We cannot lose our nearly 100-year old "lady" of the Ethical Humanist Society. We are having a lot of fun buying piano notes, starting with Calvin Dames' purchase of middle C. Each notes is $100 and can be purchased with a check to EHSLI, earmarked "piano fund."
Kids In Deed!

KIDS IN DEED has had a great month! We have been learning about Felix Adler's life and discussing the meaning behind "Deed Before Creed" and "Act so as to elicit the best in others, and thereby yourself." Since we as Ethical Humanists don't have a formal creed, this was a new concept for many of the kids. But they are never far from the idea of doing good deeds for others as a way to help create a better world.

On October 9, our class, parents, and Reid Hetzel and Ryan Dobrin from the YES group, participated in the Food Allergy and Anaphylaxis Walk in Eisenhower Park. This 3-mile walk drew hundreds of participants who helped raise money and awareness of food allergies. Our own group raised $621 for this worthy cause, thanks to many Society members who contributed. Special recognition must go to Jordan Schroeder who raised over half of what was collected.

We have welcomed two visitors to our program, Jacob Keller and Ryan Coen, and hope to see each of them again.


Kids In Deed walked to raise money for FAAN.

Alison Pratt, KIDS IN DEED Coordinator
MORE EHS LI NEWS . . .

EHS LI OCCUPIES WALL STREET!

After being inspired by a Sunday talk given by LI Jobs with Justice Executive Director Charlene Obernauer, a few members of the Society traveled down to Zuccotti Park for Occupy Wall Street on Sunday, October 16th. We had a great time exploring the park, in what has become a real social movement. The park was chaotic yet well-organized, with many designated stations such as food (all based on donations - EHS LI members who couldn't come donated a few bags of apples that we brought with us), press, medical, outreach/organization, and a library. There were also places to make signs, check out a schedule, make t-shirts and more. Several pockets of activity would spring up, like a theater troupe performance, musicians, and even a meditation group. We spent some time standing on the edges of the park, with our signs displayed for the passing tourists. As the protests continue we encourage everyone to check them out, or to help by sending a donation.

ANNUAL AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL PRESENTATION:

Business, Social Development and Human Rights in a Transitional World: Case Histories from Papau New Guinea and South Sudan
Presented by Dr. David Lowry
Sunday, December 11, 2011 at 11 am

Business, Social Development and Human Rights in a Transitional World is a talk to be presented by Dr. David B. Lowry as the annual human rights presentation of Amnesty International Group 74.

Dr. Lowry will discuss the role of social responsibility as international corporate business continues to expand, generally coming at the expense of the nation state. What is the role of social responsibility in this changing climate, he asks, and how should human rights groups and social activists respond to this change?

The multifaceted Dr. David B. Lowry is a reverend, human rights activist and corporate executive. He is rector of Christ Church in Manhasset, president of the International Center for Corporate Accountability and previously served as the director of the Center of Peace and Reconciliation at the Desmond Tutu Center at the General Theological Seminary in Manhattan. In the corporate world, he was a vice president at Freeport-McMoRan Copper & Gold, the world's lowest-cost copper producer and one of the world's largest producers of gold, where he worked to develop policies and implemented them as Freeport tried to fix local relationships with the ever changing communities around Freeport's massive mine in West Papua. This included community development, human rights training and the creation of the Freeport Partnership Fund, which has provided more than $250 million for the development of the local communities.

Also during that time he worked with the US Department of State and the British Foreign and Commonwealth Office (along with Amnesty International and others) to develop and implement the Voluntary Principles on Security and Human Rights.

Currently Father Lowry is working to develop a plan for South Sudan to link local communities through civil society (mostly churches) with the oil and gas companies that are coming to South Sudan to avoid the 'resource curse' and help communities link-up with extractive companies to develop local foundations in the areas of community development (education, health care, community infrastructure, business incubators, micro-lending). “In my view,” he says, “these programs are necessary to provide human rights.”

Father Lowry writes and lectures widely in the areas of human and indigenous rights and corporate social responsibility. He has a doctorate in British history, three master's degrees (history, theology and ministry) and a bachelor's degree in classical languages, with recent additional academic work in the area of corporate ethics.
YES!

Our large and inquisitive teen group is poised to be a real force this year. We have had some great meetings over the last few weeks, with some vibrant discussions on human rights issues. These discussions will tie into the theme of our National YES Conference, which is taking place Nov. 10-13 in NYC and the Catskills. At least 9 of our teens will attend. We also participated in the Society's annual Ethical Identity Day, joined the KID program for the Food Allergy Walk, and a few of our teens have been out Occupying Wall Street this month!

Save the date for December 10th from 6-10pm for our annual YES Pasta Dinner. This year's theme will take us down to the South Pole, with the penguins and polar bears. This is our main fundraiser for the year so we hope you can attend! Stay tuned for more details.

Tara Klein, YES Adviser
YES@EHSLL.org

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Note from the Editor

Newsletter Editor: Sylvia Silberger

Please send all suggestions for additions to future EHSLLI newsletters and comments to

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

Submissions due by the 22nd of the month for the next month’s newsletter.
October Board Meeting Minutes

ETHICAL HUMANIST SOCIETY OF LONG ISLAND
MINUTES OF THE OCTOBER 5, 2011 BOARD

Present: Mel Haber, Jim LoPresti, Deborah Strube, Alison Pratt, Liz Seegeert, Wayne Outten, David Sprintzen, and Tara Klein
Absent: Carol Pincus-Smith, Don Morgenstern, Sue Feifer, and Pat Spenser
Guests: Calvin Dame and Alice Sprintzen

1. Finances: Finances are stable, Don said in an email. Rental income looks good. We got our money back from the retreat, which we had to cancel.

2. The piano: So far, we’ve taken in $1,100 in donations to repair the piano.

3. Pledge drive: In November, Don will compose a pledge letter to members for 2012. In this letter, all our accomplishments for the year will be listed, as well as what we plan to do if we receive funds. In this letter, we also plan to include that members need to make a minimum payment to remain members; that amount is $500 for individuals and $750 for couples. Calvin will work on the letter with Don.

Among the things we plan to do with pledge money is expand the Kids in Deed program, support YES program events, increase Calvin’s hours to pay him a full-time religious director’s salary, maintain and improve the building, and maintain our Web site.

4. AEU relations: We are still awaiting word from the AEU about a letter we sent them regarding our recent dues payment, as well as about the extent of our old debt.

5. Alison’s report: Things are going well with the Kids in Deed program. She is having fun with the kids, and they with her. However, there are only six kids in the program, and we could use more. The Weill grant program is not going well because people have not sent out letters to the schools making them aware of these grants. Alison will contact those who have sent out letters to schools in the past.

6. Liz’s report: Good news! People are going to our Web site and visiting various sections: Sunday talks, About us, Calvin’s blog, and directions to our Society. We have already signed up with Constant Contact, a site that will send out our newsletters. Sylvia Silberger did an excellent job in putting out our first newsletter since the summer. We discussed having a different member write a Society-related article each week for our newsletter. Our Web site was recently updated by our Web designer, Amy. Unfortunately, we have a "worm" that is attacking our site. Liz and Amy are working on eliminating this "worm." Liz wants $1,000 to maintain the Web site; the money can come out of the budget category called "Marketing." To save money, we’ll try to have members request getting the newsletter electronically, rather than get a paper copy.

7. Tara’s report: Tara spoke about the upcoming YES conference, November 10-13. As to our YES group at Ethical, she has about 8 people coming to meetings regularly. Some new members have been coming as a result of their attending the Teen Arts Festival. The Pasta Dinner will be on December 10 this year. In a few weeks, the YES group will be involved with the Ethics Bowl.

Tara and Linda Napoli are working together as heads of the Social Action Committee. They need suggestions for activities.

As to alumni of the YES group, many on the Board said they would like to know about those who have moved away and don’t maintain contact with our Society. Alice Sprintzen said she would talk with Phyllis to find out if there is a database of YES alumni. We spoke about having these alums write to our Web site telling us where they are and what they’re doing. To get this to happen, Tara will work with Liz to try to start a column on our Web site to which alums will contribute, including photos; we could call the column, "Where Are They Now?" We will also try to have a place on our Ethical Facebook page for our alums, and even create a virtual network of our alums. In addition, we talked about sending them our newsletter electronically.

8. The Caring Committee: Jim LoPresti will now be head of the Caring Committee. He wants members of our Society to join the committee and give him ideas as to what the functions of the committee should be.

The meeting ended at 9:10 p.m.

Minutes submitted by Mel Haber
Opt-Out of Paper Newsletter Mailings

To save both 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.