From Our Religious Director

This has been a big week for "Acts of God" in my life. Last Tuesday I was in a coffee shop on Port Washington that began to sway in a fashion unmistakable to someone who has lived in California. I was about to dive under the table when the room came to a stop and the television on the wall reported the occurrence of an earthquake 346 miles away. I'm still impressed, 346 miles is a long way from the room where I was rocking back and forth. "Acts of God," indeed!

Later the same week a hurricane blew into town. Well, it blew into a lot of towns in five or six states at once. Not as ferocious as forecast, but still an unleashing of power that was not to be trifled with. My street on Long Island was evacuated, and had I been home I wouldn't have been home. As it happened, I caught a blustery edge of the storm on a visit to Maine, still powerful enough to cut the power and blow debris across the yard. As it happens, another "Act of God."

What interests me is the phrase, an "Act of God". Theologically, of course, the idea raises some knotty problems, but it is a legal, rather than a theological concept. Legally, it refers to unforeseeable natural phenomenon which involve no human agency and which can not be prevented by any foresight or care. Odd anachronism, to have the word God seated in such a legal concept, but there you have it.

What interests me is the ethical humanist values and truths that are always brought to the fore by the occurrence of an "Act of God." As, in Maine, the chainsaws come out and people check in with their neighbors to see if they can help. Or, in New York, as squads of volunteers show up to run the Emergency Centers. Or strangers slosh through water to ferry the stranded to safety. In the moment the earthquake in the coffee shop in Port Washington, the social walls crumbled and that room revealed the human community we do not usually see. "What was that? Are you okay? What should we do?"

The list human actions as brought forth could go on and on. And here is what I see: Every "Act of God" makes way for Acts of Humanism. Every natural disaster results in the blossoming of human community, where acts of kindness, heroism, and altruism flourish, and we become better people in the process. I've seen it, time and time again.

EVENTS WITH CALVIN

Wednesday Lunch Discussion Group

Sept. 7 Has Our World Changed? 10 Year Anniversary of 9/11
Sept. 14 The Debt Ceiling Debacle
Sept. 21 Poetry of Loss & Renewal Bring a poem that fits.
Sept. 28 TBA

Ethics Cafe

September 14, 6:30: Has Our World Changed? September 11th 10 Year Anniversary Discussion
Ethical Humanist Society of Long Island
38 Old Country Road
Garden City, NY 11530
(516) 741-7304
Fax: (516) 741-7305
EMAIL us at:
office@ehsli.org
http://ehsli.org

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.

Alison Pratt, Director of Religious Education

Our Children's Ethics Program has a new name: Kids In Deed. The new name was inspired by Felix Adler, our founder of Ethical Culture in 1876, who believed that good works was the basis of an ethical society, more so than creeds. Kids In Deed picks up the motto of "deed before creed" in using community service as the basis for learning ethics. That is, we can study questions of right and wrong as they arise from service.

Some of the questions we hope to investigate this year are:

• What can one person do? Children can feel powerless in the face of a world of problems. We will learn that one person can make a difference. We will conduct community service projects throughout the year, including cards for veterans on Veteran's Day, participating in the Food Allergy and Anaphylaxis (FAAN) walk to raise money for the research and education of food allergies, collecting eyeglasses for the Lions Club, doing an environmental project for Darwin Day, writing letters to Sema Academy students, running a voter registration drive, participating in the Bayside Marina clean-up, and making gift bags for needy children to give to their mothers at Mother's Day. We will read about other young people who have made a difference in the lives of others through their own ideas of how to make a difference for others.

• How do I know right from wrong? We will develop critical thinking skills, criteria and values for knowing right and wrong, by considering the greatest good and least harm to ourselves and others. We'll be discussing these questions in light of the community service projects we undertake. For example, the food allergy dilemma presents some ethical questions: how do we balance the needs of the individual to the needs of the group? Should nuts be banned from school? What about class parties and cupcakes that might contain allergens? This issue raises a good way for children to begin to sort through issues of community support versus individual rights.

• What is Ethical Humanism? We will learn some of the philosophy, history and "heroes" of the Ethical Culture movement. We hope to meet with some of our fellow student humanists from other Societies at our Ethical Identity Day on Oct. 23.

• What do my friends believe? We will learn what other religions say about ethics and goodness as well as their basic belief systems and teachings. We will contrast other religious beliefs with the Humanist philosophy of timeless questions, such as, how was the earth created? What do we believe about good and evil?

• Finally, we will have fun

SPICE EVENTS

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: September 24, 2011
Time: 7:30 pm
Maximum: 10 people
Hosts: Mel and Barbara Haber
Phone: 718-279-3143
Cost :$15

The Feifers Long-Running Poolside Dinner
Good Food, Good Company

Saturday, 9/10 at 5 p.m.
70 Bay Drive
Massapequa, NY 11758
516-795-6290
donation: $25 per person

To sign up for these events, please contact Phyllis at the office at 516-741-7304
All proceeds go to support the Society
Chloe Agostino, Eric Morgenstern, Khiron Anderson and Reid Hetzel Celebrate Coming of Age

What a splendid Coming of Age Platform May 22! The music, poem, Calvin's discussion with the four COAers, Chloe Agostino, Eric Morgenstern, Khiron Anderson and Reid Hetzel, and the parents/siblings' presentations were all vibrant threads weaving this ancient rite of passage into a beautiful acknowledgement and celebration of these fine Ethical Humanists on their way to teen ventures in the Youth Ethical Society (YES group) and in all other aspects of their lives. These highly intelligent, talented, mature and caring students shared highlights of their more than 18 collective years in the Children’s Ethics Program (CEP) and their reflections on being Ethical Humanists. They also discussed their COA project, helping Jim Lo Presti gather clothes, toys and other items which they personally helped deliver to a needy family, through our fine Ethical Friends of Children program. The final bridge segment of the program physically expressed this important transition in their EHS lives when Chloe, Eric, Khiron and Reid said good bye to their CEP classmates and hello to Tara Klein (YES advisor) and members of the YES group.

COAers JOIN YES

Discussing Their Project

FOUNDERS DAY HONORING THE SPRINTZENS
PRESENT: Mel Haber, Tara Klein, Jim LoPresti, Joan Beder, Don Morgenstern, Carol Pincus-Smith, Alison Pratt, David Sprintzen, and Deborah Strube

GUESTS: Calvin Dame, Liz Seegert, and Daniel Harding

1. CFI collaboration: Amy Frushour Kelly of CFI was not able to come to our meeting tonight. Don will meet with her in the near future. Her organization is reaching out to us. Co-hosting and co-sponsoring events will be beneficial to both our organizations.

2. President’s report:
   -- We have received two membership applications, and we approved both:
      1. Sylvia Silberger and Bill Larson
      2. Stacey Caraballo
   -- As to the piano, David Alexander recommended a person to examine our piano. He said it needs major repairs.
   -- As to the patio, we plan to get fencing, a table and chairs, and plants.
   -- As to the side door, we want to replace it for aesthetic reasons. We’re thinking of getting one with a glass panel for visibility. So far, we received a cost estimate of $1,050 for installing a new door.
   -- We are losing a tenant in July who can’t afford the rent any longer; this will be a $600 per month loss for us.
   -- A former tenant donated two used HP computers to us; one will go to our office, and the other to the Sunday School.

3. Financials: Until recently, our bank account held $30,000. However, because of the loss of a tenant (see above), we are down to approximately $21,000. We should have additional money coming to us in the near future: Princeton Review owes us about $4,000 in back rent, and should be renting additional hours from us this year to the tune of $8,000 to $10,000.

4. YES reports: The pasta dinner was successful in that those who attended had fun, and our Society raised $500. Next year, the YES group is thinking of holding the pasta dinner in December or January to make it easier for teens to attend. Having the dinner in May is too busy a time for many teens who have finals and end-of-school year activities to take care of.

With regard to the Fall Retreat, Tara will print up registration forms and have a poster made up to be placed in our lobby.

As to the recent FES Conference which Tara recently attended, the FES participants said that the Sunday Ethical Society platforms do not draw them to attend. Our Societies, as a result, need to have special ways of holding on to young people.

5. Our Sunday school: Recently, we approved of not re-hiring Ellen, the current Sunday school director. Alison volunteered to take over as a paid director of the program. She will be given the title of Interim Director and will serve for a year. We will do an active search for a permanent director.

6. Summer meeting plans: Calvin distributed a summer meeting schedule. For August 21, an open date, we’ll have an open house, which he’ll coordinate

7. Summer Board meeting: We all need to send Don our summer vacation schedule so he can set up a Board meeting this summer.

8. General membership meeting: At our upcoming meeting this Sunday, June 5, three current members will be elected as new Board members: Pat Spencer, Liz Seegert, and Sue Feifer.

9. Calvin and the AEU: Calvin got a letter recently from the Leadership Committee of the AEU saying that a group of its members wanted to meet with him on Tuesday, June 7, at the Ethical Society in NY. Joan said that he shouldn’t meet with them alone, and so she, Wayne, and Arthur Dobrin have agreed to accompany him to the meeting. Calvin has informed the AEU group that he’ll be accompanied by those three people.

The meeting ended at at 8:40 p.m.

Minutes submitted by Mel Haber

KIDS IN DEED

The new name for our Children’s Sunday morning ethics program under the direction of:
Alison Pratt, PhD.

FIRST CLASS:
Sept 18th at 11am
FES Conference Update – Tara Klein

On Memorial Day weekend, I attended the 8th annual Future of Ethical Societies (FES) Conference in Brooklyn. Throughout the weekend over twenty young people, ages 18–28, from across the country came together to connect and share their common values. We stayed in a youth hostel, participated in a service project at a community garden in East New York, and led a platform and discussion at the Brooklyn Society. It was a really great weekend, and I was happy to be involved as FES's internal communications officer.

I want our membership to be aware of one of the most important themes of our weekend. Like many Societies throughout the country, Long Island needs to grow our membership in order to survive and thrive, and it is important that many of these new members are young people. But we need to keep in mind that getting youth to attend Sunday morning meetings may not be not the best way to attract new young members. I can tell you from experience with friends that this true. We need to redefine our concept of "youth engagement" to include more unique gatherings, social justice related activities, and other alternatives to Sunday morning.

I encourage you to view the full platform, and some other fun videos, at [www.youtube.com/EthicalFES](http://www.youtube.com/EthicalFES). You can also visit us online at [www.ethicalfuture.org](http://www.ethicalfuture.org) or on Facebook under the group name “FES”.

I hope these ideas inspire us as we move forward and work to grow our membership!

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YES Schedule – Fall 2011

*Meetings and locations are subject to change. Check email before meeting date for potential changes. All Sunday meetings are from 11:00-12:00; other events times are noted. Bolded items are mandatory.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Meeting - EHS</td>
<td>Sun. 9/11</td>
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<tr>
<td>Optional Platform – Eric Alexander</td>
<td>Sun. 9/18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meeting – EHS</td>
<td>Sun. 9/25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Off</td>
<td>Sun. 10/2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Optional Platform – Charlene Obernauer – LI Jobs With Justice</td>
<td>Sun. 10/9 (Columbus Day)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Meeting – Diner</td>
<td>Sun.10/16</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Ethics Bowl (Ethical Identity Day)</strong></td>
<td>Sun. 10/23</td>
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<tr>
<td>Meeting – EHS</td>
<td>Sun.10/30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Off</td>
<td>Sun. 11/6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>YES Conference in Frost Valley</strong></td>
<td>Thurs. 11/10 – Sun. 11/13</td>
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<tr>
<td>Off</td>
<td>Sun. 11/20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meeting – Diner</td>
<td>Sun. 11/27 (Thanksgiving)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Meeting – EHS</td>
<td>Sun. 12/4</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>YES Pasta Dinner (tentative)</strong></td>
<td>Sat. 12/10</td>
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<tr>
<td>Off</td>
<td>Sun. 12/11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Off</td>
<td>Sun. 12/18</td>
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<tr>
<td>Please hold the following dates:</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Darwin Day</strong></td>
<td>Sun. 2/12</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>YES Platform</strong></td>
<td>Sun. 2/26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Teen Arts Festival</strong></td>
<td>Sat. 3/31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>New Orleans Rebuild Trip</strong></td>
<td>4/1-4/7 (NOT during break)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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For more information please contact YES Advisor Tara Klein, 917-783-4556, kleintara@gmail.com
SEPTEMBER
11 Opening Sunday Calvin Dame
18 Eric Alexander "Crisis & Opportunity: Downtown & Community Revitalization in an era of uncertainty"
25 Sharon Stanley and speaker from HBOC Previvors and Survivors

OCTOBER
2 Dr Jan Witkowski Scientist Update from Cold Spring Harbor Laboratories
9 Chjarlene Obernauer Executive director Long island Jobs With Justice
16 Calvin
23 Ethical Bowl Roberta Israeloff Executive Director of foundation sponsoring High School competition
30 Joseph Chuman Leader Bergen and New York Ethical Societies

NOVEMBER
6 Calvin
13 Bart Worden Leader, Westchester Society
20 Thanksgiving Celebration
27 Members Reasons for joining EHS LI

DECEMBER
4 Calvin
11 Amnesty International
18 Winter Festival Members bring toys for Ethical Friends of Children
25 TBA