



LEADER'S MESSAGE;
HOUSE TO HOME: THE WESTCHESTER ETHICS GROUP

FIFTY YEARS AGO the Westchester Ethical Society moved into its new home at 7 Saxon Wood Road in White Plains. The new building was the realization of a long-time dream of members to have a purpose-built place of their own. It was not the Society's first home, however. In the beginning, in 1921, meetings were held in a member's home for some time before the Westchester Ethics Group (as they were known at the time) outgrew the available living rooms.

The group was especially intent on forming a Sunday school. A good number of the original members were already members of the New York Society for Ethical Culture and were familiar with the Society's Sunday school. They felt that developing a similar program in Westchester would be great for their own children and good for the community as well. So the Society's first rental was for a place to hold the Sunday school – the ground floor of an old mansion in Mt. Vernon—while the adults continued to meet in members' homes. Their meetings, by the way, were not on Sunday mornings as ours are today but rather on Monday nights.

Within a few years the group needed a larger space for the adult meetings. They then rented a variety of places, including the Thomas Paine home, before buying their first property at 3 The Boulevard in New Rochelle in 1945. Within ten years they had outgrown that space, too, and members yearned for a place of their own that would be designed to meet the needs of the Society. They were a passionate and

persistent group and began looking for a property where they could build a new meeting house. The choices were narrowed to two, and then to one and in 1958 the Society purchased the property at 7 Saxon Wood Road in White Plains.

The selection was not, by the way, unanimous. The Society president favored the other site (I believe it was in Harrison) which was not as beautiful in its grounds but was not complicated by the presence of a natural spring as was (and is) the Saxon Wood Road property!

A local architect, Harry Wenning of Hartsdale, was retained to design the building which would feature both auditorium and, of course, classrooms. The Society continued to have a strong Sunday school program and with the new building would start their own nursery school as well. The ground breaking ceremony took place on September 22, 1962, and the new building was completed and almost ready for occupancy in time for the grand opening one year later. I say "almost ready" because it turns out

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*Celebrating 50 years in White Plains
1963 – 2013*



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A Humanist Fellowship

SUNDAY PLATFORM & Sunday School 10:30 A.M.

Leader Bart Worden
President Colleen Kapklein
Vice President Stan Snegroff
Secretary Richard Koral
Treasurer Maggie Voltaire
Religious Education
Director Lilly Schulz
Office Manager Zo Halton
Art Director Lori Fedio
The Page Elizabeth Grippe
Proofreader Oliver Swift
Platform Video Tech John Hernandez

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

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Stan Snegroff, Vice President
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& Social Events** Debra Stieglitz
Finance Michael Yellen
Barbara Finiguerra
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Leadership Support James Young
Membership Zo Halton
Nominating James Young, Chair
Nursery School Richard Koral
Planning Richard Koral,
Satish Mehta,
Lenny Meyerson,
Eric Steinnagel,
Michael Yellen
Platform Bridget McGraw
Public Affairs Greg Daugherty
Charlotte Klein
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The Page:
Submissions, comments, etc.;
Please contact Liz Grippe
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September 22 “50th Anniversary of the Meeting House,”

Bart Worden, Howard Radest

As the Leader of our Society for nearly fourteen years, and a member for some twenty five years, Bart’s participation in our Society goes back half of the Building’s history. We will hear from Howard Radest and others whose memories go back to the beginning, when the society first moved here in Scarsdale/White Plains from New Rochelle in 1963.

Regular Sunday School

September 29 “Legislative Action: Passing the Plastic Bag Ban in Mamaroneck,”

Mayor Norman Rosenblum

Being supportive of environmentally sound policies is one thing. Enacting legislation to insure that behavior follows good intentions is quite another. Mayor Rosenblum will recount the story of how the ban on plastic bags in Mamaroneck went from idea to law.

Regular Sunday School

October 6 *TBA*, Bart Worden

On the first Sunday of most months, Bart Worden, Leader of the Ethical Culture Society of Westchester speaks on a topic concerning the way we bring the ethical way of life to all aspects of our lives and relations.

Regular Sunday School

October 13 “Research on Young Adult Humanists,”

Elizabeth Collier
Recipient of a Mossler Fund grant in 2013, Elizabeth is researching the ways in which young people today express their Humanism and their non-theistic spirituality. A member of FES (Future of Ethical Societies), comprising college age to twenty-something Ethical Culture Youth, Elizabeth is in a unique position to advise the Ethical Movement concerning how it might evolve in order to remain relevant and vibrant to the Millennials among us.

No Sunday School, Columbus Day weekend

October 20 “African Americans and Humanism,”

Ayanna Watson
It is widely assumed that the African American community is firmly wedded to its traditional churches. Ayanna, founder of Black Atheists of America, will discuss the engagement by African Americans in the non-theist movements and how the non-theist groups such as ours can reach out to them.

Regular Sunday School

October 27 *TBA*, Bart Worden



*First Sunday Sharing, October 6:
United Nations Refugee Agency*

To aid Syrian Refugees in Jordan.

<http://www.unhcr.org/cgi-bin/texis/vtx/home>

SEPTEMBER, OCTOBER 2013 EVENTS

Most Sundays
9:30 A.M.

Colloquy, self-reflection and meditation on a chosen subject within a nurturing, protected group environment. Leader's study

Wednesday, October 2
7:30 P.M.

Board Meeting

Sunday, October 6
12 NOON

Newcomers' Information Session,
Leader's Study.



Tai Chi Schedule (weekly)
Saturdays at 9:30 A.M., \$10/class
RSVP: Lenny Meyerson,
914 720-7092

Saturday, October 12
TBA



Ethical Chef's Night

YES group fundraiser, see page 5 for more.

Friday, October 18
TBA

Fall Membership Meeting
Please Mark your Calendars!!

WEDNESDAY, October 23
7:30 P.M.

Men's Night Out, one in a continuing series...

A'Mangiare, 121 East Main Street, Elmsford (Telephone: 592-8800).

MONDAY, October 30
7:30 P.M.

Book Group, *The Language of Flowers* by Vanessa Diffenbaugh.
at the Swifts home. Please RSVP.

SAVE THE DATE!!!!!!: Saturday, November 9, 9:00 A.M. — 12 NOON. Details to follow.

About Our Speakers:

Howard Radest

Dr. Howard B. Radest is Dean Emeritus of the Humanist Institute and a member of the National Council of Ethical Culture Leaders. He is a consulting member (emeritus) of the South Carolina Medical Association Ethics Committee and consultant to the Center for Preparedness, School of Public Health, University of South Carolina. Also a member of the Highlands Institute for American Religious and Philosophic Thought, Dr. Radest serves on the Advisory Committee of the Appignani Center for Bioethics, is a Senior Fellow of the Center for Inquiry, and a Board Chair of The Ethical Community Charter School in Jersey City. More... <http://www.esnw.org/Bios/Radest.html>



Bart Worden

Bart has served as Leader of the Ethical Culture Society of Westchester since 1998. Bart also currently serves as the Executive Director of the American Ethical Union. See his bio at:

<http://ethicalsocietywestchester.org/leadership/>



Mayor Norman Rosenblum

Mayor Rosenblum has a varied and rich biography. A native of Mamaroneck, he attended Barry Ave. Elementary School, Rye Neck High School, University of Vermont, U.S. Departments of Commerce and State which is continuing. His bio may be accessed in full:

http://www.smartvoter.org/2009/11/03/ny/wst/vote/rosenblum_n/bio.html



Elizabeth Collier

Recipient of a Mossler Fund grant in 2013, Elizabeth is researching the ways in which young people today express their Humanism and their non-theistic spirituality. Her work will be enhanced by her leadership experience as a certified Holistic Health Coach.

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(Leader's Message, Continued from page 1)



they did not yet have a certificate of occupancy – but that did not, apparently, stop them from going ahead with the ceremony. They were still, by the way, working on obtaining the certificate a year later.

There have been notable activities at the meeting house since opening day:

- In 1964 the first public meeting (I believe in the United States) on the topic of legalizing abortion was held there with the urging of member Sylvia Bloom and the Women's Conference.
- Encampment for Citizenship was held there (we don't know exactly when, but found the remnants of the showers that had been installed in the coat room a few years ago)
- The first and the tenth Humanist Weekend events were held there
- We were one of a number of local religious organizations offering shelter to the homeless as part of SHORE (Sheltering the Homeless is Our Responsibility)
- Colin Beavan (aka, "No Impact Man") was a guest speaker for our environmental fair in 2011.

As we celebrate our meeting house's 50th year, let's remember the highlights from the past, savor the good times of the present and gear up for making some history in the years to come!

— Bart Worden



(about our Speakers, Continued from page 3)



Ayanna Watson

"I believe that we, as a society, would be a lot farther along if we did not embrace religion. We have the resources, among other things, to: seriously diminish poverty; provide a better educational system; and decrease crime. In-

stead of waiting on our beloved sky daddies to fix these injustices, we can do actual work toward a better future. Nothing fails more than prayer."

More at: <http://diversity.dfwcor.org/>

The architect of our building was probably Harry Wenning, (1928 - 2012).

Editor's Note: "Harry (Wenning) ... set up his own office and continued what he had been doing in Peru, that is, design and build, not in vogue at the time. He was a pioneer in the field of solar energy, both passive and active, and the applications have been used in many of his designs." <http://www.legacy.com/obituaries/poughkeepsiejournal/obituary.aspx?pid=159416292>



Thank you, Harry, for designing a Meeting Room full of grace, light and air.



As You Are Thinking About Your Pledge...

Our annual pledge campaign will begin, as usual, at the fall membership meeting (October 18). We'll talk much more about the easement money, our long term plans for that money (and how we will make them), and what all that has to do with the pledge campaign. As you begin thinking about making your pledge, please keep a few key things in mind:

If we dedicated every last dollar of the lump sum payment we received from the easement agreement to cover our operating budget, we could pay all our expenses for only about five years.

Experts agree: for sustainable long-term health, a member organization should derive 80% of its budget from member contributions. That means only 20% should come from an endowment, rentals, or other sources of income. Our current member contributions are nowhere near that level.

What would an endowment allow us to do, in terms of making our society better, stronger, more effective and more well-known, that we've been unable to afford before now?

Our society turns 100 in just eight years. Where do we want to be by the time we are celebrating? What will be different? What will be the same? How do we get where we want to go? How will we pay for it? What will it take besides money? Where will we go from there?

To be continued...!

— Colleen Kapklein



Sunday School Corner

NEWS FROM THE SUNDAY SCHOOL

Dates to Save:

11/01—03, 2013:

**"Be the Difference, Not the Bully:
Building Ethical Community"**

**AEU Religious Education Fall Conference
and Family Retreat**

Stony Point Conference and Retreat Center,
Stony Point, New York

[http://events.r20.constantcontact.com/register/
event?llr=mltf4jkab&oeidk=a07e80nezb740b1085](http://events.r20.constantcontact.com/register/event?llr=mltf4jkab&oeidk=a07e80nezb740b1085)



11/08—10, 2013:

"Utopia"

Youth of Ethical Societies (YES) Conference



Congrats Zachary!!!!
ECSW Sunday School Graduate!

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Sandy Williams.....Consulting Editor
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Sunday School camping trip 2.



**Ethical Chef's Night, Saturday,
October 12, Youth of Ethical Societies
(YES) Fundraiser And Fun Evening!**

Our YES group will be organizing an Ethical Chef's Night on Saturday October 12. The teen chefs will be sharing their favorite recipes with guests, teaching guests how to make them and then sharing a meal together.

The Ethical Chef's Night will be a fundraiser for the YES annual conference. This year the conference topic is *Utopia* and will be held at the YMCA Camp Letts, in Edgewater, MD, the weekend of November 8 - 10. Specific details such as the exact time and names of participants to follow.

Any member interested in participating or helping to organize the event should contact Bridget.



HIGHLIGHTS OF MINUTES

BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING, September 11, 2013

Easement Funds

Colleen had sent out a memo concerning recommendations for developing a process to handle the monies received for the easement. It proposes the formation of a long range planning committee to determine the direction of the Society with these new resources plus a finance committee whose job it will be to manage the fund. Colleen suggested an opportunity for the general membership to offer their ideas for both planning and for investment guidelines. At the fall membership meeting we could have the planning committee appointed and available to gather ideas from those in attendance.

Motion by James: "that the Society promptly deposit the sum of \$400,000 received for the easement in a new account to be established at Wells Fargo, where the Society presently holds its savings accounts." Seconded by Stanley. Unanimously approved.

Stanley will call people in the Society who are skilled in finance and vet them to see who is knowledgeable and available for serving on the Finance Committee and report back to Colleen.

The principles and guidelines for the investment of the fund, as revised, shall be the following:

1. Financial decisions will be based on the long and short term objectives of the Society;
2. Priorities for the money will be derived with input from all members who want to give it;
3. Decisions about the money will be transparent;
4. No member should individually benefit from any decision about the money, or have sole responsibility for decisions about the money;
5. We should invest the money ethically.

Long Range Planning Committee

Oliver had the original idea to organize a long range planning committee, but he told Colleen that he is too engaged with the ethical action committee to undertake this, as well. Colleen then appointed herself as chair of the Planning Committee and will choose additional members of it. Some Board members offered their names for inclusion. Bart suggested that a Sunday School parent and a newcomer should also be included.

Nursery School

Ea described the meeting of the Nursery School parents that took place this evening. Several parents expressed concerns and misgivings about the construction next door. Drilling for the blasting can itself be something to be concerned about, and the "test" blasts on Tuesday shook the Building. The drilling and the blasting will take two weeks. The construction all together can be expected to affect the NS throughout the fall in some way.

Ea reported that because of the precipitous decline in enrollment, she let one senior teacher go and instituted a cross-the-board 6% pay cut to all staff.

Ours is not the only school that has a low enrollment this year. Factors such as the lower birth rate and universal pre-K affect the entire industry in Westchester. Mamaroneck, WP, and Larchmont school districts are expanding their programs and taking in more students. Ea indicated that the NS will need financial support this year. Sara suggested that the Society could take back the cleaning expense which had been assumed by the NS. Michael asks if we might reconsider the continuation of the NS as part of our long term planning.

Membership Meeting: Scheduled for October 18

We will need to do the invitations and revise the pledge letter. Discussion about the information to be included in the letter. Concern was expressed that the creation of the endowment fund might distract members from the need to continue pledging. It has to be made clear that the Easement Fund is like the land interests that it derives from and that it has to last as long. Income it throws off must be used for expansion of our programs, not as a mere substitute for operational funding.

Zo requests that there be a by-law revision that will add the requirement that the chair of the nominating committee call a meeting at least two months prior to the Spring membership meeting. She noted that each year there is a failure to get the nominating committee in gear in time. Discussion. No action taken at this time. Suggestions that we should investigate whether the committee formation procedure can be improved or that other means be employed to remind the committee to do its work timely.

Treasurer's Report

Pledges met budget expectations for the year. Arya Samaj amount due has still to be calculated. Apparently they are behind about \$3,000 for this year. They do not pay regularly, but in occasional spurts.

Stan suggested that the Treasurer send out a letter to members in June of each year to remind those who have not yet sent in their pledge payment to do so. That would help assure the receipt of the pledges by the end of the fiscal year.

Leaders Report

Partnership groups have continued - the police monitoring group met recently, the 50th Anniversary March participants met at the Slater Center, the Islamophobia group and the Bereavement Group both met on Monday evening so the building seemed real active that night. There were photos put up on facebook from the Washington March.

Bart received a request for use of the Building on New Years Day from one of the Islamophobia group who was impressed with our facility. They do an annual thank-you event

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HIGHLIGHTS OF MINUTES

BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING, August 7, 2013

This is an abridged report of this meeting. The full report is available for view in the Society office.

Leader's Report

- ◆ 50th Anniversary of the March on Washington is coming up. Washington ES is hosting members from all over. Several people from our Society are going and the AEU will have a new banner to display, with a design based on the blue/white pattern on the AEU membership cards.
- ◆ The committee to organize the celebration of the 50th Anniversary of our own Building, is selecting a date for the event.
- ◆ Anti-Islamophobia group is continuing to meet here in our Building.
- ◆ There is a documentary about food insecurity called "A Place at the Table" around which Bart suggests creating an event at the Society. The director is in the area and might attend and speak. Bart also expressed ideas about demonstrating organic gardening.
- ◆ The Riverdale Society is a peace site with a peace pole. Perhaps we can achieve that status, too, and erect a peace pole of our own.
- ◆ Dusty Cohn's daughter Maggie was here a couple of weeks ago and reported that Dusty's house was finally sold and the family's ties to Westchester area have fully ended. But in consideration of the long association the Cohns had with the Society, the family wants to donate something to the Society in their name. Bart asked for suggestions.

Respectfully Submitted,
— *Richard Koral*, Secretary



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for their supporters and some 200 people expected.

Web site

Stan spoke to Terry Karp, web developer and member of the Bergen Society, and he recommends going ahead to work with her to revise and update the Society web site. She gave us her lowest price, \$55 per hour. Stan does not want to be the one to work with her, however. Who will work with her? It is suggested that Glen Babakian and Bart can have a three way conversation with Terry to explain what we need. Deborah Sadler is also skillful with integration with facebook and other social media so she should also be on the call.

James reminded us that we have a budget line of

In memoriam; Shirley Walzer, mother of Nora Freeman

Shirley Walzer died on September 4, 2013. She was a loving wife to the late Howard Walzer, mother, aunt, and grandmother, ardent nature lover and lifelong supporter of peace and justice movements. She is survived by her daughters Nora Freeman, Anne and Paula Walzer; sons-in-law Stanley Freeman and Rocky Neff; niece and nephew Naomi and Mark Goldman, and grandchildren Luis Torres, Daniel and Julia Crachiolo. Shirley, we will remember and miss you always. In lieu of flowers, please consider a donation to one or both of her favorite charities: *The Nation* magazine, at 33 Irving Place, New York, New York 10003; Holy Apostles Soup Kitchen, at 296 Ninth Avenue, New York, NY 10001.

I want to thank everyone who offered their love and support when my mother died. Thanks to Beverly, Oliver, and Bart for coming to the shiva; to everyone who made donations in her name, called, emailed, sent cards and loving thoughts. This has been and continues to be a very hard loss to bear. I am so grateful to be part of this community right now, more than ever before.

— *Nora*

\$5,000 for web services and the funds should be applied to retain Terry to update the site. Jason suggested that we should be clear about what we need so Terry can be informed at the outset where the efforts should best be directed.

Miscellaneous

Martina noticed that the construction fence around the construction site next door did not seem secure and she expressed concern about the Nursery School's safety. James indicated that the fence was indeed being improved and made more secure.

Respectfully Submitted,
— *Richard Koral*, Secretary

A Humanist Fellowship

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“The hero is one who kindles a great light in the world, who sets up blazing torches in the dark streets of life for men to see by.”
— Felix Adler

