



**The Interfaith Alliance**  
LONG ISLAND CHAPTER  
[www.interfaithalliance-li.org](http://www.interfaithalliance-li.org)



### **Minutes – Meeting of 3/26/2009**

**Attendance:** Mark Lukens, Chair; Hank Arond; Paul Auerbach; Norma Cohen; Joyce Gorycki; Bob Nuxoll; Lilyan Strassman; Dolores Tibbets; Rich Tibbets.

Mark called the meeting to order at 7:40 pm.

**Minutes:** Reading of the minutes was waived, and they were accepted as submitted.

**Treasurer's Report:** Dolores reported that we had \$40 in income from Member Dues and we spent \$335.75, leaving a balance of \$1,216.36. The expenses consisted of: \$26.85 for website maintenance, \$150.98 for a new TIA-LI banner, \$152.92 in postage and printing for mailing member dues notice, plus \$5 for monthly banking fees.

**Membership and Clergy Luncheon:** We had a lengthy discussion about our annual Clergy Luncheon, which is scheduled for May 21<sup>st</sup> in the Veatch Ballroom at UUCSR. Paul suggested the theme of “change” (given that we have a new President in the White House). Mark noted that we should focus on a positive message, such as the new opportunities we have for progress. Bob Nuxoll suggested the title of the Luncheon should be: “Change: TIA’s role in a new time of hope.” We decided to have speakers address the issues of Hate Crimes, Separation of Church and State, and War and Peace.

We agreed that we should make a major effort to invite clergy, both current TIA members as well as non-members, to attend this luncheon. We need to focus on increasing the diversity, both religious and ethnic, of the TIA membership, especially among clergy. (The Luncheon is also open to TIA members who are not clergy.)

**TIA National:** Norma provided a report on activity at TIA’s National Office.

- *Faith-Based Office:* The National office has met with Josh Dubois, head of the White House Faith Based office. Dubois told TIA that while the White House will not heed all our recommendations, he felt that we should be comfortable with many of their actions. The National office will continue to monitor the activities of the Faith Based Office.
- *Hate Crimes:* Norma spoke about National’s support for strong hate crimes legislation. You may read TIA’s statement on this issue at our website: <http://www.interfaithalliance.org/incongress/hatecrimes>
- *Marriage Equality:* TIA is opposed to the proposed Federal Marriage Amendment because it shows a disregard for religious liberty and diversity. As noted in TIA’s statement on the Federal Marriage Amendment, “TIA strives to model a dialogue between faith traditions that upholds our shared principles while neither critiquing nor evaluating the theology or practice of any faith tradition.

TIA honors and respects the sovereignty of individual faith traditions to determine what they choose to recognize as a religious marriage.”

You may read TIA’s various press releases on this subject by going to the website <http://www.interfaithalliance.org/the-news/press-releases> and typing *marriage* into the “Title Filter” box at the top of the page.

**Religious Coalitions:** Mark noted that there is a split within various conservative faith groups. Some young members are less ideological on hot-button social issues than their elders. He felt that religious progressives might try forging new alliances with them on those issues in which we have common goals, such as poverty and the environment. This split within conservative religious groups might deepen as economic hard times continue. Mark also noted that we should expand our outreach to the Islamic community.

**Lecture at St. Joseph’s College:** Rich informed the members of a lecture to be held at St. Joseph’s College in Patchogue on Thursday, April 23rd at 7:30pm. Imam Feisal Abdul Rauf, noted Egyptian-American teacher and author, has dedicated his life to building bridges between Muslims and the West, will present a lecture titled “Islam in the 21st Century.” Imam Feisal is author of the book *What's Right with Islam IS What's Right with America*.

Our membership committee sent a flyer about this lecture along with our annual dues notice.

For additional information, go to the TIA-LI website at [www.interfaithalliance-li.org](http://www.interfaithalliance-li.org) and scroll down to the paragraph titled “Islam in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.”

**New Yorkers Against Gun Violence:** Joyce Gorycki notified us that New Yorkers Against Violence (NYAGV) will rally in Albany on April 29<sup>th</sup> to promote legislation to stop violence. NYAGV’s main priorities are passage of the New York State microstamping bill and passage of a gun dealer bill

Microstamping is a new technology which will assist law enforcement’s efforts to quickly identify the original retail purchaser and therefore more readily trace guns used in the commission of crimes. It will also assist in identifying “straw” purchasers, that is, purchasers who obtain guns from authorized dealers in order to re-sell them to convicted criminals and others, who are prohibited from possessing them.

For further information, go to the website [www.nyagv.org](http://www.nyagv.org)

**Rockefeller Drug Laws:** Mark reported that New York State Senate is on the verge of passing legislation to reform the Rockefeller Drug Laws. The State Assembly has already passed the reform package, and Gov. Paterson is expected to sign the legislation. The legislation gives judges the ability to sentence people to treatment and other alternatives to incarceration and also allows some people currently incarcerated under the Rockefeller Drug Laws to apply for resentencing and release. The Correctional Association, which has lobbied for many years for such legislation, is very pleased that their efforts are finally paying off in a major way. They will, however, continue to advocate for the full repeal of the laws.

For further information, go to the website [www.correctionalassociation.org](http://www.correctionalassociation.org)

**Immigrant Rights:** Mark reported that he and Habeeb spoke at a press conference in Patchogue highlighting the problems immigrants face. The press conference was covered by Channel 12 and by CBS news radio as part of the American Jewish Committee's efforts on behalf of immigrants.

**TIA-LI Banner:** Rich displayed the new banner which was authorized at a recent TIA meeting. The banner is five feet long by three feet high and is made of vinyl so that we can display it outside regardless of the weather. You can view a design image of the banner at the website [www.interfaithalliance-li.org](http://www.interfaithalliance-li.org) and scrolling down to the text which reads "Click here to view the new TIA-LI Banner."

Respectfully submitted,  
Richard Tibbets

UPCOMING EVENTS
<b>Thursday, April 16, 2009 at 7:30 pm: Obama's First Hundred Days - Bailout, Banks, Stimulus and the Budget - A Conversation with Economists, Laurence Krause, SUNY Old Westbury and Martin Melkonian, Hofstra University</b> Unitarian Universalist Congregation at Shelter Rock, 48 Shelter Rock Road, Manhasset <i>Contact the Long Island Alliance for Peaceful Alternatives at 516-741-4360 for details.</i>
<b>Thursday, April 23rd, 7:30pm: "Islam in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century." Lecture by Imam Feisal Abdul Rauf</b> , noted Egyptian-American teacher and author dedicated to building bridges between Muslims and the West. <b>Location:</b> St. Joseph's College, D'Ecclesiis Auditorium, Patchogue <i>See TIA website at <a href="http://www.interfaithalliance-li.org">www.interfaithalliance-li.org</a> for details.</i>
<b>Wednesday, April 29th.:</b> New Yorkers Against Gun Violence <b>Rally</b> in Albany. <i>See TIA website at <a href="http://www.interfaithalliance-li.org">www.interfaithalliance-li.org</a> for details.</i>
<b>Thursday, May 21st. Clergy Luncheon:</b> at Veatch House, Unitarian Universalist Congregation at Shelter Rock

NEXT INTERFAITH ALLIANCE MEETING
The next TIA meeting will be: <b>Friday, April 17<sup>th</sup> at 3:30 pm</b> <b>at the Unitarian Universalist Congregation at Shelter Rock (UUCSR)</b> 48 Shelter Rock Road, Manhasset Call (516) 627-6560 for directions to UUCSR, or visit the website <a href="http://www.uucsr.org">www.uucsr.org</a>