

Central New York Chapter New York Civil Liberties Union

NEW YORK CIVIL LIBERTIES UNION

ISSUE NO. 11 • Spring/Summer 2009

Learning About Liberty

REFLECTIONS OF OUR STUDENT INTERNS OVER THE YEARS

SUBTLE CIVIL RIGHTS violations go unchecked and lead to larger infringements. Somewhere in the United States our civil liberties are challenged and violated every day. Just because it isn't happening to everyone does not mean the rights of all are unaffected.

The ACLU was created to ensure that the voices of the significant minority are heard, and that civil rights violations are addressed rather than swept under the rug. These organizations are in a constant battle to maintain our civil liberties and stand up against those who would take them away. Without these watchdog groups, the civil rights of every U.S. citizen and resident would have withered away long ago.

Jon Lance Clements
Undergraduate Intern
SUNY Oswego
June 2008

I WAS AMAZED at how much injustice exists, not just in the U.S., but right here in New York State. I have

often read in the newspaper or seen a segment on a news channel about how activists were seeking to change policy, but the ability to be part of it was an awesome feeling... I don't think I'll ever be able to look at a police officer the same, after reading all of the cases that involved police brutality. I was thrilled to be given the chance to be part of an organization that really makes a difference and changes people's lives every day. I want to thank you so much for giving me the opportunity to realize how great it feels to really make a difference in this world.

Tara Guastella
Undergraduate Intern
Syracuse University
August 2006

I DID NOT REALIZE how much our civil liberties are impacted on a daily basis. Through this internship, I discovered the power our local governments have over our rights, and how it is so very important to keep their policies in check.

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A Publication by:

**The Central New York Chapter
of the NY Civil Liberties Union**

Office: 753 James Street, Suite 8
Syracuse, New York 13203

Phone: (315) 471-2821

Email: bgewanter@nyclu.org

www.nyclu.org/region/central

The Annual Spring Dinner is in just two short weeks!

Thursday, June 25, 2009

Honoring Beth Broadway

PROGRAM DIRECTOR OF THE COMMUNITY WIDE DIALOGUE

PROGRAM AT INTERFAITH WORKS OF CENTRAL NEW YORK

RSVP now! Use the form inside on p. 5

THIS YEAR'S KHARAS AWARD WINNER...

Beth Broadway

ON WEDNESDAY, June 25, the Central New York Chapter of the NYCLU will honor Beth Broadway with our annual Kharas Award for Distinguished Service in Civil Liberties. This award is given annually in remembrance of Ralph Kharas, former dean of the Syracuse University College of Law, and a revered champion of civil liberties in the Syracuse community.

Beth Broadway is the director of the Community Wide Dialogues Program at the InterReligious Council of Central New York. This program promotes understanding between ethnic, racial and religious groups in and around the Syracuse area. Developed by Beth in 1997, it is the longest running dialogue program in the United States that is focused on ending racism. The program uses a study circle, a diverse group of people who meet regularly over a period of time for facilitated discussions of a critical public issue, to build relationships and create forums for action among people who may not otherwise have the opportunity to meet, work and learn from one another. A broad array of people have participated in these study circles, from ages 8 to 80, of all races, nationalities



and religions. The dialogue circles end up influencing opinions, changing attitudes, enhancing knowledge, and forging stronger community cooperation among participants.

Beth has followed in the footsteps of her mother, Ellen, who set an example in the mid '60s by working to quell racial tensions in the neighborhoods of their hometown, South Holland, Illinois (a suburb of Chicago). Since her arrival in Syracuse in 1983, Beth has strived to end racism and nurture harmony.

From working with disparate racial groups on Syracuse's North Side, to creating a network of dialogues between urban and suburban schools, her tireless efforts have brought adversarial groups together to examine their differences and identify common interests through systematic and thoughtful discussion.

"Beth is at the forefront of proactive peacemaking in our community," says Chapter Director Barrie Gewanter. "She has empowered countless people throughout our community to engage in tough issues, identify key civil rights goals, and build bridges and organizational networks to pursue complementary action on racial justice issues.

At a time when change seems both horribly difficult and amazingly possible, Ms. Broadway is an inspiration to our community. It is our honor to have her stand at our podium this year."

Become a sponsor for the June 25th dinner, or an advertiser in our event program book. Send a message to recognize Beth Broadway and celebrate her work. Call (315) 471-2821 or email Barrie at bgewanter@nyclu.org.

Hart Seely, REPORTER & AUTHOR, TO BE FEATURED AS SPEAKER AT THE JUNE 25 DINNER

HART SEELY is an award-winning reporter for Syracuse's *Post-Standard*. He has twice been to Iraq as an embedded reporter with the U.S. Army's 10th Mountain Division, but is most known for his lighter and rhythmic take on the political universe. His humor and satire have appeared in *The New Yorker*, *The New York Times* and *Los Angeles Times*, and on National Public Radio. Seely produced the book *Pieces of*

Intelligence: The Existential Poetry of Donald H. Rumsfeld, and authored *Mrs. Goose Goes to Washington: Nursery Rhymes for the Political Barnyard*. His work appears in "Fierce Pajamas: An Anthology of Humor Writing in the New Yorker," "The Best of Slate: A 10 Year Anthology," "Disquiet, Please!: More Humor Writing from The New Yorker," and "The Final Four of Everything." An avid baseball fan, Seeley

also coedited *O Holy Cow! The Selected Verse of Phil Rizzuto*.

He lives in Syracuse with his wife and three children, and claims that none of them will sit near him in the movie theater. We look forward to hear what Hart has to say about the upheavals in the newspaper world and the effects this may have on our communities.

YOU WIN SOME, YOU LOSE SOME... And Keep on Working for Justice!

ON APRIL 10, members of Pax Christi conducted an interpretive re-enactment of the "Stations of the Cross" along Genesee St. in Downtown Utica. The group had performed this statement of their social justice vision for many years. This year, the city said that they would need a \$1 million insurance policy in order to get a permit for the demonstration. Chapter Board Member Sunithi Bajekal put Pax Christi in touch with our Chapter director, who contacted the city attorney. This attorney discovered that the city clerk had been giving free speech groups the wrong permit request form. The director demanded revisions be made to the city's forms, to clarify the purpose of each form and address a few constitutional issues. These revisions are in process. The Pax Christi group marched on without restraint.

IN EARLY MARCH, the Chapter was contacted by a teacher in the Syracuse School District, after she was required to fill out the same affidavits and backup paperwork required of domestic partners even though she and her partner had recently been married. Chapter Director Barrie Gewanter contacted the district's personnel director, and provided him with information related to marriage recognition in New York State (especially in the wake of the NYCLU's win in the *Martinez* case in Monroe County - for more info go to www.nyclu.org). A few days later, the Syracuse District changed its procedures so that married lesbian and gay couples will be treated the same as any other married couple seeking benefits when one of the spouses is a district employee.

THE NYCLU AND THE CHAPTER are pursuing advocacy in two Central New York schools where recent actions of police officers have become highly problematic. Director Barrie Gewanter continues to monitor the development of new policy in the Syracuse District aimed at delineating between police and administrator responsibilities in respect to student behavior. Gewanter is working closely with the NYCLU to challenge a highly improper and intrusive search of at least 18 students from the Red Creek Central School District. State troopers participated in the search, and school officials searched every student on a BOCES bus. The NYCLU maintains the searches violated the students rights under both the U.S. and New York constitutions.

Continued from page 1...

The major project that I worked on involved protest rights in different cities in Central New York. I was able to speak with different people within local government, and see the red tape and disorganization that often exists. I also got the reward of actually seeing a policy changed to properly fit within the law. When these changes did occur, I felt like the system actually worked, and people within the government believed in following the Constitution.

Working with the Chapter director gave me an even stronger passion for civil liberties. She was always there to answer any questions I had, give advice if I needed it, or just talk about life.

I was also able to see connections between what I was working on and issues at the national level. Often, I feel overwhelmed because the national issues are so big, and they involve parts of the government that I will never have access to. In the projects I worked on, however, I felt like I was having a true effect. I could actually

see change happening locally.

Sam Edelstein
*Undergraduate Intern
Syracuse University
Summer 2006*

ENTERING MY SUMMER of services to the ACLU, I expected to fulfill the usual duties. I envisioned two months of photocopies, files, and office work, with minimal exposure to real issues – an internship, as opposed to an activist experience. Yet I learned a new way to be active in social issues, a new way to fight for social justice.

I thought that in order to truly make a difference, one must be on the frontline, the cutting edge, and that one must test the law, not defend it. I entered my internship with a really skewed view of the legal system, and many doubts about protecting a system which seems to protect only a few. During my work with the ACLU, I learned that enforcing the law can be one of the greatest tools for political activism, and that social movements

must derive their strength from many sources. The law can protect people, when it is enforced in the correct manner. Through several months of ACLU case work, I was able to see that protection comes in enforcement, and that this enforcement must be both monitored and facilitated. I learned that battles must be fought on all fronts, and that no task is too small to make a difference.

Katherine Worboys
*Undergraduate Intern
Summer 1997*

STAY TUNED:

Chapter Co-President Dennis Heaphy and Chapter Director Barrie Gewanter are developing a performance-based program to reach out to youth and spark in them a passion for liberty and a greater understanding of what is at stake. The program is interactive and will be modeled on actual ACLU cases and debates. We'll be looking for sponsors to help us kick off this program. More to come soon...

CNY Chapter Advocacy, Outreach & Celebration at LGBT Events in Utica, Albany, and Syracuse

THE CENTRAL NEW YORK chapter of the NYCLU has been very active this spring in advocating for LGBT rights. On the weekend of March 20, Chapter Board Members Diane Berry and Sunithi Bajekal staffed the NYC-LU information table at the *Pride and Joy Weekend Conference* in Utica. The conference provided an opportunity for families with LGBT parents to congregate, share experiences and listen to informative and inspirational speakers. Co-President Dennis Heaphy also attended, recording video interviews with LGBT families for an upcoming NYCLU advocacy video. Information on this conference can be found at www.PrideAndJoyFamilies.org.

The following Tuesday, Central New York Chapter Director Barrie Gewanter, Co-President Dennis Heaphy and Volunteer Caseworker John K. Wolf rode an early morning bus to Albany with multitudes of fellow advocates and allies. The trip was organized by the Empire State Pride Agenda and the NYCLU to lobby for passage of Governor Paterson's *Marriage Fairness Bill*, the *Gender Expression Non-Discrimination Act (GENDA)*, and the *Dignity for All Students Act (DASA)* in the New York State Legislature.

The *Marriage Fairness Bill* will provide lesbian and gay couples access to the 1,324 rights and responsibilities that come with marriage in New York State.

GENDA would provide crucial civil rights protections for transgender New Yorkers by banning discrimination in housing, employment, credit and public accommodations.

DASA would require schools to address bullying and harassment of students based on their race, ethnic group, national origin, disability, religion, sexual orientation, gender or sex, whether real or perceived. It would also require districts to provide teachers, staff and administrators the training and tools to do this, and require school districts to track and report on harassment and discrimination of these students.

There were more participants in this Equality and Justice lobby day than in any previous year. The opening speaker was none other than Governor Paterson, who extolled the merits of the *Marriage Fairness Bill*. In addressing adversaries of same-sex marriage who cite religious beliefs as the basis for their opposition, Patterson said:

"The fact is that for years these same individuals... not all of them, but many of them, who pronounce religious doctrine, did not exercise it when young gay and lesbian students were being bullied and chastised for expressing their points of view."

The lobbying visits were followed by a rousing outdoor rally that was hosted by actor Alan Cumming. Later, in the

Capitol Flag Room, the NYCLU held a ceremony in which chapter directors were recognized statewide for their efforts in this ongoing fight.

On May 12, 2009 the New York State Assembly voted 89-52 to pass the *Marriage Fairness Bill*. We are now waiting for the bill to be brought to a vote on the floor of the New York State Senate, but it's not yet clear that there are the votes to pass it, and there are only a few short weeks left in this legislature session. Please call or write your senator today to express your views on the urgency of this bill.

The NYCLU has created a great new website to address the Marriage Fairness issue and provide online tools to take action. Go to www.MarriageNY.com and watch videos of Central New York couples from around the state.

COME MARCH WITH US! On Saturday June 20, the Syracuse LGBT community will march in the annual Syracuse Pride Parade. Joe Leonard will again staff an outreach table at the Pride Festival in the Everson Plaza. Please consider joining us in the parade or to help staff the table. It would be great to have a large contingent this year. **Let's show our solidarity and our support for equality on this festive day, especially with the marriage vote still in play.**

INTRODUCING...

Kevin Atwater is our new Administrative Assistant. He is a Syracuse resident who worked at the Syracuse University Library for many years. He has a masters degree in geography, and has edited a multi-volume series on state legislators.

Jill Partridge is doing an intensive summer internship. She is a 3rd year law student at New York Law School, and plans to return to Syracuse when she completes her degree. Jill will be focusing on casework and advocacy projects this summer.

Breanna Rolland is working in our office as an intern three days a week this summer. She is a senior at Wells College who is majoring in international relations with a minor in Japanese. She will be focusing on projects related to LGBT rights, reproductive rights and immigration issues this summer.

The Chapter is very pleased to welcome these three talented individuals to our CNY office team.



Kevin Atwater, Breanna Rolland & Jill Partridge



The Central New York Chapter of the New York Civil Liberties Union
Invites You to Our

Annual Spring Dinner Honoring Beth Broadway

PROGRAM DIRECTOR OF THE COMMUNITY WIDE DIALOGUE
PROGRAM AT INTERFAITH WORKS OF CENTRAL NEW YORK

Featuring Keynote Speaker Hart Seely

POST-STANDARD REPORTER AND AUTHOR

Thursday, June 25, 2009

LaFayette Hills Golf & Country Club
4480 Lafayette Road, Jamesville

6 p.m. Reception • 7 p.m. Dinner • 8:15 p.m. Program

For more information please call the Chapter office
at (315) 471-2821, or email us at bgewanter@nyclu.org

✂ Cut here and remove and return this form ✂

Name: _____ **Email:** _____

Address: _____ **Phone:** _____

____ Yes, I/we will attend the Dinner. # of seats ____ @ \$ 70 each.	Amount _____
____ Yes, I will attend. For the special price of \$100, reserve my seat and place enclosed business card-sized ad or message in the program.	Amount _____
____ I want to make an additional donation to cover the cost of a dinner for a student or a person on low/fixed income.	Amount _____
____ No , I cannot attend but wish to make this donation.	Amount _____
Make check payable to: CNY Chapter NYCLU Foundation (\$30 of each dinner ticket purchased & used is not tax-deductible.)	Total enclosed _____
Mail Reservations & Payment to: CNY Chapter NYCLU 753 James St, Suite 8 Syracuse, NY 13203	RSVP by Phone: (315) 471-2821 or Fax: (315) 471-1077 RSVP by Email: bgewanter@nyclu.org

Call office in advance for information on ASL Interpreter, wheelchair accessibility, reduced price tickets, dietary alternatives.



NYCLU

NEW YORK CIVIL LIBERTIES UNION

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CENTRAL NEW YORK CHAPTER

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Spring Dinner & Kharas Award • June 25, 2009

Invitation and Reply Form Inside - Hurry, this date is approaching fast!

EVER THOUGHT OF BECOMING A VOLUNTEER?

Call (315) 471-2821 For More Info

CHAPTER OFFICE WISH LIST:

- 1 New Standing & Rotating Tower Fan*
- 3 New or Gently Used 5-Wheel Base Adjustable Desk Chairs*
- 2 Plastic Folding Tables (1 Med. & 1 Lg.)
- 2 Sturdy Four-Drawer Filing Cabinets*
- 1 Small Blue Recycling Basket

* Denotes Especially Needed

Taking Care With Liberty Can Take Many Forms

WHAT ONE NEW VOLUNTEER SAW AT THE CHAPTER OFFICE

Dear Barrie:

Thank you for accepting me as a volunteer this fall. I have been with you more than two months now, and I'm amazed at the constant activity in your office – our office! Each week when I arrive, you are involved in a new, urgent project here in Syracuse; a high school student abused by a policeman, a pregnant woman concerned about medical care, a transgender woman murdered.

These urgent situations are present daily, in addition to the “usual” letters and phone calls that arrive asking for help – from a citizen in need of a lawyer who actually defends, from prisoners who think they are unfairly treated, from people who have been slighted or damaged by life. Although you are not always able to help everyone, you deal patiently with each request, taking the

time needed to listen kindly and intently. You leave these people with a sense of their own worth, even if this office has no answers for them.

I'm hooked.

John K. Wolf, M.D.

*Weekly Casework Volunteer
December 6, 2008*

The CNY Chapter would like to thank Ariel E.M. Servadio of Rotten to the Core Web Design for donating her time, editing and computer expertise to produce this newsletter

ariel@arielservadio.com
<http://www.arielservadio.com>