Hello Everyone,

After some easing of fears about the pandemic that would never end, the Omicron variant of Covid has set us back again. (How long is the Greek alphabet anyway?) So our Sunday meetings are back on ‘Zoom Only’ once again.

For those who have had the booster shot, the news has been frustrating, but not as worrisome as before. After all, Winter is not such a bad season to have to hunker down. Zoom can be a lifeline, but we should still hear a human voice every day, especially if we live alone. Stay warm, because as the song says, “Baby, it’s cold outside.”

DOING SOMETHING

One of the principles that is mentioned in our Introduction every Sunday is to Ethical Humanists, the supreme aim of human life is working to create a better world. This is a very high ideal to live up to!

If you’ve been watching the news, the sabre rattling over the Ukraine is troubling, the starvation and death of the Yemini and Afghani people is heart-rending and the existential crisis of our democracy provokes our worst fears.

But social action here at our Society gives us power to act! On the Social Action page in this Newsletter are some of the activities in which the Society is engaged. I invite you to take a look at it and decide what you will do.

Linda Napoli
“Democracy” (written in 1949)

Democracy will not come
Today, this year
Nor ever
Through compromise and fear.

I have as much right
As the other fellow has
To stand
On my own two feet
And own the land.

I tire so of hearing people say,
Let things take their course.
Tomorrow is another day.
I do not need my freedom when I’m dead.
I cannot live on tomorrow’s bread.

Freedom is a strong seed.
Planted in a great need.

I live here too.
I want freedom just as you.

Langston Hughes
(1902-1967)
Harlem Renaissance Poet

Did You Know?

All of the following essentials to modern life were invented by African American Inventors:

1881  Lewis Latimer - Carbon filament for light bulbs
1891  Philip B. Downing - Modern mailbox
Late 1800’s  Alexander Miles - Automatic elevator doors
1908  Madame C. J. Walker - Home hair care products for women of color
1920’s  Garret Morgan - Three light traffic signal
1940  Frederick McKinley Jones - Refrigerated trucks

(Researched by Linda Napoli)
I write this as a blizzard rages outside and I am idly wondering whether a sympathy card I mailed to a friend, whose 104 year old mother just died, will arrive today. The U.S. postal service’s motto once went “Neither rain, nor snow, nor sleet, nor hail shall keep the postmen from their appointed rounds.” Well, here’s a test, I thought. However, the postal service’s current motto seems to be “do the least necessary with the least resources.” So, my card’s chances may not be so good, given current conditions.

The original expression of that motto was conveyed by Herodotus, the ancient historian, who was describing the fast, reliable, horse-ridden courier service in Persia organized under the Emperor Darius. Clearly, pride in work has a long pedigree. I imagine that if my card were transmitted on horseback today, it would be keeping warm in a cozy inn somewhere waiting out the tempest.

It’s common to say that things are going downhill today and that people had a stronger, more rigorous work ethic back in the old days. Memory seems to work that way. We are selective in the things we remember. But are things going downhill today?

I grew up hearing rosy stories from my elders about life in the Depression and “the War.” It was all about the heroic struggles, the trust between neighbors, and about the best president ever. It was about striving to make it in America while speaking the language of the old country at home. In short, it was about challenges and opportunities and a story that had a pretty decent ending. My family’s older generations ended up - not rich – but not insecure, either; not accomplished, but not embarrassed. America offered them the opportunity to make a life despite the travails of the times.

It is good to have an historic perspective with which to understand the present and to guess at the future. Many times during their lives their world slipped into calamity and skirted destruction. But somehow, it pulled through with hard fought determination and with luck.
The present era has offered its own calamities of scale - the Great Recession, the Pandemic, the Climate Crisis, the crisis in democracy. Pillars of our world have been shaken and tested; institutions on which we rely for our well being are showing their shortcomings and frailties.

Nevertheless, I have confidence in the future. Our world is built more on the fortitude and imagination of people than it is built on happenstance and circumstances. I see young people getting a foothold on their careers, pursuing their work and bringing their higher ethical standards with them. I see young people elevating their communities with public service and a global perspective. I see them advocating for equity, justice and climate realism. Single issue set-backs will not define this coming era - what will define it will be the recalibration of ethical standards by today's young people which will elevate us all.

Dr. Richard L. Koral, Leader EHSLI

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**OFFICE HOURS**

**Tina, our Office Manager will be in the Society office:**  
Monday’s: 10-2  
Tuesday’s & Thursday’s 10-3  
Phone & Email messages are checked daily.  
516-741-7304 or office@ehsli.org
After a 15-minute Video-about *The Ethical Society History: Social Justice Leaders*, Arthur Dobrin will speak about the founding of the Society, how he came to it, some of the key members, and a few of its failures.

Feb 13: Dr. John Teehan, Really Taking Darwin Seriously: Some Radical Implications (Darwin Day Celebration of Science)
In *On the Origin of Species* (1859), Charles Darwin predicted: “In the distant future I see open fields for far more important researches. Psychology will be based on a new foundation, that of the necessary acquirement of each mental power and capacity by gradation.” This prediction has proved correct, at least as a general framework. Human “mental powers”—the emotional, moral, and intellectual capacities that define the human mind—did not just pop into existence with the arrival of homo sapiens, but have an evolutionary history, stretching back through ancient non-human ancestors.

A profound implication of this view is that difference between the ‘mental powers’ of the human mind and that of non-human animals is one of degree only. The idea that non-human animals have minds was certainly radical in Darwin’s day, but is less so today (although still controversial). We are more or less comfortable with the idea that “higher animals” (e.g. chimpanzees, dolphins, elephants) may have emotional states and be capable of “intelligent” behavior—that they have minds, in some sense. Less complex, perhaps, but still minds. However, to really take Darwin seriously, we must accept that these “less complex” minds evolved from even earlier stages of mind—and this raises truly radical questions: How far back must we go before we come to “mindless” creatures? Can there even be a “mindless” organism?
Such questions may sound not simply radical but ridiculous, however, there are serious researchers making evidence-based arguments that mind is not restricted to higher animals (crows? octopus? bees?), and indeed may not be restricted to animals (trees? fungi? bacteria?).

In this talk, I will set out some of the evidence/arguments for this position and discuss its significance for understanding our place in the universe, and our relationships to other living beings.

Dr. John Teehan is Professor of Religion at Hofstra University, where he also teaches in the Department of Philosophy, and the Cognitive Science Program. His research focuses on an evolved cognitive scientific study of morality and religion, and its philosophical implications. He is the author of In the Name of God: The Evolutionary Origins of Religious Ethics and Violence, as well as numerous articles on these topics.

**Feb 20: Raju Rajan, ReWilding Our Lives.**

It is easy to be overwhelmed when we hear about Global challenges like Climate Change or Biodiversity Loss. The best way to overcome anxiety and paralysis is to work in our own backyards and frontyards to effect sustainable change. Raju Rajan discusses the ethical and social importance of rewilding, with simple tips for getting started on sustainable landscaping this Spring.

Raju Rajan is a technologist with a strong communitarian ethic. He came to the United States from India to obtain his PhD in Communication Networks at the University of Wisconsin, Madison. He has enjoyed a long career as researcher, consultant and technologist. His strong entrepreneurial ethic has led him to found two IT start-ups, as well as a number of community groups aimed at organizing people for systemic change.

He is currently active with Long Island Together, a progressive collective that organizes around education, immigration and social change, as well as ReWild Long Island, which brings native plants to public spaces and private yards.

Raju resides in Port Washington, NY, with wife Sonia Arora who is an educator/community organizer, son Kabeera Singh, a Schreiber High School student, and cat, Lucky, who does nothing. Raju serves as the President of the Board of ReWild Long Island.
Feb 27: Carolyn Ferrell, Transforming Life into Art: The Sources of Inspiration for my novel, *Dear Miss Metropolitan*.

How do we, as writers, transform lived experiences into art on the page? The poet Adrienne Rich wrote in her essay “When We Dead Awaken”, “[I]f the imagination is to transcend and transform experience, it has to question, to challenge, to conceive of alternatives, perhaps to the very life you are living at that moment.” The process of composing and writing my novel *Dear Miss Metropolitan* involved negotiating real life events with the demands of my imagination. In the book, three young brown girls are kidnapped, imprisoned and eventually liberated after ten years of torment in a ramshackle house in Queens, New York house. They must find a way not only to survive, but to flourish.

Often, the first question I’m asked when discussing *Dear Miss Metropolitan* is about the Ariel Castro kidnapping case, and how much true crime research I did to prepare to write the novel. The reality is, *Dear Miss Metropolitan* has a history of origins that ranges from lived experience to fairy tale to coming-of-age story. Real events simply transcribed on the page do not, in my opinion, a novel make. There has to be this journey to what New Zealand author Janet Frame called “Mirror City,” that place where experience is transformed into something that transcends the real—a place that, in the case of my novel, makes us finally see those who traditionally have been unseen, unheard, and/or considered dispensable. Ultimately, what I want most is for my reader to sit down with the book, suspend disbelief and allow the imaginary to take center stage. Though *Dear Miss Metropolitan* was begun after the onset of #BlackLivesMatter and #MeToo, the spirit of those movements informs every page.

Carolyn Ferrell is the author of *Dear Miss Metropolitan*, which was recently shortlisted for the PEN Hemingway Award for Debut Novel. Her first book, a short-story collection *Don’t Erase Me*, was awarded the 1997 Art Seidenbaum Award for First Fiction of the Los Angeles Times Book Prize, the John C. Zacharis First Book Award given by Ploughshares, and the Quality Paperback Book Prize for First Fiction. Ferrell’s stories and essays have been anthologized in *The Best American Short Stories 2020 and 2018*, edited by Curtis Sittenfeld and Roxane Gay, respectively; *The Best American Short Stories of the Century*, edited by John Updike; *Children of the Night: The Best Short Stories by Black Writers, 1967 to the Present*, edited by Gloria Naylor; *Apple, Tree: Writers on Their Parents*, edited by Lise Funderburg; and other places. She is the recipient of grants and awards from the Fulbright Association, the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD), the Bronx Council on the Arts, the National Endowment for the Arts, and Sarah Lawrence College. Since 1996, she has been a faculty member in both the undergraduate and MFA writing programs at Sarah Lawrence College. She lives in New York with her husband and children.
WEEKLY MEETINGS

SUNDAY PRESENTATIONS

NEW ZOOM LINK:
Join us every Sunday for our Sunday Presentations held via Zoom. Doors open at 10:30, meeting starts at 11:00.

https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87199821900
Meeting ID: 871 9982 1900
Or phone in at: 1(929) 436-2866
THIS ZOOM LINK will be the same every week.
Click on the link or copy and paste to your browser.

SOME MEETINGS WILL BE IN-PERSON EVENTS. CHECK THE WEEKLY EMAIL NOTICES!

TUESDAY MEDITATION GROUP AT 11 AM

Join member Judy Rosemarin every Tuesday from 11 am - 12 pm for a weekly meditation on Zoom. Learn different ways to meditate and enjoy doing it with others. All are welcome to join.

If you would like to join us, please register by calling the office at: 516-741-7304, or email office@ehsli.org and we will send you the Zoom link.

THURSDAY DIGITAL DISCUSSIONS

On Thursdays at 1:00 p.m. we hold a digital discussion group with Leader Richard Koral on Zoom. The informal discussion will focus on the political, the social, life’s practices, and the ethical choices we confront every day. People will have the opportunity to share.

https://zoom.us/j/377400022
Meeting ID: 377 400 022
Phone in: (929) 436-2866
FRIDAY COLLOQUY 10 AM

Colloquy is:
"a time of shared reflection and nurturing. It’s an opportunity for people to meet in a small group, examine a particular aspect of life, explore and practice self-reflection. It is a structured meeting, including reflection and self-expression in a nonjudgmental, confidential atmosphere.”

If this is your first time attending please register by emailing the Ethical office or calling Arthur Dobrin at 516-997-8545.

MONTHLY MEETINGS

ETHICAL ISSUES IN OUR TIMES- FEB 3, 7 PM

Join Dr. David Sprintzen for our "Ethical Issues in Our Times" (First Thursday of each month)

Topic: On the Future of America Democracy
This question seems quite pertinent in view of the unprecedented attack on our system of representative government that is now under way across the country. Those events are detailed in the attached article from the recent issue of The Atlantic magazine by Bart Gellman:
https://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2022/01/january-6-insurrection-trump-coup-2024-election/620843/

We will discuss the current situation, its possible consequences for our democratic institutions, and what would be appropriate ways to respond.

Join us in discussing this pressing social issue
To register, call the EHS office: 516-741-7304
or email: office@ehsli.org or register via Meetup
To join Zoom Meeting click on the link or cut and paste to your web browser:
https://us02web.zoom.us/j/896985586
WOMEN'S GROUP - FEB 4, 7:30 PM

Our Monthly Women's Group (members of EHSLI only) meets on the first Friday of each month. The zoom site opens at 7:15 pm, and the group runs from 7:30 to 9 pm. Barbara Haber and Delorie Cohan will host the group. Email to all women members of EHSLI with the topic and the Zoom link will be sent a week before every meeting.

POETRY CIRCLE - FEB 28, 7 PM

This meeting will focus on African American poets. Suggestions: Maya Angelous, Gwendolyn Brooks and Amanda Gorman. The Harlem Renaissance poets: Langston Hughes, Claude McKay, Countee Cullen. Paul Laurence Dunbar; Derek Walcott; Naomi Long Madgett - 19th and 20 century. Contact Linda Napoli lindanapoli819@gmail.com
Join Zoom Meeting:
https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88493996121?
pwd=bWFCTkV2UWpqVWdwRWVQK2F4WHJvUT09
Meeting ID: 884 9399 6121
Passcode: 728459
Phone in: 1 - (929) 436-2866

BOOK DISCUSSION - FEB 22, 7 PM

“[A] vivid maker of sentences with a flair for casual surrealisms ...Ferrell is navigating American trauma writ large, as well as her characters’ own.” –Dwight Garner, New York Times

Join Zoom Meeting:
https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85185334557?
pwd=ZC92UzRnS2ducVYtVDFiVStVQmRpdz09
Meeting ID: 851 8533 4557
Passcode: 427688
Phone in: 1 (929) 436-2866
Announcements:

Darwin Day - February 13th

It’s time for our annual Darwin Day “Celebration of Science”

Join us on Zoom
Sunday, February 13th
starting at 11:00

Our Sunday platform will feature Dr. John Teehan, who joins us every year on Darwin Day. This year’s talk is entitled: Really Taking Darwin Seriously: Some Radical Implications.

After the talk, members of the social action and membership committees will speak about some of the great programs we have to offer here at the society.

There will be a fun “Science Game” and then we will proceed with a Q & A with Dr. Teehan.

Darwin Day is a celebration to commemorate the birthday of Charles Darwin. The day is used to highlight Darwin’s contributions to science and to promote science in
“Where We Started”: A Novel
A discussion with Dr. Arthur Dobrin

The Interfaith Institute of Long Island (IFI) is pleased to present a discussion of the novel by Professor Arthur Dobrin.

This novel brings the past and its inhabitants alive, beginning in 1740 and ending during the Civil War. It is the story of two families, one black and one white.

We will be reading the book in sections, so it isn’t necessary to read it all before joining the zoom call. The book is available online at Amazon, Barnes and Noble and other online sellers.

Please register before January 31, 2022

Dates:  Tuesdays
February 1st 2022
February 8th 2022
February 15th 2022
February 22nd 2022

Time:  7:00pm - 9:00pm

Location:  Zoom Meeting

Registration by Email or phone:
arthurdobrin@gmail.com
516-997 8545

Zoom invite will be sent to all registrants

Dr. Arthur Dobrin
Professor Emeritus of University Studies,
Hofstra University
Leader Emeritus, Ethical Humanist
Society of Long Island
Board Member of IFI
FUNDRAISING NEWS!!

The Fundraising Committee is planning to launch their

FABULOUS FUNdraisers for 2022

and we need YOUR HELP!

Anyone who attended last year’s FABULOUS ZOOM EVENTS knows how much FUN they were!

We had:
- Mel Haber’s Musical and Anecdotal Tribute to Frank Sinatra;
- Alice Sprintzen’s photo tour of CUBA!
- Cooking Demo with Chef Rodrigo Bernal and Sue Feifer’s Tour of the Glen Cove Mansion;
- Chloe Agostino’s Singing with a Healthy Voice and
- Alan Cohen’s virtual stroll through Lower Manhattan “400 Years of History in One Mile”.

If you have an IDEA for any kind of FUNdraising Event for the committee, reach out to Mel Haber at melhaber@verizon.net or Lorraine Agostino at lorraine@agostinoarts.com
(No commitment to host the suggested event required although any kind of help is always appreciated.)
American folk musician and singer songwriter Bill Staines died in his home in Rollinsford, NH on December 5, at the age of 74.

Bill was proud to say that he had been a musician for 57 years, singing his songs and delighting audiences at colleges, clubs, and coffeehouses. He wrote and recorded too many songs to count and gained an international reputation as a gifted songwriter and performer. He wrote his autobiography, 'The Tour', which detailed his life on the road. His song, "A Place in the Choir", is a popular children's book, and has touched the hearts of millions; his several songbooks allowed others to play and sing, too. In 2015, Yankee Magazine published an edition which included Bill as one of the 80 gifts New England has given to America. This was a true honor for the veteran folksinger.

Friend David Sprintzen says, "Bill performed at Our Times Coffeehouse every year for each of our thirty years. He came regularly in January. We all looked forward to his appearance. The society has, with his approval, unofficially adopted two of his songs: Child of Mine, and Crossing The Water. He also wrote a song for me, The Philosopher's Song, which is on two of his albums. We really miss him."

He is survived by his wife of forty-five years, Karen Elrod Staines, their son Bowen Keith Staines, and countless friends and fans.
New Hour Committee and FemmeForces 2022

by Susan Feifer

What a difference a year makes!!
After working so successfully on The New Hour project in 2021, the group has come together again to work on compiling 75 Self Care Bags for this year’s project.

The founding members of FemmeForces Rafia Ahmad (off camera) and Gauri Shyamnath are now college freshmen at Stony brook and Vassar respectively. However their commitment to empowering underserved women remains steadfast. They will again be compiling feminine hygiene products to be included in the individual bags.

In addition to EHSLI Social Action Coordinator Sonia Arora, members Lyn Dobrin, Lorraine Zellar-Agostino and myself, Susan Feifer, the committee was joined by New Hour staff person Lindsey Spencer. Since last we worked together Lindsey has been promoted to Director of Operations at New Hour.
REPORT FROM DAVID SPRINTZEN AND THE SOCIAL ACTION TEAM

An unprecedented attack on our system of representative government is now underway across the country. The events are detailed in the attached article from the recent issue of The Atlantic magazine by Bart Gellman: https://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2022/01/january-6-insurrection-trump-coup-2024-election/620843/

The Ethical Humanist Society of Long Island has created a planning committee and is inviting non-partisan organizations around the Island to collaborate with us on creating a public forum on Zoom. The goal of the forum is two-fold. First, we need to educate the public on the increasing threat to democracy and then mobilize national organizations to advocate among state affiliates to effectively ensure a democracy that works for and by the people.

We would welcome any EHS members who wish to support this effort, or who can suggest local contacts of national organizations that might be interested in joining this effort. Just contact me at dsprintz@liu.edu or Sonia Arora at sonia@meow.name.

Ethical Friends of Children seek clothing (tops, bottoms, pjs, sweaters, and socks) in these sizes:
- GIRLS: 3-4, 4-5 and 9-10
- BOYS: 7-8 and 9-10.

Those interested in making clothing contributions should call Ethical Friends of Children at 516-280-5526 or email efoc@ehsli.org

Ethical Friends of Children always needs volunteers
- Wednesdays from 10-1
Please click to email Pat Spencer or call her at: 516-603-1940.
Or email Jim LoPresti at: efoc@ehsli.org

Thank you for helping with this need!
Sending warm wishes for a speedy recovery to:

Member Ginger Hendler who is recovering from hip surgery.
From Ginger "I had just gone over to visit Lois Walker at Sunrise in Glen Cove. After parking my car I started cross over the black top road and lost my balance. There was not apparent ice or other stumbling blocks that I can think of. Just fell and couldn’t get up. I yelled to a man who was getting out of his car and asked for help getting up. He was pushing a wheel chair to the passenger side where a figure seemed to be seated and ran over to pick me up. At every attempt to move me in every direction I felt incredible pain. He tried carrying me, but even more pain and then he tried to sit me down in a nearby bench, but that was agony. Two people, one in each side held me up while I winced the whole time. “Call 911” one of them urgently called. Within 5 minutes two Emergency vehicles had arrived, sirens squealing. I was in the hands of the heroes.”

Member Jim LoPresti who is recovering from foot surgery and doing well.

If you or a member of our community is sick, experiencing loss, or celebrating a milestone, a birthday, let us know. You can email us at caringconnection@ehsli.org Or call 516-741-7304. One of our members will get back to you.

Let's stay connected!!
If Only
by Ann Tiss
11/21/20 (revised 9/17/21)

If only I could be a master negotiator, I would be able to get people from differing points of view to willingly come to the table to iron some of the winkles out of unusable perceptions. I would be able to successfully drive home the point that we are in one world, one universe, and we should hold hands and begin the process of understanding one another.

Sound like a tall order? It certainly is.

I got a tiny taste of negotiating on a very small scale during my job working with children K thru Jr. High. I was hired as one of the first Resource Room Teachers in the vast city of New York way back in 1980. My qualifications included multiple licenses in reading, special education, language arts. It was a new concept in education at the time but it was the population of students that I was most interested in. My older brother suffered from schizophrenia and I watched how he suffered. I pledged to myself that someday if I could help one child not suffer, I would live a useful life.

I saw an ad in the New York Times and right then and there I knew what I wanted to do. Off I went to the hiring hall located in an old abandoned building in downtown Manhattan. I sat in a room full of applicants. How terrified I felt but I wanted to use my talents and education to not hear my husband words, “We can’t afford it!”. There was one opening in a school in Astoria, Queens. I felt relieved, thinking that Queens was where I grew up. I wasn’t going to a dangerous neighborhood where I would be afraid walking to my car.

The students that wound up in my small classes were often the most disruptive, least ideal children in the school. Their parents were also a problem, needless to say. I was usually called when a youngster caused a disruption that even the most skilled teachers couldn’t handle. For me it was a matter of simple changes by all concerned. I solved most of the problems by asking the student to tell me what was bothering him the most. I listened with great interest and mentally broke said problem into little pieces; like if you just sit in your
chair, take the workbook on your desk and open to the page you’re working on, I’ll give you a sticker or gummy worm (a reward).

After more than 25 years of working at this, I never considered it a job. Until everything changed. My small group that needed personal attention and structure evaporated. All my tried-and-true negotiations were no longer possible. Putting my easily distracted kids into the mainstream class proved to be a disaster.

Giving meaningful help to “my youngsters with special needs” was something I got to be really good at. The immediate reward for positive bits of behavior worked 100 out of 100 times. Pretty good odds to say the least. That was the crux of my work as a negotiator.

If only I could use my talent to fix the present world! Who would listen? Where and how would I start?

BOARD MEMBER SPOTLIGHT: PATRICIA SPENCER

I heard about the Ethical Humanist Society of Long Island from a friend who was a new member. I was looking for intellectual pursuits and thought that the Sunday platforms would be what I would be interested in. However, for the first four years I found the colloquy was the key that kept me returning every Sunday. The colloquy addressed many of my wants, needs and concerns that I encountered in my daily life. Needs that I had not previously addressed. Such as: what makes me happy or what defines a good person.

Each week I found I could apply, to my everyday life, what we had discussed in colloquy. I really enjoyed the thoughtful stimulation; this was a new way of thinking for me. I found it refreshing that the word GOD was not part of the discussion. I was not looking for a spiritual home; I never have been.

I didn’t become a member for almost 4 years because no one asked me; once asked I joined. Even though I was not a member, I quickly became involved, hosting plant sales and doing many of the social things with other members from the Ethical Society. I found a home and felt very comfortable with the people there. I believe it was about 10 years after becoming involved with the Ethical Society, I was asked to become a board member. It was
then I really saw how the society operated and the needs it had. It was then I started to become much more involved because I wanted the society to succeed and flourish.

I’ve been a member of the Long Island Society for close to 30 years. During that time I have seen many ups and downs, changing leaders, decreasing membership, declining kids and youth programs. However, I do feel since we have hired a social justice coordinator it has been a very positive step for the society, helping us to condense and focus on what we really want to do. I do feel that the society, in my experience, has never been so focused on worthwhile social justice issues and I find this of great comfort and joy.

It seems that the pandemic has helped many of us focus on what is important in our lives, as it has myself, and I realize how important the Ethical Society has been to me over the decades and hopefully will continue to be in the future.

I think of the Long Island Ethical Society as my Ethical home; it contains so many of my friends.
The first column by Linda Napoli was published on our Facebook page and reprinted in our January newsletter.

You can interact with our members on Facebook at https://www.facebook.com/LIEthical

or read the reprinted columns in this newsletter.

What We Read

A new column, edited by Lyn Dobrin

If you would like to participate in this adventure, email: lyndobrin@gmail.com.
What We Read #2  
January 15, 2022  
David Sprintzen

David Sprintzen is professor emeritus of philosophy at CW Post of Long Island University. He is a founder of the Long Island Progressive Coalition and co-founder of the Institute for Sustainable Development at LIU. An authority on Camus and Sartre, he is the author of four philosophy books, most recently Critique of Western Philosophy and Social Theory. David and his wife Alice Sprintzen, an artist, joined the Ethical Humanist Society of LI in 1981. They raised their son Daniel in Syosset.

• What books are on your nightstand?  

• What’s the last great book you read?  
  *The Best Short Stories of Fyodor Dostoevsky.*

• What moves you most in a work of literature?  
  Inter-personal tragedies in communication. I enjoy history, biography, and philosophy; I avoid science fiction.

• What’s the best book you’ve ever received as a gift?  
  *American Nations: A History of the Eleven Rival Regional Cultures of North America* by Colin Woodard. American Nations provides an historically grounded understanding of the major cultural, religious, ideological, and political fault lines that provide a fairly coherent framework for understanding the conflicts and coalitions that have guided America’s development.

• What do you plan to read next?  
  *The Origins of Russian Communism* by Nikolai Berdiaev.

• What’s your favorite book no one else has heard of?  
  *Memoirs of Hadrian* by Marguerite Yourcenar and *Plagues and People* by William McNeill.

• What book might people be surprised to find on your shelves?  
  Jane Austen’s *Pride and Prejudice.*
Sylvia Silberger is an associate professor and chair of the mathematics department at Hofstra University. She lives in Hempstead with Bill Larsen, Kiam Larsen-Silberger, housemate Barry Germond, dog Savannah and cat Koji. She joined the Ethical Society in 2011.

- What books are on your nightstand?
  I generally do crossword puzzles to fall asleep. Books keep me awake. So I don’t have books on my nightstand but a pile of New York Times magazines. Also, my father has written a book and although I’ve read it, I am presently reading his second draft for editing and suggestions. It is in pdf form on my iPad, though. I sometimes read that before sleep.

- What’s the last great book you read?
  These days I mainly listen to books when I’m talking to work or walking the dog, but I’ve listened to some great ones this year. I just finished the book Half a Yellow Sun by Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie. It is about the Nigerian war that happened in during the 1960’s. It is a poignant story about how love and idealism clash and complement the realities of war. I’ve talked to my family a lot about Half a Yellow Sun, but that is partly because we are all slightly horrified by the political state of the US right now and Half of a Yellow Sun is a reminder of what can go really wrong.
  I did actually *read* a pair of books this summer that were also very good: The Sympathizer and The Committed, both by Viet Thanh Nguyen. I have a long list of excellent audio books I’ve listened to this year.

- What moves you most in a work of literature?
  I think it would have to be a story or narrative that makes me challenge my everyday sensibilities; that forces me to consider the world from another’s viewpoint.

- Do you prefer books that reach you emotionally, or intellectually?
  Both. Half a Yellow Sun, for example, was emotionally jarring – it would keep you me up at night thinking about how quickly a life we take for granted can change— it was emotionally charged, but intellectually it forced me to think about idealism in different ways.

- Which genres do you especially enjoy reading? And which do you avoid?
  I don’t know that I have a favorite genre. I just like a well-written book. This year I’ve been listening to/reading a lot of dramas tinged with political and/or social commentary, but I
also like it when an absurd element is thrown in. For example, I have often thought of Kurt Vonnegut and Tom Robbins as favorite authors (and, indeed, listened to two of his earlier this year) and I’ve enjoyed authors like Terry Prachett and Douglas Adams. I feel like my reading tastes are easily molded. If I end up reading a good book that someone recommends, I appreciate it, even if it was a lot different than the last good book I read. I’m in a book club with some colleagues from school. I often miss meetings, but I’ve been trying to read (listen to) what they are reading and have been exposed to books that I may not have otherwise read that were really good.

What We Read #4
January 26, 2022
Ben Bortin

A classical music lover, current events junkie, and ardent political progressive, I’ve been a Unitarian Universalist minister since 1977, serving congregations in Duluth, MN, and Staten Island, NY, and am very happy to belong to the Ethical Humanist Society of Long Island. I am blessed with a loving wife, Andrea Starr, and an equally loving daughter, Rachel.

• What books are on your nightstand?
  Because the three books are each a little hefty, only one is on my nightstand at a time. The current candidate is Peril by Bob Woodward and Robert Costa; on deck are Leonardo Da Vinci by Walter Isaacson, and A Promised Land by Barack Obama.

• What’s the last great book you read?
The last great book I’ve read is The Red and the Black, by Maurice Stendahl

• What moves you most in a work of literature?
  What moves me most in a work of literature are intriguing but credible characters, individuals who have both impressive qualities and flaws. Vivid descriptions and exceptional command of language also move me.

• Do you prefer books that reach you emotionally, or intellectually?
  I like to be reached both intellectually and emotionally.

• What do you plan to read next?
  Unthinkable by Congressman Jamie Raskin.
• Which genres do you especially enjoy reading? And which do you avoid?
  I enjoy “non-fiction novels,” informative works, that also tell a riveting story. *Fire and Fury* (about Donald Trump) by Michael Wolff is an example. A genre that hasn’t reached me, and I take no pride in this confession, is science fiction. An exception is Ray Bradbury’s works.

• What kind of reader were you as a child? Which childhood books and authors stick with you most?
  As a child, I somehow got interested in Shakespeare, as well as Charles Dickens.

• Which writers – novelists, playwrights, critics, journalists, poets – working today do you admire most?
  A novelist I admire and enjoy is Louise Penny; in the realm of non-fiction, I like Nicolas Kristoff.

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The Ethical Humanist Society of Long Island is a welcoming home for people who think that nothing should be more important to people than people. If you value independent thought, stimulating presentations, a celebration of both science and the arts, the education of youth in the ideals of humanism, and a community of friends who work to create social change, you will find what you’re looking for with us.

Programs

Sunday morning meetings begin at 11:00 a.m. for approximately one hour. A blend of music, poetry, meditation and an informative presentation, our Sunday mornings are the centerpiece of our week. Every talk is recorded. Go to [http://www.ehsli.org/resources/archives/talks/](http://www.ehsli.org/resources/archives/talks/)

Colloquy is a time of shared reflection and nurturing. It’s an opportunity for people to meet in a small group, examine a particular aspect of life, explore and practice self-reflection.

YES (Youth of Ethical Societies) is for teens aged 13 to 18.

Humanists of Long Island is the name of The Ethical Humanist Society of Long Island’s chapter of the American Humanist Association. Find them on Facebook at [Humanists of Long Island](https://www.facebook.com/HumanistsofLongIsland/).

Commemoration Sunday is our first meeting of each new year when we renew our core values of freedom, justice, dignity and compassion.

Ethical Friends of Children assists more than 2,500 children each year by providing them with clothing and infant furniture at no cost. Please contact director Jim LoPresti at EFOC@ehsli.org if you’d like to help.

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