President’s Column

I have asked Alison Pratt to write this month's column as guest writer and Board member......she did a superb job!!!

Joan Beder, co-President

Looking Back / Looking Forward

The Roman god Janus, the god of two faces for whom January is named, was the god of transitions, with one face looking back and one face looking forward. As we look back on a year of challenges in our community, our country, and around the world, we see wars, racial strife, climate change and other societal ills that threaten to destroy our lives and lives of our children and grandchildren. It can indeed be depressing and overwhelming. In our own fledgling movement of Ethical Humanism – still "fledgling" even after nearly 140 years in existence – we seem to fail to gain the traction needed to make our voices heard and our causes successful.

But look forward: Darwin Day is a tremendous opportunity for us to shine our light in the community. Dr. John Teehan of Hofstra will be speaking on "A Darwinian Approach to Religion: Humanistic Implications." Our afternoon festivities will invite us to "come out" as humanists– proud of our values, our commitment to science, and our faith in humanity.

We will be honoring Jon Stepanian of Long Island Food Not Bombs, who has collected 3 million pounds of food, winter clothing, and school supplies in 2014, and shared it free of charge with communities in need. Jon and his volunteers are truly people who exhibit “Deed Before Creed.” These unsung heroes deserve our recognition and support.

Or do we? In fact, humanism is on the rise. Nearly one in five of Americans say they are not religiously affiliated, translating into millions of Americans who know they can lead moral and ethical lives not defined by belief in a god. At EHSLI, we have our own new chapter of the American Humanist Association. As we prepare for our Darwin Day celebration on February 8, we went out on a limb and asked Garden City Mayor John Watras to proclaim February 12th (Darwin's birthday) as Darwin Day in Garden City. He said yes! Were we surprised? OK, we were… but we shouldn't have been. There has been a paradigm shift going on under our noses. Did our past six annual Darwin Day celebrations have anything to do with it? We think so!

Look forward: we have Darwin Day, the Social Justice Leadership Award Dinner, and world-class Sunday morning speakers to anticipate. We have a new website – have you looked at it? We have Kelly Tanza, our musical director, who is helping us find our singing voices. We have Alyssa Tortora, Tara Klein and Derek Smith who are leading our youth programs. We have new members who are pitching in and getting involved. We have a newly revitalized Social Action committee. We have much to be happy about and much work to do. Let's go!

Alison Pratt
Sunday, Feb. 8, 2015
11 a.m. - 2 p.m.

Humanists Meet in Community
11:00 a.m. to 12:15 p.m.
Proclamation of Darwin Day
Garden City Mayor John J. Watras

Music, Poetry, Invited Speaker

Dr. John Teehan, Hofstra University:
"A Darwinian Approach to Religion: Humanistic Implications"
Appropriate for children ages 10 and up / Free babysitting

Afternoon Celebration of Humanism
Social Action • Humanist Celebrations • Art, Music, Games
HONORING JON STEPANIAN
LONG ISLAND FOOD NOT BOMBS
FOR HIS WORK IN CREATING A MORE CARING WORLD

The Ethical Humanist Society of Long Island and
The American Humanist Association, Long Island Chapter
38 Old Country Road • Garden City, NY 11530
www.ehsli.org • 516-741-7304

Free Admission / Donations appreciated / Vegan Food Drive for LIFNB
Raffles • Vegan and non-vegan lunch for sale • Free Babysitting

Create a Caring World
Celebrating “Chuckie D”

The debate about evolution vs. creation theory is constantly being challenged. It is incredible to think this is still up for debate, but for some it is. This is a time in America where the separation between church and state is slowly being blurred, and in some cases, whittled away. It’s important to create celebrations that do not have religious history and can also educate and provide moral examples without the use of superstition and false “truths,” because secular holidays are inclusive instead of exclusive. As humanists, we are awed by the mysteries of the natural world and support the use of science to reveal those mysteries. Ethics guides us to be mindful of our individual responsibility to preserve the earth’s beauty and resources for future generation and that science and technology can help us achieve this goal. Charles Darwin encompasses many of the values we embrace as ethical and secular humanists. He did not publish his famous book, The Origin of Species, for 20 years, because he feared religious faith would be shaken, as his had from his insights. He finally decided the scientific truth was more important than holding on to false beliefs. His theory also negated common, racist thought of the time; that people of European descent were somehow superior to all other ethnic distinctions. I contend that he was a humanist and he didn’t even know it!

The American Humanist Association initiated the International Darwin Day Foundation, which has celebrated Charles Darwin and “Darwin Day” since 1993. (http://darwinday.org/) They advocate for creating a legal holiday on February 12th. (It is interesting to learn that Darwin was born on the same day in the same year as Abraham Lincoln, on opposite sides of the Atlantic Ocean.) Some high schools and colleges celebrate Darwin Day in their science departments. Other ethical societies in the movement have been celebrating this event for many years as well. Since children and adults are fascinated by science and how our natural world works, celebrating Darwin and his extraordinary work becomes an enjoyable and educational event that everyone can embrace.

Sharon Stanley
EHSLI Chapter of AHA
Co-Chair

To read an article that Sharon Stanley wrote about Darwin Day in “The Humanist” magazine, dated December 23rd, 2011, go to

Note from the Editor

Newsletter Editor: Sylvia Silberger

Please email comments and suggestions for additions to future EHSLI newsletters to me at Sylvia_silberger@yahoo.com. Submissions due by the 15th of the month for the next month’s newsletter. All submissions are subject to editorial modifications and approval of tone and content. Printing is also limited by space constraints.
Darwin Day / A Humanist Celebration

The Ethical Humanist Society of Long Island began celebrating Darwin’s 200th birthday in 2009, and has continued this “holiday” as an annual, intergenerational event. This year, our 7th annual Darwin Day will be celebrated on Sunday, February 8th, 2015. “Darwin Day/A Humanist Celebration” will begin at 11:00 AM. The mayor of Garden City, the honorable John J. Watras has agreed to proclaim February 12th (Darwin’s actual birthday) as Darwin Day in Garden City, and we are hoping he attends that day to read the Proclamation. Our guest speaker is Dr. John Teehan, professor and chair of the Department of Religion at Hofstra University. He has shared his work on evolutionary/cognitive theories of religion at the ethical society on a number of occasions. Instead of our usual coffee hour, lunch, beverages and snacks will be available for purchase. The afternoon will continue as we honor Jon Stepian, of “Long Island Food Not Bombs,” who is instrumental in providing free, healthy, vegan options to the hungry and homeless in the New York Metropolitan Area. The afternoon will be filled with a variety of an intergenerational events. Our local chapter of the American Humanist Association will utilize this event as a venue for the “Openly Secular” campaign. (www.openlysecular.org). Opportunities will be available for interested individuals to create a short video or auditory recording that answers the question, “Why are you a humanist?”

Other activities will include a graffiti wall where all are invited to draw or write about their path to humanism. There will be a theatrical performance, and the “Survival of the Fittest” game and exciting, hands-on science activities. A social action table will be set up for letter writing in order to advocate for pressing social issues. There will be something for everyone to enjoy and participate in, while relaxing and engaging in stimulating thought and conversation. Participants of all ages are encouraged to come out and enjoy this great day.

Volunteers are needed to help out, run events and oversee the Welcome table. "Darwin Day" is one of only two events where the Ethical Humanist Society conducts as outreach to the general public in order to raise awareness of our organization and attract new members. It is very important that the society members and friends come out and support this event. To find out how you can help out and for further information, please speak to Heidi Mann, Alison Pratt and/or Sharon Stanley, or leave a message at 516-741-7304.

Sharon Stanley
EHSLI Chapter of AHA
Co-Chair

AEU’s New Mission Statement

According to the American Ethical Union (AEU) website (http://aeu.org), the AEU now has a new mission statement. The statement below is a direct quote from their site (http://aeu.org/2014/12/new-mission-statement/):

“Ethical Humanism/Ethical Culture is an alternative to traditional religion, often referred to as a non-theistic or humanist Movement because it focuses on ethics over speculative theology. Our members work to foster a world that honors the worth of every individual, nurtures ethical relationships, and builds social justice. We believe in deed before creed and seek partnerships with groups dedicated to empowering everyone through service and activism. We advocate for reason, compassion, and rational thinking so that we can celebrate with and support each other through life.”

We welcome their new mission statement below:

New AEU Mission Statement

The American Ethical Union creates, nurtures, and inspires ethical humanist communities to foster a world that is democratic, compassionate, just, and sustainable.
January & February Sunday Meeting Schedule

January 4: Remembrance Day


January 18: Walter Mugdan, Superfund Director, U.S. EPA Region 2 and President, Udall’s Cove Preservation Committee.

Bio: Walter has worked since 1975 in Region 2 of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. He is currently director of the region’s hazardous waste cleanup and emergency response programs. He is responsible for cleaning up some of the nation’s most notorious toxic waste sites including the Gowanus Canal, Newtown Creek, the Passaic River and the Hudson River PCB site. He previously managed the region’s air, water and environmental assessment programs; and he also served for many years as Regional Counsel, the region’s chief legal officer. He earned both his bachelors and law degrees from the University of Michigan. Walter grew up in Douglaston, in the northeast corner of Queens County. He has lived since 1976 in nearby Little Neck, where he and his wife Vivienne raised their daughter Elana. Walter has served since 2002 as President of the Udall’s Cove Preservation Committee, a local conservation group; and the Westmoreland Association, a local homeowners civic association.


Description of Citizen Campaign: Citizens Campaign for the Environment (CCE) was formed in 1985 by a small group of concerned citizens who recognized the need to provide public involvement to advance stronger environmental policy. Today, CCE has grown to an 80,000-member organization with offices in Farmingdale, NY, White Plains, NY, Albany, NY, Syracuse, NY, Buffalo, NY, and Hamden, CT. CCE continues to work to empower the public by providing members with opportunities to participate in the political process and thereby advance a strong environmental agenda.

CCE engages in extensive education, research, lobbying and public outreach. One of our primary goals is to help citizens increase their influence and participation in important environmental campaigns. Through such activism, the public has a stronger voice in the development of public policies and legislative agendas.

CCE’s experienced program staff works to identify key environmental concerns in communities across New York State and Connecticut. By working with other organizations in diverse coalitions and through ongoing communication with local, state and federal elected officials and environmental and public health agencies, CCE has been successful in advancing programs that benefit the natural environment and public health. Our achievements through public involvement have resulted in greater awareness and protection of drinking water quality, preservation of open spaces, protection of beaches, bays, rivers and Great Lakes waters, advancing renewable energy and a reduction in pollutants that impair our air and water resources.

February 1: Ashley Hunt-Martorano, Program Director, Renewable Energy Long Island.

February 8: (Darwin Day!) John Teehan, Professor of Religious Studies, Hofstra University, *A Darwinian Approach to Religion: Humanistic Implications*.

February 15: Lisa Tyson, Long Island Progressive Coalition

February 22: Jim Quigley, *The New Dr. Strangelove*.

Description: This title is a throwback to the bizarre Hollywood hit of 1964 that was subtitled "How I Learned to Stop Worrying and Love the Bomb." The new version of this view of life is, I believe, being foisted on the public in the form of "How I Learned to Stop Worrying and Love Climate Change." It is delusional and it is dangerous. "So-called ecopragmatists say we can have a ‘good Anthropocene,’“ writes Clive Hamilton, the Australian professor of public ethics at Charles Sturt University in Canberra. Hamilton’s "Earthmasters: The Dawn of the Age of Climate Engineering" (Yale University Press, 2013), is a scathing critique of what may be the greatest manifestation of hubris in human history: the belief that technical fixes will get us safely out of the predicament of global warming, rising seas, melting ice, violent storms, massive droughts, an agricultural crash and famine. The technical fix fixation thus becomes an apology for business as usual and an excuse for continued inaction. The general public is still largely ignorant of the rapidly expanding industries on board with "geoengineering" technologies that seek to alter ocean and atmospheric chemistry and, as their argument goes, make further loading of carbon into the ecosystem from fossil fuel combustion a non-issue. How should sane people respond? Should we embrace this mutation of Dr. Strangelove, or hang his effigy in the public square?
Goings on at and Announcements from EHSLI

eBay SPICE Fundraiser — The SPICE committee and Bill Larsen are organizing an EHSLI eBay account as a fundraiser for the EHSLI. Email Bill Larsen at EHSFundraising@gmail.com with descriptions and pictures (if possible) if you have something you think might be worth donating. Email Bill for more detail on item specs needed. Our eBay seller ID is EHSLI fundraising. Come visit our Ebay sales site here: http://myworld.ebay.com/ehslifundraising?_trksid=p2047675.l2559

AHA Meetings: The Ethical Humanist Society of Long Island is a member society of the American Ethical Union and a chapter of the American Humanist Association.

We are currently planning our Darwin Day celebration for February 8th. Meetings will generally be held on the last Tuesday of each month at the Ethical Humanist Society of Long Island, 38 Old Country Road, Garden City, NY 11530. However, the December 30th meeting has been canceled for the school holiday. Our next official meeting will be January 27th, 2015. These meetings will consist of a mixture of discussion, social action and socialization.

Come out and join the group! Your participation will be a wonderful contribution in our efforts to make the world a better place.

Darwin Day: Save the date for Darwin Day, a Humanist Celebration, Sunday, February 8th, 2015 from 11 AM to 2 PM. Speaker: Dr. John Teehan, Hofstra University. Afternoon activities to inspire all Humanists! Keep up as plans finalize: http://darwinday.org/events/darwin-day-a-humanist-celebration/

Our Times Coffee House: On January 16th, 2015, Our Times Coffee House welcomes back Bill Staines to for the 25th year running. Chances are, at least one of your favorite folk tunes were written by Bill Staines. Singing mostly his own songs, this veteran performer is one of the most popular on the folk scene today, and with 20 albums, one of the most prolific. In his resonant voice, Bill weaves a gentle blend of wit and humor into his performances, with a sense of timing to match the best stand-up comic. His music is a slice of Americana, including traditional folk tunes and knee-slaying contemporary country ballads. Join "Our Times" for Bill's annual concert - typically a sell-out performance. For more information visit http://www.ourtimescoffeehouse.org/.

Doors open at 7:15 PM and the show starts at 8 PM.

Tickets: Adults $15, Students (w/school I.D.) $10, Children (under 12) $6.

(Very young children are free.)

Rebirth and Reorganization of the Social Action Committee: Plans are afoot to organize an active and current committee that will involve the Society and various voluntary members in Social Action activities. To keep abreast and/or join the committee, please read this newsletter and follow the announcements at Sunday platforms. For more immediate information and answers to your questions or to become a vital part of this committee call Richard Rapp at his home phone (718) 767-3610 or his cell phone (718) 314-8135. You can also email him at nydonkey1@aol.com.

Board Meeting Time Change: Starting in January, the board will be meeting on the third Monday of every month, rather than the second.

Continued on Page 7
Goings on at and Announcements, Continued

Continued from Page 6

**EHSLI New Years Day Potluck Party!** Join us on New Years Day from 4 to 8 PM. Ethical Society Members, their family members and friends are invited. There will be fun for the kids, sing-a-longs and an open mic for the talented. Bring your party mood, dish to share and drinks. Ethical Society will provide coffee, tea, paper goods and festivities. RSVP to Phyllis the number of adults and kids attending, dish being brought.

**Ethical Friends of Children:** Ethical Friends of Children is looking for volunteers to help man the free store on Wednesdays, 10 AM—1 PM. Contact the EHSLI office if interested.

**Small Group Connections:** The Small Group Connections will be meeting every 2nd and 4th Wednesday of the month. The meetings will begin promptly at 7:30 PM in the Joseph Weill conference room. The topics will be announced in the weekly emails. Please join us if you have not attended a meeting and would like to see what they are all about. We would love to have you. Contact Linda Napoli at vequa45@yahoo.com if you have questions.

**Weekly Food Drive:** Members of the EHLI are collecting food items for INN (Interfaith Nutrition Network). Please bring non-perishable food items to the basket in the lobby.

**Free Vinyasa Flow Yoga Class:** on hold until January 14th. If interested in attending after that, contact Sylvia at matsbs@yahoo.com to be put on her class confirmation email list.

**Diogenese Roundtable:** Discuss your thoughts with us, as we probe the deeper questions of life and have a few laughs along the way. Every month we will explore a different topic in philosophy and learn from the ideas of great thinkers. For meeting times e-mail AnHonestManEHS@gmail.com, or talk with Liam Stephens or David Sprintzen. All are welcome.

**Movie Group:** For info on the movie group contact Al Zeiger at 516-538-2687. Leave message and he’ll get back to you.

**The Caring Connection:** our commitment to taking care of those of us who are sick or in need. We encourage involvement from all. This is core to who we are as Ethical Humanists.

**Suggestions for Sunday Speakers:** If you have heard any speakers whom you would like to recommend to the Sunday Committee, based on their excellence and subject matter including ethical issues, for consider for next season, please send suggestions to the office to be forwarded to committee members.

**Sponsor a Coffee Hour:** $15 and, with enough advanced notice, add your name and message to the Sunday Meeting bulletin! Contact Phyllis at ethicalsociety@optonline.net.
Opt-Out of Paper Newsletter Mailings

To save resources and postage costs, we encourage you to email Sylvia at matsbs@yahoo.com if you would be satisfied with an email-only version of this newsletter rather than a paper copy.

Ethical Humanist Society of Long Island

Phone: 516-741-7304  Fax: 516-741-7305
Ethicalsociety@optonline.net  http://www.ehsl.org

Haven’t heard of us? Come see what we are about some Sunday!
Sunday Colloquia start at 9:30 AM and Sunday Meetings at 11 AM.

Create a Caring World

The Ethical Humanist

The Ethical Humanist Society of Long Island
38 Old Country Rd. Garden City, NY 11530