Several months ago, on the occasion of Veterans Day, I gave a talk at our Society about the situation facing our returning service members who have been overseas engaged in wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. Much of what I spoke about was the difficulty many have returning home and transitioning to civilian life. Some of our service members make that transition smoothly and within months are comfortable in their civilian life. For others, the transition is troubled by war experiences, difficulties at home and an unsupportive economy. Many struggle with post-traumatic stress disorder, addictions, and physical and emotional wounding.

At the end of the presentation, I asked our membership to write letters in support of the Clay Hunt Bill. Clay Hunt was a Marine who served in Afghanistan and Iraq as an infantryman. He experienced several deployments and during the final deployment in 2008 to Afghanistan, sixteen of his fellow Marines and one Navy corpsman were killed and scores were wounded. Clay left the Marine Corps soon after this event and struggled with depression, panic attacks and post-traumatic stress disorder. In 2011, at the age of 28, Clay committed suicide.

In response to the suicide and the growing numbers of suicides by our returning service members, legislators crafted the Clay Hunt Bill. The bill directed the Department of Veterans Affairs to provide for the conduct of mental health care and the establishment of suicide prevention programs. On the day of my presentation, many of our members wrote letters to their local senators asking for their support of this legislation. The bill was passed this month and signed into law by President Obama.

Did our letters enable the passage of the bill? Probably not and surely yes! We sent out 20 letters, and perhaps another organization sent out 50 and another 233 and so on. We joined with many others to bring about the passage of this bill. Consider the power so many voices can have. Let your voice be heard!

Joan Beder
Co-President
Please Save This Date!

The Social Justice Leadership Award Dinner
Thursday May 14, 2015, 6:30 p.m.

Presented By
The Ethical Humanist Society of Long Island

Honoring
Robert Keeler, Journalist
Michelle Schimel, Assemblywoman
David Sprintzen, Activist

To Be Held At
The Nassau County Bar Association
15th & West Streets, Mineola, NY 11501

awardsdinner@ehsli.org
516-741-7304

The Ethical Humanist Society of Long Island
38 Old Country Road
Garden City, NY 11530
Create a Caring World
Our Secular Universe

February 18, 2015

The Ethical Humanist Society of Long Island (EHSLI) is a member society of our “mother” organization, the American Ethical Union (AEU). There are roughly 23 ethical societies, and a handful of ethical “circles”; societies that are in remote parts of the United States, where new societies might blossom.

What many of us do not know is that we are also a part of a larger group called the Secular Coalition for America. This group lobbies on behalf of secular Americans at the national level.

“The Secular Coalition for America is a 501 (c)(4) nonprofit advocacy organization whose purpose is to amplify the diverse and growing voice of the nontheistic community in the United States. Our staff lobbies the U.S. Congress on issues of special concern to our constituency. The Secular Coalition represents more than 200 organizations nation-wide and advocates at the federal level to protect and strengthen the secular character of the government […]. One of the Secular Coalition’s primary roles is to facilitate unity within the movement. Our 18 voting member organizations are established 501(c) (3) nonprofits who serve atheists, agnostics, humanists, freethinkers and other nontheistic Americans. In addition to our voting member organizations, the Secular Coalition boasts over 190 endorsing, allied and associate organizations as part of the Coalition.”

(https://www.secular.org/about/main)

At this writing, there were about 3,000 people in the ethical movement, and 10,000 members of the AHA. The AEU and the AHA have had strong ties historically, and are working together again to benefit both organizations. The AHA has the “numbers” but Ethical Humanism has congregational models and children’s programming.

Since many of these organizations overlap in their philosophies, my family and I also donate and/or belong to a few others of the member organizations. I marked those with a gold star.

Long Island is part of the United States, and the United States is part of North America, one of the seven continents on Earth. Our earth is one planet of many in the Milky Way Galaxy; the Milky Way Galaxy is among trillions of galaxies in space. It is hard not to be awe struck by this enormity. It is nice to know that we are an important part of a larger whole.

It is also nice to find your friendly niche within that larger whole.

Sharon Stanley, Co-chair
EHSLI Chapter of AHA
Darwin Day– A Humanist Celebration, A Humanist Success

Our 7th Annual Darwin Day event was held on February 8th here at the Society. We had a packed house and a great time celebrating both science and humanism.

Our day started with a special guest: Mayor John Watras of Garden City came to issue a Citation declaring February 12 (Darwin's birthday) as Darwin Day in Garden City. It was the first time in anyone's memory that a Garden City mayor had attended our Sunday program. The beautiful citation will be on display in our lobby for all to see. The Citation was a result of the work by our newly-formed chapter of the American Humanist Association following the lead of many other cities in the country who want to elevate the role of science and reason in civil discourse. Mayor Watras quickly and graciously agreed to it.

Dr. John Teehan delivered the Sunday address on the topic of the evolutionary development of religious thought in humans and how religion— that is, defining "in" groups and "out" groups and creating moral codes— would help people adapt to threatening environments and survive. As always, poetry, music, and reflection rounded out our morning.

Our lunch consisted of a hot buffet of vegan and non-vegan fare. In an effort to be more earth-friendly, we used stainless steel flatware instead of plastic, and paper placemats instead of plastic tablecloths. Duo Liz Taub and Michelle Fury performed on fiddle and guitar for us while we ate.

Our afternoon session began with "A Tiny Play" performed by Bill Larsen and Sylvia Silberger. Bill played a man who decided to "come out" to his mother—as a humanist! She barely recovers from her shock when she realizes she doesn't understand what humanism is. This play led to our next segment, "You might be a Humanist if..." read by Sharon Stanley. For example, you might be a Humanist if someone sneezes and you don't know what to say. The humorous list ended with a real description of humanism and the opportunity to present our first-ever Deed Before Creed award, along with a check for $500, to Jon Stepanian, leader of Long Island Food Not Bombs. Jon's tireless work to feed the hungry on Long Island was recognized because there are no paid staff, the group uses only vegan foods, and they collect food from grocery stores where it would otherwise be thrown away. Jon and his volunteers collected 3 million pounds of food in 2014. The food is taken to six different food share locations around Long Island and Bedford, 6 days a week, where community members can take it, for free. If you want to know more about LIFNB, visit their website at www.lifnb.com, or find them on Facebook.

Our afternoon science events included children's activities, card tricks based on math concepts, biology demonstrations with a microscope, and a psychological demonstration about brain processing. Raffles, and music—a group sing of "Imagine"— ended our day. Thank you to Mayor John Watras, Dr. John Teehan, Jon Stepanian, our advertisers, sponsors, children's staff, and volunteers helpers who made the day a total success.

Alison Pratt

More pictures next page 5
Darwin Day Pictures

Jon Stepanian of Long Island Food Not Bombs receive the Deed Before Creed Award from Alison Pratt

Thank you, Chuck!!

Music by Liz Taub and Michelle Fury

Our beautiful citation!
(Thanks again, Mayor Watras.)

Sylvia Silberger showing off mind-reading techniques with math-o-magic to Darwin Day Participants

More pictures page 6
Food for Thought

March 2, 2015

As an active member of the Ethical Humanist Society of Long Island for more than 30 years, I have often thought about the nature of ethics. What does it mean to be ethical? Aren’t most people ethical? What about morals? Are they the same as ethics and aren’t most people moral? If so, what leads people who would define themselves as moral to behave immorally or unethically either individually or institutionally?

What makes a whole population ignore or accept the immorality of their leaders whether in the present or the past? And what leads some individuals to stand up against immoral practices? Here is where one’s sense of morality and being ethical differ. And this is often the slippery slope.

To continue this line of inquiry, how do greed or power or irrational hatred overcome the sense of morality that we all supposedly have? If life is choices, then what roles do morality and ethics play?

From what I understand, morality is a way of thinking which we are trained in from the earliest days of our upbringing. Kindness, compassion, and respect are hopefully taught by the words and examples of the adults in our life. Unfortunately, in some cases, racism, greed and violence are taught or modeled instead. Morality, therefore, is inherently subjective as it is based on teachings and experience.

Ethics, on the other hand, is an attempt to systematize morals based on the concept of 'Do No Harm.' This is putting it simply. The study of ethics has always been a major branch of philosophy. Ethics is also taught, but in a conscious way involving thinking, reasoning and discussion. It, too, can and should be developed from our earliest days and is a naturalistic teaching. The important thing to remember is that morality is knowing the difference between right and wrong. Ethics is choosing what is right.

The conclusion I come to from this is that without an ethical grounding or viewpoint, even though a person has what they believe are morals or a sense of right and wrong, under the right circumstances they can be swayed to do something contrary to their beliefs. It can be a major event or a slippery slope, but without a strong ethical viewpoint, it’s not so hard to imagine. For proof, look at the world around us.

Linda Napoli

Still More Darwin Day Pictures

Our selection of bumper stickers for sale.

Imagine!
Even More Darwin Day Pictures
March Sunday Meeting Schedule

**March 8:** Diane Mason. *Ethical Issues in Nursing*

*Description:* An Institute of Medicine report on The Future of Nursing recommends that nurses be included at all decision-making tables in health care. But in New York City and nationally, it’s rare to find a nurse on a governing board of a health care organization. Improving this picture is part of a national and state objective that could improve the accountability of health care organizations to put the interests of patients first.

**March 15:** Anne Kleaysen, NYSEC Leader. *White Privilege: A Wake-up Call.*

*Description:* People with white skin in western societies, where they are the dominant group, enjoy privileges that they are carefully taught not to recognize. These come in an invisible package of unearned credits and assets passed on generation after generation. Unlike the parents of children of color, who explicitly explain the rules of society with its limits and dangers, parents of white children needn’t explain a thing. Their children grow up in a culture that affirms their worth and freedom, assuming the universality of their experience, seeing themselves as "normal" and others as "different." It is high time - indeed the time was long ago - to unmask and unpack this societal concept that feeds racism and perpetuates inequality.

*Bio:* Anne Klaeysen is Leader of the New York Society for Ethical Culture, Ethical Humanist Religious Life Adviser at Columbia University, Humanist Chaplain at New York University, and co-dean of The Humanist Institute. She holds a Doctor of Ministry degree in pastoral care from Hebrew Union College and Masters degrees in business administration from NYU and German from the State University of NY at Albany.

**March 22:** Paulo Riberio. *Consuming Fire: Contemporary Society, Religion, and Youth Spirituality.*

*Description:* Contemporary America has become a consumer society. The goods and services we buy define who we are and how we form relationships in ways no previous civilization has ever seen. Increasingly Americans are moving away from associational life and becoming “spiritual but not religious”. In what way has the corporate take over of culture changed us? How have communities managed to respond? And what does this mean for the spiritual and emotional needs of Millennials as the first generation of digital natives?

*Bio:* Paulo Ribeiro is a Leader-in-Training with the American Ethical Union. He holds a BA from Montclair State University in Sociology and is currently enrolled in the Humanist Institute. He is a three-time recipient of the US President’s Volunteer Service Award for his work with children’s education and recreation programs.

**March 29:** Tara Klein and the YES Group

*Sunday Meetings begin at 11:00 AM*
*Sunday Colloquies begin at 9:30 AM*
New from the AEU

February 2015

I’ve been a member of EHST since 1996 where I’m certified as an Ethical Officiant. I’ve served on the board since 2010 as Secretary and am also on the staff of Lay Leadership Summer School. The Ethical Movement is where I have found a philosophical home and supportive community. Being involved on the national level has brought home how important it is to strengthen our movement to bring our message to those who are looking and longing for the kind of place we can provide.

To this end, this is the time of year that the Assembly committee, the AEU staff, and the National Leader’s Council are finalizing plans to bring another Assembly program to the members of the Ethical Union. The Metro Area Leaders have been developing workshops around Ethical Culture/Humanism, the themes of sustainability and effective ethical action. Outside experts, Leaders, and others experienced with best practices will share their expertise and offer inspiration and encouragement as we go back to our individual societies.

This year’s 100th Assembly should have particularly good attendance. The location in Stanford Connecticut is near several of our member societies and is easily accessible by train from Grand Central Station in NYC. The Westchester society is close enough to act as ‘host’ for one evening activity. The board held its retreat at the same facility last year and the accommodations are excellent (and our conference planner negotiated a great room rate!)

Regardless of the presentations and experts, I find the greatest value is in the connections made with those from other societies, from coast to coast and border to border. Sharing problems and successes, finding common ground and inspiration from the work of others, and just having fun socializing and in informal conversation make the Assembly worthwhile. I hope all societies will encourage and support their members to attend the 100th Assembly of the American Ethical Union, June 25-28.

Jan Broughton,
AEU Board Secretary
Member of the Ethical Humanist Society of the Triangle in NC

New AHA Meeting Times

The Ethical Humanist Society of Long Island's chapter of the American Humanist Association, which previously met on the last Tuesday of the month, will now be meeting on the last Monday of each month. The next two meetings are: March 30th and April 27th, at 8:00 PM in the second floor meeting room.

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.

Sylvia Silberger and Bill Larsen, Yosemite National Park
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](http://myworld.ebay.com/ehslifundraising?_trksid=p2047675.l2559)

**AHA Meetings:** The Ethical Humanist Society of Long Island's chapter of the American Humanist Association, which previously met on the last Tuesday of the month, will now be meeting on the last Monday of each month. The next two meetings are: March 30th and April 27th, at 8:00 PM in the second floor meeting room.

For questions or information leave a message for Sharon or Heidi at 516-741-7304 or email Sharon at lihumanist@gmail.com.

**Newcomers Welcome:** The Newcomers Welcome, originally scheduled for February 22nd, has been changed to March 8th after the Sunday Meeting. -- Linda Napoli

**Our Times Coffee House:** On March 20th, 2015, Our Times Coffee House welcomes David Massengill. By birth a Tennessean, David Massengill "emigrated" to the Greenwich Village folk scene in the mid-70's, walking the same streets and playing the same storied coffee houses as Dylan and Van Ronk.

Thirty years later, he's still walking those streets—but now he's being recognized universally for his pivotal role in keeping the American folk music tradition alive. Called "a master of vivid lyrical imagery" (Boston Globe), David continues to create beautiful and poignant "story songs" that are intimate and relevant and tug at your emotions. Songs like "Rider On An Orphan Train" a narrative ballad ringing with truth and anguish" (Washington Post), "Number One In America", a riveting and ironic civil rights anthem" (Boston Globe) and the biting political statement, "The Gambler", a thing of beauty about all things ugly" (Barry Crimmins).

His songs have been covered and recorded by Joan Baez, The Roches, Lucy Kaplansky, Tom Russell, Nanci Griffith and his mentor, Dave Van Ronk, who said David "took the dull out of dulcimer!" Notes Music Boulevard, "That David made the lap dulcimer his instrument of choice tells us a lot about the soft-spoken native of eastern Tennessee. He accompanies his performance with an instrument indelibly Appalachian, yet conquers even the most urban of musical communities. He does it without losing that remarkable gift for true storytelling."

David has released six albums, eleven bootlegs and fourteen books to date, including "Partners in Crime", the debut album of The FolkBrothers, David's duo project with the late great Jack Hardy.

For more information visit [http://www.ourtimescoffeehouse.org/](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.)

**Free Vinyasa Flow Yoga Class:** Sylvia's free yoga class will resume on Tuesdays at 5:45 PM. If interested in attending after that, contact Sylvia at matsbs@yahoo.com to be put on her class confirmation email list.

Continued on Page 12
Goings on at and Announcements, Continued

Continued from Page 10

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.

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.

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.

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 consideration 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.

Visit EHSLI Online!
EHSLI Website: http://www.ehsli.org
EHSLI on Twitter: www.twitter.com/ehsli
EHSLI on Facebook: www.facebook.com/LIEthical
K.I.D. on Twitter: www.twitter.com/KidsInDeed
EHSLI on Meet-up: http://www.meetup.com/Ethical-Humanist-Society-of-Long-Island/. This site lists a full schedule of our events. Support us by becoming an EHSLI meet up member.
Leader emeritus Arthur Dobrin is blogging weekdays at arthurdobrin.wordpress.com
Photos: picasaweb.google.com/LIEthical
EHSLI on Linked-In: Under the name “Ethical Humanist Society of Long Island”
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  
Haven’t heard of us? Come see what we are about some Sunday! Sunday Colloquium 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