



# THE NJHN BULLETIN

VOLUME 10 NUMBER 1 • JANUARY / FEBRUARY 2005

## EDITOR'S MESSAGE

*Bradford Holcombe*

Long time, no bulletin. Yes, we know. You may not have had time to notice it, but we have and will continue to try to do better. Running NJHN is more complex and multifaceted than back when Harley founded it with three other people in his living room, ten years ago. There are monthly meetings to plan, HumanLight to participate in, both locally in New Jersey and globally, concerts for Humanist music, web sites, interactions with other organizations, picnics, dinners, press relations, fund raisers, and much more. All of this is accomplished largely by the NJHN board, all of whose members have lives, all of whom volunteer their time to NJHN. We have been too busy bringing you the other parts of NJHN to publish the bulletin.

There is a great deal of work in making NJHN the organization it has become. NJHN has arrived where it is largely through gradual, organic growth, an idea here, a new activity there. Harley had the dream that someday we'd be big enough to have too many things on our plate. Well, we are big enough now, and we do have the problems that come with a rapidly growing organization.

Which brings us to strategic planning. Our monthly meeting this month is all about the work of some of the members of the NJHN board who are thinking long-term about NJHN. Where is

NJHN going as an organization? Where do we want to focus our effort? What has worked and what hasn't. This work has been led by board member Will Abrams, who has done professional strategic planning for other non-profit groups in the past. The committee has been meeting for about half a year to discuss these questions, and they'd like to ask you for your opinions at the January monthly meeting. Please attend so that NJHN may serve you better.

The results of the meeting and the planning committee's work will help guide the board through its next ten years. With some foresight, we can continue to grow as an organization, and avoid some of the more obvious growing pains.

## CONTENTS

- Editor's Message..... 1**
- Event Schedule..... 1**
- In Memoriam: Marge Magnusson..... 2**
- Bulletin Distribution.....2**
- Contribute to our Camp Quest Fund.....2**
- Garage Sale Donations Needed.....2**
- Building a Humanist Community.....3-4**
- Community of Reason Leadership Summit..... 4**
- Application for Campership Assistance..... 5-6**
- New on NJHN's Website... 7**
- On Roger Greeley..... 7**
- NJHN Membership Form...7**
- Event Schedule, Cont.....8**

## EVENT SCHEDULE

NJHN meetings are held at the Bridgewater Library, 7pm, on the fourth Wednesday of the month, unless otherwise noted. Details at [www.njhn.org/schedule.html](http://www.njhn.org/schedule.html).

**MONTHLY MEETING**  
Wed., January 26, 2005, 7pm  
Arbor Glen  
100 Monroe Street  
Bridgewater, NJ 08807

What is a Humanist Community? What can we do as an organization and as individuals to make a vibrant Humanist Community a reality? This meeting will focus on these questions and give all of us an opportunity to contribute to a strategic plan that will help set the course for NJHN. Come tell us about your humanist vision.

**MOVIE NIGHT AT THE FISCHERS: THE WEATHER UNDERGROUND**  
Saturday, January 29, 2005, 7pm  
341 Lakeside Avenue, Hopatcong, NJ

As always, our showings are free of charge, we will have refreshments and lots of discussion. Please, it is not necessary to bring any food or house gifts. We plan to start the movies at around 7:00 PM, but feel free to arrive any time after 6:30 PM. Call or e-mail us if you need directions. Bring your friends! RSVP Katy and Russ Fischer by email to [kifischer@optonline.net](mailto:kifischer@optonline.net) or call (973) 663-4646.

*Events continued on the back page*

## **IN MEMORIAM: MARGE MAGNUSSON**

*Sara Brown*

Long time member Marge Magnusson passed away on October 26, 2004. We will miss her pleasant smile and quiet unassuming grace.

Marge joined NJHN back when we were still meeting in homes. Marge was instrumental in creating our original banner. She was very active in her community working with the Democratic Party and the Warren Co. Women's Commission; she also delivered Meals on Wheels.

Her interests included astronomy, music, art and reading. In her home in Belvidere hung several fine paintings she had done, and she played guitar with the Little Old Ladies in Tennis Shoes. She attended the 1999 American Humanist Association annual convention in Columbus, OH.

## **BULLETIN DISTRIBUTION**

If you have an email address registered with NJHN, this issue is coming to you over email as an experiment. To reduce our costs of printing, mailing labor and postage, we'd like to start sending bulletins in electronic form, rather than hard copy. This has other benefits besides cost, as fewer people and logistics are involved, raising the chances for an issue to go out on time. For those who are comfortable with an electronic version only, this won't be an issue. For those who are not so comfortable,

rest assured. We will still send printed copies to anyone who requests one. This issue contains a form that you can fill out and mail back if you'd like to still receive your bulletin in printed form.

## **CONTRIBUTE TO OUR CAMP QUEST FUND!**

Please consider making a tax-deductible donation to our Harley A. Brown Fund for Camp Quest. This Fund provides campership assistance to the children of New Jersey humanists, atheists and free-thinkers to attend Camp Quest, which has been verified by the American Camping Association as the first of its kind for the children of those who accept reason and rational inquiry over systems grounded on faith and belief in the supernatural. Details on how to make a donation to the fund are at: [www.njhn.org/camp\\_quest.html](http://www.njhn.org/camp_quest.html).

If you would like to apply for the campership itself, an application form is included in this bulletin.

## **GARAGE SALE DONATIONS NEEDED**

There's still time to donate quality items to NJHN for its Spring garage sale fundraiser which is held every year in Belvidere, NJ. Please contact Lisa Ridge if you have items to donate or can volunteer for a few hours at this year's sale. Also, we are looking for other sites that have town-wide garage sales. Let us know if there is a good one in your town.

## **The NJHN Bulletin**

Volume ten, number one  
January / February 2005

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The NJHN Bulletin is a bi-monthly newsletter of the New Jersey Humanist Network (NJHN), published on the first day of January, March, May, July, September, and November.

Editor: Bradford Holcombe  
Contributing Ed.: Linda Kieseling

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We encourage the submission of articles, suggestions, letters to the editor and corrections. Submissions must be received one month before publication. Content may be edited for length. Unless otherwise specified, all submissions become property of NJHN and may be reproduced in part or in full in the NJHN Bulletin.

We invite anyone with a business or service to advertise in the NJHN Bulletin. Rates are \$10 per up-to-half-column. Send all copy and artwork to the contact above. Include a contact name and phone number or email address. We reserve the right to refuse any advertisement.

## BUILDING A HUMANIST COMMUNITY

Will Abrams

HumanLight was a wonderful experience that gave us all a glimpse of what it might mean to have a vibrant Humanist Community. During this celebration we saw families gathering to celebrate the circle of life, discussions on building moral communities and critical inquiries into life's mysteries. We all walked away with a greater understanding of Humanism and a reinvigorated sense of community. How do we channel this energy to further the growth of a Humanist Community? What is the path that we must follow to further the development of our community for our neighbors, our children and ourselves?

**NJHN needs a plan!** Yes, just as we would start with blueprints and a project plan to build a skyscraper we need to start with a strategic plan to drive our organization to support and facilitate the growth of a vibrant Humanist Community. We need to gather our free thinkers and turn our critical reasoning inward and lay out a plan for the future.

Let's start by taking a look at who we are as an organization. It is important to be able to clearly articulate who we are to our fellow Humanists,

the larger community and even the religious. Furthermore, since organizations like people are constantly growing and changing it is a healthy practice to revisit and reaffirm who we are as an organization. The following mission statement has been used by NJHN in the past and provides a great foundation for answering the question of who we are:

*NJHN is a vibrant and growing community of secular humanists. We believe that virtues like morality, kindness, justice, and generosity function best independent from religious dogma, from belief in supernatural powers, and from belief in a spiritual afterlife.*

Does this address who we are, where we are going and how we intend to get there? As a first step in the strategic planning process, I would suggest that all of our members take a hard look at this statement and see if we can revise and/or add to it to ensure that NJHN has a strong mission statement. An effective mission state-

ment will provide greater focus for our organization.

Once we have established our mission statement, we will be able to establish a strategic plan to provide clear direction for our organization. It is important that this strategic plan has specific and measurable goals and objectives that keep us focused and allow us to critically assess our success. Our stated goals should be lofty and far reaching while the objectives in our strategic plan point to specific steps that lead us towards the accomplishment of these goals. The table below shows an example of what kinds of goals NJHN might set for itself, ways of measuring progress against those goals and who is responsible for seeing that they are met.

As we can see from the example, the primary goal of establishing HumanLight as a "National Holiday" is supported by more specific objectives that will provide a progression towards the accomplishment of that goal. Similarly, our

Goal/Objective Statement	Success Metric	Target Date	Responsible Resources
To establish HumanLight as a national holiday with celebrations on Sunday prior to the Winter Solstice (23DEC is the actual date)	Established National Holiday	12/09	HumanLight Committee
To dramatically increase attendance at the HumanLight Celebration	85% increase in attendance each year	12/05 – 12/09	HumanLight Committee
To increase public exposure to HumanLight through increased media coverage	Five additional media outlets per year	12/05 - 12/09	Public Relations Committee
Produce Media Kit to inform media outlets of the event and Humanist values	Distribution of 50 Kits	11/05	Public Relations Committee

strategic plan should outline our goals and objectives and be broken down into the functional departments of NJHN. The more specific the success metrics and target dates are the more valuable the strategic plan will be for our organizational development. Additionally, the identification of specific resources will help to ensure ownership.

The New Year is here and we are taking time as an organization to put together a strategic plan that will serve as a living document and aid the development of NJHN and the building of a Humanist Community. I encourage all members to think about the goals and objectives they feel are important to include in this document. Please come to the January 26th meeting with dreams and ideas to share. This session will be the basis for the creation of a 5-year strategic plan for the organization. Following this meeting, the Strategic Planning Committee will meet with other stakeholders, build the strategic plan and present it to the Board for ratification.

This is an exciting time for NJHN and we have an opportunity to take the organization to the next level. What we can imagine and set direction for, we can accomplish! The Strategic Planning Committee is looking forward to the active participation of the membership and stakeholders of NJHN.

## COMMUNITY OF REASON LEADERSHIP SUMMIT

*Maddy Urken*

Just days before the inauguration of George W. Bush, the American Humanist Association convened the Inauguration Summit, a meeting of the leaders of twenty-two national non-theistic organizations, to address the unprecedented challenges Bush's inauguration symbolizes.

Leaders of groups that traditionally have at best avoided each other sat at the same table because what they have in common far outweighs their differences. The participating organizations were American Atheists, American Ethical Union, American Humanist Association, Anti-Discrimination Support Network, Association of Humanistic Rabbis, Atheist Alliance International, Brights' Network, Camp Quest, Congress of Secular Jewish Organizations, Freedom from Religion Foundation, Gay and Lesbian Atheists and Humanists, Humanist Institute, Humanist Society, HUUmanists, International Humanist and Ethical Union, Internet Infidels, Institute for Humanist Studies, Objectivity Accuracy and Balance in Teaching About Religion, Secular Coalition for America, Secular Student Alliance, Society for Humanistic Judaism and Unitarian Universalist Infidels.

Most of the meeting time was spent in strategy discussions, but time was found to learn about critical issues from invited experts like Americans United Executive Director Barry Lynn, National Organization for Women President Kim Gandy and American Civil

Liberties Union Legislative Counsel Chris Anders.

The meeting went beyond discussing strategy to planning for action:

- Several groups will support the American Atheists' Atheists in Foxholes march on Veterans Day, November 11, 2005 on the National Mall.
- Some of the organizations will collaborate on a project to hold a briefing for representatives, senators, and their staffs on legislation affecting the creation-evolution debate.
- Others discussed working together on lawsuits that support and enforce the Establishment Clause of the First Amendment.
- Also discussed were educational and public relations programs to inform the general public about non-theists and make sure we have a seat at the table.

This was a truly historic occasion for our movement. There hasn't been a gathering of this many free-thought organizations in at least twenty years. The meeting was exciting, harmonious and productive. I was privileged to attend as the representative of the Humanist Society and a member of the AHA Board. Anyone who wants more information should contact me at [maddyu@optonline.net](mailto:maddyu@optonline.net).

**HARLEY A. BROWN FUND FOR CAMP QUEST**

New Jersey Humanist Network

P.O. Box 8212

Somerville, NJ 08876-8212

(732) 658-6440

[president@njhn.org](mailto:president@njhn.org)

[www.njhn.org](http://www.njhn.org)

**APPLICATION FOR CAMPERSHIP ASSISTANCE**

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Camper's Name \_\_\_\_\_ Age: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City/ST/Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Has Camper attended Camp Quest before? \_\_\_\_\_

Which Camp Quest preferred? OH/KY \_\_\_\_\_ TN \_\_\_\_\_ MI \_\_\_\_\_ MN \_\_\_\_\_

Amount requested? \_\_\_\_\_

With this application, please attach a 300-word essay written by the Camper which explains "Why I Want to Attend Camp Quest." Essays may be typed or handwritten, but should be legible. This application must be received by March 31, 2005.

Total Campership assistance available will be based on donations received for the Camp Quest Fund each year. Recipients will be notified by April 30, 2005, and NJHN will make payment directly to the preferred Camp Quest the recipient has chosen.

Please contact Lisa Ridge, NJHN President, at the address, email address, or phone number above with any questions.

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ATTN: CAMP QUEST FUND  
NEW JERSEY HUMANIST NETWORK  
POST OFFICE BOX 8212  
SOMERVILLE NJ 08876

**NEW ON NJHN'S WEBSITE**

- NJHN is now the host for the Equal Time for Freethought website at [www.njhn.org/etff.html](http://www.njhn.org/etff.html). ETFF is a radio talk show produced for the freethinking community by Barry Seidman, Arnell Dowret and Neil Murphy on WBAI 99.5 FM in New York City on Sundays at 6:30 PM. You can hear the audio broadcast from recent shows at [www.njhn.org/etff\\_archives.html](http://www.njhn.org/etff_archives.html).
- You can join NJHN or renew your membership online with your PayPal account at [www.njhn.org/registration.html](http://www.njhn.org/registration.html).
- You can make donations to our Camp Quest Fund, our Music Program, or our General Fund at [www.njhn.org/donations.html](http://www.njhn.org/donations.html).
- Check out our NJHN merchandise at CafePress.com: [www.cafeshops.com/njhn](http://www.cafeshops.com/njhn).

**ON ROGER GREELEY**

*Terry Ripmaster*

As a snow bird, I spend winters in Sarasota, Florida and attend the Unitarian Universalist Church in Sarasota. To my surprise, a Sunday program was conducted by Roger Greeley. Having attended Greeley's People's Church in Kalamazoo, Michigan over 50 years before, I was thrilled to discover that he was living in the Sarasota area.

We spent an afternoon together reminiscing and catching up on our humanist backgrounds. After retiring from the People's Church, Greeley went on the road with a one-man show about the "great

**NJHN MEMBERSHIP FORM**

If you would like to become a member of NJHN, please fill out this form, make out a check to the New Jersey Humanist Network and send both to NJHN, Post Office Box 8212, Somerville NJ 08876. Members receive issues of THE NJHN BULLETIN free of charge.

- Individual membership - \$30
- Family membership - \$45
- Student/Limited Means membership - \$20
- Bulletin subscription only - \$15
- Receive bulletin via email only - Free

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
 Address \_\_\_\_\_  
 Email \_\_\_\_\_  
 Phone \_\_\_\_\_  
 Spouse/Partner \_\_\_\_\_  
 Children \_\_\_\_\_  
 How did you hear about us? \_\_\_\_\_

Please exclude me from the NJHN membership directory.

agnostic" Robert Ingersoll. He also edited The Best of Ingersoll and The Best of Humanism, both published by Prometheus Books.

All Humanists should know about Robert Ingersoll. It is almost impossible today to think that such a freethinker and outspoken atheist could fill halls with crowds of people. Ingersoll was a great orator and, with Mark Twain, was one of the most famous speakers of his time. He spoke out against organized religion, religious mythology, racism, sexism and corporate and political corruption.

On the Sunday of Greeley's talk at the Unitarian Universalist congregation, he quoted Ingersoll and drew laughter when he told the story about Ingersoll being asked by a reporter why he didn't any longer debate with Christian ministers. Ingersoll's reply was, "It's like giving medicine to the dead."

Greeley, like Ingersoll, has no patience with theistic explanations, and is not bashful about asserting his faith in reason and enlightenment.

After his address, I stood at a table selling copies of his books. They sold out and people signed up to have him send them copies. For me, it was wonderful to meet again with Greeley and hear his address. He converted me from theism to humanism in 1962. If you wish to contact him, his email is [kayrog@aol.com](mailto:kayrog@aol.com). You might also wish to purchase his books.

*Terry Ripmaster  
 Professor Emeritus of History  
 William Paterson University*

## EVENT SCHEDULE, CONTINUED

### DARWIN DAY FIELD TRIP

February 12, 2005, 10am  
Liberty Science Center  
251 Phillip Street  
Jersey City, NJ 07305

We thought it would be great to take the little NJHNers to the museum for Darwin Day, but it turned out all the adults wanted to go too! Meet us there, regardless of your age. Let us know if you'll be coming. [bulletin@njhn.org](mailto:bulletin@njhn.org).

### DARWIN DAY CELEBRATION

February 12, 2005, 7:30pm  
Arbor Glen

Darwin Day is an international celebration of science and humanity as exemplified in the life, work and influence of this great scientist. This year's celebration guests include singer-songwriter Sonny Meadows, Victoria Alexander from the Dactyl Foundation and leading evolutionary

biologist Dr. Joseph L. Graves, Jr. 10.00 for adults over 17; free under

### RED BANK HUMANISTS MONTHLY MEETING

February 13, 2005: 11:30 AM

Darwin Day Celebration. Guest speaker Avital Pilpel, Ph.D. "What the Fundamentalists Got Right About Darwin"

New Location:  
Red Bank Charter School  
58 Oakland Street  
Red Bank, NJ 07701-8331

For more information, email: [president@redbankhumanists.org](mailto:president@redbankhumanists.org), call 732-939-6507 or visit [www.redbankhumanists.org](http://www.redbankhumanists.org).

### NJHN MONTHLY MEETING

Wed., February 23, 2005, 7:00 PM  
Bridgewater Library

Our speaker will be Matthew Brauer, research staff member at the Lewis-Sigler Institute for Integrative Genomics at Princeton University, and co-author of the September

2004 Public Law Research Paper, "Is it Science Yet?: Intelligent Design, Creationism and the Constitution."

### MORRISTOWN'S ST. PATRICK'S DAY PARADE

March 12, 2005, 10:30am  
Parade time: noon.

Help NJHN raise our visibility by participating for the third time! Be sure to wear something green! (and comfortable shoes)

Parade participants will meet in the parking lot behind the Municipal Building, 150 South Street, Morristown, at 10:30 AM.

The best place to park is at the end of the parade route -- Morristown High School, 50 Early Street.

Please email or call 732-658-6440 if you plan to march with us (so that we know to look for you), or if you have any questions.



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POST OFFICE BOX 8212  
SOMERVILLE NJ 08876