



Vol. XXXVIII No. 10
October 2024

HUMANIST Monthly

A Publication of the Capital District Humanist Society
Connecting the Secular Humanist Community of Upstate New York, Western Massachusetts, and Southern Vermont

Sunday, October 13th, 2024

In Person at 12:30 PM and Online at 1:00 PM

THE WELL-CONNECTED ANIMAL: SOCIAL NETWORKS AND THE WONDROUS COMPLEXITY OF ANIMAL SOCIETIES



Lee A. Dugatkin

It's all about who you know. Whether vampire bats sharing blood meals for survival, macaque monkeys forming grooming pacts after a deadly hurricane, marmots warning others of danger lurking in the mist, or long-tailed manakins singing and dancing their little hearts out---it pays to be well connected.

Dr. Lee Alan Dugatkin is a Professor and Distinguished University Scholar in the Department of Biology at The University of Louisville. He is an animal behaviorist, evolutionary biologist, and historian of science. Dr. Dugatkin is the author of over 175 articles on evolution and behavior in such journals as *Nature*, *The Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* and *The Proceedings of The Royal Society of London*. He has published three books on the evolution of cooperation. Dr. Dugatkin has had the privilege of speaking at over 150 major universities all around the world including Harvard, Oxford University (England), Cornell, The University of Chicago, The London School of Economics, and Cambridge University (England), and is a contributing author to *Scientific American*, the *New Scientist*, *Newsday*, the *Washington Post*, *Cerebrum*, *BioScience* and the *Wilson Quarterly*.

This event is free and open to the public. It will be held at Pinnacle Living at 45 Forts Ferry Road in Latham, New York and via Zoom. Light refreshments will be available before the talk, but **please bring your own beverage**. If you are not a current paid CDHS member, please follow the instructions below to request an email invitation to attend.

ANYONE WHO IS NOT A CURRENT PAID MEMBER of CDHS can attend. Send an email request to: CDHS.Albany@gmail.com. Please send the request several days prior, or you may log onto our Meetup page: <https://www.meetup.com/Capital-District-Humanist-Society/>, then click on JOIN, then click on ATTEND, and use the RSVP function, and the link will be available.

The Capital District Humanist Society provides a supportive community for exchanging ideas, heightening our knowledge of the world and ourselves, fostering moral and ethical growth, and promoting the principles of secular humanism. CDHS is a member organization for people with humanist values. Our values include commitment to free inquiry, rational thought, lifelong education, democracy, social concern, and fellowship.

Capital District Humanist Society, Inc.

Established 1986

Find us on Facebook at <http://www.facebook.com/CapitalDistrictHumanistSociety>



CDHS is affiliated with:

The American Humanist Association (AHA)

Center for Inquiry (CSI)

Humanists International (HI)

The Secular Coalition for America (SCA)

On Sunday, November 10th, 2024, 12:30 PM (In Person) and 1:00 PM (Online)

The Capital District Humanist Society Presents:

Live To See The Day: Coming of Age in American Poverty

Kensington, Philadelphia, is distinguished only by its poverty. It is home to Ryan, Giancarlos and Emmanuel, three Puerto Rican children who live among the most marginalized families in the United States. This is the story of their coming-of-age, which is beset by violence--the violence of homelessness, hunger, incarceration, stray bullets, sexual and physical assault, the hypermasculine logic of the streets, and the drug trade. In Kensington, eighteenth birthdays are not rites of passage, but statistical miracles. Although all three are high school dropouts, they are on a quest to defy their fate, and their neighborhood. Nikhil Goyal follows Ryan, Giancarlos and Emmanuel on their mission, plunging deep into their lives as they strive to resist their designated place in the social hierarchy.

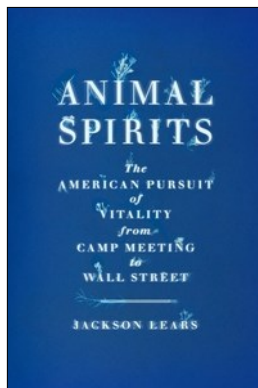


Nikhil Goyal

Nikhil Goyal is a sociologist and author. He earned his B.A. at Goddard College, and earned his M.Phil. and Ph.D. at the University of Cambridge. He also served as senior policy advisor on education and children for Chairman Senator Bernie Sanders on the U.S. Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor and Pensions, and Budget. He developed education, child care and child tax credit federal legislation, as well as tuition-free college programs for incarcerated people and correctional workers in Vermont. He has taught sociology at New York University, the University of Vermont, and Wesleyan University. Nikhil has appeared on CNN, Fox, and MSNBC, and written for the New York Times, Washington Post, Wall Street Journal, and Time. His book, which is the subject of this talk, was named Best Book of 2023 by The New Yorker.

This program will take place both in person (at 12:30 PM) and online (at 1:00 PM) via Zoom. The in-person event will be held at Pinnacle Living at 45 Forts Ferry Road in Latham, NY. It is free and open to the public. Light refreshments will be available at the in-person meeting before the speaker's presentation. Current paid CDHS members will automatically receive an invite to the on-line meeting via email. If you are not a current paid CDHS member, please see page 1 to request an email invitation to attend.

CDHS Book Group is reading *Animal Spirits: The American Pursuit of Vitality from Camp Meeting to Wall Street* by Jackson Lears. The group meets on the 2nd and 4th Thursdays.



Contact Frank Robinson if you would like to join the spirited and informative discussion.

CDHS Executive Council

Executive Director	Don Porterfield
Acting Secretary	Vacant
Treasurer	Roland Tozer
Programs, Publicity	Fred Levine
Publications	Carol Quantock
Social Activities	Candace Fuller
Membership, Telephone	Judith Herbert
Meetup Coordinator	Fred Levine
Compliance	Vacant
Member at Large	Sherry Levine

Appointed Positions

Hospitality	Sue Parry
Room Arrangements	Frank Robinson
Caring Network	Rosina Ansaldo

RECAP OF OUR SEPTEMBER SPEAKER'S TALK

by Frank Robinson

Ben Wang gave a presentation on emergency preparedness — noting that September is National Preparedness Month. This does not mean you needn't be prepared in other months.

He called this a sobering topic, noting that most people are not prepared for emergencies or disasters until it's too late.

Wang invoked his background as a member of New York City's Community Emergency Response Team. Its function is to prepare and educate the public, and support First Responders in disaster events.

One example he discussed was the massive Northeast blackout in August 2003; he himself experienced lack of electric power for several days. Meantime, our local area can be subject to severe storms, flooding, snow, power outages, heat waves, fires, and toxic contamination from train derailments.

Wang said preparedness involves three questions: What should I do? What should I have? How will I communicate with others? A further question might be how can I profit? Leaving that aside, you are generally pretty safe in your own home, if Hannibal Lecter is not in residence. Among the needs Wang identified are water (one gallon per person per day), non-perishable food (requiring no refrigeration or cooking; cans are good but be sure to have a manual can opener); a first aid kit; a flashlight and batteries; and a full tank of gas in case you need to skedaddle. Also, something to keep you entertained, bearing in mind that online entertainment sources may be temporarily unavailable.

But in some cases you might have to evacuate, like in a flood or fire or alien invasion. Wang recommended having a “go-bag”: a light sturdy portable case for stuff you'll need to take along. Items suggested: first aid kit, personal protective equipment [PPE], prescription and over-the-counter medication, keys, flashlight, portable radio and/or walkie-talkie, a water collection device, water decontamination pills, non-perishable food, rain gear, extra clothes, a lightweight blanket, child care needs, pet items, copies of important documents, some cash (small bills preferred), and something like playing cards to keep you occupied while you are in unfamiliar surroundings.

Wang concluded with the dictum, “Failing to plan is planning to fail.”

A recording of Ben's presentation can be found on the CDHS YouTube channel: <https://youtu.be/hAP8c9yhrZA>.

The Votes Are In!

Fred Levine was overwhelmingly re-elected to another two-year term as the Programs/Publicity Coordinator on the CDHS Executive Council. I know that we all appreciate Fred's efforts regarding arranging speakers. Congratulations to Fred and thank you to all who participated in the CDHS election.

Remember to participate in that other election that is coming up next month, and let your humanist values guide your choices.

Join the bunch for lunch! We will gather again at Diner Time at 11:30 AM on October 17th. The November Lunch Bunch will meet on Thursday, November 21, at a location TBD (see below). Please let Rosina Ansaldo know by Wednesday evening if you'll be joining them.

NOTE: We're looking for more suggestions for restaurants for the Lunch Bunch. We'd like to give our local eateries a chance by rotating them every few months and returning to the ones that get enthusiastic thumbs up. Please send ideas to Rosina Ansaldo. Thanks!

Report from 2024 International Humanist Conference (IHC) and Humanists International General Assembly (HI-GA)

by Don Porterfield, Executive Director, CDHS

I was honored to represent CDHS at the combined 2024 IHC and HI-GA in Singapore on August 30 through September 1, 2024. The event was attended by over 100 delegates representing Humanist organizations from around the world. It was great to meet so many humanists, share our common values, and learn how other organizations are promoting secular humanism.

The theme of the Conference was Secularism and Interfaith Harmony. The topics of the presentations, which mostly focused on Southeast Asia, at the 2024 IHC included:

- ⇒ Tours of local communities, the Harmony in Diversity Gallery, and the Religious Rehabilitation Group;
- ⇒ What kind of dialogue is there between Atheists and Religious People?
- ⇒ The shift toward a Post-Religious Society in Muslim Communities;
- ⇒ Interfaith dialogues between worldviews;
- ⇒ Improving relations between the religious and non-religious;
- ⇒ Evaluating approaches to interfaith harmony in post-9/11 Singapore;
- ⇒ Navigating Conservatism and Secularism in Malaysia's Sociopolitical Landscape;
- ⇒ Deliberate offense-taking and why we should be worried; and
- ⇒ How can we better engage and protect non-religious individuals at risk?

I enjoyed the opportunities that the 2024 IHC and HI-GA provided to meet and chat with other humanists. If any of you are interested in attending future Humanists International Conferences or HI-GAs, mark your calendars for:

- ⇒ The next HI GA, which will be held in Luxembourg on July 4 through 6, 2025.
- ⇒ The next WHC, which will be held in Washington, DC on August 26 through 28, 2026.



Delegates take a few minutes for a photo opportunity at the International Humanist Conference in Singapore

Refreshments Volunteers Still Needed for 2025

Sue Parry reports that for the remainder of 2024, enough volunteers have signed up to bring refreshments to monthly meetings. Unless otherwise announced, meetings are held on the second Sunday of each month. Light snacks/finger foods such as chips and dips, cookies, cheese and crackers, etc. are what works the best. Refreshments volunteers are not responsible for beverages, as members will bring their own. Please see below for more details:

- Volunteers for 2024: **October 13: Risa and Laird Scranton; November 10: Olga and Don Porterfield; and December 8: Carol Quantock.**
- Venue: Pinnacle Living at Forts Ferry, 45 Forts Ferry Road, Latham, NY 12110 in the Library/Lounge.
- Setup time: arrive between 12:00 noon—12:15 PM to set up food table; plates, utensils, etc. are located in the CDHS cart.
- Plan on 20-25 in-person attendees, but choose food that you'd be willing to take home if there are leftovers, but usually there are people who are interested in taking leftovers.

To volunteer or for more information, please contact Sue Parry at sueparryharmony@gmail.com.

Indian Ladder Farms, Thacher Park are Venues for October Social

We have scheduled Saturday, October 19th, for our next social. We'll meet at Indian Ladder Farms, 342 Altamont Road, Altamont, NY 12009 at 12:00 noon at DeFazio's Pizza Garden (<https://www.indianladderfarms.com/>). They have delicious pizza and options to try some craft beers. It should be a beautiful ride there with optimum scenery at the site. If the weather cooperates, you'll be able to walk or hike in the area.



Nearby John Boyd Thacher State Park (<https://parks.ny.gov/parks/thacher/>) is breathtaking at this time of year, especially the Helderberg Escarpment overlook, where you might be able to see various species of hawks, vultures, ravens, and other birds flying at or below your eye level. You can also visit the main building (Thacher Park Center Building) as well as the Emma Treadwell Thacher Nature Center (<https://parks.ny.gov/environment/nature-centers/8/details.aspx>). Both buildings have interesting educational displays featuring the history of the area as well as its natural resources, plants, and animals.

Keep an eye on your email inbox for updates as details are in progress. Please RSVP by October 17 to: candacelf13@gmail.com.



CDHS INVOLVEMENT IN ALBANY AREA PRIDE EVENTS—2025

Can We Count on You to Participate?

CDHS is hoping to become involved in the Albany area Pride events in May, June, and July of 2025. Our options are to:

- ◆ walk in the Pride Parades under a CDHS banner
- ◆ host an informational table at Pride events providing visitors with information about CDHS
- ◆ sell LGBTQ+ supportive stickers made by one of our members – the sales profits are to be split among CDHS, the member who creates the stickers, and local LGBTQ+ advocacy groups
- ◆ or, all of the above!

Knowing the level of participation we can expect from our membership is critical in order to properly scale our plans. There were four local Pride celebrations in 2024: Albany (downtown), Bethlehem, Saratoga, and Troy. Please think about whether you can commit to helping with any of the following tasks, and if you can, please send us (Judith Herbert and Brad Fitzgerald, your CDHS Pride planners) an email at 6nospam@gmail.com by October 20, 2024. Enter Pride Events Interest in the subject line. Thank you!

- ◆ transporting our table, banner, awning, literature, stickers to/from the place where we will set up on the day of the event(s)
- ◆ tabling (sitting at our table, handing out literature, selling stickers, and speaking to visitors about CDHS and why we are involved in Pride activities (four-hour shift(s) or full day/event shift(s))
- ◆ walking in the parade
- ◆ carrying one of two ends of the CDHS banner in the parade walk.

Proposition One: New York Equal Rights Amendment

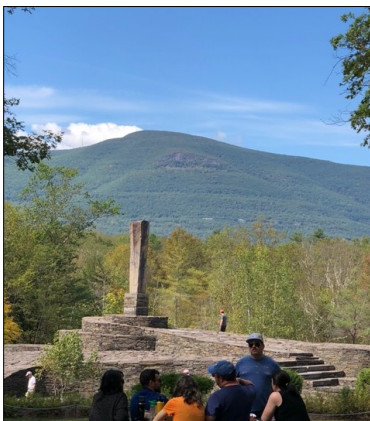
Below is the text of Proposition One, the New York Equal Rights Amendment, which will appear the reverse side of ballots in November. Don't forget to turn your ballot over to review the proposition and vote.

"No person shall be denied the equal protection of the laws of this state or any subdivision thereof. No person shall, because of race, color, ethnicity, national origin, age, disability, creed [or], religion, or sex, including sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, pregnancy, pregnancy outcomes, and reproductive healthcare and autonomy, be subjected to any discrimination in [his or her] their civil rights by any other person or by any firm, corporation, or institution, or by the state or any agency or subdivision of the state, pursuant to law.

Nothing in this section shall invalidate or prevent the adoption of any law, regulation, program, or practice that is designed to prevent or dismantle discrimination on the basis of a characteristic listed in this section, nor shall any characteristic listed in this section be interpreted to interfere with, limit, or deny the civil rights of any person based upon any other characteristic identified in this section."

September Social Recap

Four intrepid CDHS members attended the September Social at Opus 40, a beautiful environmental sculpture and bluestone walkway/trail in Saugerties. They enjoyed a beautiful day, a picnic lunch outdoors, and spectacular scenery. As always, sincere thanks go out to Dee Fuller for arranging all our socials and making them such a success.



Check Your Voter Registration Online!

As a service to Humanist Monthly readers, below is a list of the websites of local county boards of elections. In order to check your voter registration status, copy and paste the URL into your browser to see if your registration information is current.

New York State:

<https://elections.ny.gov/>

Albany County:

<https://www.albanycountyny.gov/departments/board-of-elections>

Columbia County:

<https://elections.columbiacountyny.com/home>

Delaware County:

<https://www.co.delaware.ny.us/departments/elec/elec.htm>

Fulton County:

<https://www.fultoncountyny.gov/board-elections>

Greene County:

<https://www.greenegovernment.com/departments/board-of-elections>

Hamilton County:

<https://www.hamiltoncountyny.com/government/board-elections>

Herkimer County:

<https://www.herkimercountyny.gov/government/board-of-elections/>

Montgomery County:

<https://www.co.montgomery.ny.us/web/sites/departments/boe/default.asp>

Otsego County:

https://www.otsegocountyny.gov/departments/board_of_elections/

Rensselaer County:

<https://www.rensco.com/429/Elections>

Saratoga County:

<https://www.saratogacountyny.gov/departments/board-of-elections/>

Schenectady County:

<https://www.schenectadycountyny.gov/boe>

Schoharie County:

<https://www4.schohariecounty-ny.gov/departments/elections/>

Warren County:

<https://www.warrencountyny.gov/boe>

Washington County:

<https://www.washingtoncountyny.gov/197/Board-of-Elections>

You Can Help Make a Difference

You can help to make a difference this November by writing postcards to eligible voters in Pennsylvania, one of the swing states in the presidential election. Olga Porterfield is organizing a postcard-writing gathering on October 6, 2024, at 4:00 PM at Pinnacle Living at 45 Forts Ferry Road in Latham, New York. If you would like to help, please register at this Alphabet Soup Meetup address: https://www.meetup.com/alphabet-soup-social/events/302571585/?_xtid=gqFyqDEzNjE2NDE3oXCjYXBp&from=ref.

Please note that this event is not sponsored by CDHS; it is a personal invitation to participate in getting out the vote in the swing state of Pennsylvania. The project does not endorse any particular candidate; it is intended to encourage people to exercise their constitutional right to vote.

If you have any questions, please contact Olga at either her email address or phone number, both of which are available upon request at CDHS.Albany@gmail.com.

Capital District Humanist Society, Inc. PO Box 11209, Loudonville, NY 12211-0209

(518) 533-2666 E-mail us at cdhs.albany@gmail.com

Visit us on the web at humanistsociety.net

The Capital District Humanist Society (CDHS) is an independent, non-profit (and non-prophet), non-partisan and strictly non-religious educational and social organization for those who share humanist values: commitment to education, rational and free inquiry, democracy, social concerns and fellowship. CDHS is affiliated with the four major humanist organizations - the American Humanist Association (AHA), the Council for Secular Humanism (CSH), the Secular Coalition for America (SCA) and the Humanists International (HI).

There are five types of CDHS member support: Individual, \$50/yr.; Family, \$80/yr.; Sustaining, \$100/yr.; Patron, \$150/yr.; and Lifetime Member, one contribution of \$1000 or more.

Members receive our publication, *The Humanist Monthly*, and vote each September on the make-up of the governing Executive Council. Members are eligible for election to the Executive Council and may also serve as appointed officials. Members are welcome to attend Executive Council meetings.

The IRS recognizes CDHS as a tax-exempt organization under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code. Therefore, all donations, both cash and materials with established "fair market value", qualify as charitable contributions for income tax purposes.

Donations are gratefully accepted to help speed our growth. CDHS is a tax-exempt 501(c)(3) organization under the IRS Code. Financial disclosure information and our annual report are available upon request.

If you know of someone who may be interested in CDHS, please pass this newsletter along or give us the name; we will send a sample copy or two with no obligation.

We value your input. In the best humanist tradition, CDHS has no rigid picture of itself. We ask you to join us, not follow us. What activities and services would you like CDHS to provide its members? Send us your suggestions, questions, and comments.



CDHS

PO Box 11209

Loudonville, NY 12211-0209

FIRST CLASS

Address service requested

CDHS ++ PO Box 11209, Loudonville, NY 12211-0209 ++ (518) 533-2666

<https://www.humanistsociety.net>

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MEMBER SUPPORT FORM

Name(s) _____ Phone _____

Address _____

City ++ State ++ Zip _____

Email _____ Fax _____

How did you hear about the Humanist Society? _____

All this information will be included in our Directory, which is distributed to members only, unless you request otherwise by checking and signing here: ☐ I do not want to be listed in the CDHS Member Directory _____

Levels of Member Support

Annual Payment **Date** ____/____/____

- | | | |
|---|---|-------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Individual Membership | \$ 50 | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Family Membership | \$ 80 | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Sustaining Member | \$100 | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Patron | \$150 | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Life Member | one-time contribution of \$1000 or more | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Additional tax-deductible donation | \$ _____ | _____ |

Please make checks payable to CDHS

☐ Please send me additional information