

NJHN Board of Directors

Board Position Slate for 2013-14

Report prepared by Michael Jacobsen, Nominating Committee Chairperson

The slate of the NJHN Board of Directors for the coming year include:

1. Those members who are in mid-term.
2. Those current members with expiring terms who would like to retain their board positions.
3. New board members.

1. The following are mid-term current board members:

Gary Brill, Patrick Colucci, Michael Jacobsen, Tim Ridge, Bill Schlegel

2. The following are current board members with expiring terms who would like to retain their positions for the coming year (*requiring confirmation vote*):

Tamar Kieval Brill

Tamar originally hails from Albany, NY and lived in NYC between 1972 and 1982 for college and graduate school. She has a B.A. in psychology and education from Barnard College, Columbia University, and a M.A. in counseling from NYU. Aside from a five-year stint in corporate America, she's spent all of her working life in higher education, first at NYU and for the last 27 years as at Rutgers University, where she is an assistant dean in the School of Arts and Sciences' Office of Academic Services. She's been involved with Humanism for more than 20 years on various levels. She's been a member of NJHN for about four years, though attended many events for much longer than that. She has served as a member of the NJHN Board since 2011, assisting with the membership committee. She has also been involved in the Humanist Chaplaincy at Rutgers University. Tamar is also a member of the I.L. Peretz Secular Jewish Community. She is married to Gary Brill and they have a 23-year old son, Zach, who is a graduate student at UC-Berkeley.

Linda Mastellone

Linda Mastellone has been the Secretary of Board of Directors of the New Jersey Humanist Network since 2011. Linda was a councilwoman for Flemington Borough (2008-10) and a member of the Flemington-Raritan School Board (2011-12). Professionally, Linda was the Executive Director of the Franklin Township Chamber of Commerce and the Events Coordinator for the Middlesex County Chamber of Commerce. Both positions helped her learn about non-profit management--including financial matters, organizing, and event planning. She has used those skills to help NJHN as it continues to grow and reach out to the Humanist community.

Nick Mellis

Nick Mellis has been involved in Movement/Electoral politics since 1986. He has worked on the Michael Dukakis 1988 presidential campaign and with the Sierra Club's 1992 Clinton/Gore Campaign. He has also helped to start various environmental groups including one to stop the Duck Island Incinerator. In 1995 he co-founded the Green Party of New Jersey. Nick also hosted a cable access show called 'From a Green View' for many years. During the 1990's he participated in women's health care clinic defense work. He ran for Congress in 1998, the Lawrence Twp Council in 1997 (Green Party) and for state assembly in 2009 where he received an endorsement from NJ NOW for the 12th legislative district. He was national treasurer for the Green Party of the United States in 2000. He would like to get the word out about NJ Humanism.

Janice Rael

Janice Rael is the Founder and Vice-President of the Delaware Valley Chapter of Americans United for Separation of Church and State, DVAU. She is a grassroots activist who has focused on various church-state separation issues throughout her life, including religious freedom, women's rights, LGBT equality, supporting public education, and promoting science literacy. Janice is also the co-chair of the Philadelphia LGBT action coalition called The Summit. In addition to running the Delaware Valley Americans United Chapter, Janice is a Co-Organizer of Gloucester County Humanists in New Jersey, and is on the Board of Directors of the New Jersey Humanist Network. She also co-organizes several Philadelphia-area secular groups on Meetup, and is on the National Leadership Council of Americans United for Separation of Church and State. Janice lives in South Jersey with her spouse and their two teenagers.

Lisa Ridge

Lisa Ridge has been a member of NJHN since 2002. She is the current Vice President of NJHN, a position she has held since 2011; Program Chair from 2003-Present; and Membership Chair from 2009-Present. She served as President from 2003-2008. Raised by Catholic parents in southern Indiana, Lisa knew by the 3rd grade that she didn't believe in the god she was taught existed. She vividly remembers seeing Madalyn Murray O'Hair on The Phil Donahue Show and The Tonight Show and that was when she realized she was an atheist. It wasn't until the late 1990s that she heard the term "Humanism" and finally found the worldview that matched how she had lived her life. Lisa was an environmental activist with the Sierra Club from 1980-2004 at the local, state, and national levels, but became more involved in secular activism after moving to New Jersey in 2001. Lisa is also a member of the American Humanist Association, American Atheists, Center for Inquiry, Secular Woman, Foundation Beyond Belief, Americans United for Separation of Church & State, Freedom from Religion Foundation, and Red Bank Humanists, which she aided in founding. Lisa has a goal of helping to form a true network of Humanist groups in every county in New Jersey. She is an Air Force veteran, works for the State of New Jersey's Judiciary, and lives with her husband Tim, another NJHN Board member, and their cats in Ewing in Mercer County.

3. The following NJHN members have accepted nominations to serve on the board for the coming term (*requiring confirmation vote*):

Marilyn Francis

Marilyn was an atheist before she heard the word. She was raised by Jewish parents, but could never understand the logic of religion. Marilyn worked for AT&T/Bell Labs/ Lucent in the fields of IT and Finance for 31 years, presumably alongside numerous other atheists. When she found out about NJHN, she joined to be among other people in the freethought community. She would like to be more involved in that community to help spread the word that it is more than OK to think and act based upon logic, knowledge, and kindness.

Jennifer M. Vriens

Jennifer has made social justice her lifelong passion. She has worked in the field of fundraising since 1999 specializing in women's issues, including domestic violence, reproductive rights and women's economic empowerment. She currently serves as the Director of Development and Marketing at the YWCA Eastern Union County, Union County's domestic violence program. Continuing her commitment to women's issues and philanthropy, Jennifer was the Founding President of the New Jersey Abortion Access Fund, New Jersey's first state-wide abortion fund. Jennifer is a relative newcomer to the free-thought movement, joining the New Jersey Humanist Network in 2012. She self identified as a non-believer in 2009, after many years of doubt. To her, religion has no place in a progressive society seeking peace and respect for all people. Jennifer has a master's degree in Counseling and a bachelor's degree in Sociology from the University of Delaware.