



The Utah Humanist

Happy Humanist

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Humanists of Utah is a Chapter of the American Humanist Association. We are a nonprofit corporation organized to advocate and promote ethical, rational, and democratic humanism among our membership and the larger community.



Humanism is a rational philosophy informed by science, inspired by art, and motivated by compassion. It affirms the dignity of each human being and supports individual liberty consonant with social and planetary responsibility. Humanism advocates participatory democracy, the open society, human rights and social justice. Free of supernaturalism, it recognizes human beings as part of nature and holds that values—be they religious, ethical, social, or political—have their source in human nature, experience, and culture. Humanism thus derives the goals of life from human need and interest rather than from theological or ideological abstractions, and asserts that humanity must take responsibility for its own destiny.

—*The Humanist*,
Official publication of the American
Humanist Association

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Censorship and Obscenity in the Arts: Is the Cutting Edge Too Sharp?

Any music banned by the Church is bound to be a lot of fun!

Occasionally, a piece of music comes along that is so outrageous it is banned from the airwaves. Back before radio, a young composer by the name of Bach, played music so unconventional it earned him severe reprimands from the Protestant Church. Today we call it Classical Music. Experience it for yourself, live at Symphony Hall.”

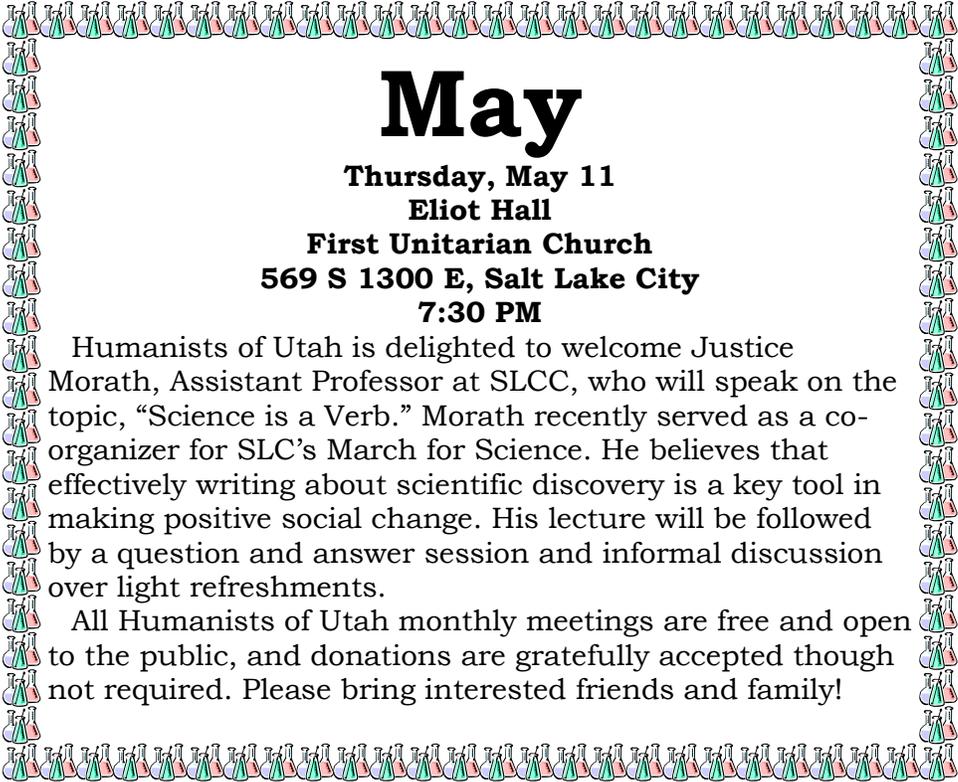
This tame and slightly humorous quotation from the inside cover of a program of the Utah Symphony, written to entice a new, younger audience to symphonic music, is quietly symbolic of a debate currently raging in America about what constitutes art, what constitutes “acceptable” art, whether our uniquely American form of government should concern itself with art and if so, what kind of art is to be deemed appropriate for government funding. This debate had reached a shrieking crescendo, its noisy volume battering the walls of Congress and the American sensibility with the dark and dangerous politics of intolerance and fear, and with counter-charges of censorship. The combatants in the debate had drawn their battle-lines at the doors of the National Endowment for the Arts, established in 1965, the federal agency whose mission is to support, foster and provide wide access to the arts in America.

Programs in the Endowment include support to the fields of: Dance, Design Arts, Expansion Arts, Folk Arts, Literature, Media Arts, Museums, Music, Opera-Musical Theater, Theater, Visual Arts, Arts in Education, State and local partnerships. To accomplish its work, the Endowment utilizes a peer panel review system in which ‘peers’ in each field meet and determine which applications or proposals they deem to have substantial artistic and cultural significance, and which recommends their approval and a funding level to the National Council on the Arts, a group of 26 presidentially-appointed artists, patrons, and citizens. This Council reviews the panel recommendations and after discussion and debate, makes their own recommendations to the Chairman of the Endowment, who makes the final determination.

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May

Thursday, May 11
Eliot Hall
First Unitarian Church
569 S 1300 E, Salt Lake City
7:30 PM

Humanists of Utah is delighted to welcome Justice Morath, Assistant Professor at SLCC, who will speak on the topic, "Science is a Verb." Morath recently served as a co-organizer for SLC's March for Science. He believes that effectively writing about scientific discovery is a key tool in making positive social change. His lecture will be followed by a question and answer session and informal discussion over light refreshments.

All Humanists of Utah monthly meetings are free and open to the public, and donations are gratefully accepted though not required. Please bring interested friends and family!

Support the AHA

Humanists of Utah urges you to support the American Humanist Association.

The AHA is dedicated to preserving individual rights and promoting nationally the philosophy of humanism.

Membership brings you the *Humanist* magazine and *Free Mind* newsletter six times a year.

Annual membership is only \$45.00 (**\$35 Introductory Rate**) and can be paid with plastic. Phone (800) 743-6646 or write to:

American Humanist Association
1777 T Street, NW
Washington DC 20009

President's Message

This month I have three items to touch on, one humorous, at least to me, another serious and one about me.

I have mentioned before that for the last twenty-five to thirty years I have not had cable TV. What little came over the air was enough for Amy and me. Now that I'm spending much of my time at my mother's home, I have been watching a lot more TV and the commercials are something else. I think one of the most hilarious is the marketing of razors. I mean really, how many times and ways are there to improve the razor. Have they made one with five blades yet? Soon they'll be laser guided. I know it's stupid thing to write about, but I can't help it.

Speaking of stupid things, I want to get to the serious thing I want to address, that being our new administration. I realize the as a 501c3 organization we must avoid using our resources for political reasons. But I don't think I'm barred from giving my opinion. I can say what I have on my mind in a few sentences. We have a president who seems to only function in an adversarial mode. That along with the politics of

fear and hatred appears to have brought us to a point where the whole world is angry and on edge. All this fear and hatred is not new or all his fault, but this president has added a lot of fuel to the flames. Is this a good way to govern? Where every issue is a battle to always give HIM a chance for a "victory."

Moving on. Board member Sally Jo asked me help her put together a bio of myself for last month's newsletter. That didn't happen so this month I thought I would answer one of the questions she asked me to review. First on the list is where I have lived and my favorite place.

I have lived here in Salt Lake City all my life except for about a year when we moved to California just a mile and a half from Disneyland. I was eight years old then and met a kid who knew how to sneak into Disneyland. But that's a whole story of its own. However, I did spend four years in the United States Air Force, where I was stationed in Texas, Colorado, Utah, Thailand, New Jersey, California and Oklahoma.

The second part of the question, "my favorite

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President

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place,” has more than one answer, or at least two. When it comes to cities, there is no doubt it is San Francisco and the bay area. My other favorite place is far different from the highly compact and highly populated streets of San Francisco, and that is the Red Castle area of the High Uintah’s Wilderness Area here in Utah. It is a beautiful area where you will be camping about eight miles from the nearest dirt road at around 10,000 ft. and still be looking up at the top 2 to 3 thousand feet of mountain tops. I could go on and on about the beauty of this area, but there isn’t room.

But there is room for one little anecdote about being an experienced backpacker who meets up with friends who are not so experienced.

Soon after I began backpacking I determined that I was going to always go it alone as far as equipment and meals. Sharing was too problematic and I sometimes went in a day ahead of friends. So, I always packed rather heavy (seventy pounds) with extras like “real food” and a tape player for music and to record notes for my geomorphology studies. The real food I would bring along was a medium size potato, a small onion, a small can of mushrooms, some butter, salt and pepper. Plus, enough Aluminum foil for cooking in the fire. Plus, I also had a flask of B&B.

After setting up camp, I would go fishing first thing and usually catch a nice sized fish for supper. You can imagine the envious looks I got as I stuffed onions and mushrooms in the fish, surrounded it with the cut-up potato added salt pepper and the butter and wrapped it in a few layers of foil. Then after rolling it around in the coals of the fire for about a half hour you open up a real treat, especially welcome after hiking in eight to ten miles. I would share a taste but only a taste to those who came with light packs and nothing but freeze dried meals and granola as they tried to cook freeze dried chili (at 10,000 ft) long enough that the beans weren’t crunchy.

See you at our next meeting.

—Robert Lane
President, HoU

Is the Cutting Edge Too Sharp?

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The budget of the Endowment in 1990-91 was \$174 million, or approximately 65 cents per American citizen.

When the Endowment was established in 1965, there were very few state arts agencies. Through the catalyst of direct state block grants, there is now an arts agency or council in every state and territory in America. This encouragement of state and local arts agencies has been instrumental in the encouragement of *state* governmental support of the arts totaling over \$220 million dollars in 1989, a figure which, at the time, exceeded the federal arts budget by 50 million dollars.

Taken as a whole, the leveraging effect of NEA support was 10 to 1 in economic impact.

What was the cultural result of the Endowment’s efforts in numerical terms?

- Theaters: In 1965, there were 56 nonprofit theaters in the U.S. In 1988, there were over 400.
- Dance: In 1965, there were 57 companies, generally located in New York City. In 1988, there were 250 nationwide.
- Museums: More than 1/3 of the national sample of art museums in 1988, had been founded since 1960.
- Orchestras In 1965, there were 60 professional orchestras. By 1988, 163 orchestras received funding out of the 212 orchestras which applied.
- Opera: From 1965, to 1988, professional opera companies had doubled from 45 to over 100.
- Choruses: In 1965, there was only one professional chorus. By 1988, there were 57.
- Artists-in-Schools: The NEA, through its programming and advocacy, was the re-birth of interest in establishing arts education as basic requirements in our public schools.
- Local Arts Councils: By 1988, there were 3000, created as a direct result of the Endowment’s catalytic financial support.

During its history of the first 25 years, (to FY ‘89-‘90), the Endowment had awarded over

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Is the Cutting Edge Too Sharp?

83,000 grants, approximately 3000 per year.

Of this total, 20 grants had raised some form of controversy. However, with the public exhibitions of the work of Andre Serrano, in 1987, and Robert Maplethorpe, in 1989, what had been a minor issue, exploded into major cultural warfare. The issues of government censorship of the arts and what comprises obscenity in the arts became front-page fodder.

During my seven years of service, beginning in 1985, on the National Council, I was witness to efforts of a few congressmen, led by Texas Representative Richard Armey to find *any* scrap of material which they could use as the focus of a campaign against the Endowment. They demanded that their respective staffs be allowed to rummage for months on end through the Grant's files of the Endowment. To their own enormous disappointment, they were unable to locate the piece of "rotting meat" around which to frame their earlier attack – *until Serrano and Maplethorpe*. One had to question the ETHICS of these pork-barrel politicians, who, while vilifying the National Endowment for the Arts, had, for years, forced down the throats of American taxpayer's the subsidization of the growing of tobacco, long after it was proved to be one of the great killers of men, women and children throughout the world.

These "terrorists of the mind" are telling Americans that art, created in part through support of the National Endowment for the Arts, does not enjoy the protection from censorship provided under the Constitution and Bill of Rights, simply because this support involves "tax-payer's dollars". Does this mean that all governmental agencies are free to act *outside* the limits of these documents? Is this contradiction of law and values what we, as Americans are willing to accept? NO must be our answer to this question.

What can we do? First, we can inform ourselves and others about this debate. We can demand that our elected representatives clear away the intolerant rubbish of this debate and look to long-term values in their votes. Second, we must infuse back into our institutions of higher learning and into our public schools the

proper balance of learning in the arts and humanities, a proper balance to the current love affair with scientific research. If the nuclear age has taught us anything if Hiroshima, the Holocaust and the Joseph Stalins of the world have opened our eyes a little if Chernobyl has shown us the "black hole" of the policy of unlimited growth and unbridled energy consumption if the Savings and Loan's feeding-frenzy-of-greed has shown how we have robbed our treasury of the potential for education and the expression of human compassion then, these catastrophic world-altering and crippling atrocities *must* point out the necessity for a change of course in our educational priorities. Paying cruelly, misleading lip-service to the value of the arts and humanities in our colleges, universities and public schools is no longer sufficient.

What is needed is a re-direction of financial and administrative support for these disciplines, for the re-introduction of required courses in history, philosophy, ethics (particularly ethics), and aesthetics *for every student who expects to leave a university or college with a bachelor's degree, or for students graduating from our secondary schools*. It is these disciplines which stimulate creativity, teach basic principles of compassion, of civilized, tolerant human behavior and instill a basic habit in all of us of simple ethics in politics, business, in our professions and all levels of human interaction. Unless we do this, and soon, I fear that the ultimate 'mirror-image' depicted of our society by the "ultimate Artist" will reflect the crucifixion of our world on the world's stage, with the blood of life running off its apron onto all of us who remain as silent spectators of these events.

—M. Ray Kingston, FAIA
Member NCA 1985-1991
HoU Member

This piece is a condensed version of a more complete report which is available on our website.



Humanist Minister

Humanists of Utah meetings are open to the public and free of any admission charge. A discussion and light refreshments follow the speaker's presentation. Come join us and **bring a friend!**

Monthly meetings are held at 7:30 PM in Eliot Hall of the First Unitarian Church, 569 South 1300 East, on the second Thursday of each month.

Disclaimer: The views expressed herein are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the position of Humanists of Utah nor the American Humanist Association. Reprinting of articles is permitted for humanist groups promoting the interests of humanism if attribution is properly stated.



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>> Put Your Name Here <<
 >> Write an Article! <<

Elaine Stehel, Certified Humanist Minister, provides officiating services for weddings, funerals/memorial services, and other life-passage events. First consultation meetings are free of charge, and if I am found to be an ideal fit for your event, a non-refundable fee of \$50 will be requested to hold the date.



Additional details can be found at secularweddingsutah.com, and you are welcome to email elaine@humanistsofutah.org or call 801-654-7614 with any questions you may have. All of life is worth celebrating!

Membership/Renewal Application

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

- \$50 Regular Annual Membership and subscription to the Utah Humanist
 - \$90 Regular 2-year Membership and subscription to the Utah Humanist
 - \$35 Regular Annual Membership with email delivery of the Utah Humanist
 - \$65 Regular 2-year Membership with email delivery of the Utah Humanist
 - \$20 Student Annual Membership and subscription to the Utah Humanist
 - \$20 Annual subscription to the Utah Humanist (I do not want to be listed as a member of **Humanists of Utah**)
 - Please send a *FREE* trial Subscription to the Utah Humanist
 - \$ _____ additional contribution to help promote public awareness of humanism
- => All contributions in excess of the \$20 subscription fee tax deductible.
 => *Members* have the right to vote in Chapter elections and participate in Chapter decisions.
 => Dues provide for information packets, honoraria to speakers, expenses of newsletter publication, trial subscriptions, copies to libraries, and newsletter exchange with other chapters.

Humanists of Utah
P.O. Box 1043
West Jordan, UT 84084

Upcoming Events

Meeting	Topic	Date	Time	Place
General Meeting	Science is a Verb Justice Morath	May 11	7:30	Eliot Hall
Board Meeting	Chapter Business	May 18	7:30	RE 201
General Meeting	TBA	June 8	7:30	Eliot Hall
Board Meeting	Chapter Business	June 15	7:30	RE 201

Notes:

- ◆ *General Meetings* are for all members and the general public. There are no admission charges.
- ◆ *Discussion Group* meetings are open to everyone. A different book or topic is covered every month.
- ◆ *Board Meetings* are planning and business sessions. They are open to all members.
- ◆ Eliot Hall is in the First Unitarian Church located at 569 South 1300 East in Salt Lake City.
- ◆ RE 201 is upstairs in the East Educational Building at the First Unitarian Church.



Application Form Inside



Humanists of Utah
Off Chapter of the American Humanist Association
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