



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*,
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Darwin

~Great Benefactor to the Scientific World~

Time was, people believed that a perfect earth was created and would never change. In their old-world view, no change was needed nor would occur since perfection could not be bettered.

But Darwin, that heretic, changed the scope and breadth of science by making the conceptual leap to grasp that things could change. He saw that change had occurred in the past and would continue to change from now into the future. Moreover, Darwin was courageous enough to say the heresy out loud; even if it put him in danger.

Once he was able to transcend the idea of a static earth, which included life unchanging on that earth, Darwin gifted the world with an understanding of how the enormous variation in all life came to exist. Thus arrived Darwin's theory of evolution by natural selection.

Science reigns in Darwin's world, not supernatural, immutable perfection, and for this we, humanists, honor him.

For our 11th annual celebration of Darwin, the Humanists of Utah met at the Utah Department of Natural Resources auditorium. We listened to Dr. Randall B. Irmis, Chief Curator at the Natural History Museum of Utah, which is currently hosting a new exhibit, "Nature's Ultimate Machines."

Dr. Irmis is also an Associate Professor at the University of Utah in the Department of Geology and Geophysics. He has done field work all around the world studying early dinosaurs and has published major articles in prominent journals such as *Nature* and *Science*.

In keeping with Darwin's monumental idea of evolution, Dr. Irmis spoke on "The Rise of the Dinosaurs: Evolutionary Success Through Competition or Luck?" His writings are based on his hands-on study of the fossil record.

An extinction event about 252 million years ago, thought to be a massive release of greenhouse gases and lots of big rocks hitting the earth, defines the boundary between the end of the Permian Age and the beginning of the Triassic Age. In the late Triassic, the first dinosaurs are found in the fossil record. On first appearance, dinosaurs are not important parts of their ecosystems.

(Continued on page 3)

Inside This Issue

President's Message.....	2
Stardust Campaign	2
Darwin Day Photos	4



President's Message

I hope you are enjoying the spring weather as much as I am. It is my favorite time of the year as I think I have mentioned every spring that I have been writing these messages. All my life I have enjoyed growing things to eat. And nothing is fresher than what is growing right outside your back door.

Speaking of back doors, some of you may know I am moving into my deceased mother's house. It is a bit strange, as this is where I grew up. But my mother didn't grow much food, so I'm having to eek out some spots among the bushes. But I love putting seeds in the ground early. Planting things like carrots, peas, lettuce, spinach, onions, dill, etc. I'm also going to grow some herbs in quantities to be able to give some away to friends and neighbors. There is already lavender, sage, rosemary, thyme and oregano and I plan to plant more. But enough of my gardening zeal.

By now I hope you know that we are going to a bimonthly schedule and to also move the venue around to a variety of places on different times and days of the week. With that in mind, I hope you will give some thought to places you think would be a good place as a venue for a meeting or event. This February's Darwin Day Celebration at the Utah Division of Natural Resources facility was an excellent venue. And if they are willing, I think we should have Darwin Day there often. I would also ask you to think about what you want us to schedule. With only six dates to plan for, do we want more socials, more speakers, an advocacy project? The Board of Directors would love to hear from you.

Speaking of Darwin Day, it was a great success this year with the work of Craig Wilkinson, MD, Utah Friends of Paleontology, Atheists of Utah, and all the other participating groups making it happen. There were exhibits to check out, a tour given by UFOP members. There was an excellent presentation with birthday cake after.

It is never too soon to start planning next year's event, so I want to suggest that we think about the theme and subject. Though we have had Climate Change as the subject recently, the threat it presents seems even more pressing with Trump as President. Unfortunately, with this man in the Oval Office, much that has been accomplished environmentally in the past is being attacked and undone. It will make a good theme again as well as an opportunity to advocate for the environment.

With that said I think I'm going to close and go do the environment a little good by getting some seeds planted.

—Robert Lane
President, HoU

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**

Stardust

Inspire passion for science and wonder with this children's STEM book exploring the Big Bang, the Solar System, and our place in space!

My name is Douglas Harris and me and my daughter Bailey (age 12) released a book called *My Name is Stardust* in 2017. The book has done very well with secular families and was supported by prominent activists such as Michael Shermer and Dale McGowan.

We are launching a Kickstarter campaign for the next book in the Stardust Series, *Stardust Explores the Solar System*.

You can contribute to the campaign here: <https://goo.gl/SWSYD6>

—Douglas Harris



Darwin Day 2018

(Continued from page 1)

But the end-Permian event which had wiped out many species left ecosystem holes into which dinosaurs could radiate and even thrive.

During the course of the next 140 million years the dinosaurs began to increase in numbers of species and individuals and became the dominant species on our earth. The family tree of dinosaurs split into two, the Ornithischians and the Sauropodomorphs. Later, the Sauropods gave rise to the Theropods which have evolved in modern times to be the birds in our back yards and on our tables.

In the environment of the early Triassic, tiny meat eaters were more successful than the plant eaters. Floral growth was more varied and inconsistent, offering vegetarians variable famine that would have overtaken and dispensed with many plant eaters, especially the large ones.

Associated with low numbers of plants, the percentage of oxygen in the atmosphere was low. Low oxygen tension was less of a challenge to the dinosaurs if a bird-like lung is theorized for them. Current birds' lungs are more efficient at extracting oxygen from the air than the lungs of other animals, giving the Theropods a physical advantage in the Triassic Age.

Cold blooded reptiles, fish and amphibians would also have had mobility and functional challenges. Posited to be warm-blooded, dinosaurs would have had superior ability to move and function. The fossil record also indicates another reason for more efficient mobility in dinosaurs compared to reptiles. A complete hole in the leg socket of the pelvic bone where the femur articulates is thought to make them more mobile with better locomotion. More efficient mobility is assumed to be an advantageous evolutionary strategy allowing the Theropods to more successfully radiate and fill empty ecological niches.

Even though the luck of surviving one or more extinction events is shared by more than dinosaurs, it is dinosaurs who better adapted to the environment and who thrived while reptile numbers shrank.

In the fossil record, about 1000 species of dinosaurs have been found.

Dr. Irmis thinks Darwin thought both a superior ability to compete as well as luck were involved as he devised his laws of Natural Selection. Thus, from the Divergence of Character and the Extinction of Less Improved Forms "evolve the current species."

Thank you, Dr. Irmis and Mr. Darwin.

Thank you also, to Dr. James Kirkland and Dr. Evan Cowgill for tours of the Utah Geological Survey paleontology preparation lab where we saw pneumaticity in the bones of Theropods in the forms of grooves and air cells. Removal of bone makes the bones lighter, thereby more like the birds we know and love today.



Pneumaticity In Theropod Fossil

—Lauren Florence, MD

Faith, indeed, has up to the present not been able to move real mountains....But it can put mountains where there are none.

—Friedrich Nietzsche



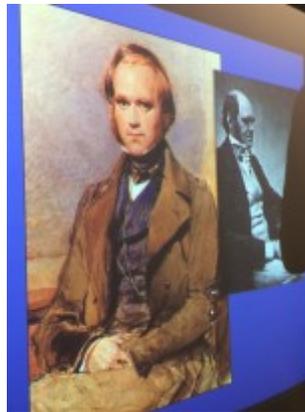
Photos from Darwin Day



Another photo of the grooved, and thus less weighty, pelvic bone next to the paper by Dr. James Kirkland, one of our local experts.



Tenontosaurus



Charles Darwin, two ages



Unearthed specimen of Theropod spinal column with attached ribs being cleaned and processed



Theropod born with "kill claw". It gets larger as the animal grows.

More photos on our website



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!**

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 <<
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Nonprofit

Humanists of Utah is a nonprofit organization supported in large part by dues paying members. Our other major source of funds comes from generous gifts, mostly from the same dues payers who give a little more. In February 2003, chapter member Marion Craig died and left HoU a bequest of \$20,000. We invested this money in an endowment fund. The interest is still helping to pay for banquets, special events, etc. When you create your personal will please consider leaving a gift to Humanists of Utah.

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
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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.

Humanists of Utah is enrolled in Smith's Inspiring Donations program. If you have a Smith's Fresh Value card, you can register it to benefit Humanists of Utah. Simply visit www.smithsfoodanddrug.com/inspire, create an account, associate it with your Fresh Values card number, and then enter NPO Number: KQ330 within your "account summary." All future purchases will now benefit HoU.

—Leona Blackbird

Upcoming Events

Meeting	Topic	Date	Time	Place
General Meeting	Culbert Levy Olson Craig Wilkinson, MD	Apr 12	7:30	Eliot Hall
Board Meeting	Chapter Business	Apr 19	7:30	RE 201
General Meeting	TBA	Jun (TBA)	TBA	TBA
Board Meeting	Chapter Business	Jun 14	7:30	RE 201

April/May

Our April Meeting will feature Board Member Craig Wilkinson, MD discussing his recently published book, *The Honorable Culbert Levy Olson, Governor of California 1939-1943*. Olson was a Humanitarian, ex-Mormon, Atheist, and often called the "People's Governor."

The meeting will be held Thursday, April 12 at 7:30 PM in Eliot Hall at the First Unitarian Church located at 539 South 1300 East in Salt Lake City. The lecture will be followed by a question and answer session and then an informal discussion with light refreshments. Everyone who is interested is welcome to attend, there is no charge however, donations are always welcome.



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