



The Utah 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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Helping Rebuild Lives

Kathy Bray, CEO of Volunteers of America, Utah was the featured speaker out July general meeting. Volunteers of America, Utah (VOA) provides a bridge to self-reliance and health for vulnerable individuals and populations who struggle with homelessness, addiction and mental illness in our Wasatch Front communities.

Volunteers of America is a national, nonprofit organization with 122 years of history. The Utah affiliate has operated human service programs for more than 30 years and annually manages more than \$11 million in revenue, utilizes more than 3,000 volunteers and serves close to 8,000 clients in multiple programs. These programs include a Detoxification Center, Domestic Violence Counseling, Homeless Outreach, Case Management, Young Men’s and Women’s Transition Homes and our new Youth Resource Center which offers 30 beds for emergency overnight shelter.

Upcoming programs include the Geraldine E. King Women’s Resource Center, a state-of-the-art facility which will provide resources and emergency shelter to 200 women each night which will open to the public in Summer of 2019. Volunteers of America, Utah’s is also excited to announce it’s first residential program called The Denver Street Apartments, which is scheduled to open Fall of 2019. These apartments will provide supportive housing for severely mentally ill individuals of Volunteers of America, Utah’s Assertive Community Treatment program.

Individuals who are interested in learning more or getting involved with Volunteers of America, Utah can do so by visiting www.voaut.org

—Sarah Cavalcanti
Marketing & Communication Director, VOA

We are looking for a qualified CPA, NOT a volunteer, to audit the HoU books. If you can help please contact a Board member. Regular fees for service will be paid.

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This is the perfect opportunity for those of you interesting in finding out what Humanists of Utah is all about to come out and meet us in person. Eat some food, play some games, meet new friends—but be sure to come!



Greetings Freethinkers, I hope your summer is going well. It’s amazing to me that it’s August already, and for me, that means getting to work on some outside projects I have started. But there is plenty of hot weather left before skiers can start getting excited.

Speaking of hot weather, I want to comment on a Salt Lake Tribune article from Friday, July 5, 2019 titled, “Best way to fight climate change? A trillion trees.” The article cites some Swiss scientists who say, “there is enough space for new trees to cover 3.5 million square miles.” The article also quotes these scientists as stating

that this is the cheapest and most effective climate change solution. The trees would help by taking in carbon dioxide, which the study says may be as much as 830 billion tons removed.

The article also shows a park in Milan, Italy with the caption stating that the city plans to plant 3 million trees by 2030. This got me to wondering if there are volunteer groups that plant trees. I haven’t looked into it yet, but I bet there are and I think the Arbor Day Foundation might be a good place to start. This could be a way to get involved in being advocates for

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Dehumanize

~Book Review~

It doesn't take much time in front of the television, YouTube, online news sites or even in public before the stark realities of us-versus-them politics and judgements come to the forefront. We currently live in a state of unrecognizable vitriol and tension as lack of equilibrium in environmental, economic and other ecologies widen the gap between not only haves and have-nots but between races, genders, health and numerous other categorizations. This has often turned to violence and confrontation and unfortunately resulted in murder on occasions. If you're like me, you may have wondered: how it is that the human mind, while capable of such illustrious and awe-inspiring accomplishments throughout its history, can turn its back on its own species and lower itself to destroy, denigrate and debase others along the way? What is it that makes some of us monsters instead of saviors to our fellow humans?

I have just finished reading *Less Than Human: Why We Demean, Enslave, and Exterminate Others* by Dr. David Livingstone Smith with that very question in mind. This is a book I recommend with the highest intensity and encourage all who read this article to pursue in reading. The author traces the roles, psychologies, cognitive processes, and outcomes of historical and current situations wherein dehumanization was used effectively to devastating results. Some of these cognitive processes are subconscious while others are emotional reactions to fear. Dr. Smith issues warnings to us today that this can easily happen again if we do not understand the processes, triggers and propagandic manipulation involved in lowering others of our species to less than human and fight them with understanding.

Dehumanization is the act of removing the humanness from another. It involves lowering "others" to a reduced place of importance on the Great Chain of Being (a medieval philosophy that placed humans second below God, above animals and flora) that justifies them not being treated as equals. The others must become *sub-*

human—less than us—or we find ourselves constrained by social contracts and mores that prohibit murder, slavery and other harmful actions. The attacking people see themselves as true and pure humans, untainted by foreign blood, culture or religions, so it is by relegating "others" to the status of subhuman that we overcome these social and ethical concerns about killing and hurting others. The thinking goes that if the others aren't really human but rather lower-level counterfeits who deserve neither the empathy and tolerance reserved for others of our kind nor justice when they oppose our ways, then we aren't killing humans after all and therefore a moral conundrum about our actions is needless. The systemized cruelty of spreading death and pain to slaves, captives, immigrants, war opponents and despised others comes from a collective acceptance and embracing of the corroded status of their humanity.

To accomplish this, there are many proven methodologies that have—and are—being utilized as dog whistles for sowing hate, division, and violence towards others. Typically, government or military propaganda against an opponent will label the others as monsters or strange beings due to their culture and appearance as a way of frightening people. Media may fall in line with authority to promote division by referring to the others as vermin, insects or diseases, and often their writing utilizes phrases or words that are pegged to these categories. Look for them in the headlines and you will be surprised at how others are described. This is happening in front of our eyes right now with regard to racism with undocumented immigrants and their families, from ICE raids to police brutality to immigrant children staying (and dying) in cages, rooted on by a bigoted authoritarian who has scared many constituents into hatred against innocent folks and fellow Americans. As humanists, the greatest weapon we have against the present demagoguery and populist nationalism that is adopting dehumanization and fear is the *under-*

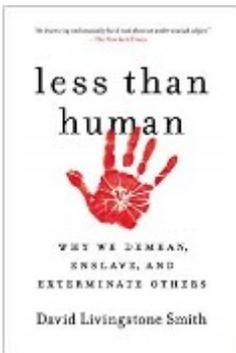
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Dehumanizing Soap Box

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standing of dehumanization and where it comes from. By recognizing it and calling it out for what it is, we can help others stop and realize what is happening. By highlighting and resisting the use of derogatory terms, labels, treatment and classification of our fellow humans, we can attempt to break much of the cycle that has led to the denigration of many people and a



life of pain, ruin, and servitude. If you see dehumanization occurring, call it out! Talk to others about the subtlety of this cancerous attitude and be an example to all around you of tolerance, respect, peace and understanding! We can make a difference daily at a ground level, one by one, by using our awareness of the dehumanization process to

mitigate its spread and bring hope to others. Whatever you do, take action for good—it is the humanist way.

—Jeff Curtis
President, HoU

Book Recommendation

The Four Horsemen, The Conversation That Sparked an Atheist Revolution. It is a transcription of a conversation among Christopher Hitchens, Richard Dawkins, Sam Harris and Daniel Dennett in 2007.

It is an enjoyable read.
I found it at the County Library.

—Leona Blackbird

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fighting human caused climate change. It's something to think about. I can see myself planting trees.

—Switching Gears—

This month I wanted to add a personal note. It's a cat story. I've told it a number of times because it's hilarious (at least to me it is).

Recently we lost our 16-year-old black cat. To help me deal with the loss, I've made myself think of the ways he enriched our lives rather than dwelling on his illness and death. The cat story is about how he gave me one of the best laughs of my life.

Several years ago, Amy and I lived at a four plex with Larry our black cat. The apartments had a covered walkway in front with a few steps up to ground level on each end, with some lawn close to the front steps.

The Jehovah's Witnesses came around a lot in that neighborhood and one of our neighbors in the four plex started having some weekly sessions with "witnesses" on the lawn near the steps. During one of these sessions I happened to step out onto the walkway wearing my black Heretic-in good company t-shirt. At the same time Larry came walking up with a medium sized robin in his mouth. As Larry approached the stairs up to the lawn, I asked him what he had in his mouth and as I touched him he let go and this pissed off robin went flying and screeching out of his mouth towards this session with scriptures in their hands. The bird brushed the side of one of the Witnesses head causing him to drop his scriptures and scattering the other session goers. They looked at me and Larry as if we had just attacked them. I couldn't hold it in and started to laugh and laugh and laugh. When later I related this to Amy we laughed and laughed. We thanked Larry profusely for the gift. Now that he is gone, we thank him again for scaring the shit out of the Jehovah's Witnesses.

See you at the Barbeque.

—Bob Lane

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.

Charitable Giving While You Shop

Amazon.com

Sign up for Amazon Smile and a percentage of your purchase will be donated to HoU:

- Log into amazon.com and open your personal account settings.
- Select “Your Amazon Smile.”
- Search for “Humanists of Utah.”
This will find “American Humanist Association” in West Jordan because we use the AHA as our umbrella for sales tax exemption.
- Click the “Select” button.

If you have a bookmark for Amazon please modify it to go to smile.amazon.com—you always want to use the “smile” option.

Smith’s Grocery Stores

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.

Upcoming Events

Meeting	Topic	Date	Time	Place
General Meeting	Annual Picnic	Aug 8	6:00	Eliot Hall
Board Meeting	Chapter Business	Aug 15	7:30	TBA
General Meeting	Jared Anderson	Sept 12	7:30 ^T	Eliot Hall
Board Meeting	Chapter Business	Sept 19	7:30	TBA

Humanists of Utah

A Chapter of the American Humanist Association

P.O. Box 1043

West Jordan, UT 84084