



The Utah Humanist

November 2019

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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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Humanist Association

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Our Judicial System

Part of being a humanist is being a good citizen. Being a good citizen requires attention to our community and staying aware of how the systems we live with affect the people around us.

On October 10, we spent time at our monthly meeting examining our judicial system. An energetic and thoughtful judge, Richard Mazrick of the Third District gave us time and attention to keep us up to date on our local judicial system. The title of his remarks to us was, “Understanding our Legal System through Ethics and Compassion.” Judges are known to set the tone in their own courts. I already appreciate this judge for the offered lens of ethics and compassion, through which we could view our legal system.



The United States is well-known for having one of the most sophisticated judicial systems in the world. Our system is also flexible and far reaching as it operates in a country with as much diversity as we have here.

One of the keys to this success is a balanced and well-organized hierarchy. Federal courts control issues of federal law. The highest federal court is the Supreme Court. Just below this are the regional courts of appeals. Next down are the 94 district courts. Each of these courts has at least two judges who may appoint magistrates to help with their case load.

State courts are separate and different in order to control the different systems of laws in each state.

The basic elements of the U.S. judicial system are, in part, inherited from English common law and depend on an adversarial system of justice. In an adversarial system, litigants present their cases before a neutral party through their lawyers who present written and oral testimony as evidence. These arguments allow the judge or jury to determine the truth about the conflict.

Many rules exist regarding how evidence and testimony are presented, trial procedure, courtroom behavior and etiquette.

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November

Thursday, November 14
Eliot Hall
First Unitarian Church
569 S 1300 E, Salt Lake City
7:30 PM

Humanists of Utah is delighted to welcome Loreen Cleveland, who is one of the top executives with the Utah Pride Parade. She and another speaker (Liz) are heavily involved with the Utah Pride Center and will be speaking on LGBTQ+ issues and status in Utah. Her remarks 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!

YouTube Channel

Humanists of Utah now has our very own YouTube channel!

We will be posting all of our future speaker's presentations (not counting technical difficulties or the speaker's privacy choice). Our most recent posting is Jared Anderson's Humanism 101. It is an hour long but well worth your perusal, especially if you were unable to attend the September meeting. More to follow!

Where to find it?

There is a link on the [HoU web page](#) under **Media**->Videos (thanks Lisa Miller!) or search YouTube for the "Humanists of Utah" channel.

Don't forget to subscribe; this will make it easier to find in the future!

—Brian Trick

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
1821 Jefferson Place, NW
Washington DC 20036

Or visit online:

<https://americanhumanist.org/>

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.

The Florien Wineriter Trust recently donated \$1000.00 to our chapter! When you create your personal will please consider leaving a gift to Humanists of Utah.



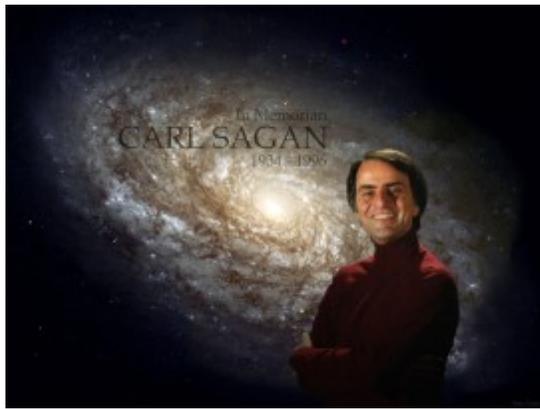
Carl Sagan Day

November 9

*“Somewhere, something incredible
is waiting to be known.”*

(In his book, Pale Blue Dot: A Vision of the Human Future in Space, Sagan directs the reader’s attention to the first photo ever from deep space of the Earth – a pale blue dot in the vast black void of space.)

Look again at that dot. That’s here. That’s home. That’s us. On it everyone you love, everyone you know, everyone you ever heard of, every human being who ever was, lived out their lives. The aggregate of our joy and suffering, thousands of confident religions, ideologies, and economic doctrines, every hunter and forager, every hero and coward, every creator and destroyer of civilization, every king and peasant, every young couple in love, every mother and father, hopeful child, inventor and explorer, every teacher of morals, every corrupt politician, every



“superstar”, every “supreme leader”, every saint and sinner in the history of our species lived there — on a mote of dust suspended in a sunbeam. The Earth is a very small stage in a vast cosmic arena. Think of the endless cruelties visited by the inhabitants of one corner of this pixel on the scarcely distinguishable inhabitants of some other corner, how frequent their misunderstandings, how

eager they are to kill one another, how fervent their hatreds. Think of the rivers of blood spilled by all those generals and emperors so that, in glory and triumph, they could become the momentary masters of a fraction of a dot.

Our posturings, our imagined self-importance, the delusion that we have some privileged position in the Universe, are challenged by this point of pale light. Our planet is a lonely speck in the great enveloping cosmic dark. In our obscurity, in all this vastness, there is no hint that help will come from elsewhere to save us from ourselves.

The Earth is the only world known so far to harbor life. There is nowhere else, at least in the near future, to which our species could migrate. Visit, yes. Settle, not yet. Like it or not, for the moment the Earth is where we make our stand.

It has been said that astronomy is a humbling and character-building experience. There is perhaps no better demonstration of the folly of human conceits than this distant image of our tiny world. To me, it underscores our responsibility to deal more kindly with one another, and to preserve and cherish the pale blue dot, the only home we’ve ever known.”

Interviewer: Didn’t he want to believe?

Ann Druyan: He didn’t want to believe; he wanted to know.

—November PIQUE

Secular Humanists Society of New York

Harriet

The recent movie *Harriet*, about Harriet Tubman, is a wonderful production. It has tension, strong storytelling, action heroes, and hope – injections against the days of now.

One of the things that has stuck with me is this idea of ‘bold humanity’. When Harriet must take off running, she is met with a ‘system’ that is already in place. I think about the amount of creative planning and communication that had to take place to form all of that under a ruling system that put you at so much risk for doing so. And the human drive to do right things despite huge risks.

Harriet threw herself almost impulsively into danger time and again, driven to free others from slavery. Often the Underground Society wanted to proceed with more caution when danger was very high, but Harriet was compelled to follow her own vision (literally at times). It also struck me how both courses are needed to move something like this – the careful planning and efforts to move things at high levels, as well as the very, very brave throw your physically into making it happen. It takes my breath away with a need to be bolder myself.

The movie was wonderful. So moving and lasting. Highly recommended!

I want to form my own committee to “Get Harriet on the \$20 bill!”. These are the heroes we need. I also need to go out and find 2 or 3 good biographies/profiles on her life right now.

—Lisa Miller



Our Judicial System

(Continued from page 1)

These rules are designed to promote fairness and allow each side an opportunity to adequately present its case.

Many court rulings become precedent, i.e. a principle, law or interpretation of a law established by a court ruling. Precedent is generally respected by other courts when dealing with a case or situation similar to a past precedent. This policy is known as “stare decisis” or “let the decision stand.”

Precedent is sometimes overturned or disregarded by a court, but the policy generally provides continuity in courts’ interpretations of the law.

State courts are the courts most Americans will contact during their lives. In Utah, civil cases are appealed directly to the state Supreme Court, which then has the power to refer the case instead to an intermediate appellate court, rather than being appealed first to an intermediate appellate court and then to a state supreme court.

While we hope not to have to know anything about our judiciary system personally, it behooves us to understand how it works and be able to wend our way through the system just in case, for either ourselves or others. Many thanks to Judge Richard Mazrick for the time he spent with us, making us more educated about our judicial system and thus, better citizens.

—Lauren Florence, MD

Theodicy? The Idiocy!

First Published May 1996



An airplane faltered, then fell from the sky;
Eighty-nine died. A collective sigh,
“It’s God’s will.”

A terrible flood, but all were saved
by rescuers strong, fearless and brave.
“It’s God’s will.”

A child was starved, beaten, then died.
They buried her deep, and adults cried,
“It’s God’s will.”

A little one found—he wasn’t quite dead.
The people thanked heaven, and then of course said,
“It’s God’s will.”

Millions can suffer in earth’s darkest holes,
Yet millions keep saying that god’s in control.

The greatest good or the greatest ill,
“Why don’t you know? It’s all god’s will.”
“God’s will” is the phrase they mindlessly use,
So no matter what happens, god can’t lose!
Absurd contradictions their intellects kill.

We humanists work with a human will.
Sifted through reason, the finest of screens,
This is what god-talk really means:

All of us born to a world cold and stark;
Most remain “children crying in the dark.”

—Adrienne Morris

Tess is a Happy Humanist, and a retired Advanced Placement English teacher with a flair for writing and stimulating her students to THINK.

THEODICY: The defense of god’s goodness and omnipotence in view of the existence

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	Loreen Cleveland Utah Pride	Nov 14	7:30	Eliot Hall
Board Meeting	Chapter Business	Nov 21	7:30	TBA
General Meeting	Annual Business Meeting & Banquet	Dec 12	6:30	Eliot Hall
Board Meeting	Chapter Business	Dec 19	7:30	TBA

Humanists of Utah

A Chapter of the American Humanist Association

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