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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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Why is Violent Racism Still A Surprise?

“That’s not a chip on my shoulder, that’s your foot on my neck.”
—Malcolm X

It is difficult to imagine someone more privileged than I am. Male, white, American, college educated, baby boomer, born at the right time, late enough to miss the Vietnam War and early enough to take the internet revolution more or less in my stride. Pursuing a profession that allows me to sit out the coronavirus lockdown without having to make a choice between my money and my life.

I can also claim, when it suits my purposes, to be an Honorary Black Man.

Or I could, if the title were hereditary.

My father earned it, back about the early 1970s, for just showing up to work. The local chapter of the NAACP needed a parade permit, or a park reservation, or something, for their local Juneteenth celebration. The chapter’s members hadn’t realized the paperwork was necessary and ran down to City Hall at the last minute to seek help.

My father, who was in charge of such officiousness, filled out the necessary form and stamped it or signed it or whatever was needed. A minimal effort for a person who had been doing such things for many years.

The applicants were grateful, and more than a little bit surprised. They had half expected the grizzled old white guy, who grew up on a farm in Kansas and probably hadn’t seen a black person until he went to college, to put up some resistance. To think up some bureaucratic reason why they couldn’t have the permit they wanted because they had made their application after 4 p.m. on a Friday.

And the old man was just a little bit offended that the applicants had made an assumption about the content of his character based on the color of his skin.

As I said, the title is not hereditary. But one thing I do carry on is a privileged blindness that continues to leave me surprised when yet another example of violent racism is splashed across the national media.

Aren’t we finished with this yet?

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I'm Back, Mostly...

I am having a personal battle with anxiety. I must admit that its kind of blind-sided me, or maybe it just crept up on me. Either way, anxiety got the best of me when this epidemic kept getting worse and worse. I was isolating in a serious way because I am one of those 70+ year-olds with other health issues that makes me high-risk individuals who are most likely to die from the Novel Coronavirus. I was also watching too much news and seeing how everything was being made even worse by the horrifying incompetence of the man in the White House. Then, on Easter Sunday I was having a toast with a shot of scotch with friends online, which was quite enjoyable except, that I drank it with an empty stomach.

My gut did not like it and it made me sick for some days and increased my anxiety. I worried that I had awakened my gall stone that I had dealt with several months earlier. But the anxiety got worse as I thought about having to go out in public and go to the hospital to get checked out. By this time, it was out of control to the point that it took some prodding to get me to go to the V.A. emergency room. At the hospital they found all my blood work normal and diagnosed me to be experiencing a severe anxiety episode. I never realized how anxiety can make you sick—and not just mentally but physically as well. Those neurotransmitters can cause a lot of problems when they are out of whack.

I have always thought of myself a person who thinks rationally and logically. I have always researched the various illnesses I have had to understand what's going on, symptoms, side effects, and what treatments are available. But I never gave anxiety this same scrutiny. I have had varying amounts of anxiety over the years, especially when being a full-time caregiver, but nothing like this.

Anyway, with the proper meds and some self-help (mindfulness, yoga, etc.) I am back, mostly.

I am still worried about COVID-19, but I must tell myself that no matter how long I have left, I am not going to let anxiety capture my mind and keep me from enjoying life.

Next month I hope to talk about the rush to reopen, and to get “back to normal”. I understand the world can't stand still forever but being

reckless could cause a spike that could affect the holidays which would be devastating at a time when commerce is usually at a peak.

I also have a lot to say about some notions out there about “culling the herd” and some sort of recent eugenics/social Darwinism/who knows what to call it. It is a slippery slope when you start offering up the sick and elderly, not to mention those in poverty to ease the burden on society. People are not wildebeests on a migration, where the old, sick, and injured are mindlessly left behind to be dealt with by predators. We take care of each other because we can, and it is the right thing to do. Otherwise, why have medicine or doctors or hospitals at all? Just let anyone who is sick get well on their own or die? That is not what a society does.

I obviously have a lot to say in this area and hope to revisit it for the next newsletter.

I hope this has not been too much information about me, but I hope that you and your families and loved ones are all safe and well. Please keep your distance and wear a mask for the good of yourself and others.

—Bob Lane

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.



Today is the Day!

We truly are living in unprecedented times. There is not one area of all of our lives that is not impacted by outside stresses, chaos, uncertainty and in many cases fear. We are all adapting on the fly to daily updates to the world around us and we are witnessing pivotal moments of change right before our eyes. We are in the midst of a worldwide pandemic, political chaos, and systemic brokenness. It is almost too much to bear. During all of this, there is a resurgence of greatness happening. An awakening in us all. One that has been spoken for decades and from the mouths of leaders and fellow humans who call for us to be better.

We must BE the change. What is it to BE the change? It is so obvious that people are hurting. We suffer in many different ways and it is closing in on many. How can we BE the change in something like a pandemic? How can we BE the change in something like cities in chaos due to protest and riot? How can we BE the change in our everyday lives where things feel out of control? The true answer is to go inward and reflect on yourself and what you have to give. Whether it is time, resources, finances, support, a kind word, or more importantly stopping a broken cycle that continues to move forward. We can BE any of those things.

It is important to recognize that any movement forward, no matter how small, is a step in the right direction. The biggest step is to figure out what that looks like for you, in your lives, in your space, in your community, in your family and in your hearts. We are all human. We are all in this together. We really are. We do not have all to be frontline responders to initiate change. But I will tell you this, frontline responders are fighting for everyone. We want others to thrive. We want peace. We want equality for everyone, no more, no less. The time is now for change. Our world is in crisis and it is up to ALL OF US to step up, whatever that looks like for you.

Jeff and I participated in the protests this past weekend. Of course, we were peaceful and trying to facilitate change, but we held ground and were ready to root in should the need arise.

We witnessed palpable angst. We smelled things burn burning, we heard and screamed at the top of our lungs to be heard with our brothers and sisters who are sick of inequality. We will not stop until change is made. The media will show so many aspects of what is happening and of course there is slant to it all. But raw truth is this: not all humans are treated fairly.

The time is now to not allow this anymore. I am calling you and your beautiful humanist beliefs to action. No one can stand by and not do anything. Not now, not anymore. Vote, support, talk about it constructively, figure out what ways you were taught to subconsciously keep others "place." We all do it because it has been this way for too long and these behaviors are intrinsic in our cultures. There is no room anymore for racism, in any form, in our society. I ask to you to love your neighbors and others and to live our humanist principles and share them with everyone. This is how we will BE the change. Today is the Day!

—*With kindest regards always*
Melanie White-Curtis,
Vice-President, HoU



SLC Protest



Violent Racism

(Continued from page 1)

Can't people of all skin colors get a parade permit, go bird watching in Central Park, get picked up for a minor criminal offense, play with a toy gun, have a barbecue in a public park, go jogging, go to the store for some Skittles and any number of other normal things without worrying that they will be turned away, have the police called on them, get shot, get their windpipes crushed?

Apparently not.

That woman in Central Park who called the police when the black man told her that she was in an area where her dog should be on a leash. She lives in New York City, for crikey sake. She sees black people—and Puerto Ricans and Asians and Indians—all the time. Why isn't that just normal? Why does she think she should call the police, when she must have known on some level that the result could very easily be that this inoffensive stranger could die in front of her?

White people see black people on TV, buy their music, root for them to score a touchdown or a three-pointer, emulate their style and their figures of speech. We even elected a black man president of the United States. Twice.

But in real life, it is a relationship still guided in large part by fear. It can't just be dislike or discomfort or even feelings of superiority. This much violence and acceptance of violence can only rise from white people being afraid of black people.

Police officers, particularly, are these days trained in techniques of de-escalation that, at least officially, honor officers for resolving situations without resorting to violence. But there is obviously just too much Wyatt Earp in too many cops—and, especially, in self-appointed vigilantes—that is triggered by a belief that a black man who writes bad checks or sells untaxed cigarettes is not just a miscreant but a clear and present danger.

The result, of course, is police brutality and self-deputized acts of violence that the black community tolerates for as long as it can, plus a little, before erupting in burn-down-the-police-station rage.

Which only serves to prove to the bigots among us, particularly the one in the Oval Office, that their fear was always well placed, and their violent acts of self-defense always justified.

Of course, white people are afraid of black people. We know if we were treated the way blacks are treated in our society, we might be pretty angry, too.

So it goes.

—George Pyle, editorial page editor of *The Salt Lake Tribune*, thinks white people might catch a very tiny hint of what it's like to be a minority by, as he did, riding public transit in Buffalo, N.Y., for four years. Though, because nothing bad ever happened, it's not really the same.

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Barbara Tanner 1917 ~ 2020



Barbara Tanner, one of the first members of Humanists of Utah has died. She was a philanthropist, who also supported the Utah Symphony and opera, said the humanities could make someone a better person.

“Barbara’s a radical,” her friend Mary Dickson, a retired executive at public television station KUER, said in a 2018 video tribute made by the University of Utah when Tanner received an honorary doctorate. She was 101 then. “She believes in radical kindness; she believes in radical goodness and radical change.”

HoU is a strong organization do in no small part to Barbara and her husband Norman’s support over the years.

Click link below to see [Barbara’s official Obituary](#)



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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Board Members:

Jared Anderson
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 Brian Trick
 Craig Wilkinson, MD

Key Contacts:

Jeff Curtis-----385-495-3786
 jcurtis@humanistsofutah.org
 Wayne Wilson-----801-561-0406
 wwilson@xmission.com

Website:

<https://HumanistsOfUtah.org>

Newsletter Contributors

Melanie Curtis
 Bob Lane
 George Pyle

>> Put Your Name Here <<
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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:

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Membership/Renewal Application

Name: _____

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- \$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
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 - \$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

Now you can pay online with PayPal!

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.

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Smith's Grocery Stores

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Upcoming Events

All Public Meetings are
CANCELLED until further notice

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A Chapter of the American Humanist Association

P.O. Box 1043

West Jordan, UT 84084