



# The Utah Humanist

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**H**umanists 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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## National Day of Reason

On **Thursday, May 6, 2021**, please join the Freethought Society, Recovering From Religion, the Freedom From Religion Foundation, the Secular Student Alliance and the Secular Coalition for America as we celebrate The National Day of Reason by hosting a Zoom entertainment extravaganza entitled “Mayday for Humanity.” The event will begin at **4:00 PM PST/6:00 PM MST/7:00 PM EST**.

Comedians **Leighann Lord** and **Ian Harris** will co-host this 3-hour event. They will usher in an array of comedians, poets, and musical performers. All funds donated during the event will benefit homeless shelters and food banks selected by the co-sponsors. Beneficiary organizations operate in a nondiscriminatory and secular manner.

This entertaining and enlightening program will interweave messages from co-sponsors, celebrity supporters, and people who are conducting grassroots community service projects during the 2021 Secular Week of Action (April 30-May 9).

An online auction will also take place with items donated by renowned-sculptor **Zenos Frudakis**, award-winning science writer **Ann Druyan**, illusionist **Curt Anderson**, the Humanists Society of Santa Barbara and many others.

Register for the Zoom event at:  
[bit.ly/Join4Humanity](https://bit.ly/Join4Humanity)



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# Infrastructure Plan

How the proposed Infrastructure Plan offered by President Biden could roll out. Many say that infrastructure is only what can be driven on, others argue it should be expanded to broadband, national, and state parks. Some say it should extend much further into caring for our population in terms of the health and wellbeing of the populace. Predictably the most limiting common argument against these improvements is the associated costs and the discussion of where to obtain the necessary funding to follow through on all these projects.

Mark Twain said, "It isn't what sum you get, it's how much you can buy with it, that's the important thing." (*A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court*) In other words we should expect to get what we pay for. Let us imagine what life might be like if the full range of President Biden's entire plan were implemented. The roads, bridges, broadband, energy production is primarily from renewable sources, and the proposed human support factors are all in place. A young woman and her partner decide to bring a child into the world. The mother will receive appropriate medical care throughout her pregnancy and delivery. This will include maternity and paternity care for both parents for 6-12 months post-partum and then available quality childcare at work. The child will begin formal pre-schooling early in life that will be followed by subsidized K-12 education and then schooling directed to either an academic or skilled trade training depending on the aptitudes and desires of each person. Finally, our subject will become an informed, productive, voting, and tax paying citizen who will help other new people follow the same scenarios.

Yes, this will be expensive, very expensive. But as Twain notes, the important thing here is what we get for our investment. I am not an economist but am certain that major changes will need to be made to existing tax codes. This will have to include actually taxing everyone, including the very rich who reportedly pay a much smaller percentage of their earnings than people like you and me pay. It will also require

that everyone who works full time will get a living wage; a home, food, television, and broadband connectivity and have something left for vacations and leisure activities.

There is good evidence that this government model works in a significant number of countries around the world. Their citizens realize that investments in themselves pay dividends to make everyone's lives better. It almost sounds like the words of Abraham Lincoln who described our country as being, "Of the People, By the People, and For the People."

It seems to me like we might be at a rare stage of our history where virtually everything can be made better for almost everyone. I am entering the later stages of my life and would be very glad to see the torch of humanity passed to a better world than we have now for future generations.

—Wayne Wilson

## President's Message

Happy Spring Humanists!

With the weather getting nicer and our communities becoming safer, it is a perfect time to talk about things that many of us enjoy and feel hopeful about. With Summer just around the corner, many are making plans that have been anxiously awaited and heavily anticipated. We are excitedly planning events for the near future, hopefully, as we grow closer to herd immunity. More of our fellow humans are becoming vaccinated and more of us wanting to be outdoors will make this a safe option coming off of the stress of the past year.

This month we will be celebrating our mothers and Memorial Day. We hope you and your families enjoy each other, safely and are able to feel love and hope for the future. It is a season of hope and a season of community.

Kindest regards, and have a blessed day.

—Melanie White-Curtis  
President, Humanists of Utah



# Gender Unity and Humanism

*Who Is Going To Decide Things?*, asked Dr. Alan Coombs in his lecture on *Progress* at the Humanist meeting of July 8, stating further that this is one of the most important decisions a new society or organization can make.

From a female perspective, the results of those who make decisions can be critical, far-reaching and very personal in nature, because the decision-maker not only determines the course of events an organization takes, but also defines the amount of power, control and freedom each member of the group can exercise.

Theories about how women and men look at the world are well documented. Though not everyone fits the mold, it helps us to become aware of the generally attributed differences. Men tend to be direct, status-conscious, and hierarchical in their inter-actions. The feminine perspective is steered toward people, intimacy, and interdependence. Women see themselves as persons in a network of connections, cognizant of human inter-relatedness. As Deborah Tannen explains in her 1990 book *You Just Don't Understand*, "Life [to women] is as community, a struggle to preserve intimacy and avoid isolation. Though there are hierarchies in the female world, they are more of friendship than of power and accomplishment."

Because men tend to focus more on control and independence, and women generally place more emphasis on closeness and connection, we can expect differing leadership styles to be practiced between the two. Consequently, the decisions a leader makes in an organization, whether male or female, will reflect their personal biology, their conditioning, their experiences, and their biases. And these biases, if left unchecked, can lead to narrow perspectives and alienation.

In some ways we're all alike, but in other ways each person is different, and these differences may conflict with each other from time to time. To ensure that our differences do not become a major source of conflict, we must begin with **awareness**. Linda Galindo in an October, 1991 article in *Network* states: "Being aware of differing orientations or preferences can assist all of us in pulling together, rather than seeing the way things are done as right and wrong. The most successful people are those who integrate their own cultural orientation with the organizations to preserve the mental, physical, and emotional well-being of the individual while achieving the organization's goals."

Hopefully, the organization's goals will be gender inclusive and equitable.

We all must face the fact that gender is an issue that will not go away, nor should it; for both women and men could benefit from learning each other's frame of reference. Becoming aware of our different approaches to life can provide a "starting point to develop not only self-understanding, but also flexibility—the freedom to try doing things differently, if our own ways of doing them aren't having entirely successful results." (Tannen)

The more women and men work together on an equal basis, the more they will be modeling behaviors that benefit each other. Men can learn how to listen and be more personal, more caring, and connected in their interactions. And women can learn to be more assertive, independent, and forthright in their approach. Women and men would both do well to learn strategies typically used by members of the opposite sex, not to switch over entirely, but to have more strategies at their disposal. Then perhaps over time, our gender differences will be minimized because males and females will be better integrated. Both will have discovered and developed their female and male counterparts and learned to use them effectively and appropriately.

An obvious question is, Can people really change their ways of thinking and behaving? I sincerely believe if they want to, yes, they can. But it will take a conscious effort, and an inclusive approach. Both women and men would be included in decision-making and policy-making within an organization because of their different approaches to life. And both need to listen to each other, respect differing viewpoints, and have the courage to try new and perhaps better ways of doing things. Honest and sometimes heated disagreements should be expected to occur, but if negotiation and compromise are valued in an atmosphere of having the freedom to disagree, then perhaps wiser and more humane decisions could be the result.

Humanist, Elizabeth R. Johnson, sees more women and men acting with a spirit of unity, making the world a better place. "As courageous wives, mothers, and daughters liberate themselves from traditional bondage, they find many bold men are also shaking off the

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# A Joyful Humanism Gender Unity

Dare I say it? I want a human humanism. I want a humanism, not of the philosophers—the abstract thinkers, those sheltered in ivory towers, those trapped in the brilliance of their own minds issuing pronouncements and manifestos—but a humanism for the people, the man and woman in the streets, the poor who live in villages all over the world. I want a democratic humanism, a creatively democratic humanism.

I want a humanism that is joyful and a little messy. I want a humanism that is funny, full of jokes, stories, and tales. I want a humanism that is relaxed, friendly, helpful, not one that is full of bile, criticism, and always whining about how stupid it is to believe in God or religion.

I want a humanism that puts the head back on the body, that recognizes we have bodies—bodies that leak, smell, are awkward, and, though they may be beautiful, ultimately fail. The humanism of the mind is the humanism of the perfect idea, the principle, the system that issues a list of impregnable right positions. This humanism should retreat for a while; it should rest up, then wake up and smell the corpses of ideologies' inhumanity.

I want a humanism that sees the human, not at the pinnacle of an evolutionary chain of being, but as part of this natural world. I want a humanism that loves this Earth, our home. I want a humanism full of rhyme and poetry, unafraid to play. All thought and no play makes humanism exceedingly dull. I want a humanism that can be stated in terms of caring, loving, promoting, building, doing, and being. What does the humanist love? The record suggests that the humanist loves abstractions.

Let abstractions be damned! I want a humanism that is about men and women, about the struggle to live decently in this world. I want a humanism that gives us a road map for the future, that points us towards a planetary perspective; that fosters, not correct thinking, but joy in living; that encourages the creative power of every human being; that affirms life in all its expressions; that elicits possibilities for a humane future; that has no argument with the world.

I want a humanism that loves differences, that is joyful, that celebrates this life and this world.

—W. Edward Harris, *Unitarian Minister*

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undemocratic, restrictive shackles of the past, and adopting a more humanistic attitude, philosophy and lifestyle. They are bravely working out their own destinies. In every instance, these more mature and more responsible women and men, while learning from the past but devoted to the present and the future, are displaying intellectual and social integrity combined with an impressive spirit of unity. Bringing a new vitality, a new social consciousness and conscience to human relationships, these individuals are doing their utmost to make this world a healthier and more civilized place. These women and men are the instigators of meaningful change. They speak with the voice of reason, combating ignorance and stupidity with knowledge and compassion. Whether they are working at the home, community, national, or international level, their positive influence is unequivocal." (*Free Inquiry*, Fall, 1990)

Because of its inclusive philosophy, Humanism should be at the forefront of this evolutionary change. Both women and men will be the benefactors of this approach.

"A true democracy welcomes differences and disagreements, and cherishes as a creative force in society, minority criticisms of existing institutions and prevailing patterns of thought." (Corliss Lamont, 1965, *The Philosophy of Humanism*)

—Nancy Moore

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**H**umanists 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!**

**D**isclaimer: 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! <<

## Do Things For Your Own Enjoyment

When I was 15, I spent a month working on an archeological dig. I was taking to one of the archeologists one day during our lunch break and he asked those kinds of “getting to know you” questions you ask young people: Do you play sports? What’s your favorite subject? And I told him, no I don’t play any sports. I do theater, I’m in choir, I play the violin and piano, I used to take art classes.

And he said WOW. That’s amazing! And I said, “Oh no, but I’m not any good at ANY of them.” And he said something then that I will never forget and which absolutely blew my mind because no one had ever said anything like it to me before: “I don’t think being good at things is the point of doing them. I think you’ve got all these wonderful experiences with different skills, and that all teaches you things and makes you an interesting person, no matter how well you do them.”

And that honestly changed my life. Because I went from a failure, someone who hadn’t been talented enough at anything to excel, to someone who did things because I enjoyed them. I had been raised in such an achievement-oriented environment, so inundated with the Myth of Talent, that I thought it was only worth doing things if you could “Win” at them.”

—Kurt Vonnegut

## 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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**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.

## Charitable Giving While You Shop

### Amazon.com

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- Log into amazon.com and open your personal account settings.
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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](http://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.



All Public Meetings are  
**CANCELLED** until further notice  
Due to the Pandemic



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