



# 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*,  
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Humanist Association

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## Altruism

*Now is the time we can all vow to make the world a better place one day at a time by being our authentic selves.*

Each of us is capable of helping the world. Often, we think that it is impossible to make a difference without unlimited funding or free time. But all it takes is a few minutes each day and you can go at your own pace. When we vow to make the world a better place one day at a time, the true significance of small, good deeds reveals itself to us. We can see that we can be of service in small acts of kindness, helping those around us or doing something big, if we choose. The warmth we feel when we help the world is only a tiny part of the affirmative transformations that take place when we make altruism a part of everyday existence.

We make our homes, workplaces, communities, and countries better and brighter when we think positive thoughts that echo outward, give donations of time or money, smile at everyone we meet, and lend those in need of aid our assistance. As we learn, we inadvertently improve the universe because we can only be deeply involved when we are informed. Even enthusiastically sharing ideas with others generates positive energy that then serves as the motivation for more tangible change. Selfless and helpful deeds remind us that we exercise some degree of control over a world that can seem chaotic at times. Even the smallest of such deeds is a demonstration of the fact that we can change the world in a positive way. So much negative energy is generated by the suffering, pain, and close-mindedness we are regularly exposed to, but we can counteract it in a constructive way by thinking and acting altruistically when opportunities to

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# President's Report Humanist Humor

We are very happy to announce that we are going to be starting in person meetings next month, in July! Our calendar is currently under construction but is rapidly filling up with fun things, like volunteer opportunities, the summer BBQ, monthly speakers, and our HumanLight Celebration at the end of the year.

It feels like it has been forever since we have been able to meet in person and our board is very excited to see you all soon! We will have new updates soon on our Facebook page and social media as they become available. Next month's newsletter will announce most of the activities for the rest of this year.

In 2022, we will be hosting many of our larger events like Darwin Day, our booth at the Pride Festival and other things. This will be possible because of general population compliance to masking, social distancing, and perhaps most notably how many people are being vaccinated. There are still a lot of people, notably the younger set for whom the vaccines are just becoming eligible for the jabs.

In an abundance of caution, we will be offering masks, social distancing, hand sanitizer to help us all feel secure and stay safe.

My beloved humanists, it has been an extremely long year plus of misery. I know we are all weary but have been fighting the good fight on the side of science, rational thought, and all the different ways that we individually participate in making the world a better place. It is still, oh so important for us to continue. It is working! I find John Lewis to always be inspiring by urging us to get into *Good Trouble*. This is an important message and I send you into June with his immortal words:

*Freedom is not a state; it is an act. It is not some enchanted garden perched high on a distant plateau where we can finally sit down and rest. Freedom is the continuous action we all must take, and each generation must do its part to create an even more fair, more just society.*

We miss you. We are excited to see you soon. We are still here going strong and are preparing to launch out to help create good trouble and make a difference for the betterment of our world and our people.

Kindest regards, and have a blessed day.

—Melanie White-Curtis  
President, Humanists of Utah

## The Gospel of OOPS!

A humanist recently had to buy an older used car. He took it to his mechanic and friend of 25 years for his evaluation, who said that the car was in good condition. The humanist bought it. Shortly thereafter, the car broke down, and it was taken back to the mechanic. The mechanic apologized and said that he felt very "guilty."

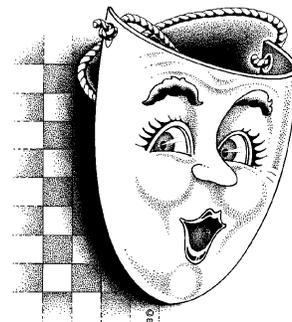
"I don't believe in guilt!" said the humanist. "I believe in The Gospel of OOPS! As in OOPS! I made a mistake and I'd better fix it."

"OOPS! Why OOPS?" asked the mechanic, not believing what he heard.

"Well, it's like this," the humanist went on, "Once you believe in guilt, then comes sin, repentance, salvation, judgment day and so on, it just never ends. OOPS! does it all."

"Okay. No sin, no guilt, just OOPS! Right!" said the mechanic as he happily began to fix the car.

—Bob Green





# Kiss the Ground

## ~Film Review~

*Kiss the Ground* is a documentary narrated by Woody Harrelson and is a good presentation of the central idea of regenerating the soils of the earth. Consider the fact that healthy soils are filled with tens of thousands of organisms and that soils hold a lot of CO<sub>2</sub> and moisture. They also help to moderate the weather on the large scale and on the small scale. There is a lot to glean from this documentary and I suggest that you watch it and that perhaps HoU consider host a showing.

One of the main themes of the documentary is that tilling or ploughing the soil is harmful and that tilling along with the use of pesticides kills the soil and causes erosion and desertification and they state that since pesticides were ramped up in the 1970's we have lost *one third* the earth's soil. Plus, the fact that this has been going on long before the 1970's. They state that during the dust bowl of the 1930's some 200,000,000 acres of soil were severely damaged, and that history shows that where soils were ploughed throughout the world in ancient times, they eventually turned to desert. The predictions are, that at the rate we are going, the earth's soils will be depleted in 50 years. So, there is no time to waste.

They go on to advocate the regeneration or healing of the soils which will help with the CO<sub>2</sub> problem. The method is basically quite simple and that is to stop killing the soil by tilling it up plus and learning to use a diversity of species so the soil is alive and productive all year round.

When we discuss environmental issues such as pollution and climate change, we need to remember to look at all the various factors as to what is causing the problem. That can be daunting as there are numerous factors when looking at a global problem like climate change. But one of the facts is that the earth's soils are a big part of the climate change equation that

needs to be addressed along with air pollution and other factors.

Speaking of facts, I'm reminded of one of my favorite quotes. It is written by Robert A. Heinlein one of my favorite science fiction writers. One of his characters named Lazarus Long has a notebook with an entry that reads.

"What are the facts? Again, and again and again—what are the *facts*? Shun wishful thinking, ignore divine revelation, forget what the "stars foretell," avoid opinion, care not what the neighbors think, never mind the unguessable "verdict of history"—what are the facts, and to how many decimal places? You pilot always into an unknown future; facts are your single clue. Get the facts!"

—Bob Lane

## Altruism

(Continued from page 1)

do so arise.

Helping the world often takes no more than a moment, just a wish for the world is a beautiful gesture and can be done by even the busiest of people effortlessly. The gift you give each day need not be grand or attention-worthy because the broader benefits are the same no matter the literal repercussions. Once a day, you can affect reality, and you can reap the rewards of knowing that you are making the world a better place, day by day, not only for others, but also for yourself too. Have fun!

Kindest regards, and have a blessed day.

—Melanie White-Curtis  
President, Humanists of Utah



# The Future Of American Liberalism

The liberal temper is above all a faith in enlightenment, a faith in a process, rather than in a set of doctrines, a faith instilled with pride in the achievements of the human mind, and yet colored with a deep humility before the vision of a world so much larger than our human hopes and thoughts. If there are those who have no use for the word 'faith,' they may fairly define liberalism as a rationalism that is rational enough to envisage the limitations of mere reasoning.

Liberalism is too often misconceived as a new set of dogmas taught by a newer and better set of priests called 'liberals.' Liberalism is an attitude rather than a set of dogmas—an attitude that insists upon questioning all plausible and self-evident propositions, seeking not to reject them but to find out what evidence there is to support them rather than their possible alternatives...Liberalism regards life as an adventure in which we must take risks in new situations, in which there is no guarantee that the new will always be the good or the true, in which progress is a precarious achievement rather than an inevitability.

It enables us to see that most of the 'yes or no' questions on which political debate centers at any given time involve false alternatives and unduly narrow assumptions that unnecessarily limit the scope of possible solutions. Thus the liberal, while generally provoking the hostility of both sides in any current dispute, sometimes develops a solution which shows that the dispute was a mistake.

Liberalism is therefore a reaction against all views which favor repression or which regard the denial of natural desires as in itself good.

"Liberalism so conceived is concerned with the liberation of the mind from the restraint of authoritarianism and fanaticism. As opposed to the policies of fear and suppression, based on the principle that nature is sin and intellect the devil, the aim of liberalism is to liberate the energies of human nature by the free and fearless use of reason.

Liberal civilization...is based upon... the Greek motto: 'What is important is not life, but the good life'...The real liberal believes that life is important only as the condition or opportunity for the good life, and prefers not to live at all if he must live as a slave or in degradation.

—*Morris R. Cohen*

This piece was originally published in our July 1993 newsletter





**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! <<

## 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.

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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

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](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.



Our First Public Gathering will  
be our Annual Summer Picnic.

August 12 ~ 6:00 - 9:00 PM

Murray Park

Watch Our Website for Details



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*A Chapter of the American Humanist Association*

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