



# 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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## History of American Secularism

The Humanists of Utah have celebrated Thomas Paine Day in the past by holding a Thomas Paine Day in the fall of each year. This year due to Covid 19 restrictions the board has asked me to write an article about Thomas Paine in lieu of a meeting with a speaker. Thomas Paine is considered one of the founders of our nation. In this discussion I would like to include three other men associated with the formation of our country along with Thomas Paine: Thomas Jefferson, Benjamin Franklin, and John Adams.

As background, it is important to note that the American revolution was in large part a strong reaction against the state-sponsored Church of England and the “divine right” of the English monarchy. The colonists were not fond of Kings or of their God-given right to be dictators.

Now, contrary to the belief of most Christians in America, the founders of our nation were not religious in the sense that they would have you believe. The four founding fathers I will discuss were all deists. A deist is not a theist or an atheist. Their ideology held that God might have created the world but after he created it, it could, and did, run by itself. After the initial creation event, the deists contended that God no longer intervened in any temporal events, concerned himself with the affairs of man, or answered any personal prayers. Deists rejected any religious dogma or claims that any religion or any scriptural book; the Torah, the Bible, The Quran, The Bhagavad Gita, or any other book contained God’s revealed words.

Benjamin Franklin was born in Boston in 1706. He had been brought up a pious Presbyterian. After reading many different books, he began to have doubts about religion by the age of fifteen. He wrote, “Of several points, as I found them disputed in different books that I read, I began to doubt revelation itself. Some books against deism fell into my hands, and it happened that they wrought an effect in me quite the contrary stop what was intended by them. The argument for deists...appeared to me to be much stronger than the refutations.”

Benjamin Franklin traveled to Europe. While in Scotland he stayed with the well-known agnostic philosopher David Hume. Hume’s works including “An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding” and “Dialogue Concerning Natural Religion” were widely read and deeply influential. Hume’s friends consider him a

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# President's Message

I hope this finds you well and happy. We want to thank everyone who was able to come to the annual BBQ picnic earlier this month. We had a great time. It was intended to be our big launch back into the world of a bit of normalcy. We have plans of future events, meetings, and such. But due to the ever-changing nature of this pandemic, it is not to be yet. We, as a board, are watching very closely to the CDC recommendations and to our state health officials and what is happening here in our own communities. Currently, we are hesitant to "re-open" too quickly and risk putting folks in harm's way. But, the good news is, we are not going dormant like happened last year. With all the heavy things we are witnessing and experiencing right now, as a people, it is hard sometimes to find bright spots, moments of happiness and clarity, and peace. So, instead of being able to congregate together in person, for now, we are going to be providing many different avenues for engagement. Lots of safe interaction, happy thoughts, good reading, and many virtual activities and speakers for you to connect with. We also have plans for safe activities in the near or not so near future. Again, we will be adhering to the guidelines presented to us and as always, you are free to use your best judgment, as well.

Friends, there is so much to be grateful for in these times of chaos and uncertainty. We are fighting a good fight. We are all in this together. We have strong values and morals to guide us. We have each other and this wonderful organization to lean to and draw strength from.

Many have expressed interest in learning more about humanism, what it is and perhaps some of the history that got us where we are today. A great starting place is an article, "The Humanist Philosophy in Perspective," from the American Humanist Association written by Fred Edwards who has been active in national humanism since at least 1990. <https://americanhumanist.org/what-is-humanism/humanist-philosophy-perspective/>

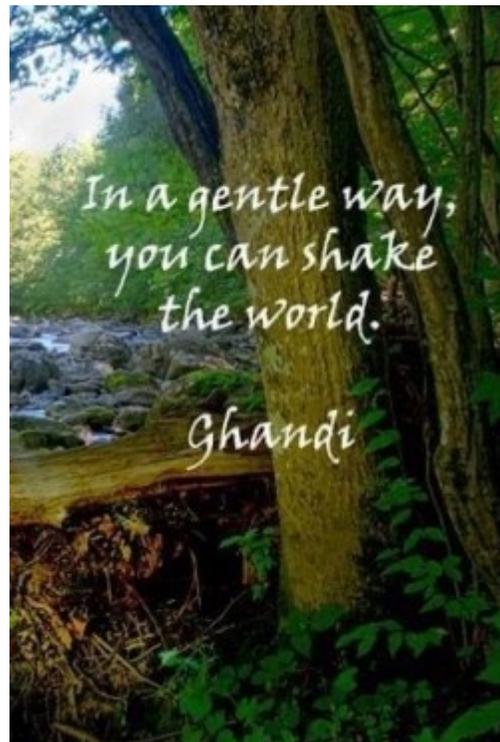
Our own HoU Website also has wealth of information and history surrounding

humanism's roots, core beliefs, and actions.

- Flo Wineriter, one of our most influential founders wrote this piece in 1993 (our chapter was founded in 1992): [https://humanistsofutah.org/newsletter-archive/1993-newsletters/september-1993/#Humanism\\_A\\_Brief\\_History](https://humanistsofutah.org/newsletter-archive/1993-newsletters/september-1993/#Humanism_A_Brief_History)
- In 2000 Wineriter opined on this subject again: [https://humanistsofutah.org/newsletter-archive/2000-newsletters/october-2000/#Living\\_and\\_Dying\\_Humanism\\_and\\_US\\_History](https://humanistsofutah.org/newsletter-archive/2000-newsletters/october-2000/#Living_and_Dying_Humanism_and_US_History)
- Richard Layton addressed this subject in his Discussion Group: [https://humanistsofutah.org/newsletter-archive/2006-newsletters/april-2006/#The\\_State\\_of\\_Humanist\\_Organizations](https://humanistsofutah.org/newsletter-archive/2006-newsletters/april-2006/#The_State_of_Humanist_Organizations)

I wish you: health, safety, and peace. I also am very excited to see you in all of the good news that is coming. Watch for it and plug into our FB page for daily goodies and information.

*kindest regards  
Melanie White-Curtis*





# Robert Frahm

~ In Memoriam ~  
1936 ~ 2021

Robert Ray Frahm passed away peacefully Saturday, August 7, 2021, in the home he shared with Sally Jo Fuller in Sandy.

He was born March 4, 1936, in Granger, Utah to Stella Petersen and William Frahm.

After attending Cypress High School, he spent two years in the US Army during the Cold War, stationed in Greenland. Robert was employed for 45 years by Kennecott-Rio Tinto. His occupation is listed as Powerplant Control Room Operator. Robert was always fascinated with the large machinery and operations at the plant. Robert's passion was watching Formula One and motorcycle racing events and TV shows where older model cars were rebuilt to their original design. Classical music was always on his mind.

Robert was preceded in death by both of his parents and his "best cook" sister, Bette Barton.

He leaves behind a daughter, Kimberly Mitchell of SanTan Valley, Arizona and the following nieces and nephews: Richard G. Barton, Julie B. Rasmussen, Tina B. Aramaki, and Michael Barton. Robert also leaves behind his most caring friend and domestic partner, Sally Jo Fuller.

We wish to thank Bruce Bailey, our neighbor, who came to his assistance many times these past few months. Also, we wish to thank the George E. Wahlen VA Medical staff and Superior Home Care and Hospice for their care over the past few years.

Robert was a lifelong Atheist and Democrat and proud of it.



—Sally Jo Fuller

# John Barnes

~ In Memoriam ~  
1931 ~ 2021

John Barnes was born in Kansas City, Missouri, September 15, 1931, but he grew up in Cheyenne, Wyoming. In about 1950 he was called into the National Guard.

In 1956 on to the University of Wyoming where he majored in Business Management attaining his Bachelor of Science Degree after four years. During this time, he met and married Joyce who was attending the University of Colorado's State Teachers College. They have two daughters who live in California and Montana.

After college, John was employed as a Data System Analyst for The Martin Company in Littleton, Colorado, for five years. Then moved to the Salt Lake area where he worked for Hercules Aerospace as a Data System Analyst for the next thirty years until retirement in 1989.

John and Joyce have done some traveling, but mostly enjoy the local cultural events in Salt Lake City by regularly attending the symphonies, ballets, operas, and theater productions. A great pastime in reading magazine publications, such as; Discover Magazine, National Geographic, The New Yorker, and The Bloomberg News Newspaper.

John has been a member of the Humanists of Utah for twenty years and a Board Member for three years. He says that joining HoU, he has enjoyed the company of developing intelligence of the members. As to his sense of humor which he shares liberally, he believes that he acquired it mostly on his own.

—Sally Jo Fuller





# Paine Day

*(Continued from page 1)*

skeptic and his enemies considered him an atheist. Hume and Franklin became friends. On his return to America from Europe Franklin joined the earliest Masonic Lodge in America in 1734 and later became its president. In time he would become a strong influence on Thomas Paine.

Thomas Jefferson certainly qualified as a Deist if not an agnostic or atheist. This becomes clear from one of his most famous quotes.

“I have recently been examining all the known superstitions of the world, and do not find in our particular superstition, Christianity, one redeeming feature. They are all alike, founded upon upon fables and mythologies.” He went on to say, “Christianity is the most perverted system that ever shone on man...perverted into an engine for enslaving mankind...a mere contrivance for the clergy to filch wealth and power to themselves”.

Jefferson is known for writing his version of the Bible that kept all the teachings of Jesus intact but removed all the ‘miracles’. He believed that if we had a clean text of the Bible, one that included only the words of the real Jesus and not his miracles, it would help conquer bigotry and fanaticism.

Of the four men, John Adams was the least vociferous proponent of deism. Not as outspoken as the others, he did however carry on a long correspondence with Jefferson in which they mutually criticized religion. As the second president of the United States, Adams signed into law the Treaty of Tripoli in 1797. The treaty declared the government of the United States was not in any sense founded on Christianity. In one of his last letters to Jefferson, he mentions the historian Charles Francois Dupuis (1792-1809) who explained the story of Jesus as a “...classic myth, born at winter solstice, beset with difficulties, reborn from beneath the earth in spring.”

Thomas Paine (1737-1809) was an English-born American political activist, philosopher, political theorist, and revolutionary. His pamphlet “Common Sense” published in 1776 had a profound influence on the movement for independence in America. His pamphlet challenged the authority of the British government and the royal monarchy. The plain language that Paine used spoke to the common people of

America and it was the first work to openly ask for independence from Great Britain. His 47-page pamphlet, proportionally the all-time best selling title in American history, was read by, or to every rebel in the American Revolution. After the American Revolution, the Revolutionary War, and the writing of our Constitution Paine traveled to France to participate in the French Revolution. He was very popular and was elected to the French National Convention. While in France he wrote his most famous work, “The Age of Reason”. The French revolution had a very turbulent and fractious ending, and he smuggled his book out of France in 1794 and barely left in time to save his neck.

President Jefferson invited Paine home and gave him passage on a national ship. Back home, his book, “The Age of Reason” was widely read and had a strong influence on a young nation based on a strong separation of church and state.

Paine did not spare word when it came to religion. He wrote, “Every national church or religion has established itself by pretending some special mission from God...Each of the churches causes the others of unbelief, and for my own part, I disbelieve them all.”

He used the history of the Jews in his arguments: “The best evidence we now have respecting this affair of Jesus is the Jews. They are regularly descended from the people who lived in the times that this resurrection and ascension is said to have happened, and they say it is not true.” When asked about his religion Thomas Paine said, “The world is my country, all mankind are my brethren, and to do good is my religion.”

These deist founding fathers had a major influence in the writing of the United States Constitution. They carefully inserted a strong wall between church and state by way of the First Amendment of the Constitution. This constitutional amendment makes America the first fully secular nation ever conceived and brought forth upon this earth. As secular humanists we should be very proud of our country and its founders including Thomas Paine.

—Craig Wilkinson, MD  
Board Member Humanists of Utah



**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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Summer BBQ- more pictures on website

**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
  - \$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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## 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:

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- 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.



All Public in person  
meetings are CANCELLED  
again until further notice  
Due to the Pandemic



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