



The Utah Humanist

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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.

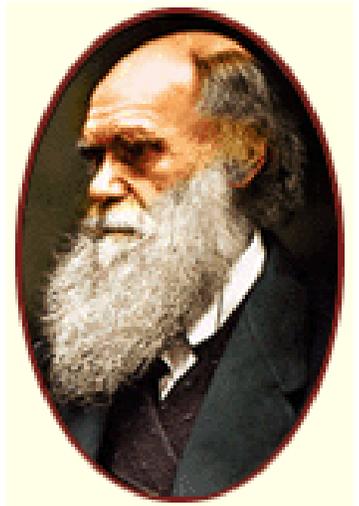
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Darwin Day 2022

This year we will be celebrating Darwin Day online; again, due to the pandemic.

The history of Darwin Day is intriguing. Charles Darwin, the man who would come to be known as the father of natural selection, was born on February 12, 1809. He was the fifth of six children in a wealthy English family. His father was a doctor, and his grandfathers were naturalists who laid the groundwork for the discoveries that Charles would go on to make. In 1825, Charles, who had been helping his father caring for the poor and sick in Shropshire, left for medical school. He found it dull, and he didn't put much effort into his studies. It wasn't long until his father sent him to Christ's College in Cambridge to become an Anglican parson.



Though he was on a religious course of study, Charles found himself drawn to natural sciences. A friend at the time got him interested in beetle collecting and he became acquainted with other parson naturalists, who spurred his interest even more. He positioned himself to join his professor on a trip to the tropics to study natural history.

After his return, Charles received an offer to serve as a naturalist on an expedition that headed down the coast of South America. The ship was the HMS Beagle, the captain was Robert FitzRoy. The ship set out on its voyage in 1831 and spent five years aboard the ship. Across South

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President's Message

I have been thinking very heavily about the state of the world, the state of our country, our state specifically and especially about our communities. During this time of Covid, which unfortunately is alive and well, our world and lives have been drastically modified all the way down to the way we even interact with each other. I am a people person, so this has been difficult to navigate on many days. I miss seeing you all and talking face to face. I am very grateful that technology is as advanced as it is, so we are not completely isolated and can still do many things we enjoy - such as learning and researching.

This in mind, I admonish you to take time to really develop your humanist beliefs. We will be sending out prompts through social media and emails to give your ideas on where to start searching in your quests for knowledge. All of us are on different levels of our humanist journey. Our lives are unique and beautifully our own. This is part of the human fabric that makes this world wonderful. Deepening where you already are not only helps you, but it also helps all of those you come in contact with and spreads in a pay it forward way.

Some key issues that we are committed to building an inclusive America are - we are grounded in an embrace of reason, ethics, scientific inquiry and compassion rather than religious dogma. This does not mean that we are above anyone or that we are exclusionary of those who are religious. We have members who are spiritual and some who even still religiously practice. This is part of their journey at the present time. We, as an organization, do not include religious dogma in our organization—creating a level space for open minded, free

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Chaplain's Corner

Utah State Senate Session Invocation Given by Jared Anderson January 20, 2022

Let us take a breath and take a moment.

In this moment, as citizens, as servants, as staff, as Senate we take a moment to pause, to breathe, to center ourselves in our values, our principles, our purpose. We take a moment to remind ourselves with gratitude of our privilege, of our great power and great responsibility.

We take a moment to name and honor the fear that so many of our citizens are feeling. We honor the fear and confusion and overwhelm as disease and disaster disrupt our daily lives. We honor the exhaustion of those who work and the despair of those who do not have enough opportunity and support. We honor the complexity and challenge of the current connected world.

We name the fear and confusion as change accelerates, difference illuminates, and anger incinerates.

And in this moment, having named it, we release the fear and confusion and even exhaustion.

In this moment we again connect ourselves to our highest values, to our commitment to freedom and opportunity. We affirm our common humanity and right to dignity. We affirm our need and possibility and invitation to lean in and open up to courage and compassion towards each other. We affirm the need and ability to have the hard conversations and make the right choices. We affirm our ability to show up to life and to our values. We dedicate ourselves to show up to ourselves, to show up to each other, to life,

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Gloomy Gus

I joined Humanists of Utah in 1996 and have submitted probably over one hundred articles to this newsletter on a wide range of subjects. I published my first “President’s Report in October 2005. Lately, when I sit down to write an article, I discover that what I’ve decided as the subject is one that I’ve written about before. With some subjects like the environment or religion, you all know that is a special interest of mine, for which I’ve made abundantly clear over the years. But in the last few years, I feel like I have been sort of a “Gloomy Gus,” with a fair amount of focus on the bad news and criticizing certain groups of people and some individuals. However, we’ve been through a lot in this country in the last few years and there are a lot of things to be critical of.

In that vein, there is a quote by Thomas Paine.: “All religious institutions are human inventions, set up to terrify and enslave mankind and monopolize power and profit.” Reading it got me thinking about science deniers and the fact that for the most part, they consider themselves to be religious. I decided that calling them “science deniers” was being too kind. I think we need to call them “science haters.” They hate science because it tells them the earth is round, revolves around the sun, and that the earth is billions of years old. It tells them, by way of DNA, that life has evolved over eons of time on this water planet. They hate it because it turns long held beliefs on their head.

As I am writing this, this would also be the time of year, that we would be getting prepared for our annual Darwin Day event. Unfortunately, the pandemic continues to make it impossible to get together. I want to be hopeful that we might be able to have Darwin Day next year, but we will just have to see. Perhaps soon we can have more outdoor get-togethers, like our BBQ, or just a bring your own picnic.

I also want to close on a few positive notes, one being some actual good news from this Supreme Court and their recent vote of 8 to 1 against Trump’s attempt to keep documents away from Congress. The January 6

Commission and the press already are in possession of many of these documents, which will no doubt make some people squirm a little bit, I think. This is a good news item!

Also, I want to give a review and thumbs up to a CD Amy gave me for Christmas. It’s called “Juno to Jupiter” by Vangelis. The music is reflective of the NASA mission Juno to Jupiter and his involvement in that project. The CD’s liner notes give thanks to pretty much everyone that has ever been involved in the exploration of space. It is quite enjoyable to listen to this music while thinking about how wonderful it is to live in a time when we can launch an instrument-laden vehicle on a journey to help us study such a magnificent planet so far away. I know I have mentioned before the words of Carl Sagan from the first *Cosmos* series, but it bears repeating: “We are a way for the Cosmos to know itself.” It very satisfying to me to live at a time when we can learn and understand so much about the cosmos from the sub-atomic to the entire universe and be one of those creatures with a brain that allows the Cosmos to know itself.

—Bob Lane





Darwin Day 2022

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America, Charles was exposed to a wealth of new geology, anthropology, zoology, and botany. He carefully collected samples of fossils, rocks, plants, and bugs to bring back to England. Darwin and FitzRoy both kept journals of the trip, which are impactful documents to this day.

Darwin's theories of evolution were already percolating as the HMS Beagle returned to England. It was especially the finches in the Galapagos Islands that illustrated his theories. He madly rewrote his journals from the trip to gain a better understanding, read the work of Malthus, and conducted experiments with plants to test his theories. During this time of overworking, he got married but also developed a chronic illness.

Finally, in 1859, Charles published *On the Origin of Species*, a book that described the case for natural selection. While the book was unexpectedly popular, there was pushback from the church, that taught Divine Creation as the source of life. He continued to work and publish on evolution and natural selection for the next 22 years. He would eventually die of heart disease in 1882, which likely originated from the chronic Chagas disease he suffered from.

Charles Darwin's research, journals and legacy is still alive and well and utilized often in the science communities. We honor his work, his legacy, and his vision.

*kindest regards
Melanie White-Curtis
President, HoU*

President's Message

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thought conversations and an all-inclusive community. There is no recruitment here—only folks who are looking to promote social justice, scientific integrity, enforce the separation of religion and government (they are independent of each other and should stay this way), defending nontheists and all secular rights and promoting peace.

Charles Darwin Day is in February, and we will not be able to have our normal event due to COVID. We will again do an online version of celebrating the day! So stay tuned to your social media and emails for details to come.

My friends, stay healthy, safe and know that you are in my thoughts often as we navigate this time of COVID. Empower yourself with knowledge during this time - you are worth the investment.

*kindest regards
Melanie White-Curtis
President, HoU*

Chaplain's Corner

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to this precious civilization.

We take a moment to remind ourselves that we have an opportunity to design and facilitate opportunities for better moments and better days, to give us a better chance to be our better selves.

And by showing up to this moment, we dedicate this Session of the Utah State Senate to those highest values, to productivity and purpose, to opportunity.

And so it is, and so with our work may it be even better. Amen.

—Chaplain Jared Anderson



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
 Jeff Curtis, Advisor
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 Lisa Miller, Webmaster
 Brian Trick
 Craig Wilkinson, MD

Key Contacts:

Melanie White-Curtis—385-495-3786
 melaniewhitecurtis@gmail.com
 Wayne Wilson—801-561-0406
 wwilson@xmission.com

Website:

<https://HumanistsOfUtah.org>

Newsletter Contributors:

Jared Anderson
 Melanie White-Curtis
 Bob Lane
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>> 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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Name: _____

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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

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.



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



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A Chapter of the American Humanist Association

P.O. Box 1043
West Jordan, UT 84084