



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.

—*The Humanist*,

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What Makes My Life Worth Living

In response to the most thoughtful high school student, Maria, who wrote to the Humanists of Utah (and in particular our beloved Chaplain, Jared Anderson) recently to ask, “what makes life worth living,” I felt moved to share just one individual’s perspective of what makes my own life worth living.

Sometimes, all the scientific conglomerate data we may be able to collect/analyze, pales in comparison to individual stories, which is why I so very much love to read memoirs and talk personally with people I love and respect, to hear their own perspectives as I grow, learn, and shape my own.

I was raised LDS/Mormon during the 1980’s, 90’s, and early -00’s ... I resigned my Membership in the faith of my childhood at the age of 21, in 2006. Today, 16 years later, I feel so far removed personally from the deeply-held religious and spiritual beliefs and practices of my upbringing, that it sometimes shocks me as much as others when it comes up in conversation.

I currently identify as a humanist, atheist, Buddhist, and Unitarian Universalist (UU) ... I often tell people I’m recently meeting/getting to know that I may possibly be “the most religious atheist” they’ll ever meet! ‘Religion,’ in the sense of the community connections and support it enables and encourages, as well as the ‘traditional’ yet ever-evolving-and-changing practices encouraging compassion, thoughtfulness, kindness, and love ... all speak deeply to something inexplicable within me. I consider my current UU community (The Unitarian Church of Montpelier, in Central Vermont) to be my sangha -- we live within a self-governed covenant, and are dependent on each other financially, communally, and in many other ways.

Many things make my own life worth living, and most of them have, perhaps ironically, to do with other people and beings. I adore watching Nature Documentaries; listening to Guided Meditations by Tara Brach, Pema Chödrön, and Thich Nhat Hanh; and appreciating art and music that “speaks to the soul I don’t believe in.” I adore learning languages I didn’t grow up speaking ... discovering and immersing myself within

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President's Report

My Dearest Humanist Community,

It is so nice to be back in the swing of things. The past couple of months have been rough personally for me and I needed to handle a few things. Covid finally hit our home after doing everything possible to avoid it for as long as we could. I am grateful it was not as severe as it could have been but, in all honesty, it got me good. I am happy to say that I am very good now and continuing to improve.

That said, I think about you all often and spent my time researching, learning and planning for this community and on how to help our world, ourselves, and our mission to help increase awareness and further promote rational thought, personal responsibility, and social accountability. Our world is craving this now more than ever. With all the political noise, media driven urgency for whatever the news wants said and personal turmoil, it is imperative for action on what we believe and how we implement it in our homes, our neighborhoods, our communities, and world. It's kind of the whole "pay it forward" mentality but in a more simple and direct way.

There are studies out there that show religions and their belief centers are hemorrhaging our brothers and sisters of this planet. People are not finding what they are looking for in religion as much as they used to. Reason and discernment are growing. Our friends are looking for a new connection that makes sense, is not exclusionary and will stand the test of time. Humanism offers this. Our beliefs are universal. They are personal and communal. We have beliefs that accompanied with action, can provide a tremendous sense of satisfaction in supporting the common good and being part of something bigger, our beautiful world. We are the change that we seek. We are the change that is needed. We are the ones who are called to action. We are the ones who can make things happen. What does that look like for you? Have you thought about your part in all of this? Have you decided how you want to bring your humanism to the forefront of your life? The best part is that this is an ever-changing idea. You get to be the one who decides how to present this. Ask yourself, what do I offer and how can I help? It's okay if it is a big endeavor or a small one. Remember, this can change at any time to work with your life. What is important is that you stand in the truth of humanism and live it to the best of your ability.

With the summer months here, there are more opportunities to see others now that we are outside, feeling more social and spending time together.

We can't wait to see you soon and share our passions for information, science, reason and for our friendships with each other.

I hope this finds you well, happy, and safe. Always remember to fight the good fight in all you do and to continue building your knowledge and sharing your beautiful selves with the world.

*Kindest regards,
Melanie White-Curtis
HoUP President*

Life Worth Living

(Continued from page 1)

cultures I wasn't raised in ... reading to learn everything I possibly can about everything I don't know ... and writing to express the inexpressible inside of me.

Nature, mostly, makes my life worth living ... being, simply existing, outdoors. Walking, hiking, jogging/running, just to breath in fresh open air ... biking to feel like I could fly ... camping to feel like I could survive in the wild ... remembering always that I, too, am natural. That I belong in nature, that I am an animal, that I am not only an observer or detached participant within our natural world, but that I am (and all of us are) deeply and truly an inter-connected part of nature.

Thank you, for asking this thoughtful question, and I wish you all the curiosity and fervor necessary to seek out and find your own answers for what 'makes life worth living' for you!

—Elaine Ball
Chapter Member





Death of Democratic Party?

On April 23, 2022, after returning from attending the Utah State Democratic Party Convention, I informed my father of the “death of the Utah Democratic Party.” He looked back at me with bewilderment. I explained to him that former Congressman Ben McAdams and Salt Lake County Mayor Jenny Wilson worked to remove the only person running as the Democratic senatorial candidate on the November ballot. Mr. McAdams, Ms. Wilson, and the Independent candidate believed two things: we need to deny Senator Lee’s reelection, and the Independent candidate believed he had a better chance to do it if there was no Democratic candidate on the ballot. An op-ed by Leigh Washburn in *The St. George Spectrum*, April 23, 2022, stated: “This caused a great schism within the Democratic Party that will last for years... The Party’s missteps have left many feeling betrayed, disenfranchised, and powerless, and wondering whether Utah Democrats really understand the concept of democracy.” Even though the Democratic candidate, the Republican candidate, and the Independent candidate would have all been on the November ballot.

That said, I began to think about our democracy. Tom Nichols’ book: *Our Own Worst Enemy: The Assault from within on Modern Democracy* starts out by implying two questions that came to me: Are we our own worst enemy when it comes to

protecting our democracy? Or is the snollygoster of coterie were the lumpenproletariat? Both these questions demonstrate how we form tribes and our narcissism of both our elected officials and of ourselves of wanting things like a two-year old, who is having tantrums or complaining how bad off they are. In protecting democracy, we need to increase informed participation and not populism. This should always be done with the understanding that authoritarian temptation and populist temptation are more alike than we realize. Social media has aggravated this, making us more isolated from each other, forming the false premise that “we can do it alone;” a libertarian philosophy of misery of lumpenproletariat and other disinformation that makes us dumber by the minute. Liberal democracy depends on knowledge, discipline in our willingness to learn and to be more civil in our public life. Abraham Lincoln quipped: “Democracy is the government of the people, for the people, by the people.” Some snollygoster would claim we live in a republic yet forgetting to add the prior word: “representative” republic, codifying what Abraham Lincoln quipped. Between now and primary election and general election, I will try to work on my civic duty to protect democracy and from there forward.

—Cindy King
Chapter Member

Despair May '22

you hypocritical fools continuing to vote into office cowards and liars who righteously:
restrict women's rights
ban books
persecute the vulnerable
mislead the ignorant
flaunt their partisanship
gerrymander to control
elections
vomit senseless words about
guns don't kill people
people kill people
while pocketing gun lobbyist
money
claim to be prophets
destroy public education
take credit for projects that
benefit their community but
vote against them
claim to love our country
claim to uphold the constitution
work to destroy our republic
Shame Shame Shame
Shame on all of us who
continue to vote for cowards
and liars
And now a moment of Silence
for more children who did not
have to die.

—Anna Hoagland
Chapter Member





Seriously?!

I've been pining for the past lately when we were able to have our general meetings and events. To have speakers give presentations about a wide range of subjects. To meet and shake hands and have conversations with like minded people. To host our Darwin Day event and our Thomas Paine day. To host our Winter Solstice Dinner and summer BBQ. To take an excursion like we did to the Cleveland Lloyd Dinosaur quarry. The Covid virus pandemic made all that impossible to do. I want to write about those get togethers again and spend more time with science and the environmental issues and so on. Soon, I hope.

Lately, during the month between newsletters I've been writing mostly in response to some of the absurdities I see in the news. They are almost exclusively from the conservative side of politics. This month is no different, except for the fact that there are so many that caught my eye that it's hard to know where to start or which absurdity to make mention of.

Wondering what to mention got me thinking about starting a list of absurdities. I'm not sure what to call this list. Perhaps just "The Latest Absurdity," or "You Can't Make This Shit Up," or "You've Got to be Kidding Me," or "You Can't be Serious." Maybe one of you readers has an idea for the name of the list and or a suggestion for an absurdity to go on the list. I'd love to hear from some of you freethinkers. Email me at (bob@humanistsofutah.org).

Anyway, I have a few to start the list.

Americans United for Life president and CEO Catherine Glenn Foster, while testifying before Congress made the claim that aborted fetuses were being burned to supply electricity to Washington D.C. and other places. (try to wrap your brain around this one)

The Idaho legislature is trying to make it possible for the family of the rapist to sue anyone involved in an abortion for the victim. (this one is truly sick)

The news that the Supreme Court is likely to overturn *Roe v Wade* is at the top of the list this month, as it will allow states to enact laws like the in Idaho and in about half of the United States. And these states aren't stopping with abortion, but also birth control, Gay marriage and on and on.

Well, that's enough for now. I sure hope we can get together soon. I really need it.

—Bob Lane
HoU Board Member

Electoral College

Senator Mike Lee prides himself on his belief that he is a Constitutional expert. According to the recent public release of Tweets where he described himself as spending up to 14 hours a day looking for a Constitutional rationale to declare the twice impeached former president the winner of the 2020 election.

The Constitution has needed modifications since it was first accepted as the law of the land. Think abolishment of slavery, granting women the right to vote, etc. Senator Lee is in favor of repealing the 17th Amendment which establishes the direct election of United States senators by popular vote; previously senators were appointed by State legislators.

It is my belief that the Constitution is in serious need of upgrades to address the way national elections are conducted. All of Senator Lee's hard work around the 2020 election would be moot if the President and Vice President were elected by popular vote. The notion that the USA is a Democracy is sheer fantasy when the Electoral College is mentioned. Most states vote for only one presidential candidate, so the winner is chosen by states and not citizens' ballots.

Imagine if the President had been selected by popular vote in 2000; Al Gore would have been President. Assuming the attack on the World Trade Towers still happened, it would have been very unlikely that the US would have invaded Iraq. A military focus on Afghanistan likely would have been much shorter, caught Bin Laden, and not have involved the whole Middle East in warfare. It is also easy to imagine that a full press approach on climate change would have the world in much better position than we are today.

There are other issues around fair voting processes but abolishing the Electoral College and using a national popular vote to select our Executive Branch leaders is the most urgent.

—Wayne Wilson
HoU Board Member



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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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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 - \$ _____ additional contribution to help promote public awareness of humanism
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- => 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.

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



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