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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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Chaplain's Corner

Hell on Earth

Ok, perhaps not hell, but just the hottest summer ever. So far.

Temperatures over 100°F (53.3°C) have swept multiple continents for much of July. Temperatures over 110°F (43.3°C) have baked Phoenix, Arizona for 25 days straight. China hit 52.2°C (126°F), and Death Valley 128°F (53.3°C). So yes, even this heat feels pretty hellish. In addition to the pervasive heat, floods and fires have hit with unusual frequency and ferocity. Unfortunately, such disruptions are becoming the new normal.

Over the past several decades, humans have been experiencing steadily increasing discomfort and disasters, with already suffering populations suffering disproportionately. The bad news is that we not only will continue to suffer more of the same, but we are approaching a tipping point where any number of cataclysms could shift us into an entirely new way of existing (or struggling to) on the planet as a whole. It seems cliché to say that this moment of history is the most important ever, but in our case, it is precisely true. We are on the cusp of compromising the possibilities of life on earth, and for the first time, we have the technology and access to resources to do something about it. Even if we were to immediately stop the use of fossil fuels, the earth will continue to warm, remaining hot and hellish for centuries. And we all know that is not going to happen, so the next few decades will determine the level of discomfort our descendants (and all of life on earth) will need to endure for the rest of human history. Most troubling of all is the possibility of cataclysmic tipping points such the collapse of the Gulf Stream or the collapse of the Western Antarctic Ice Sheet, which alone could raise sea levels as much as ten feet (important to remember as we contemplate this that about 40% of humanity lives on the coasts). Ironically and perhaps poetically, this hell on earth actually is punishment for our sins, a natural consequence of unsustainable pillaging of earth's resources that have destabilized ecosystems countless millions of years in the making. Our environment can be hellish, but what really characterizes hell on earth is the way we humans treat each other. In this exploration of hell on earth, I haven't

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Women's Equality

Alice Paul (1885-1977) was born to a New Jersey family of Quakers. She received her educational degrees from the United States and United Kingdom, earning Masters and Doctorate in Sociology from the University of Pennsylvania and a Law degree from Washington College of Law and Law Masters and Doctoral degrees from the American University. In 1913 she, along with Lucy Burns, formed the Congressional Union for Women's Suffrage, which later reconstituted as the National Women's Party. Their goal, along with many women including Black Women working at the time on the Mott Amendment, named after Lucretia Mott, "Men and women shall have equal rights throughout the United States and every place subject to its jurisdiction." There is no amendment that included women's rights in the United States Constitution. Naysayers at the time claimed that the 14th amendment, approved on July 9, 1868, also known as one of the "Reconstruction Amendments," included the rights for women. At this time women were not allowed to vote, but it gave Black men the right to vote, but many Southern States had requirements that restricted their ability to vote. On April 2, 1917, Montana elected the first woman to congress: Jeannette Rankin. She worked tirelessly to secure women the right to vote and improve working conditions. Ergo, becoming the only women to vote for Mott amendment on August 18, 1920. The 19th Amendment passed, allowing some women to vote. Black Women were still not allowed to vote until passing the Voting Rights Bill of 1964.

By 1943 the amendment's wording changed and became known as the Paul amendment, named after Alice Paul, who at the time was Vice President of the National Women's Party. She used wording similar to the verbiage used in the Fourteenth Amendment. "Equality of rights under the law shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any State on account of sex." Later this came to be known as the "Equality Rights Amendment" or the "Equal Rights Amendment." In 1972 President Nixon issued a proclamation designating August 26 as "Women's Right Day," since then it has been declared as

"Women's Equality Day."

Congress originally passed 1972, with a ratification deadline by March 1979, a seven-year passage requirement, the only amendment to date that had deadline for ratification. In 1977, 35 States passed the Equal Right Amendment out of 38 States required. As the deadline approached arch-opponents, like Phyllis Schlafly, claimed the passage of the Equal Right Amendment would force women to go to war, would lose their right to child support and alimony, and society would fall apart. "The women's libbers are radicals who are waging a total assault on the family, on marriage, and on children." Phyllis Schlafly single handedly turned the Equal Rights Amendment from a widely accepted concept into culture war with an uncanny knack for bringing together women of diverse religions.

1977 was also known as the "International Women Year." The United Nations was holding conferences across the United States to address wage inequality of women, women's right to body autonomy, child care, to name a few, and to select delegates to their International Conference. Approximately 14,000 Mormon women and men took over the conference in Salt Lake City. United State Senator from Utah, Jake Garn, inserted an anti-Equal Rights Amendment speech of Apostle Boyd K. Packer into the Congressional Record. Mormons tried to take over the Washington State, Honolulu, Hawaii, Houston, Texas, and the Sterling Park, Virginia conferences.

President Trump's administration, in a memo, instructed the Justice Department, the National Archives and Records Administration to decline the publish the Equal Rights Amendment to the Constitution, despite it achieving the necessary steps. On January 31, 2023, Congress passed a Joint resolution that states: "This joint resolution provides that the Equal Right Amendment which prohibits discrimination on the basis sex, was ratified by three-fourth of the States and is therefore a valid Constitutional Amendment, regardless of any time limit that was in the original proposal." Congress extended the deadline for ratification of the Equal Rights Amendment and three more States ratified:

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President's Message

I hope this newsletter finds you happy, healthy and enjoying the summer so far. Summer for me is filled with lively adventures, growing gardens, kids playing in the water, time with family/friends and oh so many BBQs. It feels like the opposite of winter, where springing forward into activity seems natural as opposed to cuddling into a cozy routine while the season sleeps.

Interestingly enough, with the world changing in so many ways, the seasons changing do not derail the chaos we face as human beings. It has become increasingly difficult to quiet the political, socioeconomic, and even personal struggles that are part of our lives now. Technology is wonderful, but it is noisy and constant. This is hard to navigate and is especially treacherous if one is trying to quiet themselves to focus on themselves, their priorities and their mental health. It can make life hard or feel very difficult. This is very real.

There is considerable talk nowadays about mental health and self-care. Both terms feel almost overused and dulled down, but they are a critical part of our lives and help us navigate our world, each other and ourselves. There are so many atrocities and hardships that we endure that the good sometimes feels lost or nonexistent. I see you. I hear you. I feel what you go through. I am also here to help, and so is our group.

The time has come for our group to come back to life, fully and then some. We are starting with our annual BBQ next month and will then have speakers each month following. We will be incorporating activities, community service, visits to the Capital, all things that will be supportive of our messages, our place in this world and most importantly - our support of the human beings on this planet...and you!

My message is that even though the world is hard and we are facing tough things all of the time, there is SO much beauty and good out there. The good is often not as loud as the chaos, but it is firmly there. I will ask: Do you seek the good? Do you participate in trying to promote goodness wherever you are in your

life? Are you in need of more good in your world? What do you feel compelled to do about it? Would you like to come and help us change things for good? Even coming to the monthly speaking engagements is a force for good. Empowerment through knowledge and information is invaluable to you and your lives (and we have cookies!!). Standing with a group of like-minded folks is a positive connection that will leave you feeling good. Fighting the good fight adds strength in numbers and personally. You are welcome to all of this and more.

My dear humanists, we are so excited to see you in person. We are working to establish a community again that is full of options for you all and we would love for you to tell all you know about us. Everyone is welcome here.

Remember, you are the master of your life. You are the captain of your soul and the creator of your world. Come as you are and participate as you can.

I send my vision of hope and kindness to you all and am so excited to see you in a few weeks at the BBQ.

—Melanie White-Curtis
President, HoU

Women's Equality

(Continued from page 2)

Nevada 2017, Illinois 2018, and Virginia 2022.

Addendum: Remember to Celebrate August 26, International Women Equality Day. Vote in your municipal races. The 27th Amendment took 202 years to pass, making it the longest period for an amendment to be passed. I recommend reading for the summer dog days *Pedestals and Podiums: Utah Women, Religion Authority and Equal Rights* by Martha Sonntag Bradley a local author.

—Cindy King



Hell on Earth

(Continued from page 1)

even touched on how we humans treat each other, with war and abuse so common, exploitation and conflict the norm. I've darkly joked that humans are capable of extraordinary good... after exhausting all other options. So, what can we do as humans as humanists when our existence on the planet is literally at stake, and we are living during what is probably the most pivotal time in earth's history? I want to share some Chaplain skills, which is one of the key purposes of this column. The first thing we can do is remain aware. When people ask me how I cope with being a Chaplain, helping people with death and tragedy and trauma every day, I respond, "It's true whether or not I'm looking." The religious beliefs that God is going to fix everything or that everything is going to be better after we die function as avoidance mechanisms that decrease motivation and effectiveness to actually address our increasingly urgent problems. No matter how hard reality gets, facing it remains our only hope of improving or dealing with that reality. Before I taught World Religions, I was familiar with the paraphrase "religion is the opiate of the masses," but I remember being inspired when I read the whole quote from Karl Marx: "Religious suffering is, at one and the same time, the expression of real suffering and a protest against real suffering. Religion is the sign of the oppressed creature, the heart of a heartless world, and the soul of soulless conditions. It is the opium of the people. The abolition of religion as the illusory happiness of the people is the demand for their real happiness. The demand to give up the illusion about its condition is the demand to give up a condition which needs illusion." Remaining aware helps us take responsibility to act and improve the world. Remaining aware hurts, so the second thing we can do is to practice pivoting our relationship to pain. Not coincidentally, increasing fortitude in the presence of emotional pain and distress is a key aspect of Chaplain training. We literally

calibrate our nervous systems to remain present and gentle, calm, and curious in crisis. We train ourselves to engage both compassionately and decisively. Instead of resisting pain, as understandable as that is, we can bring curiosity to our pain. Pain is information, an alarm system telling us that something is wrong. I use the metaphor of clean pain versus infected pain. Resistance and avoidance make our pain infected, while facing our pain calmly keeps our pain clean, paradoxically minimizing it. I am not in any way dismissing, discounting, or glorifying pain, just acknowledging that we all need to deal with it. Allowing pain to flow through us without resistance will increase our capacity to bear it, and that fortitude provides our best chance to face challenges in a healthy and constructive way. As Gandalf tells Frodo when he said he wished he didn't live in such times of hardship, "So do I," said Gandalf, "and so do all who live to see such times. But that is not for them to decide. All we have to decide is what to do with the time that is given us."

Finally, we can show up with imagination and determination, key human and humanist ideals. One of the fundamental challenges of being human is that our evolution motivates us for survival rather than thriving. We are often at our best when things get quite bad. Again, I am not romanticizing or glorifying any of this, just pointing out that we humans are staggeringly resilient and creative, and our potential is often not met until we meet extreme challenges head on. We are radically adaptable and imaginative. We are the only animals that can cooperate flexibly in large groups and most significantly, we seem to be the only animals who can imagine what does not yet exist. This is the key to both our destruction and hopefully our redemption—we can imagine solutions to even cataclysmic problems. Yes, hell exists on earth, but so does heaven, and that remains something that we can create together.

—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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>> Put Your Name Here <<
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Summer Picnic
August 19
Sugar House Park
1330 E 2100 S
Salt Lake City, UT
84106
Sego Lily Pavilion
6:00 PM
BBQ food provided

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!

Upcoming Events

Meeting	Topic	Date	Time	Place
Annual Picnic	BBQ — First In Person Get Together!	Aug 19	6:00	Sugarhouse Park Sego Lily Pavilion
General Meeting	Incomparable Good at Inexcusable Cost <i>Jared Anderson</i>	Sept 16	1:00	Holladay City Hall
General Meeting	End of Life Legislation <i>Jen Daily-Provost</i>	Oct 15	1:00	Holladay City Hall
Special Event	Darwin Day 2024	Feb 10	TBA	Thanksgiving Point

Notes:

- ◆ *General Meetings* are for all members and the general public. There are no admission charges.
- ◆ Most meetings are held in the Holladay City Hall, 4580 South 2300 East, Holladay, UT 84117. There are several rooms at the facility; the specifics for each meeting will be published when it is scheduled. City Hall is open on Sundays but not staffed. The “back door” is always open but not friendly to people with walking issues. The front door is near an elevator and can be opened from the inside; please us (board@humanistsofutah.org) know if you need assistance and we will arrange it.

Charitable Giving While You Shop

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.



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