HUMANIST Monthly
A Publication of the Capital District Humanist Society
Connecting the Secular Humanist Community of Upstate New York, Western Massachusetts, and Southern Vermont
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November 2026

Sunday, November 8th, 2026

In Person at 12:30 PM and Online at 1:00 PM

Afrofuturism



Aiesha Turman

Afrofuturism is a cultural aesthetic, philosophy, and artistic movement that explores the intersection of the African diaspora with science fiction, technology, and speculative fantasy. It re-examines the past and envisions liberated, empowered futures for Black life through a non-Western cultural lens. The movement spans across multiple creative disciplines to heal historical traumas and create agency.

Dr. Aiesha Turman holds an Interdisciplinary PhD with a major in Humanities and Culture with certificates in Creative Writing and Women's and Gender Studies from The Union Institute & University in Cincinnati, OH. Her dissertation, There's Always Been an Afrofuture: Black Women's Literature as Technology of Protest, explores the Black feminist literary genealogy of Afrofuturism and is part of her broader interest in Black pasts as the key to Black Futures.

She's taught English and Africana Studies at NY City College of Technology, Hunter College, Nassau County Community College, and is a new faculty member in the Writing & Critical Inquiry Program at the University at Albany.

Dr. Turman's research explores the rich intersections of African American history, culture, and speculative futures. Her work explores the lived experiences and cultural practices of African and African Diaspora communities through the innovative lens of Afrofuturism, envisioning future scenarios that center on Black experiences, histories, and imaginations.

As a trauma and memory theorist, she investigates the profound impacts of historical and contemporary traumas on individual and collective memory, examining how these memories are formed, represented, and reconciled. Through her interdisciplinary approach, Dr. Turman aims to illuminate the resilience and creativity of Black communities while addressing critical issues of identity, power, and social justice.

Dr. Turman's presentation will be live, in person, and begins at 1:00 PM at Pinnacle Living at 45 Forts Ferry Road in Latham, NY. It is free and open to the public. Light refreshments will be available at 12:30 PM before the speaker's presentation, but **PLEASE BRING YOUR OWN BEVERAGE**. Current paid CDHS members will automatically receive an invitation to the online meeting via email. If you wish to attend via Zoom or are not a current paid CDHS member, please email your request to CDHS.Albany@gmail.com no later than Friday, November 6th, to receive a link.

The Capital District Humanist Society provides a supportive community for exchanging ideas, heightening our knowledge of the world and ourselves, fostering moral and ethical growth, and promoting the principles of secular humanism. CDHS is a member organization for people with humanist values. Our values include commitment to free inquiry, rational thought, lifelong education, democracy, social concern, and fellowship.

On Sunday, December 13th, 2026, 12:30 PM (In Person) and 1:00 PM (Online)

The Capital District Humanist Society Presents:

Dora The Anarchist



Lisa Aronson

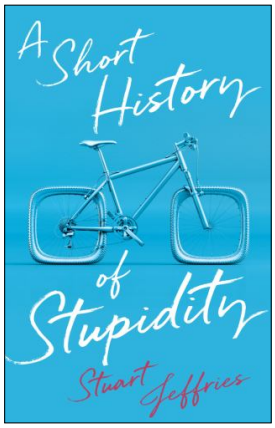
"When I tell people my grandmother, Dora Keyser, was an anarchist, they sometimes ask whether she was ever jailed or involved in violence—common misconceptions about the anarchist movement. For many Jewish and Italian immigrants who embraced it, anarchism was a universalist, anti-capitalist, nonviolent movement committed to freedom from political, social, economic, and religious authority. Drawing on my book in progress, Dora the Anarchist, this talk explores the influences that led Dora to anarchism and the ways she lived its principles." -- *Lisa Aronson*

Lisa Aronson is Professor Emerita from the Art History Department at Skidmore College, where she taught African Art for 31 years. Her research and publications on African art and visual culture have centered on African textiles and trade, issues of gender in African art, contemporary African art issues, and African photography. Lisa's contemporary African art exhibition, *Environment and Object in Recent African Art*, co-curated with the Tang Museum's former Director, John Weber, was on view at the Tang from February-July 2011, and then traveled to Middlebury College's Museum of Art and to the Anderson Gallery at Virginia Commonwealth University. In 2017, she and Martha Anderson co-authored their book titled African Photographer J. A. Green: Reimagining the Indigenous and the Colonial (Indiana University Press, 2017). The six-year long research project that led to its publication was funded by a Getty Collaborative Research Grant. In 2021, the Arts Council of the African Studies Association (ACASA) awarded it the "Arnold Rubin Outstanding Publication Award for a Joint-Authored Book." Since retirement, she has turned her attention to the pivotal role that the anarchist movement played in her grandmother, Dora Keyser's, life.

This program begins at 1:00 PM. Lisa will present live and in person at Pinnacle Living at 45 Forts Ferry Road in Latham, NY. It is free and open to the public. Light refreshments will be available at the in-person meeting before the speaker's presentation. **Please bring your own beverage.** Current paid CDHS members will automatically receive an invitation to the on-line meeting via email. If you are not a current paid CDHS member, request an email invitation to attend no later than Friday, December 11th, to CDHS.Albany@gmail.com.

Next Meeting: Sunday, January 10, 2027

CDHS Book Group is reading *A Short History of Stupidity* by Stuart Jeffries. The group meets on the 2nd and 4th Thursdays.



Contact Frank Robinson if you would like to join the spirited and informative discussion.

CDHS Executive Council

Executive Director	Don Porterfield
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Programs, Publicity	Fred Levine
Publications	Carol Quantock
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Appointed Positions

Hospitality	Sue Parry
Room Arrangements	Frank Robinson
Caring Network	Rosina Ansaldo

RECAP OF OUR SEPTEMBER SPEAKER'S TALK

(by Frank Robinson)

Liz Robinson is CEO of Charmaghz, an organization providing education for girls in Afghanistan, where it's essentially banned past 6th grade by the Taliban regime.

She started by profiling the country. Afghanistan is a landlocked Texas-sized nation, between Iran and Pakistan, with a population around 45 million. It's ethnically diverse, Pashtuns being the biggest group; Dari the most used language, among several. The population's median age is just 17.4 years; it's 73% rural, and quite poor; 90% cannot read by age 10.

Afghanistan became a unified kingdom in 1747, later contested between Britain and Russia ("the great game"), then becoming independent in 1919, and eventually sidelining the monarchy. In 1978 the government was taken over by Communists, sparking a Soviet invasion to defend the new regime against armed opponents. After Russia withdrew, the Muslim fundamentalist Taliban took power, then ousted by an international force led by America in the wake of 9/11 (Bin Laden having been protected there by the Taliban). In 2021, America gave up and the Taliban regained power.

Robinson, after graduation from Tufts in 2015, got work in the Middle East, and soon, in 2016, she served for a time with an international development organization in Afghanistan. She connected with Freshta Karim, who had founded Charmaghz, mainly operating a fleet of mobile libraries serving children (half of whom were girls), promoting reading, critical thinking, and open-mindedness. Anathema to the Taliban and closed down by them in 2025 as part of a "gender apartheid" regime, life in Afghanistan became "women effectively living in Hell." They can only be served by female doctors — try finding one now. Thus, childbirth deaths are exploding. Only 7% of women work at all. They can be killed with impunity.

Robinson started volunteering with Charmaghz, and succeeded Karim as CEO in Spring 2026. Pivoting the organization now to providing education services remotely, mainly online. An immense challenge, for various reasons: one is the paucity of internet connections, which are unaffordable for most Afghans. (Charmaghz is picking up the cost.)

Meantime, she noted that most Afghans, including many in the regime, actually oppose its restriction on girls' education. It's speculated that the Taliban might be using this as a bargaining chip, willing to change the policy in exchange for international recognition.

Robinson ended by quoting a young Afghan woman's short story, depicting a teenage girl doing online education: "In the mirror [she] didn't just see a girl stuck in a room. She saw someone training to be free."

A recording of this presentation can be found on the CDHS YouTube channel: https://youtu.be/Vyapzko8LfE.

EC Election Results

Thanks to all of you who voted in the recent election for the Programs/Publicity position on our Executive Council. Fred Levine was overwhelmingly elected for another two-year term. Congratulations to Fred and kudos for the great job that he is doing! As Fred pointed out recently, he gets a lot of suggestions for speakers from our members and appreciates the input. This is another example of how member participation helps CDHS remain a strong and vibrant organization.



Join the bunch for lunch! We'll be returning to DinerTime, 813 Loudon Road, Latham, NY 12110 (https://dinertimeny.com/latham-dinertime-food-menu/) on November 19th at 12:00 Noon unless a change is made; you will receive a notification via email. In December, we'll meet on Thursday the 17th,location TBD. Please let Rosina Ansaldo know by the Wednesday evening prior if you'll be joining them.

NOTE: If you know of a great local eatery, please don't be shy; recommend it! We'd like to give our local restaurants a chance by rotating them every few months and returning to the ones that get enthusiastic thumbs up. Please send ideas to Rosina Ansaldo. Thanks!

Are Tech Billionaires Buying Our Democracy While Promising Us Paradise?

(by Thom Hartmann, The Hartmann Report, Substack, October 31, 2026)

— Corruption has become the midterm issue the pundits never saw coming, and it has Trump's name all over it. For years I've been ranting at Democratic politicians and strategists that corruption is the most powerful meme they can use against the GOP. (From 2021 when I started this newsletter to 2022 to at least a dozen articles since including this year.) They finally noticed that the public has always agreed with me because multiple pollsters finally got around to asking the question. The Financial Times reports that corruption now ranks among the top concerns pushing Americans to the polls this year: the FT/Focaldata poll found 69 percent of registered voters, including nearly half of Trump's own 2024 voters, are worried about "corruption, self-dealing, or conflicts of interest" in his administration. A Fox "News" poll — which has to be alarming Republicans — found government corruption had edged out inflation as voters' single biggest worry. Gallup says 89 percent of Americans now believe corruption is widespread in the Trump regime, a number that's jumped up fully ten points from an already mind-boggling 79 percent in a single year. And a Washington Post-ABC-Ipsos poll found about a third of Republican-leaning adults now say Trump is using the presidency to enrich himself. The challenge now for Democrats will be to follow through and actually work to drain the swamp when so many of their own "moderate" elected officials are also on the take (since political bribery was legalized by five corrupt Republicans on the Supreme Court). Progressives are leading the way by refusing corporate PAC money, often putting themselves at a disadvantage, but the simple reality is that publicly and loudly standing on principle while pointing out the other side's corruption is the single most effective way to pull this off.

— Citizens United Alert! Corporate cash in our elections has exploded by more than 5,000 percent since five Republican justices opened the spigot. The year that five on-the-take Republicans on the Supreme Court ruled in 2010 (*Citizens United*) that there was nothing wrong with corporations buying judges and politicians, corporations spent a mere $12.8 million on federal elections. This year, Public Citizen reports, they've spent more than $737 million. And the most corrupt and sensitive-to-regulation industries have been at the front of the line: More than half of this cycle's corporate money, $391 million, came from crypto, online gambling, and Big Tech, including the AI and data center companies currently begging for tax breaks and cheap electricity.

Elon Musk, although not a corporation, has a fortune that largely wouldn't exist if Obama hadn't bailed out his Tesla corporation and Trump hadn't handed his SpaceX corporation hundreds of billions in federal contracts, so he's tossed in an additional $445 million to support corrupt Republican candidates. This was the predictable result of the "conservative" campaign started in the 1970s with the Powell Memo and amplified by rightwing think tanks and media outlets over the years since. There are, however, fixes, including Montana's Initiative 194 that would outlaw corporate campaign spending in that state; it's on the ballot and we'll know how it turned out on Tuesday. There's also Rep. Pramila Jayapal's *We the People Amendment* to the US Constitution, as well as Sen. Jeanne Shaheen's *Democracy for All Amendment*: both would overturn the decision outright but will require two-thirds of the House and Senate and three-quarters of the states to ratify. While that may seem impossible, never underestimate the power of public opinion: When young people's outrage about the Vietnam War and the draft was at its peak, the 26th Amendment was introduced on March 23, 1971, and ratified on July 1, 1971, taking a mere three and a half months. It *is* possible!

— Republicans in Texas got busted impersonating a transgender advocacy group to frighten parents into voting for Paxton. As early voting began this month, millions of Texas households got glossy brochures addressed to "the students" of the family, purporting to come from the "Texas Transgender Student Union" and coaching kids on bathroom laws, emancipation from their parents, and getting gender-affirming care out of state. There's no such group, and the brochures came from an LLC registered in Wyoming on September 2. This week a Travis County judge ordered the senders unmasked, and it turns out the execrable flyers were apparently produced and mailed by the Republican Women's Caucus Fund and a man named John Braun. The Houston Chronicle also reports the same outfit was behind the mailers. The fund denies everything, but its treasurer, Paul Kilgore, also handles the money for the Senate Conservatives Fund, which is spending to elect Ken Paxton, and the fake group's lawyer used to work in Paxton's office. This is so egregious that it's provoked a Republican district attorney to open a criminal forgery investigation. When a Texas voter raised the mailers at a town hall, JD Vance said he'd like the Justice Department to look into it, without mentioning it was his own party that had produced and sent them out. Even conservative author Daniel Darling called it "A wicked thing to do. Targeting vulnerable kids." Remember that the next time a Republican ad warns you about who's coming for your children.

Yes, they're intimidating election officials: Trump's Justice Department is serving grand jury subpoenas on California election officials just five days before this fall's election. Registrars in at least four counties, including Los Angeles, Orange, Santa Clara and San Diego, have received federal subpoenas demanding unredacted voter files, registration and voting histories, citizenship data, and even their internal communications about the department's fraud claims. Workers are terrified, and many will be spending their retirement funds to hire attorneys, which is the whole point to most of Trump's punitive prosecution efforts. The backstory here is that this Tuesday, U.S. District Judge David O. Carter warned Bill Essayli, the Trump loyalist and MAGA election denier running the U.S. Attorney's office in Los Angeles, to stop threatening state and county officials. The following day, he refused Essayli's demand to sequester 20,000 ballots, describing the department's conduct as "a broad, ongoing pattern of attempted election interference by federal officials." The Trump regime's answer to this federal judge telling it to stop threatening election workers was to drop more subpoenas, plus a 48-hour ultimatum to those same officials to review lists of alleged noncitizen voters or face criminal prosecution. David Becker of the Center for Election Innovation and Research, himself a former DOJ attorney, said the department had simply "doubled down." This may well be the precursor to the regime trying to block certification of all of California's Democrats in the House and Senate, just like they're now threatening against Alaska. Stay tuned: this battle won't be resolved next week and will, I predict, drag on until at least January 3rd.

Ken Paxton's office is suing Texas's biggest county for the crime of telling Black and Latino residents when and where they can vote. With one day left in early voting, the Texas Attorney General's office filed suit against Harris County Clerk Teneshia Hudspeth and her communications director over a "Plan, Check, Vote!" ad campaign the county rolled out on both Facebook and Instagram. The ads didn't endorse anyone; they simply listed polling hours and a website with how-to-vote information. Paxton's lawyers are using the old Republican "discriminating against white people" trope, because the county used Meta interest tags that included "African-American history" and "Latin dance." The timing isn't subtle: Harris County (Houston) with a massive Black and Hispanic population had cast more than 860,000 early ballots by Thursday afternoon, already past its 2018 midterm record of 855,711, and the county leans heavily blue. It could also be another example of Republicans setting up challenges to seating in Congress on January 3rd against anybody elected from Houston, and perhaps even opposing Talarico's being seated should he win statewide.

Oligarch Alert! Elon Musk — who's spent almost a half-billion dollars to swing our election — says democracy ends if Democrats win. Friday morning the world's richest man posted on X that Democrats "will execute their plan to end democracy in America if they gain control." It apparently went to every American using the platform. His freak-out is (correctly) based in his fear that a Democratic sweep of both houses could bring both DC and Puerto Rico into the union as states, adding political power to millions of non-white US citizens who currently have taxation but no representation. That, the white supremacist from South Africa says, would be "game over for America." The near-trillionaire seems to be getting weirder and weirder, telling his followers that "saving money for the distant future is pointless" because superintelligent AI is about to deliver abundance for all. Just keep Republicans in charge, and it'll all work out. Just like in 1929, right? It sure looks like we're about to relearn that lesson…

Crypto Alert! North Korea just pulled off the biggest heist in human history, going after crypto, the source of much of Trump's billions. Binance, the world's largest crypto exchange, saw $6.3 billion drained out of their "bank" in a mere 20 minutes Thursday night. It's apparently the work of TraderTraitor, Pyongyang's elite hacking unit, which reportedly got into the system via a single engineer's compromised laptop. Kim's hackers are funding the regime's nuclear and missile programs with these kinds of thefts; last year they stole around $2 billion in crypto. Meanwhile, crypto, online betting and Big Tech — who are all essentially regulation-free and want to remain that way — put $391 million into this election cycle. The Trump regime seems unconcerned; apparently the Trump family accounts weren't hit.

Public Health Alert! Pennsylvania doctors are now treating a disease most of them had only read about in textbooks. The Atlantic reports that congenital measles, passed from an infected mother to her child in the womb, is back in America for the first time in decades. Pennsylvania's outbreak has sickened 1,286 people across 42 counties, including 66 pregnant women. At least six babies have tragically been born infected, two of them sick enough that they required intensive care. Six Pennsylvanians have now died since Bob Kennedy began his anti-vax campaign as our chief public health official, two of them infants. State health officials issued an emergency advisory to physicians this month because most of them have never treated the disease; it was declared eliminated in 2000, twenty-six years ago. Babies born to mothers with measles risk a fatal brain inflammation that can appear years later. Nationally the CDC counts more than 4,400 cases this year, double last year's total. Every one of these babies had a mother who could have been protected by a sixty-year-old vaccine that costs less than a tank of gas. Bob Kennedy has disgraced himself and should be impeached.

November Social: Sunday, the 22nd at Harbinger Theatre

The Harbinger Theatre is a performing arts company based in Albany, New York, that focuses on Capital Region and world premieres of new and underrepresented plays. On November 22nd they will be performing a play, "The Best We Could Do" at the Sand Lake Center for the Arts. It's described as a family tragedy that will make you laugh. Intrigued? Join the Capital District Humanist Society for an afternoon to see how this talented writer develops the story.

Mark your calendar for Sunday, November 22nd at 2:00 PM. (The matinees are only on Sunday.) Tickets are $15 with open seating. Harbingertheatre.ludus.com is the website for your ticket. Purchase your ticket as soon as you know you'll be going to be sure they haven't sold out.

Lunch before the play will be at Lakeview Restaurant on Crystal Lake at 12:00 Noon. The restaurant and theater are only 2 or 3 miles apart.

GPS: Lakeview on Crystal Lake, Old Route 66, Averill Park, NY

GPS: SLCA, NY 43, Averill Park, NY

Tickets: Harbingertheatre.ludus.com $15.00, open seating

Date: 11/22/2026 at 2:00 PM

Please email Dee Fuller at candacelf13@gmail.com by Friday, November 20, 2026 if you plan to go to one or both activities and indicate which one(s) you'll attend.

Photos from September's Social at Breitenbach Castle

A very nice tour comprised our September Social at Breitenbach Castle. We had a great day, both weather-wise and attendee-wise. If you weren't able to attend, this attraction is worth the drive.











Holding the reins, with morality at stake

(by Rex Smith, The Upstate American, Substack, October 31, 2026)

Riding a horse is one thing — I've spent hours in the saddle, both Western and English types — but driving a horse and buggy is something I've never tried. It looks hard, mainly because you can't communicate as directly with the horse.

I mean, when you're up on a horse, both you and the horse understand that you're engaged in a dialogue, perhaps subtle but surely clear. I used to own a sweet mare whose nervousness could be offset if I settled back a bit in the saddle and murmured quiet reassurance, and even a slight movement of a hand and leg would signal a turn. But when you're sitting on a little bench six or ten feet back from a bit, you can't manage that horse's every footfall. So a buggy driver, I figure, needs to keep a steady hand on the reins while trusting that the terrain will be navigated through the horse's training and good nature.

This came to mind on this last weekend before Election Day because of an old saying from horse-and-buggy days: "It's not the harness that pulls the wagon; it's the horse." What that means to me as we choose who we will entrust with leading our nation and our states for the next few years — that is, who's going to be pulling our wagon — is that what really matters most is the candidates' quality of character, not what they're saying on the stump. A flawless harness can't help a broken horse, just like platforms and position papers won't keep us on track if the moral fiber of our leaders isn't strong.

So beyond all the policies that deserve our attention — the factors causing high prices and economic inequality, the decisions making the world more dangerous, the leadership failures transforming history's greatest democracy into a declining state — what must guide our choices is morality. The overriding issue on Nov. 3 is the abject amorality of Donald Trump's administration.

Our goal for the 2026 election must be to clarify this: Americans will not tolerate moral failure in our elected leaders.

And once we decide that the fundamental qualification for public service is morality, other decisions follow more easily. It is inescapably true that Republican officials and candidates have repeatedly and flagrantly failed to call out the moral lassitude of the Trump regime. Whatever other qualifications they may have for public office, that acquiescence in enabling the worst impulses of a conscience-free leader has rendered them disqualified.

So at the risk of over-reaching the metaphor, I'd say that our priority must be to make sure that Trump-adjacent Republicans — is there anybody on the Republican ballot who is not that, really? — are promptly turned out to pasture. They've gone off-course, and we've got to hitch our wagon to better stock.

Plenty of people take what they consider a more pragmatic approach to politics. Morality isn't really measurable, they argue, so our obligation as citizens is to consider only a legislator's voting record or a leader's stances on the issues. Their view follows the line from Niccolò Machiavelli, the father of political pragmatism, whose 16th-century work *The Prince* laid out the argument that whatever a leader's private morality, what ultimately matters is their public utility and effectiveness.

Machiavelli argued that people who aim toward being good "must necessarily come to grief among many who are not good" — yep, there are a lot of bad folks out there — and that an effective leader must therefore instead "learn how not to be good, and to use this knowledge and not use it," depending on circumstances. A leader who conquers and maintains the state's stability, even by using dishonorable means, Machiavelli wrote, "will always be judged honorable and will be praised by all."

About a century ago, the German philosopher Max Weber carried Machiavelli's philosophy into the modern age. Weber essentially argued that political effectiveness is, in fact, the highest form of political morality. There's a certain appeal to that view, since its standard is a conveniently cold calculation of what works, or at least what initially seems to work.

But what gets ignored when that standard is applied in our country is nothing less than the entire basis of the American experiment.

The Declaration of Independence framed our founders' intent as securing not just comfort, but also inherent human rights for themselves and future generations. In his First Inaugural Address, George Washington spoke of the "union between virtue and happiness; between duty and advantage; between the genuine maxims of an honest and magnanimous policy and the solid rewards of public prosperity and felicity." In Washington's view, Americans would find reward in doing what is right.

Ever since, Americans have judged our nation's success not by military might or wealth alone, but rather by our national deportment, and by our progress toward that "more perfect union" envisioned in our Constitution. Even on the eve of our Civil War, Abraham Lincoln evoked "the better angels of our nature," rather than urging an eager annihilation of his political foes. He viewed secession as a national tragedy, and the creation of a slavery-free union as calling forth those better angels.

Of course, American history is full of the failures of that vision — the many ways in which the reality of governing hasn't matched the rhetoric of those who govern. We can't whitewash those facts, from the slaughter and repression of indigenous Americans to the persistence of racism long after slavery's belated demise; nor can we ignore history's recording that in the name of the United States, foreign governments have been attacked for frustrating American financiers and tycoons, and opportunities to thrive have been squelched for groups disfavored by the ruling majority. Ours is a deeply flawed history.

But the obvious failures of morality throughout our history do not justify its outright rejection today. And let's be clear: Among all of Donald Trump's predecessors, there is no parallel to the eager immorality of this 47th presidency.

This administration and its enablers have added $12 trillion to the national debt, which now stands at over $40 trillion, an obligation that will hamstring future generations from realizing the prosperity that the wealth of this land ought to sustain for all. That is a product of immoral fiscal management.

They have built political power by encouraging division and hatred along racial, economic and geographic lines. That's immoral inhumanity. And there is so much more.

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They have widened the wealth gap between rich and poor and squelched the hopes of the middle class through ignorant economic policies that are piling up unimaginable wealth at the top of society by drawing it from everybody else.

They have debased the ethical standards of government beyond any historical precedent, with the president, his family, and numerous hangers-on using their positions to gain millions of dollars of wealth, and dispensing favoritism without regard for justice or fairness.

They have attacked Constitutional norms, amassing power in the presidency and diminishing the independent administration of government power in the interest of partisanship and personal gain.

By abandoning efforts to fight climate change, they are laying in the ruination of so much of nature's beauty and ensuring that future generations' lives, here and everywhere else on the planet, will be more miserable.

By pulling back health aid and economic development programs both in the United States and abroad, they are all but assuring the loss of millions of lives of the poorest people on earth.

And by abandoning America's role as the world's best example and surest guarantor of democracy and human rights, this administration's cynical foreign policy is dashing the hopes and aspirations of countless repressed societies around the world.

These are all immoral acts. They will be sustained, however, unless voters see them as exactly that, and replace the immoral enablers with people at every level of public service who will work to restore the moral underpinnings of our government's actions.

Here's the problem with casting a ballot based on campaign promises and resumes — or, as the metaphor goes, on the beautifully-crafted harness that we envision on the horse, steadily pulling our wagon: A highly competent politician without a moral compass may be quite effective at not only delivering decent government, but also at navigating toward self-interest or corruption. And when a crisis hits — an economic collapse, a pandemic, a geopolitical disaster — the promises fashioned for everyday scenarios won't be of any use. Rather, we will need to rely upon our leaders' instincts, empathy and ethical baselines.

What do you think just now of the empathy and ethical baseline of Donald Trump? If you're fine with it, then you should by all means vote for the people on his ballot line, as he is urging voters across the country to do these days with him in mind. If you think the man lacks the character we need in leaders, then you must look elsewhere. You choose: Which side are you on?

In the end, we're not electing a set of answers when we choose who will represent or lead us. Rather, our votes put into place the framework for how decisions will be made — that framework being, in a democracy, the people who make up our government. It is a moral grounding, not a transactional one, that will safely undergird that framework.

Back to our trusty metaphor: It's up to us as voters to guide the carriage of our government. When I'm riding a horse, I appreciate the intimacy of the relationship with the horse beneath me — including that feeling in my fingers of the horse's mouth on the bit. But from the distant seat of the citizen driving the wagon of our nation, we can't quite get that same sensitive connection; the driver of a wagon has to rely more on the horse's training, stamina and willingness to pull the load.

So we cannot hitch our national wagon to a horse lacking the moral character to handle the heavy load. If we do, no amount of tugging on the reins will ever save our wagon from the ditch.

What's worth your time at Capital Region colleges and universities?

Find out by subscribing to Alan Koslow's ***Capital Region Curated***, a list of upcoming events at local colleges and universities. Subscriptions are available at https://capitalregioncurated.substack.com/p/capital-region-curated-november-28

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The Capital District Humanist Society (CDHS) is an independent, non-profit (and non-prophet), non-partisan and strictly non-religious educational and social organization for those who share humanist values: commitment to education, rational and free inquiry, democracy, social concerns and fellowship. CDHS is affiliated with the four major humanist organizations - the American Humanist Association (AHA), the Council for Secular Humanism (CSH), the Secular Coalition for America (SCA) and the Humanists International (HI).

There are five types of CDHS member support: Individual, $50/yr.; Family, $80/yr.; Sustaining, $100/yr.; Patron, $150/yr.; and Lifetime Member, one contribution of $1000 or more.

Members receive our publication, *The Humanist Monthly,* and vote each September on the make-up of the governing Executive Council. Members are eligible for election to the Executive Council and may also serve as appointed officials. Members are welcome to attend Executive Council meetings.

The IRS recognizes CDHS as a tax-exempt organization under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code. Therefore, all donations, both cash and materials with established "fair market value", qualify as charitable contributions for income tax purposes.

Donations are gratefully accepted to help speed our growth. CDHS is a tax-exempt 501(c)(3) organization under the IRS Code. Financial disclosure information and our annual report are available upon request.

If you know of someone who may be interested in CDHS, please pass this newsletter along or give us the name; we will send a sample copy or two with no obligation.

We value your input. In the best humanist tradition, CDHS has no rigid picture of itself. We ask you to join us, not follow us. What activities and services would you like CDHS to provide its members? Send us your suggestions, questions, and comments.

A Timely Suggestion From Paul Tick



Paul Tick, editor of "News From The Neighborhood", posted the following in his October 25th newsletter:

"**One of our readers, J. knows where the real fraud is and tells us,** *Trump says the government will pay up to $30,000 for tips on fraud. Of course, Trump and his friends are the biggest frauds of all. You can file your tip about Trump's corruption on-line at fraud.gov and you do not have to give your name. I already filed 67 fraud tips, about Trump and his cronies.* After you file your tip, the reader asks us to send this message to ten friends and encourage them to help 'gum up the works' at Trump's treasury department."

If you'd like to subscribe to "News From The Neighborhood", go to https://paultick.substack.com/p/news-from-the-neighborhood-bc1?img=https%3A%2F%2Fsubstack-post-media.s3.amazonaws.com%2Fpublic%2Fimages%2F9e2bbc35-6aaf-494b-9615-38701d9f7395_760x184.jpeg&open=false.

Need to Find a Ballot Drop Box?

If you need to locate a ballot drop box on or before Election Day on Tuesday, the NEA (National Education Association) has provided a link to drop boxes across the country by accessing this link: https://educationvotes.nea.org/plan-your-vote/vote-plan/polling-place-location/?utm_source=edaction&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=20261031_c_and_e&ms=email_edaction_20261031_c_and_e&emci=c5a57c4e-7fd4-f111-bf5b-000d3a54442e&emdi=66784dbd-2fd5-f111-bf5b-000d3a54442e&ceid=21296092. All you do is enter your address and you'll find the nearest drop box, since it's too late to mail a ballot now.

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https://www.humanistsociety.net

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MEMBER SUPPORT FORM

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How did you hear about the Humanist Society?_____

All this information will be included in our Directory, which is distributed to members only, unless you request otherwise by checking and signing here: [ ] I do not want to be listed in the CDHS Member Directory _____

Levels of Member Support	**Annual Payment**	**Date_____/_____/_____**
[ ] Individual Membership	$ 50	_____
[ ] Family Membership	$ 80	
[ ] Sustaining Member	$100	_____
[ ] Patron	$150	_____
[ ] Life Member	one-time contribution of $1000 or more	_____
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