

# Sacramento Reason

COR

*Shine the Light of Reason!*

## Special Events

- **Fri Mar 1** [Movie n Pizza at Sierra College](#)
- **Fri Mar 1** [SAAF meeting and discussion](#)
- **Sat Mar 2** [Little Free Library planning](#)
- **Sun Mar 3** [Ancient Christian Study Group](#)
- **Wed Mar 6** [New Member Coffee Meetup](#)
- **Sat Mar 9** [SF National Atheist Party Conf.](#)
- **Sat Mar 9** [Stockton Brunch and Atheism](#)
- **Sun Mar 10** [Dinosaur Day Science Fest](#)
- **Sun Mar 10** [Modesto Science on Screen](#)
- **Sun Mar 10** ["Hope After Faith" - Jerry Dewitt](#)
- **Fri Mar 15** [Stockton Drinking Skeptically](#)
- **Sat Mar 16** [Ask an Atheist - St. Pat's Parade](#)
- **Sat Mar 16** [Potluck Game Night](#)
- **Sun Mar 17** [JoAnn Anglin Poetry Topics](#)
- **Sun Mar 17** [Blasphemy Breakfast - Rocklin](#)
- **Sun Mar 17** [Blasphemy Brunch - Arden/Arcade](#)
- **Mon Mar 18** [Book Club "Good Omens"](#)
- **Tue Mar 19** [Freethought Roundtable](#)
- **Thu Mar 21** [Freethought Dinner Social](#)
- **Fri Mar 22** [Skeptics in the Pub](#)
- **Fri Mar 22** [Lodi Godless Game Night](#)
- **Sun Mar 22** [Ancient Christian Study Group](#)
- **Sun Mar 24** [Freethought Movie Night](#)
- **Fri Mar 29** [Turlock "Myth" Colloquium](#)
- **Sun Mar 31** [Flying Spaghetti Monster Party](#)
- **Wed Apr 3** [New Member Coffee Meetup](#)

Sac Coalition of Reason Calendar: [sacramento.unitedcor.org/sacramento/page/events](http://sacramento.unitedcor.org/sacramento/page/events)

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Volume 1, Issue 3

March 2013

## Darwin Day Gala a Success!

We honored science and the greatest scientific discovery, natural selection. Lots of tables, including ACLU, local groups, Camp Quest, sale of Darwin finger puppets, four electric cars were displayed, the Mockingbirds sang sciencey songs in great harmony, and everyone had plenty of cake!



Dr. Ivan Schwab made interesting points about the eye:

1. We needed a 'file cabinet' to handle so much sensory input, so the brain developed after the eye, not before.
2. Eyes started when creatures were still ocean dwellers. That's why our eyes need constant lid flap-ping to keep them wet.
3. Eyes started as a protein source, using sunlight for energy. Later came a reaction for movement away from sudden shadows.
4. Many types of eyes still exist, many much better than ours. Some see infrared, like snakes. Animals still exhibit all levels of evolution of the eye even today, seen in many species.



Mr. Darwin herself.

The hundreds of guests had an information-filled day, experts to question, goodies to buy, literature to read, and fun for all.



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#### HELP WANTED:

Pope. Lead the world to stop thinking rationally, overpopulate beyond capacity, convince half they are lesser and must remain silent, induce guilt for normal acts and thoughts, demand money in exchange for promises, encourage holy world-wide war to end times sooner. Select your own minority to condemn, gays a plus. Must speak dead language. Apply Vatican City. No technical skills necessary. You want this job? *Really?*

#### Book Club

"Good Omens" by Pratchett & Gaiman (fiction/fantasy)  
Someone seems to have misplaced the AntiChrist just when they need him to end times!  
Join the fun! ... Our [2013 book list is here.](#)

Open to everyone,  
[Coffee Garden,](#)  
[2904 Franklin Blvd,](#)  
[March 18 6:30.](#)

### "Ask The Social I.Q. Lady" - Atheist vs. Nontheist?

Dear Social I.Q. Lady,

What's the difference between "atheist" and "nontheist"? -- A.W.

Dear A.W.,

Both words essentially mean the same thing: without belief. However, they each hold a different connotation to believers. To many believers, the word atheist carries along some extra "baggage" like "without morals", "anti-religious", or "devil-worshiper".

Good communication requires learning to be both effective and appropriate with our words. Words mean nothing until we attach meaning to them and over time some words change meaning. We speak differently to children than we do to adults and differently to our friends than we do to our boss or a potential client.

Appropriateness refers to fulfilling social expectations for a particular situation. Effectiveness is the extent to which you achieve your goals in an interaction. We need to be both effective and appropriate if we want to become competent communicators. When deciding which word to choose think about what you want to achieve. If you're talking to a religious family member that "hates" atheists and you want to foster a good relationship, which word should you use? While the word "atheist" is completely appropriate to describe someone without a belief in a god, it's not effective if it shuts down further communication.

Sometimes people confuse the word "atheist" with "agnostic". This is also because of connotation. Many people think the difference is a matter of degree of belief, but that's not accurate. An atheist is someone without a belief in a god and an agnostic is someone without any personal knowledge that a god exists. One can be both! For example, I am an agnostic atheist. While it seems ridiculous that anyone would say he is a gnostic atheist or theist, there are those who feel very strongly that they either know or don't know. As atheists, we must remember that although the statistics weigh heavily against the existence of any god, we cannot argue that one does not exist. Fortunately we don't have to; the burden of proof lies with the theist.

Social I.Q. Lady

*Andrea Griffith is a Social Intelligence expert. Learn what to say and do to get the results you want.*

Theist - believes in a god

A- (as a prefix) - without. (Not "against", for example asexual means without sex, not against sex.)

A-theist, or atheist - without belief in a god. (No claim to sure knowledge either way.)

If you do not run your life according to a belief in a god, then your life is without theism. You are atheist. (Not "an" atheist, as you are not a something, but just atheist. Just as you are not "a hungry", you are just "hungry".)





## New Members Meetup—Wednesday Mar 6, 6:30–9:00 pm

Are you new to the Sacramento area freethinking community? Come meet like-minded friendly people at our New Member Meetup. **Coffee Garden**, 2904 Franklin Blvd. [Map here](#). Have a sandwich, soda or coffee as you learn what Sac town offers.

### Public Reaction Says It All

This is why we gather together locally for dinners, chats, to hear speakers, to learn more, to reason together, to laugh together in a release of emotion... because being out there as an atheist is hard.

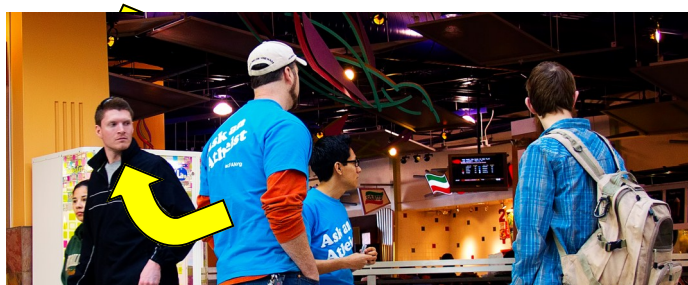


The hand grip of death (see right)

Scowling at the word "atheist" (see left and below)



Atheists are the least trusted group of any. Those who are willing to go out there, to take the hits for those who can't, aren't ready, or won't, those willing to take the risks pave the way for others.



Photos by Matt Martin

You know it's been worth it when they see you as people.





## Some popular 'Meet, Eat n Drink' Addresses and Maps:

Mar 9 10:00 am Brunch and Atheism: Panera Bread 10718 Trinity Pkwy Stockton [Map here](#)

Mar 17 11:00 am Blasphemy Brunch: Mel's Diner 565 Howe Ave [Map here](#)

Mar 22 6:30 pm Skeptics in the Pub: Hoppy Brewing Company 6300 Folsom Blvd [Map here](#)

Mar 24 5:00 pm Freethought Movie Night: David's Clubhouse 2250 Scarborough Dr Lodi [Map here](#)



### Little Free Library

Attend a meeting March 2 to help build a Little Free Library locally in Sacramento, possibly near a school. If you can help, see more [details here](#).



### Atheist Highway

This is our stretch of highway. By the Elkhorn Blvd exit, W of 99, 1 mi. N of I-5/99 split. We don't own it, but we do keep it clean. Many notice the word "Atheist" as they drive by.

Page 4

Sacramento Reason

## Flying Spaghetti Monster Party

108 Lost Oak Ct, Roseville, CA. Private home. Sunday March 31, 1:30 pm. Spaghetti, costume contest, pirate singing, \$6 requested, for which FSM will smile upon thee. Family friendly. Willing to help out? [Contact Rachael](#). Learn more about the Church of the Flying Spaghetti Monster at [venganza.org/about](http://venganza.org/about). [Details](#)

## Colloquia: "Hope After Faith" and All About "Myths"

On Sunday March 10, 4:30 pm, you can meet the actual first graduate of The Clergy Project, a safe house for clergy coming out as atheists. On Friday March 29, 7:00 pm, you can hear why it is so difficult to become aware of myths we still believe in. "It's like a fish becoming aware of the water it's swimming in." Two great speaking events. Don't miss either one! CSU Stanislaus, Naraghi Hall of Science, Rm 101, Turlock. [map](#).

## Dinosaur Day Science Fest

**Sierra College Natural History Museum** Sunday, March 10. All-day family adventure! [Details here](#). Get an up-close look at the amazing collection of natural history specimens housed in the [Museum located on the Rocklin Campus of Sierra College](#). Plus plenty of activities! Spend the day!



## Freethought Dinner—March 21, 6:15 pm

A fun dinner social for friends and members of the local community of reason. Feed your mind and feed your body, join your freethinking pals at the **Lemon Grass Restaurant** 601 Munroe St, for Thai food, good drink and sparkling conversation about all things freethoughty! [Map click here.](#) [Details click here.](#)



## Ancient Christian Study Group

Our local scholars walk us through fascinating perspective and facts. No prior knowledge is needed, just join in and learn with the rest of us! [March 3 and March 22, noon, at Shine Café, 1400 E Street](#)

## Find A Game Night Near You

Bring a potluck dish to share, if you can, and join in the fun! Two popular locations for freethinker game nights:

Sat Mar 16, 6pm on Spanos Ct, near Howe and Fair Oaks Bl. Chatting, eating, playing, laughing. [Details here.](#)

Fri Mar 22, 7pm in Lodi. No formalities. Just show up when you can and leave when you've had enough fun. [Details here.](#)

## Congresswoman is a “None”, Yet Slams “Atheism”

Rep. Kyrsten Sinema, D-Arizona, was sworn in a few days ago [without a Bible](#), and she is the first member of Congress to openly describe her religious affiliation as “none.” Although 10 other members don’t specify a religious affiliation — up from six members in the previous Congress — Sinema is the only one to officially declare “none.”

This has gotten Sinema a fair amount of attention from the media. Many [identified her as an atheist](#) during her congressional campaign, and after she won, sources touted her [as a non-theist](#). Even this past weekend, [Politico declared in a headline](#): “Non-believers on rise in Congress.”

But there’s a slight issue: Sinema doesn’t actually appear to be a non-believer. In response to news stories identifying her as an atheist, her campaign [released this statement](#) shortly after her victory: “(Rep. Sinema) believes the terms non-theist, atheist or non-believer are not befitting of her life’s work or personal character.”

As a non-theist, atheist and non-believer (take your pick), I find this statement deeply problematic.

It is perfectly fine, of course, if Sinema isn’t a non-theist, and it is understandable that she would want to clarify misinformation about her personal beliefs. But to say that these terms are “not befitting of her life’s work or personal character” is offensive because it implies there is something unbecoming about the lives and characters of atheists or non-believers.

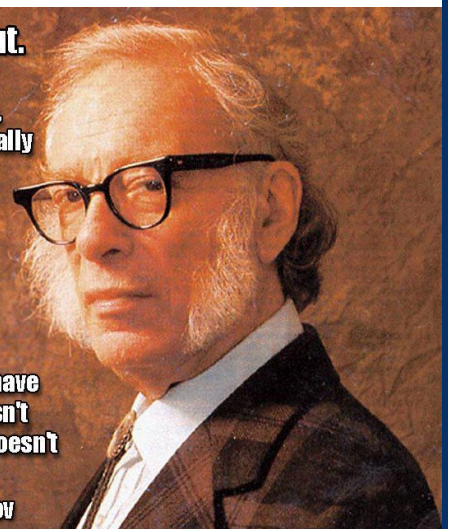
As a proud atheist and humanist, I’m disheartened that the only member of Congress who openly identifies as nonreligious has forcefully distanced herself from atheism in a way that puts down those of us who do not believe in God.

We are Americans of good character, too. (From CNN article by Chris Stedman)

### I am an atheist, out and out.

It took me a long time to say it. I've been an atheist for years and years, but somehow I felt it was intellectually unrespectable to say one was an atheist, because it assumed knowledge that one didn't have. Somehow it was better to say one was a humanist or an agnostic. I finally decided that I'm a creature of emotion as well as of reason. Emotionally I am an atheist. I don't have the evidence to prove that God doesn't exist, but I so strongly suspect he doesn't that I don't want to waste my time.

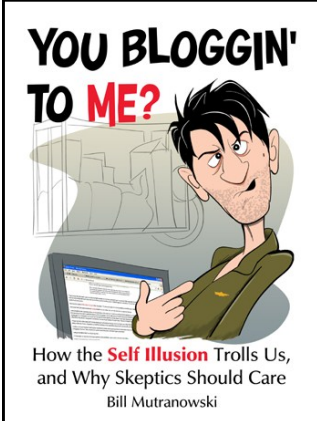
—Isaac Asimov







**BBC - 3 part series** *Atheism: A Rough History of Disbelief*  
 “I’m rather reluctant to call myself an atheist,” Jonathan Miller says at the outset, though he does go on to dissect his disbelief - his atheism. Read an article about the series [here](#) Watch the YouTube series [here](#).



**FREE Book --  
 “You Bloggin’ To  
 Me? How the Self  
 Illusion Trolls Us,  
 and Why Skeptics  
 Should Care”**

By Bill Butranowski

There’s only so much you can express in a single cartoon. Clicking on the link below will take you to Smashwords, where you can download a free, essay-length ebook written by me, the author of [atheistcartoons.com](http://atheistcartoons.com). In what I hope is an amusing way, the book discusses infighting within American skepticism/atheism, in light of what science and reason are telling us about the nature of the self and free will. If, like me, you’re concerned about the quality of our discourse, especially online, and would like to see us all move forward, then please do check out the book. It may interest you. Also, did I mention that it’s free?

<https://www.smashwords.com/books/view/270673>

Page

Sacramento Reason

## What Do You Talk About at Blasphemy Breakfast/Brunch?

Have you ever thought of joining one of those Blasphemy Breakfasts or Brunches, but worry there might be too much blasphemy? I’ve asked people from all three Blasphemy Breakfasts/Brunches what they really did talk about when they met February 17. Here is what they said.

We discussed genetic heritage mapping, and if any among us had tried to reach out to god.

The best places nearby to go for a walk or go hiking or bicycling. Renewable energy. Family relationships comes up often, especially as it relates to religious relatives and how we each deal with them.

Something about the Pope resigning . What it would be like if the Catholic church got with the times - could they still claim authority?

The time and place for being nice, or being snarky, or being violent .

History of well-heeled women in early times was more prominent than is acknowledged. Also that Sac will have a billboard campaign coming.

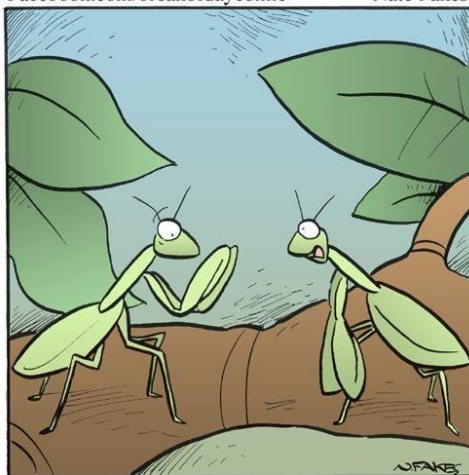
Differences between and need for various freethinking organizations.... So, you can see it’s quite a mix of topics. Always friendly people, easy-going chats.

Join us on March 17! Rocklin at Mel’s Diner 6708 Lonetree at 9:30; or Arden/ Arcade at Mel’s 565 Howe Ave at 11:00. Check [CoR calendar](#) for more.



Facebook.com/breakofdaycomic

Nate Fakes



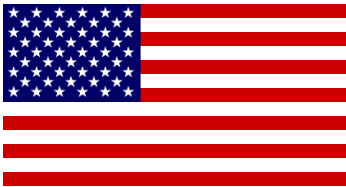
“I’m atheist.”

## BREAKING NEWS - Legal Issue

The yet unannounced local chapter of FFRF is already a named complainant in a separation of church/state issue that has just surfaced in Roseville. The City of Roseville was caught promoting a Chili Cook Off featuring celebrity chefs, including a Fox 40 figure, raising money for an evangelical Christian ministry. Freedom From Religion Foundation has demanded Mayor Rohan turn over key documents and submit her plan to prevent unconstitutional acts. To support this, please [join the local chapter](#).

# Local Groups to Visit or Join

Name	Emphasis		Tax Ded		Website
Agnostic & Atheist Student Association (AgASA)	UC Davis student group Meets Tuesdays, 6:10 great topics	Y		Y	<a href="http://agasadavis.wordpress.com">agasadavis.wordpress.com</a>
Americans United for Sep of Church and State (Sac Chapter)	Promotes individual activism, confronts violations	N	Y	National only	<a href="http://au-sac.org">au-sac.org</a>
Atheist Student Organization (ASO)	CSUS student group Meets Fridays at noon.	Y		Y	<a href="http://csusaso.wordpress.com">csusaso.wordpress.com</a>
Brights Action	Translate our naturalistic worldviews into constructive actions for school/library/media	Y	Y	Internat'l only	<a href="http://the-brights.net">the-brights.net</a>
FACTS Church	Church-like hymns, rituals, all the trappings in secular form.	Y	Y	N	<a href="http://factschurch.com">factschurch.com</a>
Greater Sacramento Chapter of Freedom From Religion Foundation	Protecting the constitutional principle of separation of state and church.	Y		N	<a href="mailto:sacffrf@gmail.com">sacffrf@gmail.com</a>
Humanist Association of the Greater Sac Area (HAGSA)	Humanist events, speakers, focus is on doing good.	Y	Y	National only	<a href="http://hagsa.org">hagsa.org</a>
Sacramento Area Coalition of Reason	Directing the community to the various groups of reason.	Y	N	Y	<a href="http://SacramentoCoR.org">SacramentoCoR.org</a>
Sac Area Skeptics (SAS)	Promotion of skeptical thinking, awareness of reality, logical skills.	Y	Y	Y	<a href="http://sacskeptics.org">sacskeptics.org</a>
Sac Atheists and Other Freethinkers (AOF)	Events both social and presented, for growth and fun.	Y	Y	N	<a href="http://aofonline.org">aofonline.org</a>
Sac City Freethinkers	Sac City College student group Meets every other Wednesday.	Y		Y	<a href="http://saccityfreethinkers.wordpress.com">saccityfreethinkers.wordpress.com</a>
Sac Freethinkers, Atheists and Nonbelievers (SacFAN)	Meetup for variety of fun, learning, singing, projects, games, activism.	Y	N	Y	<a href="http://SacFAN.org">SacFAN.org</a>
Sac Organization for Rational Thinking (SORT)	Discussions of rational thinking and science over mysticism and anti-rationalism.	Y	N	N	<a href="http://home.comcast.net/~kitray2/site/?/home">home.comcast.net/~kitray2/site/?/home</a>
Sac Think Atheist	Events, podcast, and forum to fight anti-atheism and gain tools.	N		N	<a href="http://thinkatheist.com/group/sacramentocalifatheists">thinkatheist.com/group/sacramentocalifatheists</a>
Secular Coalition for California	Train to engage media and lobby state politicians. Activist resource.	N	N	Y	<a href="http://Secular.org/states/chapters/california">Secular.org/states/chapters/california</a>
Secular Student Alliance or Freethinkers of Sierra	Sierra College student group Meets Thursdays at 1:00.	Y		Y	<a href="http://secularstudents.org/sierra">secularstudents.org/sierra</a>
Stockton Area Atheists and Freethinkers (SAAF)	Meetup events, variety	Y		Y	<a href="http://StocktonAAF.org">StocktonAAF.org</a>
Sun City Roseville Humanists	Humanist opportunities for our Sun City residents. Meets 1st Sundays from 1:00 to 3:00.	N	N	N	<a href="http://scres.org/sub_category_list.asp?category=98">scres.org/sub_category_list.asp?category=98</a>



We firmly support the United States Constitution and Bill of Rights, including the First Amendment: "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion" and Article Six "no religious test shall ever be required as a qualification to any office or public trust under the United States".

Save these 2013 dates:

**May 4** [Freethought Alliance Conf, Anaheim](#)

**May 30** [AHA Conf in San Diego](#)

**Apr 22** Earth Day  
**Summer** AOF's 20th Anniversary

**June 15** [SkeptiCon in Berkeley](#)

**Aug 8-11** [Skeptic's Toolbox, Oregon](#)

**Oct 12** [Freethought Day Sacramento](#)

Can I make tax deductible donations? **Yes!**  
Many freethinking groups are 501c(3).

**We're on the Web!**  
[SacramentoCoR.org](http://SacramentoCoR.org)



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## The Word 'Atheist' - this issue's theme

This issue is dedicated to those who use the word atheist. I know we have readers who would not use this word, but today I'm looking at this specific label. It carries the worst animosity, so deserves a special issue.

My theory is that many believers must go through x number of "spit responses", as I call them, before they see us as people. So, for every rude stare-down I get I figure that's one less spit response they have to go through before that person calms down.

This mall cop actually shared that he had a FSM ornament on the back of his car. He walked up to shake hands, saying, "Hi, I'm with you guys." Seeing someone wearing the word "atheist" means a lot; sometimes a flash of relief that you're not alone.



## If You're Atheist, Saying So is Healthy

Many people feel there is some overseer or realm beyond the real world as we know it, yet who don't believe in any religion. This kind of identity is often expressed as "spiritual". People who profess to hold "spiritual" rather than conventional religious or atheist beliefs are apparently more likely to suffer from mental health problems including drug dependency, phobias, anxiety disorders and neurotic disorder, according to a study. For believers, it is healthier to align with a religion. For atheists it is healthier to align with atheism. But, for those who *are* atheist yet do not identify with that word, this non-acceptance of the label atheism is apparently not healthy. [See article here.](#)

## Learn How to Lobby

The Secular Coalition of America will be flying to California to teach us how to lobby our local government officials. Look for this training day to coincide with the AHA Conference in San Diego, and possibly another training day up here in SF or Sacramento. I'll keep you posted. Or, fly to [Wash DC](#) late April. Most groups you see in this newsletter are not allowed to lobby - BUT YOU ARE!

