

Sacramento Reason

COR

Shine the Light of Reason!

Special Events

Sat Jun 1 [Brunch and Atheism](#)
Sun Jun 2 [Secular Family Day, Ballico](#)
Mon Jun 4 [Book Club in Ceres](#)
Wed Jun 5 [Concert in the Park, Stockton](#)
Wed Jun 5 [Welcome Meeting](#)
Thu Jun 6 [Ask an Atheist at Zoo Night](#)
Fri Jun 7 [Monthly discussion, Stockton](#)
Sat Jun 8 [Brunch and Atheism, Stockton](#)
Sun Jun 9 [20th Anniv Party for AOF-open](#)
Wed Jun 12 [Concert in the Park, Stockton](#)
Thu Jun 13 [Noelle on Free Will, Turlock](#)
Fri Jun 14 [Game Night in Oakdale](#)
Sat Jun 15 [Skeptical Conf. in Berkeley](#)
Sat Jun 15 [Potluck Game Night - Sacto](#)
Sun Jun 16 [Blasphemy Breakfast in Rocklin](#)
Sun Jun 16 [Brunch and Atheism in Turlock](#)
Sun Jun 16 [Blasphemy Brunch Arden/Arcade](#)
Sun Jun 16 [Ancient Christian Study Group](#)
Mon Jun 17 [Book Club Most Hated Woman](#)
Tue Jun 18 [Free-thought Roundtable Discussion](#)

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Sac Coalition of Reason
Calendar: sacramento.unitedcor.org/sacramento/page/events

Subscribe

Volume 1, Issue 6

Issue Theme: Scams and Hoaxes

June 2013

Skeptical in Berkeley

Last year we all overdosed on homeopathic "medicine", among other things. Learn more about skepticism, then put your wits to the test. Just look at this great schedule:

James Randi Live via Skype, including Question and Answer, so come ready!

Eugenie C. Scott - Legends, Hoaxes, Frauds and Frauds of Science

D. J. Grothe - Grassroots Skepticism

Julia Galef - Thought Experiment Workshop

I. C. E. - Community Experiment; share your results

Jill Tarter - SETI in an Age of UFOs: What Constitutes Extraordinary Evidence?

Laurie Essel-Tarver - Who Owns Your Body and the Future of Medical Ethics

Leonard Tramiel, et al - Lessons Learned from a Paranormal Investigation

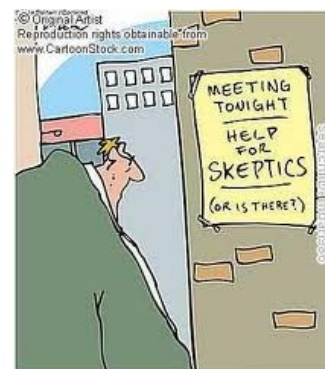
Anthony Pratkanis - Weapons of Fraud

Ryan Kane - Magic Show

Over a dozen exhibitors!

Saturday, June 15 9:00 - 6:00 (lunch is available on the premises) DoubleTree Inn, on the water at the Berkeley Marina, just off Hwy 80, at 200 Marina Blvd, Berkeley, CA.

<http://www.skepticalcon.com/>



AOF 20th Anniversary Party - Open to All!

June 9, 2:00 - 5:00. Let's regale, eat and sing as one of Sacramento's first groundbreaking freethinking organizations celebrates its long history of paving the way for others - for 20 years, and counting! Details [here](#).

Entertainment by
The Mockingbirds!

Food from the expert
Chef Tony of Headhunters

Tales to be shared from the
crypt!

Get your tickets here.

<http://aof20yearparty.eventbrite.com/>





Facebook.com search for 'Sacramento Area Coalition of Reason'. 'Like' the Sac CoR Facebook page, where you will find a daily variety of news, humor, insights and tools for every person of reason. Our readers represent 20 countries. 40% live in the Sacramento area. Sign up to keep informed! ([Click Here](#)) or go to <http://www.facebook.com/pages/Sacramento-Area-Coalition-of-Reason/376151155788191>



This guy was arrested a few days ago for trying to force a clairvoyant to hand back his cash that he had paid for a love spell. It seems the spell didn't work. We're talking \$210,000. Police were called to the scene, where he was making a scene. Everyone was arrested. They found the money rolled up in a newspaper, hidden. Not only did the love spell not work, but she didn't foresee her arrest, either, apparently. So, no psychic clue about the cops coming? *Really?*

Book Club

America's Most Hated Woman -

The life and gruesome death of Madalyn Murray O'Hair. Join the discussion even if you haven't finished reading it. ... Our [2013 book list is here](#). Open to everyone, [Coffee Garden, 2904 Franklin Blvd, Jun 17, 6:30](#).

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"Ask The Social I.Q. Lady"

Dear Social I.Q. Lady,

I would think atheists would be better at not falling victim to scams, but I have atheist friends that still got taken. What's a good way to avoid becoming a dupe? Trevor

Dear Trevor,

Yes, it happens to the best of us. We fail to recognize the signs. We let our veil of skepticism part and walk right into the arms of a scam. Fortunately, we can learn from our mistakes and the failings of others to avoid any future blunders.

The three keys to help you avoid becoming a victim of a scam are: negotiating skills, a moral compass, and common sense. Good negotiating skills include having the power to walk away from a "deal", being able to observe (watch and listen), being prepared (gathering pertinent information and checking all the facts), and patience. Patience is important because scammers frequently use the "sense of urgency" on their victims to get them to act quickly before they come to their senses.

We all need a moral compass. It's that "inner voice" that alerts us to what is right and what is wrong. If your moral compass is confounded by greed, you're more likely to buy into a scam. Someone once said, "It's the set of the sails and not the gales that determine your direction."

If something is too good to be true, it probably is. Use your common sense to "smell" a rotten egg. Be skeptical. We are very good at seeing what we want to see. Don't forget to look for what you don't want to see.

Anyone can be a victim. Use your brain and think. When in doubt, ask a skeptical friend to take a look at the "deal". Your friend will not be emotionally involved and can offer a fresh perspective.

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



Davis Crêpes and Atheism

Join us on June 24, 6:00 PM, at Crêpeville in Davis for a happy time with like-minded friends, new and old.

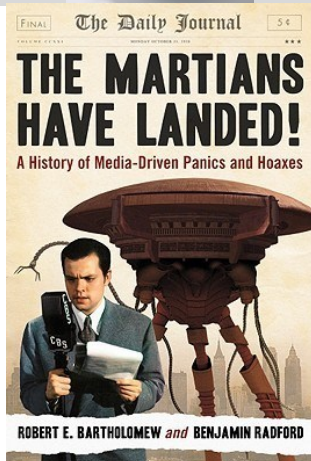
Exceptionally good crêpes, from more recipes than can be imagined!

Come have a good time, every fourth Monday of the month. 330 3rd Street.



New Member Meetup

New to the freethinking community? Come to this casual event for a quick overview of the community and plenty of time to just hang out and get to know each other. *Coffee Garden, 2904 Franklin Blvd., Every 1st Wednesday, 6:30p - 9:00p.*



The Martians Have Landed

Chemtrails, Morgellons Disease, Satanic Cult Scare, Chupacabra Panic, Organ Theft Panic, Killer Vaccines, London Riot Hoax. and many more. Why people believe and vehemently react to stories we hear on TV and the internet. [Details.](#)



Toilet Paper Drive

No, really. Bring packages of toilet paper to Cal Expo 7am - 7pm June 13. For a good cause.

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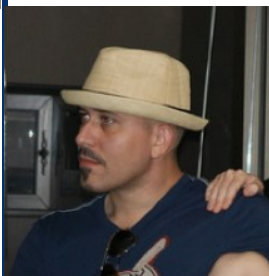
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Ancient Christian Study Group

Sunday, June 16. Meet at the Shine Cafe, 1400 E St, Sacramento.

The history of ancient Christianity is an endlessly fascinating topic. Don Fox and Steve Thoreson are facilitating this meet up to review the history of Rome, religions of the Roman empire, Gnosticism, Mystery cults, history of Christian persecutions, biographies of major Christians, the history of the Bible and many other related topics. If you ever wanted to sort out Eusebius from Clement, or Constantine from Diocletian, or the Vulgate from the Septuagint, or if you want a new perspective on the old ways, then this group is for you.



Your hosts are Steve Thoreson (left) and Don Fox (right). Previous biblical knowledge is not required to participate.

We will be meeting every third Sunday. Each meeting a specific topic will be covered. [Details here.](#)



SKEPTICISM 101 BETA 1.0
THE SKEPTICAL STUDIES CURRICULUM RESOURCE CENTER
Skeptical resources, freely available to anyone, anywhere, anytime.

WELCOME TO SKEPTICISM 101!

THE SKEPTICAL STUDIES CURRICULUM RESOURCE CENTER is a comprehensive, free repository of resources for teaching students how to think skeptically. This Center contains an ever-growing selection of books, reading lists, course syllabi, in-class exercises, PowerPoint presentations, student projects, papers, and videos that you may download and use in your own workshop.

Lessons in these resources include:

What science is, how it differs from pseudoscience and why it matters, the scientific method and how to use it to investigate and conduct skeptical analyses of extraordinary claims, how to construct effective arguments and rhetorical strategies, reason, logic, and skeptical analysis, the psychology of belief, how ideas are presented within academia, how peer review works, and much more... <http://www.skeptic.com/skepticism-101/>

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

June 8 10:00 am Brunch and Atheism: Panera Bread 10718 Trinity Pkwy Stockton [Map here](#)

June 19 6:15 pm Freethought Dinner: Sushi Cafe Express 1221 Alhambra Bl [Map here](#)

June 16 11:00 am Blasphemy Brunch: Mel's Diner 565 Howe Ave [Map here](#)

June 28 6:30 pm Skeptics in the Pub: Hoppy Brewing Company 6300 Folsom Blvd [Map here](#)



March With AU

March with Americans United in the Gay Pride Parade June 15 11:00 am. Show support for separation of church and state. End at the Capitol. Just show up, or [email Carol for more info.](#)

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How To Discuss Atheism - Workshop #3



Whether you plan to talk with peers, relatives, or others about atheism, or simply want to learn more about how to discuss the subject, come join us as we learn the 'talking points' of being atheist. Too often we are caught off-guard when someone brings up religion or atheism. In this supportive, friendly atmosphere of like-minded people, we will learn the tools of talking atheism. Arcade Library 6:30, June 27.

Blaspheming With Food Every '3rd Sunday' Morning!



Such a pleasant group of happy heathens on a fine Sunday morning! Every 3rd Sunday of the month, in various locations around Sacramento, come sit down to breakfast or brunch with us. Everyone is welcome! It's a nice way to meet like-minded friends. No topics, just have fun. See <http://unitedcor.org/sacramento/page/events>

TAM! 2013
JULY 11-14 | LAS VEGAS
SOUTH POINT HOTEL | CASINO | SPA

**FIGHTING
THE FAKERS**

Join **JAMES RANDI**
and emcee **GEORGE HRAB** plus
more than 50 PRESENTERS!

FRIDAY
KEYNOTE: **SUSAN JACOBY**
AUTHOR, *THE AGE OF AMERICAN UNREASON*

DAN ARIELY | SUSAN BLACKMORE
SUSAN HAACK | MICHAEL SHERMER
CARA SANTA MARIA | JERRY COYNE

AND MANY OTHERS
REGISTER ONLINE:
amazingmeeting.com



Freethought Dinner—June 19, 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 **Sushi Cafe Express**, 1221 Alhambra Bl for good food, good drink and sparkling conversation about all things freethoughty! We ate here last year and enjoyed it. [Map here.](#) [Details here.](#)



Calendar cont'd.

Wed Jun 19 [Concert in the Park, Stockton](#)

Wed Jun 19 [Free-thought Dinner Social](#)

Fri Jun 21 [Drinking Skeptically, Stockton](#)

Sun Jun 23 [Free-thought Movie Night, Lodi](#)

Mon Jun 24 [Davis Crêpes & Freethinking](#)

Wed Jun 26 [Concert in the Park, Stockton](#)

Thu Jun 27 [How To Discuss Atheism 3 of 5](#)

Fri Jun 28 [Sacramento Skeptics in the Pub](#)

Fri Jun 28 [Godless Game Night, Lodi](#)

Tue Jul 2 [Book Club in Ceres](#)

Wed Jul 3 [Concert in the Park, Stockton](#)

Wed Jul 3 [Welcome New Members Mtg](#)

Save these 2013 dates:

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

Oct 12 [Freethought Day Sacramento](#)

Freethought Roundtable

Good discussion forum. [June 18, 7:00pm.](#) Coffee Garden, 2904 Franklin Blvd. They have great sandwiches, too!

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Free Little Library Project Update

By Mynga Futrell

The Brights are always looking for ways to reach out, to educate, and do good.

This Free Little Library mockup looks pretty simple, but it took a good while to get just the right proportions and sizes for features we are wanting to include to make our LFL unique as well as serviceable. (The guy on left is actually a civil engineer, so we had great fun with that!)



We will later be calling for donations of children's books from the broader community, especially any on nature, critical thinking, or good young reader fiction, so I'll let you know specifics of that when we're ready to receive.

Call for carpenter skills! Help us make the real thing in July! [Details here.](#)

Review: Holocaust Story Gave Me Nightmares

By Judy Saint

Everything was legal, Elizabeth Igra reminds us. Elizabeth was young, but very aware as the organized efforts began. She reminds us Germany was a democracy, and they *used* the system. It was a modern society. The whole movement was orchestrated. Start with outcasting groups; always evaluating groups. End with all of society allowing babies and small children to be killed en masse because they were useless to the "right" people. And everyone went along.

Little slurs can be ignored, and that's where it starts. Soon laws were passed saying who could legally be CEOs, judges, etc. Then they took ability to make money away, then moved them, then killed the strong, outspoken ones who might rise up or try to organize. All legal, in a modern democracy just like ours.

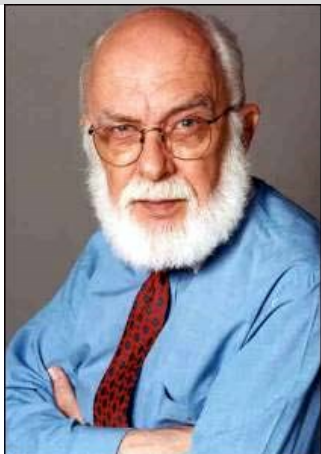
She spoke from the perspective of a 4 to 7 year old, who still played with friends, who thought Germans were nice. They were always told that every change was to make them more comfortable or somehow help the system. It worked.

Her vivid recollections of only seeing shiny boots between adult legs, of being swept up inside her mother's coat only able to see the rain puddles become pink, fleeing through a back window suddenly homeless... These memories gave me nightmares. It was orchestrated bit by bit. It happened in a democracy among happy people. It can happen again. It can happen here. It's scary. It's real.

Game Nights

Atheists and theists are all welcome. Bring a friend, roommate or honeypie. Chatting, eating, playing, laughing. Sound good? Three to choose from:

[Sacramento Jun 15 6:00 pm](#), or [Lodi Jun 28 at 7:00 pm](#), or [Oakdale Jun 14 at 7:00 pm](#)



\$1 Million Prize

At JREF, we offer a one-million-dollar prize to anyone who can show, under proper observing conditions, evidence of any paranormal, supernatural, or occult power or event. The JREF does not involve itself in the testing procedure, other than helping to design the protocol and approving the conditions under which a test will take place. All tests are designed with the participation and approval of the applicant. In most cases, the applicant will be asked to perform a relatively simple preliminary test of the claim, which if successful, will be followed by the formal test. [Details here](#). No winners in 40 years.

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Homeopathy - Homeo-Pathetic, More Accurately

- **No Ingredients:** Homeopathic remedies are so dilute that most do not contain a single atom of their 'active' ingredient. To make such a dilution, you'd have to mix one molecule of duck liver with more matter than exists in the entire universe.
- **No Testing:** Homeopathic remedies are exempted from regulations. They give a substance to a healthy person, observe the symptoms it causes, and then figure dilutions of the same substance will cure those symptoms. For example, coffee causes sleeplessness—so they prescribe homeopathically-diluted coffee as sleeping pills. Less is better, and backward.
- **No Facts:** Major pharmacy chains like CVS, Walgreens, and Rite Aid sell useless homeopathic products right alongside real medicine, with no warning to consumers. U.S. law exempts homeopathy from certain rules that govern drugs and nutritional supplements, so manufacturers can market homeopathic remedies for the treatment of illnesses despite the fact that reputable studies show homeopathy does nothing, and they have no facts that show otherwise.



Review: SEX and RELIGION

Get ready to lose your standards. Greta Christina is here to show you why they are relics of a religious past that can and should be reconsidered without the tinge of dogma.

Speaking at UC Davis, she challenged us to rethink our attitudes. Personally, I'll never see sex and bodies the same again. You go in to her talk thinking you're oh, so liberal, but you walk out realizing you're oh, so not.

She presents a research-driven basis for discussing sexual mores and values from a new perspective void of dogma. It's quite different than the discussions this country typically has. Basically, if a practice does no harm then legislating restrictions is merely bigotry. We can look at sexual practices in light of practical implications, but only after we learn where our biases are. Greta Christina helps us all learn where our blinders have been placed, and why. She helps us remove them so we can have new discussions and new thinking about sex, sexual roles, sexual behavior, and all things sexual. Bravo to Greta for taking on a taboo topic, and enlightening us.



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

Review: Alzheimer's Talk with Mynga Futrell

By Roger Zabkie

Speaking without access to her PowerPoint presentation -- due to a computer malfunction -- Mynga Futrell nevertheless gave a riveting talk on the subject of Alzheimer's disease. Titled "Heartache and Hope: A Look at Alzheimer's Disease," her speech was a perfect mixture of startling statistics and moving personal stories.

After saying that Alzheimer's is only one form of dementia, she explained that it represents the largest subset of that umbrella term. Furthermore, she pointed out that Alzheimer's is the number six cause of death, and the numbers are growing due to the aging of the Boomer generation. But research into this devastating affliction is funded at about \$500 million, a fraction of what is budgeted each year for other major diseases.

There is no cure for the disease, although there are drugs to help the patient cope. Diagnosis is now possible without awaiting autopsy, thanks to brain scanning techniques which have recently become available. There also is more help for the primary caregiver than in decades past: day care, home care, assisted living facilities all can provide relief.

And the caregiver -- usually a spouse or other family member -- really needs help! Ms. Futrell stressed that caring for a dementia patient is far, far more difficult than caring for a patient suffering from another type of affliction.

Although she provided much more information in her talk, Ms. Futrell very much wants people to consider volunteering with the Alzheimer's Association, as she has. She said that group needs all forms of assistance. If we are at all interested we should check out www.alz.org for more information.

Thank you, Mynga Futrell, for your very excellent presentation. We were all moved and informed by it.



Ask an Atheist at Hot Rod Night at the Zoo!

June 6 - Hot Rod Night

50s diner dinner, rock music and hot rods!

Ask an Atheist goes to the Zoo with Hot Rods and live music on Twilight Thursday, June 6 (Atheist Pride Day!) <http://www.saczoo.org/page.aspx?pid=518>

5:30 - 8:30 pm (admission to zoo covers Hot Rod Night, too)

- Live music by: The Count - a classic rock/classic soul band
- Car show featuring: Very Hot Hot Rods
- Featured nonprofit partner: Sacramento Children's Museum
- Dinner special: Classic drive-in style double burger, onion rings and a mushroom skewer. Nice, cold drinks!

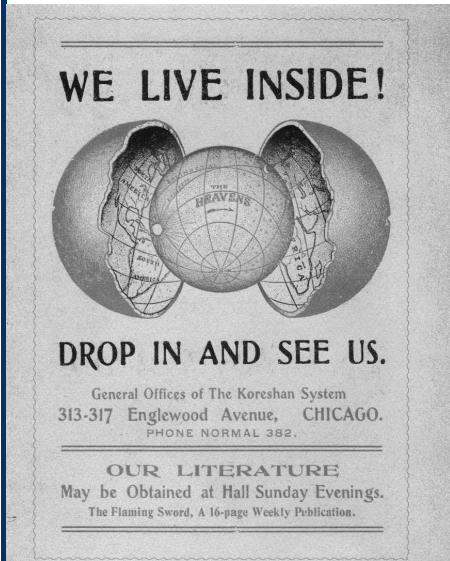
Buy your bright blue shirt there from Judy, \$10. Then wear it everywhere!



The Inverted World of Cyrus Teed

By Ken Nahigian

You know the Flat Earth Society, of course: the watchdogs and insurgents against atheistic round-earth cosmology. Its history goes back to 1849. The last major flat-earth spokesman, Rev. Charles K. Johnson, died in March 2001. The Society may or may not still exist—no one seems sure. It is or was one of my favorite movements. Not my most favorite, however. Listen.



Suppose that the world is not flat but spherical, and hollow. Suppose we live on the concave surface within, like bacteria on a beach ball's interior; planets, stars and wheeling constellations all afloat in the enclosed space, the farthest mere dustmotes only 4000 miles away—and the true external universe (under our feet) solid matter going out forever—what then? Such was the inverted view of Cyrus Teed, an eccentric doctor (herbalist, actually) from upstate New York.

In 1869, Cyrus had a vision: a beautiful woman appeared and explained to him the true, divine form of the world. Taking the name Koresh (do not confuse, please, with David Koresh of Waco), he published *The Cellular Cosmology*, his opus magnum, where he eagerly explained Earth's concavity. "All that is opposed to Koreshanity is antichrist," proclaimed the new prophet.

The sun is in the center. Dark on one side, it turns; this explains day and night. Tricks of optics produce the illusions of sunrise, sunset and a horizon, and also prevent us from seeing the antipodal continents directly above. The moon is some kind of weird reflection of the Earth (Koresh was sure he could see outlines of the continents on it).

Besides astronomy and geology, he also denounced the scientific method, Copernican theory, atomic theory, chemistry, conventional surveying, and of course optics. Everything you know is not just wrong, it is damn wrong.

Koresh toured and preached. He founded a communal society in Chicago, the Koreshan Unity, a periodical, *The Flaming Sword*, and eventually a political party (no, not the libertarians, shut up). At its height, "Koreshanity" had several thousand followers. In the 1890s he established the town of Estero in Florida, near Ft. Meyers, declaring it the coming capital of the world. He expected eight million settlers. ... Only 250 came.

Koresh also taught that after his death he would rise to heaven, taking his faithful followers with him. Alas, he died in 1908, and eventually county health officers forced the colony to bury the decaying body. They placed it in a tomb, which a 1921 hurricane washed out to sea. *The Flaming Sword* continued to publish until 1949. It never admitted the divine leader was gone.

Followers hung on for a while, but now they are sadly gone, too. Florida preserves the main colony as a historical site in Estero.

If curious, and with patience, you can read Cyrus's revelation at <http://www.sacred-texts.com/earth/cc/cc00.htm>. Ah, Cyrus. Afloat like the dust of stars within the hollow earth. Rest you well.

Are Brains Necessary?

The Koreshan Unity will open Meetings, beginning Sunday Evening, July 19, 1903, to continue Every Sunday till further notice.

KORESH SPEAKS

At Corinthian Hall, 17th Floor, Masonic Temple.

Subject, July 19:—Brains the Basis of Mental Science, and How Utilized for the Healing of Disease. Opportunity will be given for Five-Minute Criticisms after the lecture.

Lecture Begins at 7:45 p. m.

COME AND BE HEALED

"Without Money and Without Price." You are free to call in your friends to the fountain of vigor and of perpetual youth. When Jesus healed he did not make a Millionaire of himself and call it Christian Science.

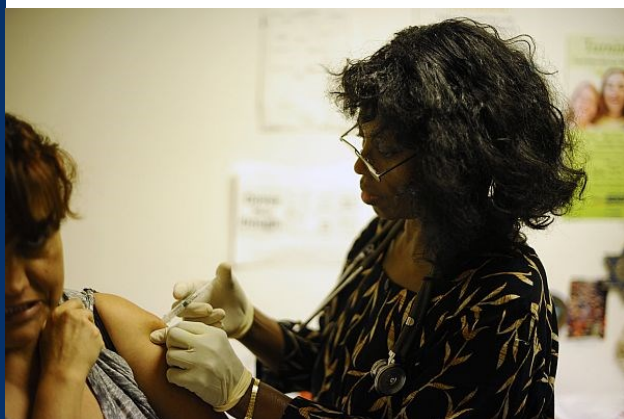
Complimentary. This Admits Bearer and Friend.

You'd Never Fall For This, Right?



A British businessman who sold the Iraqi security forces more than 6,000 fake bomb detectors bought from the United States was convicted of fraud. The device has a lengthy piece of metal that freely swings as you tilt it. It was supposed to swing to the side if it detected the item of interest. McCormick sold the devices for up to \$40,000 each. The fake detectors were purchased by the Iraqi government and used at checkpoints throughout the country, as well as in Mexico, Syria, Lebanon and Niger. McCormick faces up to eight years in prison for selling this swivel.

Magnetic Man. People commonly stick smooth objects to their oily skin claiming special powers. (Try that when you're wearing a shirt.) "I defeated the similar claims of a Chinese gentleman who even stuck a porcelain toilet lid to his own son's chest to prove how magnetic his whole family was. I dusted father and son with talcum powder, and their powers evaporated." (James Randi)



At a humble medical clinic in LA, lined with messages of Christian inspiration, patients flocked to see Dr. Christine Daniel. Few knew that the physician and ordained minister at Sonrise Medical Clinic faced up to 150 years behind bars and a \$5.5 million fine after being convicted of federal fraud charges for bilking desperate cancer sufferers of their money, claiming she could cure them with something she whipped up herself. "She's terrific. She's fantastic. And she's *Christian*," said Alicia Wolfkill, 33, of Mission Hills.



The Woman Who Could Not Be Lifted. Here's the trick: Keep yourself at least a foot away by placing your hands on their upper arms. Similar fake tricks are used to promote those "Power Balance Bracelets" which are no more than plastic. Sacramento was embarrassed to have named our sports arena after this fakery - which is now renamed Sleep Train Arena, also not great for a sports team arena name, but better than being named for a hoax.

“You Will Believe” ... Regardless, it seems



Weeping Statue of Mother Mary Blesses All Who See It! Actually, the blood is a colored, commonly sold rose-scented oil. Tiny drilled holes were found where the oil had been injected so it could seep out slowly. Even after discovery of the hoax people still insisted it was a genuine bleeding statue caused by God. The church profited quite well. Another famous weeping statue was found to be “natural” - in that the tears actually came from a leaky plumbing line from the bathrooms above. That discovery was not well taken. “I don’t care (about the report),” one parishioner said. “With my eyes I saw that. I believe it in my heart. It’s a miracle. No one knows what happened, but it’s a sign from God.”

Guardian Angel Saves Man, Caught in Actual Photograph! Is it a miracle he survived? Is this angel responsible? This picture with accompanying story of survival is a complete fabrication using Photoshop and an actual accident that can be verified (for authenticity). First posted on a faith-based site, it gained a list of comments claiming confirmation, and was reposted repeatedly before it was revealed that the image was a hoax. These photoshopped hoaxes were generated by Matt Martin for *Sacramento Reason*.



Angels Seen in Skies Around the World as New Pope is Elected! More accurately, our photographer, Matt Martin, found an image of an angel, blurred it and blended it into a cloudy sky to produce a compelling “sign”. (See original image in corner of photo.) Thanks, Matt, for showing us how easy it is to make a hoax that goes viral.



A Real Mermaid! Come See the Proof! This made PT Barnum famous. The creature was allegedly caught in 1842 by a “Dr. J. Griffin.” Griffin was actually Levi Lyman, one of Barnum’s close associates. Though many people believed Barnum’s claim, the Fiji mermaid was actually the torso and head of a baby monkey sewn to the back half of a fish and covered in papier-mâché. People flocked to see it.

"I'm actually an atheist."

Atheists are rebuilding Rebecca's house! AHA and indiegogo have collected \$102,000 of the \$150,000 needed. Watch the interview that started it all [here](#). Let the world know atheists [care here](#).



Rebecca spoke honestly and bravely, and she deserves our community's special support. She has not asked for this, but we're doing it, and [you can help](#) send this powerful message across the nation.

In a live [interview](#), CNN's Wolf Blitzer spoke to Vitsmun after her decision to leave Moore, OK at the last minute to avoid the tornado that ultimately killed 24 people and destroyed hundreds schools, businesses and homes, including her family's. Blitzer asked, "You've gotta thank the Lord, right? Do you thank the Lord for that split-second decision?" Vitsmun replied, "I'm actually an atheist."

"Rebecca Vitsmun's courage to speak forthrightly about her atheism inspired humanists and others who are good without a god across the country to help her through this difficult time." said Roy Speckhardt, executive director of the American Humanist Association. "Natural disasters are a product of our environment, not supernatural forces, and we have a responsibility to help those affected by them."

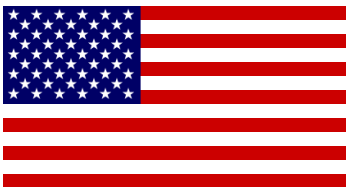
"We are so appreciative for all of the support we have been receiving during this difficult time," Vitsmun said. "People from all around the world have reached out to us and the people of Moore and Newcastle and we don't know how we can ever thank everyone enough for their generosity. It is really hard to even know where to begin, but having so many here to embrace us while we figure it out makes the path ahead less intimidating. Thank you all so much."

The American Humanist Association established Humanist Charities in 2005 in response to an outpouring of generosity from humanists and atheists who wanted to support relief efforts in the aftermath of major disasters around the world. *Sacramento Reason* asks you to participate.

 **indiegogo**



**Atheists
Unite**



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".



Can I make tax deductible donations? **Yes!** Many freethinking groups are 501c (3). groups, and would well use your deductible offer. See table on previous page.

We're on the Web!



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This issue's theme -Scams and Hoaxes

Our brains are story-tellers. The person able to second-guess the confirming bias of their own brain's insistent stories is a laudable freethinker, indeed.

Here's another hoax for you. This one even convinced the author of Sherlock Holmes. The **Cottingley Fairies** appear in a series of five photographs taken by Elsie Wright and Frances Griffiths, two young cousins who lived in Cottingley, England. In 1917, when the first two photographs were taken, Elsie was 16 years old and Frances was 10. The pictures came to the attention of writer Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, who was enthusi-



astic about the photographs, and confirmed them as clear and visible evidence of fairy existence. After stirring the imagination and belief of many, the shapes were found to be from a children's book, pasted onto cardboard and hung in the garden. That explains why the girls told adults they would scare away the fairies, so the girls always had to take the camera alone.

This issue was fun to put together. I had no room for all those fake psychics, faith healers or other mind-benders. Those fakers will fill another issue someday.



Advertising space happily donated by *Sacramento Reason*



Camp Quest West

Camp Quest is a **secular** summer camp near Sacramento that teaches science and Humanism during an all-American camp experience.

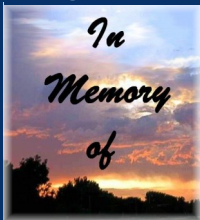
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- \$275 Volunteer's Bunk and Food
- \$597 Full Campership for a Child

Visit CampQuestWest.org to donate, or send a check to PO Box 50803, Palo Alto, CA 94303.

We're beyond belief.



Susan Mogull

Susan L. Stalnaker was born in 1942 and raised in Weston, W. Va. She graduated from a state college and earned a master's degree in English from West Virginia University. She taught English and American history at elementary schools in Maryland and at Glenville State College in West Virginia before marrying Bob Mogull in 1970. She moved to Sacramento with her husband, a long-time business professor at California State University, Sacramento, and raised three children.

Susan L. Mogull, a teacher and influential advocate for accurate portrayals of Jews and Judaism in education, died April 24 of cancer, her family said. She was 72.

Raised Methodist in West Virginia, Mrs. Mogull was a schoolteacher in the South before she converted to Judaism, married and settled in the Sacramento area. Her unassuming personality and soft approach to people contrasted with her firm beliefs and leadership as a champion for balanced and accurate treatment of Jewish people, heritage and history in public schools.

She co-founded the Institute for Curriculum Services, a national resource center that provides schools with materials about Jews, Judaism and Israel. She reviewed textbooks on California Department of Education advisory panels and testified before state officials on textbooks and the treatment of religious minorities in education.

She was instrumental in a State Board of Education decision to require changes in a textbook that spelled the Christian God with a capital "G" but the Jewish God with a lower-case "g." She helped persuade a publisher to revise a sixth-grade history book that contained many errors, including a suggestion that Jews – not the Romans – killed Jesus.

While opposing teaching religion in public education, Mrs. Mogull supported teaching about religion in appropriate subjects and grade levels. As founder and president of the Sacramento chapter of Americans United for the Separation of Church and State, she helped persuade California officials to adopt constitutional guidelines for teachers to discuss religion with neutrality and objectivity.

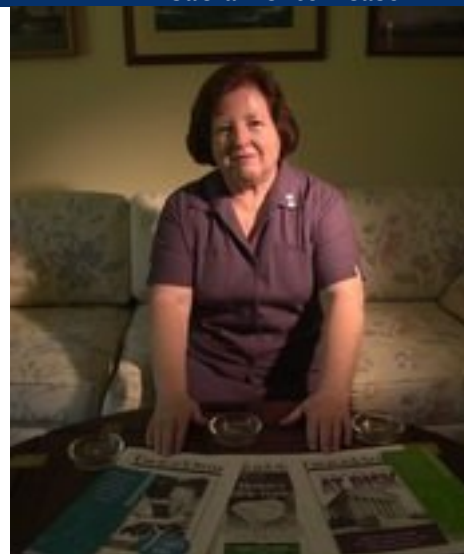
"The basic principle that Susan felt so strongly about is that religion thrives when government stays out of their business, and legislation should never be based on people's religious preferences," said Carol Velarde of Americans United for Separation of Church and State.

She received the Earl Raab Award from the Jewish Public Affairs Committee of California for service to the statewide Jewish community.

"I had no idea I was marrying such an activist," her husband said. "She was such a nice, easy girl to live with, and in 42 years we never argued – and here she was this dynamo, this bulldog in her activities. She was such a gentle woman."

Survived by: Husband, Bob of Elk Grove; children, Robin Livingston of Peoria, Ariz., Scott of Austin, Texas, and Michael of Atascadero; sister, Amanda Lilly of Virginia; three grandchildren.

Remembrances: In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to the Institute for Curriculum Services, SF.



Dec. 15, 1940 - April 24, 2013

