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Sac Coalition of Reason  
Calendar: [sacramento-  
to.unitedcor.org/  
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Volume 11, Issue 4

Issue Theme: Other Gods

April 2014

## *Rise and Shine Extravaganza with Dan Barker* Easter Morning - for the Whole Family!

### FREE!

**April 20, 10:00 am**  
**3 Stages Theater**  
**Harris Center**  
**Folsom, CA**

### RSVP here (opt.)

Featuring Dan Barker's wit, wisdom and fun lyrics as he shares this beautiful spring morning at the piano. The co-president of the Freedom From Religion Foundation, Dan loves any chance at a piano to inspire, entertain and just share a lot of fun with us!



Opening for Dan is our own celebrated and well known stand up comic Keith Lowell Jensen. You'll be rolling in your chairs with laughter as Keith shares those little things you just never think about in his non-stop style. Just when you think you've heard the punch line he hits you with a bigger line in his perfect timing and style. Laugh out loud fun!

Special appearance by the Mockingbirds, with Special Guest Appearance by the goddess of the spring equinox herself to help us remember why we lovingly celebrate the coming of spring! Plus more family-friendly surprises on this special morning extravaganza!

We're glad the sun is out, the birds are singing, and life feels renewed everywhere! Ring in the equinox with friends new and old!

Bring your friends and family! Open to everyone, believer and non-believer alike! Suitable for all ages! See you there! [More details here.](#) (Please [RSVP](#), but if you haven't, you're still welcome, with your friends! Seating is limited.)

Sponsored by the [Greater Sacramento Chapter of the Freedom From Religion Foundation.](#)



**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>



### Exodus 20:23

God says, "Do not make any gods to be alongside me." Wait a minute - God admits us folks down here are actually making our gods? We can do that? Otherwise, why would he have to tell us not to? And he doesn't want us to make any alongside him? Is it OK if we make some, say, under him? Can we make people, too? But, seriously, God knows we make our own gods? *REALLY?*

### Freethought Dinner Social

**Pooja Indian Grill**  
in W. Sacramento.  
Thursday, April 17,  
at 6:15 p.m. [Map here.](#)

Please join us for conversation and good food. We ate here a few years ago. Great Indian food. Easy to get to and has its own parking lot. [Details here.](#) Here's a [link to the menu.](#)

### "Ask The Social I.Q. Lady"

Everyday we're faced with making choices. We're free to make any choice and to basically do whatever we want. There is no puppet master pulling our strings. We're not free though to choose our consequences resulting from our choices. When it comes to food, we can choose whatever we'd like to put into our bodies. Some foods will be kind to us: they'll give us lots of nourishment and make us feel good; other foods will zap us of our energy, create toxins in our bodies, and may even make us sick. That doesn't mean we can't ever have what we want (unless you're allergic), it just means we have to accept the consequences of our food choices.

If you haven't yet begun to make small changes in your eating habits, start today. Instead of a fast-food burger, have a sandwich on whole grain bread. Cut out soda from your diet and switch to water, tea, or fruit juices. You may even want to try a green smoothie! You'll be doing your body a favor and it will reward you right back with health and happiness.

We can also make choices with what we choose to put into our minds. Are you a victim of negative or religious thinking? Dwelling on negative thoughts can also affect your body in a harmful way. Sometimes bad things happen. That doesn't mean we have to simmer for hours or even days on end about it. Take a negative and try to turn it around. For example, when someone cuts you off while driving, instead of going on about it, let it go. They might be an accident looking for a place to happen and you should be grateful you're not going to be part of it.

Free your body. Free your mind. Think.

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

### Join the Rally at the State Capitol! May 1st, 6:00 PM!

Support the **National Day of Reason (NDOR)**:

- Wear "Day Of" **YELLOW** shirts on May 1st ([Available Here](#))
- Attend the rally on the **west steps of the State Capitol, May 1, 6:00 PM!** Lots of speakers and music!
- Change your social media profile photos and cover photos using [NDOR graphics \(Available Here\)](#).
- Help educate others as to why separation of church and state matters and helps protect both secular Americans as well as religious ones!

Join us on the west steps of the Capitol! More details here: <http://ndorsac.org/>







Shine Cafe, 1400 E St. [Map here](#). For atheists who want to know the foundations of Christianity better than Christians do. Previous biblical knowledge is not required to participate. 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. Everyone welcome. Details are found on [SacFAN calendar](#).

## Flying Spaghetti Monster Party

**1:30 PM**

## April 20

**Check website for location (Have a location to offer?)**

Aarr! Join us in celebrating His noodliness at Sacramento's 7th Annual FSM Party. [See details here](#) for location updates.

This year will be a potluck, please bring some food to share. You might also want to bring some grog. We encourage everyone to dress in full pirate regalia, of course, since it's the only appropriate attire to celebrate the Flying Spaghetti Monster.

Learn more about the Church of the Flying Spaghetti Monster at [venganza.org/about](http://venganza.org/about).

Willing to help? [Email us here!](#) Great fun! See you there!



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

Apr 12 10:00 am Brunch and Atheism, Panera Bread, 10718 Trinity Pkwy, Stockton [Map here](#)

Apr 13 9:30 am Blasphemy Breakfast, Mels Diner, 6708 Lonetree Blvd [Map here](#)

Apr 13 11:00 am Blasphemy Brunch, Mel's Diner 565 Howe Ave [Map here](#)



### Blaspheming With Food Every 3rd Sunday!

Happy, well-fed heathens! One Sunday each month, in various locations, 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 the calendar](#) for all locations.

### Book Clubs Sacramento "AA: Cult or Cure?"

Apr 21, 6:30 pm  
Coffee Garden  
2904 Franklin Bl  
[Details here.](#)

Ceres, Apr 1 7pm  
1st Tues each mo.  
[Details here.](#)

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### Highway Cleanup

**Apr 26, 9:00 am**

Meet at the Elkhorn Bl exit off CA-99 in the Park & Ride lot on the west side.

We provide everything you need, including grabbers, trash bags, gloves and friends! Pitch in as we all vie for the most mysterious of items found. Fun work, and keeps the "atheist" stretch under our "Atheists and Other Freethinkers" sign nice and clean. [Details here.](#)



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### Coffee Church

**Sacramento:** Apr 6, 3:00 - 6:00 pm

Panera Bread, 2731 Del Paso Rd, [Map here.](#)

April showers bring May Flowers and that's a great inspiration for meeting up for coffee and conversation! [Details here.](#)



### Coffee Klatsch

**Modesto:** Apr 20, 11 am - 2 pm

Starbucks, 1800 Oakdale Road, Modesto. [Map here.](#)

Always the third Sunday of each month. Bring books, devices while we solve the world's problems, exchange witty repartee, or just nurse Friday night hangovers. [Details here.](#)

### Get 'National Day of Reason' Stuff

On the National Day of Prayer we celebrate a National Day of Reason! Attend the rally at the State Capitol May 1, 6:00 PM! Speakers! Music!



Order mugs, shirts, car magnets, stickers and more at:

<http://www.evolvefish.com/fish/ndor.html>

Download all NDOR graphics free!



**Cosmos TV Show Controversy** Creationists demand equal time on the show. He is giving creationism equal time, even emphasizing it, and saying exactly the truth about it. So, they're getting their fair air time; it's just not what they'd have said about it. New episodes each week, shown on Fox network 6 pm Sundays or National Geographic Channel on Mondays at 7 pm. Watch full episodes [online here](#).

## Upcoming Events

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**19** [Sunday Sewing Circle, Saturday Edn.](#)  
**19** [Wine and N.O.S.H.](#)  
**20** [Rise and Shine Extravaganza with Dan Barker](#)  
**20** [Blasphemy Brunch, Dixon/Vcville](#)  
**20** [Coffee Klatch, Modesto](#)  
**20** [Ancient Christian Study Group](#)  
**20** [7th Annual Flying Spaghetti Monster Party](#)  
**20** [Freethought Movie Night, Lodi](#)  
**20** [Cosmos, watch it together](#)  
**21** [Book Club, Sac](#)  
**24** [Sing with the Mockingbirds!](#)  
**25-27** [Booth at Festival, Stockton](#)  
**25** [Godless Game Night, Lodi](#)  
**25** [Sacramento Skeptics in the Pub](#)  
**25** [Dinner, Karaoke, Dance in Modesto](#)  
**26** [Highway Cleanup](#)  
**26** [Humanist Hikers](#)  
**27** [Brunch and Atheism, Turlock](#)  
**27** [Cosmos watching](#)  
**28** [Sirens & Satyrs of Sharp crafts Manteca](#)  
**May 1** [Lobby Day](#)  
**May 1** [Rally at State Capitol for Reason](#)

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## 'Ask an Atheist' at The Galleria Mall

**Apr 5, 2:00 pm**  
**The Westfield Galleria Mall**  
1151 Galleria Blvd  
Roseville [Map here](#).

Shop, eat, wander, have fun while others see the blue "Ask an Atheist" shirts. We walk in pairs, and usually get thumbs up. Buy your shirt there from Judy, \$10. Join us!



## Learn to Lobby at Lobby Day!

By Secular Coalition for California

Lobby Day Planned for Thursday, May 1st

Please join us for our upcoming day of secular activism at the statehouse. **No experience is necessary.** We will provide training on general lobbying and on the specific topics for our lobbying visits. Handouts will be provided.

After training, everyone will split into small groups and go to pre-scheduled appointments at the offices of elected officials. We will pair up each group to have a mix of people who are experienced and inexperienced at lobbying.

In-person lobbying from constituents is still the most effective method for reaching elected officials. Because the representation of secular and nontheistic Americans is still very low, we need as many secular and nontheistic people to speak up and tell their elected officials that they are voting, paying attention to the issues, and showing who they are.

Although this is a one day event, we are also recruiting people ready and willing to make independent lobbying visits to the statehouse throughout the year. We need people who are local to Sacramento, have flexible schedules, are knowledgeable about the issues, are comfortable talking to other people about the issues, and are motivated to effect change.

Please sign up as soon as you can, so that we can begin to schedule appointments with elected officials. The last day to register is April 23. [Go here to register](#).

And, be sure to stick around afterwards for the National Day of Reason rally.

Find out more about the [Secular Coalition for California](#), our [Key Issues](#), and be sure to [subscribe to Action Alerts](#). You can also [Like us on Facebook](#). Email us with any questions - [california@secular.org](mailto:california@secular.org).

## Game Nights

Atheists and theists are all welcome. Bring a friend, roommate or honeypie. Chatting, eating, playing, laughing. Sound good? Several to choose from. Be sure to check the calendar for updates.

[Sacramento Apr 26 at 6:00 pm](#) or [Salida Apr 11 at 6:30 pm](#) or [Lodi Apr 25 at 6 pm](#)



### New Members Meetup & Coffee

Apr 2, 6:30 PM  
Coffee Garden  
2904 Franklin Blvd  
[Map here.](#)

For new and current members of SacFAN. A casual event with a quick overview of the group and plenty of time to just hang out and get to know each other.

- What SacFAN is
- Recent news and announcements
- Other local, related groups of interest
- Upcoming Events

After that, everyone is invited to continue to socialize and stay as long as you like. Buy some great drinks and snacks, and make some new friends! [Details here.](#)

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### Family Time By Rick Tracewell

THANK YOU to all of you parents reading this. You are raising your children to use their noodle. You are leading by example and teaching your kids to think critically and to challenge ideas and thinking that doesn't make sense to them. You are not creating a child with a "foggy" brain who can't tell fact from fiction. You are not teaching your kids that it's okay to believe that there are inherently (and invisible) evil creatures above (have you read the old testament?) and below them pulling at them constantly, but at the same time they shouldn't believe such crap shown to them in ANY other facet of their life.



Parenting is one of those tricky things. It's natural, yes, but the outcome of the child's rearing affects ALL of us in society. There is more need for reason than ever before with our global world where we are all connected, sharing ideas – good ones, bad ones and extremely dangerous ones.

I'm not one who gives ANY credence to the bible, but even the bible refers to "other gods". At every point in human history there were gods that people revered, worshipped and feared. Zero evidence has ever been discovered that supports ANY of these gods. Yet here we are in 2014 with amazing technological advances and a MAJORITY of the world still believes in an invisible man in the sky with the best video game controller, like EVER, in his or her hands.

Question #1) How does a child raised with flawed logic cope with the real world?

Question #2) What's the percentage of "believers" in the prison population lately?

Again, THANK YOU for raising your children to think critically, making them less susceptible to bullies and better able to cope with real world issues in life.

### Wine and N.O.S.H. (Natomas Order of Secular Hostesses)

May 19  
7 - 10 PM

Mashariki's Place in North Natomas (see details link below)  
A loose affiliation of drinkers and eaters focusing on wine and hors d'oeuvres, who meet monthly at alternating residences; however, we are not the least bit snooty. [Details here.](#)



## Local Groups to Visit or Join

Name	Emphasis		Tax Ded		Website
Agnostic & Atheist Student Association (AgASA)	UC Davis student group Socialize with like-minded students.	Y		<u>Y</u>	<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	<u>National only</u>	<a href="http://au-sac.org">au-sac.org</a>
Secular Student Alliance @ Sacramento State University (CSUS)	CSUS student group to socialize and promote freethought.	Y		<u>Y</u>	<a href="http://csusaso.wordpress.com">csusaso.wordpress.com</a>
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>
Brights Action	Translate our naturalistic worldviews into constructive actions for school/library/media	Y	Y	<u>Internat'l only</u>	<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	Y	N	<a href="http://sac.ffrf.org">sac.ffrf.org</a>
Humanist Association of the Greater Sac Area (HAGSA)	Humanist events, speakers, focus is on doing good.	Y	Y	<u>Y</u>	<a href="http://hagsa.org">hagsa.org</a>
Sacramento Area Coalition of Reason	Directing the community to the various groups of reason.	Y	N	<u>Y</u>	<a href="http://SacramentoCoR.org">SacramentoCoR.org</a>
Sac Area Skeptics (SAS)	Promotion of skeptical thinking, awareness of reality, logical skills.	Y	Y	<u>Y</u>	<a href="http://www.meetup.com/sacskeptics/">http://www.meetup.com/sacskeptics/</a>
Sac City Freethinkers	Sac City College student group. Meet, question, promote, unite.	Y		<u>Y</u>	<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	<u>Y</u>	<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	<u>Y</u>	<a href="http://Secular.org/states/chapters/california">Secular.org/states/chapters/california</a>
Secular College Student Alliance	Sierra College student and faculty group for non-belief in religion.	Y		<u>Y</u>	<a href="http://secularstudents.org/sierra">secularstudents.org/sierra</a>
Stockton Area Atheists and Freethinkers (SAAF)	Meetup events and philanthropy, from Galt to Modesto.	Y		<u>Y</u>	<a href="http://StocktonAAF.org">StocktonAAF.org</a>

**From a Wiccan:** “Wiccans believe in reincarnation and have a supernatural connection to the world; we are more tuned in with nature and the elements. The way that Wicca and atheism is the same is that we accept those who are outcasts and different, those who aren't accepted in regular society we cherish because we don't like having people be left without a friend or someone to talk to. Wiccans and atheists are very supportive of each other as all human beings should be. The world we live in is so cruel but we Wiccans and atheists make it our duty to help and support the special people who never have a voice.” ... So, atheists, what do you think?



## Skeptics in the Pub - Two Locations

### Sacramento

Apr 25, 6:30 pm  
Hoppy Brewing Co.  
6300 Folsom Bl, Sac  
[Map here.](#) Enjoy rational discourse, a drink or two, and maybe a bite to eat.  
[Details here.](#)

### Stockton

Apr 18, 6:30 pm  
Valley Brew  
157 W. Adams Street, Stockton  
[Map here.](#) VB is a restaurant and bar located just off the Miracle Mile.  
[Details here.](#)

## Finally!

*The Skeptic's Annotated Bible* is in Print!  
[Buy it here.](#)

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# < 30

By Sara Lone

Everyone has heard of the 10 commandments, right? How many people can list off all 10...? Your guess is as good as mine, but I find it really interesting that the first one is: Thou shalt have no other gods before me.

Hmm... why would an omnipotent, omniscient, omnipresent, etc., etc., god need to put that clause in? Well, even though our country (and government) is inundated with monotheistic Christian beliefs, back in the day - like **ancient** back in the day - everyone believed in multiple gods, also known as polytheism.

When we think of pagans now we think of earth-loving, tree-hugging, spell-casting, stand-in-a-circle-and-chant groups; historically, though, they were the real deal and 99% of the ancient Mediterranean world believed in and worshipped multiple gods all at once. Think of your basic Christian holidays: Christmas, Easter, even Halloween! These all started out as pagan holidays but were 're-claimed' by the converted Christian Roman Emperor, Constantine. Why else would we put trees in our houses and search for eggs? Do you realize how ridiculous that sounds?

Another interesting fact, Jesus wasn't seen as divine until the early 4th century (some 300 years after his "death") - which coincides with Constantine becoming Emperor. I'm just sayin', it sounds fishy. Everyone believing in multiple gods, having their own holidays promoting fertility/harvests dedicated to those gods.... it stands to reason why the author of the 10 commandments would want to put a clause in that says: p.s., no other gods but me. Why? Because everyone back in the ancient day thought that was bonkers and practiced polytheism! To everyone who thinks Miley Cyrus is crazy: she's famous and rich (you and I are not). Even if you're an infamous trendsetter, you'll get buku attention+ crazy followers.

Contact Sara at [Under30@sacramentoreason.org](mailto:Under30@sacramentoreason.org). #under30nones

## Start Your Own Blasphemy Brunch!

Enjoy going out for breakfast with like-minded friends, new and old.? If you don't see a Blasphemy Breakfast or Brunch in your area, start one! We can help! All you need is a restaurant and an appetite. No rules. No topics. Just get together some Sunday morning. We'll show you how to make it a calendar item so others can join you. Try it. [Let us help.](#)



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**Social IQ Lady** cites her sources for last month's column, since a reader asked: "[Http://www.christianitytoday.com/ch/asktheexpert/oct26.html](http://www.christianitytoday.com/ch/asktheexpert/oct26.html) first mentioned the fish symbol/vagina reference. After some research, I found the book I cited 'Blind Faith' by Morné du Toit. That book talks about the Sea Goddess Atargati and her symbols of fertility. Another good book illuminating this is Ancient Faiths embodied in Ancient Names. [http://ssoc.selfip.com:81/texts/1868\\_inman\\_ancient\\_faiths\\_v1.pdf](http://ssoc.selfip.com:81/texts/1868_inman_ancient_faiths_v1.pdf)" (edited for space)

## Juvenile Hall Update

By Judy Saint

After last month's article about visiting juvenile hall as an atheist, about 15 people have stepped forward wanting to help. Some want to go with me, or even take a unit of juveniles of their own. Others bought books, others want to help organize. I delivered the first 6 books, which the girls must take turns having in their cells. I have received 10 more since then. I now have a rubber stamp so all future readers will know they came from "the good" atheist members of the community. I'm in the process of getting an ID badge for permanent visitor status. My fingerprint appointment is next week, then a 4 hour class.

[Books Behind Bars Wish List](#)

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## Secular Family Day - Two to Choose From

**Sacramento:** Apr 6, 11:00 am

Fairytale Town, 3901 Land Park Dr, Sacramento [Map here.](#)

Fairytale Town is a 2½ acre children's play park and outdoor children's museum that brings fairytales and nursery rhymes to life! Located in William Land Park. [Details here.](#)



**Manteca:** Apr 19, 2:00 pm

Strike Zone Manteca Bowl, 1251 E Yosemite Ave, Manteca [Map here.](#)

We are going bowling! Strike Zone has bowling, an arcade, batting cages and billiards. We plan to rent a lane once people have arrived. [Details here.](#)

## "Greatest Story Ever Sold" - Reviews

If you didn't hear Andrew Seidel, you missed something awesome. Here are three comments about the day:

"This event was well worth the time and exceeded my expectations. I appreciated the time allowed to enjoy the lunch and chat with others. I rate Andrew Seidel as being an excellent public speaker and debater; he is certainly well grounded in Establishment Clause law and current legal activities related thereto. We all need to heed his advice to 'come out of the closet' at every opportunity and work to get others to join FFRF." - John

"Andrew made a brilliant argument against American law being built on Judeo Christian values. It was so nice to meet him and get a chance to talk to him. The food was amazing too!" - Becky

"He succinctly countered everything that theocrats like to claim when suggesting that this is a Christian nation. And, his optimistic plea to have people come out of the closet and stand up for our

rights couldn't have come at a better time." - David

[Video of this same speech given last year in Wisconsin.](#)



Photos by Matt Martin



## Forgetting God

By Aaron Asbury

Hey there! Do you believe in god? Yeah, me neither. Have you ever though? How did you know your god was the right god? If you're like me, the Bible told you so.

My Sikh friend was taught the concept of Ik Onkar (or the one creator) by the Guru Granth Sahib. An Indian girl I used to work with believed in multiple Hindu deities, learned from her parents. Aside from different origination stories that share similar details, etc., what is the one common denominator of all these "gods"? They're all the one, true god for someone out there. And most, if not all, of these base the truth and knowledge of their beliefs in stories, passed down through generations, as historical record. Isn't it convenient that the god you worship is validated only by the story that it says is the absolute truth?

Coming out of Christianity, this was both a point of revelation and further confusion for me. Where is there to go, what comfort is to be had, from any system of belief that has no evidence for its existence? I only had to open my eyes and see beyond the want for such a belief, the want to choose the "right" god, to find that this life holds more than enough truths, and wonder, and reality by itself.

Does staring at the starry night sky and knowing it is the result of a massive expansion of matter throughout billions of years make it any less awesome than saying one god spoke it into existence? No. Not to me. Quite the contrary actually.

For some though, being as insignificant as we are (in the grand scheme of things), is a daunting prospect without the comfort of those supernatural beliefs. To my fellow humans needing that reassurance: keep it. I've got reality. No god required.

Aaron writes a blog of the same title, musing on his life after god, at [www.forgettinggod.com](http://www.forgettinggod.com)



## Overheard - True Stories

"At a fundraiser dinner last night at the local Elks Lodge, a proud Elk and his wife, having a meal at our table, had been trying to recruit us all evening. I didn't want to join, but couldn't quite get them off the subject as the evening went on. Finally, I pointed out a reference to God in their Elks literature, to which the Elk proclaimed loudly to me, with a scowl of authority and knowingness, that there are three requirements to join as an Elk: "One, you have to be over 21. Two, you have to believe in God." I quickly interjected as matter-of-factly as possible, "I can't belong. I don't believe in God."

I think it was that I said it so directly without apology that got to him. He never got to requirement number three. He walked away from the table, leaving his wife and her friend to tell me how you don't really have to believe because "there is a Jewish member of the women's group and Jews don't believe in God." Oh, where to start.... " - anonymous



Have a funny, inspiring, touching or other interesting true story to share? [Please email it to me here.](#)

## Listen Up!

By Cleo Kocol

Freethinkers don't genuflect or tithe. Sometimes we even picket places of worship. I can still see the shock on the faces of the two priests and two nuns exiting the New Jersey Catholic Church in a limousine in 1977. My sign read, TAX CHURCHES.

But sometimes in our zeal we are in danger of making gods of our non-theist celebrities. Lately, as Cosmos' glories transfix us again, I recall how easy it is to make gods of our own star-studded galaxy of freethinkers. I actually tripped over my feet when Carl Sagan was given his Humanist Award in 1981. At the AHA convention in San Diego, I was rushing around a corner leading to the elevator, and he was rushing around the opposite corner. Of course we collided in front of the elevator door. He seemed amused as I over-apologized. I was so flustered, I was barely coherent. I'd seen Cosmos, had the book, been to Puerto Rico where he and others listened for extraterrestrial intelligence. In my mind Sagan stood head and shoulders above the rest of us. To top off my awkwardness, I realized we were taking the elevator to the same floor!

Once I collapsed in my room, common sense and logic took over. I realized I had for a time made him a god. I was careful not to repeat that worshipful stance (non-stance?) when Neil deGrasse Tyson leaped onto the Humanist scene. Today candidates for god status abound. Tyson, of course, Gloria Steinem, Richard Dawkins to name three. I greatly admire all of them, but I remind myself, they are humans, too. Gods exist on the same plane with fairy tales, Easter bunnies, and Santa Claus. Admire our non-theist celebrities, honor them, but be careful not to genuflect, even in our minds.

Cleo Says

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Sacramento Reason

### MODEL SECULAR POLICY GUIDE

The relationship between religion and government is constantly a subject of heated discussion for all Americans. Religion and government are intertwined in government. All decisions made away from affiliation with organized religious institutions, the consequences of government, including the effects of religiously based government, are consequences for religion on the one hand and the state, as well as the separation of church and state, on the other. This guide provides background and policy recommendations on a variety of issues, some originating with the Founding Fathers and others with more recent events, as a result of the humanist approach to government.



## Secular Policy Guide

Finally, we can tell our elected leaders exactly what a secular America would look like. Here are our issues and concerns, put together by the Secular Coalition for America.

[Link here.](#)

The policies we advocate help to promote a religiously-neutral government. They are solid policies that are good for the country as a whole—both the religious and non-religious alike.

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## Legal Watch By Arash Khosrowshahi

Satanic Temple, a religious organization, has proposed a monument of Satan to be placed at the Oklahoma state capitol. This is partly in response to a Ten Commandments monument placed at the capitol in 2012. While the ACLU of Oklahoma has filed a lawsuit to remove the Ten Commandments, the Oklahoma Capitol Preservation Commission, in charge of what monuments are displayed, has put a moratorium on what new monuments may be added, including the monument of Satan, while the Ten Commandments lawsuit is litigated.

Whether the monument of Satan may be allowed largely depends on whether the Ten Commandments monument may be allowed. The law on Ten Commandments displays is highly contextual: the Supreme Court had ordered Ten Commandments monuments on Kentucky courthouses to be removed for having a religious purpose in *McCreary County v. ACLU of Kentucky*, while simultaneously allowing a Ten Commandments monument at the Texas state capitol for advancing a secular purpose of historic and social meaning in *Van Orden v. Perry*.

If the Ten Commandments display is allowed but the Commission refuses the monument of Satan, then the question would become if there is religious discrimination. The Supreme Court has stated in *Larson v. Valente* that the Establishment Clause prevents the government discriminating among different religions, so it is possible that the Satanist monument would be allowed.

This issue is interesting, as Freethinkers are composed of more than just atheists or agnostics—many who identify as pagan or satanist would also call themselves Freethinkers. Moreover, those who are for a strict separation of church and state might find the Satan display to be just as violative of the Establishment Clause as the Ten Commandments. But if a Judeo-Christian display is allowed, the Satan monument could be viewed as an instance of "if you can't beat them, join them."

*These statements are opinions of Arash Khosrowshahi, Attorney at Law, not to be construed as creating an attorney-client relationship, nor legal advice. Provided for educational purposes only.*



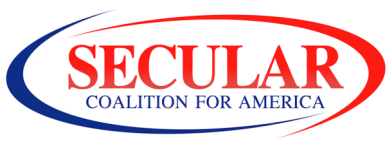
## How Do I Find My Representatives?

US Senate: [http://www.senate.gov/general/contact\\_information/senators\\_cfm.cfm](http://www.senate.gov/general/contact_information/senators_cfm.cfm)

House of Representatives: <http://www.house.gov/representatives/find/>

State Senate/Assembly: <http://findyourrep.legislature.ca.gov/>

Local representatives can always be found on your City or County websites.



NATIONAL SECULAR NEWS - LISTEN EVERY WEEK

Call (559) 726-1300 every Thursday at 9:00 AM Enter Code: 953064. Or, if you prefer getting your national secular updates by email, then [sign up here](#).

## California Legals - Dept. of Bad Bills By Tom Manger

While the SCCA supports or opposes a variety of bills each year, we thought it important to highlight the most sectarian bills this year. We want people to understand the types of religious incursions that happen in California every year - and why we oppose them so vehemently.

### **Legalizing Religious Discrimination - AB 2237**

This year many states introduced bills that would codify the right for people and businesses to discriminate against others based upon strongly held religious beliefs. Although it didn't make the news, California was part of that group. Assemblymember Grove introduced AB 2237 to allow that discrimination. The SCCA did a lobby visit with her office. She has since dropped this bill.

### **More Legal Loopholes for Religious Nonprofits - AB 1934**

It is an obscure part of California Corporate Code, but there is a whole section devoted to religious nonprofits. This year Assemblymember Alejo introduced AB 1934 to create five new loopholes for these nonprofits - but are not available to secular organizations. This bill would make their finances more obscure, it would allow religious organizations to bypass decisions meted out by the Secretary of State's office, and it would allow religious canons to dictate who can make decisions regarding the legal status of the organization. The SCCA did a lobby visit regarding this bill and have seen one modification made. However, we are opposing this bill in full and have plans for additional lobbying efforts.

### **Allowing Religious Hospitals to Call in Their Own Religious Rape Counselors - SB 798**

Although this bill doesn't explicitly set this up as policy, it quietly opens a backdoor that would allow it. It is a bit of a fluke that we even discovered this backdoor. We know that religious hospitals don't allow doctors to even \*discuss\* contraception, sterilization, abortion or fertility treatments unless a woman's life is in imminent danger. We much prefer that secular hospitals bring in secular rape counselors and provide a robust discussion about all forms of reproductive healthcare. In other states, there are rape crisis centers run by religious organizations. It would be an easy next step for religious organizations in California to have their Crisis Pregnancy Centers also provide rape counseling. And, then \*all\* discussion of these healthcare options would be eliminated. The SCCA met with the Senator who introduced this bill and will be lobbying for its defeat as written. Additional lobbying, education and outreach efforts are being planned.

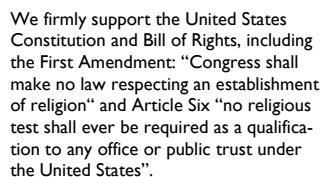
### **Taxpayer Funding of Private Religious Schools - AB 2421 & AB 2422**

This bill would allow tax credits for individuals and businesses that make direct donations to private scholarship funds within the state. These same types of funds have been set up in other states and they have been used to predominately fund private religious schools. The National Center for Education Statistics shows that 80% of all students attending private schools attend schools run by religious denominations. So, that adds up to a lot of taxpayer funding for religious schools. The SCCA met with this legislator's office to stake our opposition on these bills. These bills are not likely to see the light of day.

### **Blanket Restriction Against Sterilization Procedures - SB 1135**

The SCCA has not had a chance to meet with this Senator's office. But, until we have a chance to better understand the reasoning and justification we oppose it. This bill is specific to female prisoners so it is a limited scenario. But, if a female prisoner requests sterilization as part of another medical procedure (giving birth, tumor removal, etc.) it doesn't make sense to make this procedure completely inaccessible. We will be investigating further.

Find out more about the [Secular Coalition for California](#), our [Key Issues](#), and be sure to [subscribe to Action Alerts](#). You can also [Like us on Facebook](#). Email us with any questions - [california@secular.org](mailto:california@secular.org).



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**Yes!** Many freethinking groups are 501c3. See Page 7 for details.

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## Making Civil Marriages the Norm

Current law states that the only people who can solemnize a wedding are religious celebrants and various governmental officers and agents. There are limited secular options. So, this is an obvious instance of religious privileging. A new bill (AB 1525) proposes to add "city clerks" as a new class of government employees who can solemnize a wedding. This certainly gives more balance to the options. But, since government employees are usually only available Mon-Fri during normal work hours, the options are still restricted. City hall, county courthouses and other government buildings are less than ideal for weddings. Couples getting civil weddings want more personal options. So, the SCCA is looking to completely separate the marriage solemnization from the wedding ceremony - whether civil or religious. To that end, the SCCA has proposed an amendment that would allow any notary public in California to solemnize a wedding.

The LGBT community is very much in favor of this amendment since the vast majority of LGBT weddings are civil ceremonies. (Not too many religious denominations willing to solemnize these weddings!) We have also been reaching out to groups representing the wedding industry, notaries, the LGBT community, and the secular community.

If we don't get our amendment added this year, we will be looking to have it introduced as its own bill next year.

Find out more about the [Secular Coalition for California](#), our [Key Issues](#), and be sure to [subscribe to Action Alerts](#). You can also [Like us on Facebook](#). Email us with any questions - [california@secular.org](mailto:california@secular.org).

## Sacramento Area's Freethinking Calendar

The Sacramento Area has its own event calendar for atheists, skeptics, humanists, and all other freethinkers. Sacramento Area groups love to cooperate and mingle, all supporting each other in these times of religious zeal. The Sac Coalition of Reason, which maintains this automatically-updated calendar, is not a club or group with a Board, or rules, but is a resource directing anyone interested to find local freethinking groups that suit them. Bookmark this calendar on your devices. It's a handy one-stop reference for almost everything going on up and down the valley.

<http://unitedcor.org/sacramento/page/>

