

Sacramento Reason

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Shine the Light of Reason!

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

Subscribe

Volume 11, Issue 5

Issue Theme: Free Exercise

May 2014

National Day of Reason Rally at the State Capitol!

Wear Yellow! Bring Signs!

Thursday, May 1 6:00 - 8:00 PM

West Steps of the State Capitol Building ([Map](#))
1315 10th St. Parking garage at 10th and L St.

Celebrate REASON on this National Day of Prayer! Hear poignant messages and personal stories as we gather to rally for Reason!

Religion has no place in government, and is our most persistent threat to religious freedom and freedom from religious dogma. Hear inspirational messages about separation of church and state, raising children to use reason and critical thinking, how full life can be without religion, and more!

Be counted this Thursday as we gather to rally for Reason. This year's theme is "Because Reason Works!" Wear yellow in support!

Speakers: Tom Manger, Arash Khosrowshahi, Andi Griffith, Cleo Kocol, Judy Saint, Kate Woolley, David Fitzgerald, David Diskin, Noel Navarro, Barri Babow, with special messages from Rebecca Hale, Roy Speckhardt, Dan Barker, Ramin, an atheist in Iran, and others!

Don't miss this! Show lawmakers we're here!
[Details here.](#)

Rally Speakers!



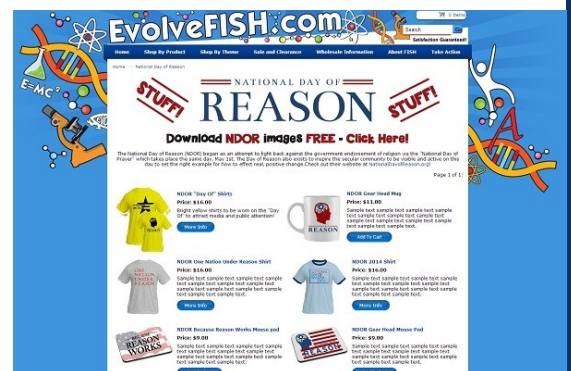
And Others!

Download NDOR Graphics Free!

Make your own signs and shirts for the rally! EvolveFish offers all the official NDOR graphics available for FREE DOWNLOAD!

Be creative! Use these on Facebook or elsewhere May 1!

[Buy NDOR stuff here,](#) or
[Download Graphics Free here!](#)





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>



The First Amendment says we can't make a law prohibiting anyone's free exercise of their religion. Well, the holy books all say to kill all those who do not believe as you do, So, I guess believers have a lot of "free exercising" of their religion to do. Better begin soon before sinners start dying of old age on their own. In fact, a lesbian recently stood before a church which had a sign proclaiming that gays and lesbians were to be stoned to death, like their religion dictates. She brought a stone to make it convenient, but they said the person who does the stoning was out at the moment. Stoning is by appointment only? REALLY?

Finally!

The Skeptic's Annotated Bible is in Print!

[Buy it here.](#)

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"Ask The Social I.Q. Lady"

Some people argue from a "position" rather than arguing the "issue".

Positional arguing is when each side takes a position, argues for it, and makes concessions to reach a compromise. For example, when it comes to abortion, one side claims "abortion is wrong no matter what" and the other side might state "abortion may be wrong sometimes (like late-term abortions) but should remain legal". Still others would argue "abortion is nobody's business except the pregnant woman's".

When people argue over positions they tend to lock themselves into those positions. If you believe abortion is fine if done within the first trimester but not after, the other person will try to "bargain" with you: "what's the difference between two months, twenty-nine days and three months, four days?", and so on. These types of "bargaining" are not useful on arguments of issue.

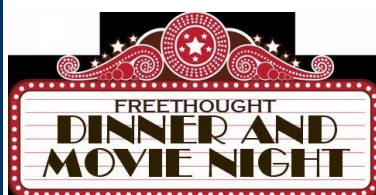
Religious beliefs interfere with critical thinking. Most Christians believe that life begins at conception. They have little to no understanding of the stages of life. They don't understand or even acknowledge undifferentiated cells in stem cells. Without proper education of the issue, they can only argue their position.

No protester is going to change his or her mind with a sharp barb directed at their lack of knowledge on this issue. Do the right thing by saying nothing and walk on by. If you do want to say something, ask a simple question like "can you explain to me what embryonic stem cells are?" or "did you know that 25 per cent of all pregnancies spontaneously abort before the woman even knows she's pregnant?"

Sometimes, the best thing is to avoid an argument when it's obvious that one is arguing from a position of extremism or stubbornness. The issue is usually not the problem for them, their religious ideals are.

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

Freethought Movie Night in Lodi



Sunday, May 18

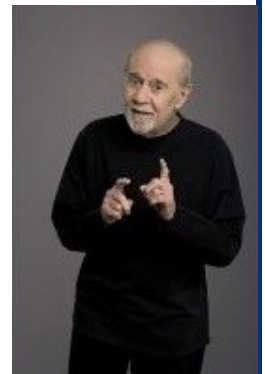
7:00 - 9:30 PM

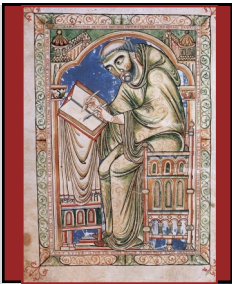
George Carlin's "It's Bad For Ya!"

David's Clubhouse (see details)

Chip in for food; we order out.

[Details here](#)





Ancient Christian Study Group - May 18, at Noon

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.

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SkeptiCal in Berkeley

Saturday, May 31, 2014
Oakland Asian Cultural Center
388 9th Street, Oakland, CA

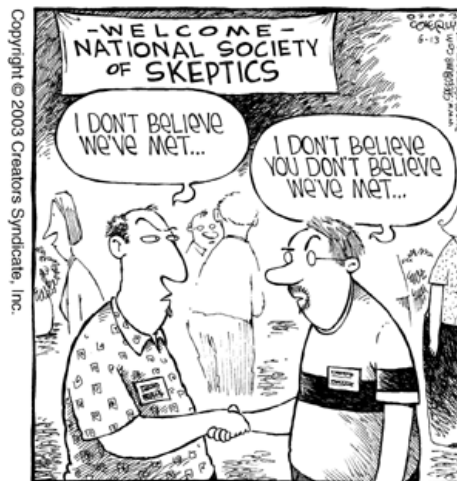
[Buy Tickets Here](#)



The 2014 SkeptiCal Conference will be held at the Oakland Asian Cultural Center on Saturday, May 31st. We are proud to once again bring together an excellent and knowledgeable group of local speakers on science and skepticism. We anticipate another day of stimulating ideas and conversation.

This years speakers include Paul Doherty, Director of the Teacher Institute at the Exploratorium; Sheril Kirshenbaum, author and Director of The Energy Poll at The University of Texas at Austin; Patrick O'Reilly, Professor of Psychiatry at the University of California, San Francisco; Ben Santer, Climate Researcher at Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory; and many more. Please visit our website at www.skepticalcon.com to see our full speaker lineup.

Regular tickets are available at a discounted rate of \$40 until May 1, when the price goes up to \$50. Students, with an active student ID can register for \$30 until May 1. We are also offering a t-shirt for \$15. There is limited space available so assure your spot by registering at skeptical2014.brownpapertickets.com/ today.



We thank you for your interest in attending our annual conference and your support of the skeptics movement. We look forward to seeing you in May! [More details here](#).

COSMOS: A Spacetime Odyssey - Watch It Together!

Sunday, May 4 at 7:30 PM - Check [calendar](#) for other Sundays.
Home of Bryan & Hope Schear (address in the details link below)

Get together with fellow Skeptics to watch the new Cosmos series!

Arrive by 7:30 to watch the corresponding episode of the original *Cosmos*, followed by *Cosmos: A Spacetime Odyssey* beginning at 9:00. This event is kid friendly, so bring those young Skeptics with you! ... BYOB and chair.

[Details here](#)



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

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

May 18 9:30 am Blasphemy Breakfast, Mels Diner, 6708 Lonetree Blvd [Map here](#)

May 18 11:00 am Blasphemy Brunch, Mel's Diner 565 Howe Ave [Map here](#)



Blaspheming With Food Every 3rd Sunday!

Happy, well-fed heathens! Every 3rd Sunday of the 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 "Godless"

May 19 at 6:30 pm
Coffee Garden
2904 Franklin Bl
[Details here.](#)

Ceres, May 6
7:00 pm
1st Tues each mo.
[Details here.](#)

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Sunday Sewing Circle

May 11 1:00 - 4:00 PM

Raley's Grocery Store Event Center, 4650 Natomas Blvd, Sacramento

Bring those creative projects to work on while we chat with our talented and friendly group.

We meet inside Raley's. Bring your quilt scraps, crochet hook, knitting needles, sewing machine, scrap book materials, and so on (and sew on?) and come join us!

[Map here](#) ... [Details here](#)

7th Annual FSM Party - Review

Below are David Diskin and Rachael Harrington at the entry table, leading to the wonderful lodge full of friends and spaghetti-monster themed food aplenty!



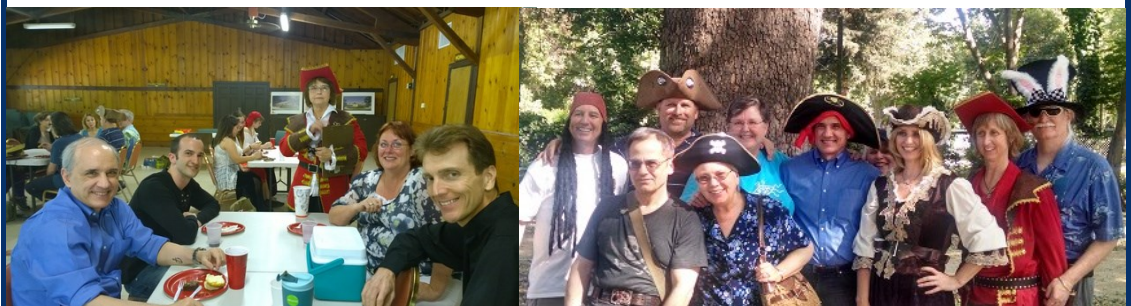
Nancy Sneed won the female costume contest, seen above right, though calling the winner was tough!



The Mockingbirds had special pirate songs for us!

Below are some group shots taken inside the roomy lodge in the gentle wooded area, and an outdoor group with ship chaplain, Dan Barker. The weather was perfect!

Thanks for a great time, great food, great company and fun times on this 7th Annual FSM feast! Here's to next time! Arrgh!



Online Secular Classes

Interested in philosophy, society, science, or the challenges of emerging technologies? Enrichment classes for independent learning (not college credit) are now affordable and accessible. Leading authors and scholars from the secular world are now offering their online classes for everyone. They are all announced at one convenient website: secularactivism.org

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23 [Sac Skeptics in the Pub](#)

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24 [Humanist Hikers](#)

25 [Brunch and Atheism, Turlock](#)

26 [Sirens Satyrs of Sharp crafts Manteca](#)

30 [Godless Game Night, Lodi](#)

31 [SkeptiCal Conf.](#)

31 [Brights Projects](#)

Jun 3 [Book Club Ceres](#)

Jun 4 [New Member Meetup - Welcome](#)

Jul 4 [BBQ Potluck, Stockton](#)

Jul 4 [Modesto Parade](#)

Jun 6 [Dinner Wine and Art Hop, Lodi](#)

Jun 7 [The Tubes at Harlow's](#)

Save The Date

Aug 10 AOF Speaker Series

Oct 11 Freethought Day

Nov 14 [Lobby Day in Washington DC](#)

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Secular Family Days - Two to Choose From

Sacramento Zoo - May 4, 12:00 - 3:00 PM 3930 W Land Park Dr [Details here.](#)

Stockton: All 3rd Saturdays are Secular Family Days in Stockton. The May event is not yet determined, but check [this link](#) for updates.

Dan Barker Shines

Billed as the “Rise and Shine Extravaganza”, we had a most enjoyable morning with such a great lineup of entertainment at the Harris Center.

Dan Barker says playing a 9 foot Steinway allowed him to play his songs differently, pausing for those long sustains. Some in the audience did not know Dan plays so well. His knowledge of atheist composers, and their songs, delighted us all. Opening were Keith Lowell Jensen, The Mockingbirds with John Lucas on guitar, a special highly educational romp with the Goddess of Spring, and various other shenanigans and fun on this Easter morning. Everyone even received Cadbury eggs!



Dr. Sarah Strand: "The Evolution of Religion"

East Bay Atheists, Berkeley, CA

Sunday, May 4 at 1:30 PM

Berkeley Public Library, 2090 Kittredge at Shattuck (One block from Berkeley BART station)

Parking: \$7 at Allston & Harold Way, a short block from the library. [Details here.](#)



Coffee Klatsch



**Sunday, May 18
11:00 AM**

Starbucks
1800 Oakdale Rd
Modesto

Bring books, devices, or notepads while we solve the world's problems, exchange witty repartee or just nurse our hangovers.

[Map here.](#)

[Details here.](#)

Can You Help?

We need readers to look at the CA Educational Codes finding all references to any teaching of religion. FFRF has a lawsuit pending and could use some help. [Email here](#) to inquire.

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Activist Corner

By Julie Wedge

Two simple words – Hobby Lobby. For our faith filled friends these two words speak volumes about how persecuted they are. How dare the big bad government tell a corporation – which, in fairness, has been deemed by the Supreme Court to be a person - they have to provide a pill that helps millions of women control their reproductive choices, prevent suffering from PMDD, provide a much needed hormone boost...oh no. Birth control is for those bawdy sluts.

I only have a very small space to let you know how, if this outrages you as much as it does me, to let your representative know he/she does not only represent voices of faith. Let him/her know some people understand the science behind good medicine and, quite honestly, I have 2 teenage girls in my house. Birth control gives us all piece of mind that for one week a month no one does any permanent damage to one another!

Call your representative. Send an email if you are not the chatting type. Snail mail a letter right to their Washington DC office. This kind of silliness must be stopped. It is time for women - and men who believe women are humans – to unite against this clear violation of reason, science and good old-fashioned common sense. Stand up. Because when we are seen as a community, when we are seen as humans, when we are seen as equals, and when we fight shoulder to shoulder against that which is clearly wrong we win. And win we must.

(See "How Do I Find My Representatives?" on page 13.)

I think it'd be great if Hobby Lobby doesn't have to provide Birth Control for their employees because they love Jesus.

And I'd love it if anyone with a Jehovah's Witness as an employer had to pay out of pocket for a blood transfusion.

And it'd be great if Scientologist owned businesses didn't have to cover your psychiatric drugs.

And best of all, if you work for Christian Scientists, you'll really enjoy your "We'll Pray For You" medical plan.



Keith Lowell Jensen
@keithlowell
RockAss.net

Melissa Unoff Photography

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 May 17 at 6:00 pm](#) or [Salida May 9 at 7:00 pm](#) or [Lodi May 30 at 7:00 pm](#)



New Members Meetup & Coffee

May 7, 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!

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Family Time

By Rick Tracewell

Teaching children from birth “the way of the lord” sounds wholesome to most Americans – even to many atheists. Sunday school sounds so sweet and innocent. Throughout America’s history, church-going, god-fearing Christians have always sounded “right” and were somehow impervious to criticism and above reproach. They were pure.



But let’s look at it from a historical point of view – looking backward, say 300 years from now when (HOPEFULLY) the jig is up and everyone knows the entire thing was a sham to control people.

Consider the damage done to billions of children who couldn’t have possibly known any better. They never had a chance. Assuming that most of you reading this were indoctrinated to some degree as children into one religion or another, can you look back and see what **any** form of religious upbringing did to your thinking and reasoning skills?

Once the “god glasses” are off, it can be devastating to look back on your life and wonder how it would have been different had you not been taught almost everything incorrectly. You were raised to NOT believe your own eyes. Hold a 4 million year old dinosaur fossil in your hand, but NOPE – it’s only 6,000 years old...and forget the fact that your own bible (which supposedly tells THE story of the universe without mistake) doesn’t even mention creatures of such size.

Critical thinking and reasoning skills are SO important for children to master to the best of their ability during those incredibly precious development years. No wonder our current political “offerings” who pander to the religious sects are so ridiculously ineffective. They were raised with a giant asterisk next to their thinking and reasoning skills. Children are empowered to do great things when they are taught HOW to think, not WHAT to think. [Get “I Wonder” book for kids here](#), which lets them know it’s OK to think and not know all the answers.

Vegan Potluck Picnic in the Park

Saturday, May 17 from 12pm - 3pm

Roosevelt Park, 10th St and P St, Sacramento (on the P Street side of the park)

Yes, the title is a mouthful, but that’s the point! We’re getting together! Bring a vegan dish to share with everyone You don’t have to be vegan, but the dishes do. :-) We’ll have reusable plates and utensils.

[Map here](#) ... [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>	agasadavis.wordpress.com
Americans United for Sep of Church and State (Sac Chapter)	Promotes individual activism, confronts violations	N	Y	<u>National only</u>	au-sac.org
Secular Student Alliance @ Sacramento State University (CSUS)	CSUS student group to socialize and promote freethought.	Y		<u>Y</u>	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	<u>Internat'l only</u>	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	sac.ffrf.org
Humanist Association of the Greater Sac Area (HAGSA)	Humanist events, speakers, focus is on doing good.	Y	Y	<u>Y</u>	hagsa.org
Sacramento Area Coalition of Reason	Directing the community to the various groups of reason.	Y	N	<u>Y</u>	SacramentoCoR.org
Sac Area Skeptics (SAS)	Promotion of skeptical thinking, awareness of reality, logical skills.	Y	Y	<u>Y</u>	http://www.meetup.com/sacskeptics/
Sac City Freethinkers	Sac City College student group. Meet, question, promote, unite.	Y		<u>Y</u>	saccityfreethinkers.wordpress.com
Sac Freethinkers, Atheists and Nonbelievers (SacFAN)	Meetup for variety of fun, learning, singing, projects, games, activism.	Y	N	<u>Y</u>	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	<u>Y</u>	Secular.org/states/chapters/california
Secular College Student Alliance	Sierra College student and faculty group for non-belief in religion.	Y		<u>Y</u>	secularstudents.org/sierra
Stockton Area Atheists and Freethinkers (SAAF)	Meetup events and philanthropy, from Galt to Modesto.	Y		<u>Y</u>	StocktonAAF.org

Freethought Dinner Social

Bella Bru Cafe - May 14 at 6:15 p.m.

4680 Natomas Blvd, Sacramento

Please join us for food, spirits, and conversation. Bella Bru has parking, good fresh food, and a bar. Phone. [\(916\) 928-1770](tel:9169281770) [Details here.](#) [Map here.](#)



Skeptics in the Pub - Two Locations

Sacramento

May 23, 6:30 PM

Hoppy Brewing Co.
6300 Folsom Bl.

Hoppy's has reasonably priced menu items and has ample parking in the back.

[Map here](#)

[Details here](#)

Stockton

May 16, 6:30 PM

We will be Drinking at Valley Brew, 157 W Adams St, Stockton. VB is a restaurant and bar located just off the Miracle Mile in Stockton.

[Map here](#)

[Details here](#)



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By Sara Lone

"How many of ya'll think "intelligent design" should be taught in schools? "Intelligent Design" = the wacky notion that some being (it's always a dude!!) created us and is in charge of all the crazy things happening on our little world. It's usually religious zealots attempting to brainwash children (get 'em while they're young!) with unbelievable tales and (let's not forget!) fear-mongering. I'm going out on a limb (a very short, stable limb) assuming that none of you think it's logical to label intelligent design a "serious criticism" of evolution, or teach it as such in schools. If I'm wrong, you're probably reading this and praying for my salvation - if I'm right, let's all be Pastafarians!

So, the Free Exercise Clause has 2 parts, "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof" - this is classic separation of church and state. Sounds like a great plan, until fundamentalists blur the lines. Bobby Henderson, a physics grad from Oregon State University and a member of our own <30 nones (represent!), sent a letter in 2005 to the Kansas State Board of Education when they decided to go crazy and considered teaching intelligent design in biology classes... Get this, he didn't take the normal route of "that's unconstitutional!" or, "separation of church and state!" — his letter requested equal class time for "Flying Spaghetti Monsterism!" He argued that believing the universe was created by a Flying Spaghetti Monster was just as legit (intelligent design-wise) as saying it was created by some god-dude-person-trinity-thing and if the school insists on teaching intelligent design, they can't neglect the Flying Spaghetti Monster! What happened? Now we've got the FSM church, MORE pirate costumes, and Kansas still teaching good ole' fashioned science! If you can't beat 'em, outsmart 'em!"

Contact Sara at 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.](#)





Freethinking students at UC Davis host Dan Barker and have an AGASA Ask an Atheist booth! More out atheists around the valley is a good thing. Nicely done, Aggies!



Humanist Hikers

4th Saturdays!

Saturday, May 24
12:30 PM - 5 PM

Location is to be determined, but check the [SAAF Meetup page](#) for updates as we get closer to May 24.

Our activities will range from hiking to kayaking to rock climbing to anything fun and adventurous; we're open to suggestions.

Activity start times vary depending on where we are going and what we are doing. Due to the nature and length of activities, they are generally **not family friendly**, unless specifically stated.

Use the [meetup page](#) to organize car pooling in the Comments section. See u there!

Juvenile Hall Update

By Judy Saint

The voice behind the blackened window told me to have a seat with my box of 10 books. She'd be out from behind the locked doors in a few minutes to retrieve it.

The only other person waiting on the hard metal mesh seats was a lady who struck up conversation about the nice mural painting on the wall. Since I didn't say too much more, she again struck up conversation a minute later asking if I was a volunteer here. In retrospect, with so many people coming and going wanting to see their sons and daughters, I guess it was the box that said "Contents: 10 Books" that made her ask that. Maybe I just didn't look like I was visiting anybody in jail.

She asked what sort of volunteering I did. "Trying to help the girls with critical thinking, being able to think for themselves. Basically, to give them some encouragement about their lives, that they were born beautiful and worthy." She asked if I did this on the street. "No, I just come here. But there is a whole community out there who tries to do good for people all the time, who think this way." She maintained her look right into my eyes, with a sweet need to talk. I finally added passively, "We're atheists. We're good people, despite what you hear about us." She admitted shyly, but still looking right into my eyes that she didn't know what that word really meant, and waited for me to explain. I did the "without a god" thing. That broke the dam. She began telling me, quietly, how she thinks churches really do damage to people. I tried to gently add a comment here or there, but she didn't stop to let me. She had a few quiet comments about not really liking churches anymore and she had wondered what this atheist thing was. It was all in whispers.

At that point she was called to enter the metal detector area to go inside the locked doors for her visit. She kept looking back at me, saying one or two words with every turn. Finally, in such a polite demeanor said, "It was really nice meeting you" as she was escorted in. She stopped, turned again just before the door shut and added, "I'll see you later." She didn't want the connection to end with a goodbye. It meant too much to her. I said I'd see her later, too.

Books Behind Bars Wish List - Pick the ones you care to purchase. They are delivered directly to me so I can get them to juvenile hall for their 5 libraries. Thanks. It means a lot. (*Juvenile Hall Outreach is a project of AOF.*)

Forgetting God

By Aaron Asbury

Hi there... Where do you live? Me? Well, there are a lot of people out there who would like you to believe its a place called the United Christian States of America (under God), or something else just as pretentious.

The bigger the voice of opposition, as the atheist community's is becoming, the louder those people hem and haw about "tradition" and "foundations" and what not. Hell, they'll even compromise to join hands with Muslims and people of other faiths in the great battle against the unbelieving oppressors (just so long as you believe in a god).

We ask for government bodies to check themselves against religious favoritism, and they yell "Persecution!" We fight for equal rights among all people in this country (not just heterosexual, Christian Caucasians) and we're "destroying the moral fabric" and "what about the children?!" Yes, indeed, what about the children? As the father of three young girls I strive, daily, to make sure the example I am setting is one of tolerance, open-mindedness, and positivity. To teach them that there are obstacles to freedom and happiness all around. But there are also those of us who work, in what ways we can, to make things better for everyone, not just ourselves. Our children should be one of the biggest reasons we seek equality in all things, and the tearing down of old traditions that teach arbitrary sin, fear, supernatural retribution, and false superiority.

I believe that growing up (mentally) and growing away from a god belief doesn't just free us from Sunday morning obligations and guilt-ridden visits to the confessional. Rather, it should compel us to find a way above the established norms to show our progeny, and the metathesiophobic public, a better world. No god required.

Aaron writes a blog of the same title, musing on his life after god, at www.forgettinggod.com



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

Saturday, May 17

5:00 PM - 8:00 PM

Mashariki's Place (see details link for address)

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. Honest!

Bring a bottle of your favorite wine and I will supply the hors d'oeuvres. I will post the exact location once we get closer to the event date. Hope a few of you can attend!

[Details here.](#)



Listen Up! By Cleo Kocol

How far does the free exercise of religion go? The Catholic Church seems to believe any business or organization they back is theirs to decide what to do and not to do regarding the business or the employees who work at the business.

I contend they are very wrong, as are other religious denominations. In the first place a hospital or a grocery store or a dry goods store, or any business you want to name, is not a church. Just because a religious person owns it has nothing to do with religion.

Religious education or worship belongs in the church and the church school, not in the public market place. Unfortunately, some presidents and administrations have let faith-based organizations into our lives. They have effectively held hands with government. If you are a non-theist charity or 501-C organization you have to jump through hoops to get licensed. No such thing happens with the church organizations. The government seems to feel that church is good, but non-churched organizations need to be scrutinized and subjected to a powerful magnifying glass.

I'd like to remind the government and the religious that they are getting a free ride tax-wise. Not only that they use our community facilities, such as the police and fire department, all of us who have thought through religion and found it wanting, subsidize all of them.



Colloquium: AmyJo Mattheis, *Religion Made Me Fat*

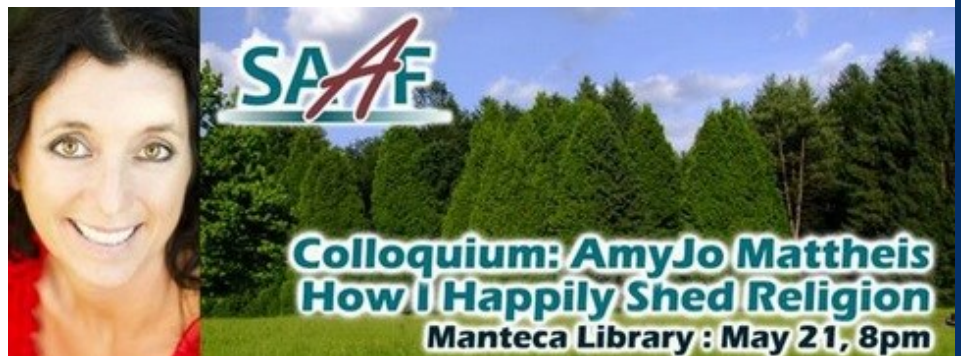
May 21, 8:00 - 9:30 PM
Manteca Library
320 W Center St, Manteca

Author AmyJo Mattheis
Religion Made Me Fat, shares
her story from pastor to athe-
ist.

As a child of a pastor, AmyJo was raised in Christianity. After taking off that narrative, she explores the tenacious nature of religion and shares how she was finally able to let go, putting herself in charge of her destiny. AmyJo is a deeply spiritual atheist, and will demonstrate how we can move toward achieving a reason-based society of respectful, happy people!

This is a free event, open to the public, at the Manteca Library. Those of all worldviews and faiths are welcome. Donations to support this and future Colloquiums are appreciated.

[Map here.](#)
[Details here.](#)



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Issue Theme: Free Exercise

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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 our lives, and the line between the two is often blurry. This guide provides background and policy recommendations on a variety of issues, some originating with the Founding Fathers, and others which emerge as a result of the modern religious environment.



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.

[Subscribe here](#) to receive the emailed Newsletter, Action Alerts, or Morning Read by SCA.

Legal Watch By Arash Khosrowshahi

On March 25, the Supreme Court heard *Sebelius v. Hobby Lobby Stores, Inc.* The owners of Hobby Lobby argue they should be exempt from providing contraceptive coverage for their employees under the Affordable Care Act ("Obamacare") because of their religious beliefs against contraceptives.

The first question the Court must answer is whether for-profit corporations have religious rights. Though *Citizens United* related to corporations having free speech in campaign finance, one can see the Court expanding the other First Amendment right of free exercise of religion to corporations. However, allowing the owners' religious beliefs dictate the operations of the corporation blurs the line shielding owners from liability for the actions of the corporation--largely why businesses incorporate.

If corporations do have such rights, then the question becomes whether the mandate under Obamacare is the least-restrictive means towards a compelling government interest under the Religious Freedom Restoration Act. Cheaper healthcare costs and providing vital services to women via the mandate may be compelling interests, but the millions-of-dollars penalty Hobby Lobby faces in not complying may be overkill. Moreover, because Obamacare exempts churches from the mandate, one may wonder whether the interests above are that compelling after all.

It is difficult to predict an outcome. Chief Justice John Roberts surprised everyone in 2012 in upholding Obamacare as constitutional, though he and Justice Anthony Kennedy are both sympathetic to the view of corporations as people. Justices Ruth Ginsberg, Sonia Sotomayor, and Elena Kagan were adamantly opposed to Hobby Lobby during oral argument.

This battle between workers' and women's rights versus corporations and the Religious Right should alarm all freethinkers, as religious beliefs of our employers could dictate how we live our lives. If Hobby Lobby succeeds, there is no clear limit as to what employers could deny their workers in the name of religion.

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

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](#).

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Sacramento Reason

California "Department of Bad Bills"

By Tom Manger

This past month we've been busy putting together letters of support and letters of opposition for the many bills we are tracking. The week of April 21st, the Secular Coalition for California will be at the statehouse in Sacramento to oppose two different sectarian bills being vetted at committee hearings.



The first bill being discussed, AB 1934, would give religious organizations additional privileges in the way that they hold assets. This bill would allow religious organizations to bypass decisions meted out by the California Secretary of State regarding "corporation sole", an arcane area of corporate law used by many of the larger hierarchical religious groups. It would also recognize canon law for succession of the single person in control of the corporation sole and all associated assets. The Secretary of State has already weighed in stating that corporation sole should be eliminated because of "corruption and money laundering". We'll be there to concur.

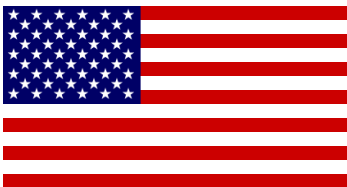
The second bill, SB 978, requires an understanding of current law for the problem to present itself. Current law states that whenever a rape victim presents at a hospital for treatment, a law officer must be brought in for evidentiary reasons. And, that law officer is required to contact a local rape crisis center so that the rape victim counselor can be made available on site. This bill being considered will allow hospitals to contact the rape crisis center directly therefore bypassing the law enforcement officer.

This second bill seems innocuous when taken at face value. The problem is when a rape victim presents at a religious hospital. Most of these hospitals don't allow doctors to fully discuss medically available options such as emergency contraception. And, since there are an estimated 25,000 pregnancies each year due to sexual assault in the U.S., access to full medical information is needed should a victim become pregnant.

Our concern is that this bill would allow religious hospitals to call in their own religiously driven rape crisis counselors. We know that Crisis Pregnancy Centers already use misinformation, medically inaccurate information, emotional pleas, shaming and religious fervor to sway their clientele away from abortions. We don't want rape crisis centers using the same techniques.

Wish us luck in sending these bills to the dust bin of history!

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.



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 501c3. See Page 7 for details.

We're on the Web!
SacramentoCoR.org



**SACRAMENTO AREA
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PO Box 15182
Sacramento, CA
95851-0182

E-mail:
admin@sacmentoreason.org
Judy Saint, Editor
Photographer, Matt Martin

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Wink-Wink!

From the Editor

We had a small basketful of various Easter kiddie toys, Cadbury eggs and Dan Barker here, left over from yesterday's Extravaganza. (Dan spent the night here before he heads to Reno today, not that he's a leftover.) I decided to give all the kiddie toys and candy eggs to our Christian neighbors whose kids seldom look at or say hi to Kathy and me when we see each other outside. The parents are only "polite" to us, their atheist lesbian neighbors. ... As I was about to go deliver the little basket I walked over to Dan, held it out, and asked him to bless the gift. Without missing a beat he immediately turned his chair to face the basket, raised both hands and bowed his head saying, "In the name of Mother Goose." Little does my neighbor know her Easter surprises she's giving to her kids have been blessed by Dan Barker!



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/>

