

Sacramento Reason

COR

Shine the Light of Reason!

Upcoming Events

Aug 29 [Finally Friday Dinner/Karaoke](#)

30 [Contradiction Movie, Potluck](#)

31 [Coffee Church: Vespers](#)

Sep 2 [Book Club in Ceres](#)

3 [Welcome New Members Meetup](#)

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

7 [Nonconforming Thinkers Nitty Gritty](#)

7 [Coffee Church: Vespers](#)

8 [Sirens and Satyrs of Sharp crafts, Manteca](#)

12 [Game Night in Salida](#)

13 [Brunch and Atheism, Stockton](#)

14 [Vegan Heathens in Turlock](#)

14 [Coffee Church: Vespers](#)

15 [Book Club: Towing Jehovah](#)

16 [Peter Boghossian, Manteca](#)

19 [Darien De Lu on Voting Guide](#)

19 [Drinking Skeptically, Stockton](#)

20 [Freethought Dinner Social](#)

Continued on Pg. 5

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

Subscribe

Volume 11, Issue 9

Issue Theme: Talking with Believers

September 2014

Matt Dillahunty - September 30th

"Talking With Believers"

Host of The Atheist Experience TV

Raised a Southern Baptist, Matt Dillahunty is now best known as the affable, informed and quick witted host of The Atheist Experience TV show out of Austin, Texas, live streamed around the world.

Come listen as Matt talks to us in his easy style about his experiences debating young earthers, anti-science fanatics and every other brand of religious thinking out there. He tells of his weekend with the Church of Christ conference, at which we just can't help but laugh along with his anecdotes. Matt has plenty of zingers, like, "Cults are what big religions call little religions."

Let Matt put you in the comfort seat when talking with believers, as he does on a regular basis, especially when some of those believers are our own relatives we love and hope love us back.



Is this what it feels like sometimes?

belief, and challenges were often what helped us along. What we say matters.

Watch Atheist Experience live on Sundays at 2:30 pm, or previous show tapings, at [this link](#). Or, watch some fan-selected "Greatest Hits" moments if you scroll down on [this website](#).

Free. Open to the Public. Bring your friends.
Tuesday September 30, 6:30 pm
Reason Center, 1824 Tribute Rd, Suite A
Sacramento ... [Map here](#) ... [Details here](#).

Matt Dillahunty's appearance is funded by AOF Speaker Series. [Become a supporting member here](#), to help bring more informative speakers like Matt to Sacramento.



His message is one of hope for the future. He helps us learn the importance of each small step with believers, reminding us that most of

us come from a place of

Reason
Center



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>



Every time science is said to show something in the bible might have really happened, it is broadcast far and wide, but as soon as we ask believers about all the science that disproves their claims, they cry out against science. So, science that helps them is good, but science that destroys their claims is bad? They want it both ways and don't think we'll see through that? **REALLY?** Peter Boghossian has an interesting approach to talking with such believers. He begins asking them how they process information in other areas of their lives, like when crossing the street or selecting a car. Once the person understands their own ability to think critically in other areas, the theory is that they'll then, on their own, realize they're not using this method with religion. Worth a try.

Page 2

Sacramento Reason

"Ask The Social I.Q. Lady"

Dear Social I.Q. Lady,

My new neighbors are very religious. How can I tell them I'm an atheist without creating trouble between the fences? – Just Moved

Dear Just Moved,

Although most people claim to be religious, many aren't that "strong" in their beliefs. Before you go announcing to your neighbors that you're an atheist, start by just being friendly. Let your neighbors get to know you and your family. Allow them time to "like" you. Talk about charity work and other positive interests. If they point-blank ask you about your beliefs, simply tell them you're "not religious". Most will let it go at that. Believers, especially strong ones, have less anxiety about someone being "non-religious" than they do about someone being atheist. This is because the word atheist carries a much more negative connotation to believers. If they push to find out your beliefs in a god, tell them you are not a believer. Again, this is very passive and is used to maintain a relationship that isn't going to go away (like a neighbor or relative). Believers will begin to ask you questions when they are ready to hear some answers. Until then, anything you say to try to convince them out of their beliefs will fall on "deaf ears".

If your neighbor invites you to any of their functions, make an offer to attend if he or she agrees to attend one of your get-togethers. Freethought Day is coming up and that would be an awesome event to bring people. Unless a neighbor is forcing their beliefs on you by consistently asking you to church or dropping off religious articles or books, allow them to dwell in their delusions. The time will be right eventually and if they get to know you first, they may listen to you.

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

Freethought Dinner Social

Saturday, September 20, 5:30 PM

Hock Farm

1415 L Street, Sacramento

Someone suggested we find a more enlightened menu. The Hock Farm has a great menu and indoor or outdoor seating. Finding parking shouldn't be too hard on a Saturday (it's not 2nd Saturday), but there is no validated parking. They will do separate checks. Hope for nice weather!

[Dinner menu here.](#)

[Map here.](#)

[Details here.](#)



Ancient Christian Study Group - September 21, 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.

David Noelle - September 17, 8:00 PM

Modern cognitive neuroscience is increasingly uncovering how your choices arise from the structure and function of your brain. Since the structure and function of your brain has been determined by factors beyond your control, it is hard to understand how you can be reasonably held responsible for the choices that emerge. This is the philosophical problem of "free will". When our choices are the result of the physical laws that govern the development and activity of our brains, in what sense can we be said to be in control of our own decisions?

Recent neuroscience studies have been used to argue that free will is illusory. These ideas will be described and critically assessed. Other cognitive neuroscience findings that directly bear on questions of self control and decision making will be discussed, and conceptions of personal responsibility that are compatible with scientific findings will be introduced. Finally, the ramifications of these issues for crime and punishment will be explored.

Free, Open to the public.

Manteca Library, 320 W Center St, Manteca

[Map here](#)

[Details here](#)



Reason Center Now Open

Thanks to everyone who attended Reason Center's Grand Opening Celebration on July 31. It was an evening of great people, good food, and fun conversation! The overwhelmingly positive reception was a huge encouragement to the Reason Center

Board, and we look forward to supporting and strengthening the secular community of Sacramento.

You can sign up for our e-newsletter, become a monthly member, and make one-time donations via ReasonCenter.org.

(View more photos on our facebook: fb.com/ReasonCenter)



**Reason
Center**

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

Sep 13 10:00 am Brunch and Atheism, Panera Bread, 10718 Trinity Pkwy, Stockton [Map here](#)

Sep 21 9:30 am Blasphemy Breakfast, Mel's Diner, 6708 Lonetree Blvd [Map here](#)

Sep 21 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

Towing Jehovah

Sep 15, 6:30 pm

Coffee Garden

2904 Franklin Bl

[Details here.](#)

Ceres, Sep 2, 7pm

Lies My Teacher

Told Me

[Details here.](#)

Need Organizer for Winter Solstice Potluck

Dec. 21 we're having a party! For everyone of all ages!

We have helpers, decorations, location, ideas, and more, BUT!...

We need a lead contact to oversee all the bits and pieces. It's been a wonderful success for many years - thanks, Tom and Wendy Ikelman - always plenty of food, plenty of company, entertainment and a variety of fun. If you can lend some leadership for this year's event, please contact either Ken at treasurer@aofonline.org or Bill at president@hagsa.org.

Freethought Day - October 12

The 13th Annual Sacramento Freethought Day is Sunday, October 12, and combines the fun and atmosphere of a fair with the education and activism of a conference. Join us for engaging speakers, live entertainment, family activities, an authors' panel, and more! [TICKETS HERE](#) (free, or donation with perks)

Speakers, Entertainers, Authors, Podcasters and More!

Participating Authors' and Podcasters' Panel at this year's Freethought Day:

- Rebecca Watson, SkepChick
- Phil Zuckerman, Sociologist
- Chris Johnson, Photographer and Videographer
- Ryan Kane, Illusionist
- Ross Blocher, of the podcast *Oh No Ross and Carrie*
- Victor Harris, Poet
- Richard Carrier, Author
- Greta Christina, Blogger and Author
- Brendan Powell Smith, Author of the *Brick Bible*
- David Fitzgerald, Author
- Dan Arel, Author of *Generation Atheist*
- Tom Beasley, of the podcast *An American Atheist*
- Andi Griffith, Author

You can help make Freethought Day a continued success by donating, attending the fundraising reception, hosting a table, or becoming an esteemed business sponsor with plenty of advertising opportunities and benefits.

For questions regarding support, donations, sponsorships, tables or volunteering, please contact David Diskin at david@LodiUnited.org.

[Map here](#)

[Details here](#)

Humanist Association of the Greater Sacramento Area (HAGSA)

Monthly speakers. Open to everyone. Come join us on the third Sunday of each month at the Reason Center, 1824 Tribute Rd, Suite A, Sacramento. [Map here](#). [Details here](#). This month hear Pete Martineau, with Friendship Force International on September 21, 3:00 PM.

Upcoming Events

cont'd from pg 1

[20 Potluck Game Night!](#)
[21 Blasphemy Breakfast, Rocklin](#)
[21 Blasphemy Brunch Dixon/Vacav](#)
[21 Blasphemy Brunch Arden/Arcad](#)
[21 Coffee Klatch, Modesto](#)
[21 Ancient Christian Study Group](#)
[21 Coffee Church: Vespers](#)
[21 Freethought Movie Night, Lodi](#)
[26 Game Night and Pool Party, Stockton](#)
[26 Sacramento Skeptics in the Pub](#)
[26 Finally Friday Dinner and Karaoke](#)
[27 Secular Family Day - Star Party](#)
[28 Brunch and Atheism in Turlock](#)
[28 Sunday Assembly](#)
[28 Coffee Church: Vespers](#)
[30 Matt Dillahunt Talking w/ Believers](#)
October
[1 Welcome New Members](#)
[3 Dinner, Wine and Art Hop, Lodi](#)
[5 Lodi Street Faire](#)
[11-13 Freethought Day and Advocacy](#)
[27 Disneyland](#)
[Dec 21 HumanLight](#)

Volume 11, Issue 9

Issue Theme: Talking with Believers

Page 5

Sunday Assembly First Event Kick Off!

September 28, 10:00 AM

The Sunday Assembly is a secular congregation that celebrates life.



Our events -- on the **fourth Sunday** of each month -- are 75 minutes of music from a live band (80s and 90s pop hits), inspirational talks, poetry and art, donuts and coffee, and more, followed by an optional potluck.

September 28, 2014

We are very excited to announce the speakers for our launch event: [Tom Ikelman](#) and [Michelle Huey](#).

Tom will share with us his personal story as a cancer survivor. Michelle, a volunteer for the [Pathfinders Project](#), will tell us about her international travels as a Humanist service worker.

10:00 - Doors Open

10:30 - Service Begins

11:15 - Potluck

What is Sunday Assembly?

"It's all the good bits of church, but without doctrine and deities."

We are **radically inclusive** - everyone is welcome, regardless of their beliefs (or lack thereof), their sexual orientation, their age, gender, or politics.

Our events are **free for all to attend**, though donations are appreciated.

Childcare is provided.

And It's a Potluck!

Stay after the service and have lunch with your fellow Sunday Assembly goers. Bring a dish to share -- just make sure your dish will be waiting about 90 minutes until we dig in. We'll cover drinks, napkins, plates, and plastic ware.

Reason Center, 1824 Tribute Rd, Suite A, Sacramento

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

**Reason
Center**

Coffee Church - Every Sunday, 3:00 PM

Weekly coffee and conversation, laughter and camaraderie. Even if you are shy or a first timer, welcome! Please make a purchase then meet us at the Big Table in the middle. Panera Bread, 2731 Del Paso Road (not Blvd), Sacramento. Come share your stories and journeys, or just hang out with us. [Map here](#) ... [Details here](#)

Page 6

Sacramento Reason

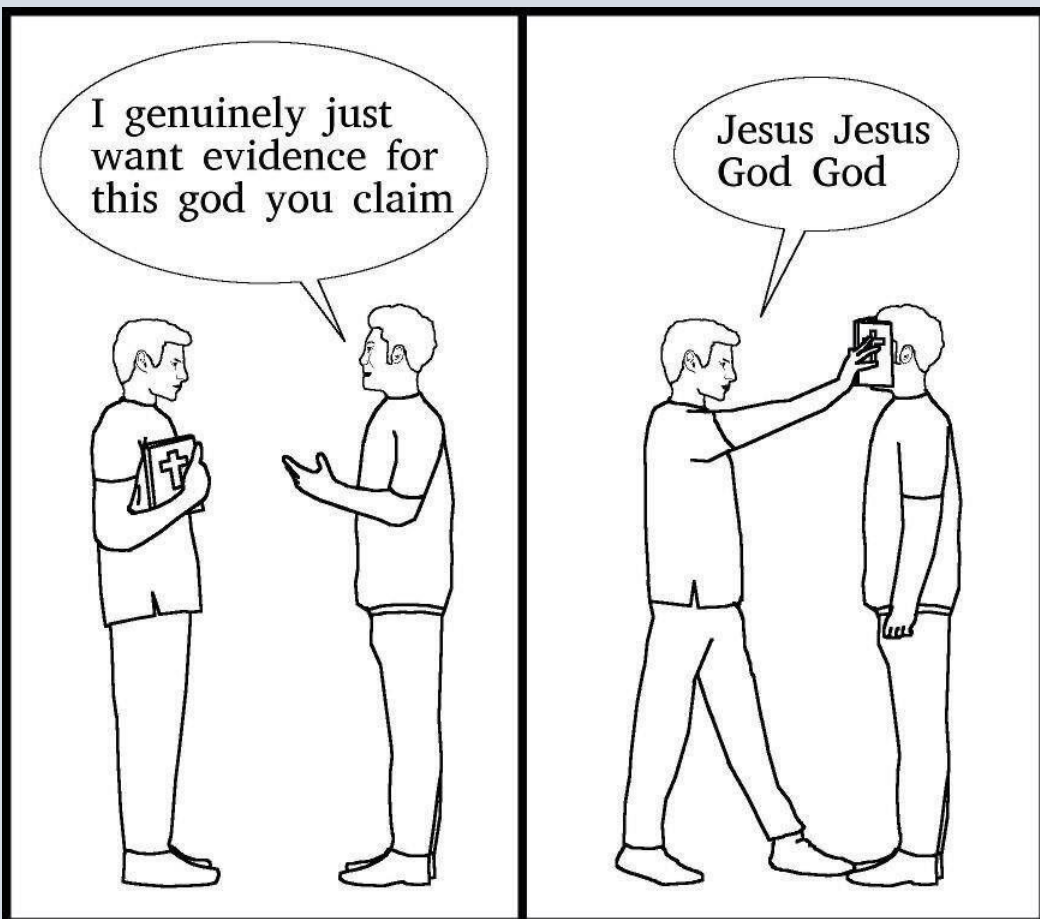
Activist Corner By Oriana Morrison

Talking with believers can sometimes be rewarding but often very challenging. It is important to remember that talking about faith can be difficult for believers, even when the conversation is with another believer. It's just not an easy subject.

I have had a few different reactions from people when they found out that I don't subscribe to any religion. One friend had a very knee-jerk reaction when I told her I was an atheist. She told me that I couldn't love or be kind. I did not get angry with her or feel hurt much because her reaction was so immediate that it couldn't have had anything to do with me.

I also very recently came out to my fundamentalist Christian parents. I thought it was going to go very badly but it actually went quite well. The thing that I think made the most difference with them was that I kept the emphasis as much as I could on how very much I love them and value their presence in my life.

Last but not least, some people can respond very negatively. I've been called a demon and a dog, and that hurt, but again, it wasn't about me. The name-calling and the venom were from that person's inner struggle with being made aware of my unbelief. It really had nothing to do with me. It is important to remember that the feelings and thoughts people have about non-believers are not personal. The believer is just dealing with his or her own fears and anxieties and often misperceptions. The proof is in how quickly they scoff or scold. They're just reacting as they've been trained. One thing they have not done before now is to think it through. And you've just helped with that!



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 Sep 20 at 7:00 pm](#) or [Stockton Sep 26 at 6:00 pm](#) or [Salida Sep 12 at 7:00 pm](#)



New Members Meetup & Coffee

Sep 3, 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

Everyone is invited to continue to stay as long as you like. Buy some great drinks and snacks, and make some new friends! \$1 donation.
[Details here.](#)

Volume 11, Issue 9

Issue Theme: Talking with Believers

Page 7

Family Time By Rick Tracewell

Have you ever sat your children down to devise a plan on how they should interact with believers? I actually did, many years ago. We don't exactly live in the "bible belt", but there are plenty of churches on almost every corner. A very common question among kids (and adults) is, "What church do you go to?"



My kids came to me and asked how they should answer that and other questions about religion without the fear of peer pressure or negative remarks and, more importantly, without saying something to the believers that would hurt their feelings or make them feel bad for believing. Now, isn't that something?

I thought it was very fair of them to come to me and very respectful that they were equally concerned about making their school friends feel bad for believing in fairy tales.

So we sat down as a family and discussed it – at length. What we came up with was a simple phrase that simultaneously answered the proposed question and diffused any further exploration on the believer's part – unless they are a jerk, in which case my kids were instructed to just walk away.

The phrase was/is, "My family's beliefs are private and we don't like to discuss it." Granted it's a bit blunt and somewhat mysterious, but it's hard to argue against if the question was innocent and conversational to begin with. That phrase served my kids well in their adolescence and now they are much more capable of handling those situations with tact and respect as young adults.

What have you discussed with your kids about speaking with believers on the topic of religion or god? I'd like to know. Send your thoughts and ideas to rick@sacramentoreason.org.



Knocking on the door where an Atheist lives, can be an eye opener for some Christians!

Local Groups to Visit or Join

Visit the Reason Center for more friendly information about our freethinking community and events. [1824 Tribute Rd, Suite A](#)

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
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>	ca.secular.org
Secular Student Alliance @ Sacramento State University (CSUS)	CSUS student group to socialize and promote freethought.	Y		<u>Y</u>	csusaso.wordpress.com
Sierra 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

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'll show you how to make it a calendar item so others can join you. Want help? Just ask! Email admin@sacramentoreason.org. No commitment, just fun. And brunch!



Skeptics in the Pub - Two Locations

Sacramento

Sac Skeptics in the Pub

Fri Sep 26, 6:30p
Hoppy Brewing Co
6300 Folsom Blvd

[Map here](#)

[Details here](#)

Stockton

Drinking Skeptically
Fri Sep 19, 6:30-11p
Valley Brewing Co.

157 W Adams St
Stockton, CA

Restaurant and bar
just off the Miracle
Mile. Join in!

[Map here](#)

[Details here](#)



Volume 11, Issue 9

Issue Theme: Talking with Believers

Page 9

< 30

By Sara Lone

The United States is changing. Social justice is now at the center of media attention, and sometimes we have to fight dirty to win. We, the under 30 crowd, are the most important promoter for social change and always have been.

The Greensboro sit-ins were started by 4 college freshman in 1960 and were instrumental in raising public awareness of racial segregation and civil rights; they were 19.

Susan B. Anthony collected anti-slavery petitions during the still slavery-proud 1830s and went on to become one of the most important activists for women's rights, co-founding the National Women Suffrage Association; her journey began at 17.

The Free Speech Movement started on the UC Berkeley campus in 1964, and Mario Savio became a prominent voice by leading the peaceful 32-hour "sit-in" protest; he was 22.

In 2012, Jessica Ahlquist became national news when she won a lawsuit that ordered her high school to remove a religious prayer from her school auditorium; She was 17.

All of these amazing individuals have at least three things in common: they all fought for social justice; they were under 30 when they got their start; and they have all experienced heightened discrimination for fighting the good fight.

The Greensboro freshman were ridiculed and threatened; Susan B. Anthony was harassed and fined; Mario Savio was put in jail; and Jessica Ahlquist continues to experience discrimination throughout her community.

We are powerful and we will change the way America sees us non-believers. Sure, we're young and poor and the economy sucks, but we have a voice - YOU have a voice! Don't be afraid to offend anyone, say it loud and proud. We may lack belief in a god, but we believe in ourselves and our ability to change the world.

Contact Sara at
Under30@sacramentoreason.org.
#under30nones



Blasphemy Rights Day - September 30

The right to blaspheme is where the rights of free speech and religious freedom intersect. In order to have a truly democratic and open society, all citizens must be able to speak openly and honestly about all things—even another’s religion, lack of religion, beliefs, gods, and sacred books—and be able to take the name of supernatural entities in vain: Holy Zeus! [Learn more here.](#)



Talk Like a Pirate Day Sept. 19

Ever since Dave Barry mentioned us in his nationally syndicated newspaper column in 2002, what once was a goofy idea celebrated by a handful of friends has turned into an international phenomenon that shows no sign of letting up. Whether you be new to the notion, or one of the millions who've made it your own personal excuse to party like pirates every [September 19th](#), welcome! September 19 - International Talk Like A Pirate Day!

[More fun information here.](#)

Page 10

Sacramento Reason

Secular Family Day

TELESCOPE TIME!

Star Party at Oak Grove Park.

Saturday, September 27,
7:00 PM - 9:00 PM

Oak Grove Park

4520 W. Eight Mile Rd, Stockton

[Map here.](#) [Meetup details here.](#)

All ages invited, including those without kids!

Members of the Stockton Astronomical Society will volunteer to set up their telescopes for the public.

The Nature Center will also be open with indoor astronomy activities. (\$6 fee per vehicle, but Nature Center and telescope viewing are free.)

Nearly every month we host a “Secular Family Day” for the whole family to get out and meet other secular families in a fun place somewhere in the Central Valley. Visit once, or make this a regular social activity for your whole family! [More information.](#)



Resources for Talking With Believers

Friendly Atheist gives us 5 points for debating believers [at this link.](#)

Addicting Info “How to Talk with 7 Types of Religious Rights” [found here.](#)

Leaving Fundamentalism “How to Talk to a True Believer” [entertaining article.](#)

Peter Boghossian’s book “A Manual for Creating Atheists” [Amazon link here.](#)

American Humanist Association “I’m a What?” [article here.](#)

Forgetting God

By Aaron Asbury

I had a quippy column for this month... but I have to talk about something else. *(Warning, graphic content - editor)*

At this moment there are at least four different factions trying to kill each other off in the Middle East. At this moment two of them are at great disadvantage compared to their aggressors. I sit here, relatively safe in the neighborhood tea shop... but thousands and thousands of men, women, and children... CHILDREN... are trembling on a mountain. Starving to death. Being hunted and tortured and butchered.

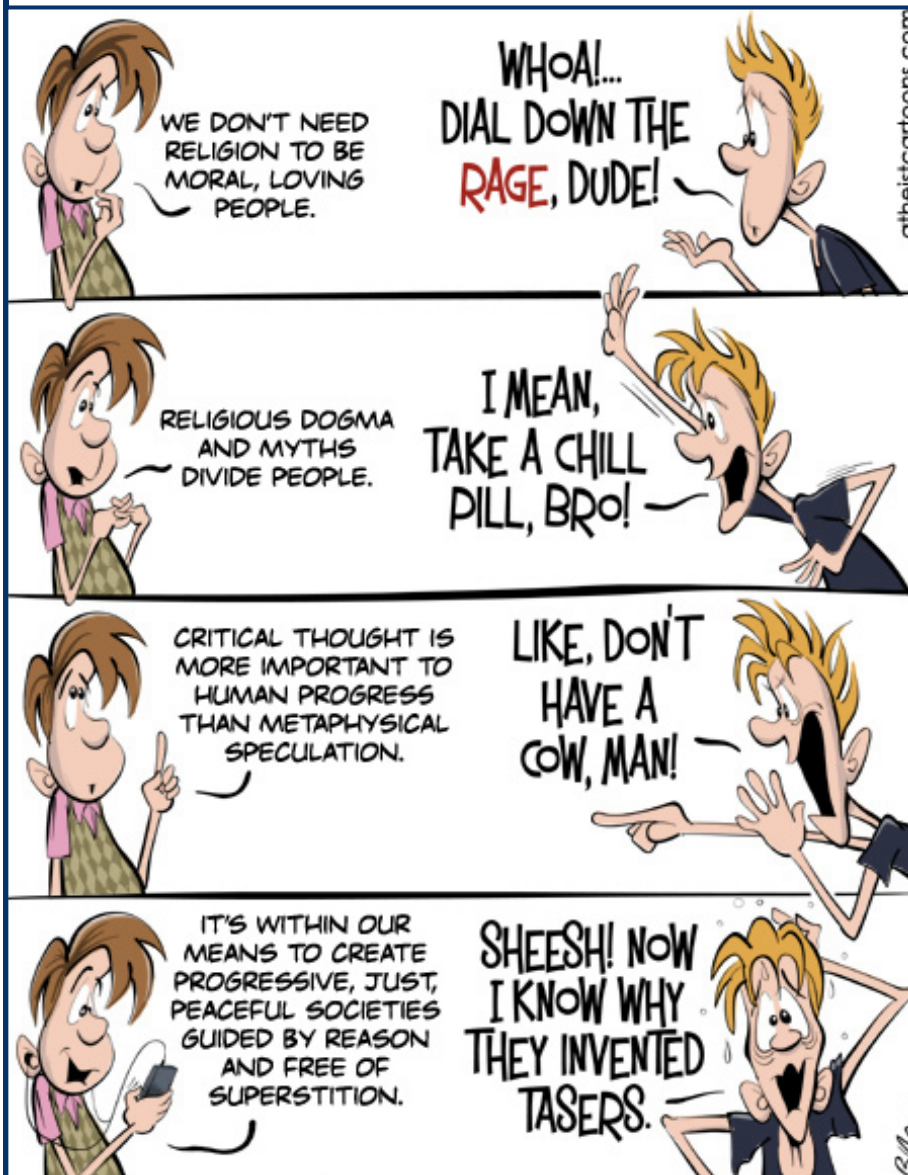
Children. As a father of three little girls, nothing infuriates and sickens me more than harm coming to innocent children. Little boys and girls who are drinking the blood of their parents to try to stay alive. Children who are being beheaded, torn limb from limb, cut in half, shot, burned, and any other manner of hideousness these ISIS bastards can think up to inflict upon them and their parents. Because of what?

Land? Resources? Money? God? No. Instead, it's one of the most vile ideas ever conceived by human beings... religion.

Because the Yishidi people hold a Christian faith over an extreme Islamic one. They have been driven from their homes, chased into the mountains, and are being tormented.

We, as freethinkers, know the saddest part of all of this: this is nothing new. Religious beliefs are both the greatest source of union and division amongst people. Religious beliefs have given oppressors "divine authority" to destroy, claim resources, enslave, and kill others. Religious beliefs claim to be the basis of morality for all of mankind... yet celebrate depravity in the name of their gods. We know there will be no progression, as a species, until we can shed ourselves of the delusion of these gods and subjugation to religion. If only...

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



Listen Up!

By Cleo Kocol

I usually say "I'm not religious" when people appear at my door to tout their church or their belief system. A few months ago I was returning home with my arms full and saw two elderly men approaching my door. Coming up behind them I said, "I assume you're looking for me. I'm the lady of the house. How can I help you?"

They said something about reading the Bible. Their exact words have deserted me, but I recall vividly what I said. "You've got the wrong person. I'm an atheist. And have you read the Bible? All that killing, rape, and mayhem!"

They looked as shocked as anyone can be, muttered something and turned away.

I went into the house and deposited my packages in the kitchen when the doorbell rang. I answered it. One of the Bible thumping men faced me. "I believe this is yours," he said and held out my sturdy glasses case that held my prescription glasses.

"Oh, I must have dropped them. Thank you. "

"Have a good day," he said and walked off.

"You, too." I even smiled.

Back inside, I opened the case. My glasses were there, but the stems that go over the ears had been bent back. The "good" Christian men had to have done it. Nothing else was wrong, no case damage.

Throughout the years, I've noticed that young women are more amenable to discussion, even agreeing with separation of church and state. Sometimes I make a few points they would question later.

The bottom line is you have to assess whether saying the "A" word is worth it in unplanned meetings with religionists. If you are unsure of the other person or persons, it is always best to avoid a confrontation that might not be worth it.



Advocacy Day at the Capitol - Save the Date, October 13

Please, join us on Monday October 13th at the statehouse in Sacramento. We will spend the day advocating for secular issues.

This is NOT the same as our Lobby Day. We will not be talking about specific bills. Rather, we will be highlighting the issues listed on the Secular Coalition for America website. [See list of issues here.](#)

If you are passionate about any one topic, this is your chance to speak your mind to legislators who can make a difference. Let us show you how you can be the one who gets the message through.

Details in next month's issue.

Become a fully legal Wedding Officiant with American Humanist Association using this online course. [Link here.](#) Looking for a Humanist Celebrant for any life event? [Find one here.](#)

Page 13

By Arash Khosrowshahi

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.

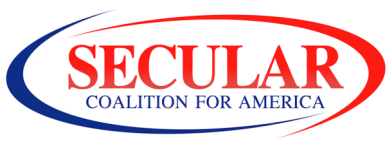
Local representatives can always be found on your City or County websites.



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.

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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Page 14

Sacramento Reason

California Legals - Dept. of Bad Bills By Tom Manger

The 2014 legislative session in California wraps up at the end of this month. So, there is a lot of intense wrangling taking place in Sacramento. Once the legislators are done, the governor still has 30 days to sign or veto the bills that come across his desk. I've attended two different weddings this summer. So, I'm going to talk about recent changes to related law in California.

Back in 2012, SB 1140 (Leno) was passed to clarify that marriage was a "civil contract". This was done partly to separate it from any religious endorsements or requirements. This bill also stated that a religious leader would not have to solemnize a marriage if that marriage went against the tenets of their faith.

In 2013, the US Supreme Court struck down Proposition 8, a California law that banned same sex marriages. With same sex marriages now legal in California, the flood gates were opened. There have been many same sex weddings since then.

Earlier this year, the bill SB 1306 (Leno) was signed by the governor. It changed the laws to reflect the fact that same sex marriage is now legal in California. Wording that defined marriage was changed from "a man and a woman" to "two persons".

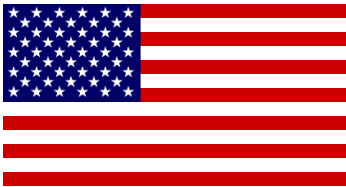
In the weeks to come, we are hoping that the governor approves AB 1525 (Lowenthal), a bill that will provide a new option for secular marriages. In addition to judges, legislators, and a handful of other civil servants, this bill will allow "city clerks" to solemnize marriages. It doesn't seem significant, but it will multiply secular options.

If AB 1525 passes, next year we will be looking to expand secular marriage options even further. We will be looking for a legislator to sponsor a similar bill that will allow notaries to solemnize weddings. Since a marriage is a civil contract (with no mandatory religious element) we think it straightforward that notaries be allowed this privilege.

If you would like to help us further secular marriage options in California, be sure to join us for our upcoming Advocacy Day on Monday, October 13th at the statehouse! (It's the day after Sacramento Freethought Day!)

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".



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George Gold Deals Blow to Chico City Council

Congratulations to George Gold and the rest of our friends in Chico who have pursued over a year being able to deliver invocations at City Council meetings. Now that the Greece case is settled, all seemed ready. However, not so fast. The City still ignored Gold's requests.

Finally, after attorney Andrew Seidel, working for Freedom From Religion Foundation, sent a strongly detailed letter, Chico has issued their schedule for 2015 invocations, and guess who is listed not just once, but three times? Yup, it's our wonderful George of Chico.

In George's words: "When the US Supreme Court ruled in Greece v. Galloway (in 2014) it became clear that the Court doesn't share our view that the introduction of religion at the beginning of a government proceeding violates the first amendment. But the Court did make it clear that no preference may be applied to the people who deliver the invocation, Atheists must be included.

"Over the last year we have been petitioning the Mayor of Chico to be included in the invocation rotation. On August 26, 2014, we received the official invocation schedule for 2015, and we have been invited to deliver an invocation on three occasions throughout the year. Our first invocation is scheduled for January 6, 2015, 6pm, Chico city council chambers." Let's show up in support.



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.

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