

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 12

Issue Theme: Celebrate Solstice

December 2014

HumanLight Solstice Party

Sunday, December 21, 2014

12:30 PM to 3:30 PM

**Curtis Hall, Sierra 2 Center
2791 24th St., Sacramento**



At a time of year near-suffocated with religious observances, this is our opportunity for freethinkers to be festive, too, and to celebrate reason, common values, and friendship. HumanLight began in 2001 as a celebration of positive humanist ideals and values: **Reason, Compassion, Hope, Humanity**, enjoyed as an alternative to religious ceremonies this time of year. More of the backstory [here](#).

As ever, the party will include a potluck, games, entertainment, a fund raising raffle, and a people and pet food charity drive. No charge to attend. Everyone is welcome! Parking is free.

This event is a potluck, so whip-up (or buy) your favorite dish to share. Please bring your food already prepared and ready to serve. The hall has a microwave oven for warming up food, but no oven or stove. A sink and refrigerator are available. We will provide plates, bowls, utensils, napkins, and cups. Please bring some beverages to share, too. We will start eating at approximately 1 pm.

There will ice-breaking games and a trivia game played in teams, with glorious prizes! Professional dancers, Roger Zabkie and Pam Rivera, will once again show off their smooth dance moves to the delight of all. We will collect food and basic supply items for two local charities, the River City Food Bank and the Sacramento Pet Food Bank. So either dig through your pantry or consider purchasing goodies to donate. See you there!

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

HumanLight/Solstice Party is sponsored by [AOF](#) and [HAGSA](#).





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>



Pagan Season

Some pre-Christian winter solstice pagan traditions: The giving of gifts, mistletoe, the sun being said to stand still 3 days, the indoor evergreen tree, the baubles of decoration, the yule log, the virgin birth of a notable figure, the nog, the midnight gatherings, the ringing of bells, lighting candles in the darkness, holly and ivy, poinsettia, hanging stockings, and all this on the winter solstice. You still think Christians started all this? *REALLY?*

Finally Friday Karaoke

Friday, December 26, 2014

7:00 PM to 10:00 PM

[Torri's Japanese Restaurant](#)

2401 E Orangeburg Ave, Modesto

Dinner at 7 PM.

Kids welcome till 10 PM.

[Details here.](#)

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Sacramento Reason

"Ask The Social I.Q. Lady"

Q: What can I say to believers who question my celebration of Christmas?

A: Christmas is a holiday that can be celebrated anyway you want. The decorations, the gift-giving, and even the holiday parties have nothing to do with Christmas. These are all part of an ancient celebration called Saturnalia, a harvest festival that marked the winter solstice.

Remind believers that decorating a tree originated in Germany. The Germans got it from the Romans, who got it from the Babylonians and the Egyptians. "An old Babylonish fable told of an evergreen tree which sprang out of a dead tree stump. The old stump symbolized the dead Nimrod, the new evergreen tree symbolized that Nimrod had come to life again in Tammuz! Among the Druids the oak was sacred, among the Egyptians it was the palm, and in Rome it was the fir, which was decorated with red berries during the Saturnalia!" (Walsh, *Curiosities of Popular Customs*, p.242)

Giving gifts is a wonderful thing but you can remind Christians that the Bible says to avoid the way of the Heathens and this is exactly what Heathens do during the Winter Solstice. The wise men didn't "exchange" gifts on Jesus'

"birthday". They gave gifts *after* he was born (perhaps three years after) as was customary when greeting a "king".

The lights, the wreaths, the mistletoe, the holly, and the Yule log all represent paganism. If Christians want Christmas to represent something that would honor their god, they should avoid all of these traditions.

I celebrate Humanlight. When asked why I don't celebrate Christmas I say, "Because I'm not a Christian." I like the idea of celebrating all things Christmassy and telling people you're celebrating something else like Humanlight or even Saturnalia. It invites conversation and questions which is always a good thing.

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

Freethought Dinner Social

Saturday, December 13, 2014

5:30 PM

[Taste of Thai](#)

1628 Broadway, Sacramento

We ate here a few years ago and most of us were happy. It's easy to find parking on 17th on the other side of Broadway or in the bank pkg lot across Broadway.

[MENU HERE](#)

[Map here](#)

[Details here](#)





Ancient Christian Study Group - Dec. 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.

Black Humanists and Non-Believers

New Group!

New Meetup! [Take a look here](#).

Planning meeting, Dec. 6th, 6:00—8:00 PM at the Reason Center, 1824 Tribute Road Suite A, Sacramento

The Black Humanists and Non-Believers of Sacramento is an outreach and educational community group for African American atheists, humanists, non-believers, skeptics, agnostics and for those who are questioning their religious beliefs and are seeking information on atheism/humanism/etc. in a supportive and judgment-free environment. We hold educational forums and socials for the community. We welcome all members, regardless race, gender, or sexual orientation!



AFRICAN AMERICANS FOR HUMANISM

Secular Holiday Party December 24, 2014, 3:45 PM to 5:20 PM [Details here](#)

The Sol Collective will hold its 1st Annual Secular Holiday Party for its atheist, agnostic, humanist, skeptic and non-believer members and allies. This will be an opportunity for us to gather and enjoy the holidays as a community. On the menu is homemade chicken soup, hot chocolate and cider, an assortment of holiday sweets and more! The time is short; but the company will be grand!

**Reason
Center**

Ask an Atheist at Arden Fair Mall

Saturday, December 13 at 12:00 Noon

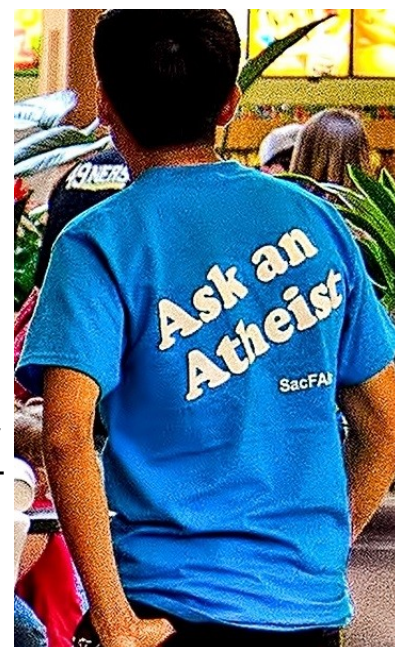
Arden Fair Mall, 1689 Arden Way, meet upstairs by Cinnabon

What better audience to see our "Ask an Atheist" t-shirts than holiday shoppers? We don't approach people, we just walk around in pairs, smiling, and even do our own shopping.

Have a good time while you remind people that not everyone is celebrating the baby Jesus! Just be yourself - if you don't know an answer, say you don't know. Usually we get thumbs up more than questions. Don't have a shirt? Judy will have most sizes there, S—3X, \$10.

Seeing these shirts in pairs really makes people stop to think. Most don't say anything, but hundreds of people will see that someone is proud to be a non-believer, even with all those Jesus-songs playing overhead.

Join us. Have a good time. Get some shopping done at the same time. Activism was never easier!



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

Dec 13 10:00 am Brunch and Atheism, Panera Bread, 10718 Trinity Pkwy, Stockton [Map here](#)
Dec 21 9:30 am Blasphemy Breakfast, Mel's Diner, 6708 Lonetree Blvd [Map here](#)
Dec 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 Club In Ceres

Tuesday Dec 2
7:00 PM to 9:00 PM
[Is God a Moral Monster?: Making Sense of the Old Testament God](#)

Everyone welcome!
[Details here.](#)

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Coming Out

By Oriana Morrison

I'm all about coming out—the pains and gains—but I shall digress. It's the holiday season, and honestly, right now I'd suggest maybe not coming out just yet. I know, I know, that's shocking, but consider staying tucked away in that closet just for now (unless this is the right time for you) and enjoy that eggnog or rum cake.

Your dark secret will make it all the more delicious. Coming out will possibly be easier and less dramatic after the holidays are over because during the holidays emotions and stress tend to run high. It's best to come out when you and the people you are coming out to are feeling calm and relaxed, and no one has had too much eggnog or rum cake.

But what if you, like me, already are out, and it's your first Christmas/Hanukkah/Ramadan/winter holiday with family and friends since the big reveal? They may have anger or hurt feelings over not sharing the same beliefs anymore. This is a great opportunity to show them that you still love and cherish them and your time with them just as much, if not more. You may even still enjoy the same traditions that you did before!

It also can be a time to start a new tradition, such as celebrating the winter solstice, which reflects your appreciation of things that are real instead of imagined. Look back on the past year and appreciate how far you have come, look forward to all the growth the new year can bring. Enjoy your friends, family and the joy that the holidays can bring and come out to them when you are ready and feel safe doing so, whether that's now or later, and maybe save just a little bit of that rum cake to celebrate.

Sacramento Reason





Jazz Singer Vivian Lee Holiday Show Dec 14, 5:30 PM. [Fire Rock Grill](#)

11275 Folsom Blvd, Rancho Cordova. Jazz vocalist and recording artist Vivian Lee specializes in the standards; Gershwin, Ellington, Jobim, with some Brubeck, Hubbard, Monk and Gillespie thrown in. Ms Lee has three times (2005, 2006, 2007) been voted one of Sacramento's top jazz groups and top entertainer. [Tickets here](#) ... [Meetup details](#)

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- 20 [Secular Family Day](#)
- 21 [Blasphemy Breakfast in Rocklin](#)
- 21 [Blasphemy Brunch in Dixon/Vacaville](#)
- 21 [Blasphemy Brunch ArdenArcade](#)
- 21 [Sunday Assembly "Celebrating Life"](#)
- 21 [Coffee Klatch in Modesto](#)
- 21 [Ancient Christian Study Group](#)
- 21 [HumanLight Winter Solstice Party](#)
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- 26 [Game Night in Lodi](#)
- 26 [Sacramento Skeptics in the Pub](#)
- 26 [Finally Friday Dinner Karaoke](#)
- 28 [Brunch and Atheism in Turlock](#)
- 28 [Coffee Church Vespers PaneraBread](#)
- Jan 2 [Dinner Wine and Art Hop in Lodi](#)

Save The Date

- Early Feb:** Jerry DeWitt
- Mar 4** Dogma Debate in Sac
- May 14** Seth Andrews, The Thinking Atheist in Sac

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Recovering From Religion Planning Meeting

December 10, 2014

6:00 PM to 8:00 PM [Reason Center](#)
1824 Tribute Road Suite A, Sacramento



RECOVERING FROM RELIGION

Many in the Sacramento Area have discussed starting a local chapter of the "[Recovering from Religion](#)" (RR) support group.

This **initial meeting** is for all those who are interested in seeing this happen, and might even have some extra time to help volunteer in the organization. We'll explore the viability of a RR group with plans to start in 2015.

Those attending should spend a few moments on the [official RR page](#) to learn more about the international organization. Everyone is encouraged to attend. ... [Details here](#)



Family Time By Lindsey Campbell

I was a lone ranger as an atheist in my family for many years. I was surrounded by Christians, from tepid half-believers, to fundamentalist bible literalists, and everything in between. But no one, besides myself, in my huge family and extended family, would ever openly profess to *not* believe in god.



That all changed when my daughter started to talk.

My eight year old daughter, I'll call her Roxanne, has been known to engage her babysitters, teachers, and even her cousins' Sunday school peers, in conversations about the existence of eternity. I am often scrutinized about my parenting techniques because of the fact that Roxanne speaks so openly about atheism. This is not something I intended to teach her, though, and it usually occurs when I'm not around to direct conversations away from philosophical topics. I receive reports from people, usually after the fact, about interesting conversations they had with my daughter about god and atheism. Some call her a genius, others shake their heads and say she is sadly confused. However you want to look at it, the fact is that she is free to express herself however she chooses, and knows full well that her decisions over what to believe are her very own.

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Vegan Heathens

Sunday, December 14, 12:00 PM Lysa's Home in Turlock. (see details link below) Vegan Heathens, hosted by Lysa, is a Sunday brunch-style potluck. Bring your favorite dish, enough to share with others, and have a great time. This event occurs on the **second Sunday** of each month, starting at about noon and ending whenever. [Details here](#)



AN AMERICAN ATHEIST

Listen to our local atheist radio show [at this link](#).

Tom talks to the Legislative Chair for the [Secular Coalition of California](#) Tom Manger on atheist political representation in America and abroad, and what can be done to help. [Podcast here](#).

Noah Lugeons hosts [The Scathing Atheist](#), a straight-to-the-point, explicit language-bearing show by atheists for atheists. Tom interviews Noah to explore the appeal of this particular brand of atheism. [Podcast here](#)

Podcasts available in MP3 or OGG.

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Little Activisms

By Judy Saint

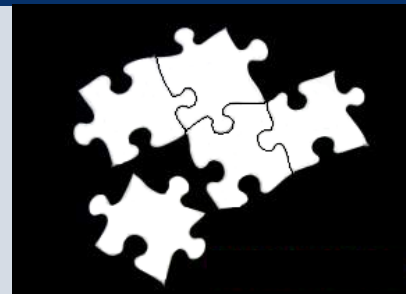
My neighborhood magazine article was censored this month when I tried to list religions in my holiday message to my neighbors. Wanting to use the word "atheist" out loud, I added that group in my list of neighbors who might celebrate, or not celebrate, this season in different ways. ("Best Seasonal Wishes to all our neighbors—Buddhist, Christian, Muslim, atheist, Jewish, and all our other neighbors.") They wouldn't run it. Being the little activist that I am, here is what I wrote back to the editors, who told me they were "afraid":

"I don't share that fear at all. I think it's unfounded, and I would hate to think it a mask for bigotry. Do you want me to apologize to any groups I may have left out by adding another sentence? It has my name on it, it's from me. Do you need to put a disclaimer under the article?"

"Would you not mention handicapped students when talking about special school accommodations because it might leave out students with diseases? What are you afraid of? These are all groups of wonderful people. What upset can come from trying to be inclusive? Are you scared of Muslims? Of atheists? They're great people.

"We need to role model acceptance and tolerance. Do your good deed for the holiday season. Include these people by name. They are your neighbors."

Maybe you have the chance to mention atheists in a list of other religions during this holiday season, aloud or in print. Every time we do, we're another little piece of the puzzle stronger. I may have been censored this time, but there is now one more editor out there who was made to stop and think about it. Maybe next year they'll run it. You know I'll try it again. ;-)



Coffee Church and Coffee Klatch

Open to everyone. Come relax with your favorite cuppa and meet some new friends.

Coffee Church meets every two weeks in Sacramento. [Details here](#).

Coffee Klatch meets every 3rd Sunday of the month in Modesto. [Details here](#).



Game Nights

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

[Sacramento Dec 13 at 6:00 pm](#)



New Members Meetup & Coffee

January 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

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.](#)

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Family Time

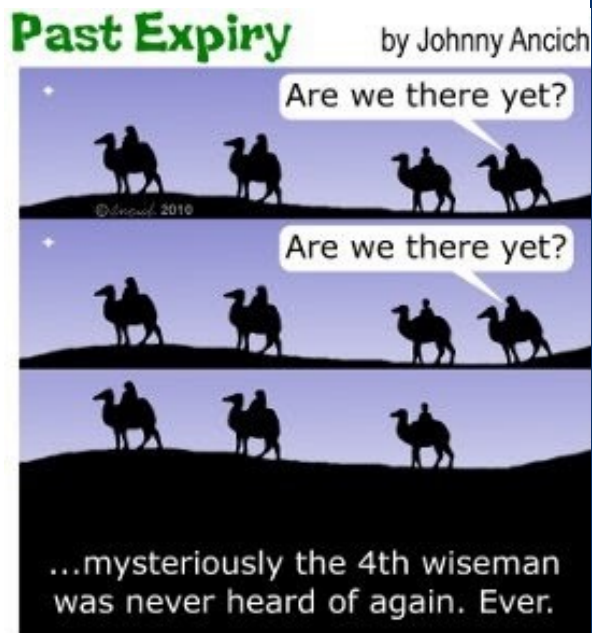
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I know this is true because of Roxanne's self-guided views on Santa Clause. When my daughter was around a year old, I had finally completed the long, painful process of letting go of god and re-learning pretty much everything I thought I knew about the world. I was starting life anew as an atheist.

Guided by what I then saw as the strength of my new belief system, I decided that Roxanne would never be led to believe anything that was not true, and that I would always be entirely straight-forward on every topic, including Santa Clause. A few times we'd had conversations about Santa and belief, but last year, when she was seven years old, the conversation took a sudden turn. When I approached the topic, she looked me square in the eye, and without hesitation she said, "Don't ever tell me Santa is not real again."


I guess a normal parental response to this assertion would be to feel disrespected. But in that moment, something grand occurred to me: Roxanne was asking me to allow her to choose what to believe. The belief in Santa is safe, normal, and a gift that lies inherently in the realm of American childhood. If my goal is to teach her to trust in her own beliefs, then what purpose does it serve for me to yank childhood dreams out of her hands? This may be one of the most significant milestones on the journey to a solid naturalist belief system, which is what I want for her.

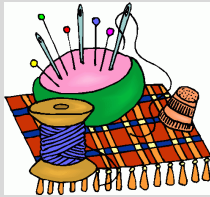
Roxanne may or may not actually believe in Santa, but this is not for me to know. This is something that lies in her heart alone. It's her own unique experience, and it has nothing to do with me, no, not even her mother. She asked me to step back, and since then I have. The underlying message that I hope she gets from this is that I trust her. She is intellectually competent, and she can decide for herself. And besides, believing in Santa is a lot of fun for relatively low risk.



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		Y	agasadavis.wordpress.com
Americans United for Sep of Church and State (Sac Chapter)	Promotes individual activism, confronts violations	N	Y	National only	au-sac.org
Atheists and Other Freethinkers (AOF)	Events both social and presented, for growth and fun.	Y	Y	N	aofonline.org
Black Humanists and Non-Believers of Sacramento	We hold educational forums and socials for the community. Open to everyone.	N	Y	Y	http://www.meetup.com/Black-Humanist-and-Non-Believers-of-Sacramento/
Brights Action	Translate our naturalistic worldviews into constructive actions for school/library/media	Y	Y	Internat'l only	the-brights.net/
FACTS Church	Church-like hymns, rituals, all the trappings in secular form.	Y	Y	N	factschurch.com
Greater Sacramento Chapter of Freedom From Religion Foundation	Protecting the constitutional principle of separation of state and church.	Y	Y	N	sac.ffrf.org
Humanist Association of the Greater Sac Area (HAGSA)	Humanist events, speakers, focus is on doing good.	Y	Y	Y	hagsa.org
Sacramento Area Coalition of Reason	Directing the community to the various groups of reason.	Y	N	Y	SacramentoCoR.org
Sac Area Skeptics (SAS)	Promotion of skeptical thinking, awareness of reality, logical skills.	Y	Y	Y	http://www.meetup.com/sacskeptics/
Sac City Freethinkers	Sac City College student group. Meet, question, promote, unite.	Y		Y	saccityfreethinkers.wordpress.com
Sac Freethinkers, Atheists and Non-believers (SacFAN)	Meetup for variety of fun, learning, singing, projects, games, activism.	Y	N	Y	SacFAN.org
Sac Think Atheist	Events, podcast, and forum to fight anti-atheism and gain tools.	N		N	thinkatheist.com/group/sacramentocalifatheists
Secular Coalition for California	Train to engage media and lobby state politicians. Activist resource.	N	N	Y	ca.secular.org
Secular Student Alliance @ Sacramento State University	CSUS student group to socialize and promote free-thought.	Y		Y	csusaso.wordpress.com
Sierra College Student Alliance	Sierra College student and faculty group for non-belief in religion.	Y		Y	secularstudents.org/sierra
Sunday Assembly Sacramento	The Sunday Assembly is a secular congregation that celebrates life. Live better, help often, wonder more.	Y	N	Y	http://www.meetup.com/Sunday-Assembly-Sacramento/
Stanislaus Humanists	Book groups, discussions, game nights, theatrical movies, karaoke, dancing.	N		Y	www.StanislausHumanists.org , Meetup
Stockton Area Atheists and Freethinkers (SAAF)	Meetup events and philanthropy, from Galt to Modesto.	Y		Y	StocktonAAF.org



Crafts Group—Sirens & Satyrs of Sharp

Monday, December 8, 6:30 PM to 9:00 PM (check detail link for location)

Come over with your favorite beverage, wine, alcohol, soft drink, perhaps a snack... and relax, have fun, gab, and maybe learn a thing or two! [Details here](#)



Skeptics in the Pub - Two Locations

Sacramento

Sac Skeptics in the Pub

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

[Map here](#)

[Details here](#)

Stockton

Drinking Skeptically
Fri Dec 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](#)



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By Sara Lone

Everyone always asks, “So, what does an atheist do on Christmas?”

My response? “I readily accept all the gifts people give me, eat way too much pie, and enjoy quality family time.”

Despair not, <30s! We get to celebrate the Winter Solstice! As an astronomical event, our lord and savior Neil deGrasse Tyson can christen it as a legitimate reason to break out the pie and have a day off — most importantly, the days are going to start getting longer now! Yippee!!

On the real though, this time of year can be problematic for us non-religious folks, mostly because it’s rare to find oneself surrounded by an overabundance of non-believers. It’s fairly easy to not talk about religion in day-to-day life — but if students want to put on a school play about the birth of Jesus at your public school, or your local city government wants to put a nativity scene on their front lawn, or people you sell stuff to at your retail job get angry when you say “Happy Holidays” instead of “Merry Christmas,” the holiday fervor could really start to grind your gears.

But you can get through this; with presents and pie! Declare the solstice, take back the holidays, and insert some serious cheer into your life and the lives of the people around you. When you say “Happy Holidays” and someone gets all in a tizzy, let them know with the biggest smile on your face that you are a proud, solstice-celebrating, gift-giving, charitable non-believer. Don’t forget to add in that you don’t do it for perks in the afterlife — we strive to be good without a god even on non-holidays!

So, on December 21, eat pie! And celebrate our lovely earth being the legitimate reason for the season.

Contact Sara at Under30@sacramentoreason.org #under30nones



Thirsty Thursday

Thursday, December 11, 2014

6:30 PM to 8:30 PM

Location: [Mama Kim Eats](#) ... [Details here](#) ... [Menu here](#)

1616 Del Paso Blvd, Sacramento

Come in and join us at MAMA KIM EATS for our Thirsty Thursday Social. Enjoy weekly food and drink specials for \$5 all night long! Come beat the heat with a Delta Peach Cooler or Sangria for \$5. See all you heathens there!

The Brights—Ferret Project and Mini Website

Monday, December 8, 5:00 PM at The Office, 3001 J Street, 2nd Floor, Sacramento

The Ferret conversation was productive and interesting! No, not real ferrets. It's about donating science-oriented books to an elementary school. The Brights! Fertile minds, good ideas! We're the group that gets things done! Everyone is welcome! [Details here](#)



Dinner, Wine and Art Hop

Friday
December 5
6:00 to 9:00 PM

Check the details link below for location updates.

For our Lodi socialites, join us the **first Friday** of each month as we take in the best that Downtown Lodi has to offer.

Each evening will be a combination of a dinner at a chosen Downtown Lodi restaurant, followed by some wine and art hopping in conjunction with the Lodi Arts Commission's monthly Art Hop.

[Details here](#)

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DAY
ASSEMBLY
SACRAMENTO



3rd Sundays at the Reason Center

Sunday Assembly and Smoups (Small Groups)

Dec 7, 4:00—7:00 PM, Memorial Auditorium, 1515 J St. Help assemble school and dental kits for low income children.

Dec. 7, 6:00—9:00 PM, Laura's Apt SMOUP: Living Better Potluck for fun, uplifting discussions on how we can live better! ! [Details here](#)

Dec. 13, 10 AM—12 PM, Ashton Park, 4251 Ashton Dr, Sac. SMOUP: Secular Parenting. Take a chance to meet up and let the kiddos play while we socialize and share about parenting from a secular world view. [Details here.](#)

Dec. 14, 5:30 PM, Fire Rock Grill, 11275 Folsom Blvd, Rancho Cordova. Holiday Show with great award-winning jazz singer Vivian Lee. [Details here](#) and on Page 5.

Dec. 21, 10:30 AM—12 PM, Reason Center, 1824 Tribute Rd, Suite A. December's theme is "Celebrating Life". [Details here.](#) Then extend our morning celebration by attending the HumanLight Potluck! (See Page 1)

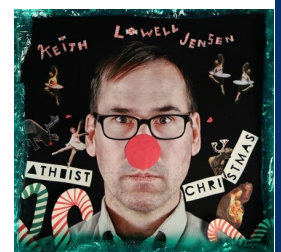
Ha Ha Heathens ... with Keith Lowell Jensen

Thursday, December 4, 8:00 PM

[Punch Line Sacramento](#), 2100 Arden Way #225

This is the 5th year of doing Ha Ha Heathens. If that weren't enough it's also the official release of my new special and album *Atheist Christmas* from [Stand Up! Records](#).

So come join fellow Stand Up! Records artist [Johnny Taylor](#), yogurt salesman and OH (Original Hater) [Matt Lieb](#), Sacramento Comedy Festival winner for best stand up [Michael Patten](#), [Cate Gary](#), and RetroCrusher [Robert Berry](#) for a night of HO HO Holiday Goodness. ...[Facebook post here.](#) ... [Details here.](#)



Forgetting God

By Aaron Asbury

It's that time of year again. Time to break out the decorations, light the fire, and listen to the god-fearing people of this country complain about where they can't place nativity scenes, what holiday greetings they can or can't say, and whether or not Bill O'Reilly has spouted the phrase "War on Christmas" enough to get his point across. That's right nation, it's December. Along with the strong retail renaissance comes renewed recognition that "traditional values" are still under attack from godless heathens.



I don't know about you, but this heathen just wants some hot chocolate, laughing kids, and maybe snow flurries for Christmas. I don't give a darn about all the other stuff... unless it's being shoved down my throat. There's this idea that, as non-theists, all we want is to ruin everyone else's fun, what with our billboards and "Happy Holidays!" and such.

To be fair, as far as I can tell, we're just asking for the respect of equal footing. Whatever that may entail. That's a hard pill for a group that has its fingers in every little pumpkin pie they can find, and they don't know quite how to handle it. I remember, as a Christian, making fun of those who didn't believe that Christmas was the birth of Jesus, or calling those who celebrated the winter solstice "pagans" (i.e. satanists). I know a lot of people who still do. And, as we all know, indoctrination (like ignorance) runs deep.

My stance now is to try to educate those acquaintances, those family members and friends, little by little, on origins, definitions, and reality. I may never convince them of my position but, maybe, I can show them there is still value in time spent with family, friends, and good food this holiday season... no god required.

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

Secular Family Day

Saturday, December 20, 2014

2:00 PM to 4:00 PM

Location: Check the details link below for updates.



Nearly every month, the **third Saturday** is "Secular Family Day" -- a day for the whole family to get out and meet other secular families in a fun place somewhere in the Central Valley.

All ages are invited, including those without kids, and most events will be pet-friendly, too! Due to the randomness of our venue each month, be sure to read all the details about food, travel, parking, and more. And be sure to ask questions! Please join us when you can!

[Details here.](#)

Listen Up!

By Cleo Kocol

Our government is secular but American citizens can be either religious or secular. Most secularists tread a path somewhere between the two when the winter holiday season comes around. Very few are on the extreme ends, all religion or all secular, when it comes to celebrating winter holidays. But I'd like to address the broader society. If you belong to a club or organization that still says Christmas Party instead of Winter Holiday, do you correct them? If not, you need to speak up. Do you smile and nod or repeat "Merry Christmas" when someone addresses you that way? In other words are you a timid backslider when it comes to public expressions? Secularists need to remind society -- in a diplomatic way -- that Americans are not all Christian. If we do not protest that crèche in the city square, we are letting false beliefs predominate -- that indeed we are a country founded on Christian beliefs. We can enjoy the season even more if we don't let outmoded and Christian words take precedence over the truth. I'm sure our friends of Muslim, Jewish and other beliefs will appreciate our honesty as we all navigate the waters of December celebrations and stores blaring songs of Christian derivation. Do your own thing when it comes to that Dec. 25th holiday, avoid arguments with family, but maintain your secularity, especially when it comes to the broader society. As Franklin said before the American Revolution, we must all hang together or we most assuredly will hang alone.



Atheist Panel at Sac City

By Don Button and Jim Naylor

Noontime spectators posed questions such as: "If you don't believe in God, then what is the purpose of life?" to a panel of secular students at the 'Ask an Atheist' presentation at Sacramento City College Tuesday, November 19th. About a hundred people gathered to watch the hour-long event put on by the Secular Student Alliance at Sac City.

This one guy did start reading some stuff out of a text book, guess he didn't get the whole 'Ask' part of 'Ask an Atheist'. Some spectators stayed after the presentation asking further questions, and continuing their discussions.

A few thanked the secular students for bringing a message

advocat-
ing the im-

portance
of critical
thinking.

We didn't expe-

rience any confrontational or angry questions this time around, as we have in the past, though I did see some confused and uncomfortable expressions in the audience from time to time.

Photo credit: Cody Wyatt



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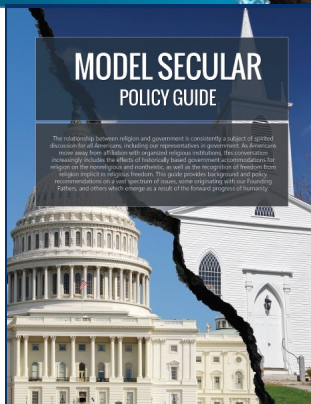
Volume 11, Issue 12

Issue Theme: Celebrate Solstice

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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 many ways, and the separation of church and state is a complex issue. This guide provides a framework for understanding the relationship between religion and government, and offers recommendations on a variety of issues, from the separation of church and state to the treatment of religious minorities.



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

In Tracy, California, two junior students, Adrianna Teboe and Derek Giardina, left out the words "under God" when it was their turn to recite the Pledge over the school loudspeaker. As a result of their actions, their grades were marked down, and Giardina was also given detention and threats of suspension from school. Because public schools are government institutions, they must also abide by the Establishment Clause and ensure that there is no government endorsement of religion. Sadly, however, the Pledge of Allegiance has carried religious overtones since 1954, when the Knights of Columbus, a Catholic organization, petitioned President Eisenhower to include the phrase in order to distinguish the capitalist, Christian United States from the communist, secular Soviet Union and the rest of the world.

Unfortunately, given the state of Establishment Clause jurisprudence as of late, it is likely that "under God" may be ruled constitutional by the Supreme Court were it to ever hear the matter again. The Supreme Court struck down Michael Newdow's Ninth Circuit victory in 2004 on technical standing issues, staying silent on the merits of the case. The Ninth Circuit came against Mr. Newdow in his second case, *Newdow v. Rio Linda Union School District*, as did the Second Circuit earlier this year. This anomaly can be explained by the view that "under God" is non-denominational (never mind the historical context under which the phrase was added), the phrase does not substantially burden the religious rights of atheists or other freethinkers, nor is it enough to advance religion.

It is the waning of the Lemon Test and strict separation of State and Church which is the cause of this result. Freethinkers have been getting more politically active and visible--this needs to continue to fight the religiosity wave we have witnessed as of late.

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.

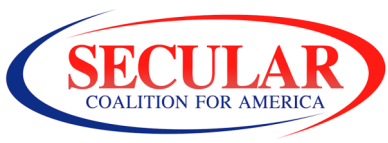
How Do I Find My Representatives?

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

Secular Coalition—CA Update

By Tom Manger

Last month, the Secular Coalition for California made several Secular Scorecards available on its website - ca.secular.org. We hope all of you voted. If these scorecards helped you reach a decision, all the better.

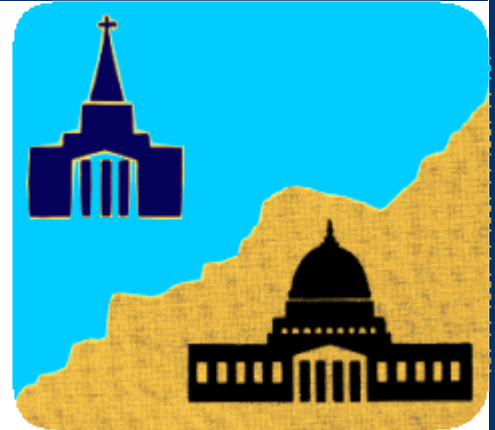
California legislators won't start up the new session until January 5th. From there legislative offices will be racing to get their bills introduced. They have until February 27th to submit their bills to the Secretary of State. After that, bills churn through various committee hearings and - if they're lucky - a floor vote by the entire assembly or senate.

As it turns out, the SCCA is working to get three of its own bills introduced for important secular issues. This is just one of many lobbying related activities planned for 2015.

In an effort to help raise the voice of secular voters, we will be ramping up volunteer outreach to make it easier for you to voice your position to your legislators. This is part of a larger effort to get more individuals and groups lined up and working towards our mission of church/state separation.

We will have our next monthly call (open to the public) on Saturday, January 3rd at 10am. We hope more of you will join us on this call. Visit our website or Facebook page for call in details - ca.secular.org or [Facebook.com/SecularCA](https://www.facebook.com/SecularCA).

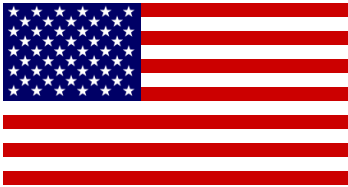
Find out more about the [Secular Coalition for California](#), our [Key Issues](#), and be sure to [subscribe to Action Alerts](#). You can also [Like us on Facebook](#). Email us with any questions - california@secular.org.



DECEMBER						
SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
11	22	33	44	55	66	77
88	99	1010	1111	1212	1313	1414
1515	1616	1717	1818	1919	2020	2121
2222	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				

ATHEIST ADVENT CALENDAR

PAUL
NOTH



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 8 for details.

Print one copy of this newsletter to leave somewhere for others to find and read.



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Arts Review By Linda Hsu

Like the dystopian future depicted by most popular culture these days, *Interstellar* opens in an unspecified future where the planet earth is on the brink of eliminating its human population. Inexplicably, our hero, Cooper, discovers a hidden NASA installation, conveniently located within driving distance, by following the clues from a "gravitational anomaly" inside his house. If all science fiction can be considered a thought experiment, then success is defined by supplying ample evidence during the unfolding of the plot to make a case for the premise. Unlike many who claim that his plot is too convoluted, I understand the plots, but am dissatisfied by the flimsy evidence Nolan supplied to make his case. *Interstellar* is a failed thought experiment.

I am grateful that Nolan never took the easy path of explaining away the impossible by claiming God as an answer; but he didn't actually present the characters as rational people capable of logical decisions, either. Cooper is a hot shot pilot able to communicate in Morse Code. His shipmate Amelia Brand is a damsel in distress who needs to be rescued by a robot. The others get killed off for various subplots and none seem to influence the final outcome. Cooper and Brand make decisions based on love; and we, the viewers, are pretty much told to take the conclusion of the movie *by faith*.

Of course, even a failed experiment can contain a step in the right direction. Throughout the movie the Dylan Thomas poem "Do not go gentle into the good night" was repeatedly referenced. (Hear a moving reading by Anthony Hopkins. <http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p021j07s>) The poem is an encouragement to struggle against incredible odds, and never give up even when it seems hopeless. This might reinforce believers in the audience that they are on the right path, just as it might reinforce non-believers of the same thing. I recommend the poem.

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/>

