

Sacramento Reason

COR

Shine the Light of Reason!

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

Subscribe

Volume III, Issue I

Issue Theme: What Can I Do?

January 2015

Jerry DeWitt

"It's All About Being Yourself!"

Hear this Ex-Evangelical Pastor's Rousing Talk!

[Sacramento February 3 details here](#)

Tuesday February 3, 6:30 pm
Reason Center, 1824 Tribute Rd,
Suite A ... [Map here](#)

[Stockton Feb. 7 6:00 PM details here](#)

Jerry DeWitt is a former evangelical pastor who first experienced doubts about his religious beliefs when he contemplated the idea of hell. He later found himself unable to pray for God's help when a congregant told him of her injured brother. He preached for the last time in April 2011



after years of on-fire evangelism.

After being outed, he lost his secular job and his wife. Jerry is the first member of The Clergy Project to drop his anonymity and freely speak about the Project, which helps pastors who no longer believe in the supernatural learn new trades and move forward in life.

In 2011 and 2012, he served as the executive director of Recovering from Religion, a group which helps people find their way after a loss of faith.

DeWitt has written a book based on his career and experiences entitled *Hope After Faith*. You can [order a copy here](#), which I'm sure he'll happily sign for you.

His message to others who are coming out as atheist to friends and relatives is that it's all about being yourself. Being yourself, as he will elaborate, is what matters in the end. Let him tell you for himself, in his ever-the-preacher energetic fashion—but without the guilt, and with all the fun of a real down home lively tent meeting! Free. Open to the Public. Bring others!

Jerry DeWitt's appearance is funded by AOF Speaker Series. [Become a supporting member of AOF here](#), to help bring more renowned speakers to Sacramento. Support the Reason Center, a hall for freethought groups to use, at this [Reason Center supporter's link](#). Thank you!

Reason
Center

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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. Sign up to keep informed! ([Click Here](#)) or go to <http://www.facebook.com/pages/Sacramento-Area-Coalition-of-Reason/376151155788191>

Really?



The Passion of the Christ—Noah—Exodus: Gods and Kings—The Ten Commandments—The Last Temptation of Christ—God's Not Dead—The Robe—Heaven is For Real—Son of God—Left Behind—King of Kings—The Nativity Story—The Blood of Jesus—Jesus—The Prophecy—The Testaments—The Great Commandment—Kingdom of Heaven—Believe Me—Persecuted—Son of God—The Bible—Unstoppable—My Year as an Atheist—The Cross—Saving God—Exorcist ...

Just look at all the religious movies that were arguably hilarious because they were trying to act like they're real, yet along comes a really silly raunchy B movie that doesn't at all try to pretend it's real in any sense, and it's the movie that gets pulled from 3,000 theaters? REALLY?

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Sacramento Reason

"Ask The Social I.Q. Lady"

Q: My cousin says he is a Christian, but doesn't really act the part. He doesn't attend church, read the bible or anything like that but he still clings to the ideology. He will sometimes ask me if it bothers me that I'm going to hell. How should I respond?

A: Next time your cousin brings up his worries about you going to hell, validate his concerns with a "thank you for worrying about me. I know you say these things because you love me and would hate to see me live a life in eternal damnation. I appreciate your concerns." Assure him that the thought of anyone going to hell does not bother you because you don't believe such a place exists. Let him know that you are welcome to explore any new information that might prove Hell does exist.

Religion instills fear in people that can remain long after they've stopped attending services. Your cousin has given up going to church, but might be having trouble letting go of his fears. I say fears because that's exactly what he's exhibiting when he talks about a hell. Start a conversation about heaven and hell and find out what his true beliefs are. Most Christian religions maintain the belief in a heaven and a hell. However, according to a poll done in May 2013 by the True Life in God Foundation (TLIG), only 62% of Americans believe in heaven and think they are going there and only 44% believe in an actual hell. It could be that perhaps your cousin is beginning to question this part of his belief system. I find that those beginning to question their beliefs often turn to atheists for answers. Don't just be his cousin, be his friend. Listen and respond with compassion and kindness.

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

How To Get More Atheist Leaders—PAY THEM!

Patreon! Become a patron of a freethinking leader so they can quit their day job and work full time doing what they're already doing in their spare time!

[Seth Andrews, The Thinking Atheist](#)

[Matt Dillahunty, The Atheist Experience](#)

[Jaclyn Glenn, YouTuber with younger audience](#)

[Darrel Ray, author Sex & God and Secular Sexuality podcast](#)

[Hemant Mehta "The Friendly Atheist"](#)

[David Smalley, Dogma Debate](#)

It's about time we got on board to give these folks a well deserved income. Got \$5/month? Good. [Patreon.com](#)



Ancient Christian Study Group - Jan. 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.

Atheist Giving the Invocation at Chico City Council

Let's carpool to Chico to support our fellow activist, George Gold, who fought for years, together with help from Freedom From Religion Foundation, to finally be able to give an official atheist invocation before the City Council meeting. Here is a message from George: "Hello everyone... As you may have heard, we have been invited to deliver secular invocations to the Chico City Council, three times during 2015. The first invocation is scheduled for January 6, 2015. Based upon the Pew research study of 2012, there are approximately 17,000 people in the City of Chico living secular lives.

"It's important that we show the City Council that we are a segment of the population that cares and participates in the fabric of the city. The first invocation is scheduled for January 6, 2015. PLEASE make this your first 2015 entry in whatever you use for a calendar, electronic, paper, on the fridge, and let our elected officials know that we are here and that we care. Show up at the City Council chambers on January 6, 2015, 6pm."

[Map here](#)

[Details here](#)

Because We're All About the Food...

Freethought Dinner Socials—January 3 in Roseville ([details](#)), January 17 in Sacramento ([details](#))

Café Discussions—January 3 ([details](#)), January 10 ([details](#)), January 17 ([details](#)), January 24 ([details](#)), January 31 ([details](#))

Happy Hour—January 7 ([details](#))

Brunch and Atheism in Turlock—January 10 ([details](#)), Jan. 25 ([details](#))

Vegan Heathens—January 11 ([details](#))

Finally Friday Dinner and Karaoke—January 30 ([details](#))

Dinner, Wine and Art Hop in Lodi—February 6 ([details](#))

Blasphemy Brunches—January 18 in Roseville ([details](#)), Arden/Arcade ([details](#)), Dixon/Vacaville ([details](#))



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

- Jan 10 10:00 am Brunch and Atheism, Panera Bread, 10718 Trinity Pkwy, Stockton [Map here](#)
Jan 11 3:00 pm Coffee Church: Vespers, Panera Bread, 2731 Del Paso Road [Map here](#)
Jan 18 9:30 am Blasphemy Breakfast, Mel's Diner, 6708 Lonetree Blvd [Map here](#)
Jan 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, sit down to brunch with us. Everyone is welcome! No topics, just have fun. [See the calendar](#) for all locations.

Book Clubs

Everyone welcome

Sacramento

Jan 19, 6:30 pm
Reason Center
1824 Tribute Rd,
Suite A
[Details here.](#)

Sacramento

Dad's Kitchen
March 8, 11:00 am
2968 Freepoint Bl
[Details here.](#)

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

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Sacramento Reason

Coming Out

By Oriana Morrison

You mean I can have kinky sex now? You mean I can have a drink now? Wear shorts and a tank top? Watch an R-rated movie? And not go to hell?! Hallelujah!! I can finally stop feeling guilty for being a human being who snuck in all those things at some point anyway – in secret, of course!

I don't know about you, but my parents are dedicated, conservative Christians who raised me to be just like them (I know, what happened?) I always feared disappointing them by just being a normal human.

The problem is, I still do fear disappointing them for just being a normal human, even after coming out atheist. I'm still a part "them". I still fear their finding out that I enjoy a glass of wine in the evening, enjoy good sex with my husband, watch Game of Thrones, basically anything they'd disapprove of because of their religion – all this despite their knowing I am an atheist.

I've come out to them that I've rejected their god, but rejecting their moral ideals is another whole thing. Even though I am still loving and kind, and far more accepting than their faith would have me be, it's going to take courage to tell them that I don't hold their morals sacred; that I form my own now.

The process of coming out can take a lifetime as it doesn't just end when you say you don't believe in your family's god anymore. It extends to finding your own morality, and coming out to family that you now set your own morals. It extends to realizing you can have that wine or skimpy tank top if you want, without guilt or fear, or thought given to the family dogma. It's like coming out a second time.

Introducing the Politics and Philosophy Group

Have you looked into the Sacramento Politics and Philosophy Group? [Check it out here.](#) The intent of this group is that people who are interested in discussing politics and philosophy can meet periodically, on either weekends or weekday evenings so that people who have day jobs can attend. We will probably meet in some public place, such as a coffee shop or bar, introduce ourselves and discuss the issues of the day along with more abstract philosophical topics. Join us! Everyone is welcome.



Why not wear an atheist pendant?

Ever see anyone in a store, at work, or some meeting who wears a cross around their neck, or a shirt with a religious symbol? Why not try wearing something saying you don't have superstitions? Some of the symbols are quite tastefully designed. [Try Evolvefish.com](http://TryEvolvefish.com).

Upcoming Events

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18 Blasphemy Break-fast, Rocklin

18 Blasphemy Brunch Dixon/Vacav

18 Blasphemy Brunch ArdenArcade

18 Coffee Klatch, Modesto

18 Sunday Assembly

18 Ancient Christian Study Group

19 BHNBS Booth at M L King Expo

19 Book Club

21 Recovering from Religion

23 Game Night, Lodi

23 Sacramento

Skeptics in the Pub

24 Café Discussion

25 Brunch and Atheism, Turlock

25 Tim Minchin in SF

30 Finally Friday—Dinner Karaoke

31 Café Discussion

Feb 3 Jerry DeWitt

Feb 3 Book Club in Ceres

Feb 4 Welcome New Members

Save The Date

Feb 7 Jerry DeWitt in Stockton

Mar 4 Dogma Debate in Sac

May 14 Seth Andrews "The Thinking Atheist" in Sac

Sunday Assembly

January 18, 10:00 am—12:15 pm

Sunday Assembly at the Reason Center

1824 Tribute Road Suite A, Sacramento, CA [Map here](#) [Details here](#)

The Sunday Assembly is a secular congregation that celebrates life.

Our event -- on the third Sunday in January -- is 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. Everyone welcome!

Smoup (Small Group): Secular Parenting.

Jan. 4, 10 AM, Ashton Park [Map here](#)

[See Smoup details here.](#)

**Reason
Center**

"What You Can Do" List by Christopher Hitchens

Great article by Hitchens explaining 15 (16?) ways atheists can stand up for rationality. Below is paraphrased only, so be sure to read [his original words](#).

1. When others ask to "Say Grace", explore your options.
2. Dismiss the false aura of sanctity—Discuss religion, right out loud.
3. Share the delights of being atheist with others.
4. Share your purpose in life, as an atheist.
5. Talk about your morality, where it comes from, what it is.
6. Stand up for the wonder of creation in all its forms, straight up.
7. Call out Creationism as more irrational and unbelievable than natural ways.
8. Respond with common sense when someone says they'll pray for you.
9. Laugh at Pascal's Wager, be ready with any of several quick retorts.
10. The real comfort comes from self-reliance, not false hope as if a good vodka.
10. Fear and feeble-mindedness will not suddenly come to us in tragedy. Do not tell us we will once again be fooled in time of calamity or when facing death.
11. No one may make assertions without expecting objections from thinking folk.
12. Jesus, according to the stories, was not merciful. "Depart, ye cursed, into everlasting fire."
13. Can't prove there is no god? What does that matter?
14. Consider the "well, it's true for me" concept as soppy and pretentious.
15. Told not to take the full bible literally? Some is only metaphor? If it's not totally revealed truth then it's left to each reader to interpret differently without any guide as to how to do so, and thereby worthless.

His article ends with, "Arm yourself with the courage of your rationalist convictions and go forth. We will all be better off for it."

“What You Can Do to Fight the Woo”

Talk from TAM 2014 uploaded by James Randi Foundation. Learn how YOU can DO something important. Check out this workshop from TAM 2014 with Robert Blaskiewicz, Susan Gerbic and Kirill Alferov. ... [Watch the full 1 1/2 hour talk at this link.](#)



AN AMERICAN ATHEIST

Listen to our own 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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Sacramento Reason

Little Activisms

By Judy Saint

At the FFRF Conference a lady seeing our t-shirts in an elevator asked what atheists would talk about. I mentioned the paleontologist who discovered Lucy was there. She ran away as soon as the door opened at the 3rd floor.

I only had that one sentence. How did I do? It's like a game – how fast can you think on your feet when asked about atheism?

Typically the question is, “Why are you an atheist?” It's always a game to see who can hit the buzzer first: you being able to get out a meaningful sentence or them being able to escape. Ready go!

This is referred to as your ‘elevator talk’. If you only had one floor with a person on an elevator, how would you answer that question? Once you come up with your answer, practice it, so you don't think of it 2 minutes after they've left.

Is it because you were raised without superstition? Is it because you had enough from pushy believers? Is it because you studied other religions, or actually read the bible? Is it because you prefer evidence? Everyone's story is different, of course. Find yours.

Then phrase it so it invites the listener in. Instead of saying “I found the truth”, try, “I found an interesting book”. Instead of saying “It's obvious once you think about it”, try, “I spent time thinking about it.” If the listener hears something they can relate to, they might hang onto your words. After all, if they asked the question, they're ready to listen.

You might be a role model and not even know it. Once they get off at the lingerie floor, they're gone.

Get your sentence ready, then practice it. You never know when someone might give you that important 10 seconds.



Recovering From Religion

Still having problems leaving or recovering from your previous religious experiences, friends and family, or dealing with after-effects? Or want to help others with these difficult transitions to normalcy? Open to everyone. Come join us.

Sunday, January 11, 5 pm—7 pm [Details here.](#)

Wednesday, January 21, 6 pm—8 pm [Details here.](#)

Reason Center, 1824 Tribute Rd, Suite A, Sacramento

Reason
Center

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 Jan. 17 at 6:00 pm](#) or [Lodi Jan. 23 at 6:00 pm](#) or [Salida Jan. 9 at 7:00 pm](#)



New Members Meetup & Coffee

Jan.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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Issue Theme: What Can I Do?

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Family Time By Lindsey Campbell

My daughter, Roxanne, just returned from a weekend with Grandma, with a “real” story about a boat that carried every animal in the whole world. This always makes me mad. So, what can I do?

The first thing is stop and recognize that my anger is centered in a deep fear that someone will squirm into that malleable little mind and plant the God Virus there. Then I let go of the anger so I can think clearly. When I see religious people hover around their children, screening what they see, hear, and say, I get the impression of a deep insecurity on the part of the parents. They cannot allow anything to challenge their own beliefs, because they are taught as youngsters to never admit being wrong. Ever. So, fear of being wrong is passed to their children rather than critical thinking skills.

Understanding this was, for me, an important step in letting go of my anger. Young children do not yet have all the logical thinking skills necessary to do critical thinking. They are not yet capable of analyzing this information. But eventually, their frontal lobes mature, and they will make their own choices no matter what we tell them. (IF we give them the tools of skepticism and critical thinking.) So my advice on this matter is to allow them to be wrong! I know, weird, right? Let them go through the process of *realizing*, *admitting error*, and *changing* their own beliefs, using the thinking skills you teach them.

Being OK with being wrong is something that indoctrination does not teach; if you learn that you’re never wrong, you’ll never learn to make intellectual adjustments. Let them use the tools you’ve given them. Let them be wrong. Let them pass this to your grandchildren someday.



Have a Story? Write Your Own Book

You have stories in you. Write them. Maybe your biography, maybe a book for young atheists, whatever sounds fun. You can write it yourself, yes you can!

“The best tool to add to your tool belt for this job is [Calibre](#). It converts files to PDF, ePub and other file types that work well on ereaders. Just save a copy of your book to TXT or ODT and then convert in Calibre. Upload to it a site like [ePubBud](#) or [UploadNSell](#) if you want to go it alone, or post it right to Amazon if you want that exposure. Be careful, though — Amazon takes a chunk of your sales. Set your price lower than you would a print copy — probably as low as half or less. People are more likely to take a risk on your book if the price isn’t too high.” (from USA Today)

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>	agasa-davis.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
Stanislaus Humanists	Book groups, discussions, game nights, theatrical movies, karaoke, dancing.	N		<u>Y</u>	www.StanislausHumanists.org , Meetup
Stockton Area Atheists and Freethinkers (SAAF)	Meetup events and philanthropy, from Galt to Modesto.	Y		<u>Y</u>	StocktonAAF.org

Live around Stanislaus County? Ceres, Turlock, Modesto, Manteca, Merced

You have a very active Meetup group called Stanislaus Humanists. See the [event calendar here](#).



Skeptics in the Pub - Two Locations

Sacramento

Sac Skeptics in the Pub

Fri Jan. 23, 6:30p
Hoppy Brewing Co
6300 Folsom Blvd

[Map here](#)

[Details here](#)

Stockton

Drinking Skeptically
Fri Jan. 16, 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 III, Issue I

Issue Theme: What Can I Do?

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By Sara Lone

So, you're a young secularist and you want to be loud and proud. What can you do?

I KNOW you've heard of.... Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Friggen' Pinterest — All of these social media sites can be the perfect outlet for your secular promotions and activities. First of all, you're reading this newsletter, so keep doing that, but SHARE it! You may think you can't make a difference, but loads of young people just like you are asking the same questions... having similar thoughts... struggling with those existential meaning-of-life concerns, and YOU can be the shining star to guide them on their journey to destination: secularism. School doesn't really teach you how to think critically about things — we hear stuff and spit it back up on tests, but there seems to be no time to ask those pressing “why?!” questions. Now, imagine if you were someone growing up with intolerant parents who despise “why” questions — that wouldn't really promote a lifelong critical thinking mindset. Basically: we need more critical thinkers in the world. Do you think Gandalf would have gotten anywhere if he hadn't been a critical thinker? NO! He was a wizard! And really cool, to boot. If everyone had been like Gandalf, a critical thinker AND a good person, the world would be a much better place. Except we probably wouldn't have the Hobbit or the Lord of the Rings...

Anywho, the point is: use those social media skills to reach out to your friends, not only to bring them out of the dark (kinda like Gandalf), but also to let the world know that you're proud of your whys, your critical thinking, and your non-belief! You know why? Cuz the haters gonna hate hate hate hate... but you gonna be you you you you you!

Contact Sara at Under30@sacramentoreason.org. #under30nones



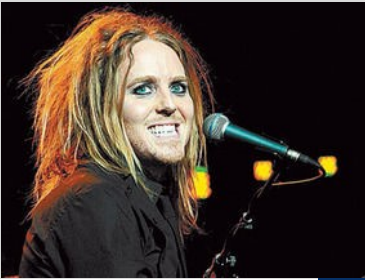
Brights—Holiday Recovery at Limelight

Wednesday, January 7, 5:00 PM

The Limelight

1014 Alhambra Blvd, Sacramento, CA ([map](#))

Join The Brights for an evening drink and comradery while we do something for the community! We still have work to do on our Little Ferret Library project. We are still collecting books, and talking to schools. In addition, our Freethinkers Through History Project is ongoing. We also welcome other ideas for small, local projects that can be done by a small group of dedicated individuals. Everyone is welcome. [Details here](#).



Tim Minchin in SF—Let's Go Together!

For car pooling, dinner details, and for those who believe “the more the merrier”, leave your comments on this [SacFAN link](#). — **SOLD OUT** —

Reason Center

Support Sacramento's Reason Center

It's all up to us now. Consider supporting Sacramento's Reason Center with a monthly donation, whichever free-thought group you belong to.

The Center needs regular monthly backing from each of us to succeed. Even [\\$5/month](#) is good.

You may have seen recent speakers such as Matt Dillahunty, or you may have been at the Center to organize a new group in the area. Or, you might find yourself coming to the Reason Center for just about anything, but without *lots* of monthly donors, we cannot keep a great facility like this operating. See what you can do to help.

[Set up a monthly donation here.](#)

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Sacramento Reason

Let Businesses Know They're Not Including You

Have you ever received a religious greeting from a company you use? Here is what was written to such a company over the last holiday season (used here by permission). The company responded that they will next year change their policy.

“While you own your own business, and can do with your newsletters whatever you like, I would like to be heard, even if briefly.

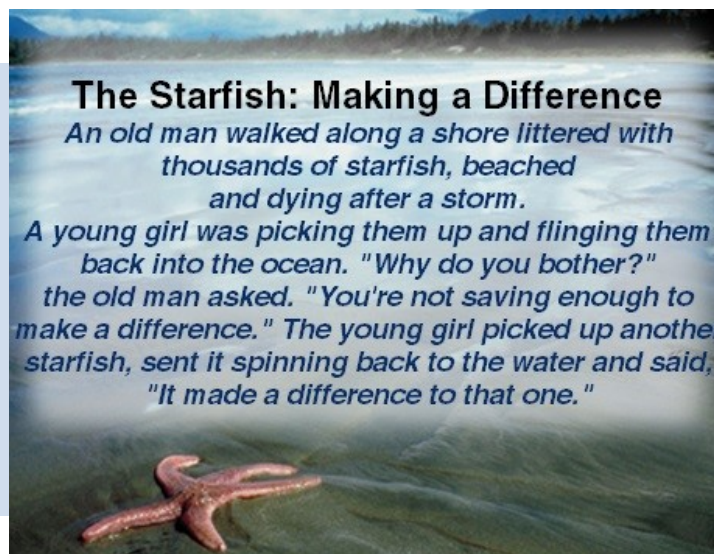
“While I know you mean well, with wishes of peace, health, happiness and love, religion is exactly why we stopped using our previous service and came to you. I hope we don't have to do the same again. We like what you offer, and would like to stay with you.

“However, many of your customers, like us, are not Christian. References to three desert camel travelers, mention of God, identifying this as the season of Christmas, all can leave many of us with a sense of not being included. Some might be offended, but I don't personally go that far. I know those who do, though. Our family is atheist, and we are generally quite patient and understanding.

“Please simply try in the future to include all of us when you express your loving wishes and kindness for us. Displaying Christian references does not do that. ... You have unknowingly made us ‘outsiders’... Please realize that your identifying your business as Christian-oriented has raised concerns for us, your paying customers who provide your profits.

“Thank you for the newsletter, and for your kind-hearted intentions, as I know they were. I hope our family can feel included next year, along with others who are not Christian. As for your personal views on religiously-based issues, I encourage you to also realize the benefits of clear thinking, and the value of separation of church and state for the good of everyone.

“As you didn't intend to offend me, I also do not intend to offend you. Thank you for your time and consideration.” The difference made by this letter might be small, but it's a difference nonetheless. Don't be afraid. Speaking up is something we can do.



Juvenile Hall Update

By Judy Saint

A few of the girls challenged me to prove evolution right in front of them. One because her mother insists it is evil. The other because she loves to display a healthy dose of skepticism every chance she gets now that I've praised her for her natural tendency to question. So, I mentioned a few things about evolution, and that atheists and scientists aren't the ones claiming to have all the answers anyway—you know, the usual. But, as the mood became elevated about this one issue I just stopped, sighed, looked straight at our wonderful skeptic, and asked with quiet resignation, "You know why we come out here?" They all got quiet as I let the question hang a minute. Then I continued, "Because people are telling you you're going to hell." I paused to look around at each set of eyes, that were all on me. "Because they're calling you names." They know too well the names I meant. You could have heard a pin drop. After I let my honesty sink in a minute, I firmly stated, "And I hate that." I said it again with conviction, "I *hate* that." They were all fixed on me. You could feel the tension as they awaited my next words. In that moment, class got real.

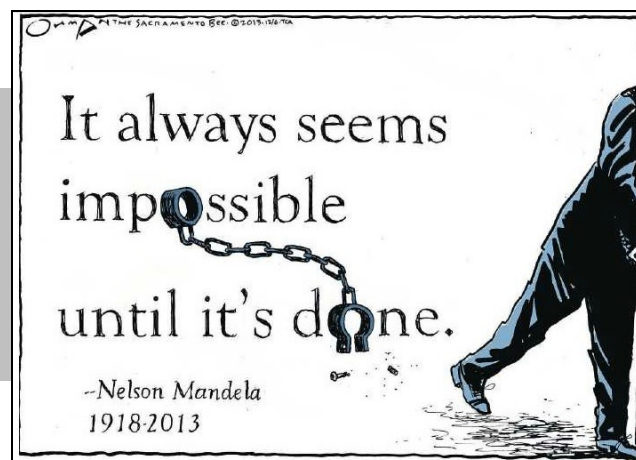
It's a very serious thing we're doing out at Juvenile Hall. We're not converting. We're not trying to convince. We're equipping girls to think, reason and be skeptical. If they decide to believe in a god, we tell them that's perfectly fine. We're possibly the only ones in their lives who are not shoving rules and judgment on them, not yelling at them, not insisting we have the only truth, telling them how awful they are.

There was no chance to get to the topic I'd prepared. It was raised hands the whole session, one after another. Most had been in this class before, so there wasn't as much attitude. No one laughed at anyone else's questions this time. Even the one who usually tries to proselytize only had a few really good questions, no attitude at all. Officer Webb says they trust me now. I can feel it. It's been almost a year.

Eight of us will lead these classes. Once all 8 of us have our ID Badges we can possibly open up a Free-thinkers Class in the other girl's unit, as well. This is historic. No one has ever heard of any such class in any juvenile hall anywhere before. (Church folks, of course, visit each unit several times a week.)

What I need right now are lower level books. If any of you could look over the [Books Behind Bars Wish List on Amazon](#) (sort by Priority) I'd really love to get some of these out there for them. If you purchase from this wish list, they are delivered directly to my house, then I take them out there. They have no internet, no phones, no way to look anything up, other than the 65 books on their small library shelf, of which 43 are bibles. The books I bring are locked away in a box labeled "Atheist Books". They check them out to take to their cells. One girl secretly took one home when she was released. I love that.

Thanks to all of you for caring about this program.



Listen Up!

By Cleo Kocol

Cleo Says

**LISTEN
UP!**

The venues for getting out the freethought message are many, among them the written word in poetic form. My poem TALK TALK was originally published in the newsletter of the Freethought Society of Philadelphia. There are also some mainstream poetry journals that print all aspects of religion. Your freethought poetry can be published in [Eloquent Atheist](#), [Mobius](#), or [Atheist Empire](#), to name just a few places. It's something you can do.

TALK TALK

They say:/He walked in righteousness,/walked where no one had walked before/walked barefoot and poor/among the rabble and the rich.

They said:/Make yourself in his image. So...some of us gave away our/belongings. We wore sackcloth and/ashes until the sackcloth wore out/and we were arrested for public nudity.

Argument ensued. Who had/ acted in a Christian way; who was/ right and who was wrong? Shame/ ricocheted from everyone's wall,/ but none came tumbling down.

Forgetting God

By Aaron Asbury

Welcome to the new year.

Isn't it amazing that it's 2015 and the world still feels on the brink of slipping back into the dark ages? So many people face ridicule, discrimination, or even death just for holding a certain belief (or no beliefs at all). Only a handful of countries on this planet are open and equally accepting of atheists and freethinkers. There are twice as many that are just as open about their hate for those who do not believe, and have death penalties for such "offensive" behavior. A god belief is paramount to all other human endeavors for a majority of the world, and we are all suffering for it. There's no reason we have to just sit around and accept it though...



We may not all be in government, or have tons of money, but we can still contribute to the freethinking community. Some of the best ways to be involved, for me, were communications and assistance. Writing this column, entries on my blog, or comments in a thread on Facebook are ways to bring insight and information to others. Talking about or reposting news stories of pain and suffering brought on by religious fanaticism forces those who know and listen to me to face the realities of divine morality, and hopefully question their adherence to it. Donating to groups who support the well-being of those less fortunate, or fight for equality among all people, helps to further causes I feel strongly about. The point, for me, is to do what I can with what I have. Even if that entails this collection of 300 words and supportive discussions with other atheists over breakfast once a month. Every little bit we do can help to make the world a better, more accepting place for everyone... no god required.

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

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humanistweddings.org



Perform Legal Weddings

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.](#)

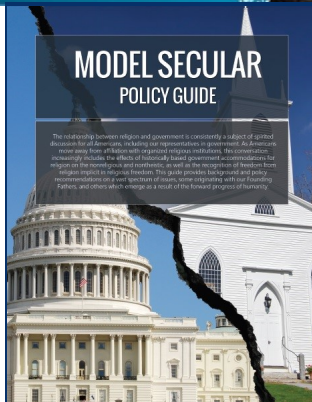
Volume III, Issue I

Issue Theme: What Can I Do?

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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 many ways from affiliation with organized religious institutions, discrimination, and the effects of religiously based government action on the lives of citizens. This guide provides background and policy recommendations on a wide spectrum of issues, some originating with the Founding Fathers, and others which emerge as a result of the changing religious landscape.



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

A recent Daily Show clip involving the Freedom From Religion Foundation's involvement with Mary's Gourmet Diner's "prayer" discount put FFRF and Dan Barker in a comedic, albeit negative, light by claiming that Mary's Gourmet Diner's violation of the Civil Rights Act, providing a discriminatory discount for religious practices, was essentially not a big deal. The Diner provided discounts for customers who prayed, which qualifies as religious discrimination against anyone who didn't, which includes many secularists.

On some level, a 15% discount for a restaurant meal may not be as big of a discrimination issue as racial segregation, but religious discrimination is against the Civil Rights Act, and there is a trend of secular viewpoints being given second-class status in recent Supreme Court precedents, notably *Town of Greece v. Galloway* and *Burwell v. Hobby Lobby Stores, Inc.* Religious pluralism, while having a good intention for appreciating diversity, fails to recognize that religious invocations at town meetings, and religious beliefs of closely-held corporations controlling contraception coverage for employees, by definition discriminate against the secular as a class, as many do not carry supernatural beliefs.

It is good to have a sense of humor about the types of discrimination we face, because it is funny that people are trying to control citizen lives just because of religious belief, even if unaware of the bad consequences of their good intentions. But the discrimination is different only in degree with racial segregation, not in kind. Religious belief should be free but unable to affect the lives of others, and the government should stay strictly separated to be truly equal to all. If we are asking what we can do this month, it is to take this political issue seriously as a community instead of dismissing it as a joke.

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.

BHNBS Meet n Greet

Black Humanists and Non-Believers of Sacramento

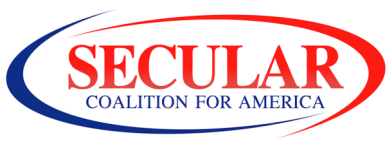
Wednesday, January 14, 6:30—8:30 PM

[Mama Kim Eats](#), 1616 Del Paso Blvd, Sacramento, CA



Come on out and meet fellow Black Humanists and Non-Believers of Sacramento members during happy hour at this yummy local restaurant! Open to all!

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



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

SCCA Update

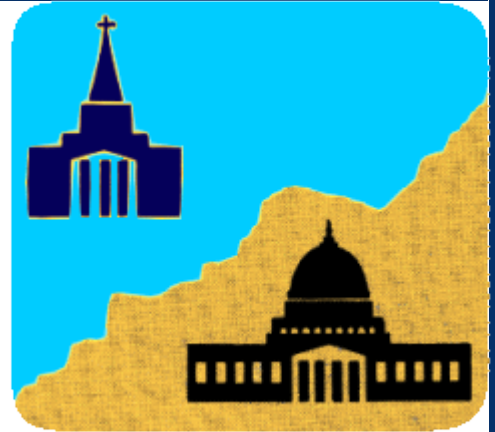
By Tom Manger

The Secular Coalition for California (SCCA) is planning a busy year as the 2015 legislative session gets ready to start. Between January 5th and February 27th California legislators will be submitting their bills for consideration throughout the remainder of the year. We're going to be part of this process - not just by tracking & lobbying for/against legislation - but by submitting our own bill proposals. We have three proposals that we'll be submitting next week. You can check out our Facebook page or website for more details.

What can you do to help promote secularism in the Sacramento statehouse and across California? Lots! And, it doesn't need to take a lot of time or effort. Contact your legislators. Write letters to the editor of your local paper. Attend our Lobby Day events. Attend committee hearings when important bills are being considered. Participate in a monthly SCCA conference call. Be a part of the democratic process!

If you have questions about what you can do to help, feel free to contact me directly at tmanger1@gmail.com.

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.



Buy a set of Bible Warning Labels—Fun for the Whole Family!

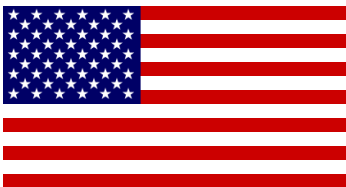
[Buy in sets of 8 at this link.](#)

For those bibles you just must warn people about. Full of all sorts of... well, you can read the warning for yourself. Buy a set of warning labels for your own fun and dedication to let others know what's really in that bedside story book. (Never place on books that are not yours! No, never do that. Especially not those in hotel bedside drawers. We would never tell you to do that. No, not us.)

WARNING: This is a work of fiction. Do **NOT** take it literally.

CONTENT ADVISORY: Contains verses descriptive or advocating suicide, incest, bestiality, sadomasochism, sexual activity in violent context, murder morbid violence, use of drugs or alcohol, homosexuality, voyeurism, revenge, undermining of authority figures, lawlessness, and human rights violations and atrocities.

EXPOSURE WARNING: Exposure to contents for extended periods of time or during formative years in children may cause delusions, hallucinations, decreased cognitive and objective reasoning abilities, and, in extreme cases, pathological disorders, hatred, bigotry, and violence including, but not limited to fanaticism, murder, and genocide.



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 in a coffee house or other public location. You never know.



**SACRAMENTO AREA
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Arts Review By Rick Tracewell

From his Mr. Rogers-esque entrance to his tongue-in-cheek recollection of the part of the bible condemning the tradition of cutting down a tree, dragging it back to your house and decorating it, Jensen muses in a style that rivals the best stand up comedians out there.

A Sacramento-based Comic and father of a very cute and funny dragon (you'd get it if you follow him on social media),

Jensen's style is filled with irony, sarcasm and "gotchas" that you don't see coming. He's been mentored by some of the best, like the late Robin Williams and Rosanne Barr who said earlier this year, "Keith Lowell Jensen is hilarious!"

Filmed at the Sacramento Comedy Spot and produced by Stand Up! Records, *Atheist Christmas* is a great hour of laughter. Oh, and don't let the title fool you, it's not all anti-Christmas humor in this special. It's a show you can laugh with year-round as Jensen's comedy is pretty timeless stuff. Human stuff. Funny stuff.

I highly recommend checking out *Atheist Christmas*. It's very well produced (I LOVE the opening credit sequence!) and his timing is spot on.

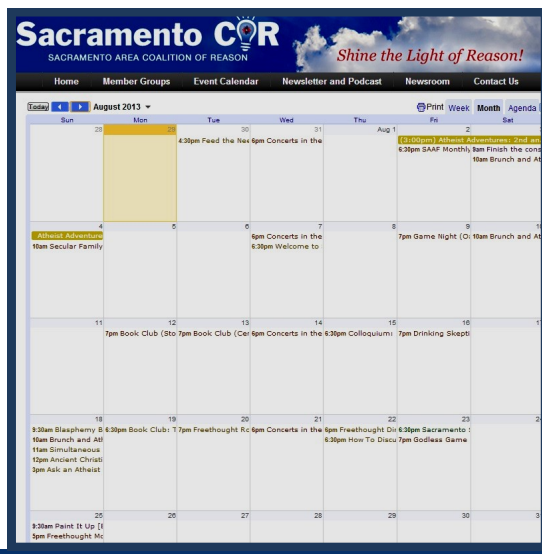
Watch it on [Hulu at this link](#). [Buy it here](#). Good enough to share with the family. To watch *Atheist Christmas* other ways, purchase Jensen's other specials and see his upcoming schedule, visit his web site at [RockAss.net](#).



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/>





KNOW YOUR COLUMNISTS

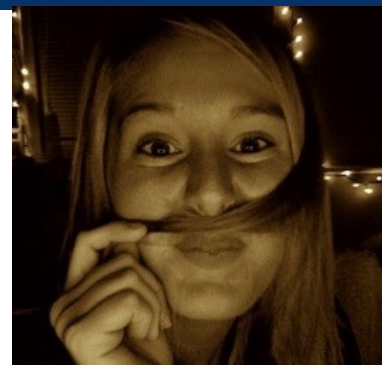
Special Insert

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Sacramento Reason

Sara Lone

Author of “< 30” Column



I am the current executive signer for the Secular Student Alliance at the University of California, Irvine; I recently completed (and am continuing to work on) an internship at the American Humanist Association; I also look forward to giving a secular invocation at a City of Irvine council meeting in the next few months! I also plan on volunteering for Camp Quest West this next summer!

I am currently a 2nd year masters student in the public policy program at the University of California, Irvine and my “job” is working as the state and national legislative liaison for the Associated Graduate Students of UC Irvine. SO MANY WORDS! I’m also madly in love with my partner, James, who is utterly supportive of any and everything I do, which makes life that much sweeter. My mom was diagnosed with MS (Multiple Sclerosis) a few years ago, so I’ve made efforts to volunteer with the National MS Society. I love to sing and dance and watch Doctor Who, I’m a yoga enthusiast and I cycle on my sweet road bike daily (mostly because I’m always running late for everything and biking is much faster than walking). I’m a fan of burning the candle at both ends — “...burning the candle at both ends, I find that it often gives a lovely light” (Christopher Hitchens). I’m also obsessed with corgis.

As an <30, I’m constantly on some form of social media like Facebook and am always adding more friends! I also plan/coordinate events for our community and attend as many as I possibly can. Anybody can: Friend me on Facebook — Sara Melisa Lone, Email me — under30@sacramentoreason.org, or

Follow me on Twitter — [@under30nones](https://twitter.com/under30nones)



I was raised in the Lutheran tradition but started asking controversial questions at a young age — I decided to study religion more thoroughly and came to the conclusion that religion is the culprit of some pretty terrible things in this world, and I, as well as every other human, can be great (and moral) without a god. And, stereotypically, I also read some Hitch, which totally swayed me.

Asked how she became a Sacramento Reason columnist: I fell into this! I had never written something like this before, but someone I know <cough> JUDY <cough> believed in me enough to ask me to write this article! I agreed, and almost a year later, I’m incredibly happy I said yes. I write now because I want to reach my community of under 30s, and I want to raise involvement amongst my peers — we have to get more of us out there; loud and proud! I’m happy to do that in whatever medium I can — I also hope to make people laugh every now and again, while being simultaneously educational within the span of 300 words. I shall insert a totally cliché inspirational line that I’m pawning off as my own revelation: Live the dream, be a philanthropist, and remember

that you only get one life — live every minute to the fullest!