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

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Volume III, Issue 2

Issue Theme: Handling Platitudes

February 2014

Two Darwin Day Celebrations!

Sacramento—February 8

18th Annual Darwin Day Birthday Gala
February 8, 2:00—4:30 PM
La Sierra Community Center, Carmichael
([Map here](#))

Celebrate science as we hear Dr. Marco Livio, Senior Astrophysicist at Space Telescope Science Institute, and author of *Brilliant Blunders*, present “Charles Darwin: Curiosity, Blunders, and Brilliance”.



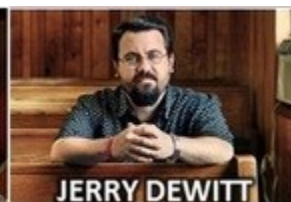
A man who knows blunders.

Opening musical entertainment by Scientific Jam. Vendors and swag all around the room. Cake after the talk, of course! Admission is still only \$7.50 advance or \$10 at the door (students \$5).

[Tickets and more details here](#)

Manteca—February 7

Darwin Day 2015:
From Faith to Reason
February 7, 4:00—7:00 PM
Manteca Library, 320 E Center St, Manteca
We'll be in the gazebo. ([Map here](#))



Amazing speaker lineup! Jerry DeWitt, Ryan Bell and Glenn Branch! Topics range from stories of breaking free of religion—including Creationism—to an analysis 90 years after the Scopes Trial.

Come celebrate science and share some birthday cake for our now 206 year old Charles Darwin. Activities will be available for children of all ages. Free to everyone!

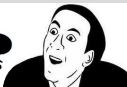
[Details here](#)

facebook



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](http://www.facebook.com/pages/Sacramento-Area-Coalition-of-Reason/376151155788191)) or go to <http://www.facebook.com/pages/Sacramento-Area-Coalition-of-Reason/376151155788191>

Really?



Are there people who genuinely have a literal phobia of certain populations of people or certain religious beliefs? Do people even know what the word phobia means anymore? When cries against beheadings and burnings and stonings are berated as merely phobias against groups of people, one must wonder where this claim originates. Is only a phobia keeping them from doing the same? *REALLY?*

Save The Date

Mar 18 [Matt McCormick Talk](#)

Apr 28 Dr. Robert Price Speaking

Apr 12 Tracie Harris of Atheist Experience

Apr 15 Dan Barker Jam Session and Potluck

June 6 SkeptiCal

June 23 Seth Andrews, The Thinking Atheist

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Sacramento Reason

"Ask The Social I.Q. Lady"

Q: I'm agnostic and have the habit of using the phrase "Oh my god" when I'm shocked or surprised. My religious friends tell me I'm hypocritical when I say that and my atheist friends think I'm weird. Should I not say it or is it just another form of expression?

A: Atheists don't believe in a god so when they use the word "god" in a phrase of expression, they aren't referring to a Christian god, a Hindu god, or any other particular god. In fact, they aren't really referring to a god at all. Phrases such as "Oh my god", "God damn it", and "Holy, mother of god" become habitual and carry no more meaning for an atheist than "Holy cow", "Heaven's sake", or "Good gracious". Some atheists find it fun to change the phrase to "Oh my scientific method", but like most claims of surprise, they're automatic and people tend to blurt out what comes naturally. It's natural to repeat a phrase when you've been raised hearing that phrase over and over. You can learn to say a new phrase, but this also takes time and practice to make it spontaneous.

Since meanings are not in words, but in people, you might want to reconsider what you say in order to reduce misunderstandings. Language creates pictures inside of our heads and they can affect our thinking processes so we should pay attention to our words. My favorite phrase is "seek first to understand". If you want to lessen misunderstandings, try to discover what *people* mean, not what *words* mean. Let your religious friends know that the word "god" for you might simply mean "nature". In this way, when you exclaim "Oh my god", you are literally showing your astonishment at how magnificent, interesting, or surprising nature can be.

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

Sacramento Reason Is Charlie Hebdo

Sacramento Reason joins publications worldwide in supporting free speech.

Over the Hedge

by T Lewis and Michael Fry





Ancient Christian Study Group - Feb. 15, at Noon

Shine Cafe, 1400 E St. [Map here](#). For atheists who want to know the foundations of Christianity better than Christians do. Previous biblical knowledge is not required to participate. Review the history of Rome, religions of the Roman empire, Gnosticism, Mystery cults, history of Christian persecutions, biographies of major Christians, the history of the Bible and many other related topics. Everyone welcome.

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“The Jesus Debate” in Sacramento

Wednesday, March 5, 6-8pm

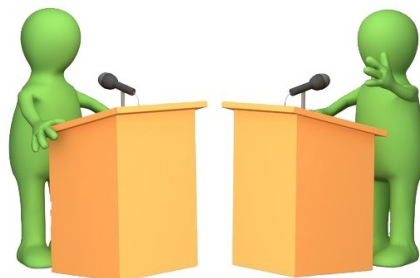
Sacramento City College, Student Center [Map here](#)

“The Jesus Debate: Lord or Legend?”

David Fitzgerald vs. John Christy

Info on David: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/David_Fitzgerald_\(author\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/David_Fitzgerald_(author))

Info on John: <http://www.johnchristy.com/About.aspx>



Free to all Los Rios Community College District students and employees
\$5 at the door for general public (\$2 day parking)

Any questions can be emailed to secularstudents.saccity@gmail.com

We are also working with David Smalley of Dogma Debates to try to arrange for him to be there as moderator and to live broadcast the event on his podcast.

Sponsored by the Secular Student Alliance – Sac City College ([Updates here](#))

Jerry DeWitt— “Atheist Community Building”

February 3, 6:30 PM

Reason Center, 1824 Tribute Road, Suite A, Sacramento
([Map here](#))

Ex-Evangelical Preacher Builds Atheist Communities

Churches seem to build community very easily. What can secular groups learn from this? There is a crucial difference between the church service & the services of the church. The church does not provide community via the service (the sermon) but by the services it provides to members. The church service itself builds a reputation, drawing people in originally; but the quality of the services a church provides creates depth in the community. To grow membership you need the service; to build community for the members, you must rely on the services you provide.

Jerry DeWitt, author of [Hope After Faith](#), preached for the last time in April 2011. He has great advice for building community and support systems around town. He emphasizes the important message for all our lives; it's all about being yourself.

[Details here](#)

Sponsored by the AOF Speaker Series. [Join AOF here](#).



Reason
Center

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

Feb 14 10:00 am Brunch and Atheism, Panera Bread, 10718 Trinity Pkwy, Stockton [Map here](#)
Feb 15 9:30 am Blasphemy Breakfast, Mels Diner, 6708 Lonetree Blvd [Map here](#)
Feb 15 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 The Happy Atheist by PZ Myers

Feb 16, 6:30 pm
Reason Center
[Map here](#)
[Details here](#)

Ceres, Feb 3 7pm
1st Tues each mo.
[Details here.](#)

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Sacramento Reason

Coming Out

By Oriana Morrison

In the past when people presented me with religious platitudes I felt like giving them gold stars. And they probably felt they earned them, but religious platitudes lack real connection. We need that warmth of connection. Isolation is to this day one of our most severe forms of punishment, our understanding of this bought through the heartbreaking misery of rhesus macaques in Henry Harlow's disturbing [experiments](#).

When we are grieving, people can tend to want to pull away from our grief, either out of selfishness or a desire to avoid discomfort, and they find there is nothing better than a good platitude for them to hide behind. Sadly, that leaves us feeling alone and unheard. One key here, when we find ourselves dealing with someone else's grief, is that we don't have to have something to say. Quite possibly the most effective thing we can do is to [just listen](#). Don't try to hide behind words you've heard others say in similar situations, don't try to avoid their pain, just be there. Listen.

When you find yourself dealing with your own grief it's possible that coming out as non-theistic is the best thing you can do to help others understand your sorrow. If theistic people think you believe in an afterlife, they will expect you to find comfort in the thoughts that they expect, but likely fail themselves, to find comfort in, and their religious platitudes may grate on your nerves more than you would have anticipated.

By coming out you can be understood and they can have a better chance of comforting you, or at least avoid telling you over dinner that god needed a new guardian angel, resulting in a seemingly accidental yet strangely accurate spoonful of peas being flung in their direction.

Facts and Misinformation 2.0

February 4, 10:30 AM

Old Soul at The Weatherstone, 812 21st Street [\(Map here\)](#)

How do we know? What makes an idea a fact? Is truth relative? Come join the Sacramento Politics and Philosophy Group to share your thoughts. Everyone is welcome.

[Details here](#)



Highway Cleanup in Chico

Sunday, Feb 8, 8:00 AM—10:30 AM ... Highway 99, Nelson Road, Chico ([Map here](#))

Rain will cancel, but forecast looks good. If this is your first time, we have a [video](#) for you to watch.

[Details here](#)

Upcoming Events

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[21 Potluck Game Night!](#)

[22 Brunch and Atheism, Turlock](#)

[22 Coffee Church: Vespers](#)

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[27 Skeptics in the Pub, Sacramento](#)

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[Mar 3 Book Club in Ceres](#)

[Mar 4 Jesus Debate at Sac City](#)

[Mar 4 Welcome New Member Coffee](#)

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Black Humanists Celebrate Martin Luther King, Jr.

By Mashariki Lawson

Black Humanist and Non-Believers of Sacramento (BH/NB) serves as an outreach, educational and social community group of self-identified Black/African-Americans, open to anyone who is questioning religious beliefs, seeking information in a supportive and judgment free environment.

BH/NB chose to make its major debut at the recent MLK Diversity Expo. We started the day bright and early, arriving at the Sacramento Convention Center at 7:45am to begin set up. It was beyond exciting to see our group's name 'up in lights' so to speak.

Our primary goal at the expo was visibility: we wanted the Black/African-American community, as well as other communities of color, to know an organization exists where it's okay to question religious faith.

The traffic at our booth was fantastic! One of our first visitors was a producer from the local public access organization, Access Sacramento who encouraged us create a show to promote BH/NB.

A local faith-based community group showed interest in doing a joint volunteer effort to promote acceptance of believers and non-believers alike. A number of people grabbed our literature and some indicated they would join us for our

future events, including our March book club, when we will read *The Ebony Exodus Project: Why Some Black Women Are Walking Out on Religion—and Others Should Too*. One more thing: BH/NB made history. BH/NB was the first humanist/atheist/non-believer community group to host a booth in the 13 year history of the MLK Diversity Expo! BH/NB is already looking at next year's MLK Diversity Expo!



Freethought Dinner Social

Feb. 15, 5:30 PM. Fahrenheit 250 BBQ, 7042 Folsom Blvd. [Map here](#)

Small, interesting menu, mainly BBQ. Join us in the bar early. Please join us for conversation and good food. Everyone is welcome!

[Details here](#)

Interfaith Discussion with Bayside Church

Join our own Gary and John as they lead a panel discussion at Bayside Church about belief, faith, evidence, science and other topics. Open forum discussion. Be part of the effort to spread more understanding, just by being in attendance to listen, even if you don't speak up. [Map here](#) [Details here](#)

Secular Family Day

Saturday, Feb. 7
Naraghi Hall of Science—CSU Stanislaus
1 University Circle
Turlock

For families throughout the whole valley. Hands on science exploration everyone will enjoy. Meet at Chipotle for lunch.

[Details here](#)

Brunch and Atheism

Saturday, Feb. 7
10:00 AM—Noon
Panera Bread
10718 Trinity Pkwy
Stockton

[Map here](#)

Order some coffee, a pastry or an early lunch. Or just come for the chat! You'll have a great time and meet some new people at this casual event. Everyone is welcome.

[Details here](#)

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Sacramento Reason

Little Activisms

By Judy Saint

"Mommy, can I has cheeseburger?" Mothers patiently correct, "May I have a cheeseburger" almost subconsciously before answering. She restated his comment in adult words. That's how children learn, by hearing a corrected mirroring of their statement.

We can do the same whenever we hear religious platitudes. We can mirror what believers say, letting them know we understand their meaning, yet we have an opportunity to mildly model how people in the real world talk – how we nonbelievers express ourselves in sincere times.

For "He's in a better place now", we could respond, "He had a great place with his family. He loved those kids."

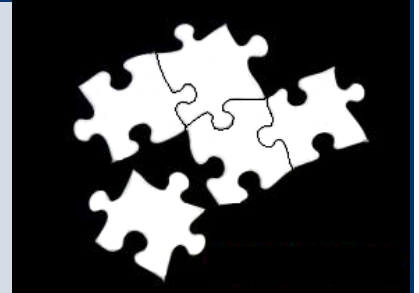
For "God bless you" after you sneeze, you could respond with a smile, "Oh, I'm not superstitious, but thanks. I'll try not to give you my cold."

For "I'll pray for you", you could respond, "I don't think mumbling into our hands does anything, but maybe you could come stay with me after my chemo, or pick up my prescription this afternoon, or watch Mattie while I'm at the doctor's tomorrow."

For "God needed another angel", you could say, "With her big heart, I wonder what great work she would have done right here on this earth, where we need it."

Try rewording their comments using real world words and phrases, with a smile, being appreciative of their good intentions.

Matter-of-factly rephrasing their platitudes might seem like a very small act of activism, but each little activism is one more piece of the puzzle until everyone sees religion for what it is. We can help them learn what they are really saying by rephrasing their platitudes in real world language. Try it just once. See what it feels like. Thanks for considering it.



Coffee Time!

Coffee Church, Vespers: Sunday, Feb 22, 3PM
Panera Bread, 2731 Del Paso Rd, Sacramento

[Map here](#)

[Details here](#)

Coffee Klatch: Sunday, Feb 15, 11 AM. Starbuck's, 1800 Oakdale Rd
Modesto [Details here](#) [Map here](#)



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 Feb 7](#) or [Sacramento Feb 21](#) or [Lodi Feb 27](#) or [Salida Feb 13](#)



New Members Meetup & Coffee

Feb. 4, 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 By Lindsey Campbell

One myth in our culture says atheists basically operate in a binary with the religious. Rather than god, they believe in nothing. Therefore, as the false logic goes, instead of love they seek hate; instead of peace they start war; instead of forgiveness they exact revenge.



The reality, we know, is that there is no false dichotomy like this. It is clearly not "either-or," but try explaining that to a religious fanatic? Good luck. Instead, as we all know, our actual human qualities can be seen over a period of time by getting to know us, and from watching our consistent behavior. If they were to notice, believers would see atheists demonstrating good behavior. Where did we learn this behavior? From seeing it demonstrated. This demonstrating begins at home, in the family. That's where we really learn our behaviors and responses to the world.

Let's take forgiveness, for example. Everyone agrees that children who develop the ability to forgive are more likely to succeed in long-term relationships and keep close, life-long friends.[1] Forgiveness is often associated with religious beliefs, so believers conclude atheists can't express this forgiveness without learning it in the church. But, guess where children actually learn forgiveness strategies? That's right—parent interactions, not religion. This includes, by the way, even divorced parents, step parents, and older sibling/parent relationships.

During my childhood, my mom lent many helping hands to my struggling father in times of need. I learned from them that people can be friends for life, even after divorce. I learned as I watched my mother model forgiveness.

In short, demonstrating behavior consistently over a long period of time helps our children develop solid relationships and life skills, and also stands up against the myth that atheists are incapable of good qualities such as forgiving.

[1]<http://denhamlab.gmu.edu/Publications%20PDFs/Denham,%20Neal,%20Wilson,%20Pickering,%20%20Boyatzis%202005.pdf>

Juvenile Hall Thanks You for All the Books!

Thank you, everyone who sent books in! It can mean everything to a young teen girl who has no other opportunity to read these ideas that counter what they're expected to believe, which is often, if not typically, damaging to their sense of self worth and confidence. The girls at Juvenile Hall now have lots of books so they can find just the right level and topic for their interests. Thank You! 😊

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



Skeptics in the Pub - Two Locations

Sacramento

Sac Skeptics in the Pub
Fri Feb. 27, 6:30p
Hoppy Brewing Co
6300 Folsom Blvd

[Map here](#)

[Details here](#)

Stockton

Drinking Skeptically
Fri Feb 20, 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](#)



< 30

By Sara Lone

For MLK day I volunteered with friends to paint a high school in a seriously underprivileged area. Our mural was huge, so we needed more than just us so we got paired up with a few other volunteers. So, part of the way through, we're talking about student loan debt — which is literally the biggest stressor in most <30 lives. One volunteer said to me "Goodness, you must pray so often for God to help with that burden!" I just casually said "Oh, ha, no, I'm an atheist, so I'll have to pay all that off myself!" The moral of the story: I can't express enough how much I don't care what other people think of my non-belief. For some, it's difficult to come out, and I get that, but if this lady was gonna talk smack about me being an atheist, on a day that I was volunteering to help people no less, then she is the obvious hypocrite. Not me. I take those opportunities to show people that we can be good without a god, we can be happy without a god, and we are not ashamed to say we ride solo through life, sans God.

When I come out as a nonbeliever I do it with a big grin on my face and when people look at me all surprised I just say, "Yeah! Cool, right?! Bet you've never seen one of me before! Or, actually, you probably have, they just didn't tell you because they thought you were gonna give 'em the same look you're giving me right now." So, how do you handle people that say stuff like "God's BLESSINGS to you!" after you've just told them you're a nonbeliever?

"May the force be with you." ... Because Star Wars. And let's face it, Midichlorians are MUCH more believable.

Contact Sara at Under30@sacramentoreason.org. #under30nones



Start Your Own Blasphemy Brunch!

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

Want help? Just ask! Email admin@sacramentoreason.org.





Dan Barker Music Jam and Potluck

Coming Wednesday, April 15, to tickle the keyboard along with our great local musicians, is none other than the Freedom From Religion Foundation's Co-president, Dan Barker.

Come listen as the "Unofficial Greater Sacramento FFRF Band" accompanies Dan for a casual evening of fun, laughter, maybe some dancing, and maybe some words of wisdom from Dan, as he does so well.

Bring any potluck dish, or just show up for fun!

April 15
Potluck 6:30 PM
Music 7:00 PM
Reason Center
1824 Tribute Rd,
Suite A, Sacramento

Reason
Center

Unsuperstition Friday the 13th Party!

Fun with superstition! We can walk under ladders, open umbrellas inside, step on a crack, wear white after labor day, and other (optional) silly superstitious activities while enjoying the company of fellow science supporters.



Potluck! Please bring food and/or drinks to share. \$1/person for Reason Center rental. Look up some [food superstitions here!](#) Open to everyone!

At the Reason Center, 1824 Tribute Rd, Suite A

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

Reason
Center

Sunday Assembly

Smoup: Musical Entertainment

Sunday, February 1, 5:00 PM—7:00 PM

Reason Center, 1824 Tribute Rd, Suite A, Sacramento ([Map here](#))

The Sacramento Sunday Assembly music committee has begun and we need your help! - Attend the music smoup! - Join the Sunday Assembly Choir! - Be that token member of ours who just likes to dance! - Help us pick tunes. - Give suggestions to help us grow and improve musically. [Details here](#)



Sunday Assembly "Love and Stuff"

February 15, 10:30 AM—1:00 PM

Reason Center, 1824 Tribute Rd, Suite A, Sacramento ([Map here](#))

The Sunday Assembly is a secular congregation that celebrates life. Our events are 75 minutes of inspirational talks, music (mostly 80s and 90s pop hits), poetry and art, donuts and coffee, and more, followed by an optional potluck.

Just in time for those post-Valentine's Day feels, Dr. Sarah Strand of Sacramento State University will discuss the **Neurobiology of Love**. We'll also have a selection of poetry and songs and one other speaker who we'll announce shortly to make this a memorable and fun Valentine's Day service.

Stay after the service and have lunch with your fellow Sunday Assembly goers. Bring a dish to share -- just remember your dish will be waiting about an hour until we dig in.

[Details here](#)

Reason
Center

Forgetting God

By Aaron Asbury

Once a week I speak with my grandparents and mother on the phone or through text messages. These usually cheerful conversations are always concluded in about the same way: "May the Lord bless you, and watch over you and your family." I've come to expect this from my family, though I've told them multiple times I'm an atheist. I smile to myself, say "OK", and don't make a fuss about the sign-off because I respect their freedom of belief and don't see it changing. Does that make it OK, though? Not particularly.



Religious folks, it seems, have a tendency to project their beliefs onto those around them, especially when they know you don't share the same ideas. Whether the act of doing so is innocent well-wishing, an attempt to evangelize, or blatant demands of respect for their faith, the end result can be nothing short of offensive and alienating for the non-believer. When this type of behavior is exhibited in already stressful situations the offers of prayer or blessings are disrespectful and only seem to validate the believer's need to put god in everything they do (or offload emotional responsibility).

As the writer of this column, my professional advice is to find boundaries for these situations that suit you and express them freely to those who need to be made aware. As a real-life person though (and relatively shy one at that), asking that god and faith be left out of comments and condolences can be daunting, but necessary. Anecdotally, this made a huge difference in the way I dealt with sympathy after the death of my brother. It also established a precedent for many people in my life, reinforcing that their reliance on a god was no more important than my choice to live life with no god required.

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

Joint Panel Discussion—Black Humanists with HAGSA

Sunday, February 15, 3:00 PM
Reason Center, 1824 Tribute Rd, Suite A
Sacramento ([Map here](#))

The Humanist Association Of the Greater Sacramento Area (HAGSA) has asked us to be a part of their annual Black History Month recognition meeting/event.

The specifics of the event/meeting are still being planned, but it will basically be a four-person panel discussion made up of two people from BHNBS and two from HAGSA. We'll introduce each of our groups and our mission, and then discuss a few broad questions and objectives concerning humanism. The panel will include, of course, audience participation. Please come join us!

[Details here](#)



Reason
Center

Listen Up!

By Cleo Kocol

At times we must take stock of our relationships. Do we really need to keep that friend who always says something religious, the one who drives you into infuriating silence, or the one who patronizes you because they know you're not religious? I say no, they are just causing you grief. But how about those dedicated religious relatives? You don't have to disown them if you truly savor the "tie that binds." But you don't need to see them as often as in the past; you can be politely busy when they call. If you can tell them your beliefs, assure them you won't proselytize if they don't, that can work with some people. You don't need those who don't agree and consequently cause you stress. Sometimes, it is relatives, sometimes friends. Assess your own life and those in your circle. Do the thing that works for you, not them. Platitudes from acquaintances is another thing. Remember nothing fails like prayer. Say anything that comes to mind and forget them. Years from now you won't even remember their name.

Overall, it is time, actually past time, for non-theists to let people know they don't believe in a god. We need to stand with free speech advocates. We need to protect our rights. The massacre at Charlie Hebdo's office was a wake up call. Do we hunker down and hide, or support our beliefs?



Sunday Sewing and Crafts

Hurry! This month's Sunday Sewing and Crafts is February 1, 1:00—4:00 PM
Raley's Grocery Store Event Center
4650 Natomas Blvd, Sacramento ([Map here](#))

Bring your sewing or craft projects and join us for an afternoon of creativity and freethought conversation. Don't have a project idea? We'll get you going!

We meet in a friendly and relaxed environment at the Event Center inside Raley's. If this is your first time, look for us next to the pharmacy. Thank you for not bringing outside food into Raley's. They have a Peet's and a deli inside Raley's if you are feeling hungry.

Newcomers will be enthusiastically welcomed!

[Details here](#)

Finally Friday Dinner and Karaoke

February 27, 7:00—10:00 PM
Torri's Japanese Restaurant, 2401 E Orangeburg Ave, Modesto
([Map here](#))

We start with dinner at Torri's at 7:00. After dinner, we hang out for karaoke.

Kids are welcome at Torri's till 10.

Please let us know if you're coming for dinner so we can save enough seats.

[Details here](#)



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Volume III, Issue 2

Issue Theme: Handling Platitudes

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MODEL SECULAR POLICY GUIDE

The relationship between religion and government is constantly a subject of heated discussion for all Americans. Religion and government are intertwined in our lives, and the two are often seen as one and the same. This guide provides background and policy recommendations on a variety of issues, some originating with the Founding Fathers, and others which emerge as a result of the modern religious environment.



Secular Policy Guide

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

[Link here.](#)

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

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

Legal Watch

By Arash Khosrowshahi

Normally I write columns tracking legal developments on Establishment Clause cases that are going on throughout the country. However, with the recent Charlie Hebdo massacre and the unfortunate responses of some who do not understand how free speech works, I believe reviewing the principles undergirding the freedom of speech are in order.

In the United States the First Amendment guarantees freedom of speech, and many Western European countries have adopted this principle as part of their daily life. At bottom, freedom of speech includes the possibility that your speech might offend someone, regardless of the topic. Sorry Pope Francis, but this includes speech that offends religious belief. To do otherwise creates a slippery slope, as there is no objective basis as to which statements count as offensive and which do not, and hence any speech could be potentially banned.

I have read much on how Charlie Hebdo promulgates racist images against minorities in France, including the black and Muslim populations. More importantly, there is a double standard in Europe generally when it comes to anti-Semitic depictions, which are oftentimes against the law due to the historical association with the Holocaust.

I believe these points have merit. There is a race problem in Western Europe due to racial homogeneity that the United States has worked out in some degree based on our different histories. And you cannot have double-standards: if hate speech should be allowed, it should be allowed for every group rather than be selectively enforced.

But in the final analysis, the correct response to speech you find offensive is either to not listen to it, or combat the speech with speech of your own. Silencing people with laws or guns is not the answer, and attempting to garner sympathy for the attacks because of background racism is irresponsible.

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

SCCA Update

By Tom Manger

By the time you read this article the California legislative session will be entering its second month. There is one bill of note that has attracted our attention. And, the SCCA is very much in favor of it.

This newly introduced bill (SB 128) is known as the End of Life Option Act. It is authored by Senators Wolk and Monning. Since its introduction a number of other legislators have signed on as sponsors. Similar bills have been introduced in years past and failed. But, times have changed.

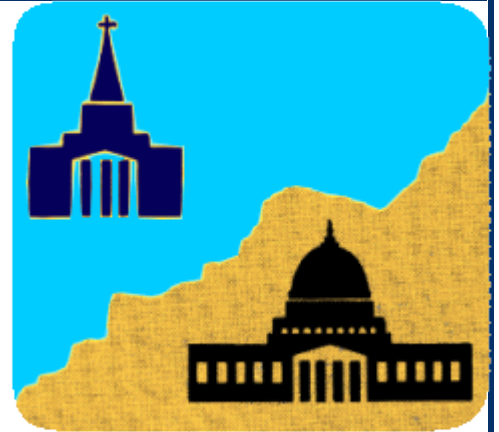
There are now four other states in the U.S. that have death with dignity laws allowing assisted suicide for terminally ill patients. So, we now have both anecdotal and statistical information surrounding the people who have chosen this option.

There is also the recent and very visible death of Brittany Maynard. She was a young California resident who suffered from an untreatable brain tumor. She ended up moving to Oregon and eventually took her life surrounded by friends and family. One of her dying wishes was that the California legislature would pass a death with dignity law.

And, we now have a growing secular voice willing and able to push back against the religious objections to laws such as this one. The Secular Coalition for California is an official supporter of the group Compassion & Choices (compassionandchoices.org) that initiated this bill. We hope you will join us in voicing your support. We'll be sending out notifications and action alerts as events change.

If you have not yet signed up for our email alerts, please, do so soon. ca.secular.org

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.

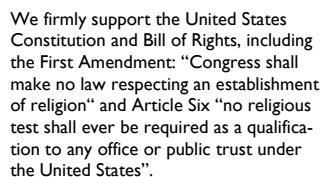


Happy Hour with Topic: Net Neutrality

Thursday, February 5, 6:30 PM

Kupros, 1217 21st Street, Sacramento ([Map here](#))

Should private carriers be able to work out deals with content providers to favor certain kinds of internet traffic over others? On the one hand, this could make highly used services such as Netflix more reliable. On the other hand, this could make it more difficult for newer startup content providers to compete because their traffic could be much slower. Some have proposed "Net Neutrality" rules, which would force providers to treat all traffic equally. Join this discussion. [Details here](#)



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
COALITION OF
REASON**

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95851-0182

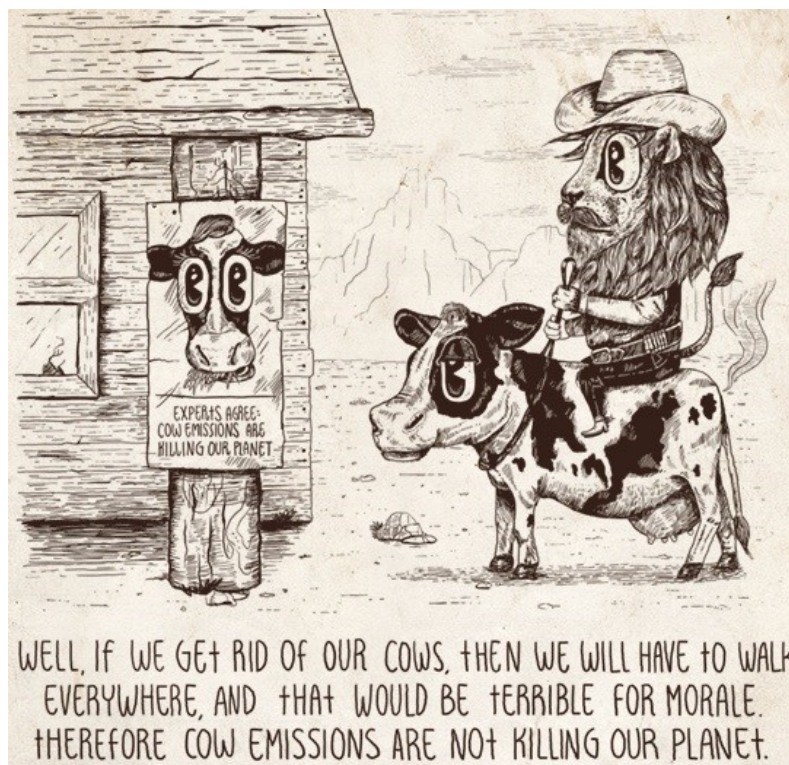
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Judy Saint, Editor
Photographer, Matt Martin

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Logical Fallacies On Parade

Name this logical fallacy (answer upside down below).

If we hear a statement that might end up causing something we do not like, then we decide the statement is not true. Or, if it causes something we like, we decide the statement surely is true. We think this is good logic. It's not.

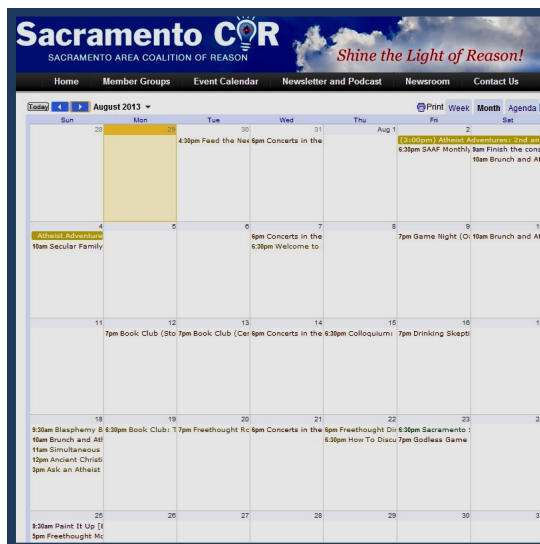


Name is Argument From Consequences, a type of Red Herring fallacy Graphic is from the book, Bad Arguments.

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

Aaron Asbury

Author of “Forgetting God” Column

Aaron writes the column, Forgetting God, as well his blog of the same name. He hosts online debates and discussions, and is a regular supporter of the Freedom From Religion Foundation.

What other things do you do outside of working for the atheist/secular cause?



I'm a full-time husband, father of three young girls, and Helpdesk Analyst/Problem Coordinator for Apple, Inc. I've no real hobbies to speak of at this time, but my interests include photo editing/manipulation, working on my Saab, and researching religious history.

How can people catch up with you, generally?

Because of my work schedule and family it's hard for me to attend any regularly scheduled event with any consistency. However, I've been known to appear at the Rocklin Blasphemy Breakfast from time to time. My blog is available online at: forgettinggod.com (it's been a while since I've written, but that will change soon), or I can be reached directly at: akasbury@me.com

What is your religious history in a nutshell?

I was raised in a Christian home and attended church on a regular Wednesday night/Sunday morning/Sunday night schedule up till the age of 18. During those years I attended services at over a dozen different denominational houses of worship, and spent a couple of years as a member of a Christian family (read "cult"). I've raised my hands, spoken in tongues, been slain in the spirit, partook of the Passover feast, been baptized many times, and traveled as a missionary to Norway and India. I've

read the bible cover

to cover twice and never felt confidence in its message. I felt I was close to God, though, and never questioned... until I left home at 18. For the first time, it seemed, I started to think for myself. It's been all downhill from there. :)

Why do you write “Forgetting God”?

Having been indoctrinated into a way of thinking that was lived out for so long I found there were many ideologies that stuck with me, even after renouncing my faith. Writing my blog posts and the column has provided a way to deal with those leftovers and, hopefully, help others to do the same.

