

Sacramento Reason

COR

Shine the Light of Reason!

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Sac Coalition of Reason
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Subscribe

Volume III, Issue 3

Issue Theme: When Science Is Wrong

March 2015

THE JESUS DEBATE: Lord or Legend?

John Christy vs. David Fitzgerald

MAR
25

The Jesus Debate: Lord or Legend?

Sac City College
Wed, March 25
6pm



Live Dogma Debate On-the-Air from Sacramento! Wednesday, March 25, 6pm at Sac City College

A lively and educational debate between Christian writer and filmmaker John Christy and atheist author David Fitzgerald.

The debate will be moderated by David Smalley of [Dogma Debate Radio](#) and broadcast to tens of thousands of online listeners.

Debate will be followed by audience question and answer.

Free to all LRCCD students and employees (with ID), or \$3 at the door for general public.

On campus Parking is \$2, available at kiosks in the parking lots.

Debate begins at 6pm, doors open at 5:30, seating is limited, first come first serve. Please arrive early.

People of all faiths and non-faiths are welcome! Appropriate for all ages.

The event will take place in the **SCC Student Center**, in the middle of campus on the east side of the quad.

This event is co-sponsored by the Secular Student Alliance - SCC and Inter-Varsity Christian Fellowship @ SCC student clubs. It is made possible by funding from the national [Secular Student Alliance](#) and the SCC Club and Events Board.

CAMPUS MAP: <http://www.scc.losrios.edu/campus-map/>

PARKING LOT MAP: <http://www.scc.losrios.edu/documents/student-parking-map.pdf>

[More Information 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?



Science Much?

God creates light and separates light from darkness, and day from night, on the first day. Yet he didn't make the light producing objects (the sun and the stars) until the fourth day ([1:14-19](#)). And how could there be "the evening and the morning" on the first day if there was no sun to mark them? [1:3-5](#) Did no one think this through before they wrote it down? And people think the bible is the word of some really superior intellect that can't even figure out basic science correctly? **REALLY?**

Save The Date

Apr 28 Dr. Robert Price Speaking
Apr 12 Tracie Harris of Atheist Exper.
Apr 13 Dan Barker at Sac City College
Apr 17 Dan Barker Music Jam 'n Potluck
Jun 23 The Thinking Atheist

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"Ask The Social I.Q. Lady"

Q: I'm an atheist but I don't see what the big deal is about saying "bless you" after someone sneezes. Everyone says it and it's considered polite. Why do you say we shouldn't say it?

A: Saying "bless you" (or any other variation of the phrase) after someone sneezes is clinging to an ancient superstitious ritual. Many people seem to think there is nothing wrong with a little superstition. However, superstitious beliefs can be deadly. The rhinoceros has become endangered because of deliberate slaughter by those who believe their horns, in powdered form, can reduce fevers, cure headaches, and increase sexual potency. Other animals, like seals and dolphins, have been senselessly killed for their "parts" because of superstition. The killing of animals (and people for that matter) for superstition is real. We have all heard about someone dying because their religious or superstitious beliefs kept them from seeking vital medical help. But the occasional "bless you" won't kill anyone so, again, what's the big deal? Flawed thinking and superstitious belief is a slippery slope. When we allow faulty reasoning to creep into our habits of thought, we turn our critical intelligence off. Our minds are precious and our thinking processes should be carefully nurtured. When we ignore these "little" superstitious thoughts we can become susceptible to arguments from those who would try to deceive us. In Thomas Gilovich's book "How We Know What Isn't So", he says, "As individuals and as a society, we should be less accepting of superstition and sloppy thinking, and should strive to develop those 'habits of mind' that promote a more accurate view of the world." Next time you catch yourself about to repeat an "innocent" superstitious phrase, stop and think. Remind your fellow atheists that "silly" phrases end up doing more harm than good.

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

A 'Fascinating' Role Model

"Logic is the beginning of wisdom, not the end." — Leonard Nimoy

The Science Officer of our youth lived long, and we prospered.

Leonard Nimoy, 1931-2015





Ancient Christian Study Group - March 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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Review of SCC Darwin Day By Don Button

The SSA - Sac City College club held a Darwin Day tabling event on Thursday, Feb. 12. We spent 4 hours in the SCC quad talking to students about Charles Darwin, evolutionary science, and science education.

With the help of faculty members from Biology, Geology, Anthropology, and Astronomy (and the Anthro Club) we were able to display various human and transitional primate replica skulls, a dolphin skull, and several actual fossils that were

over 100 million years old. We also displayed a number of educational graphics and handed out pamphlets about evolution and the scientific process.

Seven different faculty members from the sciences also took turns at the table with us to offer their expertise to those with questions.

At noon, we donned our party hats and noisemakers while we revealed our giant Happy Birthday Darwin sheet cake, and served free slices to over 80 passing students.



Black Humanists Meetup Events

Books and Brunch! - Sunday, March 8, 11—1:30 PM

Dad's Kitchen, 2968 Freeport Blvd

Let's discuss "The Ebony Exodus Project: Why Some Black Women Are Walking Out On Religion—And Others Should, Too". [Details here](#).

Monthly Meet 'N Greet! - Wednesday, March 18, 6—8 PM

House of Chicken & Ribs, 3535 Elverta Road, Antelope

Meet new and old friends at this local, family owned restaurant servicing good ol' bbq goodness! [Details here](#).

BHNBS Planning Meeting - Saturday, March 28, 3:00 PM

Reason Center, 1824 Tribute Road Suite A, Sacramento

Our monthly planning meeting. See links to articles we will discuss and other [details here](#).

Reason
Center

UC Davis AgASA Hosts FREE Comedy Show!

March 5, 6pm—7pm, Olson 6 on UCD campus. [Map here.](#)

AgASA is excited to have comedian Keith Lowell Jensen and special guest Johnny Taylor perform at UC Davis. [Find more information here.](#) Did we mention it's FREE? Open to everyone! Bring friends.



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

March 16, 6:30 pm
Reason Center
1824 Tribute Rd
Sacramento
[Details here.](#)

Ceres, Mar 3, 7pm
1st Tues each mo.

[Details here.](#)

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Coming Out

By Oriana Morrison

"Inspiring" "Rewarding" "Thrilling" These may not be words that pop into your head when you think about coming out atheist, but maybe they should be! I certainly never imagined those would be words that could describe coming out, but after my recent experience, I can tell you, yes they can!

I really felt alone here on this military base as far as being a non-theist. I felt it was possible that I was close to the only one, which was a miserable feeling. But being a bit of an optimist I thought, "What if I'm not the only one? And what if there are others feeling just as alone here as I do?" So I set out to find my fellow non-believers.

All right, I have to level with you. I was scared. I was going to have to put myself on the map as an atheist for the whole base to see in order to start a new group and spread the word. I questioned my sanity, and then I went ahead and did it. It was nerve-wracking. I waited for my house to be egged. The eggs never came, but the non-theists did.

They expressed sheer joy and gratitude at finally having a place to be out and to be with others who think like them. They had been alone in a seeming sea of religion, just like I was. I was not alone anymore. None of us were.

When we don't come out, we sit there alone, isolated. We have no idea that the person next to us might feel as alone and isolated as we are, and for the exact same reason. So come out, do it for yourself. Do it for the next person. You never know what joy it might bring.



Auburn Freethinkers—Meetup in Loomis

7:-00—9:00 PM

Friday, March 6

PEET's Coffee, 6199 Horseshoe Bar Road, Loomis

Let's hear it for Auburn/Loomis freethinkers! Help get this Meetup off the ground! Meet at PEET's, on the right side of Raley's (freeway side) for casual chat and coffee. Everyone is welcome! [Map here.](#) [Details here](#)

Freethought Dinner Social—March 14, 6:00 PM

Café Morocco, 1221 Alhambra Blvd, Suite 107, Sacramento

Saturday, March 14, 6:00 PM. [Location Map here.](#) See the [menu here.](#)

Please join us for conversation and good food. [Details here.](#)

Upcoming Events

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[15 Blasphemy
Brunch in Arden/
Arcade](#)
[15 Coffee Klatch in
Modesto](#)
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Study Group](#)
[15 Bruce Maiman
Good Without God](#)
[15 Wizard of Oz](#)
[16 Book Club in Sac](#)
[18 Black Humanist
Meet and Greet](#)
[18 Matt McCormick
speaking, Manteca](#)
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cally in Stockton](#)
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[21 Café Discussion](#)
[22 Brunch and Athe-
ism in Turlock](#)
[25 Jesus Debate:
Lord or Legend?](#)
[27 Game Night, Lodi](#)
[27 Sacramento
Skeptics in the Pub](#)
[27 Finally Friday—
Dinner and Karaoke](#)
[28 Black Humanists
Planning Meeting](#)
[28 Café Discussion](#)
[28 Bill Maher—Live
in Oakland](#)
[Apr 1 New Member
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and Art Hop, Lodi](#)

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Recovering From Religion—A Safe Place

6:30 to 8:30 PM

March 18, at the Reason Center, 1824 Tribute Rd, Suite A, Sac

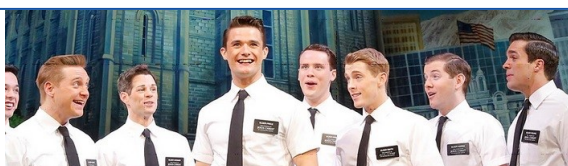
A support group for people in transition moving away from religion, or coping with family or social pressure unsupportive of the change.

Freethinkers everywhere process and discard old beliefs that no longer meet the standard of proof, or do not work for us, as we get smarter about the distortions in us and around us. It is painful, but worth it. This is a journey of the individual, but it is also an evolution of the social relationships we are in. Often family, spouse, children, and friends are upset by the changes we make. Many of us have to stay in the closet with many of our close family and friends. In our meetings, you can learn coping skills and gain a sense of freedom in being able to speak your mind and share your heart. This evening is intended to create a safe place to explore the whole you.

Join us... When you are ready.

[Map here](#)

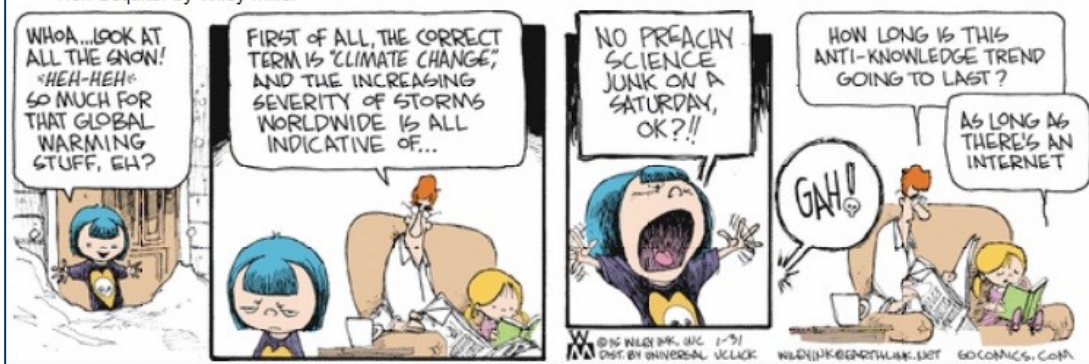
Reason
Center



Book of Mormon

Join us on a nice Sunday in The City for the 1:00 PM show! Get your tickets soon! [BUY TICKETS HERE](#) [Map here](#) [Meetup details here](#)

Non Sequitur by Wiley Miller



Adopt-a-Highway Cleanup—Saturday, March 21, 9–11 AM

Enjoy a morning commune with nature, and do a good deed for the environment near our Hwy 99 Atheist sign. A casual and fun 2 hours with friends, finding all sorts of exotic surprises! Equipment provided. Meet in the Park 'n Ride parking lot at the Elkhorn exit, on the west side of Hwy 99. Thank you!

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



Dan Barker Music Jam and Potluck

Coming Wednesday, April 17, 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 17
Potluck 6:30 PM
Music 7:00 PM
Reason Center
1824 Tribute Rd,
Suite A, Sacramento

**Reason
Center**

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Little Activisms

By Judy Saint

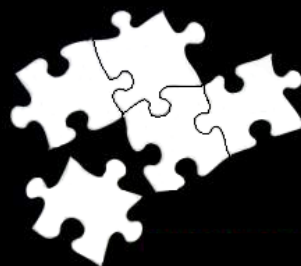
Our young are made afraid of error. It sticks with us. We feel it again each time we hear a lecturer call our name. We're all afraid to be called on, so much so that we learn to fear public speaking altogether. But being wrong sometimes is not only OK, but necessary.

Let's make sure kids know it's OK to take time to think before responding, even if the teacher is waiting for an answer. Allow children and ourselves the time to stop to think, work through a problem, ask questions, and not feel pressured to have the expected answer quickly. Teach them that sometimes even the best thinking can lead to mistakes, and mistakes can lead to learning, and learning leads to innovative ideas.

Help our world learn that thinking and trying, questioning, testing and retesting, and sometimes being wrong, is the one method that has worked for us. We call this the scientific method, or science for short. Science involves being wrong, and being OK with being wrong. That's how we know it's working – sometimes it takes a failure to know what to do next. This is the method we need for ourselves at home, at work, and in our classrooms. If you allow yourself to be wrong, to make mistakes, to stop and take time to think, you might even get over your fear of public speaking. Who knows?

As your little piece of activism this month, let at least one young person know it's OK to think, it's OK to be wrong, it's OK to keep the teacher waiting, and it's the best way to learn what works in this world; the best way to find new answers for the world. It's part of science. And it works.

Think. Ask. Be wrong sometimes. Really, it's OK.



Coffee Klatch

Modesto: Coffee Klatch

Sunday, March 15, 11—2 PM
Starbucks, 1800 Oakdale Road, Modesto

Always the third Sunday of each month. Bring books, devices, or notepads while we solve the world's problems, exchange witty repartee, or just nurse Saturday night hangers. [Map here](#) [Details here](#)



Game Night

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.

[Lodi March 27 at 6 pm](#)



New Members Meetup & Coffee

March 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

From the outside, it may seem difficult to teach our kids a scientific world view, especially when we were brought up to believe in divine law. But science changes... how can we trust an authority that has the power to change its mind? How do we teach children to trust science, when we may have to re-teach them things they learned in elementary science class? For example, I learned in grade school that there were three states of matter, solid, liquid and gas. I was told that the sun was made up of gas. Then, in my first year of high school, the textbook I was reading told me that the sun was made of plasma, a fourth state of matter. How does a young mind reconcile these new discoveries? Can we teach our children to trust something that seems to change, while protecting them from the immediate gratification that religious belief gives?



The answer is a resounding yes. The reason that we can teach science as an authority over our lives is that we teach *faith in the method*. It's easy for the religious to claim that science is wrong when a theory is publicly rejected. They love the idea that science requires as much faith as belief in god. But they are wrong again. We have faith in the method through which theories, facts, and knowledge are attained. We teach our children that, rather than focusing on the product, we rely on a reliable method for choosing what to believe.

This throws the credibility out the window for methods such as eye witness account, anecdote, tradition, and ritual in the quest for evidence. Children as well as adults will benefit in the long-run, and have a more satisfying experience of life, when they are more focused on the process, and less obsessed with the outcome.

The Cosmological Argument—March 3

A famous argument which makes the case for God's existence is based on the postulation that whatever begins to exist has a cause. It suggests that the formation of the universe could only occur through some sort of causation. While this notion may be primitive, is the case sufficient, based on fundamental logic? Come join the discussion! Open to everyone.

Temple Coffee and Fine Tea (*a Temple!*), 2829 S Street, Sacramento

[Map here](#)

[Details here](#)

Local Groups to Visit or Join

Name	Emphasis		Tax Ded		Website
Agnostic & Atheist Student Association (AgASA)	UC Davis student group Socialize with like-minded students.	Y		<u>Y</u>	Website here
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
Black Humanists and Non Believers of Sac (BHNBS)	Doubts about religion? You're one of many. Social and other Meetup events.	Y	N	<u>Y</u>	Website here
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>	Website here
Sac Freethinkers, Atheists and Nonbelievers (SacFAN)	Meetup for variety of fun, learning, singing, projects, games, activism.	Y	N	<u>Y</u>	SacFAN.org
Sac Politics and Philosophy Group	Meetup group for Thinking Beings!	N	N	N	Website here
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 - Sac City College	Sac City College student group. Meet, question, promote, unite.	Y		<u>Y</u>	Facebook page here
Sierra College Secular Student Alliance	Sierra College student and faculty group for non-belief in religion.	Y		<u>Y</u>	Website here
Stanislaus Humanists	Book groups, discussions, game nights, theatrical movies, karaoke, dancing.			<u>Y</u>	Website here
Stockton Area Atheists and Freethinkers (SAAF)	Meetup events and philanthropy, from Galt to Modesto.	Y		<u>Y</u>	StocktonAAF.org
Student Alliance @ Sacramento State University (CSUS)	CSUS student group to socialize and promote freethought.	N		<u>Y</u>	csusaso.wordpress.com
Sunday Assembly Sacramento	Secular congregation celebrates life with pop music, inspirational talks, donuts and more.	Y		<u>Y</u>	Facebook page here

Davis Community Meal—Help Feed the Hungry

Tuesday, March 31, 4:30pm - 7:00pm. The Davis Community Meals team will perform all food prep and kitchen work. Our job: simply to set up chairs & tables, serve, put things away at the end, maybe mop. At St. Martin's Episcopal Church, 640 Hawthorne Lane, Davis. [Map here.](#) [Details here.](#)



Skeptics in the Pub - Two Locations

Sacramento

Sac Skeptics in the Pub

Fri March 27 6:30p
Hoppy Brewing Co
6300 Folsom Blvd

[Map here](#)

[Details here](#)

Stockton

Drinking Skeptically
Fri March 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](#)



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By Sara Lone

I love it when the Pope comes out and says ridiculous tune-changing statements. If ever there was a reason to leave your faith, this is one of the biggies — religious leaders going back on what they've ALWAYS said just to lure people in. They've got to water down the message and cut back on the good ol' fire and brimstone talk to get people in the door, which is becoming more difficult with the interwebz at our fingertips. This is how they attempt to change and adapt, but we, the <30 crowd, can see right through the back-peddling and we're not falling for it. Speaking of change/adapting...

Most of us non-believers are diehard fans of science. Ergo, we love our science gurus like Neil deGrasse Tyson, Bill Nye, Carl Sagan, <insert famous scientist here>, like we love fluffernutters; one of the best parts of being a non-believer is our ability to understand and accept scientific change. Know how? We don't have to "believe" in anything. People sometimes ask, "Do you believe in evolution?" No, I don't "believe" in evolution, I "know" evolution. Granted, science doesn't always get it right, but science doesn't claim to have the whole truth, and nothing but the truth — science is open to change, and we should be, too. Religion limits us and keeps us from experiencing new things, growing, changing, learning, and coming to new understandings. Science doesn't always have all the answers, and scientists admit it, but religion and religious leaders claim to have the "way, truth, and light." Anybody who claims to have this is a wolf in sheep's clothing, and it's crappy for the rest of us who are just trying to figure it all out, sans insanos whispering in our ears. Don't fall for it, <30s — Keep sciencing!

Contact Sara at Under30@sacramentoreason.org. #under30nones



Bruce Maiman on "Being Good without God"

Morality and doing good are deeply associated with religion and belief. Come listen to the idea that perhaps this is not the case at all. Learn how to discuss "Being Good without God" with your friends and family.

Bruce Maiman is, among other things, a regular columnist for the *Sacramento Bee* and a substitute host for Capital Public Radio's Insight. He is also an educator, former talk radio host, and concert pianist.

Reason Center, March 15 at 3:00 PM.

1824 Tribute Rd, Ste A, Sac. [Map here.](#) [Details here.](#)

Free for everyone. Bring friends!

**Reason
Center**

FFRF Attorney Demands Removal of Sacramento County Chaplains

On February 26 Freedom From Religion Foundation attorney, Andrew Seidel, demanded Sacramento County discontinue embedding religious chaplains with the Sheriff's Department. In his three page demand letter, he clearly educates officials at Sacramento County as to how this breaks the law.



Be A Monthly Supporter

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

Matt McCormick on "The 'F' Word" (not *that* F word)

Wednesday, March 18, 7:15—9:15 PM
Manteca Library, 320 W Center St, Manteca

One of the most common responses to doubts, questions, or criticisms of religious views is to invoke the "F word": faith.

Believing by faith, we are told, solves whatever problems there may be with the evidence. Not only is this response common, but believing by faith is widely treated as admirable and virtuous.

Sacramento State professor Matt McCormick returns to the Manteca Library to argue that believing by faith is dangerously misguided, and he will make a case to believers and non-believers for why they don't want to resort to faith as support for their views. Free event. Everyone is welcome!

Join us at CK Mongolian BBQ, 1039 S Main St, for dinner before the event.

[Map here](#)

[Details here](#)



Skeptical 2015

[List of Speakers here.](#)



SkeptiCal is the Northern California conference of science and skepticism, a day-long event with speakers, panels, and discussions on a wide array of subjects.

Our 2015 SkeptiCal event will be held on June 6 at the Oakland Asian Cultural Center. We are very excited, once again, to offer an all-star cast of speakers covering a wide range of topics of interest to the skeptical community! [Join the Bay Area Skeptics](#) (or renew) to receive a \$10 discount from the full registration fee.

[Map here](#)

[Details here](#)

Listen Up!

By Cleo Kocol

The scientific method is not a slap-dash event. Among the steps scientists use is observation. They see that something helpful to society may be developed that hasn't been before, or they observe something may be added to an existing modality to improve lives. They then propose a hypothesis (es) and begin testing their scientific idea(s). The testing must be replicated under various conditions to be called viable.

But sometimes pseudo-scientists capture the public's attention, like in the recent measles outbreak. For seventy plus years, measles has been eradicated in the USA because of vaccination. Now, a sizable segment of our society put their children's lives in the hands of a charlatan who said vaccinations brought autism. His mantra (that came in one article published in Britain) was next picked up by the privacy crowd. Religious right proponents said parents should be the ones to decide whether to vaccinate or not. Otherwise normal parents took to that assumption. While scientists debunked the charlatan early on, the god crowd paid no attention. They shrugged off facts, especially scientific fact about vaccinations. Instead they relied on their interpretation of the Bible. Today, politicians, who know better, in their zeal for political power, spout the line of parental choice. Our whole society is being held hostage by a minority who would take us back to the middle ages, or at least a time that I remember when children became very ill, became crippled, or died because there were no vaccinations for childhood illnesses...including polio.



Women's History Month: Ada Augusta Byron Lovelace

By Ken Nahigian

The elegant woman at right is Ada Lovelace (Dec 10, 1815 - Nov 27, 1852), née Ada Augusta Byron, the one legitimate daughter of Lord George Gordon Byron, Romantic-era poet. She had no heart for poetry but a genius for language, mathematics, astronomy and analytical philosophy. At age 18 she met Charles Babbage, the mathematician who had suggested the idea of a "Differential Engine," a machine programmed to compute values of functions.

The idea fascinated her. She translated and published Babbage's notes, adding her own to show how the Engine could also manipulate letters and symbols along with numbers according to any algorithm, any set of prescribed rules, and continue indefinitely until it arrived at an answer. In so doing she developed the first computer program. In 1980, when the U.S. Defense Department created a new programming language, it named it after her: Ada, a language still widely used.

If Babbage was the father of cybernetics, Ada Bryon Lovelace was certainly the loving mom. She was a freethinker, a bright mind and free spirit with a relaxed attitude toward men, but also an unfortunate propensity for gambling, and bouts of ill health. At age 20 she married unhappily to become the Countess Lovelace. At age 36 she contracted cervical cancer. After confessing to an affair with mathematician John Crosse, her husband abandoned her. Her fanatically religious mother decided to "purify" her soul by withholding all morphine and opium, the only thing protecting Ada from horrific pain. Months later, Ada Lovelace died in agony. Her last request was to be buried next to her father.



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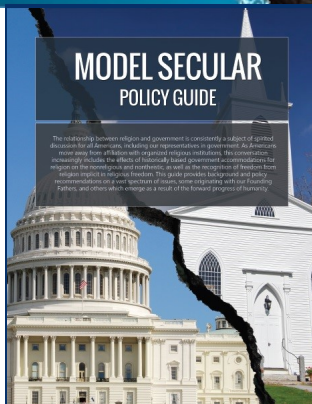
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Issue Theme: When Science Is Wrong

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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 their interaction is a complex one. 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 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

An interesting iteration of *Hobby Lobby* style cases have cropped up. Two cases come to mind: one in Oregon and one in Colorado.

In the Oregon case, a couple running a bakery refused to sell a wedding cake to a gay couple in January 2013, citing their religious beliefs against homosexuality. The bakery, Sweet Cakes by Melissa, has been found to have engaged in discriminatory behavior by the Oregon Bureau of Labor and Industries.

In the Colorado case, the plaintiff asked a bakery to make a cake stating "God hates homosexuality". Understandably, the bakery denied such a request. This case is meant to create a false equivalence between LGBT discrimination and "religious discrimination".

While *Hobby Lobby* does not technically apply to these state cases, as *Hobby Lobby* related to the federal Religious Freedom Restoration Act and the federal "contraception mandate" of the Affordable Healthcare Act, *Hobby Lobby* has nevertheless inspired such litigation to move forward.

With regards to the Oregon case, arguments that the Free Exercise Clause permits bakers to discriminate against the LGBT community seem weak, as general anti-discrimination laws apply to everyone rather than targeting religious people in particular, and therefore the government can restrict actions motivated by religious beliefs fairly easily. Governments also have more leeway in regulating commercial speech, and preventing discrimination in commerce is a good rationale to prevent businesses from behaving this way.

With regards to the Colorado case, it need only be pointed out that there is a difference between someone refusing you service because of your religious beliefs, and someone refusing you service because your order requires a bigoted statement to be said about others, even if your beliefs justify such bigotry.

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](#).

12 Steps to a Compassionate Life

Saturday, March 14, 9:00 AM

Bloom Coffee & Tea, 1485 Eureka Rd, Suite 100, Roseville

I propose a part book study/part discussion group to help participants enhance relationships with their loved ones, their communities, and the larger world. This is not a 12-step recovery program. The book "12 Steps to a Compassionate Life," by author Karen Armstrong, will provide a focus for the meetings.

Some of the steps include: Look at your own world, Mindfulness, Action, How little we know, Recognition, How should we speak to one another, and more steps.

For more information, see Karen Armstrong's TED Talk.

http://www.ted.com/talks/karen_armstrong_let_s_revive_the_golden_rule#t-93755

Her work has blossomed into a Charter for Compassion, adopted by communities all over the world.

<http://charterforcompassion.org/global-compassion-movement>

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

Politics and Philosophy Meetup Group

See the full March calendar [at this link](#).

March 3—[The Cosmological Argument](#), Temple Coffee and Fine Tea, 2829 S Street, Sac

March 4—[Facts and Misinformation 2.0 \(bonus\)](#), Kupros, 1217 21st Street, Sac

March 7—[The Eurozone](#), Coffee Garden, 2904 Franklin Blvd, Sac

March 10—[Same Sex Marriage](#), The Limelight, 1014 Alhambra Blvd, Sac

March 11—[Are Policies Like Affirmative Action Good or Bad?](#), Cafeteria 15L, 15th and L Streets

March 14—[Identity Politics](#), Coffee Garden, 2904 Franklin Blvd, Sac

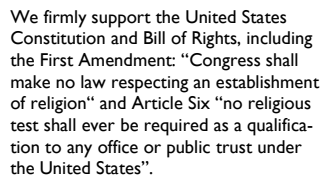
March 21—[Café Discussion Topic TBD](#), no location yet

March 28—[Café Discussion Topic TBD](#), no location yet

March 28—[Bill Maher—Live Appearance in Oakland](#), 1807 Telegraph Ave. Tickets required.

April 1—[Historiography: The Science of History](#), The Fat Rabbit Public House, 825 Sutter St, Folsom

Other upcoming topics: Population Control, and Narrative of the Constitution



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.



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Logical Fallacies On Parade

Name this logical fallacy. (Answer is upside down below.)

What do we call it when someone tries to make their position sound logical because their position is held by so many others?



Appeal to Bandwagon, a type of Red Herring. Graphic from Book of 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

Arash Khosrowshahi Author of "Legal Watch" Column

I started finding my way to atheism when I studied Philosophy in college. I became the President of the Agnostic and Atheist Student Association at UC Davis, and later went on to work at the Freedom From Religion Foundation during law school, as the separation of church and state means a lot to me. I also participate in Freethought events when my busy lawyer schedule allows me.

I am currently a legislative history researcher, but I have also worked on criminal defense and civil rights cases. My intellectual interests these days are centered on constitutional jurisprudence and history, and I spend my free time reading *The Federalist Papers* and other works of Western political philosophy when not delving into Eastern religions. I really enjoy cinema and works of directors like David Lynch and Alfred Hitchcock.

I am a prolific Facebook commentator, and most of what I think about (social issues implicated in current affairs) I write on there for my friends to comment. I am considering starting up a blog but have yet to make the time for it.

My father is from Iran and exposed me to Shia Islam, while my mother is from Iowa and exposed me to Catholicism. Both decided they would let me come to my decision on my own after learning about both religions. After realizing that both religions (and others) claimed a monopoly on the truth, against my parents' teaching that "all religions are different paths to the same place," I delved into agnosticism during my teenage years out of a fear based in Pascal's Wager.

Once learning analytical philosophy, however, my belief in God pretty much dissipated by the first year of college. One huge lesson philosophy taught me was the importance of defining terms when making an argument, and I found that the concept of God was so amorphous and ill-defined that hardly anyone knows what they really mean when they invoke God to explain anything. But even assuming God was a coherent concept, I still found the arguments for God's existence to be lacking (and still do).

These days I believe there is some psychological foundation for religion on some subconscious level, a sort of Jungian theory on religion's purpose in humanity's life. I don't think that makes religious claims true in any factual sense, but considering that humans are more than just logic machines I can see why such an explanation makes religion more powerful in the minds of believers than a simple "fear of death" explanation.

I find the public is done a disservice when people from any professional community do not adequately explain what is actually going on in their field, and that includes lawyers who do not explain the law for educational purposes. I write this column in particular because I believe secularism is under attack and is a value worth upholding. I hope I can convince others of the same.

Thanks for reading my column. If there are any issues you would like me to cover send me a message.

