

Sacramento Reason

COR

Shine the Light of Reason!

Upcoming Events

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

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Volume III, Issue 5

Issue Theme: Why LGBT Matters

May 2015

Tracie Harris

"The Harmful Impact of Religious Family Values"

Tuesday, May 12

7:00 PM—8:30 PM

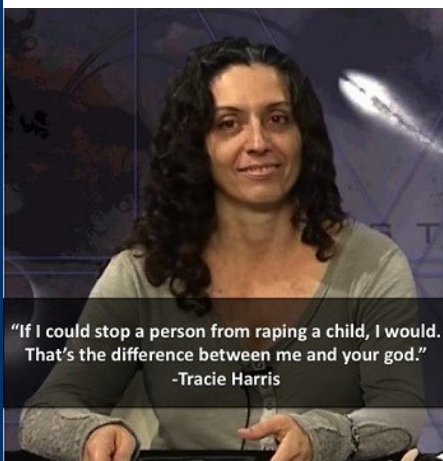
Reason Center, 1824 Tribute Rd, Suite A, Sac

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

Tracie will speak about the "other side" of religious family values—the negative impact these ideologies may have when someone in the family expresses unbelief. Tracie will also discuss how some religions use negative stereotypes of unbelievers to perpetuate pressure on atheists in religious homes.

Tracie Harris is a contributor on The Atheist Experience public access show in Austin, TX where she is well known for the "supernatural dice" segment. She is a publishing professional and creator of the Atheist Eve strip (see sample below), hosted on the Atheist Community of Austin web site. She is a regular voice on the ACA atheist/feminist podcast "Godless Bitches" and has been an occasional voice on ACA's "Non-Prophets", and was a speaker at ReasonCon One in 2014.

Harris is a former Christian Fundamentalist (Church of Christ). Harris and Matt Dillahunt were featured on the Religion section of The Huffington Post "facing down an aggressive Christian caller with a shocking view of children who have been the victims of rape".



Free, event! Open to everyone! Bring your friends ... and, if you dare, family!

Cartoon by our guest speaker, Tracie Harris



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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](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?



Hitler Obeyed The Law

Hitler didn't break any laws to do what he did. Germany voted in the Nazis, voted in Hitler, and were very happy to rally around the exciting ideals of the perfect race. Everyone was very happy to show each other how "good" they were by revealing all the hated groups, to have them killed. The Holocaust was popular. And you think this anti-gay thing is just silly and an old relic of old thinking? You think religions and right wing legislators just "happen" to blame LGBT for everything from hurricanes to joblessness because they're stupid? You think public figures are outlandish and idiotic for no reason? You think the bill to kill gays in California is a one-off attempt? You think they don't know exactly what they're doing? **REALLY?**

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"Ask The Social I.Q. Lady"

Q: What can I say to Christians who think they are being persecuted by homosexuals? A coworker of mine says her rights are being trampled on in the name of tolerance.

A: As more and more states support equal rights for homosexuals to marry, Christians are grasping at straws trying to protect their "right" to discriminate and uphold ancient rhetoric. According to a poll released May 29, 2014 by Public Religion Research Institute, only a small portion of the country still believes you should be able to refuse service to either African-American, Jewish, gays and lesbians, or atheists. More people said it should be legal to refuse to do business with members of the LGBT community (16%) than with atheists (15%).

When Christians tell you their rights are being trampled on in the name of tolerance, remind them that the "right" to discriminate is not a "right" at all. It's mean and hateful. Discrimination undermines equality of opportunity which is why we have laws against it. It's not "freedom for one". It's "freedom for all". When their religious "freedoms" interfere with the rights of others to be treated fairly, it's called discrimination and that is something our nation is no longer willing to tolerate for them.

No one has the "right" to dictate how others choose to live their lives. Christians have been trying to play the "victim card" for centuries. To Christians, religious freedom means allowing Christians to impose their religious morality and faith on others. They thrive on creating problems where there are none. They don't want gays to marry because their religion forbids it. They don't want "liberals" to say "Happy Holidays" or play secular holiday music during their Christmastime which apparently begins the day after Thanksgiving now. They want the Ten Commandments erected in government offices because it showcases their religion. They don't want

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Ancient Christian Study Group - May 17 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.

Richard Carrier on "The Historicity of Jesus"

Wednesday, May 20 at 7:15 PM

Manteca Library, 320 W Center St, Manteca (enter street side)

When he last spoke to us, Dr. Carrier helped us understand what makes good evidence, how conflicting evidence is examined, and how we can mathematically ascertain the validity of a claim using Bayes' Theorem.

This time, Richard will apply those lessons to the evidence for Jesus Christ and the origins of Christianity.

Carrier will summarize and take questions on his latest book, *On the Historicity of Jesus* -- the first university-published book to pass peer review at a major respected biblical studies press -- which systematically argues that Christianity began without a historical Jesus.

Parking, coffee and pastries are free. Suggested donation \$20 is appreciated. Sponsored by [SAAF](#).



The Thinking Atheist, Seth Andrews—Coming June 23!

Topic: "I Love the Idea!"

June 23, 7:00—8:45 PM

Reason Center, 1824 Tribute Rd, Suite A, Sacramento

Tickets Required, but they're FREE! [Click here for Free Tickets](#).

From pop culture to religious cultures, Seth takes a humorous and revealing look at belief, cherished heroes, and the true stories hidden beneath the legends.

Seth Andrews, a video producer and former Christian broadcaster, now hosts "[The Thinking Atheist](#)," one of the most popular online atheist communities in the world, a site which encourages all to reject faith and embrace doubt, curiosity and reason.

Seth has chronicled his transition from believer to atheist in his autobiography, "Deconverted: a Journey from Religion to Reason," and his weekly radio podcast downloaded 1.5 million times a month.

His second book, "Sacred Cows: a Lighthearted Look at Belief and Tradition Around the World" releases any day now. Bring your change—he just might have his new book with him!

With a mix of humor and heart, Seth Andrews speaks around the country about his former faith, the rise of reason, and why we should all pursue a personal relationship with reality.

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

Sponsored by AOF Speaker Series. Become a supporting member of [AOF Speaker Series here](#) (thank you!)



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

May 9 10:00 am Brunch and Atheism, Panera Bread, 10718 Trinity Pkwy, Stockton [Map here](#)

May 17 9:30 am Blasphemy Breakfast, Mel's Diner, 6708 Lonetree Blvd [Map here](#)

May 17 11:00 am Blasphemy Brunch, Mel's Diner 565 Howe Ave [Map here](#)

Jon Stewart Eviscerates Anti-LGBT Law

[\(see video here\)](#)

RFRA supporters compare LGBT with the KKK. Listen to what Jon Stewart of The Daily Show had to say about this.

Book Clubs

Sacramento

May 18, 6:30 pm
Reason Center
1824 Tribute Rd
Suite A; Sac
[Details here](#)

BHNBS—Sac

May 17, 11 AM
Tower Café
1518 Broadway
[Details here](#)

Ceres, May 5, 7pm
1st Tues each mo.

[Details here](#)

Grass Valley

May 6, 5:00 PM
Thai Kitchen
149 S Auburn St
[Details here](#)

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Coming Out

By Oriana Morrison



The crowd surrounded the two of us, taunting, jeering. Their eyes were cruel, they laughed and then pulled away like they had stepped too close to something contagious. Something that might cling to their skin, sink into their pores and change their very identity. One girl pretended to puke all over the floor. Their taunts, "are you a lesbian?" were aimed at my friend who stood next to me.

Indeed, she was a lesbian. She had fiery red hair and a great sense of humor. But the crowd saw only that she was a homosexual. To them, that was all that mattered. It set this girl apart as other. She was to be feared because she was different; she made the members of this group aware of their own desires that they would rather keep hidden, not just from others but also from themselves. She didn't cower like they expected. She was courageous.

I was a coward. I wanted to do more than stand beside her silently, but the words stuck in my throat. The fear that bound and gagged me was that of hell and condemnation of the church I was member of. I wasn't ashamed of my friend; I was terrified of the church finding out that I didn't condemn homosexuality like a good Christian was supposed to. I let the fear control me. I have regretted that for the last 15 years and will for the rest of my life.

When Prop 8 was on the floor I was, regrettably, still a theist. I saw my friends on Facebook changing their profile image to a red equal sign in support of equality. I wanted to change my profile image too so badly, but that same fear still bound me like ropes I didn't know how to unknot. I was so ashamed of my fear of the condemnation of the church and of hell, but I didn't know that I had any other choice than to be controlled by it.

Later that year I read Richard Dawkins' *The God Delusion*. Under the weight of his logic and reason those ropes snapped like an old bra strap too worn out and undersized for its owner. The feeling was liberating. I was finally free to stand up for [Leelah Alcorn](#), [Matthew Shepard](#), [Sam Taub](#), and countless others who are harassed, denied equal treatment and rights, attacked and even killed just for being themselves.

You and I can make the world a safer, more accepting place by standing up for the LGBT community, and if being in the closet as a non-theist is keeping you silenced, then come on out! The rights of the LGBT community affect everyone in minority groups because bullies don't just target one group; they target anyone who is different from the so-called norm. If we allow others to be mistreated we may later find ourselves being mistreated. So do it for yourself, do it for your LGBT friends. Come on out and be the change this world so desperately needs.

Richard Dawkins in Portland, Oregon—June 5

Make it a road trip with friends! See Richard Dawkins in person. Only \$35.

May I suggest a weeklong trip, staying along the coast (Fort Bragg and Coos Bay?), then catch a play at the Ashland Shakespeare Festival on the way back. Fun and Dawkins, both! [Details here](#)

Upcoming Events

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[17 Blasphemy Break-fast, Rocklin](#)
[17 Sunday Assembly](#)
[17 Blasphemy Break-fast, Dixon/Vacaville](#)
[17 Books & Brunch!](#)
[17 Blasphemy Brunch Arden/Arcade](#)
[17 Coffee Klatch in Modesto](#)
[17 Ancient Christian Study Group](#)
[17 SA Trustees Mtg](#)
[18 Book Club](#)
[19 Self Defense, RC](#)
[20 Richard Carrier "Historical Jesus"](#)
[21 Self Defense, RC](#)
[22 Work at RC](#)
[22 Skeptics in the Pub](#)
[24 SA in Oakland](#)
[24 Eggie's; BHNBS](#)
[24 Brunch & Atheism in Turlock](#)
[26 Game Night in Stockton](#)
[26 Self Defense, RC](#)
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[29 Work at RC](#)
[29 Finally Friday Dinner & Karaoke](#)
[30 BHNBS Planning](#)
[31 Book of Mormon](#)
[31 Potluck Game Night!](#)
[Jun 1 Book Club](#)
[Jun 3 New Members Coffee Meetup](#)

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Issue Theme: Why LGBT Matters

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Join Us for Dinner!

Each month our various freethinking members plan outings to different restaurants, in hopes you will join them. Usually about 10 to 18 people show up and have a great time sampling cuisine from so many different restaurants and cultures. Be sure to watch the calendar for Freethought Dinner Socials!

This month:

May 1 in Lodi, Alebrijes Mexican Bistro, 10 West Oak St, Lodi. [Details here](#)

May 9, Mizu Japanese Seafood Buffet, 3636 N Freeway Blvd, Sac [Details here](#)

May 16, El Novillero Restaurant, 4216 Franklin Blvd, Sac [Details here](#)

Dan Barker Rocks Sacramento

"That was the most fun I've had in a long time!" Dan Barker wasn't the only one saying this. Amid his many stops to speak to Secular Student Alliance groups on various California campuses, the Greater Sacramento Chapter of FFRF invited Dan to a Friday night music jam session and potluck, inviting the local free-thinkers to come meet Dan, and get up and dance!

The quickly formed group of guitars, bass and drums, with guest bass player Chapter President Judy Saint and Board Member John Lucas on lead guitar calling themselves the "Unofficial Greater Sacramento FFRF Band", backed up Dan on his unique and fun original songs as only a rock band could!

Then Dan joined the group in full rock and roll style with classic tunes as the dancing began. Not only can Dan write clever secular songs, but did you know he totally lets loose on songs like "Mustang Sally", "I Love Rock and Roll" and "Glory Days"? The man can

rock a piano! Dancing, great food and an all-atheist band – what a night! Thanks, Dan, for having a great time with us in Sacramento, and John for the band!



Photos by Marilyn Schultz



Little Activisms

By Judy Saint

Sexual rules are a gateway to theocracy.

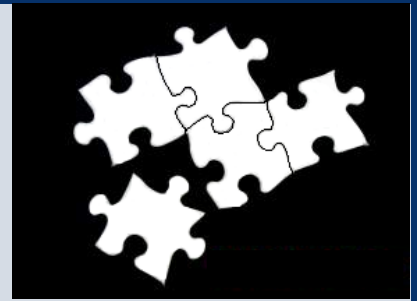
Are you capable of such a frenzied belief that you would come find me and shoot a bullet into my head, or perhaps put me through hours of torture first; then you and your friends know you've done a good deed once I'm dead? I mean you, really you, and me, really me? How can you hear that this is happening now abroad and pass it off as cultural wars, even though it's being instigated by American leaders? How can you hear of the teen vigilante groups going on "safaris" to hunt, torture and kill innocent people in Russia, and you're not shocked to hear the police allow it? How can you hear that it happens in alleys and on farm fences in this country, and that so many commit suicide as young as 11 to avoid being a target? How can you hear that this is what happened in Germany, and just pass it off as a weird result of people having elected bad leaders long ago?

What if you were in the minority group being targeted – would you just decide you're OK because you don't plan to travel to Russia or Uganda? What if your own USA was rising in this direction in very scary ways – would you just make sure your passport was in order in case you were allowed to peacefully relocate before they catch and torture you, or at least before they decide not to let you sell your house or refuse to sell you gas for your car so you can leave, or confiscate your car as they do in other countries to those fleeing?

I just woke up from a bad dream. But, it's only not true yet, not that far from happening in reality at any time, and I mean in this country, and I mean to me. And you'd be there to watch. Or to ignore it. But, you'd be there, as you are there now, hearing about how it's beginning, but perhaps sitting back sure you'll be fine. In the dream I heard a mob of about 15 young men outside my house, with various weapons, getting excited about doing the good work of invading my home to get me. I tried to find a weapon of some sort, but knew it wouldn't be enough, no matter what I could find. I knew calling the police would be too little too late, and somehow knew the society I was in had no problem with this happening, anyway.

All I could do was avoid being seen through curtain slits until I finally heard them inside the house in the front room. In the dream, I suddenly became an observer, watching as they dragged someone else through the house and into the back yard where they had made several torture areas. Two of the victim's friends were forced to kneel and watch at gunpoint, hands tied. Somehow I found myself able

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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 May 16, 6:15 pm](#) or [Stockton May 26, 6:00 pm](#) or [Salida May 8, 7:00 pm](#)
or [Reason Center May 27, 6:30 pm](#)



New Members Meetup & Coffee

May 6, 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.](#)

Family Time By Lindsey Campbell

My personal philosophy on talking to kids is typically considered highly unorthodox, and I don't always advise parents to be as open with sensitive topics with their kids as I am. However, I will tell you why I have always kept an open conversation about gayness with my daughter, and why I believe it's important to teach kids about gayness before they learn about it from their peers.



First of all, I told my daughter when she was six that a gay man marries another man, and kisses and hugs him, and sometimes they adopt babies and have a family together. The same goes for gay women. Naturally she wrinkled her nose and sad, "Ew, they kiss?" And I looked her straight in the eye and said that yes, they do kiss. And they love each other and they have houses and children and jobs and so on and so forth. I was pleasantly surprised recently when this topic came back up, and Roxanne (now almost nine) said to her friend, "Gay people are just like other people, but men marry men, and women marry women. They are born like that." She did not bat an eye, she didn't blanch in embarrassment, and she happened to put together the fact that it's natural without my needing to guide her to that. Also, she helped regulate her peer's response to learning about homosexuality; she essentially shielded her friend against the shock value attributed to homosexuality. I was a proud mom at that moment.

What I had done was essentially immunized Roxanne against "school bus" education. I am a teacher, and I work with elementary students. Would I discuss gayness with my students? Absolutely not. However, the kids will learn about it at school—from each other!—and hence most likely in a less than favorable light. I recommend that parents take the initiative to talk about these things with their kids, in the privacy and safety of your home. This way, you can regulate their reactions. Remember, it's kissing that is gross to children. Let them wrinkle their noses, let them get their squirms out, and then the shock is over. Once the shock is over, questions will emerge, and then a discussion can begin.

Children, especially elementary aged students, will use controversial material to shock each other. They love the value of shock and disgust. They also like to try to outdo each other with how much they think they know about the world.

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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	Y	<u>Y</u>	Facebook page here

Secular Family Day—Saturday, May 16

Nearly every month, the third Saturday is "Secular Family Day" -- a day for the whole family to get out and meet other secular families in a fun place. Check the calendar. [Details here](#)



Skeptics in the Pub - Two Locations

Sacramento

Sac Skeptics in the Pub
Fri May 22, 6:30p
Hoppy Brewing Co
6300 Folsom Blvd

[Map here](#)

[Details here](#)

Stockton

Drinking Skeptically
Fri May 15
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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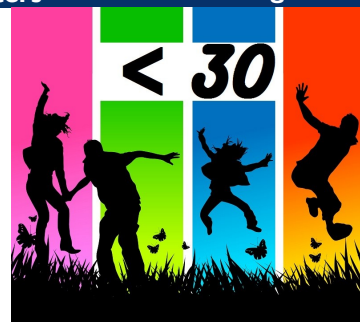
By Sara Lone

If you've been living under a rock lately, stay there. The world we live in right now is hardly recognizable... Seriously, we have people talking about shooting other people for being gay, not giving people pizza for being gay, and don't even get me started about all the brutality all over the country. It's insane, and do you know what it all means? This is actually the Twilight Zone... But on a serious note, climb out from under your bed because we have work to do. It is our responsibility as young people to change the conversation around LGBTQ rights and "religious freedom," because the only people benefiting from that seem to be crazy Christians who would prefer to burn us all at the stake for blinking.

Having said that, let's talk about the Avengers. If you haven't seen it yet, GO!!! It's a perfect example of how horribly things can turn out when people who can't see anything past their own convictions obtain any form of "power" and want to force others into their insano-mold. I know, it's hard for us to believe that people would do that because we're normally so passive, right? Seriously, though, it takes some pretty strong conviction to work hard enough to get signatures on a petition for a law that would legalize shooting ANYONE in the head, let alone a community that has been through enough crap as it is with our legal system.

It's our turn to have strong convictions and to share them with the world. When you hear someone say anything stupid, just look at them like the idiot they are and let them know you don't agree. We don't need to put up with this. <30s, UNITE!

Contact Sara at Under30@sacramentoreason.org. #under30nones



Finally Friday—Dinner and Karaoke

May 29, It's Finally Friday!

Find the gang at Torri's Japanese Restaurant
2401 E Orangeburg Ave in Modesto

Everyone is welcome! We start with dinner at Torri's at 7:00. After dinner, we hang out for karaoke! Have fun with like-minded folks who are all glad it's Friday! Kids are welcome at Torri's until 10:00 PM.

Go to [this website](#) to let us know you're coming so we can save enough seats.
[Details here](#)

Self Defense Classes at the Reason Center

Jujitsu master Professor Richard Francis is hosting a series of self-defense classes to benefit the Reason Center. (\$70/mo—twice each week). What you will learn is worth much more than you will pay. [Details for May 5 class here](#) 6:30—8:30 PM, Reason Center, 1824 Tribute Rd, Ste A, Sacramento.

Lobby Day

May 7, all day
State Capitol
1010 L St, Sac

We will train you and supply you with material to hand to legislators or their aides. Visit offices to promote secular voices as only a personal visit can do. No prior experience needed.

[Register here](#)

Grass Valley Freethought Meetup

Join our Introductory Meeting, everyone is welcome.

June 15, 6:30 PM
Madelyn Helling Library
980 Helling Way
Nevada City

This is our first meeting. Let's get to know our like minded locals and make some plans.

[Details here](#)

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SkeptiCal—June 6

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!

Oakland's Asian Cultural Center, 388 9th St, #290, Oakland CA
June 6, all day

[Purchase Tickets Here, from \\$25.00](#)
[Details here](#)



Board Games at Reason Center!

The Last Wednesday of Every Month!

May 27, 6:30 PM
Reason Center
1824 Tribute Rd, Suite A, Sac

Join us at Reason Center for a fun monthly board game night!

All ages are welcome. BYOG (Bring your own games) or we'll have some games there to get us started: Apples to Apples, Taboo, Scattergories, Fluxx, Bananagrams, etc.

Feel free to bring snacks and drinks to share if you'd like.

GAMES! GAMES! GAMES!

[Details here](#)



Sunday Assembly

Check the Sunday Assembly calendar for General Meetings, small group meetings and more [at this link](#). Join the Assembly each month for singing pop songs together, hearing an inspirational secular message, and enjoying a potluck afterward. May 17, at 10:30 AM, then the 2nd Sunday of each month after that. At the Reason Center, 1824 Tribute Rd, Suite A, Sac.

Sunday Assembly Field Trip to Oakland

Join us on Amtrak for a trip to the Oakland SA on May 24 [at this link](#). Or join the bunch traveling by car [at this link](#).

Write an Atheist TV Script—\$40,000 in Prizes!

No God But Funny Contest

Contribute to the downfall of civilization by writing a sitcom and/or producing a webisode that features a likeable atheist. (See graphic below to explain why they're doing this!) The contest will award \$15,000 to those crafting the winning sitcom script and \$25,000 to producers of the winning webisode that takes the "ass" out of atheists.

Dan Barker, co-president of the Freedom From Religion Foundation notes that entries must "reflect a positive view of atheism, and we expect that at least one story line per episode/webisode out of the typical 3 story lines will be about the atheist character's life.

[More details here, on the Freedom From Religion Foundation website.](#)



THAT'S HOLLYWOOD'S PORTRAYAL
OF ATHEISTS IN TELEVISION.

CHANGE THIS!

Listen Up!

By Cleo Kocol

Cleo Says

LISTEN UP!

From Puritan, colonial days the United States has been obsessed with sex. How to prevent it, how to do it and how to punish those who indulge incorrectly. Remember Hawthorne's *Scarlet Letter*. Recently the punishment aspect of sex has again come to the forefront and religion is at fault.

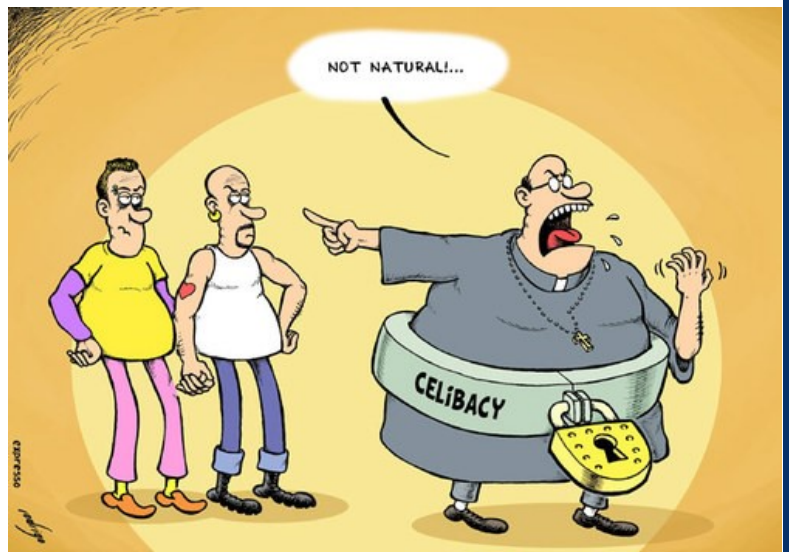
Sunday, April 5, a mock, fictional trial was held on TV. It concerned a gay couple who wanted a bakery business to make them a wedding cake. The bakery refused on religious grounds. The attorney for the men made her logical arguments stick. The show, *The Good Wife*, brought to its millions of followers what has happened in the real world recently. If the case goes to the Supreme Court, we know the Supremes came down on the side of religion in the *Hobby Lobby* case. It could again if we straight as well as LGBT progressives don't let our voices ring out. The religious far right has already staked a position that eschews science and would take our country to a day of biblical supremacy.

If I had seen the letters LGBT when I was growing up, they would have seemed like Egyptian hieroglyphics. Homosexual was a term I didn't hear until I was in my teens and then only in whispers. "Queer" was the derogatory term used and it meant men. Hardly anyone figured it had anything to do with women. Much later I heard the term "dyke." While society acknowledged homosexuals existed, no one admitted knowing any "homos," the collective most people used.

Forty or so years ago I read a scientific article that said all people are on a continuum that has heterosexual and homosexual on opposite and extreme ends of an imaginary line with the rest of us falling somewhere in between, that we are born with an innate attraction for the opposite or the same sex. People attracted to both fall in the middle of that line. But sometimes nature goofs and a person is born with a brain that says one thing and a body that says another. It all made sense to me.

But shades of my growing up years are still with us. Recently a young, single woman was sentenced to 20 years in prison because the zealots maintained she killed her baby because she took pills that caused her to have a miscarriage. She confessed she was afraid to tell her parents she was pregnant. In an earlier age, the much-honored writer Oscar Wilde was put at hard labor in prison because of his sexual orientation.

This proclivity to punish anyone who doesn't fit their sense of morality is held by 25 to 30 percent of our American society. This minority is determined to put their brand of Christianity in the forefront of American life. This attitude cannot be shrugged away as belonging to a bunch of kooks. Hitler and his cohorts were in the minority, but they took over Germany in the 1930's and the Holocaust and WWII happened. The current majority in the House of Representatives and the Senate of the United States spouts a similar anti woman and anti homosexuality line. We cannot take these attacks as someone else's problem. It is ours.



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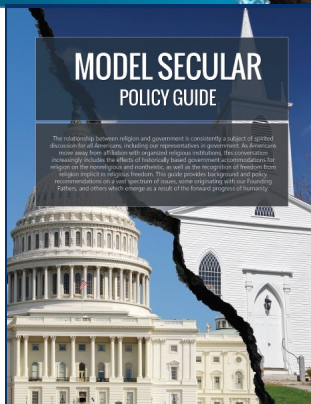
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Issue Theme: Why LGBT Matters

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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 often overlap. This guide provides a framework for understanding the relationship between religion and government, and offers suggestions for how to navigate this complex terrain.



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.

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Legal Watch By Arash Khosrowshahi

The History of the Religious Freedom Restoration Act, and When Theoretical Argument Masks Actual Discrimination

The Religious Freedom Restoration Act (or “RFRA”) has existed for over two decades at the federal level as well as in many states. The reason has to do with a Supreme Court case decided in 1990, *Employment Division v. Smith*. In that case the Supreme Court ruled that, under the Free Exercise Clause of the First Amendment, a neutral law of general applicability could prohibit certain religious conduct: particularly with *Smith*, the plaintiffs were two Native American drug counselors who were fired after ingesting peyote, a known religious hallucinogen of the Native American Church of which both plaintiffs were members. The Supreme Court upheld the state of Oregon’s decision not to grant unemployment compensation to the plaintiffs, as their firing was based on misconduct which made them ineligible to receive such aid. This was because possessing a substance like peyote was a crime that applied to everyone, rather than targeting believers of the Native American Church in particular.

Special interest groups, outraged by the *Smith* decision, supported the first RFRA which was signed into law by President Bill Clinton in 1993. RFRA in essence made the government’s burden of proof higher before it could restrict religious conduct: rather than merely having a so-called “rational basis” for restricting a religious activity, the government had to have a “compelling interest” before doing so.

RFRA, however, took on a new meaning in the recent Supreme Court *Hobby Lobby* decision. As Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg noted in her dissenting opinion in that case, rather than interpreting RFRA with a “moderate purpose” that was understood by Congress in 1993, the majority of the Court read RFRA as providing a “bold initiative” to not only protect religious freedom, but to actively impose religious beliefs upon others. In the case of *Hobby Lobby*, closely-held corporations whose owners held religious beliefs against contraception use could deny their employees contraception coverage under the Affordable Care Act.

Emboldened by this recent ruling, the Religious Right has now decided to see how else they can use RFRA to their benefit. The most recent iteration of this comes with the new Indiana RFRA signed into law by Governor Mike Pence. After the Indiana RFRA went into effect, an enormous backlash by LGBT rights organizations, corporations, and public officials ensued, claiming that the RFRA is really intended to allow businesses in Indiana to discriminate against gays and lesbians if the business owners have religious

Continued on page 16

Ask the Social I.Q. Lady—Continued from page 2

to pay for an employee's birth control pills because it goes against their religious values.

Christians have the right to practice their religion. They can pray – not disrupt. They can refuse to attend or support a gay wedding – not picket or disrupt it. They can celebrate their religious holidays. They can attend church services whenever they'd like. They can hold Bible studies in their home as long as they meet the same requirements as other house meetings are compelled to follow. They can wear funny hats and special underwear. They can fast until they die. They can do all these things and more. There is also an endless list of things they don't have to do if they don't want to do them: watch pornography, marry someone of the same sex, learn about science, have sex outside of marriage, drink coffee or alcohol, listen to rap music, wear a bikini, uncover their head, wear make-up, pierce their body, get a tattoo, swear, understand evolution, read *Catcher in the Rye*, attend a funeral, watch *South Park*, eat bacon, use birth control, have an abortion, get a divorce, draw an irreverent picture, donate blood or have a blood transfusion, take medication when ill, etc.

Don't fall into the Christian victimization trap. They're not losing their rights; they're just losing their control.

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

Family Time—Continued from page 7

So parents, I'm not suggesting that we teach all six-year-olds about gayness. But, I would like to call on you to take the initiative before they learn about it on the school bus, where there is no adult guidance on how we should be reacting to it, and where their first impression of it will be implanted in their minds as forever taboo.

Lastly, always remember that any child you ever come into contact with might be gay. If and when sensitive topics come up in the classroom, my usual response is, "I recommend you ask your parents. These are things that parents should teach their kids, not me, and not other kids at school." This takes the pressure off me of having to beat around a thorny bush, and also takes the pressure off the children as far as how much they ought to know about family life and at what age.

So, parents, please let go of the little voice in your head that tells you that children shouldn't know these things. Instead, remind yourself that knowledge is power, and that if you don't teach them, someone else will!





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](#).

Sacramento Reason

Issue Theme: Why LGBT Matters

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SCCA Update

By Tom Manger

As you are reading this newsletter in early May, a flurry of activity is taking place in our state's capital. Legislators are racing to meet a June 5th deadline in which bills must "pass the house of origin" in order for consideration in the other legislative chamber.

In last month's newsletter I listed the most visible bills for which we are lobbying. But, that was just a partial list. Some other bills of note that we support are:

AB 775 - Reproductive FACT Act - Would require crisis pregnancy centers to post signs stating that they are unlicensed and that no medical personal are available on site.

AB 329 - Sexual Health Education - The bill would require school districts to ensure that all pupils in grades 7 to 12, inclusive, receive comprehensive sexual health education and HIV prevention education.

SJR 4 - Relative to the Sally Ride statue - Would replace a statue of Junipera Serra currently in the nation's capitol building in DC with a new statue of astronaut Sally Ride.

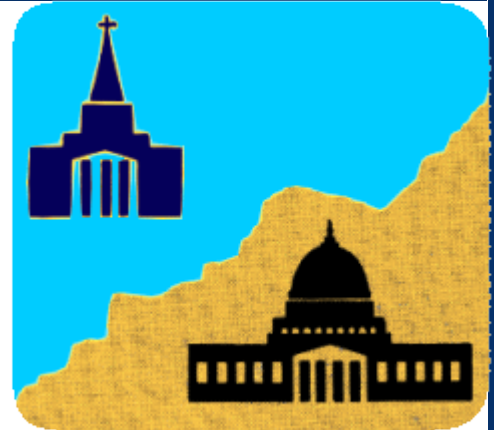
AB 1177 - Primary care clinics; written transfer agreements - Would remove the requirement that primary care clinics maintain a written transfer agreement with one or more local hospitals.

Two additional bills that we oppose are:

AB 1426 - Charter schools: classroom based instruction - Would lower the required in-class time for charter schools from 80% to 60%. This would increase the amount of time a student could be trained offsite or electronically.

AB 1254 - Health care service plans: abortion coverage - Would remove abortion from the list of basic medical services required to be included in all medical insurance plans in California. Note that this is a "gut & replace" bill that was snuck into the legislative process by replacing all of the original text of the bill with text of a completely different import.

We encourage all readers to read up on these bills then contact your representatives to state your position - and the position of the secular community. You can also join us in Sacramento on May 7th for our annual Lobby Day. See our website of Facebook page for more info. Feel free to email me directly if you have questions or concerns about any of these bills. 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.

Legal Watch—Continued from page 13

beliefs against homosexuality or gay marriage. Governor Pence soon declared afterward that he would ask the Indiana Legislature to issue a statement which would clarify the intent of the law as to not discriminate against the LGBT community.

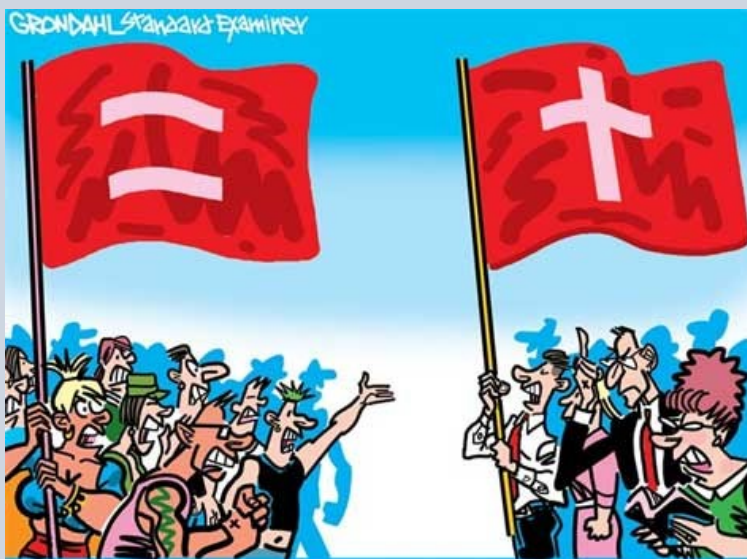
Let me be clear: offering to make a statement to “clarify the intent” of the law is disingenuous on Governor Pence’s part, for the context of Indiana passing RFRA legislation over 20 years after it was a big issue cries out for a better explanation. But if we add to this context the recent lawsuit surrounding a bakery refusing to bake a gay couple their wedding cake, the political picture becomes apparent.

However, Governor Pence could likely get away with having a discriminatory law on the books while disclaiming that it any way discriminates. Governor Pence would, for one thing, be following precedent. President Bill Clinton’s signing statement which accompanied the Defense of Marriage Act in 1996 (or “DOMA”) stated the following: “I also want to make clear to all that the enactment of this legislation should not, despite the fierce and at times divisive rhetoric surrounding it, be understood to provide an excuse for discrimination, violence or intimidation against any person on the basis of sexual orientation.” As we know today, however, DOMA was meant exclusively for the purpose of discriminating against gays and lesbians, despite any statement of “clarifying intent” to the contrary. So, too, is Indiana’s RFRA.

However, the more sinister way Indiana’s RFRA law can discriminate is through the public’s acquiescence via some of the discourse I have witnessed surrounding the law. It is problematic discourse because it is based in theory rather than acknowledging events on the ground. We can have the legal discussion as to whether a hypothetical Jewish baker should be allowed to refuse neo-Nazis service if they ask for a swastika cake, but the important political point being lost is that these hypothetical scenarios are not actually happening *en masse*. What is happening *en masse* is discrimination against the LGBT community, and it is not being eradicated by pontificating which ignores the history of the RFRA, its reactionary revisionist interpretation by the Supreme Court in the past year, and the facts of discrimination against gays and lesbians on the ground.

Defending Indiana’s RFRA to protect conduct that theoretically could happen, but is not actually happening, seems to be in line with the Quixotic conservative approach to legislation these days. Really conservatives aim to suppress the vote, but they say they institute voter identification laws to preserve the integrity of the voting process (never mind the virtual nonexistence of voter fraud and how the ID laws target racial minorities). Really conservatives try to prevent a woman’s access to an abortion, but they say they are worried about the safety of women and therefore require abortion clinics to comply with obscene levels of facility requirements (which in effect shut down the clinics). This approach is Quixotic because it fights against giants that do not exist, and aims to enforce an idealistic morality in an age where civilized society has settled these issues against conservative paternalism long ago. That is, unless, we forgo the fight for equality and frame reality and the argument in conservative terms. I am not in the mood to be Sancho Panza.

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.



BATTLE FLAGS

Little Activisms—Continued from page 6

to invisibly run and climb over a high chain link fence, eventually finding town people in the movie theater, where they refused to talk about it. One lady in the front row was carrying a large stick for self-protection while she watched the movie, but everyone else just sat or stood silently. Eventually, one of the men told me they knew about it. I even spotted some of the leaders of our freethinking community (whom I know in real life), who were likewise just standing there, inside the movie theater, knowing that the low profile was safer for them, while the movie played on. The lady with the stick said she couldn't watch any more of the movie, because a violent scene was coming up, and she was the only person to leave the theater, though she just stood close by outside in the daylight.

It was outside the theater where I found myself still trying to understand why this was so acceptable to the calm town people. The head intruder into my home showed up with a burlap sack of bits and pieces of something, and threw it on the walkway in front of the theater, and said 'here is the offensive person', in the sack. He proudly left, his job done.

I'm noticing a lot more display of religious symbols as I drive around, not only to tell each other they are part of the approved in-group, but to also help mark territory that this is where it's OK to ostracize the selected out-group, in this case LGBT individuals. This is real, not the dream.

Also real is that Indiana just passed a law allowing people to not sell to LGBT, or serve them, just like back when many in this country used to legally do the same to blacks. It is also real that many other states are also introducing this same type of law, and that the US Supreme Court will probably not stop it since they have the Religious Freedom Restoration Act to use as their skirt to hide behind. In fact, that is only one of the religious take-over laws passed federally; others give money to religions and help justify keeping young people from learning too much, or help make more people poor and ill without relief, herding as many as possible into churches where their votes and labor can be better controlled. Not to mention changing our national motto to "In God We Trust" and adding "under God" to the pledge they want all children to recite daily, both done in the 1950s, but being used in rising fashion today.

And, here in my home state of California, we have seen the first petition submitted for placement on the ballot a law making it legal (and worse yet, making it seem beneficial to your neighbors) to kill gays and lesbians, all LGBT, 'with a bullet to the head or other convenient means'.

Even LGBT people aren't that riled, since most people don't realize that this is how it starts. By extremes getting through maybe the fifth or tenth time they are introduced, by calling it by other names, by justifying it with the bible or some other good cause, and by making it seem like the majority favors it. Hating an out-group is the first thing they always do to gain control. Even allies with the hated out-group, and even members of the hated out-group, don't really see it coming until it's too late.

Why is this happening in Russia right now, that the police do nothing to prevent safari hunting and torturing of gays? We don't even allow people to torture dogs or rats, why is it OK with humans? Why is this allowed in African countries, with American right wing legislators and religious leaders funding "kill the gay" bills, which are passing because of the lies associated with it? Why did Prop 8 pass only a few years ago when today everyone proudly walks in gay pride parades as if it wasn't their vote that killed my right to marry Kathy as we had been planning at the time?

Continued on next page

Little Activisms—Continued from previous page

I know why. We are animals who survived, precisely because our species' DNA contains mean competition and tribalism. Almost every movie we watch or story we read has the theme "MY sperm!" (aka 'boy gets girl' or 'my tribe kills yours' or 'the male most like my tribe wins', etc.) Without this "MY sperm!" instinct our species might not have made it all these millennia. But, we did make it, and violent tribalism is why. It's in our DNA to hate and kill out-groups, as much as it's in our DNA to desperately do anything to be seen as being "good" to our in-group, so they won't hate and kill us. That's what we call society, helping our in-group survive and reproduce, so we are seen as 'good' by others in our tribe. People don't believe in god as much as they believe in being seen as good to their groups – that's often why so many profess and display symbols of belief yet will explain to you why they don't really need to live by every word of their holy books. It's not a god they're really trying to please, it's their neighbors.

That's survival of our species, social animals, to advance our own in-groups together. So, knowing people are built to hate and kill out-groups, and knowing people will do anything to be seen as valuable to their in-group, all I can do about these threats is see the writing on the wall, and maybe use that passport before it's taken away from me, or before the US Census is used illegally to hunt me down like they did the Japanese in this country after Pearl Harbor, and send them all into dirty, dry camps to stay for years.

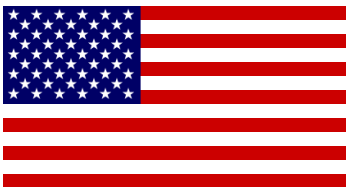
My bad dream did not end well. German history did not end well for the LGBT who lived there in the 1940s, or for the Jews. African countries and Russia are seeing it not end well for many of their LGBT citizens. In this country the only likely effect today is that I might not be served lunch at a restaurant or be able to buy gasoline in Indiana, and that I must suffer bad dreams worrying about the ballot initiative to kill me with a "bullet or any other convenient means" in my bed in Roseville. It's such a short step from today to tomorrow, though. Germany, Russia, Uganda and other places all used legal means to turn people against LGBT (this is usually the selected out-group to hate and kill because those wanting power can easily rule sexual behavior, which sets off an automatic emotional trigger that need not be justified).

It will happen legally. It will feel like you are "doing good" for society. It will divert your attention from theocratic take-over by the power-hungry. It will be wrapped in words like freedom, god and good. It will use me as a crushed skull to help those who want power rise just a little higher. My crushed skull will make you feel good, too, based on statistics. It's easy to create such an excitement filled with lies and diversions to get people to vote against their own interests and pursue immoral acts in the name of morality and good.

Can this be stopped? Or is everybody off watching movies? (What – you wanted me to answer this question? All I can do is ask people to see what is happening, and even that didn't work in that incident in the Ox Bow story.) Just remember that Afghanistan used to be a vacation destination for posh Americans. Afghan women used to wear tight cute skirts as airline hostesses, own bookstores, and were even scientists in that country – until religion worked its way into the laws. And that only took a few years. It can happen here, too. There are people trying to make it happen here. And then it won't just be LGBT, it'll be you.

But, I do have a few answers.

Support Freedom From Religion Foundation or any other efficient, dedicated group protecting our secular civil rights. (Links: <https://ffrf.org/get-involved/join-ffrf> or visit the homepage at <http://ffrf.org>.) Come out of the closet as atheist. Speak up. Vote. Pay attention. Don't fall for distractions.



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".

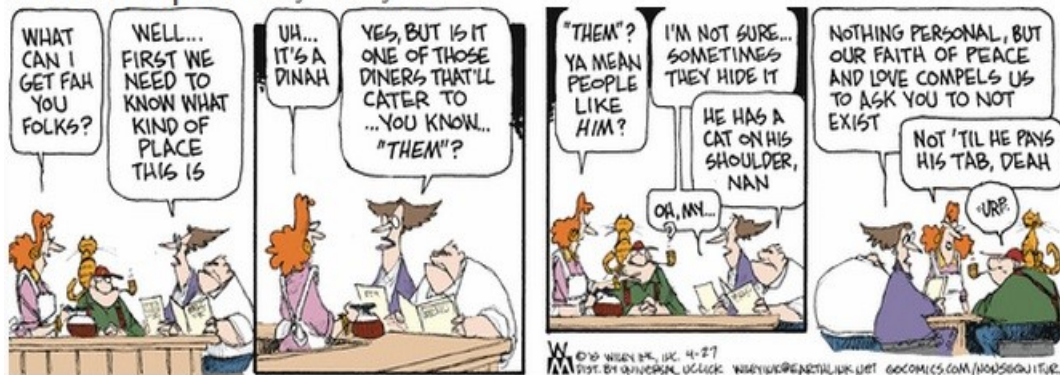


Can I make tax deductible donations?
Yes! Many freethinking groups are 501c3. See Page 8 for details.

Print one copy of this newsletter to leave in a coffee house or other public location. You never know.

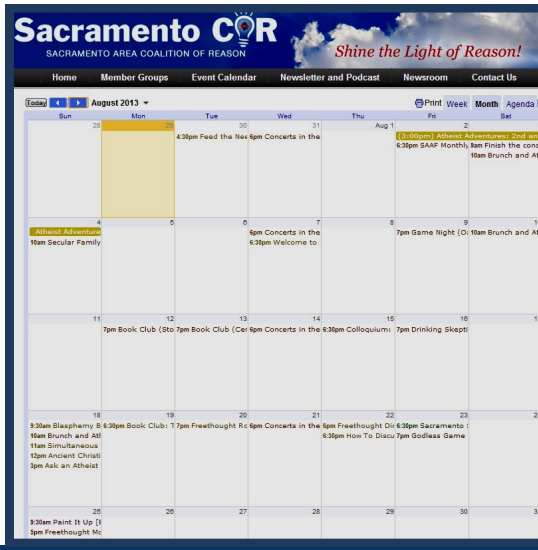


Non Sequitur by Wiley Miller



Sacramento Area's Freethinking Calendar

The Sacramento Area has its own event calendar for atheists, skeptics, humanists, and all other freethinkers. Sacramento Area groups love to cooperate and mingle, all supporting each other in these times of religious zeal. The Sac Coalition of Reason, which maintains this automatically-updated calendar, is not a club or group with a Board, or rules, but is a resource directing anyone interested to find local freethinking groups that suit them. Bookmark this calendar on your devices. It's a handy one-stop reference for almost everything going on up and down the valley.



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