

Upcoming Events

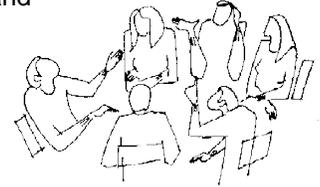
➤ Board of Directors Meeting

Tuesday, July 11, 2017, 7pm – 9pm

It's a planning meeting for AOF Directors & officers, but open to *all* interested AOF friends and members. These occur about every other month. Please join us, meet the Board, and keep an eye on the shenanigans.

Bring your ideas for AOF, your strategies, your suggestions for events and activities -- most of all, volunteerism! Helping hands are wonderful.

Location: Reason Center, 1824 Tribute Rd, Suite A, Sac. Map: <https://goo.gl/iVQL8z>.



➤ Freethought Dinner Social

Saturday, July 15, 2017, 6pm

Happy news, we hope to revive the Dinner Social, a fun communal dine-out for friends and members of the local community of reason. No reservations needed. Just come join your free-thinking pals at the **Kathmandu Kitchen** for fine food, good drink and freethoughty conversation. Like to see the menu first? Click [here](#).

Note, some are sensitive to colognes and perfumes. Except for your personal pheromones, please be chemical free. (And maybe take it easy on those personal pheromones, eh?)

Freethought Dinner Socials occur at Sac-area eatery, and all are welcome. Family friendly, come join the fun! (And don't be shy, suggest your own favourite eatery for next time.)

Contact: Lynne at 916-457-9123, or email: <thelynnster55 (at) comcast (dot) net>

Location: Kathmandu Kitchen, 1728 Broadway, Sac., ph. 916-441-2172, map: <https://goo.gl/maps/Kh67KyksrPG2>.



➤ Reason Center Open House, Library Book Sale & 3rd B-day Party

Sunday, July 16, 2017, 4pm - 7pm

Come get to know your Reason Center – featuring speakers on *why* RC exists, *what* it does, *where* its future lies, and *how* you can get the most from a membership. This event is open to all the curious and those that already support the Reason Center. Heavy *hors d'oeuvres* and refreshing libations will be there to toast the day and those who have brought us together.

Note, this is *not* an AOF event—it is a *Reason Center* event! But AOF supports RC and urges all AOF friends and members to attend. The itinerary will include tables and speakers on: RC's Mission and Vision, How to get full use out of your RC Membership, Volunteering, Welcome to the Library, Where RC is going, Scheduled Improvements for RC, Financial Outlook, Navigating the new RC Website and Becoming a Content Writer, and Leasing Space. Wow.

The RC team looks forward to seeing and meeting you all!

Contact: Reason Center, 916-426-6416, or email <reasoncenter (at) gmail (dot) com>

Location: Reason Center, 1824 Tribute Rd, Suite A, Sacramento. Map: <https://goo.gl/iVQL8z>.



➤ Philosophers' Table: Reclaiming the Words

Sunday, July 30, 2017, 12pm - 1 pm

"Fellowship," there's a word. Say it, taste it, roll it on your tongue. What are you thinking? A church hall gathering where half the attendees bring a casserole based on 'shroom soup, the other half an excuse for potato salad, hm? Or maybe an surge of claustrophobia – forced smiles, trapped, nowhere to turn.

But *fellowship* means (should mean) simple friendship and companionship. Religion does not own the word. Atheists can have connections as much as any. So now ask, what steps can we take to reclaim this word, a word appropriate for all groups, including nonbelievers?



"There can be no peace until they renounce their Rabbit God and accept our Duck God."

You might well also ask, what other words need rescuing?

Bring your thoughts on this and a snack to share...even a mushroom soup casserole. No, please don't. Finger foods are better, light beverages too. Also, maybe a few crinkled bucks to stuff in the tithing jug (*chuckle*) to keep Reason Center alive. This is your community! Your community of *fellowship*.

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➤ **What to do About it?**

Sunday, July 30, 2017, 1pm - 3pm

Having fun yet? Well, *duh*. Sectarian dogma creeps into public schools like tendrils of a cuttlefish violating the Body Politick, senators openly dis on science, employers cut your health care, a global gag rule ... *Where will it take us?* We aren't sure, but if you're tough enough to face the screaming, thanks for reading this, Chuck Norris.

Our July speaker will offer ideas, ideas for fighting back. Hear how you can rise to make a difference.

This presentation, as usual, is free. Free air conditioning, free parking too. But to keep the Reason Center venue alive, we humbly request support in whatever amount you can manage. Just stuff a crinkled dollar or two in the plastic donation jug. Yes, that's it. Now let go. Thanks.

Bring a snack to share if you can. Maybe a beverage. Anything but canned beets, yuck.

Location: Reason Center, 1824 Tribute Rd, Suite A, Sacramento. Map: <https://goo.gl/iVQL8z>.



Book Review (by Ken Nahigian)

Up Jumps the Devil by Michael Poore (2012, Ecco Books)

Up Jumps the Devil is imaginative, bitter, funny and slyly tender, an urban religious fantasy in the style of Christopher Moore or Neil Gaiman.* It tells the story of the Devil himself, John Scratch, and his many adventures in America.

Forget what they say. The devil is not such a bad fellow. He doesn't give a damn about sin. He doesn't want souls in hell. He is too busy nursing the first broken heart. What he does want is a leaner, swifter, cooler world, with a lot less killing and chaos. And to get it, he would kill you.

This sample scene occurs in a Louisiana swamp. Scratch and a burnt-out Blues player named Two-John Spode have a music contest. If Scratch wins, Two-John will go on tour with Memory, a singer. If Two-John wins, he gets the Scratch's guitar.

Two-John grinned his foxy grin, and said, 'I will play the blues, Devil, and then you play the blues, and we'll see who will take what.'

'Deal.' said the Devil.

Two-John shaped himself about his guitar, as if the guitar were a bed he meant to sleep in. His beard and hands and everything about him gained an air of unutterable sadness, and when he played his first note it went out and hung itself by the neck.

For the longest time it was the only note Two-John played.

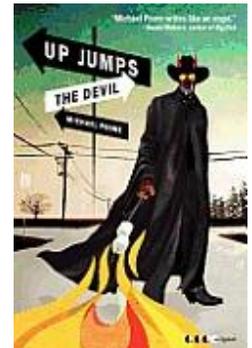
Then another note came along, drunk and bleeding and shoeless, and another like a well. The notes came faster and began to fall like tears.

They were heavy notes. The kind of notes that sound like empty rooms and twist you up inside.

He didn't show off and try to play what Regret sounded like, or make them hear what Heartbreak sounded like, because the blues is not about those things, if you let the blues be what they are. And you could tell Two-John knew it, and let it be what it was, which is the smallest and most lonely of moments and the most distant of sounds, the loneliness and sadness that are there for no reason at all. which maybe only an old man can know, or a man who knows witchcraft, and his blues were so perfect that no one even knew when the song ended and Two-John stopped playing.

They might have sat there all day, knowing the strange things the song made them know and remembering the small things it made them remember, gazing dumb-eyed into the fog on the water, if the Lord God Bird hadn't returned, a passing shadow, awakening them with a cry.

When the Devil started playing, it sounded like a choo-choo train. It was so simple, compared to the salt-mine-of-the-soul Two-John had played, that it sounded like a cartoon. Memory thought it was a joke, at first.



But the chord grew.

It wasn't sad. Not all blues songs moan. Sometimes they *HOWL*.

Like an old, bent dog, the Devil crashed against his guitar.

The song was like a car wreck, but with rhythm.

It was like being stabbed, with rhythm.

It was razors cutting, with rhythm like a hundred trains, and it sounded like a hundred guitars. The harder the Devil played, the more like the Devil he seemed to become. In all the white mist in the white world of the swamp, his eyes were the only color, shining red like something living kicked apart.

The Devil understood the secret of the blues, too, and he knew that the blues are about the bluesman. These blues weren't loneliness or the smallest of empty moments. These blues didn't leave them staring into space, feeling sullen and empty. This blues had enough problems without people feeling sorry for it. This blues wanted them seared to death, because somebody was going to PAY, goddammit. The Devil had been kicked out of HEAVEN! and had his true love stolen by GOD! and his true love had left him four different times and he hadn't seen her for three hundred YEARS! and when he played the guitar it was like strangling Creation because no one ever, EVER had the blues like the Devil had the blues. And even if they thought they had the blues anywhere near as bad, when the Devil finally burned to a stop, covered in sweat and tears and Spanish moss, they were way too scared to say so.

* If you haven't read anything by Neil Gaiman or Christopher Moore, forget this review. Grab a copy of *Good Omens* (Gaiman) or *Lamb* (Chris Moore) – read those first!



When you donate blood...

Please consider donating blood at the BloodSource, and if you do, use AOF BloodSource ID# 4857. Numerous BloodSource Donation Centers exist -- find them listed at: <http://www.bloodsource.org/Locations>. AOF gets no perks when members donate, but it saves lives, and is good for public relations. And what is more Humanistic than donating blood?

Support the Reason Center

Reason Center opened in July 2014. Since then RC has hosted well over 200 freethought events. Currently the Center has twelve partner organizations.

Its mission: to support a social and intellectual community for freethinkers, contribute to society through education and community service, advance the civic understanding and acceptance of freethinkers, and uphold the separation of religion and government.

But to continue this vital work, the Reason Center relies on continued support from its members and donors. Please help support Reason Center. To set up a monthly or one-time contribution, visit ReasonCenter.org. You'll be doing good. And you'll feel good about it.



Not a member of Atheists and Other Freethinkers? Then join us!

AOF is a 501(c)(3) non-profit association, FEIN 68-0325762. General Meetings are free and open to the public. AOF also hosts civic service projects, dinners, movie outings, parties! To see what awaits you, visit the website, www.aofonline.org; or contact AOF at our 24/7 voice-mail: 916-447-3589; or write to PO Box 15182, Sacramento, CA 95851-0182. Semaphore? You can try.

AOF Acting President: Brad Clark. Vice-president: Mynga Futrell. Editor: Fran Evanisko. And all the rest of us, their minions.

"The purpose of Atheists and Other Freethinkers (AOF) is to promote the civic understanding of atheism and the acceptance of atheists in our community. Through educational programs, projects, and publications, AOF will extend secular perspectives, including the separation of religion and government and the right to think and speak freely on these perspectives."

