



✧ ✧ **Upcoming Events** ✧ ✧

➤ **Free Movie Nights!**

Friday, Jan 5 & Jan 19, 2018, 7pm – 10pm

2X a month, Reason Center (RC) and AOF host a **Free Movie** under an excellent MPLC License. The License prohibits us from telling you the movie title. But we can hint.

The January 5 movie is the two-hour gut wrenching tale of a hapless member of the Church of Scientology and his effort to escape it.

On January 19 it's a 2009 fantasy-comedy starring Ricky Gervais, about an alternate earth where nobody lies, nobody even knows how -- until a man discovers lying by accident. Significantly, this alt-earth has no religion, but he finds that the idea of an invisible man-in-the-sky is a convenient way to package his prevarications. It catches on. And things soon change, significantly.

Can't guess the movies? Just contact Reason Center (see contact info below). They'll tell you, then you can tell anyone.

Movie Night is an informal, picnic-style family evening. The venue has a huge silver screen and a dynamic sound system. Chairs are available but may be a bit uncomfortable for a two-hour sit, so it's OK to bring blankets, pillows, lawn chairs and your own snacks & beverage, non-alcoholic please. RC may provide fluffy, buttery theatre popcorn. Children are welcome if they're cool children -- and if you judge the movie appropriate for them. (Also: the taller your own chair, the further back you will sit. Really tall chairs may end up in the adjacent building.)

The movies are especially for Reason Center members, but non-members are welcome too. RC may beg a small donation to cover costs. How can you become a member? Sign up at <http://reasoncenter.com/donate/>. Membership is a measly \$4 a month, is tax deductible if you itemize, and the perks (like this one) will fall to you like stardust.

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

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

Free Movie Nights occur on a Friday evening each month. Maybe two Fridays. Suggest your own fave film for next time!



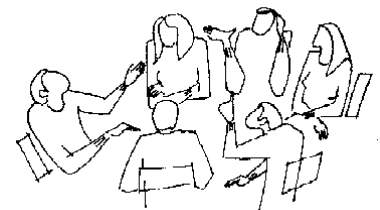
➤ **Board of Directors Meeting**

Tuesday, Jan 9, 2018, 7pm – 9pm

An AOF planning meeting for AOF Directors & officers, but open to *all* interested friends and members. These happen about every other month. You are welcome to join us, and meet the (new) Board!

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

Contact: AOF at 916-304-3796, or see <http://www.aofonline.org/contact.html>.



➤ **Freethought Dinner Social**

Saturday, Jan 13, 2018, 6pm

It's a casual dine-out for friends and members of the local community of reason, and any who wish to join us. Come join your free-thinking pals at the **Old Spaghetti Factory**, in Midtown Sacramento, for fine food, good drink and sparkling conversation. Spaghetti, yum! (Reservations may be wise, please ask the contact person, see below.) For the menu, see <http://www.osf.com/menus/>.

Location: Old Spaghetti Factory, 1910 J Street, Sacramento, ph. 916-443-2862.



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

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

➤ **Adopt-a-Highway Cleanup**

Sunday, Jan 28, 2018, 9am - 11am

In July 1995, Sacramento-area freethinkers "adopted" a two-mile stretch of Highway 99 from Elkhorn Boulevard to Elverta Road. Since then we have kept it clean of litter and debris, and received recognition for our work. It is one of our more successful civic efforts, showing that freethinkers can also serve the community.

So, join us! Enjoy a morning commune with nature, and do a good deed for the environment and local area wildlife. The refuse that we collect would otherwise ultimately be swept by the rain into tributaries and into the ocean, degrading habitat, and leading to a slow death for many sea creatures.

As usual, the stalwart activity captain will provide all safety equipment, including comfortable, natty hard-hats and gloves, stylish safety vests, collection bags, and handy trash pickers. The clean-up takes a scant two hours. Please dress for the season. It may be a good idea to bring a backpack or fanny-pack to carry 3 or 4 trash bags.

To find the site, travel north from Sacramento on I-5, past the Sleeptrain Arena. Take the "Highway 99 - Yuba City, Marysville" exit. Exit at Elkhorn Boulevard less than a mile north. Turn left, cross the overpass, and the park-&-ride lot will be on your left.

Contact: ph. 916-447-2169 (Don Knutson), or see <http://www.aofonline.org/contact.html>.

Location: Caltrans Park-&-Ride lot, W. Elkhorn Blvd, map at <https://goo.gl/maps/zw3Rwct9yR52>.

Notes: *This is a great event for older children, but please leave smalls safe at home.*



➤ **Philosopher's Table: Atheist Friendship**

Sunday, Jan 28, 2018, Noon – 1pm

Do atheist friends have special value to you?

"Friends are the bacon bits in the salad of life." So, this Philosopher's Table will explore the labyrinth of friendship, in particular, how theist friends might differ from non-theist. *Do* they differ? In your experience, do faith issues arise? Are non-theists easier to be with or talk to, or do they irk you? If & when you "came out" as a nonbeliever, did you have a rough patch, and did any friends (theist or -non) help you through it?

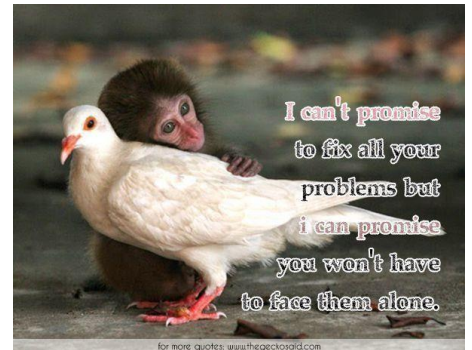
Furthermore, common wisdom says, to have a friend, be a friend. How do you show your friends you care about them?

For this discussion, we will cluster in groups of four or five people. First-timers, don't worry, you're not alone. We have newcomers at every meeting, just like every other Meetup you've ever attended. We are your friends. Please be ours.

Location: Reason Center, 1824 Tribute Rd, Suite A, Sacramento, [see map](#)

Contact: AOF at 916-304-3796, or see <http://www.aofonline.org/contact.html>.

AOF Philosophers' Tables are roundtable discussions, free to attend and open to all, believers and anti-theists, friends and non-friends, even enemies. But try not to break the furniture.



➤ **Community & Coffee!**

Sunday, Jan 28, 2018, 1pm – 3pm

Camaraderie, community, coffee: Which comes first?

Let's plan how to help Sac-area non-theists feel more like a community. For this, of course, Reason Center is pure gold. But it would also help to get to know other non-believers who live near you. Maybe meet with your secular neighbors for coffee once in a while. How could you get something like that going? What could non-theist *coffee klatsches* expect to accomplish, what should they avoid? What ground rules should you establish? Let's work out the logistics now.



But before that, we will enjoy a 10- to 15-minute presentation by a local nonprofit that helps sexual assault survivors in the first few hours after the attack. It's a tough topic, but we promise to be as positive as possible.

- Important to know:

Reason Center is the *only* venue in the region dedicated to freethought, non-theism, rationality, skepticism, non-belief (or insert your preferred appellation here), and it's open just for you (and your friends). To continue its success, please support it. Reason Center is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit, so all donations are tax-deductible to the full extent allowed by IRS regulations. Need more info? Visit www.reasoncenter.org.

Location: Reason Center, 1824 Tribute Road Suite A, Sacramento, see [map](#)

Contact: AOF at 916-304-3796, or see <http://www.aofonline.org/contact.html>.

Bring a snack or beverage to share if you can, and we'd be very grateful for crumpled soiled dollars tossed into the donation jug. Heat ain't cheap!

➤ Davis Community Meal: Feed the Hungry

Tuesday, Jan 30, 2018, 4:30pm – 7pm

In nearby, bucolic Davis city, compassionate citizens have a secular solution for the problem of hunger -- and they need our help! Join local freethinkers in an effort to feed the poor, the hungry, the indigent, the outcast. Your reward? The opportunity to meet new minds and hobnob with your freethinker friends, a likely free meal, jazzy music, and the warm hearts-glow of benevolence. Also, seriously, it's a blast!

No cooking required. The Davis Community Meals team will perform food prep and kitchen work. Our job is simply to set up chairs & tables, serve, put things away at the end, and clean a bit (with a minimum of mopping).

Extra points if you can arrive for setup, but if you can't, that is OK, any help is good help. Setup begins about 4:30 p.m., buffet food service at about 5:45. At 6:30 we clean up, leaving the hall as we found it.

For details, please see <http://daviscommunitymeals.org>. For a map to the site, see: <https://goo.gl/maps/KRGCYkuVnY92>. Carpooling may be available. For info, please contact the Service Project Coordinator.

Location: St. Martin's Episcopal Church, 640 Hawthorne Lane, Davis, CA, see [map](#)

Contact: See [Contact Page](#), or call Service Coordinator (Don, 916-447-2169)



✧ ✧ **Secular Holidays** ✧ ✧
January 2018

➤ Religious Freedom Day

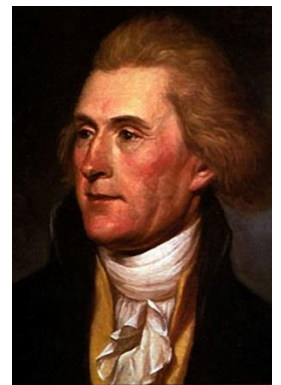
Tuesday, Jan 16, 2018

National Religious Freedom Day is in the truest sense both a religious and a secular holiday. It marks the anniversary of the passage of the Virginia Statute of Religious Freedom, the 1786 colonial statute that disestablished the Anglican Church in Virginia and set the foundation for Separation of Church and State. Thomas Jefferson marked this statute as one of his greatest achievements. Among other things it declared the following:

"that to compel a man to furnish contributions of money for the propagation of opinions which he disbelieves is sinful and tyrannical,

"that our civil rights have no dependence on our religious opinions any more than our opinions in physics or geometry,

"that no man shall be compelled to frequent or support any religious worship, place, or ministry whatsoever, nor shall be enforced, restrained, molested, or burthened in his body or goods, nor shall otherwise suffer on account of his religious opinions or belief, but that all men shall be free to profess, and by argument to maintain, their opinions in matters of Religion, and that the same shall in no wise diminish, enlarge or affect their civil capacities."



Congress first marked Religious Freedom Day in 1993. It is a day to reflect on the hard-won separation of civic and religious life, and to refresh our resolve to inform fellow citizen about liberty of conscience in matters of faith, a liberty which must include both freedom of and from religion. Because otherwise, it is no freedom at all.

➤ Thomas Paine Day

Monday, Jan 29, 2018

Thomas Paine Day, also called Freethinkers Day, promotes appreciation of freethought through the life and works of American patriot Thomas Paine. Paine (1737-1809) was a courageous freethinker whose life and work inspired great social and political advancement across world. Raised in England, Paine played a vital role in the American and French Revolutions. His books and pamphlets, including *The Age of Reason*, *The Rights of Man*, and *Common Sense*, gained a mass audience for the liberating philosophy of the Enlightenment.



Paine arrived in America in 1774 at Benjamin Franklin's request. On January 10, 1776, he published *Common Sense*, a remarkable and powerful republican pamphlet which had an immediate success. He served in the Revolutionary War under General Greene and later in official positions appointed by congress and in the Pennsylvania legislature. In his later publication, *Age of Reason*, Paine expressed that "all religions are in their nature mild and benign" when not associated with political systems. Paine was the quintessential Deist of the 18th century.

Between March 1791 and February 1792 he published numerous editions of his *Rights of Man*, in which he defended the French Revolution. The words of Thomas Paine inspired many to strive for political, economic and social advancement. He was among the first to call for an end to slavery and the establishment of human rights around the world.

In the 1990s, the *Truth Seeker* magazine began celebrating Freethinkers Day on Thomas Paine's birthday in order to educate the public on the importance of Thomas Paine in the history of freedom. It's poetic description of the day, on [this webpage](#), is worthy to repeat:

This day honors Thomas Paine and is on his birthday, January 29. This is a global holiday and is simply celebrated by giving and displaying a White Rose with Thorns. The simple beauty and purity, the fragility and yet not without the danger of drawing blood by a thorn prick, makes this an excellent icon for those Freethinkers who want to reflect on Freedom and promote the ideas of personal liberty as expressed by Paine in The Declaration of Independence,

This is a holiday that celebrates the concept of Freedom by honoring the man who declared our Independence by giving us Common Sense and The Declaration. We owe a great debt of gratitude to Thomas Paine.

So, you are welcome to celebrate with us. Just remember a White Rose with Thorns.

Also in the 1990s, the Thomas Paine Foundation began celebrating the birthday of Thomas Paine on January 29th, a Thomas Paine Day proclamation on June 8 and other Paine theme events during the year.

➤ Gorilla Suit Day

Wednesday, Jan 31, 2018

From the sublime to the ridiculous. Close on the heels of Thomas Paine day comes National Gorilla Suit Day, a pseudo-holiday invented by famed Mad Magazine cartoonist Don Martin. The effluvium of controversy continues to surround this secular celebration: to some it is a blatant conspiracy of gorilla suit manufacturers to promote their wares, others see it as one of America's more important and venerable holidays. Its origins lie in a 1963 comic strip. Don Martin aficionados later evolved the tradition that "NGSD" falls on the last day of January each year.



Whatever your opinion of NGSD, few deny the cartooning genius of Don Martin. Art historian Charles Taylor described Martin's unique style of art and wit:

His people are big-nosed schmoes with sleepy eyes, puffs of wiry hair, and what appear to be life preservers under the waistline of their clothes. Their hands make delicate little mincing gestures and their strangely thin, elongated feet take a 90-degree turn at the toes as they step forward. Whether they're average Joes or headhunters, Martin's people share the same physique: a tottering tower of obloids. Martin puts the bodies of these characters through every kind of permutation, treating them as much like gadgets as the squirting flowers and joy buzzers that populate his gags: glass eyes pop out from a pat on the back; heads are steamrolled into manhole-cover shapes. All of this accompanied by a Dadaist panoply of sound effects found nowhere else: *shtoinck! shklorp! fwoba-dap!* It's unlikely Samuel Beckett was aware of Don Martin, but had he been he might have recognized a kindred spirit.



Sacramento Dawin Day ♥♥♥

Sunday, Feb 11, 2018

Mark your calendars now. The Sacramento Darwin Day gala, Sacramento's go-to event of science and human reason, will occur Feb 11 at the Mission Oaks Community Center, 4701 Gibbons Drive, Carmichael (a site change from last year). The speaker will be Dr. Erica Bree Rosenblum. Her presentation: **Shaping the tree of life: Speciation and extinction on a changing plane.**

Currently an Associate Professor of Global Change Biology at UC Berkeley, Dr. Rosenblum received her B.A. from Brown University and her PhD from UC Berkeley. Bree is interested in how new species form and why species are being lost at such an alarming rate in our contemporary world. Her research crosses scales from genes to ecosystems, and takes her from the White Sands desert in New Mexico where new lizard species are forming, to rainforests in South America where amphibians are threatened with extinction. Bree's work has been recognized by numerous awards and has been featured in the New York Times, the Discovery Channel and numerous textbooks. Bree also loves to share her inspiration for studying life on our planet and runs regular outreach events for students of all ages.

Sacramento Darwin Day is now on the AOF website, [view it here](#). More details next month. But **prices increase on Feb 1**, so please obtain tickets now at <http://hagsa.org/darwinday/DarwinDayPayment2018.html>.



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 can be more humanistic than donating blood?

Support Reason Center

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

Its mission is 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.

To continue this work, the Reason Center relies on continued support for its members and donors. Please consider making a contribution to the Reason Center. To set up a monthly, or one-time donation, visit ReasonCenter.org.



Also, Support AOF

You can support AOF *without spending a dime*. How? When you purchase goods at Amazon.com, simply use this link: <https://smile.amazon.com/ch/68-0325762>. Bookmark it now! Prices & service will be exactly the same, but AOF will get a small kickback for whatever you purchase.

Not a member of Atheists and Other Freethinkers? Then please 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: 916-304-3796; or write to PO Box 15182, Sacramento, CA 95851-0182. Or ... candygram?

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

Subscription / Membership Form

Mail to: AOF, PO Box 15182, Sacramento CA 95851-0182 (Attn: Membership)

Name(s) _____ Phone: _____

Street _____ Apt. # _____

City _____ State _____ ZIP + 4 _____

E-mail address (please print!) _____

E-mail is required for newsletter delivery.

Questions, concerns? Call AOF, 916-304-3796.

Your Membership Level (annual, please circle):

Patron (\$50) Family (\$30) Individual (\$20) Low-income (\$10)

Basic Dues : \$ _____

Additional Donation : \$ _____

Total enclosed : \$ _____

☐ Please check here if you do NOT want your name on lists occasionally provided to groups similar to AOF.

☐ Please check here if you DO want to be an AOF Activist (e-mail address required).

AOF is a 501(c)(3) Educational Association, EIN 68-0325762. Dues & Donations are tax-deductable as permitted by law. Non-members may receive the AOF Newsletter for free on request (email only).

"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."

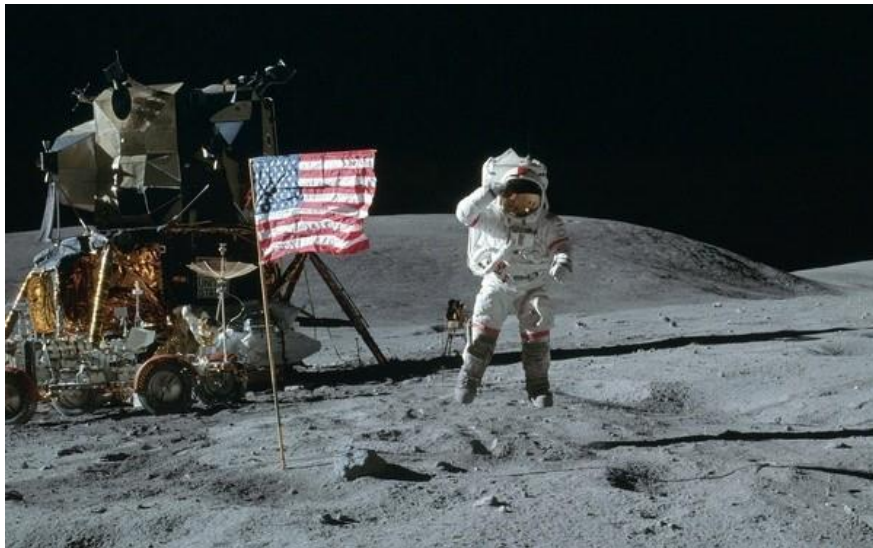


From the Quora website (<https://www.quora.com>):

Q: Can people who have faith in science name even one thing science can do which religion cannot?

One thing? No. That would be too easy. Here's a list of just a few things science has done that no religion ever could:

1. Eliminated scurvy, rickets and all other nutritional deficiencies.
2. Prevented millions from dying or suffering lifelong debilitation due to polio, smallpox, mumps, rubella, typhus, diphtheria, cholera and countless other diseases that haunted earlier generations. Oh yeah, and let's not forget leprosy, which contrary to scripture, cannot be cured by the blood of a sacrificial bird.
3. Explain and treat mental illness instead of blaming the victim.
4. Feed 4 billion people. Then five billion. Then six billion. Then seven billion.
5. Give humanity control over its own reproduction so that we will likely peak below 11 billion before dropping to a more sustainable population.
6. Turn nighttime into day.
7. The Internet.
8. *This:*



People don't need faith to trust in science, they simply observe for themselves that it's accomplished more in 350 years than mysticism had in the previous 20,000.



Thanks, xkjd.com