

♦ ♦ Upcoming AOF Events ♦ ♦

> Free Movie Nights!

Friday, October 5 & October 19, 2018, 7pm - 10pm

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

First this month is an independent 2005 documentary by Brian Flemming, noted freethinker gadfly, that questions the historicity of Jesus, examines the "Christ Myth" theory, and deconstructs other aspects of Christianity. Second is a 2004 American comedy, written and directed by Jared Hess, about an awkward 16-year-old boy who lives with his grandmother and older brother in Preston, Idaho. A runaway "sleeper" success, it has spawned numerous social memes (and t-shirts).



Can't guess? Well gosh, just contact Reason Center (see 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. Fluffy, buttery popcorn is often available (free). Children are welcome if they're cool children -- and if you judge the movie appropriate for them.

This is especially for Reason Center members, but non-members are welcome. RC *may* beg a small donation to cover costs. How can you become a member? Sign up at http://reasoncenter.com/donate/. Membership dues, a measly \$5 a month, are tax deductible if you itemize, and the perks (like this one) are cool as a vote for Pedro.

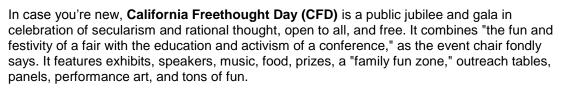
Location: Reason Center, 1824 Tribute Rd, Suite A, Sacramento. Map: https://goo.gl/iVQL8z.

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

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

➤ California Freethought Day Sunday, October 14, 10am – 5:30pm

AOF invites you to <u>California Freethought Day</u>, the **Seventeenth Annual Freethought Day Festival**, when the state-wide community of freethinkers join hands to bring you a menagerie of wonders, an arabesque of dreams, a fabulous flight of free minds, along with music, tablers, speakers, and so much more ... really, you must be there to see.





This year, projected speakers, panelists & entertainers will include: Eugenie Scott, erstwhile Executive Director of the National Center for Science Education; Kavin Senapathy, science and health writer for Forbes, Slate and other periodicals; humanist activists Seráh Blain and Evan Clark; Abby Hafer, author, scientist, educator and public speaker; Steve Hill, activist, cheerful satanist and standup comedian; Roy Speckhardt, President of the American Humanists Association; CA Reps. Jared Huffman & Jerry McNerney; local activist & gadfly Judy Saint; Uncle Sam; and more. The lineup is probably growing as you read this. This year's event theme is: Discover Reason.

So <u>sign up now</u>. But, sign up *why*? It's free, isn't it? Yes, the main event (Sunday) is free, but your advance registration (just as free) makes you eligible for delightful & toothsome prizes. Also a Supporters Reception (less free, but worth it) will occur the evening before, Saturday, with a leadership seminar for secular leaders. For info, see <u>freethoughtday.org</u>.

Location: Capitol Park, State Capitol Building North Steps. Map: https://goo.gl/maps/EtFcJBYjBzj. **Contact:** 209-610-0651, or email: Chair (at) FreethoughtDay (dot) org.

You might bring: a picnic blanket, lawn chair, sun shade, and snacks or loose change to keep vendors and area restaurants happy. Good eateries are within strolling distance of the event.

➤ Arielle Finberg on the Tribal Revival

Sunday, October 28, 1pm - 3pm

"New Hope: The Revival of Tribal Indo-European Religion"

Kids abhor a vacuum. Leave a gap in their lives and they will fill it. Here's an educated baby boomer who set out to explore religion with free choice and scant childhood indoctrination. She became clergy in the USA's fastest-growing religious movement of the late twentieth century, Wicca, aka "Neo-Paganism."

A push-back at Christianity, Wicca was introduced in 1954 by <u>Gerald Gardner</u>, retired British civil servant, and had roots in the "Ceremonial Magick" of <u>Aleister Crowley</u>. High on the heady atmosphere of the 1960's counter-culture, rebelling against the dogma and perceived suffocation of their parents' faith, young seekers seized on it, believing a return of the "old religion" could create love and freedom in a world palpably poisoned by mainstream monotheisms.



But alas, Neo-Paganism embodied its own lies and delusions. And before long, creative metaphor and joyful pretend-play became a gospel to many in these new religious groups. Often with dire consequences.

Arielle Finberg will describe her twisty journey through the very real and relevant labyrinths of monism, duotheism, polytheism, ancestor worship and nature spirits. Bring questions! If you wonder what modern witches really are, why self-styled Druids chill out at Stonehenge, and how & why modern European Nationalism adopted a religious racism drawn from wiccanism, this is a chance to ask. Because Arielle has seen it all.

Location: Reason Center, 1824 Tribute Rd, Suite A, Sacramento. Map: https://goo.gl/iVQL8z. **Contact:** See https://goo.gl/iVQL8z.

➤ Davis Community Meal – Feed the Hungry Tuesday, October 30, 4pm – 7pm

Help feed the hungry! In nearby, bucolic Davis city, compassionate citizens have a secular solution for the problem of hunger. And they need our assistance. Join local freethinkers in an ongoing effort to feed the poor, the indigent, the outcast. Your reward will be an opportunity to meet new minds and hobnob with your freethought 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. Setup begins about 4:30 p.m., food service at about 5:45. Clean up is at 6:30. For details, please see <u>Davis Community Meals</u>.

Location: St. Martin's Episcopal Church, 640 Hawthorne Lane, Davis, CA. Map: https://goo.gl/maps/J9dM1G8qAwM2. **Contact:** See Contact Page, or call Service Coordinator (Don, 916-447-2169). Carpooling may be available. For info, please contact the Service Project Coordinator.

♦ ♦ Other Upcoming Events ♦ ♦

➤ Compassionate Humanists in Roseville Sunday, October 7, 10am – 12pm

The <u>Roseville Compassionate Humanists</u> is a Meetup discussion group. Members value kindness and compassion in their lives, and wish to enhance their relationships with loved ones, their communities, and the larger world. They use material from the following books to guide discussions:

- Twelve Steps to a Compassionate Life, by Karen Armstrong
- The Moral Arc: How Science and Reason Lead Humanity Toward Truth, Justice, and Freedom, by Michael Shermer

Attendees need not have read either book. The facilitator will present topics by reading excerpts or introducing discussion points to move the conversation along.

Compassionate Humanist meetups are thought-provoking, uplifting, and educational, as well as enjoyable. Everyone who shows up wants to contribute to a more compassionate world. Join the conversation!

Location: Roseville Labou, 1730 Santa Clara Drive, Roseville, CA 95661. Map: https://goo.gl/maps/ZES1KXGYZXN2. **Contact:** Email info@compassionatehumanists.com or call 916-836-5269.

➤ More events ...

That's not all! For yet more freethought events & activities, browse the Sacramento Coalition of Reason calendar at: https://unitedcor.org/event-calendar-2/.



When you donate blood...

Do you donate blood? If so, cool! Then please use AOF BloodSource ID# 4857.

For a list of BloodSource Donation Centers, see: http://www.bloodsource.org/Locations. AOF gets no perks when members donate, but it saves lives and serves our best ideals. What can be more humanistic than donating blood?



Support Reason Center

Reason Center opened in July 2014. Since opening it has hosted countless freethought events and has acquired 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, Reason Center relies on support from members and donors. Please stand up for 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*. Huh, 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. Sweet.

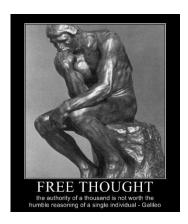




➤ Freethought Day Friday, October 12, 2018

<u>Freethought Day</u>, or "Freethought Coming-Out Day," is an *event*, but also a *day* – a day to give in-the-closet freethinkers a platform. The formal calendar holiday is October 12, but many groups plan celebrations for the closest weekend. Some recognize the week as **Freethought Week**, or the entire month of October as **Freethought Month**. In this time, newly declared freethinkers can garner strength and support from fellow "declared" freethinkers.

Why October 12? Because on the day in 1692, Colonial Massachusetts Governor William Phips wrote to the Privy Council of the British monarchs to take a stand against the legal use of "spectral evidence," that is, evidence of a non-objective nature, such as "feelings" and visions. His decision that evidence should be objective and verifiable essentially brought an end to the Salem Witch Trials, saving scores of lives. (Click here to read Phips's two letters.)



In the modern United States, discrimination, hatred and bias against freethinkers continues.

The freethought community, unlike the gay and lesbian community, lacks a powerful voice and activist population for ending such treatment. Reactions often stem from a misunderstanding of what it is to be a freethinker, or that freethought is a mindset often set in motion in childhood, like sexual preference, not something to change on a whim or with the right "religion." Others should not to try to change it with bullying, ridicule or intimidation. Freethinkers must be allowed to declare themselves openly. The intent of Freethought Day is to change this situation for the better of all freethinkers, especially the young.

Today's world sees the emergence of younger and younger freethinkers who are often alone and isolated in their communities. The <u>Secular Student Alliance</u> and the <u>Campus Freethought Alliance</u> attempt through their projects to give voice to college and university freethinkers in the US and across the globe, while programs such as <u>Camp Quest</u>, the country's first secular humanist summer camp, and the <u>SSA's High School Program</u> provide young freethinkers with a place to gain a sense of community and understand that there is a proud and illustrious history to their philosophy. However, these programs are few, and without a united voice and a united commitment to change this situation, they may not be enough.

Every freethinker should feel comfortable with his or her ideals, and part of that is a connection to like-minded individuals. Freethought Day gives our friends a chance to understand who we freethinkers are, what we believe, that freethought exists in every community, and that they should not view it with fear, but with respect as a compassionate way to live life.



Halloween, a Quasi-Secular Holliday – by Fran Evanisko

Arielle Finberg, a former Pagan Priestess, is speaking at the Reason Center at the end of October. I sent her an email message letting her know I'm happy that she accepted the invitation to speak and that it appears fitting that the date is so close to Halloween. She responded that she accepted this date because of Halloween and that it is a major holy day for Modern Neo-Pagans, and that a discussion of Halloween will be part of her talk.

I looked into the origin of Halloween (All Hallows' Eve) the evening before All Saints Day, November 1. On that day in Brittan, Christians would come together dressed in costumes representing saints and devils to acting out the struggle between good and evil.

As with many other Christian holidays such as Christmas and Easter, All Hallows' Eve falls on or near the same day as an ancient Pagan celebration, in this case the ancient Celtic festival of Samhain. This was the new year celebration for the ancient Celts, marking the end of the harvest season according to the Celtic Lunar calendar.

Typically, Christians deny that their holidays were scheduled to co-opt more ancient Pagan celebrations for their own purposes, but this happens far too often to be merely coincidental.

In the case of All Saints Day, it was initially celebrated on May 13 the Roman Feast of the Lemures, in which malevolent spirits were honored. Pope Gregory III was uncomfortable with this association and so move the date to November 1, which happened to be concurrent with the Celtic Pagan festival Samhain, I guess coincidentally, but brought along ceremonies much like those of the Roman Feast of the Lemures.



Not yet an AOF member? Please join us!

Atheists and Other Freethinkers 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 and parties! See what awaits you: visit www.aofonline.org.

AOF President & Editor: Fantastic Fran Evanisko Vice-president: Marvelous Mynga Futrell Secretary: Capable Christine Tweet Treasurer & Registrar: Kinetic Ken Nahigian Webmistress: Palpable Pat Kelley

Directors at large:
Dave Flanders
Roger Zabkie
Pamella Rivers
Linda Ostrofsky (Jetta)
... And the rest of the motley team.

How to Contact AOF:

- Call 916-304-3796 (voicemail)
- Or write to PO Box 15182, Sacramento, CA 95851-0182
 Or visit http://www.aofonline.org/contact to e-message us

How to Join AOF:

Visit http://www.aofonline.org/join, or see application below.

Where to find AOF's Facebook page:

https://www.facebook.com/pages/Atheists-and-Other-Freethinkers/533365556831322

AOF Mission Statement:

"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."

What is a Freethinker? One striving to form opinions of life, religion, politics and philosophy on the grounds of reason and experience, rather than tradition, authority or custom. He or she need not be an atheist, though in a religious society most atheists do tend to be freethinkers.

AOF supports a benign separation of Church and State as a means to protect the liberty and free intellectual commerce of citizens. "... to keep forever from these shores the ceaseless strife that has soaked the soil of Europe in blood for centuries" (James Madison, 1803).

Our vision is to serve as a venue where freethinkers and unchurched citizens can socialize, dialog, develop friendships and enjoy mutual company. AOF does not discriminate on such grounds as race, sexual orientation, age, gender, class, physical debility or religion. We welcome members and leaders of all political persuasion and preferences. Any who will treat other members with respect and dignity may join us.

Other Groups of Interest

Reason Center, a freethought venue and safehouse for all. 1824 Tribute Rd, Suite A, Sacramento; ph. 916-426-6416 Email reasoncenter@gmail.com; https://reasoncenter.org/, https://www.facebook.com/reasoncenter/

United Coalition of Reason Sacramento (SacCoR)

A group of all the groups.

Ph. 916-572-7020 or email sacramentocor@gmail.com https://unitedcor.org/coalition-of-reason/sacramento-area/

Humanist Association of the Greater Sacramento Area Meets 3rd Sunday most months at Reason Center. POB 216223, Sacramento, 95821-8223; ph. 916-514-9974 http://hagsa.org/; email president@hagsa.org/

Sunday Assembly Sacramento

Church alternative, each 2nd Sunday at Reason Center. http://sacramento.sundayassembly.com/, https://www.facebook.com/SundayAssemblySacramento or https://www.meetup.com/Sunday-Assembly-Sacramento/ Email david@LodiUnited.org

Compassionate Humanists of Roseville

Meets 1st Sunday each month in Roseville.
PO Box 769, Newcastle, 95658; ph. 916-836-5269
https://compassionatehumanists.com/discussion-groups/roseville/ or https://www.meetup.com/Compassionatehumanists/, email info@compassionatehumanists.com

Think Atheist of Sacramento

A social network and discussion group. http://www.thinkatheist.com/group/sacramentocalifatheists

Americans United Sacramento (AU-Sac)

Political advocacy on Church/State issues.
P.O Box 163418, Sacramento CA 95816; ph 916-684-4730 http://www.au-sac.org/, email president@au-sac.org

Central Valley Alliance of Atheists and Skeptics (CVAAS) 438 E. Shaw Ave #221, Fresno, 93710, ph. 559-335-3228 http://www.cvaas.org/ or https://www.meetup.com/Fresnocvaas/events/; email info@cvaas.org

Sacto Atheist-Agnostic Gatherings & Events (SAAGE) †

Online social group (Yahoo ID required). https://groups.yahoo.com/neo/groups/SAAGE/info or https://groups.yahoo.com/neo/groups/SEINE/info

First Atheist Church of True Science (FACTS)

PO Box 233345, Sacramento, 95823; ph. 707-739-6837 http://www.factschurch.com/; email factschurch@gmail.com

Sacramento Area Skeptics (SAS)

Meets monthly for critical thinking, science advocacy, beer! https://www.meetup.com/sacskeptics/ or https://www.facebook.com/groups/sacskeptics/ Email sacskeptics@gmail.com or sbaker81@comcast.net

Greater Sacramento FFRF Chapter

Church/State watchdog, secular advocacy http://sac.ffrf.org/; email sacffrf@gmail.com

Sacramento Freethinkers, Atheists and Nonbelievers

https://www.meetup.com/SacFAN/ or https://www.facebook.com/groups/SacFAN/

Sacramento Brights Action Meetup

https://www.meetup.com/Brights-Action-Sacramento/ Email the-brights@the-brights.net

Black Humanists and Non-Believers of Sacramento

Multiple meetings each month, breakfast parties, outreach! https://www.facebook.com/blackhumanistsofsacramento or https://www.meetup.com/bhnb-sacramento/ Email BlackHumanistsNonBelievers@gmail.com

Sacramento Area Multi-Belief Discussion Meetup

Meets monthly each 2nd Saturday in Roseville. https://www.meetup.com/Sacramento-Area-Multi-Belief-Discussion-Meetup/members/

Stockton Area Atheists and Freethinkers

Ph. 209-610-0651 or email david@LodiUnited.org http://www.stocktonaaf.org/ or https://www.meetup.com/StocktonAtheists/

UC Davis Agnostic & Atheists Student Assoc (AgASA)

Secular student association. 457 MU Bldg, One Shields Avenue, Davis, CA 95616

https://www.facebook.com/groups/DavisAgASA/
Email davis@secularstudents.org, agasadavis@gmail.com
or agasa-contact@ucdavis.edu

CSUS Secular Student Alliance

Secular student association.

https://www.facebook.com/SacStateSSA/ or https://sacstatessa.wordpress.com/ Email csus@secularstudents.org

Sacramento City College Freethinkers

Secular student association, meets each Tuesday. https://www.facebook.com/SSAatSCC/ Email SacCityFreethinkers@gmail.com or secularstudentssaccity@gmail.com

Sierra College Freethinkers

5100 Sierra College Blvd, Rocklin, CA 95677 Email freethinkersofsierra@gmail.com, sierra@secularstudents.org or rquinn@sierracollege.edu

Yuba Community College Freethinkers †

2088 N Beale Rd, Marysville, CA 95901 https://www.facebook.com/ssayc/
Email yccd@secularstudents.org or tsmith@yccd.edu

Email you escondistadents.org or territory your.or

Waldorf School Secular Students

3750 Bannister Rd, Fair Oaks, CA 95628 Email sacwaldorf@secularstudents.org

Laguna Creek High School Secular Students †

9050 Vicino Drive, Elk Grove, CA 95758 Email lagunacreek.hs@secularstudents.org

† Possibly in abeyance





Christina Johansdotter

In 1740, Christina Johansdotter killed a child. Why? To die. It was the theology of the day. She courted a death sentence to get to heaven.

The case came before the Stockholm court. Christina had killed a friend's infant with an axe. She admitted it freely, and explained.

An unemployed lodger, Christina was depressed and socially isolated. When her fiancé died, she wanted to die too. She considered suicide, but the church said all suicides go to hell. Puzzling over this, she witnessed the execution of a woman for infanticide. Suddenly the solution was crystal clarity. The murder of an adult did not always lead to a death sentence; child murder did. Moreover, confession and repentance would absolve even murderers. Christina resolved to kill a child, confess, repent, and be executed. She and her fiancé would then be together in heaven.

Christina borrowed a friend's infant, purportedly to show to a visitor, then beheaded it.

It was not an uncommon suicide method in the day. As with Christina, motives were always religious. Children were ideal victims due to their disadvantage in size and strength, and because they were believed to be innocent and would go to heaven too. In 18th century Sweden, suicide was the second most common motive for child murder (after unmarried women suffocating their secret illegitimate babies).

Suicide by murder was a peculiar historical phenomenon, which evolved its own customs and culture. At the end of the 17th century, a Stockholm execution was a solemn festivity; the condemned bought special costumes, decorated with embroidery and ribbons, and rented an entourage to the place of execution.

Authorities frowned. Executions must instill fear, a purpose destroyed by theatrical displays, which, they thought, created sympathy (especially for female condemned). Eventually the government issued a new law to abolish the execution-culture and restore the intended deterrence of executions. Murderers with the suspected motive of suicide were to stand on the scaffold for two days with the crime stated on a board, be whipped, and then taken to their execution blindfolded. The new law took effect in 1754, fourteen years after Christina's execution.

Little changed. Folk-faith also taught that the greater torments one suffered, the more guaranteed a place in heaven.

Finally in 1767 the death penalty was abolished. Convicted suicide-murderers were instead whipped yearly and given the toughest, most degrading work tasks. This finally put an end to the suicide murders. And thus did Denmark pioneered the abolition of the death penalty in Europe.

Sources

- Jan Guillou: Häxornas försvarare [Defender of the Witches] Piratförlaget, ISBN 916420037-X, 2002 (Swedish).
- Jeffrey Rodgers Watts. From Sin to Insanity: Suicide in Early Modern Europe, Cornell Press, 2004.
- Sveriges Radio (Swedish Radio) Släktband. "Förgiftat nattvardsvin och suicidalmord". November 8, 2010.
- A Lutheran Plague Murdering to Die in the Eighteenth Century, Tyge Krogh, Brill, 2012, ISBN 978-9004221154.

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Patron (\$50) Family (\$30) Individual (\$20) Low-income (\$10) Basic Dues : \$ Additional Donation : \$ Total enclosed : \$		☐ Please check here if you DO want to be an AOF Activist (e-mail address required).
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