

✧ ✧ **Upcoming AOF Events** ✧ ✧

➤ **Free Movie Nights!**

**Friday, February 15 & March 1, 2019, 7pm – 10pm**

Twice a month, [Reason Center](#) (RC) and AOF join hands to host a **Free Movie Night** under an excellent [MPLC License](#). Sorry, we can't name the movies, but we can hint.

On **February 15<sup>th</sup>** it is a 1992 comedy/drama with Steve Martin as a fake revivalist and faith healer stranded in a small town, finding he can't quite fool all the people all the time. On **March 1<sup>st</sup>**, a documentary about how global warming has imperilled the livelihood of many who depend on seasonal winters, and an epic struggle to reverse the effect of climate change. Now, if you can't guess the movies, don't worry: 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. The chairs may be a bit uncomfy 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.

This is 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, a measly \$5 a month, is tax deductible if you itemize. And the perks (like this one) will make you *leap* (heh, another hint).

**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>.

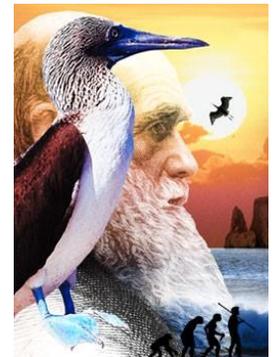
➤ **Darwin Day Birthday Gala ♥ ♥**

**Sunday, February 10, 2019, 2pm – 5pm**

**"A Marine Biologist in Today's World"**

For the 21st fabulous year, it's the **Darwin Day Birthday Gala**, Sacramento's coolest, most singular, most go-to event of science and human reason, brought to you by area science advocates, civic groups and local nerds on too much coffee. This one marks Charles Darwin's **209<sup>th</sup>** birthday. It will occur at the traditional site, the cavernous yet cozy John Smith Hall of the [La Sierra Community Center](#), in Carmichael.

[Darwin Day](#) is a science-rush like no other, an annual celebration of scientific inquiry honoring of the life and work of the great Charles Darwin (b. 12 February 1809), sponsored worldwide by community and educational groups. Not exactly an AOF event, but AOF helped establish it as a local celebration, and continues to support it and commend it to all our friends in the Sacramento community of reason. Because, science! And what is science but reason in the trenches?



Doors will open at 2 o'clock *post meridiem*, the main program to begin at 2:30. Arrive early, tour the display tables, visit the vendors, grab some science swag, then find a cozy seat. Relax and enjoy the opening entertainment, to include eclectic music by the silver-voiced [Marie Bain](#). Then get ready for the feature: [Richard K. Grosberg, PhD](#), Professor of Evolution and Ecology at UC Davis. After his presentation, more entertainment will round the event, plus snacks and of course yummy Darwin Birthday Cake. (It *is* a birthday party, after all!)

Admission just \$10 thru Feb 9, \$15 at the door, or \$5 with a Student ID. For details and to get a ticket, visit the main event website, <http://sacdarwinday.info/>.

**Contact:** ph. 916-514-9974 (Bill), or email "patdesmond8 (at) gmail (dot) com" (Pat).

**Location:** La Sierra Community Center, 5325 Engle Road, Carmichael. Map: <https://goo.gl/maps/5cVyQpdsAht>.

➤ **Freethought Dinner Social**

**Sunday, February 17, 2019, 5pm – 7pm**

A casual dine-out for friends and members of the local community of reason, in fact for any who wish to participate. This time join your free-thinking pals at the **Ernesto's Mexican Food** in Midtown Sacramento for fine food, good drink and

sparkling conversation. (But please tell the contact person, see below, because she must make reservations!) For the menu, see <https://www.ernestomexicanfood.com/menu/>.

**Location:** Ernesto's Mexican Food, 1901 16th St, Sac., ph. 916-441-5850. Map: <https://goo.gl/maps/CHj1X7rpxcq>.

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

*Freethought Dinner Socials occur when they occur at various Sac-area 'raunts. Family friendly, all welcome. (Don't be shy, suggest your own favourite eatery for next time!)*

### ➤ **David Fitzgerald: "Case Dismissed"**

**Sunday, February 24, 2019, 2pm – 4pm**

**Case Dismissed: "The Case for Christ"**

Lee Strobel's book, [The Case for Christ](#), has been getting traction, and even inspired a 2017 documentary. "Strobel probes with bulldog-like tenacity the evidence for the truth of biblical Christianity," said one noted reviewer (Bruce Metzger, Professor of the New Testament, Princeton Theological Seminary). But *are* the arguments airtight? You may be a Strobel fan, or you may seek to shoot down his conclusion. Either way, you won't want to miss this talk!

Our guest is [David Fitzgerald](#), author, public speaker and historian, called "one of the busiest activists in the Bay Area." He is the author of [Nailed](#), [Jesus: Mything in Action](#) and [The Complete Heretic's Guide to Western Religion](#). He also serves on the boards of the San Francisco Atheists and the San Francisco branch of the [Center for Inquiry](#), is the director & founder of the first [Atheist Film Festival](#), and chairs "Evolutionpalooza," San Francisco's oldest [Darwin Day](#) celebration. David previously spoke to AOF in [June 2011](#), and to the Sac City College Secular Students in March 2015.

As an author and historical researcher, David has actively delved into the Historical Jesus question for over eighteen years. He has a degree in history and was an associate member of CSER (the former Committee for the Scientific Examination of Religion). He lectures around the world at universities, churches, and national secular events, and speaks to religious groups. David lives in San Francisco with his wife, writer, producer, and movie actor Dana Fredsti. They have a new science-fiction trilogy, "Time Shards," from Titan books.

Agree, disagree, or be furious: you owe it to yourself to hear this response to Lee Strobel. Yet another fine event of the AOF Speaker Series.

**Contact:** See <http://www.aofonline.org/contact.html>.

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

*Doors open at 1pm. Presentation begins at 2pm.*



## ✧ ✧ **Other Upcoming Events (non-AOF)** ✧ ✧

### ➤ **Sunday Morning Coffee and Community**

**Sundays, Feb 3 and Feb 17, 2019, 9am – 11am**

Come warm up with hot coffee, donuts and conversation with your fellow freethinkers. Check out the library, the latest FFRF newspaper, and yummy donuts from Marie's. "C&C" is open to all, but especially Reason Center members. (Membership is just \$5 a month, see <http://www.reasoncenter.org/p/donate.html>). We look forward to seeing you there.

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

**Contact:** Reason Center, 916-426-6416, or email [reasoncenter@gmail.com](mailto:reasoncenter@gmail.com).

*Feb 3rd event hosted by Gary A and Allen. Feb 17th event hosted by Mynga and Nancy S.*



### ➤ **Compassionate Humanists**

**Sunday, Feb 3, 2019, 10am – 12pm**

It's a group for those that value kindness and compassion in their lives, those interested in enhancing 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

You need not have read either; the facilitator will present topics by reading excerpts or introducing points to nudge the conversation along. Compassionate Humanist meetups are thought-provoking, uplifting and fun. Join them!

**Location:** Roseville Labou, 1730 Santa Clara Drive, Roseville. Map: <https://goo.gl/maps/UC4975CE19P2>.

**Contact:** Ph. 916-836-5269, or email [info@compassionatehumanists.com](mailto:info@compassionatehumanists.com).

### ➤ **Yet more events ...**

Looking for more? Wow. For other secular & freethought events in the area, see the Sacramento Coalition of Reason general events calendar at <https://unitedcor.org/event-calendar-2/>. It's packed.



## Reason Center needs you!

Reason Center is *your* safehouse of freethought. Since July 2014 it has hosted hundreds of events and has garnered twelve partner organizations. Its mission: to support an intellectual and social community for freethinkers, contribute to society via education and community service, advance the civic understanding and acceptance of freethinkers, and uphold a separation of religion and state.

But to continue, Reason Center needs support from members and donors. Please stand up for Reason Center; visit [ReasonCenter.org](http://ReasonCenter.org) to join or donate. You'll feel good about it.



## When you donate blood...

Blood donors save lives! See the Donation Center list at: <http://www.bloodsource.org/Locations>. (BTW, BloodSource has changed its name to Vitalant.) Then if you donate, please use AOF ID# 4857. AOF gets no perks for it, but it saves lives and shows we serve the public good. What's more humanistic than donating blood?

## Also, Support AOF!

You can support AOF without spending a dime. When you shop at Amazon.com, simply use this link: <https://smile.amazon.com/ch/68-0325762>. Prices & service will be the same, but AOF will receive a small kickback for whatever you purchase. Bookmark it; remember it; use it.



## ✧ ✧ Secular Holiday ✧ ✧

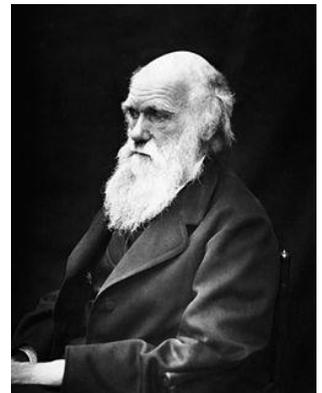
### ➤ Darwin Day

**Tuesday, February 12, 2019**

[Darwin Day](#) celebrates the life and work of the great Charles Darwin. It is a secular holiday widely celebrated within the global community, with participation from all sectors of society. Even mainline churches have joined in, celebrating the day as [Evolution Sunday](#) or [Evolution Weekend](#) (see the [Clergy Letter Project](#) for details).

Under any of these names, Darwin Day celebrates the wonder and beauty of both science and humanity, and recognizes and celebrates the achievements of a man who cast a bright, explanatory light on reality, our self-knowledge, and on the world of which we are part.

Charles Darwin contributed to our understanding at the deepest level, forever changed how we see ourselves within this vast, impersonal universe, and brought us a paradigm shift of seismic proportions. He symbolizes the brave, human enterprise of science in confronting the mystery of existence. His life and work exemplify the spirit of wonder, curiosity and adventure along with the excitement that the quest for knowledge and understanding can provide.



Darwin Day, Evolution Sunday and Evolution Weekend encourage us to come together to champion science and humanity throughout our global community. They offer an opportunity to celebrate the astonishing engagement of our common intelligence with the wonder and excitement of life in the universe. If you agree, click to the National Darwin Day site (<https://darwinday.org/>) and sign the petition calling for national recognition of this day.



## Why So Slow?

by Richard Dawkins (from <https://www.edge.org/response-detail/12018>)

The popular question "Has there been enough time for evolution to take place?" can now confidently be answered in the affirmative. It should never have been put in the first place since, self-evidently, we are here. But what is more interesting is that the real question that faces us is almost the exact opposite. Why is evolution so slow, given that natural selection is so powerful? Far from there being too little time for evolution to play with, there seems to be too much!

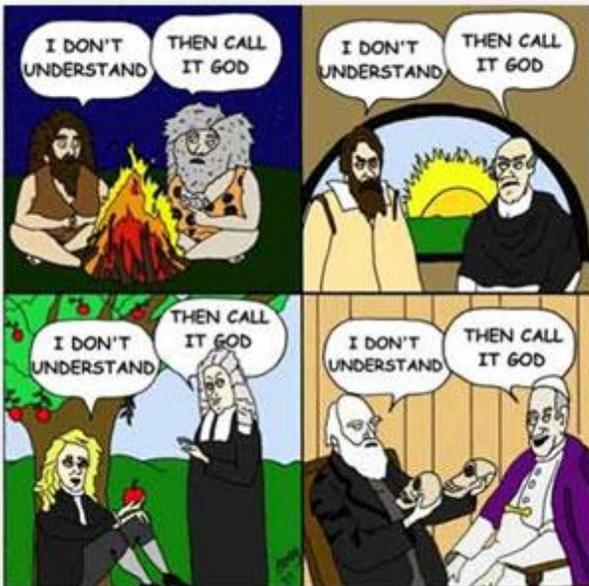
Ledyard Stebbins did a theoretical calculation about an extremely weak selection pressure, acting on a population of mouse-sized animals to favor the largest individuals. His hypothetical selection pressure was so weak as to be below the threshold of detectability in field sampling studies. Yet the calculated time to evolve elephant-sized descendants from mouse-sized ancestors was only a few tens of thousands of generations: too short to be detected under most circumstances in the fossil record. To exaggerate somewhat, evolution could be yoyo-ing from mouse to elephant, and back again, so fast that the changes could seem instantaneous in the fossil record.

Worse, Stebbins's calculation assumed an exceedingly weak selection pressure. The real selection pressures measured in the field by Ford and his colleagues on lepidoptera and snails, by Endler and his colleagues on guppies, and by the Grants and their colleagues on the Galapagos finches, are orders of magnitude stronger. If we fed into the Stebbins calculation a selection pressure as strong as the Grants have measured in the field, it is positively worrying to contemplate how fast evolution could go. The same conclusion is indirectly suggested by domestic breeding. We have gone from wolf to Yorkshire terrier in a few centuries, and could presumably go back to something like a wolf in as short a time.

It is indeed the case that evolution on the Galapagos archipelago has been pretty fast, though still nothing like as fast as the measured selection pressures might project. The islands have been in existence for five million years at the outside, and the whole of their famous endemic fauna has evolved during that time. But even the Galapagos islands are old compared to Lake Victoria. In the less than one million years of the lake's brief lifetime, more than 170 species of the genus *Haplochromis* alone have evolved.

Yet the Coelacanth *Latimeria*, and the three genera of lungfish, have scarcely changed in hundreds of millions of years. Surviving *Lingula* ('lamp shells') are classified in the same genus as their ancestors of 400 million years ago, and could conceivably breed with them if introduced through a time machine. The question that still faces us is this. How can evolution be both so fast and so leadenly slow? How can there be so much variance in rates of evolution? Is stasis just due to stabilizing selection and lack of directional selection? Or is there something remarkably special going on in the (non)evolution of living fossils? As William Blake might have written to a coelacanth: Did he who made the haplochromids make thee?

RICHARD DAWKINS is an evolutionary biologist and the Charles Simonyi Professor For The Understanding Of Science at Oxford University; Fellow of New College; author of *The Selfish Gene*, *The Extended Phenotype*, *The Blind Watchmaker*, *River out of Eden* (ScienceMasters Series), *Climbing Mount Improbable*, and *Unweaving the Rainbow*.



From <https://www.richarddawkins.net/>



## Not yet an AOF member? Please join us!

**Atheists and Other Freethinkers** is a 501(c)(3) non-profit association, FEIN 68-0325762, incorporated in 1993. Meetings are free and open to the public. AOF also hosts civic service projects, dinners, movies and parties! See what awaits you at [www.aofonline.org](http://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, Pamela Rivers,  
Linda Ostrofsky (Jetta), Kaeleigh Pontif

### 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 come to a meeting. We have forms.

### 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 the best means to protect the liberty and 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: to be a venue where freethinkers and unchurched citizens can socialize, dialog, develop friendships and enjoy shared company. AOF does not discriminate on such grounds as race, sexual orientation, age, gender, class, physical debility or (\*cough\*) religion. We welcome the fair-minded of all political persuasions and preferences. Be respectful, and you may join.

Donations to AOF are tax deductible, and the newsletter is free by email. Please share with sympathetic friends.

Letters, submissions? We love them! See:

<http://www.aofonline.org/read/submission-guide.html>

## 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](mailto: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](mailto:sacramentocor@gmail.com)  
<https://unitedcor.org/coalition-of-reason/sacramento-area/>

### Humanist Association of the Greater Sacramento Area

Meets 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday most months at Reason Center.  
POB 216223, Sacramento, 95821-8223; ph. 916-514-9974  
<http://hagsa.org/>; email [president@hagsa.org](mailto:president@hagsa.org)

### Sunday Assembly Sacramento

Church alternative, each 2<sup>nd</sup> 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](mailto:david@LodiUnited.org)

### Compassionate Humanists

Meets 1<sup>st</sup> 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/Compassionate-Humanists/>; email [info@compassionatehumanists.com](mailto:info@compassionatehumanists.com)

### Think Atheist of Sacramento

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

### Americans United chapter in Sacramento (AU-Sac)

Church/State Separation and issue advocacy.  
P.O Box 163418, Sacramento CA 95816; ph 916-684-4730  
<http://www.au-sac.org/>; email [president@au-sac.org](mailto: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/Fresno-cvaas/events/>; email [info@cvaas.org](mailto: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](mailto: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](mailto:sacskeptics@gmail.com) or [sbaker81@comcast.net](mailto:sbaker81@comcast.net)

### Greater Sacramento FFRF Chapter

Church/State watchdog, secular advocacy.  
<http://sac.ffrf.org/>; email [sacffrf@gmail.com](mailto: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](mailto: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](mailto:BlackHumanistsNonBelievers@gmail.com)

### Sacramento Area Multi-Belief Discussion Meetup

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

### Stockton Area Atheists and Freethinkers (SAAF)

Ph. 209-610-0651 or email [david@LodiUnited.org](mailto:david@LodiUnited.org)  
<http://www.stocktonaaf.org/> or  
<https://www.meetup.com/StocktonAtheists/>

### UC Davis Agnostic & Atheist 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](mailto:davis@secularstudents.org) or [agasadavis@gmail.com](mailto:agasadavis@gmail.com)

### CSUS Secular Student Alliance

Secular student association.  
<https://www.facebook.com/SacStateSSA/> or  
<https://sacstatessa.wordpress.com/>  
Email [csus@secularstudents.org](mailto:csus@secularstudents.org)

### Sacramento City College Freethinkers

Secular student association, meets each Tuesday.  
<https://www.facebook.com/SSAatSCC/>  
Email [SacCityFreethinkers@gmail.com](mailto:SacCityFreethinkers@gmail.com) or  
[secularstudentssaccity@gmail.com](mailto:secularstudentssaccity@gmail.com)

### Sierra College Secular Student Alliance

5100 Sierra College Blvd, Rocklin, CA 95677  
Email [freethinkersofsierra@gmail.com](mailto:freethinkersofsierra@gmail.com) or  
[sierra@secularstudents.org](mailto:sierra@secularstudents.org)

### Yuba Community College Freethinkers †

2088 N Beale Rd, Marysville, CA 95901  
<https://www.facebook.com/ssayc/>  
Email [yccd@secularstudents.org](mailto:yccd@secularstudents.org) or [tsmith@yccd.edu](mailto:tsmith@yccd.edu)

### Waldorf School Secular Students

3750 Bannister Rd, Fair Oaks, CA 95628  
Email [sacwaldorf@secularstudents.org](mailto:sacwaldorf@secularstudents.org)

### Laguna Creek High School Secular Students †

9050 Vicino Drive, Elk Grove, CA 95758  
Email [lagunacreek.hs@secularstudents.org](mailto:lagunacreek.hs@secularstudents.org)

† Possibly in abeyance. If you have new info, let us know please!

Far from being marginalized, as is presently the case, nineteenth-century freethought was a social movement at the core of our national life.

~ Author: Fred Whitehead