



AOF News & Views – Newsletter for August 2019

✧ ✧ Upcoming AOF Events ✧ ✧

➤ Free Movie Nights!

Fridays, Aug 2 & Aug 16, 2019, 7pm – 10pm

You know that [Reason Center](#) (RC) and AOF join hands 2X a month to host a **Free Movie Night** under an excellent [MPLC License](#). We can't tell the movie titles. But we can hint.

The first, the noted sequel to last month's movie, is about a rookie "Replicant hunter" for the Los Angeles Police in year 2049, who unearths a long-buried secret that has could plunge society into chaos. The second is a 1991 supernatural comedy concerning a newly dead man challenged to defend his somewhat ill-lived life on earth, with complications; it stars Albert Brooks and Meryl Streep.



If you can't guess, no worry. Just contact Reason Center (see below). They'll tell you, then you can tell anyone.

Movie Night is informal, picnic-style and family friendly. The venue has a huge silver screen and a dynamic sound system. The chairs 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 often provides fluffy, buttery theatre popcorn. Children are welcome if they're cool -- and if you judge the movie appropriate (please be wise).

It 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 is a measly \$5 a month, is tax deductible if you itemize, and the perks (like this one) are almost *supernatural*.

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>.

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

➤ Freethought Dinner Social

Saturday, Aug 10, 2019, 6pm – 8pm

The Freethought Dinner Social is a casual dine-out for friends and members of the local community of reason, and any who wish to join us. This time join the hungry freethinkers at the Queen Sheba restaurant for fine food, good drink and sparkling conversation. But *please tell* the beleaguered contact person, see below, because she must make reservations! For the lovely menu, see: <https://bit.ly/2GJHSXw>. Yum.

Note from the activity host: 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.)

Location: Queen Sheba restaurant, 1704 Broadway, Sac., ph 916-446-1223, map: click [here](#).

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

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

☞ Note, AOF currently plans *no General Membership Meeting* until October. If this seems a long wait, perhaps you can help! Contact AOF or the Program Chair (see <http://www.aofonline.org/contact.html>) with your speaker or meeting ideas.

✧ ✧ Other Upcoming Events ✧ ✧

➤ Compassionate Humanists

Sunday, August 4, 2019 10am – 11:30am

This humanist book club is for anyone who wishes to explore freethought as well as compassion. For the next several months, the "CH" will read and discuss *Doubt* by Jennifer Michael Hecht. This book delves into the humans in history who shaped our world through doubt and reasoning.



The August 2019 meetup will discuss Chapter 5. See you there!

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

Contact: Ph. 916-836-5269, or email info@compassionatehumanists.com.

➤ Judy's Outrageous Interviews, Featuring the Author of "Expose Yourself"

Saturday, Aug 24, 2019, 6:30pm – 8:30pm

How To Take Risks, Question Everything and Find Yourself!

The Greater Sacramento Chapter of the Freedom From Religion Foundation presents "Judy's Outrageous Interviews" featuring Erin Louis, author of a new self-help book, *Expose Yourself: How to Take Risks, Question Everything and Find Yourself - Humor and Insights From My Life As a Stripper*.

Erin Louis promotes critical thinking and self-confidence through humor, challenging insights, and her own entertaining stories.

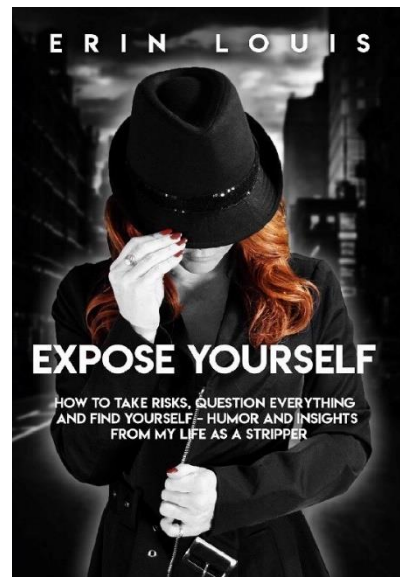
A cross between *Fifty Shades of Grey* and *The God Delusion*, Ms. Louis titillates as she enlightens, challenges, and shows readers how to think for themselves, shake off old norms that are holding us back, and find the freedom to be ourselves, discover true friendships and find happiness. (The evening can be considered PG-13.)

She'll be there in person to speak, read selections from her book, offer the audience a Q&A session, and sign her book of course! This is Erin's official Book Launch. RSVP now (via the Meetup link) to reserve your spot for this fun, enlightening evening with this confident, intelligent and brazen atheist. High attendance is expected.

Open to the public! Everyone welcome! Bring friends! Maybe don't bring the kids!

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

Meetup link for details: <https://www.meetup.com/SacFAN/events/263370174/>.



➤ More Sacramento Area Events

Really, this is just a sample. Much else is cooking within the Sacramento Coalition of Reason. We can't list it all! So if you wish to learn about other freethought events in August, check out the Sacramento Coalition of Reason general calendar at <https://unitedcor.org/event-calendar-2/>. You'll be busy as a very distracted bee.

When you donate blood...

Do you donate blood at Vitalant, formerly called BloodSource? We hope so! Then please use AOF BloodSource ID# **4857**.

See the list of Donation Centers at <https://www.vitalant.org/Our-Organization/Locations.aspx>. Blood donations save lives, serve our ideals, and show that freethinkers can also serve the community.

Support Reason Center

Reason Center opened in July 2014. Since opening it has hosted countless freethought events and has accrued 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.

Good work. To continue it, "RC" 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*. 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 the same, but AOF will get a small kickback for whatever you purchase. Sweet.

❖ ❖ Secular Holidays ❖ ❖

➤ World Friendship Day

Sunday, Aug 4, 2019

[World Friendship Day](#) (aka International Friendship Day) is the first Sunday of August, which is August 4 this year.

Humans are social creatures. We recognize the value of friendship, the invisible thread connecting our hearts. In 1935 the US Congress proclaimed World Friendship Day as a time to celebrate this humanist sentiment.

Since then other nations across the world have adopted the noble idea of Friendship Day, honoring it on the first Sunday of August every year, making it a true international celebration.

How can you acknowledge Friendship Day? Call on your friends, invite them for food, embrace them, exchange cards and flowers, gift them with a [friendship band or bracelet](#), or mark the day with programs celebrating human camaraderie.

Note, some groups and nations celebrate Friendship at other times of the year, with different customs and different emphasis. For instance:

- National Friendship Day is the first Sunday in August
- Women's Friendship Day, the *third* Sunday in August
- International Friendship Month is February
- Old Friends / New Friends Week is the third week of May



Amid the diversity, what's remarkably constant is idea of the celebration of connection. Everywhere, people express love for their friends and cherish their presence in life. For more information, visit http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Friendship_day.

➤ Ingersoll Day

Sunday, Aug 11, 2019

Ingersoll Day marks the birthday of [Robert Green Ingersoll](#), honoring the life and work of one of the most noted freethinkers in US history. Ingersoll was also the most successful orator in nineteenth century America, heard by more Americans than any human before the advent of motion pictures and radio. A leading political figure, he campaigned against slavery and for the rights of women and minorities. They called him the "Great Agnostic." He attracted huge crowds to lectures that criticized religion and promoted freethought. Walt Whitman and Mark Twain greatly admired him.

Celebrate Ingersoll Day with a visit to [the Robert Green Ingersoll Birthplace Museum](#), or by reading excerpts from [the Complete Works of Ingersoll](#).

"When I became convinced that the universe is natural, that all the ghosts and gods are myths, there entered into my brain, into my soul, into every drop of my blood the sense, the feeling, the joy of freedom. The walls of my prison crumbled and fell. The dungeon was flooded with light and all the bolts and bars and manacles became dust. I was no longer a servant, a serf, or a slave. There was for me no master in all the wide world, not even in infinite space. I was free -- free to think, to express my thoughts -- free to live my own ideal, free to live for myself and those I loved, free to use all my faculties, all my senses, free to spread imagination's wings, free to investigate, to guess and dream and hope, free to judge and determine for myself . . . I was free! I stood erect and fearlessly, joyously faced all worlds."



-- **Robert Green Ingersoll**, "Why I Am an Agnostic"

An advertisement for California's 18th Annual Freethought Day. The background features a hand holding a pen over a document and a stack of US dollar bills. The text is arranged in several sections: a large title at the top, a blue banner with scholarship details, a main text block, a yellow box with event information, and a decorative flower logo at the bottom right.


California's 18th Annual Freethought Day

\$500 High School Essay Scholarship

We want to hear your thoughts on a time you realized you were wrong about the world around you.

Enter our essay contest today!
Details at FreethoughtDay.org/essay.html

And be sure to attend California Freethought Day, October 13, FREE at the State Capitol.



\$500 High School Essay Scholarship

Details: <http://freethoughtday.org/essay.html>

Last year, California Freethought Day was thrilled to announce its first-ever high school scholarship built around the theme of "#FakeNews." From twenty outstanding applicants, the winner was an entry from Julia Vaughan, student at Bear River High School in Grass Valley. After reading her winning essay at our Supporters' Reception and again in front of hundreds at the State Capitol, CFD awarded a \$250 check for college tuition. **This year CFD has doubled the scholarship to \$500!**

The 2019 essay prompt is simple: *Describe a time when you discovered that something you were told, or took for granted, was factually wrong.* If you know of any California high school students, CFD asks you to share this opportunity with them.

Note: To donate to support the CFD Scholarship Fund, please click the button below. Donations are tax deductible!

Support the Scholarship

(Don't like PayPal? You may [donate via Facebook](#) or [mail a check](#).)

Of course, we also hope you join this year's big event (no cost to attend). Mark your calendar for October 13, 2019.

CFD Registration (free) will open in just a few weeks, but you can take a look at our [preliminary speaker lineup](#) now!



The 2018 CFD essay winner, Julia Vaughan (right), with Sarah Hagy (left) who won a similar essay contest. Both winners read their essays to the crowd at the California State Capitol.

Guest Op-ed from *Atheist Republic*, atheistrepublic.com (submitted by Kathy Warnock):

What's the point of identifying as an atheist?

We often have people tell us that we shouldn't label ourselves as "atheists" because atheism is lack of belief in god(s) and we should be focusing on things we believe rather than things we don't. The argument usually goes something like this:

"You don't golf, would you start a group for non-golfers? Of course not! There are groups for golfers but it would be ridiculous to start a group for non-golfers! So you shouldn't be creating a community centered around something you're not, you should focus on the things you ARE."

On the surface this might seem like a valid argument. It's true that atheism is no more than a lack of belief in god, so should we be focusing on a community built around non-belief? Let's continue with the golfer metaphor. Let's say that one day,

golf legend Arnold Palmer looked around him and thought, "I love golf, it enriches my life and brings me purpose. The world would be a better place if all people were golfers like me."

And so, clever Arnold sent out an email to all his golfing contemporaries. He outlined his vision for world domination of golf. And together, they drafted an idea for legislation giving preferential treatment to golfers in the private sector, including exclusion from paying taxes. The golfers also wanted other special considerations. For example, they have holidays that celebrate the golf ball and the invention of the tee and they shouldn't have to go into work on those days because those are sacred golf days.

Later, they host a big fundraiser and then they get a lobbyist to push their ideas through the political process and they win! Over time, they get most of what they want. Even though golfers are a small percentage of the world population, they have now positioned themselves as a preferred group. And all the golfers rejoice!

As the golfers gain influence, they become disgusted by the way non-golfers dress. These golfing heathens don't ever wear plaid or sweater vests and their shoes don't even have cleats. It's appalling! So they use their vast wealth and influence to get more laws passed requiring everyone to wear golfing attire. And while they're at it, they want to make sure people are set on the right path early so they create physical education curriculum that only includes activities that would favor golf. From now on, kids will learn no other sport but golf.

But what about the non-golfers? The people who think, "I'm ok with those guys going out on the green on a Saturday and playing golf, but I don't like golf, it's boring and the rules seem arbitrary and the rule book is confusing. Also, their songs are atrocious. It doesn't seem fair that I have to follow this stupid dress code and pretend to like golf just to be sure I don't get passed up for a promotion"

What is a non-golfer to do? So they start a non-golfing group and they call themselves the non-golfers and soon, everyone who doesn't want to golf is called a non-golfer. Some non-golfers want to focus on the problems with golf curriculum in schools and others want to help oppressed non-golfers in places like Florida where the golfers have a stronghold. Some hold rallies and announce publicly that they don't like golf.

They might even start a website and a Facebook page and start writing and conversing about the issues related to being non-golfers in a world of loudmouthed golfers.

Atheism should indeed be the de facto status. It should not require a label, or organizations or movements. Religion, gods, holy books, etc. are all things added. But the dominance of religion in the public sphere and the pressure religious individuals and organizations put on governments, the legal system and educational institutions, necessitates the creation of communities like Atheist Republic for advocacy, support and education. When the concept of god is used in a variety of ways to promote a religious agenda, then our lack of belief becomes more than disbelief – it becomes a path for people to find each other and a connection point for shared values.

Many members of the Atheist Republic community are looking for effective ways to stand together in a fight against the oppression that has come on the heels of the spread of religion. For example, some have found that when it is safe, announcing their atheism publicly or to a handful of friends and family can do wonders. Many theists are surprised by how many atheists they know personally, or even by how many are in their own immediate family. This might not change their religious beliefs, but for many, it can make them more accepting of atheists.

Atheism itself is nothing more than non-belief, but the Atheist Republic community stands for more. Our atheism is merely the starting point that brings us together. Not all atheists will agree with all our values and goals. Being an atheist doesn't mean that you necessarily care about worldwide theocratic injustices or the spread of superstition and religious oppression. But we have discovered that many atheists do, and we see value in bringing these people together. That view is the driving force behind the goals and visions of our community and is the foundation upon which the [Atheist Republic logo](#) was built and what it represents.

As a Citizen of the Republic, your views and ideas will shape the goals and direction we take in the future. So please, share them with us by replying to this email, we might add it to the site. Please let us know if you wish to remain anonymous.

Support Atheist Republic! ♥ <http://bit.ly/1BUHbyQ>



Don't wonder at those
who are good without God.

Pity those who need God
to be good.



Itsthetic.com



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.

AOF President & Editor: Fantastic Fran Evanisko
 Vice-president: Marvelous Mynga Futrell
 Secretary: Rapid Ruth Rezos
 Treasurer & Registrar: Kinetic Ken Nahigian
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 Roger Zabkie, Pamella 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 secular 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>