

AOF News & Views - Newsletter for September 2019

♦ ♦ Upcoming AOF Events ♦ ♦

> Free Movie Nights!

Fridays, Sep 6 & Sep 20, 2019, 7pm - 10pm

Twice a month, Reason Center (RC) and AOF host a **Free Movie Night** just for you, under an excellent MPLC License. Alas, we can't name the movies. But we can hint.

The first (Sept 6) is a 2013 documentary from director Jeremiah Camara that looks at the proliferation of churches in American communities of color and the correlation with poverty and powerlessness. Why so many churches yet so many social problems? It raises serious questions about how religious faith can undermine productivity. The second movie (Sept 20) is a 1983 British musical comedy that looks at life's meaning in all its stages but fails to answer any big questions -- well, because *Monty Python*!



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

Movie Night is an informal, picnic-style, family event. The venue has a huge silver screen and dynamic sound system. Chairs are available, but it's OK to bring blankets, pillows, lawn chairs and your own snacks & beverage, non-alcoholic please. RC may provide fluffy, buttery theatre popcorn. Kids are welcome if they're cool -- and the movie is appropriate.

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 is a measly \$5 a month, is tax deductible if you itemize, and the perks (like this one) are like the bright side of life.

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!

Board of Directors Meeting

Tuesday, Sep 10, 2019, 7pm - 9pm

This is an AOF planning meeting for AOF Directors & officers, but open to *all* interested friends and members. These occur about every other month, and aren't as dull as you think (yes they are) (shaddup). You are welcome to join us and meet the Board.



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

Contact: See http://www.aofonline.org/contact.html, the AOF contact page.

Please bring your ideas for AOF, your strategies, your event & activity suggestions -- most of all, your volunteerism.

> Adopt-a-Highway Cleanup Saturday, Sep 14, 2019, 9am - 11am

If you visit the two-mile stretch of Highway 99 from Elkhorn Boulevard to Elverta Road, you might notice: it looks pretty tidy! That's *us.* That's the Sac-area freethinkers who "adopted" it in July 1995. We've cared for it, nurtured it, rescued it lovingly from litter and debris, and received recognition for our work. It is one of our more successful civic efforts, proving that freethinkers can also serve the community.

So join us, please join us! Enjoy a commune with nature; do a 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 ever, 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 get there, go north from Sacramento on I-5, past the Sleep Train Arena. Take the "Highway 99 - Yuba City, Marysville" exit. Exit at Elkhorn Boulevard less than a mile north. Turn left, cross the overpass. The park-&-ride lot will be on your left.

Contact: 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.

> Freethought Dinner Social

Saturday, Sep 14, 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. Everyone loves food! So join the hungry freethinkers at **Selland's Market Café** 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://www.sellands.com/menu/.

Location: Selland's Market Café, 915 Broadway, Sac., ph 916-732-3390, map at https://goo.gl/maps/T3ie2QRM7VJRJ1SE9.

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. (And don't be shy, suggest your own favorite eatery for next time.)

What, **no General Membership Meeting**? Sigh, it's true. AOF currently plans none until October. Maybe 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 (non-AOF) ♦ ♦

> Sunday Assembly Sunday, Sep 8, 10:30am

A secular congregation that celebrates secular life. Events (the second Sunday of each month) are generally 75 minutes of music (80s and 90s pop hits), inspirational talks, poetry and art, donuts and coffee, and more... followed by a potluck feast! "SA" is radically inclusive - everyone is welcome, regardless of their beliefs or lack thereof, sexual orientation, age, gender or politics (just be courteous.) Events are free for all, though donations are appreciated. Sponsorships not accepted; childcare provided. And please bring a snack for the potluck.

Motto: "To live better, help often, and wonder more."

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

Contact: See https://www.meetup.com/Sunday-Assembly-Sacramento/ for details.

> Freethought Breakfasts

Sundays, Sep 15 & 22, 9:30am

Join your freethinker friends for delicious breakfasts and freewheeling discussions on any topic, a great way to introduce yourself and meet new minds.

Sep 15, **Blasphemy Breakfast** at Original Mel's Diner, 6708 Lonetree Boulevard, Rocklin; map at https://goo.gl/maps/kpmQWfWnbmn1PZFL7. For details & RSVP, see https://www.meetup.com/SacFAN/events/264112923.

Sep 22, **Black Humanists & Nonbelievers Breakfast** at Eggie's Restaurant, 1650 Fulton Ave, Sacramento; map at https://goo.gl/maps/YwwNhuond6VzmBPm6. For details & RSVP, see https://www.meetup.com/bhnb-sacramento/events/264389302.

➤ Freethought Day Festival – save the date now! Sunday, Oct 13, 2019

It's California's annual festival of free speech and free thought, civic engagement, enthusiasm for science, social justice, and the separation of church and state. Best, attendance is *free*. Register at http://freethoughtday.org/registration.html (optional) for free goodies & door prizes.

Much needed: as many volunteers as possible through the weekend of October 12th - 13th to make it another outstanding event. There will be a complimentary Volunteers' Dinner. Volunteer at http://freethoughtday.org/volunteer.html.



"California Freethought Day, Sunday, October 14, 2019, combines the fun and atmosphere of a fair with the education and activism of a conference. We'll have speakers and live entertainment, family activities, an authors' panel with Q&A, and more! Register today, then come out and celebrate with us!"

freethoughtday.org

Location: Capitol Park, CA State Capitol Bldg North Steps, see map at https://goo.gl/maps/EtFcJBYjBzj.

Contact: ph. 209-610-0651, or email: Chair (at) FreethoughtDay (dot) org, or see http://freethoughtday.org/.

> Other Sac-area Events

Want more? See numerous other freethought events in the area on the Sacramento Coalition of Reason calendar at https://unitedcor.org/event-calendar-2/. You'll be amazed. You'll be busy!

You can help. Here's how.

When you donate blood...

If you donate blood at Vitalant, formerly BloodSource, please use the AOF BloodSource ID, #4857.

Find a Donation Center at https://www.vitalant.org/Our-Organization/Locations.aspx. Blood donations save lives, serve our ideals, and show freethinkers can also serve the community. What is more humanistic than donating blood?

Support Reason Center

Since Reason Center opened in July 2014, it has hosted hundreds of events and accrued 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.

Good work. To continue, "RC" relies on support from members and donors. Please stand up for Reason Center, because it stands up for you. To set up a monthly or one-time donation, visit ReasonCenter.org.

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 receive a small kickback for whatever you purchase. Sweet!

Suggest a Meeting

Know a compelling speaker, have a great meeting idea? Tell the AOF Program Committee! Go to http://www.aofonline.org/contact.html, click "Program Committee" in the drop-down line, and enter your thoughtful suggestion. (Reasonable honorariums paid to speakers.)

➤ Talk Like a Pirate Day Thursday, Sep 19, 2019

Avast ye lubbers. International Talk Like a Pirate Day is a day to show your Piratude. Created in 1995 by John Baur and Mark Summers, promulgated to worldwide popularity by humorist Dave Barry in a syndicated column, we can celebrate this secular holiday in many ways: garb like pirates, talk like pirates, swill grog like pirates, stagger and fall down like pirates. What's grog? Never mind, just find some and swill. Then haul your keel, shiver your timbers, and do wha' ever else seem right and proper, 'cause this be a day to celebrate. More info at https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/International Talk Like a Pirate Day.



Other Piratey links:

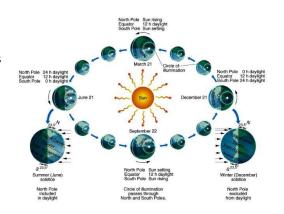
How to Talk like a Pirate, instructions at http://www.yarr.org.uk/talk/. Translate text into Pirate Talk at https://funtranslations.com/pirate. Google's Pirate Search engine is at https://www.google.com/webhp?hl=xx-pirate.

> Equinox (September)

Monday, Sep 23, 2019

The **September Equinox** is one of two days in the calendar year when day hours almost equal the night. In the northern hemisphere it is also the first day of Autumn or Fall (Gregorian calendar), called the Autumnal Equinox. (In the southern hemisphere it is the first day of Spring.)

The Autumnal Equinox marks when green things begin to shed, when growth which was young in the spring has reached maturity. Animals prepare for winter, tree leaves turn colors, and the air takes a chill. In most cultures this a time for harvest and taking stock of life's fragility. It is a time when people begin noticing the waning hours of daylight in anticipation of the winter. Since this time of year is



one of the most temperate, it is also a good time to reflect on the meaning of life.

The Autumnal Equinox also signals the return of weather that favors slowing down, introspection, and conservation. Many cultures celebrate the harvest as a means to defeat the starvation brought on by winter. It is also a time closely associated with the dead. Though the dead do not return to life nor walk the earth this time of the year, it is well to memorialize those no longer with us. For freethinkers the Autumnal Equinox is a good time to celebrate the lives of those who contributed to the freethought movement, and a day to contemplate your thoughts on what you invest in life.

Banned Book Week

Monday, Sep 22 to Saturday, Sep 28, 2019

The last week of September marks **Banned Books Week**, a celebration of the Freedom to Read, established by the American Library Association in 1981 in response to growing attempts to ban books in public libraries across the country. First observed in 1982, we celebrate it each year during the last week of September, to remind our fellow citizens not to take for granted their freedom to read the written word.

Every year bookstores and libraries across the United States celebrate Banned Books Week with displays of and readings from books that have been banned or threatened throughout history. Such works range from the *Bible* and Thomas Paine's *The Age of Reason* to Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, Mark Twain's *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* and J.K Rowling's *Harry Potter* series, and has included books on atheism, science, tolerance, social issues, love and sex, and philosophy. Jean-

Jacques Rousseau, Thomas Paine, Voltaire, Aristophanes, Margaret Sanger, Mary Shelley, Ambrose Bierce, Charles Darwin, George Eliot, Mark Twain and John Locke were all victims of censorship during their lifetimes and still face censorship in some sections of the world today.

Banned Books Week stands as a reminder that freedom is precious, that without constant diligence and defiance we can lose it, even in the United States. This should motivate freethinkers everywhere to read banned books, discuss them, and protect the rights of all Americans to read what they want, when they want, in libraries across the country.

Banned Books Week sponsors include the ...

American Booksellers Association,

American Booksellers Foundation of Free Expression,

American Library Association (ALA),

Association of American Publishers,

American Society of Journalists and Authors, and

National Association of College Stores.

It is endorsed by the Library of Congress Center for the Book.

➤ Blasphemy Day Monday, Sep 30, 2019

Secularists and freethinkers worldwide celebrate <u>International Blasphemy Day</u> or "Blasphemy Rights Day," marking the anniversary of when images of Muhammad appeared in the Denmark newspaper *Jyllands-Posten* in 2005. Conservative Muslims reacted to the drawings with worldwide protests, riots, embassy burnings and death threats.

Founded in 2009 by Ronald Lindsay, Directory of the Center of Inquiry in Ahmherst, NY, and promoted by the <u>Campaign for Free Expression</u>, this secular holiday is now a platform for individuals freely to express criticisms of religion and religious establishments. As Ronald Lindsay said in a television interview: "... religious beliefs should be subject to examination and criticism just as political beliefs are, but we have a taboo on religion."

"... we're against restrictions on speech based purely on the possibility that some people might be offended," he also said; "Because if you go down that path there's no end to it."

Participants have celebrated Blasphemy Day in various ways: with speeches, art exhibitions, feasts, poetry, music and song, and by taking the <u>Blasphemy Challenge</u>. Use your imagination!



The Prophet Mohammed (actual photo)



Book Review

No God? No Problem by Tom Tyner, the Amiable Atheist (reviewed by Editor Fran)

No God? No Problem is a humorous and informative book that touches on many aspects of religion from christianity, agnosticism, creationism, and includes discussions of secular humanism and the big bang theory. The narrative begins with the direct statement "Let's throw it out there right now: there is no God", equating belief in an omniscient god with belief in Santa Claus, Easter Bunny and the Tooth Fairy.



The book lists 28 topics in its "Unholy Contents" list, and each topic has a cartoon associated with it.

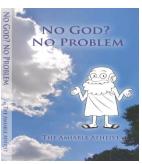
Every topic makes a cogent point expressed in a humorous way. The book discusses numerous aspects of the effects of religion on humanity. One of the main points seems to be that if there were a god, things would be different. A loving, all powerful, all knowing god wouldn't allow all of the suffering that exists in the world.

The section titled **When the Cookie Crumbles** suggests a recovery program for those who may need help with losing faith:

- 1. Play John Lennon's Imagine
- 2. Engage in Blasphemy
- 3. Have a Holy Grail scavenger hunt ("Surprise! There is no Holy Grail!")
- 4. Repeat this poem: There is no God and I am glad, I don't need a manufactured dad, I've got a nice dad of my own, and I can hit him up for a loan.
- 5. Convert believers

I found the book fun to read. Mr. Tyner informed me that he is not looking to make any money on the book at this point. You can get a free eBook copy by emailing breadanpub@aol.com and requesting a copy. He will send it to your email address to download.

Fran Evanisko







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

Webmistress: Palpable Pat Kelley

Directors at large:

Dave Flanders, Roger Zabkie, Pamella Rivera, Linda Ostrofsky (Jetta), Kaeleigh Pontif

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

AOF's Facebook page:

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

AOF is affiliated with the Alliance of Secular Humanist Societies (ASHS), Atheist Alliance of America (AAA), American Atheists (AA), American Humanist Association (AHA) and the Sacramento Coalition of Reason (SCoR).

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. Any who will treat others with respect and dignity 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, 95825 Phone 916-426-6416, Email reasoncenter@gmail.com https://reasoncenter.org/, https://www.facebook.com/reasoncenter/

United Coalition of Reason Sacramento (SacCoR)

The 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

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

Think Atheist of Sacramento

A social network and discussion list.

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

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

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. PO Box 2883, Rocklin, CA 95677 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 (SAAF)

Ph. 209-610-0651 or email 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 or agasadavis@gmail.com

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 Secular Student Alliance

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

Yuba Community College Freethinkers †

2088 N Beale Rd, Marysville, CA 95901

https://www.facebook.com/ssavc/

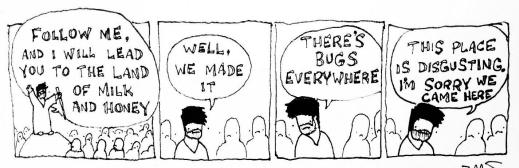
Email vccd@secularstudents.org or tsmith@vccd.edu

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



Thanks. extrafabulouscomics.com

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