

Video of Recent Online AOF Meeting

If you missed the March 28 AOF Meeting, [Who We Are](#), you can now view it at this link: https://us02web.zoom.us/rec/share/pDeX5PQo1qMNPgQc0Fzen9EU_PlaAOntEIEhu44IAbY3mWZHvvI0TmS5RytoKmL.HbvzuzVN4Ag9myCG (passcode: +90*9LQy). It will be available for about a month, thanks to Susan McLean. Note, the real meeting begins at about 00:14:40 -- skip ahead, ignore the guy with the big nose, and have fun.

✧ ✧ Upcoming AOF Events ✧ ✧

➤ Free Movie Night!

Friday, April 16, 7pm – 10pm

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

Alas, the regular movie venue, [Reason Center](#) (RC), is now closed (we're working on it). So to attend this, you'll need a personal Netflix account + home computer with the [Google Chrome web browser](#). If you don't have these we apologize -- please be patient until RC can open its doors. Else, here's how to join us:

1. Open your Chrome web browser right now and install the Netflix Teleparty Extension from: <https://www.netflixparty.com/>. (Really, do it *now*, don't wait till movie night!)
2. Just before show time, fire up the Chrome browser again and go to the very special Netflix Movie Teleparty link, which will appear on the AOF Website minutes before 7pm that day.
3. **Click that link.** The Movie Teleparty page will open. Log into Netflix (if not logged in already). At the top right of the browser frame check your "Extensions" list. Find the letters **Tp** in red. You may need to click on the letters. (If you can't see the **Tp**, look for the little puzzle-piece icon in the upper right, click, then you'll see it.)
4. The Netflix movie party should begin. You'll be watching it along with the rest of us. As it plays we can chat on the side of the screen and make silly, snarky comments.



Free Movie Night was made for Reason Center members, but non-members are welcome too. RC *may* beg a small (voluntary) donation to cover costs. How can you support Reason Center? Go to <http://reasoncenter.com/donate/>. Membership, a measly \$5 a month, is tax deductible if you itemize. And the perks (like this one) just keep getting better.

Location: A Netflix teleparty link, see above.

Contact: See <https://reasoncenter.com/contact/> or <https://www.meetup.com/SacFAN/events/thrggsyccgbvb/>.

Free Movie Nights generally occur two Friday evenings each month. You can suggest your own fave flick for next time, how cool is that?

➤ Why Smart People Fall for Fake News

Sunday, April 25, 2021, 2pm - 4pm

You're smart, right? You make decisions, you rely on reason, you reject superstition. Yet in many cases, smart people are more likely to fall for fake news than average minds! Research in cognitive neuroscience and behavioral economics shows that some kinds of misinformation are a special kryptonite for smart people. This arises from a dangerous judgment error called *cognitive bias*.

Learn how you might be vulnerable to fake news, find out what you can do to fix that, and see how to help prevent other people from falling for fake news as well. You'll be a superhero.

[Dr. Gleb Tsipursky](#) is a cognitive neuroscientist and behavioral economist passionate about truth, rational thinking, and wise decision-making. A civic activist and philanthropist, he's the volunteer President of the Board of the nonprofit Intentional Insights (<https://intentionalinsights.org>) and co-founded the Pro-Truth Pledge (www.protruthpledge.org). Professionally, he serves as the CEO of the decision-making and risk management strategy consulting, coaching, speaking, and training firm Disaster Avoidance Experts (<https://disasteravoidanceexperts.com>). He's a best-selling author of a number of books, most notably *Pro Truth: A Pragmatic Plan to Put Truth Back into Politics* (Changemakers Books, 2020), as well as the national bestsellers *The Truth Seeker's Handbook: A Science-Based Guide* and *Resilience: Adapt and Plan for the New Abnormal of the COVID-19 Coronavirus Pandemic*. He has published over 550 articles and has given over 450 interviews for prominent venues such as *Time*, *USA Today*, *Scientific American*, *Psychology Today*, *Fortune*, *The*



Conversation, Inc. Magazine, CNBC, CBS News, NPR, *Newsweek*, and more. A nonbeliever, he frequently writes for secular venues such as *The Humanist*, *Skeptical Inquirer*, *The Skeptic*, and *Free Inquiry*. His expertise stems from his research background with over 15 years in academia, including seven years as a professor at the Ohio State University, where he published dozens of peer-reviewed articles in academic journals such as *Behavior and Social Issues* and *Journal of Social and Political Psychology*. Email him at "gleb (at) intentionalinsights (dot) org".

Another fine event of the AOF Speaker Series.

How to attend:

Reason Center is currently closed, so this meeting will be by online videoconference.

- **Any time before the event:** Go to <https://zoom.us/download>. Download & install the "Zoom videoconference tool" if you haven't already. (Do it just once; it will be good for all future online Zoom meetings.) (Note, this is *optional* -- it just makes the teleconference a bit easier.)
- **Moments before the meeting:** Go to https://zoom.us/meeting/register/tJEtcOCrrT0rH90arzEKZcfFbc2TXf8pOA_P. It will take you to a "Zoom Page." Enter your ID info if you have to, then follow the displayed instructions.
- **If it asks you to sign in:** If you have a Facebook or Google account, or even an SSO account, just click one of the buttons for those, then sign in with your Facebook or Google info. Or create your own free Zoom account, but this is not necessary.
- **If it wants a Meeting ID** (it probably won't), the ID is **950 7933 6159**.
- **If it wants a passcode** (it probably won't), the passcode is **052116**.
- If necessary, click the line that says **Join from Your Browser**.
- The videoconference should begin. Speakers on, please! Sit back and enjoy.

Or listen in by phone at 1-669-900-6833. Same meeting ID (**950 7933 6159**) and same passcode (**052116**). This is for the Northern California region.

Location: An online Videoconference via Zoom - see link above.

Contact: Email "programs (at) aofonline.org", or see <https://www.meetup.com/SacFAN/events/276064925/>
To support the Speaker Series, join AOF at www.aofonline.org/join. Because without AOF, it wouldn't happen.

✧ ✧ Other Upcoming Events ✧ ✧

➤ Sacramento-area Online Meetings

Other local groups exist and also have online meetings. Join them (free) and share your personal wisdom!

- **Saturdays, Apr 3 & Apr 24, 7pm – 9pm: Wine, Cheese, and Litera-cheer.** Share your thoughts about any book of choice, one you like or one you hate, one read recently or long ago. Just be nice (focus on the "cheer"), and BYO wine & cheese. Attendance link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85691401185?pwd=ZXJLVXA2V01QSVRCNjRjNFJDUVFKQT09>.
- **Sundays, Apr 4 & Apr 18, 10:30am – Noon: Online Coffee & Community.** Join fellow freethinkers on the 1st and 3rd Sundays for coffee (BYOC) and conversation. Link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84984111659?pwd=cThkaGdTK0FCdXJpWnB3MVZ1R213Zz09>.
- **Thursday, Apr 5, 5pm – 7pm: Getting Real About Body Positivity.** Recovering from Religion Sacramento will discuss body positivity and provide strategies for overcoming negative body imagery. Attend <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/186729414>.
- **Tuesdays, Apr 6 & Apr 20, 7pm – 9pm: Porch Talk.** A social gathering on a virtual front porch, a chat about topics of the day. Your topic suggestions are welcome. Link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86401692746?pwd=NWVhRdHpEellNblRiR0w4RGtmQ2ZLUT09>.
- **Wednesdays, Apr 7 & Apr 21, 7pm – 8pm: Black Lives Matter and Me.** Talk, read, watch videos; discuss social justice, reforms, privilege, power and oppression. Link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82590278514?pwd=K1pzaXA0dGVESzlvS1lUcEs4RnE2UT09>.
- **Wednesdays, Apr 14 & 28, 7pm – 9pm: What's Your Story?** Meet other freethinkers, atheists, agnostics, nonbelievers and humanists in the Sacramento area; discuss beliefs and philosophy, and what led you to this place. Attendance link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85489607519?pwd=a1V2eEVKb3hnWXhZMVZRMm04Wk5BQT09>.
- **Thursday, Mar 18, 7pm – 9pm: Recovering from Religion Virtual Support Group.** Providing personal support to individuals as they let go of their religious beliefs. Share your story or just listen. Link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82268955990>.
- **Monday, Apr 15, 6:30pm – 8:30pm, Book Club: *The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness* by Michelle Alexander.** Every 3rd Monday, discussing a nominated book. Details: <https://www.meetup.com/SacFAN/events/276329647/>.
- **Friday, Apr 23, 6:30pm – 9:30pm, Virtual Skeptics.** A social meeting for the Sacramento Area Skeptics, welcoming new Skeptics and like-minded folks too. Details: <https://www.meetup.com/sacskeptics/events/276913766/>.

➤ Other Events (via the Coalition of Reason)

We're not done! Other freethoughty events pop up all the time. Please keep an eye on the Sacramento Coalition of Reason global calendar at <https://unitedcor.org/event-calendar-2/>.



✧ ✧ April's Secular Holidays ✧ ✧

➤ April Fools Day

Thursday, April 1, 2021

For decades, **April Fool's Day** has been a celebration of nonsense. Practical jokes and other foolish activities mark the morning hours of April 1st. But by one tradition, all foolish behavior must cease by noon, or roles will be reversed, and the joke will be on you!

Foolery abounds in our 21st Century culture; April Fool's Day offers to groups, organizations and individuals committed to minimizing the nonsense and gobbledygook in our world, a chance to educate and enlighten the public through fun events and activity. It also gives us an opportunity to commemorate Steve Allen by recognizing [Dumbth](#) as the Book of the Month.



➤ Yuri's Night, Cosmonauts Day

Monday, April 12, 2021

Yuri's Night, also called Cosmonauts Day honors Yuri Gagarin, who became the first human in space on April 12, 1961. Twenty years later on the same day the U.S. launched the first space shuttle.

The Soviet Union first celebrated Cosmonauts Day in 1962, on the first anniversary of Gagarin successful flight into space. It was celebrated annually in the USSR and then Russia. The idea for a worldwide celebration of space and technology sprang into existence at the United Nations' Space Generation Advisory Council Conference in September of 2000. The new, worldwide Yuri's Night was first celebrated on April 12, 2001 and has since become an annual international celebration.



Yuri's Night not only celebrates space and technology, but also the principles of freethinking. Once people thought that the other planets travelled around Earth. It took courage as well as intelligence for people to argue against the religiously-ordained view of the Earth as the center of the universe. Yuri's Night is not only about celebrating his historic achievement, but all accomplishments of science that have overturned dogma and advanced our knowledge of our universe.

Yuri's Night has become an international phenomenon since its introduction in 2001. Every year coordinators and participants look to broaden the spectrum of events held. The range of events is as diverse as the people who hold them; even residents of the International Space Station have been known to join in the fun. Whether in someone's living room, a nightclub or a world-class science museum, Cosmonauts Day events all have one thing in common: people who are excited about space exploration, science, freethought, and want to join together to celebrate it. Participating in Cosmonauts Day isn't difficult: if finding an already existing party near is hard, then get your friends together call it a Yuri's Night party. Getting people to think about space, science, and freethought is the focus no matter the venue.

"Circling the earth in my orbital spaceship I marveled at its beauty. People of the world, let us safeguard and enhance this beauty, not destroy it!" -- Yuri Gagarin

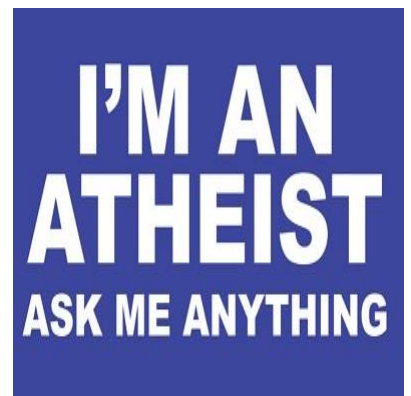
➤ Ask An Atheist Day

Thursday, April 15, 2021

[National Ask an Atheist Day](#), a movable secular holiday, occurs twice each year -- on the 3rd Thursday of April (anywhere from April 15 to April 21) and on the 3rd Thursday of September (Sept 15 to Sep 21). As if atheists don't have enough to do already.

"NAaA Day" is an opportunity for secular groups across the country to dispel stereotypes about atheism and to encourage constructive, courteous dialogue between believers and nonbelievers. And it is an opportunity for the general public—particularly people of faith—to approach non-theists and ask questions about secular life. Please don't be afraid to spark up a discussion with us, we won't bite. Most don't, anyway.

The first NAaA Day was in February of 2011, when members of the [Secular Student Alliance](#) (SSA) at the University of Illinois set up a table with a sign that said "Ask an Atheist." The next month an article appeared in the [Friendly Atheist website](#), written by a "Guest Contributor" (probably an SSA member), saying the event was a smashing success and the Illinois group hoped to take the day nationally. "The SSA is ready to help," it added. Since then the day has occurred across the nation each April, and soon in September as well.



For those interested, it helps to know a bit about atheism. Of course the point is to ask atheists questions, but here is some background. Generally, atheists have no belief in deities, which is not *quite* the same as a positive belief no deity exists. The prefix "a" just means "without." Atheism has no set ideology—atheists may be humanists, rationalists, Unitarian Universalists, postmodernists, secularists, among other things. Historically, Greek and Roman philosophers and writers such as Epicurus, Democritus, and Lucretius had an influence on what would become atheism. The term didn't appear until the sixteenth century, a time when freethought and skepticism began to flourish. Some that lived during the Age of Enlightenment were the first to identify themselves as atheists. The supremacy of human reason was a facet of the French

Revolution, and it was at this time that atheism first became used politically. Science also began to lock horns with orthodox religion during the second half of the nineteenth century.

Today it is challenging to estimate how many atheists are in the world. A 2015 poll claimed about 11% of the world's population are atheists, and a 2012 poll claimed the number to be 13% (both WIN/Gallup International polls). A BBC poll from 2004 put the number at 8%. Europe and Asia seem to have the largest number of atheists. In 2015, 61% of Chinese citizens identified as atheists.

How to observe the day. If you call yourself an atheist, you can celebrate the day in a variety of ways. For example, set up a table where believers and others can come up to you and ask you questions about atheism, secular living, and your beliefs (or nonbeliefs). You can [email](#) the SSA for supplies for your table, such as brochures, [stickers](#), posters, and flyers. You could also wear the stickers and put flyers up on campus (flyers could be put up before the day as well). You could organize an "ask an atheist" panel event, or go on a radio station and have an "ask an atheist" segment where listeners are able to call in and ask you questions about atheism. When posting on social media, use the hashtag #askanatheist.

➤ Earth Day

Thursday, April 22, 2021

[Earth Day](#) is a day to grow and diversify the environmental movement, and to mobilize our resources to promote a healthy, sustainable planet. Earth Day is the only Secular Holiday celebrated simultaneously around the globe by people of all backgrounds, faiths and nationalities. More than a half billion people participate in Earth Day campaigns every year.

U.S. Senator Gaylord Nelson founded Earth Day in 1970 to push the environment onto the national agenda. It is an inclusive event, attracting people of all religions and beliefs. Non-religious groups have many reasons to celebrate Earth Day: those who don't believe in heaven or divine intervention realize that this world is all we have and that it is in our hands to protect it. Those who believe that the scientific method is the best way to gain understanding of our world, can also use Earth Day to promote the best available science about environmental issues. Secular groups can use this annual event to network with environmental groups and other organizations.

You can celebrate Earth Day in many different ways. Events across the globe are often designed to bring notice of the environment to lawmakers. Events also take place on college and school campuses. Meetings intended for the sole purpose of attracting attention to the cause are the most common; these meetings often employ music, speakers, and other attractions to generate attention.



You can help us. Here's how.

Support Reason Center

Opening in July 2014, Reason Center has hosted hundreds of events and accrued twelve partner organizations. It is now closed, but that's temporary (we hope). Its continuing mission: to support a social and intellectual community for freethought, to contribute to society through education and community service, to advance the civic understanding and acceptance of freethinkers, and to uphold the separation of religion and government. All good work.

But "RC" depends 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 get 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.)

Volunteer?

We suggest it meekly. See <http://www.aofonline.org/learn/committees.html> for opportunities.





2021's [Secular Week of Action](#) is April 30 – May 9, 2021. Each year the secular movement comes together to create change in our local communities and provide a relevant alternative to the *National Day of Prayer* (May 6, 2021). The Coalition spends a week organizing service projects and volunteering as individuals, **increasing the visibility of secular people and helping improve our world.**

This year, because of the **dramatic increase in food insecurity and homelessness** as a result of the pandemic, we're especially encouraging groups to focus on those critical issues. But any service is encouraged throughout the week of **April 30 - May 9.**

Here are steps to get you started:

- **Follow** the [Secular Week of Action Facebook Page](#) for ideas, memes, and more!
- **Visit** the [Secular Week of Action website](#) to pledge individual action, see suggestions for actions you can take, and find events near you.
- **Register** for [Mayday for Humanity](#), a virtual fundraiser to help those impacted by hunger and homelessness ([Facebook Link](#)).

Finally, to support our work on behalf of nontheist Americans, please visit https://secular.org/woa_mfhc4/. Every dollar goes to representing you on Capitol Hill, and strengthening the wall of separation between religion and government. With *your* help, we can make even greater progress on the issues we care about!



National Events, Activities and Resources

American Atheists' 2021 Online Convention, April 2-4, 2021, <https://convention.atheists.org/>

Secular Student Alliance Virtual Conference, May 15-16, 2021, <https://secularstudents.org/conference/2021conference/>

Thomas Paine Celebration, Tues, June 8, 3:45 PM PST (6:45 PM EST). Join the Freethought Society (FS), the Thomas Paine National Historical Association (TPNHA), Freedom from Religion Foundation (FFRF), Center for Inquiry (CFI) and the American Humanist Association (AHA) as they celebrate the 2021 Thomas Paine Day via teleconference. Register (for free) at https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_OAX2WWk3S0CpEVO_i4n5yw.

American Humanist Association 80th Annual Conference, July 24-25, 2021, <https://conference.americanhumanist.org/>.

Beyond Belief Network. The [Foundation Beyond Belief](#) has created the [Beyond Belief Network](#) (BBN), a collective of humanist and other secular organizations putting humanism into action through volunteering and charitable fundraising. BBN exists to offer support, encouragement, visibility, and community. Joining provides access to a closed Facebook group (for networking and ideas), a profile on FBB's website, and FBB staff support. As you submit your service event reports your team levels up and becomes eligible for free t-shirts and grants to help increase the impact of your service events. Learn more [here](#) and apply to join [here](#). If you have any questions, please contact Wendy Webber at "wendy (at) foudnationbeyondbelief (dot) org".



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: Prolific Pamella Rivers
Vice-president: Marvelous Mynga Futrell
Secretary: Rapid Ruth Rezos

Treasurer & Registrar: Kinetic Ken Nahigian

Webmistress: Palpable Pat Kelley

Program chair: Super Susan McLean

Facebook page: Keen Kaeleigh Pontif

Directors at large:

Roger Zabkie, Fran Evanisko, Christine Tweet,
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>.



Secular Survey – please help

Joe Blankholm, a professor at the University of California, Santa Barbara along with Juhem Navarro-Rivera, Ph.D., and Dusty Hoesly, Ph.D., are conducting a survey of members of secular communities in the United States. The group has been researching secular and nontheist people for several years, and they themselves identify as secular. They have announced a new project called The Secular Communities Survey (see <https://secularcommunities.hfa.ucsb.edu>).

This will be the largest-ever study of the community life of nonbelievers. Please participate and encourage other nontheists you know to participate. Go to <https://secularcommunities.com/scs> to access the survey. It's entirely anonymous and takes about 15-20 minutes to complete. It will ask about secular political views and degrees of civic engagement. The research and survey results will be important for scholars of community life in the United States. Survey deadline is April 11.

Thanks in advance for your participation and your help. The survey designers are happy to answer any questions you may have, so please reach out. You can contact them by emailing secular.survey@hfa.ucsb.edu.

Survey participation outreach signed by,
Joe Blankholm, Ph.D.

Assistant Professor, Department of Religious Studies
Humanities and Social Sciences Building 3049

University of California, Santa Barbara, CA 93106-3130

<http://www.religion.ucsb.edu/people/faculty/joseph-blankholm/>



Mayday for Humanity

Mark your calendar! On **Thursday, May 6, 2021**, please join the Freethought Society, Recovering from Religion, the Freedom from Religion Foundation, the Secular Student Alliance and the Secular Coalition for America in celebrating [The National Day of Reason](#) by hosting a Zoom entertainment extravaganza, *Mayday for Humanity*.

The event will begin at **4pm PST (7pm EST)**. Comedians **Leighann Lord** and **Ian Harris** will co-host this 3-hour event. They will usher in an array of comedians, poets, and musical performers.

The National Day of Reason falls on the same date of the National Day of Prayer. As the religious community prays, the nontheist community will take action. During the National Day of Reason *Mayday for Humanity* event we will be collecting online donations to benefit homeless shelters and food banks selected by the event co-sponsors. Beneficiary organizations operate in a non-discriminatory and secular manner.

The program will include messages from co-sponsors, celebrity supporters, and people conducting grassroots community service projects during the 2021 Secular Week of Action (April 30 - May 9). An online auction will also occur with items donated by Zenos Frudakis, Ann Druyan, Curt Anderson, the Humanists Society of Santa Barbara and many others.

Register for the Zoom event at: bit.ly/Join4Humanity

Pre-event donations can be made at: bit.ly/MAYDAY4HUMANITY. You can also donate via text! Just text the code: "MAYDAY4HUMANITY" to 44-321

A list of performers and guest appearances:

Ty Barnett
Sandra Booker
Baba Brinkman
John Davidson
Ann Druyan
John Fugelsang

Victor Harris
Jon Huertas
Keith Lowell Jensen
John de Lancie
Hemant Mehta
Shelley Segal

Gary Stockdale
Penn & Teller
Jill Sobule
Julia Sweeney
Voices of Reason

