

✧ ✧ **Upcoming AOF Events** ✧ ✧

➤ **Adopt-a-Highway Cleanup**

Saturday, Mar 25, 2023, 9am - 11am

Location: Near W. Elkhorn Blvd & Hwy 99, map at <https://goo.gl/maps/zw3Rwct9yR52>.

A tidy stretch of Highway 99 runs two miles from Elkhorn Boulevard to Elverta Road -- *our* stretch! Sac-area freethinkers "adopted" it in July 1995. It's tidy because we have cared for it, nurtured it, lovingly rescued it from litter and debris, and received recognition for our work -- proving freethinkers can also serve the community.

So join us! Enjoy a morning commune with nature, and do a deed for the environment and local area wildlife. The refuse 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. Note, Cal-Trans is now paying a significant stipend for our work!

As usual, the stalwart activity captain will provide all gear, including comfortable, natty hard-hats and gloves, stylish safety vests, collection bags, and handy trash pickers. The cleanup takes a scant two hours. Please dress for the season. It may be a good idea to bring a pouch or fanny-pack to carry 3 or 4 trash bags.

To get there, travel north from Sacramento on I-5 past the Natomas area. Take the "Highway 99 - Yuba City, Marysville" exit. Exit at Elkhorn Boulevard less than a mile north. Turn left, cross the overpass. Park in the park-&-ride lot if possible, or near it.

Contact for details: 916-447-2169 (Don Knutson), or see <https://www.aofonline.org/contact.html>.

In case of rain, fog, excessive mud, rapture or locust plague, the Cleanup will be rescheduled. If unsure, call the Activity Captain (Don).

This is a great event for older children, but please leave smalls safe at home. And please review the CalTrans Highway Cleanup guidelines at <https://dot.ca.gov/programs/maintenance/adopt-a-highway/covid19>.



➤ **Madalyn Murray O'Hair – A Documentary**

Sunday, March 26, 2023, 2pm - 4pm

Location: Reason Center, 1300 Ethan Way, Rm 675, Sac., map at <https://goo.gl/maps/RwiUgEJ5ESHRhrPu8>.

Not a *pleasant* person by all standards -- some have called her "Mad Madalyn". But we promise, the real story of Madalyn Murray O'Hair, the truth behind the curtain, is ever so much more interesting than Saint Patrick's. Madalyn's adult life was dark, funny, scary, poignant and powerful.

You might best know her for [Murray v Curlett](#), the lawsuit that took down the policy of mandatory prayer and bible reading in Baltimore public Schools. Join us now to learn the secret history. Perhaps you will evolve a new conclusion, freethinker that you are.

From Variety.com:

"Godless in America," produced by U.K. indie October Films for the BBC and the Sundance Channel in the U.S., follows the ongoing struggle of American atheists interwoven with the story of Madalyn Murray O'Hair, the founder of American Atheists, who was murdered in 1995 at age 76.



As usual, we will have a lively group discussion after viewing this documentary, with an opportunity to say just what you think about Madalyn & her legacy. We will be "all ears"!

Contact: Email "programs (at) aofonline (dot) org", or see <https://www.aofonline.org/contact.html>.

Park free in the lot. This is an in-person event, so be aware of COVID risks.

You may bring personal snacks & nonalcoholic beverages - or snacks to share as you wish.

AOF is not the only game in town. Other groups have their own games going. We've collected highlights. Enjoy the list.

➤ Blasphemy Breakfasts/Brunch

Sunday, Mar 5, 2023, 9:30am – 11am,

Saturday, Mar 11, 2023, 10am – 11:30am, and

Sunday, Mar 19, 2023, 9:30am – 11am

Like to hang out with like-minded people? Want to meet freethinkers in smaller groups? Or do you just get the morning munchies? Join us at Mel's Diner for our "Blasphemy Breakfast." We really don't blaspheme all that much, but who knows what darksome mutterings will emerge? A great place to speak your mind, and a good starter if you are new to meetups.

On Mar 5: at 3000 J Street, midtown Sacramento, map at <https://goo.gl/maps/nW9U93obp9PKck9a7>.

On Mar 11: at 13399 Folsom Blvd, Folsom, CA, map at <https://goo.gl/maps/ri6JvaBoSZVHTdnU6>.

On Mar 19: at 6708 Lonetree Blvd, Rocklin, CA, map at <https://goo.gl/maps/ZUY2gq72KkmkC4bU6>.

For details and contacts, see <https://www.meetup.com/sacfan/events/>.

➤ Coffee and Community

Sunday, Mar 5, 2023, 10:30am – 12 noon

Sunday, Mar 19, 2023, 10:30am – 12 noon

Meet for coffee and open-topic conversation. Get to know new folk or visit with some old friends! Hosted by Nancy Sneed and Mynga Futrell, two amiable people.

On Mar 5, it will be an online Coffee & Community via Zoom Teleconference. BYOC, obviously. To attend, simply click this link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88317332021?pwd=OVI6M3IRQm52L0hQUmhwd0pucENEQT09>.

On Mar 19, meet at Reason Center, 1300 Ethan Way, Rm 675, Sac., map at <https://goo.gl/maps/RwiUgEJ5ESHRhrPu8>.

➤ Recovery from Religion Virtual Support meetings

Sunday, Mar 5, 2023, 4pm – 6pm (online attendance link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/7287067292>)

Saturday, Mar 11, 5pm – 7pm (female gender only, online link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87403436249>)

Thursday, Mar 16, 8pm – 10pm (online attendance link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82268955990>)

Saturday, Mar 18, 7am – 9am (online attendance link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/7287067292>)

Sunday, Mar 19, 12 noon – 2pm (for LGBTQ+ persons, attendance link <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/7287067292>)

Providing ongoing and personal support to individuals letting go of their religious beliefs. Please be sensitive and tolerant. "RfR" is here to help us.

➤ Atheist Community Online Videos

Monday, Mar 6, 2023, 7:30pm – 9:30pm

Educational and entertaining presentations about Atheism, Logic, Reason, and Thoughtfulness, every 1st Monday, by [Atheists United](#). To attend, simply click this link at meeting time: <https://zoom.us/j/99257974801>.

➤ Social, Game Night & Potluck

Saturday, Mar 11, 2023, 5pm – 9pm

Meet, socialize and game with like-minded people. Free to attend but donations to the Reason Center for overhead costs would be appreciated. Please bring food, non-alcoholic drinks or snacks to share – maybe your favorite game too!

Location: Reason Center, 1300 Ethan Way, Rm 675, Sacramento, map at <https://goo.gl/maps/RwiUgEJ5ESHRhrPu8>.

Details: See <https://www.meetup.com/sacfan/events/jmmpctyfcfbpb/>.

➤ Word Confusion

Saturday, Mar 11, 2023, 7pm – 9pm

Wonder about words or phrases? Language can be weird and twisty, and its quirks change over time. Here's an online discussion. Hosted by Nancy Sneed. Details at <https://www.meetup.com/reasoncenterevents/events/rsshqsyfcfbpb/>.

Attendance link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88417809715?pwd=UGx1Q3hpU25iWkwrZjZaTWZFZMEMxZz09>.

➤ Sunday Assembly

Sunday, Mar 12, 2023, 11am - 1pm

Location: Reason Center, 1300 Ethan Way, Suite 675, Sacramento, map at <https://goo.gl/maps/S5MR1e8ZodBzb4TG8>.

Sunday Assembly is back with music, readings, and speakers. This month the speaker will be Nancy Castignetti, a licensed speech-language pathologist. For the potluck lunch, bring your favorite dish to share, and be hungry.

Details: see <https://www.meetup.com/sacfan/events/snnjbtvfcfbqbl/>.

➤ Suicide Loss Survivors Discussion

Tuesday, Mar 14, 2023, 5pm – 7pm

Online survivor support in a compassionate, secular way. Attendance link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82683645189>.

➤ Casual Card Game Day

Saturday, Mar 25, 2023, 3pm – 10pm

Only casual card games will be played and most take less than an hour to play. If you have a favorite card game then you are welcome to bring it. Meet on the South side of the library.

Location: North Natomas Library, 4660 Via Ingoglia St, Sacramento, map at <https://goo.gl/maps/7U3FhbeMQVBpR53t5>.

Details: See <https://www.meetup.com/sacfan/events/291922954/>.

➤ Black Humanists & Non-Believers Book Club

Saturday, Mar 25, 2023, 3:30pm – 5pm

An online book discussion open to all, about the Introduction and Chapter One of *Godless Americana: Race and Religious Rebels*, by Sikivu Hutchinson. For details see: <https://www.meetup.com/bhnb-sacramento/events/dbdzvqyfcfbhc/>.

➤ Ex-Muslim Chat

Saturday, Mar 25, 2023, 6:30pm – 8:30pm

Come join us for an online conversation led and centered on ex-Muslim topics. To attend, simply click this link:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85631755559?pwd=L0luRS9ybTQydIFkcFlzSmNZMVZkZz09>.

Details at <https://www.meetup.com/reasoncenterevents/events/vxqfctyfcfbhc/>.

➤ Humanity Breakfast

Sunday, Mar 26, 2023, 11am – 1pm

Join round 2 of the Humanity Breakfast (2023 Touring Edition). "We are a fun, friendly, and non-intimidating group of like-minded people, so come join us!" See <https://www.meetup.com/bhnb-sacramento/events/291975710/> to reserve your spot at the table (RSVP required).

Location: Bacon & Butter, 5913 Broadway, Sacramento, map at <https://goo.gl/maps/6AUcMhAm3ZSCE8qB8>.

➤ Saturday Morning Hike

Saturday, Apr 1, 9:30am – 11:30am

Sacramento is filled with gorgeous hiking places, ranging from riverside nature to rugged hills. Join us for a hike event each first Saturday of the month, to meet new people, observe nature, and get stickers in your socks. Site to be determined.

Details at: <https://www.meetup.com/sacfan/events/hfkcqsyfcgbc/>.

Questions or hike suggestions, please contact Muhannad at <https://www.meetup.com/SacFAN/members/328699576/>.

➤ More Local Events - Event Calendars

But wait, there's more! And plans keep changing, so don't depend on all the static list above. To keep track of those other events, bookmark & follow these links:

- Sacramento Freethinkers, Atheists and Nonbelievers, <https://www.meetup.com/SacFAN/events/calendar/>
- The Reason Center calendar, <https://www.meetup.com/ReasonCenterEvents/events/calendar/>
- Black Humanists of Sacramento events, <https://www.meetup.com/bhnb-sacramento/events/calendar/>
- Recovery from Religion Sacramento, <https://www.meetup.com/RfR-Sacramento-CA/events/calendar/>
- Sacramento Skeptics events, <https://www.meetup.com/sacskeptics/events/calendar/>
- Compassionate Humanists of Roseville, <https://www.meetup.com/compassionate-humanists/events/calendar/>
- Sunday Assembly Sacramento events, <https://www.meetup.com/sunday-assembly-sacramento/events/calendar/>
- Sacramento Atheistzone, formerly Think Atheist, <https://atheistzone.com/>
- Central Valley Alliance of Atheists & Skeptics, <https://www.meetup.com/fresno-cvaas/events/calendar/>

You can help. Here's how.

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. All good work. But to continue, "RC" relies on support from members and donors. Please stand up for Reason Center, because it stands up for you. To join or donate, visit ReasonCenter.org.

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.

✧ ✧ This Month's Secular Holidays ✧ ✧

➤ International Women's Day

Wednesday, Mar 8, 2023

[International Women's Day](#) (IWD), an international celebration, honors the social, economical, and political achievements made by women everywhere.

This secular holiday dates back to the early 1900's, a time of turbulent growth in the industrialized world that saw growing demands for women to have the right to vote. Among other relevant historical events, it commemorates the "Triangle Shirtwaist Factory Fire", on March 25, 1911 in New York City, where over 140 women lost their lives.

Born from the socialist and labor movements, International Women's Day has grown to become a global day of recognition and celebration across developed and developing countries alike. Promoted by the United Nations since 1975, International Women's Day is, in the words of the UN, "a day when women are recognized for their achievements without regard to divisions, whether national, ethnic, linguistic, cultural, economic or political. It is an occasion for looking back on past struggles and accomplishments, and more importantly, for looking ahead to the untapped potential and opportunities that await future generations of women."

IWD is an occasion that can be celebrated by all community groups that believe women's rights are human rights.



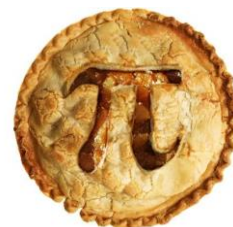
➤ Pi Day

Tuesday, Mar 14, 2023

Pi, Greek letter (π), is of course the symbol for the ratio of the circumference of a circle to its diameter. $\pi = 3.1415926535...$ (This is π to just ten decimal places; it is an irrational number, meaning the digits continue *infinitely* without repeating.) Math enthusiasts around the world celebrate Pi Day on March 14th, i.e. 3/14 in the American dating convention, since the first three digits of Pi are 3.14 (March 14 also happens to be Albert Einstein's birthday). "Pi Moment" occurs on that day just before 3:10 pm (more precisely, 15:9:26.5).

The San Francisco Exploratorium celebrated the first **Pi Day** in 1988, with staff and public marching around one of its circular spaces, and then consuming fruit pies. Since then, the museum has added pizza pies to its Pi Day menu. The founder of Pi Day, the "Prince of Pi," is Larry Shaw, now retired from the Exploratorium, but still helping with the celebrations. The Massachusetts Institute of Technology often mails out its acceptance letters to be delivered to prospective students on Pi Day.

Celebrate Pi Day by doing anything to get students interested in mathematics. Teachers can organize many unique activities for students to generate interest. It is also used to inform students as well as the rest of the public about Pi, its history and applications. Pi Day parties in math and science classes are common, utilizing different types of pies, all the while teaching students about pi.



➤ Freedom of Information Day

Thursday, Mar 16, 2023

[Freedom of Information \(FOI\) Day](#) is an annual event on March 16, the birthday of James Madison, widely regarded as the Father of the Constitution and a foremost advocate for openness in government.

On this day, the [American Library Association](#) presents the James Madison Award and the Eileen Cooke State & Local Madison Award to recognize those individuals or groups that have championed, protected, and promoted public access to government information and the public's right to know.

The **James Madison Award** – Named for President James Madison, the award was established in 1986 and is presented annually on the anniversary of his birth. That award is designed to celebrate an individual or group that has brought awareness to these issues at the national level.

The **Eileen Cooke State & Local Madison Award** – Named for Eileen Cooke, former director of the ALA's Washington Office, this award honors an extraordinary leader who has built local grassroots awareness of the importance of access to information. Cooke herself was a tireless advocate for the public's right to know and a mentor to many librarians and trustees.



➤ Sunshine Week

Sunday, Mar 12 – Saturday, Mar 18, 2023

[Sunshine Week](#) is the week including Freedom of Information Day (March 16). It stands as a national initiative to open discussions about open government and



freedom of information. This secular celebration dates back to 2002 when the Florida Society of Newspaper Editors launched Sunshine Sunday in response to efforts by some Florida legislators to create new exemptions to the state's public records law. After Florida's initiation on this topic, other states followed its course. The American Society of Newspaper Editors launched Sunshine Week in March 2005. It has become an annual event.

Sunshine Week is not just for journalists. Anyone can be involved: students, teachers, bloggers, private citizens, public officials and non-profit groups. The only requirement is to engage in a public discussion either small or large about the importance of open government. A discussion can take many forms: a large public forum, a classroom discussion, an article or an editorial. The idea of participation is not about how much, but about actually being involved.

➤ Equinox (March)

Monday, March 20

The **March Equinox** is one of two days in the calendar year when day and night hours are nearly equal; in the northern hemisphere, it is also the first day of Spring (Gregorian calendar).

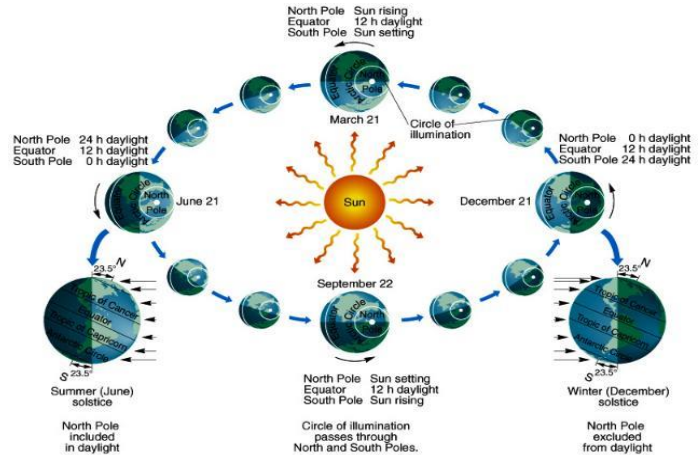
Annual seasons exist because of two planetary occurrences:

- 1) a 23.5° tilt of the earth's axis, which makes the earth rotate like a gyroscope, so it points continuously in a fixed direction-toward the area of space near the North Star;
- 2) the earth continuously revolves around the sun in an elliptical orbit-once every 365.25 of our solar days.

So for half of the year the Southern Hemisphere is more exposed to the sun than the Northern Hemisphere, and for the other half of the year the reverse is true.

The Vernal (Spring) Equinox is almost exactly halfway between the winter and summer solstices, and in the sky the sun appears about midway between its highest and lowest points. It is one of the two times during the year when day and night are almost exactly 12 hours long, and very close to being equal to one another. The other day is the Autumnal Equinox, which usually falls on or near the first day of Autumn (September 22-23 northern hemisphere / March 20-21 southern) in the Gregorian calendar.

In every culture the Vernal Equinox signals the return of weather that favors our ability to grow agricultural crops, and for this reason we have associated it with the "rebirth" of our ability to perpetuate ourselves. It is understandable why we have chosen to celebrate such a momentous occasion, and why it has come to represent "rebirth" in a variety of contexts. For freethinkers the Vernal Equinox is a great time to celebrate the rebirth of Western art, philosophy, and culture with secular themes after centuries of religious domination. It is also a perfect day to celebrate the accomplishments of intellect, reason, and logic, and a time to renew connections to our intellectual past as well as renew promises to continue striving to enlighten and improve the human condition.



➤ Atheist Coming-Out Day

Thursday, Mar 23, 2023

Atheist Day or Atheist Coming-Out Day is a fairly new global secular holiday declared in 2019 by the [Freedom From Religion Foundation](#) in partnership with the [Atheist Republic](#). In the words of the declaration:

We atheists and atheist allies hereby declare that from now on, March 23rd is Atheist Day. We recognize the struggle of atheists to live authentic lives in many parts of the world. The struggle to openly affirm one's atheism. The fear of intolerant governments, mobs, and religious zealots.

On March 23rd we shall take a stand for our right to be treated equal and for those of us in countries where atheists are persecuted and live under a threat of death. From every city in every country in the world we shall be one voice, a voice of reason.





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: Prolific Pamela Rivera
 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, 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 pages (two):

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/1525411971087089/>
<https://www.facebook.com/Atheists-and-Other-Freethinkers-AOF-104763721971742>

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>.

In Canada, when it comes to religion, most adults believe Catholics, evangelicals, and Muslims do more harm than good. All three religions had a net negative score when people were asked if their members helped or hurt Canadian society. Evangelical Christians received the lowest scores. Those are some takeaways from [a 2022 survey](#) conducted by the Angus Reid polling group.

In your view, would you say the overall presence of each of these in Canadian public life is benefitting or damaging Canada and Canadian society? (Net benefitting minus damaging shown)									
	Gen pop sample (1,708)	Religion							
		Roman Catholic	Mainstr. Protest.	Evangel. Christ.	Muslim	Hindu	Sikh	Jewish	No religion
Catholicism	-5%	22%	1%	7%	3%	-14%	2%	-15%	-47%
Protestantism	9%	6%	32%	55%	15%	-10%	1%	10%	-15%
Evangelical Christianity	-16%	-15%	-10%	68%	-5%	-16%	-2%	-46%	-46%
Islam	-11%	-19%	-2%	-24%	44%	-32%	-8%	11%	-13%
Hinduism	9%	8%	9%	8%	12%	37%	18%	34%	6%
Sikhism	6%	-2%	11%	-1%	35%	16%	74%	39%	3%
Judaism	14%	13%	26%	35%	27%	10%	19%	58%	3%
Atheism	7%	2%	-1%	-43%	-9%	15%	19%	17%	32%