

✧ ✧ **Upcoming AOF Events** ✧ ✧

➤ **AOF at Sacramento Earth Day ♥ ♥**

Sunday, April 23, 2023, 11am - 4pm

Location: Southside Park, Sacramento on 6th Street, between T and W Streets; see map at <https://goo.gl/maps/uzgMquB1abSvZbRb7>.

It's [Sacramento Earth Day](#), the largest Earth Day festival in the Central Valley, hosted yearly by the Environmental Council of Sacramento (ECOS). Free to all, it offers fun, games, music, and info on healthy gardens and sustainability. AOF will proudly sponsor and table at the event, adding to the cheerful cacophony (and possibly cheesing off a few evangelists).



Find it on the central green in beautiful [Southside Park](#), where experts will advise you on native plants, water conservation and landscaping. Nurseries will offer native plants for sale. Bring your gardening questions ... And visit *us*, of course! Stop by the AOF table to say hello and hobnob. It may take effort to find, but you'll have fun looking. And if you can volunteer to join us for an hour or two, *contact the AOF president now* (see below). Just say what hour(s) you can spare to help table.

Sacramento Earth Day is a delight -- a textured phantasmagoria of art, live music, vegan-friendly food, cute dogs, assorted cults, earnest screeds, aged hippies, tables piled with free swag, and more. This year's theme is GROW NATIVE. And we remind you, attendance is FREE.

Contact for details: see <https://www.aofonline.org/contact.html>, or email "president (at) aofonline (dot) org".

→ If you wish to *volunteer* to join us for an hour or two, contact AOF, and say hour(s) you can spare.

Earth Day details at: <https://www.ecosacramento.net/sacearthday/>.

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

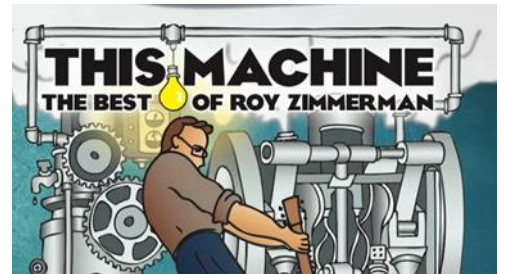
Sacramento has other freethought groups. So much to do! Here are some event listings – just a sample.

➤ **Roy Zimmerman – “This Machine”**

Friday, April 7, 2023, 8pm - 11pm

Location: Reason Center, 1300 Ethan Way, suite 675, Sacramento; see map at <https://goo.gl/maps/Dz1mgtEAP6jE3oX79>.

For thirty-odd years, singer and satirist Roy Zimmerman has brought the struggle for social justice to stages, screens and airwaves (and they've been thirty *very odd* years). “This Machine” is ninety minutes of Roy's music, at turns heartfelt and hilarious. It is laughter and encouragement for progressive-minded people who need a lot of both.



With his wife and co-writer Melanie Harby, Roy celebrates the release of “This Machine: The Best of Roy Zimmerman,” a double album set, containing their runaway song parody “Vote Him Away (The Liar Tweets Tonight).” Joni Mitchell says, “Roy's lyrics move beyond poetry and achieve perfection.”

Details at: <https://www.meetup.com/reasoncenterevents/events/292474678/>, or call 916-426-2464 (Reason Center).

This is a video concert. Attendance fee: \$20 at the door.

COVID-19 safety measures apply. Event will be indoors. The event host is instituting safety measures.

➤ **Saturday Morning Hike**

Saturday, Apr 8, 9:30am – 11:30am

Sacramento has gorgeous hiking places, ranging from riverside nature to rugged hills. Join us for hiking on a Saturday each month, to meet new people, observe nature, and leave footprints. Site to be determined.

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

➤ **Blasphemy Breakfast**

Saturday, Apr 8, 2023, 10am – 11:30am

Sunday, Apr 16, 2023, 9:30am – 11am

Apr 8 location: Mel's Diner, 13399 Folsom Blvd, Folsom, CA, map at <https://goo.gl/maps/ri6JvaBoSZVHTdnU6>.

Apr 16 location: Mel's Diner, 6708 Lonetree Blvd, Rocklin, CA, map at <https://goo.gl/maps/ZUY2gg72KkmkC4bU6>. 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 the diner for our "Blasphemy Breakfast." We really don't blaspheme all that much, but who knows what dark mutterings will emerge? A great place to speak your mind, and a good starter if you are new to meetups.

Details for Apr 8, see <https://www.meetup.com/sacfan/events/vhszctyfcgblb/>.

Details for Apr 16, see <https://www.meetup.com/sacfan/events/pwwnssyfcgbvbl/>.

➤ **Recovery from Religion (RfR) Virtual Support meetings**

Saturday, Apr 8, 5pm – 7pm (female only, online link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87403436249>)

Saturday, Apr 15, 7am – 9am (online attendance link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/7287067292>)

Sunday, Apr 16, 12 noon – 2pm (for LGBTQA+ folk, attendance link <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/7287067292>)

Thursday, Apr 20, 8pm – 10pm (online attendance link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82268955990>)

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

➤ **Flying Spaghetti Monster Pirate-party**

Sunday, Apr 9, 12 noon – 2pm

Location: Reason Center, 1300 Ethan Way, suite 675, Sacramento; map at <https://goo.gl/maps/Dz1mgtEAP6jE3oX79>.

In honor of the [Flying Spaghetti Monster](#), Reason Center will host a pirate potluck of spaghetti, pizza, salad, drinks and dessert. Join us for the first celebration of His Noodliness at RC; bring your favorite food to share! Note, pirates are sacred to the "FSM," don't ask why, but a pirate costume is optional.

Details at: <https://www.meetup.com/sacfan/events/292731353/>.

➤ **Suicide Loss Survivors Discussion and Support**

Tuesday, Apr 11, 2023, 5pm – 7pm

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

➤ **Word Confusion**

Wednesday, Apr 12, 2023, 7pm – 9pm

Wonder about words or phrases? Language is 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/kxfzctyfcgbqb/>.

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

➤ **Birds, Blooms, and Vernal Pools**

Saturday, Apr 15, 2023, 9am – 11am

Location: Phoenix Park, 9050 Sunset Avenue, Fair Oaks, map at <https://goo.gl/maps/VHTvRCdfnS7eaTyB8>.

Join an easy 3/4 mile nature walk in Phoenix Park. Expect a muddy trail, birds, wildflowers, oaks, vernal pools (and their attendant flora and fauna), and at least one nature nerd. Meet at the kiosk at the beginning of the vernal pool trail.

Details at: <https://www.meetup.com/bhnb-sacramento/events/291877357/>. An RSVP might be nice.

➤ **Coffee and Community**

Sunday, Apr 16, 2023, 10:30am – 12 noon

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

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, such friendly people!

➤ **Ancient Christian Study Group**

Saturday, Apr 16, 2023, 12 noon – whenever

Location: Shine Cafe, 1400 E Street, Sacramento, map at <https://goo.gl/maps/8YJG9B7PbAwNjxjh6>.

The history of ancient Christianity is endlessly fascinating. Don Fox and Steve Thoreson will help review the history of Rome, religions of the empire, Gnosticism, Mystery cults, history of Christian persecutions, biographies of major Christians, Bible history and other such topics. Previous biblical knowledge not required to participate.

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

➤ **Casual Game Day & Game Swap**

Saturday, Apr 22, 2023, 3pm – 10pm

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

Casual board & 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. Bring your own snacks, but no alcohol!

Details: See <https://www.meetup.com/sacfan/events/292696476/>.

➤ **Black Humanists & Non-Believers Book Club**

Saturday, Apr 22, 2023, 3:30pm – 5pm

An online book discussion open to all, about Chapters 5-7 of *Godless Americana: Race and Religious Rebels*, by Sikivu Hutchinson. For details see: <https://www.meetup.com/bhnb-sacramento/events/dbdzvqyfcgbd/>.

➤ Ex-Muslim Chat

Saturday, Apr 22, 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, see <https://www.meetup.com/reasoncenterevents/events/vxqfctyfcgbd/>.

➤ Atheist Community Online “New Start” Videos

Monday, May 1, 2023, 7:30pm – 9:30pm

Educational and entertaining presentations on 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>.

➤ More Local Events - Event Calendars

But there's more! And plans keep changing, so don't trust 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/>
- Central Valley Alliance of Atheists & Skeptics, <https://www.meetup.com/fresno-cvaas/events/calendar/>

Can you be part of this? Yes! 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. 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.

✧ ✧ **Secular Holidays in April** ✧ ✧

➤ April Fools Day

Saturday, April 1, 2023

For decades, April Fools Day has been a celebration of nonsense. Practical jokes and other foolish activities mark the morning hours of April 1st. 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 Fools Day offers to groups, organizations and individuals committed to minimizing the nonsense and gobbledegook 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 officially recognizing *Dumbth* as the Book of the Month.



➤ Yuri's Night, or Cosmonauts Day

Wednesday, April 23, 2023

Yuri's Night, also called **Cosmonauts Day**, is in honor of 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's 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. Celebrating Yuri's Night not only is about celebrating his historic achievement, but all accomplishments of science that have overturned dogma and advanced our knowledge of our universe.

"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 20, 2023

[National Ask an Atheist Day](#) is a movable secular holiday occurring twice each year -- on the 3rd Thursday of April (anywhere from April 15 to April 21), and the 3rd Thursday of September (from 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.

**I'M AN
ATHEIST
ASK ME ANYTHING**

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 NAaA Day has occurred across the nation each April since, and soon in September as well.

For more about the day and how to participate, take a look at the [Ask an Atheist Day Activity Guide](#). But what if you aren't an atheist? Celebrate NAaA Day by asking an atheist about atheism! The day is meant to be filled with respectful dialogue, so make sure to participate in such a way, no matter if you are an atheist or the person asking questions.

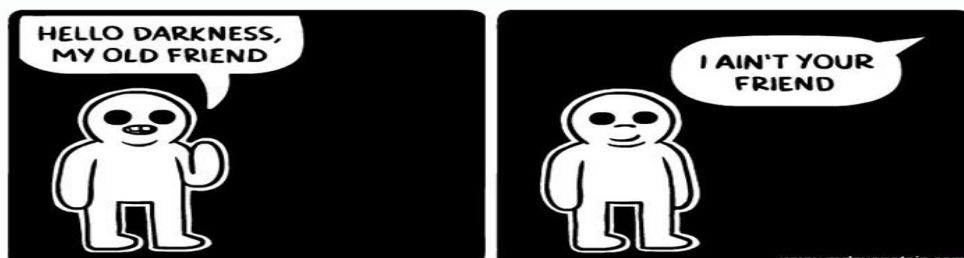
➤ Earth Day

Saturday, April 22, 2023

Earth Day is a day to grow and diversify the environmental movement, 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.



Utah lawmakers allowed book banning; a parent went after the Bible

Parent submitted a detailed request to get Bible banned due to inappropriate content

Conservatives in several states have moved to ban books deemed inappropriate for children because they cover racism, sex, and LGBTQ relationships in ways that make certain parents very uncomfortable. The books themselves aren't graphic, much less pornographic, but fear-mongering has been effective, especially in states like Texas and Florida. Utah too. Last year, lawmakers passed a bill paving the way for the banning of school books that contain "pornographic or indecent" content. Those words, however, are not defined, allowing groups to declare just about anything they don't like as unfit for kids. But at least one parent decided to kick conservatives where it hurts: in their favorite holy book.

According to reporter **Courtney Tanner** of the *Salt Lake Tribune*, a parent submitted a formal request last December to get the Bible banned from Davis High School in Kaysville. The newspaper received a copy of it via a public records request. While the submitter's name is redacted, the content of the request is glorious. **"Incest, onanism, bestiality, prostitution, genital mutilation, fellatio, dildos, rape, and even infanticide,"** the parent wrote in their request, listing topics they found concerning in the religious text. "You'll no doubt find that **the Bible, under Utah Code Ann. § 76-10-1227, has 'no serious values for minors' because it's pornographic by our new definition.**" "Get this PORN out of our schools," the parent wrote. **"If the books that have been banned so far are any indication for way lesser offenses, this should be a slam dunk."** The parent in question didn't just say all this. Included in the demand was an 8-page list of specific verses that justified the request. The parent also included this bit of sarcasm when introducing the list: **"I thank the Utah Legislature and Utah Parents United for making this bad faith process so much easier and way more efficient. Now we can all ban books and you don't even need to read them** or be accurate about it. Heck, you don't even need to see the book!"

Was it trolling? Sure. But the request is superficially no different from the ones conservative parents are making, and the school district says it will review the request just as it does all the others they've received. (It's taking a while because there's a backlog.) The point is obvious: Just because a book mentions sex (or any other potentially controversial topic) doesn't mean it deserves to be banned from school shelves. Children should have the option of reading what they want—and easy access to books that other people (including adults!) may not want them to read. If conservatives are targeting young adult novels that talk about same-sex attraction, just to name one example, then there's no reason everyone else shouldn't target holy books which are far more offensive. That includes the *Book of Mormon*. If the passages in those religious books were written as a young adult novel, you can bet conservatives would ban those, too.

To be clear, the purpose of calling for a ban on the Bible isn't to actually ban the Bible. It's to highlight the absurdity of book-banning, period. The solution isn't to toss the Bible out of school for children who may want to read it; it's to make sure public school students have access to all kinds of literature.

Friendly Atheist, <https://friendlyatheist.substack.com/>,
(03/24/2023)

Reprinted from *CDSH Monthly*, April 2023



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 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, 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 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.

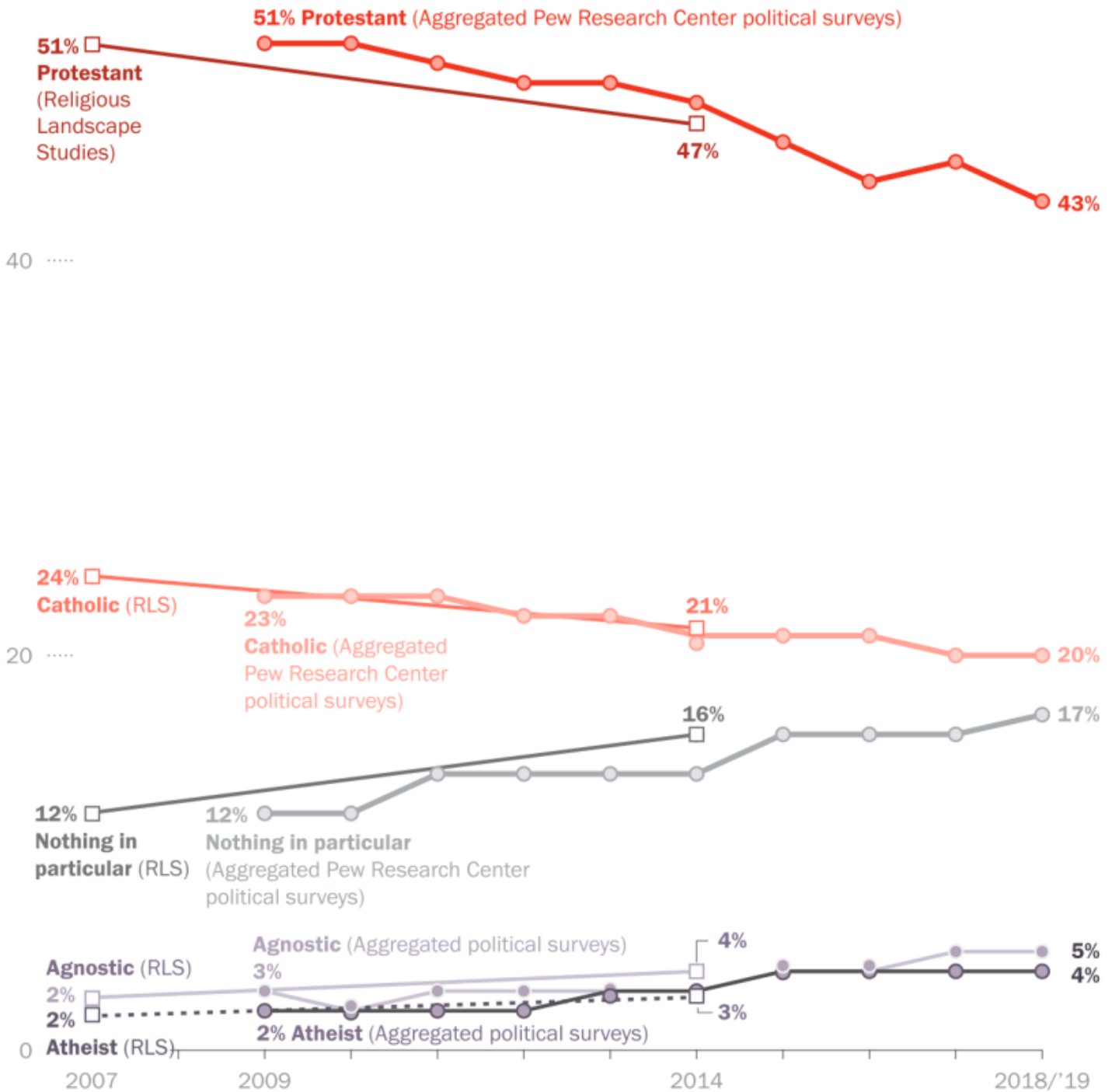
Donations to AOF are tax deductible, and the newsletter is free by email. Please share with sympathetic friends.

Letters, submissions? We love them! See: <http://www.aofonline.org/read/submission-guide.html>.

Your 'umble editor is Fran Evanisko.

Protestants and Catholics shrinking as share of U.S. population; all subsets of 'nones' are growing

% of U.S. adults who identify as ...



Source: Pew Research Center Religious Landscape Studies (2007 and 2014). Aggregated Pew Research Center political surveys conducted 2009-July 2019 on the telephone.

"In U.S., Decline of Christianity Continues at Rapid Pace"

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

Family News Department

Past AOF director and editor of this newsletter **Jody Craig** called to say she will move to Portland, OR, in June to be with family and lend needed support. If you remember her and would like to say goodbye, please contact the editorial staff – Jody is busy packing, but we will try to get a message to her.

