

✧ ✧ **Upcoming Events** ✧ ✧

➤ **Free Movie Nights!**

Friday, November 3 and November 17, 2017, 7pm – 10pm

Free Movie Nights are an ongoing collaboration of Reason Center (RC) and AOF, within the scope of an excellent MPLC License. The License prohibits us from announcing the movie title. We can hint, but your best bet is to contact RC. They'll tell you, then you can tell anyone.

On Nov 3rd, it's a documentary about separation of church and politics, focused on a certain California church that went possibly too far beyond the limits when a contentious proposition came before voters.

On Nov 17th it will feature a sci fi adventure about a billionaire and his ragtag crew on a secret mission to a new planet to follow a star map left via clues in disconnected archaeological sites. As they investigate, things go very wrong, very fast.

Movie Nights are informal, picnic-style family events. The venue has a huge silver screen and a 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, theater popcorn. Children are welcome if they're cool children, and if the movie is appropriate for tender eyes & ears. (Note, the taller your chair, the further back you will sit -- keep that in mind.)

This is especially for Reason Center members, but non-members are welcome too. RC *may* beg a small donation to cover costs. How to become a member? Sign up at <http://reasoncenter.com/donate/>. Membership is a measly \$4 a month, is tax deductible if you itemize, and the perks (like this one) will sprinkle you with stardust.

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 two Friday evenings each month. Suggest your own fave film for next time!



➤ **Board of Directors Meeting**

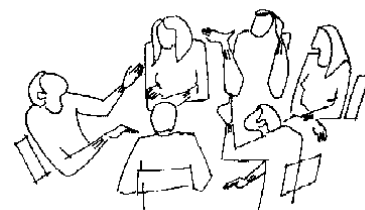
Tuesday, November 14, 2017, 7pm – 9pm

An AOF planning meeting for AOF Directors & officers, but open to *all* interested friends and members. These happen conspiratorially about every other month.

You are welcome to join us, and meet the Board, and keep a sharp eye on us.

Location: Reason Center, 1824 Tribute Rd, Suite A, Sacramento, [see map](#)

Contact: See <http://www.aofonline.org/contact.html>.



➤ **Philosophers' Table: The Atheist Conceit**

Sunday, November 26, 2017, 12:00pm - 01:00pm

"Disdain, Part Deux"

A few months back we looked at various aspects of the atheist conceit. Non-believers are notorious for being dismissive of religious people, just as religious people can often be intolerant of us. Is it simply human nature? Can we move beyond that archaic in-group/out-group dynamic? Or is the need to belong as strong as the apparent need to exclude? What steps could we take to shed that way of living? Let's talk about this!

Location: Reason Center, 1824 Tribute Rd, Suite A, Sacramento, [see map](#)

Contact: See <http://www.aofonline.org/contact.html>.

AOF Philosophers' Tables are roundtable discussions, free to attend and open to all, religious believers and anti-theists too. Join us, we hardly bite at all.



➤ **Tribalism: Why We Choose to hate**

Sunday, November 26, 2017, 1:00pm – 3:00pm

Once again (last time was, oh, about six years ago), AOF is honored to present Richard Andrew Kowaleski, critical thinker, skeptic, professional stage magician, Rotarian speaker, wry mind, bon vivant and hot ballroom dancer. His topic: Tribalism. What is that?

We have a need to belong. But also, apparently, a need to exclude. This is tribalism, the human tendency to bunch into groups like little dust-bunnies. Whatever group we go to, its characteristics begin to define us. Straying from group norms is dangerous -- it sparks suspicion, anger, worry, curiosity, envy, fear, even admiration. Then if adventurers come home, homeboys may ostracize them, attack them, even welcome them warmly. A paradox. Is this simply another puzzle of human nature? Can we ever get past it?

We are definitely a squirrelly species.

Professor Richard Andrew Kowaleski of California State University, Sacramento, teaches critical thinking at the CSUS Renaissance Society, where he explores the biases that undermine sound decision-making. He is emeritus faculty from Sac State's College of Engineering and Computer Science, and he formerly taught engineering and mathematics courses at the United States Air Force Academy.



Another fine event of the AOF Speaker Series. Damn yeah!

Location: Sacramento Reason Center, 1824 Tribute Rd, Suite A, Sacramento, [see map](#)

Contact: See <http://www.aofonline.org/contact.html>.

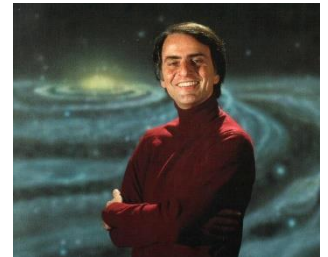
As ever, bring a snack to share if you can. Or a beverage. We like beverages too. Nothing alcoholic, please.



✧ ✧ Secular Holidays ✧ ✧ (November 2017)

➤ Carl Sagan Day Thursday, Nov 9

[Carl Sagan Day](#) marks the birthday of the great Carl Sagan, and is a celebration to honor his memory. Professor of Astronomy and Space Science and Director of the Laboratory for Planetary Studies at Cornell University, Carl Sagan was an outspoken skeptic, humanist and freethinker, and a Pulitzer Prize winning science author. But the public mostly remembers him as the creator of the [Cosmos](#) television series. This Emmy and Peabody award-winning PBS series transformed educational television when it aired in 1980. Thirty years later it still seems fresh, and has gone on to affect the hearts and minds of over a billion people in sixty countries.



His *magnum opus* was his final book, [The Demon-Haunted World](#), published in 1995, the year before his untimely death.

Few other science writers (perhaps only Isaac Asimov) were able to reach and teach so many nonscientists in such a meaningful way. So, in 2009, the [Center for Inquiry](#) inaugurated Carl Sagan Day as a secular holiday. Each year we will continue to celebrate Dr. Sagan, remember him and his work, and revel in the wondrous cosmos he helped us understand.

➤ Church/State Separation Week Friday, Nov 24 – Tuesday, Nov 28

Many freethinkers have adopted the week of Thanksgiving (~November 24) as **Church/State Separation Week**, to offer concerned and active citizens an opportunity to educate others about the importance of a clear division between Church and State. The hope is that this secular holiday will rally us and provide a platform to celebrate one of this nation's finest contributions to civilization.

Secularist societies such as [Americans United](#), the [Institute for First Amendment Studies](#), the [Freedom From Religion Foundation](#), the [American Atheists](#) and the [Institute for the Secularization of Islamic Society](#), as well as others united for a secular government, have supported this celebration.



In humanist circles, some also celebrate November 24 as [Evolution Day](#), marking as it does the anniversary of the first publication of *The Origin of Species* (Nov 24, 1859). For the most, however, the focus is on church/state separation this week. Charles Darwin has his own secular holiday (February 12).



Movie Review

Dogma, a View Askew Production, released November 1998, directed by Kevin Smith, distributed by Lions Gate Films. Starring Ben Affleck, George Carlin, Matt Damon, Alan Rickman, Linda Fiorentino, and "Jay & Silent Bob".

Reason Center's Free Movie on October 20 was *Dogma*, an urban religious fantasy and comedy, the fourth movie by cult-film director Kevin Smith. Like the first three it occurs in the "ViewAskewniverse," the world of Jay & Silent Bob, clueless stoners reminiscent of Cheech & Chong (but Jay is more foul-mouthed), the McKenzie Brothers (not quite *that* clueless) or Penn & Teller (only in the sense that Silent Bob is mostly silent).

In *Dogma*, Ben Affleck and Matt Damon are two outcast angels who find a loophole to return to heaven. One catch: if they succeed, the universe evaporates. Meanwhile, God has gone missing. Heaven scrambles to stop the cosmic holocaust. An angel visits the Last Scion, the many-times-great grandniece of Jesus (Linda Fiorentino), who happens to be a lapsed Catholic working at an abortion clinic. He sends her to stop the renegades, appointing two "prophets" (Jay & Silent Bob) to help. Reluctantly she sets out, on the way garnering other supernatural help and adversity—including two retired Muses, the 13th Apostle, and the Golgotha, a demon composed of ... uh, let's move on.



The satire of the Church triggered organized protests and over 300,000 pieces of hate mail, including death threats against Kevin Smith (himself a practicing Catholic). Having a sense of humor, Kevin subsequently joined a protest at the Sony Multiplex in Eatontown, New Jersey, carrying a sign reading "Dogma is Dogshit." News crews spotted him, gave him a prime time interview, and generated much publicity for the film.

Dialog manages to be both clever and wooden, acting adequate, and special effects a long walk from cutting edge. Even so *Dogma* has a sturdy cult following. It is an "idea movie" – the key idea being the danger of confusing faith with dogma, or using faith to justify greed, war, racism or homophobia. The ending, involving a Biblical-scaled holocaust of flying body parts, with the answer to the One Cosmic Question you always wanted to ask God, is purest popcorn.

It was nominated for an Independent Spirit Award as well as a Science Fiction and Fantasy Writers of America honor, both for Best Screenplay, and received a Las Vegas Film Critics Society Awards in 2000.

MPAA Rating: R for "strong language including sex-related dialogue, violence, crude humor and some drug content." Yeah.

Ken Nahigian



Support Reason Center

Reason Center opened in July 2014. Since opening it has hosted well over 200 freethought events. Plus a cool wedding! Currently the Center has 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.

Reason Center relies on continued support for its members and donors. Please consider making a contribution to the Reason Center. To set up a monthly, or one-time donation visit ReasonCenter.org.



And Support AOF

You can support AOF *without spending a dime*. What, 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 exactly the same, but AOF will get a small kickback for whatever you purchase.

When you donate blood...

Please consider donating blood at the BloodSource, and if you do, use AOF BloodSource ID# 4857. Numerous BloodSource Donation Centers exist -- find them listed at: <http://www.bloodsource.org/Locations>.

AOF gets no perks when members donate, but it saves lives, and is good for public relations. And what can be more humanistic than donating blood?

Not a member of Atheists and Other Freethinkers? Pah. Please join us.

AOF is a 501(c)(3) non-profit association, FEIN 68-0325762. General Meetings are free and open to the public. AOF also hosts civic service projects, dinners, movie outings, parties! To see what awaits you, visit the website, www.aofonline.org; or contact AOF at our 24/7 voice-mail: 916-304-3796; or write to PO Box 15182, Sacramento, CA 95851-0182. Or try interpretive dance. AOF President: Brad Clark. Vice-president: Mynga Futrell. Newsletter editor: Fran Evanisko. And all the rest of us, their minions.

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.

Subscription / Membership Form

Mail to: AOF, PO Box 15182, Sacramento CA 95851-0182 (Attn: Membership)

Name(s) _____ Phone: _____
Street _____ Apt. # _____
City _____ State _____ ZIP + 4 _____
E-mail address (please print!) _____

E-mail is required for newsletter delivery.

Questions, concerns? Call AOF, 916-304-3796.

Your Membership Level (annual, please circle):

Patron (\$50) Family (\$30) Individual (\$20) Low-income (\$10)

Basic Dues : \$ _____

Additional Donation : \$ _____

Total enclosed : \$ _____

Please check here if you do NOT want your name on lists occasionally provided to groups similar to AOF.

Please check here if you DO want to be an AOF Activist (e-mail address required).

AOF is a 501(c)(3) Educational Association, EIN 68-0325762. Dues & Donations are tax-deductable as permitted by law. Non-members may receive the AOF Newsletter for free on request (email only).

☞ Watch your email for the AOF Board of Directors Ballot, coming in November. Exercise your rights as a member, and keep AOF strong for another year. ☞

Ignorance is Bliss. And yet every day I set out to learn and to experience the world.
Why would I do this if it will only make me unhappy?

I do it because even when I was ignorant I could tell there was something I lacked, something others had. I knew it the same way a man who had never eaten would know hunger, though not food. So I began to grow up and by this logic, I should regret it. But I don't.

Knowledge and understanding underpin appreciation and enjoyment of life's supreme and incomprehensible beauty. I will never choose to return to ignorance because that would rob me of all I have become and all I have seen.

It is only by allowing ourselves to see the stark horrors that exist that we can grow to understand and love all that is good. There is so much good in the world. That some choose to see only darkness and pine for ignorance is beyond my comprehension.

I will never return to the cloying darkness of ignorance. I face the future with adventure in my heart.

Will you come with me?

