



AOF News & Views – Newsletter for December 2017
Fran Evanisko, Editor

✧ ✧ **Upcoming Events** ✧ ✧

➤ **Free Movies!**

Friday, Dec 1 and Dec 15, 2017, 7pm – 10pm

The Free Movie Nights are a collaboration of Reason Center (RC) and AOF, under an excellent [MPLC License](#). The License prohibits us from naming the movie. We can hint, sometimes. But your best bet is to contact RC. They'll tell you, then you can tell anyone.

These are informal, picnic-style family evenings. The venue has a huge silver screen and a dynamic sound system. Chairs are available but may be a bit uncomfortable for a two-hour sit, so it's OK to bring blankets, pillows, lawn chairs and your own snacks & beverage, non-alcoholic please. RC will often provide fluffy, buttery theatre popcorn. Children are welcome if they're cool children -- and if you judge the movie appropriate for them.



The **December 1** movie is a 2009 historical drama/documentary about [Hypatia](#), cool mathematician, philosopher and astronomer of late 4th-century Roman Egypt, who challenged the emerging Christian church and came to a tragic end for her freethinking ways.

On **December 15** it's a fantasy-comedy about a pompous television personality who becomes "stuck" in time, looping through the same day over and over, until he learns some much-needed life lessons.

This is especially for Reason Center members, but all are welcome. RC *may* beg a small donation to cover costs. How to become a member? Glad you asked! Just sign up at <http://reasoncenter.com/donate/>. Dues are a measly \$4 a month, tax deductible if you itemize, and the perks (like this one) will fall unto you like gentle rain from heaven, excuse the term.

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 a month. Please suggest your own fave film for next time!

➤ **Adopt-a-Highway Cleanup**

Saturday, Dec 2, 2017, 9am - 11am

Sacramento-area freethinkers have "adopted" a stretch of Highway 99 from Elkhorn Boulevard to Elverta Road. Since July 1995 we have kept it clean of litter and debris, and received recognition for our work. In fact, it is one of our more successful civic efforts, proving that freethinkers can also serve the community.

So, join us! Enjoy a morning commune with nature, and do a good 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. And the things you might find ...! Over the years volunteers have recovered many *highly esoteric* items: lacy under garb, erotic equipment, drug paraphernalia, even \$100 bills -- yo, we don't kid, *actual C-notes* littered amid the highway detritus! -- and even stranger things. No, we are too delicate of disposition to say ... we blush, we drop our eyes ... but we promise, surprises await.

As usual, 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 find the site, travel north from Sacramento on I-5, past Sleeptrain 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 [Contact Page](#).

Location: Caltrans Park-&-Ride lot, W. Elkhorn Blvd. Map: <https://goo.gl/maps/5V9ouwEiv1m>.

Note: This is a great activity for older children, but please leave smalls safe at home.



➤ Freethought Dinner Social

Saturday, Dec 9, 2017, 6pm

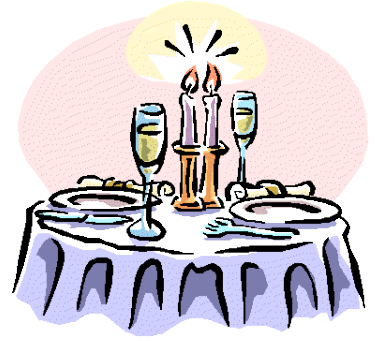
The Dinner Social is a casual dine-out for friends and members of the local community of reason, in fact for any who wish to join us. Come join your free-thinking pals at **Andy Nguyen's**, noted Asian vegetarian restaurant, for fine food, good drink and sparkling conversation. (Reservations may be advisable – please ask the contact person, see below.) For the beautiful menu, see: <https://goo.gl/Z6Y5o7>.

By the way, some are sensitive to colognes and perfumes. Except for your personal pheromones, please be chemical free. (And take it easy on those personal pheromones.)

Location: Andy Nguyen's, 2007 Broadway, Sacramento, ph. 916-736-1157.

Contact: 916-457-9123, 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!)



➤ HumanLight/Solstice Party ♥♥♥

Saturday, Dec 23, 2017, Noon - 2:30pm

Come celebrate positive Humanist ideals and values, such as reason, hope, compassion, science, kindness, joy and community! At a time of many religious holidays, HumanLight provides an opportunity for freethinkers to be festive and celebrate common values and friendship. This party will include a potluck, fund-raising raffle, and people- and pet-food charity drive. No charge to attend. Even parking is free! Just bring food to share for the potluck, your appetite, and a smile. Be prepared for some secular fun! The event is family-friendly, so bring the kiddos.



Potluck: Whip-up (or buy) your favorite dish to share. Please bring your food already prepared and ready to serve. The Reason Center kitchen has a microwave oven for warming-up food, but no oven or stove. A sink and refrigerator are also available. Plates, bowls, utensils, napkins, and cups will all be provided, but please remember to bring a serving utensil for your dish. Bring some beverages to share too. Wine and beer are okay.

Raffle: The raffle helps pay for the hall rental so that we can make attending the event free. If you have something that you'd like to donate to the raffle, please contact the event organizers.

People and Pet Food Charity Drive: We will collect food and basic supply items for two local charities, the River City Food Bank and the Sacramento Pet Food Bank (called "Titanic's Pantry"). So dig through your pantry or consider purchasing something at the store to donate. We will also have donation jars available for cash/check donations for both charities. This is an opportunity for the freethought community to come together and show their compassion and kindness for others in need. Donations for human and pet food and supplies are encouraged, but not required.

The event sponsors are the Humanist Association of the Greater Sacramento Area (HAGSA) and Atheists and Other Freethinkers (AOF).

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

Contact: tom (dot) ikelman (at) gmail (dot) com, wendynj5 (at) yahoo (dot) com, or call AOF (916-304-3796).

Reason Center has no cooking facilities, so pre-prep please. Hot plates, crock pots and warmers should be OK. Open fires, not so much. To volunteer, help set up & clean, contact the event organizers.

➤ Rational Refugees at Reason Center

Monday, Dec 25, 2017, 1pm - 3pm

"Rational Refugees from Religious Relatives - Relax, Relate and Regroup 2017"

It'll happen at RRRRRRRReason Center, where else? If the holiday hectors you, if religious relatives drive you half batty, take your sweet self and a friend or two (or more) to RC to relax with your fellow refugees from Chris... from Chris... from *that* day. Our sound system will play non-holiday music as we share snacks, stories and true camaraderie. We'll use the gentler lights, not harsh fluorescents, not multi-color strings, so you'll feel toasty and cozy.

This will be extra informal: no introduction or closing, just a seamless segue into a relaxing gathering. Bring goodies, friends, games, your favorite CD of secular music. If you want to bring a movie, do. Bring whatever party-ish leftovers you have so we can all absorb bizarre-looking comestibles.

We don't have to change much about the day, just keep what we like and ignore the rest. Just as everyone else does.

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

Contact: Call 916-304-3796, or see <http://www.aofonline.org/contact>.

Bring a snack to share if you can. Or a beverage. Nothing heavy, nothing alcoholic.

➤ Philosophers' Table: Growing our Community

Sunday, Dec 31, 2017, Noon - 1pm

Thanks to the Internet and organizations like Meetup.com, skeptics and non-religious folk are finding each other. More and more, we now know we're not alone.

How can we advance this? How can we best make secular people even more aware that a community of the like-minded exists? It will be welcome news to those who feel isolated, outcast or disconnected from their families, communities or churches.

About a quarter of the U.S. population now self-identifies somewhere along the non-belief spectrum as atheist, agnostic, Humanist, non-religious, and to some extent even "spiritual but not religious." Yet the media still seem to be unaware of us, and some media outlets openly malign us.

Outreach is the key. Bring your ideas, bring a friend. Speak and share. Then stick around for the general monthly meeting, which kicks off immediately after Philosophers' Table. Both are at the Reason Center, about a mile from the Arden Fair Mall and close to Business 80.

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

Contact: Call 916-304-3796, or see <http://www.aofonline.org/contact>.

The Philosophers' Tables are monthly roundtable discussions open to all, religious believers too. The only rule: be respectful, and listen at least as much as you speak.

➤ Planning for 2018

Sunday, Dec 31, 2017, 1pm - 3pm

It's about community. It's about enjoying the fellowship and camaraderie of non-believers, and getting to know more of your new friends.

Our presence in Sacramento is growing, and we can do it right if we can figure out what "right" means. Some pretty good ideas come from how religions grow their own communities, of course, because they've been refining growth strategies for millennia, while non-theists have only recently caught a clue that we, too, can join hands. Obviously, the Internet has something to do with that.

So what tools are there to grow our communities? Being friendly, sincere, and outgoing are good ways to start, so how do we implement that? One resource that's geared especially to the Freethought cause is the organizing manual of Secular Student Alliance (SSA). We can take a look at the most relevant tips.

If you've been reading up on church growth, bring your observations and ideas so the group can decide which strategies would work best for us.

Again, it's all about enjoying the companionship of fellow non-believers and getting to know more of your new friends.

As always, bring a few bucks to support Reason Center if you can. The Reason Center is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit, which means your donations are tax deductible to the extent allowed by law.

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Contact: Call 916-304-3796, or see <http://www.aofonline.org/contact>.

As ever, bring a snack to share if you can. Or a beverage. Nothing heavy, nothing alcoholic. Finger foods are best, yum.



◆ ◆ Secular Holidays ◆ ◆ December 2017

➤ International Human Rights Day

Monday, Dec 10

International Human Rights Day is a way to promote, defend, and remember the basic human rights every person in every country has as a result of being born into this world. The basic document that outlines these rights is known as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, as adopted by the United Nations in 1948.

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights came about as a result of the atrocities of World War II. As the United Nations came into being its charter gave human rights a new international legal status, and the need to codify human rights as a means to prevent similar atrocities took shape. It created a



Dignity and justice for all of us

Commission on Human Rights, which spent three years drafting the declaration with the help of such members as Eleanor Roosevelt, John P. Humphrey, Charles Malik and Rene Cassin. The declaration was adopted without dissent on December 10, 1948, and has grown in stature and respect over the years since its adoption as it continues to assert the human dignity and worth of every human being on the planet.

Since its adoption countries around the world have celebrated the anniversary, but it has only been since the 50th anniversary celebrations in 1998 that the holiday has gained in popularity.

Eleanor Roosevelt once said that the fate of human rights lies in the hands of everyone in every community. Freethinkers know the importance of this statement. It can often be a challenge for many of them to be given the same rights and opportunities as others in their own communities, much less in the world. They, of all people, understand the importance of keeping human rights the center of focus and attention in the world at large. Celebrating International Human Rights Day is a way to show how everyone, religious or not, is connected in ways that run deeper than the nature of belief.

➤ Bill of Rights Day

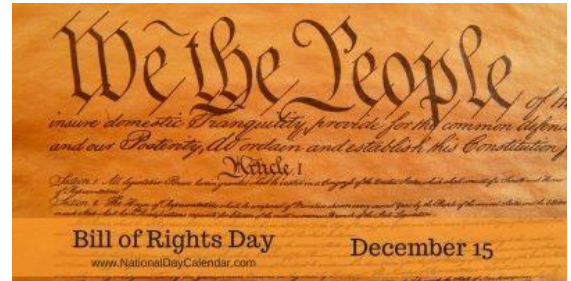
Friday, Dec 15

By Presidential Proclamation:

Now, Therefore, I, Franklin D. Roosevelt, President of the United States of America, do hereby designate December 15, 1941, as Bill of Rights Day. And I call upon the officials of the Government, and upon the people of the United States, to observe the day by displaying the flag of the United States on public buildings and by meeting together for such prayers and such ceremonies as may seem to them appropriate.

To view the full proclamation, see:

<http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=16046>



The first 10 amendments to the United States Constitution make up the Bill of Rights. Passed by Congress on September 25, 1789, these rights place limits on government power. Did you know ...?

- The bill was introduced by James Madison. He later became the 4th President of the United States.
- The Bill of Rights initially had 12 proposed amendments. One concerned the number of constituents for each Representative. The other addressed compensation of Congressman. Neither were ratified.
- In 1992, compensation of Congressman was ratified 203 years later and is now the 27th amendment.
- The Bill of Rights is displayed in The Rotunda of the National Archives Building in Washington, DC.
- There were 14 copies of the Bill of Rights, one for each of the 13 states to sign and one for the federal archives. Only 12 copies survive today.

➤ Solstice (December)

Thursday, Dec 21 in 2017

December Solstice is the *real* Reason for the Season. Called Winter Solstice in the northern hemisphere, Summer Solstice in the southern, people have marked this astronomical event for thousands of years. Many religions have seasonal holy days or celebrations linked to the December Solstice. It is the day the Northern Hemisphere has less daylight than at any other time of the year (we call it *the shortest day*), and the Southern Hemisphere has more daylight occurs than any other time (*the longest day*).



The exact date varies from year to year, but it will occur between the 20th and 23rd of December.

"Solstice" derives from two Latin words: *sol* (meaning sun) and *sistere* (to cause to stand still). At noon in either hemisphere the sun will be low in the sky during the winter season, high in the sky during summer. The day with the least daylight is the Winter Solstice, where sun has the lowest elevation. So, in the Northern Hemisphere, the December Solstice is officially the first day of winter, sometimes called Midwinter.

To the ancients, this day marked a key point in the cycle of life. For modern astronomy enthusiasts, it offers an opportunity to celebrate what we have learned about the cosmos, and allows us to revel in the excitement of space exploration and the complexity of the universe.

Book Review – Provided by Kathy M. Warnock

Out of the Flames by Lawrence and Nancy Goldstone

If you enjoy the show "Game of Thrones," and are interested in the history of Humanism and/or Unitarianism, then this is a must read for you. This book includes detailed descriptions on everything from how to shall I say barbeque a human to massacres of thousands of people. And every gory little evil in between. They even devised special machines so that the

condemned could be lowered into the flames, then raised up and lowered again and again to prolong the agony. Kind of gave me a different visual to "Dunkin Donuts." I don't think I'll be doing that any time soon. Then there's the Paris Massacre in which Catholic soldiers entered the city of Paris, slammed and locked the gates closed behind them, and basically slaughtered about 5,000 Protestants inside who could not get out. Interwoven amongst all of this mayhem is the story about one very intelligent and brave Michael Servetus. It is an interesting look at the "Reformation" era, so I highly recommend it.

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?

Support Reason Center

Reason Center opened in July 2014. It has hosted well over 200 freethought events, and acquired twelve partner organizations. Its mission is 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.



To continue, Reason Center depends on support from its members and donors. Please consider making a contribution. To set up a monthly, or one-time donation visit ReasonCenter.org.

News! Reason Center is **now able to receive donations of securities** (stocks & bonds). Please call RC at 916-426-6416 if you would like to try this. It has tremendous tax advantages!

Not a member of Atheists and Other Freethinkers? Then 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. AOF President: Brad Clark. Vice-president: Mynga Futrell. Editor: Fran Evanisko. And all the rest of us, their minions.

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 : \$ _____

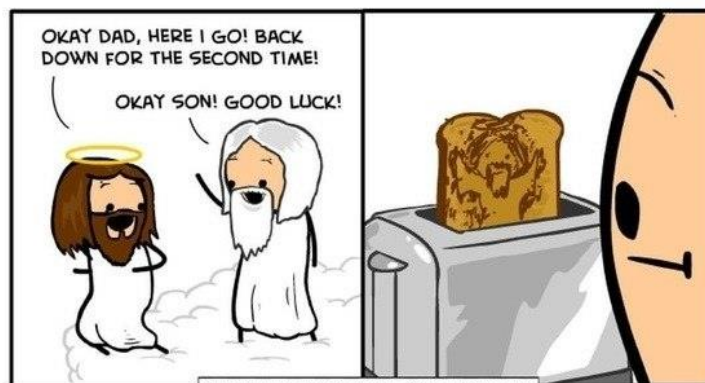
Total enclosed : \$ _____

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-deductible as permitted by law. Non-members may receive the AOF Newsletter for free on request (email only).

"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."



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