

✧ ✧ Upcoming AOF Events ✧ ✧

➤ Free Movie Nights!

Friday, August 3 & August 17, 2018, 7pm – 10pm

Twice a month, Reason Center (RC) and AOF join hands to host a **Free Movie Night** under an excellent MPLC License. Alas, we can't tell you the movie titles. *But we can hint.*

The first one is a 2017 documentary that follows former Secretary of Labor Robert Reich as he speaks to the heart of America about our economic system and how to fix it. The second is the acclaimed 1979 Monty Python comedy about Brian of Nazareth, who spends his life being mistaken for a certain messiah.



Can't guess? Look on the bright side: just contact Reason Center (see below). They'll tell you, then you can tell anyone!

Movie Night is an informal, picnic-style family evening. The venue has a huge silver screen and a dynamic sound system. The chairs 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. Fluffy, buttery theatre popcorn may be available. Children are welcome if they're cool children -- and if you think the movie appropriate for them.

The Movie Nights are especially for Reason Center members, but non-members are welcome too. RC *may* beg a small voluntary donation to cover costs. Want to join? Sign up at <http://reasoncenter.com/donate/>. Membership is a measly \$5 a month, is tax deductible if you itemize, and the many perks (like this one) will fall to you like 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>.

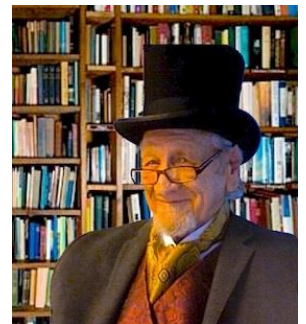
Free Movie Nights occur on a Friday evening each month. Maybe two Fridays. Suggest your own fave film for next time!

➤ How Darwin Became a Giant

Sunday, August 26, 2018, 1pm – 3pm

Presented for your purest joy: Charles Darwin, history's most influential freethinker, ranked as one of the Top Ten Minds of the Millennium. All agree he lived a fascinating, exciting life of discovery. AOF member Arthur Murchison, retired marine biologist, will now invite Darwin's living ghost to tell us how he (Darwin) became such a big noise in the world of science.

An enthusiastic science history buff, our time-tripping tour guide has spent much enjoyable time with 19th-century British scientists (called "natural philosophers" in the day). Art will fire up his Wayback Machine to revisit Charles Darwin's world with the help of digital images, music, narration and sound effects. Join him and us in a new phase of the adventure.



Contact: See the AOF Contact Page, <http://www.aofonline.org/contact>.

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

Free + free parking. But do bring some light snacks to share, and drop a dollar or two in Reason Center's donation jug.



✧ ✧ Other Events ✧ ✧

➤ Roy Zimmerman: RiZe Up (concert!)

Thursday, August 9, 2018, 7pm – 9pm

Join local humanists for *RiZe Up*, ninety minutes of original songs by satirical singer-songwriter and guitarist Roy Zimmerman, a forceful and funny affirmation of Peace and Social Justice.

Roy has been heard on HBO and Showtime; his videos have garnered tens of millions of views. He has recorded for Warner/Reprise Records and shared stages with Bill Maher, Ellen DeGeneres, Holly Near, Robin Williams, Arlo Guthrie, John Oliver, Kate Clinton and George Carlin. Roy tours the country constantly with his wife and co-writer Melanie Harby. "Sometimes I think satire is the most hopeful and heartfelt form of expression," says Roy, "because in calling out the world's absurdities and laughing in their face, I'm affirming the real possibility for change."



For this HAGSA-sponsored event, a donation of \$20 is requested (more if you like). Roy will receive 80% of the total; the rest will go to Reason Center.

Contact: See the HAGSA Contact Page, <http://hagsa.org/contact/>.

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

➤ **Writing Your Freethought Memoir**

Saturday, September 29, 2018, 1pm – 4pm

Not an AOF event. But we had to tell you, it's so cool!

Think of your journey from dogma to reason. Was it a single "aha" moment or a slow tidal change?

Pop media are soaked & soggy with stories of faith, but rarely do you hear the other side. Now Reason Center will host a workshop on writing your journey, so others can share the epiphanies, the eureka moments, and perhaps find their own enlightenment. This workshop will show how to bridge faith-based divides, how dismantle biases, and how to manage the fear of revealing your personal details. At the end you will have a rough draft of a memoir, story or personal essay, and a clear direction for its completion. Note: *Pre-registration required, see below.*



Your guide will be Joey Garcia – the same wise Joey who writes the "Ask Joey" relationship advice column for the *Sacramento News & Review*, and has spoken to AOF previously. She is a talk show host with NewsRadio KFBK, the on-air Relationship Expert for Fox 40 News, and the author of the award-winning book, *When Your Heart Breaks, It's Opening to Love*. Originally from Belize, Joey launched the first-ever Belize Writers' Conference in 2018.

Workshop Costs:

- * **Early-bird: \$30 through Sunday, Sept. 23.**
- * **Regular fee: \$35 after Sept. 23.**
- * **Registration closes Thursday, Sept. 27 at midnight.**
- * **To register see: <https://www.paypal.me/askjoey>**

Contact: Joey Garcia at joey@newsreview.com, or call Reason Center at 916-426-6416.

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

➤ **Still more events...**

Not busy enough? You amaze us. To learn of other freethought events in this area, check the Sacramento Coalition of Reason events calendar at <https://unitedcor.org/event-calendar-2/>.

Support Reason Center

We continue to beat the drum for Reason Center, which opened in July 2014 and has hosted well over 200 freethought events. 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.

You want this, right? But "RC" relies on continued support for its members and donors. Please consider making a contribution. To set up a monthly, or one-time donation visit ReasonCenter.org. And enjoy.



✧ ✧ Secular Holidays ✧ ✧

➤ World Friendship Day

Sunday, August 5, 2018

World Friendship Day (or International Friendship Day) is always the first Sunday of August, which of course floats like the friendships in our lives, and can be any day from Aug 1 through Aug 7.

We are social creatures. We recognize the value of friendship, the invisible thread connecting our hearts. In 1935 the US Congress proclaimed World Friendship Day as a time to celebrate this humanist sentiment. Since then other nations across the world have adopted the noble idea of Friendship Day, honoring it on the first Sunday of August every year, making it a true international celebration.

How can you acknowledge Friendship Day? Call on your friends, invite them for food, embrace them, exchange cards and flowers, gift them with a friendship band or bracelet, or mark the day with programs celebrating human camaraderie.

Note, some groups and nations celebrate Friendship at other times of the year, with different customs and different emphasis. For instance:

- National Friendship Day is the first Sunday in August
- Women's Friendship Day, the *third* Sunday in August
- International Friendship Month is February
- Old Friends / New Friends Week is the third week of May

What is remarkably constant amid this diversity is idea of the celebration of our connections. Everywhere, people express love for their friends and cherish their presence in life. For more information on this secular holiday, click [here](#).



➤ Ingersoll Day

Saturday, August 11, 2018

This Day marks the birthday of Robert Green Ingersoll, honoring the life and work of one of the most noted freethinkers in US history. Ingersoll was also the most successful orator in nineteenth century America, heard by more Americans than any human before the advent of motion pictures and radio. A leading political figure, he campaigned against slavery and for the rights of women and minorities. They called him the "Great Agnostic." He attracted huge crowds to lectures that criticized religion and promoted freethought. Walt Whitman and Mark Twain greatly admired him.



Celebrate Ingersoll Day with a visit to [the Robert Green Ingersoll Birthplace Museum](#), or by reading excerpts from [the Complete Works of Ingersoll](#).

When I became convinced that the universe is natural, that all the ghosts and gods are myths, there entered into my brain, into my soul, into every drop of my blood the sense, the feeling, the joy of freedom. The walls of my prison crumbled and fell. The dungeon was flooded with light and all the bolts and bars and manacles became dust. I was no longer a servant, a serf, or a slave. There was for me no master in all the wide world, not even in infinite space. I was free -- free to think, to express my thoughts -- free to live my own ideal, free to live for myself and those I loved, free to use all my faculties, all my senses, free to spread imagination's wings, free to investigate, to guess and dream and hope, free to judge and determine for myself. . . I was free! I stood erect and fearlessly, joyously faced all worlds.

-- Robert Green Ingersoll, "Why I Am an Agnostic"



A Letter to the Editor

Freethinkers should avoid the all or nothing attitude of religion, the division of people into sheep and goats who are either all in heaven or all in hell. Instead, people discredited for one thing in life should be allowed to prosper in another. To take an example from history and apply it to the freethinker me too situation: It was correct for murderer Robert Stroud, "birdman of Alcatraz," to be imprisoned for life, but it was also correct to allow him to pursue his outstanding

ornithological studies behind bars. So, to draw a broad analogy, even though Lawrence Krauss and David Silverman have bad personal lives, their writings and speeches on freethought are outstanding and should continue. So, Krauss and Silverman should be offered to be paid for additional books, articles, essays, and You Tube speeches on freethought subjects, but it should also be made clear that they aren't welcome to show up in person. I Krauss and Silverman continue to be committed to freethought as a cause, they should accept conditional offers like this.

Respectfully Yours, Andrew Orrin Lutes, Erlanger, KY (June 4, 2018)



Reasons to Hope

Excerpts from *The Better Angels of Our Nature* by Steven Pinker (2011, Viking Books)

Romantic visions of medieval Europe omit the exquisitely crafted instruments of torture and ... the thirtyfold greater risk of murder in those times. ... times in which the wife of an adulterer could have her nose cut off, a seven-year-old could be hanged for stealing a petticoat, a prisoner's family could be charged for easement of irons, a witch could be sawn in half, and a sailor could be flogged to a pulp. The moral commonplaces of our age, such as that slavery, war, and torture are wrong, would have been seen as saccharine sentimentality, and our notion of universal human rights almost incoherent. Genocide and war crimes were absent from the historical record only because no one at the time thought they were a big deal.

(pp. 692-694)

... consider some of the convictions that were common in the decades before the effects of rising abstract intelligence began to accumulate. A century ago dozens of great writers and artists extolled the beauty and nobility of war, and eagerly looked forward to World War I. One "progressive" president, Theodore Roosevelt, wrote that the decimation of Native Americans was necessary to prevent the continent from becoming a "game preserve for squalid savages," and that in nine out of ten cases, "the only good Indians are the dead Indians." Another, Woodrow Wilson, was a white supremacist who kept black students out of Princeton when he was president of the university, praised the Ku Klux Klan, cleansed the federal government of black employees, and said of ethnic immigrants, "Any man who carries a hyphen about with him carries a dagger that he is ready to plunge into the vitals of this Republic whenever he gets ready." A third, Franklin Roosevelt, drove a hundred thousand American citizens into concentration camps because they were of the same race as the Japanese enemy.

On the other side of the Atlantic, the young Winston Churchill wrote of taking part in "a lot of jolly little wars against barbarous peoples" in the British Empire. In one of those jolly little wars, he wrote, "we proceeded systematically, village by village, and we destroyed the houses, filled up the wells, blew down the towers, cut down the shady trees, burned the crops and broke the reservoirs in punitive devastation." Churchill defended these atrocities on the grounds that "the Aryan stock is bound to triumph," and he said he was "strongly in favor of using poisoned gas against uncivilized tribes." He blamed the people of India for a famine caused by British mismanagement because they kept "breeding like rabbits," adding, "I hate Indians. They are a beastly people with a beastly religion."

(p. 658)

Today if someone said we should burn heretics, keep slaves, execute gays, beat children till they have blue wounds (Prov. 20:30), outlaw interracial marriage or break criminals on the wheel, or that women should not vote or have jobs or have a



Not yet an AOF member? Please join us!

Atheists and Other Freethinkers 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 www.aofonline.org

AOF President & Editor: Fantastic Fran Evanisko

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Secretary: Capable Christine Tweet

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Webmistress: Palpable Pat Kelley

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Roger Zabkie

Pamella Rivers

Linda Ostrofsky (Jetta)

... And the rest of the motley team.

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

Visit our Facebook page:

<https://www.facebook.com/pages/Atheists-and-Other-Freethinkers/533365556831322>

How to Join:

Visit <http://www.aofonline.org/join>, or see the form on the next page.

"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."

say in choosing a husband, or that political dissent is treason, you would probably be dumbfounded. Yet a mere century ago, even decades ago, intelligent thinkers of good will agonized over these very questions!

(p. 644, paraphrased)

To hear the liberal punditry talk, one would think that the United States has been hurtling rightward for more than 40 years, from Nixon to Reagan to Gingrich to the Bushes and now to the angry white men of the Tea Party movement. Yet in every issue touched by the Rights Revolution – interracial marriage, the empowerment of women, tolerance of homosexuality, punishment of children, and the treatment of animals – the attitudes of conservatives have followed the trajectory of liberals, with the result that today's conservatives are more liberal than yesterday's liberals. As conservative historian George Nash points out, "In practice if not in theory, American conservatism today stands well to the left of where it stood in 1980."

(p. 476)

Subscription / Membership Form

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

Name(s) _____ Phone: _____
Street _____ Apt. # _____
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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).

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