



AOF at Sacramento Earth Day, April 26, 2026

❖ ❖ **This Month's Headliner Event** ❖ ❖

➤ **Doctor R Snick: Fascinating and Horrible Elixirs**

Sunday, May 17, 2026, 2 pm – 4 pm

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

Fascinating and horrible Elixirs from the 1800s to the late 1940s

Prepare to be shocked, amazed, entertained, and possibly grossed out. Prepare to journey into the past with the good **Dr. R. Snick**, and learn about how sometimes science and quackery combine and have love-children.

The good Doctor R. Snick returns to shed light on the origins of the patent medicine shows that began in England then spread in the US like that unfortunate rash. You know the one.

You'll discover some of the early energy drinks and the drugged sodas of the 1940's. You will see a bottle whose elixir was created by the corporation Lily, an early energy drink sure to pump up your blood! These medicines offered false cures. False, we stress. Don't try them please. But they were entertaining to a gullible nation before the arrival of radio, film and the FDA.



Andrei Pischainikoff, AKA **Doctor R. Snick**, is a sideshow performer and fan of history, fraud, hoaxes and *Memento Mori*. Andrei will tell you about some of the curious and unsettling things that questionable science and quackery sold to the public for over a hundred years. He began his journey speaking about 19th and 20th century quackery (fake medicine) and oddities in 2022. He now delivers captivating shows about patent medicines, snake oils, medicine shows and sticky oddities while focusing on the audience's interests.

This event is our gift to you. You don't need to get us anything.

Discover much more about Andrei at www.doctorrnick.com.

Contact for details: See <https://aofonline.org/contact-us/>.

❖ ❖ Other Upcoming AOF Events ❖ ❖

➤ Free Movie and Discussion

Friday, May 8, 2026, 7 pm – 9 pm

Join us for a cozy in-person Movie Night at Sacramento's beautiful [Reason Center](#), in a quiet room with cushy seating and a huge screen and refreshments right at hand. The exact movie title is a secret because of our MPLC License and certain legal folderol. We can drop hints, sometimes. This month it is a biopic about Jose Hernandez and his path from a farm worker to becoming an engineer and an astronaut. "A tale of perseverance, community and sacrifice to accomplish a seemingly impossible dream."

AOF and Reason Center co-sponsor the Movie Night. The team provides popcorn and other munchies — feel free to bring your own snacks as well. We also encourage a post-film discussion, which makes this educational if you stretch the word a bit. No fee required to attend, really, but donations gratefully accepted. We do have to pay for the room!

Contact for details: See <http://reasoncenter.com/contact/>.

Free Movie Night is a joint venture of AOF and Reason Center. Suggest your own fave film for next time!

❖ ❖ Other Upcoming Events ❖ ❖

Some local *non*-AOF events worthy of your attention. We won't list them all this time, just highlights. For more, please check the calendar links below.

➤ Secular Solidarity Benefit 2026

Thursday, May 7, 2026, 4:45 pm – 7:30 pm

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

A Big Day of Giving fundraiser for the secular community, featuring door prizes, live jazz, light food, pub trivia, and inspiring talks from local leaders.

This event is a fundraising opportunity for:

- [Reason Center](#)
- [Atheists and Other Freethinkers](#)
- [Camp Omni](#)
- [Freedom From Religion Foundation, Greater Sacramento Chapter](#)
- [Sunday Assembly Sacramento](#), and
- [California Freethought Day](#)

Click on any organization above to make a donation that directly supports them, or make a donation through our ticketing page (<https://givebutter.com/Secular2026>) and it will be split evenly among all of us.

➤ Blasphemy Breakfast and Brunch

● Saturday, May 9, 2026, 10 am – 11:30 am, at Mel's Diner, 13399 Folsom Blvd, Folsom, CA, map at <https://goo.gl/maps/ri6JvaBoSZVHTdnU6>, details at <https://www.meetup.com/sacfan/events/312169697/>.

● Sunday, May 17, 2026, 9:30 am – 11 am, at Mel's Diner, 6708 Lonetree Blvd, Rocklin, CA, map at <https://goo.gl/maps/ZUY2gq72KkmcC4bU6>, details at <https://www.meetup.com/sacfan/events/314509631/>.

Like to hang with like-minded people? Want to meet freethinkers in smaller groups? Or do you just get the morning munchies? Join us for our "Blasphemy Breakfast" (or Brunch). We don't blaspheme all that much, but dark mutterings may emerge ... be warned. A great place to speak your mind, and a good starter if you are new to meetups. Please RSVP (see the links).



➤ LiteraCheer at the Reason Center

Saturday, May 16, 2026, 2 pm – 4 pm

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

Come and enjoy the afternoon in the library seating area of Reason Center discussing favorite books with fellow thinkers. Everyone will get a chance to share ideas about any book of their choice—any genre, fiction or nonfiction. It's a great way to keep abreast of what like-minded people are reading.

Note, the event must have 3 persons RSVPs to move forward. Lacking that number will force a cancellation.

Follow common decency in the choice of books. Have a book in mind for discussion - even if you are still reading it. Try to keep the book topics accessible to all – a topic you would bring up at a cocktail party or public function. Finally, be nice, always be nice.

Details: See <https://www.meetup.com/sacfan/events/314497080/>.

➤ **Sunday Assembly Picnic**

Sunday, May 17, 2026, 11 am – 1 pm

Location: McKinley Park, 601 Alhambra Blvd., Sacramento, map at <https://maps.app.goo.gl/fPF9q9PLKi7tdFqE8>.

Sunday Assembly meets on the third Sunday this month and moves to the outdoors! We will gather at Group Picnic Area **GA3** in McKinley Park, 601 Alhambra Blvd., Sacramento.

What to bring:

- Please bring a picnic potluck item to share.
- The site has picnic tables, but feel free to bring along a lawn chair if you wish.
- Sunday Assembly will be providing some burgers, veggie burgers and dogs on the BBQ, but feel free to bring your own items for the grille if you wish.
- Bring your own dishware if you'd like to reduce the waste of paper plates and plastic utensils.
- Also feel free to bring games or activities.

Details: See <https://www.meetup.com/sacfan/events/301129844/>.

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

Saturdays, May 23 & 30, 2026, 4:00 pm – 5:00 pm (online meeting)

An online book discussion open to all. The book will be *The Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass*, an account by the renowned abolitionist and former slave, Frederick Douglass, powerfully describing his life of oppression and his journey to freedom. "I prayed for twenty years but received no answer until I prayed with my legs," he wrote. RSVP at the Details link below, and you will get an attendance link.

Details: see <https://www.meetup.com/bhnb-sacramento/events/314610449/>.

➤ **Coffee and Community at Reason Center**

Sunday, May 24, 2026, 10 am – 11:30 am

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

Come to the Reason Center Library for coffee, tea and treats. This event is just a casual conversation on topics of the day, and newcomers are welcome. Hope to see you soon!

Details: see <https://www.meetup.com/sacfan/events/313630677/>.



➤ **Small Groups, Big Talk (Consensual Non-Monogamy)**

Saturday, June 6, 2026, 4 pm – 8 pm

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

A structured small-group discussion for the local Polyamory/CNM community, covering the "What, Who and Why" of it. Roughly 2 hours of discussion with breaks. A safe space for LGBTQIA+ and BDSM but not exclusive to those communities. Not a swing party (really), just discussion. Don't be hot to trot.

Details: see <https://www.meetup.com/reasoncenterevents/events/314384368/>.

➤ **Skeptics in the Pub**

Sunday, June 7, 2026, 6 pm – 8 pm

Location: Urban Roods Brewing & Smokehouse, 1322 V Street, map at <https://maps.app.goo.gl/VmDt4vn2y1ac12Np7>.

A social gathering for the skeptical minds, a community of people, friends, and families that champion the methods of science and critical thinking. The Skeptics will usually meet in the back patio, weather permitting; tables are out there under a tent. Otherwise, a table inside. Urban Roots is an ideal location.

Details: See <https://www.meetup.com/sacskeptics/events/314619199/>.

➤ **More Events – So many Calendars!**

Really, there's more. And plans change, because we're human. So don't trust the list above. To learn of all those other events, please 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/>
- 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/>

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! Go to <https://aofonline.org/contact-us/>, click "Programs" 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** ✧ ✧

➤ **The National Day of Reason** **Monday, May 4, 2026**

[The National Day of Reason](http://www.nationaldayofreason.org/) (NDoR), endorsed first in 2003 and honored by U.S. secularists, occurs on the first Thursday of May. It is a response and counterbalance to the National Day of Prayer, designated by the US Congress since 1952. On this day all humanist Americans can join hands to celebrate rational thinking—a concept all can or should support. The goal: to raise public awareness of the persistent threat to religious liberty posed by government intrusion into the sphere of private worship. For details, and to learn about events in your area, see <http://www.nationaldayofreason.org/>.



Other organizations such as the [Ethical Humanist Society of Philadelphia](http://www.ethicalhumanistsociety.org/) have designated this the Rational Day of Care, a day to donate home-cooked meals to the Aid for Friends project, or perform other acts of humanistic charity. On January 23, 1808, in a letter to the Reverend Samuel Miller, our Founding Father Thomas Jefferson had these words: "Fasting and prayer are religious exercises; the enjoining them an act of discipline. Every religious society has a right to determine for itself the time for these exercises, and the objects proper for them, according to their own particular tenets; and right can never be safer than in their hands, where the Constitution has deposited it. ...civil powers alone have been given to the President of the United States and no authority to direct the religious exercises of his constituents."

The National Day of Reason is a movable secular holiday. It can occur any time from May 1 to May 7.

➤ **Towel Day** **Monday, May 25, 2026**

[Towel Day](http://www.towelday.com/) is the annual celebration of the life and writings of Douglas Adams (1952-2001), humorist, humanist, conservationist, science fiction writer, and social critic. On that day, fans around the universe proudly carry a towel in his honor. Why a towel? Don't panic, go to the website to see – or better yet, read [The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy](http://www.gutenberg.org/files/16416/16416-h/16416-h.htm). It's a great book.



➤ **Opposite Day** **Tuesday, May 26, 2026**

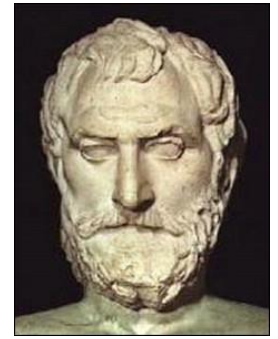
Some say the proper date is May 26, some say April 30, some say March 27th — can you ever be sure? When someone says "Today is Opposite Day," he might be lying! Opposite Day is a day to say the reverse of what you mean, with a wink, with a nod; a day when "no" means "yes" and "shut up" means "keep talking;" a day to be nice to your boss, teacher or enemy, and a complete jerk to your best friend; a day to turn words on their head; a day to tie knots in logic. Celebrate with care. It might get you in trouble!

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➤ **The Birthday of Science**

Thursday, May 28, 2026

The Birthday of Science marks the day Thales of Miletus (in 585 BCE) correctly predicted a solar eclipse. A better choice might be the discovery of fire or the wheel, but we don't know exactly when that happened, or who did it. We do know about Thales. His prediction was significant because the idea of cause and effect (causality) applies to all science. Given any phenomenon, with the exception of purely random quantum events, in principle we can trace its cause or causes, and the cause of those causes, back through time — until all cause-tracks merge at the “Big Bang,” beyond which, presumably, no tracks remain. The seeds of our life and future were sewn then. The [Large Hadron Collider](#) is an effort to re-create those first moments. Science desires a beginning that applies to the big picture, and a sense of order and predictability. That is where causality leads us.



How One Man's Confession Rewired Christianity

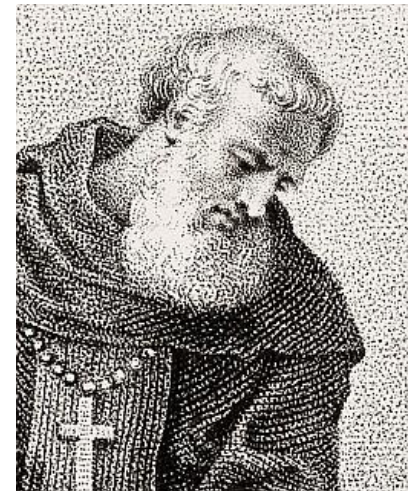
By John Mac Ghlionn, from [Religion Unplugged](#)

Augustine of Hippo is one of history's great minds, which makes it all the more remarkable that he spent so many years being devious, promiscuous and extremely busy explaining why he wasn't quite ready to change. He eventually ran out of reasons, got baptized, picked up a quill and accidentally rewired Western Christianity.

“Confessions” — completed around the year 400 — is the book that taught Western Christianity how to talk about itself. Before Augustine, religious writing tended toward the declarative. Here are the rules. Here is the creed. Here is what you must believe and how you must live. The tone was confident, instructional and occasionally thunderous. Augustine arrived with something stranger and far more unsettling. He told the truth about himself. Publicly, in detail and without flattering edits.

Augustine admitted he had prayed, as a young man, for chastity - but “not yet.” He found this funny enough to record and revealing enough to leave in. He admitted to stealing pears as a teenager. Not because he was hungry, but because theft felt thrilling; transgression had its own intoxicating pull.

He admitted he kept a mistress for over a decade, fathered a son, loved them both and still managed to construct an elaborate intellectual framework to explain why conversion could wait. The man who would become one of Christianity's most formidable minds spent his twenties doing things he knew were wrong and deploying his considerable intelligence to explain why that was probably fine. This is not the biography of a saint, but one of a recognizable human being. This is precisely why it landed so hard and has held on ever since.



The honesty was revolutionary. Not because confession was new. But because Augustine made the inner life legible in a way it had rarely been before. He showed that faith is not just a set of propositions to affirm on Sunday and file away until next week. Instead, it is a struggle. It is wanting two things at once. It is the stubborn, embarrassing gap between knowing better and doing better.

He also identified the real enemy with surgical precision, and it wasn't what most people expected. The villain of “Confessions” is not lust, though lust makes vivid appearances. It is not ambition, though Augustine had plenty. The villain is pride. The destructive, self-flattering, remarkably durable conviction that you are basically fine, that the rules apply to others with somewhat more urgency than they apply to you, and that your particular failings are more nuanced and forgivable than they appear. Augustine knew this villain intimately. He said so, plainly, without resorting to false modesty or manufacturing dramatic remorse for effect.

That candor changed things. Before Augustine, the dominant model of religious transformation tended to be sudden and clean — a blinding light, a complete reversal, a before-and-after with a clean break between them. Augustine offered something else entirely: years of partial knowledge, deliberate delay, genuine struggle, and a conversion that felt less like a thunderclap than like finally ending the argument he had been losing for far too long. God had been patient. Augustine had been creative with excuses. Eventually, the excuses ran out.

What he gave his readers — then and now — was a starting point that actually works. Be honest about where you are before claiming where you hope to go. Don't begin with the refined version. Begin with the true one. Repentance, in Augustine's telling, starts not with a resolution but with a reckoning. You say what is. You say it without decoration or retreat, and you do so without apology.

The “Confessions” reordered Christian thinking about pride, grace, the mechanics of change and the kind of transparency that makes transformation possible. It taught believers that the interior life matters — that what happens in the private conversation between a person and their conscience is not a footnote to the religious life but its very center. In some ways, this was more revolutionary than anything in scripture itself. The Bible shows you what God does.

Augustine, born in what is modern-day Algeria, showed you what it feels like from the inside — the resistance, the delay, the undignified process of being changed against your own preferences. No biblical writer had gone there with that nakedness. Augustine made interiority a theological category. Western Christianity has not been the same since.

He wrote it down so no one could pretend the journey was easy or accomplished without considerable embarrassment. That is precisely why, sixteen centuries later, people still read it in the small hours of the night and feel, with some discomfort and more relief, completely seen.

Poor Choice of Words



Advertisement

Critical Bigfoot Theory: Does Bigfoot Exist? (Bigfoot, Sasquatch & Myths Color Books)

A new book by **Pat Kelley**, former AOF Director
Format: Paperback

What makes Bigfoot so special to survive in our imaginations and strike fear in the hearts of otherwise intrepid hikers and campers who dare trek far into the vast hinterlands of the Pacific Northwest and Canada?

Is Bigfoot just another Boogieman or is there really a wild, smelly, gigantic apelike creature lurking in the shadows waiting to create havoc upon campgrounds and lay waste to innocent intruders?

Can the process of Bigfoot Critical Theories answer these questions? Let's explore the possibilities.

Order it from [Amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com)

How many Unitarian Universalists does it take to change a light bulb?

"We choose not to make a statement either in favor of or against the need for a light bulb. However, if in your own journey you have found that a light bulb works for you, that is fine. You are invited to write a poem or compose a modern dance about your personal relationship with your light bulb (or light source, or non-dark resource) and present it next month at our annual light bulb Sunday service, in which we will explore a number of light bulb traditions, including incandescent, fluorescent, three-way, long-life, and tinted — all of which are equally valid paths to luminescence."



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 Pamella Rivera
Vice-president: Marvelous Mynga Futrell
Secretary: Rapid Ruth Rezos
Treasurer & Registrar: Kinetic Ken Nahigian
Event Coordinator: Pamella Rivera (again!)
Program chair: Super Susan McLean
Webmistress: Palpable Pat Kelley
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Directors at large: Fran Evanisko, David Herbert, Roger Zabkie, Rick Tonsing

How to Contact AOF:

- Call 916-304-3796 (voicemail)
 - Or write to PO Box 15182, Sacramento, CA 95851-0182
- Or visit <https://aofonline.org/contact-us/> to e-message us.

How to Join AOF:

Visit <https://aofonline.org/join-us/>, 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.

Your humble editor is Fran Evanisko.

Letters, submissions? We love them! See: <https://aofonline.org/submission-guide/>.