



June 28, 2026: Director Gregg Fishman and staff spoke about SMUD's Zero Carbon Plan for 2030 at a poorly attended meeting. ☹

✧ ✧ This Month's Headliner AOF Event ✧ ✧

➤ Irish Music Concert with Sean O'Brien

Sunday, July 26, 2026, 2 pm – 4 pm

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

You remember Sean O'Brien, right? The Robert Ingersoll guy, the Poe guy, right? Wrong. He has talents beyond that. Now Sean will entertain us with masterful skill on the folk guitar, Irish pennywhistle and the *bodhran*, an ancient Irish drum. It will be a musical concert like none other. It will get your Irish up. And if you miss it, you have only yourself to blame.

Sean O'Brien has a BA in Theatre Arts and a Masters in Politics. He began his acting career in NYC at The Irish Arts Center and The Irish Rebel Theatre on the West Side and went on to teach Theatre Arts for thirty years in secondary schools.

Since retiring, Sean has performed in theatres throughout the Sacramento region. He created Every Corner Productions, which includes "The Portable Poe Show" and "Bob: The Words of Col. Robert Green Ingersoll", one-man shows he performs in local schools and other venues such as at the Sacramento History Museum in Old Sacramento this coming fall.

No entrance fee for this and free parking (you are so lucky); donations gratefully accepted. Doors open 1:45 pm. OK to bring snacks to share.

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

✧ ✧ Other Upcoming AOF Events ✧ ✧

➤ Board of Directors Meeting

Tuesday, July 14, 2026, 7 pm – 8 pm

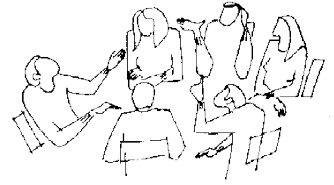
Location: Reason Center, 1300 Ethan Way, Rm 675, Sacramento, map at <https://goo.gl/maps/RwiUgEJ5ESHRhrPu8>.

Just an AOF planning meeting, mainly for AOF directors & officers, but open to all of you. These happen as required and are more fun than they sound.

Please join us, meet the Board, and keep an eye on the shenanigans. We love visitors. We often have snacks. And maybe you'll have some good ideas, hm?

Note, this will be an actual in-person meeting, so be sure vaccinations are current, or wear a mask, or just don't cough on us.

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



✧ ✧ 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.

➤ Free Movie and Discussion

Friday, July 10, 2026, 7 pm – 9 pm

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

It is *no longer* a joint event of AOF and Reason Center, but we still invite you to join us for a cozy in-person Free Movie 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 the MPLC License and certain legal folderol, but we can hint. Here goes:

Directed by Eva Longoria, this 2023 film (1 hour, 39 minutes) stars Jesse Garcia, Annie Gonzalez, and Emilio Rivera. It is the inspiring story of Richard Montañez who, as a Frito Lay janitor, helped disrupt the food industry by channeling his Mexican heritage to turn Frito Lay snacks into an iconic global pop-culture phenomenon.

No fee to attend, but we do appreciate sticky quarters and grimy dollar donations. Just pop 'em in the jar.

The movie team provides popcorn and other munchies - OK to bring your own snacks as well. We also encourage a post-film discussion, which makes this educational if you stretch the word.



➤ Blasphemy Breakfast and Brunch

● **Saturday, July 11, 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/315357035/>.

● **Sunday, July 19 2026, 9:30 am – 11 am**, at Mel's Diner, 6708 Lonetree Blvd, Rocklin, CA, map at <https://goo.gl/maps/ZUY2gq72KkmkC4bU6>, details at <https://www.meetup.com/sacfan/events/299855550/>.

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." 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 to do that).



➤ Sunday Assembly & Potluck

Sunday, July 12, 2026, 11 am – 1 pm (doors open 10:30am, presentation at 11)

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

Hosted by the vivacious Nancy Sneed, Sunday Assembly is a secular celebration of *you*, with music, readings, food and speakers, plus entertainment for children. The presenter will be **Angela Di Martino**, the Community Engagement Senior Manager at MUTTVILLE Senior Dog Rescue in San Francisco. Angela manages all activities in the Seniors for Seniors Program, including Cuddle Clubs, Humane Education programs and community outreach. Oh, bring a food dish to share if you wish – it's a potluck too!

Details: see <https://www.meetup.com/sacfan/events/315372276/>.



➤ LiteraCheer at Reason Center

Saturday, July 18, 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 personal RSVPs to move forward. Less than that will compel a cancellation. Also, please follow common decency in your choice of books. Have a book in mind for discussion - even if you are still reading it. Try to keep topics accessible to all – a topic you would bring up at a cocktail party or public function. Finally, always be nice.

Details (and to RSVP): See <https://www.meetup.com/sacfan/events/315289025/>.

☞ *Optional to bring your snacks to share with others. The organizers will bring complementary treats.*

☞ *Honor your RSVP and keep it updated.*



➤ Ancient Christian Study Group

Sunday, July 19, 2026, 12 pm – 2 pm

Location: Mast Coffee, 1430 28th Street, Sacramento, CA, map at <https://maps.app.goo.gl/7LLEqGrzrQRZm7jn9>.

The history of ancient Christianity is an endlessly fascinating topic. Don Fox and Steve Thoreson facilitate this meetup to review the history of Rome, religions of the Roman Empire, Gnosticism, Mystery cults, history of Christian persecutions, biographies of Christian founders, the history of the Bible and other related topics. If you ever wanted to sort out Eusebius from Clement, or Constantine from Diocletian, or the Vulgate from the Septuagint, then this group is for you. Previous biblical knowledge not required to participate.

Details: See <https://www.meetup.com/sacfan/events/315474179/>.

➤ Black Humanists & Non-Believers Book Club

Saturdays, July 25, 2026, 4:00 pm – 5:00 pm (online meeting)

An online book discussion open to all. The book will be *The 400-Year Holocaust: White America's Legal, Psychopathic, and Sociopathic Black Genocide - and the Revolt Against Critical Race Theory*, which examines and discusses factions of the legal history of anti-blackness and Whiteness through colonialism and the United States, and its impacts on present-day America. RSVP at the Details link below, and you will get an attendance link (this is an online event).

Details: see <https://www.meetup.com/bhnb-sacramento/events/314984523/>.

➤ Coffee and Community at Reason Center

Sunday, July 26 2026, 10:30 am – 12 pm

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: <https://www.meetup.com/reasoncenterevents/events/315507786/>.



➤ Humanity Supper at Fixins – Yummy!

Sunday, July 26, 2026, 4 pm – 6 pm

Location: Bawk Fried Chicken, 1409 R Street, Suite 102, Sac., map at <https://maps.app.goo.gl/92bwACL6ZWEmuyt58>.

Join the Black Humanists for a scrumptious supper. The gentle BHNB folk alternate between dinners and breakfasts each month; even months are breakfasts, and odd months dinners. This event needs at least 3 RSVPs to proceed. Short of this threshold, the event will be cancelled the day before. Always check for updates or check your email.

Be prepared to bring cash to have the most flexible payment experience (if party size is larger than 3).

Details: see <https://www.meetup.com/bhnb-sacramento/events/315045384/>.

➤ Skeptics in the Pub

Sunday, Aug 2, 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/mzdnstycjclbdb/>

➤ 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/>

- 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/>

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 Program Committee! Go to <https://aofonline.org/contact-us/>, click "Program Committee" in the drop-down line, and enter your thoughtful suggestion. (Reasonable honorariums paid to speakers.)

Volunteer?

We suggest it meekly. See <https://aofonline.org/leadership-governance/> for opportunities.

✧ ✧ **Secular Holidays** ✧ ✧

➤ **Chevalier de la Barre Day**

Wednesday, July 1, 2026

Mainly a French observance, [Chevalier de la Barre Day](#) is for all who opposes religious oppression, marking the execution of the Chevalier de la Barre for impiety. On July 1, 1766, church authorities tortured and killed young Jean-Francois de la Barre (the "Chevalier de la Barre" because he held the title of Chevalier or "knight") for impiety. His reputed "crimes" included not doffing his hat at a religious procession, singing bawdy songs, and the possession of banned books by Voltaire, a famed writer of his day and a leading critic of the Catholic Church. An outraged Voltaire made the execution a cause célèbre, haunted by "this sentence so execrable, and at the same time so absurd, which is an eternal disgrace to France," because a key piece of evidence used against La Barre was La Barre's possession of Voltaire's *Philosophical Dictionary*. The Chevalier and two young friends had been accused of defacing a crucifix in the French town of Abbeville. None saw this happen, but local clergy harassed and harangued the villagers until a few, fearing excommunication, vaguely recalled three youths who had not removed their hats at a recent Catholic procession. They pointed out La Barre and his friends. Once charged, one of the youths fled to Holland, and one (only 15 years old) was simply fined. Only the 19 year old La Barre remained. A search of his home turned up three forbidden books. The courts and the church decided they had their ideal suspect. Mercilessly they tortured him, cut out his tongue, then decapitated him. Eventually they burned his body on a pyre along with his copy of Voltaire's book. In 1905, a statue of Jean-Francois, Chevalier de la Barre was built in Montmartre, on the outskirts of Paris. In 1941, Nazi collaborationists removed it and melted down for munitions for the war effort – while leaving statues of saints and kings intact. In France, Chevalier de la Barre Day often features demonstrations in his memory. Today, freethinkers in France and the West experience great freedom in their lives, but in other cultures still torture and kill freethinkers and dissidents for their beliefs. Chevalier de la Barre Day is therefore a day to remember all those men and women persecuted by religion, and to campaign for the rights of those persecuted today. For more information, see: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fran%C3%A7ois-Jean_de_la_Barre.



➤ **Indivisible Day**

Saturday, July 4, 2026

In the state of Minnesota, former Governor Jess Ventura declared Independence Day to be Indivisible Day, a day in recognition of the separation of Church and State, and the vital role it has played in keeping our nation free and whole.



➤ World Population Day Saturday, July 11, 2026

The Governing Council of the United Nations Development Programme established World Population Day (<https://www.unfpa.org/swop-2014>) in 1989, seeking to raise awareness of global population issues. The inspiration for this annual event was public interest in Five Billion Day, July 11, 1987, when the world's population reached approximately five billion people. Visit the World Population Clock at <https://www.worldometers.info/world-population/>.



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 Rivera
Vice-president: Marvelous Mynga Futrell
Secretary: Rapid Ruth Rezos
Treasurer & Registrar: Kinetic Ken Nahigian
Event Coordinator: Pamela Rivera
Webmistress: Palpable Pat Kelley
Facebook page & Advisor: Keen Kaeleigh Pontif
Directors at large:

Fran Evanisko, David Herbert, 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.

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/people/Atheists-and-Other-Freethinkers-AOF/100076377183563/>

AOF is affiliated with the Alliance of Secular Humanist Societies (ASHS), Atheist Alliance of America (AAA), American Atheists (AA), American Humanist Association (AHA), the Sacramento Coalition of Reason (SCoR), and the League of Knee-walking Dwergles.

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's 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.

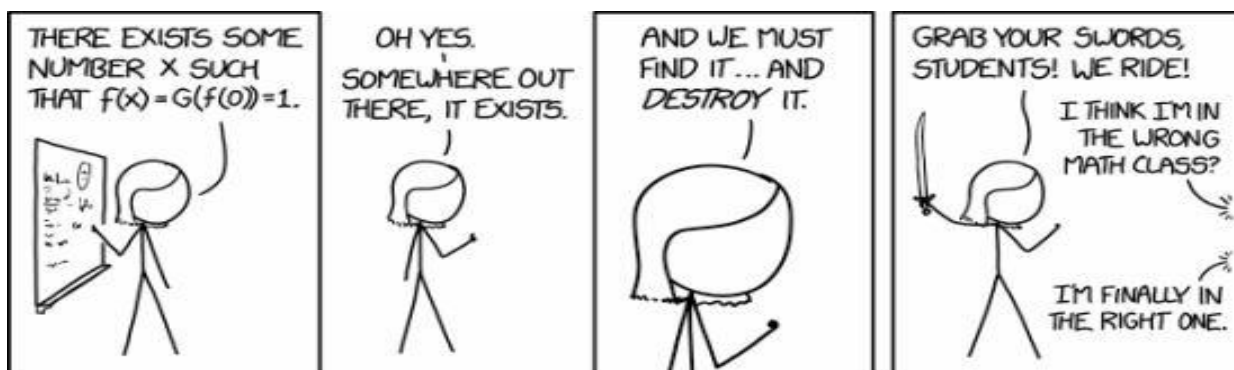
AOF supports a benign separation of Church and State as the best means to protect the liberty and intellectual commerce of citizens. "... to keep forever from these shores the ceaseless strife that has soaked the soil of Europe in blood for centuries" (James Madison, 1803).

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. Any who will treat others with respect and dignity 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: <http://www.aofonline.org/read/submission-guide.html>.



The 250th Anniversary of the United States has been absconded by White Christian Nationalists

By Nick Fish, President, American Atheists

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Saturday, July 4 marked 250 years since the Declaration of Independence was ratified.

The current regime commemorates this occasion with prayer and patriotic platitudes. On their Freedom Trucks, AI-generated George Washingtons proclaim, “Our rights are a gift from God,” a sentiment he never uttered, let alone believed.

On June 26th, Trump’s “Religious Liberty Commission” declared there is no wall separating church and state. The same day, the Texas State Board of Education mandated that public school students read from the Bible.

This isn’t the religious liberty our Founders envisioned and enshrined into law. It’s revisionism. A White Christian Nationalist framework to establish a theocracy where our rights are no longer based on the Constitution but on one’s religious constitution.

So in celebration of the Fourth and in honor of the “confirmed infidel” and “howling atheist” who penned our Declaration, let’s consider Thomas Jefferson’s actual words:

“It does me no injury for my neighbor to say there are twenty gods or no God. It neither picks my pocket nor breaks my leg.”

“Our civil rights have no dependence on our religious opinions any more than our opinions in physics or geometry.”

“No man shall be compelled to frequent or support any religious worship, place, or ministry whatsoever.”

“Question with boldness even the existence of a God...”

“...in answer to [the] question why the Ten

Commandments should not now be a part of the common law of England we may say they are not because they never were.”

Jefferson’s belief in the absolute separation of church and state was neither incidental nor isolated to a single letter. And that conviction didn’t end with Jefferson. It was carried forward and codified into law by James Madison, the Father of our Constitution, whose own writings make clear he, too, would have regarded the Religious Liberty Commission’s policy recommendations as an affront to the First Amendment.

In *Memorial and Remonstrance against Religious Assessments*, Madison rejected public funds for parochial schools:

“...the Bill implies either that the Civil Magistrate is a competent Judge of Religious Truth; or that he may employ Religion as an engine of Civil policy. The first is an arrogant pretension falsified by the contradictory opinions of Rulers in all ages, and throughout the world: the second an unhallowed perversion of the means of salvation...”

Madison vetoed legislation that would have directed public funds to religious institutions, warning against the precedent of government entanglement with sectarian causes. And he was extremely explicit about chaplains:

“The Constitution of the U.S. forbids everything like an establishment of a national religion... The establishment of the chaplainship to [Congress] is a palpable violation of equal rights, as well as of Constitutional principles...”

And on the consequences of entangling religion and government:

“During almost fifteen centuries has the legal establishment of Christianity been on trial. What have been its fruits? More or less in all places, pride and indolence in the Clergy, ignorance and servility in the laity, in both, superstition, bigotry and persecution.”

America’s Founders did not write in riddles. And yet we have moved beyond reinterpretation into a more deliberate and dangerous revisionism.

White Christian Nationalists insist that separation is a myth, neutrality is hostility, and liberty belongs only to believers. Their version of our nation’s history requires amnesia — on stripping Jefferson and Madison of their actual arguments and replacing them with something more politically convenient.

Church-state separation was not an offhand remark. It was central to the Founders’ constitutional philosophy: that the government has no authority over conscience and no competence in matters of belief.

The Fourth belongs to those of us who defend that line against those who would dismantle it.

