AOF
Atheists and Other Freethinkers

AOF News & Views – Newsletter for November 2026



Happy AOF Members convened Oct 25 to hear speaker Tim Flood discuss “Sacred Cows and Golden Calves”

✧ ✧ This Month’s Headliner Event ✧ ✧

➢ A viewing of Neil DeGrasse Tyson

Sunday, November 22, 2026, 2 pm – 4 pm

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

Here’s a treat! Spend a cozy afternoon with **Neil DeGrasse Tyson** and other Friendly Freethinkers.



We are deep black holes of bewilderment and perplexity, but at Reason Center the effervescent Dr. Tyson will explain the biggest El Niño in history, and also interview a very talented border collie. And your mind will sparkle.

Presented by Atheists & Other Freethinkers (AOF) at our monthly event.

Dr. Tyson will of course come to us via video on our big screen TV, the viewing of which will be followed by amusing, intelligent discussion which you will provide. See you there!

Event open to the public. Free parking in the lot. OK to BYO snack/beverage – or to share if you wish (pie is nice). Cool water provided. No entrance fee; donations ever so gratefully accepted.

Contact for details: see https://aofonline.org/contact-us/.

✧ ✧ Other Upcoming AOF Events ✧ ✧

➢ Board of Directors Meeting

Tuesday, November 10, 2026, 7 pm – 8 pm

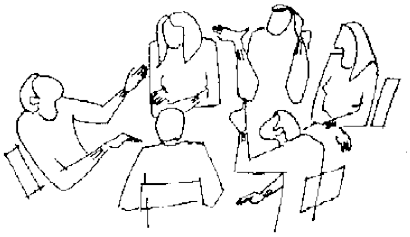
Location: Reason Center, 1300 Ethan Way, Rm 675, Sacramento, map at https://goo.gl/maps/RwiUgEJ5ESHRhrPu8.

It's 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 do join us, meet the Board, keep an eye on the shenanigans. We love visitors. We 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/.
Bring your ideas for AOF, your strategies, your event and activity suggestions -- best of all, your volunteerism! Helping hands are the bomb. (A good kind of bomb.)



✧ ✧ Other Upcoming Events ✧ ✧

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.

➢ Sunday Assembly & Potluck

Sunday, November 8, 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.

Sunday Assembly is a secular celebration of *you*, with music, readings, food and speakers, plus entertainment for children. Featured presenter is **Angela Hassell, MSW,** Executive Director of Sacramento Loaves and Fishes, an organization that began by serving sandwiches out of a car trunk. Today, it has grown into a vital 4.5-acre campus on North C Street, serving nearly 1,000 adults and children daily. Bring a food dish to share if you wish – it's a potluck too!

Details: see https://www.meetup.com/sacfan/events/315653009/.

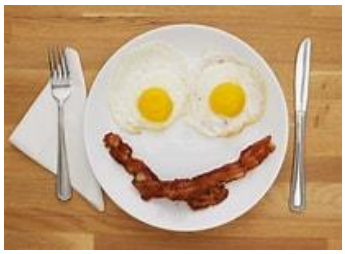
➢ Free Movie and Discussion

Friday, November 13, 2026, 7 pm – 9 pm
Location: Reason Center, 1300 Ethan Way, Rm 675, Sacramento, map at https://goo.gl/maps/RwiUgEJ5ESHRhrPu8.

Join us for a *free movie* at Reason Center in Sacramento. We provide comfy seating and popcorn, but feel free to bring other snacks as well. What movie? The name is a secret because of our MPLC License and stodgy rules of law -- but we can slip a hint. (*ahem*) A young martial artist embarks on an adventure, battling others until he eventually meets an aging man who will show him the true meaning of martial arts and life. From 1978, starring David Carradine, Jeff Cooper and Christopher Lee. It is rated R and runs 1 hour and 42 minutes. We also encourage a post-film discussion, which makes this educational, sort of. Note: No fee to attend, but we do appreciate donations to Reason Center.

Details: See https://www.meetup.com/sacfan/events/317126833/.

➢ Blasphemy Brunch and Breakfast



- **Saturday, November 14, 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/316175892/.
- **Sunday, November 15, 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/317147928/.

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).

➢ Ancient Christian Study Group

Sunday, November 15, 2026, 12 pm – 2 pm
Location: Mast Coffee, 1430 28th Street, Sacramento, 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 major Christians, the history of the Bible and many 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/316629264/.

➢ Game Night at Reason Center

Monday, November 16, 2026, 6 pm – 8 pm

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



Reason Center hosts a fun game night on the third Monday of every month. We have a few games to get us started, but feel free to bring your own. “RC” provides snacks and beverages. Attendees are welcome to bring more to share. (But no booze, and no gambling allowed.)

Details: see https://www.meetup.com/sacfan/events/316649211/.

➢ LiteraCheer @ the Reason Center

Saturday, November 21, 2026, 2 pm – 4 pm
Location: Reason Center, 1300 Ethan Way, Rm 675, Sacramento, map at https://goo.gl/maps/RwiUgEJ5ESHRhrPu8.



Come to the Reason Center library seating area to talk up your favorite books with fellow thinkers. Everyone will get a chance to share ideas about any book of their choice—any genre, fiction, nonfiction or coloring. 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 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): https://www.meetup.com/sacfan/events/317027682/.

☞ Optional to bring your snacks to share with others. The organizers will bring complementary treats.
☞ Honor your RSVP and keep it updated.
☞ Avoid unrelated and/or prolonged discussions that veer off topic.
☞ Focus on the "cheer" part of the event.

➢ Coffee and Community at Reason Center

Sunday, November 22, 2026, 10:30 am – 12 noon
Location: Reason Center, 1300 Ethan Way, Rm 675, Sacramento, map at https://goo.gl/maps/RwiUgEJ5ESHRhrPu8.

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/317258335/.

➢ Humanity Supper – Yummy!

Sunday, November 22, 2026, 4 pm – 6 pm
Location: Tori's Place, 1525 Grand Ave, Sacramento, map at https://maps.app.goo.gl/NRXpn3KH9kh6zvbMA.

Come to Del Paso Heights' iconic blue shack for scratch-made Southern classics: legendary slow-simmered Gumbo, crispy fried chicken, rich mac & cheese, and famous pan-fried hot water cornbread. Wash it down with a house-favorite "Palmer" (lemonade + sweet tea blend). And rub elbows with the lovely folk of the Black Humanists & Non-Believers of Sacramento.

Details (and to **RSVP**)**:** see https://www.meetup.com/bhnb-sacramento/events/315046037/.

➢ BHNB Book Club

Saturdays, November 28, 2026, 4:00 pm – 5:00 pm (online meeting)

An online book discussion open to all. The book will be *Children of the Struggle and the Ancestors Who Stayed*, with 21 personal narratives of those who came of age during the Civil Rights Movement. RSVP at the Details link below, and you will receive an attendance link (this is a teleconference event).

Details: see https://www.meetup.com/bhnb-sacramento/events/317003633/.

➢ Skeptics in the Pub

Sunday, December 6, 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/mzdnstyjcqbjb/.

➢ 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.

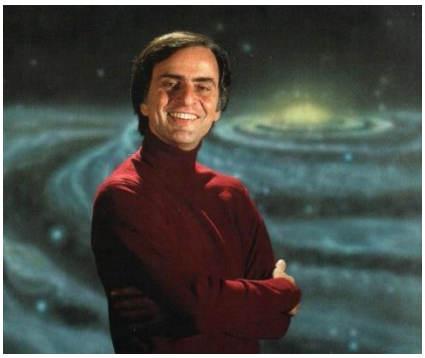
But to continue, "RC" relies on support from members and donors. Please stand up for Reason Center, because it stands up for you. To join or donate, visit ReasonCenter.org.

Suggest a Meeting
Know a compelling speaker, have a great meeting idea? Tell the AOF Program Committee! Go to https://aofonline.org/contact-us/, click "Programs" in the drop-down line, and enter your thoughtful suggestion. (We pay reasonable honorariums to speakers.)

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

✧ ✧ Secular Holidays ✧ ✧

➢ Carl Sagan Day
Monday, November 9, 2026



Carl Sagan Day marks the birthday of the great Carl Sagan, and is a celebration to honor his memory. Carl Sagan was Professor of Astronomy and Space Science and Director of the Laboratory for Planetary Studies at Cornell University, an outspoken skeptic, humanist and freethinker, and a Pulitzer Prize winning science author. But for the most part the public remembers him as the creator of the Cosmos television series. This Emmy and Peabody award-winning PBS series transformed educational television when it first 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*. 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
Tuesday, November 15 – Saturday, November 21, 2026



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 for the Separation of Church and State, 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 (Feb 12).

HumanLight/Solstice Party

Sunday, Dec 13, 2026, 12pm – 2:30pm. Doors open 11:45 am.
Location: Reason Center, 1300 Ethan Way, Suite 675, Sacramento.
Parking at Reason Center is always free.

The **HumanLight/Solstice Party** will include a potluck, live music, a charity drive, and lots of socializing. This event is family-friendly & open to the public.

The Potluck: Bring a dish to share. Please bring your food already prepared and ready to serve, including serving utensils for your dish. No kitchen facilities or electric outlets are available. We provide beverages, water, coffee, & dining utensils.

Live music: Instrumentals and vocals for a happy party.

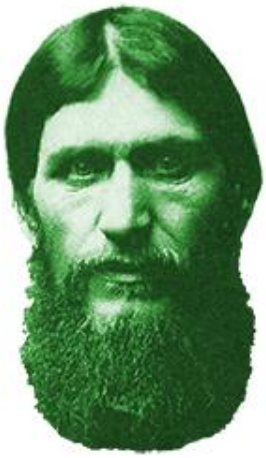
Charity Drive: Food for *humans & pets*. We will collect nonperishable *food & other necessities* for two local charities, the River City Food Bank and the Sacramento County Animal Shelter. Contributions are encouraged but not required.

Our Generous Sponsors:
- **Atheists and Other Freethinkers (AOF),**
- **Sunday Assembly,**
- **California Freethought Day,**
- **Reason Center.**

Contact: Nancy, nancysneed10@gmail.com or Pam rivera.pamella@gmail.com



From Russia with debauchery



HE CERTAINLY HAD SOMETHING going for him, did **Grigory Yefimovich Novykh**, the holy man of Russia, but it equally certainly wasn't holiness. Hence his nickname, "Rasputin", which means, "the debauched".

At 18, with a scandalous past already behind him, he was converted, and fell in with a sect of monks who whipped themselves to subdue their passions. Rasputin agreed with their aims but improved on their methods. He found that his passions were at the most subdued after a long night of carnal abandon, and so took to "sinning away his sin".

His powers of healing and prediction gave him upward mobility. In 1908 he healed the Czar's only son of hemophilia, buying influence over the throne that was both phenomenal and disastrous.

He developed a theory that women were purified by bodily communion with himself, and they fell for it in droves. Rumour said that the Queen, her daughters and even the Czar tried it.

The royal reputation suffered so badly that the nobility arranged Rasputin's execution. The Czar's nephew offered him a date with his wife. While they waited for the lady, Rasputin tucked into cakes that were pumped full of poison. He put away enough to kill a regiment, without suffering so much as indigestion.

Eventually the terrified prince gave up on the cakes and shot him in the front from point blank range. The noble gang laid his corpse in the basement and started celebrating.

This was premature. Seized by an odd desire, one of them went down to beat up Rasputin's corpse for a bit – he really was very unpopular. But Rasputin started fighting back. Overpowering the count, he crawled upstairs and ran out across the courtyard.

Now the aristos panicked. They ran after him, shooting four times. Two shots missed, two hit him square in the back and took him out properly – again. They tied him up, wrapped him in a carpet, and made a long journey to the river, finally dropping him into the icy waters at 5:00 am.

When the police found the body, the autopsy showed he had drowned.

Now this is no urban myth or neo-medieval legend, but extremely well-documented. And the weirdness isn't over yet.

On 7 December 1916, nine days before his murder, Rasputin had written to the Czar. "I feel I shall die before January 1," he announced. "If I am killed by peasants, you have nothing to fear. If I am killed by the nobility, a 25-year civil war will follow. But if I am killed by one of your own family, not one of your relations will live longer than two years."

Rasputin was killed by the Czar's nephew on the night of 16-17 December 1916. The royal family were executed in the Communist revolution 19 months later. Now tell me that's not spooky.

AOF
Atheists and Other Freethinkers

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
Facebook page & Advisor: Keen Kaeleigh Pontif
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/.