



The effervescent Joey Garcia discusses love at the March 31 AOF General Meeting. Were you there? (Pic: Roger Zabke.)

✧ ✧ This month's Main AOF Event ✧ ✧

➤ AOF at Sacramento Earth Day Sunday, April 21, 2024, 11 am – 4 pm

Location: Southside Park, Sacramento (on 6th Street between T & W Streets), see map at <https://maps.app.goo.gl/QMpQ2mDBhCHtxkeE6>.

The [Environmental Council of Sacramento \(ECOS\)](#) hosts **Sacramento Earth Day** every year. AOF is a proud annual sponsor and tabler at this, the largest Earth Day celebration in the Sacramento region. A free event, it provides thousands of attendees with information on sustainability. This year's theme is **BUILD GREEN**.

- On the central green in Southside Park, experts will feature these **Build Green** concepts — education, climate, water, and habitat.
- What's your connection to **Build Green**? Sac Earth Day seeks to inspire action and advocacy to move our region toward sustainability.
- **Sacramento Earth Day** details at: ecosacramento.net/sacearthday/.



Please visit our AOF table. Stop by and say hello!

To *volunteer* to join us for an hour or two, contact president@aofonline.org. You tell us the hour(s) you will be with us.

Sac Earth Day is a delight -- a textured phantasmagoria of art, live music, vegan-friendly food, cute dogs, assorted cults, earnest screeds, tables piled with free swag, and more.

For details: Email "president (at) aofonline (dot) org", or see <https://www.aofonline.org/contact.html>.

✧ ✧ Other Upcoming AOF Events ✧ ✧

➤ Film and Discussion Night Friday, April 12, 7 pm – 10 pm

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

It's a free, in-person Movie Night at the Sacramento's Reason Center, in a quiet room with cozy seating and a huge screen and refreshments right at hand. The actual movie is a secret because of our MPLC License and the stodgy rule of law -- but we can slip you a hint. It's a 1977 dark comedy starring Elliott Gould, James Brolin, Brenda Vaccaro, and Sam Waterston. When the first manned flight to Mars is deemed unsafe and scrubbed on the launch pad, anxious authorities scramble to save face and retain their funding - and so an unthinkable plot to fake the mission is hatched.



AOF co-sponsors this event. The movie 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. No fee to attend. But you know, Reason Center always appreciates donations. Just saying.

For details: See <http://reasoncenter.com/contact/>.

➤ Adopt-a-Highway Cleanup

Saturday, April 20, 2024, 9 am – 11 am

Location: Near W. Elkhorn Blvd & Hwy 99, map at <https://goo.gl/maps/zw3Rwct9yR52>.

Out on Highway 99, for two miles from Elkhorn Boulevard to Elverta Road, runs a lonely stretch -- *our* stretch! Sac-area freethinkers "adopted" it in July 1995. We care for it, nurture it, lovingly rescue it from litter and debris, and have received recognition for our work. One of our more successful civic efforts, it proves freethinkers can also serve the community.



So join us! Enjoy a morning commune with nature, and do a deed for the local area wildlife. The refuse 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. Note, Cal-Trans has been paying a stipend for AOF's work!

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 cleanup 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 get there, travel north from Sacramento on I-5 past the Natomas area. Take the "Highway 99 - Yuba City, Marysville" exit. Exit at Elkhorn Boulevard less than a mile north. Turn left, cross the overpass. Park in the park-&-ride lot if possible, or somewhere near it.

This is a great event for older children, but please leave smalls safe at home. In case of rain, fog, excessive mud, rapture or locust plague, the Cleanup will be rescheduled. If unsure, call the Activity Captain (Don).

For details: Call 916-805-9337 (Don Knutson), or see <https://www.aofonline.org/contact.html>.

➤ Feed the Hungry – Davis Community Meal

Tuesday, April 30, 2024, 4 pm – 7 pm

Location: St. Martin's Episcopal Church hall, 640 Hawthorne Lane, Davis, CA, map at <http://binged.it/1uBpi57>.

The **Davis Community Meal** project serves meals to the hungry, the poor, the indigent, the outcast. It happens in bucolic Davis city, so near to us, where compassionate citizens have developed a secular solution for the problem of hunger, and need our help.

So join us, join us in this effort! Your reward will be an opportunity to meet new minds and hobnob with your freethought friends, a likely free meal, jazzy music, and the rosy hearts-glow of benevolence. Also, seriously, it's a blast!

Cooking? Dish washing? None required. The Davis Community Meals team will perform all the food prep and kitchen work. Our job is simply to set up chairs & tables, serve, smile, put things away at the end, and clean a bit (with a minimum of mopping). Extra points if you can arrive for setup, but if you can't, that's OK, any help is good help. Setup begins about 4:30 pm, food service about 5:45. At 6:30 we clean up the hall.

Carpooling may be available. For info, please contact the Service Project Coordinator (Don, 916-805-9337) or see <http://daviscommunitymeals.org/>.



✧ ✧ Other Upcoming Events ✧ ✧

All these are local non-AOF events, but give them a chance please. You might be surprised.

➤ Recovery from Religion (RfR) online meetings

Sunday, Apr 7, 4 pm – 6 pm. Providing ongoing and personal support to individuals as they let go of their religious beliefs. Attendance link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/7287067292>. For details see <https://www.meetup.com/rfr-sacramento-ca/events/298843179/>.

Saturday, Apr 13, 2024, 5 pm – 7 pm, for women & non-binary. Attendance link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87403436249>, details at <https://www.meetup.com/rfr-sacramento-ca/events/298843668/>.

Friday, Apr 19, 2024, 5 pm – 7 pm, for young people. Attendance link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85471165177>, details at <https://www.meetup.com/rfr-sacramento-ca/events/299497804/>.

Saturday, Apr 20, 2024, 7 am – 9 am, Virtual Chapter Support. Attendance link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/7287067292>, details at <https://www.meetup.com/rfr-sacramento-ca/events/298843371/>.

Sunday, Apr 21, 2024, 12 noon – 2 pm, for LGBTQA+ folk. Attendance link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/7287067292>, details at <https://www.meetup.com/rfr-sacramento-ca/events/298845302/>.

Saturday, May 4, 2024, 8 am – 10 am, for men. Attendance link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81672617364>, details at <https://www.meetup.com/rfr-sacramento-ca/events/298844188/>.

"RfR" provides ongoing and personal support to individuals letting go of religious beliefs. Please be sensitive and tolerant, and cut others some slack, so you will get it too.

➤ Sacramento Skeptics in the Pub

Sunday, Apr 7, 2024, 6 pm – 8 pm

Location: Duke's Pints & Plates, 510 La Sierra Dr, Sacramento; map at <https://goo.gl/maps/aNzV4j33cnizW9j77>.

A social meetup for the skeptical minds, a community of people, friends, and families that champion the methods of science and critical thinking. Visitors and new skeptics most welcome!

Details: see <https://www.meetup.com/sacskeptics/events/cnczhtygcgbkb/>.

➤ Suicide Loss Survivors Discussion and Support

Tuesday, Apr 9, 2024, 5 pm – 7 pm

Online survivor support in a compassionate, secular way. Attendance link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82683645189>.

Details: <https://www.meetup.com/rfr-sacramento-ca/events/298844763/>.

➤ Blasphemy Breakfasts and a Brunch

Saturday, Apr 13, 2024, 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/299993362/>.

Sunday, Apr 14, 2024, 9:30 am – 11:30 am, at Mel's Diner, 3000 J Street, Sacramento, CA, map at <https://goo.gl/maps/toijMkseMWmTanVP7>, details at <https://www.meetup.com/sacfan/events/299403436/>.

Sunday, Apr 21, 2024, 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/299854394/>.

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).

➤ Compassionate Humanists of Roseville (CHR) - Humanist Salon

Saturday, Apr 13, 2024, 10:30 am – 12 noon, details at <https://www.meetup.com/compassionate-humanists/events/300138875/>. Location available to CHR members only. Visit the link to join & learn more.

➤ Sunday Assembly & Potluck

Sunday, Apr 14, 2024, 11am - 1pm (doors open 10:30am), presentation

Location: Reason Center, 1300 Ethan Way, Suite 675, Sacramento, map at <https://goo.gl/maps/S5MR1e8ZodBzb4TG8>. (Back of the building.)

Sunday Assembly is a secular celebration of *you*, with music, readings, food and speakers, plus entertainment for children. Featured presenter is Kenny Ballentine who has worked as a documentary filmmaker since 2008. Please bring a food dish to share. **Details:** see <https://www.meetup.com/sacfan/events/299537621/>.

➤ Games at Reason Center

Friday, Apr 19, 2024, 6 pm – 9 pm

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

A fun evening of games and food. OK to bring some of your own games to share. Light snacks to share to too. Reason Center has both board games and card games. (Here are a few: Ticket to Ride, Azul, Camel Up, Labyrinth, Rummikub, and more.) But no gambling allowed!

Details: see <https://www.meetup.com/sacfan/events/300121826/>.



➤ Saturday Night Hangout

Saturday, Apr 20, 2024, 6 pm – 9 pm, details at <https://www.meetup.com/sacfan/events/300138960/>.

Saturday, May 4, 2024, 6 pm – 9 pm, details at <https://www.meetup.com/sacfan/events/hprbjtygcgbgb/>.

Location: Meeting by teleconference; to attend, just click the attendance link:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83092441353?pwd=Wmp6RVIUR1Q0dFZZMIFQUiVodTN0dz09>.

An online meetup on alternate Saturdays, at 6:00 PM Pacific Time. The first half hour is for greeting friends, catching up, welcoming newcomers and having fun. No politics please! Then games, trivia, movies. The list of options may grow.

➤ Secular Advocacy Day

Monday, Apr 22, 8:30 am – 11:30 am

Join online meetings with elected official to discuss pending legislation that is important to the secular community. We will discuss AB-2924 (Prohibits Underage Marriage), AB-798 (Prevents Female Genital Mutilation), and AB-2339 (Improves Telehealth Access). Learn more about these bills at <https://freethoughtday.org/programs/advocacy/>. To attend, please register at least one week in advance at <https://freethoughtday2024a.eventbrite.com>. Fee is \$10, free for students.

Details: see <https://www.meetup.com/sacfan/events/299935981/>.

➤ Porch Talk

Wednesday, Apr 24, 2024, 7 pm – 8:30 pm

Online attendance link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88417809715?pwd=UGx1Q3hpU25iWkwrZjZaTWZFMEMxZz09>.

A social gathering on the virtual front porch. Join online (via your personal computer) for a videochat on topics of the day; just click the link at meeting time and follow the instructions. Discussion suggestions are welcome. Host: Nancy Sneed.

Details: see <https://www.meetup.com/sacfan/events/300225977/>.

➤ Black Humanists & Non-Believers Book Club

Saturday, Apr 27, 2024, 3:30 pm – 5:00 pm

A book discussion via phone conference, open to all. RSVP to attend and the phone number will be revealed. The book this month is *God: The Most Unpleasant Character in All Fiction*, by Dan Barker.

Details (and to RSVP): see <https://www.meetup.com/bhnb-sacramento/events/299137331/>.

➤ Coffee and Community

Sunday, Apr 28, 2024, 10 am – 11:30 am

Location: Reason Center, 1300 Ethan Way, Rm 675, Sacramento, map at

<https://goo.gl/maps/RwiUgEJ5ESHRhrPu8>.

Meet for open-topic conversation, great coffee and tea, and treats. Get to know new folk or visit with some old friends! Hosted by Nancy Sneed, such a friendly person.

Details: see <https://www.meetup.com/sacfan/events/298712799/>.



➤ More Events – So many Calendars

There's more. Plans change, because we're human, so don't trust the static list above. To keep track of all those other events, 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 July 2014, [Reason Center](https://www.reasoncenter.org) 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](https://www.reasoncenter.org).

Suggest a Meeting

Know a compelling speaker, have a great meeting idea? Tell the AOF Program Committee! Go to <http://www.aofonline.org/contact.html>, click "Program Committee" in the drop-down line, and enter your thoughtful suggestion. Or email "programs (at) aofonline (dot) org". (Reasonable honorariums paid to speakers.)

Volunteer?

We suggest it meekly. See <http://www.aofonline.org/learn/committees.html> for opportunities.

✧ ✧ Secular Holidays ✧ ✧

➤ Yuri's Night, or Cosmonauts Day

Friday, April 12, 2024

Yuri's Night, also called **Cosmonauts Day**, is a day in honor of Yuri Gagarin, who became the first human in space on April 12, 1961. Twenty years later on the same day the U.S. launched the first space shuttle.



The Soviet Union first celebrated Cosmonauts Day in 1962, on the first anniversary of Gagarin's successful flight into space. It was celebrated annually in the USSR and then Russia. The idea for a worldwide celebration of space and technology sprang into existence at the United Nations' Space Generation Advisory Council Conference in September of 2000. The new, worldwide Yuri's Night was first celebrated on April 12, 2001 and has since become an annual international celebration.

Yuri's Night not only celebrates space and technology, but also the principles of freethinking. Once people thought that the other planets travelled around Earth. It took courage as well as intelligence for people to argue against the religiously-ordained view of the Earth as the center of the universe. Celebrating Yuri's Night not only is about celebrating his historic achievement, but all accomplishments of science that have overturned dogma and advanced our knowledge of our universe.

Yuri's Night has become an international phenomenon since its introduction in 2001. Every year coordinators and participants look to broaden the spectrum of events held. The range of events is as diverse as the people who hold them; even residents of the International Space Station have been known to join in the fun. Whether in someone's living room, a nightclub or a world-class science museum, Cosmonauts Day events all have one thing in common: people who are excited about space exploration, science, freethought, and want to join together to celebrate it. Participating in Cosmonauts Day isn't difficult: if finding an already existing party near is hard, then get your friends together call it a Yuri's Night party. Getting people to think about space, science, and freethought is the focus no matter the venue.

"Circling the earth in my orbital spaceship I marveled at its beauty. People of the world, let us safeguard and enhance this beauty, not destroy it!" -- Yuri Gagarin

➤ Ask An Atheist Day

Thursday, April 18, 2024

[National Ask an Atheist Day](#) is a movable secular holiday occurring twice each year -- on the 3rd Thursday of April (anywhere from April 15 to April 21), and on the 3rd Thursday of September (from Sept 15 to Sep 21). As if atheists don't have enough to do already.

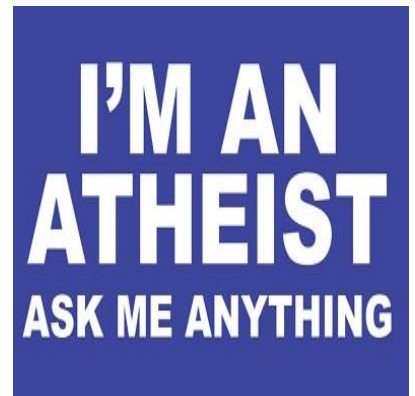
"NAaA Day" is an opportunity for secular groups across the country to dispel stereotypes about atheism and to encourage constructive, courteous dialogue between believers and nonbelievers. And it is an opportunity for the general public—particularly people of faith—to approach non-theists and ask questions about secular life. Please don't be afraid to spark up a discussion with us, we won't bite. Most don't, anyway.

The first NAaA Day was in February of 2011, when members of the [Secular Student Alliance](#) (SSA) at the University of Illinois set up a table with a sign that said "Ask an Atheist." The next month an article appeared in the [Friendly Atheist website](#), written by a "Guest Contributor" (probably an SSA member), saying the event was a smashing success and the Illinois group hoped to take the day nationally. "The SSA is ready to help," it added. Since then NAaA Day has occurred across the nation each April since, and soon in September as well.

For those interested, it helps to know a bit about atheism. Of course the point is to ask atheists questions, but here is some background. Generally atheists have no belief in deities, which is not *quite* the same as a positive belief no deity exists. The prefix "a" just means "without." Atheism has no set ideology—atheists may be humanists, rationalists, Unitarian Universalists, postmodernists, secularists, among other things. Historically, Greek and Roman philosophers and writers such as Epicurus, Democritus, and Lucretius had an influence on what would become atheism. The term didn't appear until the sixteenth century, a time when freethought and skepticism began to flourish. Some that lived during the Age of Enlightenment were the first to identify themselves as atheists. The supremacy of human reason was a facet of the French Revolution, and it was at this time that atheism first became used politically. Science also began to lock horns with orthodox religion during the second half of the nineteenth century.

Today it is challenging to estimate how many atheists are in the world. A 2015 poll claimed about 11% of the world's population are atheists, and a 2012 poll claimed the number to be 13% (both WIN/Gallup International polls). A BBC poll from 2004 put the number at 8%. Europe and Asia seem to have the largest number of atheists. In 2015, 61% of Chinese citizens identified as atheists.

How to observe the day. If you call yourself an atheist, you can celebrate the day in a variety of ways. For example, set up a table where believers and others can come up to you and ask you questions about atheism, secular living, and your beliefs (or nonbeliefs). You can [email](#) the SSA for supplies for your table, such as brochures, [stickers](#), posters, and flyers.



You could also wear the stickers and put flyers up on campus (flyers could be put up before the day as well). You could organize an "ask an atheist" panel event, or go on a radio station and have an "ask an atheist" segment where listeners are able to call in and ask you questions about atheism. When posting on social media, use the hashtag #askanatheist.

For more about the day and how to participate, take a look at the [Ask an Atheist Day Activity Guide](#). But what if you aren't an atheist? Celebrate NAaA Day by asking an atheist about atheism! The day is meant to be filled with respectful dialogue, so make sure to participate in such a way, no matter if you are an atheist or the person asking questions.

➤ Earth Day

Monday, April 22, 2024

Earth Day is a day to grow and diversify the environmental movement, and to promote a healthy, sustainable planet. Earth Day is the only Secular Holiday celebrated simultaneously around the globe by people of all backgrounds, faiths and nationalities. More than a half billion people participate in Earth Day campaigns every year.

U.S. Senator Gaylord Nelson founded Earth Day in 1970 to push the environment onto the national agenda. It is an inclusive event, attracting people of all religions and beliefs. Non-religious groups have many reasons to celebrate Earth Day: those who don't believe in divine intervention realize that this world is all we have and that it is in our hands to protect it. Those who believe that the scientific method is the best way to understand our world, can also use Earth Day to promote the best available science about environmental issues. Secular groups can use this annual event to network with environmental groups and other organizations.

You can celebrate Earth Day in many different ways. Events across the globe are often designed to bring notice of the environment to lawmakers. Events also take place on college and school campuses. Meetings intended for the sole purpose of attracting attention to the cause are the most common; these meetings often employ music, speakers, and other attractions to generate attention.



Not yet an AOF member? Then 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: Redoubtable Roger Zabkie
Vice-president: Marvelous Mynga Futrell
Secretary: Rapid Ruth Rezos
Treasurer & Registrar: Kinetic Ken Nahigian
Advisor: Dependable David Herbert
Event Coordinator: Prolific Pamela Rivera
Webmistress: Palpable Pat Kelley
Program chair: Super Susan McLean
Facebook page: Keen Kaeleigh Pontif
Directors at large:
Fran Evanisko, Kaeleigh Pontif

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.

How to Join AOF:

Visit <http://www.aofonline.org/join>, 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 is affiliated with the Alliance of Secular Humanist Societies (ASHS), Atheist Alliance of America (AAA), American Atheists (AA), American Humanist Association (AHA) and the Sacramento Coalition of Reason (SCoR).

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. 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.

Letters, submissions? We love them! See: <http://www.aofonline.org/read/submission-guide.html>.

Family News

Phillip W. LaZier, Sept 4, 1935 - Feb 24, 2024

AOF bids farewell to Phil LaZier, a mainstay of the Sacramento humanist community, Secular Celebrant, and AOF member since June 2000. In his long life he was a sailor, Air Force pilot, war veteran, teacher, counselor, astronomer, musician, classical music lover, chess teacher, outdoor nature lover, volunteer, family man, and much more. Above all he was a dedicated humanist. We will miss him.

For tributes, or to leave words of your own, see

<https://www.forevermissed.com/phillip-williams-lazier/about>.



This Month in Religious History

April 1, 1771 - John "Swearin' Jack" Waller was preaching in a Baptist church in Spotsylvania County, Virginia, when the local Church of England parson, who thought Baptists were heretics, entered the sanctuary with the county sheriff. The sheriff stood by the pulpit and ran a horsewhip across Waller's Bible, then stuck the whip in the pastor's mouth during a hymn. Waller started praying with the congregation, but in the midst of it was jerked off the stage and held by the back of his neck, then his head was repeatedly beat against the ground before he was carried out to the street and given 20 lashes with the horsewhip. This tended to put a damper on the singing of the Doxology.

April 2, 1778 - David Barrow, pastor of Mill Swamp Baptist Church near Portsmouth, Virginia, was conducting an outdoor service when a well-dressed vigilante gang grabbed him and his assistant, Edward Mintz, dragged them down to the banks of the Nansemond River, and violently dunked them under the water (because they were Baptists, get it?) while singing obscene songs. At the time a license was required to preach, but Baptists were opposed to religious licensing and refused to apply, making it difficult to get police protection when these recurring incidents of persecution occurred. The "I'm gonna baptize you, preacherman" joke got kind of old, though.

April 25, 1800 - Thomas Jefferson attacked as an atheist by the Federalist Party, which claimed he was so intoxicated with free-thinking philosophers and infidels like Helvetius and Rousseau that he was unqualified to be president, especially since he'd shown partisanship toward the atheistic French Revolution. (In one political cartoon, the eye of God accused him.) This campaign of vilification is cited by atheists today, who say that obviously Jefferson was an atheist, but in fact Jefferson denied all charges and insisted that he was a good Christian. Under his own definition, of course.

April 29, 1820 - Thomas Jefferson completed *The Life and Morals of Jesus of Nazareth extracted textually from the Gospels in Greek, Latin, French & English*, which stripped out all supernatural elements from the Christ story, keeping only the parts Jefferson thought plausible. For many years a presentation copy of what came to be known as the Jefferson Bible was given to every new Congressman at his swearing-in.

