



Last month's AOF meeting, July 26, 2026: Sean O'Brien entertained us with an Irish Music Concert

✧ ✧ This Month's Headliner Event ✧ ✧

➤ Liam McDaid: The Hubble Constant Controversy

Sunday, August 23, 2026, 2 pm – 4 pm (doors open at 1:30)

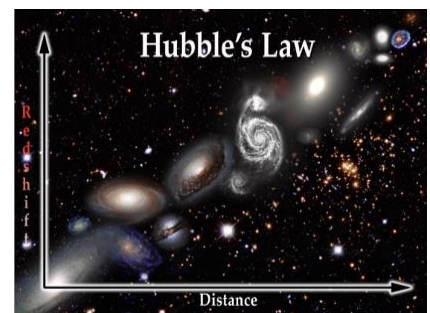
Location: Reason Center, 1300 Ethan Way, Rm 675, Sacramento, map at <https://goo.gl/maps/RwiUgEJ5ESHRhrPu8>.

The Hubble Constant is the most inconstant constant you are likely to meet. It's also one of the most important in cosmology. It tells us how fast the universe is expanding, which can tell us much else — like the age of the universe, its history, and possible new particles or forms of dark energy. The name came from UChicago alum [Edwin Hubble](#), who first estimated it in 1929. He pegged it at about 500 km/s/Mpc (kilometers per second per megaparsec), roughly 160 km/s per million light-years. But despite a century of astronomical measurements and calculations, scientists still can't agree on the exact value.

Our speaker will describe the controversy in laymen's terms. From the beginning, where researchers had values that differed by as much as 100% to the slight but important gap between methods today, the debate over the value of the Hubble Constant rages. Find out why this is so. Find out why it matters.

Speaker [Liam McDaid](#) is professor of Physics, Astronomy & Geology at the Sac City College campus, Bachelor of Science in Astronomy (Penn State), Master of Science in Astronomy (New Mexico State), Master of Arts in History (Sam Houston State), Master of Science in Physics (New Mexico State), and a total brainbox. Since growing up in Philadelphia, Liam always had a passion for astronomy. At New Mexico State, he was fortunate enough to share an office with Clyde Tombaugh, the discoverer of the planet Pluto! In graduate school he moonlighted part-time as a stand-up comic — “until I had a bottle thrown at me and decided to stop,” he says. Now Liam will guide you through peaks and precipices of the starry wisdom. Don't miss this presentation.

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



Event open to the public. Free parking in the spacious lot. OK to BYO snack/beverage, or goodies to share if you wish. Cool clear water provided. No entrance fee, but donations gratefully accepted.

✧ ✧ Other Upcoming Events ✧ ✧

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

➤ Blasphemy Brunch and Breakfast

● **Saturday, Aug 8, 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/315749392/>.

● **Sunday, August 16, 2026, 9:30 am – 11 am**, at Mel's Diner, 6708 Lonetree Blvd, Rocklin, CA, map at <https://goo.gl/maps/ZUY2gg72KkmkC4bU6>, details at <https://www.meetup.com/sacfan/events/315664569/>.



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 if you can (see the links).

➤ Sunday Assembly & Potluck

Sunday, Aug 9, 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 non-religious congregation that meets once a month to share stories, create community, and learn from experiences. It is inclusive and everyone is valued here. Hosted by the vivacious Nancy Sneed.

The main Speaker: **Aysha Khan**, Director of Operations at Ex-Muslims of North America (EXMNA), a nonprofit dedicated to supporting people who leave Islam and promoting freedom of thought, conscience, and expression. She works on advocacy, asylum support, and public education, helping raise awareness about the challenges faced by ex-Muslims around the world.

As always, families are welcome. Sunday Assembly will also have a short Doing Your Best presentation by a member, and a potluck. Please bring a dish to share unless you are a newcomer. Donuts and coffee are provided.

Details: see <https://www.meetup.com/sacfan/events/315764284/>.

➤ Movie Night at the Reason Center

Friday, Aug 14, 2026, 7 pm – 9 pm

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

Movie & Discussion Night (no longer co-sponsored by AOF, but still gobs of fun) occurs the second Friday each month at Reason Center, in a quiet room with cushy seating, a huge screen and refreshments right at hand. The team provides popcorn and other munchies - feel free to bring your own snacks as well. A post-film discussion makes this educational if you stretch the word. No fee to attend. But Reason Center always appreciates donations – we're just saying.

The movie. From 2006, this satire by Mike Judge and Etan Cohen starring Luke Wilson, Maya Rudolph and Dax Shepard is 1 hr 24 min long and rated R. Corporal Joe Bauers, a decidedly average American, is selected for a top-secret hibernation program but is forgotten and left to awaken to a future so incredibly moronic that he's easily the most intelligent person alive.

Contact for details: See <https://www.meetup.com/sacfan/events/315634565/>.

Suggest your own fave film for next time!



➤ LiteraCheer @ the Reason Center

Saturday, Aug 15, 2026, 2 pm – 4 pm

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

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): <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.

☞ Avoid unrelated and/or prolonged discussions that veer off topic from the book.

☞ Try to keep the book topics accessible to all. A topic you would bring up at a cocktail party or public function.

☞ Focus on the "cheer" part of the event.



➤ Ancient Christian Study Group

Sunday, Aug 16, 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. Every third Sunday, 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/315782499/>.

➤ Board Games at Great Escape

Monday, Aug 17, 2026, 3pm – 5:30 pm

Location: Great Escape Games, 250 Howe Avenue, suite 3A, Sac, map: <https://maps.app.goo.gl/hhDywKrLhLNYYPos5>.

A gaming event to compliment the Reason Center Game Night the same day. Join the gang for board games, and then move to the Game Night at the Reason Center (about a block away). All Experience Levels welcome. There will be a large selection of games. If you have a favorite that you'd like to share, you are welcome to bring it.

Details: <https://www.meetup.com/sacfan/events/315953007/>.

➤ Game Night at Reason Center

Monday, Aug 17, 2026, 6 pm – 8 pm

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

The Reason Center hosts a 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. (Note, no gambling allowed.)

Generally, the Game Night staff will provide snacks and non-alcoholic beverages. But for our inaugural game night, they will order pizza. The order goes out at 6:15, so come at the start if you want to be counted or have any pizza preferences.

Details: <https://www.meetup.com/sacfan/events/315625277/>.



➤ Black Humanists & Non-Believers Book Club

Saturdays, Aug 22, 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 a teleconference event).

Details: see <https://www.meetup.com/bhnb-sacramento/events/314984528/>.

➤ Humanity Breakfast at Fixins

Sunday, Aug 23, 2026, 11 am – 1 pm

Location: Fixins Soul Kitchen, 3458 3rd Ave, Sac, map at <https://maps.app.goo.gl/aS39UpJvZUhVAaRq5>.

Time for a scrumptious breakfast. The BNHBS folk alternate between dinners and breakfasts each month. This breakfast needs at least 3 RSVPs to proceed, otherwise 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.

Details: <https://www.meetup.com/bhnb-sacramento/events/315045912/>.



➤ Coffee and Community at Reason Center

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

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: <https://www.meetup.com/reasoncenterevents/events/315430262>.

➤ Skeptics in the Pub

Sunday, Sep 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/mzdnstyjcmbjbl/>.

➤ 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

[Reason Center](#) opened in July 2014. Since then 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 <https://reasoncenter.org/join>.

Suggest a Meeting

Know a compelling speaker, have a great meeting idea? Tell us! 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 <http://www.aofonline.org/learn/committees.html> for opportunities.

✧ ✧ Secular Holidays ✧ ✧

➤ World Friendship Day

Saturday, Aug 1 - Friday, August 7, 2026

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

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

How can you acknowledge Friendship Day? Call on your friends, invite them for food, embrace them, exchange cards and flowers, gift them with a friendship band or bracelet (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Friendship_bracelet), or mark the day with programs celebrating human camaraderie. Note, some groups and nations celebrate Friendship at other times of the year, with different customs and different emphasis. For instance: – National Friendship Day is the first Sunday in August – Women's Friendship Day, the third Sunday in August – International Friendship Month is February – Old Friends / New



Friends Week is the third week of May. What is remarkably constant amid this diversity is idea of the celebration of our connections. Everywhere, people express love for their friends and cherish their presence in life. For more information on this secular holiday, visit http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Friendship_day.

➤ Ingersoll Day Tuesday, Aug 11, 2026

Ingersoll Day marks the birthday of [Robert Green Ingersoll](#), honoring the life and work of one of the most noted freethinkers in US history. Ingersoll was also the most successful orator in nineteenth century America, heard by more Americans than any human before the advent of motion pictures and radio. A leading political figure, he campaigned against slavery and for the rights of women and minorities. They called him the “Great Agnostic.” He attracted huge crowds to lectures that criticized religion and promoted freethought. Walt Whitman and Mark Twain greatly admired him. Celebrate Ingersoll Day with a visit to the [Robert Green Ingersoll Birthplace Museum](#), or by reading excerpts from the Complete Works of Ingersoll (<https://infidels.org/author/robert-g-ingersoll/>). For more about him, see https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Robert_G._Ingersoll.



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



The United States Not Founded As A Christian Nation

From <https://secular.org/2026/01/the-united-states-was-not-founded-as-a-christian-nation/>

On the advent of the nation’s 250th Birthday (the Semiquincentennial), we expect to hear more than usual about whether the United States was founded as a Christian nation. It was not. While influenced by a predominantly Christian culture, the political foundations of the United States rest on Age of Enlightenment rationalism and a deliberate rejection of any established religion. The country was simply founded as a place where Christians were free to worship, as were people of other faiths or no faith, but not as a Christian nation.

- Many of the most influential Founding Fathers embraced deism fully or partially, rather than Christianity.
- The Declaration of Independence does not mention the God of the Bible or Christianity. It was drafted by Thomas Jefferson, a deist, to announce that the Thirteen Colonies were separating from England, not to establish a national government.
- The Articles of Confederation (1781), the Constitution (1787), and the Treaty of Tripoli (1797) explicitly or implicitly distance the federal government from Christianity or any religious identity.
- Nowhere in those documents or even in the 85 essays comprising The Federalist Papers did any of the Founders say “This will be a Christian nation” or anything similar.

Examining the intellectual, social, and legal contexts of the nation’s founding era shows that the United States was not established as a Christian nation, but rather as a secular republic committed to protecting freedom of religion.

The Religious and Intellectual Climate of the Founding Era

By the late eighteenth century the Colonies were populated by Baptists, Anglicans, Congregationalists, Quakers, Presbyterians, Methodists, Moravians, and Deists; collectively they were Protestants who all had different ideas about Christianity. Catholics had yet to immigrate in any significant numbers. Equally important was the influence of the Age of Enlightenment. Across the colonies, but especially among the educated political leaders, the writings of John Locke, Voltaire, Montesquieu, and other Enlightenment figures shaped debates about government, authority, and human rights. Enlightenment thinkers challenged the divine right of kings, emphasized natural law, and advocated religious toleration. The Founders absorbed these ideas through their education, personal libraries, and political discussions. (See full article at <https://secular.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/01/Was-the-United-States-Founded-as-a-Christian-Nation.docx-1.pdf>.)



If you gaze into the abyss, the abyss gazes also into you.

~ Friedrich Nietzsche

Smith & Moroni (deceased)

For a different flavor of religious eccentricity, consider the first American cult leader to get a million followers. Whether that shifts him from sectarian loony to holy maverick is your call.

Though inspired by 19th-Century evangelical revivals across America, Joseph Smith was told (by God) not to join an existing church but wait for something better. Then a resurrected dead fellow called Moroni visited him in New York and told him...

"2,200 years ago my Jewish ancestors – the Lost Tribes – came from Jerusalem to America, where we became the Indians and got a visit from Jesus when he came back from the dead. Eventually, everyone backslid or died apart from me and my Dad, and we died too. But not before I wrote it all down in bizarre hieroglyphic gobbledygook on gold plates. What's more they're the long-awaited Third Testament of the Bible, and they're buried in a box on top of that hill over there."

The next day, Smith dug them up, and four years later he was allowed to take them out of the box. "How am I supposed to read this stuff?" he asked.

"Nearly forgot," replied Moroni. "You'll need these magic specs." Then the so-called "Moronic visitations" stopped and Smith got down to the job of translation and getting the Mormon Church together.

Mr Smith also discovered in 1843 that, having been above ground for 26 years, it was time for the Book of Mormon to be revised. The traditional one-wife maximum it imposed was, according to Smith's more up-to-date information, too restrictive, and all limits were lifted.

This was great for the babe-magnet Smith, who apparently already had over a dozen wives here and there, and managed to squeeze in twice as many again over the next year, before he was murdered by a monogamous lynch mob.

(Reprinted from [Ship of Fools](#))



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 (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/>.