

~ The Secular Gazette ~

Supporting Science, Reason and the Separation of Church and State

Issue #25 November 28, 2011

Due to our southern California billboard campaign mis-quote last month, we've received thousands of emails both pro and con, and many non-theists expressed their opinions on our comment section at BackyardSkeptics.com. I am happy that these non-believers can use the Secular Gazette to stay in touch with skeptic news, atheist's articles, science news and church-state separation news. This is the only publication which touches on these four specific topics and presents the latest information to our readers.

People have joined Freethought Alliance from as far away as Islamabad and South America. But to enjoy reading this e-newsletter is a far cry from meeting local agnostics and atheists to discuss issues and talk about current events. I assume that if one has a computer to download a copy of the Secular Gazette that they would be able to meet others through Meetup.com or other social networking sites. As more and more non-theists sites are developed, more atheists will have a growing voice around the world. As it stands, America has grown to 15% non-theistic from 8% in just 10 short years. More than one-quarter of American adults have left the faith in which they were raised in favor of another religion, or no religion at all, the Pew Landscape Survey found. Is there a reason people are losing their faith? My opinion is yes – it's because we need God less than ever in today's current climate of science discoveries and the self-education one can easily receive through the internet.

Bruce Gleason, Editor

Skeptic's Corner

Ontario, Canada medical college votes for tougher scrutiny for alternative medicine

Tom Blackwell Nov 29, 2011

A new stance on alternative treatment by the Ontario doctors' college may influence policy across Canada.

Canada's biggest medical regulator has toughened up a sympathetic new policy on acupuncture, homeopathy and other alternative medicine after sharp criticism from some physicians, who complained the proposed rules undermined the principle of science-based health care.

The revised version of the guidelines — to be voted on by the College of Physicians & Surgeons of Ontario (CPSO) Tuesday — now emphasizes doctors should employ only treatments founded on good evidence and apply the same standards of proof to all kinds of therapies.

Critics who considered the policy too liberal say it still all but prohibits doctors from voicing skepticism about unproven non-conventional remedies. Others worry physicians performing alternative medicine will continue to face "heavy-handed" scrutiny.



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The college posted its draft policy over the summer and drew almost 700 submissions from doctors, other health practitioners and lay people, one of the largest responses to a regulatory proposal it has ever received.

As the most detailed policy on the issue in Canada, coming from the most populous province, it could influence the agenda elsewhere, too, some observers say.

Briefing notes for the council acknowledge the new draft will not please everyone, given the contradictory input from those on differing sides of the debate.

"It does encourage physicians to keep lines of communication open with patients who pursue these practices," noted Jill Hefley, a college spokeswoman. "Hopefully, in the final policy, we've found the right balance."

The new policy proposal was drafted to recognize what some see as growing popularity of "complementary and alternative" health care in Canada, from herbal medicine to naturopathy and chiropractic. In its original form, it said doctors should respect patients' wishes to try non-conventional care and require "sound evidence," but not necessarily clinical trials, to back up any alternative treatments they use.

Critics included the Canadian Medical Association, which said the policy should emphasize the lack of science behind some of the therapies. A group representing allergy doctors warned it could give credence to practitioners who lure asthmatics away from life-saving treatment. Others, including the organization that oversees Canada's medical specialists, said the policy was, if anything, too restrictive.

[Read more HERE](#)

<http://news.nationalpost.com/2011/11/29/ontario-medical-college-votes-for-tougher-scrutiny-for-alternative-medicine/>

Lonely broken-hearted creationists

http://scienceblogs.com/pharyngula/2011/11/lonely_broken-hearted_creation.php

Category: Creationism

Posted on: November 28, 2011 by PZ Myers

Aww, poor Intelligent Design creationism is feeling unloved. Or perhaps it's jealousy. David Klinghoffer, that clueless ideologue at the Discovery Institute, is [whimpering](#) that blogging scientists aren't paying enough attention to his brand of creationism.

Darwinian scientists who blog -- in other words, those whose comments are most readily accessible to us -- may indeed not pay attention to ID arguments, but that's certainly not because of any lack of "rigorous and persuasive ideas" on ID's part. The proof is that Darwin defenders are typically very busy indeed picking on other arguments that no thoughtful and critical person would remotely regard as "rigorous and persuasive." What those other arguments have in common is that, unlike ID, they're too weak to effectively fight back.

As a convenient example, right over at Panda's Thumb, Scanlan's colleague PZ Myers contributes [a longish post](#) (1500+ words) attacking some guy's rather... well, strained attempt to discover the details of all of embryology in two vaguely formulated verses from the Koran. Dr. Myers complains:

I have read the entirety of Hamza Andreas Tzortzis' paper, "Embryology in the Qur'an: A scientific-linguistic analysis of chapter 23: With responses to historical, scientific & popular contentions," all 58 pages of it (although, admittedly, it does use very large print). It is quite possibly the most overwrought, absurdly contrived, pretentious expansion of feeble post hoc rationalizations I've ever read. As an exercise in agonizing data fitting, it's a masterpiece.

Who is Hamza Andreas Tzortzis? On his Facebook page, he is identified as "a convert to Islam, ...an international lecturer, public speaker & author. He is particularly interested in Islam, philosophy and politics." How Dr. Myers discovered Mr. Tzortzis and what an easy punching bag he makes, I do not know.

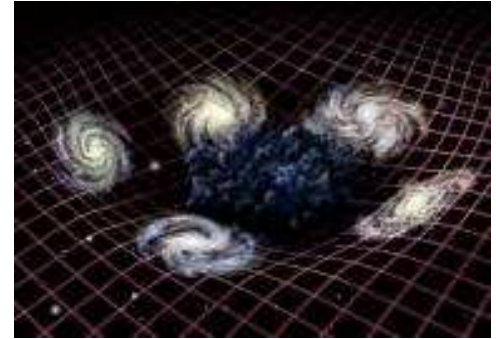
Don't worry, Davy! I think you're just an easy a punching bag as Tzortzis, and just as obscure and irrelevant! Also, I think Intelligent Design creationism is just as strained, just as ludicrous, just as fallacious as Tzortzis's Muslim creationism, or Ken Ham's fundamentalist creationism, or Hugh Ross's old earth creationism, or Biologos's theistic evolution. I despise you all equally. Read more [HERE](#)



Science News In The Dark - What is the universe made of?

[FROM SCIENCENEWS.COM](#)

In ancient times, listing the ingredients of the universe was simple: earth, air, fire and water. Today, scientists know that naming all of that, plus everything else familiar in everyday life, leaves out 95 percent of the cosmos's contents.



From the atoms that make up an astronomer, to the glass and steel of a telescope, to the hot plasma of the stars above — all ordinary stuff accounts for less than 5 percent of the mass and energy in the universe. “All the visible world that we see around us is just the tip of the iceberg,” says Joshua Frieman, an astrophysicist at the University of Chicago and the Fermi National Accelerator Laboratory in Batavia, Ill.

The rest is, quite literally, dark. Nearly one-quarter of the universe's composition is as-yet-unidentified material called dark matter. The remaining 70 percent or so is a mysterious entity — known as dark energy — that pervades all of space, pushing it apart at an ever-faster rate.

“Dark” is an appropriate adjective, as scientists have little insight into where dark matter and dark energy come from. But figuring out dark matter would illuminate what holds galaxies together. Figuring out dark energy might help reveal the universe's ultimate fate.

Read the rest of this article [HERE](http://www.sciencenews.org/view/feature/id/72326/title/In_the_dark). http://www.sciencenews.org/view/feature/id/72326/title/In_the_dark

Pre-Bang branes and bubbles

[FROM SCIENCENEWS.COM](#)

What happened before the big bang? By [Ron Cowen](#)

Cosmologists Paul Steinhardt and Neil Turok liken the early history of the universe to a play in which the protagonists — matter and radiation — move across the stage according to the laws of physics. Astronomers are actors who arrived on the scene 13.7 billion years too late to know what happened.

But that hasn't stopped Steinhardt, Turok and other researchers from pondering whether the universe was born in a giant fireball around that time or might have existed before that.

The modern-day notion of the cosmos's tumultuous beginning — known as the Big Bang — has its roots in Edwin Hubble's 1929 discovery that the universe is expanding. At the time, scientists envisioned the universe explosively flying outward from a single point in space and time.

Though this simple version of the Big Bang idea can't fully explain what people see in the cosmos today, Alan Guth of MIT added a new ingredient in 1981. Early in its history, the universe underwent a brief period of faster-than-light expansion, known as inflation, he proposed. In the years since Guth's suggestion, inflation has been wildly successful in explaining the structure of the universe and its arrangement of galaxies.



Bubbling over

Some scientists think that if inflation happened once, it could happen many more times — hinting at a cosmos alive and well eons before the Big Bang. Rapid expansion, in these interpretations, isn't confined to just one neck of the cosmic woods, like a single expanding balloon. Instead, distant patches of space keep inflating, like a child continually blowing soap bubbles, says Alex Vilenkin of Tufts University in Medford, Mass.

Every inflated patch becomes a separate universe, with its own Big Bang beginning (*SN: 6/7/08, p. 22*). In this “eternal inflation” scenario, the fireball that begot the universe seen with today's telescopes was preceded by a multitude of others just as surely as it will be followed by many more, each popping off at different times in different parts of the cosmos, Vilenkin says.

Just as the sun is merely one of billions of stars in the Milky Way galaxy, the visible universe may be one of countless in the cosmic firmament. Cosmologists call this ensemble of universes the multiverse.

Read more [HERE](#) http://www.sciencenews.org/view/feature/id/72325/title/Pre-Bang_branes_and_bubbles

Strung together

[FROM SCIENCENEWS.COM](#)

Is there a theory of everything?

By [Matt Crenson](#)



There's quantum mechanics, the weird tumultuous world where particles pop into and out of nothingness and cats can be simultaneously living and dead. And there's general relativity, Einstein's majestic vision of massive objects bending space and time.

Ever since these two very different views of the universe emerged early in the 20th century, generations of physicists have tried to unite them in a single theory that would ideally describe all four of nature's basic forces to boot. Even Einstein tried, and failed.

Now, after an especially frustrating few decades with little new evidence to guide them,

today's physicists may be about to get some tantalizing hints about how the forces fit together.

The clues are expected to come from the Large Hadron Collider, a ring of superconducting magnets in the Alps designed to smash protons together at energies never before seen on Earth. The collider began operating in March 2010 and is expected to reach full power in 2014, when it will attempt to smash its protons together with double the violence it does today.

Even then, the LHC will be far from powerful enough to re-create the single, unified force that physicists believe existed for a fraction of a second after the Big Bang — you'd need a collider as big as the universe itself for that. But the LHC might be able to test some of the predictions made by the leading theory that joins gravity and the other forces.

Superstring theory — string theory for short — ties all of physics into one neat package by reducing the bewildering taxonomy of particles in the current bestiary of physics, the Standard Model, to identical snippets of string, each less than a billionth of a billionth of a billionth of a centimeter long. According to string theory, the particles that carry the three forces included in the Standard Model — the photon (electromagnetism), the gluon (strong force) and the W and Z bosons (weak force) — are all just the same tiny dancers each following their own distinct rhythms.

Read more [HERE](#) http://www.sciencenews.org/view/feature/id/72335/title/Strung_together

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<http://freethoughtalliance.org/donate.html>

Church-State Legal News

Westphal v. Wagner

Updated October 21, 2011 |, CA

Federal Court:

[U.S. District Court, Central District of California](#)

AU's Role: [Counsel](#)

History:

The South Orange County Community College District operates two community colleges in Orange County, California — Saddleback College and Irvine Valley College. Members of the District's Board of Trustees deliver prayers at scholarship-award ceremonies (which are mandatory for students receiving scholarships) and graduations, training programs for faculty, building dedications, and other significant events. In response to complaints, trustees have embellished the prayers with attacks on religious minorities and nonbelievers: At Saddleback's 2008 scholarship ceremony, for example, the Board president justified the prayers by declaring that "the overwhelming majority of our fellow citizens believe [in God]," and dismissed those who are uncomfortable with the official prayers as "too uncertain in the strength of their own views . . . [to] abide any mention in public of the divine." And at a 2009 faculty-training program, the District presented a slideshow entitled "God Bless the USA," which preached that "Jesus Christ . . . died for your soul." On November 19, 2009, Americans United challenged the presentations on behalf of five faculty members, two students, and one former student. We began by seeking a preliminary injunction to have the prayers discontinued while the lawsuit was ongoing. The district court denied the motion, and we appealed to the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit.



Most Recent Developments:

Legal Director Ayesha N. Khan presented oral argument on the preliminary-injunction appeal on December 6, 2010; we are awaiting a decision from the Ninth Circuit.

Meanwhile, the case has continued before the district court. After several rounds of discovery, the Defendants filed a motion for summary judgment. On November 4, 2010, the district court granted Defendants' summary-judgment motion in part – and then on January 28, 2011, in response to cross-motions for reconsideration and Plaintiffs' Motion for Summary Judgment, the court vacated its November 4th ruling and issued a revised ruling. The court held that: (1) the 2008 scholarship-ceremony invocation and the "God Bless the USA" presentation violated the Establishment Clause, and that Plaintiffs are entitled to relief for these violations; (2) that Plaintiffs are entitled to an injunction directing Defendants to comply with the Board's December 7, 2009 Prayer Policy, which requires District officials to pre-screen audiovisual presentations for "inappropriate religious or other content" and forbids "presenting personal comments with sectarian religious content at District or college events"; and (3) that generic, non-sectarian prayers can continue to be presented at District and college events. Judgment has not yet been entered.

Separation of Church and State

"Those who would renegotiate the boundaries between church and state must therefore answer a difficult question: why would we trade a system that has served us so well for one that has served others so poorly?" Supreme Court Justice Sandra Day O'Connor on the [Ten Commandments](#) ruling, June 27, 2005

To read updates on Church-State Separation, [click here](http://www.theocracywatch.org/separation_updates.htm). http://www.theocracywatch.org/separation_updates.htm

Background

[Wedding Church And State](#), Susan Jacoby, director of the [Center for Inquiry-Metro New York](#), writes:

In 1773, the Rev. Isaac Backus, the most prominent Baptist minister in New England, observed that when "church and state are separate, the effects are happy, and they do not at all interfere with each other: but where they have been confounded together, no tongue nor pen can fully describe the mischiefs that have ensued."

If only that reverend manqué, President George W. Bush, had consulted the Reverend Backus' "[An Appeal to the Public for Religious Liberty](#)" before endorsing the mischief implicit in a constitutional amendment to define marriage as a union between a man and a woman and "prevent the meaning of marriage from being changed forever."

One of the most ironic aspects of the current assault on separation of church and state is that the apostles of religious correctness have managed to obscure the broad and tolerant origins of the godless Constitution, which was written and ratified by a coalition of Enlightenment rationalists and evangelical Christians equally fearful of entanglements between religion and government.

By Arthur Schlesinger Jr., published in the [Los Angeles Times](#), October 24, 2004:

The founding fathers did not mention God in the Constitution, and the faithful often regarded our early presidents as insufficiently pious.

George Washington was a nominal Anglican who rarely stayed for Communion.

John Adams was a Unitarian, which Trinitarians abhorred as heresy. Thomas Jefferson, denounced as an atheist, was actually a deist who detested organized religion and who produced an expurgated version of the New Testament with the miracles eliminated. Jefferson and James Madison, a nominal Episcopalian, were the architects of the Virginia Statute of Religious Freedom. James Monroe was another Virginia Episcopalian. John Quincy Adams was another Massachusetts Unitarian.

The Godless Constitution

The word "God" does not appear within the text of the Constitution of the United States. After spending three-and-a-half months debating and negotiating about what should go into the document that would govern the land, the framers drafted a constitution that is secular. The U.S. Constitution is often confused with the Declaration of Independence, and it's important to understand the difference.

The Declaration of Independence is seen as that document that established the new nation of the United States. It was written by Thomas Jefferson in 1776. It was signed by the Continental Congress and sent to King George III of England. It is a very eloquent document that is celebrated every July 4, but it is not the law of the land. It is a statement of sentiments directed to King George III in reaction to unfair taxation. The U.S. Constitution was ratified on March 4, 1789 -- thirteen years after the signing of the Declaration of Independence.

The Declaration of Independence refers to "the Creator:"

We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness.

The Declaration of Independence is not a legal document; it is not the U.S. Constitution. Foes of the principle of separation of church and state often refer to the word "Creator" in the Declaration of Independence as proof that the framers of the U.S. Constitution intended for the United States to be ruled by a sovereign being. Nothing could be further from the truth. The United States Constitution was written and ratified by elected officials representing a coalition of Enlightenment rationalists and evangelical Christians who were deeply concerned about entanglements between religion and government.

What the Religious Right doesn't tell people, and what, tragically, many Americans apparently don't know, is that when it comes to determining what the laws of the United States mean, the only document that matters is the Constitution. The Constitution, a completely secular document, contains no references to God, Jesus or Christianity. It says absolutely nothing about the United States being officially Christian. The Religious Right's constant appeals to documents like the Declaration of Independence, which contains a deistic reference to "the Creator," cloud the issue and make some people believe their rights spring from these other documents.

See more on church and state separation [HERE](#) <http://theocracywatch.org/>

From the Blog of Sam Harris



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The Truth about Violence

3 Principles of Self-Defense

As a teenager, I once had an opportunity to fly in a police helicopter over a major American city. Naively, I thought the experience might be uneventful. Perhaps there would be no crime between 8:00 and 10:00 p.m. on a Saturday night. However, from the moment we were airborne, there was a fresh emergency every fifteen seconds: Shots fired... rape in progress... victim stabbed... It was a deluge. Of course, the impression this left on me was, in part, the result of a sampling bias: I was hearing nothing but incident reports from a city of 4 million people, most of whom would never encounter violence directly. (No one calls the police to say "Everything is still okay!") Yet it was uncanny to discover the chaos that lurked at the margins of my daily routine. A few minutes from where I might otherwise have been eating dinner, rapes, robberies, and murders were in progress.

Just as it is prudent to wear your seat belt while driving, it makes sense to know how best to respond to violence. In fact, it is overwhelmingly likely that some of you will become the targets of violence in the future. The purpose of this essay is to help you prepare for it. While I do not consider myself an expert on personal security, I know enough to have strong opinions. In my youth, I practiced martial arts for many years and eventually taught self-defense classes in college.[1] My education included work with firearms and a variety of other weapons. □ I eventually stopped training and moved on to other things, but my interest in self-defense has resurfaced. It's hard to say why. No doubt receiving occasional death threats and other strange communications has been a factor. But I think that having a family has played a much larger role. I now feel acutely responsible for the safety of those closest to me.

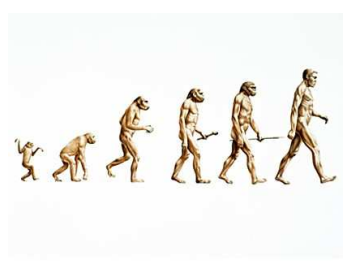
In my experience, most people do not want to think about the reality of human violence. I have friends who sleep with their front doors unlocked and who would never consider receiving instruction in self-defense. For them, gun ownership seems like an ugly and uncivilized flirtation with paranoia. Happily, most of these people will never encounter violence in any form. And good luck will make their unconcern seem perfectly justified.

But here are the numbers: In 2010, there were 403.6 violent crimes per 100,000 persons in the United States. (The good news: This is an overall decrease of 13.4 percent from the level in 2001.) Thus, the average American has a 1 in 250 chance of being robbed, assaulted, raped, or murdered each year. Actually, the chance is probably greater than this, because we know that certain crimes, such as assault and rape, are underreported.

Of course, your risks vary depending on who you are and where you live. In Compton, one of the more dangerous parts of Los Angeles, your chances of experiencing violent crime in 2010 were 1 in 71; if you lived in Beverly Hills they were 1 in 458. Still, even in good neighborhoods, the likelihood of being attacked is hardly remote. In the comparative safety of Beverly Hills, assuming the crime rate stays constant, the probability that you will be robbed, assaulted, raped or murdered at some point over the next 30 years is 1 in 16. (The average risk in the U.S. is 1 in 9; in Compton it's better than 1 in 3.) Again, these statistics surely paint too rosy a picture, because many crimes go unreported.

It may seem onerous to prepare yourself and your family to respond to violence, but not doing so is also a form of preparation. Failing to prepare is, generally speaking, preparing very well to do the wrong thing. Although most of us are good at recognizing danger, our instincts often lead us to behave in ways that increase our chances of being injured or killed once a threat emerges.

Read the rest of this blog [HERE](http://www.samharris.org/blog/item/the-truth-about-violence/) <http://www.samharris.org/blog/item/the-truth-about-violence/>



Biology's big bang had a long fuse

Animals started evolving long before showing up as fossils

By [Susan Milius](#)



RISING DAWN The evolutionary extravaganza of the Cambrian period about 550 million years ago spawned early arthropods such as the *Olenoides* trilobite and the *Sidneyia* spider-cousin, immortalized here in Canada's Burgess Shale. New DNA analyses suggest that common ancestors for such creatures diverged some 200 million years before. A new effort to date the early history of modern animals finds a lot of evolutionary dawdling.

The last common ancestor of all living animals probably arose nearly 800 million years ago, a multidisciplinary research team reports in the Nov. 25 *Science*. From that common ancestry, various animal lineages diverged

and evolved on their own paths. Yet the major animal groups living today didn't arise until roughly 200 million years later, in an exuberant burst of forms preserved in fossils during what's called the Cambrian explosion.

"There's a deeper history that's been missing from the fossil record," says study coauthor Kevin Peterson of Dartmouth College. He and his colleagues have been pushing back that date for a last common ancestor, and now, he reports, the analysis has the broadest reach yet. "We show that animals evolved quite a bit before they show up in the fossil record."

This work updates the notion of a long evolutionary lag, when much of the basic biological toolkit was already in place for a later surge of new body forms, says paleontologist and study coauthor Douglas Erwin of the National Museum of Natural History in Washington, D.C., and the Santa Fe Institute.

"The Cambrian explosion is like the industrial revolution," Erwin says. Inventions that would later be important for a major shift in technology — or, in this case, genetic novelties important for evolution — appeared long before they played a role in widespread changes that had a major impact on life. For understanding animal origins, the new paper "is really worthwhile as it stands back and tries to make sense of the whole picture," says James Valentine of the University of California, Berkeley, who studies animal evolution.

Just what happened with animals during that Cambrian explosion remains one of the more celebrated puzzles in the history of life. Charles Darwin mused over how diverse animal forms appear suddenly (geologically speaking) without much in the way of precursors. Darwin's answer, as Erwin puts it, was that paleontologists just needed to look harder.

Read the rest of this article [HERE](#) or here:

http://www.sciencenews.org/view/generic/id/336480/title/Biology%E2%80%99s_big_bang_had_a_long_fuse

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God is Imaginary

Proof #4 - Think about science

Notice what happens when anyone is "miraculously cured". A person is sick, the person prays (or a prayer circle prays for the person) and the person is cured. A religious person looks at it and says, "God performed a miracle because of prayer!" That is the end of it.

A scientist looks at it in a very different way. A scientist looks at it and says, "Prayer had nothing to do with it - there is a natural cause for what we see here. If we understand the natural cause, then we can heal many more people suffering from the same condition."

In other words, it is only by assuming that God is imaginary that science can proceed.



You can see a direct example of science at work in [this article](#):

Fleming had so much going on in his lab that it was often in a jumble. This disorder proved very fortunate. In 1928, he was straightening up a pile of Petri dishes where he had been growing bacteria, but which had been piled in the sink. He opened each one and examined it before tossing it into the cleaning solution. One made him stop and say, "That's funny."

Some mold was growing on one of the dishes... not too unusual, but all around the mold, the staph bacteria had been killed... very unusual. He took a sample of the mold. He found that it was from the penicillium family, later specified as *Penicillium notatum*. Fleming presented his findings in 1929, but they raised little interest. He published a report on penicillin and its potential uses in the *British Journal of Experimental Pathology*.

Fleming worked with the mold for some time, but refining and growing it was a difficult process better suited to a chemist. The work was taken over by a team of chemists and mold specialists, but was cut short when several of them died or relocated.

In 1935, Australian Howard Florey was appointed professor of pathology at Oxford University where he headed up a laboratory. This was a daunting task in an economically depressed time, and seeking funding for the researchers and work he hoped to do took much of his time. One researcher he hired soon after his arrival was Ernst Chain. Chain was paid to do cancer research, and work that spilled over into Florey's own interest and work on lysozyme. Chain became quite enthusiastic about the search for antibacterial chemicals. In looking back at old articles written about lysozyme, including those by Fleming in the 1920s, he happened across Fleming's paper on penicillin. "I had come across this paper early in 1938 and on reading it I immediately became interested," he wrote.

The Oxford team, as Florey's researchers have become known, began experimenting with the penicillin mold. They took it one step further than Fleming did: they did not just try it topically or in a petri dish, but injected it in live mice. With controlled experimentation, they found it cured mice with bacterial infections. They went on to try it on a few human subjects and saw amazing results. By now it was 1941, and England was at war. As Fleming first foresaw, the wartime need for an antibacterial was great, but resources were tight and penicillin still very experimental. Florey had connections at the Rockefeller Foundation in the United States, however, and it funded further research.

Did Fleming or Florey say, as a religious person would, "The death of this bacteria is a miracle! God has reached down and killed it!" Of course not. Instead, they completely ignored "God". They determined what was actually happening through experimentation and then made useful medicines from the mold. They took a rational approach rather than a religious approach and we all benefit from penicillin and its many derivatives today.

Read the rest of this article [HERE](#)

<http://godisimaginary.com/i4.htm>

Skeptoid

By Brian Dunning

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The Fate of Fletcher Christian

Skeptoid #284 November 15, 2011

Did the leader of the Bounty mutineers die on Pitcairn Island, or did he eventually make it back to England?

The mutiny on the *Bounty* is perhaps the best known of all stories from the era of wooden ships. Fletcher Christian, the infamous officer responsible for the affair, is believed to have died on Pitcairn Island, where he and the other mutineers took refuge. Yet some say his death was faked, and he did in fact make it back to England. Today we'll point the skeptical eye at these stories, and see if we can learn for certain where Fletcher Christian made his final atonement. The basic story of the *Bounty* is not only well known, it's well documented and not in any meaningful doubt. In 1789, the small British naval ship left the island of Tahiti with a cargo of breadfruit plants. Three weeks later, its discontented crew, led by sailing master Fletcher Christian, mutineed against Captain William Bligh. Bligh and the loyal crew members were set adrift in the *Bounty's* open launch, in which they ultimately made it to safety, and made knowledge of the mutiny public.



Christian and his crew of 24 – eighteen mutineers, four loyalists who couldn't fit in Bligh's launch, and two neutral men – sought refuge for several months in some of the neighboring islands, but upon finding the natives too unfriendly, they returned briefly to Tahiti. Sixteen of the men remained there, leaving only eight aboard the *Bounty*; barely enough to sail her. And so, one night when the mutineers' women and some other natives happened to be on board, they set sail unexpectedly, effectively kidnapping the Tahitians. And thus was the founding population of Pitcairn Island established: eight British sailors, six Tahitian men, eleven Tahitian women, and one baby. These events are known from the accounts of the sailors who remained on Tahiti, including the four loyalists, who were either captured by or rejoined the British navy when the ship *Pandora* was dispatched to find them.

From that point onwards, the fate of the *Bounty* is more thinly documented. Fletcher Christian took his crew to Pitcairn Island because he knew from the British charts that its position was not precisely known, so they'd have a fair chance of evading capture. When they arrived, the *Bounty* was scuttled, both to avoid advertising their presence and to prevent anyone from leaving the island and possibly raising the alarm. We know for a fact that the *Bounty* was sunk because its remains have been found. Without any reasonable doubt, Fletcher Christian left Tahiti aboard a ship that went to Pitcairn Island and nowhere else. No other ship of any nation reported encountering them en route.

Read the rest of this article [HERE](#) <http://skeptoid.com/episodes/4284>

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This will be Orange County’s third secular conference, where all freethinkers, humanists, atheists, agnostics, and church and state separatists can mingle with some of the most famous secular leaders of our time. Our speakers will inspire, educate and entertain you.



Mr Deity



Michael Shermer



Brian Dunning



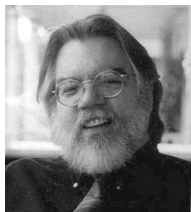
Barbara Forest



Jim Underdown



Aron Ra



Robert Price



Phil Zuckerman



Richard Carrier



Dan Barker



Dave Richards

Oct 1 – Dec 31 Early-bird Pricing:

Saturday afternoon: \$50, Saturday night debate: \$10, Sunday:\$80, All-weekend pass:\$120

Jan 1 – May 10 Pre-Registration:

Saturday afternoon: \$60, Saturday night debate: \$10, Sunday:\$90, All-weekend pass:\$130

At-The-Door pricing,

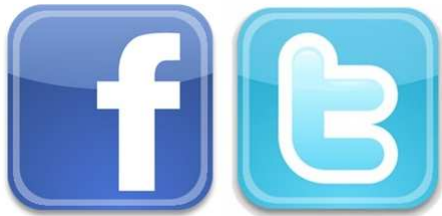
Saturday afternoon: \$70, Saturday night debate:\$10, Sunday:\$90, All-weekend pass:\$150

Child-Car services: \$20 per day \$10 Box Lunch on Sunday

www.Freethoughtalliance.org

Backyard Skeptics

is a 501C3 grass-roots organization based in Villa Park, CA which sponsors monthly meetings with interesting secular speakers, dinner-and-a-movie nights, science-oriented field trips, outreach programs for letting others know about our secular community and atheist advocacy programs. If you are local to Orange County you are welcome to join our meetup group to receive announcements of upcoming events. <http://www.backyardskeptics.com>



[Backyard Skeptics is now on Facebook and twitter – if you're a Facebook fan then join our group page by searching for Backyard Skeptics.](#) Follow us on Twitter at Backyardskeptic (no 's' at the end)

[Also see the "Newsworthy Articles section on the Backyard Skeptics website for interesting and insightful articles.](#)



[NEWS](#) (more at [backyardskeptics.com](http://www.backyardskeptics.com))

- 11/25/11 Calif. Woman Promotes Government-Endorsed 'In God We Trust' Signs
- 11/24/11 NUMBER OF RELIGIOUS LOBBYING GROUPS IN D.C. IS UP FIVEFOLD
- 11/16/11 :Atheists in the U.S. military want to participate in the armed services' chaplaincy program
- [11/10/11 Religion and Obesity; Report Associates Religious Activity With Weight Gain](#)
- [11/10/11 Nun Excommunicated Over Allowing Life-Saving Abortion Given Honors](#)
- 11/8/11 [Dobson: U.S. in 'trouble with God' if Obama reelected](#) (with video)
- [11/5/11 Bankrupt church wants donations for pastors for pastor's sick wife ferried in limo](#)
- [11/3/11 Yoga is the Work of the Devil](#)
- 11/2/11 [Let's talk to dead people!](#) Alleged-medium James Van Praagh talks to dead people in Laguna beach Oct 19, 2011
- [11/1/11 Americans United Blasts Congress For Wasting Time On 'In God We Trust' Resolution](#)

Backyard Skeptics Events



Dec 2nd – Pub Crawl in downtown Orange
6:30pm
Backyard Skeptics South County - Our Next
Monthly Meeting: Tuesday Dec 7th at Denny's
off Alicia
Our Next Monthly Meeting: Dec 23rd – Our
Winter Solstice Pot-Luck Party. Dress warm –
even our 6 patio heaters might not be enough!
Free

Other events which are coming up at Backyard
Skeptics:

Blackstar Canyon visit with the OC
Astronomers Club
Habitat for Humanity volunteer day
Music Appreciation night – rock, classical and
jazz
Mt Wilson Observatory night (we are renting
the 60" telescope for the evening!)
Orange County Freethought Alliance
Conference May 19 & 20, 2012
Borego Springs overnighter with the OC
Astronomy Club
Joshua tree camping overnighter in June.

Local Events

(Also on the Backyardskeptics.com page)

Dec 3 IEAA (Inland Empire Atheists and
Agnostics) Freethinkers Bookclub
Dec 3rd Movie Night – San Diego Atheists
and Agnostics
Dec 4 – IEAA Sunday Breakfast
Dec 4 = IEAA High Desert Coffee and
conversation, Apple Valley
Dec 10 Orange County Secular Book Club, 2pm
Westminster
Dec 14 CFI-LA Book Club for Skeptics
Dec 18 Humanists of Orange County Monthly
Meetup 2pm, Irvine
Dec 18 Generation Atheist monthly meeting, the Cat &
Fiddle, Hollywood, 3pm
Dec 18 Long Beach Atheists. Claim Jumper
Restaurant 11:30am
Dec 25 – Atheists United meeting at 11am at CFI West
in Hollywood at 11am

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Go to www.freethoughtalliance.org
to help us continue to bring you the most
recent news in skepticism, atheism,
science and church-state separation.

Born Atheist

Chapter 19. Art to die for

Good art makes you think.

This crime called blasphemy was invented by priests for the purpose of defending doctrines not able to take care of themselves. Robert Ingersoll

The collision of art, free speech and religion is enlightening. Historically, in Western countries, art and free speech usually win. The situation is reversed in Muslim countries, where “blasphemy” is often a crime. But the trend is shifting. Religionists’ reaction to art which is legal, but offends their religious mores, often shifts into superlegal action—supernaturally authorized illegal acts (see Chapter 21). The use of religion to justify illegal activities, including murder, for often innocuous art, is one of the most shocking and unjustifiable functions of religion.

In 2004, Theo Van Gogh, a distant relative of artist Vincent Van Gogh, directed a ten-minute English language film called “Submission.” “Submission” is a literal translation of the word “Islam.” The screenplay was written by a Somali-born refugee who fled an arranged marriage and eventually became a member of the Dutch Parliament. The film shows four women, who while praying, describe the physical and sexual abuse they have suffered from men. The women have verses from the Koran written on their skin and are wearing transparent garments.

The verses from the Koran included:

Men are the maintainers of women because Allah has made some of them to excel others and because they spend out of their property; the good women are therefore obedient, guarding the unseen as Allah has guarded; and (as to) those on whose part you fear desertion, admonish them, and leave them alone in the sleeping-places and beat them; then if they obey you, do not seek a way against them; surely Allah is High, Great.

They ask thee concerning women’s courses. Say: They are a hurt and a pollution: So keep away from women in their courses, and do not approach them until they are clean. But when they have purified themselves, ye may approach them in any manner, time, or place ordained for you by Allah. For Allah loves those who turn to Him constantly and He loves those who keep themselves pure and clean.

(As for) the fornicatress and the fornicator, flog each of them, (giving) a hundred stripes, and let not pity for them detain you in the matter of obedience to Allah, if

you believe in Allah and the last day, and let a party of believers witness their chastisement.

Following the airing of the film, both Van Gogh and the author of the screenplay, Hirsi Ali, were threatened with death. Ms. Ali already had police protection. Van Gogh declined police protection and told Ms. Ali, “if they kill me, remember the rule of law has to be protected against extremists.”

In November 2004, on a city street in broad daylight, a Dutch-Moroccan Muslim man shot Van Gogh six times, slit his throat, and then pinned a six-page letter to his body with a knife. The letter declared jihad against Holland, Europe and the United States and included this statement (translated from Dutch):

Islam will be victorious through the blood of the martyrs. They will spread its light in every dark corner of this earth and it will drive evil, with the sword if necessary, back into its dark hole. This struggle which has burst forth is different than those of the past. The unbelieving fundamentalists have started it and Inshallah the true believers will end it.

There will be no mercy shown to the purveyors of injustice, only the sword will be lifted against them. No discussions, no demonstrations, no petitions; DEATH will separate the Truth from the Lies.

Verse: Be warned that the death that you are trying to prevent will surely find you, afterwards you will be taken back to the All Knowing and He will tell you what you attempted to do.

The story of Danish cartoonist Kurt Westergaard has also become well known. Westergaard drew a political cartoon showing the face of a bearded man with a bomb in his turban. The bomb was a simple black circle, the kind you would see in a child’s cartoon, with a lit fuse. Dutch newspaper Jyllands-Posten (Jyllands Post) ran the cartoon as part of a series of 12 in 2005. The editor commented:

Read the rest of this article [HERE](#)

<http://bornatheist.com/19.html>

By Cameron English



Blame Christianity for Nazism?

I will be the first to admit that Richard Weikart's hypothesis is flawed. As a Christian, I have no problem with Evolution and no desire to link it to Nazism. But that being said, PZ Meyers is mistaken to suggest that Christianity was somehow responsible for the Nazis' rise to power in Germany.

Meyers suggests that "Nazism was not science-based. It was pseudo-scientific religious dogma, tightly tied to the German culture of the time, which was almost entirely Catholic and Lutheran." If you pick up any scholarly history of Nazi Germany, it will be immediately obvious how foolish this argument is. The truth is that the Nazis saw religion as an obstacle to overcome, because religion requires believers to dedicate their lives to something greater than a government, a problematic fact for a totalitarian regime. If you want to research this, take a look at Joachim Fest's history of the resistance movement in Germany, *Plotting Hitler's Death*. Fest points out that the Nazis openly attacked the churches too soon after taking power and were forced to grant them a degree of freedom, realizing that they wouldn't simply roll over. As Fest explains, "...the churches provided a

forum in which individuals could distance themselves from the regime" and the resistance from the churches was so intense that "...Hitler decided to postpone a showdown until after the war." (p 32)

But the Nazis soon attempted to nationalize the Protestant Church and make its doctrines more congenial. As historian Richard J Evans reports in *The Third Reich in Power*, "Hitler seems to have had the ambition of converting [the Protestant church] into a new kind of national church, purveying the new racial and nationalist doctrines of the regime..." (p 223) The result of this effort on Hitler's part was a split in the Protestant church; The German Christians fell in line behind the Nazis and the Confessing Church held out its resistance, though in the face of much persecution. Evans says that their pastors were banned from preaching, denied their salaries; a major Protestant publishing house was seized, theology students were forced to join Nazi organizations, and by 1937 700 pastors were imprisoned, some eventually murdered. (p 230) Not one of these facts is ever mentioned by those seeking to lay blame for Nazism on Christianity. On his blog, for example, Meyers makes a big deal out of the cover of Michael Lackey's book, which depicts brown shirts saluting a crucified Jesus, but he fails to mention the intense opposition that also came from within the church.

So while it would be correct to say that Hitler, the clever politician that he was, knowingly co-opted the beliefs of the vast majority of Germans in the service of his cause, it would be wildly incorrect to call him a Christian.

Opinion

Cosmological Coincidences & God

Charles L. Rulon
Emeritus, Life Sciences
Long Beach City College
Our universe appears to be fine-tuned

Astronomer, Fred Hoyle, commented that, because of what appears to be a "monstrous series of accidents," our universe is exquisitely fine-tuned for the evolution of life. In fact, says Hoyle, our universe looks just like a "put-up job," as though somebody had been "monkeying" with the laws of physics.ⁱⁱⁱ What Hoyle meant was that only tiny shifts in the relative strengths of various forces such as gravity and electromagnetism, or the mass of various particles, or the form taken by the various laws of physics would bring about changes so drastic that carbon-based life of any imaginable sort could have never evolved. In fact, physicist Freeman Dyson famously observed that our universe seems almost as if it "must have known we were coming".

As just one example, carbon chemistry is enormously richer than the chemistry of any other element. In fact, of all the 92 naturally occurring atoms found in our universe, biochemists are convinced that only the carbon atom has the many unique and essential properties necessary to form the backbone structure of life, not only on Earth, but throughout our universe. But carbon is very tricky for stars to synthesize. With just the slightest changes in the apparent fine-tuning of a few physical parameters stars could never have made carbon in the first place.^{iv}

In 1999 Martin Rees, a leading figure in theoretical astrophysics and Astronomer Royal of Great Britain, in his book, *Just Six Numbers*, listed six fundamental physical constants, which are believed to hold throughout our universe. Each of these six numbers is

fine-tuned in the sense that, if it were slightly different, the universe would be completely different, making our form of life impossible. Since then, other theorists have added several more numbers. Currently there is no known law that requires these numbers to have the values that they do. So how did we get so lucky with all these apparent cosmological coincidences?

Many theists see all of these "amazing cosmological coincidences"—all this "miraculous fine tuning"—as strong evidence for the existence of God.

Perhaps there are no knobs to tune in the first place?

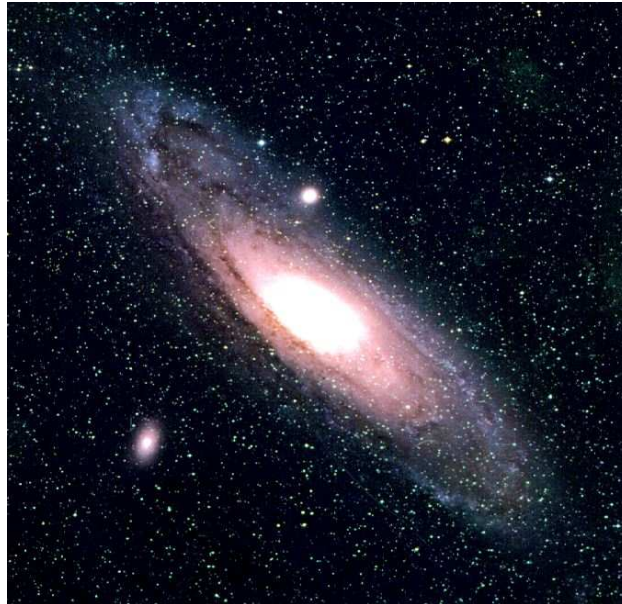
So how did we get so lucky with all this fine-tuning?

Physicist Tanner Edis (*Ghost in the Universe*, p. 88) agrees that the universe does look fine-tuned, but observes that future theories might reduce the number of dials to tweak, thus causing the apparent fine-tuning of these dials to disappear. Richard Dawkins (*The God Delusion* - p. 144) also suggests that perhaps these six numbers of Martin Rees depend upon each

other, or on some other unknown thing in ways that make them no freer to vary than the ratio of a circle's circumference to its diameter. If this turns out to be true, then there could be only one way for a universe to be. To quote Dawkins: "Far from God being needed to twiddle six knobs, there [would be] no knobs to twiddle." Yet, observes Dawkins, *and this is the critical point*, if there are no knobs to tune "then why did that one way [the only way to make a universe] have to be such a set-up job for our eventual evolution?"

Many theists would see such a discovery (no knobs to twiddle, thus a ready-made universe for the evolution of humans) as further proof that God not only exists, but that He also created our universe.

The multiverse can explain our universe's apparent fine-tuning



Read the rest of this article [HERE](http://freethoughtalliance.org/files/cosmos.pdf)
<http://freethoughtalliance.org/files/cosmos.pdf>

Secular DVDS from FreethoughtAlliance.org BackyardSkeptics.com



Both of these sites have one of the largest selections of secular DVDs available anywhere. Most DVDs are only \$10. Make a contribution to your secular organizations by ordering one of our entertaining and educational DVDs

[The 2011 Orange County Freethought Alliance Conference 3-DVD set. !3 wonderful speakers. Enlightening, Educational and inspiring. \\$34](#)

Magic, Witchcraft, and Religion: An Anthropological Survey of the Supernatural World with Adrian Novotny, Ph.D. \$10 special
Thomas Quinn - "God Needs Therapy" (a comedy) \$12

[Dr. Richard Carrier: How Christianity Began Is Proof Enough It's Bunk \\$12](#)

[San Diego Secular Humanist Conference 2011 - Entertaining speakers, engaging insights and thought-provoking lectures. 2 DVDs \\$45](#)

[Ali Ayaan Hirsi Ali is a spokesperson for human rights and a proponent against female mutilation in Muslim countries. Her riveting personal story is told with the help a local](#)

Funny Stuff

HELL EXPLAINED
BY A CHEMISTRY STUDENT

[journalist, Jill Stewart. \\$10](#)

[Sean McDowell vs. BYS - Commonalities of Christians and Atheists
Sean visits Backyard Skeptics, then Bruce Gleason and Mark Smith visit Sean's church in San Juan Capistrano A 2-DVD set. \\$15](#)

[Sarah Dunn - Atheists in Prison: How the law, culture, psychology shape prison Populations \\$10](#)

[Dave Richards - Exploring logical fallacies and how to identify them \\$10](#)

[Eugenie Scott - Creationism, evolution, education, and politics, Taped at Chapman University, Orange CA \\$10](#)

[Orange County 2010 Freethought Alliance Conference 2- DVD set
Enjoy 12 full-length seminars and an evening discussion panel for only \\$30](#)

[Does God of the Bible Exist? A 6-
Person Panel Debate, December 2009 \\$20](#)

["The God Question" -
Debate between Shermer & DeSouza \\$10](#)

[Bruce Gleason - "Why Am I Am Atheist" speech at
Calvary Church, Costa Mesa, CA \\$10](#)

[Dan Barker 2 DVD set - Jesus Myth or Fiction?
and Why I Became An Atheist \\$20](#)

[Chris Mooney - The War on Science: What Have We
Learned? CFI lecture \\$10](#)

[John Shook - The God Theory is Dead CFI lecture
\\$10](#)

[Edward Tabash - America at the Crossroads \\$10](#)

[Sean Carroll - The Origin of the Universe and the
Arrow of Time CFI lecture\\$10](#)

[Ross Blocher - Swaddling Cloth out of Whole Cloth:
Problems with the Nativity Story CFI lecture \\$10](#)

The following is an actual question given on a University of Arizona chemistry mid term, and an actual answer turned in by a student. The answer by one student was so 'profound' that the professor shared it with colleagues, via

the Internet, which is, of course, why we now have the pleasure of enjoying it as well :

Bonus Question: Is Hell exothermic (gives off heat) or endothermic (absorbs heat)?

Most of the students wrote proofs of their beliefs using Boyle's Law (gas cools when it expands and heats when it is compressed) or some variant.

One student, however, wrote the following:

First, we need to know how the mass of Hell is changing in time. So we need to know the rate at which souls are moving into Hell and the rate at which they are leaving, which is unlikely.. I think that we can safely assume that once a soul gets to Hell, it will not leave.

Therefore, no souls are leaving. As for how many souls are entering Hell, let's look at the different religions that exist in the world today.

Most of these religions state that if you are not a member of their religion, you will go to Hell. Since there is more than one of these religions and since people do not belong to more than one religion, we can project that all souls go to Hell. With birth and death rates as they are, we can expect the number of souls in Hell to increase exponentially. Now, we look at the rate of change of the volume in Hell because Boyle's Law states that in order for the temperature and pressure in Hell to stay the same, the volume of Hell has to expand proportionately as souls are added.

This gives two possibilities:

1. If Hell is expanding at a slower rate than the rate at which souls enter Hell, then the temperature and pressure in Hell will increase until all Hell breaks loose.

2. If Hell is expanding at a rate faster than the increase of souls in Hell, then the temperature and pressure will drop until Hell freezes over.

So which is it?

If we accept the postulate given to me by Teresa during my Freshman year that, 'It will be a cold day in Hell before I sleep with you,' and take into account the fact that I slept with her last night, then number two must be true, and thus I am sure that Hell is exothermic and has already frozen over. The corollary of this theory is that since Hell has frozen over, it follows that it is not accepting any more souls

and is therefore, extinct.....leaving only Heaven, thereby proving the existence of a divine being which explains why, last night, Teresa kept shouting 'Oh my God.'
THIS STUDENT RECEIVED AN A+

National Secular Links

Here are several secular links to other organizations supporting secularism, science and skepticism around the world:

[Americans United for Church and State Separation](#), National au.org

[American Humanist Assoc.](#) americanhumanist.org

[Atheist Alliance International](#) atheistalliance.org

[American Atheists](#) atheists.org/

[Military Assoc. of Atheists and Freethinkers](#) atheists.org

ACLU.org

BERTRAND RUSSELL SOCIETY

www.users.drew.edu/~jlenz/brs.html

CFI centerforinquiry.net

camp-quest.org

Freedom From Religion Foundation ffrf.org

jennymccarthybodycount.com

Meetup.com (search for humanist, agnostic, atheists or church and state in your area)

National Center for Science Education ncse.com

People for the American Way pfaw.org

Richarddawkinsfoundation.org

James Randi Educational Foundation randi.org/site

[Southern California Secular Humanist Conference.org](#) (in San Diego)

Whatstheharm.net

Local Southern California groups and links

Ateos Unidos: The group for Spanish speakers!
3rd Saturdays at 11 a.m. at the Center for Inquiry West, 4773 Hollywood Blvd.
Contact Liliana at 323-466-4223.

Americans United Meets the third Sunday of the month at 1:30pm at the [Irvine Ranch Water District](#)

15600 Sand Canyon Ave. Irvine, CA 92618
<http://www.au-oc.org/>

AU General Meeting: 4th Sundays, 11:00 a.m. at Center for Inquiry West, 4773 Hollywood Blvd. Presentation followed by lunch and afternoon activity. Board meets briefly at 10:30 a.m. for members' concerns. Childcare is available.
<http://atheists.meetup.com/705/>

Adopt-a-Highway: Help us keep our roads clean in the name of atheism!
AU hosts the southbound strip of the Glendale Freeway, Hwy 2, south of the 210. Keeping the road clean allows us to keep our signage there. Good exercise, and fun company! Two Saturdays a month. Dates vary. Contact Steve 310-670-7131

BackyardSkeptics.com – meets once a month in Villa Park (Orange County) also see meetup.com/backyard-skeptics

Center for Inquiry -Lectures 1st and 3rd Sundays, 11a.m. 4773 Hollywood Blvd., Los Angeles. Free for members of CFI, \$6 for non-members
<http://centerforinquiry.net/la>

San Diego Coalition of Reason

FreethoughtAllaince.org – sponsors debates and events in southern California

Free Thinkers for Liberty.org Freethinkers for Liberty is an organization of humanists and others who reject all superstition, in favor of rationality and critical thinking, who also respect the freedoms our forefathers described in the US Constitution and the Bill of Rights.

Freethinkers Toastmasters: Want to improve your speaking abilities in a fun and supportive group? Join FTTM on 2nd & 4th Saturdays at 2 p.m. at the Center for Inquiry West. More information: David: 310-479-6318.
<http://www.freethinkersclub.org>

GALAH: Gay and Lesbian Atheists and Humanists- 2nd Sundays, 1 p.m., Center for Inquiry West, 4773 Hollywood Blvd. Contact Ken Wolverton 818-554-9858 or galahla@aol.com

Generation Atheist: A meeting group for atheists in their 20s and 30s, 3rd Sundays, location changes monthly. <http://atheists.meetup.com/724/Hollywood/>

East LA: 2nd Tuesdays, 7 p.m. at Atwater Village in Glendale .Contact Steven Gibson 562-900-2834.
<http://atheists.meetup.com/212/>

Humanist Association of Orange County Meets the third Sunday of the month at 1:30pm at the Irvine Ranch Water District 15600 Sand Canyon Ave. Irvine, CA 92618 <http://www.meetup.com/OCHumanists>

Humanist Association of Los Angeles: 2nd Sunday, 11:00 a.m., Colorado Center Community Room (same as Yahoo Center), 2500 Broadway, Santa Monica (near corner of 26th Avenue and Broadway); Contact: Larry Taylor 310-479-2236, larry-a-taylor@att.net

Inland Empire: 1st Wednesday, 7 p.m., Riverside Unitarian Church 3657 Lemon St., Riverside Contact JanGoings@aol.com
<http://atheists.meetup.com/499/>

Lancaster "Antelope Valley Freethinkers" 4th Thurs., 7pm, Camille's Garden Cafe, Lancaster
<http://atheists.meetup.com/615/>

Long Beach: 3rd Fridays, 7 p.m., at Hometown Buffet, 290 E. 4th St. Meal cost is \$16. Contact Rodney 562-437-4370 or Hank Schultz, whschultz@mac.com.
<http://atheists.meetup.com/487/>

Orange County Atheists, meets one a month at the IHOP across from OC Airport
<http://www.ocatheists.com/>

Orange County Atheist United Chapter: 2nd Sundays, 10:30 a.m., Tee Room, 3100 Irvine Ave Newport Beach Contact Norman 310-408-8653 (cell).

Atheists United San Fernando Valley: 3rd Thursday, 6:30 p.m., Kountry Folks Restaurant, on Sepulveda Blvd. and Chase St. Contact Henry at 818-988-2806, after 5:00 p.m.
<http://atheists.meetup.com/614/>

San Diego New Atheists and Agnostics
<http://www.meetup.com/atheists-518/>

Atheists United Santa Clarita: 2nd Sundays, 11 a.m., at Greenhouse Café, 26586 Bouquet Cyn. Rd., Santa Clarita <http://atheists.meetup.com/670/>

Atheists United South Bay/Torrance: 3rd Sundays, 7p.m., At Marie Callender's, 2979 Artesia Blvd,

Redondo Beach <http://atheists.meetup.com/729/>

[Atheists United Ventura](#): 4th Mondays, 7pm,
E.P. Foster Library, 651 E Main Street, Ventura.
Contact Brian Parra for info: 805-794-4714,
venturaatheists@yahoo.com
<http://atheists.meetup.com/494/>

[Ventura "Freethought Parents Network"](#):
Kids playgroup meets every Tuesday at 11am,
Locations subject to change
<http://www.meetup.com/freethoughtparents/>

[WestValley Secular Humanists](#): Last Sundays, 2 p.m.,
Daphne's Greek Café, 5780 Canoga Ave. Unit B,
Woodland Hills
<http://secularhumanism.meetup.com/17/>
