

APRIL 1996

Contents

- [Another Look at a Gore Vidal Interview](#)
- [Quote of the Month](#)
- [Unclear on the concept](#)
- [President's Desk - Pride](#)
- [Reminder - Elections are Coming Up!](#)
- [April Program](#)
 - Three Reasons for Hope
- [AOF Third Annual Hike](#)

Letters

- [Freethought in music is not new](#)
- [Freethought is out there](#)
- [Atheists must speak out](#)

FYI Freethought News You Can Use

- [The Center for Critical Thinking](#)
- [Book on Logical Thinking](#)
- [Charity Dinner Report](#)
- [Good for a Laugh](#)
- [March Meeting Report](#)
- [Let's Put the Atheist Perspective on TV!](#)
- [Calendar of Events](#)

Another Look at a Gore Vidal Interview

Source: [Modern Maturity magazine 1994](#)

MM: How do you educate people?

Vidal: Starting in the first grade give them everything: the Big Bang, the Garden of Eden, superstitions, legend, myth, multiculturalism. Education would be the history of the human race. Bring in science and medicine as they develop through history. Teach the religions as they come

and go. It might be superficial, but superficial knowledge of what you know is better than total ignorance of what you don't know.

MM: One subject not taught in schools that you've tried to teach in some of your books is a new attitude toward sexuality. Do people no longer consider sex a taboo subject?

Vidal: It's still pretty taboo. The gay issue is more out in the open, particularly with the row over the military, but attitudes are just as dimwitted as they were when I wrote the City and the Pillar 46 years ago. They stem from religion, which stems from monotheism. Judaism, Christianity, and Islam are all totalitarian religions, full of absolute decrees and absolute deities - one god, one king, one Pope, one boss in the factory, one master in the family, the father. Obviously, in a patriarchal society the woman exists to be impregnated by the head of the clan, and any deviation from that is abomination in the eyes of the Lord. Sexual attitudes come from that.

MM: Is that why they're held so strongly by so many people?

Vidal: Once people get hung up on theology, they're lost to sanity forever. More people have been killed in the name of Jesus Christ than any other name in the history of the world. It isn't Jesus or Moses or Mohammed giving us orders from heaven, telling us we're not to have sex with the same sex. It's totalitarian society. It starts with politics on Earth and ends with politics in heaven. (People) turn it around and say, "It's what God wants." We invent the religion that conforms best to the kind of society we want.

MM: Some people believe that one of the most powerful forces in the US today is the religious right. Do you foresee its followers ever coming to power?

Vidal: I don't see how they could. We of the liberal persuasion belong to Western civilization in a way they never will.

Plainly, we have more information than they do. In my opinion, they are simple folk and rather cowardly; the fact that they like totalitarian government means they're waiting to be given orders. So you change the orders.

What really strikes me is the alliance of Roman Catholics of the lower classes and Northern blue collars with the southern Baptists - let's all hate for Jesus! That's an interesting alliance and a dangerous one.

MM: Why are important issues rarely discussed by politicians?

Vidal: There's nothing in it for them. They talk about race and sex and religion, though they seldom use the words. If you're a good demagogue, you get all three into one sentence. These are the hot buttons you press. A lot of cunning and diversion goes into keeping thought out of politics...."

Quote of the Month

"I have ever judged of the religion of others by their lives...it is in our lives, and not from our words, that our religion must be read. By the same test the world must judge me. But this does not satisfy the priesthood. They must have a positive, a declared assent to all their interested absurdities. My opinion is that there would never have been an infidel, if there had never been a priest. The artificial structures they have built on the purest of all moral systems, for the purpose of delivering it from pence and power, revolt those who think for themselves, and who read in that system only what is really there."

Thomas Jefferson, Aug. 6, 1816.

Unclear on the Concept

Spotted on Fair Oaks Boulevard: A Chevy Blazer with a JESUS fish and a DARWIN evolving fish going nose to nose and about to (eat?) each other. Does this suggest differing religious beliefs within one family, or is it someone just into conflict? Does the presence of an NRA sticker suggest anything?

President's desk - Pride

My goal as president is to make our members proud of our atheism. There is much to be proud of and much educating of the public about atheism to be done. Last week I informed an acquaintance of my atheism and her first question was, "Do you have a church?" It was difficult to believe this elderly woman could really hold such an idea.

There is real courage in declaring one's non-belief in a society where politics, social life and even businesses try to infuse religion into the mix. We are all aware that politics and social events are smeared with it. But are you aware that business uses it too? Think of Mary Kay cosmetics where their big meetings are tangled in prayer and exhortations to God. You can say the same thing for Shaklee and Amway products. Look in the telephone book and see the fish symbol on the advertisements. I suppose the fish is to grab Xians and others who might interpret the fish to say this business can be trusted. To let others know of your atheism in such situations takes courage. We are fortunate that people have come a long way from burning heretics and infidels at the stake. Maybe common sense is winning - slowly.

Certainly we are aware that it takes intelligence to see through the maze of religious stories we were exposed to as children. Many of us read voraciously to gain knowledge of the history of religions and superstitions. Courage and intelligence are part of the mix while we are still learning how to disperse this information to others.

One of the first items on the believer's questions to us is "How can we be moral without the fear of later punishment?" This is where we have the best opportunity to engage them in conversations. We can state that we use our common sense, our respect for others, and the pain and suffering here on earth we can see when people do wrong. But the best argument is for them to see (our actions) us as moral and caring in spite of their concern over our atheism. Unless we let them know of our nonbelief, they will fail to see that morals come from within ourselves - not because we fear a punishment in the hereafter.

I believe that coming together at meetings and finding other atheists helps us build pride in our courage, intelligence and moral fiber.

Reminder - Elections Coming Up!

Our annual election of a new Board of Directors is fast approaching. You may still nominate yourself or another AOF member for any position on the Board up through the closing of the general meeting on April 14. If you have any questions concerning the duties of board members or to make a nomination call the AOF Voice Mail number (916-920-7834) or speak to Karen Abbe or Cleo Kocol. Voting will take place at our general meeting on May 12.

AOF Third Annual Hike

Our annual hike will take place on Saturday, April 27 this year. We will hike the American River Trail from the Nimbus State Fish Hatchery to Sacramento Bar, which is three miles, and back again. Hikers should meet at the fish hatchery parking lot at 10:30 am. To get to the hatchery, exit US Route 50 at Hazel Avenue, go north on Hazel then turn left at the traffic light which is just before the bridge. Travel about a quarter of a mile to the entrance to the fish hatchery which will be on your right.

If you have any questions concerning this event you may contact Cleo Kocol through AOF's Voice Mail system. (916-920-7834)

Letters

Freethought in music is not new

This is in response to the column by Heather Lucio, "Freethought in Modern Music," that appeared in your March 1996 newsletter.

I have to disagree with Brenda on one point. It is not just the record companies who are responsible gansta rap being in demand. Record companies do not create a demand, they only exploit it. The demand for rap was increasing when the major labels jumped in and started signing artists. However, this is not intended to be a forum for discussing the ills of the music world. Rather, I wanted to take a moment and expand and clarify some of the things that Heather wrote in her column.

Heather painted the picture that Freethought in music was a relatively new concept; it is not. All one has to do is look at the release dates on some of the albums referenced to see that Freethought has always been a part of music; regardless of the type of music. I own a number of albums listed so I thought it would be beneficial to list the release dates. In no particular order, here they are: **The Cure**, "The Top," 1984; **Genesis**, "We Can't Dance," 1991; **Metallica**, "Ride the Lightning," 1984; **Ministry**, "Psalm 69," 1991; **Nine Inch Nails**, "The Downward Spiral," 1994; **Rush**, "Signals," 1982; **Rush**, "Moving Pictures," 1981; **Rush**, "Roll the Bones," 1991. As you can see, this is not a new trend. If you look back over the last 25-plus years, one could find more examples.

I also think that Heather missed on "Dear God," by a little bit. What makes that song so good is not its "blatantly atheistic" lyrics, but how they are presented. Andy Partridge, the song writer for "Dear God," presented his thoughts as a letter to God. He is telling God why he does not believe in Him. He is not saying that God does not exist. He is saying that he does not believe in His power; His ability to do all of the wonderful things that the bible claims he can do.

I would like to leave you with one last quote from another freethinker. Her name is Joan Jones and she is in the lyrics for Sun 60: "I've seen God/Wouldn't know him in a crowd." Thanks for the time.

by **Brad De Luchi**

Freethought is out there

Speaking as one who has her head, body and soul out there on the chopping block, so to speak, with my face plastered all over the religion & ethics page every 8 to 10 weeks for my friends, neighbors, employers and co-workers to see, I must take exception to some of what Betty stated in her president's desk last month.

This criticism reminds me somewhat of the conservatives, who after driving the Sacramento Union into the ground, now constantly lob accusations at the Sacramento Bee for being such a "liberal" run newspaper. The mind-set of many of those accusers is such that if the news is not 100% conservative then it must be liberal. There is no room for gray. I hope this is not true of the mind-set of most atheists. Do we really yearn for the day when all everyone talks about is that there is no god? Wouldn't that be about as boring as talking all day long about the existence of god? OK, I know I'm over-simplifying to make a point but come on! There's lots of areas where 'reason' is at issue and can be discussed freely.

I've been paying extra attention to articles in various publications these past several weeks. A December 95 New Yorker just laying around in the office breakroom carried a long piece entitled "Annals of Religion, Straying From the Way," by Kennedy Fraser. Mr. Kennedy describes the prevailing religion of England as "a kind of domesticated pantheism." He says that "two-thirds of its (Britain's) population has no discernible religion. While half of the people in America are regular church goers, only about ten percent of the English are."

In the March 30, 96 Parade magazine, Marilyn Vos Savant was asked: "What do you think is the source of moral authority?" Her reply, in part, "Most people find the source of moral authority in their religions, but I don't. That's because there would be multiple authorities, many of them in conflict and most of them biased. Speaking for myself, I find the source of moral authority in the lessons of history - the principles that arise out of the mass of good choices, bad ones and the rest in-between."

In that same issue, offered Carl Sagan's "In the Valley of the Shadow," where he talked about his latest brush with death. He was stricken with the blood disorder; myelodysplasia, and needed a bone-marrow transplant. Toward the end of his article he talks about the vast number of religious people who prayed for his recovery. He said: "While I do not think that, if there is a god his plans for me will be altered by a prayer, I'm more grateful than I can say to those - including so many whom I've never met - who pulled for me during my illness. Many of them asked me how it is possible to face death without the certainty of an afterlife. I can only say that it hasn't been a problem. With reservation about "feeble souls," I share the view of a hero of mine, Albert Einstein: 'I cannot conceive of a god who regards and punishes his creatures or has a will of the kind that we experience within ourselves' Neither can I - nor would I want to-conceive of an individual that survives his physical death. Let feeble souls, from fear or absurd egotism, cherish such thoughts. I am satisfied with the mystery of the eternity of life and a glimpse of the marvelous structure of the existing world, together with the devoted striving to comprehend a portion, be it ever so tiny, of the Reason that manifests itself in nature."

The Bee has recently headlined several articles with "science" themes. One was a high school annual science experiment, then there was the March 11 headline: "Morality not limited to humans, more scientists believe," in which was discussed the results of a study of morality in animals, and why morality is no longer thought to be an exclusively human trait. Sunday March 17th the Bee headlined the announcement that Eric Loewy, a medical ethicist is joining the Med Center.

During the month of March the Bee had several articles on Creationists challenging the teaching of evolution in public schools. And we can't overlook their numerous reports made about the religious freedom issue over animal sacrifices in the Fair Oaks cemetery, and who can forget the photo of Byron, the thimble-sized two-headed snake in Africa that was being blamed by traditional healers for recent flooding and political upheaval?

There are many issues that are deeply rooted in "reason" and can be talked about freely in most individual conversations. These issues include, abortion, most social issues, education, racial issues, ecology, censorship, science, astronomy. Movies, such as "Birdcage," encompass many of these issues at once and are promising box office hits.

Just as religious evangelists begin statements with "I'm a Christian..." each of these topics can be approached with our statement: "I am an atheist (or humanist, or skeptic, or rationalist) and I think..." Personally, unless the other person is also a skeptic, agnostic, atheist or an otherwise freethinker, that's as far as I think we should go down the prostelization path. Most people value their privacy and do not wear their beliefs on their shirtsleeves, but are willing to share viewpoints on the above topics and have areas of agreement with the voice of reason.

Speaking from experience, at the office nothing clears a room faster than prostelizing in either direction! It's like sexual harassment - you know it when you see it or are subjected to it. If the person to whom you're speaking announces support or curiosity on your Freethought announcement, then you have a match! Otherwise leave it alone. This doesn't mean you can't let people know you are an atheist, it just means you are letting people know you are an atheist and an active, working member of their GROUP.

Radio show host Tom Leykis stopped a Christian cold on air a few weeks ago when, after the Xian stated he wanted to debate the Bible, Tom told him (in effect) that while he supported the man's right to practice in his faith, he didn't debate religion doctrine because it is irrelevant. What a feeling of power that gave me!

The Internet Infidels have an "Atheist Celebrities" web page which contains names and Freethought quotes of famous personalities in such categories as Writing and publishing, Entertainment and the Arts, Science and Medicine, Broadcasting and Talk Media, Journalism and Punditry, Philosophy and Lay, Business and Politics. Did you know, for instance that the Dali Lama said there is no creator? Or that Arnold Schwarzenegger mentions his lack of belief in his autobiography?

I think we need to ask ourselves, do we make non-belief the focal point of our lives? Do we walk around like little anti-evangelists mumbling and complaining about how we NEVER can find

anyone to protest while completely ignoring the reality of the progress we've made? Do we bemoan (like conservatives) that the media is just too conservative? How can this be?

I think AOF is doing an excellent job presenting to the world that we are just trying to get along like anybody else. This is a position with which most people can appreciate and identify. The vast majority of people, while claim to be religious are not single minded evangelicals making religious devotion the focal point of their lives. The vast majority find people like this to be a "pain in the ass" and go out of their way to avoid them.

The best thing for us to do is when we have opportunities to speak out, to count to ten, then do it sensibly, responsibly with complete confidence that our way is right. We waste our words calling people fools and imbeciles and telling people their way is wrong. It places people in the position of having to defend their beliefs or way of life and does not encourage reasonable response.

by Pat Kelley

Atheists must speak out

Betty Simonsma's "plea for help" (Presidents Desk, March 1996) prompts me to respond. I have been trying for years to raise the alarm at religion "in full war cry" (and you have to know its history to understand it), but my efforts have fallen on deaf ears and I suspect it is now too late. This country seems to me to be headed straight for a Christian theocracy (in fact if not in name) and this is proceeding at an accelerated rate. The reasons are complex, but yes Betty, non-believers are too timid and too kind to speak out for fear of Christian wrath, and/or the disapproval of their peers, their employers and society at large. Yes, there is a code of silence enforced by publishers, producers, advertisers, etc., to deny the media to skeptics, non-believers and iconoclasts. Yes, we are too poor and too unwilling to buy our way into the media. What is more and more in control of every aspect of society and people's minds.

With regard to your niece (and her son) in Los Angeles, who has ever heard anyone speak out for atheism, nor knows of any atheist writers, nor where to find books on the subject, she is anything but alone. She is just one more victim of religious repression. Prometheus Books (59 John Glenn Drive, Amherst, NY, 14228-2197) publishes all kinds of books of an atheist, Freethought and anti-religious nature. The bookseller H.H. Waldo (PO Box 350 Rockton, IL 61072) has a large stock of these and supplies list gratis - a post card requesting them will bring. Also, the Freedom From Religion Foundation (FFRF, PO Box 750, Madison WI 53701) sells very good books on the subject (write them), and there are others. Unfortunately such books are not cheap! I'm trying to write a book myself, but it is a slow business!

Over the past 5 years I have build a library of nearly 150 books on the subject, and if you wish, I could make up a "beginner's list" of say, 20 books which you or anyone else could copy and send to any interested person. Unfortunately, and it should be explained to them, that they will have to make a little more than the usual effort to get these because they will not be available in their local library or book store. Any good book store will order them for you, or you can write direct to the addresses I have given. They should also consider donating copies to their local library. I have done this in several cases.

Finally, let me say that the hour is late, and we must all be prepared to speak out, and I am willing to speak publicly on the subject, providing we can agree on an appropriate time and place, for I am limited in both these respects. To Atheism and Darwinism, reason and rational thought.

by **Ted Pengelley**

FYI Freethought News You Can Use

The Center for Critical Thinking

This organization, founded by Richard Paul and located in Santa Rosa, conducts advanced research and disseminates information about the theory and practice of critical thinking. It works closely with the Foundation for Critical Thinking, the College Board, the National Education Association, the US Dept. of Education, and numerous colleges, universities, and school districts to facilitate implementation of high standards of critical thinking instruction from kindergarten through college. Its major works include the annual International Conference on Critical Thinking and the Staff Development Series.

This group offers workshops, literature, and videos on critical thinking. The book entitled *Critical thinking: What every Person Needs to Survive in a Rapidly Changing World* by Richard Paul is available for \$19.95. *How to teach Through Socratic Questioning* (a three part series) and *Critical Thinking and the Economics of the 21st Century* (a six-part series) are two of the video titles available, Write to them at 4655 Sonoma Mountain Road, Santa Rosa Ca 95404. Their Internet address is: [A HREF="http://www.sonoma.edu/ctthink/">http://www.sonoma.edu/ctthink/](http://www.sonoma.edu/ctthink/)

Book on Logical Thinking As announced in *Parade* magazine on Sunday, March 31, Marilyn Vos Savant (who writes the column "ask Marilyn" for that magazine) has written a book. *The Power of Logical Thinking*, published in March by St. Martin's Press. It is subtitled *easy Lessons in the Art of Reasoning...and Hard Facts About Its Absence in Our Lives*. Over the years Ms. Vos Savant has shown herself to be exceptionally logical and quite a freethinker, thus, this looks to be a very promising volume.

Charity Dinner Report

by Kay Stinson

The March 22 Charity dinner was again a big success thanks to the help of all the AOF members who volunteered their time and contributions of food or money. We served spaghetti, salad, garlic bread, cookies, lemonade and coffee.

The dinners are now being served at the Robertson Community Center on Norwood Avenue which is a larger and better equipped facility than the Hagginwood Center. As a result, the number of dinners served has increased. At the last count, 125 dinners were served that night and numerous second helpings followed. As the number of people in need increases, so does the demand for volunteers of time and contributions. I would like to heartily thank all the generous volunteers who made this dinner a big success.

Although it is not the most glamorous or high-profile project, it is a rewarding and gratifying experience to have the opportunity to help those who are in need and very appreciative of our efforts. Let me leave you with the reminder that all of those who didn't have a chance to participate this time will be able to do so in the month of June.

Good for a Laugh

Good for a laugh: When member Ed McConnell arrived at the new venue to serve the Charity Dinner, he asked someone where the kitchen was located. He was pointed in the right direction, then told that he must wait, because dinner would not be served for another half hour. Was it the wardrobe, or did Ed need a shave?!

March Meeting Report

The speaker at our general meeting on March 10 was Cleo Kocol (our vice-president). Following is a summary of her presentation, which was titled, "Me and the Mormon Temple," a personal account of an event which took place in Belle, Washington in 1980:

Hank and I lived in Seattle at the time and one day, as we drove across Lake Washington to Bellevue, we noticed a large Mormon temple that was being erected. We also noticed that, on the sidewalk in front of this temple, there were four or five people picketing - carrying signs that said, "Tax Mormon Millions," "Maintain Separation of Church and State," and "Honk if you're for the ERA." Since freedom from religion and gender equality were issues that Hank and I believed in implicitly, we not only honked, we parked, and that day, we joined the picketers.

During 1980 we picketed for two or three hours every Sunday and soon our group grew to about a dozen regulars. The picketers belonged to no formal organization, but were individuals who had learned that the Mormons were violating separation of church and state laws by using their money, their time, and their influence to defeat candidates who supported ERA. Later we learned that they were laundering money from California and using it to defeat candidates in other states.

The people involved in this protest were not the wild-eyed, man-hating radicals they were depicted as by the media. There were school teachers, clerical workers and homemakers; there was a young couple and married and working mothers. As the Temple neared completion, Mormons began to show up, wanting to debate us. We would discuss legal and political issues but would not argue theology. We were only concerned with the separation of church and state. A month before the Temple was completed, we began to picket daily. By this time the word was out in the Pacific Northwest about our vigil and many people came from all over the area to support us and join us on the picket line.

At this time Senators Hatch and Helms and the anti-ERA faction were ranting about the "horrors" that would ensue should the ERA pass and lauding the Mormon church and "traditional values." It was then that we decided to commit civil disobedience at the Mormon Temple - hoping that the resultant publicity would allow them to tell the complete story about the ERA and the Mormons. Two of the protesters dashed in and chained themselves to the main Temple gate and vowed to stay there for 24 hours or until removed.

As hoped, the media bit and pictures and stories of the event were sent out nationwide. Along with our protest, it was reported that the LDS Church was one of the top 20 corporations in America with a daily income of \$4 million, all of it tax exempt, that a vast number of Mormon Church-owned businesses employed women at discriminatory wages, and that the Church worked covertly against the ERA, keeping their activities secret even from their own members.

Many people defended the church but many others supported our side and many traveled to the temple to join us, even bringing flowers and food. Meanwhile, a group called "Mormons for the ERA" (made up of people who had been excommunicated from the Mormon Church due to their support for the ERA) had planned a rally at the University Towers Hotel to coincide with the end of the 24-hour chaining.

The rally began after our two chained members were released and were given a standing ovation. There were various speakers and then Sonia Johnson, head of Mormons for ERA, addressed the group. She was completely riveting. She pointed out that Spencer Kimball, the head of the Mormon Church, would be coming to dedicate the new Temple the next morning. She asserted that we should all chain ourselves to his gates. We could keep him from entering the grounds and

get national coverage of the action. She warned that this would be civil disobedience and that we would probably go to jail for it. With some apprehension but with solid determination, some of us signed up to be chained; others were to assist.

It was a cold and rainy morning in November, 1980, when we all gathered in the woods skirting the Temple. At the signal from Sonia, we burst from the woods and ran for the gates, where we were met by the Temple guards. There were some struggles and two of the women were knocked to the ground. I veered off to a side gate with no interference and chained myself to it. Several other women and one man had managed to chain themselves to the fence also.

Spencer Kimball's big limousine approached with an entourage of cars behind it. They could not get into the Temple grounds. Kimball sent for the police immediately and in no time squad cars came screeching up to the Temple. Then they warned us to leave, but no one moved. Then they warned us that anyone who didn't leave the Temple grounds would be arrested. Most of the supporters who were not chained moved back behind the police lines. A few stood fast beside us. The police read us our rights, cut our chains with bolt cutters, and hauled us off to jail - where we remained for six hours until our attorney managed out release. We were charged with trespassing and illegal entry and were facing a \$250 fine each and 90 days in jail.

A Mormon official noted that this was the first time in the history of the established LDS church that a sizable demonstration had taken place. After we had been taken to jail, a splinter group of Mormons called "Saints Alive" arrived to picket outside the Temple. That evening, Walter Cronkite reported our story on the news with video of the chaining. Feminists all over the country began picketing Mormon Temples in support of our actions. we, who were arrested at the Temple began to call ourselves "The Bellevue 21."

We arrived on court a couple of months later only to find that the Mormons had dropped all charges against us. This was in their own best interest because, as a result, we did not get the forum we had hoped for. However, because of our vigilance, the money laundering of the Mormon Church was widely reported, women left the Mormon Church in droves and people became more aware of the perfidy of religion. For me, the whole experience was a liberating one. It pointed out that almost anything is possible if you work for it, plan for it and are dedicated.

April Program

When Betty Simonsma contacted Irene Williams of Grandmothers for Peace to ask if she would speak to our group, Ms Williams accepted and sent the following letter:

Dear Ms. Simonsma, It might amuse you to know that several years ago a good friend of mine failed to get a passing grade in a Catholic University because she entitled her paper, "On being a

Religious Atheist." It was supposed to be an account of her progression in religious faith, from infancy to adulthood. Unfortunately, the reader had neither a sense of humor nor a sense of shame in failing her because she was not a true believer. It also my hunch that he would see no irony in the fact that the word belief has a lie right in the middle if it. That is a way of looking for a title for my presentation to the AOF group on April 14, an occasion I am looking forward to. As Barbara Wiedner told you, I am a member of the Grandmothers for Peace, and I would like to incorporate my talk a brief history of Barbara's experience in founding and directing this International Organization. Next, I would like to talk about my experience of accompanying Barbara to the Women's Conference in China last year. Then I'd like to look at our common history of immigration, the search for the New Jerusalem, and the current evolution of racial tension in our country. The matter of religion's role is best left to open discussion and dialogue. You can shorten the title as you wish for your advertising, because it is very long: "grandmothers, the Peace Tent, and the Search for a New Jerusalem, Here or There: Three Reasons for Hope."

About me: I am a licensed clinical social worker, a former instructor in gerontology and social welfare, a life-long learner committed to creative problem solving and personal growth. I am extremely concerned about the waste of human talents and eroding resources within our older population. I received my Masters degree in Social Welfare at the University of California in 1963. Yours sincerely, Irene Williiams.

Let's Put the Atheist Perspective on TV!

You may not have noticed, but Sacramento cable-access programming is overwhelmingly religious! Where is the voice of reason and reality. An independent group of freethinking individuals has decided to consider taking steps to correct this imbalance. We need your help in creating a cable-access television program showcasing the secular scene, i.e., what is happening here, near, and elsewhere from the perspective of the non-religious community.

We are open to a variety of presentations, for example: Discussions, commentary, interviews, exposes, skits, and filming of local events. The focus will be on whatever is *real*, as opposed to illusory, illogical, magical, or supernatural. The tone would be light, topical, thought-provoking, perhaps satirical, exposing the hypocritical, ludicrous aspects of the miracles, psychics, channelers, TV faith-healers- but with gentle humor - skepticism without cynicism.

Our intent is not to polarize or proselytize but to educate the general public about who we are, what we do, and why we think as we do. We hope to also reach those skeptics and non-believers who do not identify themselves as humanists or atheists, yet share our concerns about the growing influence of the religious right, the Christian Coalition, creationists, fundamentalists, the rest of the radically irrational and their ilk.

This project is still on the drawing board, and will stay there unless *you* participate. (For the "camera shy," there are up to ten people needed behind the scenes for every one person on screen.) Please attend our first informal "brainstorming" meeting on Sunday, April 21, at 2:00 p.m. in Fair Oaks (near Fair Oaks Blvd. and Sunrise, just north of the American River) Members, call for address and directions.) Facts and snacks will be provided. Bring your ideas and enthusiasm!! For directions and other info call AOF's 24-hour information system 916-920-7834.

Calendar of Events

- | | |
|--------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Sunday, April 14 | General Meeting |
| Sunday, April 14 | Newsletter Deadline for Submissions |
| Sunday, April 14 | "Fight the Right" March, S.F. |
| Sunday, April 21 | Brainstorming: Atheists on TV |
| Tuesday, April 23 | Board meeting |
| Saturday, April 27 | Annual Hike |
| Sunday, Mar 12 | General Meeting |