

# AOF News & Views

Sacramento, California

November 2004

**Sunday, November 14**

***Special Points  
of Interest***

- President's Message (page 2)
- A Freethought Day 2004 Photo Album (beginning, page 3)
- Looking Forward to 2005 (page 7)

## **The Journey of Life (Video & Discussion)**

At the November meeting we will be focusing on the "lifetime actuality" for persons who hold the perspective that "one life is all there is" and that other perspectives on human mortality just don't fit reality. The program will begin with a short film prepared by COCORE (The Colorado Coalition of Reason) entitled "**The Journey of Life from the Nonbeliever's Point of View.**"

The Coalition just recently prepared this approximately half-hour videotape and is now disseminating copies of it to organizations. The intended audience is the general public. The idea is to improve public understanding of the perspective of the so-called "nonbeliever" on "the journey through life from birth to death."

Following the computer-projected video showing, attendees can critique the film and contribute their own perspectives on the "shaft of light between two eternities of darkness."

## **Volunteers Sought for KVIE Fundraising KVIE Requests AOF Help with Fall Pledge Drive**

**Standard Fare**

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Looking for a great opportunity to promote AOF? You can help AOF get regional on-air exposure by helping KVIE with their Fall 2004 Membership Pledge Drives.

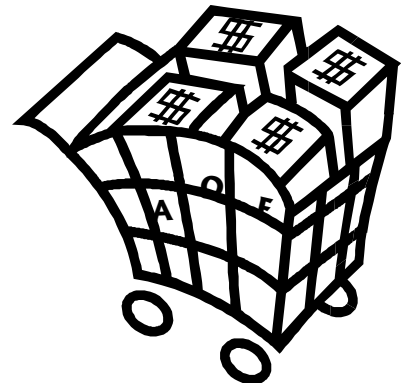
The final date and time-slot, while not finalized, will fall between November 27-28 and December 2-12. KVIE requests 16 members, so invite your friends, co-workers, family to come on down and help AOF answer the telephones and raise funds and awareness for Public Television.

Training is simple and will be provided for every group. First come first served!

Please call the AOF voice-mail at

**916-447-3589** to express your interest. Leave your contact information on the recorder. When we finalize the date and time, we will follow-up with you and give you the full details.

Thanks for considering!



# The AOF Line

## By Kevin Schultz

"The show must go on." Josephine Demott Robinson stated those words in the book, "The Circus Lady" in 1926. Anyone who attended Freethought Day can attest to the fact that the show certainly did go on — despite occasional gusts of wind strong enough to transport tents!

Freethought Day 2004 celebrated the American values we support and protect through our actions as members of AOF. Namely, the co-existence and diversity of worldviews fostered by the separation of religion from government. Those who define themselves as atheists, agnostics, brights, humanists, religious separationists, skeptics, and many other labels find shelter under this American ideal. We cherish pluralism and diversity over authoritarianism and rigidity in matters of conscience.

Freethought Day 2004 represented a major milestone in the progress of freethought in the Sacramento valley. For that, thanks go to all participants in the event for exhibiting their talents, and also to the entire 2004 Freethought Day Event Committee for their efforts. Why, it seems like just yesterday when we sat down at the Hoppy Brewing Company on Folsom Boulevard to begin planning. Over the course of 2004, the committee planned, produced and finally executed the event, with much success. Special thanks go to Beverly Church and Mynga Futrell for their efforts as event and program committee chairs. It wouldn't have happened without you.

Are you looking for information on how to get involved and make the 2005 Freethought Day Event even grander? Please call the AOF voice-mail number (916-447-3589) and

leave your name and contact information. A member of the committee will contact you and provide additional information. The first 2005 planning meeting will be scheduled soon, so keep your eyes open for the announcement in a future *AOF News and Views* newsletter.

Last month I wrote about the importance of creating a long-term organizational strategic vision and budget. Putting further AHA grassroots manual discussion on hold for a month, I would like to discuss the importance of participating in local community political and civic affairs.

The Constitution grounds the legitimacy of American governance in the citizenry, not in a deity with a white bushy moustache. Everyone realizes the impact federal elections have on the future of America. However, many overlook the impact of local candidates. For example, two at-

*The purpose of the organization, AOF, is to promote the civic understanding and acceptance of atheism in our community.*

tempts to introduce creationism have failed by slight margins in Roseville over the last four years. They receive support from publicly elected school board members who favor creationism. Through our questions we can discover which candidates do not support the American values of separation of religion and government. Through our voices we can alert our fellow community members to these shortcomings. Through our votes we can deny them the opportunity to favor creationism over science.

And while you're at it, who better to serve on a school board than an atheist? Consider filling a local elected position yourself. Become an active participant in the great American experiment. And share

*(Continued on page 3)*

## AOF Board

**President:** Kevin Schultz

**Vice President:** Kay Dickey

**Secretary:** Dave Flanders

**Treasurer:** Ken Nahigian

### Directors at large:

Tina Burgess

Beverly Church

Mynga Futrell

Don Knutson

Betty Simonsma

## AOF Committees

**Newsletter:** Mynga Futrell, Editor

Kay Dickey, Asst. Ed. (Submissions),

Jerry Sloan (Mailing)

### Visibility and Impact:

Kay Dickey, Mynga Futrell, Don Knutson, Kevin Schultz, Jerry Sloan, (more members welcome!)

**Archive:** Jody Craig, Kay Dickey,

Mynga Futrell, Ken Nahigian,

Betty Simonsma

### Connections (ad hoc):

Ken Nahigian,

Tina Burgess (Youth)

Betty Simonsma

Kevin Schultz (E-mail)

**Darwin Day 2004:** Bronda Silva,

Mynga Futrell, Ed McConnell, Ken

Nahigian

## AOF's Voluntariat

### Affiliation Liaisons:

Mynga Futrell, Kay Dickey (AAI),

Hank Kocol (CSH),

Betty Simonsma (AA),

Beverly Church (AHA/HAGSA)

### Community Service Projects:

Don Knutson

### Internet Website:

Pat Kelley

### Meetings:

Dave Flanders,

Jerry Sloan, Betty Simonsma

### Membership Database:

Betty Simonsma

We welcome additional involvement from AOF members. Right now we need volunteers to perform very small tasks at our meetings. Just phone the voice mail 447-3589 if you can help us out. Or, send an e-mail to us at

**aofboard@rthoughtsrfree.org**

## Helping Out the Locals

# Mike Newdow Sings Song of Liberty, Signs Pledges



### Our "Featured Singer-Songwriter"

The Freethought Day Committee appreciated that nationally known activist Mike Newdow agreed to participate in our local event. He signed laminated copies of the pre-1954 "One Nation Indivisible" Pledge of Allegiance that was on sale at our main Freethought Day table, and then he delighted the crowd with some of his songs, including "Liberty and Justice for All." Several people had come especially to hear him sing, as we had promised in our advertisement in *Sacramento News and Review*.

Thanks Mike!



### AOFLine

(Continued from page 2)

your story with the AOF News and Views. We'd love to hear from AOF members who have served in public office and have stories to tell.

As always, if anyone has any questions or comments regarding AOF, please do not hesitate to submit them to any member of the board of directors. As a transparent organization, we are directly accountable to you as an AOF member, and we encourage active participation by our membership.

### Atheists and Other Freethinkers



AOF is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit educational organization. It is a member society of the Atheist Alliance International. AOF maintains affiliations with the Council for Secular Humanism, American Atheists, and the American Humanist Association.

### AOF's Statement of Purpose

*The purpose of the association, Atheists and Other Freethinkers, is to promote the civic understanding and acceptance of atheism in our community. To accomplish this purpose, AOF will, through educational programs, projects, and publications, extend atheistic perspectives concerning the separation of church and state and the right to think and speak freely on these perspectives.*

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Subscription \$12 per year (free to members).

Reprinting of original material in this newsletter is granted to atheist, freethought, rationalist, skeptical, and secular humanist groups as long as acknowledgment is given. Exchange of newsletters with aforementioned organizations is solicited.



## Best Yet Freethought Day 2004 in Sacramento

A photo reminiscence — Wasn't it *just great?* — Wasn't it *windy?!!*

The photographer shown at left happens to be **Bill Potts**, HAGSA president. At bottom left, our "official" event photographer, **Tom Fields**, is concentrating on the passers-by, who are picking up literature and learning about freethought. Pictures in this "photo album" are compliments of AOF/HAGSA member **Anna Andrews**, who posted them on her personal Website. You can visit her site and see a good many more pix our very successful day. Go to [http://homepage.mac.com/anna\\_mae/PhotoAlbum14.html](http://homepage.mac.com/anna_mae/PhotoAlbum14.html)



At right: Featured speaker, **Darrell Lambert**, tells the crowd (above) how he came to be "kicked out" of the Boy Scouts of America because he did not believe in a god and would not change his mind (as requested) on that topic. After relating his own personal saga, Darrell described an alternative option he favors and suggested some strategies for urging the BSA to reverse course in this matter.



### From the Freethought Day Mission Statement

#### Goals:

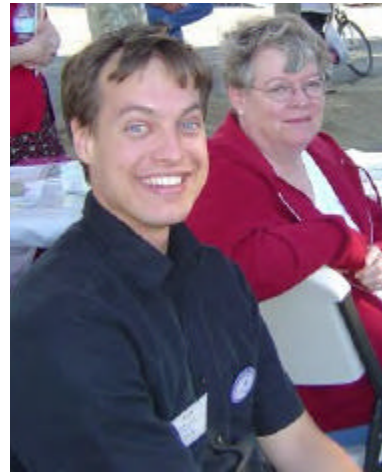
- Raise public consciousness of secular governance (legal neutrality)
- Promote accurate understanding of the heritage of liberty of conscience
- Educate the public about contributions of freethought and freethinkers in advancing human rights and establishing and preserving a religion/government separation in the United States
- Foster participation of organizations with mutual understanding of and support of the mission
- Publicize freethought organizations



## Lots of Displays, Happy People, & Fun Entertainment A Windy, Windy Day



↑ **ROCKS**—a necessary ingredient to hold down any papers!  
 ↓ **HATS**—something you had better hold onto, fellas!



### Freethought Day

**A celebration of freethought, secular government, ethics, civic values, and liberty of conscience**

—At left:

(Top) Display to educate about “What is Freethought?” (Middle) AOFers **Phil Lazier** and **Paul Geisert**, pausing for a moment from their lively exchange of ideas [what freethinkers do] to be snapped (Bottom) **Mike Newdow** and **Roberta Chevrette** lead the crowd in singing “Liberty and Justice for All,” which is one of Mike’s many musical compositions. Roberta had earlier presented some delightful compositions of her own.

—At right

(Top) Notables in AOF’s “Gallery of Free and Independent Thinkers” swing and flap and snap in the gusts. Left to right: **Matilda Joselyn Gage**, **Robert Green Ingersoll**, **Mark Twain**, and **Clarence Darrow**. (Middle L) AOF President Kevin Schultz chats and minds tables with **Elaine Potts**, a member of HAGSA (as is Kevin). (Middle R) Also minding a table for a FTD2004 co-sponsoring organization are **Karen Scott** and **Jerry Sloan**. Karen heads the Interfaith Religious Liberty Foundation. (Bottom) The wind pauses briefly to give a rest to: **Thomas Jefferson**, **James Madison**, **Frances Wright**, and **Elizabeth Cady Stanton**





# AOF Subscription / Membership Form

Mail to: AOF, P O Box 15182, Sacramento CA 95851-0182 (Attn: Membership)

Name(s) \_\_\_\_\_ Phone (     ) \_\_\_\_\_

Street \_\_\_\_\_ Apt. # \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail address (print legibly!) \_\_\_\_\_

## Check your preference:

\_\_\_ Newsletter Subscriber Only (\$12)     \_\_\_ Family Membership (\$30)

\_\_\_ Low-income Member (\$10)     \_\_\_ Patron (\$50)

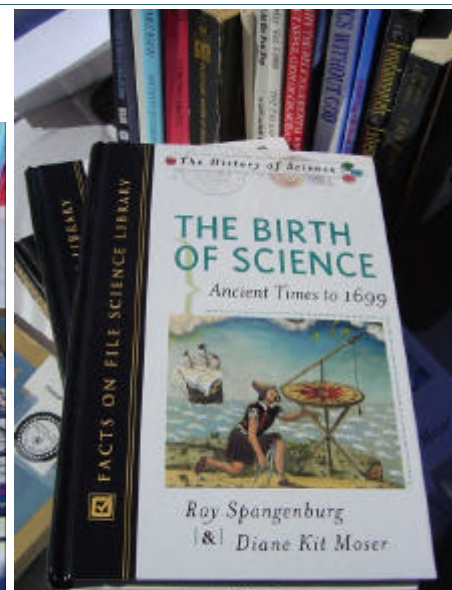
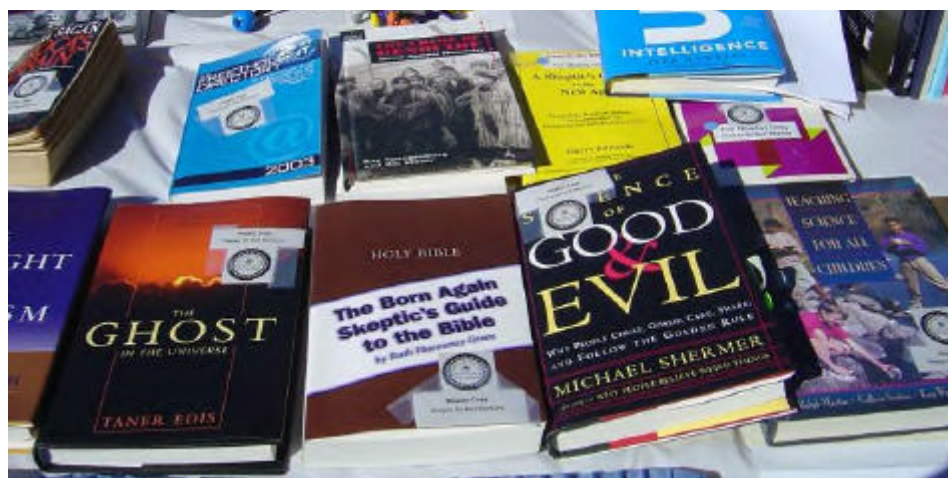
\_\_\_ Single Membership (\$20)     \_\_\_ Donation (\$ \_\_\_\_\_)

☐ Please check here if you do NOT want your name on lists occasionally provided to organizations similar to AOF.

Please check your preference. We can deliver your monthly newsletter via an attached .pdf file to your e-mail address above.     ☐ E-mail newsletter     ☐ Postal mail

☐ Please check here if you DO want to be on our AOF activist list.

## Books—Always a Favorite with Freethinkers



Two Freethinkers Enthused about Freethought Day ↓



## Book Displays at Freethought Day, 2004

The books straight above were some of the many in the "A Freethinker's Bookshelf" display (2nd year). These books were loaned for display by Paul Geisert and Mynga Futrell, with a few augmentations by Beverly Church and Kevin Schultz. A new display this year was: **Banned Books**. It consisted of items selected and supplied by the Sacramento Public Library (with one added by Betty Simonsma).

And then there were the items specifically oriented toward educating young people. The **Different Drummers** table got a lot of attention from passers-by. It featured a set of teaching materials for educating about nonconforming thinking, loaned by the OABITAR (Objectivity, Accuracy and Balance In Teaching About Religion) Project. The display included copies of the *Timeline of Free and Independent Thinking in History*.

Above right is a set of science books written for young people by local authors Kit Moser and Ray Spangenburg, who were kind enough to loan their work for display. They are co-founders of SORT (Sacramento Organization for Rational Thinking), a local organizational co-sponsor of Freethought Day.

A Prototypical Freethinker (AOF Favorite) ↓



## Upcoming ...

### Notice Switches from Previously Announced Dates!

#### Highway Cleanup, November 13

Everyone has an extra week to rest up in preparation for AOF to hit the highway once again to pick up the recent accumulation of trash and sundry artifacts of interest. The date printed in the October newsletter was in error. The next cleanup takes place at 8 AM on Saturday, the 13th. We hope to see you there. The more the merrier!

#### December 12 General Meeting

**Rena Lowry** will tell her personal story of activism against "God Bless America" in her daughter's public school.

*Editor's Note:* The last in the three-part recollection of how our local Freethought Day event evolved, intended for this issue, was set aside to make room for the pictorial reminiscence of this year's event. The article will be printed in December's issue.

## FTD 2004

### Okay, Now We Start on 2005

#### By Beverly Church

I'll be writing up a more lengthy reflection on Freethought Day 2004 for the next newsletter, but for now I'll just say that it is behind us! And, we hope all who attended enjoyed the day. If you weren't there, you missed what was for so many of us a fantastic day.

The FTD 2004 Committee has had its debrief party . . . uh, I mean meeting . . . and we're tossing around some pretty exciting ideas about FTD 2005. If you have ideas you'd like to contribute, please do send them to us! Mail your sugges-

tion AOF's PO Box, Attention: Freethought Day 2005. Or, you may phone the voice mail (447-3589) and ask for a callback.

The Freethought Day 2004 Committee thanks all of you who helped make this event such a success. So many folks pitched in to help set up and tear down / clean up – and even though I'm not mentioning any names here, one brilliant individual (Jody) showed up with a stapler that pretty much saved the day, and I truly believe, prevented our Program Chair (Mynga) from having a total

## Newsletter Submissions

Submit your newsletter items to the N&V submissions editor, Kay Dickey, at this e-mail address:

**frethnkr@mindspring.com**

or mail item to the AOF mailbox: PO Box 15182, Sacramento, CA 95851-0182.

Preference is given to material submitted online in a PC-compatible word processing format such as *Word*, *Wordpad*, or *Notepad*. (To submit, attach your file to the e-mail and send.)

AOF also welcomes succinct and substantive letters to the editor. Note: All letters are prioritized by AOF's publishing criteria deriving from the organization's Statement of Purpose.

melt-down.

I'd be remiss if I failed to mention the "Laurel and Hardy-ish" nature of the valiant effort by many to set up the grounds in the face of what must have been at least gale-strength winds. We can laugh now.

For those of you who contributed but have not yet received your premium (pledge poster), we will be distributing them at the next AOF meeting, and after that we'll resort to mailing.



The 2004 Freethought Day Committee takes a bow at the end of the Day. From left to right: **Kevin Schultz** (Outreach); **Kay Dickey** (Event Treasurer); **Mynga Futrell** (Program Chair); **Jerry Sloan** (Day-of-Event Coordinator); **Beverly Church** (Event Chair), and **Ken Nahigian** (Publicity)

## Newsletter Freebie Policy

*We'll be pleased to send one free newsletter to any person upon request, but after that time, please subscribe to AOF's newsletter for only \$12 per year. Or, better yet, why not become a member? That way, you'll get our newsletter FREE as part of your membership!*



P.O. Box 15182  
Sacramento, CA 95851-0182

We're on the Web!

[www.rthoughtsrfree.org/aof.htm](http://www.rthoughtsrfree.org/aof.htm)

## Calendar of Events

**AOF General Program Meeting (open to public)**      **Sunday, November 14, 2:30 PM**

**AOF Board Meeting (open to members)**      **Sunday, November 21, 9:30 AM**

Atheist MeetUp (*location TBA, phone for Tina at 447-3589*)      Nov. 16, 7 PM

Brights MeetUp (*location TBA, phone for Paul at 447-3589*)      Nov. 22, 7 PM

**December Meeting**      Sunday, Dec. 12

**Solstice Celebration**      Sunday, Dec. 19

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## Directions to AOF's General Meetings

AOF meetings are open to the public and are generally held on the second Sunday of every month, from 2:30 - 5 PM at the Sierra 2 Community Center, Room 10. The Sierra 2 Center is located at 2791 24th Street in Sacramento, just south of Broadway and the Department of Motor Vehicles. Visitors are welcome. Parking is available on the street or in the rear, off 4th Avenue. AOF Board meetings are held at alternating sites, so please inquire about the location. For AOF's 24-hour Recorder, call 447-3589.

