

# AOF News & Views

Sacramento, California

August 2008

## *Special Points of Interest*

Inaugural AOF Dinner Social Planned (page 1)

AOFers table at 2008 Sacramento Pride Festival (page 2)

Paul Storey's Essay Religion, Culture, History and Mankind's Survival on Earth (page 3)

September Meeting to Feature Musician Paul Martin (page 3)

A portion of Olive Schreiner's *Undine*, with commentary by Ken Nahigian (page 4)

AAI Convention Announcement—September 26-28 (page 5)

Dr. Vijayam of India's Atheist Centre Visit a Success (page 7)

## **AOF August General Meeting** **Marie Bain, "Baby Killer: Fired for Immorality"** **Sunday, August 10, 1:30—4:00 PM**



Marie Bain

"BABY KILLER: Fired For Immorality" is the outrageous, true story of Marie Bain, told through song, dance, and multiple characters, of her involvement with the Catholic church, Planned Parenthood, and the 1st Amendment.

In this documentary, Bain plays 34 people and characters as she relates, with emails, blogs, and newspaper articles, (punctuated with musical interludes), the events that led to and through her hiring, firing, and lawsuit against the school, the Catholic Diocese of Sacramento, and the bishop.

For those not familiar with her story, the online web site womense-news.org reports ([tinyurl.com/6e3yyh](http://tinyurl.com/6e3yyh)): "Drama teacher Marie Bain was fired from a Catholic school system in Sacramento, Calif., in 2005 when an anti-abortion activist and parent complained that Bain had been an escort at a Planned Parenthood clinic before teaching at the school."

(Continued on page 3)

## *Standard Fare*

Membership Form 6

AOF Family News 2

AOF Upcoming Events 8

## **Inaugural Dinner Social Planned:** **Thursday, August 7, 5:30 PM** **By Suzanne Donachie**

Dinner Meet-Ups to be held first Thursday of the month. Your restaurant recommendations are welcome. Looking forward to good food and socializing! The first meeting will be held Thursday, August 7, at 5:30 PM

Location:

**Taro's By Mikuni**  
1735 Arden Way (by Arden Fair Mall)

The host requests that guests R.S.V.P.:

[shastaseer@sbcglobal.net](mailto:shastaseer@sbcglobal.net)  
or 916-419-2105

## Sacramento Pride Festival 2008

### AOF Tabling Outreach Efforts



AOF members table at the 2008 Sacramento Pride Festival (<http://www.sacramentopride.org/>) in Southside Park on Saturday, June 21.

From left to right: Paul Storey (President), David Flanders, Jerry Sloan, and Steve Campbell. Not pictured: Don Knutson, Deborah Smith.

Thanks to everyone who tabled without the benefit of a tent covering for many hours that day.

## Sharing and Caring Info About Our Members

### AOF Family News

- AOF Member **Jerry Sloan** was recently honored by one of the leading gay organizations in Sacramento, The Court of the Great Northern Inland Empire (CGNIE), when Their Most Imperial Majesties Emperor XXXV Santos and Empress XXXV Precious Taylor'd Cargo bestowed on him the title of **Imperial Founder** for all of his many years of work in the Sacramento gay community such as being the principle co-founder of the gay community center (1984) and the co-founder of the annual gay pride celebration (1984) and his famous successful lawsuit against the late Rev. Jerry Falwell.
- It's a **birthday party!** Jerry Sloan writes: "Dear Friends, Please set aside Saturday, August 16, 2008, 2 to 4 pm to attend my 71st Birthday Party."

(Continued on page 6)

### AOF Board (2007-2008)

**President:** Paul Storey  
**Vice President:** Mynga Futrell  
**Secretary:** Nancy Gilbert  
**Treasurer:** Ken Nahigian  
**Directors at large:**

Kay Dickey,  
 Don Knutson, Kevin Schultz,  
 Debora Smith

### AOF Committees

**Newsletter:** Kevin Schultz (Editor)  
 Tom Nicolette (Mailing)

#### Freethought Day, Oct. 5, 2008

Beverly Church, Mynga Futrell, Carla Corbett, Kay Dickey, Jerry Sloan, Tom Ikkelman, Kevin Schultz, Brian Krofchok

#### Darwin Day, Feb. 15, 2009:

Bronda Silva, Mynga Futrell,  
 Dave Henderson, Ed McConnell,  
 Kay Dickey, Ken Nahigian,

#### Ad Hoc Committees:

Web Portal (Kevin Schultz, Richard Langley); Alternate Meeting Place/ Time (Jerry Sloan, Ken Nahigian, Kevin Schultz); Youth Outreach (Jerry Sloan, Tina Burgess, Mynga Futrell); Connections (Kevin Schultz, Betty Simonsma); Growing AOF Membership (Jerry Sloan, Kevin Schultz)

**Archive:** Kay Dickey, Mynga Futrell,  
 Ken Nahigian, Betty Simonsma

### AOF's Voluntariat

#### Affiliation Liaisons:

Mynga Futrell, Kay Dickey (AAI)  
 Hank Kocol (CSH)  
 Kevin Schultz (AA)  
 Beverly Church (AHA/HAGSA)

#### Community Service Projects:

Don Knutson

#### Internet Website: Kevin Schultz

**Meetings:** Dave Flanders, Ken Nahigian  
 Jerry Sloan, Betty Simonsma

#### Membership Database:

Ken Nahigian

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 at **447-3589** if you can help us out. Or, send an e-mail to us at

[aofboard@aofonline.org](mailto:aofboard@aofonline.org)

**ISSN: 1936-4229**

**AOF BloodSource ID#: 4857**

**AOF Federal Tax ID#: 68-0325762**

# Religion, Culture, History, and Mankind's Survival on Earth

By Paul Storey

I began to have doubts about religion in high school. After studying mythology, Catholicism began to look like another step in the progression of ideas which echoed mankind's primitive understanding of the world. Early societies had gods of the hunt, fertility, love, war, the harvest. These morphed into Egyptian gods half animal, half human. The Romans and Greeks transformed their deities into human form, with gods who played chess with the lives of men. These gods were immortal, but could be deceived, and were all too human in their emotions, including lust for mortal women.

The Hebrews made their god more abstract, without a face, without form, and increased his power and knowledge to infinity. With the lure to the masses of immortality in heaven and fear of hell, Christianity dominated society, bringing the dark ages. With the church ruling the state came the horrors of the Inquisition. Islamic states today still resemble this period of theocracy.

Brave men struggled against the power of the church, risking their lives in defying dogma and Holy Scripture in declaring the earth was not the center of the universe. Over hundreds of years, science progressed and the dominion of religion steadily diminished. New in-

ventions which prevented the wrath of god's punishment, such as lightning rods on buildings and smallpox vaccines, became accepted. Anesthesia was used during birth, eliminating god's punishment to all the descendants of Eve.

Darwin finally drove the final nail in the coffin, eliminating the need for a divine source of life. The religious opposition to this discovery still blazes today.

Contrary to Biblical times, polygamy was banned, slaves were freed and women became legally equal to men. Morality and ethics were being driven by human enlightenment, not by ancient scripture.

Birth control was condemned as a mortal sin by the Pope, not once, but in two Encyclicals. As if breeding in exponential growth until all resources are exhausted, like bacteria in a Petri dish, was god's intention for mankind. The Pope can never change his mind, because that would show Popes to be fallible! So we are locked into overpopulation and ever diminishing resources, leading to starvation, famine, disease and wars over resources such as land, oil, then food and water. Perhaps one cure would be to have all the world's

(Continued on page 7)

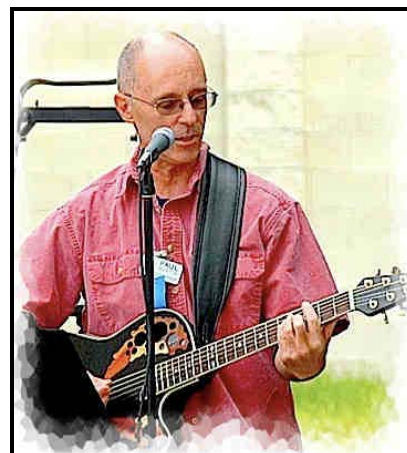
(Continued from page 1)

"I did nothing that broke any law. I did nothing illegal. I did nothing. All it takes is one fanatic," said Bain. "It knocked my life into a tailspin."

Since that time, the court system awarded Ms. Bain a settlement.

AOF meetings are open to the public. Light refreshments will be served.

**Coming in September:  
Atheist Road Minstrel  
Paul Martin**



Paul Martin will perform for AOFers in September as he passes through Sacramento on his summer travels. Don't miss it! Sunday, September 14, 1:30—4PM.

## Atheists and Other Freethinkers



AOF is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit educational organization. It is one of 50 member societies of the **Atheist Alliance International** ("a positive voice for atheism"). AOF

also 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.*

**AOF News & Views:** Copyright © 2008 by Atheists and Other Freethinkers, PO Box 15182, Sacramento, CA 95851-0182. The contents of News & Views are informational and educational. Views expressed via the articles in this publication are not necessarily those of Atheists and Other Freethinkers.

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.



## Historical Figures Series

# From *Undine*, by Olive Schreiner

By Ken Nahigian

A while back, quite a while, I wrote of Olive Emilie Albertina Schreiner, the little-known Victorian feminist and freethinker, and a personal favorite writer. Time to revisit. Here follows an excerpt from her novel, *Undine*, published 1928.

Found with her personal papers, *Undine* is a metaphor for Schreiner's own life, her closest effort at an autobiography and a good introduction to her. 10-year old *Undine* is the main character. Here she and her classmates receive their Sunday lessons; the subject: Matthew's Gospel, chapter twenty-five. The instructor speaks.

"What does the thirty-first verse speak of, my dear?"

"The judgment of the world," said *Undine*.

"And what does he say to the good people on his right and the bad on his left hand?"

"He says to the good people, 'Come, you blessed, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world'; and to the others, 'Go, you cursed, into the everlasting fire'."

"And what lesson does this teach us, my dear?"

"That God has prepared a heaven for the people he means to save and a hell for the people he means to burn," said *Undine*, very gravely, never raising her eyes from the carpet on which they rested.

There was a pause; then came the remark: "Hardly the right way of putting it, my dear. It teaches you that you should be a very good little girl, so that when you die God may take you to heaven and not send you to hell to burn forever and ever."

"I would much sooner be wicked and go to hell than be good only because I was afraid of going there," said *Undine*, now raising her eyes from the carpet and fixing them on the horror-stricken countenance of her instructor.

"*Undine!*" gasped forth that unfortunate individual. "*Undine*, what do you mean? You were always an evil and wicked child, but you grow viler every day."

"Yes," said *Undine*, getting off the box, with a face alternately as red as



**Olive Schreiner (1855-1920)** South African author, pacifist, and political activist. Image source: *Wikipedia*, public domain

the sprigs on her little print dress and as pale as her little white pinafore--"yes, I don't want to go to heaven, and, if God wants to, he can send me to hell and I will never again ask him not to, never. I know I'm very wicked, but I'm not half so wicked or so cruel as he is. Nothing is, not even the devil. The devil is glad when we go to hell, but he did not make us on purpose to send us there, and he did not make hell, and he did not make himself, and I'm sorry for him. I believe he tries to be good and God won't let him, that's

what I believe," said *Undine*, who, with her wild dark eyes and clenched hands, looked more like some spirit who had just arrived from the regions of which she spoke than a carefully-brought-up little Christian receiving her Sunday lesson.

If she had been Medusa her gaze could not more completely have paralyzed her opponent, who sat there as if turned into stone; while the two little pudding-faces looked from one to the other with wild astonishment in their big grey eyes.

*Undine* clasped her little hands behind her and walked slowly out of the room.

It was the first time that she had ever given utterance to the evil thoughts with which her small and, as she believed, devil-ridden soul was haunted; they were fiendishly evil thoughts, all of them, she knew; but, if they were hers, why should she not give them utterance?

Her little heart swelled so it well nigh suffocated her, but it was with a sense of freedom and strength that she was pacing up and down her little room, when she heard the key turn in the door.

It was pleasant enough to think of having a day all to herself with no fear of interruption and no company but her books; but to think of that clink of the key and know that, wishing it or not, she was a prisoner, made her stamp her feet upon the ground as she walked up and down and to rebel in her bitter little heart against all powers, human and divine.

Read it all for free at <http://www.indiana.edu/~letrs/vwwp/schreiner/undine.html>



# 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.

We can arrange to deliver your monthly newsletter electronically via the e-mail address you print above. Please check the mode you prefer. ☐ E-mail ☐ Postal mail

☐ Please check here if you DO want to be on our AOF activist list (e-mail address required).

## Sharing and Caring Info About Our Members

### AOF Family News

(Continued from page 2)

When I was 50 I decided to only celebrate my birthday every five years. However, at the wiser age of 70, last year it dawned on me that one does not get enough birthday cake that way. So, accordingly, I hope you and any special person of your choosing will take the time to help me celebrate this milestone in the Club House of Capital Estates at 6701 63rd Street, Sacramento, California, 95828.

As usual, only your presence is desired, not your presents. However, if you are so moved a check made out to the Lavender Library and Cultural Exchange (LLACE) would be

appreciated to help defray the cost of putting my 35 years of archives in acid free folders and boxes which will be housed at LLACE.

The gate will be open and there should be ample parking around the club house or you can park on Fowler and walk in.

Please RSVP at [projtoc-sin@yahoo.com](mailto:projtoc-sin@yahoo.com) or at 916-381-3115.

- Many AOF members who know **Tom Ikelman** (not an AOF member, but a participant at an AOF panel earlier this year) know Tom through his participation in Free-thought Day each fall. On a web site devoted to documenting the latest news of his recovery (<http://caringbridge.org/visit/tomikelman>) Tom shares the news that he currently undergoes treatment for **diffuse b-cell lymphoma**. This represents a common, and therefore a pretty treatable cancer (a

much better diagnosis than lung cancer). Tom reports that he received a first round of chemotherapy which went well. All of us at AOF wish Tom health and a speedy recovery.

- The July/Aug 2008 issue of *The Humanist* features a poem by AOfer **Cleo Fellers Kocol**, entitled "My Country 'Tis of Thee" (page 35). Thanks to Ken Nahigian for spotting it. Congratulations Cleo!
- AOF regrets to announce that Alice Corley, for personal reasons, has ended her tenure as an AOF Board Member at Large. Many thanks to Alice for her enthusiasm, her service, her calm judgment and her bright smile. We look forward to her return some day.
- Pat Kelley announces a new family-friendly web site: <http://papertotempoles.com>.
- We anxiously need Free-thought Day committee people, especially with Tom out of commission! Please contact FTD chair Bev Church at [bchurchrnc@aol.com](mailto:bchurchrnc@aol.com).

*Do you have any info that you'd like to share with the AOF membership?*

**Please submit items to:**  
[newsletter@aofonline.org](mailto:newsletter@aofonline.org) and specify in the e-mail that you'd like to announce the information in the Family News section. **Thanks!**



## AOF Hosts International Atheist Humanitarian

### Dr. Vijayam of Atheist Centre, India, Visits Sacramento



AOF owes a huge debt of gratitude to two *shining stars* who made the Sacramento leg of Dr. Vijayam's trip to the United States possible—**Nancy Gilbert and Mynga Futrell**. Thank you both so much!

Pictured above, AOFers and community members enjoy an outdoor meal on Nancy's patio—clockwise: Paul Geisert, Dr. Vijayam, Cyril, Roger Zabkie, Phyllis K. (partially shown), Dawn Hustig, Ken Nahigian, Ruth Rezos, Mynga Futrell, and Pam Zabkie.

#### Newsletter Submissions

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

**[newsletter@aofonline.org](mailto:newsletter@aofonline.org)**

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

Preference is given to material 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.

(Continued from page 3)

homeless people go to the Vatican City. Maybe that would wake up the Pope.

Today, religion is at the center of most conflicts on earth. The center of the three biggest religions is the one of the most war torn places on earth. A wall is being built across the city to prevent suicide bombers from killing enemies and becoming martyrs to get 72 virgins in Paradise.

Following religion is like driving down the freeway with your head looking straight up. What is religion doing to prevent overpopulation, global warming, ecological collapse? The concepts are simply not in their vocabulary. With a society engulfed in religion, how long before we end up like the inhabitants of Easter Island? What was the person thinking who cut down the last tree on Easter Island? Probably, he was getting wood to build a bigger temple than the other sect, in order to win more favor from his gods.

#### 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!*

Want the latest AOF board minutes?

E-mail [aofboard@aofonline.org](mailto:aofboard@aofonline.org)!





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

*We're on the Web!*  
**aofonline.org**

## August Calendar of Events

Inaugural August AOForum @ Taro's By Mikuni    Thursday, August 7, 5:30 PM

**August General Meeting—Marie Bain    Sunday, August 10, 1:30—4:00 PM**

**September General Meeting—Paul Martin, Atheist    Sunday, September 14, 1:30—4:00 PM**  
**Musician**

AOF Adopt-A-Highway Event—Volunteers Needed    Saturday, September 20, 8—10 AM

**Freethought Day (in lieu of October general meeting)    Sunday, October 5, 12:00—5:00 PM**

*AOF meetings are open to the public and are generally held on the second Sunday of the month, from 1:30 - 4 PM at the Sierra 2 Community Center, Room 10. Note: The months of February and October are exceptions, since AOF co-produces two public education events: (1) an outdoor fair in October - "Sacramento's Freethought Day" (2008-10-05), and (2) a science and humanity celebration - Sacramento's "Darwin Day Educational Gala" (2009-02-15). Watch the newsletter for details.*

### Directions to AOF's General Meetings

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. Leave your name and a number (repeat for clarity) and someone will phone back to answer your questions about AOF.

