

AOF News & Views

Sacramento, California

September 2011

Special Points of Interest

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Sunday, September 11, 1:30-4:00 p.m. Lola Acosta on, "How Women Won the Vote in California"

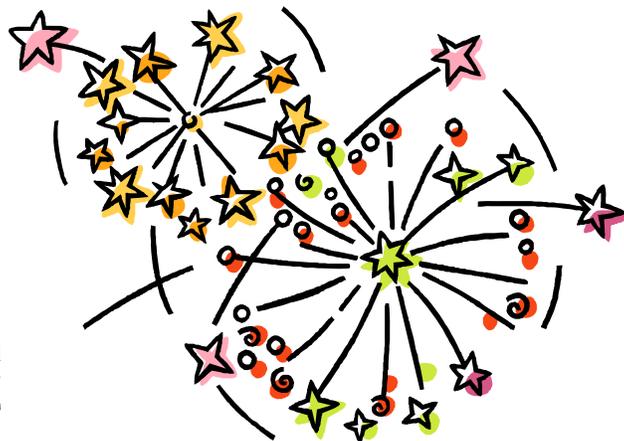


In celebration of the Centennial of California women gaining the right to vote, AOF welcomes Lola Acosta, President of the League of Women Voters of Sacramento County. Proposition 4 of 1911 (a.k.a. Senate Constitutional Amendment #8) guaranteed voting rights to women in this state fully nine years ahead of the 19th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution. It was a close and difficult vote, a story larger than life, full of high drama, and Lola will tell us just how it happened!

Born in Avalon, Catalina Island, Lola Acosta traces her roots through her maternal grandparents, who emigrated from Mexico to the United States. She attended public schools in Los Angeles, earning a BSN at California State University Los Angeles, and an MSN at the University of California Los Angeles. Her professional career began in nursing capacities, including as team leader at Orthopedic Hospital of Los Angeles and

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AOF in October 10th Annual Sacramento Freethought Day!



In October, **do not go to the usual Sierra 2 meeting site**. Why? Because we won't be there! AOF plans no regular October meeting so we can focus on the **Tenth Annual Sacramento Freethought Day Festival**.

Freethought Day is an annual jubilee, a salute to independent minds and rational thought, brought to you here by the **Sacramento Coalition of Reason (Sac-CoR)**, of which AOF is one part. The traditional day is October 12, but this year's celebration is on the 23rd to mark our **survival of the predicted Apocalypse on October 21**. At least we hope to be celebrating. If not, well, please wear shoes. Thick ones.

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AOF General Meeting Recap

Sizzler Report: AOF In August

By Mynga Futrell

The August "Summer Sizzler" may have drawn a small audience, but it did bring forth perhaps the highest level of audience participation seen so far!

Virtually everyone present has something to say in either a <2-minute or <5-minute turn at the mic. Some folks were upbeat, others informative, and some downright grouchy.

A lunch of cold salads, delicious bread, beverage and cookies preceded the presentations. Then the first speaker, Don Knutson, set the stage with his *Rage about Our Current State of Affairs*. That title and its execution definitely opened up the opportunity for all others who had signed up to speak out and not hold back!

This listing shows the great variation in the topics that occupied the minds of the various speakers who went to the lectern during the meeting.

- *Check Out Your Thrift Store!*
- *Myth of Religious Liberty*
- *Freethought in Music*
- *We're Stuck on the God Stuff*
- *Believe in Yourself*
- *Reason Rally Ruminations*
- *Dumping on Religion*
- *Robert Ingersoll on Napoleon*
- *Don't Feel Your Age*
- *The Origin of the Name, Atheists & Other Free-thinkers*
- *Secularism in Academe*
- *If I Was God*

A drawing followed the presentations. Only the presenters were eligible. (*A speaker "earned a ticket" for each minute spent edifying the audience, as long as s/he stayed within the time limits set in advance. Overrunning the time meant losing tickets at the same rate.*) There was lively Q&A on some of the topics,

There was also much laughter when President Jerry

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AOF Board (2011)

President: Jerry Sloan

Vice President: Mynga Futrell

Secretary: Jillian Stanley

Treasurer: Ken Nahigian

Directors at large: Kristi Craven, Mynga Futrell, Peggy Lucas, Mario Sandri, Jerry Sloan, Jillian Stanley, Vincent Wales

AOF Standing Committees

All AOF members are urged to volunteer in the organization. There are openings in every committee listed here. Please contact the chair or coordinator of any area of interest to you to learn details of getting involved. We would love to have your participation! Phone AOF 916-447-3589 or e-mail aofboard@aofonline.org for direct contact to relevant personnel.

Building / Reason House Committee

Beverly Church, Chair

Paul Geisert, Mynga Futrell, Mario Sandri

Freethought Day 2011: Date to-be-announced

Beverly Church, Chair. (Save the date! – It's a celebration of reason and church/state separation)

Darwin Day 2012: Date to-be-announced

Mynga Futrell and Bronda Silva, Co-Chairs

(Save the date! – It's a celebration of science and humanity)

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

AOF Voluntariat

Affiliation Liaisons

Mynga Futrell, Atheists Alliance International (AAI), <http://atheistalliance.org/>

Jerry Sloan, American Atheists (AA), <http://atheists.org/>

Jerry Sloan, American Humanist Association (AHA), <http://americanhumanist.org/>

Jerry Sloan, Council for Secular Humanism (CSH), <http://secularhumanism.org/>

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AOF Community Service Events

Saturday, Sep 16: AOF Adopt-A-Highway Cleanup Event!

By Don Knutson

On July 30, six AOF volunteers, **Jerry Bachman, Peter D. Henan-White, Ken Nahigian, an alien with antennae known previously as Robert Poeschel, Gary Alexander, and Don Knutson.** turned out to cleanup our two-mile stretch of Highway 99 north of Elkhorn Boulevard. Some **18 bags** of trash were collected by this most motley of crews.

We return to the site Saturday, September 17 @ 9:00 a.m. to participate in the annual "California Cleanup Day".

I like the idea of thousands of people geographically apart but working for the common cause of preventing as much trash and litter as possible from getting into the streams and estuaries of California where it can only further contaminate the environment and pose a threat for unsuspecting wildlife. Please consider joining us.



From left to right: Jerry Bachman, Peter D. Henan-White, Ken Nahigian, an alien with antennae known previously as Robert Poeschel, Gary Alexander and Don Knutson.

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as a public health nurse in the inner city. She also volunteered on community health advisory boards, advocating for access to health services for poor women and children. After some years of practicing nursing, Lola became a tenured Associate Professor of Nursing at Rio Hondo College in Whittier. In 1977 she moved to Sacramento with her husband Mike and one-month old son, Miguel David. There she worked in various state government positions involving policy, program development and administration. In 1980, her daughter Francisca joined the family. In addition to working and rearing two children, she co-founded Madrinas, a charitable organization which raised funds and offered scholarships to inner city college bound students.

Lola joined the League of Women Voters (LWV) in 1999. Approaching retirement in 2006, Lola fully involved herself in LWV activities. After leading the League's immigration study, Lola was nominated to serve on the Board of Directors. In 2009 the LWV of Sacramento County elected her as President. During her presidential tenure, she has focused on expanding voter election education to a more geographically and culturally diverse Sacramento, raising funds to support continuing League activities, and inviting new members to build the Sacramento League.

How could you miss a speaker like this? Come to AOF's September meeting!

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.

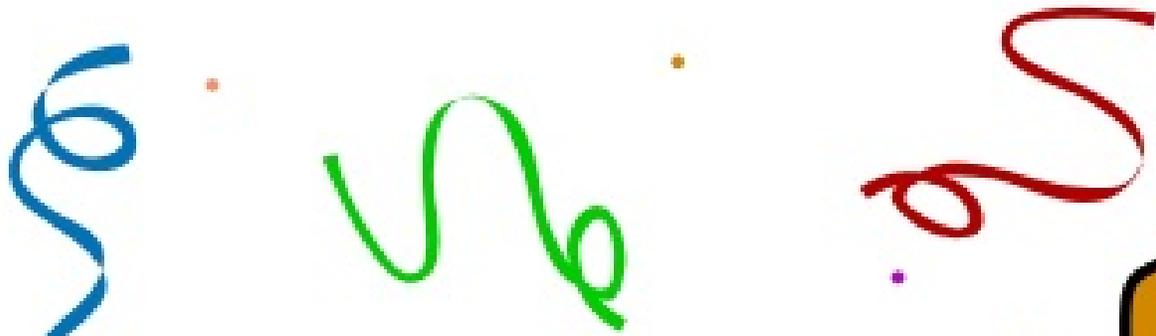
AOF's Statement of Purpose

The purpose of the association, Atheists and Other Freethinkers, is to promote the civic understanding of atheism and the acceptance of atheists in our community. Through educational programs, projects, and publications, AOF will extend secular perspectives, including the separation of religion and government and the right to think and speak freely on these perspectives.

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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.



come out!
and celebrate
reason.



Freethought Day

October 23, 2011



McGeorge School of Law · Sacramento

Save the Date! Mark Your Calendar! October 23 @ McGeorge 10th Annual Sacramento Freethought Day Impresses! By Freethought Day Committee

Activities (Nice!)

Comedy Hour - Presented by Keith L Jensen, Coexist Comedy Tour

Trivia Showdown - Presented by Caralee Hickey, Sac FAN

Family-Style Outdoor Activities - Presented by Camp Quest West

Contests, Giveaways, and Drawings

Movie Screenings and Directors' Q&A

Live Music

Awards and Presentations

Freethought Heroes Gallery

Speakers (Wow!)

Although we are still working on the schedule, the following speakers have been confirmed. There will also be a leadership and development track hosted by the Secular Student Alliance, and more!

Glenn Branch - National Center for Science Education

Zack Kopplin - Student challenger of the Louisiana Science Education Act

Dan Barker - Freedom from Religion Foundation

Michael Newdow - Freethought movement lawyer

Amanda Kneif - Secular Coalition of America

Fred Edwards - Coalition of Reason

Elizabeth Cornwell - Richard Dawkins Foundation

Sponsorships and Donations

Individuals and Families that wish to support Freethought Day will be recognized throughout the event and on the website. Support packages start at **just \$50**. Organizations and Businesses can sponsor Freethought Day and/or have an exhibitor table for promotion and sales. Sponsorship **starts at \$75**. To support Freethought Day, please contact David Diskin at david@LodiUnited.org.

Volunteers

To make this event a success, we need volunteers! If you have time to help leading up to the event, or the day of, please let us know. Contact David Diskin at david@LodiUnited.org.

More Information

For the latest up-to-date information, check out the following resources: **Facebook** (facebook.com/FreethoughtDay), **Twitter** (twitter.com/FreethoughtDay), **E-mail** (david@LodiUnited.org), or **Web Site**: freethoughtday.org/

AOF Subscription / Membership Form

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

Name(s) _____ Phone: _____
 Street _____ Apt. # _____
 City _____ State _____ ZIP + 4 _____
 E-mail address (please print!) _____

Membership Level (please circle one):

Patron (\$50) Family (\$30) Individual (\$20) Low-income (\$10)

Note: Membership does not include a newsletter subscription

Newsletter subscription:

- Send my printed newsletter by postal mail (\$12 extra)
 Send my newsletter by email (*Free!*) – my email address is above

Additional Donation: \$ _____

Total enclosed: \$ _____

AOF is a 501(c)(3) Educational Association – Dues & Donations are tax-deductible as permitted by law. Non-members may receive the AOF Newsletter (same rate - \$12 printed, free via email).

AOF Member Essays

Provide the Video

By David Flanders

If a Christian showed me an actual video of Jesus H. Christ—the actual Jesus on planet earth 2,000 years ago—I would be a believer. For me, being a freethinker and being scientifically literate is accepting evidence even if you don't like it. Hopefully there would be a bonus video of God creating my earliest human ancestor, Adam. An additional video of naked Eve and the talking snake would increase legitimacy for the word "sin".

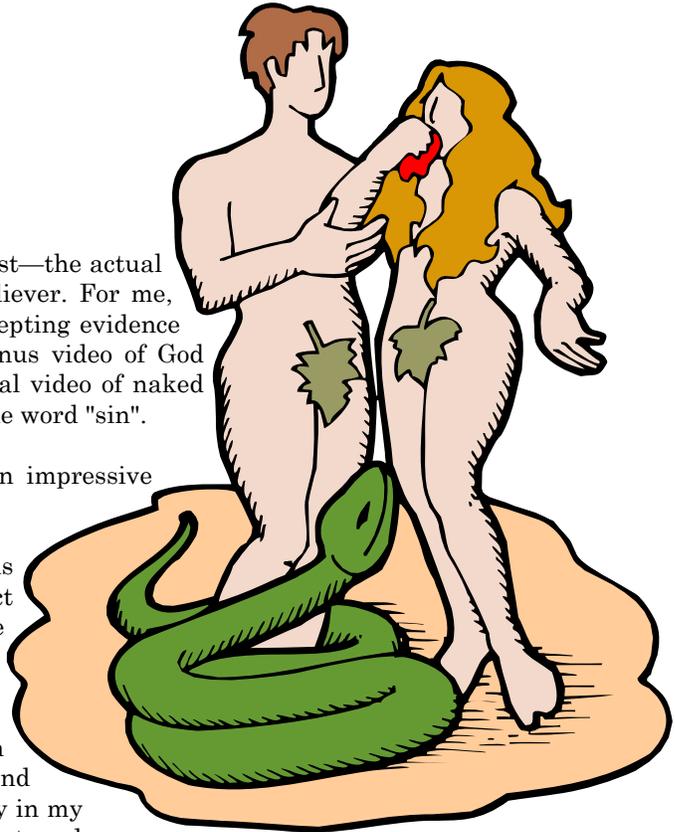
Owing my existence to God the creator is undeniably an impressive trump card.

At age 55, I also know the constraints of my brain—it is very much error prone. Jesus' commandment: "be ye perfect even as your heavenly father is perfect" might cause suicidal thoughts due to the difficulty of the goal.

The saying of Jesus that "God has an eye on the sparrow"—thus He is monitoring the circuitry of my brain 24 hours a day—would put me in a state of paranoia and guilt, shutting down the intellectual and curiosity circuitry in my brain. It would be evident that God would want my brain to value a personal relationship with Him over scientifically literacy and curiosity. And so perhaps there would be some sadness and grief with my coming back to God.

At age 55 and still single, there has been compatibility issues I've encountered with past women. To their credit, at least they existed in space and time like I do. Hopefully God or Jesus, who exist outside of space and time would install an interface circuit in my mechanistic brain so that getting online to God can occur in a timely manner. For some reason my brain values space and time a lot. Maybe it is due to naked Eve and the talking snake—sin.

After the installation I could call myself a Christian, but would I be a freethinker?



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Sloan, having been given the honor of drawing the grand prize winner from the accumulated tickets in the hat, proceeded to draw out his own ticket number! In his *Dumping on Religion*, Jerry had contrasted the experiences of those who did and did not experience religion growing up. (He told of his own youthful experiences in religion and the value he saw in some of them as illustrative of the value that so often goes unacknowledged in atheist circles.) So, do we credit Jerry's early years immersed in Christianity for the fact that wouldn't take the prize when he draw the number?

With Jerry's second dip into the hat, another grand prize winner was chosen. Mynga Futrell chose her prize from 3 options offered. It was a book titled *Nature's Numbers*. Mynga promptly donated the book to AOF's extensive free-thought library (now on display at the offices of The Brights' Net). She also loaned it then and there to Kristi Craven, who had expressed interest in reading it.

All in all, quite a fun and informative afternoon!



Newsletter Submissions

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

newsletter@aofonline.org

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

Preference is given to material in a word processing format. (To submit, attach your file to the e-mail and send.)

AOF 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.

Newsletter Freebie Policy

This newsletter is free by e-mail to everyone. Just send your e-mail address. If you prefer printed copy by postal mail, AOF will send one free issue on your request; after that, please subscribe at \$12 per year. For details, see the signup form on page six.

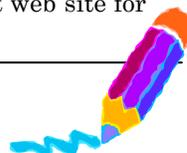
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The 2011 Sacramento Freethought Day event will be the biggest yet, combining the fun **and atmosphere of a fair with the education and activism of a conference**. It will feature speakers, live entertainment, food and contests, family activities, exhibitors and more. Admission is free, though we may request a voluntary donation at the gate (expenses).

Among the activities: A Comedy Hour by Keith Jenson of the Coexist Comedy Tour, the Freethought Heroes Gallery (with inauguration of a new Hero), Speakers, Live Music, Contests, Giveaways, Drawings, Movies, Presentations, and more.

Plans are evolving even as you read this, so do visit the event web site for

Want to send a letter to the Editor?
E-mail newsletter@aofonline.org





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

We're on the Web!
aofonline.org

September/October Calendar of Events

AOF Board Of Directors Meeting (contact AOF for details)	Tue, Sep 6, 6:00-8:00 p.m.
AOF Meeting in September: "How Women Won the Vote in California"	Sun, Sep 11, 1:30-4:00 p.m.
AOF Adopt-A-Highway Cleanup Event	Sat, Sep 17, 9:00-11:00 a.m.
October Freethought Dinner Social: Location to be determined; Contact: Suzanne @ 419-2105 or shastaseer@sbcglobal.net	Thu, Oct 6, 6:30 p.m.
AOF Meeting in October: CANCELED, in Lieu of Freethought Day	
10th ANNUAL SACRAMENTO FREETHOUGHT DAY FESTIVAL	Sun, Oct 23, 10:00-7:30 p.m.

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" (Oct 2011), and (2) a science and humanity celebration - Sacramento's "Darwin Day Educational Gala" (Feb 2012). 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.

