

Atheists and Other Freethinkers

# AOF News & Views

*Monthly*

Sacramento, California

April 2012

*Sunday, April 8, 1:30 p.m.*

## Spaghetti Monster Pasta Feed! (Roseville)



It will be the **5th Annual Sacramento Flying Spaghetti Monster Party**. What is a Flying Spaghetti Monster Party? Basically it's an excuse for a spaghetti feed.

But the "FSM" party also pokes gentle fun at **Intelligent Design Creationists** who insist a cosmic Intelligence simply had to have created this well-designed world. "**Pastifarians**" say it was the Flying Spaghetti Monster in his **noodly omniscience**. Open your heart to the FSM, and It will fill you with rich red sauce and garlic bread. Open to all local freethinkers and anyone with a sense of humor. A **miniscule door fee** (\$5, chump change, look in your sock drawer) will cover costs, food & supplies. You will want to **bring your own beverage**. There will be singing, contests, meat spaghetti, **vegan spaghetti**, and cake. **Cake!** Come celebrate the Grand Designer with 'sketti. Optional: wear **pirate garb** if you can, or something piraty. Pirates are sacred to the FSM. Why? It is a mystery. (Oooo-WEEE-ooo).

Location: The home of Roberto Leibman, 108 Lost Oak Ct, **Roseville**, 916-786-9860. This is a gated community; seek ye 'Leibman' in the gate's directory and the FSM will open the way for you. The house is at the foot of a steep driveway. The driveway will be open and a car available to taxi any who may need it. **Contact: Rachael** at 916-548-4617 or **David** at 209-610-0651

## Reason Rally Report, National Mall, Saturday, March 24



No thunderbolts fell, only scattered rain, on about 20,000 freethinkers and freedom advocates gathering Sunday, March 26, at the Washington, D.C, National Mall to call for a secular society and church-state separation. CNN reported it as the largest secular gathering in history, uniting "a mix of white and black, young and old, Asian and Hispanic, religious and non-religious." Journalist Navid Baraty described the emotional energy as "incredible," the movement as "historic," though other news sources reported it as "quiet," "polite" and "lacking passion," possibly due to the drizzly weather. Speakers included Richard Dawkins, Dan Barker, and Adam Savage of the Mythbusters TV show. Near the main stage a small Christian group staged a cordial counter-rally, but the loudest protester was a young man vowing that heretics would be devoured by Cthulhu, the fictional deity in H.P. Lovecraft's stories. The message to unite and empower disenfranchised unchurched citizens seemed to carry the day. For fun Rally images (the 10 best signs), visit [http://blogs.villagevoice.com/runninscared/godless\\_behavior/](http://blogs.villagevoice.com/runninscared/godless_behavior/).

# AOF Line

## By President Vincent Wales

As a writer, I'm a stickler about the proper use of words. I'm the guy who will politely point out that you're "envious," not "jealous," when your neighbor buys a new car. I'll explain that when you suggest something in your speech, you're "implying," but those who pick up on it are "inferring." And I'll correct the kid who says he's "anxious" for his birthday to arrive, when he really means "eager."

These are all easily explained, and can be illustrated with any dictionary. But there's another pair of oft-confused words that I never see in lists of such terms. It's a pair we non-religious people will likely encounter, and not so easy to explain. Even dictionaries sometimes claim that "trust" and "faith" are synonymous.

It's with a bit of embarrassment that I look back to a time when my understanding of the difference was still hazy. I was a teen, in the questioning period of my religious life, and was visiting an older couple from my church with whom I was friends. Bill and I were sitting on his front porch, deep into a discussion about the nature of belief. I remember telling him that I simply couldn't believe something without evidence. His response was that I needed to believe based on faith. I told him I couldn't. "Sure you can," he said. "You take things on faith all the time. You have faith that the sun will come up tomorrow, don't you?"

Even though I knew his question had a negative answer, I couldn't yet explain why. I'm sure this is because people were always using the terms "faith" and "trust" interchangeably, even though they are fundamentally different. But in the years since, I've come to understand a key difference... one that the religious don't seem to grasp.

"Trust," I maintain, is belief in something based on evidence or a demonstrated history. "Faith" is belief in something without, or in spite of, such supporting evidence.

I didn't have faith that the sun would "come up" the next day. I trusted it would, because it always had. I trust my friends because they have shown themselves worthy of that trust. I have trust in myself because, so far, I've managed to survive everything I've encountered. Faith, on the other hand, is something that has no place in my life.

Trust me on that.

## AOF Board (2012)

**President: Vincent Wales**

**Vice President: Mynga Futrell**

**Secretary: Jillian Stanley**

**Treasurer: Ken Nahigian**

**2012 AOF Board of Directors:** Kristi Craven, David Flanders, Mynga Futrell, Ken Nahigian, Mario Sandri, Jerry Sloan, 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](mailto:aofboard@aofonline.org) for direct contact to relevant personnel.

### Building / Reason House Committee

*Vacant, Chair*

Paul Geisert, Mynga Futrell, Mario Sandri

### Freethought Day 2012: October 13 and 14

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

### Darwin Day 2012: February 12

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, Atheist Alliance of America (AAA),

<http://atheistallianceamerica.org>

Jerry Sloan: American Atheists (AA), <http://atheists.org>; American Humanist Association (AHA), <http://americanhumanist.org>; Council for Secular Humanism (CSH), <http://secularhumanism.org>; and the Sacramento Coalition of Reason (Sac COR), <http://sacramento.unitedcor.org>

### AOF News Team

Newsletter Editor: Kevin Schultz

Postmaster: Jerry Sloan

Webpeoples: Pat Kelley (Webmistress); Ken Nahigian (Deputy Webmaster)

**ISSN: 1936-4229**

**AOF BloodSource ID#: 4857**

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

**AOF Voice Mail: 916-447-3589**

## Margaret Downey on “The history of freethought activism in the USA”

### March meeting recap

By David Flanders

Margaret Downey was AOF's March speaker.

Margaret encouraged those in the audience to share their freethought story to others.

She then shared her life story to those who attended the meeting—her struggle over religious oppression in America—a country still soaked in much religious superstition.

Margaret encouraged us to do more good work together and to build something positive in this world—the only world we will ever have.

It was clear Margaret connected with us in the freethought community, and we were very delighted with her talk.



*AOF March presenter Margaret Downey  
with AOF President Vincent Wales*

*Join AOF Today!*

[aofonline.org/join.html](http://aofonline.org/join.html)

#### Atheists and Other Freethinkers



AOF is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit educational organization. It is one of 50 member societies of the **Atheist Alliance of America** (“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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*We're on the Web!*  
**aofonline.org**

## April/May Calendar of Events

**AOF April General Meeting**

**CANCELED (AOF will next meet  
in June 2012)**

**Flying Spaghetti Monster party:** Roseville. Contact: Rachael  
at 916-548-4617 or David at 209-610-0651.

**Sun, Apr 8, 1:30 p.m.**

More info: <http://j.mp/z1JHXb>

**AOF Highway Cleanup**

**Sat, Apr 14, 9:00-11:00 a.m.**

More info: <http://j.mp/H4bUgM>

**Board of Directors Meeting:** home of Ken Nahigian. More  
info: <http://j.mp/H4ctr9>

**Mon, May 21, 7:00-8:30 p.m.**

**AOF Davis Community Meals Dinner:** Davis. More info:  
please see the AOF web site calendar

**Tue, May 29, 4:00-7:00 p.m.**