

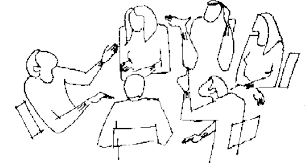
**Upcoming Events** ✧

➤ **Board of Directors Meeting**

**Monday, November 14, 7 pm – 9pm**

An AOF planning meeting for AOF Directors & officers, but open to *all* interested friends and members. We have these every other month, more or less. And as always, we welcome you to join us and meet the Board.

*Bring your ideas for AOF, your strategies, your suggestions for events and activities -- most of all, volunteerism! Helping hands are wonderful*



**Location:** Reason Center, 1824 Tribute Rd, Suite A, Sacramento. Map: <https://goo.gl/iVQL8z>.

➤ **Adopt-a-Highway Cleanup**

**Saturday, November 19, 2016, 9-11am**

In July 1995, Sacramento-area freethinkers "adopted" a two-mile stretch of Highway 99 from Elkhorn Boulevard to Elverta Road. Since then we've striven to keep it clean of litter and debris, and we have received recognition for it. It is, in fact, one our more successful civic efforts. It shows that freethinkers can also serve the community.

This time, why not join us? Enjoy a morning commune with nature, and do a good deed for the environment and local area wildlife. The refuse that we collect would otherwise degrade habitat, leading to a slow death for many creatures.

As usual, the activity captain will provide all safety equipment, including comfortable, natty hard-hats and gloves, stylish safety vests, collection bags, and handy trash pickers. The clean-up takes a scant two hours. Please dress for the season. It may be a good idea to bring a backpack or fanny-pack to carry 3 or 4 trash bags.



**Location:** CalTrans Park-&-Ride lot, W. Elkhorn Blvd, see [map](#).

*(Travel north from Sacramento on I-5, past the Sleeptrain Arena. Take the "Highway 99 - Yuba City, Marysville" exit. Exit at Elkhorn Boulevard less than a mile north. Turn left, cross the overpass, and the park-&-ride lot will be on your left.)*

**Contact:** 916-447-2169 (Don Knutson), or see the AOF Contact Page (<http://www.aofonline.org/contact.html>).

➤ **Philosophers' Table: Morality and Religion**

**Sunday, November 27, 12 pm – 1 pm**

Here's a question. Religious leaders have argued that without a god, people would lack a moral compass, would commit heinous crimes -- because of no threat of hell. "If God does not exist, everything is permitted," old Dostoevsky reportedly wrote. But what of all the "holy wars" packed with atrocities? What of the Inquisition, the "Magdalene Sisters," clergy child abuse, witch executions, poor Michael Servetus roasting at the stake? Pick any one example of religious atrocity, then trace through the rationale. How do perpetrators justify their acts? By appeal to logic, or to faith? Does this suggest something? Or are we being a bit unfair?

Join AOF friends and members for another Philosophers' Table discussion. Just be open to questions, and listen as much as you speak.



**Location:** Reason Center, 1824 Tribute Rd, Suite A, Sacramento. Map: <https://goo.gl/iVQL8z>.

➤ **Football + Crafts**

**Sunday, November 27, 2016, 01:00pm - 03:30pm**

Now for something different. Something Thanksgivingish, but secular. The "speaker" will be the television, amplified by our pretty-darned-good sound system. The topic: football. Wait, what?

Yes, America's traditional Thanksgiving weekend activity. Who's playing? Who cares? The point is the company of like-minded folk who enjoy the same strategy-rich game. Bring your favorite snacks to share: salty and crunchy, hot and gooey, or frosty cold. If hot, please bring an electric crockpot or hotplate to keep it that way. Don't forget serving utensils.

If you're a non-FB-fanatic, simply enjoy some social time in the other meeting room where we will sew, knit, and otherwise craft (or sit and chat if you like), far from the hoot and holler of the concussion-inducing game.

It is a perfect time to work on unfinished projects or start one for gift-giving. And we, too, can share snacks. Bring your fave. Nom.

**Location:** Reason Center, 1824 Tribute Rd, Suite A, Sacramento. Map: <https://goo.gl/iVQL8z>.

➤ **Davis Community Meal – Feed the Hungry**

**Tuesday, November 29, 2016, 4pm – 7pm**

Sacramento atheists are heading west to help the [Davis Community Meals](#) Project (DCM) serve a dinner of donated food prepared by volunteer chefs to anyone who is hungry (including seniors, low-income and homeless individuals and families). Our volunteers set up tables and chairs for about 100, serve the meal buffet style, and cleanup.

After everyone is fed, then we can partake. And as always, there is music and good cheer. Come join us and make a difference.

**Location:** St. Martin's Episcopal, 640 Hawthorne Lane, Davis.

**Contact:** 916-447-2169 (Don Knutson), or see the AOF Contact Page (<http://www.aofonline.org/contact.html>).



★ ★ **Proposed Revision of AOF Bylaws** ★ ★

Have you ever *read* the AOF Bylaws? (Hint: it's painful. See the website.) The AOF Board has found that they are too long and complex for our organization, and are working to make them simpler, shorter and more useful. The bylaws contain two types of provisions: (1) Those that affect the rights of AOF members, and (2) Those that don't. *Any change to provisions of the first sort require membership approval.* Other kinds of changes may be decided by the Board.

To update the provisions that affect members' rights, Mynga Futrell and Fran Evanisko have worked to eliminate wording that seem irrelevant, and to simplify language where possible. The updates are currently ready for review. This month, AOF Voting Membership should receive a special email with a link to the revisions, and another link for voting. Please watch for this email and exercise your unique franchise as an AOF voting member. Examine the proposed changes carefully, and vote.



**Of Lice and Men**

Humans and chimps have similar parasites, and genetics tell us these parasites share a common ancestor. Unless evolution is true, it is an incredible coincidence that the genetic tree of these parasitical species should so closely match the genetic tree of their human/chimp hosts.

"The genetic difference between humans and chimpanzees is so small that it corresponds to that between sibling species (closely allied) species and is less than between two non-sibling species of the same genus. *It is also apparent that the malarial parasites of man and those of every one of the apes evolved from a common ancestor.* This is an important point, as it indicates that their hosts, man and apes, did likewise." [Emphasis added.]

-- J. Richard Greenwell (Secretary of the Arid Lands Natural Resources Committee, University of Arizona),  
"Tiptoeing Beyond Darwin," *Skeptical Inquirer*, spring 1980, p. 42-54

"Interestingly, the similarity between the various lice that live on monkeys and those of man is so close that they can interchangeably feed on one or the other host without harm... Such interchange of hosts is not usually possible. A louse fed on a foreign host, in most cases, suffers a probably painful and fatal ingestion... The lice that infest each species of monkey in South and Central America, so far as known, fall into distinct species according to the hosts they infest, thus indicating to a certain degree an evolutionary descent for both host and parasites that evolved with them and upon them."

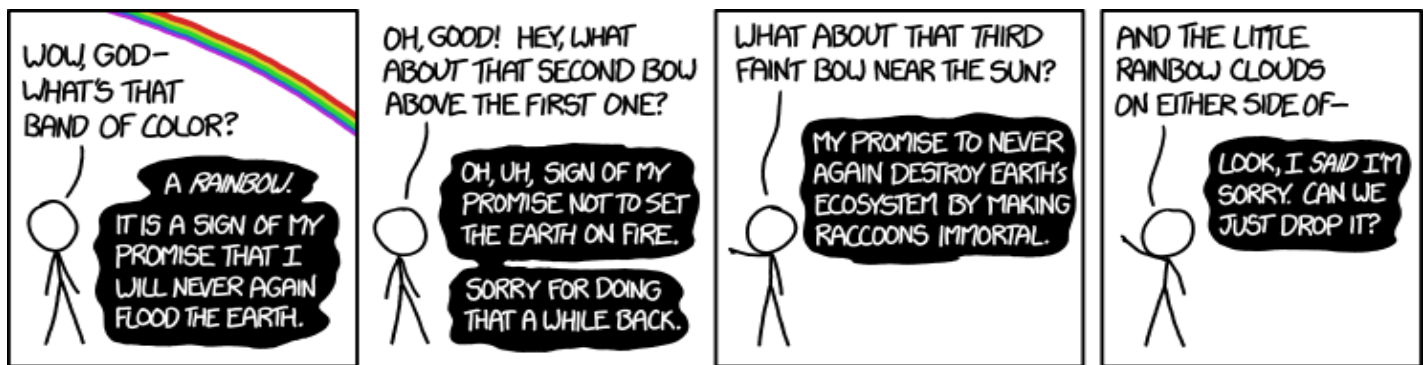
-- Hans Zinsser, *Rats, Lice and History*

"The human body louse, *Pediculus humanus*, has two ways of making a living -- either dwelling on the scalp, feeding on blood, or snuggling into our clothes and come out once or twice a day to graze on our bodies. For lice, we humans are the world. They cannot live for more than a few hours away from our bodies. Only by crawling from one host to the next does their species escape extinction. A group of louse specialists recently decided to find out where human lice came from. Have they been riding on our bodies since before we were human? A comparison of the lice that live on different primates shows that they certainly can be very loyal. If you draw an evolutionary tree of primates, and then draw a tree of their lice, the trees are almost identical. On the other hand, some lice can live on more than one species. And a side-by-side comparison of trees reveals that in some cases they don't form a perfect mirror. In other words, sometimes lice can make an evolutionary leap.

"As the researchers report today in Public Library of Biology, they compared human lice to the lice of primates, looking at both their DNA and their anatomy. As earlier research had shown, they found a major split among lice species that live on apes and on monkeys and other primates. That reflects an ancient split in the primates themselves: our ape ancestors diverged from other primates 20-25 million years ago. The variation in louse DNA turns out to act like a sort of molecular clock, showing when they split into different lineages. The molecular clock puts the split between lice that live on humans and chimps at 5.6 million years ago--exquisitely close to the age that's been estimated for humans from studies on both DNA and fossils.

"The research suggested that we've carried our lice for millions of years, since before the time of our common ancestor with chimpanzees. But after we parted company with the chimps, the lice have a remarkable story to tell. Human lice split into two lineages. One lineage is found around the world. The second is found only in North America. The worldwide branch all share a common ancestor that lived 540,000 years ago. The North American branch shares a common ancestor that lived 150,000 years ago. And finally, the two branches share a far older common ancestor, which lived a 1,180,000 years ago."

-- Carl Zimmer, "If These Lice Could Talk," Oct. 2004 <http://scienceblogs.com/loom/2004/10/04/if-these-lice-could-talk/>



### When you donate blood...

This again? Yes, this. Please consider donating blood at the BloodSource, and if you do, use AOF BloodSource ID# 4857. Numerous BloodSource Donation Centers exist -- find them listed at: <http://www.bloodsource.org/Locations>. AOF gets no perks when members donate, but it saves lives, and is good for public relations. And what can be more Humanistic than donating blood?

### Support Reason Center

The Reason Center opened in July 2014. Since then it has hosted over 200 freethought events. Currently the Center has twelve (12) partner organizations.

Reason Center's mission is to support a social and intellectual community for freethinkers, contribute to society through education and community service, advance the civic understanding and acceptance of freethinkers, and uphold the separation of religion and government.



To continue its good work, "RC" relies on continued support for its members and donors. Please consider making a contribution to the Reason Center. To set up a monthly, or one-time donation visit [ReasonCenter.org](http://ReasonCenter.org).

### Support AOF

If you shop at **Amazon.com**, try this: do the shopping at [smile.amazon.com/ch/68-0325762](http://smile.amazon.com/ch/68-0325762). What's the difference? Nothing, prices are identical, service the same. But AOF receives a small residual for every dollar you spend. This will enable AOF to bring in more smoking great speakers from out of Sacramento. Be smart, try it!

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### Not (yet) a member of Atheists and Other Freethinkers? Join us! Please!

AOF is a 501(c)(3) non-profit association, FEIN 68-0325762. General Meetings are free and open to the public. AOF also hosts civic service projects, dinners, movie outings, parties! To see what awaits you, visit the website, [www.aofonline.org](http://www.aofonline.org); or contact AOF at our 24/7 voice-mail: 916-447-3589; or write to PO Box 15182, Sacramento, CA 95851-0182. Or tag one of us at a meeting.

AOF Acting President: Kristi Craven. Vice-president: Mynga Futrell. Editor: Fran Evanisko. And all the rest of us, their minions.

# 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!) \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail is required for newsletter delivery.

Questions, concerns? Call AOF, 916-304-3796.

## Your Membership Level (annual, please circle):

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

Basic Dues : \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Additional Donation : \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Total enclosed : \$ \_\_\_\_\_

AOF is a 501(c)(3) Educational Association, EIN 68-0325762. Dues & Donations are tax-deductible as permitted by law. Non-members may receive the AOF Newsletter for free on request (email only).

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

Please check here if you DO want to be an AOF Activist (e-mail address required).

"The purpose of Atheists and Other Freethinkers (AOF) 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."



**Save the Date.** At each year's end AOF joins hands with our sister groups, the Humanist Association of the Greater Sacramento Area (HAGSA) and Sacramento Atheists, Freethinkers and Nonbelievers (Sac-FAN) to host a singular and wondrous event, the HumanLight/Solstice celebration. Will it happen this year? We hope! But *we need volunteers* – for setup, for cleanup, to manage games & activities, and to deliver charity-drive items to the appropriate places.

What date? Sunday, December 18, noonish to about 3 pm. If you can help with the fun, contact AOF, see phone number above. Our gratitude will be florid. And you will have even more fun that day, we promise.

**Upcoming elections.** Not what you think. Something else occurs about now: AOF voting members elect or re-elect a Board of Directors to lead the group through the coming year. If you care for AOF, if you have a good mind, if you can serve as an officer in 2017, please contact us! Or sit tight and listen. Because your phone may ring soon. Be kind to the caller.

**Your writings here.** Help AOF News & Views avoid white space such as we are plugging now with mindless blather. Welcome: submissions, from anyone. You need not be an AOF member, nor even atheist or agnostic. Your topic should simply be within the broad arenas of freethought, humanism, skepticism, or secular (worldly) politics. It should be relevant, articulate, grammatical, spell-checked, terse. We prefer it be in sync with our basic goal and mission: to foster civil understanding, dignity and free discourse between churchd and unchurchd citizens. But really, that's between you and the editor. Work something out.

We like poetry, stories, essays, news articles. Hate literature is right out. Honest critiques, OK.

Oh, and the editor reserves the right to edit – that's what he's for.

Each issue comes out at about the start of the month. The submission deadline is the middle of the third full week of the month before. If that seems too complex, think mid-month plus a few days.

PROBABLY NOT HOW IT WORKS

