

AOF News & Views - Newsletter for May 2017

> Board of Directors Meeting

A planning meeting for AOF Directors & officers, but open to *all* interested friends and members of AOF. You are welcome to join us, meet the Board, and keep an eye on the shenanigans.

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

Location: Reason Center, 1824 Tribute Rd, Suite A, Sacto. Map: https://goo.gl/iVQL8z.

> Social Bias and Evangelism

Kathryn Panger, graduate sociologist at UC Davis, is studying social bias against atheists as part of her master's thesis project. She hopes to conduct a focus group at the Reason Center from noon to one, followed by a general discussion and Q&A on her project and on the sociology of evangelism. Please join us! Arrive at noon if possible to participate in the focus group, and advise Kathryn of ways secularism has impacted your social relationships: difficulty of job seeking as an "out" atheist, damaged family ties, social exclusion, or how your dog keeps biting you. Then hang tight for part two, because Kathryn will describe what she has learned about evangelism in society. This will be a fascinating meeting.

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

> Davis Community Meal - Feed the Hungry

In bucolic Davis city, compassionate citizens have a secular solution for the problem of hunger -and they need our help! Join local freethinkers in an ongoing effort to feed the poor, the hungry, the indigent, the outcast. Your reward? The opportunity to meet new minds and hobnob with your freethinker friends, a likely free meal, jazzy music, and the warm hearts-glow of benevolence. Also, seriously, it's a blast!

No cooking required. The Davis Community Meals team will perform food prep and kitchen work. Our job is simply to set up chairs & tables, serve, put things away at the end, and clean a bit (with a minimum of mopping).

Extra points if you can arrive for setup, but if you can't, that is OK, any help is good help. Setup begins about 4:30 p.m., buffet food service at about 5:45. At 6:30 we clean up, leaving the hall as we found it. (And maybe take home leftovers.)

For details, please see <u>Davis Community Meals</u>. For a map to the site, see: <u>Martin's Episcopal Church</u>.

Location: St. Martin's Episcopal Church, 640 Hawthorne Lane, Davis, CA, see map



A Lecture Review (by Fran Evanisko)

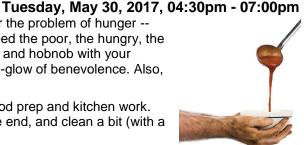
David Diskin's Yuba College Atheism lecture

Yuba College's lecture series "Crossing Waters, Building Bridges", sponsors speakers every month, and offers students extra credit units to attend. This speaker series is led by Language Arts Professor Neelam D. Canto-Lubo. This month I had the pleasure to attend this event which featured our own David Diskin on behalf of the Yuba College Secular Student Alliance, led by Kaeliegh Pontif. David's lecture was titled *Atheism: An Open Look*.



Wednesday, May 10, 2017, 7 pm – 9 pm





David's talk was well prepared and presented, supported by an effective PowerPoint presentation. He started by showing an image of a portion of the night sky from the Hubble Telescope, and relating it to the immense size of the universe in space and time, emphasizing the implications of the existence of billions of galaxies containing billions of stars, for humanity.

David went on to discuss several topical areas including: Two paths to atheism, labels, the history of atheism, a society of atheists, music/poetry/humor, and secular rights. The two paths to atheism being a secular upbringing, and a religious upbringing that eventually leads to doubt and an eventual falling away from religion. David defined and discussed five labels closely associated with the atheistic perspective: "atheism", "agnosticism", "freethinker", "humanism", and "Skepticism". He gave brief overview of the history of atheism from Pygmy tribes in Africa, to Jainism and Buddhism, to the Greek Philosophers, Muslim philosophy, the Enlightenment, modern philosophers such as Marx and Nietzsche, and current writers like Richard Dawkins and Christopher Hitchens. He presented an overview of the society of atheists in the US. Pointing out that 1 in 10 claim to have no belief, 3 in 10 between 18-29 years old are not affiliated with any religion, 4 in 10 Californians are not affiliated, and 7 in 10 Jews think an atheist can still be a Jew. As examples of Atheistic entertainment, David presented portions of performances by an atheist songstress, rapper, and poet.

He then turned to Secular rights and concerns, pointing out that although atheism is not a religion, courts have decided that atheism is considered a religion only in the sense that atheists have the same civil rights as do the religious.

He concluded by discussing the various groups that are part of the Sacramento Coalition of Reason, directing the attendees to the <u>http://sacramentocor.org/</u> web page.

David's lecture was cordial, effective, and well received by the 50 or so students and faculty who attended. We are fortunate to have someone like Dave who can present our views in a positive light. This fall Kaeliegh Pontif will be transferring to Sacramento State University to work toward an environment science degree. I hope we can encourage her to stay involved with the Secular Students Alliance at Sacramento State.



When you donate blood...

Please consider donating blood at Sacramento's BloodSource, and use AOF BloodSource ID# **4857** when you do it. Many BloodSource Donation Centers exist – find them listed at <u>http://www.bloodsource.org/Locations</u>. AOF gets no perks when members donate, but it saves lives, and is good for public relations. And what is more purely, sweetly Humanistic than donating blood?

Support the Reason Center

Reason Center rocks! It opened its doors in July 2014 and continues to pick up speed. "RC" has hosted hundreds of freethought-friendly events, and currently has twelve partner organizations.

Its mission: 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, uphold the separation of religion and government, and foster fun.

But will it continue? Reason Center needs ongoing support from members and donors. Please become a Reason Center member, or even make a one-time donation. You'll feel good. You'll feel *great.* Visit the website, <u>ReasonCenter.org</u>, to see how to help.

No More "In God We Trust"

Remember "No More IGWT"? Since July 2015 this project has operated in the background, quietly gathering funds to support renewed litigative efforts by Dr. Mike Newdow to remove religious references from U.S. currency and to restore original legal neutrality toward faith. As James Madison said, "Every new & successful example therefore of a perfect separation between ecclesiastical and civil matters, is of importance. And I have no doubt that every new example, will



succeed, as every past one has done, in shewing that religion & Govt. will both exist in greater purity, the less they are mixed together." (*Letter to Edward Livingston, 10 July 1822 - Writings* 9:100–103)

The Fund now stands at nearly \$4600. If you wish to support it, visit <u>http://nomoreigwt.com/</u>, or drop a donation to AOF at PO Box 15182, Sacramento, CA 95851. Donations large or small are appreciated, and tax deductible of course!

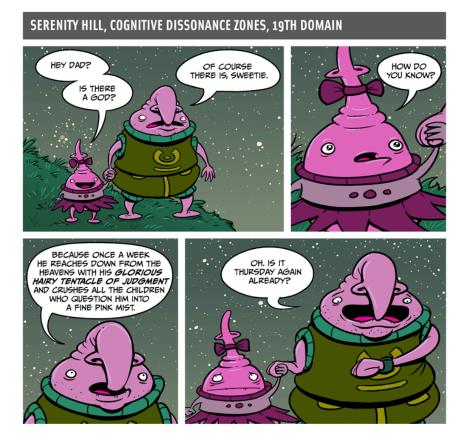
Not a member of Atheists and Other Freethinkers? We have a fix for that!

AOF is a nifty 501(c)(3) non-profit association, FEIN 68-0325762. General Meetings are free and open to all. AOF also hosts civic service projects, dinners, movie outings, parties! To see what awaits, visit the website, <u>www.aofonline.org</u>; or contact AOF at our 24/7 voice-mail: 916-447-3589; or write to PO Box 15182, Sacramento, CA 95851-0182. But pigeon messages will be eaten.

Subscription / Membership Form Mail to: AOF, PO Box 15182, Sacramento CA 95851-0182 (Attn: Membership)		
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E-mail is required for newsletter delivery.		
Questions, concerns? Call AOF, 916-304-3796.		Please check here if you do NOT want your name on lists occasionally
Your Membership Level (annual, please circle):		provided to groups similar to AOF.
Patron (\$50) Family (\$30) Individual (\$20) Low-income (\$10)		
Basic Dues : \$		Please check here if you DO want to
Additional Donation : \$		be an AOF Activist (e-mail address required).
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AOF is a 501(c)(3) Educational Association, EIN 68-0325762. Dues & Donations are tax-deductable as		
permitted by law. Non-members may receive the AOF Newsletter for free on request (email only).		

AOF President: Brad Clark. Vice-president: Mynga Futrell. Yr 'umble Editor: Fran Evanisko.

"The purpose of Atheists and Other Freethinkers (AOF) is to promote 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." There, we said it!



Thanks to http://amultiverse.com/

