

Did you miss AOF's June 28 presentation by podcaster [Aron Ra](#) (topic: Factor Fantasy)? You're in luck! The talk is *now available* to view at https://us02web.zoom.us/rec/share/91aH4DM-jhIEqfJsFDIX6E-LNu7T6a8gXAa-VfzB5_5z-mJWu_nxTZZ_FfQRqh. It will be there for about a month, so don't dawdle, catch it now.

✧ ✧ Upcoming AOF Events ✧ ✧

➤ Free Movie Nights!

Fridays, Jul 3 & Jul 17, 2020, 7pm – 10pm

Twice a month, [Reason Center](#) (RC) and AOF host a **Free Movie Night** under an excellent [MPLC License](#). We can't tell the movie title, but we can hint.

The first, tentatively, is a 1964 fantasy directed by George Pal, about a mysterious, magical circus that comes to a western town bearing wonders and characters that entertain the inhabitants and teach valuable (often painful) lessons. The second (Jul 17) is a 1997 American drama, written by, directed by and starring Robert Duvall, about a charismatic Pentecostal preacher who learns his wife is having an affair, beats her lover into a coma, then flees the state to start a new church. (Note, this is *tentative*, plans tend to change.)



Our regular movie venue is [Reason Center](#) (RC). Alas, RC is now *closed* due to the Coronavirus lockdown. So how can you see the movie? You'll need a personal Netflix account + the [Google Chrome web browser](#). If you don't have these, we apologize; please be patient until RC can open its doors. Else, here's how to join us:

1. Open your Chrome web browser now and install the Netflix Party Extension. Get it at "www.netflixparty.com". (Really, do it *now*, don't wait till movie night!)
2. Just before show time, fire up the Chrome browser again and visit the AOF website (<http://www.aofonline.org/>) to get the special Netflix Movie Party link. (Or go to <https://www.meetup.com/SacFAN/events/> to get it.)
3. Click the link. The Netflix Movie Party page will open. Log into Netflix (if not logged in already). At the top right of the browser frame, see a small circle with the letters **NP** in red. It's not easy to see, so look closely. You may need to click on the "**NP**".
4. The Netflix movie party should begin. You'll be watching it along with the rest of us. As it plays we can chat on the side of the screen and make silly, snarky comments.

Location: A Netflix Movie Party on your Chrome Browser. Get the extension at "www.netflixparty.com" (see above).

Contact: Email "programs (at) aofonline.org" or contact Reason Center (<https://reasoncenter.org/>).

Free Movie Nights occur on a Friday evening each month. Maybe two Fridays. Suggest your own fave film for next time!

➤ Adopt-a-Highway Cleanup

Saturday, Jul 11, 2020, 9am - 11am

The Highway Cleanup project will resume, since social distancing is easy on the two-mile stretch of Highway 99 from Elkhorn Boulevard to Elverta Road, which Sac-area freethinkers "adopted" in July 1995.

So, 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 ultimately be swept by the rain into tributaries and into the ocean, degrading habitat, and leading to a slow death for many sea creatures.



As ever, the stalwart 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.

Just travel north from Sacramento on I-5, past the old Sleep Train Arena. Take the "Highway 99 - Yuba City, Marysville" exit. Exit at Elkhorn Boulevard less than a mile north. Turn left, cross the overpass. 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>).

Location: Caltrans Park-&-Ride lot, W. Elkhorn Blvd, map at <https://goo.gl/maps/zw3Rwct9yR52>.

Notes: This is a great event for older children, but please leave smalls safe at home.

➤ Evolution of Religion – Sarah Strand

Sunday, Jul 26, 2020, 2pm – 4pm

Natural selection! It seems so *natural*. In fact, Darwin's theory is a springboard to explore the evolution of many things, even ideas, even religion. History shows how religion became so infectiously pervasive: by bifurcating, spawning, mutating, competing; a skein of threads adjusting to the world and each other in live-or-die nudges.

The wise presenter, Sarah Strand, holds a doctorate in behavioral neuroscience from the University of Massachusetts at Amherst and has lectured on neurobiology topics (including religion, morality, and love) for ten years. She is a psychology lecturer at Sacramento State University, an ESL teacher, and a neurotheology science communicator. Her very first religion talk was the result of an invitation from Atheists and Other Freethinkers and [Sac-FAN](#) in February 2010. Since then Sarah has developed a lecture series and a course at Sac State about the psychology of religion. That very first invitation, she says, was a catalyst for this part of her career. How about that!



One more event of the AOF Speaker Series. So full of surprises and revelations, you may never see your eyebrows again.

How to attend: Reason Center is temporarily *closed* due to the COVID-19 lockdown and might still be by the end of July. So this meeting will occur via Videoconference.

- **Any time before the event:** Go to <https://zoom.us/download>. Download & install the "Zoom videoconference tool" if you haven't already. (Do this just once, it will be good for all future online Zoom meetings.)
- **Moments before the meeting:** Visit link <https://zoom.us/join/86328040740>. It will take you to a Zoom Page.
- **If it asks you to sign in:** If you have a Facebook or Google account, or even an SSO account, click one of the buttons for those, then sign in with your credentials. Or create your own Zoom account, but this is probably not necessary.
- **If it wants a Meeting ID** (it probably won't), the ID is **863 2804 0740**.
- **If it requests a passcode**, the code is **107225**. Again, probably not needed.
- **The videoconference should begin.** Speakers on, please! Sit back and enjoy.

Or listen in by phone at 1-669-900-6833. Same meeting ID and passcode (**863 2804 0740** and **107225**).

Location : Videoconference via Zoom - see link above.

Contact : Email "programs (at) aofonline.org", or see <https://www.meetup.com/SacFAN/events/271538333/>.

Attend for free, using the Zoom Videoconference tool from Zoom.us. Details above.

✧ ✧ Other Upcoming Events ✧ ✧

➤ Online Coffee and Community

Sundays, Jul 12 & Jul 26, 2020, 10:30am – 12 noon

Join us via Zoom Videoconference for coffee & snacks (BYO) and lively conversation. New folks are always welcome – we love new minds and faces. To join us, go to <https://zoom.us/download> to download & install the "Zoom videoconference tool" if you haven't already. Then on the event day & time, visit the Coffee & Community link, as follows:

- On July 12, visit link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85735020087?pwd=WlI5WHRiTVc3SDNZRjBpNCs2M3k0UT09>
- On July 26, visit link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82894724662>

For details : See <https://www.meetup.com/SacFAN/events/wkftfrybckbqb/> (Jul 12) or <https://www.meetup.com/SacFAN/events/wkftfrybckbjc/> (July 26).



➤ Sacramento Skeptics in the Pub

Friday, July 24, 2020, 6:30pm – 9:30pm

A monthly meeting devoted to skepticism, rational thought and good beer, designed to promote fellowship and camaraderie among skeptics, critical thinkers, freethinkers, rationalists and other like-minded individuals. Also, beer. (Note, pizza & sandwiches are available right next door to the pub.)

Location: Sactown Union Brewery, 1210 66th Street, Sac. Map: <https://goo.gl/maps/DY1yLewkpVASHnTa7>.

Contact: Email "sacskeptics (at) gmail (dot) com" or "sbaker81 (at) comcast (dot) net".



➤ Still more events courtesy of the Sacramento Coalition of Reason

sigh Is that all? No way! This is a *big tent*. For more local freethought events, please visit the Sacramento Coalition of Reason calendar at <https://unitedcor.org/event-calendar-2/>. We will fill up your dance card.

You can help. Here's how.

Support Reason Center

Since Reason Center opened in July 2014, it has hosted hundreds of events and accrued 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, and uphold the separation of religion and government. All good work.

But to continue, "RC" relies on support from members and donors. Please stand up for Reason Center, because it stands up for you. To set up a monthly or one-time donation, visit ReasonCenter.org.

Support AOF

You can support AOF *without spending a dime*. How? When you purchase goods at Amazon.com, simply use this link: <https://smile.amazon.com/ch/68-0325762>. Bookmark it now! Prices & service will be the same, but AOF will receive a small kickback for whatever you purchase. Sweet!

Suggest a Meeting

Know a compelling speaker, have a great meeting idea? Tell the AOF Program Committee! Go to <http://www.aofonline.org/contact.html>, click "Program Committee" in the drop-down line, and enter your thoughtful suggestion. (Reasonable honorariums paid to speakers.)

Volunteer?

We suggest it meekly. See <http://www.aofonline.org/learn/committees.html> for opportunities.

✧ ✧ Secular Holidays ✧ ✧

➤ Chevalier de la Barre Day

Wednesday, Jul 01, 2020

Mainly a French observance, **Chevalier de la Barre Day** is for all who opposes religious oppression, marking the execution of the Chevalier de la Barre for impiety.

On July 1, 1766, church authorities tortured and killed young Jean-Francois de la Barre (the "Chevalier de la Barre" because he held the title of Chevalier or "knight") for impiety. His reputed "crimes" included not doffing his hat at a religious procession, singing bawdy songs, and the possession of banned books by Voltaire, a famed writer of his day and a leading critic of the Catholic Church. An outraged Voltaire made the execution a cause célèbre, haunted by "this sentence so execrable, and at the same time so absurd, which is an eternal disgrace to France," because a key piece of evidence used against La Barre was La Barre's possession of Voltaire's *Philosophical Dictionary*.

The Chevalier and two young friends had been accused of defacing a crucifix in the French town of Abbeville. None saw this happen, but local clergy harangued the villagers until a few, fearing excommunication, vaguely recalled three youths who had not removed their hats at a recent Catholic procession. They pointed out La Barre and his friends. Once charged, one of the youths fled to Holland, and one (only 15 years old) was simply fined. Only the 19-year-old La Barre remained. A search of his home turned up three forbidden books. The courts and the church decided they had their ideal suspect. Mercilessly they tortured him, cut out his tongue, then decapitated him. Eventually they burned his body on a pyre along with his copy of Voltaire's book.

In 1905, a statue of Jean-Francois, Chevalier de la Barre was built in Montmartre, on the outskirts of Paris. In 1941, Nazi collaborationists removed and melted it for munitions for the war effort – while leaving statues of saints and kings intact.

In France, Chevalier de la Barre Day often features demonstrations in his memory. Today, freethinkers in France and the West experience great freedom in their lives, but in other cultures still torture and kill freethinkers and dissidents for their beliefs. Chevalier de la Barre Day is therefore a day to remember all those men and women persecuted by religion, and to campaign for the rights of those persecuted today.



➤ Indivisible Day

Saturday, Jul 4, 2020

In the state of Minnesota, former Governor Jess Ventura declared Independence Day to be **Indivisible Day**, a day in recognition of the separation of Church and State, and the vital role it has played in keeping our nation free and whole.



➤ World Population Day

Saturday, July 11, 2020

The Governing Council of the United Nations Development Programme established [World Population Day](#) in 1989, seeking to raise awareness of global population issues. The inspiration for this annual event was public interest in Five Billion Day, July 11, 1987, when the world's population reached approximately five billion people.



Not yet an AOF member? Please join us!

Atheists and Other Freethinkers is a 501(c)(3) non-profit association, FEIN 68-0325762, incorporated in 1993. Meetings are free and open to the public. AOF also hosts civic service projects, dinners, movies and parties! See what awaits you at www.aofonline.org.

AOF President & Editor: Fantastic Fran Evanisko

Vice-president: Marvelous Mynga Futrell

Secretary: Rapid Ruth Rezos

Treasurer & Registrar: Kinetic Ken Nahigian

Webmistress: Palpable Pat Kelley

Directors at large:

Roger Zabkie, Pamela Rivera, Linda Ostrofsky (Jetta),

Kaeleigh Pontif, Ben Tuason

... And the rest of the motley team.

How to Contact AOF:

- Call 916-304-3796 (voicemail)
 - Or write to PO Box 15182, Sacramento, CA 95851-0182
- Or visit <http://www.aofonline.org/contact> to e-message us

How to Join AOF:

Visit <http://www.aofonline.org/join>, or come to a meeting. We have forms.

AOF's Facebook page:

<https://www.facebook.com/pages/Atheists-and-Other-Freethinkers/533365556831322>

AOF is affiliated with the Alliance of Secular Humanist Societies (ASHS), Atheist Alliance of America (AAA), American Atheists (AA), American Humanist Association (AHA) and the Sacramento Coalition of Reason (SCoR).

AOF Mission Statement:

"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."

What is a Freethinker? One striving to form opinions of life, religion, politics and philosophy on the grounds of reason and experience, rather than tradition, authority or custom. He or she need not be an atheist, though in a religious society most atheists do tend to be freethinkers.

AOF supports a benign separation of Church and State as the best means to protect the liberty and intellectual commerce of citizens. "... to keep forever from these shores the ceaseless strife that has soaked the soil of Europe in blood for centuries" (James Madison, 1803).

Our vision: to be a venue where secular and unchurched citizens can socialize, dialog, develop friendships and enjoy shared company. AOF does not discriminate on such grounds as race, sexual orientation, age, gender, class, physical debility or (*cough*) religion. We welcome the fair-minded of all political persuasions and preferences. Any who will treat others with respect and dignity may join.

Donations to AOF are tax deductible, and this newsletter is free by email. Please share with sympathetic friends.

Letters, submissions? We love them! See:

<http://www.aofonline.org/read/submission-guide.html>.

The Holy Bible, Abridged Beyond the Point of Usefulness

From [Hivework Comics](#) and Zach Weinersmith of [Saturday Morning Breakfast Cereal](#) (don't mock the name), a new abridgement of the Holy Bible, usefully condensed down to a few sentences per chapter, with inspiring illustrations.

A perfect companion to other Hivework publications such as [Religion: Ruining Everything since 4004 B.C.](#), and [God](#). Carry them with you to smite the wicked or leave them by the sofa for a friendly yet judgmental presence.

Available in bundles or bulk orders at discount, ideal for gifting to your wayward friends or for distribution like tracts.

See <https://hivemill.com/collections/smbc> or email merch@thehiveworks.com. For catalog inquiries, write to Hivemill, 3381 S Lawson Dr, Apache Junction, Arizona 85120.



Christianity Tanking in the United Kingdom

From <https://deadstate.org/study-shows-christianity-is-majorly-tanking-in-the-united-kingdom/>

Last year the United Kingdom released a survey that may disappoint the religious: they are fast becoming a minority in Great Britain. This news hails from something our neighbors across the pond have called the British Social Attitudes Report, and it's the 36th year the survey has been conducted.

According to the [Friendly Atheist](#), 52% of British respondents are religiously unaffiliated. Even more encouraging for those hoping the western world is abandoning religion is the fact that most of that 52% did not have to deconvert. They were not raised with a religion in the first place. Thirty-three percent of that number said that they are "very" or "extremely" non-religious. The first British Social Attitudes Report came out in 1983, when 68% were self-identified Christians. That number now sits at 38%. Just 1% of the all-important 18-24 age bracket claims any affinity for the Church of England, which is the demographic that predicts trends in most societies today:

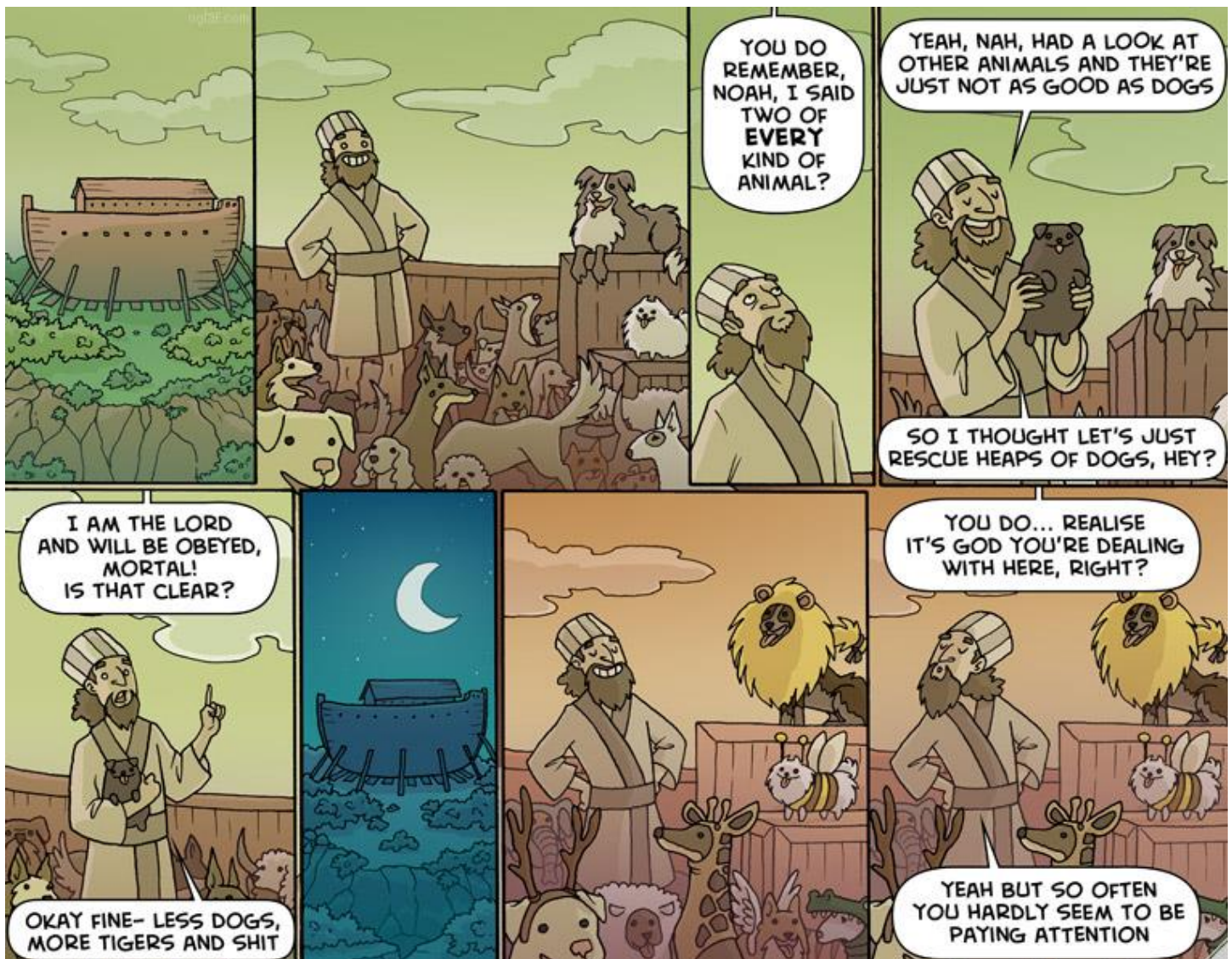
From the Friendly Atheist:

"Britain is becoming more secular not because adults are losing their religion but because older people with an attachment to the C of E and other Christian denominations are gradually being replaced in the population by younger unaffiliated people."

"To put it another way, religious decline in Britain is generational; people tend to be less religious than their parents, and on average their children are even less religious than they are."

The survey concludes that these numbers represent a "dramatic decline" in Christianity amongst the British. This could also offer political hope with regards to the nation's swing to the far right as well. After all, the less religious someone is, the more liberal they tend to be.

By Shannon Barber of [Deadstate.org](#)



(Thanks, Oglaf.com)

The prostitutes' padre

THERE IS GOOD PRECEDENT for a Christian who feels called to be "the friend of prostitutes and sinners." But a crucial distinction exists between friend and client, just as between scorning respectable social values and being unhinged. The Rev. Harold Davidson was, it's fair to say, a little hazy on both.

Calling himself "The Prostitute's Padre", he spent six days a week ministering to the scarlet women of London for a quarter of a century from the 1900s. He was supposed to be the Rector of Stiffkey in Norfolk, but he only came back for Sundays.

His mission strategy was to tell young streetwalkers (or waitresses, he wasn't particular) that they looked like famous actresses, follow them home after a hard night's work and ask them out for coffee. And if they were lucky, they got a trip to Paris under an assumed name too.

He was perfectly open about his work – or the less undercover parts of it, at least. He often took the girls home to meet the family. He gave extravagantly to them, though he rarely seems to have kept his promise to help them start a new life. Apparently he assumed his company and conversation was the most useful charity he could give.

Stiffkey eventually had enough of tarts on the Rectory lawn, and in 1932 the Church of England put Davidson on trial for sexual misconduct. He had a whale of a time, and especially enjoyed the testimonies for the prosecution. Despite them all, he utterly maintained his innocence, to the extent of claiming not to know what a buttock was.



Rev. Davidson in 1932

The newspapers also loved the trial. Davidson became a celebrity, so when he was found guilty on every count, he took to show biz to fund an appeal.

First he exhibited himself in a barrel on Blackpool prom for tuppence a look. Soon he was telling his story to crowds of thousands, so he took the show to theatres, fairs, cinemas and the odd nudist camp.

It was a hit, but the crowds soon dwindled, so he took to increasingly dramatic publicity stunts. His most inspired and extreme stunt was to proclaim his innocence Daniel-like from the lion's den in Skegness Zoo ... until he was mauled by a normally docile lion, Freddie, while preaching from the Bible.

Davidson was evidently as convinced as he was unconvincing in his stance as innocent holy martyr. It wasn't the world's greatest cause, but he gave it his all.

(Thanks & hat-tips to <http://www.ship-of-fools.com/>. More details at https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Harold_Davidson.)



Perpetually short-staffed, AOF could use help in several areas. The current deputy web minion, for example, is a sack of squirrels. At [this link](#) (scroll down a bit), you will see that AOF desires help with **Program Planning**, **Social Activities**, a **Caring Committee**, **Publicity/Outreach**, and a **Deputy Newsletter Editor**. Our current **Postmaster** might also like a deputy who'd be willing, eventually, to take over that duty. What do these entail?

- The **AOF Postmaster** prints & mails one newsletter a month to our last remaining print-subscriber (others have converted to email, but we have a holdout). In addition, s/he mails printed reminders & renewal applications to members who are about to expire. Skills needed: envelope stuffing, stamp licking, ability to avoid paper-cuts. AOF reimburses all costs.
- The **Newsletter Editor** prepares & formats the monthly newsletter from a standard template, drawing news from the [AOF website](#), the [AOF news feed](#), and divers other sources, spicing it with stolen cartoons, short articles, reviews, or whatever readers might enjoy. Required, a working knowledge of MS Word or Publisher, a streak of yellow journalism, slyness, and a design flair. The current editor is Fran Evanisko (contact at newsletter@aofonline.org).
- The **Web Minion** & deputy manage the AOF website, updating it as the need arises. Helpful here are a IT background, and a knowledge of HTML and a web management system called "Joomla." But it can all be learned if you don't mind the nosebleeds.
- **Publicity/Outreach** means posting major AOF events on various community calendars, such as the Sacramento Bee events calendar, the SN&R calendar, Craigslist, Sacramento 365, Yelp, Eventbrite, Eventful, etc. ... Truth tell, it is tedious, but it is one way for a group to grow. Needed are Internet access, time, and a web browser that won't crash when you are in the midst of a posting.
- **Program Planning** is the huge job. It means working with our Program team (contact: programs@aofonline.org) to get speakers for AOF's monthly meetings. This job actually has a budget! Our current team is wonderful but a bit stressed. The previous program person, a true Saint, was incomparable, and had a magical knack for pulling in big name speakers from distant areas. We're still not sure how; it probably involved keeping in touch with other freethought groups in CA -- whenever they host a freethought writer, blogger or media person, *immediately* pounce and ask if the person might come to Sacramento also if we shared travel cost and provided room/board. Needed for this are frenzied alertness, haggling and haranguing skills, and perhaps a soft couch where the visiting speaker can sleep.