

Thanks to all who attended the AOF General Meeting on May 29. We hope you enjoyed the one-man Robert Ingersoll show by Sean O'Brien. For a glimpse of attendees, please see the video file at <https://www.sendspace.com/file/ig88sf>. (Courtesy of Christine Tweet.)

✧ ✧ Upcoming AOF Events ✧ ✧

➤ Free Movie Night!

Fridays, June 3 and June 17, 7pm – 10pm

Location: A Netflix Movie TeleParty, details below

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

On June 3 it will be an action/adventure from 2019 with a wise-cracking Ryan Reynolds. Six people believed to be dead are free to start fixing the world - one bad guy at a time. Reviews were fair to good. On June 17, who knows? Make a suggestion!

To attend, you'll need a personal Netflix account + a laptop or desktop computer with the [Google Chrome](#) or [Microsoft Edge](#) web browser. If have these, here is how to join us:

1. Open your web browser right now and install the Netflix TeleParty Extension. Get it at <https://www.netflixparty.com/>. (Really, do it *now*, don't wait till movie night!)
2. Just before the movie starts, fire up the browser again and go to the unique Netflix Movie TeleParty link, which will appear on the AOF events calendar about a half hour before showtime.
3. **Click that link.** The Movie TeleParty page will open. Log into Netflix (if not logged in already). At the top right of the browser frame check your "Extensions" list. Find the letters **Tp** in red. You may need to click on the letters.
4. The 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.

Free Movie Night was made for Reason Center members, but non-members are perfectly welcome. How can you be a Reason Center member? Just sign up at <http://reasoncenter.com/donate/>. Membership is a measly \$5 a month and is tax deductible if you itemize. And the perks (like this one) are an adventure.

Questions, contact: See <http://reasoncenter.com/contact/>.

More details about June 3: Please see <https://www.meetup.com/SacFAN/events/wmnjtsydcjbfb/>.

More details about June 17: Please see <https://www.meetup.com/SacFAN/events/qmnjtsydcjbwb/>.



➤ Hard History

Sunday, June 26, 2022, 2pm – 4pm

Location: Sam's Hofbrau meeting room, 2500 Watt Ave, map at <https://goo.gl/maps/Sf8o8QKV1WcDQcFQA>

Last century, when a tired instructor couldn't throw down a lesson plan, s/he just rolled out the movie projector. Today, we stream videos. So guess what? We will screen two noted [TED talks](#), "How to Deconstruct Racism" by Baratunde Thurston, and "Why We Must Confront Hard History" by Hasan Kwame Jeffries. Then engage in a lively group discussion of their messages and our thoughts.

[Baratunde Rafiq Thurston](#) is an American writer, comedian and commentator. He co-founded the Black political blog Jack and Jill Politics, whose coverage of the 2008 Democratic National Convention was archived in the Library of Congress, and he was Director of Digital for [The Onion](#).

[Hasan Kwame Jeffries](#) is an American writer, historian, multi-media lecturer, and associate professor of American history. He teaches courses on the Civil Rights and Black Power Movement. Hasan is active on several public history projects. He hosts the podcast "[Teaching Hard History](#)".



Why not join us? We will convene in the cool, air-conditioned, elegant twilight of Sam's Hofbrau meeting room, with its wondrous video screens and yummy food bar, for an educational mind-meet of fellow free-thinkers.

Note, this is an in-person event. Be aware of COVID risks and plan accordingly.

Questions, please contact: See <https://www.aofonline.org/contact.html>.

Park free in the lot. Get some snacks, and convene in the private room at the back.

✧ ✧ Other Upcoming (non-AOF) Events ✧ ✧

Global Events Calendar ☆ ☆

Good news! The [Sacramento-Area Coalition of Reason](https://www.aofonline.org/contact.html) is back, with its global events calendar for all the local skeptic/freethought/humanist groups. To learn of other local events, simply visit: <https://unitedcor.org/event-calendar-2/>.

Following are highlights of what's happening this month. A *lot* is happening.

➤ Saturday Morning Hikes

Saturday, June 4, 2022, 9am – 12 noon

Saturday, July 2, 2022, 9:30am – 11:30am

Sacramento is filled with gorgeous hiking places, ranging from riverside nature to rugged hills. Join us for a hike event each first Saturday of the month, to meet new people, observe nature, and annoy the voles.

For **June 4**, meet at Negro Bar, map: <https://goo.gl/maps/6t39nCuRW9JH4QwL8>.

For **July 2**, see details at <https://www.meetup.com/sacfan/events/hfkcqsydckbdb/>.

Questions or site suggestions, please contact Muhannad at <https://www.meetup.com/SacFAN/members/328699576/>.

➤ Coffee and Community in the Park

Sundays, June 5 & June 19, 2022, 10:30am – 12 noon,

Meet at local parks for coffee, treats, and conversation. We bring folding chairs and our own favorite coffee or tea. Please feel free to share your favorite snacks or goodies, but if you don't, come anyway, there is always plenty. New folk welcome! Hosted by Nancy Sneed and Mynga Futrell. Park locations (or links) posted prior to each event.

Details for **June 5**, see <https://www.meetup.com/sacfan/events/285950512/>.

Details for **June 19**, see <https://www.meetup.com/sacfan/events/286245414/>.

➤ Blasphemy Breakfasts

Saturday, June 11, 2022, 10am – 11:30am, and

Sunday, June 19, 2022, 10:30am – 12 noon

Do you like to hang out with like-minded people? Want to get to know freethinkers in smaller groups? Or do you just get the munchies in the mornings? Join us at Mel's Diner for what we call our "Blasphemy Breakfast," not that we blaspheme that much, but who knows what will come up? This is a great starter event, if you haven't been to meetups before.

On **June 11**: 13399 Folsom Blvd, Folsom, CA, map at <https://goo.gl/maps/ri6JvaBoSZVHTdnU6>.

On **June 19**: 6708 Lonetree Boulevard, Rocklin, CA 95677, map at <https://goo.gl/maps/ZUY2gq72KkmcC4bU6>.

➤ Women's Virtual Recovery from Religion Support Group

Saturday, June 11, 2022, 5pm – 7pm

For individuals who identify as female, non-binary and gender-fluid, recovering from the crush of oppressive religion.

Online attendance link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87403436249>.

➤ Porch Talk

Tuesdays, June 11 and June 22, 7pm – 9pm

A social gathering on the virtual front porch. Join online for a chat about topics of the day. Your suggestions for discussion topics are welcome. Hosted by Becky Marc.

Videoconference link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81116895135?pwd=VDVyWHJMQUIJL3R5K1V0VmxBOQVNdz09>

➤ Recovery from Religion Virtual Support Group

Thursday, June 16, 2022, 7pm – 9pm

Providing ongoing and personal support to individuals as they let go of their religious beliefs.

Online attendance link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82268955990>.

➤ Remote Book Club (BHNBS)

Saturday, June 25, 3pm – 5pm

Topic: *The 1619 Project: A New Origin Story*. "The New York Times Magazine's award-winning 1619 Project issue reframed our understanding of American history ..."

To attend, see <https://www.meetup.com/bhnb-sacramento/events/286295895/>.

You can help us. Really. Here's how.

- **Join or Support Reason Center**

Ah Reason Center, you may remember – it opened in July 2014, hosted hundreds of events, then closed in November 2020. It created a social and intellectual community for us, contributed to society through education and community service, advanced civic understanding and acceptance, and upheld the separation of religion and government. Will “RC” ever return? That depends on you. Please stand up for Reason Center! To donate or join, visit ReasonCenter.org.

- **Support AOF**

You can support AOF too, 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! (AOF pays honorariums.) Go to <http://www.aofonline.org/contact.html>, click “Program Committee” in the drop-down line, and enter your wise thoughts.

- **Volunteer?**

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

✧ ✧ Secular Holidays ✧ ✧

➤ **World Environment Day**

Sunday, June 5, 2022

The goal of **World Environment Day** is to stimulate worldwide awareness of environmental issues, and to generate action for conservation. The United Nations General Assembly established [World Environment Day](https://www.un.org/en/observances/world-environment-day) in 1972 to mark the opening of the Stockholm Conference on the Human Environment. Each year World Environment Day celebrations occur at a different location around the globe. To find a location for this year, see: [World Environment Day Events](https://www.un.org/en/observances/world-environment-day).



World Environment Day gives environmental issues a human face, one with which we can identify. The philosophy of the Day has changed little over the last three decades; it still strives to associate faces with environmental issues and empower people to be advocates of sustainable and equitable development. By promoting an understanding that communities are pivotal to changing the attitudes towards environmental issues, and advocating partnerships, World Environment Day strives to ensure all nations and peoples enjoy a safe, clean, healthy, and more prosperous future.

In the words of the United Nations Environment Programme, "On this World Environment Day, let us not despair, but instead examine the state of our environment. Let us consider carefully the actions which each of us must take, and then address ourselves to our common task of preserving all life on earth in a mood of sober resolution and quiet confidence."

Groups around the world hold activities to acknowledge and celebrate this day. Find an activity near you, and join the fun!

➤ **Juneteenth**

Sunday, June 19, 2022

[Juneteenth](https://www.juneteenth.com/) commemorates a major milestone: slavery's end in the United States. On June 19, 1865, Union soldiers led by Major General Gordon Granger landed at Galveston, Texas, with news that the war was over and the enslaved were now free. This was *two and a half* years after the Emancipation Proclamation (official on Jan 1, 1863). The Proclamation had had little impact in Texas due to a lack of federal troops to enforce it - but with General Granger's arrival, Union forces were finally strong enough to overcome resistance.

Why a two and a half year delay in the recognition of Emancipation? Variant stories try to explain this. One concerns a messenger murdered on his way to Texas with the news. Another is that enslavers deliberately suppressed the news to maintain the labor force on their plantations. Another, that federal troops actually waited for slave owners to reap the benefits of one last cotton harvest before going to Texas. And for some, President Lincoln's authority over the rebel states was still in question. Whatever the truth, conditions in Texas sadly remained status quo well beyond what was statutory.

The celebration of June 19th, coined "Juneteenth" but also called "Freedom Day," "Liberation Day" and "Jubilee Day," began the next year and grew yearly with participation from abolitionists and family of former slaves. The Juneteenth celebration became a time to reassure each other, to gather with family, and to hear speakers recount the abuses of the past. Decades after Emancipation, Juneteenth continued to be revered in Texas with many former slaves and descendants making an annual pilgrimage back to Galveston on the date.



Modern American secularists can mark this day by educating themselves about this stain on our history. A good starting point is [*The Middle Passage* by Dr. John Henrick Clarke](#).

➤ Solstice (June)

Tuesday, June 21, 2022

Called Summer Solstice in the northern hemisphere, Winter Solstice in the southern, people have marked the **June Solstice** in some way or another for thousands of years. Many religions have seasonal holy days linked to this day. It is the day when the Northern Hemisphere has more daylight than at any other time of the year. In the Southern Hemisphere, the least daylight occurs this day in June. The precise date of the June Solstice varies from year to year, but usually it is between the 20th and 23rd of June.

"Solstice" comes from two Latin words: "sol" (meaning sun) and "sistere," (to cause to stand still). At noon in either hemisphere the sun will be high in the sky during summer, low during winter. On the day with the greatest number of daylight hours, the sun reaches its maximum elevation; we call this the Summer Solstice. Likewise, the day with the least daylight is the Winter Solstice.

In the Northern Hemisphere, the June Solstice is officially the first day of summer, also called Midsummer because it comes roughly during the midst of the growing season in Europe.



➤ World Humanist Day

Tuesday, June 21, 2022

World Humanist Day is a day to spread information and combat misinformation about humanism as a life-philosophy and a means to affect change in the world. This secular holiday dates back to the 1980s, when several local state chapters of the [American Humanist Association](#) (AHA) began celebrating World Humanist Day. Different chapters had different ideas as to when that day should be, however. In the late 1980s and early 1990s, the AHA and then the International Humanist Ethical Union passed resolutions declaring the Summer Solstice to be World Humanist Day.



The [American Humanist Association](#), the [International Humanist and Ethical Union](#), the [Council for Secular Humanism](#), the [Campus Freethought Alliance](#) and the [Secular Student Alliance](#) currently celebrate World Humanist Day.

Use this secular holiday to educate the public in your area about humanism, and to gather and celebrate as a humanist community that continues to contribute to the progress and education of the world. A picnic, is a particularly good way to celebrate World Humanist Day. Read your favorite humanist texts aloud; spend time socializing with your fellow humanists in a relaxed, natural environment.

➤ Torture Victims Day

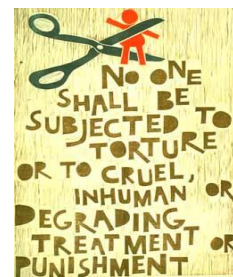
Sunday, June 26, 2022

In 1997, the United Nations General Assembly passed resolution **52/149**, establishing June 26 as the United Nations [International Day in Support of Victims of Torture](#).

The goal is the eradication of torture and the effective functioning of the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (resolution 39/46, annex, 26 June 1987). This day gives us all an opportunity to stand united against cruelty, and remind the world that torture is a violation of basic human rights.

Clearly the abolition of torture is a key issue to freethinkers and humanists, and too often the worst perpetrators of this atrocity are highly religious societies. But secular societies have been far from innocent of it. This is a cause where we can often join hands with our religious brothers and sisters.

Take a moment on this day to visit the [United Nations webpage](#) for this secular holiday, and also to view the [Interactive World Map of torture](#).



"At a time when the legitimate aspirations of people in many regions of the world for greater freedom, dignity and a better life are too often met with violence and repression, I urge States to respect the fundamental rights of all people. Torture and other forms of cruel, degrading and inhuman treatment and punishment, wherever they occur and whatever the circumstances, can never be justified."

Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon
Message for the International Day in
Support of Victims of Torture, 2011



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: Prolific Pamela Rivera
 Vice-president: Marvelous Mynga Futrell
 Secretary: Rapid Ruth Rezos
 Treasurer & Registrar: Kinetic Ken Nahigian
 Webmistress: Palpable Pat Kelley
 Program chair: Super Susan McLean
 Facebook page: Keen Kaeleigh Pontif
 Directors at large:

Roger Zabkie, Fran Evanisko, Christine Tweet,
 Rae Howard, Kaeleigh Pontif

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 pages (two):

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/1525411971087089/>
<https://www.facebook.com/Atheists-and-Other-Freethinkers-AOF-104763721971742>

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 the newsletter is free by email. Please share with sympathetic friends.

Letters, submissions? We love them! See: <http://www.aofonline.org/read/submission-guide.html>.

Family News

Diana Ruth, July 2, 1935 - April 11, 2022

Farewell to Diana, free mind and long supporter of Sacramento Darwin Day and the Humanist Association of the Greater Sacramento Area. Diana belonged to the American Humanist Association (AHA) for over 45 years. She taught in the earliest Head Start programs, designed to ensure that low-income families had access to early education before transitioning to elementary school. She was also one of the early supporters of including children with disabilities in regular preschool classrooms at a time when these children were often segregated into separate learning environments. She supported civil rights organizations, environmental causes, and animal welfare groups. She liked meeting with fellow humanists, and attending statewide conferences. She respected and was interested in the lives of all she met.

One of her favorite songs was "Imagine" by John Lennon. She never stopped believing that we could all live in peace and care for one another. She died peacefully, surrounded by her family -- she was 86 years old.



Seeking a Certified Flight to Salvation

by William van Druten <wvand@charter.net>

A recent news item reported that most Americans are sure they are going to heaven. I have talked to some of them and discovered this: They will be flying on separate planes. You get your ticket from whatever cult you have selected, but each has its own airline.

They were all shocked that I wasn't scheduled to fly and each pressed me to join his or her sect. They told me that eternity is a good long time and the flight is not so short either, I should get good seats right away.

I went to the nearby pastor and said I wanted to book some reservations. He put his arm around my shoulder and led me to his sanctuary. "Bill, if you put in with us it's a sure bet you'll be sitting in first-class for your trip into Eternity. All you have to do is have faith and I can supply that for you if you join up."



I thanked him but wanted to shop around. There was a more impressive church across the street and I poked in there. I got a warm welcome, a firm handshake and a reassuring smile. But the conversation left me unsettled. The minister said that the pastor across the street was a fool and sure to roast in hell. "No, Bill, faith without good work is useless, and at our place you contribute some money and we hire folks to do the good work for you." I said I needed to think it over and he said that was fine, but I should hurry as a fiery doom hung over me.

So I went to the pastor on the other corner and asked if I signed on with him would I go to heaven? He got right to the point. "Look, Bill, the decision has already been made. We are each predestined for the heavenly choir or the hot place; there is nothing we can do about it. Your minister and your pastor are just whistling Dixie. Nice tune but it won't get you squat upstairs. But if you are a tenor, I can get you predestined and you are on your way with Calvin Air Express."

I checked at the Air Islam office next. "Oh yes, we have an immediate seating plan. And you fly with some really nice virgins. We can get you reservations. You only need to blow up yourself and a load of infidels and a building to get 36 virgins. Two buildings get you 72 virgins."

The multiple virgin part was tempting but....

The last option on that block was a cathedral. The priest made me sit in his little ticket booth where he explained it all to me through a grill. "Oh those cults, ignore them! Just get to a priest for a confession before you croak and all is well. You roll the beads and do some Bloody Marys, a nice donation is good and you're in. It even works for our guys that diddle the little boys and girls. They are all up there, you know. First class tickets and no waiting for check-in."

You can be sure I was plenty confused. Five confirmed tickets to heaven, but each had a different flight plan. Here is the hardest part: Each cult was absolutely certain all the others had flawed plans. I thought and thought. Some of them must be wrong, but which ones? I thought some more until I saw the light: They were all frauds!

Someday I'll just die and be done with it. I know this: Alive or dead, I don't want to be anywhere near those liars.

William van Druten is the founder of the Lake Superior Freethinkers

Reality Yes, but Kindness and Love Too (excerpt)

by Ann Druyan at the FFRF National Convention, November 2021

I'd like to recall for you a kind of miracle, a secular miracle that Carl Sagan performed in the early 1980s. He was asked to testify in one of the so-called creation science trials in the South. He was asked by the ACLU to be a friend of the court and to testify to the court, to bear witness why the notion of creation science was a kind of oxymoron. He gave his testimony, and about a year later he received a letter from the opposing expert witness, the "creation scientist."

This man had since given up his job teaching creation science and gone back to school to become a biology teacher. I can still recall his letter very clearly. He said, "If you hadn't have been so patient and so thoughtful, and if you hadn't listened so carefully to what I was saying, and taken my questions to heart the way that you did with such humility and without any attempt to demean me or my beliefs, I never could have seen the truth of what you were saying. But you were so open-hearted to me that I felt I had to pay attention to what you were saying. And once I began to pay attention, I realized that my life was unraveling, that my belief system, that what I had completely staked everything I had on, was worthless."

An article about the recent Thomas Paine Birthday Celebration (January 29, 2022), with photos, is now available at: <https://thomaspainememorial.org/the-thomas-paine-birthday-celebration-brings-great-progress-for-the-statue-project/>
Here is a link to the recording of the Celebration (about 3 hours): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mq-oOdD5g94>

The next Thomas Paine event will take place live in New Rochelle, New York, June 16-18. Unfortunately a Zoom connection cannot be established in New Rochelle, but recordings may be available later.
Please see this link for complete details: www.ThomasPaineCenter.org