



Well-fed AOF folk at the annual Picnic in the Park (Sep 25). We were there – where were you?

## ✧ ✧ Upcoming AOF Events ✧ ✧

### ➤ Free Movie Nights!

**Fridays, Oct 7 and Oct 21, 7pm – 10pm**

**Location:** A Netflix Teleparty link, see below.

Twice a month, [Reason Center](#) (RC) and AOF treat you to a **Free Online Movie**. On October 7, it will be *Mirror, Mirror* (2022) (we can tell you now), about an absurd world where your reflection talks to you. People learn to run their lives by listening to or ignoring the dialog. "Smart, kitschy, pop-referential and risky," says one reviewer. For October 21, the movie is undecided.

*How to attend:* You'll need a personal Netflix account + a laptop or desktop 'puter with the [Google Chrome](#) or [Microsoft Edge](#) web browser. If you don't have these -- please be patient until we have a physical movie venue again. Else you can join us as follows:

1. Open your web browser right now and install the "Netflix TeleParty Extension." Get the extension at: <https://www.netflixparty.com/>. (Really, *do it now*, don't wait till movie night!)
2. Just before the show, fire up the browser again and go to the very special Netflix Movie TeleParty link, which will appear on the AOF Events Calendar about that time.
3. **Click that link.** The Movie TeleParty page will open. Log into your Netflix account (if not logged in already). At the top right of the browser frame check your "Extensions" list. Find the letters **TP** in red. You'll need to click on the red letters. (If you can't find the **TP**, look for the little puzzle-piece icon in the upper right, click, then you'll see it.)
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.

Reason Center made Free Movie Night for its members, but non-members are welcome too! "RC" *might* like a small donation to cover costs. How can you support Reason Center? Sign up at <http://reasoncenter.com/donate/>. RC membership is a measly \$5 a month and is tax deductible if you itemize. And the perks (like this one) are almost cinematic.

**Contact for details:** See <http://reasoncenter.com/contact/> or email "programs (at) aofonline (dot) org".

Or, for Oct 7, see <https://www.meetup.com/sacfan/events/wmnjtsydcnbkb/>;

For Oct 21, see <https://www.meetup.com/sacfan/events/qmnjtsydcnbcc/>.



## ➤ Adopt-A-Highway Cleanup

**Saturday, Oct 8, 2022, 9am - 11am**

**Location:** Near W. Elkhorn Blvd & Hwy 99, see map at <https://goo.gl/maps/zw3Rwct9yR52>.

A tidy stretch of Highway 99 runs two miles from Elkhorn Boulevard to Elverta Road -- *our* stretch! Sac-area freethinkers "adopted" it in July 1995. It's tidy because we have cared for it, nurtured it, lovingly rescued it from litter and debris, and received recognition for our work. One of our more successful civic efforts, it proves freethinkers can also serve the community.

So join us! Enjoy a morning commune with nature, and do a deed for the environment and local area wildlife. The refuse 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. **Note, Cal-Trans will pay AOF a stipend for our work.**

As usual, 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 cleanup 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.

To get there, travel north from Sacramento on I-5, past the location of the old Sleeptrain Arena. Take the "Highway 99 - Yuba City, Marysville" exit. Exit at Elkhorn Boulevard less than a mile north. Turn left, cross the overpass. Park in the park-&-ride lot if possible, or somewhere near it.

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

Also see the CalTrans Highway Cleanup guidelines at <https://dot.ca.gov/programs/maintenance/adopt-a-highway/covid19>.

**Contact for details:** 916-447-2169 (Don Knutson), or see <https://www.aofonline.org/contact.html>.

*In case of rain, fog, excessive mud, rapture or locust plague, the Cleanup will be rescheduled. If unsure, call the Activity Captain (Don).*



## ➤ California Freethought Day

**Sunday, Oct 9, 2022, 11am - 5:30pm**

**Location:** West steps, California State Capitol, map at <https://goo.gl/maps/EYkQPCk3urcvEG7L6>.

**California Freethought Day**, the **Twenty-first Annual Freethought Day Festival**, will be an in-person event for the first time in three years. On this day the community of freethinkers will bring you a menagerie of wonders and a fabulous flight of free minds, along with music, speakers, awards and more. Attendance is free. Please join us!

AOF founded "CFD" in 2002, a rather rag-tag gathering on the Sacramento courthouse steps. It grew. Year by year it grew, until it left the nest and took wings. No longer an AOF event, we still promote it because we couldn't be more proud.

Now it is an annual public jubilee and gala hosted by the independent [Freethought Day Committee](#), a wide-ranging celebration of free speech and free thought, civic engagement, enthusiasm for science, social justice, and the separation of church and state. It is open to all -- combining "the fun and festivity of a fair with the education and activism of a conference," as the event chair fondly explains. It features exhibits, speakers, music, prizes, panels, performance art, and tons of fun.



*Freethought Day*

Projected speakers and entertainers include comedian and film editor [Emery Emery](#), podcaster Kevin Cameron, religious freedom activist [Chalice Blythe](#), the Rev. [Nancy Brink](#), [Nadya Dutchin](#) of the American Humanist Association, and others.

So sign up now. But wait, sign up *why*? It's free, isn't it? Yes, the main event (Sunday) is free to attend, but advance registration (at no cost) brings delightful & toothsome benefits, including door prizes and updates. And would you consider joining us for the Supporters Reception the evening before? CFD is a multifarious event, covering the weekend. For details, visit the main website at <https://freethoughtday.org/>.

Finally ... if you'd like to volunteer, sponsor, help promote, help plan, participate - or if you just have ideas - then please do visit <https://freethoughtday.org/> now, and contact the chairman (see below). Sooner = better. The team will love to have you, because hands that help ... are beautiful hands.

**Contact for details:** 209-610-0651, or email: Chair (at) FreethoughtDay (dot) org.

More info at <https://freethoughtday.org/main/>.

## ➤ Halloween Party with the Portable Poe Show

**Sunday, Oct 30, 2022, 2pm - 4pm**

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



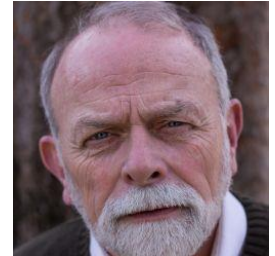
Costumes will be **admired but not required** at AOF's Halloween Party. If you got 'em, this is an opportunity to rock 'em.

**Starring Sean O'Brien:** [Every Corner Productions](https://www.everycornerproductions.com/) will present Sean O'Brien delivering a dramatic recitation of Edgar Allan Poe's most popular short stories and poems: *The Raven*, *The Fall of the House of Usher* and *The Tell Tale Heart*. Mr. O'Brien brings these classic horror stories to life with his "The Portable Poe Show," which he has been performing in public schools for over seven years. How better to celebrate Halloween than a program celebrating the master of horror himself?



Lucky us, we will kick off the fall season and begin the holidays. Let's party, in costume if you wish, and enjoy a chilling Portable Poe Show as Sean summons Poe's tormented ghost from its Baltimore grave.

Sean began his work on the stage in rural Connecticut when he was but 14, and has acted, directed and taught theater in New York, Virginia, Montana and California. Since retirement from teaching, he has performed for fun in schools and venues around the Sacramento area, including California Freethought Day and the Davis Shakespeare Festival. His growing production company, Every Corner Productions, recently expanded its repertoire to include a new show, "Bob: The Words of Col. Robert Green Ingersoll."



Sean O'Brien

**Contact for details:** See <https://www.aofonline.org/contact.html>.

*Park free in the lot. Get grub in the front, and convene in the room at the back.*

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## ✧ ✧ Other Events, Other Groups ✧ ✧

Surprise, AOF is not the only game in town. Other freethought groups exist, and have their own events going down. Here are highlights. Because we're all about spreading the word.

### ➤ Recovery from Religion Online Support

**Monday, Oct 3, 2022, 5pm – 7pm: Demonic Possession & Spirit Beliefs**

**Saturday, Oct 8, 8pm – 10pm: Women's Virtual Support Group Meeting**

**Saturday, Oct 15, 2022, 7am – 9am: Virtual Chapter Support Group Meeting**

**Thursday, Oct 20, 2022, 7pm – 9pm: General Virtual Support Group Meeting**

Providing ongoing and personal support to individuals letting go of their religious beliefs. "RfR" is here to help you on this often painful journey.

For Oct 3, online attendance link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/186729414>.

For Oct 8, online attendance link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87403436249>.

For Oct 15, online attendance link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/7287067292>.

For Oct 20, online attendance link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82268955990>.

### ➤ Blasphemy Breakfasts

**Saturday, Oct 8, 2022, 10am – 11:30am, and**

**Sunday, Oct 16, 2022, 9:30am – 11am**

Do you like to hang out with like-minded people? Want to meet freethinkers in smaller groups? Or do you just get the morning munchies? Join us at Mel's Diner for what we call our "Blasphemy Breakfast." We don't blaspheme all that much, but who knows what dark words will emerge, what baleful mutterings? A great starter event if you are new to meetups.

**On Sep 10:** 13399 Folsom Blvd, Folsom, CA, map at <https://goo.gl/maps/ri6JvaBoSZVHTdnU6>.

**On Sep 18:** 6708 Lonetree Boulevard, Rocklin, CA 95677, map at <https://goo.gl/maps/ZUY2gq72KkmcC4bU6>.

### ➤ Word Confusion

**Saturday, Oct 15, 2022, 7pm – 9pm**

Wonder about words or phrases? Quirks of language come into use or change over time. Here's a gathering to discuss them. Hosted by Nancy Sneed. For details, see <https://www.meetup.com/sacfan/events/nvshqsydcnblb/>.

**Attendance link:** <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88417809715?pwd=UGx1Q3hpU25iWkwrZjZaTWFMEMxZz09>.

### ➤ Coffee and Community

**Sunday, Oct 16, 2022, 10:30am – Noon**

Meet us for coffee, treats, and conversation. For this in-person meetup, we bring folding chairs and our own favorite coffee or tea. 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, two gregarious people.

**Location:** East Portal Park, Sacramento, map at <https://goo.gl/maps/p8WHusZXbNnca94r8>.

For details, see <https://www.meetup.com/sacfan/events/bqrrvsydcnbvbl/>.

## ➤ Online Photo-sharing

**Wednesday, Oct 26, 2022, 7pm – 9pm**

Like photography? Maybe you caught something interesting or mysterious, perhaps a landscape, a sculpture, a flower, a plant or tree, and that photo that's unique. And you might have a story behind it you'd like to share. Join us for a photo-exchange and discussion of the art. This event will occur on the fourth Wednesday of every month.

- Please upload your best pics to your computer beforehand.
- Photos appropriate for general audiences. No sexy selfies this time. (You know who you are.) (And btw, thanks.)
- Please do not share photos of individuals without their expressed permission.

Online attendance link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88417809715?pwd=UGx1Q3hpU25iWkwrZjZaTWZFMEMxZz09>.

Questions, contact Nancy Sneed at <https://www.meetup.com/sacfan/members/13951445/>.

## ➤ Saturday Morning Hike

**Saturday, Nov 5, 2022, 9:00am – 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 get stuck with stickers. Site to be determined.

Details at: <https://www.meetup.com/sacfan/events/hfkcqsydcpbhb/>.

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

## ➤ Online Zoom with Atheists United

**Tuesday, Nov 7, 2022, 6:45pm – 8:45pm**

Discussion sparked by short videos about atheism, religion, science, current events, critical thinking, comedy, life hacks, health and beyond, followed by moderated discussions. Online attendance link: <https://zoom.us/j/99257974801>.

For details see: <https://www.meetup.com/reasoncenterevents/events/blkvwsydcnbbc/>.

## ➤ More Local Events - Event Calendars

But you know what? We're only human, and plans change. So don't depend on all these static listings. To keep track of those other local events, bookmark & follow these links:

- Sacramento Freethinkers, Atheists and Nonbelievers, <https://www.meetup.com/SacFAN/events/calendar/>
- The Reason Center calendar, <https://www.meetup.com/ReasonCenterEvents/events/calendar/>
- Black Humanists of Sacramento events, <https://www.meetup.com/bhnb-sacramento/events/calendar/>
- Recovery from Religion Sacramento, <https://www.meetup.com/RfR-Sacramento-CA/events/calendar/>
- Sacramento Skeptics events, <https://www.meetup.com/sacskeptics/events/calendar/>
- Compassionate Humanists of Roseville, <https://www.meetup.com/compassionate-humanists/events/calendar/>
- Sunday Assembly Sacramento events, <https://www.meetup.com/sunday-assembly-sacramento/events/calendar/>
- Sacramento Think Atheist events, <http://www.thinkatheist.com/events>
- Central Valley Alliance of Atheists & Skeptics, <https://www.meetup.com/fresno-cvaas/events/calendar/>

### ***You can help. Here's how.***

#### **Support Reason Center**

Remember Reason Center? It opened in July 2014, 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 stood up for you. To set up a monthly or one-time donation, visit [ReasonCenter.org](https://ReasonCenter.org).

#### **Support AOF**

You can support AOF *without spending a dime*. How? When you purchase goodies 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 get a small kickback for whatever you purchase. Sweet!

#### **Suggest a Meeting**

Know a compelling speaker, have a great meeting idea? Tell us, tell us! 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 Holiday ✧ ✧

### ➤ Freethought Day or “Freethought Coming-Out” Day Wednesday, Oct 12, 2022

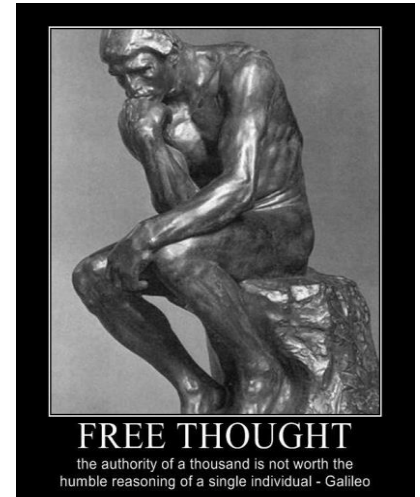
**Freethought Day** is a day to give closeted freethinkers a platform from which to declare themselves. The formal calendar holiday is October 12, but many groups plan celebrations for the closest weekend. Some recognize the week as **Freethought Week**, or the entire month of October as **Freethought Month**. In this time, closeted freethinkers can garner strength and support from fellow “declared” freethinkers.

Why October 12? Because on the day in 1692, Colonial Massachusetts Governor William Phips wrote to the Privy Council of the British monarchs to take a stand against the legal use of “spectral evidence,” that is, evidence of a non-objective nature, such as “feelings” and visions. His decision that evidence should be objective and verifiable essentially brought an end to the Salem Witch Trials, saving scores of lives. (Click [here](#) to read Phips's two letters.)

In the modern United States, discrimination, hatred and bias against freethinkers continues. The freethought community, unlike the gay and lesbian community, lacks a powerful voice and activist population for ending such treatment. Reactions often stem from a misunderstanding of what it is to be a freethinker, or that freethought is a mindset often set in motion in childhood, like sexual preference, not something to change on a whim or with the right “religion.” Others should not try to change it with bullying, ridicule or intimidation. Freethinkers must be allowed to declare themselves openly. The intent of Freethought Day is to change this situation for the better of all freethinkers, especially the young.

Today we see the emergence of younger and younger freethinkers who are often alone and isolated in their communities. The [Secular Student Alliance](#) and the [Campus Freethought Alliance](#) attempt through their projects to give voice to college and university freethinkers in the US and across the globe, while programs such as [Camp Quest](#), the country's first secular humanist summer camp, and the [SSA's High School Program](#) provide young freethinkers with a place to gain a sense of community and understand that there is a proud and illustrious history to their philosophy. However these programs are few, and without a united voice and a united commitment to change this situation, they may not be enough.

Every freethinker in every community should feel comfortable with his or her ideals, and part of that is a connection to like-minded individuals. Freethought Day gives our friends a chance to understand who we freethinkers are, what we believe, that freethought exists in every community, and that they should not view freethought with fear, but with respect as a positive, compassionate way to live life.



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## Request for Submissions

We have a website, we have a newsletter. Both invite submissions from anyone. *Anyone*. You need not be an AOF member, nor even atheist or agnostic. But your topic should be within the broad arenas of freethought, humanism, skepticism, or secular (worldly) politics. It should be relevant, articulate, grammatical, spell-checked. AOF would *prefer* it to be in sync with our basic goal and mission – not to bash religious belief or push atheism, but to foster civil understanding, dignity and free discourse between church and unchurched citizens. But really, that is between you and the newsletter committee. Work something out.

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

Please include your contact data with all submissions: name, postal address, “e-dress” and phone. Retain a personal copy please. AOF cannot always be able to return submissions, and sometimes we spill coffee.

The editors reserve the right to edit – that’s what they’re for.

Each newsletter issue comes out at about Day 1 of the month. Submission deadline is the middle of the *third* full week of the month before. If that seems too complicated, think about mid-month, plus a few days.

The website has no deadline. We’re easy. Submit anytime.

To review the Submission Guidelines, open this link: <https://www.aofonline.org/read/submission-guide.html>, or navigate to the “Submission Guide” on the AOF Homepage (in the main menu, click **Read**, then **Submission Guide**).

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### **Kentucky Noah’s Ark display sues Insurance Company for Rain Damage**

We couldn’t make this up. See:

<https://www.cbsnews.com/news/kentucky-noahs-ark-encounter-sues-insurance-company-over-heavy-rain-damage/>



**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](http://www.aofonline.org).

AOF President: Prolific Pamella 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>.

## Most Christians don't know this but,

"In the entire first Christian century Jesus is not mentioned by a single Greek or Roman historian, religion scholar, politician, philosopher or poet. His name never occurs in a single inscription, and it is never found in a single piece of private correspondence. Zero! Zip references!"



-Dr. Bart Ehrman  
Professor of Religious Studies  
at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill