

## AOF News & Views – Newsletter for November 2022



*Terrified AOF members hear speaker Sean O'Brien channel Edgar Allen Poe at the Oct 30 meeting. A spooky show!*

## ✧ ✧ Upcoming AOF Events ✧ ✧

### ➤ Free Movie Nights

**Fridays, Nov 4, Nov 18 and Dec 2, 7pm – 10pm**

**Location:** An online “Teleparty,” details below.

Twice a month, [Reason Center](#) (RC) and AOF host a **Free Movie Night** just for you! On Nov 4, for example, it will be a crime/systery/suspense/thriller from 2022, *The Stranger*, “based on a true story” (they say). Australian police are running the nation's largest operation and our two protagonists are caught in the middle. “No one is who they seem.” Reviewed 94% “fresh” on the Rotten Tomatoes website. Suspenseful. Bring popcorn.

On Nov 18 and Dec 2 ... um, we don't know yet. Please send suggestions to the programs team at “reasoncenter (at) gmail (dot) com”.

So how can you attend? You'll need a personal Netflix account + a laptop or desktop computer with the [Google Chrome](#) or [Microsoft Edge](#) web browser. Details are complex and we bet you're sick of seeing them every month, so visit the AOF website at <https://www.aofonline.org/calendar-of-events/icalrepeat.detail/2022/11/04/3048/free-movie-night.html> to see.

Free Movie Night was originally for Reason Center members, but non-members are welcome too. RC *may* beg a small (voluntary) donation to cover costs. To become a Reason Center member? Sign up at <http://reasoncenter.com/donate/>. A measly \$5 a month, membership is tax deductible if you itemize. And the perks (like this one) are ... cinematic.

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

*Free Movie Nights generally occur two Friday evenings each month. You can suggest your own fave flick for next time, how cool is that?*



### ➤ Adopt-a-Highway Cleanup

**Saturday, Nov 12, 2022, 9am - 11am**

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

A stretch of Highway 99 runs two miles from Elkhorn Boulevard to Elverta Road -- *our* stretch! Sac-area freethinkers “adopted” it in July 1995. Since then 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. **And Cal-Trans is now paying a stipend for our work.**

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 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. 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 near it.

Note, please review 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).*



### ➤ Board of Directors Meeting

**Tuesday, November 15, 2022, 7pm - 8pm**

**Location:** Raley's meeting room, 4840 San Juan Ave, F.O., map at <https://goo.gl/maps/JbWdw9tnt6xfEStR6>.

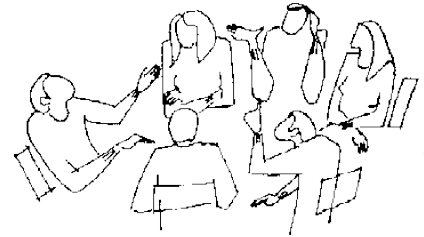
It's an AOF planning meeting, mainly for AOF directors & officers but open to all. These happen as required and are a lot more fun than they sound.

Join us, meet the Board, keep an eye on the shenanigans. We love visitors. We often have snacks. And maybe you'll have some good ideas.

Note, this will be an actual in-person meeting, so be sure your vaccinations are current, or wear a mask, or just don't cough. (Stop coughing!)

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

*Bring your ideas for AOF, your strategies, your event and activity suggestions -- best of all, your volunteerism! Helping hands are the bomb.*



### ➤ Atheism 2.0 (a Viewing)

**Sunday, Nov 27, 2022, 2pm - 4pm**

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

A video this time -- a viewing of philosopher Alain de Botton's TED-talk: [Atheism 2.0](#). On the glorious hi-def full-color screens in the cozy Sam's Hofbrau meeting room.

What aspects of religion should we respectfully adopt? Alain's idea is for secular minds to incorporate religious forms and traditions to satisfy human need for connection, ritual and transcendence. He calls it *Atheism 2.0*.

Afterward, we will engage in a lively group discussion of what rituals and traditions we most appreciate as atheists, freethinkers, skeptics, etc. Like turkey on Thanksgiving Day, hummmm?

So who is this fellow, standing there with arms folded so insouciantly? In 1997, Alain de Botton turned from writing novels and instead wrote a touching extended essay titled *How Proust Can Change Your Life*, which became an unlikely blockbuster on the "self-help" shelves. His subsequent books take on some of the deep worries of modern life ("Am I happy?" "Where exactly do I stand?" "Who took my hat?"), informed by deep reading in philosophy and by a novelist's eye for small, gem-like moments. His newest book is [The School of Life: An Emotional Education](#).

If you want to view the video in advance, the link is [here](#). But please, no spoilers.

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

*Park free in the lot. Get lovely food from Sam's food bar, then convene in the room at the back. This is an in-person event. Be aware of COVID risks.*



### ➤ Davis Community Meal – Feed the Hungry

**Tuesday, Nov 29, 2022, 4pm - 7pm**

**Location:** St. Martin's Episcopal Church, 640 Hawthorne Lane, Davis, CA, see map at <https://goo.gl/maps/uAKtApo3CdnZamGU9>.

The **Davis Community Meal** is now serving up meals to the hungry, the poor, the indigent, the outcast. It all happens in bucolic Davis city, so near to us, where compassionate citizens have developed a secular solution for the problem of hunger, and have asked for secular help.





Join us in this effort. Your reward will be an opportunity to meet new minds and hobnob with your freethought friends, a likely free meal, jazzy music, and the rosy hearts-glow of benevolence. Also, seriously, it's a blast!

Cooking? None required! The Davis Community Meals team will perform all the 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's OK, any help is good help. Setup begins about 4:30 p.m., food service at about 5:45. At 6:30 we clean up, leaving the hall as we found it. (Yes, it's a church hall, so what?)

**Contact for details:** See <https://www.aofonline.org/contact.html>, or call Service Coordinator (Don, 916-447-2169). *Carpooling may be available. For info, please contact the Service Project Coordinator.*

## ✧ ✧ Other Events, Other Groups ✧ ✧

AOF is not alone in this growingly freethinky world. Other freethought groups exist and have their own events. Here are some highlights, because we want you to know.

### ➤ Humanist Salon

**Saturday, Nov 5, 2022, 10am – 11:30am**

The Humanist Salon, a meeting hosted By Compassionate Humanists of Roseville. Please join for details. See <https://www.meetup.com/compassionate-humanists/events/289420349/>.

### ➤ Sunday Assembly

**Sunday, Nov 6, 2022, Noon – 2pm**

The Sunday Assembly is back! A secular congregation that celebrates life. Get together for socializing and good food at [The Barn](#) in West Sacramento. Talk, have fun, and the new board members will update you on new developments.

Map to site: <https://goo.gl/maps/7MtKcWJeqQcReHhE6>.

Details at <https://www.meetup.com/sunday-assembly-sacramento/events/289079207/>.

### ➤ Recovery from Religion Online Support

**Sunday, Nov 6, 2022, 4pm – 6pm: Virtual Chapter Support Group Meeting**

**Saturday, Nov 12, 5pm – 7pm: Women's Virtual Support Group Meeting**

**Thursday, Nov 17, 2022, 8pm – 10pm: Virtual Chapter Support Group Meeting**

**Saturday, Nov 19, 7am – 9am: Virtual Chapter Support Group Meeting**

**Sunday, Nov 20, 2022, 5pm – 7pm: LGBTQ+ Virtual Support Group Meeting**

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

For Nov 6, online attendance link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/7287067292>.

For Nov 12, online attendance link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87403436249>.

For Nov 17, online attendance link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82268955990>.

For Nov 19, online attendance link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/7287067292>.

For Nov 20, online attendance link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/7287067292>.

### ➤ Blasphemy Breakfasts

**Saturday, Nov 12, 2022, 10am – 11:30am, and**

**Sunday, Nov 20, 2022, 9:30am – 11am**

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 mutterings will emerge? A great place to speak your mind, and a good starter if you are new to meetups.

**On Nov 12:** 13399 Folsom Blvd, Folsom, CA, map at <https://goo.gl/maps/ri6JvaBoSZVHTdnU6>.

**On Nov 20:** 6708 Lonetree Boulevard, Rocklin, CA 95677, map at <https://goo.gl/maps/ZUY2gq72KkmcC4bU6>.

### ➤ Word Confusion

**Saturday, Nov 12, 2022, 7pm – 9pm**

Wonder about words or phrases? Language is weird and twisty, and the quirks change over time. Here's a gathering to discuss them. Hosted by Nancy Sneed. Details at <https://www.meetup.com/reasoncenterevents/events/rsshqsydcpcbqb/>.

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

### ➤ Coffee and Community

**Sunday, Nov 13, 2022, 10:30am – Noon**

**Sunday, Nov 20, 2022, 10:30am – Noon**

**Sunday, Nov 27, 2022, 10:30am – Noon**

Meet up for coffee, treats, and conversation. For the 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 amiable people.

**On Nov 13:** An online meeting via Zoom. To attend, click this link:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87468875186?pwd=dGkxTXY5a2p3cTFPTmx2MU95ZWpnUT09>.

**On Nov 20:** Meet at East Portal Park, Sac, map at <https://goo.gl/maps/p8WHusZXbNnca94r8>.

**On Nov 27:** Also at East Portal Park, Sacramento, see that last map.



## ➤ Online Zoom with Atheists United

**Tuesday, Nov 17, 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/blkvwsydcpbwb/>.

## ➤ Online Photo-sharing

**Wednesday, Nov 23, 2022, 7pm – 9pm**

Like photography? Maybe you caught something interesting or mysterious, perhaps a landscape, a sculpture, a flower, a shrub 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 please. (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=UGx1Q3hpU25iWkwrZjZaTWZMEMxZz09>.

**Questions?** Contact the host, Nancy Sneed, at <https://www.meetup.com/sacfan/members/13951445/>.

## ➤ Saturday Morning Hike

**Saturday, Dec 3, 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 get stuck with stickers. Site to be determined.

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

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

## ➤ More Local Events - Event Calendars

But you know – we're only human, and plans change. So don't depend on all these static listings. To keep track of those other 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/>

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## ☞ Help AOF! Be a Board Member in 2023. ☞

Have ideas for AOF but don't know how to start? Here's your chance: Be an AOF Director in 2021! Once a year the door opens to those willing to go an extra mile to help AOF thrive, by joining the AOF Board of Directors.

AOF's bylaws require an elected board of at least 5 directors. Elections are around the corner. The term is just one year. And nominations are now open.

Requirements? Simply to be an AOF member in good standing. It helps to have a sharp mind and email access. You're all that, right? Minimum duties: one brief planning meeting every few months, at which you will share your wisdom, help make decisions, and plan how AOF can serve this wonderful community of reason. And nibble snacks.

If interested, great! What next? Tell us! Contact AOF via its contact page or voicemail number (916-304-3796). Then cobble a brief paragraph, 300 words max, about yourself as a freethinker and your background. Include a pic if you can.

Submit to this newsletter at <[newsletter@aofonline.org](mailto:newsletter@aofonline.org)>, subject line: AOF Board Candidate Statement. Do it by about the end of November, please.

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

### **Support Reason Center**

Reason Center opened in July 2014, has hosted hundreds of events and accrued twelve partner organizations. Its mission was 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. Then, alas, it closed/

But to come back, "RC" relies on support from members and donors. Please stand up for Reason Center, because it stands up for you. Set up a monthly or one-time donation by visiting [ReasonCenter.org](http://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! 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 this month** ✧ ✧

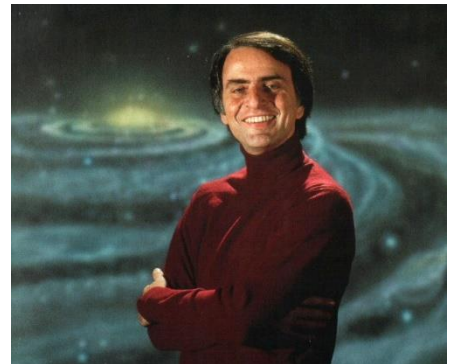
### ➤ **Carl Sagan Day**

**Wednesday, November 9, 2022**

Carl Sagan Day marks the birthday of the great Carl Sagan, and is a celebration to honor his memory. Carl Sagan was Professor of Astronomy and Space Science and Director of the Laboratory for Planetary Studies at Cornell University, an outspoken skeptic, humanist and freethinker, and a Pulitzer Prize winning science author. But for the most part the public remembers him as the creator of the Cosmos television series. This Emmy and Peabody award-winning PBS series transformed educational television when it first aired in 1980. Thirty years later it still seems fresh, and has gone on to affect the hearts and minds of over a billion people in sixty countries.

His magnum opus was his final book, *The Demon-Haunted World*, published in 1995, the year before his untimely death.

Few other science writers (perhaps only Isaac Asimov) were able to reach and teach so many nonscientists in such a meaningful way. So in 2009, the Center for Inquiry inaugurated Carl Sagan Day as a secular holiday. Each year we will continue to celebrate Dr. Sagan, remember him and his work, and revel in the wondrous cosmos he helped us understand.



### ➤ **Church/State Separation Week**

**Sunday, November 20 – Saturday, November 26, 2022**

Many freethinkers have adopted the week of Thanksgiving (week of Nov 24) as **Church/State Separation Week**, to offer concerned and active citizens an opportunity to educate others about the importance of a clear division between Church and State. The hope is that this secular holiday will rally us and provide a platform to celebrate one of this nation's finest contributions to civilization.

Secularist societies such as [Americans United for the Separation of Church and State](http://Americans United for the Separation of Church and State), the [Institute for First Amendment Studies](http://Institute for First Amendment Studies), the [Freedom From Religion Foundation](http://Freedom From Religion Foundation), the [American Atheists](http://American Atheists) and the [Institute for the Secularization of Islamic Society](http://Institute for the Secularization of Islamic Society), as well as others united for a secular government, have supported this celebration.

In humanist circles, some also celebrate November 24 as **Evolution Day**, marking as it does the anniversary of the first publication of *The Origin of Species* (Nov 24, 1859). For the most, however, the focus is on church/state separation this week. Charles Darwin has his own secular holiday (February 12).





An **archive of freethought articles** by Herb Silverman is at:

<https://www.ftsociety.org/herb-silverman-articles/>

If you enjoy them, Silverman would like to hear from you. He also welcomes ideas for his writings. Write to: [SilvermanH@cofc.edu](mailto:SilvermanH@cofc.edu).

More of his work is at the Herb Silverman Website, with information about upcoming speeches, presentations on video, photos, and much more. Link: <http://www.herbsilverman.com>.

Silverman founded the Secular Coalition for America (SCA) and is president emeritus. He served as SCA president through December of 2012 and again from December 2014 to June 2017. Born in Philadelphia, Silverman received his Ph.D. in mathematics from Syracuse University and is Distinguished Professor of Mathematics at the College of Charleston in South Carolina. He has written over 100 research papers in mathematics journals, and two scholarly books (Complex Variables and, with co-author S. Ponnusamy, Complex Variable with Applications), and is the recipient of the College of Charleston Distinguished Research Award.

In 1990 a colleague pointed out that atheists could not hold public office in South Carolina. Silverman ran for governor of South Carolina to challenge that state law. He did not become governor, but then applied to become a state notary and refused to agree that he was a believer in a god. After an eight-year battle, Silverman won a decision in the South Carolina Supreme Court, which struck down any religious test requirement.

Silverman founded the Secular Humanists of the Lowcountry in Charleston and is founder and first faculty advisor to the College of Charleston Student Atheist/Humanist Alliance. He has appeared in numerous debates and debated at the Oxford Union in Oxford, England on the topic: "Does American Religion Undermine American Values?" Silverman has spoken at numerous conferences, presented sermons at Unitarian churches, has conducted book tours throughout the United States, and has written for the Washington Post, The Huffington Post, The Humanist, Free Inquiry, Humanistic Judaism, and many other magazines and blogs.

Silverman is a recipient of the American Humanist Association's "Lifetime Achievement Award." Silverman is the author of two books for general readership, *Candidate Without a Prayer* and *An Atheist Stranger in a Strange Religious Land*.

## The King James Version of the New Testament

The King James version of the New Testament was completed in 1611 by 8 members of the Church of England.

There were (and still are) no original texts to translate. The oldest manuscripts we have were written down hundreds of years after the last apostle died. There are over 8,000 of these old manuscripts, with no two alike.

The King James translators used none of these, anyway. Instead, they edited previous translations to create a version their king and Parliament would approve.

So, 21st Century Christians believe the "Word of God" is a book edited in the 17th Century from 16th Century translations of 8,000 contradictory copies of 4th Century scrolls that claim to be copies of lost letters written in the 1st Century.



### 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 Pamela Rivers  
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 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. Be respectful, and you 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>.