

AOF News & Views

Sacramento, California

November 2008

Special Points of Interest

Nov 9th General Meeting: AOF Board Elections for 2009, Rosalie McClung (page 1)

AOF Fund Raising Social Planned (pages 1, 7)

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Special AOF Board Elections for 2009 Insert

Sunday, November 9, 1:30—4:00 PM AOF Board Elections for 2009; Rosalie McClung Presents “Raise Your Hand”

Raise your hand if your mother was a nun. Anyone...anyone? Is Rosalie the only one? Okay, now raise your hand if you're sure the human race believes weird things.

Rosalie always was a stubborn mule who eventually cast aside the square peg that absolutely refused to fit in a round hole. After six years of college, ten years of public school teaching, and forty-one total years of searching for the truth, this mule stamped out dogma with honesty, humor, and reality.

Rosalie was diagnosed with multiple sclerosis a few years ago, and during this time when MS has taken away many of her physical freedoms, her mind has been freed from the prison of religion.

Rosalie is in the process of editing her book, “MS is BS: One Woman. One Disease. A Load of Bull.” and will be sharing her experiences on her progress from religion to spirituality to becoming post-theological while fending off those who think she's an easy mark for their brand of spirituality just because she has a disease.

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December 14, 1:30—4:00 PM

December Meeting: Fund Raising Social

AOF's general meeting in December will include a potluck, socialization, and a silent auction. Be sure to attend the frolic! And, to support AOF, plan now for what you will bring to be auctioned! Don't wait. Now is the time to start accumulating viable material to bring for the bidding!

Maybe that book by Dawkins has been gathering dust on the shelf for over a year. If you expect someone else would enjoy the opportunity to read it, you could donate it to AOF for the auction.

Upon attending, just think of the goodies you may discover that others

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AOF Board Elections for 2009 Candidate Statements

AOF requested candidates submit a statement limited to 300 words. Please take the time necessary to read the candidate statements below. For information on conditional candidates, please see page three of this newsletter. Elected candidates start in January of 2009.

Steve Campbell

Life long skeptic, freethinker since the second grade. If elected to the board of AOF, I would like to investigate ways to increase both membership and member's engagement in AOF activities and explore the question: Why would someone want to be member of AOF and participate in AOF activities? To that end, we might consider changes to the meeting format, outreach to local colleges and students and more educational and social activities. The reality based rationalist/naturalistic/secular viewpoint is not well represented in our community and certainly deserves equal consideration when policy decisions are made. AOF could help establish that legitimacy. I would appreciate your vote. Thank you.

David Flanders

As a child I was brought up as a catholic. As a teenager I became a ratcheted up sky god believer. Over the years I have attempted to be a upgraded defender of atheist. As a freethinker I sometimes enjoy attempting to think outside the box in the land of freethinking. Please vote for me.

Mynga Futrell (incumbent)

Conditional candidate—see page three.

I have enjoyed serving AOF in many capacities (as president, newsletter layout, newsletter editor, on many committees and projects). It is no secret that this organization is dear to my heart.

Besides serving on the board, I handle the voice mail locally, and each year I coordinate one community meals event, also doing highway cleanups whenever I am in town. Among major projects I have done for AOF is coauthoring on its behalf an amicus curiae brief for the Newdow Pledge case that went to the Supreme Court.

I have represented AOF on the board of the Atheist Alliance International for several years (attending each annual meeting in various locations across the country). In that capacity, I advanced AOF to win the first Community Service Award ever awarded to a local group by the Alliance, getting it \$500 along with the recognition.

While AOF president, we initiated what became the annual Freethought Day Fair. I continue to serve on FTD's organizing committee. I co-chair Sacramento's Darwin Day Galas. Both community events garner increasingly notable speakers.

I have urged cooperation with other secular and humanist groups locally. This year, as vice president, I have stepped in several times to fill in when the current president was unavailable. As one of the co-founders, you'd think I'd be all worn out by now. But, I'm not - not yet, anyway! No, I continue to be a workhorse for this organization.

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AOF Board (2007-2008)

President: Paul Storey

Vice President: Mynga Futrell

Secretary: Nancy Gilbert

Treasurer: Ken Nahigian

Directors at large:

Don Knutson, Kevin Schultz,

Debora Smith, (two vacancies)

AOF Committees

Newsletter: Kevin Schultz (Editor)

Tom Nicolette (Mailing)

Freethought Day, Oct. 5, 2008

Beverly Church, Mynga Futrell, Carla Corbett, Jerry Sloan, Tom Ikelman, Kevin Schultz, Brian Krofchok

Darwin Day, Feb. 15, 2009:

Bronda Silva, Mynga Futrell,

Dave Henderson, Ed McConnell,

Ken Nahigian,

Ad Hoc Committees:

Web Portal (Kevin Schultz, Richard

Langley); Alternate Meeting Place/

Time (Jerry Sloan, Ken Nahigian,

Kevin Schultz); Youth Outreach

(Jerry Sloan, Tina Burgess, Mynga

Futrell); Connections (Kevin

Schultz, Betty Simonsma); Growing

AOF Membership (Jerry Sloan,

Kevin Schultz)

Archive: Mynga Futrell, Ken

Nahigian, Betty Simonsma

AOF's Voluntariat

Affiliation Liaisons:

Mynga Futrell, Kay Dickey (AAI)

Hank Kocol (CSH)

Kevin Schultz (AA)

Beverly Church (AHA/HAGSA)

Community Service Projects:

Don Knutson

Internet Website: Kevin Schultz

Meetings: Dave Flanders, Ken Nahigian

Jerry Sloan, Betty Simonsma

Membership Database:

Ken Nahigian

We welcome additional involvement from AOF members. Right now we need volunteers to perform very small tasks at our meetings. Just phone the voice mail at **447-3589** if you can help us out. Or, send an e-mail to us at

aofboard@aofonline.org

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Measure Will Determine Incumbent Candidates' Standing

AOF Bylaws Amendment

Summary

- Strikes sentence "No director shall serve more than three consecutive years." from AOF bylaws.
- Calls for 2009 board of directors to implement an alternative term limit plan, which will be brought for a vote before the AOF board elections for 2010.
- Approves standing of incumbent candidates Mynga Futrell, Don Knutson, and Ken Nahigian for AOF board elections for 2009.
- Incumbent Paul Storey chooses not to run for re-election if amendment approved.

Full Text of Proposed Amendment

The approved AOF board motion reads:

"To put to a vote of the general membership to strike the final sentence from Article 3, Section 4 of the amended bylaws, which states, 'No director shall serve more than three consecutive years.' The 2009 BoD will develop an alternative term limit plan, which will be brought for a vote before next year's election."

Text of Proposed Bylaws Change

SECTION 4. QUALIFICATION AND TERMS OF OFFICE

Any member in good standing may serve as director of this corporation. Each director shall hold office until the next annual meeting for election of the Board of Directors as specified in these Bylaws, and until his or her successor is elected and qualifies. ~~No director shall serve more than three consecutive years.~~

(Continued from page 1)

November 9th also represents AOF's annual business meeting.

This year, the business meeting will include two components: 1) a bylaws amendment (see the article immediately to the left for full details); and 2) election of directors to the 2009 AOF board (see pages 4—7 for candidate statements).

Refreshments will be provided, and the meeting is open to the public.

The AOF board invites all AOF members in good standing to the November business meeting to vote, and everyone to the general meeting to hear Rosalie's exciting talk.

Donations to AOF Represent Tax- Deductible Gifts

Atheists and Other Freethinkers



AOF is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit educational organization. It is one of 50 member societies of the **Atheist Alliance International** ("a positive voice for atheism"). AOF

also maintains affiliations with the Council for Secular Humanism, American Atheists, and the American Humanist Association.

AOF's Statement of Purpose

The purpose of the association, Atheists and Other Freethinkers, is to promote the civic understanding and acceptance of atheism in our community. To accomplish this purpose, AOF will, through educational programs, projects, and publications, extend atheistic perspectives concerning the separation of church and state and the right to think and speak freely on these perspectives.

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Reprinting of original material in this newsletter is granted to atheist, freethought, rationalist, skeptical, and secular humanist groups as long as acknowledgment is given. Exchange of newsletters with aforementioned organizations is solicited.

AOF Board Elections for 2009 Candidate Statements (continued)

(Continued from page 2)

AOF is an indispensable resource for freethinkers in the Sacramento area. We need more and younger members, creative programs and more social involvement, and all without losing sight of the AOF mission. That mission is immensely worthwhile and needs more coordinated attention than it has been receiving, as there are all-too-many major challenges to atheists' legitimacy as citizens. Together we can do wonders!

Paul Geisert

Paul elected to verbally present his candidate statement to the members, an option available to all candidates.

Nancy Gilbert (incumbent)

I accept the opportunity to be a Board candidate. If so honored by your vote, I would like to see us: #1. Encourage our mutual sociality in positive ways; we need to re-evaluate our format and add activities, and have more fun. #2. Enlarge and activate our membership, #3. Improve our organizational functioning and direction, and #4. Remember our stated mission of AOF. As part of it, I feel we need to refute that pervasive assumption that a moral sense and ethical behavior is dependent on a god-belief. This, I believe, has little basis in fact; there is ample evidence that humans have at least some genetically programmed sense of justice (unfortunately, not uniformly coded!), and that early childhood inculcation and continual modeling is extremely important. I feel we should call attention to this whenever possible; it goes to the basis of our political and sometimes social exclusions; it would not hurt us to demonstrate it either. I have time and energy to give to working to invigorate AOF.

Don Knutson (incumbent)

Conditional candidate—see page three.

I have been an active AOF member for 13 years. I have served for several years on the Board, for one term as Board Secretary and for two terms as President. I also coordinate AOF's Adopt-A-Highway program and our Davis Community Meals volunteer work. I find AOF's continued presence and growth in an American societal cauldron of superstition and mythology as absolutely essential. I am a former teacher but today I describe myself as a "world traveler" and everywhere I go, I see the burden people must endure in their having been indoctrinated by their endemic culture into adopting an unnatural view of life on

Earth and how their lives could be so enhanced by the presence of an organization like AOF.

Rena Lowry

This organization is special to me. I found AOF purely by accident, when I was desperately searching for support during an extremely difficult time in my life. I put out a call for help online, and members of AOF answered almost immediately. And not knowing who I was or anything about me, other than my civil rights were being trampled, members of AOF sent letters to the offending parties, showing support for myself and my family. This proof of solidarity helped me know that I was not alone, and not wrong. So I survived and my daughter thrived. Thank you AOF.

Since that time, I have gone through many life changes, some good, some not so good, but I definitely have grown through my experiences and feel I may have something to share. I am settling into my new/old home in downtown Sacramento, which allows me time to "get involved." I promised to myself that I would give back to AOF someday, and this is what I would like to do now, give back, by accepting a nomination for the AOF board.

I have owned businesses, won awards, have one son and one daughter, consider myself "earth friendly," have a college degree, owned a home, lost a home, divorced twice, lived in L.A., lived in San Francisco (always come back to Sac), call myself a freethinker and an artist, was the original art docent for Camp Quest, am known to speak my mind, love to bring people together, am disgusted with discrimination or any form of inequality, come from a family of educators, have 3 cats, and love to cook, but mostly love to eat.

Thank you for your consideration.

Ken Nahigian (incumbent)

Conditional candidate—see page three.

Ken Nahigian, incumbent board member, will cheerfully serve AOF one more year if we eliminate the Term Limits rule. Otherwise he'll enjoy a more cheerful vacation.

Ken is almost, not quite, an AOF founder. Joining in December 1993, he has served as Treasurer since 1995 and as Member Registrar since about 2004. Having a small, brittle, blinkered mind that finds a joy in balanced columns and niggling minutia, he has agreed to continue with these duties in any case, if the new Board is willing.

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AOF Board Elections for 2009 Candidate Statements (continued)

(Continued from page 4)

After a long-checked history of religious belief, Ken became a freethinker in his mid-20's because the stigmata were messy. As your treasurer, his personal vision will be to pinch pennies, sell buttons and bumper stickers, expand the membership, and keep us solvent. His motto: "I started with nothing, and still have most of it left."

Tom Nicolette

I have been a member of AOF since March of 2004. (Damn time sure flies when you're having fun). I guess the chief reasons to consider me for the position is that I am retired and don't have the same time constraints that have crippled others at fulfilling the obligations of this position. Also I have been told that I am reliable and regular in fulfilling my promises. My current regular duty is to do the non-creative "grunt" work of getting out the newsletter every month.

I am aware that the decisions of the board are important in many ways, not the least of which is that whatever the board decides is going to reflect on the membership. Therefore we should always be mindful of our stewardship and your trust.

Debora Smith (incumbent)

About myself: I received my undergrad degree in psychology from Cal. In my 20's I worked as a stockbroker for Kidder, Peabody, & Co., then went to grad school at UCSD and became a veterinarian, after which I worked in small animal private practice. This past year has been my first on the AOF board.

I would like to see AOF members become more involved in both community service and in outreach to the local freethought community. This year much of the board's time was spent discussing these and other goals, and I'm hopeful that next year implementation will begin. At the beginning of my term on the board, I was primarily interested in looking at ways to bring more people, and particularly younger people, to AOF. I have come to realize that, rather than tailoring meetings and events with the primary goal of attracting new members, we will likely be more successful if our primary goals are making AOF an enjoyable organization for ourselves and increasing community awareness of AOF. If current members are happy with AOF, potential members will likely be as well.

Freethought Day and Darwin Day are the current highlights of AOF's outreach, and I'm willing to spend

the time to help us build on the model of these successful programs to increase community awareness of our organization. These types of events not only serve to let other freethinkers know about us, but they also give the community at large a bit of information about us, and create opportunities for dialog and education.

Jillian Stanley ("Zazie")

Thank you for the opportunity to be a candidate for the AOF Board of Directors. I more usually serve on the sidelines of any organization to which I belong (make cookies or put away chairs), but I will gladly do what I can to keep AOF viable and continuously improving. We've had discussion both in the monthly meetings and in the coffee-house afterward about reaching out, gaining more members, etc, and that challenge particularly interests me. My own attitudes and beliefs may be idiosyncratic—I have been an avowed atheist since about the age of fifteen, yet I do not necessarily deny and denounce every concept that seems mystical or every nuance of spirituality—but I would prefer a world with much less religion in it, and being more active in AOF, I would take a small step toward that goal.

Paul Storey (incumbent)

Conditional candidate—see page three.

Please read the President's Message in this issue for my analysis of AOF throughout my tenure for the year 2008. I want to see AOF stay alive. The best way to do this is to elect new leadership. Keep the board small, 5 people max, all fresh faces with new perspectives and willingness to change. It is time for the founding fathers to turn the torch over to a new generation. I strongly suggest myself, Vince Wales, Steve Campbell, Rena Lowry and David Flanders. I recommend these candidates because they are all known and trusted atheists, your friends, active in life, younger than the mean AOF age, energetic, working to earn a living and in touch with society. Give us a year and see what we can do. If you don't like the results, the old board can be re-elected next year for back to business as usual and repeal any of the changes we have made. Changes of leadership happen every four years in our country and are not a disaster, rather an opportunity to adapt to new views of our world. If you agree with new leadership, vote for 5 candidates only, and no more. A larger board has more inertia and is much more resistive to any changes, especially long term members who have invested a lot of their time in activities which may not be our highest priorities as a group. A smaller board will have less internal disagreement, and be able to focus more time and attention externally. A smaller board of a

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AOF Subscription / Membership Form

Mail to: AOF, P O Box 15182, Sacramento CA 95851-0182 (Attn: Membership)

Name(s) _____ Phone () _____

Street _____ Apt. # _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

E-mail address (print legibly!) _____

Check your preference:

___ Newsletter Subscriber Only (\$12) ___ Family Membership (\$30)

___ Low-income Member (\$10) ___ Patron (\$50)

___ Single Membership (\$20) ___ Donation (\$ _____)

Please check here if you do NOT want your name on lists occasionally provided to organizations similar to AOF.

Please check here if you DO want to be on our AOF activist list (e-mail address required).

We can arrange to deliver your monthly newsletter electronically via the e-mail address you print above. Please check the mode you prefer. E-mail Postal mail

AOF Board Elections for 2009 Candidate Statements (continued)

(Continued from page 5)

new generation of leaders will be best for AOF to attract new members, the lifeblood of any organization. We will also do our best to keep current members attracted to our meetings and events.

Vincent Wales

Vincent M. Wales has been a member of AOF since moving to California in late 2000. His first action as an AOF member was the Promise Keepers protest at Arco Arena a mere two weeks after arriving. He served on the AOF Board in 2005, but stepped down when personal issues made a commitment to AOF difficult.

Mr. Wales is the founder of the Freethought Society of Northern Utah, a past member of Margaret Downey's Freethought Society of Greater Philadelphia, and has been a member of the Freedom From Religion Foundation for over fifteen years. He was also responsible for convincing About.com to feature an Agnosticism/Atheism page, and was its first "guide." He also served on the board of Northern California Publishers & Authors for three years. Currently, he does volunteer work as a suicide prevention counselor, is a volunteer Big Brother, and works full-time for the California Hospital Association.

His second published book, ONE NATION UNDER GOD, is a dystopian novel that deals with an Ameri-

can theocracy in the near future. The book was published in 2004 and has won multiple awards while maintaining a five-star rating on Amazon.com.



Save the Date! February 8, 2009—Can you help? Darwin Day 2009: Michael Shermer By the Darwin Day Committee

Save the date—the Darwin Day Committee booked **Michael Shermer** for Sacramento's Darwin Day Educational Gala.

Dr. Shermer is a regular columnist for *Scientific American*, publisher of *Skeptic* magazine, and an author of numerous works, including:

- o Why People Believe Weird Things: Pseudoscience, Superstition, and Other Confusions of Our Time
- o The Borderlands of Science: Where Sense Meets Nonsense
- o How We Believe: The Search for God in an Age of Science



The 2009 Darwin Day committee needs your help—if interested in event planning or day-of-event volunteering, please contact Bronda Silva at: brondasilva@yahoo.com or the AOF voice-mail at 916-447-3589. Tickets will go on sale a month or two before the event.

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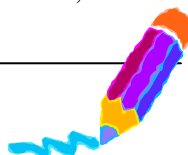
have brought! Perhaps it's that book you thought about getting, but never got around to purchasing. You'll be able to have some "serious fun" at the same time you empty your wallet to benefit the organization. For example, everyone will have opportunities to step up to the mic to tout their donated items. (You don't have to, of course, but maybe you'd like to say *why* you think that the book you are donating is something every freethinker should read.)

Besides the books, we welcome donations of any types of media (especially the *new type*, like CDs and DVDs) – anything you think will tickle a freethinker's fancy.

If you have something *extra special* of the old type, like an antique pamphlet or a poster (framed or unframed) or a trinket or a freethought magazine, you could try and see if anyone will open their wallet to own it. But, please limit your donations to items that either pertain directly to freethought, or that you're pretty sure a fellow freethinker might readily spend more than a dollar to own.

Further details will be provided in the December newsletter. But, right now is the time to start scouring your household for extra items to donate to the silent auction. Start your pile of stuff to bring, right now! But please, leave Aunt Suzie's ugly vase in place for now. This time, it's a "Media and Books" auction.

Want the latest AOF board minutes?
E-mail aofboard@aofonline.org



Newsletter Submissions

Submit your newsletter items to the N&V submissions editor at this e-mail address:

newsletter@aofonline.org

or mail item to the AOF mailbox: PO Box 15182, Sacramento, CA 95851-0182.

Preference is given to material in a PC-compatible word processing format such as *Word*, *Wordpad*, or *Notepad*. (To submit, attach your file to the e-mail and send.)

AOF also welcomes succinct and substantive letters to the editor. Note: All letters are prioritized by AOF's publishing criteria deriving from the organization's Statement of Purpose.

Our THOUGHTS

Lead to ACTIONS

Which form HABITS

Which define our VALUES

And determine our DESTINY

Derived from and demonstrated by GHANDI

Newsletter Freebie Policy

We'll be pleased to send one free newsletter to any person upon request, but after that time, please subscribe to AOF's newsletter for only \$12 per year. Or, better yet, why not become a member? That way, you'll get our newsletter FREE as part of your membership!



P.O. Box 15182
Sacramento, CA 95851-0182

We're on the Web!
aofonline.org

November Calendar of Events

AOF Dinner Social, Kaveri Madras Cuisine, 1148 Fulton Ave; Thursday, Nov 6, 5:30 PM
RSVP to shastaseer@sbcglobal.net or 419-2105

Adopt-A-Highway Event Saturday, Nov 8, 8—10:00 AM

November General Meeting: 2009 AOF Elections; **Sunday, Nov 9, 1:30—4:00 PM**
Rosalie McClung

AOF Dinner Social, Sher-E-Punjab, 6400 Fair Oaks Blvd; Thursday, Dec 4, 5:30 PM
RSVP to shastaseer@sbcglobal.net or 419-2105

Davis Community Meals Tuesday, Dec 30, 4—7:00 PM

AOF meetings are open to the public and are generally held on the second Sunday of the month, from 1:30 - 4 PM at the Sierra 2 Community Center, Room 10. Note: The months of February and October are exceptions, since AOF co-produces two public education events: (1) an outdoor fair in October - "Sacramento's Freethought Day" (Oct 2009), and (2) a science and humanity celebration - Sacramento's "Darwin Day Educational Gala" (2009-02-15). Watch the newsletter for details.

Directions to AOF's General Meetings

The Sierra 2 Center is located at 2791 24th Street in Sacramento, just south of Broadway and the Department of Motor Vehicles. Visitors are welcome. Parking is available on the street or in the rear, off 4th Avenue. AOF Board meetings are held at alternating sites, so please inquire about the location. For AOF's 24-hour recorder, call 447-3589. Leave your name and a number (repeat for clarity) and someone will phone back to answer your questions about AOF.

