

# AOF News & Views

Sacramento, California

November 2010

*Sunday, November 14, 1:30-4:00 p.m.*  
**Jerry Sloan and Cleo Kocol: Elections!  
Plus: "Gay Stereotypes and Gender-  
Role Perceptions in Modern Media"**

**Special Points of Interest**

*AOF December Meeting: Terry Sandbek on "Religion Vs. Science: A Millenia-Old War" (page 1)*

*Freethought Day 2010 Photos, by Mario Sandri (pages 3, 5)*

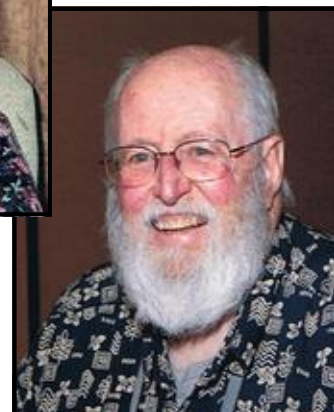
*AOF Board Elections for 2011: Candidate Statements (pages 4, 7)*

*AOF August Meeting Recap, by David Flanners (page 6)*

*HeartStrong Visits Sacramento Nov 15, by Jerry Sloan (page 7)*

Prior to the November general meeting, AOF will hold its annual board elections. All AOF members in good standing are encouraged to participate. For Candidate Statements, please see page four.

Subsequently, Cleo Kocol and Jerry Sloan will speak on Gay Stereotypes and Gender Roles in the Media. Neither speaker needs much introduction, but we'll try.



*(Continued on page 2)*

**AOF in December**  
**Sunday, Dec 12: Terry Sandbek on "Religion vs. Science: A Millenia-Old War"**

Dr. Terry Sandbek, skeptical activist and co-founder of the Sacramento Skeptics, will speak on the millenia-old war between religion and science, with accents on modern accommodationism (come to the meeting to see just what that means). Dr. Sandbek is a Sacramento-area clinical psychologist with a focus on Cognitive Behavior Therapy, and has participated in the local organized community of reason since its earliest days.



Please note the location change for this meeting. For the December general meeting only, AOF will convene in the Garden Room of the Sierra 2 center. The Garden Room is at the north end of the long hall -- just follow the mural -- really, you can't miss it!

**Standard Fare**

- Membership Form 6
- AOF Upcoming Events 8

(Continued from page 1)

In 1988, the American Humanist Association named Cleo a Humanist Heroine. In the words of one association leader, she "projects the endless energy and enthusiasm that have fueled decades of activism." Cleo belongs to two humanist/freethought groups in this area, but that has not prevented her from founding a third group within the most conservative area of Roseville. She is also an award-winning poet, short story writer, essayist and novelist.

Do not confuse Jerry Sloan with the NBA Basketball Player, though they look just alike. Jerry has described himself as a "recovering fundamentalist." In 1991 he co-founded Project Tocsin to monitor political actions of the Radical Religious Right in California. His specialty is to follow the money trail like a bloodhound. The money has led him to some remarkable places. He continues to disseminate his findings through press releases and other contact with the media, and to other organizations and activists through speaking engagements. One of his many great moments was his showdown with Jerry Falwell, a fascinating story. Jerry also helped found the Lambda Community Center in Sacramento. Come to the meeting, and you may learn more!

## César Chávez Park Freethought Day 2010 Photos (Pages 3, 5)

Page three, clockwise: The **Freethought Day banner**; **Roberta Chevrette** (<http://bit.ly/bvyvPT>); **Freethought Day Gallery** posters; keynote speaker **Bruce Maiman**, radio personality, commentator, educator, concert pianist and Sacramento celebrity: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bruce\\_Maiman](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bruce_Maiman)

Page five, clockwise: **Rachael Harrington**, holding the **Sacramento City Council and Mayoral proclamation** and a letter from Governor **Arnold Schwarzenegger**; Marie Bain, Mistress of Ceremonies, with her **ladybug umbrella**; **home-made tee-shirts** supporting science and freethought were on display; unknown people re-connecting with laughter; **The James Israel Band** delighted: <http://www.facebook.com/JamesIsraelBand>; **Ken Burnett**, mandolin player for Roberta Chevrette.

More information: <http://www.freethoughtday.org>.  
Thanks to everyone who came out!

## AOF Board (2010)

**President:** Beverly Church

**Vice President:** Mynga Futrell

**Secretary:** Jillian Stanley

**Treasurer:** Ken Nahigian

**Directors at large:** David Flanders, Paul Geisert, Ken Nahigian, Mario Sandri

## AOF Standing Committees

All AOF members are urged to volunteer in the organization. There are openings in every committee listed here. Please contact the chair or coordinator of any area of interest to you to learn details of getting involved. We would love to have your participation! Phone AOF 916-447-3589 or e-mail [aofboard@aofonline.org](mailto:aofboard@aofonline.org) for direct contact to relevant personnel.

### Programs and Events Committee

Program Planning (Team Coordinator, *Open*)

Meeting Matters / Logistics (Team Coordinator, *Open*)

Social Activities (Team Coordinator, *Open*)

### Membership Committee

Members Tracking (Team Coordinator, Ken Nahigian)

"Freethought Friends" (Team Coordinator, Jillian Stanley)

Outreach / Recruiting (Team Coordinator, Steve Campbell)

### Communications Committee

Beverly Church, Chair

AOF News Team (newsletter editor, events editor, public editor, postmaster, webmaster)

### Education, Activism and Service Committee

Service Projects Coordinator: Don Knutson

Education/Action Coordinator: Mynga Futrell

### Building / Reason House Committee

Beverly Church, Chair

Paul Geisert, Mynga Futrell, Mario Sandri

### Freethought Day 2011: Date to-be-announced

Beverly Church, Chair. (Save the date! – It's a celebration of reason and church/state separation)

### Darwin Day 2011: Date to be announced

Mynga Futrell and Bronda Silva, Co-Chairs

(Save the date! – It's a celebration of science and humanity)

## AOF Voluntariat

### Affiliation Liaisons

Mynga Futrell, Atheists Alliance International (AAI), <http://atheistalliance.org/>

Kevin Schultz, American Atheists (AA), <http://atheists.org/>

Beverly Church, American Humanist Association (AHA), <http://americanhumanist.org/>

Hank Kocol, Council for Secular Humanism (CSH), <http://secularhumanism.org/>

### AOF News Team

Newsletter Editor: Kevin Schultz

Postmaster: Jerry Sloan

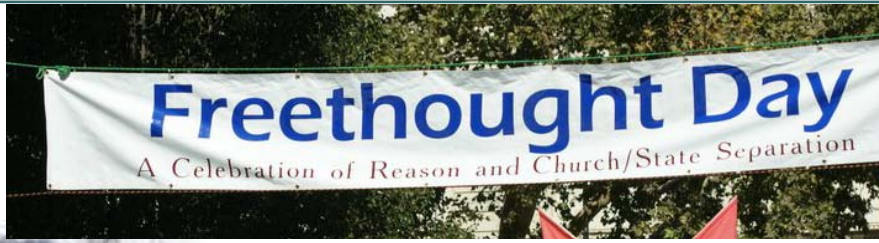
Webpeoples: Pat Kelley, Robert Poeschel (Openings for Events Editor and Public Editor)

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**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 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.*

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*Print subscription \$12 per year, e-mail subscription free to all on request.*

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 2011 Candidate Statements

AOF requested candidates submit a statement limited to 300 words. Please take the time necessary to read the candidate statements below. Elected candidates start in January of 2010.

### **Kristi Craven**

I grew up being taught that truth, integrity and character are the cornerstones of a good life. Never have I felt closer to that goal than in the past 6 years when I have become an agnostic freethinker. Now I know the difference between belief and facts, truth versus tradition, and comfort as opposed to reality. My road to that discovery has been a difficult one, flocked with various churches, cults and disorganized thinking. As Dan Barker of FFRF has often told people that if he was not a believer than no one is can also be applied to me. I searched for meaning and symbolism in everything, looking for that magic formula that would make everything make sense. I reached out to God in every way imaginable finally becoming a born again Christian in 1997. It didn't take long for me to realize that I was far too intelligent and independent to accept this ideology and decided that either all religions were true or none of them were. I went through a period of accepting all religions until I finally just woke up one day and told myself that the God of no confusion certainly was confusing. It was then that I realized what I really was, an atheist. It was a painful acceptance at first and was not without significant personal loss, but pretending anymore to be something that I wasn't just was no longer an option. Since becoming a non-believer I have discovered that so many of the truths I was holding onto were not truths at all and that doing my own research instead of just accepting someone else's word for what was right gave me the answers I had been searching for so long and I truly felt "born again". I still find myself missing the fellowship and friendships that came from my church relationships and hope that I can bring this to the AOF table. I am also an accomplished singer, musician and actress and hope I can lend my talents, as I did as a Christian, to inspire and give courage to those who are, perhaps, once like me, lost and searching for the truth wherever it may lead them.

### **Mynga Futrell**

I have enjoyed serving AOF in varied capacities across many years -- as president, vice-president, newsletter layout, newsletter editor, and on various committees and projects. That this organization has been dear to my heart is no secret, and I continue to represent AOF to the Atheist Alliance International as AAI goes through a key reorganization that will likely impact

organized freethought in the USA. (I recently attended AAI's annual board meeting in Montreal.)

In 2008, when I last ran for the local AOF governing board, I listed in my candidate statement many specific projects that I had done back when AOF was in what I now call its "heyday." Back then, we were initiating so many community-directed activities! We had a "Reason for the Season" library project and were kicking off Sacramento's Freethought Day event, etc. But, frankly, AOF is no longer what it was, and the current decline has numerous causes.

Having stepped in to lead various gatherings and board meetings of late on behalf of AOF's president, I can state firmly that AOF, coasting essentially leaderless now due to her illness, has become moribund. Consequently, in this statement I don't feel like bragging about personal past achievements. What I want to issue is a challenge to voting members to recognize the fact of decline and elect a board to reverse it.

AOF operating in its self-serving mode of recent years has lost sight of its mission and had almost zero impact on the *acceptance of atheists in the broader community*. Let's not just read AOF's purpose statement at meetings and publish it in newsletters. Let's take it seriously. Believe me, AOF's mission (read it, please!) is immensely worthwhile and needs far more coordinated attention from its board than it has been receiving. Frankly, there exist all-too-many major challenges to atheists' legitimacy as citizens. Right now, thanks to Internet organizing, there's a dynamic younger Meetup group far better able to serve as a "safe place" and meet the social discussion needs of a budding atheist movement. The situation for AOF in Sacramento is ripe for us to get serious about our mission.

If you don't want AOF to change course, then don't vote for me. But do vote for me and for any other candidate who wants to reverse the decline and get AOF doing what it is supposed to do as a formally organized public benefit 501c3 organization. With an excited and motivated board and membership working together, we can still do wonders!

### **Peggy Lucas**

*No candidate statement received at press time.*

### **Mario Sandri (Incumbent)**

*No candidate statement received at press time.*

*(Continued on page 7)*



# AOF Subscription / Membership Form

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

Name(s) \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Street \_\_\_\_\_ Apt. # \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP + 4 \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail address (please print!) \_\_\_\_\_

## Membership Level (please circle one):

Patron (\$50)    Family (\$30)    Individual (\$20)    Low-income (\$10)

**Note: Membership does not include a newsletter subscription**

## Newsletter subscription:

\_\_\_ Send my printed newsletter by postal mail (\$12 extra)

\_\_\_ Send my newsletter by email (*Free!*) – my email address is above

**Additional Donation:** \$ \_\_\_\_\_

**Total enclosed:** \$ \_\_\_\_\_

*AOF is a 501(c)(3) Educational Association – Dues & Donations are tax-deductable as*

*permitted by law. Non-members may receive the AOF Newsletter (same rate - \$12 printed, free via email).*

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

Please check here if you DO want to be an AOF Activist (e-mail address required).

## Kel Munger on “Armageddon”

### August AOF Meeting Recap

By Dave Flanders

Kel Munger was AOF's September speaker. She is putting together the final touches on a book about the second the second coming of Jesus--the absurdity of it.

Kel said she grew up in a Jehovah's Witness culture that said the end of the world was near. As a youngster, she witnessed for Jesus--a person in the bible (supposing he existed) who lived in a very superstitious time in human history. Many in her community preferred a predictable future in which their God is victorious over the non believers.

In the bible, Jesus says he will return to earth before the death of his 12 apostles, possibly no later than the year 100 C.E. The bible further states Jesus, the Prince of Peace, will kill non-believers using a sword in his mouth. Also, he will engage in battle against Satan, an entity with 7 heads. Furthermore, Christians will get to witness atheist and other free-thinkers getting tortured in the lake of fire.

So far none of this has happened yet. For the past 2,000 years, many non-believers think Jesus is another failed prophet in the bible. To counteract that, some Christian book authors have decided to gerrymander various obscure symbolic bible verses and thus show Jesus will soon come back to planet earth. "Left Behind" books promoting the second coming of Jesus perhaps intend to provide readers with a sense of security in the risky society we live in today.

But history seems to indicate for those who are willing to embrace reality (the future is unpredictable) and look at life from several different angles, the odds increase they could have a greater amount of security--they have done their homework. In this case freethinking appears to be superior to myopic thinking.



(Continued from page 4)

### **Jerry Sloan**

I am a charter member of AOF. I have served on the board a couple of times. For many years as a volunteer I have been responsible for getting the AOF newsletter printed and mailed to our subscribers.

### **Jillian "Zazie" Stanley (incumbent)**

A year has gone by extremely quickly, and here I am again, offering to continue as an AOF Board member, and to serve another year as secretary. However, if anyone else is interested in running for Board secretary, I will not mind stepping down, because I encourage others to participate. Serving on the Board is an excellent way to be involved with AOF and the secretary position is actually a rather simple way to be useful. You need to attend the monthly Board meeting, take notes, and write up the minutes. So it's only a few hours a month of your time and you can take part in the Board discussions and contribute your own ideas as well as taking notes. So, think about it, and maybe you will run for secretary yourself; if not, vote for me!

### **Vincent Wales**

Vincent M. Wales has been a member of AOF since moving to California in 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 had to step down due to personal issues.

He was the founder of the Freethought Society of Northern Utah, a past member of Margaret Downey's Freethought Society of Greater Philadelphia, has been a member of the Freedom From Religion Foundation for nearly two decades, and was the writer behind the website, The Atheist Attic, which contains over one hundred freethought essays. He was also responsible for convincing About.com to feature an Agnosticism/Atheism page, and was its first "guide." He served on the board of Northern California Publishers & Authors for three years, has done volunteer work as a suicide prevention counselor, is currently a volunteer Big Brother, and works full-time for the California Hospital Association while working on a Masters degree in mental health counseling.

His second novel, ONE NATION UNDER GOD, deals with an American 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.

**Tuesday, Nov 16, 7:00 p.m.**

## **HeartStrong Event**

**By Jerry Sloan**



Heartstrong, a group that works with students at religious schools, particularly fundamentalist schools, deal with questions about their sexual orientation, will be in Sacramento on Tuesday, November 16, 2010, appearing at the Trinity Episcopal Cathedral at 7:00 pm. This not a religious meeting. AOF and HAGSA have sponsored Heartstrong appearances in Sacramento in previous years. The group travels thousands of miles each year speaking at schools, churches and nonbeliever groups. The speaker will be Heartstrong executive director Mark Adams, a former student at Jerry Falwell's Liberty University. Refreshments will be served after the meeting. More information: <http://www.heartstrong.org/>

### **Newsletter Submissions**

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

**[newsletter@aofonline.org](mailto:newsletter@aofonline.org)**

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

Preference is given to material in a word processing format. (To submit, attach your file to the e-mail and send.)

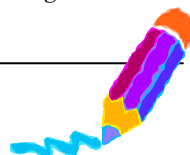
AOF welcomes succinct and substantive letters to the editor. Note: All letters are prioritized by AOF 's publishing criteria deriving from the organization's Statement of Purpose.

### **Newsletter Freebie Policy**

*This newsletter is free by e-mail to everyone. Just send your e-mail address. If you prefer printed copy by postal mail, AOF will send one free issue on your request; after that, please subscribe at \$12 per year. For details, see the signup form on page six.*

**Want to send a letter to the Editor?**

**E-mail [newsletter@aofonline.org](mailto:newsletter@aofonline.org)!**





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

*We're on the Web!*  
**aofonline.org**

## November/December Calendar of Events

AOF Dinner Social: <b>Burgers &amp; Brew</b> (“Vegan Friendly”) 1409 R Street. Contact: 419-2105 or <a href="mailto:shastaseer@sbcglobal.net">shastaseer@sbcglobal.net</a>	Thu, Nov 4, 6:30 p.m.
AOF Adopt-A-Highway Cleanup	Sat, Nov 6, 9:00-11:00 a.m.
<b>AOF General Meeting in November (Elections)</b>	<b>Sun, Nov 14, 1:30 p.m.</b>
Davis Community Meals (Setup, service, and light cleanup)	Tue, Nov 30, 4:30-7:00 p.m.
<b>AOF General Meeting in December</b>	<b>Sun, Dec 12, 1:30 p.m.</b>

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 2011), and (2) a science and humanity celebration - Sacramento’s “Darwin Day Educational Gala” (Feb 2011). 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.

