

AOF News & Views

Sacramento, California

October 2011

Special Points of Interest

Freethought Day Fund-raiser and Reception
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AOF In November—D.M. Bennett: The Truth Seeker; AOF Elections, by Ken Nahigian (pages 6, 7)

Sunday, October 23, 10:00 a.m.-7:00 p.m.

10 YEARS!

10th Annual Freethought Day: "Come Out and Celebrate Reason" @ McGeorge School of Law

This month do *not* go to the usual Sierra 2 meeting site - why? Because we won't be there! AOF plans no regular October meeting so we can focus on the Tenth Annual Sacramento Freethought Day Festival.

Freethought Day is an annual jubilee, a salute to independent minds and rational thought, brought to you here by the Sacramento Coalition of Reason (Sac-CoR), of which AOF is one part. The traditional day is October 12, but this year's celebration is on the 23rd to mark our survival of the predicted Apocalypse on October 21. At least we hope

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Freethought Day Celebratory Weekend **FTD Fundraiser Fetes Famous Freethinkers—Meet Them in Person!** **Saturday, October 22nd, 7:00-9:00 p.m.**

Join like-minded freethinkers for the Sacramento Freethought Day Reception on **Saturday, October 22, from 7:00-9:00 p.m.**

At the **beautiful country home** of Susan Vergne, the reception will feature a selection of cheeses and fine wines, appetizers, and desserts, and the first opportunity to meet many of our speakers and see the artistic talents of the freethought community.

Confirmed speakers and entertainers include: **Elisabeth Cornwell**, Richard Dawkins Foundation; **Dan Barker**, Freedom From Religion Foundation; **Michael Newdow**, FACTS

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AOF Line

Elections in November; AOF Community Projects Report

By Jerry Sloan and Don Knutson

AOF President **Jerry Sloan** writes: The AOF Board is accepting nominations for the 2012 board. Please contact aofboard@aofonline.org for full details.

AOF community events leader **Don Knutson** writes:

On August 30, a staggering 10 volunteers showed up to help at AOF's Fifth Tuesday participation in the **Davis Community Meals** at St. Martin's Church in Davis.

As usual, top quality food was prepared by a skilled cook and we just setup the hall with tables and chairs, table covers and table service with flowers, served about 85 of Davis' needy and then cleaned up.

Sheryl Geretz, Carla Kennedy, Don Knutson, Dave Lasky, Chris Mosser, Ken Nahigian, Jetta Ostrofsky, Grant Stedman and Judi Thomas all pitched in to do all the tasks necessary to make for a positive experience for those seeking a meal including the arduous task of cutting up portions of the dozens of donated desserts. The meal included a fruit salad, green salad, bread and okra in tomato sauce—a dish which looked very delectable but ran out before any of the servers could serve ourselves. The next Fifth Tuesday falls in the week after Thanksgiving on **November 29. Consider joining us then!**

The local secular community collectively expressed a fervent yawn for the annual **California Cleanup Day**, September 17, as only three individuals turned out for our **AOF highway cleanup** done in conjunction with CCD.

Gary Alexander, Peter D. Henan-White and Don Knutson collected eight bags of trash on a very comfortable Saturday morning.

Don found a winter coat in perfect condition along the highway ending a spell of countless cleanups where only boring trash was found and collected.

We return just before Halloween for another cleanup on Saturday, October 29 @ 9:00 a.m. Who knows, maybe this will be your opportunity to find a winter coat for yourself!

AOF Board (2011)

President: Jerry Sloan

Vice President: Mynga Futrell

Secretary: Jillian Stanley

Treasurer: Ken Nahigian

Directors at large: Kristi Craven, Mynga Futrell, Peggy Lucas, Mario Sandri, Jerry Sloan, Jillian Stanley, Vincent Wales

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 for direct contact to relevant personnel.

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 2012: Date to-be-announced

Mynga Futrell and Bronda Silva, Co-Chairs

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

*The purpose of the organization,
AOF, is to promote the civic
understanding and acceptance of
atheists in our community.*

AOF Voluntariat

Affiliation Liaisons

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

Jerry Sloan, American Atheists (AA), <http://atheists.org/>

Jerry Sloan, American Humanist Association (AHA), <http://americanhumanist.org/>

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

AOF News Team

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Postmaster: Jerry Sloan

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

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A Fond Farewell “Left in the Lurch by Beverly Church” By Tom Ikelman

If you know Beverly Church very well, you know that she likes that headline. She's been full of vim and vigor during her sojourn in Sacramento, and since she's accomplished so much here, she's now moved on to new challenges.



Bev was glad to find several Freethought groups in the Sacramento Area when she first arrived, and she dove right in and became active in most of them. She joined HAGSA and AOF and was a board member of both of them for several years, most recently serving as vice president of HAGSA and president of AOF.

She also carried her commitment to Humanism to the national level by being appointed to the AHA board of directors when a seat was vacated, and served there for 5 years. While on the AHA board she chaired the Chapter Committee, and also was on the Publicity Committee. The Publicity Committee was one of her proudest achievements, because they started the campaign to get the word out about Humanism. Perhaps you saw some of the ads that they ran in national newspapers a few years ago.

One thing that Bev didn't manage to make happen in Sacramento yet was a fireworks show at Freethought Day. But she did manage to get the first Mayoral Proclamation from the city honoring Freethought Day, which was quite a coup and improved our publicity and recognition locally. Bev chaired the Freethought Day committee for 5 years also, and definitely made things happen.

Her shoes are going to be hard to fill, and while there are people stepping up to the plate, her energy and sense of humour (British style) will be

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to be celebrating. If not, well, please wear shoes. Thick ones.

Location : Pacific McGeorge School of Law, 3200 Fifth Avenue, Sacramento

Contact : 916-447-3589 or email david (at) LodiUnited (dot) org The site is near the intersection of Hwy 99 and Hwy 50, across the street from McClatchy Park. It has free on-site parking, as well as free public parking on 33rd Street and 5th Avenue.

Read more about the 10th Annual Freethought Day on **pages four and five!**

Visit the Freethought Day Web Site:

<http://freethoughtday.org>

Eleanor Comes to Town



Actress
Linda Kenyon
speaks as **Eleanor Roosevelt,**

October 27, 2011

5:30 - 7:30 p.m.

Sierra 2 Center, Curtis Hall

\$40 (A benefit for the League of Women Voters, Sacramento County).

—Submitted by Don Knutson, whose full write-up will be printed in the November issue

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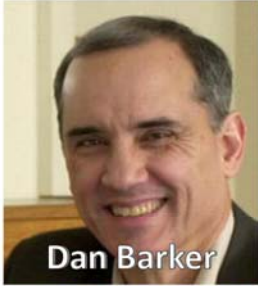
Print subscription \$12 per year, e-mail subscription free to all on request.

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.

Presenting the 10th Annual

Freethought Day

A Festival of Reason, Freethought, and Church-State Separation

Dan Barker



Elisabeth Cornwell



Michael Newdow



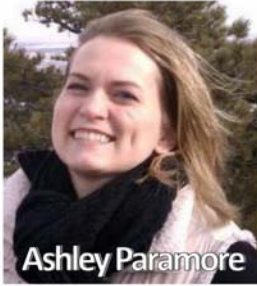
Glenn Branch



Amanda Knief



Evan Clark



Ashley Paramore



Fred Edwards



Lyz Liddell



Zack Kopplin



Live Music and Comedy · Leadership Workshops
 Family Friendly Afternoon · Freethought Art Gallery
 SactoMoFo Food · Film Screenings w/ Cast
 Trivia Showdown · Contests · Door Prizes



Free Admission · Free Parking · Register Online for Door Prizes

Rain or Shine · Seeking Donations and Sponsors · Fundraising Reception on Oct 22

October 23, 2011

McGeorge School of Law · Sacramento

FreethoughtDay.org

come out
and celebrate
reason!



Save the Date! Mark Your Calendar! October 23 @ McGeorge

Come out and Celebrate Reason!

By Freethought Day Committee

Freethinkers from Sacramento and across the valley are looking forward to the **tenth annual Freethought Day**, taking place at the **McGeorge School of Law on October 23rd**.

This year's **FREE** celebration is ten times the fun, combining the atmosphere of a fair with the education and activism of a conference. With engaging speakers, live entertainment, family activities, film screenings and more, this will be a historic day for Sacramento!

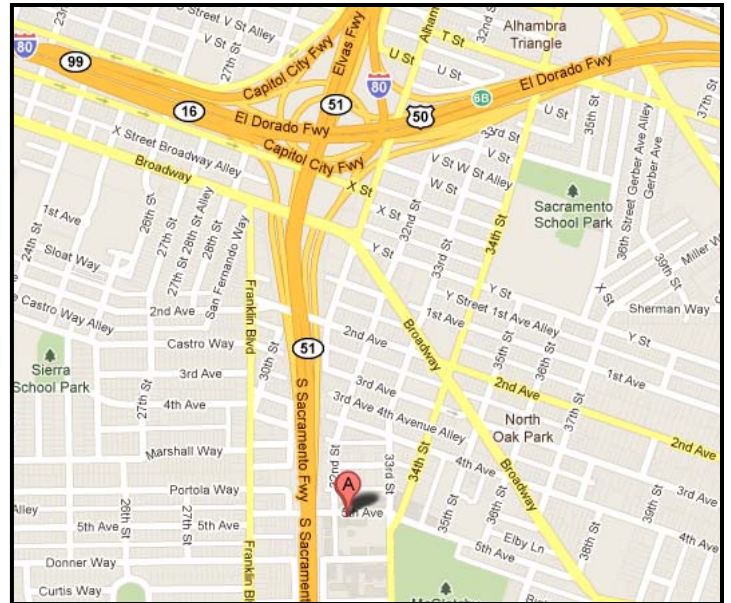
Hosted by the Sacramento Coalition of Reason (of which AOF is a founding member), speakers include **Fred Edwards** (American Humanist Association and United Coalition of Reason), **Elisabeth Cornwell** (the Richard Dawkins Foundation), **Dan Barker** (Freedom from Religion Foundation), **Michael Newdow**, **Glenn Branch** (National Center for Science Education), and more! They are even flying in **Zack Kopplin**, a Baton Rouge student who—at 16—challenged and **helped overturn the Louisiana Science Education Act** which allowed for creationism to be taught in public schools.

Past AOF speaker **Andrea Warren** (the Social IQ Lady) will be emceeding the event which starts at 10:00 a.m. and provides activities and speakers through 7:00 p.m.. In addition to awards, she'll be presenting the newest inductee to the **Freethought Gallery**. Who will it be? You'll have to be there to find out.

Other activities include a **freethought trivia showdown**, comedy with **Keith Lowell Jensen**, and two **film screenings** with cast Q&A. **Camp Quest West** will be on site for the afternoon, with a **bounce house** and plenty of **kid-friendly activities** for the entire family to enjoy. The **Secular Student Alliance** will be hosting a **leadership track** with workshops geared towards growing groups, fundraising, running meetings efficiently, planning for succession, and networking. Already the event is attracting buzz from all over. Secular Meetup groups from as far as Reno, Yuba City, Merced, and San Francisco are planning their carpools.

With a gorgeous new venue, a spectacular line-up of speakers, and activities galore, **Freethought Day needs our support!** Join your fellow AOFers at the **Saturday evening fundraising** reception where a selection of wines, appetizers, and desserts will be enjoyed while patrons mingle with featured speakers. At **just \$50 per person**, this is an amazing opportunity.

To learn more about Freethought Day, or how you can support it, register for the reception, or become a table host or sponsor, visit the website freethoughtday.org or call David Diskin at 209-610-0651.



McGeorge School of Law is located at 3200 5th Avenue, Sacramento. Directions: <http://freethoughtday.org/directions.html>

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

AOF In November

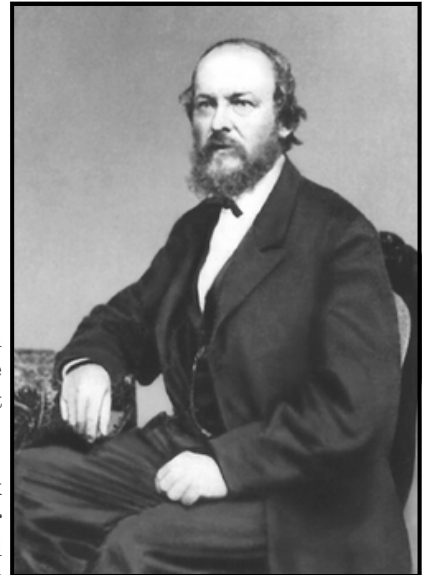
D.M. Bennett: The Truth Seeker;

AOF Elections

By Ken Nahigian

Who *was* the forgotten freethinker of the Gilded Age? Who was the biggest thorn in the side of the 19th-Century Religious Right, more so than Mark Twain, more than Clarence Darrow, more than Walt Whitman, more even than Robert Ingersoll? Come to our November general meeting to find out.

In the hazy afterglow of Freethought Day, AOF plans to kick back and relax with a free public screening of *D.M. Bennett: The Truth Seeker*, a one-hour documentary produced by Roderick Bradford. Please join us. Based on original sources, this video tells the fascinating life story of **DeRobigne Mortimer Bennett (1818-1882)** and his wife Mary Wicks.



Some may recall that we attempted a previous screening/discussion in August 2010, but failed due to technical difficulties. Now is your chance to enjoy it!

DeRobigne Mortimer Bennett was a former Shaker, who underwent an intellectual rebirth to become the "American Voltaire," the revered and reviled freethinker, the "blasphemer" and free-speech martyr who published *The Truth Seeker*, and the most successful American freethought publisher of his day.

The list of his admirers reads like a litany of freethought giants. Unfortunately his enemies were stronger. Drawing the ire of Anthony Comstock, infamous censor and bluenose, and harassed and persecuted in a controversial and widely publicized obscenity trial, Bennett took his fight for freedom all the way to the White House, inspiring the largest protest of its kind until then. Ultimately he failed. And he suffered grievously for speaking out. But few Americans were as courageous in the search for truth and in the cause of "free speech, a free press, and mails free from espionage and Comstockism."

The movie also investigates Bennett's prominent role in the National Liberal League, his interactions with leading

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Church; **Glenn Branch**, NCSE; **Amanda Knief**, Secular Coalition of America; **Zack Kopplin**; **Carrie Poppy**, Oh No! Ross and Carrie Podcast; **Lyz Lydell**, Secular Student Alliance; **Ashley Paramore**, Secular Student Alliance; **Sharon Moss**, Secular Student Alliance; and **Andrea Warren**, our Freethought Day emcee!

A generous donation of \$50 provides admission to reception and a keepsake button. Those gracious enough to donate \$125 will also receive an event t-shirt, a poster signed by event speakers, and recognition during the opening ceremony.

Reception tickets may be purchased online at <http://freethoughtday.org/registration.html> or by contacting the Freethought Day Committee at (209) 610-0651 or chair@FreethoughtDay.org. Directions will be provided via email to all registered attendees.

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suffragists and the National Defense Association (forerunner of the ACLU), and his flirtation with spiritualism and theosophy.

Free as always. Please bring friends to help AOF grow.

"Roderick Bradford reintroduces a significant nineteenth-century reformer whom mainstream historians have unfairly neglected. D. M. Bennett was the most influential publisher during America's Golden Age of freethought. Even more important, through his dogged opposition to morals campaigner Anthony Comstock - and the high price he eventually paid for it - Bennett mounted a heroic defense of freedom of expression, in the process helping to shape twentieth-century free speech standards in ways that few appreciate today. Displaying a masterful command of the historical material, Bradford deftly rescues the memory of D. M. Bennett, truly an American none of us should forget."

~ Tom Flynn, Editor, *Free Inquiry Magazine*

Also coming up at this meeting: **AOF Board Elections**. Under AOF Bylaws, each November, we must bloodily execute the previous band of autocratic oppressors, and instill a new band of autocratic oppressors. Just kidding about the execute part. We hope. But if you are a voting member, come to this meeting to help us with the regime change.

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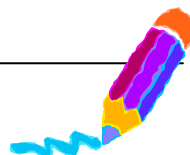
sorely missed.

In recent years back problems have sidelined her from being as active as she liked, and she wasn't even able to go to work much. The State just wanted her back to work without having to completely heal her, so she wasn't really getting better. So she decided to retire, effective September 1, and moved to Arkansas on September 7 to live with her son and his family, and try to get fully healed.

We wish her the best of health, and the best of luck with converting the deep south to Humanism, she's got her work cut out for her. Maybe we can have her back out for visits to Sacramento when we do get the fireworks show, or possibly even before that.

She can still be reached at her email address BChurchRNC@aol.com or her home phone will become her cell phone number soon 916-359-5423.

Want to send a letter to the Editor?
E-mail newsletter@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 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.



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

We're on the Web!
aofonline.org

October/November Calendar of Events

October Freethought Dinner Social: Taste of Thai, 1628 Broadway; Contact: Suzanne @ 419-2105 or shastaseer@sbcglobal.net	Thu, Oct 6, 6:30 p.m.
AOF General Meeting in October: Canceled in Lieu of Freethought Day	
FREETHOUGHT DAY FUNDRAISER AND RECEPTION, 10245 Saddle Creek Drive, Sacramento	Sat, Oct 22, 7:00-9:00 p.m.
10TH ANNUAL FREETHOUGHT DAY FESTIVAL, McGeorge School of Law	Sun, Oct 23, 10:00 a.m.-7:00 p.m.
AOF Adopt-A-Highway Cleanup (see page two)	Sat, Oct 29, 9:00 a.m.
AOF Meeting in November: D.M. Bennett: The Truth Seeker	Sun, Nov 13, 1:30-4:00 p.m.

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 2012). 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.

