

Upcoming Events

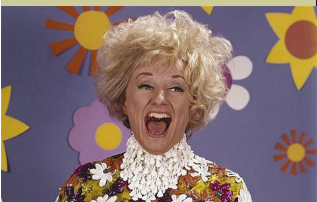
AOF dates in black

- **Sun Sep 9 @2:00PM** [Pseudoscience](#), 2791 24th St
- **Mon Sep 17 @ 7:00PM** [Board of Directors Meeting](#), 3001 J St upstairs
- Wed Sep 19-observe [Talk Like A Pirate Day](#)
- **Thu Sep 20 6:15PM** [Free-thought Dinner Social](#), Shanghai Garden, 800 Alhambra Blvd
- Sat Sep 22-observe [Equinox \(September\)](#)
- Sun Sep 23-observe [Banned Book Week](#)
- **Fri Oct 5-7** [Freethought Day Festival](#)
- Thu Oct 11 [Richard Dawkins in Berkeley, CA](#)
- Fri Oct 12—observe [Freethought Day](#)
- **Tue Oct 30**—Davis Community Feed, St. Martin's Episcopal Church, 640 Hawthorne Lane, Davis
- AOF Board Elections

AOF Calendar: aofonline.org/calendar-of-events

Sac Coalition of Reason Calendar: [sacramento-unitedcor.org/sacramento/page/events](http://sacramento.unitedcor.org/sacramento/page/events)

Atheist Events Calendar: tinyurl.com/7l4afyc



"Religion is such a medieval idea. Don't get me started. I have thought about every facet of religion and I can't buy any of it."

"I am a kind person. I'm kind to everybody. I treat everybody the same, and I'm proud of that. In fact, that's my religion."

Phyllis Diller died in her sleep at her L.A. home, surrounded by family. She was 95, and an atheist.

AOF News & Views

September 2012

"Survey of Pseudoscience" A Skeptics Panel—Sept. 9

In conjunction with [Sacramento Area Skeptics](#)

What *is* pseudoscience? What are the danger signs? How can we best avoid magical thinking? How much doubt is too much doubt? And when someone hints at a *conspiracy*, and your private crank-o-meter start red-lining, are you being fair? Because conspiracies happen, right?

Join us for a light survey of the many swamps and pitfalls to critical thinking. Our respected panelists will include Shane J. Trimer, local skeptic-activist; [Glenn Branch](#), Deputy Director of the [National Center for Science Education](#) (NCSE); Liam McDaid, Sacramento City College professor of astronomy; Sarah Strand, CSUS professor of neuroscience; and possibly Bob Carroll, author of the [Skeptic's Dictionary](#).

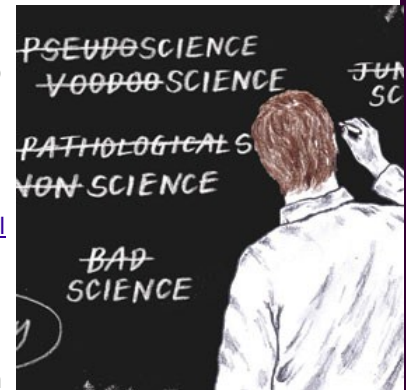
We've met crackpots, we know crackpots, there's some crackpot in all of us, and yes, experts can be wrong. "Fringe" ideas have included continental drift, powered flight, ball lightning, meteor falls. They scoffed at Einstein. Gems hide in the sewage. But, is that the whole story? Don't let rank crankism happen to you! Come to this meeting, listen, participate, have fun, and be ready to talk about your own encounters with pseudoscience.

AOF thanks the [Sacramento Area Skeptics](#) for planning this meeting. A great, non-cranky group. Do check them out.

Location : Sierra II Community Center - Room 10, 2791 24th Street, Sacramento

Contact : 916-447-3589, or click to our [Contact Page](#)

Please bring something light & edible for the snack table if you can: finger foods, fruit juice or soda pop (nothing needing utensils, please).



Sacramento Freethought Day Festival—Oct. 5, 6, 7

Do *not* go to the usual AOF meeting site in October -- AOF won't be there! Instead we will join hands with the rest of the regional freethought community for the Eleventh Annual Sacramento Freethought Day, hosted at the Ben Ali Shrine across from Hagginwood Park.

What is Sacramento Freethought Day? It is an annual jubilee, a salute to independent minds and rational thought, brought to you by the Sacramento Area Coalition of Reason (SacCOR), of which AOF is a founding member. Last year's event welcomed 350 attendees!

Sacramento Freethought Day combines the fun and atmosphere of a fair with the education and activism of a conference. It will feature speakers, live entertainment, food and contests, family activities, exhibitors, and more. Admission is free, though we encourage donations and sponsors.

This year's event is on Saturday, October 6, spanning most of the day with an exciting schedule. It will be preceded Friday evening with a fundraising reception with many of Saturday's speakers including Mikey Weinstein (MRFF), Jessica Ahlquist (student activist), Michael Werner (AHA), and more. Completing the weekend on Sunday are Leadership Workshops for those who are interested in advancing the freethought movement.

Visit www.FreethoughtDay.org for up-to-date info and registration. Your generosity will be accepted with good cheer and recognition. If you'd like to offer your support please contact David Diskin via email (david@LodiUnited.org) or phone ([209-610-0651](tel:209-610-0651)).



AOF Member, Don Knutson, was shown in the *Sacramento Bee* Metro section on Aug. 23, in an [article](#) titled “As a bike-friendly city, we’re halfway there.” Hi, Don! Thanks to eagle-eyed AOF member Ruth Rezos for spotting this.

September 2012

Whence Cometh Our Morality?

Spend 17 minutes. Watch Frans de Waal’s video, “Moral Behavior in Animals”: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GcJxRqTs5nk>

Promoting morality through emotional and social intelligence is a priority for AOF. Frans de Waal is a primatologist, ethologist, and author who focuses on the evolution of morality and social altruism. His books include *Primates and Philosophers: How Morality Evolved*, *Your Inner Ape*, and a new book, *The Bonobo and the Atheist*, coming out in March 2013.

Empathy, cooperation, fairness and reciprocity -- caring about the well-being of others seems like a very human trait. But Frans de Waal shares some surprising videos of behavioral tests, on primates and other mammals, that show how many of these moral traits all of us share. You’ll enjoy the 17 minutes of his TED Conference talk on YouTube, where he demonstrates the traits most people think of as oh, so human, yet displayed clearly in other species.

This photo, from his video, shows one monkey upset that his neighbor is getting a better treat though he did not do the work. This monkey was just fine previously when the other monkey was only given substandard treats. Sense of fairness?



Here we see two monkeys working together to both pull ropes to bring in a box containing treats. You will see how the hungry monkey prods the well-fed monkey into helping, even though only one of them is really interested in the reward. Goodwill? Cooperation? Brownie points?

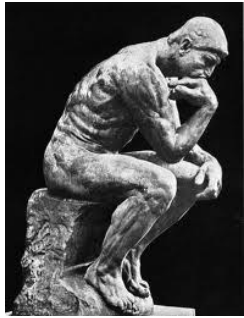


This photo is one of many where we see another species displaying consoling behavior. In the video you will see a child monkey come over to console an adult who has just lost a fight and is sulking. This is unmistakably a display of empathy and compassion.

Next time a believer asks you how you can have morals without God or their Scriptures, tell them it’s evolution. We are hard-wired with morality.

President’s Corner - Toss Your Hat in the Ring

Each November AOF elects board members for the following calendar year. With November not terribly far away, it’s time to solicit candidates. I hope everyone reading this will consider giving a little time to this great organization. We have board meetings every other month and they last only a couple hours. We also discuss things via email regularly. The actual investment of your time per year could be as little as fifteen hours. We can’t operate without input from our membership and serving as a board member is a great way to have your voice heard and to shape AOF’s future. If you’d like to toss your hat in the ring, or if you’d like more detailed information, drop us a line at aofboard@aofonline.org. Thank you!



GOOFIEST CURSES

- Hemorrhoids seem to be a useful curse. 1 Samuel 5:6, 9
- Withering away a fig tree for not producing fruit out of season upon demand. Matthew 21:18-21
- Spreading dung on your face, mentioned in the same line as corrupting your seed, as if both are about the same horror. Malachi 2:3
- Texting to the king that he’s going to shit himself to death. 2 Chronicles 21:12-15
- Creating a new ethnic group. 2 Nephi 5:21-22
- Pain when giving birth, as if forcing a watermelon through a donut hole was painless before this. Genesis 3:16, which Eve complains about to a palm tree that talks to her. Surah 19
- Nobody will remember you. Psalm 109
- Wishing you had a GPS. Num 14:18

Freethought Dinner Social, Sept. 20, 6:15

Feed your mind and feed your body, join your free-thinking pals at the wonderful **Shanghai Garden** for fine food, good drink and sparkling conversation about all things freethoughty! Restaurant menu: click [here](#). Shanghai Garden, 800 Alhambra Blvd, Sacramento., ph. 916-446-6358
Contact : 916-447-3589, or email: the.schn00g@gmail.com.



MEMBER PUBLISHED IN THE HUMANIST

Kudos to AOF Member Cleo Fellers Kocol who published a fantastic article, "[Jefferson's Women](#)," in *The Humanist Magazine*. Cleo also presented a talk on the topic June 29 for the Renaissance Society at CSUS. Also, her poem "[Salk Mountain Climb](#)" appeared in *Eloquent Atheist e-zine*. Nice!

MEMBER QUOTED IN WASHINGTON POST

AOF Member Judy Saint and her partner, Kathy, were interviewed by a RNS reporter at the recent Atheist Film Festival in SF. Here is the quote, as seen in the [Washington Post article](#). "Kathy Johnson, 58, and her partner Judy Saint, 60, drove about two hours from Sacramento for their first visit to this festival. Last year, they flew to Tampa to attend the Free Thought Film Festival. 'Film is a beautiful way to tell a story,' Saint said, sitting at the back of the Roxie's smaller theater in a bright blue T-shirt that declared 'Ask an Atheist' in large white letters. Turning to Johnson, who is not an atheist, she said, "When we watch these films, she can see where I am coming from and maybe understand me a little better."

September 2012

Leo Igwe: Human Rights Abuses in Africa

By Roger Zabkie

No one who hears [Leo Igwe](#) speak would doubt that he is a passionate man. The fifty or so people who attended this meeting can testify to that.

Mr. Igwe's presentation was about human rights abuses in Africa. Having been born and educated in Nigeria, he naturally focused primarily on that nation while making it clear that several other countries in the region share the problem.

And the problem is that superstition encourages ritual sacrifice of human beings, mainly older women and children, the easiest targets of opportunity. Children are sacrificed in the belief that their body parts will bring luck or good health to someone. Women and children are murdered because someone accuses them of witchcraft. Sadly, even organized religions such as Christianity and Islam do not prevent these atrocities, but in fact either ignore or encourage them. And the governments seem helpless to stop them.

Then there's the internecine warfare in Nigeria between the predominantly Muslim North and mainly Christian South. It seems that religion and other forms of superstition are a curse upon the nation of Nigeria.

This is where Mr. Igwe comes in: He is a humanist and human rights activist, he has been executive director of the Nigerian Humanist Movement, director of the Center for Inquiry Nigeria, the Western and Southern African representative to the International Humanist and Ethical Union, and currently serves on the Atheist Alliance International Council. At great personal risk due to the acrimony his activities arouse in the superstitious, he speaks out against all forms of irrational, harmful behavior in his country and on the continent. He has even taken a stand against gender discrimination in the law, a hot-button issue in much of Africa.

Thank you, Leo Igwe, for your inspiring presentation. I'm sure all of us in that room came away richer in understanding and empathy for the oppressed, because of your work.

"Dear Mynga, I am writing to thank you and other friends at AOF, for inviting me to address you during my first visit to the US. The meeting left very deep impressions and on me and I will continue to recall the experiences for some time to come. When I started the local humanist group in the 90s, I never thought that a day like that would come when I would meet with friends in your own part of the world. Even as I am doing this mail it still appears to me as if all that was a dream. I was excited by the warm, friendship and hospitality extended to me during my stay. I was greatly inspired by the support and understanding of friends. Particularly that many people appreciated challenges and situations that were different from what they were used to. I will always cherish their encouragement and continue to draw strength from it. Thank you once again. In appreciation, Leo"

"Must Read" Book by AOF Vincent M. Wales

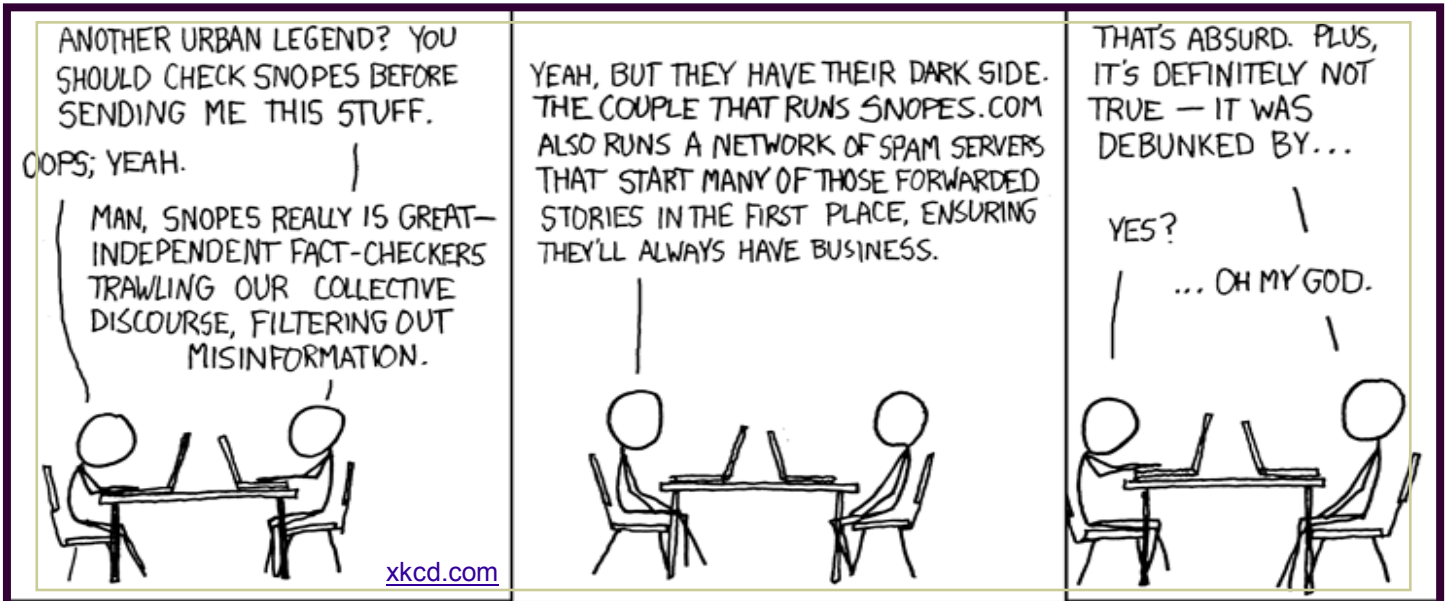
On June 4, a reviewer at [CBS Local](#) rated *One Nation Under God* one of "5 Must-Read Books By Sacramento Authors." The dystopian future novel, which is being adapted for an independent film, is by AOF President Vincent M. Wales. Both *One Nation* and his earlier novel, *Wish You Were Here*, have won multiple awards. His next novel, *Reckoning*, is expected for release in Spring, 2013. Meanwhile he will have an author appearance at the "Gathering of Spirits" Harvest Festival, Sept 22-23, at the VFW Hall, 8990 Kruithof Way, Fair Oaks. More details are available at www.vincentmwales.com.

Opportunities for Atheists to Volunteer in the Community

1.) Highway Cleanup: Monthly Event. Don says: "When I succeeded Hank Kocol as AOF's highway cleanup coordinator several years ago, I firmly believed that within a singular action, there is little more substantive undertaking an individual can take on behalf of the environment. I still believe that! And so we will be going out this Saturday to carry on this noble cause. Won't you join us at 9a.m. Saturday at the Elkhorn Blvd. Park & Ride? We need about eight to nine participants to do a thorough cleaning of our two-mile stretch."

2.) Davis Community Feed: Help serve the hungry hot food at the Davis Community Church every fifth Tuesday. Fifth Tuesdays happen about every 3 or 4 months so search ahead and mark your calendar for upcoming Community Feed events. Next is October 30.

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www.aofonline.org

AOF
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AOF meetings are open to the public at the Sierra 2 Community Center, Room 10. Next [General Meeting](#) is Sunday, Sep. 9, 2:00-5:00. Skeptics Panel on Pseudoscience.

AOF [Planning Meeting](#) Sep 17 open to public, 3001 J St, upstairs, 7:00-8:30pm 916-447-3589.

Membership Form: <http://www.aofonline.org/images/PDFs/aof-membership-app.pdf>

AOF website: <http://aofonline.org>

LIKE our Facebook Page "[Sacramento AOF](#)"

Audio of meetings can still be heard at: <http://aofonline.org/av-scrapbook.html>

AOF EIN for tax write-off: 68-0325762
DONATE with PayPal: [Click Here](#)

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Vice President: Mynga Futrell
Secretary: Jillian Stanley
Treasurer: Ken Nahigian
Newsletter Editor: Lindsey Campbell
Newsletter Co-editor: Judy Saint
2012 AOF Board of Directors : Kristi Craven, David Flanders, Mynga Futrell, Ken Nahigian, Mario Sandri, Jerry Sloan, Vincent Wales

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