



AOF News & Views – Newsletter for December 2015

## Upcoming Events

### ➤ HumanLight/Solstice Party

**Sunday, December 20, 2015, 12:30pm**

AOF will join hands with the Humanist Association of the Greater Sacramento Area (HAGSA) to host the HumanLight/Solstice secular celebration. Each year we do this, and invite all our friends in the local community of reason to join the fun. No membership required. Simply come help us celebrate and express the true reasons for the season: reason, compassion, hope, humanity. The slow swing of seasons, the return of precious light. And, oh, gluttony too (nom-nom-nom).



Festivities will include a potluck feast at least, with music, camaraderie, general reverie, and a raffle with delightful prizes, the revenue therefrom to benefit a proposed library. We may (hope to) have more. We may have games, a charity drive for pets & people, even live performance art. Plans coalesce as you read this. So to repeat, if you can help or have ideas, please-please-please contact the event captain, see below.

The Luncheon will be potluck style. For this, please bring something tasty and snacky, well-presented, ready to serve, with your own favorite beverage. But be aware, the hall has one small microwave, a sink and a refrigerator, that's all; no oven and no stove. Pre-prepare please, think about hotplates & crockpots. Bring a serving utensil too. We will provide plates, bowls, personal cutlery, napkins and cups. Eating will begin at 1 pm, and continue until about 3:00, or until you lose mobility.

As ever, the HumanLight/Solstice Party is a family-friendly event. Your smalls are welcome. But advise the event organizer, so she can plan.

The HumanLight/Solstice Party is our most humanistic party of the year: a secular oasis in the wasteland of radioactive sugar-cookie mysticism, an escape from choirs and department store consumerism, and an opportunity to celebrate the simple warmth of human kindredship.

For a history of this celebration (yes, it has history), please visit <http://humanlight.org/>.

**Location:** Reason Center, 1824 Tribute Road Suite A, Sacramento.

**For more information, contact:** reneinsac (at) gmail (dot) com, or call AOF (916-304-3796).

### ➤ Davis Community Meal – Feed the Hungry

**Tuesday, December 29, 2015, 4:30pm – 7pm**

In nearby, bucolic Davis city, compassionate citizens have developed a secular solution for the problem of hunger -- *and they need our help!* Join local freethinkers in an ongoing effort to feed the poor, the hungry, the indigent, the outcast. Your reward is the opportunity to meet new minds and hobnob with your freethinker friends, a likely free meal, jazzy music, and the warm hearts-glow of benevolence. And *it's a blast!*

No cooking required. The Davis Community Meals team will perform all food prep and kitchen work. Our job: 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 is OK. Any help is good help! Setup begins about 4:30 p.m., buffet food service at about 5:45. At 6:30 we clean up, leaving the hall as we found it.

For details, please see <http://daviscommunitymeals.org/>.

**Location:** St. Martin's Episcopal, 640 Hawthorne Lane, Davis.

**For more information or carpooling, contact:** Don, 916- 447-2169.

### ➤ AOF Board Meeting

**Monday, January 11, 2016, 7:00pm – 9pm**

**Location:** Reason Center, 1824 Tribute Road Suite A, Sacramento. A general planning meeting open to all.

### ➤ Sacramento Darwin Day

**Saturday, February 13, 2016, 2:00 – 5pm**

At John Smith Hall, La Sierra Community Center, Carmichael. Details later! For now, just save the date.

## Editorial

### The Reason for the Season, Fran Evanisko

I thought Christmas was intentionally set to December 25th to coincide with the winter solstice which was celebrated all across Europe, Asia, and North Africa, though it was understood that Jesus was not born at this time. One explanation is that some Christian bishop chose that date to prevent his people from participating in the Pagan Saturnalia festival which included feasting and giving gifts to the poor, but also licentious partying.

However, there a reluctance among many Christians to associate the Christmas celebration with Paganism. In fact historian William J. Tighe claims that Christ's birth is celebrated December 25th because it is nine months after Christ's conception which was supposedly March 25, and therefore has no relationship to the Pagan solstice celebrations. Supposedly, some believe that great prophets died on the date of their conception.

Ironically, the Vernal Equinox was also a time of Pagan Fertility festivals. So if Jesus' birthdate is free of Pagan connection, his conception is likely not.

Regardless of all of this, the first Christmas was not celebrated till 336 AD, while there is evidence of Ancient Winter Solstice celebrations dating back to about 3200 BC, so it is hard to see how the reason for any season can be something that occurred more than 3000 years after the first known seasonal celebrations.

So, what is the reason for the Pagan winter time celebrations? Clearly the reason for the Pagan winter celebrations are grounded in something that actually occurs, the solstice. HAPPY SOLSTICE.

You may wonder what happened to *Sacramento Reason*. It is on a brief vacation. I, Fran Evanisko, have assumed responsibility for publication of AOF monthly news. If you should have anything you would like to contribute relative to content, such as brief articles or literature reviews, please let me know. Contact AOF, or: [newsletter@aofonline.org](mailto:newsletter@aofonline.org).

Note also, AOF has a new logo! See it at the top of Page 1. Sweet, eh? (Thanks to Judy Saint for being the prime mover behind developing it.)

### 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!) \_\_\_\_\_

*E-mail is required for newsletter delivery.*

Questions, concerns? Call AOF, 916-304-3796.

#### Your Membership Level (annual, please circle):

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

Basic Dues : \$ \_\_\_\_\_

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

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

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).

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“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.”

Atheists and Other Freethinkers (AOF) is a 501(c)(3) non-profit association, FEIN 68-0325762. General Meetings are free and open to the public. AOF also hosts civic service projects, dinners, movie outings, parties! To see what awaits you, visit the website, [www.aofonline.org](http://www.aofonline.org); or contact AOF at our 24/7 voice-mail: 916-447-3589; or write to PO Box 15182, Sacramento, CA 95851-0182.