

AOF Board of Directors Election Results

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
▼ Kaeleigh Pontif	100.00%	20
▼ Pamela Rivera	100.00%	20
▼ Fran Evanisko	100.00%	20
▼ Ruth Rezos	95.00%	19
▼ Roger Zabkie	100.00%	20
▼ Ken Nahigian	95.00%	19
▼ Mynga Futrell	100.00%	20
Total Respondents: 20		

Thanks to all who participated. For details on AOF Directors, see <https://www.aofonline.org/learn/fearless-leaders.html>.

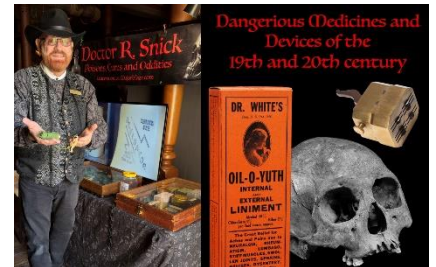
❖ ❖ Main AOF Event this Month ❖ ❖

➤ Dangerous Medicines and Devices of the 19th Century

Sunday, Jan 28, 2024, 2 pm – 4 pm

Location: Reason Center, 1300 Ethan Way, Rm 675, Sac., map at <https://goo.gl/maps/RwiUgEJ5ESHRhrPu8>.

Sideshow huckster and historian of fraud, hoaxes and Memento Mori, the very distinguished [Andrei Pischalnikoff, AKA Doctor R. Snick](#), is a man with a mission – and the mission is not squeezing snakes for oil. Well, not just that anyway. He's here to say what's what about the curious and disturbing things questionable “Doctors” or “Quacks” peddled to the public over a hundred years ago. Prepare for some *Ewww* moments.



This presentation will shed light on medicine shows, patent medicines and often uncomfortably moist devices that were useless and sometimes quite dangerous. For spoilers about **Doctor R. Snick** and his presentations, visit majorblaze.com.

This is our first meeting of 2024, and it promises to be an exciting one!

Contact for details: see <https://www.aofonline.org/contact.html>.

Free parking in the lot. OK to bring personal snacks & beverages – or to share – as you wish. AOF will provide cool clear water.

❖ ❖ Upcoming AOF Events ❖ ❖

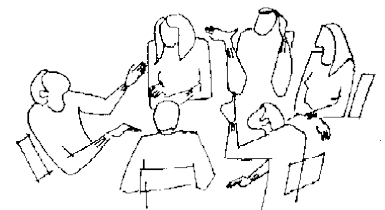
➤ Board of Directors Meeting

Tuesday, Jan 16, 2024, 7 pm – 8 pm

Location: Reason Center, 1300 Ethan Way, Rm 675, Sac., map at <https://goo.gl/maps/RwiUgEJ5ESHRhrPu8>.

It's an AOF planning meeting, mainly for AOF directors & officers but open to all of you. These happen as required and are a lot more fun than they sound.

Join us, meet the Board, keep an eye on the shenanigans. We love visitors. We often have snacks. And maybe you'll have some good ideas, hm?



Note, this Board meeting will be an actual in-person meeting, so be sure vaccinations are current, or wear a mask, or just don't cough on us.

Contact for details: see <https://www.aofonline.org/contact.html>.

Bring your ideas for AOF, your strategies, your event and activity suggestions -- best of all, your volunteerism!

➤ Film and Discussion at the Reason Center

Friday, Jan 12, 2024 7 pm – 10 pm

Location: Reason Center, 1300 Ethan Way, Rm 675, Sac., map at <https://goo.gl/maps/RwiUgEJ5ESHRhrPu8>.

It's an **in-person Movie Night** at [Reason Center](#), in a quiet room with cozy plush chairs and a huge screen and refreshments right at hand. The movie name is a secret because of our [MPLC License](#) and the stodgy rule of law -- but shh, we can slip a hint. This 2014 musical drama is about a grieving father who finds a box of his recently deceased son's music demo tapes and lyrics. Shocked to discover this secret talent, he forms a band in the hope of finding closure. The star is Billy Crudup.



AOF co-sponsors this event. We provide popcorn - feel free to bring your own snacks as well. We also encourage a post-film discussion, which makes this educational, if you stretch the word. No fee to attend. But you know: Reason Center always appreciates donations. Just saying.

Contact for details: See <http://reasoncenter.com/contact/>

Free Movie Nights are a joint venture of AOF and Reason Center. Suggest your own fave film for next time!

➤ Feed the Hungry

Tuesday, January 30, 2024, 4 pm – 7 pm

Location: St. Martin's Episcopal Church hall, 640 Hawthorne Lane, Davis, map at <https://maps.app.goo.gl/m24JXVrgKvRKhjzy6>. (Yes, a church hall, so what?)

The **Davis Community Meal** project serves meals to the hungry, the poor, the indigent, the outcast. It happens in bucolic Davis city, so near to us, where compassionate citizens have developed a secular solution for the problem of hunger, and need our help.

So, join us, join us in this effort! Your reward will be an opportunity to meet new minds and hobnob with your freethought friends, a likely free meal, jazzy music, and the rosy hearts-glow of benevolence. Also, seriously, it's a blast!

Cooking? Dish washing? Pshaw, none required. The Davis Community Meals team will perform all the food prep and kitchen work. Our job is simply to set up chairs & tables, serve, smile, put things away at the end, and clean a bit (with a minimum of mopping). Extra points if you can arrive early for setup, but if you can't, that's OK, any help is good help. Setup begins about 4:30 p.m., food service at about 5:45.



See <https://daviscommunitymeals.org/>. A map to the site is at <https://maps.app.goo.gl/cYQe2QnhuXSTafcP8>.

Contact for details: See [Contact Page](#), or call Service Coordinator (Don, 916-805-9337)

Carpooling may be available. For info, please contact the Service Project Coordinator.

✧ ✧ Upcoming non-AOF Events ✧ ✧

We're busy folk, here in the Sac Community of Reason. AOF does not own these other events, but here they are anyway.

➤ Recovery from Religion (RfR) online meetings

Saturday, Jan 6, 2024, 8 am – 10 am, for men. Attendance link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81672617364>, details at <https://www.meetup.com/rfr-sacramento-ca/events/297323506/>.

Sunday, Jan 7, 2024, 7 am – 9 am, Virtual Chapter Support. Attendance link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/7287067292>, details at <https://www.meetup.com/rfr-sacramento-ca/events/297322828/>.

Saturday, Jan 13, 2024, 5 pm – 7 pm, for women & non-binary. Attendance link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87403436249>, details at <https://www.meetup.com/rfr-sacramento-ca/events/297323310/>.

Sunday, Jan 21, 2024, 12 noon – 2 pm, for LGBTQA+ folk. Attendance link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/7287067292>, details at <https://www.meetup.com/rfr-sacramento-ca/events/297323731/>.

Saturday, Feb 3, 2024, 8 am – 10 am, for men. Same attendance link as above.

"RfR" provides ongoing and personal support to individuals letting go of religious beliefs. Please be sensitive and tolerant, and cut others some slack, so you will get slack too.

➤ Sacramento Skeptics in the Pub

Sunday, Jan 7, 2024, 6 pm – 8 pm

Location: Duke's Pints & Plates, 510 La Sierra Dr, Sacramento; map at <https://goo.gl/maps/aNzV4j33cnizW9j77>.

A social meetup for the skeptical minds, a community of people, friends, and families that champion the methods of science and critical thinking. Visitors and new skeptics most welcome!

Details: see <https://www.meetup.com/sacskeptics/events/cnczhtyqccbkb/>.

➤ **Suicide Loss Survivors Discussion and Support**

Tuesday, Jan 9, 2023, 5 pm – 7 pm

Online survivor support in a compassionate, secular way. Attendance link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82683645189>.

Details: <https://www.meetup.com/rfr-sacramento-ca/events/297323974/>.

➤ **Blasphemy Breakfasts - and a Brunch**

Saturday, Jan 13, 2024, 10 am – 11:30 am, at Mel's Diner, 13399 Folsom Blvd, Folsom, CA, map at

<https://goo.gl/maps/ri6JvaBoSZVHTdnU6>. **Details:** <https://www.meetup.com/sacfan/events/znwwgtygcbbrb/>.

Sunday, Jan 14, 2024, 9:30 am – 11:30 am, at Mel's Diner, 3000 J Street, Sacramento, CA, map at

<https://goo.gl/maps/toijMkseMWMTanVP7>. **Details:** <https://www.meetup.com/sacfan/events/nngcitygcbbsb/>.

Sunday, Jan 21, 2024, 9:30 am – 11 am, at Mel's Diner, 6708 Lonetree Blvd, Rocklin, CA, map at

<https://goo.gl/maps/ZUY2gg72KkmcC4bU6>. **Details:** <https://www.meetup.com/sacfan/events/nngcitygcbbsb/>.

Like to hang with like-minded people? Want to meet freethinkers in smaller groups? Or do you just get the morning munchies? Join us for our "Blasphemy Breakfast." We really don't blaspheme all that much, but dark mutterings may emerge ... be warned. A great place to speak your mind, and a good starter if you are new to meetups. Please RSVP.

➤ **Saturday Night Hangout**

Saturday, Jan 13, 2024, 6 pm – 9 pm, details at <https://www.meetup.com/sacfan/events/hprbjtygcbbrb/>.

Saturday, Jan 27, 2024, 6 pm – 9 pm, details at <https://www.meetup.com/sacfan/events/hprbjtygcbkbc/>.

Location: Both are online meetings, attendance link:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83092441353?pwd=Wmp6RVIUR1Q0dFZZMIFQUIVodTN0dz09>.

An online meetup on alternate Saturdays, at 6:00 PM Pacific Time. We'll spend about the first half hour greeting friends, catching up, welcoming newcomers, and just having fun. No politics please! But the list of options may grow.

➤ **Sunday Assembly & Potluck**

Sunday, Jan 14, 2024, 11am - 1pm (doors open 10:30am)

Location: Reason Center, 1300 Ethan Way, Suite 675, Sacramento, map at <https://goo.gl/maps/S5MR1e8ZodBzb4TG8>.

Sunday Assembly is a secular celebration of *you* with music, readings, food and speakers, plus entertainment for children. For the potluck lunch, bring your favorite dish to share, and be hungry. Key presenter this month is Professor Aaron Tang, topic: "What's Wrong with The Supreme Court--And How to Fix It."

Details: see <https://www.meetup.com/sacfan/events/lwcwhtygcbbsb/>.

➤ **Ancient Christian Study Group**

Sunday, Jan 21, 2024, 12 noon – 2 pm

Location: Shine Café, 1400 E Street, Sacramento, map at <https://maps.app.goo.gl/fFgfsvK3ky2RvdWs6>.

The history of ancient Christianity is endlessly fascinating. Don Fox and Steve Thoreson will facilitate this review of the history of Rome, religions of the Roman Empire, Gnosticism, Mystery cults, history of Christian persecutions, biographies of major Christians, the history of the Bible and other related topics. This month the topic will be the Infancy Gospels, including the ones of Thomas, James, Psuedo-Matthew, and the Arabic one where children are changed into goats. If you ever wanted to sort out Eusebius from Clement, or Constantine from Diocletian, or the Vulgate from the Septuagint, then this group is for you. Previous biblical knowledge is not required to participate.

Details: see <https://www.meetup.com/sacfan/events/ndfzqygcbcc/>.

➤ **Black Humanists & Non-Believers Book Club**

Saturday, Jan 27, 2024, 3:30 pm – 5:00 pm

An online book discussion, open to all. Topic will be Allow Me to Retort by Elie Mystal, Chapters 15-21. RSVP to attend, and the location will be revealed.

Details (and to RSVP): see <https://www.meetup.com/bhnb-sacramento/events/whnfftygcbkbc/>.

➤ **Coffee and Community**

Sunday, Jan 28, 2024, 10 am – 11:30 am

Location: An online videoconference; to attend, just wait for the meeting time and then click this link:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88317332021?pwd=OVI6M3IRQm52L0hQUmhwd0pucENEQT09>.

Meet for open-topic conversation, brew your own coffee. Get to know new folk or visit with some old friends! Hosted by Nancy Sneed and Lucila, such friendly people!

Details: see <https://www.meetup.com/sacfan/events/ssgctygcbblc/>.

➤ **Porch Talk**

Wednesday, Jan 31, 2024, 7 pm – 8:30 pm

Online attendance link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88417809715?pwd=UGx1Q3hpU25iWkwrZjZaTWFZMEMxZz09>.

A social gathering on the virtual front porch. Join online (via your personal computer) for a videochat on topics of the day; just click the link at meeting time and follow the instructions. Discussion suggestions are welcome. Host: Nancy Sneed.

Details: see <https://www.meetup.com/sacfan/events/kcslftygccbpc/>.

➤ Open Library Hours at Reason Center

Thursday, Feb 1, 2024, 3:30 pm – 6:30 pm

Location: Reason Center, 1300 Ethan Way, Ste. 675, Sacramento, map at <https://goo.gl/maps/S5MR1e8ZodBzb4TG8>.

The Reason Center library is open for browsing. We have an extensive collection of books; you can even borrow them if you are a Reason Center member. See reasoncenter.org to join, or you may join up at the library.

Contact: Call 916-426-6416 or see <https://reasoncenter.com/contact/>.

Details at <https://www.meetup.com/sacfan/events/gctvgygcbcb/>.

➤ Atheists Community videos & discussion

Monday, Feb 5, 2024, 7:30 pm – 10:30 pm

Location: A videoconference; to attend, wait for the meeting time, and then click

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/81807086862?pwd=ZjUyamt1b2dlc1N5bEZ6Q0w1Um00QT09>.

An educational and entertaining teleconference about Atheism, Logic, Reason, Thoughtfulness - accentuated by videos and, of course, your presence.

Details: see <https://www.meetup.com/reasoncenterevents/events/kgfwgtygcbcb/>.

➤ More Events – So many Event Calendars

There's more. And plans change, because we're human. So don't trust the static list above. To keep track of all those other events, bookmark & follow these links:

- Sacramento Freethinkers, Atheists and Nonbelievers, <https://www.meetup.com/SacFAN/events/calendar/>
- The Reason Center calendar, <https://www.meetup.com/ReasonCenterEvents/events/calendar/>
- Black Humanists of Sacramento events, <https://www.meetup.com/bhnb-sacramento/events/calendar/>
- Recovery from Religion Sacramento, <https://www.meetup.com/RfR-Sacramento-CA/events/calendar/>
- Sacramento Skeptics events, <https://www.meetup.com/sacskeptics/events/calendar/>
- Compassionate Humanists of Roseville, <https://www.meetup.com/compassionate-humanists/events/calendar/>
- Sunday Assembly Sacramento events, <https://www.meetup.com/sunday-assembly-sacramento/events/calendar/>
- Central Valley Alliance of Atheists & Skeptics, <https://www.meetup.com/fresno-cvaas/events/calendar/>

You can help us. Here's how.

Support Reason Center

Since Reason Center opened in July 2014, it has hosted hundreds of events and accrued twelve partner organizations. Its mission: to support a social and intellectual community for freethinkers, contribute to society through education and community service, advance the civic understanding and acceptance of freethinkers, and uphold the separation of religion and government. And help us party -- all good work.

But to continue, "RC" relies on support from members and donors. Please stand up for Reason Center because it stands up for you. To join or donate, visit ReasonCenter.org.

Suggest a Meeting

Know a compelling speaker, have a great meeting idea? Tell the AOF Program Committee! Go to <http://www.aofonline.org/contact.html>, click "Program Committee" in the drop-down line, and enter your thoughtful suggestion. (Reasonable honorariums paid to speakers.)

Volunteer?

We suggest it meekly. See <http://www.aofonline.org/learn/committees.html> for opportunities.

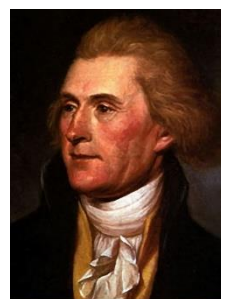
❖ ❖ Secular Holidays ❖ ❖

➤ Religious Freedom Day

Tuesday, January 16, 2024

[National Religious Freedom Day](#) is in the truest sense both a religious *and* a secular holiday. It marks the anniversary of the passage of the Virginia [Statute of Religious Freedom](#), the 1786 colonial statute that disestablished the Anglican Church in Virginia and set the foundation for Separation of Church and State. Thomas Jefferson marked this statute as one of his greatest achievements. Among other things it declared the following:

- "that to compel a man to furnish contributions of money for the propagation of opinions which he disbelieves is sinful and tyrannical,



- "that our civil rights have no dependence on our religious opinions any more than our opinions in physics or geometry,
- "that no man shall be compelled to frequent or support any religious worship, place, or ministry whatsoever, nor shall be enforced, restrained, molested, or burthened in his body or goods, nor shall otherwise suffer on account of his religious opinions or belief, but that all men shall be free to profess, and by argument to maintain, their opinions in matters of Religion, and that the same shall in no wise diminish, enlarge or affect their civil capacities."

Congress first marked Religious Freedom Day in 1993. It is a day to reflect on the hard-won separation of civic and religious life, and to refresh our resolve to inform fellow citizen about liberty of conscience in matters of faith, a liberty which must include both freedom *of* and *from* religion. Because otherwise, it is no freedom at all.

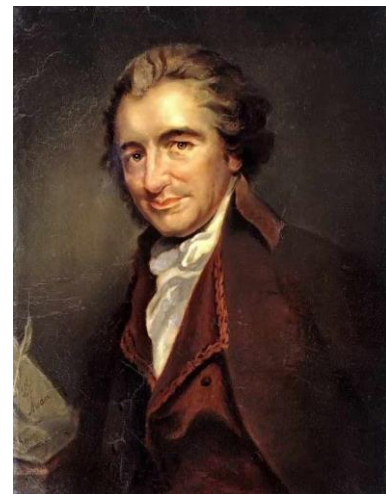
➤ Thomas Paine Day Monday, January 29, 2024

Thomas Paine Day, also called Freethinkers Day, promotes appreciation of freethought through the life and works of American patriot Thomas Paine. Paine (1737-1809) was a courageous freethinker whose life and work inspired great social and political advancement across world. Raised in England, Paine played a vital role in the American and French Revolutions. His books and pamphlets, including *The Age of Reason*, *The Rights of Man*, and *Common Sense*, gained a mass audience for the liberating philosophy of the Enlightenment.

Paine arrived in America in 1774 at Benjamin Franklin's request. On January 10, 1776, he published *Common Sense*, a remarkable and powerful republican pamphlet which had an immediate success. He served in the Revolutionary War under General Greene and later in official positions appointed by congress and in the Pennsylvania legislature. In his later publication, *Age of Reason*, Paine expressed that "all religions are in their nature mild and benign" when not associated with political systems. Paine was the quintessential Deist of the 18th century.

Between March 1791 and February 1792 he published numerous editions of his *Rights of Man*, in which he defended the French Revolution. The words of Thomas Paine inspired many to strive for political, economic and social advancement. He was among the first to call for an end to slavery and the establishment of human rights around the world.

In the 1990s, the *Truth Seeker* magazine began celebrating Freethinkers Day on Thomas Paine's birthday in order to educate the public on the importance of Thomas Paine in the history of freedom. Its poetic description of the day, on [this webpage](#), is worthy to repeat:

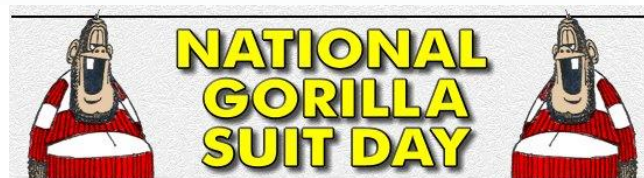


This day honors Thomas Paine and is on his birthday, January 29. This is a global holiday and is simply celebrated by giving and displaying a White Rose with Thorns. The simple beauty and purity, the fragility and yet not without the danger of drawing blood by a thorn prick, makes this an excellent icon for those Freethinkers who want to reflect on Freedom and promote the ideas of personal liberty as expressed by Paine in The Declaration of Independence,

This is a holiday that celebrates the concept of Freedom by honoring the man who declared our Independence by giving us Common Sense and The Declaration. We owe a great debt of gratitude to Thomas Paine.

➤ Gorilla Suit Day! Wednesday, January 31, 2024

From the sublime to the ridiculous. Close on the heels of Thomas Paine day comes [National Gorilla Suit Day](#), a pseudo-holiday invented by famed Mad Magazine cartoonist [Don Martin](#). An effluvia of controversy continues to surround this secular celebration: to some it is a blatant conspiracy of gorilla suit manufacturers to promote their wares, others see it as one of America's more important and venerable holidays. Its origins lie in a 1963 comic strip. Don Martin aficionados later evolved the tradition that "NGSD" falls on the last day of January each year.



Whatever your opinion of NGSD, few deny the cartooning genius of Don Martin. Art historian Charles Taylor described Martin's unique style of art and wit:

His people are big-nosed schmoes with sleepy eyes, puffs of wiry hair, and what appear to be life preservers under the waistline of their clothes. Their hands make delicate little mincing gestures and their strangely thin, elongated feet take a 90-degree turn at the toes as they step forward. Whether they're average Joes or headhunters, Martin's people share the same physique: a tottering tower of obolids. Martin puts the bodies of these characters through every kind of permutation, treating them as much like gadgets as the squirting flowers and joy buzzers that populate his gags: glass eyes pop out from a pat on the back; heads are steamrollered into manhole-cover shapes. All of this accompanied by a Dadaist panoply of sound effects found nowhere else: *shtoin!* *shklorp!* *fwoba-dap!* It's unlikely Samuel Beckett was aware of Don Martin, but had he been he might have recognized a kindred spirit.

Thomas Paine Birthday Celebration ♥

Monday, January 29, 2024

January 29th marks the official recorded birthdate of [Thomas Paine](#), celebrated worldwide. This year's online festival will start at 4 PM Pacific Time. Attendance is free, but you must pre-register at this link: <https://us06web.zoom.us/j/82980534952>.

The theme will be the Anti-Slavery Efforts of Thomas Paine, focusing on his abolitionist work. Actor Ian Ruskin will present a letter that Paine, posing as a slave, wrote to Thomas Jefferson. Paine wrote using this persona to emphasize the urgency of ending slavery. Musical performances by Cynthia McDonald will open and close the event.

Sponsors are the Secular Coalition for America, Black Nonbelievers, the Freedom From Religion Foundation, the Center for Inquiry, the Thomas Paine Memorial Association (TPMA), and the Freethought Society. For more details, see: <https://thomaspainememorial.org/birthday-celebration-will-highlight-thomas-paine-as-abolitionist/>.



Family News

From Kela Murchison, daughter of **Arthur Earl Murchison**:

"My dad, Arthur Earl Murchison, who is 89 years old, is now placed in a Senior Memory Care home in Elk Grove. He has developed moderate to severe dementia, but otherwise, seems to be living well day to day. On my recent visit, I noticed a good appetite, and he did recognize me. He does not remember most of his life, his enormous accomplishments, or who Charles Darwin is."

Arthur Murchison was an active member, presenter and participant of AOF for many years; we have delighted in his lucid audio/video shows on biology and evolution.

Kela now seeks placement for her father's large collection of science & history books. If interested, or if you have ideas, please contact her at arthurmurchison1210@comcast.net (or contact Reason Center).



Inadvertently, St. Anselm proves that God is nachos.



Not yet an AOF member? Please join us!

Atheists and Other Freethinkers is a 501(c)(3) non-profit association, FEIN 68-0325762, incorporated in 1993. Meetings are free and open to the public. AOF also hosts civic service projects, dinners, movies and parties! See what awaits you at www.aofonline.org.

AOF President: Prolific Pamella Rivers
Vice-president: Marvelous Mynga Futrell
Secretary: Rapid Ruth Rezos
Treasurer & Registrar: Kinetic Ken Nahigian
Newsletter Editor: Fabulous Fran Evanisko
Webmistress: Palpable Pat Kelley
Program chair: Super Susan McLean
Facebook page: Keen Kaeleigh Pontif
Directors at large:
Roger Zabkie, Fran Evanisko, Kaeleigh Pontif

How to Contact AOF:

- Call 916-304-3796 (voicemail)
 - Or write to PO Box 15182, Sacramento, CA 95851
- Or visit <http://www.aofonline.org/contact> to e-message us

How to Join AOF:

Visit <http://www.aofonline.org/join>, or come to a meeting. We have forms.

AOF's Facebook pages (two):

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/1525411971087089/>
<https://www.facebook.com/Atheists-and-Other-Freethinkers-AOF-104763721971742>

AOF Mission Statement:

"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."

What is a Freethinker? One striving to form opinions of life, religion, politics and philosophy on the grounds of reason and experience, rather than tradition, authority or custom. He or she need not be an atheist, though in a religious society most atheists do tend to be freethinkers.

AOF supports a benign separation of Church and State as the best means to protect the liberty and intellectual commerce of citizens. "... to keep forever from these shores the ceaseless strife that has soaked the soil of Europe in blood for centuries" (James Madison, 1803).

Our vision: to be a venue where secular and unchurched citizens can socialize, dialog, develop friendships and enjoy shared company. AOF does not discriminate on such grounds as race, sexual orientation, age, gender, class, physical debility or (*cough*) religion. We welcome the fair-minded of all political persuasions and preferences. Be respectful, and you may join.

Donations to AOF are tax deductible, and the newsletter is free by email. Please share with sympathetic friends.

Letters, submissions? We love them! See:

<http://www.aofonline.org/read/submission-guide.html>.