



Liam McDaid tutored AOF on Exoplanets at the June General Meeting

❖ ❖ This Month's Headliner Event ❖ ❖

➤ Donna Apidone: It's Election Year - Don't Freak Out!

Sunday, July 28, 2024, 2 pm – 4 pm

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

Gasp It's Election Year? Oh-em-gee. But this meeting is not about politics -- it's about staying grounded (read: sane) even knee-deep in a raging dumpster fire. Which is where we happen to be.

[Donna Apidone](#), bless her heart, has hosted [CapRadio Reads](#) since 2011 and the midday classical program for 10 years. She has been a radio devotee since age 14, when she visited a family friend at a Cleveland radio station. Often onstage now as a speaker and performer, she loves to interview authors and rock stars.

Donna is the author of *TransForMission, a Path to Purpose*, and a six-week class. She has also authored *Drive-Time Meditations: Find Purpose on Your Commute*. Both available from Amazon.com, and worth your spare bucks.

Donna is a recipient of the 2023 Artistic License Awards from California Lawyers for the Arts. She has degrees in Communication and Journalism and was ordained as a nondenominational minister at Riverside Church in New York City. She is a certified life coach. And amazing.

Donna Apidone will bring you wisdom.

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



❖ ❖ Other Upcoming AOF Events ❖ ❖

➤ Board of Directors Meeting

Tuesday, July 09, 2024, 7 pm – 8 pm

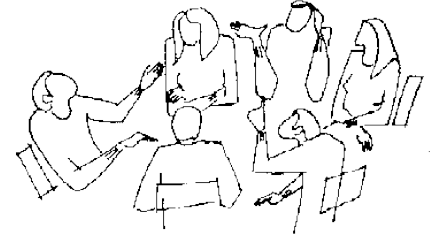
Location: Reason Center, 1300 Ethan Way, Suite 675, see map at <https://goo.gl/maps/RwiUgEJ5ESHRhrPu8>.

An AOF planning meeting, mainly for AOF directors & officers but open to all. These happen as required and are a lot more fun than they sound. Honest.

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! Helping hands are the bomb.



➤ Free Movie and Discussion

Friday, July 12, 2024, 7 pm – 9 pm

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

It's a **free in-person Movie Night** at Sacramento's Reason Center, in a quiet room with cozy seating and a huge screen and refreshments right at hand. The movie name is a secret because of our MPLC License and certain legal nicities -- but we will slyly slip a hint. This one is a 1997 Australian comedy about a working-class family from Melbourne, Australia, that fights city hall after being told they must vacate their beloved family home to allow for airport expansion. With the help of a friendly retired barrister, the case goes to the High Court. You'll see what happens then.



AOF co-sponsors this event. The movie team provides popcorn and other munchies - 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. We're just saying that.

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

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

➤ Adopt-A-Highway Cleanup

Saturday, July 13, 2024, 9 am – 11 am

Location: Near W. Elkhorn Blvd & Hwy 99, map at <https://goo.gl/maps/zw3Rwct9yR52>.

Out on Highway 99, for two miles from Elkhorn Boulevard to Elverta Road, runs a lonely stretch – *our* stretch! Sac-area freethinkers "adopted" it in July 1995. We have cared for it, nurtured it, lovingly rescued it from litter and debris, and received recognition for our work. One of our successful civic efforts, it proves freethinkers can also serve the community.

So, join us! Enjoy a morning commune with nature, and do a deed for the environment and local area wildlife. The refuse we collect would otherwise ultimately be swept by the rain into tributaries and into the ocean, degrading habitat, and leading to a slow death for many sea creatures.

As usual, the stalwart activity captain will provide all safety equipment, including comfortable, natty hard-hats and gloves, stylish safety vests, collection bags, and handy trash pickers. The cleanup takes a scant two hours. Please dress for the season. It may be a good idea to bring a backpack or fanny-pack to carry 3 or 4 trash bags.

To get there, travel north from Sacramento on I-5 past the Natomas area. Take the "Highway 99 - Yuba City, Marysville" exit. Exit at Elkhorn Boulevard less than a mile north. Turn left, cross the overpass. Park in the park-&-ride lot if possible, or somewhere near it.

This is a great event for older children, but please leave smalls safe at home. Also please review the CalTrans Highway Cleanup guidelines at <https://dot.ca.gov/programs/maintenance/adopt-a-highway/covid19>.

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

In case of rain, fog, excessive mud, rapture or locust plague, the Cleanup will be rescheduled. If unsure, call the Activity Captain (Don).



➤ Feed the Hungry – Davis Community Meal

Tuesday, July 30, 2024, 4 pm – 7 pm

Location: St. Martin's Episcopal Church hall, 640 Hawthorne Lane, Davis, CA, map at <http://binged.it/1uBpi57>.

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? 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 for setup, but if you can't, that's OK, any help is good help. Setup begins about 4:30 pm, food service about 5:45. At 6:30 we clean up the hall.

Carpooling may be available. For details, please contact the Service Project Coordinator (Don, 916-805-9337) or see <http://daviscommunitymeals.org/>.



❖ ❖ Other Upcoming (non-AOF) Events ❖ ❖

Because AOF is a small fish in a bigish swamp, and lots else is happening. Note, we don't list every event, just highlights. For more, please check the calendar links below.

➤ Blasphemy Breakfasts and a Brunch

Saturday, July 13, 2024, 10 am – 11:30 am, at Mel's Diner, 13399 Folsom Blvd, Folsom, CA, map at <https://goo.gl/maps/ri6JvaBoSZVHTdnU6>, details at <https://www.meetup.com/sacfan/events/301818505/>.

Sunday, July 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 at <https://www.meetup.com/sacfan/events/301023310/>.

Sunday, July 21, 2024, 9:30 am – 11 am, at Mel's Diner, 6708 Lonetree Blvd, Rocklin, CA, map at <https://goo.gl/maps/ZUY2gq72KkmkC4bU6>, details at <https://www.meetup.com/sacfan/events/301715994/>.

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 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 (see the links).



➤ Sunday Assembly & Potluck

Sunday, July 14, 2024, 11 am – 1 pm (doors open 10:30am, presentation at 11)

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. Featured presenter is **Paula Lee**, president of the Sacramento League of Women Voters. Note, bring a food dish to share if you wish – it's a potluck too!

Details at: <https://www.meetup.com/sacfan/events/301840270/>.

➤ Coffee and Community at Reason Center

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

Location: Reason Center, 1300 Ethan Way, Rm 675, Sac., see [map](#)

Come to the Reason Center Library for coffee, tea and treats. This event is just a casual conversation on topics of the day, and newcomers are welcome. Hope to see you soon!

Details at:



➤ Humanity Supper @ Colo's Southern Cafe (bi-monthly) Yummy :-)

Sunday, July 28, 2024, 4 pm - 6 pm

Location: Colo's Southern Café, 2326 Del Paso Blvd, Sacramento, map at <https://maps.app.goo.gl/nGSbF2hjRQXfL97bA>.

Here we go again. Time for a scrumptious early supper with the Black Humanists and Nonbelievers of Sacramento, such a friendly group! "BHNB" alternates between dinners and breakfasts each month. This event needs at least **4 RSVPs** to happen. So signup please.

Details at: <https://www.meetup.com/bhnb-sacramento/events/calendar/>.



➤ More Events – So many Calendars!

Really, there's more. And plans change, because we're human. So don't trust the list above. To learn of all those other events, please 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/>

❖ ❖ Secular Holidays this month ❖ ❖

➤ Indivisible Day

Thursday, July 4, 2024

In the state of Minnesota, former Governor Jess Ventura did something remarkable: he declared Independence Day to be **Indivisible Day**, a day in recognition of the separation of Church and State, and the vital role it has played in keeping our nation free and whole. For more information, see https://secularseasons.org/july/indivisible_day.html.



➤ World Population Day

Thursday, July 11, 2024

The Governing Council of the United Nations Development Programme established **World Population Day** in 1989, seeking to raise awareness of global population issues. The inspiration for this annual event was public interest in Five Billion Day, July 11, 1987, when the world's population reached approximately five billion people.

Visit the **World Population Clock** at <https://www.worldometers.info/world-population/>.



You can help. 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. 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.

Yes, I have a minute...

June 10, 2024, by Jim Underdown

"Got a minute to learn about Jesus?"

As I left the grocery store recently, I saw three young men walking around the parking lot in dress clothes. The one with a clipboard wore a suit and seemed to be training the others. They looked to me like either middle management surveying traffic flow, or some of Jesus's reps trolling for converts. It was

soon apparent that they were hunting for someone to save, and I was the game.

It's been a while since I've allowed myself to be pitched by cherry-faced evangelists, but I was in the mood, so when they asked me if I had a few minutes to chat about Jesus (or something along those lines) I stopped.

ME: I'm happy to talk to you guys, but you should know from the start that I've been a dyed-in-the-wool atheist for over 50 years. In fact, I do it for a living.

THEM: That doesn't bother us.

Turns out it did bother them.

I don't recall every bit of the ≈ eight minute conversation, but much of it centered one key point: When I mentioned not believing in miracles such as walking on water or rising from the dead, they equated my belief in science with their faith in a God.

ME: Science doesn't require faith. It requires evidence.

They asked if I believe atoms exist, and when I said yes, they argued that I can't see them, but still believe in them. (Incidentally, this kind of comeback is right out of their specious, oft-refuted, talking-point-playbook. Next they'll be telling me that the eye is too complex to have evolved, or that 10,000 monkeys typing will never write a Shakespeare play.)

ME: You can't see air either (the L.A. sky notwithstanding), but you know it's there. We have other means to know about things beyond our senses. By the way, you can see an atom – with an electron microscope.

They said science has been wrong about things in the past, and mentioned something humans believed in millennia ago that we now know to be wrong.

ME: First of all, science itself is arguably only about 500 years old. There wasn't really a systematic approach to learning about the universe and testing ideas about it before then. All the hallmarks of science like peer review, independent testing, transparency, verification, etc. are pretty modern developments. Second, science saying something is true is not the same as some unknown author of a 2000 year-old text saying something is true.

If I thought they would have listened, I might have mentioned that good scientists usually don't use words like "true" or "false." Careful scientists use language like "This is what the evidence shows" or "What is most likely the case." But most people don't understand probability or the nuance of tiny uncertainty scientists engage in. They want to know something for sure.

I might have also said that science isn't a static body of knowledge – it's a process by which we continually shape our understanding of the world.

One of them got a little snippy with me, and had to be reined-in by the guy with the clipboard. I bet the lad was not used to such open and thought-out opposition to his beliefs. Still, insulting me wasn't going to change my mind.

When they finally realized I was a lost cause, the parking lot proselytizers' eyes glazed over. I was obviously not going to be their curbside convert, and they weren't going to see the light and denounce religion. But I was rather enjoying myself.

Before the conversation ended, clipboard told me he'd gotten a degree in biology from an area school.

ME: How could that happen? Biology doesn't believe in miracles, and no university in the world worth its salt teaches creationism.

Before we could go down that rabbit hole, they abruptly said they had another appointment, and quickly walked away.

Well, well, well, that was fun – to see the evangelists make up a bogus excuse to get away from the quarry for a change.

[Reprinted with chuckles from the [Center For Inquiry Blog](http://www.centerforinquiry.org)]



Thanks,
Oglaf.com

This Month in Religious History

July 4, 1801

The Reverend David Austin, preaching a sermon to both houses of Congress, predicted the Second Coming of Christ as the logical outcome of the American Revolution. This is believed to be the first, but not the last, millennialist sermon preached to Congress. Many Congressmen of the time believed that we were living in the end times and that judgment was nigh, but it would be another eighty years before the idea of the Rapture was first breached, so most people don't read these sermons today because they don't have that great second act.

July 9, 1781

The Pennsylvania Quakers who decided to take up arms against the British, thereby violating their Quaker vows, decided to organize into the "Free Quakers" at Philadelphia so that maybe they could enforce their claim to "common property" with the Quakers who had stayed home. Demanding your rights in a broadside against fellow Quakers also wasn't very Quaker-like, so . . . strike two.

July 11, 1223

Pope Honorius III declared the famous "Portiuncula" indulgence, granting complete remission of all sins committed since baptism to anyone who visits the Church of Santa Maria de Portiuncula, at Assisi, from vespers August 1 to vespers August 2. This was controversial among clerics who thought the Pope was sucking up to St. Francis of Assisi.

July 27, 1787

The U.S. Congress awarded 10,000 acres of land on the Muskingum River in modern-day Ohio to the Moravian Brethren, for the purpose of "civilizing the Indians and promoting Christianity." Moravian Bishop John Ettwein had made an appeal on behalf of the Delaware Indians, who had been converted by the Moravians prior to the Revolutionary War but whose settlements had been wiped out by the British during the conflict, partly because they bought into the Moravian aversion to taking up arms. Whether this act of Congress was an example of the state supporting religion, or was simply an act of restoring land to peaceful Indian tribes, is a question that Christian conservatives and secular humanists are currently threatening to kill each other over.



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: Redoubtable Roger Zabkie
Vice-president: Marvelous Mynga Futrell
Secretary: Rapid Ruth Rezos
Treasurer & Registrar: Kinetic Ken Nahigian
Newsletter Editor: Fabulous Fran Evanisko
Event Coordinator: Prolific Pamela Rivera
Webmistress: Palpable Pat Kelley
Program chair: Super Susan McLean
Facebook page: Keen Kaeleigh Pontif
Directors at large:
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 & stuff.

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>.