



Donna Apidone spoke to AOF on July 28, soothing our election-year hysterics. Thank you Donna! (And thanks, Roger Z., for the pic.)

✧ ✧ This Month's Headliner Event ✧ ✧

➤ **Michael Miller: California & Delta Water, What You Know, What You Don't**

Sunday, Aug 25, 2024, 2 pm – 4 pm

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

Michael Miller will provide a multimedia presentation on some of the dilemmas of water in California not just in the water itself but the politics, the misunderstandings, the rules that govern distribution, environmental considerations and possible fixes.

This will be a wide ranging overview of water issues and misconceptions that abound in having to deal with water in the state and why we are where we are today. Michael will also go over some of the biggest misconceptions about some of the proposed projects and the politics that hamper the advancement of the projects.

Michael Miller's studies in college were psychology, theater, and accounting. All of these helped prepare him for his career(s). He worked for the state Department of Water Resources (DWR) Training Office. Next he became the tour coordinator for DWR, dealing with visiting dignitaries (governors, ministers, engineers etc.). This prepared him to design the Delta Tour Program which was a perfect fit for his engineer/science nerd side.



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

✧ ✧ Other Upcoming AOF Events ✧ ✧

➤ **Free Movie and Discussion**

Friday, August 9, 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. What movie? We can't say because of our [MPLC License](#) and certain legal nicities -- but here is a hint. This one is a 1980 adventure comedy with Robin Williams and Shelley Duvall: about a famous sailor man and his friends in the seaside town of Sweethaven. Family friendly. Also spinach friendly.



AOF co-sponsors the Movie Night events. 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 Reason Center always appreciates donations. We're just saying.

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

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, August 31, 2024, 9 am – 11 am

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

Contact: 916-805-9337 (Don Knutson), or see [Contact Page](#)

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. Note, Cal-Trans is now paying a stipend for our work!

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. Please review the CalTrans Highway Cleanup guidelines at <https://dot.ca.gov/programs/maintenance/adopt-a-highway/covid19>.

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



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

Some local *non*-AOF events worthy of your eyes. Just highlights. We know we'll catch hell for not listing someone's favorite event, so for more, *please* check the calendar links below. Seriously.

➤ Blasphemy Breakfasts and a Brunch

Saturday, August 10, 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/302233638/>.

Sunday, August 11, 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/301023315/>.

Sunday, August 18, 2024, 9:30 am – 11 am, at Mel's Diner, 6708 Lonetree Blvd, Rocklin, CA, map at <https://goo.gl/maps/ZUY2gq72KkmcC4bU6>, details at <https://www.meetup.com/sacfan/events/302408476/>.

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).



➤ Game Day

Saturday, August 10, 2024, 3 pm – 10 pm

Location: Elysium games, 4762 Manzanita Ave, Carmichael, map at <https://maps.app.goo.gl/TiiYDTD4fP6EGcRA8>.

A gathering to play board games and socialize. Bring some of your own games to share. The site is open for gaming all day, so come & leave when you wish. But no alcohol, no gambling allowed.

You may bring low-mess snacks if you would like, too. Chips + dip is good.

More details at: <https://www.meetup.com/sacfan/events/302278862/>.



➤ Sunday Assembly & Potluck

Sunday, August 11, 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. Bring a food dish to share if you wish – it's a potluck too!

Details: see <https://www.meetup.com/sacfan/events/302392567/>.

➤ Saturday Night Hangout

Saturday, Aug 10, 2024, 6 pm – 9 pm

Saturday, Aug 24, 2024, 6 pm – 9 pm

Location: Meeting by teleconference; to attend, just click the attendance link:

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

An online meetup on various Saturdays, at 6:00 PM Pacific Time. The first half hour is for greeting friends, catching up, welcoming newcomers and having fun. No politics please! Then games, trivia, movies. The list of options may grow.

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

➤ Meet & Greet at Reason Center

Sunday, August 18, 2024, 3 pm – 5 pm

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

Join us for stimulating conversation in a casual, friendly atmosphere. This meet & greet is perfect for newcomers to learn about our community. Optional: bring snacks to share. Or don't, it's all OK.

Details: see <https://www.meetup.com/reasoncenterevents/events/301927389/>.

➤ Coffee and Community at Reason Center

Sunday, August 25, 2024, 10 am – 11:30 am

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

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

➤ Humanity Breakfast

Sunday, August 25, 2024, 11 am - 1 pm

Location: Colo's Southern Café, 2326 Del Paso Blvd, Sac., map at <https://maps.app.goo.gl/CoyQoKArxN4EgDDJ6>.

Here we go again. Time for a scrumptious breakfast 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 **3 RSVPs** to happen, so sign up please.

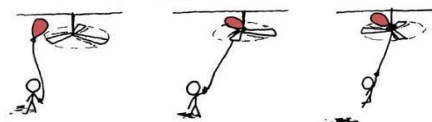
Details at: <https://www.meetup.com/bhnb-sacramento/events/301324956/>.

➤ 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/>

I WATCHED THE SCENE IN THE RESTAURANT FOR A FULL FIFTEEN MINUTES,
HOPING THIS WOULD HAPPEN:



A Specil Event from California Freethought Day

➤ Bad Faith Documentary

Saturday, August 17, 2024, 6:30 pm – 9:15 pm

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

California Freethought Day will host a screening of this important documentary, in the comfort and community of the Reason Center with a giant screen and incredible sound.

About the Film:

The forces tearing apart our democracy have never been more frightening or powerful, but who is actually behind them? **BAD FAITH** reveals how Christian Nationalist leaders have spread fear and anger for decades, distorting political issues into Biblical battles between good and evil. Financed through the secretive Council for National Policy, Christian Nationalists have succeeded in taking over the Republican Party, turning it into a powerful weapon to demolish democracy from within. Discover the origins of this organized grasp for power and the grassroots coalition of secular and interfaith leaders bravely confronting the forces threatening democracy.



★ **Special Guest**

Following the film, we'll be joined via Zoom by Kyle Spencer for Q&A. Kyle is a frequent contributor on MSNBC and CNN, and speaks frequently about right-wing culture and progressive activism. Her book, [Raising Them Right](#), explores how billionaires are building the most powerful youth movement the American right has ever seen. She is also the founding editor of a newsletter for journalists called [Reporting Right](#).

Additional Details

Registration required (fee \$10, and we anticipate selling out). Register at <https://givebutter.com/BadFaith2024>.

Snacks and Drinks: We'll have them for a small fee (via cash and credit).

Doors open at 6:30 PM for mingling. Documentary will start promptly at 7:00 PM following a brief welcome. The film is 90 minutes and guests are welcome to stick around and schmooze until RC closes up at 9:15 PM.

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.

✧ ✧ **Secular Holidays** ✧ ✧

➤ **Ingersoll Day**

Sunday, August 11, 2024

Ingersoll Day marks the birthday of [Robert Green Ingersoll](#), honoring the life and work of one of the most noted freethinkers in US history. Ingersoll was also the most successful orator in nineteenth century America, heard by more Americans than any human before the advent of motion pictures and radio. A leading political figure, he campaigned

against slavery and for the rights of women and minorities. They called him the "Great Agnostic." He attracted huge crowds to lectures that criticized religion and promoted freethought. Walt Whitman and Mark Twain greatly admired him.

Celebrate Ingersoll Day with a visit to [the Robert Green Ingersoll Birthplace Museum](#), or by reading excerpts from [the Complete Works of Ingersoll](#).

"When I became convinced that the universe is natural, that all the ghosts and gods are myths, there entered into my brain, into my soul, into every drop of my blood the sense, the feeling, the joy of freedom. The walls of my prison crumbled and fell. The dungeon was flooded with light and all the bolts and bars and manacles became dust. I was no longer a servant, a serf, or a slave. There was for me no master in all the wide world, not even in infinite space. I was free -- free to think, to express my thoughts -- free to live my own ideal, free to live for myself and those I loved, free to use all my faculties, all my senses, free to spread imagination's wings, free to investigate, to guess and dream and hope, free to judge and determine for myself . . . I was free! I stood erect and fearlessly, joyously faced all worlds."



-- **Robert Green Ingersoll**, "Why I Am An Agnostic"

Besides all the above (are you tired yet?), please **save the date** of **October 6, 2024**, for the annual [California Freethought Day](#) festival at the California State Capitol. More details on this next month.

The folks at California Freethought Day also plan two special evenings on **Friday, October 3rd** and **Saturday, October 4th**. Please mark your calendars for both – but for now, details are hush-hush. Stay tuned to know when tickets become available, and follow them @FreethoughtDay. Or watch <https://freethoughtday.org/>. It's complicated.



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
Advisor: Dependable David Herbert
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 95851-0182
- 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 is affiliated with the Alliance of Secular Humanist Societies (ASHS), Atheist Alliance of America (AAA), American Atheists (AA), American Humanist Association (AHA) and the Sacramento Coalition of Reason (SCoR).

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. Any who will treat others with respect and dignity may join.

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

Your humble editor is Fran Evanisko.

Letters, submissions? We love them! See: <http://www.aofonline.org/read/submission-guide.html>. (Booyah!)

The Bishop of Cyprus and his Miraculous Mules

SPYRIDION WAS AN uneducated shepherd who tended his flock in 4th-century Cyprus and was known for his good humour, kindness, and miracles. When he was appointed bishop to do some more metaphorical flock-tending there, he kept up the day job, too.

Refreshing, isn't it, to think that with the Roman Empire becoming Christian and church leaders elevated to palaces and political banquets, some of them were happy to keep their feet on the ground? Not if you're one of the other bishops, it's not.

I mean there's this very exciting council coming up at Nicea. We're all going to get together in the palace with the Emperor (wonderful man, you know, quite charming), and sort out the Christian faith, write a creed and expel those dreadful Arian heretics from the church.

Exactly what you don't need in a situation like this is some shepherd getting confused, saying the wrong thing and embarrassing everybody.

Nevertheless, Spy set off. He walked everywhere, but this time they persuaded him and his deacon, because of the grandness of the occasion, to ride a pair of mules, one white, one brown.

En route, he met a caravan of bishops heading to the council and joined them. They were less than delighted about this, and less than welcoming. In fact they got up in the middle of the night, cut the heads of his mules and set off without him.

But Spy also got up before sunrise. And when his deacon said, "Here, you'll never guess what they've done to our mules," instead of turning back, Spy told him to put the heads back on.

In the darkness, the deacon put each head in what looked like the right place, Spy made a sign, and the two animals got up "as if from a deep sleep." The snooty bishops were horrified when they caught them up – which is all the more understandable when you realize that in the dark the deacon put the heads on the wrong mules.

And so, somewhat alarmingly borne, Spyridion made it to Nicea to cast his vote for orthodoxy.

You may have guessed that Loose Canons has now departed the realms of reliable history for the happy land of saintly legend. And what rich pickings there are here.

But despite the apocryphal aspects of this account, I'm sure there are some important lessons here for all of us: orthodoxy always wins in the end, you can't keep a good man down, and don't leave a bishop alone with your donkeys.

Thanks [Ship of Fools](#) (Loose Canons)

