



Lamentably light attendance for Michael Miller's August 25 presentation on the dilemmas of water in California, but we all learned.

✧ ✧ **This Month's Headliner Event** ✧ ✧

➤ **Potluck Picnic in the Park**

Sunday, September 29, 2024, 2 pm – 4 pm

Location: Westwood Park, 8100 Butternut Drive, Citrus Heights, map at <http://mapq.st/3BhFpNz>.

Hobnob with us at AOF's *fourth* annual potluck picnic. This event is always a blast!

What should you bring? A picnicish dish to serve 6-8 people (picnicish, picnic-esque? someone help us here), just something portable and yummy. And your own *non*-alcoholic beverages (alcohol is a no-no in this park). BYO cushion too if you like -- picnic benches can be hard.

AOF will provide plates, cups, utensils, napkins, and cool water. The picnic tables are in the sweet sweet shade under a gazebo, and the restrooms are clean (we checked).

We will enjoy the beautiful afternoon, chat about things freethoughty or otherwise, and solve the world's problems. Feel free to invite family and friends, we're all chill about that.

Directions: From I-80 take exit 100 for Antelope Road. Go west on Antelope Road for 0.3 miles. Turn right onto Lichen Drive. At the second stop sign continue straight onto Butternut Drive. To find the picnic area, then turn right onto Treeleaf Way. See the gazebo on the right -- the one with crepe paper? That's it.

Contact: See our [Contact Page](#)

Parking is free and a breeze. The neighborhood has free parking, and there's a free parking lot. To get to the lot from Butternut Drive, turn right onto Treeleaf Way, then turn right onto Cloverleaf Way. See the map, the map, the map.

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



✧ ✧ Other Upcoming AOF Events ✧ ✧

➤ AOF Board of Directors Meeting

Tuesday, September 10, 2024, 7 pm – 8 pm

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

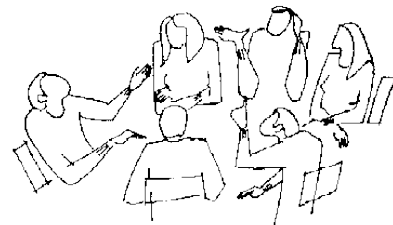
It's an AOF planning meeting, mainly for AOF directors & officers but open to all. These happen as required, and are a lot more fun than they sound.

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: See <http://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. (A good kind of bomb.)



➤ Free Movie and Discussion

Friday, September 13, 2024, 7 pm – 9 pm

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

Movie Hint: A woman finds herself inexplicably cut off from all human contact when an invisible, unyielding wall suddenly surrounds the landscape. From 2012. (We can't name the name, but you can figure it out from that.)

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 you know, Reason Center always appreciates donations. We're just saying.



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, September 28, 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 attention. We won't list them all, just some. For more, please check the calendar links below.

➤ Saturday Night Hangout

Saturday, Sep 7, 2024, 6 pm – 9 pm, details: <https://www.meetup.com/sacfan/events/302913159/>

Saturday, Sep 21, 2024, 6 pm – 9 pm, details: <https://www.meetup.com/sacfan/events/303185653/>

Saturday, Oct 5, 2024, 6 pm – 9 pm, details: <https://www.meetup.com/sacfan/events/hprbjtygcnbhb/>

Location: Online event! Meet 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/hprbjtygclbgc/>.

➤ Blasphemy Breakfasts and a Brunch

Sunday, Sep 8, 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/299832060/>.

Saturday, Sep 14, 2024, 9:30 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/302233647/>.

Sunday, Sep 15, 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/299855550/>.

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, Sep 8, 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>.

Come to Reason Center to celebrate Sunday Assembly Sacramento's **10th Anniversary!** The speaker will be **David Diskin**, the founding President of our chapter. **David** worked tirelessly for six years to make SAS a thriving community, and now is the **President of California Freethought Day**. Bring a food dish to share if you wish – it's a potluck too!

Details: <https://www.meetup.com/reasoncenterevents/events/302810664/>.

➤ Uncovering the Hidden Legacy of Slavery

Saturday, Sep 14, 2024, 9:30 am - 4 pm

Location: Unitarian Universalist Society of Sacramento, 2425 Sierra Boulevard, Sacramento, map at <https://maps.app.goo.gl/ZhynMGXFmDsVth6U8>.

An unforgettable journey of reconciliation and healing for a dark time in American history, a transformative one-day event presented by the [Spiritual Life Center](#) and facilitated by a dynamic husband and wife team, Dain and Constance Perry. Donations requested to offset costs, "but no one will be turned away." Please see link for more.

Details and Signup: <https://allevents.in/sacramento/uncover-the-hidden-legacy-of-slavery-in-america/200026854587805>.

➤ California Coastal Cleanup Action Day

Saturday, Sep 21, 2024, 9 am - 12 noon

Location: TBD (to be determined, but somewhere in Sacramento).

Join the secular community as we de-litter our lakes, beaches, rivers, and parks through [California's Coastal Cleanup program](#). After the cleanup, California Freethought Day will offer a \$10 per person (with limitations) reimbursement for brunch! We can all gather to eat and chat after all that work! Please register to learn the location.

Details: see <https://freethoughtday.org/programs/action/>.

➤ Coffee and Community at Reason Center

Sunday, Sep 22, 2024, 10 am – 11:30 am

Location: Reason Center, 1300 Ethan Way, Suite 675, Sacramento, 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/303199036/>.



➤ Humanity Supper

Sunday, Sep 22, 2024, 4 pm - 6 pm

Location: TBD (to be determined).

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 **3 RSVPs**, so sign up please. **Details at:** <https://www.meetup.com/bhnb-sacramento/events/301325046/>.

➤ **Sacramento Skeptics in the Pub**

Sunday, Oct 6, 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/drcrkygcnbjb/>.

➤ **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 (RfR) Sacramento, <https://www.meetup.com/RfR-Sacramento-CA/events/calendar/>
- Sacramento Skeptics events, <https://www.meetup.com/sacskeptics/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. 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** ✧ ✧

➤ **World Cleanup Day**

Sunday, Friday, September 20, 2024

In the United States, [World Cleanup Day](#) (WCD) is the third Saturday of September, which due to calendar vagaries can drift from Sept 15 to Sept 21. But eco-groups urge us to think of all of September as World Cleanup Month. And that's a great idea.

The idea of WCD began in the small country of Estonia in 2008, when 50,000 people united to clean up the entire country in just five hours. On that day, a bottom-up civic movement was born. It spread virally around the globe, capturing the hearts off people worldwide, who followed suit with the same ambitious ‘one country, one-day’ formula. By 2018 it had united 18 million people across 157 countries and territories.

Today the simple idea is a global movement with millions of volunteers and charismatic leaders. The simple act of cleaning has bound together people and groups that would otherwise never unite to work towards the same goal. Civil society, governments and global corporations, women in Saudi Arabia, people defying war in Yemen and Syria, Muslims, Jews, Hindus and Christians, men and women, children.

Why? Because every human has a place they call Home, be it a mansion, a street, a hut or a cardboard box. Then there are the cities, countries, and regions we call home; the planet we call home. When the Estonians successfully cleaned their



home in 5 hours, the world took notice. The simplicity of the idea and the 'let's do it' attitude took off and the rest, as they say, is history.

After all, anyone can pick up trash. But World Cleanup Day has become much more than that. Daycares, schools, companies, government officials – the old, the young, the rich, the poor, the able and less able – everyone has contributed. Because they can. Because they wanted to be involved in making their home a better place. Because they were given an opportunity to help. Because they belong to a community, and the community belongs to us.

How can you help? Go to <https://www.worldcleanupday.us> or <https://www.worldcleanupday.org/>, find your local contacts, register for a Cleanup, and rise early that day to help to beautify your parks, trails, beaches, mountains, and open spaces. The world will be better for it, and you will be a better person.

➤ Ask an Atheist Day

Thursday, September 19, 2024

[National Ask an Atheist Day](#) is a movable secular holiday that occurs twice each year -- first on the 3rd Thursday of April (which can be anywhere from April 15 to April 21), then on the 3rd Thursday of September (from Sept 15 to Sep 21). As if atheists don't have enough to do already.

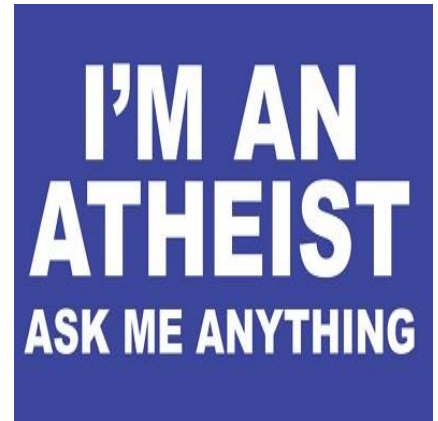
"NAaA Day" is an opportunity for secular groups across the country to dispel stereotypes about atheism and to encourage constructive, courteous dialogue between believers and nonbelievers. And it is an opportunity for the general public—particularly people of faith—to approach non-theists and ask questions about secular life. Please don't be afraid to spark up a discussion with us, we won't bite. Most don't, anyway.

The first event was in February of 2011, when members of the [Secular Student Alliance](#) (SSA) at the University of Illinois set up a table with a sign that said "Ask an Atheist." The next month an article appeared in the [Friendly Atheist website](#), written by a "Guest Contributor" (probably an SSA member), saying the event was a smashing success and the Illinois group hoped to take the day nationally. "The SSA is ready to help," it added. Since then, NAaA Day has occurred across the nation each April since, and soon in September as well.

Today it is challenging to estimate how many atheists are in the world. A 2015 poll claimed about 11% of the world's population are atheists, and a 2012 poll claimed the number to be 13% (both WIN/Gallup International polls). A BBC poll from 2004 put the number at 8%. Europe and Asia seem to have the largest number of atheists. In 2015, 61% of Chinese citizens identified as atheists.

How to observe the day. If you call yourself an atheist, you can celebrate the day in a variety of ways. For example, set up a table where believers and others can come up to you and ask you questions about atheism, secular living, and your beliefs (or nonbeliefs). You can [email](#) the SSA for supplies for your table, such as brochures, [stickers](#), posters, and flyers. You could also wear the stickers and put flyers up on campus (flyers could be put up before the day as well). You could organize an "ask an atheist" panel event, or go on a radio station and have an "ask an atheist" segment where listeners are able to call in and ask you questions about atheism. When posting on social media, use the hashtag #askanatheist.

For more about the day and how to participate, take a look at the [Ask An Atheist Day Activity Guide](#).



➤ Talk Like a Pirate Day

Thursday, September 19, 2024

Avast ye lubbers. International [Talk Like a Pirate Day](#) is a day to show your Piratude. Created in 1995 by John Baur and Mark Summers, promulgated to worldwide popularity by humorist Dave Barry in a syndicated column, this is a secular holiday we can celebrate in many ways: garb like pirates, talk like pirates, swill grog like pirates, stagger and fall down like pirates. What's grog? Never mind, just find some and knock it back.

Then haul your keel, shiver your timbers, and do wha' ever else seem right and proper, 'cause this be a day to celebrate. More info ahoy, [here](#).

Other Piratery links:

How to Talk like a Pirate, instructions at <http://www.yarr.org.uk/talk/>.

Translate text into Pirate Talk at <http://funtranslations.com/pirate>.



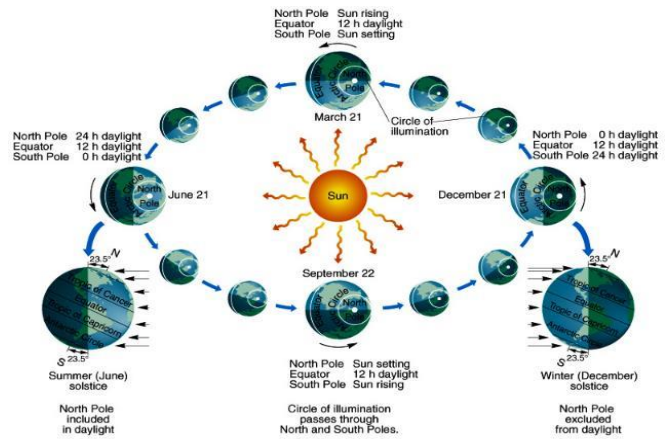
➤ Equinox (September)

Sunday, September 22, 2024

The **September Equinox** is one of two days in the calendar year when day almost equal the night hours. In the northern hemisphere it is also the first day of Autumn or Fall (Gregorian calendar), called the Autumnal Equinox. (In the southern hemisphere it is the first day of Spring.)

The Autumnal Equinox marks when green things begin to shed, when growth which was young in the spring has reached maturity. Animals prepare for winter, tree leaves turn colors, and the air takes a chill. In most cultures this a time for harvest and taking stock of life's fragility. It is a time when people begin noticing the waning hours of daylight in anticipation of the winter. Since this time of year is one of the most temperate, it is also a good time to reflect on the meaning of life.

In every culture the Autumnal Equinox signals the return of weather that favors slowing down, introspection, and conservation. Many cultures celebrate the harvest as a means to defeat the starvation brought on by winter. It is also a time closely associated with the dead. Though the dead do not return to life nor walk the earth this time of the year, it is well to remember or memorialize those who are no longer with us. For freethinkers the Autumnal Equinox is a great time to celebrate the lives of those who contributed to the freethought movement. It is also a perfect day to contemplate your own thoughts on the meaning you invest in life, and share those thoughts with others.



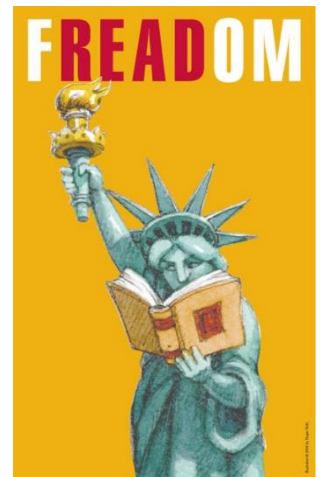
➤ Banned Book Week

Sunday, Sep 22 - Saturday, Sep 28, 2024

September's end marks [Banned Books Week](#), a celebration of the Freedom to Read, established by the American Library Association in 1981 in response to growing attempts to ban books in public libraries across the country. First observed in 1982, we celebrate it each year during the last week starting in September, to remind our fellow citizens not to take for granted their freedom to read the written word.

Every year bookstores and libraries across the United States celebrate Banned Books Week with displays of and readings from books that have been banned or threatened throughout history. Such works range from the *Bible* and Thomas Paine's *The Age of Reason* to Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, Mark Twain's *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* and J.K. Rowling's *Harry Potter* series, and has included books on atheism, science, tolerance, social issues, love and sex, and philosophy. Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Thomas Paine, Voltaire, Aristophanes, Margaret Sanger, Mary Shelley, Ambrose Bierce, Charles Darwin, George Eliot, Mark Twain and John Locke were all victims of censorship during their lifetimes and still face censorship in some sections of the world today.

Banned Books Week stands as a reminder that freedom is precious, that without constant diligence and defiance we can lose it, even in the United States. If anything this should motivate freethinkers everywhere to read banned books, discuss them, and protect the rights of all Americans to read what they want, when they want, in libraries across the country.



Family News

Merle E. Simonsma, Mar 10, 1926 - Aug 24, 2024. For sixty-two years the supportive husband of Betty Simonsma (d. Feb 2014), founder of Atheists and Other Freethinkers. Merle & Betty hosted many early events. Please see his memorial at <https://www.legacy.com/us/obituaries/sacbee/name/merle-simonsma-obituary?id=56182993>. Thank you, Merle.

☆☆☆ John de Lancie benefit performance in Sacramento ☆☆☆

Friday, October 4, 2024, at the [Jean Runyon Little Theatre](#), 1515 J Street, Sacramento (doors open 6:30 pm)

Best known for his role as "Q" in the Star Trek franchise, John de Lancie will appear live in Sacramento for one night only, performing, "The Dover Panda Trial". This original radio play, written by Mr. de Lancie and Kristen Tregar, reenacts the 2005 trial in which evangelicals took over the Dover, PA school board and tried to replace the approved biology textbook with Intelligent Design ("soft" Creationism). The result was a lawsuit, and this is the exciting story of the trial.

[California Freethought Day](#) presents this event. Following the performance, John de Lancie and Kristin Tregar will hold an open forum with the audience. Mr. de Lancie will also be selling autographed pictures to benefit California Freethought Day. *Tickets required.* Register at <https://givebutter.com/DoverTrial>.

☆☆☆ Save the Date: California Freethought Day ☆☆☆

Sunday, October 6, 2024, at the West Steps of the California State Capitol (11 am – 5:30 pm)

Free to attend, an annual public jubilee and gala hosted by the Freethought Day Committee, celebrating free speech and free thought, civic engagement, enthusiasm for science, social justice, and the separation of church and state. Anyone can join the fun, but registering will get you extra goodies. Register at <https://freethoughtday.org/main/registration/>. General information at <https://freethoughtday.org/>.



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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 Pamella 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>.

Your humble editor (yay) is Fran Evanisko.