



Wasn't that a great event? Judy Saint wowed us with her presentation on February 23. Hope you were there!

✧ ✧ This Month's Headliner Event ✧ ✧

➤ **Plastics Are Everywhere: A Presentation by David Lewis**

March 23, 2025, 2 pm – 4 pm (Doors open 1:45 pm.)

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

Yipes, it's true. David Lewis will tell us about the *worst* polluting material in the world, and if your brain starts to melt, blame it on plastics. Deborah Seilor, President of the Renaissance Society Board, will precede David with special remarks.

Plastics are indeed everywhere, from your toothpaste and toothbrush in the morning, the packaging for your morning breakfast items, the clothes you wear, the bottle of water you drink and the synthetic rubber in your tires. Probably your spinal fluid now too.

Plastic production is estimated to grow by 300 percent over the next 20 years. It is also the worst polluting material in the world with a dump truck of plastic going into the ocean every hour of the day. *Every hour.* By 2050 there will be more plastics in the ocean than fish.

David Lewis has earned his chops: 35 years in Silicon Valley, he began with a single transistor and finished with 200 million per silicon chip. As Senior Manager of New Product Development, David transferred new technologies worldwide. He is currently Vice President of Big History Club in Lincoln, CA and coordinator of the Wednesday Science Series, Renaissance Society, Sac State University. He is currently Vice President of Big History Club in Lincoln, CA and coordinator of the Wednesday Science Series, Renaissance Society, Sac State University.

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

A free event with free parking. Bring snacks or a beverage to share if you can, and maybe wrinkled bills for the donation jug (we don't accept plastic, heh). AOF will provide cool, clear water.



✧ ✧ Other Upcoming AOF Events ✧ ✧

➤ **AOF Board of Directors Meeting**

Tuesday, March 11, 2025, 7 pm – 8 pm

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

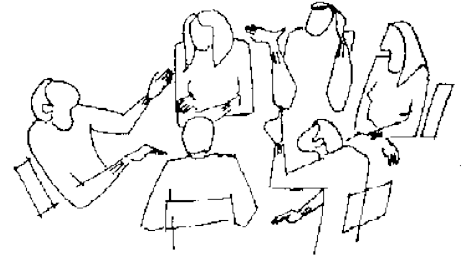
It's an AOF planning meeting, mainly for AOF directors & officers but open to all. These happen as required, and are a lot more fun than they sound.

Please 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: <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 bomb.)



➤ Free Movie and Discussion

Friday, March 14, 2025, 7 pm – 9 pm

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

It's a fabulous 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 ... well we can't say because of our [MPLC License](#) and certain legal folderol, but we can hint. It's a 2024 war drama about the 6888th Central Postal Directory Battalion, an all-black, all-female battalion, in World War II. It won five NAACP Image Awards, including Outstanding Motion Picture and Outstanding Actress in a Motion Picture. It also won an Academy Award for Best Original Song

AOF and Reason Center are co-sponsors. We provide 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 a bit. No fee to attend (but we always appreciate donations).

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!



✧ ✧ Other Upcoming Non-AOF Events ✧ ✧

Other local events worthy of your attention. We won't list them all, just highlights. For more, please check the calendar links below.

➤ Blasphemy Breakfasts and a Brunch

● **Saturday, March 8, 2025, 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/306207537/>

● **Sunday, March 9, 2025, 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/306208517/>.

● **Sunday, March 16, 2025, 9:30 am – 11 am**, at Mel's Diner, 6708 Lonetree Blvd, Rocklin, CA, map at <https://goo.gl/maps/ZUY2qq72Kkmc4bU6>, details at <https://www.meetup.com/sacfan/events/306214833/>



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).

➤ Saturday Night Hangouts

Saturdays, March 8, March 22 and April 5, 2025, 6 pm – 9 pm

Location: An online event! Meet by glorious teleconference. To attend, just click the attendance link at meeting time: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83092441353?pwd=Wmp6RVIUR1Q0dFZZMIFQUIVodTN0dz09>.

The first half hour is for greeting friends, catching up, welcoming newcomers and having fun. No politics please! Then games, trivia, movies, discussion. Options may grow.

Details at: <https://www.meetup.com/reasoncenterevents/events/305964998/>.

➤ Sunday Assembly & Potluck

Sunday, March 9, 2025, 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 this time is **Gregory Dilts**, a clinical psychology PhD student at Fielding Graduate University and a longtime Sacramento resident. He will speak about the perceived benefits of Sunday Assembly in the US cultural context.

As always, families are welcome and childcare is provided. Besides the speaker, it will feature a short Doing Your Best presentation by a member, a time for members to share their Milestones, and a potluck. Please bring a dish to share unless you are a newcomer. Donuts and coffee are provided. Hope to see you.

Details: see <https://www.meetup.com/sacfan/events/306227449/>.

➤ **LitraCheer**

Saturday, March 15, 2025, 11 am – 1 pm

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

Reason Center is jazzed to continue our in-person LitraCheer discussions in our library's seating areas. Come and enjoy the weekend afternoon by discussing books with fellow thinkers.

Everyone will get a chance to share their ideas about any book of their choice—any genre, fiction or nonfiction. It's a great way to keep abreast of what like-minded people are reading.

Follow common sense decency in choice of books, avoid marketing pitches, and generally be nice. Focus on the "cheer" part of the event. Optional to bring your snacks to add to our complementary treats – enough to share.

Details: see <https://www.meetup.com/sacfan/events/306413284/>.



➤ **Ancient Christian Study Group**

Sunday, March 16, 2025, 12 pm – 2 pm

Location: *Mast Coffee* at 1430 28th Street, Sacramento, map at <https://maps.app.goo.gl/SqEAdDZApLpSHfGZ7>.

The history of ancient Christianity is an endlessly fascinating topic. Don Fox and Steve Thoreson will facilitate this meetup to review 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 many other related topics. 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/306386443/>.

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

Saturday, March 22, 2023, 3:30 pm – 5:00 pm

An online book discussion open to all. The topic will be **Black Nerd Problems** by William Evans and Omar Holmon, a vibrant collection of pop culture essays and commentary. RSVP and the location will be revealed.

Details: see <https://www.meetup.com/bhnb-sacramento/events/304991325/>.

➤ **Coffee and Community at Reason Center**

Sunday, March 23, 2025, 11 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/306520702/>.



➤ **Sacramento Skeptics in the Pub**

Sunday, April 6, 2025, 6 pm – 8 pm

Location: Duke's Pints & Plates, 510 La Sierra Dr, Sac., Back Patio; 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/306516203/>.

➤ **More Events – So many Calendars!**

There's more. Much 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/>

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. Or call us! (Reasonable honorariums paid to speakers.)

Volunteer?

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

✧ ✧ **Secular Holidays** ✧ ✧

➤ **International Woman's Day**

Saturday, March 8, 2025

International Women's Day (IWD), an international celebration, honors the social, economic, and political achievements made by women everywhere.

This secular holiday dates back to the early 1900's, a time of turbulent growth in the industrialized world that saw growing demands for women to have the right to vote. Among other relevant historical events, it commemorates the "Triangle Shirtwaist Factory Fire", on March 25, 1911, in New York City, where over 140 women lost their lives.

Born from the socialist and labor movements, International Women's Day has grown to become a global day of recognition and celebration across developed and developing countries alike. Promoted by the United Nations since 1975, International Women's Day is, in the words of the UN, "a day when women are recognized for their achievements without regard to divisions, whether national, ethnic, linguistic, cultural, economic or political. It is an occasion for looking back on past struggles and accomplishments, and more importantly, for looking ahead to the untapped potential and opportunities that await future generations of women."

For decades, IWD has increased in strength annually. Women's organizations and governments around the world have celebrated IWD annually on the 8th of March by holding large-scale events that honor women's progress and highlight areas where women's rights still need to be advanced. IWD is an occasion that can be celebrated by all community groups that believe women's rights are human rights.

Each year on March 8, hundreds of International Women's Day events occur all around the world. IWD events range from small random informal gatherings to large-scale highly organized events. All celebrate women's advancement and highlight the need for continued vigilance and action. The day is about honoring all women and their accomplishments, this can be done by taking part in a large organized activity or by simply honoring the women in one's life with flowers, a small gift, or even a thank you.



➤ **Pi Day**

Friday, March 14, 2024

Pi, Greek letter (π), is of course the symbol for the ratio of the circumference of a circle to its diameter. **$\pi = 3.1415926535...$** (This is π to just ten decimal places; it is an irrational number, meaning the digits continue *infinitely* without repeating.) Math enthusiasts around the world celebrate Pi Day on March 14th, i.e. 3/14 in the

American dating convention, since the first three digits of PI are 3.14 (March 14 also happens to be Albert Einstein's birthday). "Pi Moment" occurs on that day just before 3:10 pm (more precisely, 15:9:26.5).

The San Francisco Exploratorium celebrated the first **Pi Day** in 1988, with staff and public marching around one of its circular spaces, and then consuming fruit pies. Since then, the museum has added pizza pies to its Pi Day menu. The founder of Pi Day, the "Prince of Pi," is Larry Shaw, now retired from the Exploratorium, but still helping with the celebrations. The Massachusetts Institute of Technology often mails out its acceptance letters to be delivered to prospective students on Pi Day.

Celebrate Pi Day by doing anything to get students interested in mathematics. Teachers can organize many unique activities for students to generate interest. It is also used to inform students as well as the rest of the public about Pi, its history and applications. Pi Day parties in math and science classes are common, utilizing different types of pies, all the while teaching about Pi.



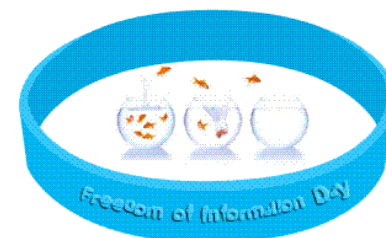
➤ Freedom of Information Day Sunday, March 16, 2025

[Freedom of Information \(FOI\) Day](#) is an annual event on March 16, the birthday of James Madison, widely regarded as the Father of the Constitution and a foremost advocate for openness in government.

On this day, the [American Library Association](#) presents the James Madison Award and the Eileen Cooke State & Local Madison Award to recognize those individuals or groups that have championed, protected, and promoted public access to government information and the public's right to know.

The **James Madison Award** – Named for President James Madison, the award was established in 1986 and is presented annually on the anniversary of his birth. That award is designed to celebrate an individual or group that has brought awareness to these issues at the national level.

The **Eileen Cooke State & Local Madison Award** – Named for Eileen Cooke, former director of the ALA's Washington Office, this award honors an extraordinary leader who has built local grassroots awareness of the importance of access to information. Cooke herself was a tireless advocate for the public's right to know and a mentor to many librarians and trustees.



➤ Sunshine Week Sunday, March 16 – Saturday, March 22, 2025

[Sunshine Week](#) includes Freedom of Information Day (March 16), the birthday of James Madison, and runs through that calendar week. Madison was the principal author of the US Constitution and the Bill of Rights which guarantee the rights of citizens. Sunshine Week stands as an initiative to open discussions about the important or open government and the freedom of information.



Sunshine Week dates back to 2002 when the Florida Society of Newspaper Editors launched Sunshine Sunday in response to efforts by some Florida legislators to create new exemptions to the state's public records law. After Florida's initiation on this topic, other states followed its course. The American Society of Newspaper Editors launched Sunshine Week in March 2005. It has become an annual event.

Sunshine Week is not restricted to journalists. Anyone can be involved: students, teachers, bloggers, private citizens, public officials and non-profit groups. The only requirement is to engage in a public discussion either small or large about the importance of open government. A discussion can take many forms: a large public forum, a classroom discussion, an article or an editorial. The idea of participation is not about how much, but about actually being involved.

Examples of the myriad ways journalists, students, lawmakers and public groups marked Sunshine Week in 2005 and 2006 are collected in [SUNSHINE WEEK - March 16-22, 2025 - National Today](#) (click the link).

➤ Equinox (March) Thursday, March 20, 2025

The **March Equinox** is one of two days in the calendar year when day and night hours are nearly equal; in the northern hemisphere, it is also the first day of Spring (Gregorian calendar).

Annual seasons exist because of two planetary occurrences:

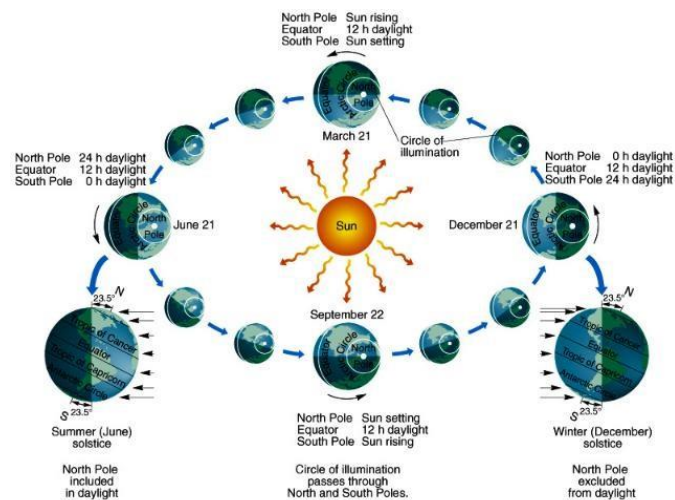
- 1) a 23.5° tilt of the earth's axis, which makes the earth rotate like a gyroscope, so it points continuously in a fixed direction-toward the area of space near the North Star
- 2) the earth continuously revolves around the sun in an elliptical orbit-once every 365.25 of our solar days.

So, for half of the year the Southern Hemisphere is more exposed to the sun than the Northern Hemisphere, and for the other half of the year the reverse is true. At noontime in the Northern Hemisphere the sun appears highest in the sky during summer and lowest in the sky during winter.

The Vernal (Spring) Equinox is almost exactly halfway between the winter and summer solstices, and in the sky the sun appears about midway between its highest and lowest points. It is one of the two times during the year when day and night are almost exactly 12 hours long, and very close to being equal to one another. The other day is the Autumnal Equinox, which usually falls on or near the first day of Autumn (September 22-23 northern hemisphere / March 20-21 southern) in the Gregorian calendar.

The First Day of Spring has been a time of celebration throughout recorded Western history. Most ancient Mediterranean Pagan religions had some sort of festival at or around the time of the Vernal Equinox. The celebrations were a way to rejoice in the rebirth of nature and to ritually act out this seasonal change, from the symbolic death of the earth in winter to its resurrection through the budding and blooming that came after the equinox. Many of these religions had stories of a man-god, born of a virgin, who was killed and reborn at this time each year, and this day was often connected to the worship of many fertility goddesses with such names as Ostara, Astarte, Eostre, Ishtar, and Ostra. The name for the modern Christian Easter holiday originated from these spring celebrations.

In every culture the Vernal Equinox signals the return of weather that favors our ability to grow agricultural crops, and for this reason we have associated it with the "rebirth" of our ability to perpetuate ourselves. It is understandable why we have chosen to celebrate such a momentous occasion, and why it has come to represent "rebirth" in a variety of contexts. For freethinkers the Vernal Equinox is a great time to celebrate the rebirth of Western art, philosophy, and culture with secular themes after centuries of religious domination. It is also a perfect day to celebrate the accomplishments of intellect, reason, and logic, and a time to renew connections to our intellectual past as well as renew promises to continue striving to enlighten and improve the human condition.



➤ Atheist Coming-Out Day Sunday, March 21, 2025

Atheist Day or **Atheist Coming-Out Day** is a relatively new global secular holiday declared in 2019 by the [Freedom From Religion Foundation](#) in partnership with the [Atheist Republic](#). In the words of the declaration:

"We atheists and atheist allies hereby declare that from now on, March 23rd is Atheist Day. We recognize the struggle of atheists to live authentic lives in many parts of the world. The struggle to openly affirm one's atheism. The fear of intolerant governments, mobs, and religious zealots.

"On March 23rd we shall take a stand for our right to be treated equal and for those of us in countries where atheists are persecuted and live under a threat of death. From every city in every country in the world we shall be one voice, a voice of reason."



The Pope who wouldn't stay in his grave

IF MUCH OF THE HISTORY of the medieval papacy is the squabbles of equally obnoxious rival vicars of Christ deposing each other (and that's not a particularly big if), it reached a bizarre new low when Pope Formosus died in the year 896.

His successor died of gout within 15 days. Next up was Stephen VI, who hated Formosus with a hate you wouldn't believe. Taking to a new extreme the idea that revenge is a dish best served cold, he dug up the late Pontiff and put him on trial.

In full papal regalia, Formosus revisited the papal throne to face charges of perjury, coveting and dodgy dealing. Rather than taking whatever was the medieval equivalent of the fifth amendment, as one might expect, Formosus answered all charges, through the mouthpiece of a Roman deacon. All the same, he was found guilty. All his acts and ordinations were cancelled, and he was stripped and thrown into the River Tiber.

It seems, however, that the corpse was supernaturally preserved, found its way out of the river and started working miracles in the nearby countryside. This was not good for Pope Stephen. Rome rose up in rebellion, sacked him and put him in prison, where he was quietly strangled.

Formosus was discreetly reburied by his fans, but then raised again two Popes later. This time his exhausted corpse was dressed up and buried a third time, with maximum ceremony and all the trimmings, in St Peter's.

[Thanks to [Ship of Fools](#) for these historical tidbits.]



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 Rivera
Vice-president: Marvelous Mynga Futrell
Secretary: Rapid Ruth Rezos
Treasurer & Registrar: Kinetic Ken Nahigian
Webmistress: Palpable Pat Kelley
Event Coordinator: Pamella Rivera
Program chair: Super Susan McLean
Facebook page: Keen Kaeleigh Pontif
Directors at large:
Fran Evanisko, Roger Zabkie, David Herbert

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 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.

Your humble editor is Fran Evanisko.

Letters, submissions? We love them! See:

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