

AOF News & Views - Newsletter for April 2025



Plastics Are Everywhere: A Presentation by David Lewis at the March 2025 AOF Event. Thanks, David!

♦ ♦ This Month's Headliner Event ♦ ♦

➤ AOF at Sacramento Earth Day

Sunday, April 27, 2025, 11 am - 4 pm

Location: Southside Park, Sacramento, map at https://maps.app.goo.gl/gFHjg7pRybJwLZn89.

It's <u>Sacramento Earth Day</u>, the largest Earth Day festival in the Central Valley, hosted each year by the <u>Environmental Council of Sacramento</u> (ECOS), and a nicer team of squeaky liberal tree-huggers you could never hope to meet. Free to all, Sac Earth Day provides you with fun, games, music, info on healthy gardens and sustainability, and a chance to meander in fresh air and enjoy the cheerful cacophony of every genre and crackpot calling to you at once. And once again, AOF will proudly sponsor and table, adding to the hubbub and crackpottery.

Find it all on the central green in beautiful <u>Southside Park</u>, where experts will advise you on Build Green concepts — education, climate, water, gardening, and habitat. It will inspire action and advocacy to move our world toward sustainability.

As you meander, visit *us* of course. Stop by the AOF table to schmooze. It may take effort to find us, but you'll have fun looking. And we get lonely you know. In fact, if you can volunteer to join us for an hour or two, contact the AOF president now at the email link below. Just say what hour(s) you can spare to help us table.



Sacramento Earth Day: a maelstrom and kaleidoscope of art, live music, vegan-friendly food trucks, cute dogs, assorted cults, earnest screeds, aged hippies, tables piled with candy and free swag, and more. What a delight. Join us!

Contact for details: Email "president (at) aofonline (dot) org", or contact AOF at https://www.aofonline.org/contact.html. We did free, right? Details at: https://www.ecosacramento.net/sacearthday/.

♦ Other Upcoming AOF Events ♦ ♦

> Film and Discussion Night at Reason Center

Friday, April 11, 2025, 7 pm - 9 pm

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

A fabulous 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 title is a secret because of our MPLC License and the stodgy rule of law – but we can slip you a hint. From 1971, it is a film starring the late great Gene Hackman and Roy Scheider, a dark look at New York City's crime-ridden days. A pair of NYPD detectives in the Narcotics Bureau stumble onto a heroin smuggling ring based in Marseilles, but stopping them and capturing their leaders proves an elusive goal.

No fee to attend, but we do appreciate donations to Reason Center. We also encourage a post-film discussion, which makes it educational if you stretch the word.

The movie team provides popcorn and other munchies - OK to bring your own snacks too. 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, April 12, 2025, 9 am - 11 am

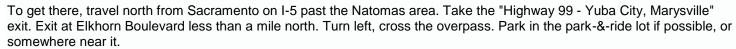
Location: Near W. Elkhorn Blvd & Hwy 99, map at https://goo.gl/maps/zw3Rwct9yR52.

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. 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.



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

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).

> Davis Community Meal – Feed the Hungry

Tuesday, April 29, 2025, 4 pm - 7 pm

Location: St. Martin's Episcopal Church hall, 640 Hawthorne Lane, Davis, 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? Pshaw, none required. The Davis Community Meals team will perform all the food prep and kitchen work. Our job is simply to set up chairs & tables, serve, smile, put things away at the end, and clean a bit (with a minimum of mopping). Extra points if you can arrive for setup, but if you can't, that's OK, any help is good help. Setup begins about 4:30 p.m., food service at about 5:45. At 6:30 we clean, leaving the hall as we found it.

For details, please see https://daviscommunitymeals.org/.





♦ Other Upcoming Events ♦ ♦

Some nifty local *non*-AOF events worthy of your attention. We won't list them all, just highlights. For more, please check the calendar links below.

Saturday Night Hangouts

Saturdays, April 5, April 19 and May 3, 2025, 6 pm - 9 pm

Location: An online event! Meet online, by 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/sacfan/events/306763799/.

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/.

➤ Blasphemy Breakfasts and a Brunch

- Saturday, April 12, 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/306882714/.
- Sunday, April 13, 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/306900837/.
- Sunday, April 20, 2025, 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/306247102/.

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/Brunch." 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, April 13, 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. The Speaker: **Laura Stillmunkes**. Laura is the Executive Director of Capital Adoptive Families (CAFA), an organization dedicated to supporting adoptive, kinship, and guardianship families to help children thrive in permanent homes. With a degree in business, Laura brings both a strategic and compassionate approach to her leadership role.

Laura has been with CAFA for 16 years, starting as a volunteer, and has played an integral role in its growth. Under her leadership, CAFA has expanded from a small organization offering a single support group to a resource hub that provides various programs, including respite care, wraparound services, multiple support groups, and linkages to critical services.

Details: see https://www.meetup.com/sacfan/events/306902595/.

Note, please bring food to share. It's a potluck too!

➤ Roy Zimmerman at Reason Center

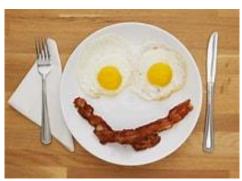
Sunday, April 13, 2025, 3 pm - 4:30 pm

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

Not a free event. But join us anyway, it's worth it! Roy Zimmerman writes funny, socially conscious songs. He has sung them on stages, screens and airwaves for over thirty years, bringing laughter and encouragement to progressive-minded people across the nation.

At turns heartfelt and hilarious, the songs turn our hearts, minds and ears toward the social justice battles yet to be won. His motto: "Sing.





Laugh. Defend Democracy." He has just released a new album - his 11th as a solo artist. *Roadmap* is a collection of classic social justice songs re-imagined for this fraught moment in our history.

"He simultaneously inspires me and makes me laugh my ass off," said Paul Krassner. "Roy's lyrics move beyond poetry and achieve perfection," said Joni Mitchell. **Price \$25 dollars or pay what you can.**

Details: see https://www.meetup.com/reasoncenterevents/events/306881801/.

➤ LiteraCheer

Saturday, April 19, 2025, 2 pm - 4 pm

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

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

You will get a chance to share your ideas about any book of choice—any genre, fiction or nonfiction, even comics. 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, April 20, 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/306235718/.

➤ Black Humanists & Non-Believers Book Club

Saturday, April 26, 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 you will see the attendance link.

Details: see https://www.meetup.com/bhnb-sacramento/events/klrsptyhcgbjc/.

> Humanity Breakfast

Sunday, April 27, 2024, 11 am - 1 pm

Location: Fixins Soul Kitchen, 3428 3rd Ave, Sacramento, map at https://maps.app.goo.gl/RmKrF3fgz8jpVCYp7.

Time for a scrumptious breakfast. BNHB alternates between dinners and breakfasts each month. This event needs at least 3 RSVPs to go forward, so see the link. Also please bring cash for the most flexible payment experience.

Details: see https://www.meetup.com/bhnb-sacramento/events/307021026/.

➤ Coffee and Community at Reason Center

Sunday, April 27, 2025, 11 am - 12:30 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/306840320/.

➤ Big Day of Giving at Reason Center

Thursday, May 1, 2025, 4 pm - 7 pm

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

A huge in-person benefit event for the local Community of Reason, sponsored by Reason Center, AOF, California Freethought Day, Sunday Assembly, Camp Omni, the Black Humanists of Sacramento, Sacramento Skeptics, and the Sac chapter of the Freedom From Religion Foundation. To include snacks, champagne, entertainment and prize drawings. Join us, have fun. Come & go when you please.

Details: see https://allevents.in/sacramento/secular-solidarity-benefit/100001312050381009.



➤ More Events - So many Calendars!

Really, 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. (Reasonable honorariums paid to speakers.)

Volunteer?

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

♦ ♦ Secular Holidays ♦ ♦

➤ Yuri's Night, or Cosmonauts Day Saturday, April 12, 2025

Yuri's Night, or **Cosmonauts Day**, is a day in honor of Yuri Gagarin, who became the first human in space on April 12, 1961. Twenty years later on the same day the U.S. launched the first space shuttle.

The Soviet Union first celebrated Cosmonauts Day in 1962, on the first anniversary of Gagarin successful flight into space. It was celebrated annually in the USSR and then Russia. The idea for a worldwide celebration of space and technology sprang into existence at the United Nations' Space Generation Advisory Council Conference in September of 2000. The new, worldwide Yuri's Night was first celebrated on April 12, 2001 and has since become an annual international celebration.



Yuri's Night not only celebrates space and technology, but also the principles of freethinking. Once people thought that the other planets travelled around Earth. It took courage as well as intelligence for people to argue against the religiously-ordained view of the Earth as the center of the universe. Celebrating Yuri's Night not only is about celebrating his historic achievement, but all accomplishments of science that have overturned dogma and advanced our knowledge of our universe.

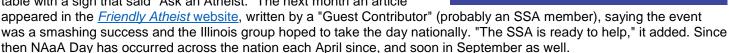
Yuri's Night has become an international phenomenon since its introduction in 2001. Every year coordinators and participants look to broaden the spectrum of events held. The range of events is as diverse as the people who hold them; even residents of the International Space Station have been known to join in the fun. Whether in someone's living room, a nightclub or a world-class science museum, Cosmonauts Day events all have one thing in common: people who are excited about space exploration, science, freethought, and want to join together to celebrate it. Participating in Cosmonauts Day isn't difficult: if finding an already existing party near is hard, then get your friends together call it a Yuri's Night party. Getting people to think about space, science, and freethought is the focus no matter the venue.

"Circling the earth in my orbital spaceship I marveled at its beauty. People of the world, let us safeguard and enhance this beauty, not destroy it!" -- Yuri Gagarin

> Ask an Atheist Day Thursday, April 17, 2025 National Ask an Atheist Day is a movable secular holiday occurring twice each year -- on the 3rd Thursday of April (anywhere from April 15 to April 21), and 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 NAaA Day was in February of 2011, when members of the <u>Secular Student Alliance</u> (SSA) at the University of Illinois set up a table with a sign that said "Ask an Atheist." The next month an article



For those interested, it helps to know a bit about atheism. Of course the point is to ask atheists questions, but here is some background. Generally atheists have no belief in deities, which is not *quite* the same as a positive belief no deity exists. The prefix "a" just means "without." Atheism has no set ideology—atheists may be humanists, rationalists, Unitarian Universalists, postmodernists, secularists, among other things. Historically, Greek and Roman philosophers and writers such as Epicurus, Democritus, and Lucretius had an influence on what would become atheism. The term didn't appear until the sixteenth century, a time when freethought and skepticism began to flourish. Some that lived during the Age of Enlightenment were the first to identify themselves as atheists. The supremacy of human reason was a facet of the French Revolution, and it was at this time that atheism first became used politically. Science also began to lock horns with orthodox religion during the second half of the nineteenth century.

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.

For more about the day and how to participate, take a look at the <u>Ask An Atheist Day Activity Guide</u>. What if you aren't an atheist? Celebrate NAaA Day by asking an atheist about atheism! The day is meant to be filled with respectful dialogue, so make sure to participate in such a way, no matter if you are an atheist or the person asking questions.

➤ Earth Day Tuesday, April 22, 2025

Earth Day is a day to grow and diversify the environmental movement, and to mobilize our resources to promote a healthy, sustainable planet. Earth Day is the only Secular Holiday celebrated simultaneously around the globe by people of all backgrounds, faiths and nationalities. More than a half billion people participate in Earth Day campaigns every year.

U.S. Senator Gaylord Nelson founded Earth Day in 1970 to push the environment onto the national agenda. It is an inclusive event, attracting people of all religions and beliefs. Non-religious groups have many reasons to celebrate Earth Day: those who don't believe in heaven or divine intervention realize that this world is all we have and that it is in our hands to protect it. Those who believe that the scientific method is the best way to gain understanding of our world, can also use Earth Day to promote the best available



I'M AN ATHEIST

ASK ME ANYTHING

science about environmental issues. Secular groups can use this annual event to network with environmental groups and other organizations.

You can celebrate Earth Day in many ways. Events across the globe are often designed to bring notice of the environment to lawmakers, and also occur on college and school campuses. Meetings intended to attract attention to the cause are the most common; these meetings often employ music, speakers, and other attractions to generate attention.



Family News

Long-time AOF member and past president **Paul Storey** is now in hospice after a severe stroke. He appreciates visitors. The care home is <u>Joann's Homecare</u>, 2829 Baseline Road, Roseville, ph. 916-367-8860. Visiting hours are until 7 pm.

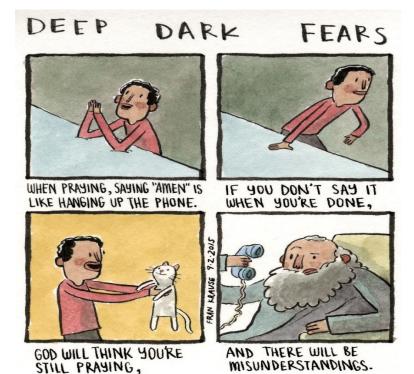


Ark Encounter Protest

Kentucky 36 at Interstate 75 Exit 164, · Williamstown, KY Sunday, July 6, 2025, 1:00 PM - 5:00 PM EDT

The Tri-State Freethinkers, Recovering from Religion and Black Nonbelievers will join hands to protest the blatant church-state violation, dissemination of willful ignorance, indoctrination of children and cynical money grab that is the Ark Encounter in Williamstown, Kentucky. Speakers will include Aron Ra, Chris Mallard, The Skeptick, Mandisa Thomas, Mark Alsip, Viced Rhino, SecularRarity, and Godless Engineer. The location will be near exit 154 off Interstate 75, where I75 intersects with KY-36 / West Stewartsville Rd., probably within walking distance of the Ark Park entrance. For details see:

https://www.meetup.com/cincinnatiatheists/events/306195743/.





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 Event Coordinator: Pamella Rivera (again) Program chair: Super Susan McLean Webmistress: Palpable Pat Kelley

Facebook page & Advisor: Keen Kaeleigh Pontif

Directors at large:

Fran Evanisko, David Herbert, Roger Zabkie

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.