



AOF at Sacramento Earth Day, April 22, 2025

✧ ✧ This Month's Headliner Event ✧ ✧

➤ Brain Stuff: Cognitive Acquisition and Maintenance from Birth to Death

Sunday, May 18, 2025, 2 pm – 4 pm

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

A whole-life research model is behind this (non-medical) presentation on the brain. The model spans early-life “brain building” through late-life “cognition keeping.” We will look at how some important nature/nurture factors of brain development, reserve, and plasticity come into play across a lifetime.

Let us be frank. As of now, you are simply stuck with whatever conditions of brain development came your way as a child, factoring in how well you’ve maintained supportive elements of cognition in adulthood so far. You may find your own brain occasionally letting you down, such as when you can’t recall someone’s name only five minutes after an introduction or know why you came into a room. Situations like that are likely not of any real consequence.



But we know about dreaded neurodegenerative diseases like Alzheimer’s, don’t we? (So now go back to sentence #1 above, and to the research model that deals with some key factors at play in both healthy brains and suffering brains.)

Our speaker, [Mynga Futrell](#), is co-founder of AOF and The Brights (the-brights.net). Since 2001 she has been a volunteer on the Education and Programs/Services Committees of the regional Alzheimer’s Association. Since 2019, she has taught a semester-long seminar on dementia at the CSUS Renaissance Society.

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

A free event with free parking. Bring snacks or a beverage to share if you can, and maybe a few bills for the donation jug, which are a burden to you. AOF will provide cool, clear water.

✧ ✧ Other Upcoming AOF Events ✧ ✧

➤ Free Movie and Discussion

Friday, May 9, 2025, 7 pm – 9 pm

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

Join us for 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 name is a secret because of our [MPLC License](#) and certain legal foderol – but here's a hint. "When a single mom and her two kids arrive in a small town, they begin to discover their connection to the original Ghostbusters and the secret legacy their grandfather left behind." Cool!

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!

➤ Board of Directors Meeting

Tuesday, May 13, 2025, 7 pm – 8 pm

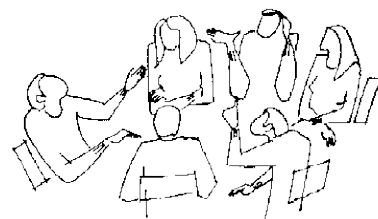
Location: Reason Center, 1300 Ethan Way, Rm 675, Sacramento, map at <https://goo.gl/maps/RwiUgEJ5ESHRhrPu8>.

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 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, please.

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



➤ Adopt-A-Highway Cleanup

Saturday, May 17, 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.

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.

Contact for details: 916-805-9337 (Don Knutson), or see <https://www.aofonline.org/contact.html>.

Note: 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 Events ✧ ✧

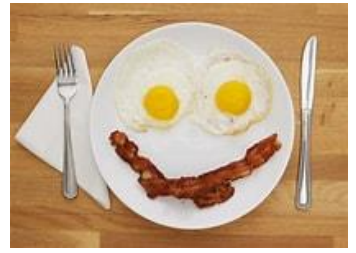
Here are some local *non*-AOF events worthy of your attention. We won't list them all, we don't have room, just highlights. But a *lot* is happening. Please check the calendar links below to see the rest.

➤ Blasphemy Breakfasts and a Brunch

● **Saturday, May 10, 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/307279350/>.

● **Sunday, May 11, 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/307405420/>.

● **Sunday, May 18, 2025, 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/307414083/>.



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 Picnic

Sunday, May 18, 2025, 11 am – 1 pm

Location: Group Picnic Area no. 8 in William Land Park, map at <https://www.williamlandgc.com/william-land-park/map/>.

Sunday Assembly is a secular celebration of *you*, with music, readings, food and speakers, plus entertainment for children. Featured presenter is art director Luisa Morco. This is an outdoor meeting at William Land Park. Bring a food dish to share if you wish – it's a potluck too! The site has picnic tables, but bring your own dishware and maybe a lawn chair.

Details: see <https://www.meetup.com/sacfan/events/307414083/>.

➤ Black Humanists & Non-Believers Book Club

Saturday, May 24, 2023, 3:30 pm – 5:00 pm (*online meeting*)

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/307609798/>.

➤ Sacramento Skeptics in the Pub

Sunday, June 1, 2025, 6 pm – 8 pm

Location: Urban Roots Brewing & Smokehouse, 1322 V St., Sac.; map at <https://maps.app.goo.gl/V8ek6ragKu4ULbcJA>.

A social gathering for the skeptical minds, a community of people, friends, and families that champion the methods of science and critical thinking. Note the new location. Visitors and new skeptics most welcome!

Details: see <https://www.meetup.com/sacskeptics/events/307202360/>.

➤ 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/>



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 just email "programs (at) aofonline (dot) org".) Reasonable honorariums paid to speakers!

Volunteer?

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

✧ ✧ **Secular Holidays** ✧ ✧

➤ **Towel Day**

Sunday, May 25, 2025

[Towel Day](#) is the annual celebration of the life and writings of Douglas Adams (1952-2001), humorist, humanist, conservationist, science fiction writer, and social critic. On that day, fans around the universe proudly carry a towel in his honor. Why a towel? Don't panic, go to the website to see - or better yet, read [The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy](#). It's a great book.



➤ **Opposite Day**

Monday, May 26, 2025

Some say the proper date is May 26, some say April 30, some say March 27th – can you ever be sure? When someone says "Today is **Opposite Day**," he might be lying! Opposite Day is a day to say the reverse of what you mean, with a wink, with a nod; a day when "no" means "yes" and "shut up" means "keep talking;" a day to be nice to your boss, teacher or enemy, and a complete jerk to your best friend; a day to turn words on their head; a day to tie knots in logic. Celebrate with care. It might get you in trouble!

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➤ **Birthday of Science**

Wednesday, May 228, 2025

The **Birthday of Science** marks the day Thales of Miletus (in 585 BCE) correctly predicted a solar eclipse. A better choice might be the discovery of fire or the wheel, but we don't know exactly when that happened, or who did it. We *do* know about Thales. His prediction was significant because the idea of cause and effect (causality) applies to all science. Given any phenomenon, with the exception of purely random quantum events, in principle we can trace its cause or causes, and the cause of those causes, back through time -- until all cause-tracks merge at the "Big Bang," beyond which, presumably, no tracks remain. The seeds of our life and future were sewn then. The [Large Hadron Collider](#) is an effort to re-create those first moments.

Science desires a beginning that applies to the big picture, and a sense of order and predictability. That is where causality leads us.



Outreach opportunity. AOF and sister groups hope to staff a table at the [Sacramento Pride Festival](#), June 14 (12-9pm) and June 15 (12-6pm), on the Capitol Mall. Setup will be Saturday morning. Needed: Volunteers to set up and present cheery faces for Sacramento's community of Reason. If you can help, please call AOF, or email "programs (at) aofonline (dot) org".

This Month in Religious History

May 4, 570 - The Kaaba, the black cube in the center of Mecca that was supposedly built by Abraham, attracted so many religious pilgrims that Christians were annoyed. They had two gripes—one, it was full of idols, and two, it kept people from their churches. So Abraha, the Abyssinian viceroy of Yemen, assembled an army in the spring of 570, and rode into Mecca threatening to destroy the Kaaba. The Meccans fled, but flocks of strange birds appeared in the sky and started dropping little stones on the Abyssinian army. Abraha and his army were infected with a deadly disease that caused Abraha's heart to burst and his fingers fall off one by one, and all his soldiers were "rendered like straw eaten up." Whatever the pox was, it was not pretty. The Kaaba abides.

May 6, 1844 - 3000 Protestants gathered in the Nanny Goat Market in Philadelphia to listen to anti-Catholic speeches. The Nanny Goat Market was in an Irish Catholic neighborhood, so Catholics eventually answered the day-long invective with musket fire. As Protestants darted among food stalls lining Cadwalader Street, an 18-year-old apprentice leather worker was mortally wounded and two other men were shot. Catholics 3, Protestants 0. No nanny goats were injured.

May 7, 1844 - Calling themselves "nativists"—people who think Catholic immigrants should go back to Europe where they belong—several thousand armed Protestants marched to the Kensington neighborhood of Philadelphia, seeking revenge for the murder of their co-religionist the previous day. But they were easy targets for Catholics bunkered in the houses on Cadwalader Street. The Irish Papists quickly laid down a steady stream of musket fire, killing a shoemaker, a ship carpenter, a marble mason and a rope maker, as well as wounding 11 others. The nativists then ignited the houses where the firing originated and, as the Irish families ran out, shot at them—missing. Militia companies arrived to restore order. The score was Catholics 17, Protestants 0.

May 11, 1825 - The American Tract Society was founded at 87 Nassau Street in New York, quickly becoming America's leading charity and distributing 35 million evangelical books and tracts in its first decade. The theory was that if we could wipe out vices like gambling, alcoholism and sexual license, all of which hinder conversion, then the nation would become Christian and the passions of the underclasses could be kept under control. The society, after 183 years of pamphleteering, is now based in Garland, Texas, and on the verge of finally eliminating every vice.

May 13, 1801 - The first reports of wild "camp meetings" in the Kentucky wilderness filtered back to the east coast, marking the start of the Second Great Awakening. Although the meetings were originally organized by Presbyterian ministers, they became so intense and emotional that they were eventually repudiated by the Presbyterians, then the Baptists. Only the Methodists continued to boogie down in the woods for the rest of the 19th century.

May 16, 1815 - In Philadelphia, Richard Allen and his black Methodist colleagues formed the African Methodist Episcopal Church, after all the black converts in the Second Great Awakening received a less than brotherly welcome from white Methodists. Allen had left the Methodists in 1787 after their initial enthusiasm for a color-blind church evaporated.

May 20, 1824 - Lorenzo Dow, a Methodist evangelist who traveled from town to town inspiring people to enthusiastic fits, introduced the Jerking Exercise, in which people would flail their arms about and let the Holy Spirit grab and shake them like bags of flour until they collapsed. It took some generations to refine the Exercise, which you can see on any stage where Benny Hinn appears.



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 Pamela Rivera
Vice-president: Marvelous Mynga Futrell
Secretary: Rapid Ruth Rezos
Treasurer & Registrar: Kinetic Ken Nahigian
Newsletter Editor: Fabulous Fran Evanisko
Event Coordinator: Pamela Rivera
Webmistress: Palpable Pat Kelley
Program chair: Super Susan McLean
Facebook page: 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
- 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>.

Please share this with your **Friends, Members, and Listeners!**
THANK YOU for your Support!

BAHA CON

Bluewater Atheists, Humanists, Agnostics

CONFERENCE INFORMATION



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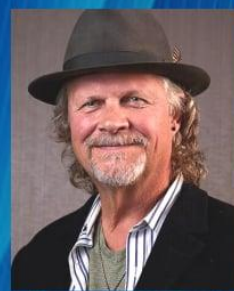
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ALL STAR LINEUP!



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APPROX. \$104 (USD)



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AUGUST 8-10, 2025

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