



AOF Event, May 18, 2025: Mynga Futrell speaks on human cognition “Brain Stuff”

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## ✧ ✧ This Month’s Headliner Event ✧ ✧

### ➤ Life in the Universe – Jeff Rodgers

**Sunday, June 22, 2025, 2 pm – 4 pm**

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

**Are we alone?** Is this *it*? The question has bedeviled humans for centuries. With the discovery of exoplanets in the 1990s and ever-improving technology that allows us to observe much of the universe, the answer has, for decades, seemed tantalizingly close. And yet, still, nothing.

Join Jeff Rodgers for an historical overview of our thinking about life beyond Earth, an up-to-the-minute run through the [Drake Equation](#) to assess the odds of life in our galaxy, and a discussion about why we may, in fact, be alone.

Jeff Rodgers is Manager of the UC Davis Multiverse Theater at the Museum of Science and Curiosity. Prior to moving to Sacramento, he served for fifteen years as Director of the Bishop Planetarium in Bradenton Florida and ten years as a popular lecturer at the American Museum of Natural History and Hayden Planetarium in New York City.

**Contact for details:** See the AOF Contact page (<http://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. AOF will provide cool, clear water.*



## ✧ ✧ Other Upcoming AOF Events ✧ ✧

### ➤ Movie and Discussion at Reason Center

**Friday, June 13, 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 cozy **in-person Movie Night** at Sacramento's [Reason Center](#), in a quiet room with cushy 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. From 1983, it is an epic American historical drama about Navy, Marine, and Air Force test pilots involved in aeronautical research at Edwards AFB in California.

AOF and Reason Center co-sponsor. The team provides popcorn and other munchies - feel free to bring your own snacks too. We also encourage a post-film discussion, which makes this educational if you stretch the word a bit. No fee required to attend, really, but donations gratefully accepted - also really. We do have to pay for the room!

**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 ✧ ✧

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

### ➤ Blasphemy Breakfasts and Brunches

● **Sunday, June 8, 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/307919461/>

● **Saturday, June 14, 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/307983629/>

● **Sunday, June 15, 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/307959528/>



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, June 8, 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 Becky Mark, SA's Child Care Director, will share her experiences and some photos of her recent trip to Portugal. Note, bring a food dish to share if you wish – it's a potluck too! (SA will provide donuts.)

**Details:** see <https://www.meetup.com/sunday-assembly-sacramento/events/307922477/>.

### ➤ Ancient Christian Study Group

**Sunday, June 15, 2025, 12 pm – 2 pm**

**Location:** Mast Coffee, 1430 28<sup>th</sup> Street, Sacramento, CA

The history of ancient Christianity is an endlessly fascinating topic. Don Fox and Steve Thoreson facilitate this meet up 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/308005051/>.

### ➤ LiteraCheer

**Saturday, June 21, 2025, 2 pm – 4 pm**

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

Reason Center continues in-person LiteraCheer discussions in its library seating areas. Come and enjoy the afternoon by discussing books with fellow thinkers. You will get a chance to share your ideas on 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/308005157/>.

## ➤ Coffee and Community at Reason Center

**Sunday, June 22, 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/308235211/>.



## ➤ Juneteenth Celebration in the Park

**Saturday, June 21, 2025, 11 am – 6 pm**

**Location:** William Land Park, Sacramento, map at <https://maps.app.goo.gl/3FeBXYp3fodMWGcZ6>.

"We cordially invite you to join us at William Land Park as we honor and celebrate Juneteenth while standing in solidarity to represent Black atheists, nonbelievers, skeptics, and humanists. It will be an opportunity to connect, share experiences, and engage in meaningful conversations. We are eager to meet you and hear about your endeavors."

**Details at:** <https://www.meetup.com/bhnb-sacramento/events/308155254/>.

## ➤ Humanity Breakfast

**Sunday, June 22, 2025, 11 am – 1 pm**

**Location:** 3428 3rd Ave, Sacramento, map at <https://maps.app.goo.gl/NLqVPcKKFXbkqjkn9>.

Our dining series is seeking to comb the area for great Black owned restaurants and support them with our dollars. Also, a great opportunity for new people trying to commit to our events. Why not start this month with this event? We would love to get to know you. Please RSVP at the "details" link below.

**Details at:** <https://www.meetup.com/bhnb-sacramento/events/308154806/>.

*Notes: Be prepared to bring cash to have the most flexible payment experience (if party size is larger than 3). Also, honor your RSVP and keep it updated. Greatly appreciated.*

## ➤ Black Humanists & Non-Believers Book Club

**Saturday, June 18, 2023, 3:30 pm – 5:00 pm (online meeting)**

An online book discussion open to all. The topic will be **My Brother's Name Is Kenny: The Greatest True Hip-Hop Story Ever Told**, by Kenny Parker. RSVP at the Details link below, and you will see how to attend.

**Details:** see <https://www.meetup.com/bhnb-sacramento/events/307609802/>.

## ➤ Polyamory: Small Groups, Big Talk

**Saturday, July 5, 2025, 4 pm – 7 pm**

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

NOT A SEX PARTY (drat), but a discussion of Polyamory for those new to it, experienced, or just curious as to what it is.

"We are a community within Sacramento who practice Polyamory, a form of Ethical Non-Monogamy. Let's get together and talk! Whether you have wisdom to share, questions to ask, or need to just observe: you are welcome. The space is closed and completely private. We will get together around tables of 6-8 and discuss various questions relating to polyamory and relationships."

**Details at:** <https://www.meetup.com/reasoncenterevents/events/308025272/>.

*Note: This is a Safe Space. That means no tolerance for hate or violence. Please listen and not pass judgements. It is safe to make mistakes and receive advice as to how to do better.*

## ➤ Sacramento Skeptics in the Pub

**Sunday, July 6, 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/308220221/>.

## ➤ 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 about 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 is 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](http://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 simply email "programs (at) aofonline (dot) org".) Reasonable honorariums paid to our speakers.

### **Volunteer?**

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

## ✧ ✧ **Secular Holidays** ✧ ✧

### ➤ **World Environment Day**

**Thursday, June 5, 2025**

The goal of **World Environment Day** is to stimulate worldwide awareness of environmental issues, and to generate action for conservation. The United Nations General Assembly established [World Environment Day](http://www.unep.org/events/) in 1972 to mark the opening of the Stockholm Conference on the Human Environment. Each year World Environment Day celebrations occur at a different location around the globe. To find a location for this year, see <https://www.unep.org/events/>.

World Environment Day gives environmental issues a human face, one with which we can identify. The philosophy of the Day has changed little over the last three decades; it still strives to associate faces with environmental issues and empower people to be advocates of sustainable and equitable development. By promoting an understanding that communities are pivotal to changing the attitudes towards environmental issues, and advocating partnerships, World Environment Day strives to ensure all nations and peoples enjoy a safe, clean, healthy, and more prosperous future.

In the words of the United Nations Environment Programme, "On this World Environment Day, let us not despair, but instead examine the state of our environment. Let us consider carefully the actions which each of us must take, and then address ourselves to our common task of preserving all life on earth in a mood of sober resolution and quiet confidence."

Groups around the world hold activities to acknowledge and celebrate this day. Find an activity near you and join the fun!



### ➤ **Juneteenth**

**Thursday, June 19, 2025**

[Juneteenth](#), an unofficial American secular holiday but official in Texas, commemorates a major milestone: slavery's end in the United States. On June 19, 1865, Union soldiers led by Major General Gordon Granger landed at Galveston, Texas, with news that the war was over and the enslaved were now free. This was *two and a half years* after the Emancipation Proclamation (official on Jan 1, 1863). The Proclamation had had little impact in Texas due to a lack of federal troops to enforce it - but with General Granger's arrival, Union forces were finally strong enough to overcome resistance.

Why a two-and-a-half-year delay in the recognition of Emancipation? Variant stories try to explain this. One concerns a messenger murdered on his way to Texas with the news. Another is that enslavers deliberately suppressed the news to maintain the labor force on their plantations. Another, that federal troops actually waited for slave owners to reap the benefits of one last cotton harvest before going to Texas. For some, very likely, President Lincoln's authority over the rebel states was still in question. Whatever the truth of it, conditions in Texas sadly remained status quo well beyond what was statutory.

On arrival, General Granger's first order of business was to proclaim [General Order Number 3](#), which began as follows:



"The people of Texas are informed that in accordance with a Proclamation from the Executive of the United States, all slaves are free. This involves an absolute equality of rights and rights of property between former masters and slaves, and the connection heretofore existing between them becomes that between employer and hired laborer."

Reactions ranged from shock to jubilation. While many lingered to learn of the new employer-to-employee relationship, others left before offers were completely off the lips of their former 'masters' - attesting to the varying conditions on the plantations and the realization of freedom. Even with nowhere to go, they felt that leaving the plantation would be their first breath of freedom. Moving North was logical; for many it represented true freedom, while the desire to reach family members in neighboring states drove some into Louisiana, Arkansas and Oklahoma. Settling into these new areas as free men and women brought on new realities and the challenges of establishing a heretofore non-existent status for black people in America. Recounting the memories of that great day in June of 1865 and its festivities would serve as motivation as well as a release from the growing pressures encountered in their new territories.

The celebration of June 19th, coined "Juneteenth" but also called "Freedom Day," "Liberation Day" and "Jubilee Day," began the next year and grew yearly with participation from abolitionists and family of former slaves. The Juneteenth celebration became a time to reassure each other, to gather with family, and to hear speakers recount the abuses of the past. Decades after Emancipation, Juneteenth continued to be revered in Texas with many former slaves and descendants making an annual pilgrimage back to Galveston on the date.

## ➤ Solstice (June)

**Friday, June 20, 2025**

Called Summer Solstice in the northern hemisphere, Winter Solstice in the southern, people have marked the June Solstice in some way or another for thousands of years. Many religions have seasonal holy days linked to this day. It is the day when the Northern Hemisphere has more daylight than at any other time of the year. In the Southern Hemisphere, the least daylight occurs this day in June.



The precise date of the June Solstice varies from year to year, but usually it is between the 20th and 23rd of June.

"Solstice" comes from two Latin words: "sol" (meaning sun) and "sistere," (to cause to stand still). At noon in either hemisphere the sun will be high in the sky during summer, low during winter. On the day with the greatest number of daylight hours, the sun reaches its maximum elevation; we call this the Summer Solstice. Likewise, the day with the least daylight is the Winter Solstice.

In the Northern Hemisphere, the June Solstice is officially the first day of summer, also called Midsummer because it comes roughly during the midst of the growing season in Europe.

## ➤ World Humanist Day

**Saturday, June 21, 2025**

World Humanist Day is a day to spread information and combat misinformation about humanism as a life-philosophy and a means to affect change in the world. This secular holiday dates back to the 1980s, when several local state chapters of the [American Humanist Association](#) (AHA) began celebrating World Humanist Day. Different chapters had different ideas as to when that day should be, however. In the late 1980s and early 1990s, the AHA and then the International Humanist Ethical Union passed resolutions declaring the Summer Solstice to be World Humanist Day.



The [American Humanist Association](#), the [International Humanist and Ethical Union](#), the [Council for Secular Humanism](#), the [Campus Freethought Alliance](#) and the [Secular Student Alliance](#) currently celebrate World Humanist Day.

Use this secular holiday to educate the public in your area about humanism, and to gather and celebrate as a humanist community that continues to contribute to the progress and education of the world. A picnic is a particularly good way to celebrate World Humanist Day. Read your favorite humanist texts aloud; spend time socializing with your fellow humanists in a relaxed, natural environment.

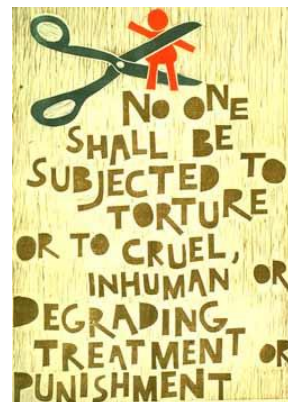
## ➤ Torture Victims' Day

**Thursday, June 26, 2025**

In 1997, the United Nations General Assembly passed resolution **52/149**, establishing June 26 as the United Nations [International Day in Support of Victims of Torture](#).

The goal is the eradication of torture and the effective functioning of the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (resolution 39/46, annex, 26 June 1987). This day gives us all an opportunity to stand united against cruelty, and remind the world that torture is a violation of basic human rights.

Clearly the abolition of torture is a key issue to freethinkers and humanists, and too often the worst perpetrators of this atrocity are highly religious societies. But secular societies have been



far from innocent of it. This is a cause where we can often join hands with our religious brothers and sisters.

Take a moment on this day to visit the [United Nations webpage](#) for this secular holiday.

*"At a time when the legitimate aspirations of people in many regions of the world for greater freedom, dignity and a better life are too often met with violence and repression, I urge States to respect the fundamental rights of all people. Torture and other forms of cruel, degrading and inhuman treatment and punishment, wherever they occur and whatever the circumstances, can never be justified."*

General Ban Ki-moon, Message for the International Day in Support of Victims of Torture, 2011

# California's 23<sup>rd</sup> Annual Freethought Day

CFD is excited to announce the launch of this year's scholarship opportunities, with \$5,500+ available in four different contests! Write an essay, share a limerick, draft a speech, or produce a video that discusses this year's theme: **One Nation, Indivisible: Liberty and Justice for All.**

Applicants should be familiar with the details of our scholarship opportunities before applying.



## ESSAY

One \$2,500+ Scholarship



## LIMERICK

Five \$100 Scholarships



## SPEECH

One \$1,000 Scholarship

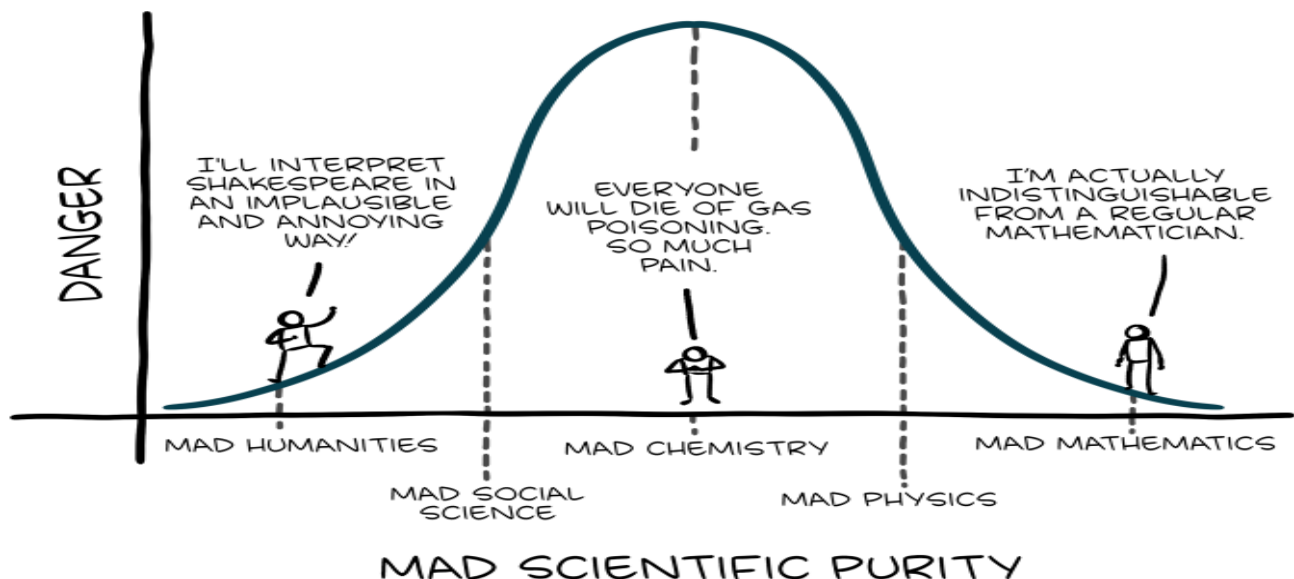


## VIDEO

Two \$750 Scholarships

Each contest has its own entry guidelines, requirements, and due dates. Visit <https://freethoughtday.org/programs/scholarships/> for rules and conditions. Hurry, the first deadline is July 15, 2025!

[California Freethought Day](#) will occur Oct 11 & 12, 2025. Save the date.





# The Monster of Münster



THE ANABAPTISTS ah yes, quaint pacifists with a hang up about buttons who invented voluntary religion. If that (or anything else) is what you thought, please meet Jan Van Leyden, aka [John of Leiden](#), the man who made "Anabaptist" the scariest word in Europe.

When Jan turned up in Münster, Germany, in 1534, they'd already made a good start without him: an armed uprising, taking over the council, flooding the city with Anabaptist immigrants, proclaiming that the world would be over by Easter, and Münster would be the New Jerusalem.

Now with Jan's help, they made believer's baptism compulsory, abolished private property, introduced the death penalty for dissent and found themselves besieged by the local bishop's army.

When Easter came, the head Anabaptist stepped out in faith against the Catholic army and got hacked to pieces. Jan saw his chance and took over. His first act as leader was to run naked and jabbering through the streets before collapsing into a three-day charismatic coma. He returned to the earthly realm with a new constitution that made him sole ruler of Münster.

All books but the Bible were burnt: the word of God would be their only law. First of all this meant imposing a strict moral code, with the death penalty for adultery.

Then, what with fighting the Catholics and killing fornicators, it turned out they had more than three times as many men as women, so, again on Old Testament principles, they reintroduced polygamy. Jan himself, to give the lead as befits a man of God, got himself fifteen teenage wives within six months.

And as there's no marriage ceremony in the Bible, all you had to do was move the lass into your spare room.

A surprising lack of domestic harmony followed this programme. So Jan looked in the Bible again, found that Moses allowed divorce and said, "If you don't like your missus, send her away." Simple as that.

So no wedding, no divorce, just as many women as your man wants for as long as he wants. From Puritan regime to free love commune in a matter of months, and every step of the way was in the Bible. They also found they had to extend the death penalty for those women godless enough to turn down the first offer of holy matrimony they received. So not entirely free love, maybe.

Next, God told one of Jan's followers that Jan was to be crowned King of the World.

"But I'm not worthy!" cried Jan, when it was publicly announced.

"No, you're not," agreed several of the audience. He had them killed.

In his new capacity, he renamed the days of the week and all the streets and children of Münster.

All servants of the Lord have their bad days, though. Jan's worst came when he woke to find a traitor had let the bishop in. The Anabaptist kingdom of Münster was destroyed and Jan himself was tortured to death with hot irons. Ow.



# AOF

Atheists and Other Freethinkers

**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](http://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>.