



AOF News & Views – Newsletter for January 2026



HumanLight Party at Reason Center, Dec 14, 2025

## ✧ ✧ This Month's Feature Event ✧ ✧

### ➤ Arturo Baiocchi: Understanding Homelessness

Sunday 25, 2026, 2 pm – 4 pm

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

#### ***Beyond the Numbers: Understanding Homelessness in California***

Sacramento State professor [Arturo Baiocchi](#) will explore the social, economic, and political roots of California's homelessness crisis, challenging common myths and simplistic explanations. Drawing on his research and the documentary *The Right to Exist*, Baiocchi discusses what we can learn from the Camp Resolution experiment and the human stories behind the statistics.

**Dr. Arturo Baiocchi** is a Professor at the School of Social Work at Sacramento State, and a Faculty Fellow at the Center for Health, Practice, Policy, and Research. His work focuses on homelessness, social welfare policy, and community-based research. Over the past decade, he has led numerous studies on housing and outreach programs, law enforcement collaborations, and community responses to homelessness.



Dr. Baiocchi recently co-produced *The Right to Exist*, a documentary on Camp Resolution - a self-governed encampment led by unhoused women in Sacramento - and was recognized as the **Unhoused Justice Champion of the Year** by the Sacramento Housing Alliance in 2022

**Contact for details:** See the AOF Contact page (<http://www.aofonline.org/contact.html>)

A free event with free parking. Open to the public. Doors open 1:45pm. Bring snacks or a beverage to share if you can. AOF provides cool, clear water.

## ✧ ✧ Other Upcoming AOF Events ✧ ✧

### ➤ Free Movie and Discussion

**Friday, January 9, 2026, 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 title is a secret because of our MPLC License and certain legal folderol -- but we can drop hints. This 2025 film is a live broadcast of a play by George Clooney and Grant Heslov. It is a dramatization of how the press became involved in the red scare and took extreme risks to inform Americans of the dangers. It also deals with the ways television both entertains and isolates us. Rated 7.8 on IMDB.

AOF and Reason Center co-sponsor the Movie Night. The team provides popcorn and other munchies -- feel free to bring your own snacks as well. No fee required to attend, really, but donations gratefully accepted. We do have to pay for the room!



**Contact for details:** See the AOF Contact page (<http://www.aofonline.org/contact.html>)

*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, January 13, 2026, 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.

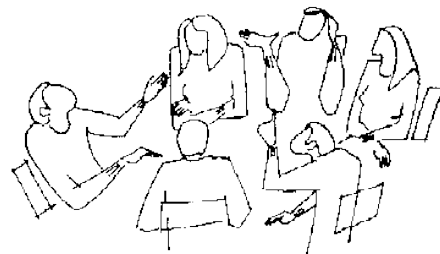
Please join us, meet the Board, keep an eye on the shenanigans. We love visitors. We have snacks. And maybe you'll have some good ideas, hm?

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.

**Contact for details:** See the AOF Contact page

(<http://www.aofonline.org/contact.html>)

*Bring your ideas for AOF, your strategies, your event and activity suggestions -- best of all, your volunteerism! Helping hands are the bomb. (A good kind of bomb.)*



### ➤ Adopt-A-Highway Cleanup

**Saturday, January 17, 2026, 9 am – 11 am**

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

**Contact:** 916-805-9337 (Don Knutson), or see [Contact Page](#)

Out on Highway 99, for two miles from Elkhorn Boulevard to Elverta Road, runs a lonely stretch -- *our* stretch! Sac-area freethinkers "adopted" it in July 1995. We have cared for it, nurtured it, lovingly rescued it from litter and debris, and received recognition for our work. One of our successful civic efforts, it proves freethinkers can also serve the community.

So, join us! Enjoy a morning commune with nature, and do a deed for the environment and local area wildlife. The refuse we collect would otherwise ultimately be swept by the rain into tributaries and into the ocean, degrading habitat, and leading to a slow death for many sea creatures. Note, Cal-Trans is now paying a stipend for our work!

As usual, the stalwart activity captain will provide all safety equipment, including comfortable, natty hard-hats and gloves, stylish safety vests, collection bags, and handy trash pickers. The cleanup takes a scant two hours. Please dress for the season. It may be a good idea to bring a backpack or fanny-pack to carry 3 or 4 trash bags.

To get there, travel north from Sacramento on I-5 past the Natomas area. Take the "Highway 99 - Yuba City, Marysville" exit. Exit at Elkhorn Boulevard less than a mile north. Turn left, cross the overpass. Park in the park-&-ride lot if possible.

This is a great event for older children, but please leave smalls safe at home. Please also review the CalTrans Highway Cleanup guidelines at <https://dot.ca.gov/programs/maintenance/adopt-a-highway/covid19>.

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





*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 ✧ ✧

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

### ➤ Blasphemy Brunch & Breakfast

● **Saturday, January 10, 2026, 10 am – 11:30 am**

**Location:** Mel's Diner, 13399 Folsom Blvd, Folsom, CA, map at

<https://goo.gl/maps/ri6JvaBoSZVHTdnU6>.

**Details** at <https://www.meetup.com/sacfan/events/312169687/>.

● **Sunday, January 18, 2026, 9:30 am – 11 am**, at Mel's Diner, 6708 Lonetree Blvd,

Rocklin, CA, map at <https://goo.gl/maps/ZUY2gg72KkmkC4bU6>.

**Details** at <https://www.meetup.com/sacfan/events/312556188/>.

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, January 11 2026, 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 Sacramento is a non-religious congregation that meets once a month to share our stories, create community, and learn from our experiences. We are inclusive and everyone is valued here. As always, families are welcome and child care is provided. We will have a speaker, 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 there.

**Main Speaker: Nick Gray.** Nick Gray is the Programs Director for the Water Education Foundation. He is a member of Sunday Assembly Sacramento, a board member of California Freethought Day, and a staff volunteer for Camp Omni, a secular summer camp for youths aged 8-17. "Do you know where your water comes from? Get an overview of California's hydrology, water development history and more to gain a deeper understanding of how water is managed and moved across the Golden State."

**Details:** See <https://www.meetup.com/sacfan/events/312463353/>.

### ➤ Film & Discussion on Zoom (online)

**Tuesday, January 13 2026, 6 pm – 9 pm**

**Location:** A video link, <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84659217414?pwd=KjXhV2Q7wt5RxYh3Qxqha1xsXbERZi.1>.

Sacramento's [Reason Center](#) hosts a monthly online movie night to share movies and discuss them. "RC" has an MPLC License which lets it show copyrighted films and TV programs in public spaces as long as it follows a few simple rules. Like, it must be free to you, we *can't publish the title here*.

Just click the link to join us, and it will be something freethoughty or amusing. We will conclude with a discussion afterward.

**Details:** See <https://www.meetup.com/sacfan/events/312569062/>.

### ➤ LiteraCheer at Reason Center

**Saturday, January 17, 2026, 2 pm – 4 pm**

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

Come to the in-person "Literacheer" event and enjoy the weekend afternoon by discussing books with fellow thinkers.

Everyone will get a chance to share 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. It will occur in the Reason Center library seating area.

📖 **Guidelines:** First, Honor your RSVP and keep it updated. Second: We must have 3 RSVPs to move forward (besides the moderator). Next, follow common sense decency in choice of books. Have a book in mind for discussion, even if you are still reading it. Avoid unrelated and/or prolonged discussions that veer off topic. Try to keep the topics accessible to all, something you would bring up at a cocktail party or public function. Finally, be nice – focus on the "cheer" part.

Optional to bring your snacks to share with others. Organizers will bring some complementary treats.

**Details:** See <https://www.meetup.com/reasoncenterevents/events/312344253/>.

### ➤ Ancient Christian Study Group

**Sunday, January 18, 2026, 12 pm – 2 pm**

**Location:** Mast Coffee, 1430 28<sup>th</sup> Street, Sacramento, CA, map at <https://maps.app.goo.gl/7LLEqGrzrQRZm7jn9>.

The history of ancient Christianity is an endlessly fascinating topic. Don Fox and Steve Thoreson 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 not required to participate.

**Details:** See <https://www.meetup.com/sacfan/events/312629644/>.

➤ **Meet Dan Barker: Music and Casual Conversation with FFRF Co-President ☆☆**  
**Monday, January 19, 2026, 1 pm – 3 pm**

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

Enjoy this unusual opportunity to relax, converse with and enjoy the secular music of Dan Barker, leading church-state separation advocate, author, composer and co-president of the [Freedom From Religion Foundation](#). You can look forward to an energizing mix of thoughtful discussion, live music, and engaging freethought conversation.

**THIS EVENT** is the fourth of five stops on [Dan Barker's Western Tour](#) in January, with events in Olympia WA, San Francisco, Palo Alto and Sacramento CA, and Salt Lake City UT. In this installment, Dan will be speaking on the *"Battle of Church and State"* with a musical performance. All events are open to the public, and everyone, members, friends, newcomers and strangers alike are warmly invited to attend.



**Details:** See <https://www.meetup.com/reasoncenterevents/events/312681889/>.

➤ **Coffee and Community at Reason Center**

**Sunday, January 25, 2026, 10 am – 11:30 am**

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

Come to the Reason Center Library for coffee, tea and treats. This event is just a casual conversation on topics of the day, and newcomers are welcome. Hope to see you soon!

**Details:** see <https://www.meetup.com/sacfan/events/312463356/>.



➤ **Skeptics in the Pub**

**Sunday, February 1, 2026, 6 pm – 8 pm**

**Location:** Urban Roods Brewing & Smokehouse, 1322 V Street, map at <https://maps.app.goo.gl/VmDt4vn2y1ac12Np7>.

A social gathering for the skeptical minds, a community of people, friends, and families that champion the methods of science and critical thinking. The Skeptics will usually meet in the back patio, weather permitting; tables are out there under a tent. Otherwise, a table inside. Urban Roots is an ideal location.

**Details:** See <https://www.meetup.com/sacfan/events/qvkdstyjcdbcb/>.

➤ **Atheist Community video clips & discussion (online)**

**Monday, February 2, 2026, 7:30 pm - 10:30 pm**

**Location:** Visit <https://us06web.zoom.us/j/81807086862?pwd=ZjUyamt1b2dlc1N5bEZ6Q0w1Um00QT09> at meeting time.

An educational and entertaining teleconference about Atheism, Logic, Reason, Thoughtfulness, debunking conspiracy theories - accentuated by videos and your presence. *What to expect:* Discussion sparked by short videos about atheism, religion, science, current events, critical thinking, comedy, life hacks and more, followed by moderated discussions.

**Details:** See <https://www.meetup.com/reasoncenterevents/events/kgfwgtyjcdbdb/>.

➤ **Yet 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**

Reason Center opened in July 2014. Since then 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](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. (Reasonable honorariums paid to speakers.)

### **Volunteer?**

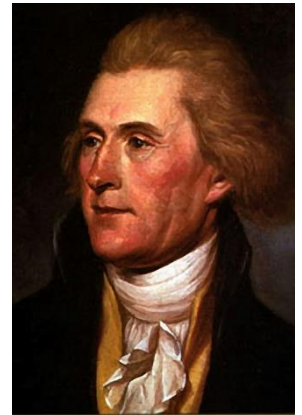
We suggest it meekly. See <http://www.aofonline.org/learn/committees.html> for opportunities.

## **✧ ✧ Secular Holidays ✧ ✧**

### **➤ Religious Freedom Day Friday, January 16, 2026**

[National Religious Freedom Day](#) is in the truest sense both a religious *and* a secular holiday. It marks the anniversary of the passage of the Virginia [Statute of Religious Freedom](#), the 1786 colonial statute that disestablished the Anglican Church in Virginia and set the foundation for Separation of Church and State. Thomas Jefferson marked this statute as one of his greatest achievements. Among other things it declared the following:

- "that to compel a man to furnish contributions of money for the propagation of opinions which he disbelieves is sinful and tyrannical,
- "that our civil rights have no dependence on our religious opinions any more than our opinions in physics or geometry,
- "that no man shall be compelled to frequent or support any religious worship, place, or ministry whatsoever, nor shall be enforced, restrained, molested, or burthened in his body or goods, nor shall otherwise suffer on account of his religious opinions or belief, but that all men shall be free to profess, and by argument to maintain, their opinions in matters of Religion, and that the same shall in no wise diminish, enlarge or affect their civil capacities."



Congress first marked Religious Freedom Day in 1993. It is a day to reflect on the hard-won separation of civic and religious life, and to refresh our resolve to inform fellow citizen about liberty of conscience in matters of faith, a liberty which must include both freedom *of* and *from* religion. Because otherwise, it is no freedom at all.

### **➤ Thomas Paine Day Thursday, January 29, 2026**

Thomas Paine Day, also called Freethinkers Day, promotes appreciation of freethought through the life and works of American patriot Thomas Paine. Paine (1737-1809) was a courageous freethinker whose life and work inspired great social and political advancement across world. Raised in England, Paine played a vital role in the American and French Revolutions. His books and pamphlets, including *The Age of Reason*, *The Rights of Man*, and *Common Sense*, gained a mass audience for the liberating philosophy of the Enlightenment.

Paine arrived in America in 1774 at Benjamin Franklin's request. On January 10, 1776, he published [Common Sense](#), a remarkable and powerful republican pamphlet which had an immediate success. He served in the Revolutionary War under General Greene and later in official positions appointed by congress and in the Pennsylvania legislature. In his later publication, [Age of Reason](#), Paine expressed that "all religions are in their nature mild and benign" when not associated with political systems. Paine was the quintessential Deist of the 18th century.

Between March 1791 and February 1792 he published numerous editions of his [Rights of Man](#), in which he defended the French Revolution. The words of Thomas Paine inspired many to strive for political, economic and social advancement. He was among the first to call for an end to slavery and the establishment of human rights around the world.





In the 1990s, the *Truth Seeker* magazine began celebrating Freethinkers Day on Thomas Paine's birthday in order to educate the public on the importance of Thomas Paine in the history of freedom. Its poetic description of the day, on [this webpage](#), is worthy to repeat:

**This day honors Thomas Paine and is on his birthday, January 29. This is a global holiday and is simply celebrated by giving and displaying a White Rose with Thorns. The simple beauty and purity, the fragility and yet not without the danger of drawing blood by a thorn prick, makes this an excellent icon for those Freethinkers who want to reflect on Freedom and promote the ideas of personal liberty as expressed by Paine in The Declaration of Independence,**

**This is a holiday that celebrates the concept of Freedom by honoring the man who declared our Independence by giving us Common Sense and The Declaration. We owe a great debt of gratitude to Thomas Paine.**

**So you are welcome to celebrate with us. Just remember a White Rose with Thorns.**

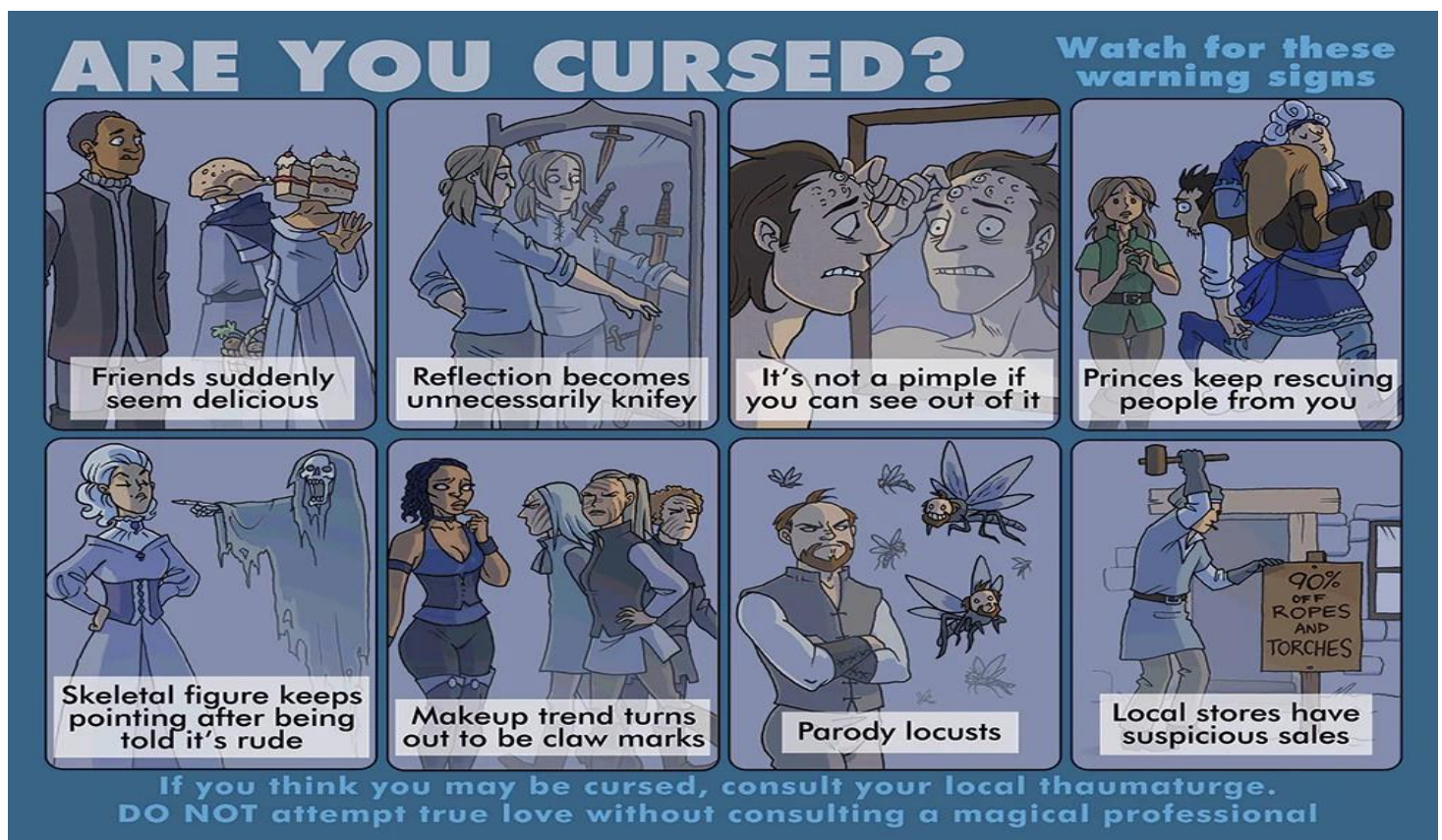
Also in the 1990s, the Thomas Paine Foundation began celebrating the birthday of Thomas Paine on January 29th, a Thomas Paine Day proclamation on June 8 and other Paine theme events during the year.

## ➤ Gorilla Suit Day Saturday, January 31, 2026

From the sublime to the ridiculous! Close on the heels of Thomas Paine day comes [National Gorilla Suit Day](#), a pseudo-holiday invented by famed Mad Magazine cartoonist [Don Martin](#). The effluvium of controversy continues to surround this secular celebration: to some it is a blatant conspiracy of gorilla suit manufacturers to promote their wares, others see it as one of America's more important and venerable holidays. Its origins lie in a 1963 comic strip. Don Martin aficionados later evolved the tradition that "NGSD" falls on the last day of January each year.

Whatever your opinion of NGSD, few deny the cartooning genius of Don Martin. Art historian Charles Taylor described Martin's unique style of art and wit:

His people are big-nosed schmoes with sleepy eyes, puffs of wiry hair, and what appear to be life preservers under the waistline of their clothes. Their hands make delicate little mincing gestures and their strangely thin, elongated feet take a 90-degree turn at the toes as they step forward. Whether they're average Joes or headhunters, Martin's people share the same physique: a tottering tower of obloids. Martin puts the bodies of these characters through every kind of permutation, treating them as much like gadgets as the squirting flowers and joy buzzers that populate his gags: glass eyes pop out from a pat on the back; heads are steamrolled into manhole-cover shapes. All of this accompanied by a Dadaist panoply of sound effects found nowhere else: *shtoin!* *shklorp!* *fwoba-dap!* It's unlikely Samuel Beckett was aware of Don Martin, but had he been he might have recognized a kindred spirit.



## Agatha and Azenor: Bosom Buddies

**A**CCORDING TO EARLY MEDIEVAL versions of the legend of St Agatha, she was tortured to death for her faith after rejecting the attentions of a Roman consul, in the process of which her breasts were cut off. (They were restored to her by St Peter.)

She was consequently depicted in medieval artwork as carrying them on a plate, but then things got a bit confused, and misidentification of these items by the public led to her becoming the patron saint of bell makers, bakers and volcanic eruptions.

Which brings us on to Princess Azenor and St Bunoc. When, in the 5th century, the King of Brest, France, was attacked by a snake, his daughter Azenor sought the advice of a nearby (presumably very nearby) wise man. Being a wise man, he told her to strip and smear her breast with olive oil and milk, an infallible ruse for alluring snakes. When the snake left the king and attached himself to her irresistible bosom, she should cut it off, he told her.

The snake fell for the Princess of Brest's booby trap, and the King was saved. But the ungrateful so-and-so turned against his daughter, for reasons which to be frank I haven't quite got to the bottom of, but I think had something to do with a wicked stepmother and an unexpected pregnancy.

He threw her into the sea, shut up in a barrel. There she gave birth to a boy, Budoc, and her bosom was miraculously restored. Thus wondrously equipped she breasted the billows, feeding the baby and steered by angels and saints till after five months they landed in Ireland. Budoc grew up to become a missionary bishop back in Brittany. True story.

[From <http://www.ship-of-fools.com/>, with gratitude]



### **THE RAFT-BUILDERS** (by Lord Dunsany)

All we who write put me in mind of sailors hastily making rafts upon doomed ships.

When we break up under the heavy years and go down to eternity with all that is ours our thoughts like small lost rafts float on awhile upon Oblivion's sea. They will not carry much over those tides, our names and a phrase or two and little else.

They that write as a trade to please the whim of the day, they are like sailors that work at the rafts only to warm their hands and to distract their thoughts from their certain doom; their rafts go all to pieces before the ship breaks up.

See now Oblivion shimmering all around us, its very tranquility deadlier than tempest. How little all our keels have troubled it. Time in its deeps swims like a monstrous whale; and, like a whale, feeds on the littlest things—small tunes and little unskilled songs of the old, golden evenings—and anon turneth whale-like to overthrow whole ships.

See now the wreckage of Babylon floating idly, and something there that once was Nineveh; already their kings and queens are in the deeps among the weedy masses of old centuries that hide the sodden bulk of sunken Tyre and make a darkness round Persepolis.

For the rest I dimly see the forms of foundered ships on the sea-floor strewn with crowns.

Our ships were all unseaworthy from the first.

There goes the raft that Homer made for Helen.



### 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  
Event Coordinator: Pamela 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, Rick Tonsing

#### 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>.