



November 23, 2025 AOF meeting – "Doom, Gloom, and Energy Boom"

✧ ✧ This Month's Headliner Event ✧ ✧

➤ HumanLight/Solstice Party

Sunday, December 14, 2025, 12 pm – 2:30 pm (Doors open at 11:45)

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

At a time of year soaked soggy with religion, the annual [HumanLight/Winter Solstice](#) Party is an opportunity for humanists & freethinkers to be festive. It lets us celebrate common values, friendship, and Humanist ideals: *reason, compassion, hope, science, kindness, joy & community*.

The party will include a potluck, live music, a charity drive, and lots of socializing. It is a family-friendly event, so kids are welcome.

The Potluck: Bring a dish to share. Please bring food already prepared and ready to serve, including serving utensils for your dish. No kitchen facilities or outlets are available.

- We will provide water & hot coffee, and other beverages.
- Also provided are: plates, bowls, utensils, napkins, and cups.

Live music: Jazzy instrumentals and vocals in keeping with our happy celebration of solstice and Human Light.

The Charity Drive: Food for humans & pets. We will collect nonperishable food and other necessities for two local charities, the River City Food Bank and the Sacramento Pet Food Bank (helping the pets of the homeless). Contributions encouraged but not required. This is a wonderful opportunity for the freethought community to come together and show their compassion and kindness for others in need in our local community.

The Generous Sponsors are Atheists and Other Freethinkers (AOF), [Sunday Assembly](#), [Reason Center](#) and [California Freethought Day](#).

Contact for details: See <https://www.aofonline.org/contact.html>, or email "nancysneed10 (at) gmail.com" (Nancy) or "rivera.pamella (at) gmail.com" (Pam).



✧ ✧ Other Upcoming AOF Events ✧ ✧

➤ Free Movie and Discussion

Friday, December 12, 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 exact movie name is a secret because of our [MPLC License](#) and certain legal folderol -- but it will probably be season related. We mean, solstice.

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. Donations are always nice. And you can suggest your own fave film for next time!



➤ Adopt-A-Highway Cleanup

Saturday, December 20, 2025, 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, or somewhere near it.

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, December 30, 2025, 4 pm – 7 pm

Location: St. Martin's Episcopal Church hall, 640 Hawthorne Lane, Davis, CA, 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 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 up, leaving the hall as we found it.

For details, please see [Davis Community Meals](#). For a map to the site, see: [Martin's Episcopal Church](#). (Yes, a church hall, so what?)

✧ ✧ Other Upcoming Events ✧ ✧

Here are 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 Breakfast and Brunch

● **Saturday, December 13, 2025, 10 am – 11:30 am**, at Mel's Diner, 13399 Folsom Blvd, Folsom, CA, map at <https://goo.gl/maps/ri6JvaBoSZVHTdnU6>, see details at <https://www.meetup.com/sacfan/events/312141115/>.

● **Sunday, December 21, 2025, 9:30 am – 11 am**, at Mel's Diner, 6708 Lonetree Blvd, Rocklin, CA, map at <https://goo.gl/maps/ZUY2gg72KkmkC4bU6>, see details at <https://www.meetup.com/sacfan/events/312057332/>.

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 really 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).



➤ LiteraCheer at Reason Center

Saturday, December 20, 2025, 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). Lacking that number will force a cancellation on the day prior. 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 of the event.

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

Details: See <https://www.meetup.com/sacfan/events/312027850/>.



➤ Ancient Christian Study Group

Sunday, December 21, 2025, 12 pm – 2 pm

Location: Mast Coffee, 1430 28th Street, Sac. Map at <https://maps.app.goo.gl/dTayRZjJ6gDajVyn7>.

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 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/312257342/>.

➤ Coffee and Community at Reason Center

Sunday, December 28, 2025, 11 am – 12:30 pm

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

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/pqqfstyhqcblc/>.



➤ Humanity Breakfast at Fixins – Yummy!

Sunday, December 28, 2025, 11 am – 1pm

Location: Fixins Soul Kitchen, 3428 3rd Ave, Sacramento, map at <https://maps.app.goo.gl/2nv3Wfn8siRMucdq7>.

Time for a scrumptious breakfast. As you may know, we alternate between dinners and breakfasts each month; even months are breakfasts, and odd months dinners. We need at least 3 RSVPs, including myself, to proceed with this event. If we don't meet this threshold, the event will be cancelled the day before. Always check for updates or check your email.



☞ **Honor your RSVP and keep it updated. Greatly appreciated.** 😊

Be prepared to bring cash to have the most flexible payment experience (if party size is larger than 3).

Details: see <https://www.meetup.com/bhnb-sacramento/events/310344237/>.

➤ Skeptics in the Pub

Sunday, January 4, 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/sacskeptics/events/mzdnstyjccbgbl/>.

➤ More Events – So many Calendars!

Yes 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](https://www.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** ✧ ✧

➤ International Human Rights Day

Wednesday, December 10, 2025

"**IHUD**" is a way to promote, defend, and remember the basic human rights every person in every country has as a result of being born into this world.

The basic document that outlines these rights is known as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, as adopted by the United Nations in 1948. The Declaration came about as a result of the atrocities of World War II. As the United Nations came into being its charter gave human rights a new international legal status, and the need to codify human rights as a means to prevent similar atrocities took shape. It created a Commission on Human Rights, which spent three years drafting the declaration with the help of such members as Eleanor Roosevelt, John P. Humphrey, Charles Malik and Rene Cassin. The declaration was adopted without dissent on December 10, 1948, and has grown in stature and respect over the years since its adoption as it continues to assert the human dignity and worth of every human being on the planet.



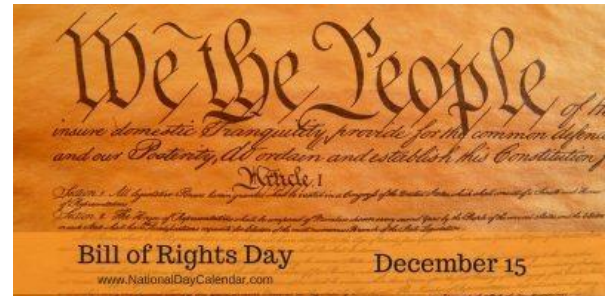
Since its adoption countries around the world have celebrated the anniversary, but it has only been since the 50th anniversary celebrations in 1998 that the holiday has gained in popularity.

Eleanor Roosevelt once said that the fate of human rights lies in the hands of everyone in every community. Freethinkers know the importance of this statement. It can often be a challenge for many of them to be given the same rights and opportunities as others in their own communities, much less in the world. They, of all people, understand the importance of keeping human rights the center of focus and attention in the world at large. Celebrating International Human Rights Day is a way to show how everyone, religious or not, is connected in ways that run deeper than the nature of belief.

➤ Bill of Rights Day Monday, December 15, 2025

Bill of Rights Day (by Presidential Proclamation):

Now, Therefore, I, Franklin D. Roosevelt, President of the United States of America, do hereby designate December 15, 1941, as Bill of Rights Day. And I call upon the officials of the Government, and upon the people of the United States, to observe the day by displaying the flag of the United States on public buildings and by meeting together for such prayers and such ceremonies as may seem to them appropriate.



To view the official proclamation, see: <https://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/documents/proclamation-2524-bill-rights-day>.

The first 10 amendments to the United States Constitution make up the Bill of Rights. Passed by Congress on September 25, 1789, these rights place limits on government power. Did you know...?

- The bill was introduced by James Madison. He later became the 4th President of the United States.
- The Bill of Rights initially had 12 proposed amendments. One concerned the number of constituents for each Representative. The other addressed compensation of Congressman. Neither were ratified.
- In 1992, compensation of Congressman was ratified 203 years later and is now the 27th amendment.
- The Bill of Rights is displayed in the Rotunda of the National Archives Building in Washington, DC.
- There were 14 copies of the Bill of Rights, one for each of the 13 states to sign and one for the federal archives. Only 12 copies survive today.

HOW TO OBSERVE:

Display the flag of the United States at home and on public buildings. Read the Bill of Rights. See if you can pass a [quiz](#) about the Bill of Rights. Use #BillOfRightsDay to post on social media.

➤ Solstice (December) Sunday, December 21, 2025 (at 7:03am)

December Solstice is the *real* Reason for the Season. Called Winter Solstice in the northern hemisphere, Summer Solstice in the southern, people have marked this astronomical event for thousands of years. Many religions have seasonal holy days or celebrations linked to the December Solstice. It is the day the Northern Hemisphere has less daylight than at any other time of the year (we call it *the shortest day*), and the Southern Hemisphere has more daylight occurs than any other time (*the longest day*).

The precise date of the December Solstice varies from year to year, but it will occur between the 20th and 23rd of December.

"Solstice" derives from two Latin words: *sol* (meaning sun) and *sistere* (to cause to stand still). At noon in either hemisphere the sun will be low in the sky during the winter season, high in the sky during summer. The day with the least daylight is the Winter Solstice, where sun has the lowest elevation. So in the Northern Hemisphere, the December Solstice is officially the first day of winter, sometimes called Midwinter.



To the ancients, this day marked a key point in the cycle of life. For modern astronomy enthusiasts, it offers an opportunity to celebrate what we have learned about the cosmos, and allows us to revel in the excitement of space exploration and the complexity of the universe.

➤ HumanLight

Tuesday, December 23, 2025

[HumanLight](#) is a holiday to celebrate the humanist values of tolerance, compassion, empathy, honesty, free inquiry, reason and rationality, and more. The event began in New Jersey in 2001, established by Joe Fox and Gary Brill of the [New Jersey Humanist Network](#). The event provides an excellent alternative to Christmas celebrations. Joe & Gary described it as follows:

*"The very first HumanLight celebration was held in New Jersey on December 23, 2001 at a gala event attended by close to 100 people. **HumanLight is December 23rd**, and should always be celebrated on or around this date. This date was chosen for several reasons. A critical objective was to be part of the peak celebration time of the holiday season, yet to have a distinct date of our own that did not coincide exactly (and thus interfere) with other holidays such as the Winter Solstice, Christmas, or Kwanzaa. We liked December 23rd because it was close to the shortest day of the year, a natural event of note, as well as very close to vacation days that typically lead to family gatherings. We wanted Humanists at family gatherings and other holiday social events to be able to say "Happy Holidays" and mean it; to have a positive, constructive way to start a conversation in which they could explain to loved ones what Humanism is about. "*



FFRF display back in California Capitol

The Freedom From Religion Foundation and its [Sacramento chapter](#) are back at the California Capitol to counter religious displays at that legislative shrine.

The Greater Sacramento Chapter of FFRF has placed a "nativity" cutout depicting three Founding Fathers (and the Statue of Liberty) gazing in adoration at a "baby" Bill of Rights. A sign reads: "At this Season of the Winter Solstice, join us in honoring the Bill of Rights, adopted on December 15, 1791, which reminds us there can be no religious freedom without the freedom to dissent." It ends: "Keep religion and government separate!"

The chapter installed the display as a response to a Christian nativity that went up again this year after debuting at the Capitol a year ago, placed there by the religion-promoting Thomas More Society.

"A Christmas nativity display is at the California state Capitol on the building steps," a California newspaper reported last year. "The Christmas crèche, including statues of the Holy Family — Jesus, Mary and Joseph — and the Three Kings will be housed under a handcrafted wooden stable, assembled Dec. 17 and remaining on display through Dec. 26."

A Jewish Menorah symbol has also been exhibited at the Capitol.

FFRF went into action due to this religious intrusion into the epicenter of lawmaking of the most populous and significant state in the country and is back representing the freethought perspective this year. The display will be up till Dec. 19, a total of 10 days as allowed under the permit.

"It is not cool to have such religious pageantry in the heart of state government," says FFRF Co-President Dan Barker. "If blatantly devotional exhibitionism is allowed in, there must be 'room at the inn' for our irreverence and freethought."

Thank you to the Greater Sacramento Chapter of FFRF for helping bring a secular viewpoint before the residents of the Golden State.



English Is a Stupid Language

There is no egg in the eggplant,
No ham in the hamburger
And neither pine nor apple in the pineapple.
English muffins were not invented in England,
French fries were not invented in France.

We sometimes take English for granted, but if we examine its paradoxes we find that:

Quicksand takes you down slowly,
Boxing rings are square,
And a guinea pig is neither from Guinea nor is it a pig.
If writers write, how come fingers don't fing?

If the plural of tooth is teeth,
Shouldn't the plural of phone booth be phone beeth?
If the teacher taught,
Why hasn't the preacher praught?

If a vegetarian eats vegetables,
What the heck does a humanitarian eat?
Why do people recite at a play,
Yet play at a recital?
Park on driveways and
Drive on parkways?
How can the weather be as hot as hell on one day
And as cold as hell on another?

You have to marvel at the unique lunacy of a language where a house
can burn up as it burns down,
And in which you fill in a form
By filling it out
And a bell is only heard once it goes!

English was invented by people, not computers,
And it reflects the creativity of the human race
(Which of course isn't a race at all.)

That is why:
When the stars are out they are visible,
But when the lights are out they are invisible.
And why it is that when I wind up my watch
It starts,
But when I wind up this poem
It ends.

FAMOUS TOPICS IN ART HISTORY:



**HERCULES ATTEMPTING TO
GIVE HIS CAT A PILL**



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
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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>.