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(SORT)**

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For past issues, bibliography, links to other skeptics, and more, check out the SORT Website:

[www.quiknet.com/~kitray/index1.html](http://www.quiknet.com/~kitray/index1.html)

For more about the co-founders of SORT, see

[www.spangenburgandmoser.com](http://www.spangenburgandmoser.com)

**September  
SORT Meeting  
Wednesday,  
September 24, 2003  
7:00 P.M.**

Room 1, Library  
Kinney High School  
2710 Kilgore Rd., Rancho Cordova  
(See driving directions)

# The *SORTified* NEWS

**“Doubt is the beginning of wisdom.”**

—Clarence Darrow

## September 24<sup>th</sup> Meeting **VIOLENCE AND THE MEDIA**

It's a long-standing debate: Does violence in the media, particularly movies and television, influence or contribute to the onslaught of violence that has become so much more prevalent in our real-life existence? You can find many experts offering a plethora of facts, charts and statistics ready to argue one side or the other of the issue. Common sense for some of us seems to answer—yes, and for others—no. It's a difficult question and one that obviously offers few easy or complete answers. Join us at our SORT open roundtable discussion on Wednesday, September 24 at 7:00 p.m. and add your thoughts as we take a look at “Violence and the Media.” It promises to be another evening of stimulating conversation. As usual, free coffee (leaded and unleaded), soft drinks, cookies and other goodies will be on hand to add to the enjoyment of the evening. Remember, the art of intelligent conversation is not dead, and if you haven't been with us before, drop in at SORT and rediscover one of life's most civilized pleasures.

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SORT meetings take place on the last Wednesday of the month (September 24 this month) at 7:00 p.m. at the library at Kinney High School, 2710 Kilgore Road,

Rancho Cordova. (See driving directions on page 3.)



## **SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENT! 3<sup>rd</sup> ANNUAL SORT POT- LUCK PICNIC**

We may be a little late in the year, but the days are still hot here in Sacramento even though summer is definitely over. So, you are invited to the SORT *Autumn* picnic at Cottage Park, Sunday October 5<sup>th</sup>, 1:00 p.m. One thing's for certain (well hopefully for certain), it won't be as hot as it was last year. We'll be making plans at the September meeting and you can sign up to bring your favorite salad, dessert, or brats/hot dogs, etc. If you can't make the meeting and still want to volunteer to bring something (food or otherwise) to the picnic you can either give us a call on our SORT phone line (916-978-0321) or drop an e-mail off to us at [kitray@quiknet.com](mailto:kitray@quiknet.com). We had a great time last year and despite the heat even learned to play bocce ball (though perhaps not how to spell it)! So join us this year for some good eats, drinks, and great fun. And if

you make a last-minute decision and have nothing to bring, don't worry. This is a guilt-free picnic—and there is usually plenty to go around. It's your company and enthusiasm we want, so we hope to see all you "Sorters" there.

**When:** Sunday, October 5, 1:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m.

**Where:** Cottage Park (entrance via Morse Avenue on El Camino side of the park)

**What to Bring:** Sign up for special items at the SORT meeting or by e-mail ([kitray@quiknet.com](mailto:kitray@quiknet.com)), and/or wing it and bring something exotic, tasty, munchy, or liquidly refreshing!

**How to Get There:** (1) Choose from the following:

- ) From I-80, the Capital Freeway or regions north: Travel south on Watt Avenue to El Camino. Turn right on El Camino (at Country Club Centre, former home of Wards). Skip to (2).
- ) From Highway 50, or regions south: Travel north on Watt Avenue to El Camino. Turn left on El Camino (at Country Club

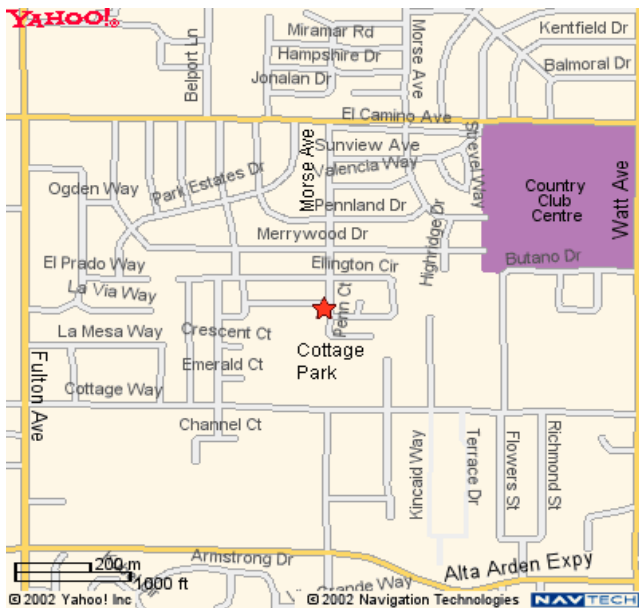
Centre) and continue to (2).

(2) Continue on El Camino. Morse Avenue jogs at El Camino instead of crossing, so pass by Morse Avenue on the right and turn left onto Morse a block farther east, where Morse seems to dead-end into El Camino. (See map.) Continue on Morse about 0.3 miles to the end of the street, where you'll see Cottage School. The entrance to Cottage Park and its parking area are just to the left of the school. Drive in, park, and look for crowds of reasonable, rational thinkers and SORT signs.

P.S. Other needs may include paper plates, paper cups, napkins, etc., hot dogs or brats, buns, condiments, briquets, a frisbee (?), etc. Any questions? Call Ray and Kit at 978-0321 or e-mail [kitray@quiknet.com](mailto:kitray@quiknet.com)!

### A GOOD SUMMER (WHOOPS, AUTUMN) READ!

O.K., so it's a little late to recommend some good light summer reading, you know, like the big papers do every late spring. Maybe that's all right anyway because we kind of prefer the



### The Sacramento Organization for Rational Thinking (SORT). . .

- Is dedicated to the promotion of rational thinking in all areas of life.
- Upholds the superiority of science over the mystical.
- Promotes and supports all efforts of intelligent communication that provide a counterpoint to the strong waves of anti-rationalism, irrationalism, and mysticism sweeping the world today.

### Toward these ends we . . .

- Host a monthly discussion group.
- Publish a monthly newsletter.
- Host special events, talks, and presentations.
- Host a web page.

While SORT began with and still continues to be concerned with the promotion of critical thinking in areas dealing with the pseudo-scientific, the paranormal, the mystical, and the fraudulent, we strongly promote critical thinking in *all* areas of human thought and endeavor.

The core of SORT activities is our discussion group. The art of intelligent conversation is not dead. We at SORT believe that rational conversation--the meeting of minds, the free exchange of ideas and the provocative stimulation of critical questions-- is one of the most civilized and enlightening of all human activities.

SORT discussion topics have ranged from UFOs to the Holocaust, from "alternative medicine" to the problems in communicating science to the public, from classic and recent cons and scams to the teaching of critical thinking. Our discussions are hosted by one of the SORT founders, and participants are by no means limited to experts (although they may include experts) but are made up of intelligent and questioning people concerned with the topic of the evening.

stuff that you can sink your mental teeth into. Regular readers know that it's usually non-fiction that we are pushing. This time, though, we're taking a rare trip down the fiction avenue. If you're looking for an intriguing read with a protagonist that many of us can identify with, you might want to pick up a copy of *Outside, Looking In* by Gil Gaudia. It's a rare book for these days, a novel of serious ideas and moral questions. Gene Geminni, the novel's central character, is that rare creature—a man who thinks for himself. In late 20<sup>th</sup>-century America, Gene discovers, such a position is not always a popular one. It becomes even less popular when it involves matters of religion. Raised in the tough and unfriendly streets, Gene has always had a problem with religion. One of three children born to an Italian-Catholic father and a Russian-Jewish mother (neither of whom practiced religion religiously), Gene had felt an outsider from the beginning. It wasn't just that he knew he was brighter than most of the people around him, but somehow it seemed he lacked most of the reference points most people used to lead their lives. Given to blunt, outspoken challenges and too quick a temper—problems that would plague him throughout his life—Gene often felt that being an “outsider” left him with few places to go and few opportunities to find a life that would be worth living. Was he, like most of those around him, going to spend his life in a series of unfulfilling and mediocre jobs, or like his father and brothers become immersed in dark levels of despair, crime, and mental illness? How he discovers both his true nature and a

place for himself in the world—a place without despair, defeat or the consolation of religion—is the driving theme of the book. It's a fascinating and often exciting story, and more importantly one that manages to tackle some important moral issues without polemic.

Gaudia, born in the Bronx “two weeks before the stock market crash of 1929,” knows his territory well, from the poverty-stricken city streets where his character Gene Geminni spends his youth, to the halls of academia where Gene finds his vocation. Holding a Ph.D. in psychology as a professor at the State University of New York at Fredonia, Gaudia has published over a dozen articles on psychology, has “worked with Native American educators on the Seneca and Onondago reservations” and directed the college's planetarium. Like his protagonist Gene Geminni, he also proudly possesses licenses to operate passenger-carrying sailing vessels and fly airplanes.

*Outside, Looking In* is published by Xlibris in paperback at \$22.99 and cloth hardback at \$39.99. Xlibris books are available at your local bookstore or by calling 1-888-795-4274 ext.276. You can also find Xlib-

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**About the Founding Members:**

Ray Spangenburg and Kit Moser are a husband-and-wife writing team specializing in science and technology. They are co-authors of 52 books and over 100 articles, including publication in the *Skeptical Inquirer*, and they are former co-editors of the *Bay Area Skeptics Information Sheet (BASIS)*.

For more information, contact:

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ris on the web at  
[www.Xlibris.com](http://www.Xlibris.com).



**GETTING TO KINNEY HIGH SCHOOL LIBRARY (SORT MEETING PLACE)**

Just off Highway 50: Traveling east, Zinfandel Exit to Folsom Boulevard; traveling west, Sunrise exit to Folsom Boulevard. Then:

- (1) Traveling west on Folsom Boulevard, turn left on Kilgore Rd., just past Sunrise. Or, traveling east on Folsom Blvd., turn right on Kilgore.
- (2) Turn right into the Kinney High School parking lot. The library is in the building just south of the parking lot, and the entrance is on the west side of the building.

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## THE RATIONAL COMMUNITY

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# CALENDAR

### **October 5: *SORT Potluck Picnic***

*Time:* Sunday, 1:00–5:00 p.m.

*Place:* Cottage Park (off El Camino—see map and driving directions on p. 2)  
(September meeting will be September 24; see page 1. October meeting will be October 29, meeting to be announced.)

### **October 12: *Freethought Day***

*What:* Celebration to venerate the legal basis that sustains pluralism and liberty of conscience in America for persons of all religions and none

*Time:* Sunday, 11:00 a.m.–3:00 p.m.

*Place:* Waterfront Park, Old Sacramento (Front and L Streets).  
Everyone is welcome. *Cost:* Free

### **October 2003: *Sacramento Skeptics***

*Topic, Time, and Place:* To be announced

For further details, contact Richard Kowaleski at  
kowaleski@earthlink.net

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*Educating Ourselves  
and Educating Others*

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ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED