



# NEWS

NOW / EVENTS / WOMEN / SUCCESS

Advancing equity for women and girls through advocacy, education, philanthropy and research.



## Presidential Postings

You usually think of January as a cold, dark month when you are trying to keep your New Year's Resolution. Not our branch!

We had two big, very successful events! The Layette Shower and the Soup Supper. Many thanks to our members who worked hard to make them a resounding success.

The board voted to not have a general meeting in February so you will have a chance to recover. The small groups will continue, however, and you should check dates and times in this newsletter. Many members have signed up for SAM (Study Art and Music), the very successful art and music program at Fair Oaks Elementary. If you would like to help, contact either Barbara Minneman or Sherrie Moore. It is scheduled for the last week in February and the first week in March.

There will be a board meeting on Wednesday, February 7<sup>th</sup>, at 7:00, at Nancy Hobert's home. If you cannot attend in person, please zoom it!

~Nancy [nhobert@aol.com](mailto:nhobert@aol.com)

**1**

**CALENDAR**

[Click here for events and Interest Section meetings.](#)

**2**

**WEBSITE**

[See photos of our recent events and learn more about upcoming activities.](#)

**3**

**LEADERSHIP TEAM**

[Find contact information for 2023-24](#)

### Membership Alert



Changes to National Bylaws

### Corrections to



### Directory

### Public Policy



From CA AAUW

## Membership Alert



### A call to action!

Beginning April 3rd to May 15th, all members will be able to vote on a proposed National Bylaws change to Open Membership. This would open membership to those without a degree, but who support our efforts for inclusion and equality. AAUW's National Board supports this change.

**Why the change?** This will enable us to include members with diverse backgrounds and perspectives. Those without degrees fight for gender equity just as we do.

AAUW has been viewed as discriminatory, and as such not qualified for other grants or funds.

Our standing as a national organization that advances gender equity with a value of inclusion is at risk if we do not allow all who support our mission to join us.

Our Branch has had to turn away interested potential members because of the degree requirement.

**How to Vote:** Those with an email on file will receive an email from [vote@simplyvoting.com](mailto:vote@simplyvoting.com). The email will not come from AAUW but from a company hired to conduct the voting.

Check your email and spam/junk mail folders around April 3rd. You will receive a unique Elector ID and Password to vote.

If you do not have an email on file, you will be sent a paper ballot by mail.

**PLEASE VOTE!** A two-thirds affirmative vote is required to change the Bylaws.

~Karen Winters & Diane Peterson Membership Chairs

## !CORRECTIONS!

Please get out your directories and make the following corrections:

Kate Christensen - 246 Christie Drive

Gail Soldavini - 2141 Wilmington Drive

Sally Whitsett - Delete landline #689-5493

Sharon Wilson - 601 Walnut Avenue, Walnut Creek, CA 94598; Cell: 925-330-3391; Delete landline #372-5800

Sandra Wolfe - Delete landline #228-2633

Bobbi Horack - cell: 925-812-7314



## SAM at Fair Oaks

Annual student art and music program begins in February.

Our SAM (Student Art and Music) Program this year will be from Monday, February 26<sup>th</sup> thru Friday, March 8<sup>th</sup> at Fair Oaks Elementary School. We will visit TK (Transitional Kindergarten) – 5<sup>th</sup> Grade classes, and 3 SDC (Special Day Classes, Special Ed).

The time slots are from 8:50 – 9:50 and 10:10 – 11:10. The schedule has been sent out to those who have volunteered. Let us know if you'd like to help. We are creating animals using geometric shapes. Our artist is Charley Harper and the composer we have chosen is Sergei Prokofiev. The music selection is Peter and the Wolf.

Volunteer duties consist of holding up posters, passing out materials (scissors, glue sticks, and paper for the background of the picture and a variety of paper cut into geometric shapes for the animals), ogling over the student pictures, and helping to clean up. We will give a short PowerPoint presentation, followed by the lesson. Volunteers can sign up

for as many sessions as they want. **Sign up for sessions by Friday, February 2<sup>nd</sup>.**

**Our workday is tentatively scheduled for Tuesday, February 13<sup>th</sup> from 10:30 – noon in Room 13.** We'll show our PowerPoint presentation, cut out shapes, and explain what the students will be creating.

It's always fun to participate in SAM.

~Sherrie Moore, Barb Minneman, and Helen Pereira

## Save the dates!

Two DVC Play Fundraisers are coming up this spring.

The first is *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead*, a comedy based on *Hamlet*. We plan to attend on April 14th.

The last play of the season is *Hangmen*, a darkly humorous play about the end of the death penalty in England. We will be attending this one on May 5th.

We hope you can join us! The plays at DVC are always well done and a lot of fun. Proceeds from ticket sales are divided between Tech Trek and Local Scholarship. More information will be coming in the March NEWS!



**Writing a check for Fund, DVC plays, or events?**

**Please make it out to AAUW Pleasant Hill - Martinez Branch.**



The Local Scholarship Committee is finally in action, now that February is here.

The scholarship advisors at both local high schools have been contacted and are ready and willing to work with us. The application will be available to the students very soon. By the way, Sherrie Moore has put it on our Branch Website for you to see, if you wish to do so.

Student applications will be due by [March 22nd](#) after which time our committee will read them and make decisions as to the winners of the \$1000 scholarships. We hope to be able to award scholarships to 4-5 senior girls going to colleges/ universities. Each school has an Awards Ceremony in May—College Park High on the 16th and Alhambra High on the 23rd.

In the meantime, our biggest fundraiser, the Kaffee Klatch solicitation letter, has been distributed to all members, either at the Soup Supper, in person elsewhere, or by mail. If you have not received one, please let me know, and I will happily provide you with one. We hope that you will be able participate in this fundraiser, and will appreciate receiving your donations as soon as possible. Thank you very much.

~Helen Pereira

## Public Policy

Is there a hidden agenda behind the “Parents’ Rights” movement?



We members of the AAUW California Public Policy School Board Project sub-committee frequently come across materials from groups advocating for book-banning, curriculum censorship, and policies which negatively impact the lives of LGBTQ+ students, in the name of “Parents’ Rights.” For example the House of Representatives recently passed H.R. 5, the “Parents Bill of Rights Act.” Eight governors have signed legislation with similar titles.

H.R. 5 establishes the rights of parents to, among other things: review curriculum; inspect the books and other reading materials in the school library; be advised of policies that permit transgender girls to compete on female athletic teams or use bathrooms or lockers designated for females; and provide consent before a school may use their child’s chosen name or pronouns on forms, or change the child’s sex-based accommodations. Many of the state laws noted above require the removal of “inappropriate” materials upon the objection of a single person.

AAUW California recognizes that not all our members will find these policies objectionable. And to be sure, most of our



members would agree with this statement from PEN America, a human rights and free expression organization: “There is no question that parents deserve a say in shaping their children’s educations; that they have a moral and legal responsibility for their children, and the freedom to make fundamental decisions for their families.” (Suzanne Nossel, PEN America CEO, [Time Sept. 20, 2022.](#))

However, legitimate questions are raised when one parent’s “right” to control what *their* child reads and learns collides with another parent’s right to ensure their child has access to a broad and diverse range of educational materials. Or when a parent’s “right” to know if their child confides to a teacher regarding a sexual identity unknown to the parent collides with the student’s right to privacy. Or when one parent’s “right” to ensure her daughter doesn’t play on the same team as a transgender girl collides with that girl’s right to partake in all the same activities as other girls, or to feel safe in the campus environment.

AAUW California advocates for a diverse curriculum in our schools, as well as the protection of all forms of gender identity and expression. It is a cause of concern when the rallying cry of “parents’ rights” is, as stated by PEN America, “wielded to do far more than give parents their rightful voice; it is turning public schools into political battle grounds, fracturing communities, and diverting time and energy away from teaching and learning.” Additionally, according to the National Education Association (NEA), H.R. 5 “ignores the breadth of parental engagement” that already exists, “disregards

educator experience and expertise” and “inserts the government into local decisions.”

PEN America worries that the current emphasis on working with schools for the betterment of the child has been replaced with a parental focus on wanting to impose their personal beliefs – moral, religious, and/or political – on the entire education system. As an organization founded on the principal of expanding educational opportunities we might all heed Suzanne Nossel’s final words in her *Time* article: “The phrase ‘parents’ rights’ may have a nice ring to it, but the agenda now afoot in its name should sound alarms for all those who care about the future of public education.”

Read more at: [Pen.org](#), [Nea.org](#)

~Kathi Harper, chair AAUW California Public Policy School Board Project Committee

### **Did you know?**

California state AAUW was organized in 1921 and incorporated in 1956. There are 116 member member branches, including an online branch. CA AAUW has 9500 members. In addition to organizing Tech Trek programs for middle school girls every year, CA AAUW also supports Gov Trek and Speech Trek programs for high school students. You can learn more about these programs [here](#).

### **So you weren’t able to volunteer at Franklin Camp Sonoma Tech Trek last year?**

Watch this video to see what you missed!  
[Techtrek2023-1.mp4](#)



The search for Tech Trekkers for 2024 at Camp Franklin at Sonoma is underway.

Middle school science and math teachers are submitting their nominations. Committee members will be reviewing applications and interviewing candidates in March. They will select five finalists and two alternates.



As you know, the price per camper is \$1300. We are able to send 5 campers this summer, with some money left in reserve. If we are to continue to send campers we desperately need a fundraising committee for Tech Trek, reaching beyond our membership for sponsors. Thank you to both Rotary and Kiwanis for their continuing support for our branch.



We appreciate all who participated in the Soup Supper raffle and silent auction. I would like to give a big shout out to Gayle Miner's daughter-in-law, Mel, for creating eleven attractive gift baskets for the raffle. We made close to \$950, over double what we made last year. Way to support Tech Trek!

Many thanks to Pat Harris for opening her garage to us, a savings of \$130 a month in storage fees!

~ Diane Coventry





Mona Sorrell, the head of the Hillcrest program, was delighted with our donations when I delivered them a few days after our shower. Thank you to all who supported this endeavor of helping those in need!

~ Janice Walker

## Annual Layette Shower

Once again the members of our branch have been extremely generous to those in need!

Twenty members contributed to this year's Layette Shower, most gathering at my home on January 10<sup>th</sup>, with several others dropping off items. Altogether we had an abundance of items that were donated to the Hillcrest Layette program, which supplies public health nurses with items needed by little ones, as they make their visits to needy mothers.

20 beautiful blankets and quilts were donated, the majority of which were handmade by members, as well as purchased blankets and a towel set. Contributions also included over 50 outfits and sleepers for boys and girls, along with lovely handmade sweaters and hats. In addition, books for little ones and many dozens of diapers and wipes were included in our donation.



## Soup Supper Update



Our 2024 Soup Supper on Wednesday, January 17<sup>th</sup> at St Andrew's Church was a great success!

We had almost 70 attendees including our speaker and 3 Tech Trek girls. We had 11 delicious soups, 5 kinds of bread and 6 yummy desserts to choose from. Kathleen Wolfe decorated the tables with colorful flower vases. Pat Harris provided our beverages.

Our speaker was author and writer Michael Barrington. His presentation of photos, "Women of the World", were taken from the more than 60 countries that he has worked in. They showed women working with babies on their backs and heavy baskets on their heads. Michael talked about cultural differences, evidenced by tattoos, piercings, and clothing.

Our raffle was a huge success for Tech Trek and included homemade goods and crafts, baskets of books, small gift baskets, wine and champagne, and gift certificates for local establishments. Our Tech Trek girls sold tickets and helped draw tickets at the end. We had 8 donated silent auction items including paintings, a Farmers' Market gift basket by Helen Pereira, a handmade baby blanket by Nancy Hobert, table topper by Suzanne Salter, and woven kitchen towel by Reba Siera. The raffle netted \$720 and the silent auction brought in \$235, all for Tech Trek.

Thank you to our membership for offering so many raffle and silent auction items and bringing soup, bread, and dessert. A great time was had by all!

~Soup Supper Committee: Sherrie Moore, Diane Coventry, Claudia Bass, Suzanne Salter







## PHM AAUW Website

Our website will show you everything you need to know about our Pleasant Hill - Martinez branch. See the photos from our Layette Shower on the **Community Action** page. View the pictures from the Soup Supper on the **Photos** page. Look at our scheduled programs and activities on the **Program** page.

Just go to <https://www.aauw-ph.org/index.html> Remember to press F5 to get the most current version of each page.

Forward any questions or comments that you may have to the webmaster on the **About Us** page.

~Sherrie Moore

### SUNSHINE

If you know of any member who needs a bit of sunshine, please let me know!

Reba Siero

[rebasiero@yahoo.com](mailto:rebasiero@yahoo.com) or 925-917-1061





## PHM AAUW Calendar

- FEB 7** Morning Books, 10 am, Sharon Wilson’s house, 601 Walnut Ave, WC.
- FEB 7** Board Meeting, 7 pm, Nancy Hobert’s house.
- FEB 16** Mah Jongg, 12:30 pm, Brookview Clubhouse.
- FEB 19** Lunchin’ Ladies, 11:30 am, Texas Back Forty.
- Mar 11** Fund Committee Meeting, 2:30 pm, Carolynn Barclay’s house.
- MAR 15** Mah Jongg, 12:30 pm, Brookview Clubhouse.
- MAR 18** Lunchin’ Ladies, 12 noon, Ristorante Aroma, 360 Park St., Moraga.
- APR 3** Check for an email from [vote@simlyvoting.com](mailto:vote@simlyvoting.com) (See Membership article on p. 2 )

## MORNING BOOKS

**MORNING BOOKS** will meet on Wednesday, February 7th, 10 am, at Sharon Wilson’s. PLEASE note that the address in the Directory is incorrect. Sharon lives at 601 Walnut Avenue, WC. We will be discussing *The Engineer’s Wife* by Tracey Emerson Wood. Who really built the Brooklyn Bridge?? Please let Sharon know if you plan to attend. Her email is correct as printed. On March 6<sup>th</sup> we will be discussing Jojo Moyes *Someone Else’s Shoes*. Plan to join us for great discussions on these current books.

## LUNCHIN’ LADIES

On February 19, we will dine at Texas Back Forty, 100 Coggins Dr. in Pleasant Hill, at 11:30 AM. Please reserve by the Monday before, which is February 12. On March 18th lunch will be at Ristorante Amoroma at noon.

NO EXCEPTIONS TO RESERVATION DEADLINE DATES PLEASE. To reserve your spot, contact Gayle Miner (925) 788-3272 by cell or [gayle.miner@yahoo.com](mailto:gayle.miner@yahoo.com) by email.

## MAH JONGG

Mah Jongg will meet on Friday, February 16<sup>th</sup> at the Brookview Clubhouse, 12:30 PM. We will meet next on Friday, March 15<sup>th</sup> at 12:30 PM.

Please let Suzanne Salter know if you plan to attend. Her contact information is:

Suzanne Salter

[seabear92020@outlook.com](mailto:seabear92020@outlook.com)

(925) 988-0322 (cell)

## Grand Slammers

For information, contact:

Marlene de Laurenti  
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 925-934-4171



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