

**Presidential Postings**



The New Year of 2026 has started off with our wonderful interest groups and other meetings. They are a real bonus to being part of this branch. You'll find friends, have lively conversations, and many times, you'll learn something you didn't know before. Whether it's Morning Books, Lunchin' Ladies, Mah Jongg, Wine Appreciation Group, Nimble Fingers, or Grand Slammers, all the details are in the newsletter.



The Layette Program at Hillcrest Congregational Church has been providing layettes to new mothers in our area who can use a hand up for 60 years. Our Annual Layette Shower has been going on for many of those years! Janice Walker has been our most recent host and the meeting at her home this past January 21<sup>st</sup> gathered many wonderful items that Janice then took to the church. Many make lovely blankets and others contribute purchased clothing and other baby and toddler articles.



February 18<sup>th</sup> is our International Soup Supper and plans are well underway to make this an evening of delicious soups, breads, and cookies, as well as having a raffle for Tech Trek. Our speaker is Cherise Khaund, who will talk about her experiences growing up in Saudi Arabia and Venezuela. Please join us for a fun evening.

The Study Arts and Music (SAM) program at Fair Oaks

[SAM](#)



[International Soup Supper](#)



[Slate of Candidates for Branch Officers](#)



[AAUW](#)

[Degree Equivalency Policy for Membership](#)



## Presidential Postings (cont.)

Elementary runs for two weeks at the end of February into early March. Look for more information on how you can participate! The calendar to help is filling up. Check with the SAM team if you wish to participate.

May your February be filled with love and kindness.

~ SarahJoy, Sherrie, and Reba



## Nominating Committee Report

The Nominating Committee (Gayle Miner, Penny Harris, Kathleen Woulfe, Marilyn Thelen, Trinka March) offers the following slate of candidates for consideration by the membership.

**Presidents:** *Trinka March, Sherrie Moore, Reba Siero*

**Program Vice President:** *Carlyn Obringer*

**Membership Vice Presidents:** *Nancy Hobert, Bobbi Horack*

**AAUW FUND (EF) Vice Presidents:** *Carolynn Barckley, Gayle Miner*

**Secretary:** *Sue Greenfeld*

**Treasurer:** *Claudia Bass*

As you can see, of the 10 elected 2025—2026 officers, 8 agreed to remain in their current positions for another year. The 2 new candidates are Trinka March as a Co-President and Bobbi Horack as a Co-Vice President for Membership.

~ Marylee Taylor



## Local Scholarships

The work of the Local Scholarship Committee has begun.

Both local high schools have been contacted as to the dates and details regarding this year’s program. Students applying for our \$2000 scholarships will submit their applications by March 20<sup>th</sup>. The committee will then read the applications and meet to discuss and make decisions as to who will be the recipients of the scholarships.

We’ll continue to keep you informed as the important dates and decisions occur. In the meantime, you will be able to contribute to the funding of Local Scholarships by participating in our Kaffee Klatch activity, whose letter you will receive at the Soup Supper on Wednesday, February 18<sup>th</sup>. The letter will be distributed by other means to those not attending.

It will also be available on our branch website.

~ Helen Perreira



## Tech Trek Tidings

We have an exciting collection of raffle items, such as wine, books, and gift certificates, for the Soup Supper Tech Trek Fundraiser. Thank you interest groups and those of you who donated. Be sure to bring your cash. See Soup Supper Flyer for details.

Our four middle schools, Martinez Junior High, Valley View Middle School, Sequoia Middle School, and Pleasant Hill Middle School, are in the process of nominating potential campers. The Tech Trek Committee will be gearing up to read and evaluate the applications at the end of February, with interviews scheduled for March 21. Good luck to all the nominees. Thank you teachers for your time and Tech Trek Alumni ambassadors for assisting our teachers.

Camp Franklin at Sonoma is June 21—27. We hope some of you might consider being a class monitor for a day. More information to follow in the Spring. Even though I am no longer a camp director, I am still involved as a camp coach/advisor, as well as our branch coordinator.

~ Diane Coventry

### SUNSHINE

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

Marti Martin

[richmar1016@sbcglobal.net](mailto:richmar1016@sbcglobal.net) or

925-229-3574



## Annual Layette Shower

Eighteen members contributed to this year's Layette Shower, donating a variety of items! Thirty-nine clothing sets for boys were donated, including 8 outfits, 4 sleepers, and 27 body suits. For the girls, 37 items included 11 outfits, 6 sleepers, 1 sweater, and 19 body suits.

Three handmade blankets, 3 crocheted blankets, and two crib blankets, as well as a 4-pack of baby blankets, a 2-pack of crib sheets, a pack of 4 receiving blankets, and 3 small handmade feeding blankets were also provided.

Additional items included 1 package of 10 pairs of socks and a package of 12 washcloths. Nineteen knitted hats, 1 hat with matching mittens, and 2 sweater vests with matching socks complete our donated clothing items. But that's not all! Four boxes of Huggies, totaling 522 diapers, 6 children's books, and 2 handmade stuffed animals complete our donation!

The ladies from Hillcrest Church, who accepted our donation, were very grateful. A very special THANK YOU to all who made our Layette Shower a success!

~ Janice Walker



## Important New Membership Update

### Degree Equivalency Policy

National AAUW has publicized a Degree Equivalency Policy. This will enable "individuals who have the equivalent of an associate degree" to become members. We can now add new members who do not have an actual degree.

To join under this policy, women must

- 1) Demonstrate a commitment to working to advance equity for women and girls.
- 2) AND have *one or more* of the following:
  - Certificates, licenses, or professional certifications issued by a higher education institution, and/or
  - At least 2 years of full-time or 48 credit hours equivalent education

Applicants must be approved by National.

Our branch has had to turn away wonderful, interested women in the past because they lacked a degree. Please encourage women who may qualify under this "equivalency" to join us. Invite them to the Soup Supper in February or other functions to learn more about us. Share our website!

If you know of a potential member, please contact Nancy Hobert or Diane Peterson, Membership Co-Chairs.



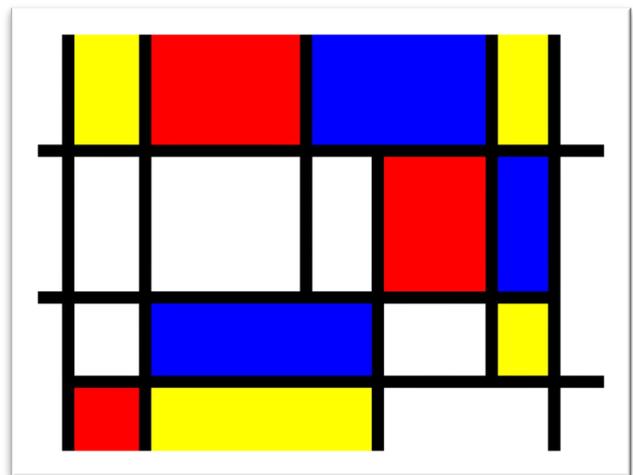
## SAM at Fair Oaks in February/March

SAM is starting in February! Our SAM (Study Art and Music) Program this year will be from Monday, February 23<sup>rd</sup> through Friday, March 6<sup>th</sup> at Fair Oaks Elementary School. We will visit 12 classes: K – 5<sup>th</sup> grade classes, and 2 SDC (Special Day Classes, Special Ed). Our artist is **Piet Mondrian** and the composer we have chosen is **George Gershwin**. The music selection is Rhapsody in Blue.

Our workday is scheduled for Tuesday, February 10<sup>th</sup> from 10:00 till noon in Room 13, across from the office. We will be preparing for the classes – cutting construction paper, bagging supplies, and reviewing the PowerPoint presentation.

Please let us know if you would like to volunteer. So far, we have 17 volunteers on our list. It's lots of fun and very rewarding.

~ Sherrie Moore, Barbara Minneman, and Helen Pereira



# Martinez Mayor to Speak at March Meeting



## AAUW Pleasant Hill—Martinez Branch Website

Our website will show you everything you need to know about our Pleasant Hill — Martinez branch. Read about our Annual Layette Shower, on the **Community Action Page**. Check out our programs and events on the **Program Page**. As always, read the latest newsletter on the **Newsletter Page**.

Just go to <http://www.aauw-pleasanthill-martinez.org>. 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, Webmaster



Martinez mayor, Brianne Zorn, will be speaking at our March meeting, which will be held at the First Congregational Church of Martinez on Saturday, March 14, at 10 A.M.

Brianne was elected to the Martinez City Council as Councilmember for District

3 in November 2020, and as mayor in November 2022. She grew up in the Seattle area and earned a BS in botany, a BA in anthropology, and a minor in Japanese from the University of Washington. Her priorities on the Martinez City Council have been transparency and good communication, air quality and the health and safety of Martinez residents, parks and open space, and improvement to the Martinez waterfront.

She has worked in the non-profit sector and environmental consulting for 20 years and provides unique biological expertise to the restoration of contaminated waterfront properties. She is a professional wetland scientist, and her work experience includes botanical garden management, permitting and regulatory support, dredging and sediment remediation, wetland delineation and monitoring, as well as digital expertise for the development of field data collection apps and database management.

She is a mother and stepmother of three kids and is proud to call Martinez her home since 2015.



## International Soup Supper

Our annual Soup Supper will be held at St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church in Pleasant Hill on February 18, at 6 P.M.

Enjoy hearty homemade soups, breads, and desserts while socializing with your AAUW friends and participating in a raffle to support Tech Trek's 2026 Camp at Sonoma State.

You can bring a pot of soup, bread, or dessert, or if you don't feel like cooking, pay \$10. This is a wonderful opportunity to bring friends, as well, so they can learn what our organization is all about!



## Morning Books

On February 4<sup>th</sup>, *The Boxcar Librarian* by Brianna Labuskes will be the subject of discussion. This depression-era novel is based on the true history of Montana's Boxcar Library and examines the experiences of women who lived in the American West, highlighting the significance of books to those in need. Kathleen Woulfe, 2154 Deerwood Drive in Martinez, will serve as the hostess for this event and Marti Martin will be our discussion leader.

*The God of the Woods* by Liz Moore is the book we'll be discussing at our March 4<sup>th</sup> meeting. This book is a gripping mystery novel that explores themes of class, power, guilt, and survival, revealing how past sins echo through generations. The book is centered around the mysterious disappearance of a young girl at a summer camp in upstate New York. Sounds very interesting! The

meeting will be at Sharon Wilson's house at 601 Walnut Avenue in Walnut Creek. Carolyn Barcklay will be our discussion leader.

Our meetings are held at 10:00 A.M. on the first Wednesday of each month from September through May and in June we hold a potluck and choose books we'd like to read the following year. Please contact Sharon (925-330-3391) if you have questions or need a ride. If you love books, join us!



## Wine Appreciation Group

Fourteen people attended the

Wine Appreciation Group on Friday, January 16<sup>th</sup>. We learned about Sangiovese wine and blind-tasted three wines. Thank you to Charlotte, Bea, and Lorrie for providing the wines.

We also collected 9 bottles of wine, 2 bottles of champagne, and several other items for the Tech Trek raffle at the Soup Supper.

The next Wine Appreciation meeting will be on Friday, February 20<sup>th</sup> at 4 P.M. at Diane Peterson's house. We will be tasting Merlot (red) wine. Please let Diane know if you would like to attend. Space is limited.

**Writing a check for donation or event?**

**Please make it payable to  
AAUW Pleasant Hill—Martinez Branch.**



## Lunchin' Ladies

Lunchin' Ladies will meet on Monday, February 16, at 12:00 noon, at La Pinata Mexican Restaurant, 2301 Willow Pass Road,

Concord.

Reservations must be in by Monday, February 9.

Gayle Miner, 925-788-3272 or [gayle.miner@yahoo.com](mailto:gayle.miner@yahoo.com)

NO EXCEPTIONS PLEASE.



## Mah Jongg

Mah Jongg will meet on Friday, February 20, at 12:30 PM at Brookview Clubhouse. Newbies are welcome

too!

Be sure to let Suzanne Salter know if you are coming:

[seabear92020@outlook.com](mailto:seabear92020@outlook.com) or 925-988-0322



## Nimble Fingers

Nimble Fingers will be meeting on Monday, February 23, at 2:30 P.M., at Janet Sullivan's

home.

Join us for a fun afternoon of crafting, chatting, admiring each other's work, and possibly learning a new skill.

Please let Janet or Karen know you're coming.

Janet: 925-387-8039

[janetsullivan218@aol.com](mailto:janetsullivan218@aol.com)

Karen: 925-408-5721

[karen.winters@sbcglobal.net](mailto:karen.winters@sbcglobal.net)



## Grand Slammers

Bridge Club — for information, contact Marlene De Laurenti:

[mdl@astound.net](mailto:mdl@astound.net) or 925-934-4171





## Lobby Days 2026 - A New Approach for Greater Impact

**Calling all AAUW Advocates — get ready for Lobby Days 2026!** Lobby Days offer an important opportunity for you to meet with legislative offices and advance our priority bills. We encourage all members to participate!

What kinds of bills will you be advocating for in 2026? In the fall of 2025, AAUW California was approached by Assemblywoman (Asm.) Krell's office to sponsor two bills related to human trafficking education and enforcement. We are currently in the process of working with Asm. Krell and her staff to shape the language and direction of this legislation. In early March, the Public Policy Committee will work together to select at least one additional bill from our Legislative Agenda to prioritize. All of our top bills are carefully chosen based on their timeliness, likelihood of passage, and alignment with our core values and public policy priorities.

**This year we're also introducing a new approach to Lobby Days that prioritizes in-district meetings.** This shift was inspired, in part, by our recent trials and tribulations with Lobby Days meetings in Sacramento. Specifically, over the past two years, it has become increasingly difficult to secure meetings with legislative offices in the capitol as they are routinely overbooked. Overbooking means that meetings tend to be confirmed at the last minute, short (most last no more than 15 minutes), and held with staffers rather than legislators (84 of 94 in 2025 ).

This proposed shift to in-district meetings for Lobby Days was also inspired, in part, by the experiences of the Redlands Branch, who took a different approach and saw remarkable results. By scheduling Lobby Days in-district, they were able to secure eight in-person meetings. These meetings were confirmed well in advance, were longer, and offered a much better chance of speaking directly with legislators. We highlighted their success in our November Public Policy survey, and members overwhelmingly indicated a preference for meeting with district offices.

For all of these reasons, **in-district meetings will be our primary strategy for Lobby Day 2026.** As we transition to this model, we will also keep a zoom meeting option for members who are unable to travel to in-district meetings.

We are also seeking volunteers to serve as **Team Leaders** — a critical role responsible for scheduling district office meetings, coordinating team members, and ensuring everyone understands their tasks and logistics.

We look forward to your participation!

### A Few Important Notes About the New Lobby Days Model

- In-district meetings will be longer, will be with your own representative's office, and are more likely to be directly with the legislator, although they may still be referred to staff, depending upon the legislator's schedule demands.
- **Some in-district meetings may include AAUW members from multiple branches.** Each team

## Public Policy (cont'd)

will need to identify 4 to 5 speakers. Even if not everyone presents, members are encouraged to demonstrate strong support, and legislative offices will appreciate meeting such an engaged group of constituents.

- **Team leaders, volunteers from your branch or district, will take on a new role.** They will not only be responsible for meeting with team members, dividing up speaking responsibilities, and leading the actual meetings. Now they will also be responsible for scheduling the in-district meetings.
- **Zoom meetings will remain brief, only 15--20 minutes in length.** They are likely to be with staff, and may be with a legislative office that is not your own. This is because in-person meetings will be prioritized. Zoom meetings

will be scheduled by the Public Policy Committee.

- **Flexibility is essential for everyone.** Schedules shift, offices change availability, and things happen outside of our control.
- **Most of all, enjoy the experience.** Lobby Day is a wonderful opportunity to connect with lawmakers, share our values, and advocate for AAUW California’s priority bills — legislation that will make a real difference in the lives of women and girls as well as those impacted by social and racial injustices.

~ Amy Hom and Missy Maceyko, Co-chairs AAUW California Public Policy

For key dates and FAQ, view the [January Public Policy newsletter](#) on the California AAUW website.



### PHM AAUW NEWS is sponsored by Montecito Animal Clinic

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**Katrinka March, DVM**

**Karen Shore, BVMS**

**Rebecca Horn, DVM**



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



**International Soup Supper**  
**Wednesday, February 18<sup>th</sup>, 2026, 6 P.M.**  
**St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church**  
**1601 Mary Drive, Pleasant Hill**

Please join us for hearty, homemade soups, breads, and desserts at our Pleasant Hill-Martinez Branch Annual International Soup Supper. Coffee, water, and tea will be provided. Be sure to bring your own soup bowl and spoon. Dinner starts promptly at 6 P.M., and remember that spouses, partners, and friends are most welcome.

Let us know if you would like to bring a pot of soup serving 10—12 people or bread or dessert OR pay \$10. All guests pay \$10. **We can always use more soups, breads, and cookies.**

Contact Suzanne Salter 925 988-0322 or [seabear92020@outlook.com](mailto:seabear92020@outlook.com) to pay and indicate number of guests.

Reservation deadline and payment by February 15<sup>th</sup>  
Make checks payable to **AAUW Pleasant Hill-Martinez Branch**  
Mail to: 275 Appalachian Drive, Pleasant Hill, CA 94523

**Our speaker for the evening is Cherise Khaund**  
She will talk about her experiences growing up in Saudi Arabia and Venezuela

**We are having a raffle to support Tech Trek**  
Raffle - 1 ticket for \$3, 2 for \$5, 5 for \$10, 12 for \$20  
So bring some cash and have some fun!  
Let Diane Coventry know by February 12<sup>th</sup> if you would like to donate any raffle items. Indicate estimated value of items.

**Hope to see you there!**



## **AAUW Pleasant Hill-Martinez March 2026 Program**

**When: Saturday, March 14th, 10:00 A.M.  
Place: First Congregational Church of Martinez  
1229 Court Street, Martinez**

**Speaker: Mayor Brianne Zorn**

**She will speak to us about...  
Air quality and the health and safety of Martinez residents,  
Parks and open space,  
and improvements to the Martinez waterfront**



**Please join us for light refreshments and an informative discussion**



## PHM AAUW Calendar

- Feb 4** Morning Books, 10 A.M., Kathleen Woulfe’s
- Feb 11** February Board meeting, 7 P.M., SarahJoy Haynes’
- Feb 16** Lunchin’ Ladies, 12:00 noon, La Pinata Mexican Restaurant, 2301 Willow Pass Road, Concord
- Feb 18** International Soup Supper, 6 P.M., St. Andrew’s Presbyterian Church, 1601 Mary Drive, Pleasant Hill
- Feb 20** Mah Jongg, 12:30 P.M., Brookview Clubhouse
- Feb 20** Wine Club, 4 P.M., Diane Peterson’s
- Feb 23** Nimble Fingers, 2:30 P.M., Janet Sullivan’s
- Feb 23** March NEWS deadline — *Early!*
- Feb 23—Mar 6** SAM at Fair Oaks Elementary
- Mar 4** Morning Books, 10 A.M., Sharon Wilson’s
- Mar 14** General Meeting, 10 A.M., First Congregational Church, Martinez

## 2025–26 Leadership Team

### President 1 (Board Meeting Chair):

SaraJoy Haynes

### President 2 (General Meeting Chair):

Sherrie Moore

### President 3 (National & Newsletter):

Reba Siero

### Vice President—Program:

Carlyn Obringer

### Vice Presidents—Membership:

Nancy Hobert & Diane Peterson

### Vice Presidents—AAUW Fund:

Carolynn Barcklay & Gayle Miner

**Secretary:** Sue Greenfeld

**Treasurer:** Claudia Bass

**Webmaster:** Sherrie Moore

**Newsletter Editor:** Karen Winters

**Social Media:** Carlyn Obringer



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