

CELEBRATE BLACK HISTORY MONTH WITH SPIRITUALS AND BLACK ARTISTS

Saturday, February 25, 2017 at 10:00 AM
St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church
1601 Mary Drive, Pleasant Hill

NOTE: THIS IS MEETING ON SATURDAY AND THE LAST WEEK OF THE MONTH
Black Artists Henry Ossawa Tanner and Clementine Hunter will be presented by Suzanne Mesetz.
Gayle Garrison will present the music of Spirituals and the song
LIFT EVERY VOICE AND SING, considered the black national anthem

Lunch after the program.....Baked Potato Bar.

For lunch reservations, call Pat Harris at 228-6263 or e-mail patriciaharris4@mac.com



The Banjo Lesson

1893



Henry Ossawa Tanner

1859 - 1937



Clementine Hunter 1886 - 1988



Fisk University Choir



PRESIDENTIAL POSTINGS

“Only the pure in heart can make a good soup.” –
Ludwig van Beethoven

The Master must have had AAUW Pleasant Hill-Martinez branch members in mind when he made that statement. On Wednesday, January 18, our branch held its annual Soup Supper, with over 90 diners and a tremendous variety of outstanding soups and scrumptious desserts to partake in. Rounding out the evening, retired DVC Oceanography Instructor **Dianna Vanni Matthias** gave an entertaining, yet poignant presentation on Midway Atoll, the Laysan Albatross and the plastic pollution that threatens their existence. We are thankful to Dianna for providing her insights on this important issue. We express our appreciation to event organizers **Sarah Joy Haynes** and **Marge Munger**, along with Program VPs **Gayle Garrison** and **Nancy Hobert** for making this evening a success. On each table, the clever centerpieces of vases with plastic recyclable newspaper bag flowers in them, were created by Co-President **Claudia Bass**. In addition, we thank **Patricia Harris** for providing coffee and tea. And finally, we are grateful to all those who prepared delicious soups and desserts. This event was a success because of the collective efforts of our branch membership.

During the evening, Local Scholarship Co-Chairs **Marie Cattalini** and **Carol Walsh** passed out invitations to “A Coffee Klatch”. While sitting down for a cup of coffee in the morning, we should think about this year’s graduates from Alhambra and College Park

High Schools who will be going on to attend four year colleges or universities. Our branch will be giving out \$1000 scholarships to four deserving young women - two from each high school. Please consider contributing to the education of these young women. Any amount you can donate is very much appreciated.

Our Nominating Committee is hard at work recruiting members to join our Executive Committee as 2017-2018 Officers. Members are encouraged to join this group of hard working women to help further the mission of advancing equity for women and girls. If you are interested in accepting an office, whether it be on the executive committee or as an appointed officer, please contact Parliamentarian **Marilyn Thelen** or committee members: **Joan Foster, Reba Siero, Gayle Miner, Joy Barden, Janice Walker, Margie Pruitt** or **Shelley Jacobson**. Your participation is welcome and encouraged.

Registration is now open for AAUW’s 2017 National Convention in Washington DC beginning Wednesday, June 14th and ending Saturday, June 17th. Two members have already registered for this convention. If interested in attending, please contact Co-Presidents **Jennifer Apkarian** or **Claudia Bass**.

Looking back on our history, our branch has two important milestones approaching. First, in 2017, we celebrate 60 years since the Pleasant Hill Branch was chartered. Then, in 2018, we will celebrate 70 years since the charter of the Martinez Branch. Let’s celebrate!!!! We would like to form a committee to plan an event commemorating these two important anniversaries – perhaps a Summer Social. If you are interested in participating on this committee, please contact **Jennifer** or **Claudia**.

We hope to see everyone at our next meeting on Saturday, February 25, when we will celebrate Black History month with a program of music and art, followed by a simple lunch. More information is included in this newsletter.

Happy Valentine’s Day!

Jennifer and Claudia

AAUW – Why We Belong, Why We Work, Why It Matters

The program at the recent Soup Supper was, as others have been, interesting, informative and even humorous. But it was also special because it shows the impact we as members can have without realizing it and what AAUW stands for quite beyond the fellowships, the lobbying, the research, the education and the local scholarships and opportunities for growth through Tech Trek, NCCWSL and Start Smart etc: what we each can do as an individual to change another woman's life.

Dianna Vanni Matthias made her second appearance at the Soup Supper and gave an interesting, informative, sometimes humorous and often very disturbing talk about her experiences over six summers on Midway atoll volunteering to try to halt the environmental degradation to the ecology of the historic spot and more importantly to the bird life whose dependence on ocean life is seriously threatened by plastic and other waste. Who knew that there are thousands of plastic cigarette lighters floating around in the massive collection of waste getting larger every day in the north Pacific? Who knew that a young bird can't tell the difference between the garbage and proper food so when it feels full, it feeds no more and dies of starvation. Opening the remains shows a mass of plastic and metal in its stomach.

Last fall, when Dianna agreed to speak again to our Branch, she asked that we invite Branch lifetime member Carol Baier to attend. Carol was Dianna's chemistry teacher in 1953-54 at Alhambra Union High School. It was her first year of teaching at Alhambra and the first of 63 continuous years of membership in our Branch. Dianna was a bright, hard-working junior who had enough credits to graduate in June of her junior year.



Dianna spoke movingly of Carol's impact on her life. Carol, spotting her abilities, even used contacts at UCSF to obtain bacteria samples so Dianna could learn to transfer them to slides. In her quiet way, Carol strongly encouraged Dianna to pursue education and a career in science even though it was a difficult choice at the time for a woman both in gaining the education and in opportunities for meaningful work. Indeed Dianna went through frequent disdain and even humiliation in her education experience from UC Berkeley and University of Nevada/Reno to Northern Arizona University where she earned her Ph.D. in marine biology. She was told by her advisor at NAU that she would indeed receive the degree she had earned, the first PhD

given by that school, but she would not be hired on the faculty. Looking at the job placement ads was not encouraging. A college in Brownsville, Texas ran an ad saying that "anyone over age 40 and any women need not apply."

Dianna did have a happy ending to her professional story but she has never forgotten Carol, the only female instructor she had in all her education up to and including the doctorate, and Carol's encouragement, her seeking out extra experiences to add interest and challenge to Dianna's classwork and her steadfast support.

Carol, now 92, sat smiling quietly but not missing a thing as she has all the 55 years I've known her. Dianna had a newspaper picture of herself, Carol and a few other students (all boys) from a 1954 edition of the Contra Costa Gazette, enlarged and framed to present to her. Dianna herself was so moved by the whole thing herself that she forgot to announce that she and her husband have created a \$1000 scholarship in Carol's honor for a young woman in the Alhambra Class of 2017 who wants to pursue a career in mathematics or science.

(continued on page 4)

(from page 3) Never an attention seeker, how did Carol react? With her usual quiet manner but with, she admits, some tears then and every time since then when she thinks of it.

Carol taught at Alhambra for three years until the first of her four children were born. After that, she substituted at the high school and began a second career of 20 years as a beloved piano teacher in Martinez. She still plays the piano at weekly Kiwanis meetings when she can attend and at the Christmas Eve service at First Congregational Church. A member of Martinez Music Forum, she has been active up to the present in helping organize the Forum's annual "Christmas Gift to the Community" concert including church choirs from in and around Martinez, soloists, the Alhambra and Martinez Junior High orchestras and even a bagpiper. It raises funds for a music scholarship at Alhambra.

Carol, a biology major from Beloit College in Wisconsin, is an avid environmentalist having been active on the Friends of the Franklin Hills and the creation of the Briones Bio Region. She has been honored by several groups and she has contacts with a number of environmental organizations and activists who are always featured speakers at Martinez Kiwanis the month she is responsible for programs.

We often don't realize the positive impact our actions, fueled by the values and goals of AAUW, have on the women and girls we interact with. But Carol didn't know either until the Soup Supper 63 years later.

By the way, Dianna decided not to join the Branch when she spoke to us previously because she is not free to leave her handicapped husband in the evenings so she thought she couldn't contribute. I have disabused her of that notion telling her she is free to not come to meetings when she is not able to, but we'll sure take her checks for Fund, for Scholarships, for Tech Trek etc. any time. She laughed and said in that case she would be very glad to fill in the application she has in her possession.

EDUCATION

Gayle Duncan

President Donald Trump has selected Betsy DeVos as his Education Secretary. She has received strong criticism from teachers' unions. They feel that because DeVos is a Republican donor and school choice activist, she is working against public education. DeVos has responded to these accusations by telling the Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee that she will be "a strong advocate for great public schools." She believes that American parents should have the right to enroll their children in high-quality schools, charter schools, magnet and religious schools, if the public schools in their areas are failing. Committee Chairman Lamar Alexander, R- Tenn., a former Education Secretary, is confident that DeVos will do a good job because she is "on the side of the children." Sen. Patty Murray of Washington state, top Democrat on the committee, has concerns with DeVos because she has not disclosed financial and ethics information prior to the hearing. Priorities for DeVos include: addressing higher education costs, massive student debt, advancing trade and vocational schools, and community colleges, because, "craftsmanship is not a fallback-but a noble pursuit." DeVos also wants to give local communities greater control over education policies, and remove federal regulations from the equation. She believes that listening to parents, students, and teachers will unlock our nation's potential, not increased government control, tougher mandates, or a federal agency.

NOMINATING COMMITTEE

The slate of nominees for the 2017-2018 board has been filled by a wonderful group of our members. The complete list will be presented in the March newsletter.

Reba Siero, Nominating Committee chair

FEBRUARY BOARD MEETING

FEBRUARY 8, 2017

7 PM

Rolling Green Clubhouse

Copy deadline for the March 2017 N.E.W.S. is:

February 20th

Please email copy to:

Reba Siero

rebasiero@yahoo.com

GAME DAY CANCELLED

Game Day was scheduled for March 30th, but has been cancelled.



We are looking at using social media as a way of getting information out about our branch and possibly attracting younger potential new members. Some branches are starting to use social media and have Facebook pages. We need someone to set up and manage a Facebook page for our branch featuring events and other pertinent information. Could possibly use Twitter as well. If you are technically savvy, we would love to have you help out. Please contact Jennifer or Claudia if you are interested.



Pleasant Hill - Martinez AAUW Website



Our website will show you everything you need to know about our Pleasant Hill - Martinez branch. Enjoy photos from our January **Soup Supper** on the **Photo Page**. Our speaker, **Dianna Matthias**, honored **Carol Baier**, a life member of our branch, for encouraging her to pursue advanced education and a career in science.

Are you interested in becoming more involved in our branch? There are many positions available for the coming year. Go to the **About Us Page**, and click on **Officers 2016-2017**. You can also become a member of one of our community service committees.

Just go to <http://www.aauw-pleasanthill-martinez.org> for all of this and more. 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, located on the **About Us Page**.

Sherrie Moore, webmaster

INTEREST SECTIONS MEETINGS



****MORNING BOOKS** will meet on Wednesday, February 1, 10 am, at Susanne Rheingruber's. We will be discussing our classic, *A Tree Grows in Brooklyn* by Betty Smith. This story is about a young girl's coming-of-age at the turn of the century ~ called a profoundly moving novel. PLEASE call your hostess if you are planning to attend. In March, we will be discussing *The Elephant Whisperer* by Lawrence Anthony. Please join us for great discussions.



****IN INDELIBLE INK** will meet on Wednesday, February 8, 10 am, at Ginny Hargrave's. Our topic will be "They'll Do It Every Time." Use your imagination, or write about an event that proves nothing is new ~ everything happens over and over. We welcome oral versions as well as written. Come and try us out!



****LUNCHIN' LADIES** will go to lunch at LiMa, 2151 Salvio Street, Suite 1, in Concord on Thursday, February 16, 1 pm. This is a newish restaurant featuring food from Peru. Please tell Marlene if you are interested in this section ~ and if you have an idea for a great restaurant it would be fun for us to try. PLEASE call Marlene (689-5439) by the 14th, so reservations can be made.



****EVENING BOOKS** will meet on Monday, February 27, 7 pm, at Marge Munger's. We will be discussing *The Girls of Atomic City* by Denise Kiernan. This is an untold story about the women who helped win WWII. In March, we will be discussing our classic by Willa Cather, *Death Comes for the Archbishop*. Plan to join us!



****MATINEE IDLE** will go to the movies on Thursday, February 23 on our regular 4th Thursday. Call Marlene (689-5439), if you have any suggestions for a movie. We always discuss the film after over coffee, other liquid refreshment, or frozen yogurt.

COMMUNITY ~ PLEASANT HILL

Marlene Maksel

Have you noticed the new City signs located at major entryways to the Pleasant Hill? There are 8 of them and they replace the old pagoda-style signs. In addition, soon there will be 29 "wayfinding" signs at various locations in the City, as an aid in finding services, parks and important aspects of the City.

The 46th annual Community Awards Night will be on Tuesday, February 21 at the Pleasant Hill Community Center. The social hour begins at 5:30; dinner at 6:30 and the program at 7:15 pm. Tickets are \$50/each and may be purchased by going online at www.pleasanthillca.org/tickets.

OTHER GROUPS



****GRAND SLAMMERS** will play bridge on Monday, February 13th at 12:30 at Brookview Club House. Each player pays \$5, with \$3 for Local Scholarship Fund and \$2 for room rental. All levels of players are welcome, members and non-members.

Contact Marlene DeLaurenti at (925) 934-4171 or mdl@astound.net if you would like to play.



****MAH JONGG**

COME PLAY MAH JONGG!

Mah Jongg meets at 12:30 PM on February 17th, at Brookview Clubhouse.

There is a \$2.00 per person charge for the clubhouse rental. If you don't know how to play Mah Jongg, but would like to learn, we will be happy to teach you.

Reservations are a must each month, so contact Suzanne Salter at (925) 935-0861, email: seabear2@msn.com OR Gayle Miner at (925) 349-6795, email: gayle.miner@yahoo.com

We play on the 3rd Friday of the month We would love to have you join our group.

MEMBERSHIP MATTERS

Bea Ball and Elva Valli, Membership VPs

It is at events such as the Soup Supper that our Branch is approached by women interested in joining AAUW. On Wednesday, January 19th, Co-Chairs Sarah Joy Haynes and Marge Munger welcomed a very large group of people to this year's event. The soups were delicious and Dianna Vanni Mathias' program was outstanding. In spite of the rain everyone enjoyed the evening. Bea and I especially enjoyed ourselves as we were approached by at least three women who were interested in becoming members of our branch. As you remember, this was one of those perfect times and places for joining as the dues are reduced between January 1st and March 15th.

We had such a good time welcoming new members at our December Open House that we look forward to the next one. We have begun to make plans for a Saturday morning event on March 18, 2017 and will have more details for you in the next newsletter.

We'd also like to remind you that the gift of a membership is always welcomed and now is an ideal time for awarding such a gift to a friend or family member. This membership is good until June 30, 2017 and your gift recipient will be able to renew at the regular rate for a 2017-2018 membership.

Joining our branch at the Soup Supper, please welcome our newest member and add her to your directory:

Leslie Clark Adams
119 Pebble Place
San Ramon, CA 94583
(925) 828-7364 (home)
leslieclarkadams@gmail.com

Leslie attended UC Berkeley earning a BA, and a teaching credential with a major in Art History.

We have a new phone number for Karen Watanabe: (925) 876-8917 (cell)



Elena Noble, Start Smart Facilitator

Enoble4@astound.net

AAUW's CCC Inter-Branch Council is once again working with The Contra Costa Community College District to offer free classes in Wage Negotiation that work toward closing the Gender Pay Gap. We have contacted **Diablo Valley, Los Medanos and Contra Costa Community Colleges**, and offered each campus an opportunity to educate graduating students with our Equal Pay Workshops.

I am pleased to announce that **Diablo Valley College** has scheduled two workshops to coordinate with their Woman's History Month in March. The dates are:

March 7, 11:30-1:30 BLF Conference Room, Pleasant Hill

March 15, (time to be determined), San Ramon

These are exciting workshops, and your Start Smart Team invites AAUW members to sit in and watch the interaction between our diverse Career Team and the students.

Feel free to contact me for questions and updates on times and places.

PUBLIC POLICY

Lita Gloor-Little lgloorlittle@gmail.com

This can be an exciting time politically for our nation, big changes are coming. I am aware that there are AAUW members who voted for Trump and I want to honor their opinion, but I also, as a member of AAUW, will let you all know what both the national office and the state offices are doing and their stance.

I received the paragraphs below on January 18, 2017 from National. AAUW is a nonpartisan organization but our president, Donald Trump, appears to be seeking to dismantle many of the laws that AAUW has fought for.

AAUW has never shied away from speaking truth to power, and that's not going to change during President Donald Trump's administration. In fact, AAUW members and supporters were in Washington, D.C., during the weekend of January 20-21 — some for the inauguration, and others as part of the Women's March on Washington.

AAUW will continue our 135-year history as a nonpartisan organization working to advance gender equity. We've played critical roles in setting agendas for city councils, statehouses, Congress, the White House, and even the United Nations.

There are so many more glass ceilings that need to be shattered, and we need to stand together if we're going to break through barriers for all women. Advocates like you are the core of AAUW's mission and the heart of this weekend's events. **We need every AAUW member and supporter right now. We need you to speak truth to power and make your voice — and all women's voices — heard.**

Sign AAUW's petition demanding that women's priorities be national priorities. Even if you couldn't join us in person that weekend, signing this petition will add your voice to the thousands calling on our government for gender equity.

To sign the petition, please go to this website: Make women's priorities America's priorities

At the local and state level some of the changes are listed. Minimum wage is a huge issue in this country and while many people have fought against raising the minimum wage, companies who have raised their employees pay level have learned that their companies have profited far more than they had expected.

States and Cities See Minimum Wage Increases But Opposition Looms

At the start of the new year, **minimum wage increases went into effect in 19 states**, leading to raises for 4.3 million workers. Some states, such as **California** and New York, did so through legislative action. While others—Arizona, Colorado, Maine and Washington—ushered in the increase through **ballot measures**. Additionally, seven states already have inflation indexing, whereby the minimum wage is automatically adjusted every year to account for changing prices. On top of the protections at the state level, 35 localities now have a minimum wage that is higher than that of their state. However, these changes are leading to push back in the form of so-called “preemption” bills that block municipalities from taking action on provisions like minimum wage or paid leave. These preemption bills, like **the one passed in Ohio** at the end of the 2016 legislative session, mandate a ceiling on worker protections, rather than a floor upon which municipalities can build. All told, **more than 20 states** have passed such laws.

Human trafficking affects us all a lot more than we know, there is a huge underground economy based on trafficking and it is happening in all of our communities. It is important to realize that many of the people being trafficked start out at very young adolescents.

Take Action during Human Trafficking Awareness Month

AAUW believes that global interdependence requires national and international policies against all forms of **human trafficking**. All states should have statutes in place that address the protection of victims, as well as prosecution and prevention, including provisions that cover safe harbor, victim assistance, civil remedies, the

ability to vacate convictions for survivors, and strict hotline posting requirements. In honor of Human Trafficking Awareness Month this January, and in partnership with the National Council of Jewish Women, AAUW released a [downloadable toolkit](#) to combat human trafficking. The resource outlines three key state policy priorities — hotline posting requirements, safe harbor laws, and vacatur laws — to identify and combat sex trafficking. This document is intended to be used in conjunction with other state policy resources, such as the [Polaris Project's model state legislation](#), to guide AAUW branches and states in their legislative advocacy.

Confirmation hearings for Trump's Attorney General and Secretary of State picks begin

Sen. Jeff Sessions (R-AL) faced [two days](#) of confirmation hearings marked by protests, tough questions about his legislative record, and unprecedented testimony from fellow members of Congress. Sen. Cory Booker (D-NJ) [made history](#) by testifying against his Senate colleague during the second day of confirmation hearings, citing concerns about Sen. Sessions' ability to adequately serve the needs of minority groups including women, members of the LGBT community, and people of color. The confirmation hearing of former ExxonMobil CEO Rex Tillerson provided some [surprising breaks](#) from President Donald J. Trump's platform. Facing the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, Tillerson [spoke out](#) against a ban on Muslim immigration into the United States, a proposal first mentioned by then-candidate Trump during the 2016 campaign. Tillerson also attempted to ease fears about his connections with Russian President Vladimir Putin. AAUW will be watching these confirmation hearings with our mission in mind. The heads of certain agencies stand to have significant influence, positive or negative, on issues affecting women and families. [Click here](#) to see how specific agencies affect AAUW issues and why the president's personnel decisions matter to public policy for women and girls.

U.S. Senate takes initial steps to repeal Obamacare

Early Thursday morning, Senate Republicans [approved](#) a budget resolution which allows for large parts of the Affordable Care Act to be repealed through a process called budget reconciliation. Such a process would allow the measure to be passed with a simple majority of 50 votes rather than a filibuster-proof 60 votes. The resolution was then approved by the House on Friday. Although there is a general consensus among Republicans that Obamacare must be repealed, many within the party are worried about voting to repeal without a firm plan to replace it. President-elect Trump, however, said he believes the ACA would be replaced quickly after its repeal. He stated, "It'll be repeal and replace. It will be essentially simultaneous. Probably the same day, could be the same hour." The GOP has yet to release a proposed replacement plan.

Ethics office concerned about rushed hearings for Cabinet nominees

The director of the Office of Government Ethics, Walter M. Shaub, [expressed concerns](#) over the current confirmation calendar, as some nominees have not completed the required ethics review prior to their hearings. Officials warned that proceeding with hearings without this information is unprecedented. The pace of the confirmation calendar has overwhelmed the independent government investigators who are responsible for the reviews. Following Shaub's statement, Senate Republicans [delayed the hearings of four nominees](#): Betsy DeVos, nominee for secretary of education; Andrew Puzder, nominee for secretary of labor; Mike Pompeo, nominee for head of the Central Intelligence Agency; Wilbur Ross, nominee for secretary of commerce.

As you can see, there is a lot to concern all of us. Fortunately, we have both a state and national organization that will fight for women's issues.

What you can do is be active for the causes in which you believe.



2016–2017 LEADERSHIP TEAM

February 2017 and beyond

- Feb 1** Morning Books, 10 am,
Susanne Rheingruber
- Feb 8** In Indelible Ink, 10 am,
Ginny Hargrave's
- Feb 8** Board meeting, 7 pm,
Rolling Green Clubhouse
- Feb 8** Grand Slammers Bridge, 12:30 pm,
Brookview Clubhouse
- Feb 16** Lunchin' Ladies, 1 pm, LiMa restaurant
RSVP to Marlene Maksel by Feb 14
- Feb 17** Mah Jongg, 12:30 pm
Brookview Clubhouse
- Feb 20** March 2017 N.E.W.S. deadline to Reba
- Feb 23** Matinee Idle, Marlene Maksel
- Feb 25** Black History Month in Art and Music,
10 am, St Andrew's Presbyterian Church,
luncheon to follow
- Feb 27** Evening Books, 7 pm, Marge Munger
- Mar 7** Start Smart Equal Pay Workshop,
11:30 am, DVC Pleasant Hill campus
- Mar 18** New Member Open House

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Here is a link to a wonderful version of Lift Every Voice:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ngFDy52eCZY>

There are many great renditions on YouTube.

PH-M AAUW N.E.W.S. SPONSOR

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