

Presidential Postings



Some days feel more like Fall than others as Summer finishes up, though the hot days linger! The Welcome Back Brunch was a great success with lovely flowers to grace the tables and good friends (new and old) to share conversations and a good meal. Thank you to Diane Peterson and her crew for making it a wonderful morning.



The new membership directories were distributed at the brunch. Be sure to look inside for the Fund letters! One is for funding our DVC Scholarship recipient, and the other is to support the National AAUW Fund.

Speaking of Fund, Kinder's Gift Cards are here for the Fund Fall fundraiser. The sale began at the brunch will go through October 22nd. Contact Gayle Miner, Claudia Bass, or Carolynn Barcklay to purchase your gift cards. They make nice stocking stuffers or small gifts of appreciation.



Our next meeting is in November, when we will hear from our County Registrar, Kristin Connelly. Please join us on Saturday, November 8th, at 10 A.M. We will meet at the First Congregational Church of Martinez, 1229 Court St, Martinez. Kristin will discuss voter outreach, the mapping prejudice project, and the November election.

Public Policy



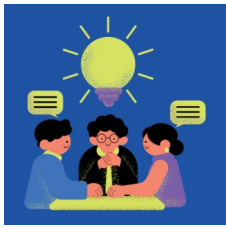
International Soup Supper



Kinder's Order Form



November Program



Presidential Postings (cont.)

Please vote in the November 4th election. I just received my voter information booklet and look forward to getting my vote by mail ballot. Thanks for participating in our election process!

Our Holiday Party will be led by Sharon Wilson this year! Thank you, Sharon, for guiding the planning of this event. It is always a lovely time spent with AAUW friends.

~ SarahJoy, Sherrie, and Reba

Membership Report

Welcome Back Brunch and New Member

On Sept. 13th, we welcomed a new member, Jan Cooper. Please add her to your Directory.

Jan Cooper
3375 Joshua Woods Pl.
Concord, CA 94518-2310
cell: (925) 212-1421
email: jan.cooper08@gmail.com

The Welcome Back Brunch was attended by 55 people. We were treated to a PowerPoint presentation with photos from Tech Trek by Diane Coventry, and enthusiastic stories from the Tech Trek girls about their activities. Many branch members contributed to the success of the brunch. Special thanks goes to Margie Pruitt for the lovely flower centerpieces and to

all the other helpers: Karen Winters, Claudia Bass, Reba Siero, Helen Pereira, Pat Harris, Diane Coventry, Sue Greenfeld, Sharon Wilson, Sandy Wolfe, Bea Ball, Gayle Miner, Carolyn Barcklay, Kathleen Woulfe, SarahJoy Haynes, and her daughter Stacey and granddaughter Sierra.

~ Diane Peterson

AAUW Fund Report

Kinder's gift cards are now on sale for \$20. The proceeds of \$4.50 per ticket fund a DVC student going on to a 4-year college. They sell quickly, so contact Gayle Miner, Claudis Bass, or Carolyn Barcklay to purchase the gift cards. They make great holiday gifts.

The annual solicitation letters for AAUW Fund were given out at the Welcome Brunch. As always, thank you for your generous support for National Fund, promoting education for women working towards a graduate degree.

The Fund Committee is accepting donations to the DVC Scholarship program that awards a \$1000 scholarship to a DVC woman who is continuing to a 4-year college. The information is included in the envelope given out at the Welcome Brunch.

The Fund Committee greatly appreciates your donations to National and to the DVC Scholarship Fund.

~ Gayle Miner and Carolynn Barcklay, Co-VPs

Writing a check for donation or event?

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



SAM at Fair Oaks in February/March

Would you like to be a SAM volunteer?

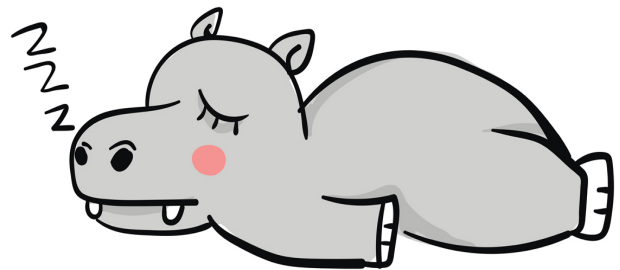
We are creating a curriculum for our SAM (Study Art and Music) Program for Fair Oaks Elementary School for February/March 2026. Our lesson plan always includes an artist and a composer. This year we will be studying the artist **Piet Mondrian**, and **George Gershwin** will be our composer. The music we will be studying is **Rhapsody in Blue**.

Your duties will be pretty simple — help us set up and clean up and then admire the work of the students. We will teach TK (Transitional Kindergarten) thru 5th grade, and 3 Special Ed classes (SDC).

We are planning a workday in February, where we will prepare the materials for the students and get familiar with the PowerPoint.

Please let us know if you would like to volunteer. So far, we have 15 volunteers on our list. It's lots of fun and rewarding.

~ Sherrie Moore, Barbara Minneman, and Helen Pereira



SAVE THE DATE

PH-M AAUW ANNUAL LAYETTE SHOWER

Mark your calendars! Wednesday, January 21, 2026, 10 A.M.,
at the home of Janice Walker. More info to come!



Morning Books

Our November book is *The Grey Wolf* by Louise Penny. Our meeting will take place on Wednesday, November 5th at 10 A.M., at Janice Walker's house. There's still time to read the book and plan on joining us to discuss this engaging thriller!



Lunchin' Ladies

Lunchin' Ladies will meet on Monday, October 20, at 12:00 noon at Original Joe's, 1300 S. Main Street, Walnut Creek. Reservations must be in by October

13th to Gayle Miner, (925) 788-3272 or gayle.miner@yahoo.com. NO EXCEPTIONS PLEASE.



Mah Jongg

Mah Jongg will meet on Friday, October 17, at 12:30 PM at

Brookview Clubhouse. Newbies are welcome too!

Be sure to let Suzanne Salter (seabear92020@outlook.com or 925-988-0322) know if you are coming.



Grand Slammers

Bridge Club — for information, contact Marlene De Laurenti:

mdl@astound.net or (925) 934-4171



Wine Appreciation Group

On Friday, Sept. 19th, the group met to learn about and blind taste Lambrusco, a sparkling red wine. Thanks to Margie P., Jeff A., and Charlotte L. for providing the wine.

Our next meeting will be on Fri., Oct. 17th, at 4 P.M., at Diane Peterson's house. We will be discussing and tasting Pinot Grigio, a white wine. Please let Diane know if you would like to attend. Space is limited.

~ Diane Peterson



Nimble Fingers

Nimble Fingers will meet on Monday, October 27, at 2:30, 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

Karen: 925-408-5721

karen.winters@sbcglobal.net

SUNSHINE

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

Marti Martin

richmar1016@sbcglobal.net or 925-229-3574



AAUW Pleasant Hill— Martinez Branch Website

Our website will show you everything you need to know about our Pleasant Hill — Martinez branch. Check out the pictures from our September Brunch on the **Photos Page**. Enjoy photos of our Local Scholarship and Tech Trek girls on the **Community Action Page**. See the article and picture of our DVC Scholarship winner on the **About Us 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



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Understanding the Urgency of Branch Participation in the Public Policy School Board Project

The constant noise that surrounds us today has had the effect on many of us wanting to “shut the door” and withdraw behind a protective shield. This is not an option if we want to protect our democracy and the rights declared in our Constitution. We must continue to protest against national policies that threaten our basic core principles, and take a stand at the state and local levels where we can have even greater impact. AAUW California’s mission and public policies are being threatened, and we will not stand by and allow this to happen. The articles that follow in our monthly AAUW California reports will present the specific violations of protected rights implemented by federal policies and local school boards throughout our state. Let’s start with a brief historical overview on the importance of our free public school system and the important role it plays in preserving our democracy.

Colonial America began the journey in Massachusetts Bay (1635) with the founding of the Boston Latin School, initially to promote the Puritan faith. Dame Schools providing reading skills for younger children were also established, and a Massachusetts law in 1647 demanded that every town comprising 50 or more families must provide a teacher to instruct on reading and writing.

Our new nation began its journey into public educa-

tion with the Land Ordinance 1785/NW Ordinance 1787 providing that the new western territories be allotted land for public school purposes. The founding fathers clearly connected the role of education in protecting our democratic republic. Thomas Jefferson proposed a system of broad, free, public education and strongly believed that “in order for a society to be self-governed, it had to be educated and free thinking.” He saw the role of education as one giving “every citizen the information he needs... to understand his duties to his neighbors and country...to know his rights.”

During the 1830s, in the era of Jacksonian Democracy, focus was on the common man achieving the vote (dropping property requirements or paying taxes); our nation witnessed the beginning of a new era in public education espousing that an informed citizenry is essential for democratic participation and the health of the republic. A key focus was on the large number of immigrants coming to our shores; we needed to instill common values in all children to prepare them for their roles within our society. It’s at this time that Horace Mann (Massachusetts) will lead the nation in the Common School Movement, a driving force resulting in widespread free public education.

These hard-fought gains are under attack and it begins with local elections for school board members. Organizations with money are backing candidates who are attempting to restrict student rights and censure the curriculum/books available that would provide factual, open discourse. These efforts will have the exact opposite effect from the intentions of our forebears: a generation of children exposed

Public Policy (cont'd)

to limited information and unprepared to engage in critical thinking necessary to fully realize the American experiment in democracy.

Please watch for future articles that will describe how the Public Policy School Board Project is fighting back. Our advocacy and commitment to our public schools is critical, with a great deal at stake. Jefferson will end this discussion: "...Only educated citizens could make the American experiment in self-government succeed."

~ Seena Trigas, Member AAUW California Public Policy School Board Project

Anti-LGBTQ+ Supreme Court Decision Will Likely Impact K-12 Education in California (Updates After Supreme Court Ruling in June 2025)

During LGBTQ+ pride month, a decision was issued in *Mahmoud v. Taylor*, a case involving the LGBTQ+ community that was heard by the Supreme Court of the United States during the 2024-2025 term. The outcome of this case may have an impact on the important legislative and on-the-ground work that AAUW California has been doing (via the School Board Project (SBP)) to protect historically accurate, diverse, and inclusive curricula in K-12 education and schools, given the likely increase in legal opt-out requests by some parents.

The *Mahmoud* case began in 2022, when the

Montgomery County Public School (MCPS) Board, in Maryland, updated their curriculum with more diverse and inclusive storybooks, working with childhood development experts to select books across the curriculum that would have common childhood themes but a wider array of characters, to make sure all students could see themselves in some of the texts. This included adding a handful of story books with LGBTQ+ characters.

In response to the addition of the LGBTQ+ story books, a coalition of Muslim, Roman Catholic, and Ukrainian Orthodox parents asked for an opt-out provision for any storybooks that included a normative portrayal of LGBTQ+ families, such as *Pride Puppy*, a rhyming alphabet book that tells the story of a family having a fun day together at a LGBTQ+ pride event, and *Uncle Bobby's Wedding*, a classic children's book about how to address the anxiety that children feel when their family grows and changes, in this case through marriage.

While the MCPS school board initially tried to accommodate opt-out requests that arose from parents, the school board received such an influx of requests that course administration became unmanageable. Opt-out policies are expensive, costly for students, schools, and taxpayers. This means that mass opt-outs can put further stress on already stressed logistical systems within financially burdened school districts.

On top of the logistical and actual costs and administrative struggles created by the mass opt-out requests, the MCPS school board in this case also noted that the influx of requests fundamentally "undermined the schools' educational obligations to-

Public Policy (cont'd)

ward inclusion, equity, and respect.” Opt-outs can hurt kids whose lives and families are mirrored in the books, in this case explicitly positioning LGBTQ+ families’ experiences as something potentially problematic and harmful to others. It also teaches young people that they can opt out of teachings that encourage being decent to all humans, even those who do not look, think, act, or love in the way that their families do. Lack of access to and understanding of diverse experiences and viewpoints and the inability to engage meaningfully with widespread inclusivity also leaves the opted-out students themselves less well-equipped to move forward to function in a diverse world, a pluralistic democracy, and a global workforce.

After the first year of implementation, MCPS school board ended the opt-out request option.

In response, the parents in the *Mahmoud* case filed a lawsuit, arguing that requiring their children to engage with story books like *Pride Puppy* and *Uncle Bobby’s Wedding*, whether independently or via neutral reading lessons created around them, would be a violation of their religious beliefs. Specifically, these parents claimed that lack of an opt-out provision, providing them with the ability to opt their children out of these lessons, was a violation of their First Amendment rights to freely exercise their religion, impeding their ability to instruct their children on faith-based issues related to gender and sexuality and to control when and how these issues are introduced.

Based on a 2008 case in Massachusetts, there was precedent for ruling against these kinds of opt outs because participation in public school instruction that simply exposes a child to ideas that conflict with the religious beliefs of their parents, “does not inhibit the parent from instructing the child differently.” However, on June 27, 2025, the majority of the Supreme Court broke with this precedent, deciding the case in favor of these parents and upholding their constitutional right to make these opt-out requests on religious grounds. The majority decision in the case called parents’ inability to opt their children out of story books like *Pride Puppy* and *Uncle Bobby’s Wedding* a “substantial interference” with the religious development of their children as the books and instruction around them were deemed “coercive.”

As such, the ruling gives a great deal of latitude to parents who want to claim a religious exemption from existing public school curricula. This means that we will likely see not only an uptick in opt-out requests for LGBTQ+ material on religious grounds throughout the country, but also an uptick in requests for opt-outs on *other* topics that parents mark as potentially problematic. Echoing some of these concerns, Justice Sonia Sotomayor and Justice Elana Kagan gave voice to this issue during oral arguments as well as in their dissent in the case, noting the potentially broad scope of the parents’ position. Historically, Sotomayor and Kagen note, there have also been objections to “biographical material about women who have been recognized for achievement outside their home,” as well as books featuring divorce, interfaith marriage, and immodest dress.

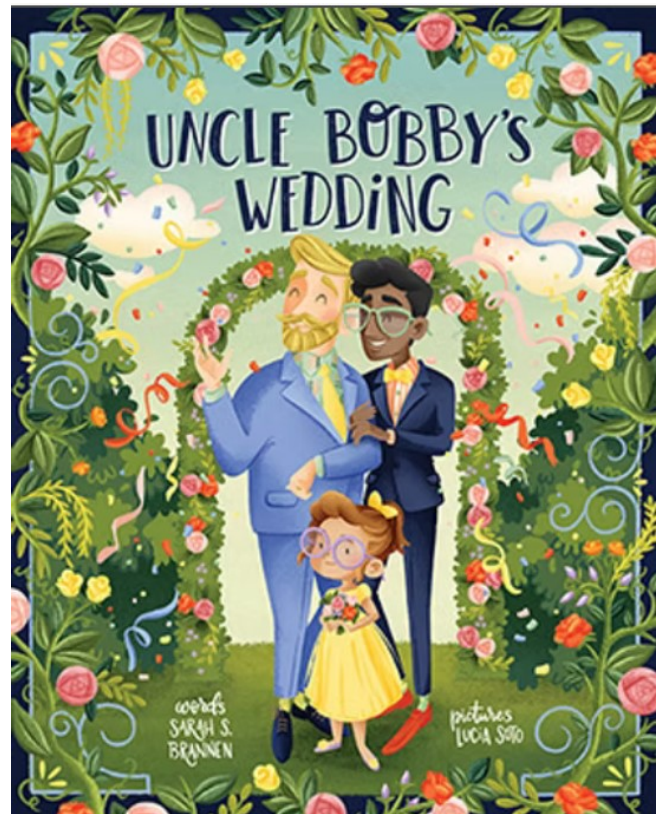
Public Policy (cont'd)

Because this was a federal decision, the ruling in *Mahmoud* will likely have an impact on public school curricula and administration in California, as well.

Parents in California already have the ability to opt their children out of some material, perhaps most notably around comprehensive sexual health education. However, these opt-out provisions are limited in scope. As the protection and expansion of historically accurate, diverse, and inclusive curricula in K-12 education in California has been an important focus for both AAUW CA's School Board Project and our legislative priorities, we need to watch how the decision in *Mahmoud* may spark expanded opt-out requests on religious grounds. While protections for inclusive curricula remain in place in California, the outcome in favor of the parents in this case is likely to create a wave of costly social and legal challenges, including a call for more expansive opt-out policies, which will have an impact on how we continue to engage in meaningful work around this priority area in the future.

A possible outcome of this is that many districts will pull back on their DEI materials, setting up a potential collision course with existing CA laws.

~ Missy Maceyko, Co-chair AAUW California Public Policy Committee





International Soup Supper

Wednesday, February 19th, 2026, 6 P.M.

St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church

Pleasant Hill

Save the date! Note February, not January

Enjoy hearty, homemade soups, breads, and desserts

at our Pleasant Hill-Martinez Branch

Annual International Soup Supper

You can bring a pot of soup, bread, or dessert

OR pay \$10

We are having a raffle again to support Tech Trek.

See if you have any raffle items to donate.

Committee members:

Sherrie Moore, Diane Coventry, Suzanne Salter, and Claudia Bass



AAUW Pleasant Hill-Martinez November 2025 Program

Saturday, November 8th, 10:00 A.M.

Place: First Congregational Church of Martinez
1229 Court Street, Martinez

Speaker: County Registrar Kristin Connelly



Kristin will discuss voter outreach, the mapping prejudice project, and the newly scheduled November election.

Light refreshments and coffee will be provided.



KINDER'S Gift Card ORDER FORM

Gift Card sales help our branch give a DVC student a \$1,000 scholarship to a 4-year college.

YOUR NAME _____

YOUR ADDRESS _____

YOUR TELEPHONE _____

YOUR EMAIL _____

Gift Cards are good at all Bay Area Kinder's locations. You may use the Gift Card for any items on Kinder's menu.

GIFT CARD SALE IS FROM September 13 to October 22, 2025. NO EXCEPTIONS

PRICE: \$20.00 each, with NO EXPIRATION DATE!

Amount of Gift Cards you are ordering _____

Amount of your check: \$ _____

(Make checks payable to: AAUW Pleasant Hill Martinez Branch)

For Mail Order Form, mail to: Gayle Miner, 125 Price Lane, Pleasant Hill, CA 94523. Gayle will deliver or mail your Gift Cards to you upon receiving your check. Your check must be in by October 18, 2024.

NOTE: You can also call Gayle Miner (925) 788-3272 cell, Claudia Bass (925) 372-8679 hm. or (925) 348-1958 cell, or Carolynn Barcklay (925) 323-8229 cell to request Kinder's Gift Cards. They are the only people who have Kinder's Gift Cards to sell.

Kinder's Gift Cards will also be for sale at the Welcome Brunch and various AAUW meetings and activities starting September 13 and ending October 22.

WE LOOK FORWARD TO YOUR SUPPORT! THE FUND COMMITTEE

PHM AAUW Calendar

- Oct 8** Board Meeting, 7 P.M., at Helen Pereira's
- Oct 14** Ways and Means Committee meeting, 10 A.M., Brookview Clubhouse
- Oct 17** Mah Jongg, 12:30 P.M., Brookview Clubhouse
- Oct 17** Wine Club, 4 P.M., Diane Peterson's
- Oct 20** Lunchin' Ladies, 12:00 noon, Original Joe's, 1300 S. Main Street, Walnut Creek
- Oct 25** November NEWS deadline
- Oct 27** Nimble Fingers, 2:30 P.M., Janet Sullivan's
- Nov 5** Morning Books, 10 A.M., Janice Walker's
- Nov 8** General Meeting, 10 A.M., First Congregational Church of Martinez, 1229 Court St., Martinez



2025–26 Leadership Team

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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:

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Webmaster: Sherrie Moore

Newsletter Editor: Karen Winters

Social Media: Carlyn Obringer

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