

Volume 68 Issue 5

January 2026

## Presidential Postings



The winter holidays are just about over, and some pretty good rains have washed the area. The days are getting longer, and suddenly 2026 is here!

The Holiday Party Extravaganza, on December 13<sup>th</sup>, was a great success. A big round of applause goes to our intrepid planning committee, led by Sharon Wilson. Thanks to all who put it together and to everyone who attended.



Our Annual Layette Shower is scheduled for 10 A.M. on January 21, 2026, at Janice Walker's home. It is always a lovely gathering where we collect items that are needed for Hillcrest Church's Layette Program. This year's request is for articles created by hand or purchased that can be used by children from 3 to 12 months old.



Our interest groups are a great way to get to know more people in the branch, as well as being a lot of fun. Give one or two a try!

The International Soup Supper is coming in February, and the SAM program runs for two weeks at the end of February into early March. Look for more information on how you can participate!

Happy New Year!

~ *SarahJoy, Sherrie, and Reba*

### SAM Program



### International Soup Supper



### Layette Shower



## AAUW Fund Report

The Fund Committee reports that our National Fund donations for the various grants totaled \$2,385. Thank you for your generosity to the National Fund that supports women as they further their educational goals.

The Fund Committee also received your generous donations for the DVC Scholarship, totaling \$2,005. Your wonderful support of this scholarship will fund a woman who will be transferring from DVC to a four-year college.

Your support makes all these very worthwhile programs possible. Thank you!

Gayle Miner and Carolynn Barcklay, Co-VPs



## Wine Appreciation Group

The Wine Appreciation group will meet at 4 P.M. on Friday, January 16<sup>th</sup>, at Diane Peterson's house. We will be learning about and blind-tasting Sangiovese (red) wine.

We will also be collecting bottles of wine for the Tech Trek raffle at the Soup Supper in February. Your donations will be appreciated.

Please let Diane know if you would like to attend on the 16<sup>th</sup>, as space is limited.

~ Diane Peterson



## Tech Trek Tidings

Thank you for your ongoing support of Tech Trek. We are collecting donations for the Soup Supper Raffle. Let Diane Coventry know by the end of January, or sooner, if you plan to contribute. Just like last year, Tech Trekkers from 2025 will join us for supper and help out with the raffle.

Our four local middle schools have been notified that Camp Franklin is June 21–27. Girls will be nominated by their teacher this month. We are looking to send 6 campers this year. Tech Trek alumni who are sophomores or older can apply to be counselors. Applications via CampDoc will be open at the end of January. Please contact me if you know any alumni who are interested. If they are 20 years or older, they can also apply to be dorm monitors, and so can you.

I am still looking for someone to help me with the Tech Trek Alumni Group (TTAG) so we can keep in touch, at least for five years, with our Trekkers! Our branch is collaborating with our IBC Trekkers from San Ramon, Danville-Alamo-Walnut Creek, Orinda-Moraga-Lafayette, Benicia-Vallejo, and Concord. Two virtual events, hosted by other branches, have taken place this past Fall. We wish to have at least two field trips and a meet-up or two this coming year. Updating the campers spreadsheet, finding out alumni interest, and forming a student leadership team is in progress.

~ Diane Coventry



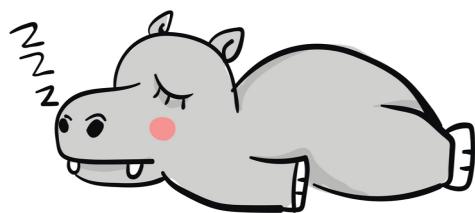
## Annual Layette Shower

### Final Notice

Don't forget to mark your new calendar for our 2026 Layette Shower, which will be held on **Wednesday, January 21, at 10:00 A.M.**, at the home of Janice Walker, 524 Monti Circle, Pleasant Hill. Donations will benefit the Hillcrest Layette Program, which supports needy mothers. Anything a little one can use from sizes 3 months to 12 months will be appreciated. Handmade items, diapers, and books will also be appreciated.

Please email me, [sandjwalk@comcast.net](mailto:sandjwalk@comcast.net), or call 925-827-3374, if you plan to attend. If you are unable to attend but would like to make a donation prior to the shower, please contact me to make arrangements for a pickup. The Hillcrest people have always been very appreciative of our donations and those in need have always been very grateful.

~ Janice Walker



## 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



## 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 K through 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 17 volunteers on our list. It's lots of fun and rewarding.

~ Sherrie Moore, Barbara Minneman, and Helen Pereira





## Morning Books

On January 7<sup>th</sup>, at 10 A.M., we're discussing *James* by Percival Everett. Carolynn Barclay will be our hostess.

This book is a reimagining of *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* told from the enslaved Jim's point of view, which I found to be quite interesting. Take a journey down the Mississippi River with Huck and Jim toward the elusive and unreliable promise of the Free States and beyond. Please let Carolynn know if you plan to attend.

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 will serve as the hostess for this event.



## Lunchin' Ladies

Lunchin' Ladies will meet on Monday, January 19, at 12:00 noon, at Metro, 3524 Mt. Diablo Blvd., Lafayette.

Reservations must be in by Monday, January 12.

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

NO EXCEPTIONS PLEASE.



## Nimble Fingers

Nimble Fingers will be meeting on January 26, at 2:30 P.M., at Sara Tancredy'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)



## Mah Jongg

Mah Jongg will meet on Friday, January 16 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



## Grand Slammers

Bridge Club — for information, contact Marlene De Laurenti:

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

### Writing a check for donation or event?

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



## 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 Holiday Party Extravaganza, on the Photos 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





## Public Policy

### AAUW California Public Policy Committee Announces School Board Symposium

In *The Once and Future King*, T.H. White wrote: “[Y]ou may see the world about you devastated by evil lunatics, or know your honour trampled in the sewers of baser minds. There is only one thing for it then — to learn.... That is the only thing which the mind can never exhaust, never alienate, never be tortured by, never fear or distrust, and never dream of regretting. Learning is the only thing for you.”

In 1881, a small group of female college graduates demonstrated that they understood the importance of learning to women’s ability to advance in the world, when they banded together in what would become the American Association of University Women to encourage more women to pursue higher education.

Almost one hundred years later, Congress demonstrated that they understood the importance of equal access to learning when they added Title IX to the U.S. Education Codes in 1972, prohibiting discrimination in educational opportunities on the basis of sex; and again when they established the U.S. Department of Education on May 4, 1980, with a mission to strengthen the federal commitment to assuring access to equal educational opportunity for every individual.

Now, fifty-five years later, it does indeed seem the world is being “devastated by lunatics.” In 2016, Title IX protections against sexual harassment were eviscerated in the first Trump administration.

Attempts by the new administration in 2020 to reverse those changes, and to provide additional protections for our LGBTQ+ and pregnant students were thrown out by a federal court. In 2022, Florida passed the Stop WOKE Act restricting classroom discussions of race, gender, and sexual orientation and banned 2300 books in just the 2024—25 school year alone followed by 23 other states. This spawned the “Moms for Liberty” movement, whose goal is to install school board members across the United States whose values include banning books, censoring curriculum, and enacting policies harmful to our LGBTQ+ students.

And it gets worse. In his inaugural address in January 2025, the President declared “As of today, it will henceforth be the official policy of the United States government that there are only two genders: male and female.” In February he sent a “Dear Colleague” letter to all school districts making federal funding contingent on eliminating race-based considerations from all policy decisions. To date eight universities have capitulated to the current administration’s lawsuits or threats to withhold grants by agreeing to curtail or eliminate DEI (diversity, equity, and inclusion) programs and policies under an Alice-in-Wonderland definition of discrimination. And the latest blow: in late November of 2025, the Trump administration took a major new step to dismantle the U.S. Department of Education (ED). After deep staff cuts, ED announced six “partnerships” on November 18 that shift the day-to-day work of key education programs to other federal agencies, despite Congress creating ED to centralize federal education expertise and protect students’ civil rights.

## Public Policy (cont'd)

Is your hair on fire yet?! I know ours (AAUW California Public Policy Committee) is. That's why the School Board Project is more important, more relevant, and more urgent than ever. We are doing everything we can to empower you, our members, to make a difference at the grass roots level to fight to save the value of learning in your local school districts, by speaking up for our values at school board meetings and supporting school board candidates who share those values. **If you're ready to fight back, please join us for a half day of our own learning, on Saturday January 31, 2026, 9:00 A.M. to 12:30 P.M. PT, for our symposium "AAUW School Board Project: Defending the Frontline of Democracy."**

In just three and a half short hours you will learn

- How the federal government's restrictive laws impact California's protective laws
- How to effectively advocate for AAUW values with your local school board members

- Why advocating on behalf of LGBTQ+ students is a crucial AAUW priority
- How to support progressive school board members in conservative districts
- How to respond to parents' concerns with accurate information
- How to form and sustain valuable coalitions in your district with like-minded organizations
- How to identify, recruit, and support school board candidates whose values reflect AAUW California's Public Policy Priorities

Don't just be on fire, be fired-up! Join us for a day of learning, by [registering HERE](#).

### LEARNING IS THE ONLY THING FOR YOU!

~ *Kathi Harper, Chair AAUW Public Policy School Board Project*



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**Katrinka March, DVM**

**Karen Shore, BVMS**

**Rebecca Horn, DVM**



## 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 need 4 more soups, 6 breads, and 2 batches of cookies.**

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

**Reservation deadline and payment by February 15<sup>th</sup>**

**Please indicate number of guests. You must pay in advance!**

**Make checks payable to AAUW Pleasant Hill-Martinez Branch**

**Mail to: 275 Appalachian Drive, Pleasant Hill 94523**

**Our speaker for the evening is Cherise Khaund**

**She will talk about her experiences growing up in Saudi Arabia and Venezuela  
(Her father worked in the oil industry as a consultant and had foreign assignments.)**

**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!**

## PHM AAUW Calendar

**Jan 7** Morning Books, 10 A.M., Carolynn Barclay's

**Jan 14** January Board meeting, 7 P.M., SarahJoy Haynes'

**Jan 16** Mah Jongg, 12:30 P.M., Brookview Clubhouse

**Jan 16** Wine Club, 4 P.M., Diane Peterson's

**Jan 19** Lunchin' Ladies, 12:00 noon, Metro, 3524 Mt. Diablo Blvd., Lafayette

**Jan 21** Layette Shower, 10 A.M., Janice Walker's

**Jan 25** February NEWS deadline

**Jan 26** Nimble Fingers, 2:30 P.M., Sara Tancredy's

**Feb 4** Morning Books, 10 A.M., Kathleen Woulfe's



## 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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