

In This Issue

Volume 42 – Number 4

President’s Message ..... 1

Looking Ahead ..... 1

November General Meeting .... 2

December Birthdays ..... 2

From the Heart / Sponsors ..... 2

Scholarship / Recipients..... 3-4

Public Policy ..... 4

Voter Service Center Review ... 5

Spotlight..... 6

Escaping Covid-19 ..... 7

Interest Groups / Sponsors ..... 8

Waves Banner ..... 8

# Waves

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

**Merry Christmas** everyone! I don’t think any of us realized how challenged we would be at this point in time. Now is the time to believe, hope and increase our faith in God’s plan.

Be still and listen to your inner voice where you have a dialogue with your Creator. All is in its season and time. So be joyful for what we have. Our branch has special members who show caring and love every day.

I’m so thankful to be able to lead these wonderful women. With deepest gratitude.

*~ Susan Brazil*

## LOOKING AHEAD

**PLEASE NOTE:** Our Board and General Branch Meetings will be held on Zoom until further notice.

Contact Pam Zirion for any required Zoom assistance.

**December 7**  
Monday @ 6:30  
Board Meeting

**PLEASE NOTE:**  
There will be **NO GENERAL MEETING** in December 2020.

**January 4**  
Monday @ 6:30  
Board Meeting

**January 18**  
Monday @ 6:30  
**GENERAL Meeting**

*The program will center around Civil Rights and the impact of Martin Luther King.*

**February 1**  
Monday @ 6:30  
Board Meeting

**February 15**  
Monday @ 6:30  
**GENERAL Meeting**

*Dr. Fawcett, Superintendent of LMUSD, will discuss how Covid-19 has impacted local schools.*

## NOVEMBER GENERAL MEETING IN REVIEW

Seventeen of our members met on Zoom for our Branch's General Meeting on November 16<sup>th</sup>. President Susan Brazil opened the meeting with a review of the agenda.

**Public Policy** - Jean B. Slater will present her report in the December Newsletter.

**Named Gift Recipients** - Two gift recipients will be announced at the May 2021 General Meeting.

**Scholarship** - Kathi Pettersen reported that three scholarships will be awarded in 2021 - one each to Arroyo Grande High School, New Tech High, and AVID. There are now two Scholarship committee positions that are open and need to be filled.

**Tech Trek** - Linda Lidberg passed on her report this month, as she canvasses members to see if we want to offer scholarships for an online program. More information will be available in January.

**RIF** - Wendy Robinson was able to distribute four bags of books to Oceano Elementary school.

**Fundraising** - Pam Zirion asked for help with fundraising ideas for our Branch. Please contact her if you have anything that might work for 2021.

**Program** - Co-chair Mary Matakovich introduced **Michelle Clark** of the SLO County Health Dept.

Ms. Clark presented a program about STRESS. The presentation addressed what stress is, the symptoms of stress, how the body responds to stress, how stress affects the brain, and how to manage stress. Helpful videos were shown.

Following the presentation, Ms. Clark answered questions from those present.

Literature about the topic was blasted out to all members about programs offered by the County for managing stress and other senior issues.

## DECEMBER BIRTHDAYS

The AAUW Five Cities-Pismo Beach Branch is delighted to wish a very HAPPY BIRTHDAY to member:

**Nancy Spierling .... 10**

## FROM THE HEART

Accolades to Linda Lidberg and her amazing team of Branch members, family, and friends who helped staff the polls for the November 3<sup>rd</sup> election. (see page 5)

The Branch would like to keep the following members in our thoughts and prayers:

**Marilyn Corey**

**Kathy Cohon & her husband, Harvey**

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At the latest Zoom meeting, the Scholarship Board of Directors regrettably accepted Marilyn Corey's resignation from the board due to health reasons. She is considering possibly moving near her son in Alabama. Her dedication, creativity, energy and openness to new ideas will not be soon forgotten. You may wish to designate a scholarship donation in honor of Marilyn (which we know she would appreciate). Your donations are welcome for 2021 scholarships or for the endowment. The donation form can be found on the branch website. Thank you!

The Scholarship Board now has two director positions open. If you wish to join us in meeting our goal of awarding scholarships to deserving young women, please contact Kathi Pettersen. We meet again in February, review applications in March, and interviews are in April.

This month, the Scholarship Board of Directors highlight the last two recipients of local scholarships for 2020. I asked the young women several questions to describe how their Freshman experience was developing as they "entered" their colleges of choice during the pandemic.

~ Kathi Pettersen, CEO  
Five Cities Pismo Beach Scholarship Corporation

Kathi Pettersen, VP of the AAUW Scholarship Corporation, sent an email in August to each of our 6 scholarship recipients. In part, it stated:

We, the Directors of the Scholarship Board, would appreciate knowing how your college experience is developing this fall. If time permits, would you kindly reply to this email describing:

- 1) What college you are attending?
- 2) At home or on campus residency?
- 3) Distance learning or classroom?
- 4) Your ability to get the classes you need?
- 5) How life as a freshman today is different from that which was previously known?



**Samantha Lynch** (Arroyo Grande High School, AVID)

Hello, Kathi and the Directors of the Scholarship Committee -

I hope this email finds you and all members of the AAUW branch well. I can't agree with you more, things have changed so drastically this past year, it's almost hard to look back on it and recollect all that has happened.

To answer your questions,

- 1. I am attending the University of Southern California, today was my first day of classes.
- 2. I am at home this semester
- 3. Distance learning using Zoom and Blackboard.
- 4. I was able to get the required classes I need, and I am on the right track in terms of obtaining my degree as a Mechanical Engineer. I was able to pick up another class on introductory work for information security, so I have some room for academic exploration.
- 5. I think the nervousness of being a freshman still holds today, but since it is remote learning it minimizes the feel of being a freshman since we don't get to interact with other students where we could see the difference in experience having been at the university for more time. Also, due to the new form of learning, everyone is experiencing the same thing so freshmen are not alone in having to adapt to online learning. There aren't the typical stereotypes that come with being a freshman since we aren't on campus to oversee those interactions with other students. Being freshmen today is more relaxed than in previous years where there is pressure to fit in and not be the newbie.

I hope that provides insight into how my college experience is developing for this fall semester. I wanted to thank you all again for the generous scholarship. It made this transition less stressful. Thank you for reaching out, and I'll keep you all updated on any achievements along the way.

Take care, Samantha

Samantha Lynch - Engineering Student, Mech E. - University of Southern California

(continued on the next page)

## SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENTS

*(continued from page 3)*

### **Saige Gardner** (Nipomo High School)

*I am sorry for the late response with all things considered life has been quite hectic. I am attending Arizona State University and am in their direct entry nursing program. I am living at home due to health conditions and the surplus of cases in Arizona right now and am attending all my courses through zoom via distance learning. Luckily, I am able to do all of my courses online and stay on track with my major. Not being able to go to campus initially was heart breaking but as time has gone on it has been a huge blessing. Being able to stay home has allowed time to focus on my mental health as well as reconnect with my whole family.*

*Being high-risk, I have to be incredibly careful with everything I do, which has led to a lot of time alone and at home. Very rarely do people my age going into college have time to reconnect with their families and themselves as much as I have, and for the I am extremely grateful.*

*I am also grateful for the support and opportunities you all have given me with this scholarship, which not only allowed me to stay at Arizona State University with the substantial financial hit my family has experienced, but also allowed me to not work to maintains my safety and health.*

*Thank you again for everything you do and I'm sorry again for the late response! I hope this email finds everyone healthy and safe.*

*Sincerely, Saige Gardner*

## PUBLIC POLICY

### 10 Scary Facts About the State of Women's Equality in America

1. In 2019, 12 states passed 13 new restrictions on abortion, 36 Planned Parenthood clinics were closed, and the Supreme Court will have 6 anti-choice justices in 2021.
2. At the current rate, women won't achieve pay equity with men until 2059 (AAUW).
3. In 2020, 36 states have bills placing restrictions on voting. (ACLU)
4. 33.6 million workers do not have paid sick days. (Pew Research)
5. 23.1% of women experience sexual assault while in college. (RAINN - Rape, Abuse, & Incest National Network)
6. Women make up just 13 percent of the engineering workforce. (National Science Foundation)
7. Women make up 23.6 percent of Congress. Women of color make up less than 4.3 percent.
8. Black women are paid 62 cents for every \$1 paid to a white man, 54 cents for Hispanic women. (AAUW)
9. The United States is the only industrialized nation that doesn't mandate paid parental leave.
10. Just 37 Fortune 500 companies are led by women. (Dun & Bradstreet)

### So What Is AAUW California Doing About it? AAUW State Public Policy Committee:

- Sets public policy priorities (every 2 years)
- Analyzes pending legislation, determines bills to be sponsored, supported, tracked or opposed by AAUW California, lobbies legislators (every year)
- Analyzes state ballot measures, determines which to endorse or oppose (election years)
- Educates branches on public policy issues
- Encourages branches to actively engage in public policy work, provides resources, gathers data and compiles reports to state

~ Jean Burns Slater



## THE VOTER SERVICE CENTER FOR THE NOVEMBER 3<sup>rd</sup> ELECTION

AAUW Five Cities Pismo Beach and AAUW San Luis Obispo staffed the Voter Service Center at the Old San Luis Obispo Airport Terminal on Saturday, October 31<sup>st</sup> through election day on November 3<sup>rd</sup>. The San Luis Obispo AAUW Branch shared the responsibility of this precinct with our Branch.

Jean Burns Slater, Kathy Cohon, and Linda Lidberg were Election Officials, while six other members - Maurina Kusell, Maureen Kelly, Susan Brazil, Sue LaCabe, Judy Leonard, and Carol McBirnie - worked as Election Clerks in various capacities.

Maurina's husband, Michael Zigelman, Kathy's husband, Harvey Cohon, as well as former members Dawn Hinchman and Andi Parejda rounded out the four-day staffing. In addition, eight friends of these workers volunteered to work, some on multiple days.

On several of the days, we had student volunteers from the high schools working as part of their community service hours. Sonja and Nikola worked very diligently and sanitized voting booths, pens, door handles, tables, scotch tape dispensers, and anything that was touched by a worker or a voter.

Going into the election, we had no idea how busy we would be since universal vote-by-mail ballots took place in California this election. (All of the 181,000 voters in SLO County received a vote-by-mail ballot.)

We weren't sure if there would be "issues" with voter intimidation or refusal to wear masks and keep the required distances. Luckily, we worried for nothing.

Voters were enthusiastic, happy to be voting, thankful that we were able to staff the Voter Service Center, and agreeable to all the Covid precautions.

While Saturday was busy in the morning, Sunday we were glad we had brought books and crosswords, etc. to keep us awake. Monday saw steady traffic and Tuesday was busy all day.

This election was like no other election we have worked in the past. There was no roster binder that voters needed to sign. Instead, they were greeted at the door by a Voter Assistance Clerk (either Jean Slater or George Janeway), who welcomed them to the precinct and used a tablet computer to check to make sure they were registered.

If they were registered, they were sent to the Voter Check-in Official (Linda), where computer access to the County Election Registration was used to determine whether or not they had returned their vote-by-mail ballot.

If they had not returned their ballot, the Check-in Official printed a label that indicated their name, precinct, and ballot type. This was then taken to the Mobile Ballot Printer Official (Kathy) where the label was placed on a roster page, signed by the voter, and then a ballot was printed for their particular precinct and ballot type.

These jobs were duplicated by members of the SLO Branch so that two check-in and two ballot-printing stations were available.

We also had staff at a "pop-up" tent, brightly-colored with the stars and stripes, outside the voter center at the curb for drop off Vote-by-mail ballots. Voters would drive up, hop out of their cars, slide their ballots into the ballot box, pick up their "I Voted" sticker, and then drive off - happy to have made their voice heard.

This process worked very well - with just one hiccup. Unfortunately, on Saturday morning, the tablets weren't connecting to the Registration system, one of the check-in computers wasn't working, and both ballot printing machines died. Luckily, we had four ICX machines available. These are electronic voting machines that allow a voter to use a touch screen to select their ballot choices and print their choices. Once the IT guy showed up from the County, we were up and running at full capacity for the rest of the four days.

I have to admit that this year's election had some interesting situations. One gentleman came in to vote and when I looked him up on the computer it said he was deceased. I don't think I have ever had to say "Do you know you are dead?" to anyone voting before. It turned out he was a junior and it was his father who was dead and his registration included his middle initial while his father's registration didn't. Once we cleared that up, he was able to vote.

The first-time voters were greeted with bell ringing and clapping, and I have to say we had more of those this year than ever before.

Voters brought in candy for the workers, flowers for our tables, and beverages for our coolers. All in all, a good time was had while doing a wonderful service for our community.

*~ Linda Lidberg*



## SPOTLIGHT ON PAM ZIRION

Our daughters do not know the extent of the work we accomplished when we opened their path, the steps we took and the struggles we endured for their generation. They are following in our trailblazed footsteps.

**Pam Zirion**, our Spotlight for December, is a true trail blazer, for her daughters and for our AAUW Branch. An immediate indication of her ability to adapt and move forward is her ZOOM meeting leadership. With a smile and a click, she lets us into our meetings and knows how to let us out. But there is much more to Pam than Zoom...

She was born into a family of five children, holding the position of #4. Her father was a USC football star and in the insurance industry. Her mother was a college educated art major, and each of the children knew that college was a requirement, supported by family resources.

Pam started at UC San Diego in science with a background with Girl Scouts and Girls Athletic Association (GAA), leadership opportunities for girls in *those* days. Quite accomplished in school, she was encouraged into the field of pathology. Pam made great college friends but decided that she wanted to transfer to UC Davis into biology. This was a big change, a carless campus with bikes everywhere.

Before graduating in biology, Pam recalled the impact of her 3<sup>rd</sup> grade teacher, so teacher education became her focus, taking education classes in her senior year. Her father died suddenly, that same year, motivating Pam to consider Long Beach State to be near her family and to support her mother while working on the teacher credential program.

However, she was selected to be an intern teacher in the Marysville School District, where she shadowed an experience teacher and was assigned

a teaching position in the Sierra Foothills, all in one year. She worked two years at Yuba Feather School where Pam lived above the general store in Clipper Mills and rode the school bus when it snowed.

She met the oldest son of the store owners, Kirk, who had recently returned from Vietnam and was attending college. They married and moved to Santa Barbara, where Kirk attended Brooks Institute of Photography, and Pam taught at a Catholic school. After Kirk graduated, Pam worked at Raytheon as a Xerox “key operator”, a fancy euphemism for “copy girl.” Boring!

Soon they moved to San Luis Obispo, where she and her husband and two partners opened Horizon Studios, a photography studio in San Luis Obispo. Ready to teach, Pam substituted for San Luis Coastal USD and eventually began teaching 5th grade in Los Osos.

As Pam’s family grew, she was able to team teach when her two daughters were little tykes. Eventually, she changed schools for a position in San Luis Obispo, and taught for 28 more years. She earned a Masters in Administrative Service Credential and retired in 2008 after her husband was diagnosed with Lou Gehrig’s disease.

Kirk was an avid bicyclist, and Pam joined him in this pursuit, but put this hobby aside when she began to care full time for her husband, until he passed away in 2010. The SLO Bike Club members kept in close touch with the Zirions, and encouraged Pam to get back on the bike after Kirk’s death. On a SLOBC bike trip to Davis seven years ago, Pam met her dear friend, John, who allows her to keep her independence while offering the close friendship of a life partner.

Pam’s daughters both live in San Luis Obispo County, offering her the opportunity to care and teach two of her grandchildren, ages 8 and 12.



Pam’s personal interests include Girl Scouts, biking (of course), gardening, traveling, camping and hiking. She has attended Road’s Scholar’s Grandparents trips, a train ride to Oregon and culinary school with her granddaughter. She has back packed the Sierras, and biked in South Dakota, Maryland, Prince Edward Island and Pennsylvania, plus kayaked on the Columbia River. As her grandchildren mature, vacations will include an introduction to California from a loving, teaching grandparent.

Pam is a very accomplished peer coach, mentor teacher coordinator, and was a loving caregiver for her husband during his illness. Her team teaching and preparation of effective professional development programs all had positive influence on teachers, students and the school community at large. Working with adult learners Pam has developed clear advice statements such as, “*Don’t go out expecting happiness. Bring it with you.*” And “*You only live once but if you do it right, once is enough!*” Come into this time in your life being more of yourself and create your own future!

Our Five Cities Pismo Beach AAUW Branch would be lost in the internet world without Pam. Thank you, Pam, for all of your contributions to our Branch - from Zoom Guiding to Fund Raising.

~ Jean Burns Slater

## ESCAPING SLO COUNTY IN TIMES OF COVID

Sometimes you just have to break out and take a chance. A dear friend and I planned a National Park tour in Utah to change our local scenery. At first, we planned this road trip for September, but then the fires, hot winds and COVID scared us into postponement.

We rearranged dates and decided we could drive to Zion National Park in southern Utah in one easy day in late October. My friend and I have both had been very careful during this COVID time, and I must admit, I had not even ridden in a car with anyone other than my husband.

The first day we rode with all of the windows down to stir up the air in the car and with each other. We booked a Zion lodge room, knowing that the food service would be severely limited, but the scenery and outdoor air would more than compensate. We arrived around 4 pm, ate in Springdale at a funky outdoor eating place called Whiptail Grill. We had skipped lunch and used the toilet at a Starbucks once on the way.

The weather was grand, the scenery was awe-inspiring and we hiked 11 miles, along the Virgin River and into the narrows. Dinner was again in Springdale, this time at the Bit and Spur, outdoors. We forgot that we were in an area that typically does not serve alcohol so our dreams of a good Old Fashion were dashed.



After a second night at the Zion Lodge, we drove to Bryce Canyon NP, stunning with hoodoos everywhere, and then a drive through Escalante Staircase National Monument, arriving in a tiny town, Torrey, near the entrance to Capitol Reef National Park. This place was our big expense, three nights in a large room to allow my friend and I separate air to breath. We thought the Lodge served dinner outdoors, but the kitchen was only open for breakfast so we found a small café with lots of space and few diners, where we ate three different times.



Using 'The Lodge at Red River' as our base, we explored Capitol Reef one day, Canyonlands National Park and Arches National Park the second day. We skipped lunch daily due to basic food insecurity (no available restaurants open) and ate again and again at the small café in Torrey. Arches NP was limiting the number of cars into the Park so we returned just before dusk. These parks offer nature in the most raw and striking ways.

After leaving the Capitol Reef area, we zipped down to Arizona, stopping at Hovenweep National Monument. This place is remote, peaceful and holds the ghosts of the ancient native Americans, The Ancestral Puebloans, who unexpectedly left in the 1200's. Our overnight was in a city called Snowflake, Arizona. It was a stop-over on our way to Silver City, New Mexico. New Mexico has a quarantine requirement for you to

stay put in one place for the length of your stay or 14 days. We were saying at Bear Mountain Lodge outside of Silver City in a small casita. With California license plates we hoped we would not be thrown into the brig for our two day stay. We visited the Gila Cliff Dwelling National Monument and ate dinner at the Bear Mountain Lodge on their outdoor porch. And then the weather turned into a snow storm so we headed straight home, from Silver City. It was a very long drive day, snow driving adding caution, and we arrived home at midnight.

To sum up this experience, I would say that National and State Parks, if open, are wonderful places to visit, be outdoors with fresh air and spaced people. Food is at a premium and hard to find. Do not expect to shop anywhere, just hike and enjoy the outdoor scenery. Avoid gas station bathrooms, even if desperate. Accept the old fashion pit toilet as an alternative in parks, but your mask filters the smell so you are safe. Revisit places you love. Do not trust the internet search for food locations and hours as the websites are often wrong and not up to date. Operating hours are severely limited.

I have visited all of these places before, but I never get tired of Parks and nature. My friend and I stayed safe and now relish our memories. ~ Jean Burns Slater



## INTEREST GROUPS

**PLEASE NOTE:** Due to Covid guidelines, most meetings/interest groups that meet face-to-face have been CANCELLED until further notice. We encourage your groups to try online options to stay connected, such as Zoom, or by other social distancing options.

### GREAT DECISIONS: PREPARE TO DISCUSS THE WORLD

Great Decision participants are sharing zoom discussions and have one session left for the 2020 year of hot topics! Zoom invitations are sent out to each participant and there is active and meaningful involvement.

Participants have the opportunity to view the video presentations through an internet link that were typically presented during the hosted meetings. Great Deciders are asked to view the segment on topic and read the chapter prior to the meeting.

Great Decisions Zoom meetings are limited to 40 minutes, so preparation prior to the meeting is requested.

#### OUR DECEMBER TOPIC:

**Artificial Intelligence & Data: Monday, Dec. 14 @ 7 PM, Susan Opava, leader**

The year 2021 will continue with Zoom discussions, based on the reading materials ordered and the DVD shared with participants. Consider joining in the world discussions of Great Decisions and recognizing the importance of community conversations of global events and topics. Contact Priscilla Alquist to sign up now!

#### PRELIMINARY TOPICS FOR 2021:

- Topic 1: The role of international organizations in a Global Pandemic
- Topic 2: Global supply chains and national security
- Topic 3: China and Africa
- Topic 4: Korean Peninsula
- Topic 5: Persian Gulf Security
- Topic 6: Brexit and the European Union
- Topic 7: The fight over the melting Arctic
- Topic 8: The End of Globalization?



### Official AAUW Interest Group Contacts:

Great Decisions *Priscilla Alquist  
& Jean Burns Slater*  
Lunch Bunch *Joan Knowlton*  
Night Readers  
Book Group *Sandra Ku*  
Theatre Goers *Judy Zaretzka*

### Independent AAUW Interest Group Contacts:

Cooking Group *Lisa Walker*  
Daytime Page Turners  
*Jean Burns Slater*  
Quilters *Linda Lidberg*

(These groups have become independent of AAUW in order to be inclusive of readers who are no longer members.)

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## The Waves

...is a monthly newsletter of the  
Five Cities Pismo Beach, CA,  
Branch of AAUW

**Vol. 42, No.4 – December 2020**

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**NEWSLETTER DEADLINE IS THE 20<sup>TH</sup>**  
of the month. Photos are welcome.

**AAUW 5 Cities Website:**  
[https://fivecitiespismo-beach-  
ca.aauw.net](https://fivecitiespismo-beach-ca.aauw.net)

In principle and in practice, AAUW values and seeks a diverse membership. There shall be no barriers to full participation in this organization on the basis of gender, race, creed, age, sexual orientation, national origin, disability or class.