

President's Message

Patti Melsheimer

It was great to see so many of you at our first meeting of the year for our Five Cities Pismo Beach AAUW branch! We learned a lot about our Lucia Mar School District and the challenges it is facing from our guest speaker, Colleen Martin, Chair of the District Board. Jean Slater, our Public Policy chair, challenged us to attend the school board meetings and take an active role in understanding the challenges of today's educational environment. For the month of October, we will view education from another perspective as we hear from our "Tech Trek" girls who attended Tech Trek camp this past summer. They are always so enthused about their experience that you won't want to miss this meeting!

On another note, I am sad to report that we will not be doing Adopt-A-Poll for the upcoming election, as we have done for many years! We did not have anyone able to take responsibility for being the Lead Worker and overseeing the effort. This will mean a loss of approximately \$500 to our budget! Consequently, we will need to support our other fund raisers wholeheartedly! If you still want to work a precinct, you can apply to work at a precinct assigned to you by the County. There is a small stipend for working and attending training. You must register at the link below. You could work independently and then donate your stipend to the Branch as one way to help make up for the loss of the fundraising money we usually make for an Adopt-a-Poll. Questions about the training sessions and schedule can be directed to precinctworker@co.slo.ca.us or (805) 781-4989.

October Events

- 2 11:30 a.m. Lunch Bunch: Rancho Nipomo BBQ & Deli, Nipomo
- 3 11:30 a.m. Daytime Page Turners: Patti Melsheimer's home
- 6 6:30 p.m. Board Meeting: Zoom
- 14 6:30 p.m. Night Readers: Linda Kime's home.
- 15 12:30 p.m. Finessing Femmes Bridge: Merry Kelley's home
- 18 10:00 a.m. General Meeting: Tech Trek campers/families
Mesa Dunes Club House
- 20 11:30 a.m. Travel Talk: Rooster Creek Arroyo Grande
- 27 7:00 p.m. Great Decisions: Mary Week's home

November Preview

- 3 6:30 p.m. Board Meeting: Zoom
- 6 11:30 a.m. Lunch Bunch: Lure Fish House, San Luis Obispo
- 15 12:00 noon Silent Auction and Bingo St. John's Lutheran Church

October Birthdays

Beth Hutton
Mary Weeks
Kathy Cohon/ Linda Kime
Susie Wedell
Rose Ann Steiner
Sharon McConnell

Action Alerts:

School Board Mtgs pg.2
Tech Trek pg. 4
Bingo/Silent Auction pg. 4
Proposition 50 pg.6
Name Gift Honoree pg.8

SEPTEMBER BRANCH MEETING

The opening Branch Meeting was held on September 20 at the Mesa Dunes Club House. Branch members eagerly welcomed guest speaker Colleen Martin, Lucia Mar Unified Schol District Board of Trustees President. President Martin spoke of the challenges the District is facing regarding transgender rights, book censorship, adversarial unscheduled speakers at Board meetings. She encouraged Branch members to attend Board meetings to see the current tenor of the meetings and support public education for all. She complimented the Branch for the strong support of student-based programs such as Eager Readers, Tech Trek, Scholarship, Women in History and AVID Classroom support.

The importance of qualified, impartial, and educationally experienced School Board members was addressed. In 2026 there will be four Trustees seats up for election. Recruiting candidates, attending School Board meetings, and spreading the word about the importance of impartial, knowledgeable candidates for the Board Trustees, requires our moving interest and intent into action and results.

Help monitor our local School Board!

Lucia Mar USD Board of Trustees Calendar 7:00 p.m.

602 Orchard Street, Arroyo Grande

October 7 October 21 November 18 December 16

"Silent acquiescence in the face of tyranny is no better than outright agreement" by C.J. Redwine.

We cannot stay silent



UNDERSTANDING THE URGENCY OF BRANCH PARTICIPATION IN THE PUBLIC POLICY SCHOOL BOARD PROJECT

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

The constant noises that surround 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 compromising 50 or more families must provide a teacher to instruct on reading and writing.

Our new nation began its journey into public education 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 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.”

OCTOBER 18, SATURDAY GENERAL MEETING

Come meet our 2025 Tech Trek campers and their families on October 18, Saturday 10 a.m. at Mesa Dunes Club House. Invite a friend or two and learn firsthand the impact of our involvement with middle school girls and science. It is a meeting not to be missed!

We shall honor Linda Lidberg for her long-time guidance as Tech Trek Coordinator and welcome Pam Zirion into this role which provides experiences of the joy, friendship, and awesome learning experiences for future Tech Trek campers.



Thank you Pam!!

I am taking over for our invaluable Linda Lidberg as the Tech Trek chairperson. **I would love to have a partner** as I also am involved with Silent Auction and Women in Herstory. It's a lot of hats for one person.

This past July I was fortunate to attend a day with Tech Trekkers at the UCSB campus. It was very exciting to see these young, soon-to-be eighth graders, involved with learning on such a vibrant campus where they live with one roommate in a dorm for one week and eat at the dining hall with other Tech Trekkers. I was very impressed with the program and feel it is a viable and invaluable part of AAUW. Consequently, I decided to chair this position, but again, would love to have a partner in this endeavor. Please contact me if you would like to join me in this journey. Pam Zirion

Tech Trek CA

Since 1998, more than 16,000 girls have discovered the joys of STEM and friendship at volunteer-powered Tech Trek summer camps—thanks to the support of many of you! Over 95% of California branches send campers to one of nine camps each year. Some of those attending are even the daughters of past campers!

Now, we're turning up the volume: ramping up to focus not just on teaching STEM skills, but also on the power of community AFTER camp. Because what's better than coding a robot? Coding one with friends!

STEM skills may open doors; however, community relationships keep them open. Don't be a stranger – connect with an alum in your community today and make a difference! Contact techtrek-ttap@aauw-ca.org to get started.

Mary Isaac, Tech Trek Program Director, techtrek@aauw-ca.org

BINGO/SILENT AUCTION FUNDRAISING

By now you have received the note about our Bingo and Silent Auction event on November 15th at St. John's Church in Arroyo Grande. We ask all members to sign up to assist at the event either by selling tickets, helping with lunch preparation, selling extra Bingo cards, assisting with Silent Auction packaging, schlepping, set up and end process. Lots of jobs for everyone! If you didn't sign up at the General Meeting, please reach out to Pam or Kathy with your volunteer request.

In addition, we need you to take those request letters to shops you frequent for donations for the Silent Auction. As you get items donated, please let Pam know so we can keep track of businesses who have helped us. Also print out a thank you letter (donation receipt) that I have sent you as an email. If you need all those items again, let me know please. For Bingo prizes we need \$25 gift cards (current please, not expired) because we are not allowed to give cash as prizes. We ask each member to donate one. Remember—it takes a village!

Pam Zirion Kathy Cohon

REAL CHANGE HAPPENS WHEN WE SPEAK UP

AAUW makes it easy for you to take action on the issues that matter most — like pay equity, student debt, and reproductive rights. When you join our Action Network, you'll receive timely alerts about advocacy opportunities right in your inbox.



With our Two-Minute Activist tool, you can contact your elected officials with just a few clicks.



[Take Action Now](#)



[Sign Up for Action Alerts](#)

Your voice. Your power. Your impact.

A BIG WIN FOR PUBLIC EDUCATION

On August 14, 2025 a federal judge delivered a major legal victory for public education and civil rights. In *American Federation of Teachers et al. v. U.S. Department of Education et al.*, the court struck down the Trump–Vance administration’s attempt to force schools nationwide to censor lessons, eliminate diversity and inclusion programs, and sign unlawful compliance certifications under threat of losing federal funding and facing criminal penalties.

Judge Stephanie A. Gallagher ruled that both the administration’s February 14 “Dear Colleague Letter” and its mandatory certification violated the Constitution and the Administrative Procedures Act, stating: “Plaintiffs have shown that neither challenged agency action was promulgated in

accordance with the procedural requirements of the APA, and that both actions run afoul of important constitutional rights.”

This decision vacates both policies, protecting the ability of educators to teach honest history, support students, and foster inclusive learning environments.

In March, AAUW joined a coalition letter to the Department of Education urging the rescission of the February 14, 2025, “Dear Colleague” letter. In April, we joined a letter to Elementary and Secondary Education Leaders urging continued investment in programs that lawfully advance diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility. If you would like future information on the ruling contact Jean Burns Slater, Public Policy Chair

INVESTING IN OUR DEMOCRATIC FUTURE: NON-PARTISAN VOTER EDUCATION AROUND PROPOSITION 50 IN CALIFORNIA

By Sue Miller, Member AAUW California Public Policy Committee

We are currently seeing and experiencing creeping authoritarian efforts to undermine fair representation, trusted information, and democratic norms in our country. This unprecedented condition, paired with overwhelming federal encroachment, presents a significant threat to many of the things that we care about, including AAUW’s mission of advancing equity for women and girls: although California continues to maintain strong protections for women and girls, marginalized peoples, free speech, accurate history, sound science, and democratic norms, we are still subject to the laws, rules, and enforcement actions of the federal government. As such, as part of this year’s GOTV campaign, AAUW California will be providing information-centered messages on the potential benefits of Proposition 50 for all Californians.

The approval of [Proposition 50](#) by California voters in November 2025 will approve redistricting efforts in California for the next election cycles (until maps are redrawn after the next census in 2030). With the passage of Proposition 50, we will experience a short-term loss of state democratic and people-centered control of an important aspect of democracy: redistricting. This effort will also seemingly have partisan benefits.

However, a short-term loss of people-centered redistricting can also be seen as an investment in a democratic future in the long term, one in which we can have more, not less, of the will of the people recognized - all of the people, regardless of who they are. Furthermore, partisanship may be seen as a reductive label when the choice has become one of supporting authoritarianism or preserving functional democracy.

Redistricting should be in the hands of the people. Gender equity should be a consistent priority so that the dreams of a pluralistic democracy are one step closer to being realized. None of this is possible if our state is operating in a federal system in which democracy is no longer functional, listing instead toward an authoritarian system that puts troops in our streets, that censors our speech,

that erases historical facts, that does not rely on sound science in decision-making, that directly endangers the wellbeing of women and girls, and that dehumanizes important and valued members of our communities.

Our goal in this campaign is to provide reliable information as a trusted resource to voters in California, and the wider public, about the potential ramifications and potential benefits of Proposition 50's passage and dispel misinformation about partisanship and redistricting in this political moment. We will also encourage and assist voters to go to the polls for this special election to vote as individuals on whether the proposed redistricting should be approved. Providing this encouragement to get out and vote and information about Proposition 50, including about potential benefits, is acting in alignment with our mission and our nonpartisan commitments, as we are advancing a pro-democracy message: we seek to support any and all efforts to preserve and advance democracy and our public policy priorities in the face of a growing authoritarian threat.

Let's all join in working together to advance our public policy priorities in moving California forward.

ADOPT A POLL ALTERNATIVE

As no one has stepped up to be the Lead Worker for us to do Adopt-a-Poll this upcoming election, Linda Lidberg notified the County that we are not going to participate. If you want to work a precinct, you can apply to work at a precinct that the County will assign you to work. There is a small stipend for working and attending training (see below) and you must register at the link below. You could work independently and then donate your stipend to the Branch as one way to make up for the loss of the fundraising money we usually make for an Adopt-a-Poll. Linda Lidberg

Precinct Worker Application

If you would like to be an active participant in the political process and make a difference in our community, please complete the [Precinct Worker Application](#). **Please note that there are special applications for student poll workers and those who participate in an Adopt-A-Poll** (see below). There is a small stipend paid to individual poll workers approximately six weeks after an election. It ranges from about \$50 to \$150, depending on role and shift worked (half- or full-day). An additional \$20 is paid to those who attend training, which is required for anyone serving as an inspector.

Poll worker training sessions will be held on 10/20 and 10/21 (Atascadero Pavilion on the Lake), 10/23 and 10/24 (SLO Odd Fellows Lodge), and 10/27 and 10/28 (South County Regional Center). Questions about the training sessions and schedule can be directed to precinctworker@co.slo.ca.us or (805) 781-4989.

MEMBERSHIP

Current membership includes 35 members. Welcome back!

UPDATES FOR YOUR 2025-26 AAUW DIRECTORY

Pam Zirion has accepted the position of Tech Trek chair. We are so happy to welcome her to the 5 Cities Pismo Beach AAUW Board of Directors! Location of the December meeting: The home of Priscilla Alquist, 424 Vista Drive, Arroyo Grande

COMMUNICATIONS: SUSAN BRAZIL

Many, many thanks to those who secured ads for our directories and newsletter. We raised \$800! Special thanks to Mary Matakovich who scoured and scored in Avila Beach. Mary also has been able to get our branch information on several social media calendars. Any information you wish to share with other members can be send to members of the communication committee. They are listed in your "new" directories.

Susan Brazil Communication and Publicity Coordinator

TALK ABOUT TRAVEL

Whether you enjoy traveling the world or driving to San Luis Obispo for lunch, you will find delightful conversation and great travel ideas and suggestions at our monthly discussions. This month we will meet at Rooster Creek in Arroyo Grande Village at 11:30 am on Monday, October 20. Please join us!

Mary Weeks

FRIENDSHIP OUTREACH

It has been an active and fun summer for many of our members, traveling to faraway places and visiting friends far and near. Jean Slater is returning from Europe and others are looking forward to trips in the next few days to Texas, Cancun, England, Scotland, and British Columbia. I am flying to Kauai with past member Karen Thomas and 4 other ladies from my sewing circle to relax for a week and create some new quilts with a Hawaiian flavor. Others are taking advantage of our beautiful local weather and scenery for some stay-cations locally, such as Kathi Pettersen to Cambria. Wow, we can all enjoy armchair traveling with these folks! There will be much more to report after meeting up with members at our first meeting of the year on September 20.

Happy news to report - Maureen Kelly's adult daughter Jacque has returned to the area. Gaye Peltzman celebrated her birthday recently with three Branch members and their spouses at Vista Restaurant - a beautiful day at the oceanside! Rose Ann Steiner wrote the script as emcee at a humorous fashion show recently, where Patti Melsheimer starred in an outfit with a "ruffle" collar reminiscent of "Lays Ruffles" potato chips along with her very own poodle skirt!

Feel free to share your news with me at meetings or by phone or email. I always enjoy catching up with your news!

Warmly, Priscilla Alquist

NOMINATIONS FOR THE 2026 NAMED GIFT HONOREE

All members are encouraged to contribute nominations for this year's Named Gift Honoree. This is the highest honor that AAUW gives a member, community member, or business. Recipients are chosen for outstanding service to the branch through efforts and commitment.

- Forward your nomination by **November 1** to Mary Matakovich, mmatakovavila@gmail.com.
- State the name and present a brief paragraph as to why the nominee should be awarded this recognition.

- Past Named Gift Honorees will vote on the nominees. (Page 17 of the Membership Directory lists past Named Gift members/businesses. Past Honorees also may be considered for this year's honor.)
- The person or business receiving the most votes will receive the award.
- The Board has asked that the name of the awardee be kept confidential.
- The AAUW Fund will send a check to National AAUW and the State will be notified of the selection.

Our awardee will be announced at the May General Meeting.

Think positive thoughts,
See the good in people,
Believe in yourself,
Show kindness towards all,
Enjoy the little things,
Embrace gratitude and be grateful,
Choose happy,
Dream big!

LUNCH BUNCH

Join us for a unique selection of California Style, Hispanic cuisine, featuring the diverse culture of the Central Coast. Favorites include the popular pulled-pork sandwich, BBQ pork ribs, burgers, vaquero tacos and burritos.

Rancho Nipomo BBQ & Deli

108 Cuyama Lane, Nipomo

Thursday, October 2, 2025

11:30 am

RSVP no later than Sunday, September 28, 2025 to aauw5cpblunchbunch@gmail.com

To be added to or removed from our Lunch Bunch e-mail distribution list, please send your request to aauw5cpblunchbunch@gmail.com

AAUW FIVE CITIES PISMO BEACH 2025-2026 ADOPTED BUDGET

Operating Income	25-26 Budgeted	YTD	YTD Vs. Budget
35 Memberships @ \$16	\$560.00		\$560.00
Advertising (16 Sponsors)	\$800.00		\$800.00
Unencumbered Funds	\$233.00		\$233.00
Operating Income	\$1,593.00		\$1,593.00

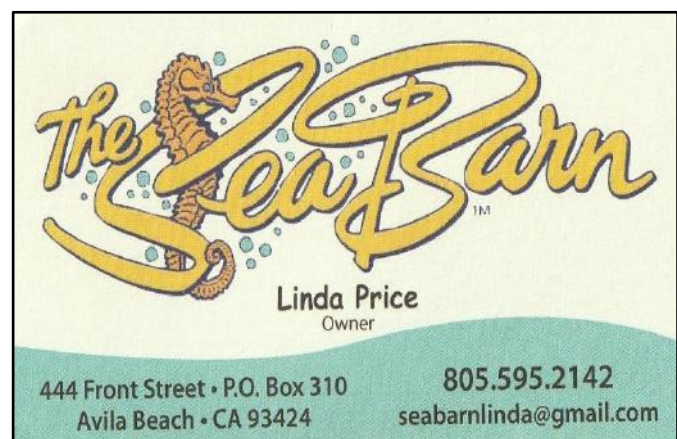
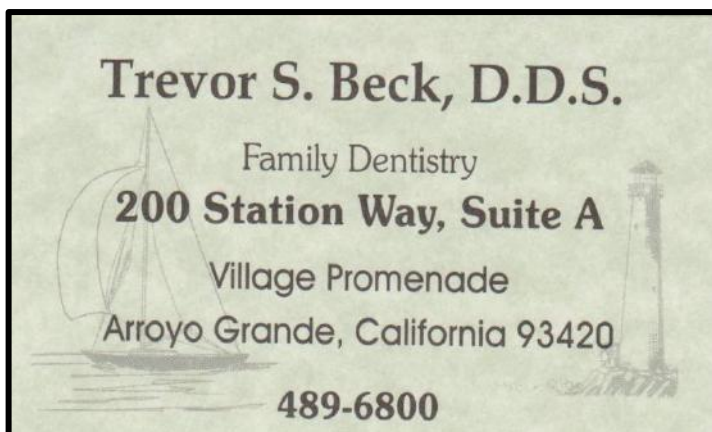
Fundraising Income 2025-2026			
	Gross	Exp./Tax	Net
Fall Bingo and Silent Auction			\$0.00
Adopt-a-Poll			\$0.00
Program Donations			\$0.00
Total Fundraising Income	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00

	25-26 Budget	24-25 Spend	Budget VS Spend	Reserve 2025-2026	Carry Over Available for 25-26	Distribution for 26-27	Balance
Operating Expenses							
Meeting Rent (Church, 1xWomen)	\$393.00	\$393.00	\$0.00	Membership Carryover	\$320.00		\$320.00
Membership Directory	\$140.00	\$126.12	\$13.88	Scholarship (15%)	\$1,436.15		\$1,436.15
Program Expenses (Zoom)	\$267.58	\$335.16	-\$67.58	Tech Trek (36%)	\$6,065.16		\$6,065.16
Hospitality	\$200.00	\$198.32	\$1.68	Eager Reader (24%)	\$6,893.27		\$6,893.27
Insurance	\$201.00	\$183.00	\$18.00	AVID Classroom Support (5%)	\$1,478.72		\$1,478.72
Post Office Box Rental	\$192.00	\$182.00	\$10.00	AAUW Funds (15%)	\$2,503.20		\$2,503.20
Business Expenses	\$36.42	\$14.60	\$21.82	General Reserve (5%)	\$15,246.60		\$15,246.60
Raffle/Bingo permit	\$30.00	\$30.00	\$0.00	Total Reserves on Hand	\$33,623.10		\$33,623.10
Annual State Renewal Fee	\$25.00	\$25.00	\$0.00				
EXPENSES	\$1,485.00	\$1,487.20	-\$20.20				

Account Balance 8.4.25	\$43,636.24
Reserves (Tech Trek, Op. Exp.)	- \$33,623.10
Unemcumbered funds	\$0.10
Monthly expenses	\$ 0.00
Remaining operating funds	\$10,013.24

Fundraising Distribution 2025-2026	
Scholarship (15%)	\$0.00
Tech Trek (36%)	\$0.00
Eager Reader(24%)	\$0.00
AVID Classroom Support (5%)	\$0.00
AAUW Funds (15%)	\$0.00
General Reserve (5%)	\$0.00
Fundraising Totals	\$0.00

**OUR THANKS TO THE FOLLOWING BUSINESSES FOR THEIR
SUPPORT OF THE FIVE CITIES – PISMO BEACH BRANCH OF AAUW!**





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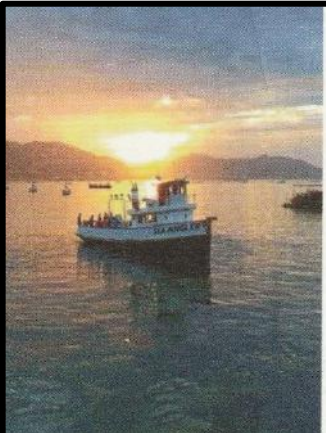
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 www.morrobaylanding.com

Amanda Curaza
 Executive Director

www.OperationSurf.org
 amanda@operationsurf.org
 O: (805) 544 - 7875
 C: (805) 704-0104
 PO Box 1581 San Luis Obispo, CA 93406



"Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it's the only thing that ever has."

Margaret Mead

Acknowledging the dedication of the AAUW Five Cities Pismo Beach Branch as it works to change our world.

Andi & Jeff Portney

