

President's Message

Joy.....Hope.....Peace

We will see and hear these words a lot during December. Greeting cards, songs, advertisements all send these wishes our way. To AAUW members, these are not empty words or words for just a season! We give **joy** and **hope** to our scholarship recipients, young readers and so many others when we support equality, open discussion, and the right to exercise our freedom of speech.

Peace is a little more difficult to demonstrate. I have a plaque that states "If you wish for Peace, work for Justice." When we recognize injustice and work to rectify it, we will truly know peace.

This is my wish for everyone.

I wish you all **Joy, Hope and Peace**, not just for a holiday, but for every day.

Mary Lee Weeks, Co-President

December Events

- 1 6:30 p.m. Board Meeting: Mary Weeks home
- 4 11:30 a.m. Lunch Bunch: Gardens of Avila San Luis Obispo
- 5 11:30 a.m. Daytime Page Turners: Mary Weeks' home
- 9 6:30 p.m. Night Readers: Susie Wedell's home
- 13 Holiday Brunch Celebration: 11:00 -1:30 Priscilla Alquist's home
- 17 12:30 p.m. Finessing Femmes Bridge: TBA

January Preview

- 5 6:30 p.m. Board Meeting: Zoom
- 8 11:30 a.m. Lunch Bunch: Gina's Italian Cuisine, Arroyo Grande
- 24 10:00 a.m. General Meeting: Voter's Rights Mesa View Club House

December Birthday

Nancy Sperling
Beth Scroggs

Action Alerts

Holiday Brunch page 4
School Board page 6

December 1, 2025 Board Meeting

The December Board meeting will be held Monday, December 1, 2025 at 6:30 p.m. in person at the home of December Presiding President Mary Lee Weeks. If you or your committee have an action item to place on the agenda, forward it to Mary Weeks marylee35@aol.com by November 28 for it to be considered at this meeting. The Board will be reviewing job descriptions for the various officers and will consider voting on these descriptions. Each Board member received a draft of the job and committee descriptions prior to the meeting.

NOVEMBER BRANCH MEETING: BINGO & SILENT AUCTION



Our Bingo and Silent Auction Extravaganza went off with a bang!

We had lots of satisfied people winning Bingos, door prizes, eating good food, and bidding on a myriad of items and experiences.

So far we grossed \$3350 on Bingo and \$5181.88 on the Silent Auction for a total of \$8531.88. We will have expenses from that total.

This Extravaganza would not have been possible without many members assisting. We all must acknowledge Pat Muhlethaler for the use of her garage to pack and store baskets and items. She opened that door numerous times for us in the last month! Andi Portney assisted greatly in the details—creating description sheets for each item, figuring out the placement of auction items, plus staying and working on set up until 9 PM on the Friday before our event! Maureen Kelly took helm in the kitchen and with her helpers, bagged over 140 lunches! Maureen also made displays for the wine and helped with wine delivery the day after the event. Joan Florence kept tabs on all the ticket sales, returns and deliveries to those who needed more. And who can forget our intrepid Linda Lidberg who has always been our Bingo (and Bunko) MC for numerous years?

There are so many people who stepped up to the plate when asked and even when not asked. They saw a need to help, and did it!

We appreciate St. John's Church for providing us the venue for many years. Now we need to look at other places to keep the momentum of our annual major Fundraiser. Let us know if you have contacts and/or suggestions, please.

Thank you all again for all you do to help our Branch.

Kathy Cohon & Pam Zirion





FRIENDSHIP OUTREACH

This month's Sunshine article is featuring Gratitude. My healthcare system has been sending interesting information about the health benefits of concentrating on gratitude as well as practicing kindness. Did you know that it reduces the stress hormone, cortisol, and lowers blood pressure by dilating blood vessels due to increasing the production of nitric oxide? I have been recording 3 things I am grateful for every day and practicing at least one random act of kindness daily.

It's fun as well as good for you!

Let me share that I was so grateful to see so many AAUW members at our recent Bingo and Silent Auction. Everyone seemed to be out in force, doing what they could to help make it a success. We can be grateful, too, for our community that has been so supportive of our mission over the years by attending our Bingo events and purchasing Silent Auction items.

Lastly, I am grateful for all the good times we have shared together and the members who have impacted our lives. As time marches on, conditions change for people and some move away for care or to be closer to loved ones. It is time to honor another such member. We just recently learned that Linda Lidberg will be moving to Grand Junction, Colorado in the spring to be closer to family. Linda has been a valuable member of our Branch and we will miss her greatly. Do come to our Holiday Brunch in December to celebrate the Season, as well as, visit with Linda and all the other members who play a special role in our lives. Priscilla Alquist Sunshine Chair



LUNCH BUNCH

In December, we return to the Gardens of Avila Restaurant at the Sycamore Mineral Springs Resort & Spa, which proudly brings the freshest homegrown and locally sourced ingredients directly to your table. The onsite 2-acre Chefs Garden provides organic vegetables throughout the growing season. They partner with local farmers, fishing docks, distilleries, and producers. Every sauce, dressing, rub, and pasta is made in-house.

If you would like to participate in an informal variation on a white elephant gift exchange, bring a small, wrapped item. Please do not buy anything. It can be any small item you find around the house that you no longer need but someone else might treasure!

Gardens of Avila Restaurant 1215 Avila Beach Drive, San Luis Obispo

Thursday, December 4, 2025 11:30 am

RSVP no later than Sunday, November 30, 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.

A decorative border of green holly leaves with small red berries surrounds the text.

HOLIDAYS ARE FOR KIDS

AAUW Holiday Brunch

Saturday, December 13 ~ 11am - 1:30 pm

At the home of Priscilla Alquist, 424 Vista Dr. Arroyo Grande

Let's party like we're 10 years old!

- * Bring a new, unwrapped gift for a child
- * Bring a photo of yourself as a child
- * Bring a dish for brunch, text 775-721-4747 to sign up
- * Be prepared for surprises!

Optional: Dress as your favorite storybook heroine

RSVP to Priscilla, text 805-305-0907 by Dec. 6



Our Tech Trek season has begun. Letters of notification were sent to math and science teachers at the three middle schools—Paulding, Judkins and Mesa. We asked these teachers to recommend 7th grade girls who would benefit the most from a weeklong STEM camp with other like-minded girls.

We hope to have these names by January and start the process of application and selection.

Last summer Tech Trek California had 9 camps, including one virtual, with 752 campers, and over 318 staff volunteers from 103 Branches state-wide. Camp fees per girl in 2026 will be the same as in 2025.

Again if any members would like to co-coordinate the Tech Trek program with me, I would be grateful. Call me if you have questions.

Pam Zirion

Tech Trek Branch coordinator

Nelly Hernandez Lopez



Dear AAUW,

I want to thank all of you for allowing me to come to this amazing camp! I'm so grateful for this opportunity you guys have given me. My time here has allowed me to really understand what I want to pursue in the future. My core class was Marine Biology. During my time in the class, it sparked my interest in learning more under the sea and scuba diving. I loved how in the camp I was able to meet a lot of new amazing people and how to find the perfect career fit for me. I'm so thankful and honored that I was chosen for this wonderful experience away from

home. Thank you once again for this chance.

Dear Five Cities Pismo Beach,

Thank you for the amazing opportunity to attend Tech Trek camp! Though my core class was not my first choice or preference, I enjoyed learning new codes in computer science. My favorite activity was meeting everyone for the first time and going to the beach. Once again, I appreciate the hard work you have put into sending me to camp and showing me that girls can do anything!



I



TECH TREK + S.T.E.M. Thank you!

Grace Faour

LET'S TALK TRAVEL

This interest group is reorganizing for the new year and welcomes anyone interested in joining. Meeting location, dates and times are to be determined. If you like to share or hear about adventures with useful travel tips, this is your group. Just message Jean Burns Slater jbslater2006@gmail.com.



HELP MONITOR OUR LOCAL SCHOOL BOARD!

Lucia Mar USD Board of Trustees Calendar

7:00 p.m. 602 Orchard Street, Arroyo Grande

Next Meeting December 16

At the November 18, 2025 Board of Trustees Meeting, the LMUSD Board voted to follow the recommendations of the District Advisory Committee and opted to retain two books in the library at Arroyo Grande High School, which were seen as controversial by a group of parents. The Lucia Mar School District reviews instructional materials, including books, through a multi-step process involving teachers, administrators, parents, and community members. This process typically includes seeking stakeholder input, forming an advisory committee, evaluating materials against curriculum guidelines, and presenting recommendations to the Board of Trustees, which ultimately makes the final decision. The Board vote was 4 to 3 to retain the books, following the recommendation of the special advisory committee that heard the formal complaints. The meeting was well attended with three of our Branch members present and was extensively covered by KSBY News, The Telegram Tribune, and New Times.

The close vote to ban these books brings to our attention the upcoming process of 2026 School Board elections. During the 2022 election a slate of candidates, campaigned on a slogan to “rebuild” Lucia Mar Unified Schools. One candidate on this slate was successful at the 2024 election. Another “rebuild” slate is anticipated for the next election, to be held in November 2026.

Current Board President Colleen Martin has spoken with our Branch at two recent meetings, expressing the need to focus the District toward its mission: "Engage, challenge, and inspire students to be lifelong learners" and achieve their full potential. The District's vision is to become the "model school district for 21st Century Learning in the nation" by ensuring all students are prepared for the future through a rigorous, supportive, and inclusive educational experience. Balanced school board candidates, *without* a set of ideological views that encompass specific political, cultural, or religious beliefs, will best serve our community and students

In 2026 there are 4 seats up for election, offering a possibility of changing the entire school board focus. The trustees are elected based on their area of representation. Trustees' area of representation that are up for election are described below.

Four Trustee positions up for election in 2026 in the following areas

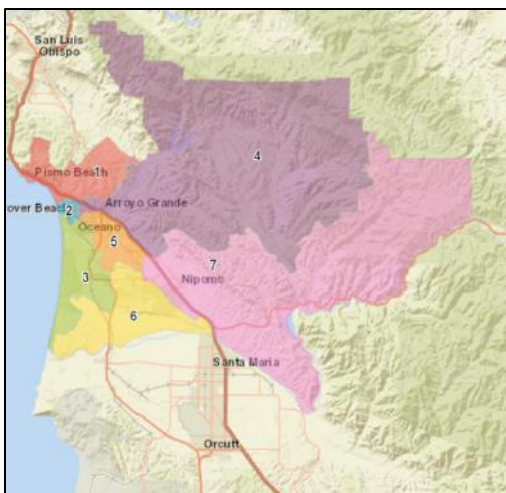
Area 3 Currently held by Andrea Naemi-Vergne

Area 5 Currently held by Colleen Martin

Area 6 Currently held by Eilene Pham

Area 7 Currently held by Donna Kandel

See accompanying map for location of the representative areas that are up for election in 2026.



Details for the procedure for filing as a candidate are listed below. If you know someone who will serve our community and all students, please encourage them to file as a candidate. The filing period for the November 2026 election typically opens the second Monday of July and closes on Friday in August, 30 days after the initial filing date.

Job description

Local school board members are responsible for overseeing school operations within the district, typically including employment decisions regarding a district superintendent.

Eligibility requirements

You may be elected or appointed to a governing board of a school district if you are 18 years of age or older; a citizen of the state; a resident of the school district; a registered voter; and not disqualified by the constitution or laws of the state from holding a civil office. An employee of a school district may not be sworn into office as an elected or appointed member of that school district’s governing board unless and until he or she resigns as an employee. If the employee does not resign, the employment automatically terminates upon being sworn into office. Any registered voter is eligible to be a member of the county board of education except the county superintendent of schools, any member of his or her staff, or any employee of a school district in that county.

Filing instructions

Filing office address: 1055 Monterey St, Rm D-120, San Luis Obispo, CA 93408

Filing phone number: 805-781-5228

Paperwork instructions: Submit paperwork to the county registrar of voters' office.

Filing requirements: No filing fee or petition signature requirement.

American Association of University Women is committed to our mission of advancing gender equity for women and girls. Thus, we have a responsibility to stay informed and assist whenever possible in fulfilling our mission. School Board elections are at the heart of our mission, focusing on candidates that are looking out for educational opportunities for all students through the public education offerings.

COMMUNICATIONS

Happy Holidays everyone. Our branch is on the move with our bingo having been a huge success. People return year after year because of the wonderful time they have playing and shopping our silent auction. Please keep the information out there about our wonderful branch. Bring a friend to our Holiday party at Priscilla's home so we can meet new potential members. If you have any information to share, please contact me. Susan Brazil. 209-747-6663.

HOSPITALITY NEEDS

January 24: General meeting	Fruit/Vegetables	Cookies/Bars	contact Maureen Kelly
February 21: General Meeting	Cheese/Crackers	Cookies/Bars	contact Maureen Kelly
March 21: General Meeting	Fruit/Vegetables		contact Maureen Kelly



AAUW: Gutting the Department of Education Betrays Students' Civil Rights

November 20, 2025

WASHINGTON, D.C. — The American Association of University Women (AAUW) is deeply alarmed by the Trump administration's escalating efforts to dismantle the U.S. Department of Education. These efforts include mass staff cuts and the recent announcement of six "partnerships" that shift the day-to-day work of major K–12 and higher education programs to other federal agencies.

These moves raise serious questions about how the Department can carry out the statutory responsibilities Congress assigned it in 1979. These were enforcing civil-rights laws in education, administering federal aid fairly and effectively, and ensuring equal educational opportunity for all students.

Statement of Gloria L. Blackwell, Chief Executive Officer, American Association of University Women (AAUW):

"Let's be clear about what is at stake. The Department of Education was created to center students' rights and educational equity, not to outsource its core expertise across agencies whose primary missions are labor, health, interior affairs, or foreign policy. You cannot meet that mandate when the people and programs with the most expertise in K–12 equity, higher education access, Native education, international education, and childcare for student parents, are scattered across agencies whose missions are labor, health, public lands, and foreign policy. When you hollow out the Department and scatter its knowledge of K-12 and higher education, you make it harder for students to challenge discrimination and harder for Congress or the public to hold parties accountable. "

AAUW urges Congress to intervene and ensure that the Department of Education can do what the law requires it to do — protect students' civil rights and advance gender and racial equity in every classroom and on every campus.

Scam emails were sent that some members may have thought came from AAUW (but did not), and caused concern. Scam email senders are getting cleverer, but a few quick checks can help identify suspicious emails. Read on for more information and tips on spotting scam versus legitimate emails, and steps to take if you have spotted a scam message.

Step 1: Check who it is really from

- You may need to **tap, click, or hover over the "From" name** to see the full address.
- Make sure the **domain** (the part after the "@") matches the actual organization.
 - Example: siteadmin@aauw-ca.org is legitimate; siteadmin@aauw-support.com or aauw-members@yahoo.com is not.
 - Watch for sneaky look-alikes: amazOn.com (zero instead of "o"), aauw-help.org instead of aauw.org or aauw-ca.org.

Step 2: Scan for common red flags

- Urgent messages: "You must read this attachment/click this link right away!"
- Unexpected offers or prizes: "Click here to redeem."
- Requests for personal info or money, especially gift cards or wire transfers.
- Links and attachments you were not expecting. Hover your mouse over links (or press and hold on mobile) to preview the real web address. *If you are unsure whether the message is legitimate, do not click if it looks unfamiliar or is shortened (like bit.ly).*
- Spelling or grammatical mistakes or unusual wording. This is not always present, but it is a clue if spotted.

Step 3: What to do if the message appears to be a scam

- Do not respond to the email.
- Do not click links or open attachments.
- Report it as spam/phishing in your email program.
- Delete it.

If you are *not sure* whether the message is a scam or not

- Contact the purported originating agency through established channels to determine whether it is legitimate. Use an email, website, or phone number you have used before or know to be correct.

A quick summary of the high points:

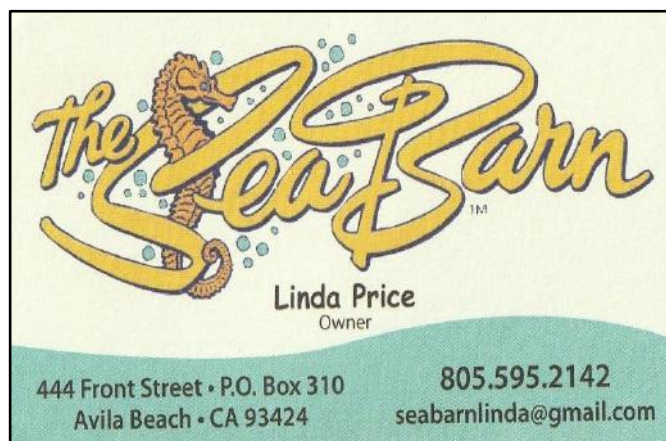
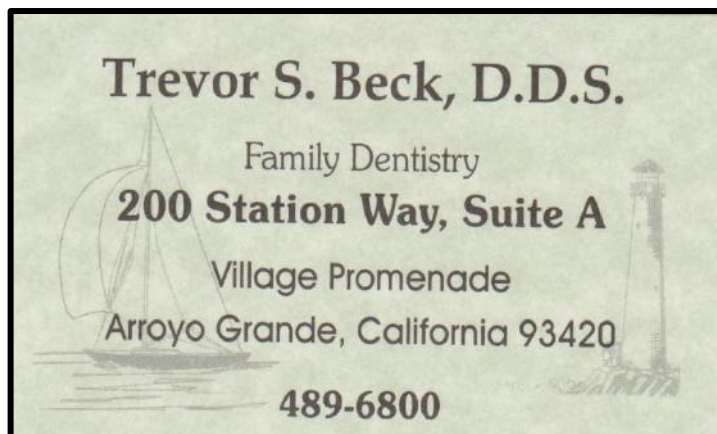
- Look past the sender's display name: verify the full email address and domain.
- Be wary of urgency, prizes, and requests for personal info.
- Do not click on links or open attachments unless you are comfortable that the message is legitimate.
- Delete suspicious messages.


I hope this information is helpful. It's a rough world out there, but with a bit of knowledge and good habits, you can keep yourself safe.

Warm regards,


Michelle Baer AAUW California Director, Communications Chair

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





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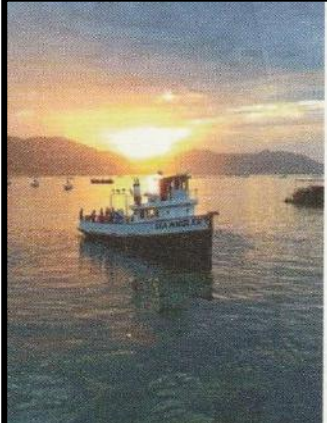
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 Arroyo Grande
 481-8195



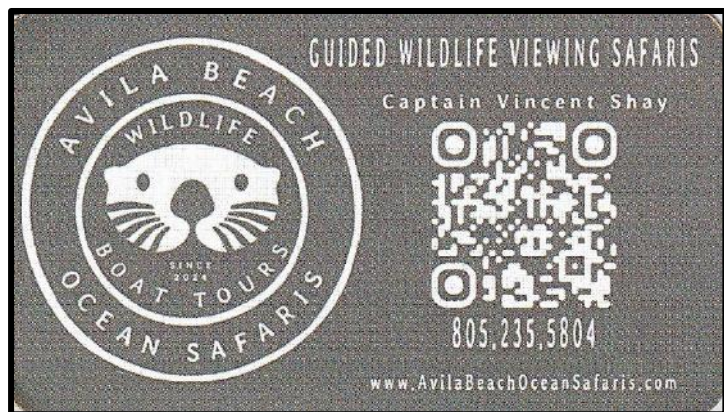
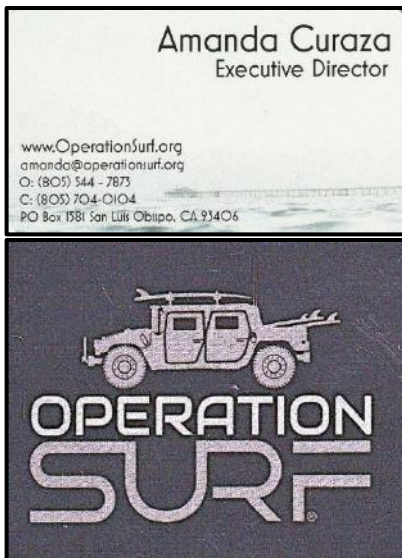
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"Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it's the only thing that ever has."

Margaret Mead

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

Andi & Jeff Portney

