



Valley View

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NOTES FROM THE PRESIDENT

Dear Members,

Wishing you all a healthy and wonder-full year. I understand many of us are having personal and family challenges that often require changes to our usual activities. I remember some words to a song that my dearest friend wrote to her father, who had been a university professor, and could no longer teach or travel. She wrote “Don’t give up the feelings in your heart, there is always time for a new idea.”

Somehow that touched me as I often experience an uplift in spirit when my creativity is stimulated by a new idea. And, here is my latest new idea about our February fundraiser. We will send out the Scholarship Fundraiser letter in February, and with it we can include an invitation to a fundraising event called Music and Dessert – the location to be determined. (I plan to visit the Community Foundation and ask about their room which they generously offered to us for AAUW fundraiser a few years ago.)

We are thinking that a Saturday afternoon would be good, for live music we will try to find local musicians, and a beautiful buffet of baked goodies and such will be volunteered by our membership. There will be entrance tickets which will raise funds for the operation of our AAUW Ukiah Chapter... and no charge for enjoying the desserts. Guests welcome. People will be able to buy leftovers, if there are any! Please e-mail me or text any ideas or feedback you may have about this potential February Fundraiser.

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We will be discussing this event at our day-long board meeting on January 23 along with focusing on finalizing By-laws, updating the job descriptions of Board Members, Officers and Chairpersons of committees. Once this is accomplished, we plan to begin our search for recruits to take on various positions for the Board and Committees. We will have several openings available and therefore we can look forward to the input of fresh energy for the coming year!

I am hoping to see you at our scheduled programs: Women's History Gala in March, the Book Club's Program and Accolades in April, and our fabulous Spring Dinner in May.

Keep cozy

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IS THERE A HIDDEN AGENDA BEHIND THE “PARENTS RIGHTS” MOVEMENT

We members of the AAUW California Public Policy School Board Project sub-committee frequently come across materials from groups advocating for book-banning, curriculum censorship, and policies which negatively impact the lives of LGBTQ+ students, in the name of “Parent’s Rights.” For example, the House of Representatives recently passed H.R. 5, the “Parents Bill of Rights Act.” Eight governors have signed legislation with similar titles.

H.R. 5 establishes the rights of parents to, among other things: review curriculum; inspect the books and other reading materials in the school library; be advised of policies that permit transgender girls to compete on female athletic teams or use bathrooms or lockers designated for females; and provide consent before a school may use their child’s chosen name or pronouns on forms, or change the child’s sex-based accommodations. Many of the state laws noted above require the removal of “inappropriate” materials upon the objection of a single person.

AAUW California recognizes that not all our members will find these policies objectionable. And to be sure, most of our members would agree with this statement from PEN America, a human rights and free expression organization: “There is no question that parents deserve a say in shaping their children’s educations; that they have a moral and legal responsibility for their children, and the freedom to make fundamental decisions for their families.”

However, legitimate questions are raised when one parent’s “right” to control what their child reads and learns collides with another parent’s right to ensure their child has access to a broad and diverse range of educational materials. Or when a parent’s “right” to know if their child confides to a teacher regarding a sexual identity unknown to the parent collides with the student’s right to privacy.

Or when one parent’s “right” to ensure her daughter doesn’t play on the same team as a transgender girl collides with that girl’s right to partake in all the same activities as other girls, or to feel safe in the campus environment.

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AAUW California advocates for a diverse curriculum in our schools, as well as the protection of all forms of gender identity and expression. It is a cause of concern when the rallying cry of “parents’ rights” is, as stated by PEN America, “wielded to do far more than give parents their rightful voice; it is turning public schools into political battle grounds, fracturing communities, and diverting time and energy away from teaching and learning.”

Additionally, according to the National Education Association (NEA), H.R. 5 “ignores the breadth of parental engagement” that already exists, “disregards educator experience an expertise” and “inserts the government into local decisions.”

PEN America worries that the current emphasis on working with schools for the betterment of the child has been replaced with a parental focus on wanting to impose their personal beliefs – moral, religious, and/or political – on the entire education system. As an organization founded on the principal of expanding educational opportunities we might all heed Suzanne Nossel’s final words in her *Time* article: “The phrase ‘parents’ rights’ may have a nice ring to it, but the agenda now afoot in its name should sound alarms for all those who care about the future of public education.

By Kathi Harper, Chair
AAUW California Public Policy School Board Project Committee

AAUW BOOKMARKERS

January Book: **Democracy Awakening**, by Heather Cox Richardson **Meeting:** January 16, 2:00 p.m. at 4561 Eastside Calpella Road, Ukiah, for directions call: 707 228-6143

NEXT BOARD MEETING

The next Board meeting will be on January 23 beginning at 10:00 a..m. in Norma's house.

MASCOT

Meet Allie Bay—AAUW People's Choice Mascot 2023-2024



Allie Bay – Official Mascot 2024

Allie Bay was the People's Choice Mascot as she had the largest number of people voting for her.