

Grapevine



Volume 47, Number 2

October 2015

Celebrating the Founding of the Branch 75 Years Ago

Los Gatos-Saratoga AAUW: The 1940s

In April 1941 three women met to discuss the formation of a Los Gatos Branch of the American Association of University Women (AAUW): **Mrs William (Margaret) Oliver** (*California Membership Chair*) and **Mrs. Frank (Marjory) Anderson** (*California Social Studies Chair*) from the Santa Cruz Branch and **Miss Ruth Beckwith** of Los Gatos.

Miss Beckwith, who was preparing her resignation from the San Jose Branch because she was growing tired of trips to its meetings, suggested the inclusion of Saratoga since either town seemed too small for individual branches. Armed with a list of 75 university graduate names, Miss Beckwith drove them winding their way about the hills hunting addresses.

Steps were taken to organize the Los Gatos-Saratoga "chapter" of AAUW at a May 17 lunch at Il Campo Bello, presided over by **Mrs. James**



T. Richards of Saratoga and sponsored by the San Jose Branch. Thirty-five women responded to the invitation to the lunch. San Jose President **Mrs. John Dowdle**, who planned the program, several San Jose Board members and Mrs. Oliver all spoke persuasively and efficiently of the virtue of belonging to AAUW. On June 7, 1941, California's 48th branch met to adopt the AAUW constitution and by-laws and to elect officers; there were twenty-one charter members. **Mrs. Clyde (Mabel) Kennedy**, our first President, presided over the

This Article continues on top of page 3.

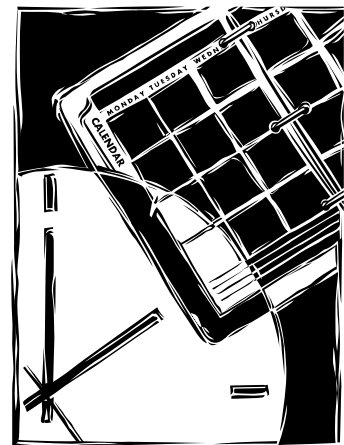
Coming Next Month . . .

November 2015 General Meeting

Save the Date – "Meet Your Elected Officials" will be Saturday, November 7, 2015 from 10:00 am to 12:00 pm at Wesley Manor.

The retirement home tower at Winchester and Hamilton Ave (1655 Winchester Blvd, Campbell). Public parking is available behind the Methodist church next door. (Do not park in the numbered places at Wesley Manor because they are private residential spots).

Event is co-sponsored with the League of Women Voters.





Letter from the Leadership Team



Why Should I Join a Local Branch of AAUW?

In the September 2015 *Grapevine* we summarized some of the work that AAUW does at the national level: Education funding and awards, research, public policy and Legal Advocacy. AAUW also has 1,000 local branches or groups of AAUW members working together for the greater good of women and girls in communities across the United States, Guam, and Puerto Rico.

Branch members enjoy networking at the local level, serving in local and state leadership roles, sponsoring community action projects, and lobbying on AAUW priority issues in their communities. If you enjoy this level of activism and engagement, then branch membership is the right choice for you! If you want to meet interesting and involved people, then branch membership is also the right choice for you!

Building a STEM Pipeline for Girls and Women

Our society tells girls and women that they don't belong in science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) fields. As early as first grade, children have already developed a sense of gender identity, and many have developed an unconscious bias associating boys with math. At almost every step of the STEM education ladder, we see girls walk away. By seventh grade, many girls are ambivalent about these fields, and by the end of high school, fewer girls than boys plan to pursue STEM in college.

The **Tech Trek** program was designed to show girls who have finished seventh grade that there

are many options and opportunities for them and a wide range of careers which require a background in STEM. The Tech Trek campers come back from their week at Stanford with new excitement about these fields of study and plan to take the courses in high school that will prepare them for college work and ultimate employment in these fields. Our Tech Trek Committee works with our middle schools to nominate candidates, interview the girls, and select our campers.

Our **Local Scholarships** are given to women from West Valley College who are transferring to a four-year college or university to pursue a degree in any of the STEM areas. Many recipients had not thought about majoring in STEM until they met a particularly influential teacher at the community college who encouraged them and inspired them. They appreciate the financial and moral support they get from AAUW. Our Local Scholarship Committee makes sure the application is available to interested applicants, reviews the applications, and selects the recipients.

Helping Women in Crisis

Even here in Silicon Valley there are homeless women and children. Several agencies work with these women to help them find employment, housing and critical social services so that they can become self-supporting. Our **Committee on Homeless Women and Children** provides both financial support to these agencies and direct assistance to the women with an



annual holiday party and gift giving, and by providing lunch once a month at the Women's Gathering Place.

Enjoying Similar Interests

AAUW members like getting together socially. Some share their interest in reading or playing bridge, others go walking or hiking, still others simply go out to lunch. It's an easy way to meet people who like to do the things YOU like to do! Are you interested in world affairs? Come see what Great Decisions is about. Are you interested in world travel? Try our "Armchair Adventures" which don't require a passport or airline ticket.

Not sure about joining the Los Gatos-Saratoga branch of AAUW? You are welcome to "sample" our small groups and see if they are right for you.

For membership forms and more information, contact Virginia Turner at (408) 866-4234 or by email at vturner@sbcglobal.net or visit our branch website www.aauw-lgs.org.

–Virginia Turner
Membership Chair

Los Gatos-Saratoga AAUW: The 1940s

This article continues from the front page.

first regular meeting on October 9, 1941, and **Mrs. Marjorie Robertson** reviewed a trip to Mexican prehistoric ruins. There were 31 members who paid an initiation fee of \$1.00 and annual dues of \$3.00.

Amy Coe, Welfare Committee Chairman, interviewed town and county officials to find out the needs and problems of Saratoga and Los Gatos. The eight interests were

1. The plight of the farmer
2. Liquor control
3. Nutrition
4. Degrading literature in popular magazines and movies
5. Cooperatives
6. Homes for girls
7. Migrants in our locality
8. Race problems in our neighborhoods and labor problems.

The Branch sold Foothill cookbooks for the national Fellowship Fund. **Mrs. G. M. Hunter** was the Chairman for the first Fellowship tea, and a donation of \$15 went to the fund as a result. The Fellowship Fund was investing in defense bonds.

The Branch grew and name tags were instituted so that members could become acquainted. We held

meetings at the Foothill Club, Little Village, Los Gatos History Club, Saratoga Federated Church, or in private homes. We were the first community organization to meet at Villa Montalvo; child care was provided upstairs.

We collected school supplies for China and Ethiopia, sent eighteen boxes of clothing to women in Europe and magazines to a college in Japan. The Branch had a circulating library, a book review section, a political study group, and a Recent Grads group. Another group was formed to read current plays for enjoyment, not merely for study. Fundraising efforts included a fashion show, toy sales, raffles, bake sales, playing card sales, magazine subscriptions, teas and a carnival.

In 1948, at the San Francisco Mark Hopkins Hotel twelve members and four delegates from our Branch attended the 27th California State Annual Convention. The Los Gatos-Saratoga Branch ranked second in membership increase statewide: 67% while San Fernando had 100% increase. At the end of the 1940's the Branch had 144 very active and involved members.

Memories of the 1940s

- California population in 1940 – 6.9 million
- World War II
- The Atomic Bomb
- United Nations
- The Baby Boom
- Penicillin
- Average cost of new home – \$4,075
- Gallon of gasoline – 12 cents
- Tupperware introduced
- **Bestselling books:**
Dr. Spock – The Common Sense Book of Baby and Child Care
The Diary of Anne Frank
Nineteen Eighty-Four
- **Oscar-winning movies:**
"Casablanca," "Citizen Kane," and "All the King's Men"
- **On Broadway:** "Mister Roberts," and "Death of a Salesman"
- **Popular songs:** "White Christmas," and "That Old Black Magic"



Stay Informed Sign up for Public Policy Newsletter

Ladies, this is a no-brainer! Give me your email, and I will send you the occasional AAUW Public Policy update!

No meetings, just good information to stay informed. Send your email to: lhagelin1@gmail.com

Know what is going on that affects women and girls!

–Linda Hagelin, Public Policy Chair

Brush Up Your Foreign Policy Knowledge

Sign up for Great Decisions 2016

The Foreign Policy Association (FPA) has just released its list of study topics for the Great Decisions 2016 program. **Study Topics:**

- Middle East
- The Rise of ISIS
- The Future of Kurdistan
- Migration
- The Koreas
- The United Nations
- Climate Change
- Cuba and the U.S.



Take Note – Deadline for signing up has changed from past years. **This year, the deadline to sign up is November 1, 2015.**

Locally the program is sponsored by the League of Women Voters of Southwest Santa Clara Valley (LWV), The American Association of University Women Los Gatos-Saratoga Branch (AAUW), the Saratoga Area Senior Coordinating Council (SASCC) and the Saratoga Retirement Community (SRC).

In 2015, the local program began with over 60 people participating in two separate groups. The local 2016 Great Decisions Program is expected to function with two groups just as it did in 2015. *The 2016 regular sessions, which begin for both Group One and Group Two on February 4, 2016.*

The registration fee for Great Decisions 2016 will be \$35 for an individual and \$45 for a couple sharing a workbook. Everyone desiring to participate is urged to sign up as soon as possible. **This year, the deadline to sign up is November 1, 2015.**

Checks should be made out to Rosalie Price and mailed to her at 14500 Fruitvale Ave, Cottage #6110, Saratoga, CA 95070. **It's important for those wanting to participate in Group One to write "Group One" on their checks.** Also, please put your phone number on your check. *(So that we can contact you regarding the possible renovation at the SASCC.)*

For questions, please contact program coordinators Terry Zaccone at (408) 257-6575 or Rosalie Price at (408) 741-7670.

How the Study Sessions Work!

Both **Group One and Two** will hold their first study session on Thursday, February 4, 2016.

Information About Group One –

Group One is expecting to enroll about forty members. As in past years, *Group One* will meet from 1:00 to 3:00 pm on the first and third Thursday of each month beginning on February 4, 2016. **Note** – course materials will be distributed to *Group One* at a planning session beginning at 1:00 pm on January 28, 2016 in the SASCC Oak Room.

As in past years each of the *Group One* sessions is scheduled to begin in the SASCC's Oak Room, which is a modular classroom. That initial assembly is for viewing a DVD, provided by the FPA, pertaining to each session's scheduled topic. Half of *Group One* then adjourns to the Magnolia room. Separating into the two sub-groups facilitates greater individual participation in discussions.

Note Possible Renovation – the Saratoga Senior Center is planning some renovation that may involve the Magnolia and Oak rooms, but there are no firm dates on this activity. You will be contacted if the meeting place changes. *For now, it's important for you to order your books.*

Information About Group Two –

Group Two, which meets in the Saratoga Retirement Community's Barnes Hall, is expected to attract about 20 participants and will function in 2016 as it did in 2015. *Group Two's* participants will hold their first study session at 2:00 pm in the SRC's Barnes Hall beginning on February 4, 2016.



Update on Committee on Homeless Women & Children

The Georgia Travis Center, named in honor of the Committee on Homeless Women & Children's founder, has permanently closed after serving homeless women and children for many years.

Georgia Travis, who was trained as a social worker, taught at San Diego State University. After her retirement she moved to this area and became a driving force in providing services for homeless women and children in Santa Clara County. She was so persuasive in her efforts to serve this community that she was honored by having the daytime drop-in center for homeless children and women named after her. She started our Homeless Committee and we continue her legacy.

New Support Effort

It was a sad day when the Georgia Travis Center closed, but we are putting our energy and resources behind a fledgling organization, *The Women's Gathering Place*. WGP is a collaborative effort of First Presbyterian Church and caring women in the greater San Jose community. WGP currently opens its doors two days a week from 12:00 to 4:00 pm. Our Homeless Committee has purchased a refrigerator and a dishwasher for the group. We also provide the women a hearty meal one day a month which we share with them, offering friendship and support.

This is a very easy and satisfying way to become involved with the

Homeless Committee and to have a direct impact on the lives of homeless women. *Would you be able occasionally to bring a salad, dessert, bread, or pot of soup for 25 women?* You can prepare it yourself or buy it. If you would like to help with a lunch, email, "WGP Hot Lunch" coordinator, Joyce Sogg at joycelawyer@verizon.net

Supporting a Woman in Afghanistan

But *Women's Gathering Place* is not the only thing we do. We recently "adopted" a woman in the *Woman for Woman* program. This program supports women from around the world who have been the victims in of war in their home country. Our adoptee lives in Afghanistan. We send her a monthly stipend which she uses for education and basic survival necessities; food, clean water, medicine. As important as the money is, perhaps more important is the emotional support we provide our adoptee by establishing a personal relationship through letters. Our adoptee will have that emotional support from many of our committee members who are writing her. You, too, can become a pen pal.

For further information about the Committee, please contact chair: Nancy Anderson, 408-867-4383 or Dander2567@aol.com

Small Things Make a Big Difference to Women in Need

You know all those little bottles of shampoo, lotion, soap, and conditioner that you get at hotels. You don't use them and you hate to throw them away, so they pile up in the back of some drawer. They are perfect for homeless women, so we are happy to relieve you of them for our friends at WGP. We also collect clothes, backpacks, and totes.

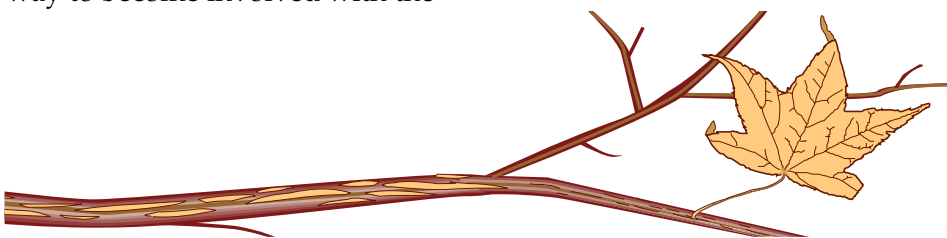
If you have items to donate, please contact Nancy Anderson at (408) 867-4383.

Branch Directory Mailed to You

All directories not pick up were mailed. Please check your entry and send any additions, changes, and corrections to: Louise Quenon, Database Manager, (408) 867-0698; lquenon@comcast.net

Help the branch keep in contact with you by keeping your information current and up-to-date. If you move or change your email or telephone, let us know.

Contact Gail Pedersen, Directory editor, if you did not get your directory (408) 377-6895; gail_pedersen@yahoo.com



Support Global Artisans in Ten Thousand Villages

Holiday Gifts, Unique Jewelry & Accessories

The 27th Annual International Gift Faire

When: October 16, 2015 from 9:00 am – 8:00 pm; and October 17, 2015 from 9:00 am – 6:00 pm

Where: The Lincoln Glen Church Fellowship Hall (2700 Booksin Ave, San Jose)

Website: internationalgiftfaire.com

AAUW member **Marilyn Fuller** invites you to attend the 27th Annual International Gift Faire. The Gift Faire is the effort of over 100 local volunteers to promote fair trade in our area. Our partner is Ten Thousand Villages (tenthousandvillages.com), which is an exceptional source for unique handmade gifts, jewelry, home decor, art and sculpture, textiles,

serve ware and personal accessories representing the diverse cultures of artisans in Asia, Africa, Latin America and the Middle East. One of the world's largest fair trade organizations and a founding member of the *World Fair Trade Organization (WFTO)*, this non-profit company strives to improve the livelihood of tens of thousands of disadvantaged artisans in 38 countries. Ten Thousand Villages accomplishes this by establishing a sustainable market for handmade products in North America, and building long term buying relationships in places where skilled artisan partners lack opportunities for stable income.

Product sales help pay for food, education, healthcare and housing for artisans who would otherwise

be unemployed or underemployed. Many of the artisans are women who are able to send their daughters to school because they are paid a fair price for their work.

All proceeds from the **International Gift Faire** are returned to Ten Thousand Villages which in turn can purchase more crafts from an increasing number of artisans. The **International Gift Faire** is the largest sale of its kind in the U.S. The community is cordially invited to participate in this exciting endeavor as a shopper and/or as a volunteer.

Marilyn Fuller is in charge of volunteers. If you would like to volunteer, you can reach her at mdfuller1@aol.com or use the SignUpGenius link on our site: <http://internationalgiftfaire.com/>

Ready – Set – Shop for Teens!

It's getting to be that time of year when those feelings of good will starts to blossom. Turn that feeling into action and think **Gift for Teens**. The **Gifts for Teens** committee and community volunteers will fill 1,300 gift bags this year but we are lacking some favorite teen items. *Do you knit or know someone who does?* 300 girls hand-knitted or purchased scarfs are needed to help complete the girl's gift bags.

Donations of unused (*non expired*) cosmetics, new cosmetics, new playing cards, store gift cards, fast food gift cards, small games, Nerf balls, toiletries and dental hygiene products are welcome as well. Any amount of cash donations is also gratefully accepted.

Leave donated items at AAUW San Jose Headquarters in the parlor closet. Please include donor's name and full address. Remember, if you do shop Amazon, log onto smile.amazon.com and choose **Gifts for Teens** as your charity. (*There is no cost to you and Amazon gives a percentage to Gifts for Teens*).



Questions – contact Elaine Benoit@gifts4teens.org.
–Jan Giroux, **Gifts for Teens**, jgiroux603@aol.com

October 2015 AAUW Calendar

- 1 Thursday **Trail Clean-Up for Hikes and Walks** on AAUW adopted trail + back by noon hike + coffee or lunch. Meet promptly 9:00 am at Los Gatos "Free Parking – Northside Lot" behind Starbucks. Questions? Jane Bishop, (408) 356-7796; Kay Duffy, (408) 867-0508. **Seeking New Hikers!**
- 2 Friday **Armchair Adventures.** Meets at 7:30 pm at The Terraces (800 Blossom Hill Rd, Los Gatos). Join Eric Thompson and his group hike *The Haute Pyrenees*. Eric leads a hiking group of 5 women and 4 men on a 22-day trip in June 2014. They hiked primarily in France's Haute Pyrenees, using 4 towns as staging areas. They also day hiked in Andorra, the tiny principality squeezed between France and Spain, using Andorra La Vella as their staging town. Chair: JoAn Lambert, (408) 867-6237. **Open to the public!**
- 5 Monday **Board Meeting.** Meets 3:00 pm (*new time*) in the Community Room at the Saratoga Fire Station (corner of Saratoga Ave & Saratoga/Los Gatos Rd).
- 6 Tuesday **Conversations in Spanish.** Meets 1:00-2:30 pm (*new time*) at Nancy Anderson's home (13561 Lomond Ct., Saratoga). RSVP to Nancy Anderson, (408) 867-4383. Chair: Sharon Kelkenberg, (650) 962-1656. **Spanish speakers welcome!**
- 8 Thursday **Scenic Hikes and Walks: The Natural Presidio.** Our annual San Francisco hike (5-7 miles) will be to the new Golden Gate Overlook (*spectacular views*) and restored natural areas at Land's End. Bring lunch. Meet promptly! 9:00 am in Saratoga at Argonaut Center (*way-out front of CVS*). Questions? Jane Bishop, (408) 356-7796; Kay Duffy, (408) 867-0508. **Seeking New Hikers!**
- 13 Tuesday **Committee for Homeless Women and Children.** Meets at 7:00 pm at the home of Nancy Anderson (13561 Lomond Ct, Saratoga). RSVP to Chair Nancy, (408) 867-4383. **All interested members can find out what we do!**
- 14 Wednesday **Let's Do Lunch.** Meets at 12:30 pm at *Caper's* (1710 West Campbell Ave, Campbell). RSVP to Audrey Lynch, (408) 725-1898. Chair: Joanna Yates, (408) 395-2950. **Dine with us!**
- 16 Friday **AM Book Review.** Meets at 9:30 am. Bring a book (*good or bad*) to talk about. Contact Margaret Bard, (408) 377-6625 or margaretbard@gmail.com, for meeting location. **Come and find your next great read!**
- 20 Tuesday **PM Book Group.** Meets 7:30 pm at Saratoga Retirement Community (14500 Fruitvale Ave, Saratoga). Book: "*A Fighting Chance*" by Elizabeth Warren. Reviewed: Margaret McCartney. RSVP to Marilyn Lenormand, (408) 741-7820. Chair: Marlene Lamb, (408) 497-1555.
- 22 Thursday **Back-by-Noon Hike.** Meets promptly at 9:00 am in Los Gatos "Free Parking – Northside Lot" behind Starbucks. Exercise 5 miles on nearby trails + coffee or lunch. Questions? Jane Bishop, (408) 356-7796; Kay Duffy, (408) 867-0508. **New Hikers Welcome!**
- 27 Tuesday **Conversations in Spanish.** Meets 1:00-2:30 pm (*new time*) at Nancy Anderson's home (13561 Lomond Ct., Saratoga). RSVP to Nancy Anderson, (408) 867-4383. Chair: Sharon Kelkenberg, (650) 962-1656. **Spanish speakers welcome!**
- 27 Tuesday **Film Buffs.** Meets at 1:30 pm at the home of Barbara Lea (121 Strathmore Pl, Los Gatos). RSVP to Barbara, (408) 354-2287. Chair: Mary Ellen Madden, (408) 264-4488. **Open to all members!**

November 2015

- 2 Monday **Board Meeting.** Meets 3:00 pm (*new time*) in the Community Room at the Saratoga Fire Station (corner of Saratoga Ave & Saratoga/Los Gatos Rd.)
- 3 Tuesday **Conversations in Spanish.** Meets 1:00-2:30 pm (*new time*) at Nancy Anderson's home (13561 Lomond Ct., Saratoga). RSVP to Nancy Anderson, (408) 867-4383. Chair: Sharon Kelkenberg, (650) 962-1656. **Spanish speakers welcome!**
- 6 Friday **Armchair Adventures.** Meets at 7:30 pm at The Terraces (800 Blossom Hill Rd, Los Gatos). **Program: Burning Man.** Gary Marcus tells us about Burning Man, a week-long annual event that began in San Francisco in 1986 and has migrated to the Black Rock Desert in northern Nevada. (*Beginning the last Monday in August and is described as an experiment in community, art, radical self-expression, and radical self-reliance*). Marcus will focus on the art, self-discovery, education, and theater that takes place at the festival. Chair: JoAn Lambert, (408) 867-6237. **Open to the public!**

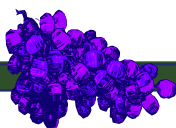


October 2015

Los Gatos-Saratoga Branch
American Association of University Women
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Try Something New

This Month – Sign Up for Great Decisions 2015 (*see page 4*); Read one of the PM Books (*insert side A*); Join one of the Interest Groups you have never attended (*see the Calendar on page 7*).

Know of a Member in Need of a Little Sunshine!

Do you know anyone who is ill or in need of support? Did a member receive recognition? Please send her information to Lavonne Marafino, our new Sunshine Chair.

Contact Lavonne, (408) 867-2634; lnmarafino@att.net



AAUW-Los Gatos-Saratoga Branch
Proposed Budget 2015-2016

(Corrected)

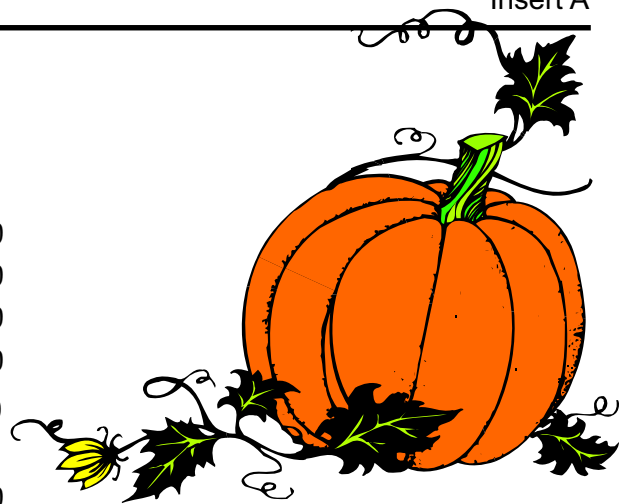
Income

Branch Dues (130 paid members)	2,600.00
Directory Ads	400.00
Miscellaneous Income (donations)	1,200.00
Newsletter print and mail (35)	350.00
Total Income	\$ 4,550.00

Expense

Bank Fees	60.00
Board Meeting Room Fee (9 mo. X \$20)	180.00
Branch supplies	250.00
CA Secretary of State Filing Fee (biannual expense)	20.00
Convention – State	300.00
Directory Mailing – First Class	110.00
Directory Printing	280.00
General Meeting Programs	150.00
General Meeting Beverages	150.00
Historian Expenses	15.00
Insurance CA AAUW	675.00
Interbranch Council Dues	20.00
Leadership Training	60.00
Meeting Facility Rental / Donation	75.00
Membership Recruitment/Renewal	400.00
Newsletter Postage (Grapevine)	100.00
Newsletter Production (Grapevine)	800.00
President Expenses	75.00
Sunshine Committee Expenses	15.00
Treasurer Expenses	25.00
Web Master Fees	500.00
Web Site	120.00
Installment Supplies (New Board)	20.00
Total Expenses	\$ 4,400.00
Net Income/(Loss)	150.00

Prepared by Louise Quenon, Finance VP, July 31, 2015



The Reads for PM Book Group!

7:30 pm, Saratoga Retirement Community

October's Book

Book: "A Fighting Chance"
 Author: Elizabeth Warren
 Reviewer: Margaret McCartney



Elizabeth Warren

November's Book

Book: "Crossing to Safety"
 Author: Wallace Stegner
 Reviewer: Pauline Berkowitz



Wallace Stegner



Can You Pass Our Social Security Quiz?

For 80 years, Social Security has been our nation's most successful anti-poverty program. Yet few people realize the crucial role that the program plays for women. **Test your knowledge!** Guess whether each statement below is true or false, and then learn the facts.

True or False

1. Nearly 60 percent of people receiving Social Security benefits are women.

True. Women face greater retirement insecurity than men do for a number of reasons. Women do not spend as much time in the workforce, have less access to private savings, and need more resources to support a longer lifespan.

2. Social Security provides a vital source of income for both divorced and unmarried women.

True. Divorced women, who historically face the highest poverty rates among all elderly U.S. women, receive Social Security benefits either as retired workers themselves, as divorced spouses, or as surviving divorced spouses. Without Social Security, single women who work in low-wage positions would have to save 25 percent of their earnings starting from their first day of work to adequately provide for retirement.

3. Social Security is especially critical to women because of the gender pay gap.

True. Because women are typically paid less than men, women tend to have lower savings and lower participation rates in 401(k) plans. Women benefit from Social Security's formula, which replaces a larger proportion of past wages for lower-earning workers.

4. Social Security is exclusively a retirement program.

False. Only half of all Social Security recipients get benefits solely as retired workers. In addition to divorced spouses, widows, and spouses, children and people with disabilities receive vital assistance from Social Security. In fact, the program provides more income to families with children than welfare does.

5. Social Security protects more than 9 out of 10 American workers and their families in the event of a life-changing disability or illness.

True. About 8.8 million workers with disabilities receive Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI), including almost 2 million children. SSDI is the main or only source of income for the vast majority of beneficiaries.



Women still bear a disproportionate burden of caregiving responsibilities. Photo courtesy of C.K. Koay via Flickr.

6. Although Social Security needs reform, the program isn't broken beyond repair.

True. The most recent Social Security trustees' report shows that Social Security can pay all scheduled benefits through 2034, and the reality is that Social Security is the strongest of the three legs of retirement security for women.

There are lots of myths about Social Security, but the truth is compelling. The program supports millions of older women — more than half of whom would fall into poverty without it. The bottom line is that women can't save money they haven't been paid. Women still bear a disproportionate burden of caregiving responsibilities, which can take them out of the paid workforce to assist children and aging parents. And the gender pay gap means women have lower savings and pension benefits (*if any*), leaving them on an unequal footing in retirement.

Make no mistake, the current Social Security system contains many benefits that must be maintained and strengthened, including full cost-of-living adjustments, guaranteed lifetime benefits, a progressive benefit formula, spousal and widow benefits, and disability and survivor benefits. AAUW believes that it is vital to women's economic security to provide for the long-term solvency of Social Security and to maintain its current guaranteed benefits.

Since AAUW's founding, our members and supporters have spoken out about policies that are important to women and girls. We're grateful for the eight decades of work that Social Security has done to help strengthen economic security for women and their families, and we'll continue to push for improvements for the next eight decades and counting.