

Los Alamos Branch AAUW November 2005

November Branch Program

Cas Mason
Thursday, November 17, 7:30pm
Bethlehem Lutheran Church
2390 North Road

Cas Mason will share her experiences teaching Russian graduate students at an English language camp. She interacted with 64 students from all corners of Russia and worked with them to improve their English abilities as they prepared and presented their scientific research.

Future Branch Programs

In January we will have our annual legislative review forum. This event is held jointly by AAUW and the League of Women Voters.

On Saturday, February 18, 2pm, at Bethlehem Lutheran Church, Kurt Whyte (Helena's son) will present a self defense program. Kurt is the owner of T.A.S.K., Travel and Safety Knowledge, a martial arts and security business.

On Saturday, March 18, 2pm, at El Castillo Retirement Center, 250 E. Alameda, we will be joining the Santa Fe and Las Vegas branches in Santa Fe for a special Educational Foundation fund raiser. Pat Jonietz will be presenting a dramatic reading, "Lessons I Learned Growing up in the 50s!" The reading will feature her favorite *teachers*: **Shirley Jackson, Jean Collins Kerr, Anne Morrow Lindberg, Phyllis McGinley and Annie Dillard**. The cost will be \$10, and Rosmarie Frederickson will be arranging carpools.

The council is planning an April meeting related to New Mexico history.

Our spring tea will be held on a Friday May 5 at the Unitarian Church.

Details on these programs will be appear in future Newsletters. Be sure to mark the dates on your calendars. There will be no general meeting in December.

Denise George and Wendee Brunish as representatives of AAUW and LAWIS (Los Alamos Women in Science) were asked to put together a round table discussion for visiting Russian professional women. Other participating branch members were Susan Oldham and Alahna Weller. The Russian visitors included a newspaper editor, the Sarov deputy mayor, a lawyer (trained as a mathematician) and a scientist. They were very interested in hearing how Los Alamos women combine career and family. We found that these concerns are universal and our contemporaries from Sarov have much in common with us. The discrimination that women in Russian face is another concern, and they were very interested in learning how organizations such as AAUW and LAWIS provide support.

Branch News

AAUW Non-Fiction Book Group:

The October meeting was rescheduled due to Pat Mendius's surgery. It will be held on November 14, 7:30pm at Carroll Thomas's, 115 La Senda. The book is *Botany of Desire*. Pat Mendius is the discussion leader.

The World Cultures through Foods:

The first meal will feature soul food and is scheduled for December 4, 6:00pm at Melissa Lamoreaux's, 5153 Quemazon. The contact is Marilyn Minshall. (672-3499).

Book Group:

The next meeting will be November 7, 7:30pm at Doris Ludwig's, 79 Mesa Verde. The book is *Blessings*, by Anna Quindlan. Susan Oldham is the discussion leader.

The December meeting has been moved to Denise George's.

Helena Whyte is organizing an evening *Great Decisions Group* for AAUW members. Please contact her if you are interested in joining the group. (672-9153, helanaw@lanl.gov)

The coordinating council is looking for a **public policy chair**. This position would primarily involve coordinating voter education activities with state AAUW and our other New Mexico branches. Let anyone on the council know if this is a job that appeals to you.

Los Alamos Women in Science are beginning to plan for the annual Expanding Your Horizons Technical Career Workshops for 8th-10th grade girls, held every March. In the past AAUW has helped with phone calls to schools, but if any AAUW members would like to be more involved with the planning, contact Tinka Gammel (jtg@lanl.gov). These girls are bright and personable and the experience of helping at the conference is very rewarding. Opportunities exist for helping that day as an assistant to a workshop presenter among other tasks.

LAWIS graciously invites us to attend their noon Lunch-Time Talks:

Tuesday, 15, Nov 2005, 12:00 noon Bradbury Science Museum Auditorium, Joyce Guzik, X-2, LANL, *Solar Abundances and Helioseismology*.

Wednesday, 7 December 2005, 12:00 noon, Bradbury Science Museum Auditorium, Claudia Lewis, EES-9, LANL, *The Pajarito Fault Zone*.

State News

The state has received a public policy impact grant from National. The purpose is to increase visibility of AAUW and the branch has decided to apply for a portion of the this grant to help fund the January legislative preview meeting.

Biography of the Month:

"The more education a woman has, the wider the gap between men's and women's earnings for the same work."

"The power I exert on the court depends on the power of my arguments, not on my gender."

"It is difficult to discern a serious threat to religious liberty from a room of silent, thoughtful schoolchildren."

Sandra Day O'Connor is the first woman and the 102nd person to sit on the Supreme Court of the United States. Born in El Paso, Texas in 1930, she spent her early childhood on the sprawling family ranch in Southeastern Arizona.

Sandra Day majored in economics at Stanford University and graduated with high honors. It was during her work as editor on the Stanford Law Review that she fellow law student John Jay O'Connor III. In 1952 she graduated from law school, again with honors, and soon thereafter married John O'Connor. Despite her excellent scholastic record, it was difficult for women to find positions as lawyers. Their first child, Scott, was born in 1957. Two more sons joined the family in 1960 and 1962. In 1965, Sandra Day O'Connor went to work on a part-time basis for the Arizona attorney general's office. In 1969 she was appointed to the state

Senate and was subsequently re-elected as a Republican to that position. In 1973 Sandra Day O'Connor was the first woman to serve as the majority leader of a state Senate. Her voting record ranged from moderate to conservative. She favored limiting government spending, restoring the death penalty, and some selected feminist issues. Specifically, she voted for the Equal Rights Amendment and supported revisions in women's protective legislation (such as the maximum hours women were allowed to work), and favored enhanced property rights for women who owned property jointly with their husbands. She also seemed to favor women's right to abortion.

In 1974 Sandra Day O'Connor was elected to a position of trial judge for Maricopa County and 5 years later was appointed by then Governor Bruce Babbitt to the Court of Appeals. Initially, she was regarded as competent but undistinguished. The following summer, however, she attended a judicial conference in England with Chief Justice Warren Burger. She gained national attention in legal circles when in January, 1981, she participated in a program on federalism and the state courts, in which she expressed her judicial philosophy. She turned her remarks into an article in the *William and Mary Law Review*. She thought that if state courts had already given a matter full and fair treatment, then federal judges should refuse to intervene or hear appeals.

On July 7, 1981 President Reagan announced that Sandra Day O'Connor was his appointee to fill the vacancy on the Supreme Court left by Associate Justice Potter Stewart's retirement. He was determined to follow through on his commitment to include women in high places of authority and importance. Sandra was a relative unknown, having spent most of her life in the West and having never served in the federal judicial system. Conservatives were not particularly happy with his choice, since she had taken a rather moderate position on abortion in the past.

During O'Connor's first year on the Court, she made it clear that she was a conservative. She joined conservatives Burger and Rehnquist on sixty-two out of eight-four opinions and opposed those two conservative allies only five times. She watched out for and

defended states' rights and acted to curb excessive appeals. On five-to-four split decisions, she joined the majority in voiding the death sentence for a sixteen-year-old killer, supported a procedure making the challenge of public money to parochial schools more difficult, upheld a state law which said that aliens could not work as parole officers, narrowed the double-jeopardy concept to make retrials easier, and supported affirmative action hiring under Title IX. She was rarely accused of creatively reading into a law what was not explicitly there.

During her second year on the Supreme Court, feminist enthusiasm for O'Connor cooled. She did split with her conservative allies in eliminating pension plans that failed to offer women equity with men, but she disappointed feminists when she refused to allow her pension-plan decision to become retroactive. She also disappointed pro-choice advocates when she supported the minority opinion to uphold a series of local laws curbing women's access to abortion.

She received the most attention, however, for a case in 1989, *Webster vs. Reproductive Health Services* which restricted access to abortions in certain cases. Justice O'Connor was the deciding vote. The 5 to 4 decision upheld the law giving states the right to make specific abortion decisions. Conservatives had hoped that her swing vote in this case would lead to further restrictions on abortions and a repeal of the famous *Roe Vs. Wade*.

During her legal career, Sandra Day O'Connor was considered to be a tough conservative, but less so when it comes to women's rights and children. O'Connor has made it clear that she believes a court's role is to interpret and not to legislate. As the first woman on the Supreme Court, Sandra Day O'Connor has acted much as any conservative male justice might have done. It is difficult to attribute any aspect of her judicial record to her being female. Yet, if she had not been a woman, she probably would not have been appointed to the Court. Her judicial experience simply was not that extensive or outstanding, yet she was undeniably competent, and her appeal was bolstered by political connections and a personal friendship with Justice Rehnquist. Timing was also a

factor. The women's movement was prominent enough to make an issue out of the fact that no woman had ever before served on the Court, and Reagan needed a feminist issue in 1980. If her decisions have not always been to the liking of feminists, she

has in other ways been an excellent role model for women.

Sources:

http://www.galegroup.com/free_resources/whm/bio/oconnor_s.htm

<http://phoenix.about.com/cs/famous/a/oconnor.htm>

Branch Calendar

Nov	7	Book Group, Doris Lodwig, 79 Mesa Verde, 7:30pm, <i>Blessings</i>
Nov	14	Non-fiction book group, <i>Botany of Desire</i> , Caroll Thomas, 115 La Senda, 7:30pm
Nov	17	General Meeting, Cas Mason on teaching in Russia, Bethlehem Lutheran, 7:30 pm
Dec	4	World Culture through Food, soul food, Melissa Lamoureaux, 6pm, 5153 Quemazon
Dec	5	Book Group, Denise George, 411 Cheryl, <i>Marrying Mozart</i> , 7:30pm
Dec	8	Council Meeting, Pat Mendius's, 124 Rover, 7:15pm

Coordinating Council for 2004-2005

Gloria Cordova	Facilitator
Rosmarie Frederickson	Treasurer
Bev Cooper	Secretary
Angela Coop	Membership
Pat Mendius	Nominating chair
Denise George	Newsletter
Marilyn Minshall	Historian/International Relations
Helena Whyte	Publicity
Natalie Markin	EF/LAF

\$\$\$\$Reminder \$\$\$\$

The AAUW Educational Foundation--the world's largest source of funding exclusively for graduate women--supports aspiring scholars around the globe, teachers and activists in local communities, women at critical stages of their careers, and those pursuing professions where women are underrepresented. If you have not made a donation this year consider filling out this donation form and mail it along with your check to:

Rosmarie Frederickson
1372 47th Street.

Name _____

Educational Foundation Donation for 2005 _____