



A Branch Sampler

The Omicron variant has us confined to our homes again. Your council is optimistically planning for in-person meetings once this peak is past. Although we are not able to meet as a large group this month, there are many AAUW Los Alamos study groups meeting via Zoom. We are inviting our members to try out one or more of our study groups. We will send out links in advance of each study group meeting to the entire branch membership.

If you've always wondered what the Great Decision group is all about, here is your chance to find out; no requirement to read anything beforehand. You are welcome to participate in the discussion or just listen. The same is true for our book group meetings.

Look through the descriptions about each study group session and mark your calendar with ones that interest you.

2022 Los Alamos Schools Science Fair

Karen Henderson was the lead AAUW judge for this year's science fair. Judy Prono, Marilyn Doolen, Denise George and Alahna Weller were on the committee. Judging was virtual and we had the week of January 17 to review projects, after which we individually ranked all 31 elementary level projects. A majority of the judges gave top rankings to the best of show and first place awardees. We then agreed upon the five second place projects. As evidenced by the project titles, creativity as well as hard work and an age-appropriate understanding of the scientific method prevailed.

Best of Show		
PS-235	Strength of Royal icing	\$30.00
First Place(6)		
PS-162	Can you make a penny corrode?	\$20.00
PS-167	Fruit and veggies vs electricity	\$20.00
PS-178	Rusting metal	\$20.00
PS-182	Are you on the right foot (on ice)?	\$20.00
ES-105	What kind of rock am I?	\$20.00
PS-152	Internet blockers	\$20.00
Second Place (5)		
PS-107	Paper absorbing Liquids	\$10.00
PS-113	Light Absorption	\$10.00
ES-99	How do Clouds form	\$10.00
LS-151	How bad is soda for your teeth	\$10.00
LS -136	How does temperature affect Yeast	\$10.00
Total number of awards 12	Total \$ budgeted and awarded	\$200.00

Book Group

The February book is Hamnet by Maggie O'Farrell. The meetings are by Zoom on February 7th at 7 pm (hosted by Denise George) and February 8th at 1 pm (hosted by Rozelle Wright). The reviewer is Ginny White.

“O'Farrell brilliantly turns to historical fiction to confront a parent's worst nightmare: the death of a child. Set in Stratford, England, in the late 16th century, *Hamnet* imagines the emotional, domestic, and artistic repercussions after the world's most famous (though never named) playwright and his wife lose their only son, 11-year-old Hamnet, to the bubonic plague in 1596. Four years later, the boy's father transposes his grief into his masterpiece — titled with a common variant of his son's name — in which the father dies and the son lives to avenge him.

O'Farrell's narratives are rarely straightforwardly chronological. In *Hamnet*, she toggles between two timelines, one beginning on the day the plague first afflicts Hamnet's twin sister Judith, the other circling back to the beginning of their parents' passionate relationship some 15 years earlier.” (NPR review)

The year's schedule is under the **study group** tab of our website at: [2021-2022 Book Group Schedule](#).

If you wish to be added to the book group membership list contact Karin Roberts (505-672-9625, karinroberts875@icloud.com).

Nonfiction Book Group

The February book is The Guarded Gate: Bigotry, Eugenics, and the Law That Kept Two Generations of Jews, Italians and Other European Immigrants Out of America by Daniel Okrent; the meeting will be held via Zoom on February 28th at 7 pm. Denise will host the meeting. Margaret Gibson will review and lead the discussion.

Reading this book was a real eye-opener to me since my father was an “undesirable” immigrant to this country. If you read this book and/or come to the meeting think about when and how your ancestors arrived.

“Today's vehement demands to stop immigrants are neither new nor proportional to their numbers. Immigrants arriving between 2000 and 2010 constituted approximately 3 percent of the United States population, while those arriving between 1900 and 1910 constituted 8.9 percent of the population. The nativist movement, as anti-immigrant campaigns were once called, began a century and a half ago, directed first against the Irish, later against those arriving from southern and eastern Europe. The case against these European immigrants was remarkably similar to today's complaints about those at our gates: They steal jobs from the native-born, they are costly to taxpayers, they don't respect American values, and they are inclined to be criminals....

Okrent's is largely an intellectual history — if we can use that term to describe the shoddy thinking of his subjects — of nativist ideology and ideologues from the mid-19th century to the first comprehensive immigration restriction law of 1924. He explores who these nativist leaders were and how their elite status allowed them to pass off bogus claims as science. Nativist leaders were among the most distinguished men of the country: upper-class, highly educated and Protestant, men who personally had nothing to fear from new immigrants.” (NYT review)

The following meeting will be on April 18th. The book is Code Breaker by Walter Isaacson; Denise George is the reviewer.

Dates have not been decided for The Last Queen by Clive Irving (Angela Coop reviewer) and Braiding Sweetgrass by Robin Wall Kimmerer (Rozelle Wright reviewer).

Great Decisions will hold two meetings this month.

The first topic is **Outer Space** on Feb. 3rd at 1:30pm.

“How should the United States approach the new crowded outer space? The launch of Sputnik 1 in October 1957 marked the beginning of the space era and of the space race between the United States and the Soviet Union. In the 21st century, there are many more participants in space, including countries such as India and China, and commercial companies such as SpaceX. How will the United States fare in a crowded outer space?” *By Eric Berge*

The second is **Drug Policy in Latin America** on Feb. 17th at 1:30.

“The issue of migration to the United States from Latin America has overshadowed the war on drugs, which has been underway for decades with little signs of progress. What are the roots and the bureaucratic logic behind today's dominant drug policies in Latin America? Is it time to reconsider punitive drug policies that disrupt supply chains and punish drug possession?” *By Mónica Serrano*

Great Decisions 2022 meets via Zoom at every other Thursday at 1:30pm. The entire meetings schedule is at: https://losalamos-nm.aauw.net/groups/#Great_Decisions.

Public Policy Update

The NM Legislature started its 30-day session on Jan. 18; it runs until Feb. 17. The AAUW-NM website provides a lot of information on how to follow legislation as it moves through the House and Senate and how to advocate for legislation that AAUW is supporting. Under the Public Policy tab on the state's website, select AAUW-NM Advocacy Team (<https://aauw-nm.aauw.net/publicpolicy/aauw-nm-advocacy-team/>) for information on how to navigate the Legislature's website and on AAUW-NM's public policy priorities. Meredith Machen, our state Public Policy Chair, has put a lot of helpful information at our fingertips. Check it out.

Latest Update from National

On Jan. 12, Gloria Blackwell (CEO), Julia Brown (Exec Bd Chair) and Malinda Gaul (Governance Chair) held a Zoom webinar to update members on AAUW affairs. As 2021 accomplishments, Blackwell mentioned that AAUW had piloted three new programs:

- Money Smart, a financial literacy program for high school girls,
- STEMEd for Girls, six virtual workshops for high school girls and their parents to demystify the world of STEM and shows how accessible STEM fields can be, and
- Social Change Ambassador Certificate, a 7-week virtual learning and networking program focused on promoting diversity, equity, and inclusion in the workplace.

All three programs were conducted back East and are now being evaluated. Blackwell also mentioned that through AAUW's Two-Minute Activist program, more than 68,000 letters were sent to US senators and representatives last year urging support for AAUW public policy priorities.

In other news, Blackwell said that passing the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA) is a public policy priority and AAUW is working with senators on the amendment. She also said that National had contributed to an ESPN documentary on Title IX, in recognition of its 50th anniversary this year. Finally, AAUW is sticking with virtual events given covid challenges and recommends that branches follow city/county/state requirements when deciding between virtual and in-person events.

Malinda Gaul indicated that there will be bylaw amendments to vote on this year and that members will have until Feb. 22 to comment on proposed changes. However, there will be no proposal this year to drop the education requirement for AAUW membership.

Julia Brown noted that the end-of-year funding campaign had been successful, though she did not have a final tally on the amount raised. She also noted that AAUW finances had been stabilized: i.e., National is living within its budget, with no new programs being launched without adequate funding.

Diversity, Equity, Inclusion

One dimension of diversity is the primary category of ethnicity and national origin, an aspect of identity that cannot be changed. When we recognize this category and learn about the contributions made by many, it is an opportunity to be inspired and be respectful as we work together in AAUW.

Representing the Navajo Nation as the youngest member of the Arizona House of Representatives is Jasmine Blackwater Nygren. She graduated from Stanford, has a law degree and passed the Arizona bar exam. She is a champion of education for Native youth and speaks out against voter suppression. She shepherded an Arizona bill, that became law, allowing Native students to wear traditional attire at high school commencements. In her words: "There is definitely a sense that women are becoming stronger with more powerful voices." She is truly a champion, defending Native rights.

Calendar

Feb 3	Great Decisions
Feb 7,8	Book Group
Feb 17	Great Decisions
Feb 28	Nonfiction Book Group

Coordinating Council 2021-2022

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Open	Nominating		