**AAUW Danville-Alamo-Walnut Creek Branch**

**Board Meeting – March 8, 2016**

Liz Williams’ Home, Danville

**Attendance**: Tena Gallagher, Robin Halloran, Carol Highton, Sandy Killoran, Marilyn Lawver, Kathy McKnight, Holly Sauer, Melanie Wade, Liz Williams, and Rita Wustner

**Consent Agenda:** items all approved

**Nominating Committee**: Melanie reported no updates. We still seek a president-elect. Are there suggestions for this key position? Other key positions are filled.

**Garden Tour**: Tena reported that we need 5 head docents. Melanie volunteered. Liz has also agreed to be a head docent. Other volunteers still needed. We have an offer from a new member, Julie, to help with baskets.

**Programs**: The Mar. 12 program about Cuba has only 30 people registered, and this number does not include any board members. In fact, several board members did register at last month’s board meeting.

We need to purchase a projector for program presentations. There is ~ $500 in the budget that could be used for this item with board approval. Holly moved and Carol seconded a motion to purchase a projector for not more than $500. A quick, on-line price check suggested a projector could be purchased for a minimum of $299. We would need to purchase it this week for the Mar. 12th program.

Fliers for the April program are ready. See the website for details.

**Appreciation/Installation**: Robin, Sandy, Norma, Kathy and Liz met to discuss the appreciation party. We need a place that will hold at least 100 participants. Could we call this a social and charge a fee? Could we combine this event with installation. Doing so, hospitality would help the installation committee with food, et al. We would only need a small installation committee. Another suggestion is to invite scholarship recipients to participate at the beginning of the event, leaving them free to leave afterwards. Such a combined event would make financial sense and we could afford to rent a venue and would have more money to do something.

MaryEllen agreed to be the installation officer. We would need a few volunteers to help with the installation. Carol offered her home. Robin suggested consulting with Mary Mix. The proposed date is June 9th, a Thursday as has been our usual day of the week for this event. Last year there was a great deal of food left over. The caterer was quite reasonable, but based on the leftover food, we should order for 20 fewer people. RSVPs become important. Sandy will handle these, again.

The hospitality committee will be able to handle most details. Robin will check this week on the caterer’s availability. Two suggestions for rentals are Pleasanton Rentals and Gagnon’s in Lafayette. Sandy and Robin will check on rentals this week, too.

Further discussion brought forward the suggested order of scholarships, food, and installation. Is there a name we want for this event? What about time? 5-7, or perhaps a bit later, to 8. Holly needs the information for the Newsletter.

**EYH:** Everybody showed up, plus extra volunteers who had not signed up ahead of time. The program was sold out. We do want to find out how many girls attended from within our branch boundaries. Orinda-Lafayette-Moraga plans to hold their own event next year. They have 501c3 status and have applied for a grant.

**Advocate**: Liz acknowledged the excellent quality of this year’s publication noting the changes that have been made. Kathy remarked that the Advocate format has been a winner!

Previously, sheets were 11 x 14 and are now 8 ½ x 11. The cost has risen from 49¢ to 71¢ per sheet. 28# paper has been purchased through Amazon, going from $10.44 to $13 per ream,. Printing averages 7¢ for 1-sided printing, and it costs $12 to mail 10 envelopes/year. Currently, 18 copies are mailed/issue. These are folded for mailing but will fit flat into large envelopes. Holly moved to increase the cost for the mailed Advocate to $25/year to members, and suggested using dues assistance for any members who cannot afford this increase. We can encourage printing the Advocate from e-mail rather than ordering printed copies. This passed unanimously.

There is no editor nor circulation manager identified for next year. MailChimp is much easier to use than Microsoft Publisher, less time consuming to create, and easier to read online than in the printed version.

MailChimp provided stats about usage: 56% of our members opened the Advocate this month. There were no bounces, and no abuse reports (spam) – and noted there was 1 that occurred by accident last month. The top links were Garden Tour volunteers and Cuba Today.

We will have an Advocate for April and for May, but not for June. Rather, June is proposed in a letter format from the Presidents as a thank you for the year, the installation party, and membership renewal. Of course, printed copies would be sent to subscribers. The deadline for April will be Mar. 15.

**General Remarks**: Liz queried why only 56 people purchased tickets for HHT by cash. This seems like a small number, and we noted that many docents did not purchase tickets but visited homes anyway! A debrief was held that ran 2 ½ - 3 hours. Many docents who delivered food visited side by side homes. We need to encourage all members to either purchase a ticket or make a donation to Tech Trek. Only about 12% of members participated.

We need to emphasize the importance of members’ responsibility to contribute to finances, and we need to change the overall perception and attitude towards AAUW. Tena noted that the video emphasizes the importance of advocacy, and Sandy noted that Mary Ellen recruited members from neighborhood groups to be docents. Liz noted that we are not publicizing well enough where funds go, so we could and should show the video at board meetings, neighborhood group meetings, the membership brunch and embed it in the Advocate. One needs to see/hear the information 7 times to reinforce any idea.

Generally, the majority of our branch is older than the board, but many new younger members likely are working and may be too busy to accept active roles or may not have a big network among our membership. Is this one of the reasons many members do not RSVP for events until the last minute? Perhaps we could provide a preview of upcoming events at the end of each program. Or possibly we could give a brief presentation at the beginning of each program to do the same thing. We might wish to note that, if the organization does not thrive, special interest groups will disappear, too.

Other branches require a two-year commitment for positions. We have a two-year maximum except for the treasurer. Could we invite some members who have expressed interest in accounting to shadow Marilyn to learn the job?

**Goals:** Liz and Kathy highlighted our goals for this year. Inclusion, specifically thanking people for participation in events, can be difficult. Should be set aside 15 minutes at a board meeting to set more realistic goals? Yet, manageable goals were set this year, and for the most part have been accomplished. Julie would be interested in an appointed position.

**Website**: updates continue to be needed. As an example, Hospitality received a message to update an area on the website. They should contact MaryEllen to confirm the status of the change. We could use additional people to update the website next year.

**Tech Trek**: The names of the scholarship recipients will be announced at next month’s meeting. Rita notes that Tech Trek recipients do not need to be approved by the board, per Policies and Procedures. San Francisco AAUW has scholarships, and as per Joan Reynolds, the retired teachers’ association also has scholarships. Rita reminds us that the board does not need to approve scholarship recipients as currently state in the Policies and Procedures.

**Next Meeting:** to be held at Robin’s home.