

[View this email in your browser](#)



**Communities include:
Lake Oswego, Oregon City,
Sherwood, Tigard, Tualatin,
West Linn, Wilsonville,
and more**



Newsletter

Volume 50, Number 4

December 2024



Prez Sez

Holiday Traditions Part II – Winter Solstice



Astronomically, winter solstice marks the end of fall and the beginning of winter. In the Northern Hemisphere, this occurs in December, and in the Southern Hemisphere, it occurs in June. Pagan winter solstice traditions were created to celebrate the “birth of the sun.” Some favorite winter solstice traditions are decorating a live outdoor tree with edible ornaments for the local birds and animals – peanut butter pinecone seed ornaments, making lanterns – adding light to the darkest day, and curling up with a child or grandchild to read *The Shortest Day* by Susan Cooper.

If you stand outside at noon and look at your shadow, it will be the longest shadow cast the entire year, because the North Pole is tilted away from the sun. Many ancient civilizations built monuments to celebrate the winter solstice – Newgrange in Ireland (3200BCE), the Nasca Lines in Peru – (1-700 CE), the temple of Karnak in Egypt (2000 BCE). There are also numerous winter solstice celebrations around the world. The Hopi Indians celebrate Soyal, which includes purification, dancing, and some gift giving. They also welcome the Kachinas protective spirits from the mountains. In Iran it is the Persian festival, Yalda, which is viewed as the victory of light over dark and the birthday of the sun god Mithra. It is a celebration with special foods and some stay awake all night to welcome the morning. In Peru, there is the Inca celebration of Inti Raymi. It also celebrates the sun god and include

feasts and sacrifices. The Spaniards banned the holiday, but it was revived in the 20th century. Saturnalia is the ancient Roman festival and is most like the modern Christmas. It celebrated the end of the planting season and included games, feasts, and gift-giving. In Scandinavia, the celebration is St Lucia Day. It incorporates festivities aligned with the Christian martyr and Norse solstice traditions. This includes girls dressing in white gowns with red sashes and crowns of candles and lighting fires to ward off spirits. In China, it is Dong Zhi, the arrival of winter. During the festival, families get together, enjoy the fruit of their labor, and celebrate the year they have had.

In the contemporary world, many of these celebrations have morphed into our modern holiday traditions – people getting together, gift giving, feasts, and yes, the magic of the holidays seen through a child’s eyes. We were reminded of what that is while touring the Portland Community College Childcare Center. Watching their enthusiasm while creating works of art, how attentive and engrossed they were when listening to a story, and imagination at work as they played, whether building construction sites or cooking up a storm. It is the magic of that unquestioning creativity and limitless belief that anything is possible. As a child, Santa came to our house on the 22nd because we always left that afternoon for Chicago to celebrate the holidays with family. I never once thought that it was odd; in fact, I thought I was special. I may have asked once why, but when I was told Santa didn’t want me to miss out, I never asked again. Let’s face it: just believing there’s a guy who travels around the world to deliver presents to children is magical in and of itself. Our hope is that you can remember that magic, no matter how you celebrate the holidays today, and recall what it was like when you were a child.



*“Play is the work
of childhood.”*
-Jean Piaget

*“Play is the answer
to how anything new
comes about.”*
-Jean Piaget





“If it hasn't been in the hand . . . and body . . . it can't be in the brain.”

-Bev Boss

“Our flexibility and willingness to follow a child's lead will allow remarkable things to happen if we let them.”

-Bev Boss



Membership



○ General Mtg

INTEREST GROUP HAPPENINGS – DECEMBER 2024

If you are interested in joining any of our Interest Groups, please reach out to the contact listed for each group.

Lunch Bunch, 3rd Tuesday at 11:30 am, Contact: Charlene Vojtilla, charjoy8@gmail.com

Date: December 17th, Location: Five Spice, Lake Oswego

RSVP to the invitation email is required to ensure seating.

Delightful Dining, Contact: Jane Taft, taft.jane@gmail.com

Date: December 7th. Theme: German Cooking
Please contact Jane Taft if you want to receive an invitation.

Interpretive Books, 3rd Thursday at 10:00 am, Contact: Diana Gough, oldgypsy1169@gmail.com

Date: December 19th, Book: *Martin Marten* by Brian Doyle

Murder by the Book, 2nd Wednesday at noon, Contact: Jane Taft taft.jane@gmail.com

Date: December 11th, Book: *The Twelve Saints of Christmas* by Karen Baugh Menuhin

Non-Fiction Books, 2nd Monday at 11:00 am, Contacts: Diana Ricks, dmricks472@gmail.com and Cathy Croghan Alzner, c.croghan.alzner@att.net

Date: December 9th, Book: *The Art Thief: The True Story of Love, Crime & a Dangerous Obsession* by Michael Finkel

Thursday Evening Books, 4th Thursday at 7:00 pm, Contact: Suzanne Kaveckis, smkaveckis@icloud.com

Date: December 5th, Book: *A Table for Two* by Amor Towles

4th Tuesday Books, 4th Tuesday at 11:00 am – 1:00 pm, Contact: Lynda Bigler, libigler@easystreet.net

Date: No meeting in December



INTEREST GROUP SPOTLIGHT ON... INTERPRETIVE BOOKS

The Interpretive Discussion Book Group was created for individuals who enjoy reading good literature and are interested in discussing selections using an interpretative approach. The Great Books Foundation provides guidelines for our discussion leaders and participants. Everyone is encouraged to express her opinion, as there are no right or wrong answers. The only requirement is that members attending should have read the selections. All readings—most are fictional—are nominated and selected by our members. We have two social events each year: a summer luncheon and a December brunch. For example, some of our most stimulating book discussions were on *James* by Percival Everett, *Lessons in Chemistry* by Bonnie Garmus, and *Radio Girls* by Sara Jane Stratford. We have been meeting monthly for over 30 years! For more information or to join, please contact Diana Gough at 503-734-9965.

+++++

Check out a new section on our website

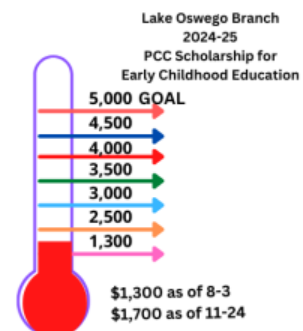
With the wonderful help of Charlene, you can now go to our website and click on Interest Groups, then click on Book Groups, and see this year's schedule for each group. In each group, you can click on that groups past books. A click [HERE](#) will take you to this new section.

Scholarship

Please make a tax-deductible donation to the **LO AAUW Scholarship Fund**. This fund benefits students enrolled in the Portland Community College Early Childhood Education Program. Our goal this year is to reach \$5,000 to support two students.

Instructions on donating electronically or by check can be found on the branch website by clicking [HERE](#). Scroll down to the red **DONATE HERE** button and follow the instructions.

Or, if you only want to donate by check, please make your check payable to **AAUW of Oregon Special Projects Fund** and mail it to:
Lake Oswego AAUW



PO Box 2078
Lake Grove, OR 97035

Thank you for thinking about a gift! Together, we can make a massive difference in the lives of two students. Let's do something amazing!



Belonging Insights – Gain a deeper understanding of community dynamics

Did you know? Belonging isn't just a nice feeling; it's key to boosting team outcomes and overall

performance! Organizations need to evolve their culture, not just add diversity.

How do we foster awareness and belonging? By embracing diversity! This means integrating everyone's perspectives and voices into our programs and materials. Together, organizations create an environment where everyone feels included!

How do we embrace inclusivity? By using multiple methods to make sure everyone, whether they're members, students, or employees, can participate and contribute on an equal footing. It's all about giving everyone a voice! When people feel they belong, they're more likely to engage and contribute. This builds a vibrant, cohesive community.

Imagine a workplace or organization where everyone feels included at every event! This means chatting in ways that makes everyone comfortable and recognizing each person's full identity. By becoming allies and respecting choices, we build a stronger, more supportive community.

Imagine a place where you're appreciated for just being you! That's what belonging is all about—complete acceptance and full appreciation. How exciting is that?

Kick off the new year with a bang! Try these tips to boost your routine at home, in the community, and AAUW and make your days brighter. Who's ready for a fantastic start?

JOIN JOHN GOODWIN AT THE PORTLAND ART MUSEUM (PAM) DECEMBER 9th

For those of you who missed John's entertaining talk on PAM's ongoing renovation in downtown PDX:

Because we couldn't get the connection to work between John's computer and the screen at Heritage House, he has **graciously offered** to host us at the museum to show us the visuals and the completed renovations in situ.

We will meet at 3 pm in the Trustee room of the Mark Building on December 9th for a glass of wine and the presentation.

Please contact me by **Friday, December 6th**, if you are interested.

Pam Berg

Huttyputty170@gmail.com

503 347-8530

Member Profile

Rachel Zierdt



Rachel loves to dance. She has been performing as a dancer with various groups since she retired in 2007, and is currently rehearsing for an upcoming performance with the Northwest Senior Theatre (NST). Located at Rise Church in Tigard, NST has been around for over 30 years and includes singers, dancers, actors and musicians. In the current show, Rachel has fourteen costume changes! She also takes tap dance classes and four to five ballroom dance classes a week. In addition, she is a dancer with "The Beat Goes On" marching band.

After growing up in San Francisco, Rachel attended university at San Francisco State College, and received a degree in American Studies/Education. She then continued on for a fifth year and received an elementary teaching credential. After that she moved down the peninsula, south of San Francisco, where she raised her family and taught for 38 years in Pacifica and Los Altos. She also mentored teachers in math and social studies.

Upon retirement, she and her husband moved to a farm in Sonoma County about an hour north of San Francisco. She misses the fresh fruits and vegetables she was able to grow there. She now forages for wild mushrooms and is on the board of the Oregon Mycological Society, and also on their scholarship committee. In addition, she maintains a lively hive of honey bees in the backyard.

Rachel moved to Portland two years ago to be near her children. She had been in Portland a short time when she suffered the unexpected loss of her husband of 40 years, Gene. She has two sons, a daughter, three grandsons, and three granddaughters. She loves to travel and just got back from Hawaii, after recently traveling to Israel, Jordan, Australia, and Mexico.

Rachel enjoys writing. At the beginning of Covid, she began writing a blog that she sends to friends once a week. She is now on week number 249. She also enjoys cooking and belongs to the Delightful Dining group. She plays bridge and is a docent at the Rose Test Garden in Washington Park.

Submitted by Patti Watkins, Membership Co-chair

2024--2025 Branch Officers



Copyright © 2023 All rights reserved.

Our mailing address is:

Lake Oswego AAUW
PO Box 2078
Lake Grove, OR 97035

Want to change how you receive these emails?
You can [update your preferences](#) or [unsubscribe from this list](#).