

AAUW-OML forges partnership with Saint Mary's College



Photo Lynda Leonard

In the spirit of community participation, Shelby's Restaurant at Theatre Square will partner with AAUW-OML Oct. 19 to raise money for OML's scholarship fund, which benefits local graduating high school girls and Saint Mary's College women. Pictured: co-owner and Chef de Cuisine Arno Kober with AAUW-OML member Laura Wittenberg, who forged a partnership with Saint Mary's College that benefits SMC women.

Submitted by Lynda Leonard

When Laura Wittenberg retired a few years ago, she found purpose and friendship by joining AAUW-OML. She has served in many roles, including as president, but it was when she volunteered at OML's STEM Conference for middle school girls at Saint Mary's College that she recognized a need and set out to fill it.

This need involved a more comprehensive relationship with the college, which required Wittenberg's networking skills, because no one person at the college had all the answers. The result of many consultations was a community and college partnership that is enriching everyone involved.

The first step was providing two scholarships for SMC women students in the High Potential/TRIO Student Support Services to attend AAUW's National Conference of College Student Leaders (NCCWSL), three days of leadership training, inspiration, and networking in Maryland. The two women returned enthusiastic about their experiences, what they learned, and the potential they discovered within themselves.

The success of their experiences led to more women attending NCCWSL and to faculty awareness of the program as well as the work of AAUW. SMC became an AAUW College/University member.

Jenee Palmer, who is currently the director of the High Potential/TRIO Student Support Services program at Saint Mary's, will be the speaker at

AAUW-OML's Oct. 19 meeting. In her role she provides leadership, management, and strategic vision for comprehensive academic, professional, and financial support to first generation and/or low-income students.

SMC's High Potential students are part of a one-of-a-kind experience. The college offers a challenging curriculum in a supportive learning environment. It includes services such as financial assistance, a peer mentor program, coaching, academic resources, leadership development, and personal and professional exploration.

In addition, SMC's students who attended NCCWSL will attend the October meeting and discuss their experiences and how they were able to achieve their goals. Wittenberg noted how rewarding her involvement with these women is, "You've just touched someone and made a difference in her life."

The October program is co-sponsored by OML's Scholarship and the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Committees. Scholarship chair Mary Ann McLeod notes that AAUW-OML also awards scholarships to graduating high school seniors at each of the three public high schools in addition to SMC undergraduates attending NCCWSL. DEI embodies the goals and spirit of inclusion, diversity, and intersectionality across all AAUW activities and participants. DEI chair Denise Burian notes the importance of community partnering and urges others to reach out to these young women and offer a helping hand.

In the spirit of community

participation, Shelby's Restaurant at Theatre Square will partner with AAUW-OML to raise money for the scholarship fund. On Oct. 19 Shelby's will donate 10% of its sales that day to the fund. Food may be purchased for lunch, dinner, takeout – or all three! Curbside delivery is available upon request. For menus, ordering, reservations, and takeout information, visit www.shelbyseatbetter.com. Ample free parking is available with validation in the garage. Reservations are preferred. Order online or call (925) 254-9687.

The OML program is scheduled at 9:30 a.m. Oct. 19. Check the OML website to determine if the meeting is at the Orinda Community Church Fellowship Hall at 10 Irwin Way or via Zoom. If needed, you can get a Zoom link on the site. The program is free and open to the public. Learn more about AAUW-OML at oml-ca.aauw.net.

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Three fun events at Orinda Books on tap in October

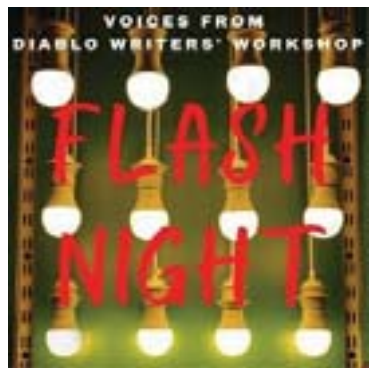


Image provided

Eight writers who are part of the Diablo Writers' Workshop will be reading from short works of fiction, nonfiction and more during "Flash Night" at 6:30 p.m. Saturday, Oct. 23. This free event will be held in-person at Orinda Books with a limited-size audience and will also be fully accessible on Zoom.

Co-founded by Janine de-Boisblanc and Andrea Firth in 2017, Diablo Writers' Workshop (diablowriters.org) brings adult writers of all ages and experience together in small classes to inspire and guide them to discover and tell their stories. "The cool thing about Flash Night is that you can attend from anywhere," said

Firth. "We're excited to host this reading of eight writers from The Diablo Writers' Workshop community."

Another exciting event offered by Orinda Books will feature Anna I. Corwin, Ph.D., author of "Embracing Age: How Catholic Nuns Became Models of Aging Well," in conversation with Brother Charles Hilken, F.S.C., at 6 p.m. Oct. 25 via Zoom. Corwin's book delves into the everyday lives of American Catholic nuns who experience longevity and remarkable health and well-being at the end of life.

And on Oct. 25 at 5 p.m., New York Times-best-selling author of "Matrix" as well as "Fates & Furies, Florida," Laura Groff, will be joined in conversation with Gail Vinett, Lead Content Manager at Ingram Content Group. Groff will discuss her latest novel – "a mesmerizing portrait of consuming passion, aberrant faith, and a woman that history moves both through and around."

For more information and to register, visit orindabooks.com and click on "Events." – J. Wake

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