

NEWS



For Immediate Release:

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AAUW Journeys To Mediterranean Countries at Traditional Wassail

Long Beach –A journey to the Mediterranean countries through landscapes painted by **E. Hashem**, husband of hostess and AAUW member **E. Hashem** was taken by members and guests in the Hashem’s Rossmoor home at American Association of University Women’s traditional Wassail on Saturday, December 3, 2011. Through his landscape paintings in oils, acrylics and watercolors, guests were traveled with E. Hashem to the places he visited whether it was Riomaggiore and Monterosso al Mare in Cinque Terre, Italy; The Iguazu Falls in Brazil and Argentina; the blue ocean in Bora Bora, Tahiti; Corona del Mar in California to the narrow streets in Damascus.

E. Hashem, a retired architect, is an enthusiastic artist now and made sure that the walls in his home were painted in the color that fit as a background for his paintings. His whimsical nature was displayed on the dining room wall in a series of brightly acrylic-painted 12” by 12” wood square blocks that looked like the tops of boxes that contain surprise gifts. An unusual floral arrangement was designed by the florist who made sure that the style of the floral arrangement, types of flowers and their colors added a new dimension to the paintings on the wall. Attention to detail was noted throughout the house, both inside as well as outside reflecting a much-loved home. A kitchen window looking onto a vine-covered wall in the side yard held a few tiles each painted with a single leaf much like O. Henry’s “The Last Leaf.”

JoAnn Kuroda and Darlene Daclan, Co-Presidents, greeted guests by toasting to everyone’s good health in the traditional Wassail expression of goodwill and in celebration of 100 years as an organization in Long Beach.

Lamis Hashem, welcomed guests to her home by stating that “Celebrating the birth of Jesus takes us back to his homeland in many ways.” She was born in Damascus, Syria, and was “...happy to reminisce on the birth of

Jesus who was born somehow in the same part of the world.” A pin dropping to the floor could have been heard as Lamis continued to reflect on her culture!

Tables throughout were topped with lovely, handmade, golden-thread-embroidered covers (known as Sarma, Aghabani or Brocar, depending if the fabric was silk, organza, velvet, satin or cotton). Centerpieces of hand-blown glasses painted with golden liquid held beautiful red poinsettia plants.

Festivities reached out to celebrate and honor longtime member and former president, **Jean Friedrichs**, as Co-Presidents JoAnn Kuroda and Darlene Daclan presented her with a special cake upon her retirement to live in Saratoga in Northern California.

A variety of delicacies, savory and sweet, prepared by many members were enjoyed by the guests. Around sixty ladies enjoyed the social event of the year in the house and backyard, remembering the importance of health, friendship and happiness, the main goal of any Wassail.

The taste of baklava took guests to the heart of the Mediterranean countries as Past Presidents poured coffee, tea and the traditional hot, mull-spiced Wassail drink prepared from a secret, AAUW recipe by member Barbara Gleason who has made the drink for more than twenty years. Past presidents honored were: **Dianne Bradfield, JoAnn Kuroda, Norma Grady, Gail Morrison, Jean Friedrichs, Pat Ferrer, Francis Rozner, Deloris Mayuga, Sharon Westafer, and Judith Kaho.**

Seen at the Scene: Special guests of Lamis were: **Shereen Othman**, daughter, and **Fadwa Hakim and Nisreen Malhis**, who was born in Palestine, the birth country of Jesus. Other guests were: **Miriam Garland, Lois Malone, Jere Millington, Jean Aldrich, Sally Geiger, Nola Irvin, Joyce Blasnek, Carolyn Magnuson, Pat Sargeant, Julie Mills, Flo Pickett, Mary Orr, Betty Thompson, Judy Logue, Louise Grifone and Evelyn Marshall.**

Selected photos and news clippings of the past 100 years found members reflecting on past accomplishments. Mrs. Florence H. Bixby, was AAUW's 2nd president and served from 1922-24. AAUW was founded in Long Beach on January 21, 1911 and originally called the College Women's Club. Early childhood health and the local PTA were emphasized when members met at the Ebell Club in the late 1920s. Members typed 53,508 pages for the Braille public service project by the mid-1960s. They placed 5th in the State of California for their

contributions to Educational Foundation in the early 1970s. By mid-1980s, the group sponsored “Women in Technology Conference” at California State University Long Beach for high school girls, a predecessor to the Science, Technology, Education and Math (STEM) Conference scheduled for February 24th 2012 at Long Beach City College, Liberal Arts Campus. Today, AAUW provides scholarships to local middle-school girls to attend Tech Trek, a summer camp at the University of California Irvine and Whittier College for one week.

AAUW Membership is open to those with an AA degree or higher. To learn more about membership in AAUW, please go to www.aauw-longbeach.org.

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Mission Statement: AAUW advances equity for women and girls through advocacy, education, philanthropy and research.