

The Lodestone

January 2024



Saturday
January 20
2024

9:30 AM—11:30

Peace Lutheran Church

828 West Main
Grass Valley



In this issue

[President's Message](#)

[Covid Guidelines](#)

[Interbranch Council Meeting](#)

[Public Policy](#)

[Local Scholarship Recipients](#)

[Tech Trek](#)

[Interest Group Schedules](#)

[Interest Group Photos](#)

[Book Review](#)

[Membership](#)

[Branch Support](#)

AAUW Mission

The mission of AAUW is to advance gender equity for women and girls through research, education, and advocacy. To that end, the organization encourages its members to actively participate in public discussion to ensure enlightened advocacy on the priorities of AAUW as established by members.

Priorities were adopted in May 2023 and can be found on the AAUW website under AAUW Public Policy Priorities. [AAUW Public Policy Priorities – AAUW: Empowering Women Since 1881.](#)



Frank Helling

For the January general meeting, Frank Helling will bring the experiences, thoughts, and accomplishments of John Muir to life. John Muir (1838-1914) was a Scottish-American naturalist and early environmental thinker and advocate. He is often called the 'Father of National Parks' and was the co-founder of the Sierra Club. His advocacy helped preserve Yosemite Valley and create Sequoia National Park.

While John Muir traveled throughout the US, including Alaska, California was his primary home. He had a particular fondness for the Sierra Nevada region. His writings continue to inspire those interested in the preservation of American wilderness.

We are fortunate to have Frank Helling recreate the life and times of Muir, from Muir's childhood in Scotland up until his death in Los Angeles. Complete with Scottish accent and period clothing, Mr. Helling has delighted audiences with his John Muir impersonation. Mr. Helling's background includes over 20 years as a teacher and dozens of years as a seasonal Park Ranger. He began to impersonate John Muir in 1981 when, as a teacher, he stayed in character all day. Audience demand for his performances grew from educational and park settings to Earth Day and John Muir Birthday celebrations. He now presents the life and times of John Muir throughout California and other states.

The October and November AAUW Branch meetings have informed us about 'fire and water' issues in our community. On the same theme, but with a slightly different take, come to the January 20th Branch meeting to rejoice and be inspired by Muir's advocacy and work on behalf of our forests and Sierra Nevada home.

"When one tugs at a single thing in nature, he finds it attached to the rest of the world."—John Muir

happy new year

President's Message

Deborah York

Hello everyone,
This is the time for looking back with gratitude and looking forward with hope and optimism. Our branch has so much to be grateful for this past year—a healthy vibrant membership that continues to grow, a faithful and active Board of Directors to shepherd our work, 17 girls and women who received financial support for college, 7 young girls who were able to attend the UC Davis Tech Trek program last summer, lots of dollars raised from our Tapas & Trivia event to support scholarships both local and national (AAUW Fund), program sponsors to cover the costs of our wonderful monthly branch programs, an incredible array of exciting interest groups to further our knowledge and camaraderie, our wonderful Lodestone to keep us in the know, our fantastic Public Relations team that lets our community know what we're doing, our holiday service projects that provided food and encouragement to local families, the opportunity to partner with League of Women Voters and Business & Professional Women to offer tools & hope to 270 community members

to de-polarize political conversations, weekly mentoring for HS seniors in how to write effective essays for scholarship applications, and so much more.

I am thankful for every one of you who made this happen. Going forward we are on track to provide 24 scholarships next year, send another group of Tech trek girls to UC Davis, to support participants in the new Gov Trek program, and to host a Gala Fundraiser in April. We look forward to outstanding programs including the John Muir impersonation, Sierra Nevada Hospital's overview of new healthcare services, an LGBTQ+ Student Panel, the League of Women Voters Getting Ready for the 2024 election, and our installation of new officers in May. Our interest groups will continue with some new opportunities. Reach out to new members and re-connect with old friends; we all need each other. Wishing you all the best in the coming year.



President Deb York

—*Deborah York, President*



Covid Guidelines

1. We will assume all Branch members are vaccinated and boosted. If you are not, please wear a mask and let Deb York know and we will accommodate.
2. If you are experiencing symptoms associated with Covid 19 (fever, headache, loss of taste/smell, sore throat, cough, muscle/joint aches, shortness of breath, etc.) please stay home from Branch activities.
3. If a close family member has symptoms or has tested positive, and you do not have symptoms, please mask when carpooling or attending indoor meetings.
4. If you have been traveling with increased exposure, please wear a mask for 5 days after returning if you are attending indoor meetings.
5. A meeting host (interest group leaders, committee chairs, etc.) may request participants to test negative prior to attending meeting or wear masks.
6. If you have been exposed to someone who has tested positive (with/without symptoms) please alert meeting host and wear a mask.
7. We will track Nevada County Covid rates and follow all local government and CDC guidelines. We will notify all Branch members of any changes to these guidelines.

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

President	Deborah York
Past President	Katherine (Bup) Greenwood
Secretary	Ann Gould
Finance Officers	Jennifer Wilkerson & Peg Flanders
Program Co-VPs	Karen Hull & Diane Kellegrew
Membership VP	Deb Cubberley
AAUW Fund VP	Carol McMillan

APPOINTED OFFICERS

Local Scholarship	Rhea Williamson
Public Policy	Melanie Heckel
DEI Officer	Lisa Turlo
Publicity	Martha Rees
Social Media	Marilee Norton
Tech Trek	Martha Rees
Ways and Means	Karin Quinn
Communications	Katherine (Bup) Greenwood

STANDING COMMITTEES (NON-BOARD FUNCTIONS)

Lodestone & Website	CeCe Royal
Distribution	Jan Williams
Directory/Database	Bonnie White
Hospitality	Gretchen Corbin
Interest Groups	Susie Monary-Wilson
Friendship	Pat Pedersen
Historian	Margaret Munson & Shirley Zeff
Event Planner	Open
Program Sponsor Dev.	Open
Photography	Martha Rees Bernadette Sylvester Sue Miller
AAUW Msg Line	CeCe Royal

You're Invited!

For more information, contact Bup Greenwood or AAUW Fund VP Carol McMillan.



Northridge Country Club
7600 Madison Ave. Fair Oaks, CA

AAUW Fund Luncheon

Sponsored by your Capitol Counties Interbranch Council

Saturday, January 20, 2024
Noon – 2 PM

Keynote speaker: Tracy Ramondini, Elk Grove Sheldon High School teacher and Gov Trek State Committee member, will update us on the Gov Trek program.

In addition, two current AAUW Fund Recipients will share their educational journeys, focusing on details and progress of their work.

Reserve your spot today; deadline for reservations is January 10, 2024.

Make your \$40 check payable to
AAUW CHAR, P.O. Box 1555, Fair Oaks, CA 95628

Name _____ Branch _____

Phone _____ email _____



Please indicate your menu choice:

Turkey w/mashed potatoes & veggies

Vegetarian Risotto





Melanie Heckel
Public Policy Co-Chair

This has been a difficult holiday season around the world—from the horrific war between Israel and Hamas in Gaza, to the heartbreak of a Texas woman, denied an abortion even though her fetus would not survive and her own health and ability to have other children was at risk if she were to carry it to term. After she, and her doctors, were threatened by the Texas Attorney General with criminal charges, her only recourse was

to flee to another state to obtain a legal abortion. But, we do not want to become overwhelmed with doom and gloom, so let's face 2024 with optimism and do what we can to promote AAUW's Public Policy Priorities.

HAPPY NEW YEAR!

Given the end-of-the-year holiday slowdown, there is not a whole lot to report in terms of good news or bad news. However, there are plenty of AAUW supported issues pending.

NATIONAL UPDATE

The U.S. House and Senate continue to be deeply divided and many of the current proposals coming from the House have harmful cuts and policy restrictions that are in direct contrast with AAUW's public policy priorities, including Title IX and reproductive health. AAUW is working with coalition partners to oppose cuts to education and other harmful policy riders in Fiscal Year 2024 appropriations bills.

AAUW Supported Measures Have Been Proposed

1. Social Security Enhancements – The Social Security Administration has proposed an AAUW-supported rule to expand and simplify the Supplemental Security Income (SSI) Program, which provides monthly cash assistance to people who are age 65 or older or are disabled. Women account for 65% of all SSI recipients 65 or older.

2. Protections for Older Workers – Rep. Bobby Scott (D-VA) reintroduced the AAUW-supported Protecting Older Workers Against Discrimination Act in the House with bipartisan support on December 4. The bill will give older workers the tools to battle age discrimination and continue to take home a fair wage.

CALIFORNIA UPDATE

AAUW California will hold our 2024 Lobby Days event on April 2 and 3, 2024. This was very successful last year, and I look forward to participating again. Last year, Carol McMillan and I met with Senator Brian Dahle in person, and with an aide of Assemblywoman Dahle on Zoom. A top priority bill,

(AB 1394), we presented was passed and signed into law in 2023.

Starting in January, the AAUW-CA Public Policy Committee will evaluate new bills introduced in the state legislature which are aligned with our Public Policy Priorities. In early March, the committee will meet to discuss and select 30-35 bills for our 2024 Legislative Agenda that best represent our priorities. We will also choose the top 3 bills to advocate for during Lobby Days.

SAD NEWS – SAYING GOODBYE TO SANDRA DAY O'CONNOR

Sandra Day O'Connor died on December 1st at the age of 93. President Joe Biden and Chief Justice John Roberts remembered O'Connor as a trailblazer during a December 19 funeral service for the first female Supreme Court justice at the Washington National Cathedral.

O'Connor was appointed to the Supreme Court in July 1981 by President Reagan.

After three days of testimony on the appointment, the Senate voted 99-0 to confirm her nomination. O'Connor remains the only Supreme Court Justice in history to receive unanimous approval from the Senate.

Throughout her term, she was consistently praised for her strict adherence to the law as she ruled in some of the nation's most consequential legal cases for a quarter century, including major decisions on abortion rights (upholding Roe v. Wade, with minor allowances for states), criminal procedures and affirmative action. She was known as a swing voter and wrote many important legal opinions.

During the funeral, President Biden said that she lived up to the challenge throughout her career, as she helped to "empower generations of women in every part of American life, including the court itself; helping to open doors, secure freedoms and prove that a woman cannot only do anything a man can do, but many times do a heck of a lot better."

To learn more about Sandra Day O'Connor, I recommend reading "Dinners With Ruth". Our Mostly Fiction Book Club enjoyed reading and discussing this book in December. This is a non-fiction book by Supreme Court NPR reporter Nina Totenberg. You will learn a lot about Nina, the workings of the Supreme Court, including the importance of Sandra Day O'Connor and her sisterhood with Ruth Bader Ginsberg on the bench. I also recommend a PBS special "Sandra Day O'Connor – The First," which was shown on KVIE on December 11th.



Supreme Court Justice O'Connor, 1981-2006

Local Scholarship Recipient Updates

Layla Mertz Studies Biochemistry

by Mari Kobus



Layla Mertz is grateful for her scholarship. "I would like to once again thank everyone for the High School STEM scholarship I received this year and for your support. I feel recognized and encouraged to pursue my interests and follow my Dreams."

Layla took a month-long trip to Europe over the summer and in September, she began her university life at Western Washington University, with a major in biochemistry. She started her fall semester with Honors Chemistry, Calculus 2, Philosophy of Religion, and Intro. to Cinema.

"Philosophy is interesting to me because it discusses things I think about all the time but don't know how to describe with words."

Layla has made terrific friends with other

women; they are fun and supportive.

"I am enjoying the many extracurricular activities available on campus! I am currently a member of the Chemistry Club and Scream Queens, which meets weekly to watch a scary movie. I also plan to be a part of the women's baseball team."



Lori Musco Goes Back to School

by Carol Raynsford

Lori Musco exemplifies what we hope to assist our local women with, in being able to step up to better horizons. She has a lot of life experience to draw from as a Certified Nurse Assistant at skilled nursing facilities, a truck driver, and a worker in manufacturing at a Lipton tea plant.

Through her work at the nursing homes, she became aware of the need for counseling and has begun a return to school with a focus on social science with interest in the elderly.

Lori has had to work hard to re-enter the college atmosphere, but has made good use of the school resources to help and indeed was ranked most improved.

Lori has a strong focus and has put her energy into stepping up to this new world, while still attending to her personal and family issues.

Bravo to Lori!



Tech Trek 2024 is coming



*Martha Rees
Tech Trek Chair*

It's beginning to look a lot like Tech Trek. Our TT Committee met in early December to begin planning our schedule for 2024, including the nomination and selection process as well as our annual Tech Trek Recognition Event, which will be on May 7th at the Nevada County

Superintendent of Schools (NCSOS) Office. Tech Trek Committee Members Kathy Scott, Chriss Hood, Stephanie Facchini, and Martha Rees met with Christine McCormick, Associate Superintendent, Educational Services, and her Assistant Olivia Carson to discuss logistics. Once again, we are extremely fortunate to have the full support of the NCSOS Scott Lay, who sent out an email to middle school principals to alert them and their seventh-grade science, math, and technology teachers that Tech Trek is coming. It turns out that Scott's daughter, Emma, attended Tech Trek in 2008 so he is quite familiar with the program as is Christine who nominated girls when she was living and teaching in a different area.

We will begin 2024 with a Tech Trek Alum "Homecoming" Get-together on January 4th. We invited all the former Nevada County Tech Trekkers, and it has been fun to hear from them – even those who are unable to attend.

One of those individuals is 2010 Trekker Montana Marchi (adjacent photo), who responded: "I am so thrilled you have reached out to me! I'm currently living in Eastern Arizona and working in the mining industry. I have been working at North America's largest Copper and Gold mining company for three years now, I've held several jobs such as drill core technician in the geology department, Dam operator in the tailing's storage department, and now I am an Apprentice Electrician in the processing department. In my free time, I am a photographer and artist. Again, I am overjoyed to hear from you! I often tell my coworkers about the opportunity from Tech Trek that fostered my love of all things science related." Here is Montana's website: <https://montanamarchi.carrd.co/> Do yourself a favor and click on "home," "about," and



Montana Marchi, 2010 Trekker

"photography" links to learn more and see her impressive photos.

Anyone interested in learning more about being a part of the Nevada County Tech Trek Committee or helping out at the 2024 Tech Trek @ UC Davis camp, please contact Martha at mjkrees@yahoo.com.

We are looking for individuals who might be interested in being dorm moms at camp, July 13-20th.

In addition to our commitment to AAUW Nevada County Branch's mission to advance equity for women and girls through advocacy, education, philanthropy, and research, we provide educational and enrichment opportunities for our members. If you would like to learn more about the Interest Groups, please see the leaders' contact information in the AAUW Membership Directory or contact **Susie Monary-Wilson**, 530-470-9272.



Susie Monary-Wilson,
Interest Group Coordinator

Arts and Crafts — Teri McConnell



In **January** the Arts & Crafts group has the opportunity to take a watercolor class where we will learn about watercolor paints and various techniques for creating beautiful watercolor masterpieces. The attendance is limited. To inquire if there is seating available, contact Chris Boykin.

Join us in **February** to learn the art of collage. Collage is defined as creating a piece of art



by combining various materials such as photographs and pieces of paper or fabric on to a backing.

Kate Dumont who has been making collages for many years and whose collages have been published will be guiding us in creating our own pieces of art. This will be held on

February 1st at 10:00am

at the home of Teri McConnell. For more information and a list of supplies, contact Kate Dumont or Teri McConnell.

Mostly Fiction Book Group — Robin Laverty-Reves

Happy New Year! My hope for the upcoming year is the continuation of friendships forged from wonderful conversations among book lovers. I would like to thank Lisa Turlo for her offer to maintain the list of book recommendations from members for selections in June. Interest group members may send their recommendations directly to her at lisaturlo59@gmail.com.

Last month's *Lodestone* advertisement seeking interest in an evening book group elicited a small number of Branch members who will be contacted this month to plan the genesis of another book discussion group. If anyone else is interested, please contact me.

The Mostly Fiction Book Group members will meet **Thursday, January 11th at 1:00** to discuss *Solito: A Memoir* by Javier Zamora. Interested Book Group members will receive a detailed email with RSVP information. If you would like more information about the Mostly Fiction Book Group, please contact Robin Laverty-Reves at lavertyreves@gmail.com.

Non-Fiction Book Group — Diane Kellegrew

Next up, the Non-Fiction Book Club will read *Why Fish Don't Exist: A Story of Loss, Love, and the Hidden Order of Life* by Lulu Miller (2020). Lulu Miller is a Peabody Award winner (science-journalist), co-host of NPR's Radiolab, and frequent contributor to NPR podcasts. In this highly acclaimed book, Ms. Miller incorporates her memoir of a troubled time around a biography of David Starr Jordan, acclaimed ichthyologist and founding President of Stanford University. Despite a complicated past, Jordan is still honored today with a named award for dedicated new scientist. This tale

has it all to include a murder mystery, drama, humor, and quirky turn of events. For a special treat, listen to a master storyteller (the author) read the audiobook.

Join us on **January 16th** from **1:00 pm to 2:30 pm** at the home of Maureen Allison. If you are interested in joining us, kindly RSVP to Diane Kellegrew (diane.kellegrew@gmail.com).



Garden Group — Janine Martin

The Garden Group will be painting rocks for their own gardens on **Thursday, January 25th** from **9:30-11:30** at Brett McWilliams' house: 11676 Marjon Dr., Nevada City.

Wear old clothes and/or an apron. Everything will be provided for you: rocks, paint, and brushes. Bring your imagination!

Please RSVP to Rose Tammi who is a Garden Group member coordinating this January meeting. rtammi07@gmail.com
Please email me at janineandgalen@gmail.com if you are a new member and want to be in Garden Group or are not getting Garden Group emails.



Interest Groups (cont.)

Gnaw and Jaw — Deb Cubberley & Chris Boykin



By now most of our dining groups have had their first get together. With our group's busy travel schedule and my grandbaby's impending birth, we couldn't pencil in a date for our first meal until December 16! We had a fun time with our "secret ingredient" theme. Since I was making dessert, I found a carrot and pineapple cake recipe which called for three jars of carrot baby food, my secret ingredient. It was very moist and delicious. Deb Cubberley made a spicy chili with her secret ingredient – pumpkin. Yum! Each dining group will meet at least three times between September and the end of May 2024, generally aiming for a dinner in fall, winter, and spring. The theme for the second dinner is "heartly soups". Plans are in the works for our entire group to enjoy a meal at one of our local restaurants. Stay tuned for when and where. If you feel that you missed the opportunity to sign up, it is never too late, just contact either Chris Boykin chrismboykin@gmail.com or Deb Cubberley debclubberley@comcast.net, your GnJ group co-leaders. Please know that (1) spouses, significant others, or just a plus-one are welcome and (2) you are also encouraged to come as a single if you prefer. Cheers to a gastronomic 2024!

Gracious Helpers — Pat Pedersen



Gracious Helpers provides meals for members who are suffering from a trauma. It might be an injury, death, or surgery for themselves or a husband or significant other. We determine the needs of the member, such as dietary necessities, day of delivery and time of the delivery. We use a

website called Meal Train which provides us with a page for the recipient. We deliver easy meals, and most providers make meals which they usually make for themselves. If you can assist us, please contact Pat Pedersen at 530 477 1881 or ppedersen76@comcast.net. She will be happy to

explain the process to you.

Great Decisions — Susie Monary-Wilson

Great Decisions will start the new season On Tuesday January 23rd with a very timely discussion of the Middle East Realignment led by Cece Royal. We'll meet from 10 to noon at Emmanuel Episcopal Church, 235 South Church Street, Grass Valley in Bucks Hall. Please contact Susie Monary-Wilson for more information at monarywilson@msn.com



Hiking Group — Mary Menconi

We hike on the first Wednesday and third Monday of each month, as follows: **Wed, Jan 3; Mon, Jan 15; Wed, Feb 7; Mon, Feb 19; Wed, Mar 6; Mon, Mar 18; Wed, Apr 3; Mon, Apr 15; Wed, May 1; Mon, May 20; Wed, Jun 5; Mon, Jun 17.** Hike locations depend on the leader's preference and are announced via email about one week in advance. If our hike is not local, we organize carpools from several locations around our area. We are also invited to join the Auburn AAUW Hiking Group for their hikes, which are usually two Thursdays each month. If you would like to be on the email list for upcoming hikes, or if you just want to know more, please contact Mary Menconi at marymenconi@gmail.com



IDEAS (Inclusion, Diversity & Equity Action Squad) — Lisa Turlo

Our January meeting will be at Susie Monary-Wilson's house on **Wednesday, January 17, from 1-3 pm.** For more information, contact Lisa Turlo at lisaturlo59@gmail.com.

Writing Group — Deborah York

The Writing Critique group will meet **Monday January 8th, 10-12**, in the Prospector Study Room in the Madelyn Helling Library.

The Write-in group will meet **Tuesday January 16th, 2:00-3:30** in the Prospector Study Room at the Madelyn Helling Library.



Interest Group Photos



*Gnaw & Jawsers
First Dinners*



*Mostly Fiction
Book Group
Holiday Luncheon
at Lily's Garden*



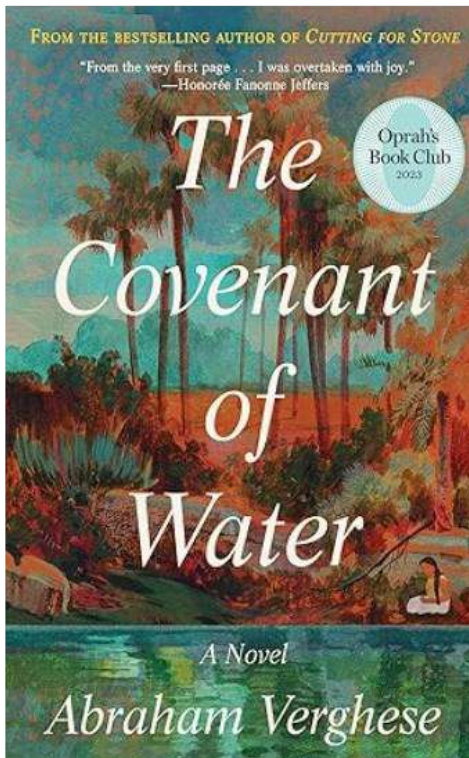
*Garden Group
Holiday Luncheon
High-Hand Nursery
Café, Loomis*

*Hikers
December 2023*



The Covenant of Water

By Abraham Verghese



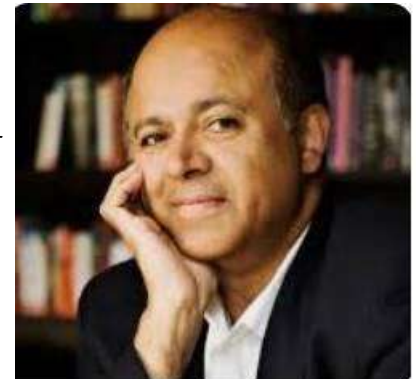
Some of you may remember having read this author's first novel, *Cutting for Stone*, written a few years ago. He has now penned a new story, set primarily in India over a period of time from 1900 to 1977.

Verghese is also a physician, currently Vice Chair of the Department of

Medicine at Stanford University and, as with his prior novel, his expertise in his field informs his writing and lends fascinating detail to his work.

The story line unfolds with the arranged marriage of a young girl, at the turn of the century, to a much older man and evolves through three

generations as she becomes the matriarch of a large and diverse family. Her Christian faith and joy of life sustain her through hardships and loss. Her family also copes with a mysterious affliction which has taken lives randomly throughout her ancestors' existence.



Abraham Verghese, MD

A parallel narrative is of the Scottish doctor who arrives in India to set up practice and, over time, becomes a respected surgeon in this same region. Eventually their paths intersect.

The novel is rich with complex characters who evolve with the years. It is essentially a story of love and family set against the historic backdrop of an India progressing beyond colonialism and of the enormous advances of medicine during this same time period.

Verghese's writing is so evocative of this past, and the plot so well thought out, that I was continually engaged. It is a lengthy book but well worth the time you will spend reading it.

—Submitted by Susan Frater



Deb Cubberley
Membership VP

Welcome New Members

Another new member, **Trish Close-Norman**, was recruited by member Rose Littau. Trish lives in Penn Valley. She is a retired licensed

Marriage and Family Therapist with a number of

interests. Please be sure to welcome Trish into our tribe.

We've also had **Mary McClain**, a former member of our branch, re-join.

For those of you that are counting, we are now up to 143 members. That is a recent record. Yay for us, particularly for those of you out there spreading the word.

Happy New Year!



Program Sponsors

These businesses and individuals have generously donated toward the support of

- [Bodacious Blooms Flower Farm](#),
Karen Hull
- [KNCO News Talk 830](#)
- [Nevada Irrigation District \(NID\)](#)
- Allison Rapp
- [Westamerica Bank](#)
Bernadette & Ed Sylvester
- [Wolf Mountain Spa](#)
Dan Wray
- [Kim White, Attorney at Law](#)



New Year's, a time for reflection and a little irreverence, too!

The bad news is time flies. The good news is you're the pilot.

—*Michael Altshuler*

You are never too old to set another goal or to dream a new dream.

—*C.S. Lewis*

Write it on your heart that every day is the best day in the year.

—*Ralph Waldo Emerson*

She who breaks a resolution is a weakling; she who makes one is a fool.

—*F.M. Knowles*

Any new beginning is forged from the shards of the past, not from the abandonment of the past.

—*Craig D. Lounsbrough*