

Santa Maria Chapter Report 2/22/16 by Chapter President Roberta Alderete

We were happy to have six Chapter members attend the CWA Annual Convention in Ventura January 8, 9 and 10, 2016. Attendees included Chapter President, Roberta Alderete; First Vice President/Legislation, Andrea Chavez; Treasurer, Laretta Griffin; 3rd Vice President/Internal Affairs Ambers Simmons; Charter Member Kathryn Donovan and long-time members Brenda Kelsch and Ruth Jensen, Federal Legislation and AAW Task Force Director.

The following weekend we held our Chapter Board Retreat on January 16, 2016 to review the information given to us at Convention and planned our calendar for meetings and events. Our new Board Members include Melissa McGeary, Secretary; Laretta Griffin, Treasurer; Amber Simmons, 3rd Vice President/Internal Affairs, Monica Barraza, 2nd Vice President/Education, and returning Board Members Andrea Chavez, First Vice President/Legislation and President Roberta Alderete. Chrissy Allen agreed to serve as our Parliamentarian and reviewed "Robert's Rules of Order" and offered suggestions for taking "Minutes" and templates for Board and General Membership Meeting Agendas, all accepted by our Board. We reviewed last year's income and expenses and developed our 2016 budget.

Our January General Membership was a business meeting where we presented our 2016 budget which was accepted by the membership. We also reviewed our calendar of events and educational programs, annual fundraiser, reviewed our Task Force Directors and shared our membership list.

We also discussed the CAUSE report, a farmworker activist report that was presented to the media saying Santa Barbara County Farmers are mistreating farmworkers by underpaying them, spraying them with pesticides, not giving them time breaks and other allegations. The CAUSE group is demanding action from our County Board of Supervisors to fund a "Farm Worker Bill of Rights" asking for funds to educate farmworkers on their rights, hire inspectors, penalize farmers, provide a farmworker "hot line" to report offenses and help farmers reduce pesticides, among other demands. All their demands are duplicative of current county, state and federal regulations.

We requested CWA State help us draft a statement and they promptly sent us a statement, based on our CWA State Labor Policy which I read at the Santa Barbara County Ag Advisory Commission on Feb. 3, 2016 and was well received by the Commission and public audience. The CAUSE group did not show, even though they had requested time to present their report. They say in their report they want the "Farmworker Bill of Rights" to be approved by March 31, Cesar Chavez day. The Commission decided to draft their own letter against the CAUSE report and their demands to be sent to the Santa Barbara County Board of Supervisors. I was asked to publish our CWA Statement in the local newspapers and I submitted it to them.

On February 20, 2016 our Chapter hosted our first Central Coast District Meeting led by our Director, Wilja Happe. We had 25 in attendance from Chapters including Ventura, Carpinteria/Santa Barbara, Santa Maria, San Luis Obispo and Salinas. We brainstormed ideas to increase membership, control meetings, discussed fundraiser ideas. Everyone was given an opportunity to speak and mark down what ag issues were important to them. Maria Azevedo gave us a presentation on Parliamentary Procedures. Diana Pedrozo assisted Wilja in gathering suggestions for better procedures and Wilja will submit that list to the CWA State Board for review and implementation.

