

Hi, I'm the AAUW Salem Branch President, Claudia Carmichael, and I'd like to welcome you all to our Second Annual Tree Planting. A couple of years ago, Peggy Shippen, our very energetic Public Policy Chair started planting the seeds at our Board Meetings for her idea that AAUW could sponsor a tree planting at a new park in NE Salem.

The first time Peggy introduced the subject of a tree planting, the Board Members looked at each other. Trees? We asked. That's not what we usually do. Our mission is to empower women and girls with an emphasis on education and career opportunities, not plant trees. But Peggy was not to be deterred—and if you know Peggy you know that she is passionate about what she believes in and her passion has a way of rubbing off on those around her. She reminded us that our members had indicated an interest in climate change and their desire to work to make a difference in our community. As a result, Peggy talked to Milan Davis of the Parks Department and he had helped her identify an area of NE Salem that had lost a good number of trees. Peggy said we could make a difference for this park and the families who live in this area. She also reminded us that since our focus as an organization is on education, what better plan would there be than to be located between two middle schools and a neighborhood. After all, we all need clean air, women and girls included. So we decided Peggy was right. AAUW could plant trees! And the rest as they say was history.

We gathered here at Yoshikai last year—even though I think the skilled, but younger, parks department workers imagined we older women would be drinking tea and watching the festivities from our chairs. They were surprised when many of us, some of us in our 70s and 80s, started pitching in and digging holes and planting trees. We were finished two hours earlier than expected. This year we hope to repeat the progress we made last year, by planting another 35 or so trees—a mix of Oregon white oaks, ponderosa pines, dogwoods, cascaras, Pacific crabapples, vine maples, maples and big leaf maples.

And then Peggy promised everyone a plaque describing the project and the people who have taken it upon themselves to donate to this project. And here we are! To celebrate the planting and the plaque, and to thank the many people whose energy and efforts made this project a reality—Jo Bateman, Betsy Belshaw, Claudia Carmichael, Tim Carmichael, the Charlotte Holmes Trust, Sally Hollemon, Kay Myklebust, Delta Kappa Gamma, Betsy McDowell, Morgan E. McNaughtan, Renita J. McNaughtan, Meredith Sheehy, Ernest Shippen, Peggy Shippen, the Bahai Community of Salem, the Bernadine Taplin Trust, Kathy Terman, E. Dollie Wolverton, Joyce Zook, the wonderful Salem Parks Department workers and Milan Davis, Urban Planter Extraordinaire, Jennifer Keller, Amanda Sitter, Vanessa

Nordyke, Micki Varney, and Jose Gonzalez and many others.

And without further ado, Peggy will perform the Great Reveal and unveil the plaque (planted among the trees) that we hope will be here for a long time to commemorate the efforts that went into this project that will continue to bring beauty and shade to us all in the years to come.

Peggy . . .