

AAUW CALIFORNIA ONLINE
JUNE PROGRAM 2016
SPEECH TREK
GUEST: SABRINA FLEMING
JUNE 2ND- JUNE 10, 2016

Sabrina Fleming, our 2015-2016 California Online first place Speech Trek winner was our guest. Sabrina also won 5th place honorable mention in the AAUW CA Speech Trek competition this year. This was Sabrina's second year in competing for the California Online branch and we're all so pleased that she placed this year in the State competition!

Here are the initial questions and answers:

1. When and where did you hear of Speech Trek?

I first heard about Speech Trek from my former drama teacher (Cathy Foxhoven) when I was in tenth grade (2014). She thought it was a field that I might enjoy exploring, and she was right.

2. This is your 2nd time competing, can you talk about your experience in competing in Speech Trek?

I'm a very research based person, and I don't like forming solid opinions without reading through both sides of the issue. So, for both of my speeches, I didn't agree or disagree right away, I took the time to look at numbers and studies and then formulate my opinion and write my speech based on the information that I found.

3. What do you think about the 2016-2017 topic: "Is It Time to Pass the Equal Rights Amendment"?

I'm not sure exactly how to think of it because there are complicated legal arguments that I don't understand; so, it's not an easy question to give to high schoolers. I think this question is more technical because you need to be able to understand the political issues, so it would be better to have a more conceptual questions that are more relevant to high school students.

4. Do you intend to compete again in the coming year?

I would love the opportunity to compete again. I learn something new each time, whether it be facts around the topic, or how to perform in front of an unknown audience.

5. What do you like about the competition?

I like this competition because, even though everyone is given the same topic, it impacts them all in a different way, and people can bring in their personal experiences. It's also nice because people aren't restricted by location, there is a branch for everyone, so

anyone can compete. This gives a great feeling of connection to the whole program, because I know that while I'm sitting here in Northern California, there is another person just like me sitting in Southern California, and another sitting across the country working on the same subject as me.

6. What could be improved?

I think it would be nice if people got two chances to give their speeches. Sometimes there are things that are out of people's control (for example, during my speech, there was some gesturing and background noise) and it would be nice to have a second chance, after all the effort that went into the speech.

Another member asked:

What specific things did you learn from your two experiences? How were they different for you?

Both experiences were relevant to me at different times in my life. I wrote a speech on the topic "Is college worth the time and expense?" when I was in 10th grade and starting to think about college (but I wasn't quite in the thick of it yet). I learned that more women are attending college than men (58% earned bachelor degrees from 1999-2010), and that not all college degrees are equal. This provided me with some background as I started looking at colleges in the summer. This past year's topic was gender bias and inequality and, as I am one step closer to college and "the real world," this speech really helped put the education and the world into perspective. One article that really shocked me was *Explaining the Gender Gap in Math Test Scores: The Role of Competition*. They found that males and females have similar aptitudes, but males performed better in competitive situations. This led me to question testing methods and think about how I approach challenging situations.

Sabrina responded to another question:

Thank you for your question (What college are you planning on attending in the future?).

I'm not quite sure what college I'm going to yet. I know I want to study something in the STEM fields, and I'm planning on staying in California, or going to the Southeast. Thank you very much for letting me know about the scholarships, I will look into that when I go to visit more colleges this summer.

Another question was asked and answered:

Hi, sorry it's a little later, I just finished my French exam.

What was my impression of AAUW that I have garnered doing the research for my speeches these last two years?

My impression of AAUW is that it's active at a very deep policy level, and I didn't realize how many levels they covered before I worked on my speeches and did some research.

Thank you,

Sabrina was thanked for her participation in our June program. She is eligible to compete again in the coming year because she was not one of the top three finalists. We hope to work with her again.

Cathy Foxhoven
AAUW California Online Program Chair