

THE SPOKESWOMAN



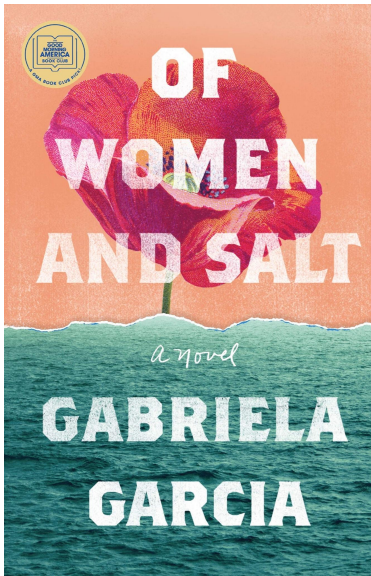
In this edition: (click to be directed to the article)

- July Book Group Report: *Of Women and Salt*
- July 8th Board Meeting Highlights
- July 2021 Celebrate the 19th Recap
- UNA Updates
- Former Tech Trekkers: Where Are They Now?
- Upcoming Webinars
- AAUW CA and National Updates

AUGUST 2021 CALENDAR

- **Saturday, August 7th, 9 am to noon** – Annual Board Planning Retreat (hybrid Zoom and in-person)
- **Thursday, August 12th, 7 pm to 8:30 pm** – Board meeting by Zoom
- **Saturday, August 14th, 9 am to 10 am** Book Group discussion by Zoom: *The Warmth of Other Suns: The Epic Story of America's Great Migration* by Isabel Wilkerson
- **Thursday, August 19th – 5 pm - 6 pm** Celebrate the NineTEAnth with Annie, pending arrival of teas from Taiwan (update to follow by email; this is tentatively planned as a hybrid Zoom and in-person event)

July Book Group Report: *Of Women and Salt*



On July 10th, Karen Lemcke led the book group discussion on *Of Women and Salt* by Gabriela Garcia. Barbara, Estelle, Verena, Stephanie, and Juliana used the first few minutes to analyze the book's cover, which features a flower juxtaposed over the ocean with the book title and author's name in the same size font. This book is Garcia's first novel and is essentially the compilation of short stories that she wrote while pursuing a Master of Fine Arts degree at Purdue University. The daughter of immigrants from Mexico and Cuba, Garcia was raised in Miami but now resides in the Bay Area. The Audible version of the book includes an interview of Garcia by her former professor and author, Roxane Gay. An interview with the author was also featured on the PBS show, [Weekend Edition](#).

Of Women and Salt tells the stories of women in two families that spans the time from the 19th century to the present day and takes place in several geographical locations including Cuba, Mexico, and the U.S. The recurring theme is the role of mothers making sacrifices so their daughters can have better lives. However, daughters make choices based on their own wishes and needs – choices that may not fulfill their mothers' hopes and dreams. Several readers found the separate stories difficult to follow and wished that the words in Spanish had been translated into English. The characters were more memorable if you were able to read the book in one or two sittings. Some of us could not really connect with the characters as they lived difficult lives involving drug addiction, domestic violence, and deportation from the U.S. as the result of illegal entry into the country. Karen asked us if we were able to have coffee with one of the characters, which one would we choose? The consensus was Maria Isabel, the Cuban cigar-smoking grandmother and Antonio, who read Shakespeare to the cigar factory workers and was a stand-up guy.

How was the title related to the stories? Salt was mentioned in the context of sweat and tears. Some thought that the reference to salt was in its value, and

the phrase 'being worth your salt' came to mind. The women featured in the stories were strong and overcame adversity. These women had to make choices that shaped their lives.

The Warmth of Other Suns: The Epic Story of America's Great Migration by Isabel Wilkerson will be discussed on Saturday, August 14th at 9 am. A Zoom link will be sent by email to members the week of the book group meeting. All are welcome to join the discussion!

July 8th Board Meeting Highlights

President Shahla led the monthly board meeting held by Zoom on July 8th from 7 to 8:30 pm. Discussions included the financial reporting by Gail, California and national updates, status of special projects, a review of June events, and planning for upcoming branch events. As part of Gail's report, membership renewal status was discussed. Followup letters will be sent to non-renewing members as of July 8th. Welcome packets to familiarize new members with the Davis branch are in progress. The annual board planning retreat on August 7th to set goals and plans for 2021/22 was discussed. Board members were asked to send their priorities for the branch to help set the agenda.

Other business included scheduling upcoming events. Rhonda will lead the Celebrate the 19th on June 19th with a discussion on equity for women in sports. The August 19th theme is tea tasting with Annie, a UCD student organization graduate, pending the arrival of teas from Taiwan.

Due to time constraints, Shahla requested that status reports/updates for AAUW@UCD, book group, Interbranch Council, and UNA be sent by e-mail for inclusion in the board meeting minutes. The next Board meeting is scheduled by Zoom on August 11th from 7 to 8:30 pm.

July 2021 Celebrate the 19th Recap



The conversation starter for this Celebrate the 19th was the Olympics (starting later in the week) and “Women in Sports”. Questions to consider were “Are women treated equitably?” “Are women paid equitably?” “Is gender important in sports?”

The casual discussion was among Zoe, Alexandra, Stephanie, Rhonda, Verena, Laleh, and Juliana. Rhonda hosted, and gave us a recipe for a mock cocktail like a virgin Margarita. One uses Ritual Tequila (non-alcoholic) and lime and margarita mix.

Stephanie was excited to report that she had just finished swimming in the lane next to former fellow DJUSD teacher Cathy Carr West. This was an appropriate and happy coincidence, as Cathy won a gold medal in the 100-meter breaststroke (with a new world record time) at the 1972 Munich Olympics. That win automatically qualified Cathy for the U.S. 400-meter medley relay team that resulted in another gold medal.

While attending the University of New Mexico, Cathy was the first female athlete to receive an athletic scholarship under the provisions of Title IX of the Higher Education Act of 1972. (See discussion of Title IX below.)

In women’s soccer, social media and news report the inequity in salaries between men and women players. Quoting from a message two days later from Senator Feinstein about the Even Playing Field Act: *“Despite the fact that our women’s soccer team has outperformed the men’s team, generated more revenue, won 4 World Cup Championships and 4 Olympic gold medals and are ranked No. 1 in the world heading into the Olympics - female players receive just 38 cents for every dollar paid to their male counterparts.”*

The same is true for WNBA, women’s basketball. Disparities at the college level are also rampant. Besides the money issue, exercise equipment and quality of hotels and meals have also been unequal and unfair. In addition, women in

sports are more vulnerable to assault and sexual misconduct by coaches and assistants.

People's bodies are influenced by genetics and exercise. Some athletes naturally have more lactic acid, testosterone or workout changes (female athletes sometimes stop menstruating for months). We learned of a girl from India who ran exceptionally fast. In a race, she was disqualified after winning because her testosterone levels were very high (without supplements) and her levels were then used as a standard to exclude others. Males aren't questioned. Transgender athletes will be testing standard guidelines. How do we deal with this at the high school level, where kids are very fragile?

Some rules/rulings interfere with the Olympic idea of bringing people together. Pursuing a goal and physical work is important, and this is an outlet for people to get together. But some athletes seem like machines due to training and diet. The Olympics now seem to have a different purpose, and COVID restrictions severely limit mobility and interactions.

Zoe told us that males have issues, too. If a boy wants to be a gymnast, he is often taunted by others. Alexandra added, yes, in ballet also. But men often get scholarships and positions of leadership in the ballet organization. Both gymnastics and dance have natural body types which are an advantage (flexible hips and joints, long necks, high foot arches).

Rhonda made the point that she saw a softball team with great spirit defeat a more skilled Bobby Sox team. Not as much money was spent on high school girls' swimming, tennis, and stick hockey until Title IX. Mention of stick (field) hockey led Verena to interject an anecdote about her experience of coming to America in the fifties hand-carrying her hockey stick (called a Pakistan) when she stepped off the boat. She was interrogated at customs because of the stick due to its unfamiliarity in the U.S. at the time.

Should there be separate teams for boys and girls? Laleh suggested that if the sport is too rough, it's not a sport. She asked further about Title IX. Rhonda explained that it is legislation that gives equal opportunity in education without bias. An example is that now girls can take classes in auto or woodshop and boys can take home economics. In fact, AAUW took UCD to court over the

women's wrestling team being eliminated, and not the men's team. She also told Zoe and Alexandra that their suggestion to have more informal meetings was accomplished several years ago when Estelle showed students and members the DVD, "Rise of the Wahine", which was about the University of Hawaii's women's basketball team and their fight for Title IX rights. This was also an opportunity for some of the UCD students present to talk about harassment and pay inequity. Sometimes it's hard to know that something feels wrong and probably is, without clear evidence.

We talked about how females are sexualized or materialized, using aspects of cheerleading as an example.

When our time was up, we all agreed that this topic should be continued at a future meeting. Our special thanks to Zoe and Alexandra for drawing on their unique and varied experiences to add to the conversation.

UNA Updates



COP26

UN Peacekeeping and COP26 are likely not among topics you think about on a regular basis, or at all. Yet both are significant issues in daily UN operations and in climate change/action that affect us all with increasing urgency. Read on for a brief insight into these matters that involve UNA advocacy.

Background on UN peacekeeping issues.

As a founding member of the United Nations with veto power, the United States is instrumental in setting rates for dues payments. For over 25 years, the U.S. has imposed an **arbitrary cap** on our payments to UN Peacekeeping (no other nation has done so). By paying at 25 percent, instead of funding at the 27.8 percent rate we negotiated for and agreed to pay, the U.S. has currently accrued **more than \$1 billion dollars in arrears**. These shortfalls cause operational and financial hardships for the UN and for the countries that contribute peacekeeping troops (who may not get paid). Peacekeeping operations ensure that many countries help shoulder the burden, both by contributing troops and sharing the financial costs.

History

In the past, both Republican and Democratic administrations have occasionally lifted the cap, **on a one-year basis**. U.S. arrears increased significantly during the past four years when the cap was **not** lifted while crises multiplied around the world. **Our credibility has suffered as a consequence**. The Biden administration has taken action to remedy the situation and gradually pay the arrears.

Appeal to lift the cap on UN peacekeeping dues

On July 13th Representative Sara Jacobs (D-CA-53), along with Reps. Joaquin Castro (D-TX-20) and Karen Bass (D-CA-37), introduced **legislation that seeks to permanently lift the cap** so that the U.S. can pay its treaty-obligated dues in full and have our actions match our words. At the behest of our sister UN Foundation organization The Better World Campaign we as UNA members have urged Congressman Garamendi to sign on to become a co-sponsor of this bill. Because of bipartisan support in the past there is some hope that it will be possible to pass legislation to make the lift permanent.

We have been encouraged to schedule an in-district meeting with our Congressman or his staff to discuss this sole issue.

Note: The average American pays just \$1.86 each year in taxes to cover our country's regular budget dues to the UN.

What is COP26?

The **Conference of Parties**, known as COP, is the decision-making body responsible for monitoring and reviewing the implementation of the **United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change**. COPs have happened annually since 1995 and bring together 197 nations and territories – called Parties –that have signed on to the Framework Convention. In 2015 **COP21** was historic in its outcome, resulting in the **Paris Agreement**. Its central aim is to encourage countries to take action to keep global temperature rise in this century well below 2 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels, and to pursue efforts to limit the increase even further to 1.5 degrees Celsius. COP26 was originally scheduled for November 2020 but had to be postponed due to COVID-19 and will now take place in **Glasgow from November 1-12, 2021**. More than 30,000 delegates are expected to contribute to formal events while hundreds of thousands are expected to attend side events.

Why is COP26 important?

- This is the year when all countries are asked to submit their new long-term goals. Ambition to address the global climate emergency is expected to be high.
- COP26 will have to finish the work that COP25 was unable to conclude – setting out the rules for a carbon market between countries.
- From now onwards the implementation of the 2015 Paris Agreement will be the key driver of international climate action.

How does this affect us locally?

A growing group of UNA members representing three Western regions (the Mid Pacific, Northern CA and Hawaii, Southern CA and the Pacific Northwest, Oregon and Washington) has been working hard to plan a **virtual 3-hour UNA Western Regions Climate Forum** – tentatively called “Global Action: Too Little, Too Late?” – to be presented on **October 1**, exactly one month before the Glasgow COP26 starts, and preceded the week prior by an optional webinar explaining the details of COPs by individuals who have attended several of these gatherings over the years.

The various task teams are busy finding speakers of note, organizing the vast logistics of multiple panels, interviewing youth for short videos, and preparing a

“Declaration and Appeal for Action” specifically from this group that is expected to represent close to 30 UNA chapters and numerous partnering organizations. Our individual chapters will be urged to endorse the ultimate Declaration that will be presented to USA government executives and COP delegates, elected officials, and the media. This effort is unprecedented in drawing on the expertise and passion in the three Western U.S. regions of UNA toward a common expression of urgency for climate action.

A vision of the October 1 Forum by NorCal Division president Herb Behrstock whose brainchild this is states: “Our vision is about global/UN perspectives and the unique role of UNA. This Forum will hopefully differ from the many other ‘climate programs’ that are usually more narrowly focused, yet illuminate the urgent needs for global action and **the indispensable role of the United Nations** – as well as how this global perspective importantly relates to the Western USA. Augmented by our Declaration and Appeal for Action **we can demonstrate UNA’s key role as an advocacy movement.**”

The Forum will be accessible to the public. Mark your calendar for October 1! A website and details about registration for the virtual Forum are expected in the coming weeks.

Former Tech Trekkers: Where Are They Now?



Sisters Mia (Tech Trek 2013) and Zoe (Tech Trek 2015) Poppenga are both students at New York University (NYU). Mia is in a surgical technology program after earning an AS degree in Allied Health from Sacramento City College. Zoe is entering her sophomore year in the film program at the Tisch School of the Arts. Mom and branch member, Amy Kapatkin, says that she misses her daughters dearly and wonders whether they will ever want to return to California after living in exciting NYC.

(Pictured: Mia (left) and Zoe (right) are ready to start the 2021-22 academic year at NYU.)

Upcoming AAUW Webinars

Using their Community Action Grant, the Long Beach Branch will hold a workshop for women 5 to 10 years into their careers called ***“Designing Your Life and Career”*** on **Thursday, August 12th, 6 to 7:30 p.m.** on Zoom. Click [HERE](#) for more details and be sure to **register by Friday, Aug. 6th.**

“You’re in Charge. Now What? What Boards Need to Know” will be presented by President-Elect Sandi Gabe on **September 8th.** Registration information will be coming out soon. Visit the AAUW CA webinars page [HERE](#) for recordings of previous webinars.

AAUW California Updates

AAUW CA Public Policy Updates

AAUW California is co-sponsoring or watching 39 bills. 18 are still active; one dealing with childcare and education has been signed. AB92- a bill related to preschool and childcare services and fees that AAUW California is co-sponsoring, is now in Senate Appropriations. Of our initial list of 39 bills on which AAUW California took positions or is watching, one has been signed by the Governor (re-hiring employees displaced by the pandemic) and 18 are still active. Click [HERE](#) to see a detailed list of active bills.

AAUW California Seeking Communications Committee Members

From AAUW-CA:

If you've ever wondered what goes on at the state level, or if your talents match with our needs, or if you just plain want to learn something new, check out the open positions on our communications team! We are still looking for individuals with social media experience in LinkedIn, Instagram, Twitter, and/or Facebook to help AAUW California expand our reach and communicate our mission. There are other openings as well. Please take a look [HERE](#) to learn more about the positions and this committee's responsibilities. If you have any questions or want more information, please contact us at communications@aauw-ca.org.

BE AS ACTIVE AS YOU CAN, BUT STAY A MEMBER.