

NOVEMBER-DECEMBER 2022

# THE SPOKESWOMAN

<https://davis-ca.aauw.net>

## Davis Branch Annual Holiday Gathering

On Sunday, December 4, members and students happily, but cautiously, gathered at Estelle Shiroma's festively decorated home for an in-person meeting to enjoy an array of delicious refreshments.

Former Tech Trekker and AAUW@UCD 2023 President Sally Ho and UCD student Selina Carillo spoke about their work with the homeless population in the Sacramento area for The Willow Clinic, with a focus on the needs of women and girls. The Willow Clinic is one of more than 13 student-run clinics at UC Davis. Students perform administrative work (such as scanning paperwork and entering it into the system)

and hands on patient services ranging from intake, distribution of medication, and outreach services to the community, including free medical services every Saturday. UCD medical students administer medical services under the supervision of a licensed doctor.

Sally and Selina gave an excellent presentation with slides about the once-a-week program of The Willow Clinic, located in a space donated by the Salvation Army facility in Sacramento and totally run by student volunteers from UCD. They are supervised by professional advisors and are hoping to find an attorney to join the staff.

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## December-January Calendar

Sunday, December 4, 2 to 4 pm - Annual Holiday Gathering

Thursday, December 8, 7 pm - No Board meeting

Saturday, December 10, 9 am - Book group meeting postponed

Monday, December 19 - Celebrate the 19th (holiday hiatus)

Wednesday, December 21 - Deadline for AAUW Fund donations to Gail Johnson (see article)

Saturday, December 31 - Deadline for online AAUW Fund donations

Thursday, January 12, 7 pm - Board meeting

Saturday, January 14, 9 am - Book Group Meeting on Zoom

Thursday, January 19 - Celebrate the 19th (watch email)

Saturday, January 28 - Annual AAUW Fund Event (online)

## Davis Branch Annual Holiday Gathering Continued

The student volunteers set up the room every Saturday with chairs, tables, dividers and supplies and must then dismantle everything at the end of each session. They operate with a minimal grant of \$250 per year from the university, so they augment their budget by holding special fundraising events. For the Veterans Day Fair, for example, Sally spearheaded a coat drive for which AAUW Davis donated warm clothing.



The clients served by The Willow Clinic are unhoused, uninsured, or otherwise in need of help. Students also walk the area and do outreach. Most of the volunteers are bilingual, but the majority of the clients speak English, including immigrants. The volunteers listen, direct clients to services, make appointments, help with paperwork and transportation, and distribute supplies.

Students receive no credits, no stipend, no certificate – just the satisfaction and experience of doing good for people in need. Students join committees that interest them,

such as pharmacy, intake, outreach, dental, smoking cessation, supplies and transportation, diabetes information, health advocacy, mind and wellness (Sally), obstetrics/gynecology (OB/GYN) (Selina), ophthalmology and others.

While Selina's OB/GYN committee does not perform deliveries, they discuss and set up Pap and pregnancy tests, contraception, pelvic and breast exams, education for teens, care kits for menstrual needs, and care to improve self-image including manicures and being listened to in a non-male setting.

Both Sally and Selina spoke about learning, giving back, listening and giving up a few hours of their time to see someone else make major positive changes as a result. Both young women were wonderful representatives for The Willow Clinic and for student volunteerism at UCD.

The event was attended by UCD students Eva Wynn, outgoing AAUW@UCD President, and Toni Brady, UCD student and new AAUW intern. AAUW Branch President Stephanie DeGraff-Hunt and Board members Verena Borton, Gail Johnson, Rhonda Reed, Laleh Rastegarzadeh, Juliana Wells, and Estelle Shiroma were present along with member Cathy Tkach and guest Susan Collopy. Special thanks to co-host Rich for his help.

In the spirit of the season, monetary donations were collected to assist The Willow Clinic obstetrics/gynecology team. If you have suggestions for other organizations that might be able to support the work of The Willow Clinic, please contact Sally at [sasho@ucdavis.edu](mailto:sasho@ucdavis.edu)

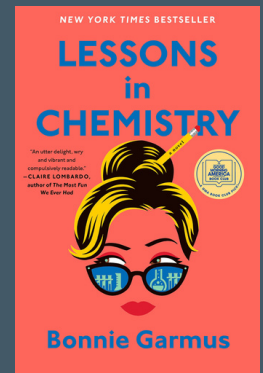
## October 8 Book Group Recap

Nine of us joined Zoom on a Saturday morning for an animated discussion of Bonnie Garmus' debut novel, "Lessons in Chemistry," written at age 64. Garmus, with a degree in English Literature from UC Santa Cruz, has worked widely in the fields of technology, medicine and education. The novel is set in the 1950s and Garmus considered the chemistry component the most challenging aspect of writing: "I could not consult Google – I had to learn from a 1950s chemistry book!" she commented. The impetus for writing this book came after a bad day at the office where she experienced the sexism that is the central theme in the life of the book's protagonist, Elizabeth Zott.

Elizabeth Zott is a gifted research chemist, an expert on abiogenesis whose scientific career advance has been ruined by sexist bosses and colleagues. As a feminist and modern thinker, she is self-assured and disdainful of social

conventions, including childrearing practices at the time. After a series of misfortunes (including the loss of her Nobel-nominated soul mate Calvin Evans, father of her daughter, as well as her research job), she becomes a successful TV host of a cooking show, "Supper at Six," a way to make a living and support her daughter Madeline. To make this employment bearable, Zott transforms the cooking lessons into chemistry demonstrations and uses them to empower the housewives in the audience to think for themselves and consider independence.

Even at the TV station and despite her popularity, she experiences the usual prejudice of the men in charge who turn down her suggestions and then often end up presenting her original ideas as their own. This particular phenomenon resonated very much with our group; many recounted similar instances, not only in the past but even extending to today. The general feeling was that men frequently were/are



"Whenever you start doubting yourself, whenever you feel afraid, just remember. Courage is the root of change and change is what we're chemically designed to do."

BONNIE GARMUS

## October 8 Book Group Recap Continued

aware of the sexist discrepancy in equity, but did/do nothing to rectify it and might still take credit for women's work.

Madeline is an incredibly bright child, reading and thinking far beyond her age and clearly following in her mother's footsteps. Seen as disruptive in the traditional school of the times, her mother encourages her to explore and be independent, even at a very young age. Her precociousness was considered a bit over the top by some of the readers.

One of the features that adds an unexpected and interesting voice to the story is the fact that Six-Thirty, Elizabeth's very clever dog, lets the reader know that he's learning an extensive vocabulary that appears in italics to add his observations

about what is going on. His view of humans and sensitivity to their needs is extraordinary. Six-Thirty is an important part of this unusual family. (Garmus has a dog named 99.)

An avid rower herself, the author makes rowing a significant and recurring theme that helps weave various segments of the story together. Another important facet is wit and humor. Many of us laughed a lot throughout the book, both about actual circumstances and about the language used to describe them, while for some the situations were too close to personally experienced reality to be funny.

This selection was appreciated by all and certainly dealt with many issues that are relevant to AAUW's mission.

## November 12 Book Group Meeting Recap

"The Personal Librarian" by Marie Benedict and Victoria Christopher Murray was discussed Saturday, November 12. The creative nonfiction novel is centered on Belle da Costa Greene (1879-1950), one of the most prominent librarians in American history who was in charge of the Morgan library for forty-three years.

Belle was genetically Black, but due to her light skin and her mother's decision to enter the family as white in the New York census, with obscure Portuguese relations to explain her slight tan, she "passed" as white in dress, demeanor and ambition, while not able to be seen with darker colored relatives. She was intelligent and well-educated, as were her relatives (her

**"It seems I'm saying  
aloud what they've  
only entertained in the  
privacy of their  
thoughts."**

MARIE BENEDICT

## November 12 Book Group Meeting Recap Continued

father was the first Black graduate of Harvard College). While at Princeton, Belle's love of Latin and the classics brought her in contact with the nephew of J. Pierpont Morgan who recommended her to his uncle for the position of librarian at his almost completed library. She began work there in 1905, organizing and vastly expanding Morgan's collection of rare books and manuscripts. Morgan respected her knowledge and ability to procure exceptional art and while domineering, he clearly recognized her as a literally beloved treasure, proudly introducing her to both New York and international society.

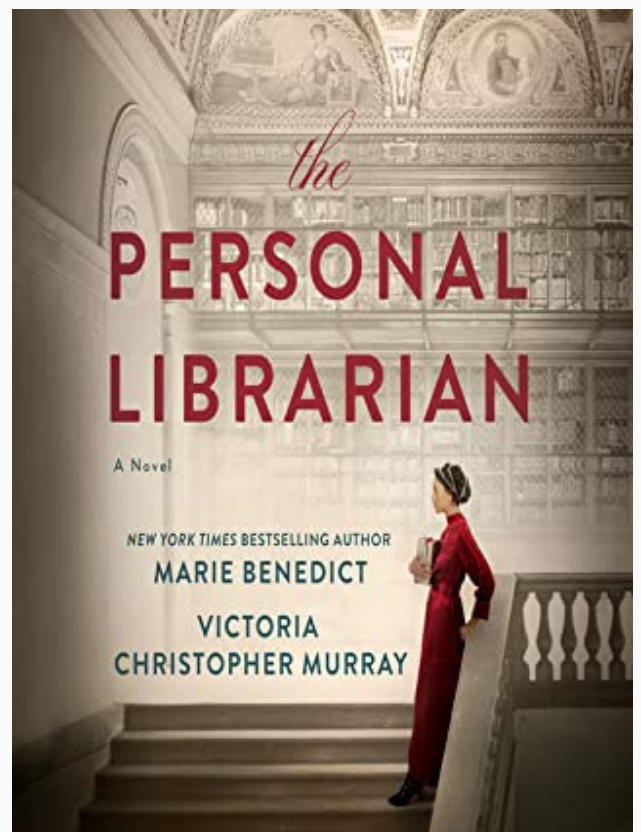
The language of the early 1900s, the description of dress and interiors of homes and ballrooms of the wealthy and famous set the tone of the novel. Written in the first person, the reader can sense Belle's feelings of apprehension, triumph, caution, regret, passion and perpetual fear that she will be "found out." The two authors, one Black and one white, seamlessly weave their interpretations together and are able to demonstrate the tensions and difficult decisions that daily confronted Belle as she analyzed her every action.

So as not to be seen as a threat to the wives of the rich, she had to act as an entertainer, a Peacock. On the home front, she was responsible for the economic wellbeing of her immediate family. In the office, she had to face the jealousy and suspicion of Morgan's daughter who was herself hiding a secret from society. In the art world, Belle had to fraternize with

powerful men who ultimately often lost deals because of her clever maneuvering. In the rare cases of romantic attractions, Belle was hindered by her knowledge that she could not risk bearing children.

Attendees for an animated discussion were Rose Mary Forehand, Rhonda Reed, Cathy Tkach, Karen Lemcke, Carolyn van Hoecke, Estelle Shiroma, Barbara Durst, Juliana Wells and Verena Borton.

The December 10 book group discussion was postponed to January 14 when we will discuss "Horse" by Geraldine Brooks. On February 11, we will discuss "The Book Woman's Daughter: A Novel" by Kim Michele Richardson. All are invited to join on second Saturdays at 9 a.m. on Zoom.



## October Celebrate the 19th

Davis and Woodland AAUW branches were honored to have Marty West, professor emerita of law at the UC Davis School of Law share her insights and knowledge about the Supreme Court decision *Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health Organization* at our October Celebrate the 19th virtual gathering. Marty began on an optimistic note given the fact that 59% of voters in Kansas voted to uphold abortion rights this past summer. To top that off women registered to vote has increased by 20%, so if this momentum continues positive outcomes for upholding abortion rights might be expected.

In preparation for our gathering, Marty read the lengthy Supreme Court Justice Alito's majority opinion for *Dobbs v. Jackson*. In the landmark decision *Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health Organization* the Supreme Court held that the Constitution of the United States does not confer a right to abortion. The court's decision overruled both *Roe v. Wade* (1973) and *Planned Parenthood v. Casey* (1992), giving individual states the full power to regulate any aspect of abortion not preempted by federal law.

The *Dobbs v. Jackson* case honed in on the constitutionality of a 2018 Mississippi state law that banned most abortion operations after the first 15 weeks of pregnancy. Mississippi's only abortion

clinic, Jackson Women's Health Organization, sued Mississippi state health officer Thomas E. Dobbs in March 2018. Lower courts had prevented enforcement of the law with preliminary injunctions based on the ruling in *Planned Parenthood v. Casey*, which had prevented states from banning abortion before fetal viability, generally within the first 24 weeks and on the basis that a woman's choice for abortion during that time is protected by the Due Process Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution.

(A link to the Supreme Court's decision is below.)

[https://s3.documentcloud.org/documents/22067237/19-1392\\_6j37.pdf](https://s3.documentcloud.org/documents/22067237/19-1392_6j37.pdf)

Throughout the entire opinion Marty noted that Justice Alito only mentioned women once or twice and never discussed women's rights. The planning for bringing about this recent decision has been in the works for a long time. The Federalist Society founded in 1982 has had a significant long term impact on the formation of a conservative court majority, which in turn opened up the possibility for overturning *Roe v. Wade*. Marty ended on an optimistic note based on the historical effect that popular sentiment had on FDR's Supreme Court between 1937-1945 when they reversed many of their previous stances on FDR's New Deal.

## November Celebrate the 19th

A very small group met on Zoom for a free-ranging discussion, comparing notes on Covid cases and remedies while hardly mentioning election results at all. Marti Abbott will talk about her volunteer work with [Chispa](#) and her travels in Honduras in 2023.

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### Fundraising/Yard Sale a Success

One of the favorite fundraisers for the AAUW Davis branch is the annual yard sale held in the front yard of Rhonda's historic home in the Old East Davis neighborhood. The yard sale is held annually, at the end of October, with the idea that students are likely to be looking for the perfect items to add to their new living space. Items up for sale run the gamut from kitchen utensils, cutlery, mixing bowls, glassware, complete set of dishes, to pots and pans, toasters, and tea kettles. Other items may include jewelry, tools, bicycles, scooters, clothes, vases, art work, fancy wool, books, baby cribs, garden tools, and even more unusual items. Great conversations are shared over the delicious homemade bake sale items that members made the night before and connections are made with people who inquire about AAUW.

Much appreciation goes out to everyone who contributed items and worked on October 22nd to help make the yard sale a great experience. We are especially thankful for the work of the 7 am early set up team; Juliana, Ken, and Barbara Bowers. Eva, our AAUW@UCD president, came shortly afterwards to help with preparations and

ended up facilitating Venmo transactions. Rhonda's enthusiastic neighbor children, middle schoolers Eden and Zeke Beeman, made an early morning appearance. They livened up everyone's spirits as they quickly expanded their support from purchasing baked goods to helping with staging, pricing items, and guiding shoppers to the perfect items. Gail was on deck to collect money. Estelle displayed the quilt donated by Marti Abbott to raise Tech Trek scholarship funds. Verena arrived with tables and yarn, baked goodies, and books. Stephanie, Laleh, and Shahla worked to engage potential buyers and smile with every sale. It was a treat to have such a wide age range of people helping out at the yard sale.

Rhonda enjoyed watching items she had donated being enthusiastically purchased by their thrilled new owner saying, "You don't get to see that when you just donate items to a charity." Rhonda especially recalls the delighted expression of the fellow who bought Shahla's 4-slot toaster. "He had great plans for what he would be cooking!" Stephanie also remembers his pleased expression as he hugged the toaster in his arms along with a

# Fundraising/Yard Sale a Success Continued

number of excellently selected kitchen items. Shahla expressed similar sentiments when she watched many of her items find a new home. "It is always easier for me to give away things I feel attached to when I know who is taking them home." Many of us are also happy to know that beautiful things from our homes will be enjoyed by someone else having them in their home.

For all the time and effort that go into staging the yard sale we really don't raise a great deal of funds, but on the other hand it is thoroughly enjoyable to have the time and opportunity to chat and socialize with each other. The camaraderie and banter that went on between all

of us helping at the yard sale did not go unnoticed by women who added their names to the list of prospective members. The people who dropped by left feeling welcomed and appreciated as at least one of us always engaged in conversations with them and assisted in locating potential purchases.

At the end of the day, we boxed up unsold items into Juliana's SUV and squeezed the doors shut as she headed off to donate the remainder to Goodwill and the library. The yard sale raised more than \$300 for branch projects and Tech Trek scholarships. All said, a job well done!

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## UNA Update

### United Nations Day

United Nations Day (October 24) marks the entry into force in 1945 of the United Nations Charter. On October 31, 1947, the General Assembly declared by Resolution that UN Day be devoted to raising awareness of the goals and achievements of the organization and gaining support for its work. The cornerstone of the UN Permanent Headquarters was laid on UN Day in 1949. In 1971 the General Assembly recommended that UN Day be observed as a public holiday by all Member States. (The U.S. does not recognize October 24 as a public holiday.)

On October 18 the Davis City Council presented a formal Proclamation for UN Day and UNICEF Observation Week 2022 signed by all Council members, accepted by UNA members Jennifer Holman and Verena

Borton. The UN flag was flown below the U.S. and California flags on October 24 – unfortunately not a very windy day.

Many UNA chapters in the region offered programs in honor of UN Day focused on the theme “Nourishing Peace” and centered on pertinent Sustainable Development Goals.





# UNA Update Continued

## IGMUN

As announced in previous Spokeswoman editions, UNA-USA nationally organized an Intergenerational Model UN simulation offered on zoom on the Friday preceding UN Day. Participating was an all-day commitment, but well worth the time. Verena was assigned to the World Food Programme Committee as the delegate from Ethiopia. A group of delegates including those representing Chile, China, Venezuela, Yemen, Ukraine, the U.S., Australia, Zimbabwe, Ethiopia and several other nations were tasked with formulating resolutions to address “Food Insecurity in Yemen.” After an excellent background presentation by a WFP official, the group engaged in lively discussion (based on extensive research for each nation) on how to tackle the issue. Two strands of recommendations evolved: one favoring immediate humanitarian assistance and the other favoring long-term solutions for sustainable development.

Within a strict time limit and with official directions, the two groups developed - with considerable detail and passion and compromise - resolutions to submit. All the editing was done online during the process.

As an example, the following point was contributed by Ethiopia and partially incorporated into the final statement favoring humanitarian assistance:

- The delegate representing Ethiopia calls attention to the fact that Yemen and Ethiopia face the same issue of severe food insecurity for millions, especially women and children, affected by devastating conflicts in which starvation is used as a weapon of war.
- UN Resolution 2417 addresses the link between hunger and conflict and gives the humanitarian world a wider framework under which to operate.
- Ethiopia urges stronger application of Resolution 2417 to ensure that the World Food Programme can deliver food assistance where most needed in Yemen, regardless of military conflict.”

Stepping into the shoes of ambassadors to the UN gives participants a sense of the difficult task of representing a country’s rather than a personal view, as well as the delicate negotiations required for arriving at a workable solution.

## COP 27

While many of us will no doubt be focused on the outcome of the midterm elections, the world’s focus from November 6-18 will turn to Sharm al-Sheikh, Egypt, where the 27th UN Climate Change Conference of the Parties (COP) will be held.

Countries attending COP will determine, plan and regularly report on their climate change adaptations through their (non-binding) Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) that outline their work towards targets for emission reductions and other measures described in the Paris Agreement. Nations will be expected to update and report on their NDCs before COP27.

# AAUW CA Updates

## AAUW Fund Events and Save the Date

AAUW Fund Events featuring fellow and grant recipients who received funding to pursue further education or fund community projects were held online during October and November. If you missed these virtual meetings, recordings are available [HERE](#). Learn how your fund donations are changing the world.

The Davis branch is facilitating the selection of speakers for the annual AAUW Capital Counties Interbranch Council (IBC) event to be held online on **January 28, 2023** from 10 am to noon. Please save the date and watch your email for details to be sent soon.

Those wishing to make **year-end donations to the AAUW Fund** may send contributions by check payable to AAUW to Gail Johnson by December 21. Gail's address is 955 Wyatt Lane, Winters, CA 95694. Donations may also be made [online](#) by December 31.

### November 8th was a Good Day for Women!

*Kathleen Harper, Director, Public Policy Committee Chair, [publicpolicy@aauw-ca.org](mailto:publicpolicy@aauw-ca.org)*

The election is finally over and overall, AAUW members can be pretty happy with the results. Here are a few highlights:

- One woman was added to each house of Congress: the U.S. House of Representatives and the U.S. Senate, bringing the numbers to 124 (H) and 25 (S).
- Of the total of 149, 54 are women of color.
- With Nancy Pelosi stepping down as Speaker of the House, we lost the most powerful woman's voice in government, but still have a woman on the minority leadership team, Minority Whip Katherine Clark.
- Governors of 12 states are now women.
- 23% of all mayors across the nation are women, including our brand new and first woman mayor of Los Angeles, Karen Bass.
- 32 women won seats in the California Legislature (total confirmed 44, 3 pending)
- All executive positions in California except Governor are filled by women, including Secretary of State, Lieutenant Governor, Treasurer, and Controller.
- Proposition 1 prevailed and women's right to control their own reproductive choices is now enshrined in our constitution.

The state Public Policy Committee thanks each and every AAUW California member who voted, who assisted in our Voter Education (VE) campaign by spreading our messages on social media, who took the pledge to vote for Prop 1 (we had 437 sign up!), and who worked within their branches to do their own VE events.

**Next challenge:** Let's add California to that list of states with a woman governor! Together we can – and will – change the world!

On December 1st, Kathleen Harper made a presentation for the California Online Branch on the election results. The recording of the presentation is posted on the website [HERE](#).

# AAUW CA Updates Continued

## AAUW California YouTube Channel

AAUW California reached the milestone of attracting 100 people to subscribe to our [YouTube channel](#). Our YouTube channel is a repository for dozens of our videos. In addition to our webinar recordings which are available on our website, there are submissions from branch events, videos of Tech Trek speakers and camper presentations, helpful training videos, and more. Click the link above or go to YouTube and enter “AAUW California” in the search bar.

## Membership

### Women with a Why. Let’s Grow!

*Written by | Marsha Swails, Membership Committee Chair, [membership@aauw-ca.org](mailto:membership@aauw-ca.org)*

Can you share why you are an AAUW member in a succinct and joyful way? This last weekend I met with the Southeast Interbranch Council in the Inland Empire. A lively meeting focused on how to grow our membership. Someone asked a straightforward and sincere question. “Where do we find new members?” I related my own story of how I found AAUW after retiring from a forty-year career in Minnesota. I knew no one here. I missed my friends, my Minnesota family, and all the familiar changes the seasons brought. I finally joined a health club’s aqua aerobics class. After a couple of sessions, while changing in the locker room, I met another retired woman from Atlanta who moved here after a long career at CNN. Her warmth meant so much. Our transition was so similar. She described an AAUW discussion group that met monthly near her home. She invited me to attend the next meeting. Hungry for new friends, I agreed. The moment I walked into that bright house, I felt at home. Twenty women were gathered happily talking and laughing in the kitchen. Later we began the discussion on an issue affecting the lives of women. Someone else invited me to a branch meeting. The same warmth. The same energy. I joined AAUW.

Where do we find new members? Anywhere. It could be in line at Rite Aid, at the DMV, or at a farmer’s market (or in a state of undress at a health club!) The key is enthusiastically sharing how AAUW gives your life purpose and meaning. Do you have the elevator speech down?

## Quick Tips for Things to Try

Join the “Nextdoor” app for your local community. Invite your neighbors to an AAUW activity or celebration. Focus on newly retired women who might be looking for friends or a new opportunity to volunteer. When someone responds to your post, reach out. Meet at a coffee shop. Invest in that person. Let’s grow!

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