

APRIL 2023

THE SPOKESWOMAN

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

Davis Branch Board Election on April 10 - Please Vote!

The election of the 2023-24 board will take place in person at the upcoming annual branch meeting at Steve's Pizza. Pizza will be provided by the branch; drinks and other items (salad, dessert) can be purchased at one's own expense. At this meeting, the Named Gift Honoree will also be announced.

When: Monday, April 10th at 5:30 pm

Where: Steve's Pizza 314 F St, Davis, CA 95616

[Click here
to register!](#)

If you will not be attending the meeting, click on the link below to vote in the election. All online votes must be cast by Monday, April 10th at 5:30 PM!

[E-BALLOT](#)

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April Calendar

April 5 to May 15 (ends at 2 pm PDT): AAUW
National Election

Saturday, April 8 at 9 am: Book Group
Meeting via Zoom

Monday, April 10 at 5:30 pm: Annual
Business Meeting (no Board Meeting in
April)

Friday, April 14 at 11 am: Webinar, Enslaved
Women and Their Remarkable Fight for
Freedom in Revolutionary America

Tuesday, April 18 at 4:00 pm: DEI Webinar,
Anti-Racism - Let's Own It! (see article)

Wednesday, April 19: Celebrate the 19th
(Amendment) TBD - watch email

Saturday, April 22 at 9 am: AAUW Annual
Event via Zoom

April 22 to May 13 (ends at midnight PDT):
AAUW CA Election - Public Policy Priorities

Board Member Profiles

STEPHANIE DEGRAFF-HUNT,
Candidate for President

Through connections in the Davis community I became a member of AAUW Davis Branch. It all began when my neighbor across the street, who had been one of Estelle's college roommates in Hawaii, hosted a lovely gathering. There I met both Estelle and Rhonda who were very interested to learn that I was teaching in the Spanish Immersion Program in Davis, because they both had a good friend who was also an elementary teacher in the school district. As it turned out their friend, Gail Johnson, was my former next door neighbor. Both Estelle and Rhonda were excited to tell me that along with Gail they were AAUW members deeply engaged in planning the upcoming AAUW STEM Tech Trek Camp. They suggested that since math and science were such an important part of my curriculum, wouldn't it be grand to be part of the AAUW Davis Branch Tech Trek team? Plus, given the fact that my mother had always been an AAUW member, it just had to be the perfect fit.

I became a member of AAUW at the celebratory September potluck in Juliana's backyard where the High School Mariachi group played, while the recent Tech Trekkers, their proud parents, and AAUW members mingled enjoying an amazing variety of delicious Sushi selections, ham, fruit, and desserts. The grand finale was hearing about the four Tech Trek experiences.

I continued to meet more Davis AAUW members at Celebrate the Nineteenth events, the annual business meetings, became a board member at large, attended a special AAUW celebration for Equal Pay in April of 2019 at the State Capitol with Rhonda and student members, volunteered at Tech Trek Camp, coordinated the 2019 International Festival booth for AAUW, and helped with the December Donation events.



Covid hit, we moved into the online meeting world, and continued to expand our technology competence. I interviewed UCD interns and speaker candidates for the IBC Luncheon and Annual meetings and discovered the book group via Zoom where I enjoy being an engaged participant with this interbranch group of Davis, Vacaville, and Woodland AAUW members.

Public Policy is an area that I feel is key to AAUW's mission. Last year I participated in Lobby Day via Zoom with a team made up of AAUW members from Napa and Sonoma. This year I participated with Sally Ho, our UCD Branch president, and Patrice Lyn from Morgan Hill, at an in person Lobby Day advocacy experience, which was an even more powerful way to advocate our values and message through the California Assembly and Senate. We met with Sulema, a lovely staff member, for Cecilia Aguiar-Curry who represents Assembly District 4 to advocate for the three key bills that AAUW California supports.

It is an honor to serve as President of the Davis Branch of AAUW. I continue to learn more about effective outreach and leadership thanks to the team work of the board members and UCD interns. Expanding AAUW's connections with the United Nations Association, the UCD student group and creating a more visible presence in our community is my goal.

Board Member Profiles

GAIL JOHNSON, Candidate for Board Treasurer

I have been a member of AAUW Davis since 1974 when I moved to Davis with family. I am a mother of two grown sons. In 2021, I moved to Winters where I live with youngest son Nick, his partner Cheree, Patrick(6), and Nathaniel (3) in a busy household.

I taught for 40 years, 26 of those as a first grade teacher at Pioneer school, retired since 2010. I have always maintained my AAUW membership and served the branch as newsletter editor, membership VP, President, and financial officer since the mid 90s. I believe finances require continuity and would love to train someone to take over.



LESLIE RUBIN, Candidate for Board Secretary

Leslie joined AAUW in 2010, and has been the Branch Secretary for AAUW Davis for the last five years. She is very involved with Tech Trek, and was a camp nurse for the UC Davis camp. Additionally, she has organized our annual evening Celebrating Women in STEM, and works supervising our branch interns. The benefits of AAUW for young women and girls is what draws and maintains Leslie's interest with AAUW Davis.

Outside of AAUW, Leslie works as a Nurse Anesthetist at Kaiser South Sacramento. She is married and has 2 kids (ages 2 and 5). They all keep busy outdoors, cooking, exercising and managing life with kids. Leslie also works closely with graduate students from her Anesthesia program, and is engaged with both of her children's schools. She looks forward to another great year with AAUW Davis!



Board Member Profiles Continued

RHONDA REED, Candidate for Board Member-at-Large

AAUW has been an important part of Rhonda's life, growing up with a mother who was the first in her family to attend college. She joined AAUW in 1979 and is a lifetime member, following in the steps of her mother who was also a lifetime member. AAUW has been Rhonda's connection to community and supportive women throughout her career as a Fisheries Biologist (now retired) in a male-dominated profession. AAUW also provided many leadership development opportunities that supported her career development from a strictly technical role to a managerial role in her profession. Rhonda has served the branch in a variety of roles, including the longest running President/Executive Officer terms. She currently serves on the board as a member-at-large and represents the Davis Branch on the Capital Counties Interbranch Council (IBC). Rhonda enjoys exploring different points of view through the branch's book group discussions and programs featuring guest speakers. As a scientist, she is especially excited about the Davis Branch's involvement in Tech Trek and the "Evening Exploring Women in STEM Careers" targeted at middle school girls. Rhonda has supported the Tech Trek camp at UCD from its inception in 2011 and she and Leslie have hosted the Junior Counselors the night before the first day of camp. During the 2022-23 year, Rhonda wants to continue to support girls through the Branch's involvement in the Tech Trek program, to recruit new members, and to support the UCD AAUW Student Organization.



ESTELLE SHIROMA, Candidate for Board Member-at-Large

Estelle joined AAUW in 2013, became a lifetime member in 2017 (after attending an inspirational AAUW national conference in Washington, D.C.), and joined the Legacy Circle in 2019. She is currently a board member-at-large, the branch liaison for the UC Davis AAUW student organization, Spokeswoman co-editor, and an active book group member. Estelle is the 2023 UC Davis Tech Trek Camp Volunteer Coordinator and will seek participation from local and regional branch members to assist with camp setup and break down, registration, and daily events. During the 2023-24 year, she wants to continue her role as branch liaison to the AAUW UCD students. She believes that if we can inspire and instill the values of AAUW in our students at campuses across the country, AAUW can grow its younger membership. Her other interests are diversity, equity, and inclusion and enhancing our branch affiliation with the United Nations Association (UNA)-USA, Davis Chapter.



Estelle has an academic background in public health (environmental health), environmental science, and engineering. She is an environmental consultant in the private sector with a specialization in human health and ecological risk assessment. In addition to the AAUW Davis branch board, Estelle serves on the boards of two nonprofit organizations and is a scientific advisory board member for a professional organization.

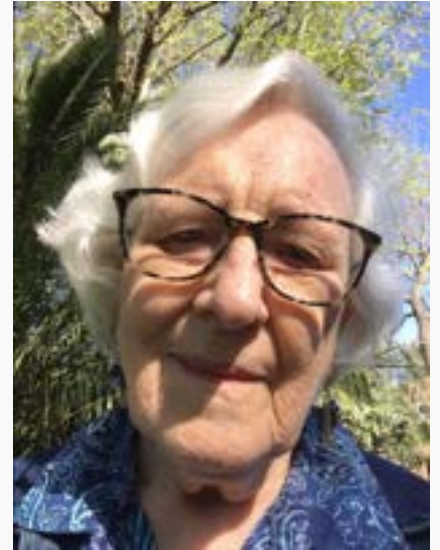
Board Member Profiles Continued

VERENA BORTON, Candidate for Board Member-At-Large

I grew up in the Netherlands and since immigrating to the U.S. in 1957, I have also lived in Mexico (doing research for a village study as part of my graduate studies), Ethiopia (during Ray's assignment through Stanford Research Institute) and the Philippines (on assignment with the Agricultural Development Council). I was on the Montana State University staff training Peace Corps volunteers for Ecuador, did occupational therapy work through art in a pediatric hospital in Addis Ababa, and taught in local schools in the Philippines.

Davis has been home since 1977. I taught English as a Second Language to students in grades K-6 at North Davis Elementary until 2004 and am continuing my 35 year role as weaving instructor at Davis Arts Center. As a professional weaver I am also a longtime member of the Artists' Collaborative Gallery in Old Sacramento.

I joined AAUW in 2012 after the former Davis League of Women Voters, where I served as board member, was dissolved. As a board member for AAUW I function as the liaison to the local chapter of the United Nations Association, UNA-USA, and UN matters in general. AAUW is one of the original NGOs present at the signing of the UN Charter in San Francisco in 1945. Over the years, AAUW has co-sponsored many Davis UNA programs for the annual International Women's Day and United Nations Day, while also supporting the local UNA chapter's traditional Human Rights Day celebration and UNICEF campaigns. The AAUW-UNA partnership flourishes because the two organizations share many of the same values, not the least of which is gender equality (UN Sustainable Development Goal #5). I regularly attend our monthly AAUW Book Group and Celebrate the Nineteenth gatherings and assist with editing the Spokeswoman.



JULIANA WELLS, Candidate for Board Member-at-Large

I taught grades 3-6 in Woodland for 30 years. Then I joined AAUW. As a member, I was Membership Chair, Secretary, and President for two terms. I also ran the CHOICES program, a mother-6th grade daughter group for discussing school and social relationships and actions. I was the Spokeswoman Editor and have been involved with Tech Trek for years.



Board Member Profiles Continued

LALEH RASTEGARZADEH, Candidate for Board Member-at-Large

In 2018, I was introduced to Davis AAUW by my boss, Ms. Shahla Farahnak, who has been a mentor throughout my career and life. The amazing women in AAUW taught me that an activist at heart can become a leader and influencer in society. I am motivated by the strong women who have been fighting for women's equity and empowerment at any capacity in the community – as a mother, teacher, scientist, artist, leader. I am inspired by the young AAUW board members and students who are creative and passionate about sharing their ideas to expand AAUW's programs. As a board member-at-large, I will focus my energy on partnerships with other organizations such as the United Nations Association-U.S.A. (UNA-USA) and Rotary clubs to create a synergy for achieving our common goals. Supporting girls to attend the Tech Trek camp is indeed one of the greatest accomplishments of the Davis branch. However, more girls, especially from disadvantaged communities, should have access to similar experiences as the Tech Trek camp and other extracurricular activities. I am hoping that partnerships with other organizations can create these opportunities for more students in our community.



Laleh is an Environmental Engineer working for the State Water Resources Control Board. She is passionate about nature, diversity, and inclusion. She loves listening to songs in languages that she can't understand and dancing folk dances from any region in the world. She is a member of the UNA-USA Davis Chapter and the Davis Sunset Rotary Club.

ALEXANDRA VIGIL, Candidate for Board Member-at-Large

Alexandra graduated from the University of California, Davis in 2021 with a degree in International Relations. While at UC Davis, she interned for the AAUW Davis Branch - where she assisted with the monthly newsletter. With the support of the Davis Branch, Alexandra had the opportunity to attend the National Conference for College Women Student Leaders (NCCWSL), which focused on career building, financial management, self-reflection, and leadership. She became a member of AAUW Davis in 2021. As a board member, she looks forward to offering new ideas to recruit younger members, interacting with the AAUW@UCD student organization to promote collaboration, and providing a voice for the next generation of AAUW members.



Board Member Profiles Continued

SHAHLA DARAGHI FARAHNAK, Candidate for Board Member-at-Large

I graduated from University of California Davis with a Masters Degree in Chemical Engineering and following a few years of working for consulting firms I joined the California Environmental protection Agency. There I worked at the State Water Resources Control Board for almost 30 years prior to retiring in October 2021 from my last position as an Assistant Deputy Director in the Division of Water Quality overseeing statewide Groundwater Protection Programs.

I joined AAUW Davis over nine years ago and throughout these years as a member, board member, co-executive officer, and president I have been truly inspired and motivated by the passion of our members and dedication of the board members. I truly appreciate the value of being part of AAUW community and would like to continue to support the mission of the organization as an active board member.

I plan to focus my energy on promoting mentorship opportunities for the new generation of future leaders. I have been inspired and impressed by the transformation of TechTrek campers attending a week long summer camp in Davis. I have been moved and have come to appreciate hearing the stories of the speakers who have benefited from AAUW support and scholarships as they shared their life experiences and career achievements at the annual inter ranch meetings and other AAUW sponsored events. These encounters, along with my own deep interest in mentoring is the basis of my desire to prioritize mentorship opportunities for our young women in college if I am confirmed by the membership to serve as a board member. I look forward to being part of another exciting and rewarding year for the Davis branch and AAUW as a whole.



Recap of March 11 Book Group discussion of “Demon Copperhead”

Cathy Tkach, Juliana Wells, Verena Borton

The March 11 Book Group gathering for a discussion of “Demon Copperhead” by Barbara Kingsolver was led by Cathy Tkach. Participating in the discussion were Karen Lemcke, Rose Mary Forehand, Carolyn Van Hoecke, Stephanie DeGraff-Hunt, Estelle Shiroma, Juliana Wells, Barbara Durst and Verena Borton.

Set in the late 1990s in rural Appalachia, the 445 page novel follows Demon Copperhead from birth (literally) to his early twenties. Kingsolver kept in mind “David Copperfield” by Charles Dickens as a template and it is interesting how many names she used that were almost, but not quite, identical to the names of Dickens’ characters.

Just as Dickens used his book to explore the issues of child labor, work houses, poverty and orphans so Kingsolver likewise uses her book to explore social issues including foster care, child labor, poverty, derelict schools, athletic success, drug addiction, disastrous loves, heartrending losses and becoming a victim despite having choices, highlighting critical needs in today’s society. The group was grateful for the sense of Mark Twain humor the author wove in to alleviate the darkest chapters – the story was basically sad and discouraging, but the distinctive positive or negative traits and unpredictability of the main characters often encouraged laughter.

We liked how well Kingsolver created the “I” voice narrator of Demon Copperhead with authentic vocabulary. He basically told his story chronologically, but often looked back at a previous incident or ahead to something that hadn’t happened yet, in this way clarifying sequences or simply piquing our curiosity. His resilience in miserable situations was admirable and the responsibilities he had to take on at a young age startling, while his strong attachment to the land of his birth, its people and the beauty of nature is remarkably endearing.

The large number of intergenerational individuals and families (too many to detail here) that were part of Demon’s story were difficult to sort out at first, but by the end of the book all the connections made perfect sense because each had played a significant role in his childhood, adolescence and young adult life.

Kingsolver concludes her acknowledgments at the end of the book with these words: *“For the kids who wake up hungry in those dark places every day, who’ve lost their families to poverty and pain pills, whose caseworkers keep losing heir files, who feel invisible, or wish they were: this book is for you.”*

Recap of March 11 Book Group discussion of “Demon Copperhead” Continued

Our discussion of Appalachian societal needs led us to touch on actions we as a branch or as individuals have taken to address needs in our region. In recent years our branch has officially supported the Yolo Crisis Nursery, Empower Yolo, The Pantry at UCD, Make it Happen, Sahaya International (headquartered in Davis) and The Willow Clinic. Our annual yard sale helps to recycle items and keeps them from the landfill. (Sorting through trash for landfill was one of Demon’s jobs as a foster youngster, so this mention brings us full circle back to the story.)

Recap of April 8 Book Group discussion

Juliana Wells

Although “The Spanish Daughter” by Ecuadorean-born Lorena Hughes was touted as an engrossing, captivating mystery – even as a lyrical and nuanced study of family and belonging – recommended for book groups, our group of six participants (Barbara Durst, Verena Borton, Carolyn Van Hoecke, Stephanie DeGraff-Hunt, Estelle Shiroma and Juliana Wells) was uniformly disappointed with this book, especially as we compared it to our last selection. While Barbara Kingsolver’s “Demon Copperhead” was so carefully crafted and beautifully written, this book by Hughes served as an example of poor craftsmanship, too many undeveloped characters, uneven writing and mislabeled historical fiction. We were unable to express praise for this book beyond the fact that it was inexpensive and a quick read.

Those of us who had traveled in Ecuador or had previously studied Ecuadorian history found no matches with reality in the author’s settings. The prominence of cacao in Ecuador’s economy was generally unfamiliar and the absence of technology to produce cacao into chocolate seemed contradictory. The author’s suggestion that the blight that devastated the cacao plantations toward the end of the story (not described in detail) was perhaps symbolic of the end of colonialism did not convince us.

While comparing male and female roles in society in the early twentieth century was basically an interesting idea, the female protagonist’s efforts to convincingly impersonate a man over a long period of time without being discovered were a stretch.

The May and June book selections are about two inspiring women with careers in media. On May 13, the book group will discuss “Cokie: A Life Well Lived” authored by her husband, Steven V. Roberts. The June 10 selection is “Listen, World!: How the Intrepid Elsie Robinson Became America’s Most-Read Woman” by Julia Scheeres and Allison Gilbert.

The book group meets by Zoom on the second Saturday of the month at 9 a.m. All are welcome to join the discussion.

March 19th Celebration of Spring Equinox, Persian New Year – Nowruz

Verena Borton

A happy and fun gathering to celebrate Nowruz – the Persian New Year – was arranged on March 19th at the Cannery Ranch House by board member Laleh Rastegarzadeh and her mother Salehe, who is visiting from Tehran. After welcoming about fifty attendees, Laleh explained how the Spring Equinox is observed as New Year (Nowruz) by more than 300 million people in countries that were once part of the Persian Empire.

A traditional Iranian Nowruz display called “Haft seen” and an Afghani traditional display called “Haft meeve” (seven fruits) had been set up. The Iranian Nowruz display included seven symbolic items, all starting with the letter S in Farsi: apple, garlic, vinegar, wheat sprouts, somac, colored eggs, coins, hyacinth, mirror and candle. The Afghani display included fresh and dried fruits, nuts, sweets and Afghani sweet bread.

Laleh described the symbolic meaning of items in the display and invited friends from Afghanistan, Turkmenistan and Kyrgyzstan to explain how they celebrate the Persian New Year in their countries. She also introduced different organizations in Davis and their members who were present. She invited leaders of some of the organizations to briefly explain their group’s contributions to the community. Groups represented were AAUW, Sahaya International, Davis Sunset Rotary and UNA-USA.

By far the largest group in the room consisted of Afghani girls (and one young boy), their mothers and a chaperone from West Sacramento. In discussing the schooling and experiences of the girls, Juliana discovered that many had recently participated in Inspire-Tech, a robotics program developed by former AAUW member Parto Aram. Through assisting with that class, Laleh had met the girls and their mothers.

The girls, wearing their colorful traditional dresses, introduced themselves and recited a song named “Sarzamin-e-man” (My Land) in English, followed by singing it in Dari. They also performed a cultural dance with authentic music. Laleh then invited us all to join in and dance; some of us did so more reluctantly than many others - including Laleh and 5-year old Mohammed - who danced with abandon and obvious joy.

March 19th Celebration of Spring Equinox, Persian New Year – Nowruz Continued

Salehe served tea and encouraged all to sample the variety of sweets that she and Laleh had baked, set out on festive tables decorated with fresh flowers (that at the end of the afternoon found a home with the Afghan families). When not dancing or nibbling goodies, guests moved around to visit with old friends and to make new friends. Verena, for whom English originally was not her first language and who taught ESL in elementary school for many years, enjoyed chatting with the Afghan girls who had been here long enough to have a good command of English, as well as with recent arrivals who could not yet say much in their new language. One 9th - grader explained that she has a hard time learning English at that level, but smiles made up for the lack of vocabulary and the atmosphere was filled with goodwill, friendship and the joy of sharing cultures.

Estelle had brought the beautiful quilt made by Marti Abbott (to raise funds for branch projects) that will be raffled off in September and some took the opportunity to purchase some raffle tickets. With so much handmade clothing in the room, there was true appreciation for Marti's handiwork.

Leslie with daughter Margo, Alexandra and AAUW intern Cristele had already left when this picture was taken of the remaining AAUW members: Stephanie, Laleh, Estelle, Juliana and Verena (right to left) behind the Haft seen.



Let us wish that this joyful gathering to greet the Persian New Year while connecting with new and old friends serves as a hopeful sign for times to come. Tashakor, Laleh, for putting it all together.

March 19th Celebration of Spring Equinox, Persian New Year – Nowruz Continued



AAUW CA Advocates for Three Key Bills

Stephanie DeGraff-Hunt

The AAUW Ca Public Policy Committee planned and organized the third AAUW CA Lobby event which came to complete successful fruition on March 21 and March 22. The third Lobby Day event was painstakingly planned and organized by Kathi Harper, Public Policy Director for AAUW CA and her dedicated committee in conjunction with Kathy Van Osten, our California state AAUW political advocate who works with MVM Strategy Group.

The process to participate in Lobby Day begins with providing Kathi Harper and Kathy Van Osten, nicknamed KVO, essential information. First, they need to know the names of our state Assembly Member and State Senator and their district number, and whether you prefer meeting via Zoom or in person, and whether you are willing to be a team leader. With this information the planners generate a roster and teams are formed. Ideally, team members are lined up to advocate with their own Assembly Member or State Senator. Team leaders are responsible for contacting their assigned team members and forward guidelines on the ways to advocate successfully, and most importantly team leaders forward the synopsis of the three priority bills selected for the event. Team members are responsible for following up by reading all the provided information and are encouraged to do further research by reading the proposed bills at <https://leginfo.ca.gov>.

A critically important Zoom meeting took place the evening before lobbying began to review key elements of the three bills. This year, a special early morning Zoom meeting was held at the opening of the Lobby 2023 Event to review any last minute concerns or questions. In addition, we had an inspirational message from Assembly Member Buffy Wicks, the author of Assembly Bill 1394, who was very passionate and informative about the process of writing and presenting her bill.

The bills selected for us to advocate for are the following:

1. Assembly Bill 1394 California Social Media Platform Liability for Child Sexual Abuse and Trafficking: authored by Assembly Member Buffy Wicks

Why do we need Assembly Bill 1394? We need this bill because 38% of tweens and 84% of teens use social media and 1/4 of 9-17 year olds report having had a sexually explicit interaction online with someone they believed to be an adult. Since 2000, traffickers have recruited 55% of sex trafficking victims online, usually through social media platforms, and sadly even though social media platforms are aware of exploitation and trafficking of children originating on their platforms, they have inadequate self-policing which continues to facilitate increased sexual exploitation. Assembly Bill 1394 proposes to help solve these

AAUW CA Advocates for Three Key Bills Continued

issues by providing an incentive for social media platforms to better police their designs to reduce the ease with which predators can use them to attract potential teen victims. AB 1394 will allow victims of child sex exploitation to sue large social media platforms if they can prove the platform knowingly, recklessly, or negligently facilitated child exploitation and if the platform refuses their request to render invisible any images or videos posted of them on the platform. The victim may be awarded damages of \$1 million to \$5 million for each act of exploitation.

2. Senate Bill 287 California Social Media Platform Liability for Child Addiction and Harms: authored by Senator Nancy Skinner

Why do we need Senate Bill 287? We need this bill because our youth are experiencing an unprecedented mental health crisis, which researchers attribute in greater part due to their social media use. During the time that Instagram expanded from 1 million to 1 billion users, suicide among girls age 10- 14 doubled. Among teens who reported suicidal thoughts, 6% of American users traced their desire to kill themselves to Instagram as it knowingly worsened body image issues for 1 in 3 teenage girls. TikTok has pushed harmful content promoting eating disorders and self-harm to young users. Every 39 seconds, TikTok recommended such videos to teens.

Senate Bill 287 would prohibit social media platforms from knowingly or negligently using a design, algorithm, or feature that causes child users to receive content that facilitates the purchase of fentanyl, inflict harm on themselves or others, develop an eating disorder or engage in dangerous dieting, purposely take their own lives, experience addiction to the social media platform. SB 287 provides a penalty of up to \$250,000 for each violation. A social media platform is not in violation of SB 287 if it institutes and maintains a program of quarterly audits and corrects, within 30 days of audit completion, any design algorithm, or feature discovered to present risk of violating the provisions above. AB287 is a package bill with AB 1394 as they are confronting the same issues.

3. Assembly Bill 549 The California Elimination of Discrimination Against Women Act: Coauthors: Assembly Members Rebecca Bauer-Kahan and Lisa Calderon

Why do we need Assembly Bill 549? The underlying problem is that women continue to face discrimination in the areas of health care, employment, economic development, educational opportunities, and gender-based violence.

AAUW CA Advocates for Three Key Bills Continued

The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women, commonly referred to as CEDAW, was an International Treaty adopted in 1979 by the United Nations General Assembly. CEDAW is essentially an International Bill of Rights for Women. To date, 187 of the 194 UN Member Nations have ratified the CEDAW treaty. The United States signed the treaty in 1980 but has failed to ratify the principles of CEDAW.

Assembly Bill 549 urgently aims to eliminate the discriminatory acts identified by requiring all state agencies to conduct an evaluation of all of their departments to ensure the state does not discriminate against women, with the focus on examining the implementation of policies and programs, allocation of funding and delivery of services. It requires agencies to report their findings to the California Commission on the Status of Women by January 2025 and every two years thereafter, with recommendations for necessary changes.

AAUW CA has at least 30 bills that are selected for attention. The legislative process is complicated and time consuming, so our support is important to our state Public Policy Team. This is where we can make a lasting impact.

Rhonda was able to meet with three other AAUW members and a staffer from Senator Bill Dodd's office. Lisa Groom, the group leader, is from Napa. Joy Barnes is from Napa and Heema Sinibaldi is from the Livermore-Pleasanton-Dublin Branch. The staffer they met with, David Gonsalves, had only been on the job for three weeks so he was unfamiliar with AAUW and our priority pieces of legislation. However, he is a father with daughters and was very interested in the issues that we identified in the bills and was eager to take the bills to Senator Dodd's attention and request his support.



Rhonda's team met with staffers from Senator Dodd's office.

AAUW CA Advocates for Three Key Bills Continued

Lobby Team 13 was made up of a perfect range of ages. Sally Ho, our UCD student branch president, and Patrice Lyn, a super energetic RSP High School teacher from Morgan Hills, and myself, a retired Davis Spanish Immersion 5th grade teacher, created Team 13. Meeting in person for the first time ever was wonderful. Sally and I drove over to Sacramento together and met up with Kathi Harper, AAUW Ca Public Policy Director and others for lunch. It was wonderful to make personal connections.

Patrice joined us to advocate with Sally and myself, even though she does not live in Assembly District 4 or Senate District 3. We made a positive team advocating for the bills meeting with Sulema Landa, Principal Consultant for our District #4 Assembly Member, Cecilia Aguiar-Curry. Sulema Landa was open to our advocating for the three bills and extremely cordial. We learned that Sulema is involved with the Women Caucus. We learned that the Women Caucus is growing in numbers and that it appears to be a group that ties in with AAUW values and concerns. Honestly, the opportunity to meet and advocate in person was wonderful. We experienced, however briefly, the power and the importance of people stepping up to speak up for important issues. My takeaway is that we have an impact on making positive changes.

AAUW NATIONAL UPDATES

Upcoming Webinar on Friday, April 14 at 11 am

Running from Bondage: Enslaved Women and Their Remarkable Fight for Freedom in Revolutionary America

Join CEO Gloria L. Blackwell in conversation with AAUW American Fellowship alumna Karen B. Cook Bell, Ph.D. Dr. Bell is an associate Professor of history and the Wilson H. Elkins Endowed Professor at Bowie State University.

Her current book, *Running from Bondage*, was a finalist for the Pauli Murray Book Prize for best book in African-American intellectual history. It tells compelling stories of enslaved women, who comprised one-third of all runaways, and the ways in which they fled or attempted to flee bondage during and after the Revolutionary War.

Learn how there were in fact two wars being waged during the Revolutionary Era—a political revolution for independence from Great Britain and a social revolution for emancipation and equality, in which Black women played an active role.

[REGISTER NOW](#)

AAUW National Election Underway

The 2023 election for Board of Directors and ballot initiatives started on April 5 and will end on May 15. Members should have received an email on April 5 with instructions for voting. For more information on the board candidates and ballot initiatives on changes to AAUW's bylaws and public policy priorities, please visit <https://www.aauw.org/election2023>

AAUW CA UPDATES

Annual Event on April 22

Lights, camera, action! AAUW California will roll out the red carpet for its blockbuster Annual Event on Saturday, April 22nd at 9 am. The virtual Academy AAUWards will feature red carpet interviews with the famous actors and directors of AAUW California, impressive speakers, and the suspenseful opening of secret envelopes to reveal the winner(s) of the Equity Champion award, the State Named Gift Honoree, and the Branch Activity of the Year awards. You'll see screenings of the finalists for the Speech Trek and Gov Trek competitions and trailers for the Tech Trek program. Then join us for an after-party to mingle with other members and toast AAUW. Click [HERE](#) to Register and prepare to be star-struck.

Reflecting on Our Learning: JABEID in Practice

Stormy Miller Sabia, Director, DEI Committee Chair, diversity@aauw-ca.org

Thank you to all who joined us on March 27th for the AAUW California DEI Committee's second DEI Statewide Chat on *Justice, Accessibility, Belonging, Equity, Inclusion, and Diversity (JABEID)*. We had 62 participants, 44 California branches represented, and branch leaders representing public policy, membership, communications, Tech Trek, and DEI, to name a few. If you were unable to attend the session, not to worry, the AAUW California website not only has the presentation and recording available, you can also access the discussion summary by clicking [HERE](#).

We wish to express our heartfelt appreciation to Dr. Lata Murti who engaged participants in practical approaches to implementing these concepts in our branches and throughout AAUW. Together, we explored what access looks like in our community spaces, the difference between belonging and inclusion, cultural humility, leveraging data to explore community demographics and representation within our branches, and why Dr. Murti leads these conversations with Justice and ends with Diversity. Lastly, we hope those of you who attended remember Dr. Murti's birthday wish that you take the learning, try it and apply it, and circle back with your experiences. Dr. Murti can be reached at: latamurti@gmail.com.

We appreciate your participation in this important conversation and look forward to seeing you at the next one!

Eager to engage in more conversations around DEI? We received an invitation to attend *Anti Racism – Let's Own It!* presented by Edwina Sessions, AAUW New Jersey, Director of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion. The session will be held on Tuesday, April 18th, 2023 at 4 pm (PST). Click [HERE](#) to join the live-streaming Zoom session.

AAUW CA UPDATES

CA AAUW Election is Approaching!

Charmen Goehring, Nominations & Elections Chair, nominating@aauw-ca.org

Although we will not need to vote for new board members this spring (due to the uncontested election), we do need to approve the Public Policy Priorities for 2023-2025. The election will open April 22nd and run through May 13th. Each member with an email address on file will receive an email on April 22nd with a link to their ballot. Members without email have been sent a paper ballot. All ballots must be returned by May 13th to be counted!

If you do not receive an email with your link, first check your spam folder. It will be coming from siteadmin@aauw-ca.org via SurveyMonkey <member@surveymonkeyuser.com>. You can also search your inbox- the subject will be 2023 AAUW California Election Ballot. If you still cannot find it, email webteam@aauw-ca.org for assistance.

Be sure to check out the proposed Public Policy Priorities [HERE](#) and get ready to vote!

Congratulations to the Inaugural Graduate Class of Gov Trek Women!

Shauna Ruyle, Gov Trek Program Director, govtrek@aauw-ca.org

We are proud to introduce the class of 2023 graduates of the Gov Trek program! After an incredible journey of learning and career exploration, these talented and driven young women are ready to showcase their skills and make their mark on the world of politics. Your support of their efforts was invaluable.

From all of us at AAUW California, we are thrilled to celebrate the achievements of these amazing students. We know they will go on to do great things, and we can't wait to see all that they accomplish.

We invite you to congratulate these outstanding young women by watching and sharing the recordings of their BRILLIANT political campaign simulation videos with your branch and community. This is a tremendous achievement and a well-deserved recognition of their hard work, dedication, and commitment to gender equity in public service and elected office.

Click [HERE](#) to watch their videos and learn the results of the competition.

Tech Trek Volunteer Opportunities

Mary Isaac, Tech Trek Program Director, techtrek@aauw-ca.org

Staff volunteer applications are still being accepted until camps are fully staffed. Available roles and the link to apply are [HERE](#) . Assignments are in process and should be completed by early to mid-May.

Many camps still need Dorm Moms (21+ years old), so if you have never experienced sleeping in a dorm, now's your chance!

For the State Public Policy Committee, March Roared in Like a Lion!

Public Policy

Kathleen Harper, Director, Public Policy Committee Chair, publicpolicy@aauw-ca.org

This month has certainly kept the Public Policy Committee on our toes! As a result, AAUW California members now have 30 bills that are being advocated for in the state legislature. Members visited 57 legislative offices to advocate for the top three of those bills during Lobby Days. We will also have the chance to vote on 11 proposed changes that have been made to the Public Policy Priorities.

Our Bill Tracker chart has been posted on the Public Policy page of the AAUW California website and can be viewed [HERE](#).

Thanks to the 120 members from 56 branches who participated in Lobby Days. The committee also thanks all the members who took the time to weigh in on updates to our Public Policy Priorities for 2023-25. The committee has reviewed all 466 comments and agreed on 11 modifications based on members' input. Not all suggestions were incorporated for a variety of reasons. Our three main criteria for edits were:

1. Is it within our mission?
2. Does it address a new issue germane to current circumstances?
3. Would adding it inform the public as to an important AAUW California position, provide guidance for the Public Policy Committee on forming our Legislative Agenda, and/or provide guidance to our membership in shaping their branches' public policy positions and programs?

Many suggestions did not meet one or more of these criteria and were therefore not incorporated. The Board of Directors has approved the suggested changes and it is now up to members to vote yes or no. Click [HERE](#) to view the proposed changes.

UNA Update

Verena Borton

International Women's Day, 2022 American Youth Priorities Report, Youth Declaration of Human Rights, Mutually Assured Survival Climate Forum and World Peace Rose Garden celebration.

The March 12 International Women's Day program, "Innovation and Technology for Gender Equality," organized by Silicon Valley UNA and Santa Clara University's Society of Women Engineers with additional support from UNA Davis, AAUW Davis and others, presented six exceedingly qualified speakers and a moderator who kept everyone on topic with excellent questions. If you missed the program but are curious to hear what these scientists shared, you can access the recording here:

<https://santaclarauniversity.hosted.panopto.com/Panopto/Pages/Viewer.aspx?id=ccffa067-7da9-4f35-a900-Afba00108467>

A few highlights selected among an abundance of anecdotes and good advice:

- Elevate success stories about women in leadership (instead of pointing out the exceptional woman leader).
- Be vigilant to look for opportunities in STEM.
- Be authentic as a leader, demonstrating empathy, gratitude, and seeking divergence ("investing in diversity is measurably valuable and tends to make men smarter").
- Underserved students respond best to collaborative teaching as opposed to lecture style teaching.
- The formal economy measures data; the informal economy (doing what matters most to women, including childcare and caring for elders) is not measured and not rewarded. This must change.
- The speakers cited many examples of studies and actual projects they had initiated, a surprising number of them in countries all over the world. An outstanding example was of a group of Vietnamese girls living in an orphanage winning the top robotics prize among 1600 teams worldwide.

UNA Update Continued

2022-23 UNA-USA Youth Observer to the UN, Himaja Nagireddy, released the 2022 American Youth Priorities Report on March 1 and conducted a webinar presenting many of the findings on March 15. She connected in person or through digital surveys with a total of more than 1900 young people in 22 states.

The report can be accessed at unausa.org 2022 American Youth Priorities Report.



***Himaja Nagireddy,
2022-23 UNA-USA
Youth Observer to the UN***

A few takeaways are that youth care about intersectionality, meaningful youth participation in policy development, intergenerationality and equity in terms of reducing social injustice. 60% of youth believe in their capacity to lead and 54% believe in the effectiveness of the UN. The following Sustainable Development Goals were used as a framework for the report: #1 (poverty), #3 (health), #4 (quality education), #5 (gender equality) and #13 (climate action).

To commemorate the 75th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in December of this year, UNA-USA will create and launch the “Youth Declaration for Human Rights.” Using the findings from the 2022 American Youth Priorities Report and the framework of the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights, this new Declaration will capture the voices, feedback and leadership of youth from across the U.S. on human rights most important to them. According to Himaja, “The process of drafting this document presents young people with an opportunity to learn more about the UDHR, champion youth action on human rights and use their feedback to create a new Declaration that is forward-thinking, more inclusive and rooted in meaningful youth participation.”

UNA Update Continued

The much anticipated Climate Forum, "Mutually Assured Survival," organized by the Western Regions UNA-USA and supported by all our chapters in the West and Hawaii, took place on April 1, with multiple featured speakers, participatory breakout sessions and a focus on local climate actions. An invitation to join was sent by email prior to the Spokeswoman's publishing date.

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The 20th anniversary celebration of the California State Capitol World Peace Rose Garden on April 15, co-sponsored by UNA Davis (our chapter will provide a UN flag), was announced in the March Spokeswoman. Here is a reminder about and invitation to this special event, with all the details (including UNA Davis logo) on the flyer:



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

Formatted by Cristele Moztarzadeh