

# THE SPOKESWOMAN

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

## Feeling Very Proud of AAUW California

*By Stephanie DeGraff-Hunt, Davis Branch President*

As our new year begins, my sense of pride in the accomplishments of AAUW California continues to grow exponentially. Across the country, as well as in California, there is a movement to install school board members who want to ban books, censor curricula, and establish policies that are harmful to LGBTQ+ students. The Public Policy Team has spent countless hours developing an all-encompassing guide for The School Board Project that was initiated to evaluate the extent of the issue in California, AAUW-CA membership's concern over the issue, and members' willingness to take action. There is a wealth of background information along with a [toolkit](#) that describes multiple steps of action to address the issue of protecting school boards from members who support anti-LGBTQ+ policies. It is well worth exploring the [Public Policy October Newsletter](#) and online resources at the [AAUW-CA website](#). We hope this information and the clear guidelines on how to take action will inspire you to step up and take action whether for the School Board Project or for critical legislation supported by AAUW California. They provide suggested ways to connect with our local legislators along with suggested scripts for speaking up at City Council meetings and School Board meetings. There are also suggestions for garnering support for like-minded school board members.

One of the goals for our Davis branch is to take action to support issues advocated by the Public Policy Committee. Selecting which issues to support is decided during board meeting discussions. In September when a number of us met to Celebrate the 19th, we had further discussion on which issue to select. Then we got down to business and wrote postcards to a list of Representatives asking them to sign the discharge petition that would allow a vote on the Resolution to support the ERA Amendment. Several of us also met Verena at the Davis City Council meeting on October 3rd to hear the reading of the proclamation she wrote in support of United Nations Day.

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## October Calendar

Sunday, October 1, 3 to 5 pm: Annual Friends and Family Gathering

Thursday, October 12, 7:30 pm: Monthly board meeting

Saturday, October 14, 9 am: Book Group meeting by Zoom

Thursday, October 19, 5:30 pm: Celebrate the 19th Yard Sale preparation and discussion on postcard advocacy strategies; email reminder will follow

Saturday, October 21, 8 am: Annual Yard Sale; email to follow

Sunday, October 22, 5 pm to 7 pm: UN Anniversary at I-House

Saturday, October 28, 4 pm: Sahaya Walks (online program) and Sunday, October 29, 1 to 4 pm: Outdoor social gathering

## Feeling Very Proud of AAUW California Continued

Verena spoke on the tremendous impacts the United Nations has had over the past 78 years. Our Davis AAUW branch has also agreed to co-sponsor the Davis United Nations Association chapter's event celebrating United Nations Day on October 22, 2023. These are all impactful ways to unite behind the mission and values of AAUW and like-minded organizations.

We also want to expand our outreach with the schools in Davis. A new way is through the Gov Trek Program, which introduces high school girls to careers and leadership in elected office. Gov Trek is open to any girl currently enrolled as a California high school junior or senior, whether in public, private, home, or continuation high schools. Students can register online on a first come, first served basis [HERE](#) or at [aauw-ca.org](http://aauw-ca.org). The registration deadline is January 20, 2024. The program can accommodate 140 students. The second Gov Trek season begins with a peer group meeting on October 16 at 7:00 PM via Zoom. Again, lots of background work has taken place and I believe we can make this happen for girls in our Davis High Schools.

AAUW is additionally offering a free online [STEMed Program](#) for high school girls in the 9th through 12th grade, with a particular focus on girls of color. Teachers, parents/caregivers, and AAUW members may join the program as communities of support for the students. The program started on September 6th but sessions continue through April 3, 2024 and explore different subject areas in science, math, and technology/computer science that students can choose as college majors. The program emphasizes skills students can use for advancement and promotion in high school to prepare for college. Perhaps you may want to recommend the program to high school girls that you know.

This past week, Gail and I both attended an excellent webinar presented by the Financial Peer Group. The topic was "What Branch Finance Needs to Know About Filing Government Forms." This is extremely important and will be available as a webinar recording that we can refer to when we have questions or concerns about the steps we have to follow and deadlines.

Again, my hats are off to the Public Policy team for their hard work to help all of us succeed in implementing our mission and values. By working as a group, our individual actions become more powerful.

# Annual Friends and Family Gathering with Tech Trekkers

*By Juliana Wells and Estelle Shiroma*

On October 1, branch members and friends enjoyed a pleasant social gathering with Tech Trekkers and their parents at the Cannery. Also attending were Junior Counselor, Nithmi Jayasundara, and Senior Counselor, Sally Ho, and AAUW@UCD President, Sara Su. AAUW branch members Leslie Rubin and Karen Lemcke attended and Hannah Vorhees, a former Trekker from S. Lake Tahoe, joined us. The Tech Trekkers in attendance included Alondra Ambriz, Kami Ho-Lu, and Grace Logan. Laura Forchu has moved to Madison, Wisconsin but sent a video sharing her thoughts about the Tech Trek experience. Kathya Garcia was unable to attend. Each Tech Trek camper was given the opportunity to talk about their Tech Trek experience. They all emphasized the excitement of learning, exploring new fields not previously considered, being with like-minded girls, and the sheer fun of the camp. A highlight of the event was a video of the UCD Davis Tech Trek activities throughout the week. Tech Trekkers found themselves on screen participating in various activities, laughing, and learning.

This event recognized the value of Tech Trek for the girls, as well as for the branch, which provides scholarships for the girls to attend camp. This was an opportunity for the girls to be recognized in person for their efforts and their chance to thank AAUW for sponsoring them. Parents could meet the women who worked to give their daughters this experience of living in a dorm and seeing some college life. The students spoke about their favorite activities and core classes that sparked new interests or reinforced ideas for future studies.

Thanks go to Laleh Rastegarzadeh for securing the location of the event, sending invitations, providing table settings, and a microphone. We are also very appreciative of Gail Johnson for her long-standing role as treasurer for the UC Davis Tech Trek camp, Ray Borton for flowers, Estelle Shiroma for technical support and quilt raffle sales, Verena Borton and Juliana Wells for food, and Stephanie DeGraff-Hunt for drinks and emceeing. We send our appreciation to the Math and Science teachers who worked to recommend the students at all of the Davis Junior High Schools.

AAUW Davis is proud to sponsor the Tech Trek program, which partially fulfills our mission of education and equity for women and girls. We welcome new members to join us as we work *locally* to provide opportunities for girls and take action to help them succeed.



***Alondra explains data presentation tips she learned in her core class, “Storytelling with Data.”***

## Annual Friends and Family Gathering with Tech Trekkers Continued



*Grace, Kami, and their parents chat with Leslie*



*Verena, Sally, and Sara (left); Alondra with her mom and brother (right)*

## Recap of September 8 Book Group Discussion

*By Juliana Wells and Verena Borton*

Susan Collopy, Stephanie DeGraff-Hunt, Carolyn Van Hoecke, Cathy Tkach, Rose Mary Forehand, Barbara Durst, Rhonda Reed, Estelle Shiroma, Juliana Wells and Verena Borton gathered on Zoom to discuss “Dinners with Ruth, A Memoir on the Power of Friendships” by National Public Radio legal affairs correspondent Nina Totenberg. The discussion was interesting, extensive and lively, but we almost unanimously agreed that the main part of the book’s title is misleading. The book definitely is about the power of friendships, with Nina’s nearly fifty years’ long friendship with Ruth Bader Ginsberg, begun over a phone call, but “Dinners with Ruth” is more a Nina Totenberg memoir than an RBG biography. Included is the history of Nina’s father, famed musician Roman Totenberg, and descriptions of family life as one of three sisters and later her married life with two husbands.

As was the case with Steven Roberts’ book about Cokie that we had recently read, many familiar names from NPR and other radio and TV programs appeared with back stories of the difficult times experienced by these women as they gradually achieved prominence and a measure of equality in what was basically a man’s world. Women would be asked very personal questions when applying for jobs, for instance “Are you a virgin?” (Nina was asked that before being allowed to work on an assignment early in her career) or “Are you planning to get pregnant?” In spite of having dropped out of college (because of boredom), Nina has achieved remarkable recognition and has become a leading expert on the Supreme Court. She played a critical role in the Clarence Thomas/Anita Hill case.

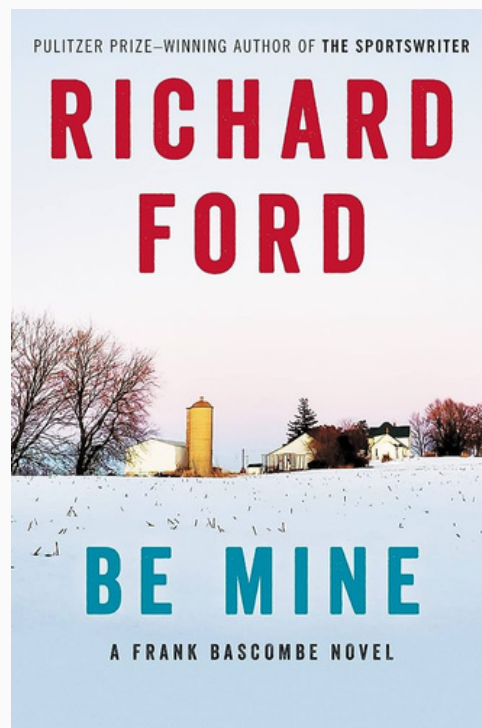
## Recap of September 8 Book Group Discussion Continued

Naturally, this led to a discussion of equal pay issues. We briefly talked about Lilly Ledbetter and her lawsuit and it was mentioned how it took fifty years to get equal prize money for the U.S. Open after Billie Jean King beat Bobby Riggs. (King's book "All In" could be our choice for March around Equal Pay Day.)

Friendships with and Nina's commentaries about Supreme Court Justices were insightful, touching on both the general lack of public pronouncements outside Court proceedings and at the same time close relationships among the Justices in private life. The friendship between opera fans RBG and Justice Antonin Scalia is legendary and even resulted in a 2015 libretto: "Scalia/Ginsberg." We also learned some interesting background information about the relationship between the first woman Justice, Sandra Day O'Connor, and the second woman on the Supreme Court, RBG. Nina pointed out that the Justices are surrounded by extreme security.

Inspired by the many descriptions of the importance of friendships in this book, we shared ways in which we make and maintain friendships, through school connections, work, organizations, chance encounters, even rereading old letters and thus rekindling old friendships. Both RBG and Nina loved to shop and so shopping was also offered as a means to create friendships for some. Those of us who regularly join the AAUW Book Group conversations have found a steady group of friends who appreciate sharing ideas about the books we read and who are always eager to welcome more participants.

On Saturday, October 14 at 9 a.m. we will gather on Zoom to discuss "Be Mine, a Frank Bascombe Novel" by Richard Ford.



# Celebrate the 19th: September Postcard Advocacy

*By Verena Borton*

At our August planning retreat it was decided that we would undertake writing postcards during some of our Celebrate the 19th gatherings. Knowing how to go about that while limited to non-partisan advocacy takes some preparation. At our board meeting on September 14th we discussed various issues recommended by the AAUW Public Policy chairs, and decided that focusing on the ERA would be the least complicated issue for our trial run on September 19th.

Laleh Rastegarzadeh, Estelle Shiroma, Stephanie DeGraff-Hunt, Sally Ho and Verena Borton gathered at the Cannery on the 19th. Juliana Wells and Rhonda Reed would have liked to join us but were not feeling well. In true AAUW fashion, we first enjoyed snacks brought by Estelle and Sally, along with a special cantaloupe beverage prepared by Laleh while exchanging a variety of news items, even planning details of the upcoming October 1 event, but essentially tiptoeing around the planned project that was a new experience for all but one of us.

Background: This year marks the 100th anniversary of the introduction of the Equal Rights Amendment. AAUW's 2023-25 Public Policy Priorities state that we advocate for ratification and passage of the ERA "to guarantee equality, equal rights, and social justice for a diverse and inclusive society." Beginning in 1923 the constitutional amendment was introduced in every session of Congress until it passed in 1972 in both House and Senate. Congress then placed an arbitrary seven-year deadline on the state ratification process before extending the deadline to 1982, but by then only 35 of the necessary 38 states had ratified the ERA. With recent ratifications by Nevada in 2017, Illinois in 2018 and Virginia in 2020, the 38 states needed for certification of the ERA to become the 28th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution had been reached, but the deadline had long passed. Multiple paths are being pursued in the current session of Congress to affirm the ERA as the 28th Amendment and we opted to focus on one of those paths.

Stephanie brought helpful printouts about the ERA and a list of twelve Representatives (from CA, NJ, NY, OR, PA, SC, TX, UT and WI, all Republicans) with their Washington contact information, amplified by Sally who quickly looked up missing details on her phone. Verena brought a collection of exotic flower postcards and stamps. Once we had zeroed in on the recommended tactic and text of encouraging the legislators to pass a discharge petition for House Joint Resolution 25 (H.J.Res. 25) which would allow a vote to remove the current ratification deadline for the ERA, we filled our pretty cards with the following text:

*Dear Rep. X,*

*We are asking for your office to sign the discharge petition on House Joint Resolution 25 (H.J.Res.25). This would simply allow there to be a vote on the resolution to remove the ratification deadline and affirm the Equal Rights Amendment as the 28th Amendment to the U. S. Constitution.*

*We signed Respectfully and included Member of Davis, CA AAUW branch with our names.*

With the current divisive atmosphere at the Capitol it is not very likely that our mail will get results, but we are hopeful that the attractive cards with handwritten messages, mailed the next morning, will be noticed by staff. It felt good to take action and the process will be more familiar the next time we do this. Please consider joining the next postcard writing Celebrate the 19th!

## Annual Yard Sale on Saturday, October 21

Start cleaning out your closets and get ready for the Davis Branch Fall Yard Sale to be held on Saturday, October 21st. Profits from the yard sale will be allocated to our Tech Trek and Branch Projects funds. We are looking ahead to 2024-2025 to provide scholarships for four incoming 8th graders to attend the UCD Tech Trek camp. The Branch Fund supports our Mission in a variety of ways, including providing funds for our UCD Student Organization members to participate in AAUW leadership opportunities, offering stipends to help members attend National or State conventions, and local projects like Sahaya Walks. The Board can also direct those funds to supplement a Tech Trek scholarship or an AAUW Funds donation.

**What to donate?** Popular items include tools, jewelry, bicycles, toys, and student-oriented furniture. Please be sure that donated items are clean and gently used.

Information on location and hours of the yard sale, how to price articles, and when/where to drop off items is forthcoming by email.

## UNA Update

*By Verena Borton*

### Advocacy

The third aspect of UNA's mission (*Educate, Inspire, Advocate*), advocacy, has been the prominent feature of our members' involvement during the past several weeks as we observed and studied budget negotiations in Washington. The House of Representatives is threatening to eliminate funding for the UN Regular Budget and slashing funding for dozens of programs that foster global peace and security, support global health and humanitarian needs, and ensure that the U.S. stays engaged in some of the most important debates of our generation. While a short reprieve until mid-November was negotiated at the last minute, the unprecedented possibility of the U.S. not paying its UN dues for the first time in history remains, possibly resulting in our losing our voting rights in the General Assembly.



## UNA Update Continued

“It is crucial for the U.S. to continue playing a leading role on the global stage by upholding its commitment to the largest international organization. Surrendering our position at the UN, along with our support to allies who rely on our leadership within the organization, is not a viable option.” (Author not known.)

Jordie Hannum, Executive Director of the Better World Campaign (a sister organization to UNA-USA) comments about calculating ROI (Rate of Investment):

- The U.S. pays about \$700 million to the UN Regular Budget.
- U.S. companies receive \$2.4 billion in contracts with the UN.
- UN programs like WFP will feed 171+ million people this year.
- UNHCR protects refugees in 135 countries.
- UNICEF supplies vaccines to 45% of the world’s children.

A letter to the editor by Verena about the importance of fully funding the UN was published in The Davis Enterprise the day before the International Day of Peace (September 21) and later reprinted in the national UNA-USA September issue of UNA Today as an example of member advocacy. The timing also coincided with UNGA 78 and served as a reminder to readers that while the U.S. Congress was considering alarming measures to defund the UN, world leaders were meeting in New York for their once-a-year huge gathering to give speeches about their ideals, plans, criticisms and ultimately hope for an improvement in the world’s outlook.

It attracted 88 heads of state, 6 vice presidents, 43 heads of government, 4 deputy prime ministers, 7 chiefs of delegations and 3 speakers from UN “observer states,” totaling 192 VIPs, according to the UN. (Information via PassBlue). Noteworthy was the absence of some leaders, including Putin, Xi Jinping and Macron whose nations are among the P5 in the Security Council. Very disappointing was the fact that only 21 women were among the speakers.

The latter fact was a trivia question during our Oct. 3 UNA national leadership call. The following comment appeared in the October Chapter Leader Update:

***Congratulations** to Verena for winning UNA-USA swag after correctly (and quickly!) answering the trivia question. Each month, we look forward to testing chapter leaders’ knowledge about the UN during our calls.*



# UNA Update Continued

## United Nations Day

On October 3 the Davis City Council presented a proclamation for United Nations Day to be observed on October 24th, the 78th anniversary of the UN. The extensive document (written by UNA) was read in part by Council Member Bapu Vaitla and a short comment about the UN and the Davis UNA chapter was given by Verena, with moral support by UNA members Stephanie DeGraff-Hunt, Juliana Wells, Estelle Shiroma and Edgar Trujillo waving small UN flags in the front row.



We thanked the city for continuing the long tradition of flying the UN flag at City Hall on October 24th. As a bonus we were given permission to include the City logo on the UN Day flyer.

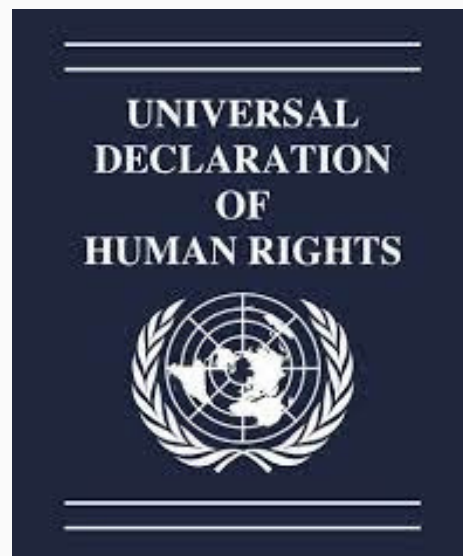
UNA's first in-person event since 2020 will take place on October 22, 5-7 p.m. at International House Davis, celebrating the UN's anniversary and specifically the SDGs. Dr. Catherine Brinkley, Associate Professor of Human Ecology and Community Development at UCD and leader of the UCD Center for Regional Change will give the keynote address, *Taking Local Action to Reach the Sustainable Development Goals*. There will be time for Q & A, refreshments, and informal conversation. The event is FREE but will require registration. A flyer is now available by email and on our brand new website. Please visit [unadavis.org/events](https://unadavis.org/events) to RSVP. Help our chapter regain its erstwhile presence in the community as a source of reliable knowledge about the U.S. role in international affairs. For membership details, go to [unausa.org](https://unausa.org).



## UNA Update Continued

### Human Rights Day

Plans are also underway to recreate our UNA chapter's participatory tradition since 2004 (interrupted by the pandemic) of observing Human Rights Day by reading each of the 30 individual rights in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in as many languages as possible. December 10 marks the 75th anniversary of the adoption of this remarkable document under the strong leadership of Eleanor Roosevelt. Date, time and venue (hopefully International House) are forthcoming, but start thinking now about participating in this important and moving event. All participants will receive a copy of the UDHR.



### Sahaya Walks 2023

Join Davis branch members in supporting Sahaya Walks, a virtual program that benefits [Sahaya International](#) which provides health-care, education, shelter, and food for HIV-infected children in India and Uganda. The online program starts at 4 pm on Saturday, October 28 and features presentations and updates on some of their work in Asia and Africa. On Sunday, October 29, from 1 to 4 pm, an outdoor social gathering will be held at a local park with an optional short walk, snacks/drinks, and games. [Registration](#) is free.

### AAUW California News

#### **Harnessing the Power of Social Media to Inspire Educators to Engage with AAUW**

By Sandi Gabe, President, AAUW California, [statepresident@aauw-ca.org](mailto:statepresident@aauw-ca.org)

In today's digital era, social media is a powerful tool for connecting like-minded individuals and organizations. AAUW California is launching an exciting campaign with a special focus on LinkedIn advertising to raise awareness among educators about AAUW's mission. This campaign, alongside our other social media efforts, includes a new [educator landing page](#) on our website.

Recognizing educators' vital role in shaping the future through education, we're utilizing LinkedIn, a professional networking platform, to create a dynamic online community. This community fosters networking and is an ideal stage for educating the teaching community about AAUW's core mission.

We've been hard at work crafting compelling posts, informative videos, and interactive campaigns that shed light on AAUW's commitment to advancing gender equity and empowering women and girls.

## AAUW California News Continued

These materials highlight AAUW's transformative work and its profound impact on the education sector.

Our ads are tailor-made for educators, aligning with their interests and career backgrounds, making it easy for them to learn about AAUW's goals and initiatives.

LinkedIn's professional audience offers a prime opportunity to engage educators and make them aware of AAUW's mission. We're poised to effectively convey our message and foster a deeper understanding of our commitment to a brighter and more equitable future in education.

Exciting news! AAUW California has launched a LinkedIn Company Page, marking a significant milestone in our commitment to connecting with our community and advancing equity in education. We invite you to follow our new LinkedIn Company Page: "[AAUW California on LinkedIn](#)."

By following our page, you'll stay updated on the latest news, events, and initiatives from AAUW California.

### Nominations and Elections

By Deanna Arthur, Nominations and Election Chair, [nominating@aauw-ca.org](mailto:nominating@aauw-ca.org)

#### 2024 Call for Candidates

AAUW California is looking for enthusiastic, committed, and proven leaders to serve on the AAUW California Board of Directors. How about you, or someone you know with leadership talent?

We seek candidates for:

Secretary (two-year term 2024-2026)

Four Directors (two-year terms 2024-2026)

One Director (one-year term 2024-2025)

The committee will be contacting branch presidents and others who have been suggested to the committee. The website and nomination form will be updated shortly. Perhaps you might like to run for state office. More information will be available shortly.

**What I need to know:** There will be several opportunities to serve on the state board of directors next year.

**What I need to do:** Consider running for an elected position or talk to potential candidates in your branch about the opportunity. Watch for an announcement that the nomination form has been posted on the website.

## AAUW National News

### How Women Bear the Brunt of the Student Loan Debt Crisis

Gloria L. Blackwell, CEO of AAUW, was featured in a recent Yahoo Finance article, highlighting how women are entangled in this financial burden and how the gender pay discrepancy will have a massive impact when student loan repayments resume.

[Read the Full Article](#)

**“If you think you are too small to make a difference, you haven’t spent the night with a mosquito.”**

*~African proverb*

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

**Formatted By: Cristele Moztarzadeh**