

# THE SPOKESWOMAN

## TECH TREK EDITION

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

## Inspiring Women Speak to Campers at Professional Women's Evening

*By Stephanie DeGraff-Hunt*

Rhonda Reed initiated the spark for me to join AAUW after I learned about AAUW's Tech Trek camps. The deal was sealed after I attended a Fall Tech Trek event in Juliana Wells' backyard where the Davis High School Mariachi band performed and four young Tech Trekkers spoke to a large audience about their recent experiences at the UCD Tech Trek Camp. Ever since, I have volunteered with Tech Trek. For the past two years, I have been involved with coordinating the camper selection process, along with Estelle. This year, I attended the Professional Women's Evening at Tech Trek camp for the first time and I am so glad that I did. My admiration for women who willingly offer their insights into future career possibilities with the Tech Trek campers soared off the charts. The ten presenters traveled from as far away as San Francisco to speak with our campers.

At Professional Women's Evening the campers engage in dialogue with ten remarkable women in STEM fields about their careers. This is an eye-opening experience as the girls meet in intimate groups with each professional. This means that not only do they get to hear about a wide variety of professions, but they have the opportunity to ask questions as well. After all the groups had met with each presenter there was time for the girls to circulate among the presenters to ask any additional questions. It seemed as if every presenter touched off a new sense of curiosity as 90 campers immediately headed straight to the presenter they wanted to continue talking with.

Prior to the evening all the campers spent time reading about each presenter. Campers may contact the evening's organizer, Martha Rees, if they would like to make further contact with any of the evening's presenters.

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## August/September Calendar

Thursday, August 8 at 7 pm:  
Monthly Board Meeting

Saturday, August 10, 9 am: Book Group Meeting via Zoom

Monday, August 19, 5:30 pm (meet at Tres Hermanas patio): Celebrate the 19th discussion topic - Get Out the Vote!

Thursday, September 12 at 7 pm:  
Monthly Board Meeting

Saturday, September 28: Annual Yard Sale

**Save the Date**

Sunday, October 13, 2 pm to 4 pm,  
Cannery Ranch House: Fall Annual Friends and Family Gathering and Tech Trek reports

## Inspiring Women Speak to Campers at Professional Women's Evening Continued

One of this year's Senior Counselors shared that her experience at the Professional Women's Evening during the UCD Tech Trek Camp over a decade ago led her to pursue multiple internships with engineering companies throughout her college years. As a result she has received numerous offers for positions with engineering companies.

I learned so much, too, and particularly enjoyed the opportunity to move around with the campers and hear their questions and observe what careers particularly piqued their individual interests. Davis member Leslie Rubin, a nurse anesthetist, held the campers' interests when she told them how she navigated a career in nursing after she completed her undergraduate degree from UC Davis in Clinical Nutrition. She knew she loved chemistry and medicine but didn't know her exact path to a fulfilling career. She emphasized that it is alright not to know what you want to do at the outset of your college experience.

I also had the chance to pick up the recent publication by Dr. Tessa Hill, a co-author of the book "[At Every Depth: Our Growing Knowledge of the Changing Oceans](#)," which is about how communities are coming together to protect the oceans. It is written in a way that is immediately engaging and I am certain that it will soon be on our book group's reading list. It inspires one to become involved in helping to protect our environment.

My hat is off to everyone who makes Tech Trek Camps possible for our girls. We are all in this together.

### Tech Trek Rocks!

*By Rachel Kanowsky, UCD Tech Trek camp co-director*

As we catch up on sleep, Deb Sabo and I and all the campers and staff at Tech Trek Davis are feeling great about the outstanding week at UC Davis!

We're so proud of the excellent care, guidance and community the dorm moms and counselors provided for their campers. We're beyond grateful for the army of volunteers that took on camp jobs, simple and complex, and supported the organization and execution of TT camp logistics.

And the Tech Trekkers benefitted from all of this teamwork. Over the course of the week, the girls completed a wide variety of interactive STEM projects, mentored by committed Core teachers and Workshop presenters skilled in their fields.

- They participated in fascinating hands-on activities at the UCD Veterinary Hospital with women veterinarian instructors and students.

## Tech Trek Rocks! Continued

- Campers experienced a taste of what it entails to study the role of insects and other hard shelled critters in the environment.
- They made and used a DIY pantogram (a drawing instrument that rescales an image size), at the Shrem Museum, then attacked a cooler of frozen otter pops on the walk back to the dorms.
- Campers interacted with the female UC Davis firefighters who geared up campers into their 60 lb plus fire gear, then ran them across the room, challenging!
- Campers teamed up to figure out an intriguing Escape room scenario, a simulated Crime Scene/Forensics puzzle led by women police officers, and a campus-wide scavenger hunt.
- Campers spent a special evening with ten professional women with STEM careers, who inspired all of us with stories of their journey and successes in male-dominated STEM professions.

These young ladies now have a sense of what college life might be like since they spent a week living with a roommate in the dorms and taking meals on campus. Best of all, many campers were surprised to discover a community of like minded girls, similar to them, also passionate, talented, and capable of navigating STEM related topics.

As you know, these are very powerful experiences for the Trekkers, things that might just alter the course they choose to take through high school and college. Great job ladies!!

I love how our lead counselor Sally describes her Tech Trek week as a Camper.

*When I was in seventh grade, I didn't have any friends who shared my interests. My friends were interested in the arts and the humanities. Meanwhile, I loved playing in the dirt, turning over rocks, and looking for bugs. I loved science and math, but no one else did as well. When I went to Tech Trek, I finally met 90 other girls who were just as interested in science as I was and some of them did like to play in the dirt as well. I was in the coding core class and this was the first year of this core class. Although I am not as interested in coding and computer science, my teacher, Ms. Simmons, taught me to be confident in who I am. Her energy was infectious. She made each of us excited to be in the coding core class even though it didn't seem as interesting or as exciting as the other core classes. Now, because of Tech Trek, I can confidently say that I am a woman in STEM who likes to play in the dirt - sometimes. ☺*

Deb and I know it's a struggle for Branch Coordinators to get through the process of selecting TT campers from your local schools, funding the scholarships, assisting families through the stacks of paperwork and more. It's not always easy, but it's so important!

## Tech Trek Rocks! Continued

We feel proud of your participation in creating this important experience for your Tech Trekkers. Thank you and job well done!

By the way, if you would like to check out our [Tech Trek Davis website](#), you'll get to see lots of photos of the campers in action.

And later this summer the annual Tech Trek Camp video (master-crafted by IT wiz Ava) will be ready, hopefully in time for your fall Branch meeting.

### Our Members Contribute to Tech Trek Success

*By Estelle Shiroma*

Throughout the year, Davis Branch members generously donate and fundraise to provide scholarships for girls from local junior high schools to attend the Tech Trek Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) camp at UC Davis. This year, four rising 8th graders experienced the Tech Trek camp from July 14 to 20. The Davis Branch awarded scholarships to Sophia Palomino (Holmes Junior High), Kinsey Van der Hoek (Holmes Junior High), Olivia Lopez (Harper Junior High), and Isla Watt (Da Vinci Junior High).

Members play an important role in the continued success of Tech Trek at UCD. The work starts in the spring when Branch Coordinators, Stephanie DeGraff-Hunt and Estelle Shiroma, contact science and math teachers at the four Davis Junior High Schools to request student nominations. The girls complete an online application that asks why they want to attend Tech Trek and are required to write a 400-500 word essay to explain their interest in STEM. The interview committee (this year the committee included Stephanie DeGraff-Hunt, Rhonda Reed, and Juliana Wells) then meets with each girl and their parents. Narrowing the field of applicants and selecting the scholarship recipients has proven to be the most difficult task year after year.

The work continues for months before the start of camp with many Zoom meetings attended by Branch Coordinators, camp directors, and staff. As the camp date draws closer, volunteers are recruited to augment the camp staff. This year, 29 AAUW members (including 14 Davis branch members) from the Sacramento region volunteered throughout the week for tasks involving laptop set up, greeting families and campers, registration, meal service, role-playing at the SAFE Credit Union Budget Cents event, and post-camp break down. Davis Branch members Sally Ho, Leslie Rubin, and Estelle Shiroma had active roles during Tech Trek week. Sally, a former Tech Trek camper (Whittier College), served as the lead Senior Counselor. Leslie, the camp nurse for many years, was a presenter at Professional Women's Evening (see Stephanie's article). Estelle participated as the Volunteer Coordinator, a role she has had since 2016.



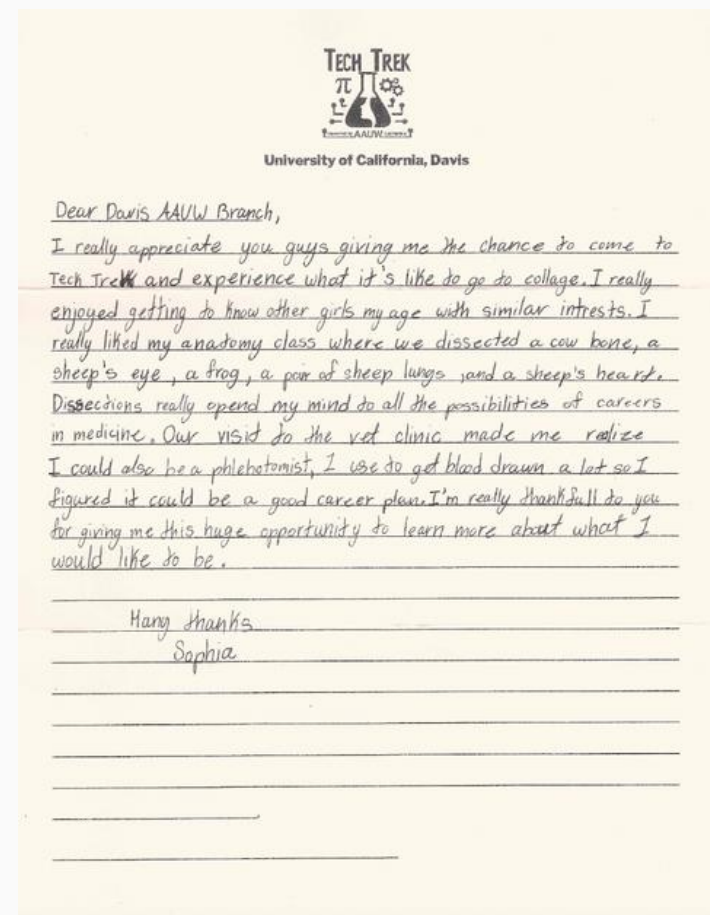
## Our Members Contribute to Tech Trek Success Continued

Members were able to get a glimpse of what the girls experience in their core classes during Visit Day held on Thursday, July 18. Davis branch members who attended Visit Day shared their thoughts. Verena Borton was thoroughly impressed with the expertise and enthusiasm shown by campers for subjects way beyond anything she had ever studied, particularly the DNA class and robotics. She said, “Seeing the ease with which the girls dissected a sheep’s head and explained the different parts, without any sign of physical hesitance, was fascinating. They all looked so professional in their lab coats (that unfortunately covered up their name tags). The class where the girls were drawing and writing to tell about themselves was the most familiar environment. But how delightful to see pens and paper instead of phones! “ Judy Flores was also impressed with the program saying, “The core subjects that were offered and the high caliber of the instructors were exceptional. The girls were all engaged and interested, and their level of intelligence and knowledge was remarkable.”

Thank you to all for your contributions and support in making Tech Trek one of our most successful branch programs. Sophia, Kinsey, Olivia, and Isla expressed their gratitude to the Davis Branch for the opportunity to attend camp in heartwarming letters.



***Sophia getting hands-on experience with insects at the Bohart Museum.***



# Our Members Contribute to Tech Trek Success Continued



University of California, Davis

July 18, 2024

Dear Davis Branch,

Thank you for letting me go to Tech Trek! This camp has been a great opportunity to learn about different careers and jobs. It has been really fun and in my class, Engineering, we made solar powered cars. We also made solar powered ovens and ate smores. Thank you again for paying for me to go to Tech Trek.

With gratitude,  
Kinsey van der Hoek



University of California, Davis

Dear Davis AAUW

Thank you for giving me this chance to join this amazing program. This week has taught me a lot about STEM, problem solving, teamwork, and how to get into college without paying a fortune. I got a chance to learn how to collect data, genes, coding, robotics, anatomy, and so much more. Thank you for picking me to join 2024 Tech Trek.

Sincerely,  
Olivia Lopez



**Kinsey views specimens at the Bohart Museum.**



**Olivia in her Climate Science Engineering core class.**



## Our Members Contribute to Tech Trek Success Continued



University of California, Davis

Dear AAUW Davis Branch,

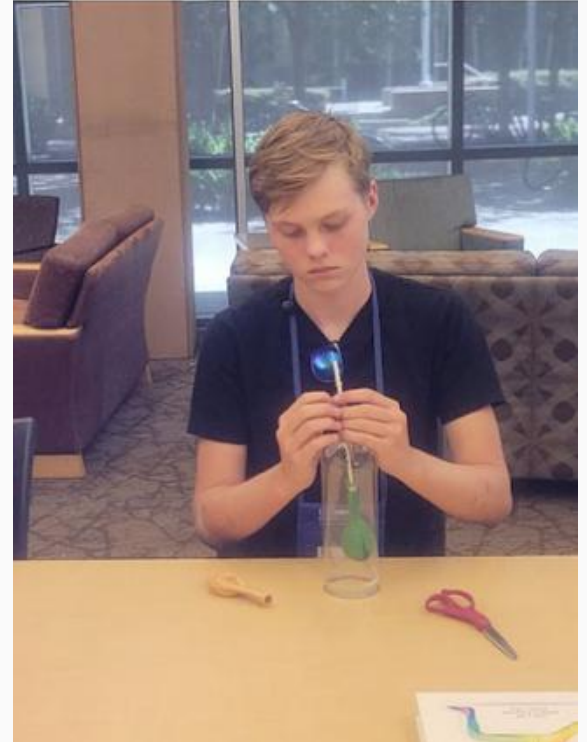
I would like to thank you for offering me a once in a lifetime opportunity, to attend Tech Trek.

Thanks to you, I have been introduced to wide variety of STEM careers which I never knew existed.

Through Professional Women's Evening I "dove" into the "depths" of oceanography, a career I knew existed but not until then I considered pursuing.

I really appreciate all the hard work you put in to give me this wonderful experience.

Sincerely,  
Isla Watt



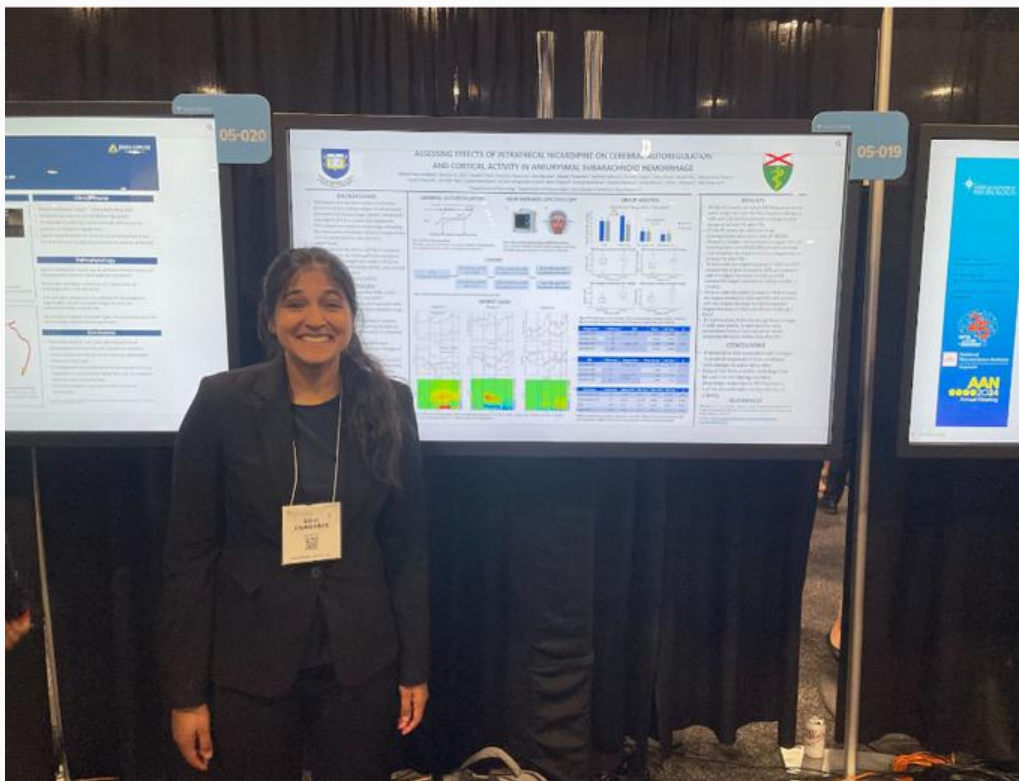
**Isla works diligently on an engineering project.**

## Past Tech Trekker News: Sithmi Jayasundara

*Sithmi Jayasundara attended the UCD Tech Trek camp in 2014 and returned as a senior counselor in 2022. She is currently applying to medical schools and recently sent an update.*

“After graduating from Johns Hopkins University last year with my Bachelor's degree in Biomedical Engineering, I've been working as a Postgraduate Clinical Research Associate at Yale School of Medicine in the Department of Neurology. Through this position, I've gained valuable exposure to neurocritical care, a subspecialty of neurology that concerns patients with strokes, aneurysms, and other brain injuries. I've had the opportunity to shadow neurosurgery procedures and use neuromonitoring technology to collect and analyze physiologic data on patients in the neuro-ICU. My research project focuses on the effects of blood pressure medications on brain oxygenation and electrical activity. I got to present a poster at the American Academy of Neurology Conference in Denver, Colorado in April. I'm so excited for what the next year has in store, and I'm incredibly grateful to Tech Trek for encouraging me to pursue a science career at a young age.

Outside of research, I enjoy making music. I've been playing violin, guitar, and piano in my free time and plan to audition for a community orchestra in the fall. I also enjoy traveling around the East Coast. I've made a few trips to New York, Baltimore, and Philadelphia to visit friends.”



***Sithmi's poster presentation at the American Academy of Neurology Conference in Denver, Colorado***



# Recap of June 8 discussion of “The Women” by Kristin Hannah

*By Verena Borton*



Barbara Durst, Carolyn Van Hoecke, Judy Flores, Sally Ho, Karen Lemcke, Dottie Bonneau, Estelle Shiroma, Stephanie DeGraff-Hunt and Verena Borton gathered on Zoom on June 8th to discuss Kristin Hannah’s novel “The Women.” Since the story was largely created around the central theme of the Vietnam war and its aftermath, it was a curious sequel so soon after reading “Absolution” which dealt with the period just prior to the full-blown war.

Most of us agreed that Hannah’s historical fiction presents outstanding, well structured writing combining war reporting and romance while it deals with issues – principally prejudice, rejection and Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder – that are still very much part of today’s society. The relentless insistence of troops serving in Vietnam and the Veterans Administration here at home, as well as the general public, that “No women served in Vietnam” was part of the extremely skewed news about the war and the role of women (an estimated 10,000 women were stationed in Vietnam during the war). The novel illustrates the powerful contributions and terrible sacrifices made by the military nurses who served without adequate recognition.

Reactions to the book varied somewhat to the extent that our group had witnessed and been involved in the events of the sixties. The attitudes of the protagonist’s conservative parents were abhorrent to several of us, while others identified with similar attitudes in their own families or among friends at the time. There simply was a big divide caused by the war.

From the author’s note: “I was young, in elementary or middle school, for the majority of the war, but I remember it vividly: the protests, the darkening tone of the nightly news, the arc of the story told by the media, more and more young men dying, and most of all, how the veterans – many of them my friends’ fathers - were treated when they came home. All of it made a lasting impression.”

## **Recap of June 8 discussion of “The Women” by Kristin Hannah Continued**

Twenty-year old nursing student Frankie has been raised in a very traditional and affluent family in southern California. The statement “Women can be heroes” told to her at a party for her beloved brother who was leaving to serve in Vietnam gets her to thinking and imagining a different future for herself than what was expected of young women in her milieu. Her parents completely disapprove of her decision to become a military nurse and follow in her brother’s path. Her experiences in Vietnam are literally and figuratively rough but ultimately make her into an indispensable member of various medical teams. She finds romance, though not successfully, but encounters two female friends who remain her anchors once she returns home to a divided and inhospitable country and suffers long periods of PTSD. (Some felt this part of the novel went on longer than necessary). In the end Frankie discovers a way to help other women with similar problems and in the process make her own life meaningful.

“The Women” is a well-researched and thought-provoking account of a very difficult period in our recent history. Our August selection, Doris Kearns Goodwin’s “An Unfinished Love Story, a Personal History of the 1960s” adds quite a bit more (non-fictional) detail about the Vietnam war controversy.

## **Recap of July 13 discussion of “The Bohemians” by Jasmin Darznik**

*By Verena Borton*

Despite vacation schedules and preparations for the Tech Trek week, nine of us gathered on July 13th to discuss our reactions to reading or listening to Jasmin Darznik’s novel focused on the life and times of photographer Dorothea Lange. Estelle Shiroma, Carolyn Van Hoecke, Helen Thompson, Barbara Durst, Karen Lemcke, Judy Flores, Rhonda Reed, Stephanie DeGraff-Hunt and Verena Borton shared a variety of feedback to the novel that was originally recommended by Shahla Farahnak.

“The Bohemians” is a work of historical fiction. However, the legendary documentary photographer and artist Dorothea Lange as the focus of the novel, her husband the painter Maynard Dixon, journalist and photographer Consuelo Kanaga, photographer Imogen Cunningham, activist and Mission Home for Girls social worker Donaldina Cameron, Giuseppe Coppa whose Italian restaurant featured prominently in the story, photographer and environmentalist Ansel Adams, and Mabel Dodge Luhan who promoted Pueblo and Hispano art and advocated for the rights of Taos Pueblo Indians all are real, historical figures. San Francisco mayor (1897-1902) and later U.S. Senator (1915-1921) John Phelan whose slogan was “Keep California White” appears fictionalized as racist John Pharrell. Caroline Lee, Dorothea Lange’s assistant and close friend who is a second central figure in the novel is Darznik’s fictionalized version of the person referred to as “The Chinese Mission Girl” about whom no definitive history exists.

## Recap of July 13 discussion of “The Bohemians” by Jasmin Darznik Continued

Initial comments were more about the writing than the story itself, several of us finding the writing style not engaging and slow moving, while giving few details about the art involved. This was primarily the reaction of those of us who read the book and who nevertheless did find the story interesting. Those who listened to it tended to be more enthusiastic and even loving the book (although Rhonda, who was listening to it while driving long distances, had a hard time staying awake!).

After we got past these technicalities, a lively conversation ensued about the uncanny parallels between challenges in San Francisco society in the 1920s and our present day challenges a hundred years later that led to the observation that the century hasn't changed matters significantly. One of the obvious parallels noted was between the Spanish flu and the Covid pandemic, another the express racist treatment of the Chinese that flared up again due to the pandemic, and as always, the difficulty for women to establish businesses and be treated as equals. Yet the decade after the earthquake, when San Francisco had to rebuild, also was described as a “a world of raw possibility”, especially for women artists. Through her friendship with Caroline, Dorothea became part of the artists' colony Monkey Block, but also was made aware of devastating and dangerous situations in Chinatown and the racist atmosphere promoted by politicians.

Quoted from Author's Note: “Again and again I'd sink into my research of the past, only to be confronted by the present. In the speeches of James Duval Phelan, the California governor who'd run on the platform “Keep California White,” I heard the ever-louder rhetoric of nativism and white nationalism. In Lange's Dust Bowl pictures, I saw the horrors of homelessness as well as the international refugee crisis. In her pictures of the Japanese internment, I saw borders, prisons, and cages of “alien” children. In her pictures documenting the flooding of a small Northern California town, I saw the flaming hills and valleys of nearby Sonoma and Napa. In her pictures of the South, I saw the relentless brutalities of racism. I realize now these weren't coincidences, or even synchronicities. Violence against women and people of color are not subjects easily or rightly relegated to the history books; they persist in our common reality.”

While Dorothea initially set up her studio (with Caroline's invaluable help) to cater to the wealthy who sat for portraits, she gradually became more aware of other portraits that express humanity's emotions, portraits that allow you to feel the passion, despair, joy or sadness in the expression captured, almost like a look into the soul of the subject. During the Depression Dorothea drove all over the country in a model T producing photographs that to this day give deep insights into the human condition, opening the eyes of our nation to the prevalent misery. Although Dorothea talked to those she encountered and shared their deprivation, she did not write about those experiences, as journalists would have – her photographs are a lasting documentation of a pivotal time in U.S. history.



## **Recap of July 13 discussion of “The Bohemians” by Jasmin Darznik Continued**

We all learned from reading this novel – about San Francisco’s history, about a vibrant artists’ community in the 1920s, about persistent racism, about arriving alone in a new place and making it your home (as the author herself did), about the difficulty of maintaining a marriage between two strong artists (we did not discuss the strains between Dorothea and Maynard Dixon that led to divorce), about resilience and tolerance. As an immigrant who fell in love with San Francisco, Jasmin Darznik undoubtedly included many of her own experiences in the development of this novel.

Our selection for August 10 is Doris Kearns Goodwin’s “An Unfinished Love Story – A Personal History of the 1960s.” Next month on Saturday, Sept. 10th at 9:00am via Zoom, the book group will discuss “One Big Open Sky” by Lesa Cline-Ransome written entirely in ballad poem style from the viewpoint of a young girl whose family of Black pioneers migrates from Mississippi to Nebraska in the early American West. The book is available in hardback, ebook ([ebooks.com](https://www.ebooks.com)), Audible, and Kindle.

## **Davis Branch Annual Planning Retreat**

On Saturday, July 27, Davis Branch Board members met for four hours to set goals and priorities for the 2024-2025 year. Branch programs will promote AAUW’s mission to advance equity for women and girls. The major goals are to expand engagement with existing members and to increase membership; increase visibility with community partnerships; and continue to support and mentor the UC Davis student organization. The student organization is still a priority of the Davis branch and we discussed how the branch could more effectively interact with the students. Other discussions included member outreach and communications, our partnership with the UNA-USA Davis Chapter, fundraising, Tech Trek scholarships, and planning events and activities for the year.

## Save the Dates! Annual Yard Sale and Fall Friends and Family Gathering

Start cleaning out your closets and get ready for the **Annual Yard Sale** at Rhonda's home in the Old East Davis neighborhood. The yard sale is scheduled on Saturday, September 28, just as UCD students return to town. We will need help from 7 am to 1 pm for set up, sales, and break down. Watch for an email to sign up to help; contact Rhonda at [salmonlady@sbcglobal.net](mailto:salmonlady@sbcglobal.net) if you have questions. Popular items to donate include tools, jewelry, bicycles, home goods, toys, and student-oriented furniture. Donated items should be clean and gently used. Proceeds from the yard sale are used to fund branch projects and Tech Trek scholarships.

On Sunday, October 13, the **Annual Fall Friends and Family Gathering** will be held at the Cannery Ranch House from 2 to 4 pm. Join us to get to know each other and to greet our new members who joined us from the Woodland Branch. Our four Tech Trekkers will present their reports on what they learned at camp this summer. We are able to hold this event at the Cannery facility thanks to our gracious resident host, Laleh Rastegarzadeh.

Details on both events are forthcoming in email reminders.

### With Deepest Sympathy



Our branch has lost a good and supportive friend with Char Cardey's recent passing. We extend our condolences to Juliana Wells on the loss of her life partner and spouse.

# UNA Update

By Verena Borton

During the past several weeks UNA Davis locally has taken a rest, while nationally activity has picked up at a fast clip. The latest changes in U.S. election prospects will undoubtedly affect U.S.-UN relations in a major way.

## UN Budget worries

Peter Yeo, President of UNA's sister organization the Better World Campaign, expressed our deep concern over the devastating spending bill, passed by an extreme minority in the U.S. House of Representatives on June 26th, a bill that would eliminate funding to the United Nations and more than a dozen UN agencies. He said we can't allow that unamended bill to destroy our global reputation or the relationships with allies we have been building for decades.

Quoting Yeo directly: *"The UN was founded right here in the United States with American leadership at the fore. The 6,000+ Americans working for the UN make up the highest percentage of staff from any single country. America's dues to the UN are reinvested back in the U.S. in the form of contracts for goods and services – with the UN awarding more business to U.S. companies than to any other nation and more in contract revenue than our assessed dues. Even the most iconic UN successes like the Universal Declaration of Human Rights were spearheaded by, you guessed it, Americans.*

*Fact is, the UN is as American as apple pie.*

*So as you open that box of American flags that you ordered for this week's {Independence Day} festivities (thank you, UN Universal Postal Union) or board a holiday flight with family (hat tip, UN International Civil Aviation Organization) or even marvel at fireworks against a starry sky (high five, UN Office on Outer Space), it's important to remember that it's through participation in organizations like the UN that the U.S. grows our global footprint – and our local economies. And with U.S. contributions to the UN totaling less than 1% of the federal budget, it's tax dollars well spent."*

## **August 1 update: U.S. Senate Backs UN Funding with Big Bipartisan Win**

Last week, the Senate Committee on Appropriations approved the FY25 State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs Appropriations Act, fully funding the UN regular budget and providing critical humanitarian aid to UN agencies and programs. Overall, the Appropriations Committee provided \$61.6 billion for the International Affairs Budget by a vote of 24-5 — a \$3.2 billion (5.6%) increase from FY24!

While the Senate Committee on Appropriations matched the President's request of \$1.67 billion for the UN regular budget, our work is not done. Remember, a bill becomes law by passing both the House of Representatives and the Senate. Ask your Members of Congress to support full funding for the United Nations TODAY.



## UNA Update Continued

### UNA-I-House Partnership

In late June, UNA Davis finalized a partnership agreement with International House Davis for 2024-2025, guaranteeing a fixed rental price for the chapter's three signature events to be held at I-House: UN Day in late October, Human Rights Day in early December and International Women's Day in March. UNA will benefit by being included in the I-House newsletter, website and social media.

### Mandela Day celebrated at I-House

Laleh Rastegarzadeh, her mother and Verena Borton joined a large international audience at I-House on July 18th (Nelson Mandela's birthday) for a celebration of Mandela Day, featuring excellent presentations by several of the Mandela Washington Fellows who were spending six weeks at UCD. Especially impressive were brief, deliberate speeches given without any notes or amplification by three Fellows representing Guinea-Bissau, Ghana and Namibia. Mandela Day was designated by the UN General Assembly as an annual holiday in 2009.



*Left to right: Laleh, Fanta Diop (Mandela Fellow from Senegal), and Verena*

### UNA Davis monthly newsletter

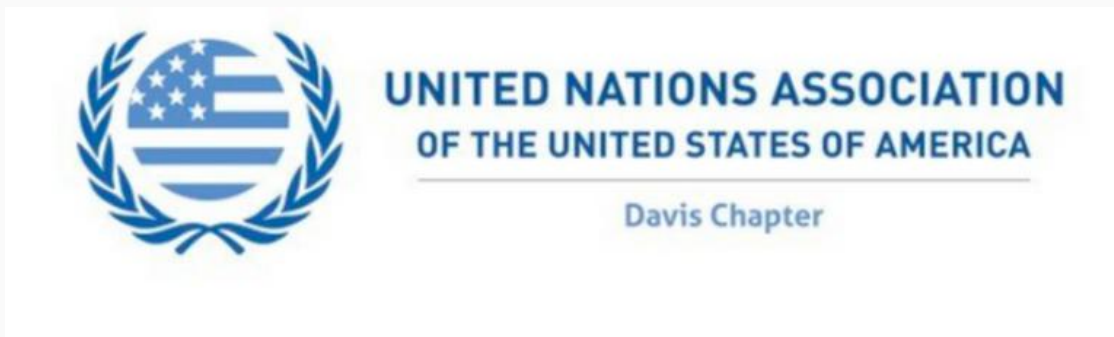
If you are not already subscribed to the UNA Davis newsletter and would like to receive it on the first of every month, please contact Verena Borton at [verena.borton@unadavis.org](mailto:verena.borton@unadavis.org) We feature local, regional, national and international news with a focus on the United Nations.

## UNA Update Continued

**UNcovered: Russia's Ambitions (Virtual)**  
August 21, 2024 | 12pm (PT)

Join us for an insightful webinar presented by the United Nations Association of Sacramento as part of their "UNcovered" series, exploring global affairs and the United Nations. In this session, we are honored to host Dr. George Breslauer, Professor Emeritus at UC Berkeley and a distinguished scholar on the politics and foreign relations of the USSR, post-Soviet Russia, and the states that constituted "world communism."

Dr. Breslauer will delve into Russia's ambitions, offering his expertise and in-depth analysis of the historical and contemporary dynamics that shape Russia's role on the global stage. This is an exceptional opportunity to gain a deeper understanding of Russia's political strategies and international relations from one of the leading experts in the field. Register [HERE](#).



## AAUW National News

### Recharge for the Fight Ahead

By Gloria L. Blackwell, AAUW Chief Executive Officer

July brings challenges to advance gender equity and opportunities to act together to create change:

- The U.S. House of Representatives passed a resolution to overturn the new Title IX rules. The U.S. Senate plans to vote on their resolution next week. This vote would prevent implementation of stronger Title IX protections for students. [Ask your Senators](#) to stand up for students and oppose all efforts to weaken Title IX.
- This month, the District of Columbia [renamed a street](#) in honor of AAUW DC's branch and board member, the late Dorothy Celeste Boulding Ferebee, MD. I was honored to give remarks about Dr. Ferebee's legacy of advocating for public health, civil rights, and women's rights. Dr. Ferebee was an inspiration to all, fearless in the fight for women's access to opportunity.
- We must stay informed and engaged. Our [AAUW Alumnae Summer Reading List](#) offers thought-provoking works that explore crucial themes of democracy, social justice, and empowerment.

## AAUW National News Continued

Given where we are in this election year, it's important we recharge for the fights ahead. Your continued support and advocacy are vital. Only by being unified can we create lasting change for women and girls across the nation.

Thank you for your unwavering commitment to AAUW's mission.

### **It's My Vote! AAUW Provides Resources for 2024 Election**

The outcome of the 2024 election could have a major impact on diversity and equity in education, women's economic security, and access to reproductive and civil rights for all women. The good news is that when women vote, we change the conversation.

Given the importance of the elections, AAUW and the AAUW Action Fund have renewed our voter engagement efforts in 2024. AAUW has provided [tools and resources](#) to support AAUW members' ability to lead and contribute to local voter education and registration efforts.

## AAUW CA News

### **Call to Action: New Title IX Rules**

By Amy Hom and Missy Maceyko, co-chairs, AAUW CA Public Policy Committee

On April 19, following an extensive public process, the U.S. Department of Education issued new, strengthened regulations regarding Title IX enforcement. These AAUW-supported rules make significant changes to better support students facing gender-based harassment or discrimination.

With the rules set to go into effect on August 1, 2024, we need a strong show of community support to ensure that students receive the full civil rights protections promised by Title IX. AAUW has joined 70 gender justice and civil rights organizations in a letter to school administrators in K-12 and higher education urging swift implementation of policies consistent with Biden administration's new Title IX Rules.

**ASK:** Please share this [letter](#) on behalf of your branch with your local school and university administrators and urge them to swiftly implement policies consistent with the new Title IX rules.

### **Background: Title IX: More Than Sports**

Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 is the federal law that prohibits sex discrimination in education. The law states, "No person in the United States shall, on the basis of sex, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any educational program or activity receiving federal financial assistance."



## AAUW CA News Continued

Commonly known for creating opportunities for women and girls in athletics, Title IX affects all areas of education, including recruitment, admissions and housing; comparable facilities and access to course offerings; financial assistance; student health services and insurance benefits. It applies to all educational institutions receiving federal funds including local school districts, colleges and universities, for-profit schools, career and technical education programs, libraries and museums. New Title IX Rules On April 19, AAUW applauded the final Title IX rules issued by the U.S. Department of Education. The new rules provide strong and comprehensive protections against gender-based discrimination in school. The new regulations clarify that student survivors of sexual harassment, pregnant and parenting students, and LGBTQ students have equal educational opportunities free from sex discrimination. The rules make significant changes to better support students facing gender-based harassment or discrimination, including:

- Broadening protections against sexual assault and harassment to include wider definitions of harassment, reversing former Education Secretary, Betsy DeVos' "deliberate indifference" policy, and addressing barriers to reporting.
- Clarifying that protections against sex-based discrimination under Title IX apply to discrimination based on gender identity or sexual orientation, based upon the *Bostock v. Clayton County* (2020) Supreme Court decision.
- Requiring schools to inform students of their Title IX rights and how to access them after being informed a student is pregnant.

The rules do not address athletics. A separate rule regarding clarification around Title IX's protections for transgender, nonbinary, and intersex students and athletics is not expected until later this year.

**Want to learn more?** The National Women's Law Center has put together a [Fact Sheet](#) (3 pages) to learn about the major effects of the 2024 Biden Title IX rule on student survivors, LGBTQI+ students, and pregnant and parenting students; and a [Chart](#) (5 pages) to compare the major changes in the 2024 Biden Title IX rule with the previous Title IX rules (including the 2020 Trump Title IX rule).

### Legal and Political Challenges

This information is provided for historical reference since recent developments have resulted in changes and the final outcome is still in flux.

### Congress:

- In June, resolutions to overturn the new Title IX rules were filed in the U.S. House of Representatives and Senate (H.J. Res. 165 /S.J. Res. 96). If passed, the new Title IX rules will be prohibited from taking effect, and the Department of Education would be prohibited from

## **Title IX Continued**

reissuing the same or substantially similar regulation in the future. Students would be subjected to continuing their education under the DeVos Title IX rules.

- The House of Representatives is expected to vote against Title IX the week of July 8. Please look for our Two-Minute Activist in July so we can defeat this vote.
- The House Appropriations bill on education also includes language to block the implementation of the new Title IX rules. That bill is expected to move through Congress in July.

### **Courts:**

- Twenty-six (26) Republican Attorneys General filed lawsuits against the Biden administration to prevent the implementation of the new rules.
- Judges have issued preliminary injunctions which temporarily blocked the new Title IX regulations in 10 states so far (Idaho, Indiana, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, Montana, Ohio, Tennessee, Virginia and West Virginia).
- One June 28, the U.S. Supreme Court issued a ruling that overruled the court's 1984 decision in *Chevron v. Natural Resources Defense Council*, holding that courts should defer to an agency's reasonable interpretation of an ambiguous statute. This ruling upends 40 years of administrative law and may call into question federal agencies' ability to provide guidance on how to interpret Congress' often-ambiguous statutes.

## **Public Policy Priorities and the Elections**

By Amy Hom and Missy Maceyko, co-chairs, AAUW CA Public Policy Committee

In September, the Public Policy Committee will:

- Present a webinar on Get Out the Vote. More details to follow soon.
- Provide information on the California ballot initiatives that we are supporting.
- Provide Candidate Comparison Guides for competitive Congressional races in California. These guides will focus on the races where an incumbent whose values are consistent with our public policy priorities is in danger of losing their seat, and where an incumbent whose values are not consistent with our priorities is being challenged by a candidate whose values align with ours. The guides will serve to educate voters on the candidates' positions on AAUW-supported issues. The competitive districts we have identified thus far are Districts 13, 22, 27, 45, 48, 49, 41.

## Public Policy Priorities and the Elections Continued

During the current election cycle, the Public Policy Committee will be putting out a series of election resources. As part of these resources, we will highlight some AAUW California Public Policy Priorities (PPPs) that are rising as central issues in the upcoming election and give you the tools to do your own candidate assessments.

The first PPP we highlighted is Title IX Protections; see the article above.

Although the 2024 legislative session won't end until this fall, the governor has already started to sign bills. We are excited to let you know that **three bills on our agenda have already been signed, AB 1955, AB1790, and AB2608. Hooray!**

**AB 1955** will prohibit school districts from requiring staff to notify parents if a student uses a different name or pronouns or identifies as a different gender than what is on their birth certificate. California is the first state in the nation to ban forced outings of transgender students.

**AB 1790** will strengthen protections against sexual assault and harassment at California State University (CSU) campuses by requiring two reports from CSU on the status of their implementation of the State Auditor recommendations.

**AB 2608** will require the California Community Colleges and the CSUs, and request the University of California, to provide educational and preventive information on sexual violence and harassment, including how to recognize if someone is at risk of drug-facilitated sexual assault.

A school board candidate questionnaire is now available, courtesy of the AAUW Fallbrook Branch. This is an excellent vetting tool. If a candidate approaches you for an endorsement or other support, ask them to complete this [questionnaire](#), which also can be found on the Public Policy website in the School Project toolkit.

**Quick Tips for Things to Try:** Learn how to reduce polarization through talk. Check out [THIS GUIDE](#), written by Missy, to learn more about how you might approach difficult conversations during election season.

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

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