

THE SPOKESWOMAN

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

President's Message

By Stephanie DeGraff-Hunt

A key reason I joined the AAUW Davis Branch was the powerful impact the Tech Trek experience has on young girls completing 7th grade. Looking back on the past few years of supporting this incredible program, I truly can't imagine life without it. Tech Trek has become such a meaningful part of my involvement with the Davis Branch — and witnessing its impact on these girls has been nothing short of inspiring.

Tech Trek requires an indescribable amount of commitment and dedication on the part of everyone involved. Every year, I'm filled with awe and gratitude as I reflect on the life-changing opportunity that Tech Trek offers the four young girls we sponsor. There's no doubt in my mind that every minute we dedicate to making this experience possible is absolutely worth it.

Each year is a bit different depending upon unexpected outside influences such as remodeling the dining facilities, COVID, or even the weather. But the bottom line is that a team of dedicated women make Tech Trek possible and no matter what, the girls come away with an experience that will forever impact their lives.

All our AAUW volunteers play a key role!!!! I want to express my appreciation to the fundraisers, supporters, and volunteers at our Annual AAUW Fall Yard Sale at Rhonda's home, and to Juliana Wells, Karen Lemcke, and Rhonda Reed for serving on the springtime interviewing committee. Many thanks also go to our individual donors and long-time sponsors. Appreciation is extended, as well, to the 7th-grade

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August/early September Calendar

Saturday, August 9 - 9 am: Book Group Meeting by Zoom

Thursday, August 14 - 7 pm:
Monthly Board Meeting by Zoom cancelled

Thursday, August 21, 5 pm to 7 pm - Celebrate the 19th at Davis Arts Center

Saturday, August 23 - 9 am to 1 pm: Annual Board Planning Retreat

Tuesday, August 26 - Women's Equality Day

Thursday, September 11, 7 pm - Monthly Board Meeting by Zoom

Saturday, September 13, 9 am Book Group Meeting by Zoom

science, math, and technology teachers in our school district who go above and beyond to nominate students they believe are especially deserving of a Tech Trek scholarship. Without their nominations and support, Tech Trek really wouldn't happen.

Our branch members who held special roles during Tech Trek week receive accolades, too. Sally Ho, a former Tech Trekker (Whittier College, 2015), has dedicated many summers to Tech Trek as a peer counselor, dorm monitor (Sonoma), and workshop presenter. This year, she served as the Assistant Camp Co-Director. New member, Mary Madera, taught Plant Biology; this was a new offering to the camp that proved to be a popular class. Leslie Rubin was a participant in the Professional Women's Evening and spoke about her journey from UC Davis to her career as a certified nurse anesthetist. Leslie and her family also graciously hosted one of the core teachers during the week. Estelle Shiroma served once again as the Volunteer Coordinator for the camp. She coordinated the involvement of AAUW members throughout our region to assist in various activities — from unpacking, tablet setup, registration, Budget Cents financial reality evening, to packing up supplies.

Appreciation goes to everyone who volunteered during Tech Trek week, especially on Sunday, July 13th, when the Tech Trekkers and their families arrived. Volunteers greeted and registered the girls for camp and supported the girls and their families by attending the opening welcome program held after the girls settled into their dorm rooms. Kudos are well-deserved for Rachel Kanowsky and Sally Ho, the co-directors of the UCD Tech Trek Camp this year. Numerous hours went into their planning and coordination to create an amazing camp experience for 90 young students.

It takes an entire community to make Tech Trek a reality that will forever impact young women's lives. I encourage you all to participate in our Tech Trek Camp next year as much as possible. The UCD camp will now be known as the Mae Jemison Tech Trek Camp, honoring the choice of past Tech Trekkers who voted to recognize Mae Jemison as a guiding light in science and the pursuit of knowledge. Check the link to learn about [Mae Jemison](#) and her important role for women in science and exploration.

If you have any doubts about the impact of Tech Trek, we encourage you to read the heartfelt thank-you letters from this year's campers (see the next article). We will hear reports from this year's Tech Trekkers at our annual Fall Friends and Family Gathering on Sunday, October 5th at the Community Ranch Room at the Cannery from 2 to 4 pm. We encourage you to join us, the Tech Trekkers, and their families for this special event.

Cheers to Tech Trek!!

Appreciation from Tech Trek Campers to the Davis Branch

The Davis Branch awarded \$1,200 Tech Trek scholarships to four outstanding rising 8th graders from local junior high schools. The recipients of the scholarships who attended the in-person camp at UCD from July 13 to 19 are:

- Naomi Beebee, Emerson Junior High School
- Abigail Russell, Holmes Junior High School
- Janelle Diaz Zamora, Holmes Junior High School
- Mileydi Garcia, Harper Junior High School

During the week, the girls attended exciting core classes in Anatomy and Physiology, Climate Change Engineering, Genetics, Plant Biology, and Coding. The jam-packed schedule included special sessions in Forensic Science and Emergency Medical Technician/Paramedic training, along with tours of the Veterinary School, Mondavi Center, Bohart Museum of Entomology, and Food Innovation Lab. The campers also participated in mindfulness and confidence-building activities. SAFE Credit Union held a Budget and Cents evening where the girls were assigned hypothetical families and learned to manage budgets. During the Professional Women's Evening, the girls explored STEM careers by talking to women who worked in the fields of engineering, commercial aviation, military service, veterinary medicine, immunology, medicine (anesthesiology), chemistry, law, video gaming, and more.

On Visit Day, July 17, branch members Stephanie Degraff-Hunt, Alexis Roberts, Estelle Shiroma, Mary Madera (Plant Biology teacher), Sally Ho (camp Co-Director) spent time with the Tech Trek campers at lunch. Their enthusiastic comments about their classes and cheerful spirits made it clear they were enjoying the week.



Bottom row, L to R: Mileydi, Janelle, Naomi, and Abigail. Top row: L to R: Stephanie, Alexis, Estelle, and Mary

The campers expressed their appreciation to the Davis branch in the following letters.



University of California, Davis

Dear, Davis AAUW Branch,

Thank you for this amazing opportunity. I'll create wonderful doors for my future. I've enjoyed my time here, I got to learn how to draw blood, bandage a dog and so much more. My favorite activity was when we got to learn about forensic science. I got to study blood splatter, fingerprints, DNA, and crime scenes. I would also like to thank you for exposing me to girls just like me, who love science and stem

Sincerley, Janelle Diaz Zamora

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Janelle Diaz Zamora", is written over a horizontal line.



University of California, Davis

Dear Davis AAUW Branch,

Thank you for giving me an opportunity to come here and for encouraging me. Thank you for putting time and effort into this and the activities we get to do, like, going to the vet clinic. That experience really opened my eyes since I want to become a vet in the future. It is also an amazing opportunity to see how it is living like a college student. My favorite part about being here is the food. The food court here is really big and cool. Another thing that I love is my core class. We dissect things everyday like a bone with bone marrow, a frog, an eyeball, a liver and a heart. All those parts came from a lamb which are very similar to us according to my teacher which I found very cool. The last thing I really loved was the boat competition. We made boats out of cardboard with a team, which we then raced in the pool. It was super fun! Thank you again for everything you guys have provided us with and all your support, I appreciate everything!

Mileydi E. Garcia



University of California, Davis

Dear AAUW Davis,

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to attend Tech Trek at UC. I am in the computer core class. We will have a ~~car~~ car race against the Engineering core class on Thursday. Well at Tech Trek we went on field trips. The Mondavi Center was amazing! We were able to play with the stage lights, which was amazing! In one of the workshops we did, we built boats out of ~~wood~~ cardboard and raced them. Dorn life was ~~quite~~ pretty good, definitely not what I expected. Budget Cents opened my eyes to what my parents have to spend to get stuff for them, my brother, and me. Thank you for giving me this opportunity to attend Tech Trek.

Sincerely,

Abigail Russell Tracker 2025



University of California, Davis

Dear AAUW of Davis,

I thank you so much for giving me this wonderful opportunity. I am so grateful that I got to experience such a huge amount of information of all kinds of fields. It was so fun expanding my brain with science. All the strong and powerful women that kept on going even when faced in the challenge of being in a field with men domination. This really inspired me to do what I love and be a role model for another young woman. Tech Trek really made learning a awesome thing that made me excited. It gave me many great tips that I will keep with me forever and share them with other young women who love STEM. I made so many powerful connections with other girls. This made me realize that so many other girls love STEM and I'm not the only one. I learned so many life lessons that I will keep in my heart for a long time. There are so many new worlds of science that I think every girl should have that chance. I will help grow this amazing family of beautiful and encouraging women. I would love to come back as an continue to be a part of this terrific organization.

Sincerely,

Naomi Jewell Beebee

Celebrate the 19th

The June Celebrate the 19th was held on Saturday, June 21st and featured a tour of [UCD campus projects](#) led by member Susan Collopy. Susan is a landscape architect and the Assistant Director of Design and Construction at UCD.

Jan Bridge, riding her recumbent bicycle, joined Stephanie Degraff-Hunt, Rose Mary Forehand, and Estelle Shiroma on the tour under a perfectly sunny sky.



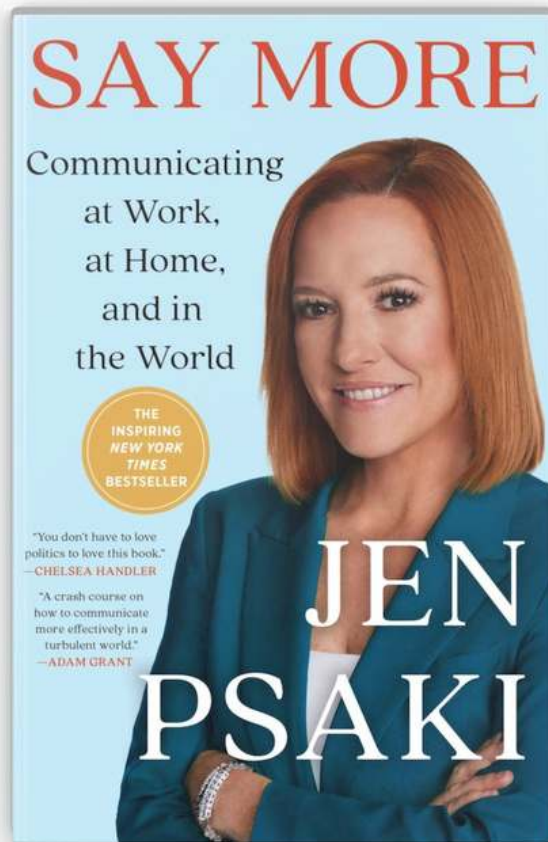
L to R: Rose Mary, Jan, Susan, Stephanie, and Estelle

Susan led us on a leisurely walk across campus to view the latest improvements of campus facilities that included the Arboretum waterway project, KDVS new location, Memorial Union, seismic upgrade work in progress at various buildings, and the Wyatt Deck. On the tour, a building named after Celeste Turner Wright caught our attention. Jan shared that [Dr. Wright](#), who taught English, Latin, German, and dramatic arts, was the first tenured woman faculty member and one of the first women at UCD to have a building named after her. We also learned that the native grass garden at the home of Jan and Adam Bridge is featured on one of the signs along the arboretum walk.

Many thanks to Susan for leading this informative tour!

July 12 Book Group Recap

By Carolyn Van Hoecke



On July 12, Karen Lemcke, Barbara Durst, Rhonda Reed, Verena Borton, and Carolyn Van Hoecke met on Zoom to discuss the book *Say More: Communicating at Work, at Home, and in the World* by Jen Psaki, published in May 2024. Now a host at MSNBC, and veteran political spokesperson, this is Jen Psaki's first book.

Parts of it read like a textbook of tips for the aspiring White House staffer, filled with unique yet universal advice about how to be an effective communicator in any situation. Psaki gives many small examples of the day-to-day encounters and adjustments that separate the successful from the also ran. She also provides a ladder of ascension leading to her use of the "Psaki bomb" for which she is now known. She definitely makes the point that every day, every minute, every announcement, is important for the effectiveness of the message and that the effectiveness of the message is the only thing that matters.

But additionally she also struggles to maintain herself as an independent person and convey the essence of who she really is. The book mixes political and personal vignettes with tips on navigating life's competing demands, stressing that this particular choice of career is all encompassing of one's emotional intelligence and energy.

A veteran of three presidential campaigns, as the spokesperson for the State Department under Secretary of State John Kerry, as White House Communications Director under President Obama, before that a competitive collegiate swimmer, Psaki left the Biden White House after 16 months as press secretary. During that time, she had the president's ear and spoke with authority. As well as formal assignments to interpret and inform on complicated and controversial topics, she describes her tussles with Peter Doocy, the Fox News White House correspondent, and how they managed to appear congenial by being civil to each other despite their obvious differences. In fact, many of the difficult personalities she had to deal with came from her own side of the aisle and she had to manage those relationships as well. With her signature wit, Psaki writes about reporting to bosses "from the hot-tempered Rahm Emanuel to the coolly intellectual Barack Obama to the surprisingly tenderhearted John Kerry." Psaki describes her endeavors to deliver bad news to the boss (with specific examples during the Biden administration) and bring up necessary subjects that others might be loathe to address, to facilitate clearing the air for honest discussion.

The group started our discussion with how drastically things have changed between administrations. The efforts for calming discussion, complete coverage, and inclusiveness that Psaki describes appear in sharp contrast to today's press briefings. She spends detailed time on how to build understanding in the larger audience community to improve communication.

We talked about how her very strong value system was formed by her childhood encounters, including the guidance provided by her father, and how she translated her own personal need for clear communication into her successful career. We also spent some time considering, with awe, how she managed to do her multiple demanding jobs, find a wonderfully supportive husband and have two children during this time.

The book group meets on the second Saturday of each month at 9 am by Zoom. On Saturday, August 9, we discussed *West with Giraffes (2021)* by Lynda Rutledge. On September 13, we will discuss *The Latino Century* by Mike Madrid. *Remarkably Bright Creatures* by Shelby Van Pelt is the October selection, followed by *The House of Doors* by Tan Twan Eng in November. Contact Karen Lemcke at lemckekaren@yahoo.com for more information on the book group.

UNA Update

By Verena Borton

Bad News

Despite heroic efforts by individual UNA members and larger groups all over the country to advocate against the rescissions package that heavily impacts many of the UN's programs, it passed and left the membership both disheartened and bent on continuing to advocate for the programs that have traditionally saved millions of lives. Of particular distress are either deep funding cuts or complete U.S. withdrawal from WHO, UNICEF, UNESCO, UNDP, UNFPA, peacekeeping and the Human Rights Council. The Rescissions Act takes away previously enacted resources from millions of people around the world and sabotages efforts to protect global health, combat HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis, Ebola, malaria and other diseases. The future for FY2026 funding for international programs looks dismal. Humanitarian aid all over the world is desperately underfunded by the U.S. and many other UN member states.

Good News

There is some good news to report locally and regionally. Plans are underway for a UN Day program at International House in late October to celebrate the 80th anniversary of the UN Charter going into effect on October 24, 1945. We anticipate once again involving elementary and UCD students as part of the program, as well as a keynote speaker on the 80-year history and accomplishments of the UN. We will be engaging with the Davis City Council for the annual UN Day Proclamation.

The Davis chapter joined with other Northern California and Southern California UNA chapters to form a unit to advocate with the CA State Legislature on bills that align with the Sustainable Development Goals. A designated group lobbied before the July 18 deadline. More thorough organization is expected before the next legislative session starting next January. Although it is a new program for UNA, it is very similar to AAUW's Lobby Days. It was prompted in large part by the fact that only a select few applicants from California were accepted for the UNA-USA June Advocacy Summit in Washington, D.C. that some of us had attended in previous years.

Possibly the best news of all is that in light of UNICEF's losing U.S. funding our board decided to immediately send most of the accumulated donations in our UNICEF

Donations account at First Northern Bank to UNICEF USA for the *Every Child Fund*. Our longtime contact in the New York office was delighted and touched by the prospect of receiving a check for \$2,100 from our community. The funds, gifts from generous friends, will be put to immediate use.

Note: We welcome year-round tax-deductible donations to UNA Davis’ **UNICEF Donations account** at First Northern Bank, 434 Second Street, Davis, CA 95616. If you prefer, you can send or deliver a check made out to UNICEF Donations to Verena Borton, 101 E. 7th St., Davis, CA 95616 – it will be deposited within 2-3 days.

Sustainable Development Goals Background and Update

Readers of the Spokeswoman may have noticed frequent mention of the Sustainable Development Goals as a focus of many of our chapter’s programs. Not everyone is familiar with the critical focus of the SDGs in local and international UN initiatives. In 2015 the UN General Assembly adopted the 2030 Agenda which outlined 17 Sustainable Development Goals – including ending poverty and ensuring that everyone had access to healthcare and quality education. The ambitious SDGs were to be achieved by prioritizing future generations through sustainable and climate-friendly initiatives. “The 2030 Agenda represents our collective recognition that our destinies are intertwined and that sustainable development is not a zero-sum game but a shared endeavor that benefits us all.”



Ten years after this commitment, the agenda is facing increasingly strong headwinds, including a \$4 trillion funding shortfall for the developing world and increasing geopolitical tensions that undermine multilateralism.

Only 18 percent of the SDGs are on track to be met by 2030. Around 17 percent are experiencing moderate progress. But over half of the goals are moving too slowly, and 18 percent of the goals have gone backwards.

“The problem is that the SDGs do not include the instruments that would be necessary to make them happen,” Secretary General António Guterres said. “We are in a global development emergency, an emergency measured in the over 800 billion people still living in extreme poverty, in intensifying climate impacts and in the relentless debt service.”

Global life expectancy increased by an astonishing five years between 2000 and 2019. Since the COVID 19 pandemic it slid backwards by almost two. More than 110 million children have entered school since 2015 – but by 2023, 272 million children still had no access to the classroom.

UNESCO announced that **44 million new teachers are needed** to reach SDG#4 by 2030. “Teachers are the guardians of our future” according to UN Deputy Secretary General Amina Mohammed.

One in 10 people still live in abject poverty and one in 11 experience food insecurity. Over 1.1 billion people live in slums or informal settlements without services including clean water and sanitation. In 2024 a life was lost to conflict every 12 minutes.

Who will represent the U.S. at the UN?

Since January 20, 2025, the U.S. has not had a formal, permanent representative at the UN. In July, Mike Waltz was interviewed for the position of UN Ambassador. What would his confirmation mean?

Diplomats work for decades to be considered for the coveted position of ambassador, but Mike Waltz’s nomination by President Trump is seen as a consolation prize for the 51-year old former army colonel from Florida and a chance for him to “rebuild his political brand” after the Signalgate scandal. Global development professionals are concerned about what a hawkish appointee wanting to regain favor post-scandal could mean for the UN at a time when the Trump administration is already causing significant damage to aid and development work.

In the Senate confirmation hearing Waltz said he would push for transparency and reforms within the UN while pursuing an “America first” agenda that would see the U.S. ensuring “that every foreign aid dollar and every contribution to an international organization, particularly the UN, draws a straight and direct line to a compelling U.S. national interest.”

The appointment could jeopardize global targets such as the SDGs. The Trump administration has denounced the SDGs as “adverse to the rights and interests of Americans.”

While UN officials and diplomats are pleased at the prospect of finally having this crucial role representing the U.S. filled, many fear that at the annual UN General Assembly (UNGA) in September Waltz will lead “an incredibly damaging full-front¹ assault on the UN, its legitimacy as an organization and the specific things that the U.S. doesn’t like – clearly everything related to women.” President Trump is scheduled to speak on September 23, in second place after Brazil which traditionally occupies the first slot.

1945-2025: Consider the UN’s many accomplishments

Stay tuned. These are perilous times for the United Nations. However, looking back at what has been achieved in the past 80 years to further peace and security, human rights, global health and improved life expectancy – along with all the aspirational ideals contained in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, we must take comfort in what has been accomplished since the UN Charter was signed in San Francisco in 1945.



**UNITED NATIONS ASSOCIATION
OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA**

Davis Chapter

AAUW National News

Thank You for Fueling AAUW's Mission

By Gloria Blackwell, Chief Executive Officer

Summer often invites rest and reflection — and we hope you're finding moments of both. Yet across the country, **AAUW members are staying energized and engaged**, continuing to advocate for equity in powerful ways.

We thank you — not only for your alignment with AAUW's mission, but for your action.

Across the country, the following branches showed up this month and led Good Trouble Lives On events:

AAUW Greater Rochester Area
AAUW Naperville Area (IL)
AAUW San Jose
AAUW Waukegan Area (IL)
AAUW West Suburban-Milwaukee

Your voices are shaping communities — and futures.

We're also grateful for the strong response to the FY25 Branch Survey — a 42% increase in responses from 2024. Your insights are guiding our shared strategy and reaffirming your commitment to higher education and economic security for women.

This month, AAUW awarded [\\$5.3 million in fellowships and grants](#) to 228 women and community-based projects. These investments — made possible by your giving — help break down barriers and open new doors in education, STEM, public service, and beyond. Your generosity fuels change. Your leadership makes it last.

AAUW's strength is its members. And in this defining moment, you are showing up — boldly, purposefully, and united by mission.

Thank you for your action. Thank you for your alignment. Thank you for making equity real.

With deep gratitude and solidarity,



Gloria L. Blackwell
Chief Executive Officer

Online Branch Virtual Title IX Program on September 17, 2025, 5:30 pm to 7:00 pm

The California Online Branch invites you to join us on September 17, 2025, from 5:30 to 7 pm, for an in-depth review of the past, present, and future of Title IX. This panel, presented by the AAUW Washington Online Branch, will feature scholars in the fields of Political Science, Athletics, and Student Affairs. The program will explore the historical evolution, current landscape, and future implications of Title IX, with a focus on its impact on gender equity in education, athletics, and beyond.

This panel will provide attendees with a deeper understanding of the legal, cultural, and political dimensions of Title IX—from its 1972 origins to the most recent developments in 2025. Panelists will share insights on enforcement trends, lived experiences, and strategies for upholding gender equity in the face of evolving interpretations and challenges.

Panelists include:

Dr. Dorothy McBride, professor emeritus of political science
at Florida Atlantic University

Dr. Julie McCleery, Co-Director, UW Center for Leadership
in Athletics, College of Education

Dr. Domanic Vanthom, WSU Vancouver, Vice Chancellor of Student Affairs
and Deputy Title IX Coordinator

To register click [HERE](#). This will take you to a Google Form to register. You will receive a Zoom link 48 hours before the presentation. You must pre-register to receive the Zoom link to attend.

BE AS ACTIVE AS YOU CAN, BUT STAY A MEMBER

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

Formatted by Emmi Kuimelis