



Visalia-Sequoia Inc. (CA) Branch

Sequoia News

Notes from the Presidents: Marilyn Rankin & Liz Kieske

Welcome to AAUW 2019-2020. We hope both our "old" members as well as our new members will find this year's AAUW activities filled with your reason for belonging to AAUW.

Our mission within AAUW is to support opportunities and equality for women and girls with a recent emphasis on seeking equal pay for women. This year marks the 100th anniversary of women's right to vote. Several of our upcoming programs will reveal the progress made and the opportunities ahead to ensure equality for women. You will find a full list of the programs in your AAUW annual yearbook which you will receive at our first meeting **September 12, Thursday 3:30-5:00 at the Vintage Press.**

Programs are varied and we hope interesting and timely in providing a perspective to local issues impacting opportunities for all. Also, please enjoy your yearbook as it provides so much information about AAUW happenings. A special thanks to Maile Melkonian for editing the yearbook which is quite a task.

Our December Holiday Tea will be special again this year. The tea will be at the home of Beth and Stephen McAuliff. Beth decorates in a style reflective of their travels to the villages in Germany producing the renowned nutcrackers and wooden Christmas decorations. The tea (December 14) and ambiance of their home will be a treat for all.

In addition to our monthly meetings most members find enjoyment by participating in an AAUW section group such as knitting, bridge, reading, California Concerns, book sorting etc. Participation in the section activities will add

SEPTEMBER AAUW Meeting

September 12 , 2019 MEETING

Location: The Vintage Press

Date: Thursday, September 12th

Time: 3:30PM to 5:00PM

Cost: \$22.50

Send Reservations with check to:
Phyllis Matteson • 3320 South Hall
Visalia, Calif. 93277

Cell: 300-5022 Home: 732-1988

"Where the History of Family and Fine
Dining Intersect in Visalia"

David Vartanian is not only a wonderful chef but a fabulous speaker as well. Join us for our first meeting and learn about the history of this immigrant family and what prompted the establishment of their distinctive gourmet restaurants. You don't want to miss out on the fabulous hors d'oeuvres available. I'm sure you will find something yummy to eat. You are welcome to come early and order yourself a glass of wine.

Please have reservations turned in no later than Monday the 9th.

NOTE: If you attend the event you will be charged whether you eat or not. (VP charges per seat.)

greatly to your enjoyment of the AAUW experience. You are encouraged to join any interest section of your choice.

Thanks to all our committee chairs, section leaders, and board members for their efforts in making 2019-20 an exciting year for the Visalia-Sequoia Branch of AAUW. Looking forward to seeing you Thursday, September 12.

~Marilyn Rankin and Liz Kieske

Cut & Save



September 12, 2019 (Thursday) 3:30pm–5:00pm

Location: The Vintage Press

Program: ***“Where the History of Family and Fine Dining Intersect in Visalia”***

October 10, 2019 (Thursday) 11:30pm–1:30pm

Location: The Creative Center.

Program: ***“The Therapeutic Magic of Creative Arts”***

November 14, 2019 (Thursday) 11:30pm–1:30pm

Location: The Vintage Press

Program: ***“Financial Matters for Women”***

December 14, 2019 (Saturday) 2:00pm–4:00pm

Location: Home of Beth McAuliff

Event: ***Holiday Tea***

January 21, 2020 (Tuesday) 11:30pm–1:30pm

Joint meeting with League of Women Voters of Tulare Co.

Location: Marriott Hotel

Program: ***“Born Criminal: Women of the Suffragist Movement”***

February 16, 2020 (Sunday)

Location: The Ice House

Program: ***“Beehive”***

March 19, 2020 (Thursday) 3:30pm–5:00pm

Location: The Vintage Press,

Program: ***“The ABCs of SGMA”***

April 16, 2020 (Thursday) 11:30am–1:00pm

Location: The Vintage Press

Program: ***“Reflections on the 63rd U.N. Convention on the Status of Women—Inspiration!”***

May 16, 2020 (Saturday) 2:00pm–4:00pm

Location: Congregation B'nai David,
1039 S. Chinowth St.

Event: ***Scholarship Reception***

Newly elected Board of Officers for AAUW Sequoia Branch, 2019-2020

Co- Presidents: Marilyn Rankin, Liz Kieske

Presidents elect: Susan Cunningham, Maile Melkonian

Program Vice Presidents: Susan Mathews, Phyllis Matteson, Sherri Bentley

Membership Vice President: Suzanne Babcock

Membership Treasurer: Jean Moritz

Treasurer: Sue McCallister

Financial Director: Jill Rojas

Secretary: Marsha Brooks-Smith

Communications Director/Newsletter: Betsy Gaudette-Cross

Sequoia Branch Honored Member Gift Fund:

Nancy Holmes

KNIT WITS Welcome All:

Whether you're a beginner or one who's been knitting or crocheting for years, you're invited to join the Knit Wits. We meet every Tuesday morning from 10-noon at Panera's. We are a very informal group. No need to call in advance, just drop by to see what we're all about. If you want more information, either text or call Cathy Lovell, 287-2982.



Calling All Members:

Hopefully you can make it to the September 12th meeting. The first meeting is always special and well attended, and we are starting the year off with a special meal at the Vintage Press. It's a great opportunity to visit with friends, make new friends, and/or hear what everyone has been doing this summer. We also pass out the directory at this meeting, so be sure to pick yours up.

Spring Book Sale

Once again, our Book Sale was a great success! Our final total was \$16,429.75. Thanks to everyone who worked shifts, sorted, put up a sign or helped clean up. As the saying goes, "it takes a village" to put on a Book Sale! If you still have any yard signs, please get them to Suzanne Babcock or bring them to our next meeting.

BOOK SORTING: Sorting all of the books is really fun! The Sorters meet EVERY Monday from 8:30-10:00 in Exeter. Text/call Betsy Gaudette-Cross if you want a map of where to go. 559.786.5340. We



are a great group who is always looking for more volunteers.

~ AAUW Fall Book Sale ~

Our fall book sale is once again upon us and we are hoping for another successful sale. While our dedicated volunteers have been faithfully sorting books, the sale needs our membership to volunteer to work at the mall. The sale runs from Wednesday, October 16 through Monday, October 21. Set up and clean up are October 15 and October 22. **AND — coming soon to a computer near you - Online Signups!** With the help of Allison Babcock, you will now be able to sign up for a work shift online in the comfort of your home. Allison will be demonstrating the process at our September kick off meeting and providing the link for everyone. Please check your calendars and sign up to work a shift or two. **Remember - 85% of our Book Sale proceeds goes to fund our various scholarship sponsorships.** This includes Tech Trek, Expanding Horizons and COS Student scholarships. The success of our sale and our continued scholarships efforts depends on everyone lending a hand.

Thanks again for your support of this effort throughout the years!
Jan Johnson • Book Sale Chairman

Do You Want To Learn How To Play Bridge? Or Maybe Just Play?

Grand Slam Winners! AAUW Thursday Night Bridge Group players Donna Nottingham and Karen Simpson bid and made a grand slam in July! Congratulations Karen and Donna! If you are interested in joining or forming an AAUW bridge group, call bridge coordinator Liz Kieske, (559) 734-0751 or email liz-k@att.net.



Book Signs Already?

Calling all members... we need your help! We need to get 60+ book sale signs out, distributed around the city, and visible for many people to see. These are the signs that bring people into our sale, and allow us to give out our scholarships.

I will be available the afternoon of September 25 and 26th at my house (3224 S. Ernest) to have you come and pick up 1 or 2 signs that you can place in your yard, a friend's yard, or a vacant lot. And remember, these signs do have to be returned.

If you want to take 3, 4 or 5 signs, I will be more than happy to deliver them to your house. It will then be your responsibility to place them around the city, collect them, and return them after the sale.

**WE NEED YOUR HELP TO MAKE
THIS SALE A SUCCESS!!!**

**CALL OR EMAIL SUZANNE BABCOCK IF YOU
HAVE ANY QUESTIONS. 559.303.9394**

WELCOME TO THESE NEW MEMBERS...

Christine Wong...

Christine joined AAUW a few months ago and has already jumped in with both feet. She has been a busy contributor at our weekly book sorting...and we appreciate that! She got her BA from UC Irvine with a focus on Social Ecology, Social Science, and Psychology. She got her degrees in 1987 and 1988. Professionally she was a bookkeeper and her current interests are reading and travel. We are glad you joined us Christine.

Tracey R. Neff...

Tracey is a new member who went to CSU Fresno. She graduated with a BS in Nursing in 1969. After her career, she is enjoying retirement. Please make her welcome when you meet/see her at our meetings.

Shivon Lavelly...

Shivon is a retired teacher who lives in Three Rivers. She graduated from CSU Hayward with her BA in Liberal Studies and Human Development. Her interests include reading, children, hiking, and traveling. Shivon Lavelly graduated in 1980.

Introduce yourselves at the next meeting and get to know her.

Something New for AAUW

Sequoia - Visalia Kiwanis club has started a little library at the Anthony Center that is in the shape of an oak tree to support our community. We have been working with them to donate a box of books every month to help them fill the tree. The tree hold books that individuals can take home to enjoy. The tree has books for all age groups, from preschool to adult. If you have a chance to see it, it looks amazing. Gene Sheesley, who is a charter member of the group, built it.

Special Interest Group

COFFEE & CALIFORNIA CONCERNS – Please keep this date:

Monday, September 16th. 10:15am – 11:45ish.

Topic and location: To be announced

Interested in discussing issues and policies pertaining to the local, county and state levels? This is the section for you!

We meet 1st and 3rd Mondays, at 10:15am.

Some topics our group would like to look at in the coming year are:

Farm Labor

Tourism

Immigration

Prisons in California

Education

Trade with the World

Electric Vehicles

Solar Energy

Art in Visalia

Three-Can Garbage Conversion -- Is it working?

Who/What young groups are there in Visalia, and who are the leaders?

How can we help develop interest in local candidate races?

Central Valley Partnership

Possible topics inspired by books are:

Women's Suffrage -- "Born Criminal" by Angelica Shirley Carpenter

Water -- "The State of Water" by Obi Kaufmann

Race and the Justice System -- "Just Mercy" by Bryan Stevenson

Local History and Architecture -- "A Walk Around Visalia" by George Pilling

This is really a great group. Come check us out.

This is a reminder:

If you sign up for the monthly meeting and don't show up, you are still responsible for paying for your lunch because we are charged. Thank you.

Meet Our Scholarship Recipients

Hisham Alsohybe - In 2015

Hisham came to California with his brother from Yemen, one of the poorest countries in the world and whose population is amongst the most malnourished. He remembers how hard it was to find a doctor, and when you did, those doctors were already booked for months in advance due to their high demand and short supply. He believes that everyone deserves access to health care. That was the catalyst for him wanting to become a doctor.



"Growing up in Yemen taught me lessons that I will never forget. I grew up in Sanaa the capital of Yemen. People think that because Sanaa is the capital, it might have the necessary infrastructures, but it doesn't. Electricity was provided for just a few hours a day, you would find and fill your house's water well to get water which is no easy task, and, because of the lack of authority, people of all ages carry assault rifles." Living here has made him very "grateful for what I have today, now I have the resources to reach my goals."

He learned English from the Internet, online dictionaries and Google Translator. By his senior year he was already comfortable reading, writing and speaking in English.

He is majoring in chemistry and molecular biology because it explains the chemical processes that happen in the human body. After a bachelor's degree he plans to enroll in an MD-PHD program, because he is interested in discovering things no one has discovered yet. Instead of reading articles written by scientists, he wants to be the one writing articles for scientific journals.

Among several clubs he is part of, he helped out with an AAUW sponsored event at COS called "Expand Your Horizons". It's a day exposing girls, 4th through 6th grade to STEM activities.

Jera Brandenburg - Jera plans to earn a bachelor's degree in business administration with an emphasis in accounting, potentially even going further and becoming a certified managerial accountant. Jera said, "This may sound like quite a generic introduction of yet another business undergraduate, but I assure you I am anything but the typical business



student. I have been out of school for 15 years since obtaining my GED in 2003. As a child and teenager, I survived a drug-infested, abuse-filled, and divorced home life, which I had to bounce back and forth between two extremely unhealthy homes. As a sixteen-year-old high school dropout, living on my own in a friend's garage, I vowed to never follow the path that was lived out before me by both of my parents. I enrolled myself in a GED program and completed it at the age of 17. Though I had a strong desire to attend college, I started working and even managed full restaurants and employees at 18 years old, demonstrating my strong work ethic and exceptional managerial skills early on. My college dream slowly faded into an unrealistic fantasy amidst my day to day survival."

Now she is a wife and mother to five boys. These past years she has been spending it raising her blended family, the youngest being 7-year-old autistic twins. We can only imagine the challenges of normal motherhood duties, having autistic twins, as well as going to school, but her desire to better herself and her family is something she is passionate about. Jera is not only setting a wonderful example for her own children by carrying on with life as well as sitting at the kitchen table studying hard for her classes. She has served as the president of the Alpha Gamma Sigma Honors Society Club on campus, started and manages a Facebook group to support other families who have autistic children in hopes of supporting and encouraging them, as well as volunteers throughout the community, gathering supplies for various needs of less fortunate individuals, and fundraising to raise money for club-wide scholarships.

Ramses Denis-Romero - "I woke up twice that day. The first time I was greeted by an intense stomach pain and an unending spew of stomach bile; the other in a hospital bed with bandages across my abdomen and tubes feeding me oxygen going through my nose. Unlike most people who get appendicitis and are released in a few days, I had the misfortune of having my appendix rupture and unleash the bacteria across several of my surrounding organs. Several days prior to this, I had gone to a doctor in Visalia due to stomach pain, though the doctor didn't seem to care, brushed it off as a stomach virus, and sent me home. That morning I had gone from



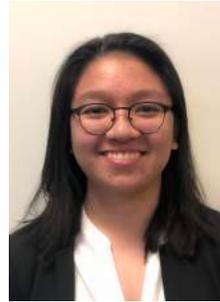
clinic to clinic looking for an available doctor, but by the time I reached a pediatrician my appendix had already ruptured. I was rushed to the ER only to find that no doctor was willing to perform surgery on me due to my age and how long I had gone with my appendix ruptured. Ultimately, my brush with death caused me to realize the severity behind the lack of physicians in the Central Valley and, additionally, catalyzed my desire to pursue a career in medicine.”

He decided to get a neurobiology, physiology and behavior major (NPB). He is a first generation Mexican-American and college student. He learned at a young age how to make the best out of a "bad" situation and learned that life doesn't always go our way by spending that summer in a hospital bed. He learned it's how we deal with the unexpected that allows us to overcome whatever obstacle is thrown our way. His goal is to be the best doctor he can be and come back to impact others' lives the way the surgeon did his. He feels he was given a second chance at life.

Alex Chaves - Alex is a first generation college student and has the added challenge of being from a single parent household. He is on his own when it comes to his education... no one is helping him, pushing him, or financing it for him. He strongly believes that education is an equalizer. (Of course we won't argue with him on that, will we!) He has decided to seek a career in the



legal field because of his encounters with the law. “His mother was an undocumented immigrant; she was approached by an immigration lawyer that promised her legal documentation for an exorbitant amount of money, this lawyer took advantage of my mother's legal status and defrauded her. This unfortunate event shed light on the dire need for ethical and affordable legal representation within rural communities. My mother's encounter negatively stayed with me - it made me question why those skilled and empowered to help would prey on those desperately seeking assistance. However, it has strengthened my resolve to pursue a path of advocacy.” He recognized the need for competent legal representation. His goal is to become a lawyer and practice in his rural community. He has worked hard to make changes to the community by advocating for DACA, volunteered for NextGen America, March for Our Lives, which protested against the incarceration of immigrant children, and the local women's march. He wants to fight and support the ideology of democracy, to advocate for those who legitimately seek to be part of our wonderful country.



Sofia Ongjocz - Sofia migrated to the United States from the Philippines three years ago to follow a dream. She said, “Finding one's purpose is a challenge everyone seeks to find, but finding the means to execute one's purpose is the bigger challenge to be faced. At an early age, I found my purpose in life – to be a Registered

Nurse. I've always wanted to help other people with their health care needs. I found my purpose during my first year of high school, when I was taking care of my mom when she was diagnosed with cervical cancer. During that time, I gained the ability to compartmentalize my emotions, and focus on her health by monitoring her food consumption, and the daily medications that she needed to maintain while she was under treatment.”

Sofia works part time while attending school. Her dad provides the only source of income for the family, so working is not an option for her, it's a necessity. Her devotion to her studies, earning a 4.0, family and school are so admirable.

Kenzie Milhous - Kenzie started her essay this way: “It's funny looking back at my scholarship essay from last year and remembering how I felt as a freshman in my first semester of college, timid but ready to face any challenge head-on. Now having a year under my belt, I have definitely dealt with these challenges in terms of taking full semesters of rigorous STEM courses, constant school and community involvement, and utilizing any free time to engage in learning opportunities. I have learned to make the most of my two years at COS before transferring in the fall of 2019, and that means being anything but the typical college student.”



Kenzie is involved with many clubs, but what I find surprising is that she is the only female math tutor on campus! She is Treasurer of the Society of Hispanic Professional Engineers (SHPE), Inter-Club Council (ICC) Representative for the COS Rotary Club, and an active member of SETA and the MESA program. She volunteers with all these clubs, and was also involved with our own Expanding Your Horizons day on campus. She is also taking part in a program called NCAS, the NASA Community College Aerospace Scholars, where students who are accepted into the program from all over the country take part in a 5-week course with a final project, and have the chance of being selected to stay on a NASA

site for 4 days based on overall performance.

Leslie Diaz - Leslie has volunteered over 450+ hours since her junior year of high school. During her junior year she didn't really know what she wanted to do until she started getting involved on campus and at a local non-profit organization. In high school she was a two year Ambassador for the Tulare County Child Abuse Prevention Club, President of Redwood's Social Justice Club, an active member in Interact club, and to name a few. She was also the Vice President of the Senior Class.



She is a first generation college student and even though her parents wanted her to become a doctor, her passion was in political science. As she started getting involved in her community and around campus, she realized that she didn't have to become a doctor to help others and making a difference. In her words she said, "Our country and world revolves around politics. Government impacts our life everyday and yet, the majority of the population has no common knowledge in politics. That is why I want to become a professor and educate others about the importance and need for politics. Also, the more I get to know my Political Science professors, the more I see myself in them, and the more I grow to love it. My career goals are to become a Political Science Professor and then run for local office. I hope to transfer to UCLA next fall and pursue my Bachelor's in Political Science and obtain a minor in Civic Engagement. As I am pursuing my education, I am also planning on getting a PhD in Political Science."

She said, "I stand apart from most students because I don't just say I am going to do things, I do them. I am driven and outspoken. I have hosted legislative advocacy workshops to youth in the Central Valley. I am a full time student that juggles three jobs, while still finding the time to volunteer, do homework, and spend time with family/friends. I have been featured in Seventeen Magazine for the changes I have been trying to make in the Visalia Unified School District. I have also been to the Capitol to lobby certain bills to congressmen and women. I am passionate about helping others and wanting to make a change and I am driven in politics. As I stated at the beginning of my essay, I have volunteered over 450+ hours in my community. My efforts in the community have not gone unnoticed, in August, I was nominated and chosen for Volunteer of the Year."

From a Scholarship Recipient last year:

Hello Jan,

I was an AAUW scholarship recipient in 2017. I am reaching out to you to inform you that I will be graduating from the COS nursing program in the next couple of weeks. I am very excited and thankful to you all. This achievement is not only mine, but yours as well. The labor of your fruit is evident in my success. I will be eternally grateful to your organization, as you have made an impact on me and the way that I see serving the community.

Sincerely,
Vicente Tinoco

A QUIZ

Question: Did you know that our AAUW Branch sends get well, thinking of you, congratulations and sympathy cards to our members?

Answer: We do...☺!!

My name is Renella Smith and I would be happy to hear from you, if you know of any member in need of some Sunshine in her life. Please call or email me.

Please note that my email address has changed!

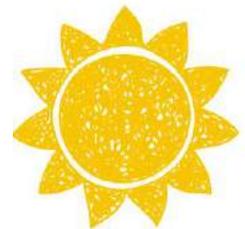
559-627-3085

559-260-9646

gregrensmith@gmail.com

**Wishing everyone
sunshine and blue skies,**

**~ Renella - Sunshine
Committee Chair**



**Save this information
please.**

Those of you who have already paid your dues... Jean Moritz is VERY grateful.



CALLING ALL MEMBERS: Are you having fun in your AAUW breakout group? Then get out your phone and take a picture or two for the newsletter... please. Send them to me, the newsletter editor. Include a sentence or two explaining what the image is about, and please put "AAUW Newsletter" in the subject of the email.

Thank you • Betsy • betsygc@me.com

When was the last time you visited the AAUW National site? Check it out if you have a chance.

<https://www.aauw.org>

And of course, you can check out our local site where we have a calendar, the newsletter, information on different activities, the new-member application, and other resources.

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



Are you on Facebook? Be sure and check out our local AAUW Facebook page. And also, feel free to post things that you did with members or in your breakout group.

Let's keep everyone connected and informed. Thanks.

Remember to refer to your directory for program dates and guides, interest groups, committees, and email addresses and phone numbers of all the members.

