



# Sequoia News

## APRIL AAUW Program April, 2021

### Notes from the Presidents: Liz Kieske & Susan Cunningham

It is spring! Is your household fully vaccinated? If so, you may be ready for an outdoor, COVID-19 guideline-compliant AAUW meeting. We are grateful to Patti Phillips for graciously offering to host a guided tour through her garden this month. See the details in this newsletter. We hope this is a healthy baby-step toward future social and informative gatherings.

We also need to have a Zoom meeting in April to complete local AAUW branch business. It will be short and sweet, but necessary. Please join us on April 29<sup>th</sup> at 3 PM for elections and other important information. Zoom meeting ID: 889 2867 9027; PW: vsAAUW.

Speaking of meetings, in March we Zoomed with Michael Cross, who enlightened us about the latest laws regarding racial justice and the death penalty. Thank you, Michael! This meeting was recorded on my computer and available by email to members upon request at [gicasusan@gmail.com](mailto:gicasusan@gmail.com).

And thank you to our membership for voting to raise our AAUW annual dues to \$95 for the upcoming year, an increase of \$3 for national and \$2 for local. The new breakdown will be: AAUW=\$62 (mostly tax deductible), CA AAUW=\$20, and Visalia-Sequoia AAUW=\$13. We had reduced our local dues in 2018 by \$5 and will now make up some ground on branch business expenses. Still a small price to pay to keep equity & education a priority! See Jean Moritz's membership information.

The AAUW California board voted in February to delete the degree requirement for membership to AAUW. The rationale is to promote inclusiveness. How do you feel about the change? You get to vote online between April 7<sup>th</sup> and May 17<sup>th</sup>. So keep a lookout for an email with directions for voting. Your vote is your voice!

**PRESENTER:** Patti Phillips  
**PROGRAM:** Garden Tour  
**DATE & TIME:** April 24<sup>th</sup> 1:00 pm  
**LOCATION:** 34109 Road 158  
**Visalia (Ivanhoe)**

Patti is a Master Gardener and has graciously invited us to tour her garden. Spring is here and April is such a wonderful time of year for gardens so this will be a special treat. She has asked that you come prepared to wear a mask. Since the tour will be limited to twenty people you will need to call, text or email a reservation. There are directions on pg 2, but it is also easy to use Google map. I would suggest car pooling. Such a lovely tour! Hope to see you there.

Contact Phyllis Matteson - Phone/Text: 300-5022  
Email: [rapmat@aol.com](mailto:rapmat@aol.com)

**DIRECTIONS ON PAGE 2**

CA AAUW is holding its annual meeting virtually on Saturday, April 17<sup>th</sup> at 9:30 AM. No fees or expenses are required! Just register at [aauw-ca.org](http://aauw-ca.org), then Zoom in. Hear the Speech Trek finalists and see what we've accomplished at the state level, even during a pandemic.

Lastly, thank you to our generous members who donated a total of \$5215 to keep our programs alive in spite of COVID restrictions. We've helped keep a ray of hope to several students who have lost so much this past year.

Liz Kieske and Susan Cunningham, co-presidents

"We cannot always build the future for our youth, but we can build our youth for the future." (Franklin Roosevelt)

# Special Interest Group

## COFFEE & CALIFORNIA CONCERNS

Thank-you to Pat Foster for leading our insightful conversation about the water crisis in California (our new normal), and to Pat and Lucia Vazquez for making our first in-person outing in a year possible--a guided tour of the Arts Visalia exhibit "Seen and Unseen," a window into the Chicano experience. Both were quite enriching.

This is our upcoming schedule:

**Mon., April 5, 10:15am**

**Topic: "A Practical Primer for Going Solar"**

**Speaker: Our own Susan Cunningham**

Like many of us, Susan has discovered that it is very difficult to get unbiased, comprehensive, up-to-date information on one's options if you're considering solar for your home. Her quest for a speaker to fit this bill has been frustrating, but she's learned a lot along the way. She'll debrief us on what she's discovered about what's involved, government incentives still in place, roof requirements, capacity issues and more.

**Mon., April 19, 10:15am**

TBD

Anyone with an idea for this meeting's topic, please contact Maile.

**The Zoom details are the same for all sessions:**

**Time: 10:15 a.m. (PT)**

[https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89925790053?](https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89925790053?pwd=S1BjeHh5bjYrNTNBbmRnWXA5c0VIQT09)

[pwd=S1BjeHh5bjYrNTNBbmRnWXA5c0VIQT09](https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89925790053?pwd=S1BjeHh5bjYrNTNBbmRnWXA5c0VIQT09)

Meeting ID: 899 2579 0053

Passcode: C&CC

Contact is Maile Melkonian



Donna Kindschuh, Pat Foster, Lucia Vazquez and Maile Melkonian contemplate one of the large-scale art pieces of Ricardo Favela, on view at Arts Visalia's exhibit, "Seen and Unseen." Pat made special arrangements for our Coffee & California Concerns section to access the museum in-person on March 15, and docent Lucia gave us fabulous background on this Chicano artist's career, messaging and importance. This exhibit has been extended through April.

## GOING ON THE GARDEN TOUR? HERE ARE THE DIRECTIONS TO PATTI PHILLIP'S HOUSE

Directions:

- 1 - Go North on Ben Maddox
- 2 - At stop sign on Ave. 328, turn right (east)
- 3 - In Ivanhoe turn left on Rd. 156 (north)
- 4 - Turn right on Ave. 340
- 5 - Turn left (north) on Rd. 158, Patti's house is a short distance down on the left

## GREAT DECISIONS

Our biweekly foreign policy discussions have been excellent this season! We meet, on-line, every other **Tuesday, 7:00-9:00pm.**

The April topics are:

**April 6 -- The Two Koreas**

**April 20 -- The Role of the World Health Organization**

**Zoom details are:**

[https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82610121173?](https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82610121173?pwd=M1F1RC9GZlVka3lwR0d4akZGT2Fxdz09)

[pwd=M1F1RC9GZlVka3lwR0d4akZGT2Fxdz09](https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82610121173?pwd=M1F1RC9GZlVka3lwR0d4akZGT2Fxdz09)

Meeting ID: 826 1012 1173

Passcode: GD2021

Meeting ID: 826 1012 1173

Passcode: 466885

Contacts are: Maile Melkonian, Carol Finney and Betsy Gaudette-Cross.



## FOR ALL RESIDENTS OF VISALIA:

The Citizen's Advisory Committee needs your help!

The City of Visalia's annual Public Opinion Survey is now LIVE. One of the great things about Visalia, is that the local government really does make an effort to hear from constituents. One of the ways they do this is through this survey--and City Council and staff actually pay attention to the results! In recent years, the survey has been made available on-line. Here are the links:

English: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/2021VisaliaSurvey>

Spanish: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/EncuestaVisalia2021>

The survey will be available until 4/22/21. It takes about 3 minutes to do. Help maximize participation this year. Fill it out--and pass it around!



Thank you to Michael Cross for that informative meeting on Racial Justice. This meeting was recorded on Susan Cunningham's computer and available by email to members upon request at [gिकासusan@gmail.com](mailto:gिकासusan@gmail.com).



## IT'S DUES SEASON

Now is the time to pay dues for the 2021-2022 fiscal year. This first week of April you will receive a dues invoice in your email with the subject line reading "**membershpaauw**". If you open that email and follow the directions you can pay your dues easily and instantaneously. A notification of dues paid is sent immediately afterward to you and to the membership treasurer. Also, please make sure to notify me of any changes in your contact information, i.e., address, email, phone number, etc. Remember, Maile needs to update the directory at the beginning of July and get it printed. Kindly pay dues early. The deadline for dues is June 30<sup>th</sup>.

Should you need to pay by check, please make it out for \$95, payable to AAUW (use only these 4 letters as that's the name of our account at Bank of America), and mail it to me soon at: Jean Moritz, 2412 S. Encina St. Visalia CA 93277. Looking forward to the next AAUW year and meeting together again and sharing friendship.

## AAUW SUNSHINE

If you know of anyone that needs some "sunshine" please contact Renella Smith at (559) 260-9646 or [gregrensmith@gmail.com](mailto:gregrensmith@gmail.com).



Remember to let her know if you hear of any of our members who need a lift, have been ill, had surgery or suffered a loss. Thank you.

**CLICK ON THE LINK**  
and see what one of our members has been up to. Way to go Lori Olvera-Clarkson

<https://www.yourcentralvalley.com/news/education/educator-of-the-week-mrs-clarkson-from-goshen-elementary/>



## AAUW California Lobby Day

On March 24th AAUW California held a statewide Lobby Day. Teams made up of local branch members met with state legislators to lobby for AAUW Priority Bills currently moving through the state legislature. Local members who participated were Nancy Adalian, Maile Melkonian, and Terry Cornelius. As further updates on this event are available, we will share them.

This was also an opportunity for AAUWCA to share with legislators the work AAUW does across the state to support its three Pillars of Public Policy Priorities. These are: economic security for all women; support a strong system of high quality public education; and guarantee equality, individual rights and social justice for a diverse and inclusive society.

The AAUW CA Public Policy Committee, in consultation with our Advocate Kathy Van Osten, selected 3 bills (out of 30 on our Legislative Agenda for this year) to advocate for with the Legislature. These are: Senate Bill 373, Senate Bill 62, and Assembly Bill 92. AB 92 is our signature bill. AAUW is a co-sponsor on this bill.

Key points in these bills are:

### **Senate Bill 373 - Consumer Debt: Economic Abuse - Author: Senator David Min**

- This bill will prohibit creditors and debt collectors from being able to collect from an individual when that individual can demonstrate the debt was incurred through economic abuse. It will also prevent the debt from being reported to credit agencies.
- “Economic Abuse” occurs when a person causes an individual to have impaired financial stability by maintaining control over the individual’s financial resources, including unauthorized or coerced use of credit or property, withholding access to money or credit cards, forbidding attendance at school or employment, stealing or defrauding money or assets, exploiting the individual’s resources for personal gain or withholding physical resources such as food, clothing, necessary medications, or shelter.
- It primarily focuses on survivors of domestic violence, elder or dependent adult abuse, and foster youth. Debts taken out in their names without their knowledge or consent damage individuals' credit and force them into years of debt repayment, reducing their economic

stability and leaving them vulnerable to future abuse, poverty, and housing instability or homelessness.

### **Assembly Bill 92: Child Care Family Fees - Author: Assembly Majority Leader Eloise Gomez Reyes**

- State and federally funded programs help families, but they must still pay fees. This can make subsidized care unaffordable and jeopardize employment or education. The current fee structure penalizes families, since the fees increase as income rises, forcing families to have to make choices between paying childcare family fees or other basic needs.
- This bill will waive family fees, using federal funding, through October 31, 2022. It will provide immediate relief for these low-income families, similar to what the Legislature did last year at the beginning of the pandemic. It will also help keep daycares in business, as many have closed during the pandemic.
- After that, the bill will create an equitable sliding scale for family fees, providing reasonable family fees and relieving the burden on working families struggling to pay for childcare and early childhood education services.

### **Senate Bill 62: Garment Worker Protection Act - Author: Maria Elano Durazo.**

SB 62 would expand and strengthen enforcement of wage theft liability in the garment manufacturing industry, ensuring that retailers cannot use layers of contracting to avoid responsibility under the law. By eliminating the piece rate in the garment industry while still allowing for bonus and incentive payments, this bill would ensure that workers are paid for all time spent working.

- Wage theft is a significant issue in the “underground economy” of the garment manufacturing industry in California. In Los Angeles, some 2,000 garment manufacturers employ more than 46,000 people - mostly immigrant women - who spend 10 to 12 hours a day cutting, sewing and dyeing clothing. Most recently many have been re-focused on face masks and personal protective equipment. Garment workers are paid by the piece rate rather than being paid legal wages for all time-spent working. Utilizing the piece rate enables sub-minimum wage, on the average, \$5.15 an hour.

## PROGRAM SCHEDULE

**May 2, 2021** (Sunday) TBA - arrive 1:15 p.m. for 2:00 curtain

LOCATION: The Ice House, 216 N. Willis St.

PROGRAM: ***“Legally Blonde”***

PRESENTERS: The Visalia Players

A fabulously fun award-winning musical based on the movie, this musical follows the transformation of Elle Woods as she tackles stereotypes and scandal in pursuit of her dreams. Action-packed and exploding with memorable songs and dynamic dances, this musical is so much fun, it should be illegal! Tickets are \$17.

**FYI - the Lifestyles box will stay closed for the time being. We thought that with the limited attendance and the need for temperature checks and social distancing, that the people picking up books at the location of the box would be a hindrance to the gym’s ability to keep within guidelines. It won’t be long now. When they open fully, we’ll be back.**

**May 15, 2021** (Saturday) 2:00–4:00pm

LOCATION: Congregation B’nai David, 1039 S. Chinowth St.

EVENT: ***Scholarship Reception***

Thanks to generous donations from all of you, we are able to grant two scholarships to worthy C.O.S. students again this year. Meet the 2021 recipients, and hear their stories of motivation and perseverance overcoming obstacles in pursuit of their goals.

**REMEMBER**, any activity listed in the newsletter is open to all members. You haven’t ever gone to Coffee and California Concerns? No problem. It is open to everyone. Great. Join the Zoom on the dates listed. Check out what AAUW has to offer.

BTW, if you are reading this, I (Betsy) want to thank you for taking the time to read to the end.

