

# The Sequoia Newsletter

Visalia - Sequoia AAUW

## CO-PRESIDENTS' LETTER

*I am among those who think that science has great beauty.* — Marie Curie

I had the privilege of volunteering at this year's **Expanding Your Horizons** STEM day-camp for elementary school girls at C.O.S. on Nov. 5. It was an unmitigated joy to see how enthusiastically the students participated in the day's inspiring activities! This is one of two significant projects (Tech Trek is the other) that we help sponsor, and we should be proud of our Branch work in this regard. Stalwart Chair Lori Olvera-Clarkson has kept us involved for a number of years. See below for photos.

Public Policy Chair Terry Cornelius and Communications Director Ally Babcock brought news of a pilot California AAUW project, called **Gov Trek**, to encourage greater female involvement in governance. Check it out below.

Communications Director Ally Babcock is refurbishing our social media. The Board decided in November to move our **Facebook** account to a new stand-alone Branch page. Stay tuned for exciting updates.

Our **November Branch meeting** program proved that "**Lifting Local Literacy**" can apply to the college-educated, as well. C.O.S. English professor and author Christina Lynch gave a surprisingly personal account of "Perspectives on Writing, Teaching

and the Importance of Literature in Our Lives." She has two new books coming out in 2023 (including *Sally Brady's Italian Adventure*), and gave us a sense of the process of writing, as well as her journey toward a career in teaching. And kudos to our Program Committee for thinking outside the box re the lunch menu.

As is our tradition, we are taking a break from our informative and educational meeting content to celebrate the season with our **Holiday Tea**. Immediate past Co-President Susan Cunningham is our hostess. Hospitality Chair Marsha Brooks-Smith is planning a festive array of goodies, and your past presidents will be pouring. In addition to the camaraderie,

two good causes will be featured: 1) a raffle to fund our end-of-year member award (contact Honored Member Award VP Nancy Holmes if you have items to donate), and 2) the Co-Presidents' featured charity, which is Little Free Libraries (bring new books—children's or adults'—or a check, if you prefer). See below for details on both.

Wishing a warm and wonderful holiday season to all!

— Maile Melkonian & Lisa Silva



### BOARD MEETING

Tuesday, Dec. 6  
1:30 p.m. (note time change)  
At Jan Johnson's home

## DECEMBER GENERAL MEETING

### Annual Holiday Tea

Date: Saturday, December 10

Time: 2:00-4:00

Location: home of Susan Cunningham,  
2603 E. Harvard Ct.  
901-5545

Cost: nothing for admission, but bring your money for raffle tickets for the great items our interest groups and generous individuals have supplied.

Gift: In the spirit of increasing literacy in our county, we are suggesting donations be

brought of new books, either for children or adults to be put in the lending library boxes you see around town. Our member Dona Meinhardt has worked on one, and we are working to create one for AAUW to maintain. Thank you. Hope to see you on this festive occasion  
Sherri Bentley, Program Member

Our Holiday Tea is just around the corner, so we need prizes for our popular raffle and silent auction. Prizes can be donated by local businesses, our chapter's special interest groups, or even by individuals. Last year we made \$700.00 from the donated prizes. If you, your business, or your special interest group has a prize to donate, contact Nancy Holmes or Susan Cunningham with details before the tea. Let's keep this tradition alive with holiday spirit and fund education at the same time.

— Nancy Holmes

*At the Holiday Tea*

this year's designated charity is  
**Little Free Libraries!**

Please bring new or barely-used children's books. (New books for adults will also help—and, yes, checks will work well, too!)



We hope to help make books available in a Visalia neighborhood where homes don't always have books.

## GREAT DECISIONS

Maile Melkonian, Co-Chair

There are still Briefing Books available for pre-order (at a 32% discount). These provide the point of departure for each of the eight foreign policy topics we'll be highlighting this coming spring. If you are interested in international issues, this section is for you!

Our first gathering will be on January 31, and we will meet, as usual, every other Tuesday evening (7-

9:00pm) till early May. The topics—all super-timely—are:

**Energy Geopolitics**  
**War Crimes**  
**China & the U.S.**  
**Economic Warfare**  
**Politics in Latin American**  
**Global Famine**  
**Iran at a Crossroads**  
**Climate Migration**

To order Briefing Books, contact Doug Dethlefs: [intofruit@yahoo.com](mailto:intofruit@yahoo.com) (559) 967-5672 or just send a check, made out to him, to: 3504 W. Sunnyview Ave. Visalia, CA 93291

The discounted price is **\$31**, and is available as long as supplies last. We expect to receive them by mid-

January, and will notify subscribers when they are available for pick-up at the Public Library, downtown Visalia.

Hope you'll join us!

Section Co-Chairs:  
 Doug Dethlefs  
 Pat Foster  
 Maile Melkonian

## EXPANDING YOUR HORIZONS

Maile Melkonian

### Expanding Your Horizons — Back In-Person at C.O.S.

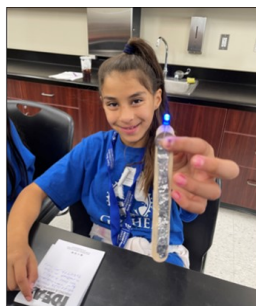
The first of our Branch's educational projects for this year was a heartwarming success! After a COVID cancellation in 2020, and going on-line in 2021, Expanding Your Horizons welcomed elementary girls back on campus, Saturday, November 5. For many participants, this was the first time they had ever stepped foot onto a college campus—and the experience can be life-changing.

EYH's mission is to encourage grade-school girls to pursue their interest in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM). The short-term hope is that these girls will continue taking such classes in high school (and participate in other programs such as Tech Trek). The long-term goal is to close the gender gap in STEM careers.

The day-camp agenda—well organized by the Tulare County Office of Education—included two morning workshops, lunch, and two afternoon workshops. I was able to pop into about half of the two dozen

available. The quality and variety were quite impressive: a presentation on nursing careers; live reptile handling and identification; how to make a flashlight with a popsicle stick; use of microscopes; hands-on understanding of the differences among sedimentary/igneous/metamorphic types of rock; detailed botany drawing; viewing the galaxy through a telescope; and much more. My favorite was a lab where students extracted DNA from strawberries—in 45 minutes!

The girls' enthusiasm was palpable—which must be why our Branch EYH Chair Lori Olvera-Clarkson has kept involved since 2002. Kudos to her for managing our participation in this worthy project for most of that time!



In this workshop, a future engineer makes a flashlight out of an LED bulb, wire, foil and a popsicle stick.



Girls have a hands-on lab with live reptiles—including this snake—while they learn about their physiology, habitat and behavior.



A student practices life-saving CPR technique, in a nursing careers class.

Some 600 girls attended. V.U.S.D. Superintendent Kirk Shrum designated a portion of the District's one-time State monies to underwrite the participation of 15 girls from each of V.U.S.D.'s 27 elementary schools—a first for the District. In addition, students came from school districts throughout the County—even as far away as Ducor.

Our contribution made it possible for 50 additional girls to get in on this inspiring event. We also subsidized the take-home lab kits that were awarded to the students whose "tweets" (pithy "posts" describing the importance of STEM endeavors to them) were judged the best. These were distributed at the day-end plenary that wrapped up a truly wonderful event.



Our Branch has made it possible for Goshen Elementary School girls to attend EYH for two decades. These happy STEM students have earned take-home lab kits, to keep their interest kindled long after the day-camp experience.

## PUBLIC POLICY

Terry Cornelius, Public Policy Chair

GovTrek: How to Rock the Next Generation, AAUW California

Men still vastly outnumber women in the halls of power. YOU can help us close that gap!

Volunteer for Gov Trek, the AAUW California program coming to YOUR branch in 2023. This virtual program for high school junior and senior girls is designed to elevate the next generation to pursue careers in public service and elected office. It was piloted by the Carlsbad-Oceanside-Vista Branch. Over five two-hour sessions, students will engage in interactive and inspiring activities with exposure to women legislators, career options, and the inner workings of a political campaign.

paigned. The program will culminate in a group competition to create a realistic campaign simulation.

This on-line program is free to the students and free to the Branch. The role of the Branch is to connect students to the program. Branch members could also be Breakout Room Facilitators - see below. Be a part of it!

**Your Volunteer Role:** Be a Zoom Breakout Room Facilitator. Breakout Room Facilitators manage a group of up to 15 students in an on line Zoom "breakout room." Anyone interested from our Branch may contact Terry Cornelius for more details or <https://www.aauw-ca.org/gov-trek/>



**GOV TREK**  
AAUW California

## Tech Trek



The Tech Trek 2023 planning has started! In early November there was a statewide Zoom about next year's camps which I took part in. There were 124 attendees on the Zoom many of them were new branch coordinators to the Tech Trek program. Break Out rooms and lots of questions were discussed. Basically the process is the same as it has been. For the next six months there will be some interaction monthly between the state program and our branch committee through me. This peaks in February through April. Initial teacher interaction begins in December and continues with interested math and science teachers through April. The good news is that the Fresno State camp will take place in early June and the virtual camps will also be available throughout the summer. The branch Tech Trek committee — Jane Grassel, Susan Kreps, and myself — welcome Sherri Bentley to this interesting and rewarding process!

— Jeanne Evans, Project Chair

## MEMBERSHIP

We had many visitors at our last general meeting! Fun to see new faces and meet new people. That is probably the best way to get some new members. So, please invite your friends, relatives, and neighbors to join us at our general meeting...so we can get the word out about our mission and our organization

— Suzanne Babcock Membership Chair



## C&C CONCERN

Are you familiar with aging services in Kings and Tulare counties? There may be more than you know and some just might be useful to you. Bonnie Quiroz with Kings/Tulare Area Agency on Aging will inform us of the many programs available to seniors in our county.

She will also be sharing information about a project just for Christmas..... Stockings for Seniors Drive. This project will help to ensure that home-bound and isolated seniors are not forgotten this holiday season. We can help fill those stocking too.

See you there. It will be informative and heart warming.

Join us.

When: December 14

Where: Cafe 210 at 210 W. Center St  
10 to 12

— Mary Ann Lawrence, Section Chair

## Travelling Troopers

We are reinstating the travelling troopers group from the past, with our first trip: Dec. 1-3 to San Francisco to visit the King Ramses exhibit at the DeYoung Museum of Art and the Museum of Modern Art. We have all reservations made, but invite any interested members who would like to be included in our group for future plans, to contact either Sherri Bentley at 288-5429, or Nancy Scott 901-0675. In the past we have gone near and far- from Carmel to Albuquerque's Hot Air Balloon festival, to New York. Here's to happy travelling!

— Sherri Bentley, Section Chair





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## Visalia - Sequoia AAUW

P.O. Box 6  
Visalia, CA 93279

Email: [visalia.sequoia.aauw@gmail.com](mailto:visalia.sequoia.aauw@gmail.com)

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We're on the web!

[Visaliasequoia-ca.aauw.net](http://Visaliasequoia-ca.aauw.net)

## Sunshine

Renella Smith, Section Chair

A Note from AAUW Sunshine:

Wishing all of you a wonderful Holiday Season. This is the time when we enjoy seeing family and friends to share stories, food, and happy thoughts.

But we also know that some of our members may be dealing with illnesses, the passing of a loved one, or other stressful situations.

Please remember to give me a call, text, or email when you become aware that one of our members could use a card reminding her that we care. Don't hesitate because you think someone else has already notified me.

Renella Smith  
559-260-9646  
[gregrensmith@gmail.com](mailto:gregrensmith@gmail.com)



## TECH PEER GROUP

This is a state program for any AAUW member that would like to learn more about tech programs (like Word, Excel, website design etc.) Our next meeting is going to be on December 6. We are going to be going over Google Docs, shared folders, uploading, editing v commenting, suggestions, what access you can give others, Google Sheets and how to download to Excel. We are excited to learn something new and see what is coming next.

Any member of AAUW is allowed to join any of the meetings. I will keep everyone updated on the topics and if you are interested in joining, please let me know.

Allison Babcock, Communication Chair

