

The Sequoia Newsletter

Visalia - Sequoia AAUW

CO-PRESIDENTS' LETTER

"It takes a village..."

— African adage

It's been a productive Branch year, and a lot of our efforts are bearing fruit. None of what we do could happen without a lot of member participation.

As you all know, our programs are funded by our **Book Sales**. When it looked like we might not have a venue for our Spring Book Sale, Lisa Silva's search committee found a solution: the Veterans Memorial Building. Sandy Parmelly, Susan Cunningham and their team of Book Sorters never lost a beat. And many of you are stepping up to cover the shifts from April 11 through 16. It's happening! Public Policy Chair Terry Cor-

nelius has kept us more engaged in this realm than ever. See her report below about our March 22 **Lobby Day** interviews of local State representatives' offices. Also, our Branch participated in AAUW-CA's 3-month pilot **GovTrek** program for high school girls, which wrapped up on March 25.

Dona Meinhardt researched our ad hoc effort to collect books and money to help stock **Little Free Library** stands in our community, fostering our theme of "Lifting Local Literacy."

Our Program Committee (Sherri Bentley, Susan Mathews and Jan Johnson) has done a terrific job month after month. In March, Nancy Bellin related her poignant

"One Woman's Story" leaving some of us dewy-eyed. By attending, you make the Committee's work (and the speakers' efforts) gratifying.

The next branch meeting is our **Annual Meeting**, on April 20—see program details below. After the program, we'll conduct some important Branch business: election of **officers** (see slate below) and approval of the Branch **Budget** for 2023-24(also below). The membership will also be voting on a proposal to increase **dues** (see Treasurer Donna Nottingham's explanation below). Hope you will all participate in these consequential votes! Which brings us to the efforts of Cathy Lovell and Jean Moritz, as our **Nominating Committee**.



They managed to corral a slate of wonderful volunteers to take the Branch through the coming year. Our organization cannot operate without you. Thank-you all!

Maile Melkonian & Lisa Silva

BOARD MEETING

Tuesday, April 18
2:30 p.m.

At **B'nai David Congregation**
in the Sanctuary
(Park in the north lot.)

APRIL ANNUAL MEETING

April Annual AAUW Meeting

Date: Thursday, April 20, 2023

Time: 11:30 – 1:30

Location: Veterans Memorial Bldg., 609 West Center Ave.

Program: **"Big Trees—Big Impact"**

PRESENTER: Lee Terkelsen, journalist, photographer, retired teacher, hiker of the Pacific Coast and John Muir Trails

We already know the Sequoia trees are big. Come discover stories hidden beneath their monumental statistics- how the Sequoias have affected our history, our culture, and how we think about our environment.

Lunch: catered by Left of Center, cost is \$20 per person.

Contact: Susan Mathews 739-1449, cell 731-8074 by **Friday April 14 with reservations**

Please know that the Left of Center charges per plate for any amount of food taken.

As this will be an interesting topic that guests (such as your significant other or nature loving friends) may find interesting, bring them along. We have reserved a fairly large room to accommodate extra guests. See you there!

Sherri Bentley - Program Committee VP



— Jean Moritz

As the time for dues paying draws near, please be aware that reminder notices will be sent to your email box from National AAUW. Be sure to check your email for those reminders from AAUW Membership. Another new addition to the dues paying system is that you will be reminded to pay your dues exactly one year from the month and day you paid your dues last year. That's right. Dues are now paid yearly on the same date on which you paid last year and are good for one year. We shall see when these reminders come, if there will be a way to pay online from that reminder with just one click. You can always pay your dues by going to the AAUW website, logging in and pay with credit/debit card. If you wish another method of paying, you can always have dues deducted automatically from your checking account. If so, you will go to the AAUW website, and enter your information for online payment from your checking account. No checks are accepted by National. Only credit/debit cards, or deduction directly from a checking account.

We will be voting on our dues at the April 20 Annual Meeting. Please wait until after that meeting before paying dues for 2023-2024. After that we will know the amount. If you have any questions, please text or call my cell, 559-731-3067, or email at moritzjl@hotmail.com.

— Suzanne Babcock

We would like to welcome new members Doug Dethlefs and Ina Evangelho. They have attended a few of our recent meetings and found the group to be right up their alley. Happily, they have both already signed up to work shifts at the upcoming Book Sale! That is truly appreciated! Please make them welcome, introduce yourselves, and invite them to a special interest group or two. Again...welcome

ELECTION OF OFFICERS

It has been a privilege to chair the Nominating Committee. I want to thank Jean Moritz for her exceptional work and tireless efforts. We also consulted with former presidents, Marilyn Rankin and Nancy Adalian, who both offered excellent suggestions for future leadership. The Committee is very proud to propose the following slate of officers for the 2023-2024 year:

Co-Presidents	Lisa Silva Linda Tucker
President-Elect	Janis Lehmann
Program Vice President	Sherri Bentley
Membership Vice Pres	Suzanne Babcock
Membership Treasurer	Jill Rojas
Treasurer	Donna Nottingham
Honored Member Fund VP	Nancy Holmes
Secretary	Marsha Brooks-Smith
Communications Director	Allison Babcock

The election of officers will be held at the Annual Meeting on Thursday, April 20. Nominations will be accepted from the floor before the vote. On behalf of the Nominating Committee, I want to thank all the nominees for their willingness to serve. The future of our organization is in good hands because of their dedication.

Cathy Lovell
Chair, Nominating
Committee



C&C CONCERNS

- Jill Rojas, Co-Chair

Interested in learning more about California water issues? Join us for an interesting session with the League of Women's Voters Tulare County.
WHEN-Tuesday, April 18 12:00 pm (doors open at 11:30 am)

Includes lunch \$20 pay at the door.

RSVP by Friday, April 14 to

Linda_Chapin@yahoo.com

WHERE- Left of Center (corner of Center and Johnson)

WHAT- Joe Yun, Executive Officer, California Water Commission

SUNSHINE

- Renella Smith,

A GENTLE REMINDER
If you hear of any of our AAUW members who need a little Sunshine note, please remember to call, text, or email me. It is always nice to receive an unexpected note when we are ill or have lost a dear family member.

Renella Smith

gregrensmith@gmail.com

(559) 260-9646



- Pat Foster, Co-Chair

Great Decisions discussions are halfway through the season already!

Next on the agenda:

April 11 - Global Famine

April 25 - Iran at the Crossroads

We meet in Room 133, COS, 7:00 p.m.

Remember to print and bring your parking passes!

LITTLE LIBRARY

Hygge and Books

Hygge, important to the Danish culture, is the art of creating a pleasing atmosphere (including your books.) An Australian study of 31 countries and the average number of books each had in homes provided the following results: The US ranked #11 with 114 per household (Estonia ranked #1 with 218. Who knew?) According to the study, "A big factor of your literacy level is the number of books in your home when you were a teenager." (at least 80 being the optimum.)

From *My Hygge Home* by Meik Wiking (Article by Dona Meinhardt)

BOOK SALE

BOOK SALE SIGNS...

By now, those of you who checked out book sale signs should have them up around the city. Thank you for agreeing to do that since this is our major source of advertising the sale.

The sale ends on April 16th. So we do need to take the signs down in a timely fashion after the last day. I will be home to collect signs from you starting on April 18th. I will send out an email to those of you with signs giving more specific directions for their return.

Again...thank you for your willingness to help with the signs. It is appreciated. - Suzanne Babcock

THANK YOU to everyone who displays sale yard signs, puts up flyers, and volunteers at our Spring Book Sale!

If you haven't signed up yet, I'm sure there are still shifts available for you to work.

[CLICK HERE TO SIGN UP](#) (for help call Allison Babcock or Susan Cunningham)

Then be sure to mark your calendar and remember to go to the Visalia Veterans Memorial Building (NOT Sequoia Mall!) At 609 W. Center Street.

We are still looking for wagons, carts, or flat-bed dollies to help us move books during the sale. If you have any of these to share, call Susan Cunningham.

These people have already offered to loan their equipment for the sale: Cathy Lovell, Lisa Smale

We could use more!

This is definitely a new chapter in our Book Sale history. Things will seem different! I will welcome any insights into how to improve at our new venue!

Thanks,

Susan Cunningham

MARCH GENERAL MEETING

For those members who were unable to attend the March meeting- you missed a terrific talk. Nancy Bellin discussed her touching experiences of being interned with her family in a Japanese Relocation Camp in Arizona during World War II. While she did reveal the absolutely negative aspects, she also detailed how the children and families were resilient, finding ways to make the experiences tolerable. We were so proud to have a record attendance of 50 people.



For the AAUW portion of the meeting, our treasurer once again explained the necessity of raising our dues next year in order to continue the scholarships and projects we do. She shared two possible budgets with us- one with the proposed increase and one without. We will have a vote on the budget, the proposed dues increase, and the slate of officers to elect at the April meeting. Thanks, Sherri Bentley



Nancy Bellin told us about one way her father kept busy during the years of internment. He carved intricate designs into found wood, such as this one, by checking out an exacto knife from the camp authorities each day.

TREASURER REPORT

Attached are two proposed budgets for the 2023 - 2024 year for our branch. There is one WITHOUT A DUES INCREASE and the other is WITH A DUES INCREASE. Which one we vote on will be based on the outcome of the proposed increase in our branch dues to \$125.00. The only difference between the budgets is the amount of money we receive from MEMBER DUES and the amount of money spent in COS Scholarships.

If we do NOT increase our dues and leave the amount at \$100.00 OUR branch will receive \$8.00 of that money.

Regardless of the outcome of the dues increase we are obligated to the following:

AAUW National \$72.00

CA - AAUW \$20.00

Our Branch \$ 8.00*

*\$8.00 per branch member multiplied by our membership of 100 equals \$800 in membership dues income; which is not enough to sustain our organization. Our minimum (meager) operating expenses are approximately \$10,000. This amount is used to pay insurance (liability and directors and officers), meeting space for board and general meetings, monthly meeting program expense, annual roster printing, post office box annual rental and booksale expenses. This does NOT include the programs we are KNOWN for: Expanding your Horizons, COS Scholarships or Tech Trek, which adds approximately \$18,000 more to our expenses. We do have money in our Morgan Stanley Account of approximately \$64,000. Based on our standing rules we are able to (and do) utilize the interest and dividends from the initial investment of \$58,000 (which we received from the sale of the Clubhouse in 1973). The initial investment is to remain intact, per our Standing Rules.

If the dues increase were to pass our obligation to AAUW National and CA-AAUW would remain the same, at \$72 and \$20 respectively, however OUR Branch would receive \$33.00. BIG DIFFERENCE. It would not cover all of our operating expenses but it would amount to \$3,300.00 a \$2,500 difference!

I would like to thank the members of the Finance Committee - Susan Franciskovich, Sherri Bentley, Susan Cunningham, Maile Melkonian, Lisa Silva and Linda Tucker for their help and input into creating these budgets.

Respectfully submitted,
Donna Nottingham
Treasurer

AAUW 2023-2024

Proposed Budget NO DUES INCREASE

		Actual - YTD July 2022 - June 2023	Proposed July 2023 - June 2024
Income			
	Dividends	1,919.62	4,000.00
	Donation	22.85	100.00
	Fundraiser		
	Booksale	16,729.00	20,000.00
	Tea	945.00	500.00
	Total Fundraiser	17,674.00	20,500.00
	Interest Earned	2.27	3.00
	Meeting Income	0.00	
	Member Dues	1,410.00	800.00
	Total Income	21,028.74	25,403.00
Expense			
	Fees	360.30	550.00
	Fundraising Expense		
	Booksale Expense		
	Book Moving - COS	250.00	500.00
	Book moving - Redwood FBLA		500.00
	Sales Tax	1,421.00	1,700.00
	Signs/Publicity	1,010.03	800.00
	Supplies	88.00	200.00
	Truck Rental	304.00	600.00
	Venue Rent		1,400.00
	Booksale Expense - Other	0.00	
	Total Booksale Expense	3,073.03	5,700.00
	Tea Fundraiser	174.00	250.00
	Fundraising Expense - Other	3.00	
	Total Fundraising Expense	3,250.03	5,950.00
	Insurance Expense	625.00	650.00
	Meetings & Programs		
	Board Meeting		200.00
	General Meeting	193.90	750.00
	State Conference		1,000.00
	Total Meetings & Programs	193.90	1,950.00
	Miscellaneous		
	Little Free Library Donation	-160.00	
	Total Miscellaneous	-160.00	
	Newsletter/Yearbook	498.53	600.00
	Office Supplies	202.00	203.00
	Philanthropic Program		
	COS Scholarships	10,000.00	4,600.00
	Educational Foundation	50.00	0.00
	Expanding Your Horizons	1,700.00	1,700.00
	Local Programs		200.00
	Tech Trek		9,000.00
	Total Philanthropic Program	11,750.00	15,500.00
	Total Expense	16,719.76	25,403.00
	Net Ordinary Income	4,308.98	0.00
		4,308.98	0.00

Proposed Budget WITH DUES INCREASE

		Actual - YTD	Proposed
		July 2022 - June 2023	July 2023 - June 2024
Income			
	Dividends	1,919.62	4,000.00
	Donation	22.85	100.00
	Fundraiser		
	Booksale	16,729.00	20,000.00
	Tea	945.00	500.00
	Total Fundraiser	17,674.00	20,500.00
	Interest Earned	2.27	3.00
	Meeting Income	0.00	
	Member Dues	1,410.00	3,300.00
	Total Income	21,028.74	27,903.00
Expense			
	Fees	360.30	550.00
	Fundraising Expense		
	Booksale Expense		
	Book Moving - COS	250.00	500.00
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	Fundraising Expense - Other	3.00	
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	Insurance Expense	625.00	650.00
	Meetings & Programs		
	Board Meeting		200.00
	General Meeting	193.90	750.00
	State Conference		1,000.00
	Total Meetings & Programs	193.90	1,950.00
	Miscellaneous		
	Little Free Library Donation	-160.00	
	Total Miscellaneous	-160.00	
	Newsletter/Yearbook	498.53	600.00
	Office Supplies	202.00	203.00
	Philanthropic Program		
	COS Scholarships	10,000.00	7,100.00
	Educational Foundation	50.00	0.00
	Expanding Your Horizons	1,700.00	1,700.00
	Local Programs		200.00
	Tech Trek		9,000.00
	Total Philanthropic Program	11,750.00	18,000.00
	Total Expense	16,719.76	27,903.00
	Net Ordinary Income	4,308.98	0.00
		4,308.98	0.00

AAUW CALIFORNIA LOBBY DAYS

-Terry Cornelius

AAUW California Lobby Days this year were on March 21 and 22.

This is an opportunity for AAUW members to meet with their state representatives and/or their staff to inform them about AAUW and advocate for their support of current AAUW CA priority bills.

Participants:

Four members of our Branch participated this year: Maile Melkonian, Lisa Silva, Nancy Adalian, and Terry Cornelius. They met with **Senator Shannon Grove's** Legislative Aide Taylor Bartucca and **Assembly Member Vince Fong's** Legislative Director Spencer Street.

What follows is a brief summary of each bill and a recap of the meeting our branch held with the legislative staff.

AAUW California Top Three Priority Bills

Assembly Bill 1394

Author: Assembly Member Buffy Wicks
Social Media Platform Liability For Child Sexual Abuse and Trafficking

The Problem:

Social media platforms are aware that sexual abuse, exploitation and trafficking of children are originating on their platforms; yet they continue to rely on inadequate self-policing of platform users.

The Proposed Solution:

This bill would provide an incentive for social media platforms to better police their designs to reduce the ease with which predators can use them to attract potential teen victims by allowing victims of child sex exploitation to sue large social media platforms:

If they can prove the platform knowingly, recklessly or negligently facilitated, aided or abetted child exploitation,
And/or if the platform refuses their request to render invisible any images or videos posted of them on the platform.

Senate Bill 287

Author: Senator Nancy Skinner
California Social Media Platform Liability For Child Addiction and Harms

The Problem:

Our youth are currently experiencing an unprecedented mental health crisis, and researchers attribute a significant part of the cause to their social media use.

This includes access to dangers such as Fentanyl.

The Proposed Solution:

Would prohibit social media platforms from knowingly or negligently using a design, algorithm, or features that causes child users to receive content that facilitates exposure to dangerous additions or harm to themselves or others. Provides a penalty of up to \$250,000 for each violation.

Assembly Bill 549

Coauthors: Assemblymembers Rebecca Bauer-Kahan, and Lisa Calderon
The California Elimination of Discrimination Against Women Act

The Problem:

Women, including women in California, continue to face discrimination in the areas of health care, employment, economic development, educational opportunities, and gender-based violence.

The Proposed Solution:

This bill was proposed by the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), which is an international "Bill of Rights" for women. The bill seeks to eliminate the discriminatory acts identified by CEDAW by requiring state agencies to evaluate their departments and report to CEDAW annually.



Lisa S., Maile M., Terry C. and Nancy A. meet with Assy. Vice Fong's Leg. Dir. Spencer Street to discuss priority AAUW bills on March 22.

VISALIA-SEQUOIA BRANCH / STATE REPRESENTATIVES MEETING HIGHLIGHTS:

Before discussing the bills, we provided some information on AAUW's mission and the work this branch has done here locally over years. Neither office was familiar with these three bills, as they are still in committee. But each office had reasons to be interested in them. Spencer Street (Fong's office) is tasked to address the Fentanyl problem. So he is especially interested in social media's role in that. Taylor Bartucca (Grove's office) was very engaging in terms of learning about AAUW and discussing the bills. She said that Senator Grove is authoring three bills related to trafficking. So she is especially interested in addressing social media's role in that.

Neither office committed one way or the other in terms of voting for the bills, but both asked for even more information. We are currently working with AAUW's State Public Policy group on the most effective way to facilitate that. This annual event gives us the opportunity to engage with our local legislators or their staff. They learn about the bills we are co-sponsoring or supporting. But they also learn about — some for the first time — our organization and its important mission:

"AAUW has been empowering women as individuals and as a community since 1881. For more than 130 years, we have worked together as a national grassroots organization to improve the lives of millions of women and their families."

GovTrek

— Maile Melkonian



Recognizing the gender gap in policy-making positions at all levels of government, AAUW California launched this new program to train and inspire junior and senior high school girls.

The girls formed campaign teams, and wrote stump speeches, designed political ads, analyzed district demographics, and organizing campaign strategies. Each team created a 6-minute video for competition at the fifth and final session on March 25. Judges were professionals in this field, and first prize is internships for all team members!

GovTrek was completely on-line, and free to both students and Branches. I thoroughly enjoyed my experience as a volunteer facilitator.

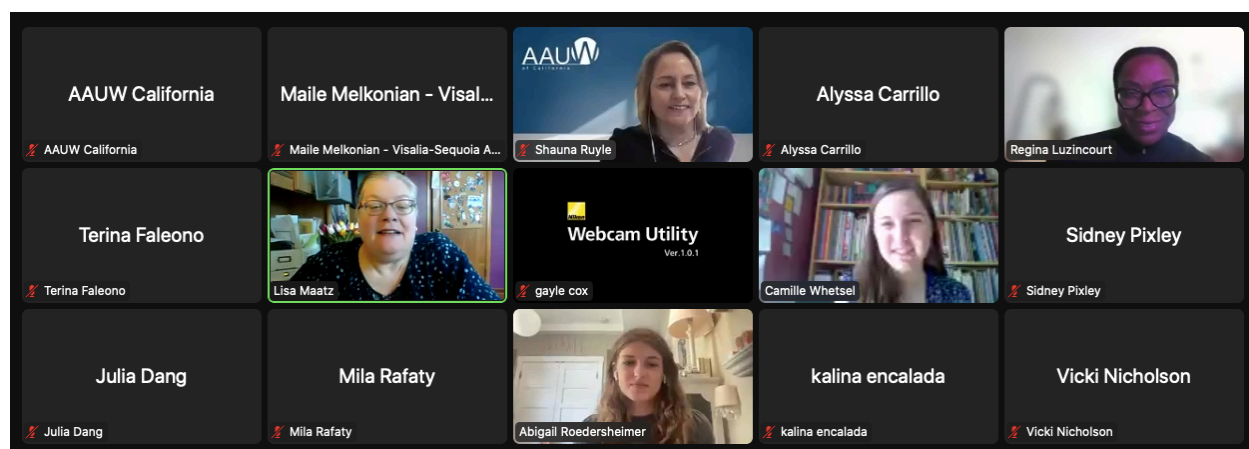
All but one of the five sessions featured speakers—an impressive array of women in government at all levels, both elected and staff. The keynote for the last session was Senator Toni Atkins, President Pro Tempore of the California Senate. “Young people...are our present and future leaders,” she emphasized, and advised, “Be your authentic self. ... and seek out

mentors. I still rely on my mentors.”

“Working with the girls over the past sessions makes me so optimistic about the future of our country,” stated program director Shauna Oenning Ruyle.

President Sandy Gabe announced that AAUW-CA will add GovTrek to its raft of programs, and invited more participation in 2024.

A lot of thought went into the “Team Abby” social media ad—one element of the final campaign simulation presentation.



After each presentation was screened, the judges had a chance to critique the students’ efforts and ask questions. Shauna Oenning Ruyle (top center), GovTrek Director for AAUW California, emceed the event. Judges Regina Luzincourt (top right), former press secretary for New York Senator Kevin Parker, and Lisa Maatz (center left), political consultant for non-profits, ask “Team Abby”’s Camille Whetsel (center right) and Abigail Roedersheimer (bottom center) about the details of their campaign strategy.

A vertical strip of colorful, patterned Easter eggs. The eggs are arranged in a dense, overlapping manner, showing various colors like red, yellow, blue, green, and purple, with different patterns such as stripes, polka dots, and solid colors.

Visalia - Sequoia AAUW

P.O. Box 6
Visalia, CA 93279

Email: visalia.sequoia.aauw@gmail.com

We're on the web!

Visaliasequoia-ca.aauw.net

Academy AAUWards Event Celebrates AAUW Stars

Lights, camera, action! AAUW California will roll out the red carpet for its blockbuster Annual Event on Saturday, April 22nd at 9 am. The virtual Academy AAUWards will feature red carpet interviews with the famous actors and directors of AAUW California, impressive speakers, and the suspenseful opening of secret envelopes to reveal the winner(s) of the Equity Champion award, the State Named Gift Honoree, and the Branch Activity of the Year awards. You'll see screenings of the finalists for the Speech Trek and Gov Trek competitions and trailers for the Tech Trek program. Then join us for an after-party to mingle with other members and toast AAUW. Register below and prepare to be star-struck: [Registration](#)

Date: Saturday, April 22, 2023

Time: 9 am

Location: Via Zoom

