

The Sequoia Newsletter

Visalia - Sequoia AAUW

CO-PRESIDENTS' LETTER

"Appreciation is a wonderful thing: It makes what is excellent in others belong to us as well." — Voltaire

As we close our Branch year out, we want to express our heartfelt gratitude for the efforts of our fantastic team, whose efforts kept our organization humming all year!

After screening Lee Terkelsen's gorgeously edited documentary, "Big Trees—Big Impact," we got some important business accomplished at our **Annual Meeting**, on April 20. A wonderful slate of **Officers** was elected (see adjacent box), thanks to the diligence of the Nominating Committee, **Cathy Lovell**, Chair, and **Jean Moritz**. The Branch Budget for 2023-24, shepherded by Treasurer **Donna Nottingham** and Financial Director **Susan Franciskovich**, was passed. And the membership also approved a proposal to increase our **annual dues** to \$125. These actions bode well for the coming year.

The **C.O.S. Scholarship** Committee, with **Nan-Celia Horobetz** finishing up as Chair, interviewed applicants ahead of the campus awards event on May 4. **Susan Cunningham** provided a lot of valuable assistance, along with Committee members **Phyllis Matteson** and **Liz Kieske**.

Jeanne Evans is managing our **Tech Trek** program to prepare candidates for the June camp at Fresno State. And **Lori Olvera-Clarkson** oversaw our support of **Expanding Your Horizons**

last fall.

As you all know, these are funded by our **Book Sales**. **Sandy Parmelly**, **Susan Cunningham** and their team of **Book Sorters** pulled off two successful Sales despite unusually difficult circumstances. And 65(!) of **you** volunteered to work shifts at the Veterans Memorial Building, ensuring our educational programs continue to be funded. **Public Policy Chair Terry Cornelius** made sure we co-sponsored two voter education fora (with partners League of Women Voters, *Visalia Times-Delta* and others) in the fall; and participated in both **Lobby Day** and **GovTrek** in the spring.

Communications Director Ally Babcock has kept busy: launching our new Branch Facebook account, tweaking the website, and creating a Master Calendar for our activities—all while making sure this newsletter gets to you each month.

Our **Program Committee (Sherri Bentley, Susan Mathews and Jan Johnson)** has provided us with a wonderful variety of excellent, informative, engaging speakers month after month. An array of high-quality programs enhanced our theme of "Lifting Local Literacy." It's good to see so many attending, and we'd like to see more of you! Parliamentarian **Nancy Adalian** led a thorough review of our **Policies and Procedures**. It's not the most exciting task, but having a solid, up-to-date handbook ensures our organization runs smoothly.

The **Honored Member Commit-**

tee, chaired by **Nancy Holmes**, has selected a deserving member—and are keeping that secret till our May meeting. **Co-President-Elect Linda Tucker**, **Secretary Marsha Brooks-Smith**, **Membership V.P. Suzanne Babcock** and **Membership Treasurer Jean Moritz** work behind the scenes to keep the Branch on an even keel. And **Sunshine Chair Renella Smith** provides a personal touch on our behalf, when needed.

This year featured two ad hoc efforts: **Lisa Silva** chaired a successful **Search Committee** for a new venue for our Book Sales; and **Dona Meinhardt** did the leg work to distribute some 300 books to help stock **Little Free Library** stands in our community.

For many of us, the sections are a true value-added aspect of our Branch, keeping membership interesting and fun—and they don't happen without Chairs: **Jan Johnson** and **Marsha Brooks-Smith** keep **Book Worms** going; **Susan Franciskovich** manages the **Unabridged Book Group**; **Liz Kieske** is our **Bridge** Coordinator, while **Marsha Roberts** handles **Refresher Bridge**; **Mary Ann Lawrence** and **Jill Rojas** revived the beloved **Coffee & California Concerns**; **Doug Dethlefs**, **Pat Foster** and **Maile Melkonian** organize **Great Decisions**; **Cathy Lovell** manages **Knit Wits**; **Sherri Bentley** and **Nancy Scott** are bringing **Traveling Troopers** back; **Jan Johnson** is coaxing **Volunteer Visalia**



out of its pandemic hiatus; and intrepid **Dona Meinhardt** keeps **Weekly Walkers** going.

Thank-you all!

Co-Presidents Maile Melkonian and Lisa Silva

ALL MEMBERS MAY VOTE IN
AAUW CALIFORNIA AND NATIONAL
ELECTIONS

for AAUW California — vote by May 13
for AAUW National — vote by May 15

Links to on-line ballots have been e-mailed to all members with e-mail accounts on file. In addition to voting for officers, members are also being asked to approve the Public Policy Priorities, and weigh in on proposed ByLaws changes.

Note that there will be no Board meeting in May.

BOARD-TO-BOARD MEETING

Wednesday, **June 7**
2:00 p.m.

At Congregation B'nai David

This meeting is for all Board members—whether outgoing, incoming or staying.

It is a chance to exchange information, pass Officer Binders along, and ask questions.

APRIL ANNUAL MEETING

By Sherri Bentley

If you were unable to attend our April meeting, you missed a feast for the eyes, and a very entertaining and informative presentation about our Sequoia National Park. Our speaker, Lee Terkelsen, presented portions of his film made about the various beautiful parts of the Sequoias, as well as with historical figures who spoke about the history of the park, its early settlers and workers. An interesting tale detailed a very dangerous fire the park endured, with a heroic rescue of one giant tree, by flooding it from within. Hopefully PBS purchases his film so you can see it in entirety. We all came away having a new appreciation for the challenges of global warming on the trees, and a better idea of the people who protect and serve in the park.

Following our speaker, Maile presented a review of our group's activities during the year. Members voted on the election of the new slate of officers, the adoption of a new budget for the upcoming year, and approval of a dues increase which will allow us to continue all the projects we do.

As thoughts turn to new programs for next year, the Program Committee welcomes any input you may like to give with speaker recommendations and places for meetings to consider, as restaurants change and prices go up which make lunches more expensive. We are considering the idea of having a few meetings being held without lunch to counterbalance the financial pinch of the new dues increase. We are also considering a few later afternoon meetings (maybe even a brunch). Give us ideas of where we might consider holding such meetings.



HONORARY LIFE MEMBERS

At our April 20 Annual Meeting, we were pleased to give the Honorary Life Member award to Nancy Adalian for her 50-year loyalty to AAUW and dedication to this community which works to break down educational and economical barriers so that all women have a fair chance. Unable to attend the meeting but also earning this award were Katherine Wolfe and Janet Hill. Congratulations to all three.

-Jean Moritz



"How did this happen? I can't be that old!"

MAY SCHOLARSHIP RECEPTION

General Meeting- Scholarship Reception

Date: **Saturday, May 6**

Time: 2:00-4:00 PM

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

Event: Scholarship Reception

Food: As in the past, we would like to have a bit of pot luck, with members with last names from **A-L** bringing savory hors d'oeuvres (hors snacks), and members with names from **M-Z** bringing sweets. Please remember to honor our host site by not bringing foods with shellfish, pork, meat and dairy mixed together. Bring your own serving dishes and implements.

Program: Come hear the heartwarming stories of our scholarship recipients and their hopes for continuing educational and vocational goals, an update on TechTrek participants from the past, honoring our outgoing presidents and any outgoing board members, as well as our Honored Member Gift Recipient of the year.




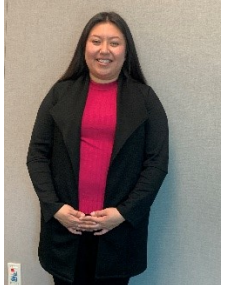

-Sherry Bentley

C.O.S. 2023 AAUW SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENTS

Your scholarship committee is proud to present the C.O.S. recipients for 2023!

Be sure to learn more about them in person at our Scholarship Reception, May 6th at 2 PM at Congregation B'Nai David. No cost, just bring a dish of finger-foods to serve 8-10: a savory snack if your last name begins with A-L or a sweet snack if your last name begins with M-Z.

Nan-Celia Horobetz, Phyllis Matteson, Liz Kieske, & Susan Cunningham

	<p>Pedrina Garcia de Phillips Pedrina is a proud Salvadoran/American. She remembers what it was like to learn English. Now she is bilingual and has her Spanish Interpreter Certificate in addition to her AA in liberal arts. She hopes to return to the local community to teach Spanish. She sets an exemplary path for her two daughters to follow!</p>
	<p>Alejandro Ali Pullom Ali has excelled in Mathematics at C.O.S. In fact, one of his letters of recommendation states, "I have been absolutely blown away by his mathematical abilities, his work ethic, and his kind and caring attitude." He has great ambitions: to master the field of personal finances, start up an ethical bank, then help educate others on how to succeed in personal finances.</p>
	<p>Juan Luis Bravo Juan wants to build on his success in Computer Science and eventually become a software developer. He is involved in several STEM clubs and organizations on campus. He has the honor of being one of only ten students selected for the Global Lunar Expedition for Everyone program. He will deploy tiny spacecraft (LunaSats) onto the moon, gathering data to analyze!</p>
	<p>Jazmin Celedon Jazmin has truly succeeded at C.O.S., graduating with not one, not two, but three AAs, including Communication Studies! Her passion to help undocumented students has led her to the Dream Club and the Dream Task Force. She hopes to become an attorney someday, helping others achieve their educational goals. Her husband and daughter are so proud of her success!</p>
	<p>Estrella Ruiz Bonilla Estrella has completed three AAs, in Engineering, Mathematics, and Physics! She was selected along with eight other community college students nationwide as a NASA Community College Scholar, completing two collaborative projects about a theoretical mission to Mars. Her major in Mechanical Engineering will just be the beginning of her educational pursuits!</p>

BOOK SALE

Eureka! We did it! We had a Spring Book Sale!

We sold \$13,559.50 worth of books; plus the sale bought in another \$643.50 in donations to our branch! We are grateful for the contributions of so many people:

- Jamie Wilson and Sequoia Orange for providing our storage place
- The dedicated sorters who meet Mondays to sort books in Exeter
- Lifestyles for housing our drop-off box
- Members who retrieve books from the Lifestyles' box
- Community members who donate books
- David & Carol Bixler for hauling books in their trailer
- Travis Burkett and the COS football team for loading the truck & trailer
- Chris Wong and R&N Market for providing boxes
- The Visalia Veterans Memorial District for our venue
- Many veterans, led by Bob Pineda for unloading the truck & trailer
- Lisa Smale, Cathy Lovell, & Marsha Roberts for loaning their wagons
- Charles White, the VVMB manager, for driving the rented truck
- Diane Sherrill at the Sequoia Mall for putting up flyers to redirect lost customers
- Mark Thompson and his family for retrieving our remaining inventory
- The almost 70 different members and friends who worked shifts at the sale
- Our amazing customers for finding us and for buying so many books

The Visalia Veterans Memorial Building turned out to be a great venue. Many customers complimented the quiet, calm atmosphere and the access to the books arranged in long rows. We had more tables, so fewer books needed to be underneath the tables. Of course, there is always room for improvement! Our book sale committee met and evalu-



BOOK SALE FOUND

Lost and Found: If you lost this lovely scarf or this stainless steel water bottle at the book sale, please contact Susan Cunningham. Otherwise, they will be donated.



BOOK SALE SIGNS

A big thank you to all of you who volunteered to put out yard sale signs, your help was invaluable! And an even bigger thank you to those who have already returned your signs... 🙏

If you still have a sign, contact me so we can arrange for the return.

I'll be asking again for your help in October...your help is appreciated!

Thanks, Suzanne Babcock
Freshstart9377@gmail.com

SOCIAL MEDIA

For our Book Sale, we reached out to many social media and other options for advertising. Some of the big numbers I wanted to share with you are:

Twitter had 298 interactions about the Book Sale.

Facebook traffic increased 271.4 %.

Nextdoor had over 2,000 views.

While sometimes social media can be overwhelming, it can help us at times. So glad we were able to use social media to help us.

Allison Babcock

MEMBERSHIP INFO

There are two items to cover when it comes to membership. Do you have a friend who is interested in AAUW's values and programs to break down educational and economic barriers to give all women a fair chance? Now might be the time to invite them to join AAUW. Currently new members joining our branch can receive 50% off of National dues during their "Shape the Future" campaign. National has set a goal to help increase membership in each branch. Our goal for 2023-2024 is to receive eight new members. So far, we have already had three new members join. We are on our way, but more is always amazing!

Secondly, National has taken over sending out the due notifications. This new system has been delayed, but when that is up and running you will be receiving an email from AAUW regarding the process. You will pay National, State and Local branch dues all through the one system.

Thank you, Jean Moritz

Please welcome our newest member Sharon Surowiec. Sharon came to our last general meeting, enjoyed the presentation, and joined AAUW! Please make her welcome, invite her to join your special interest group, and help her to get involved! Sharon, we hope that you find many new activities to tickle your fancy and meet many other interesting women!

- Suzanne Babcock

BOOK SALE DONATION



Last month, we were privileged to receive a book donation from a former AAUW scholar! Mellisa Lett earned a \$1000 award in 2009 as a re-entry student. After her success at COS, she completed her BA at Fresno Pacific and her master's at CSU Bakersfield. She devoted her career to serving others as a social worker until her husband became ill with terminal cancer. She left her job to care for him until he passed away recently. She's moving in with her aunt in Bakersfield and could not take the family library with her to her new shared space. She remembered us and our giant book sales and she reached out to pay it forward. This touching story just emphasizes how all our hard work in AAUW contributes to our community!

- Susan Cunningham

“Academy AAUWards 2023”

—Maile Melkonian

Not quite ready to have an in-person Convention this close to the pandemic, AAUW California opted again for an on-line Annual Meeting—with an Oscars theme. On April 22, Board



AAUW-CA President Sandi Gabe did a fabulous job hosting this event, giving each State Board member the star treatment with “red carpet interviews” that were both informative and fun.



National AAUW CEO and President Gloria Blackwell, whose resume includes the U.N., gave a keynote on “Manifesting Our Mission”—highlighting the salary equity laws for which AAUW has advocated. She also noted that National distributed some \$6.3 million in grants and fellowships last year.

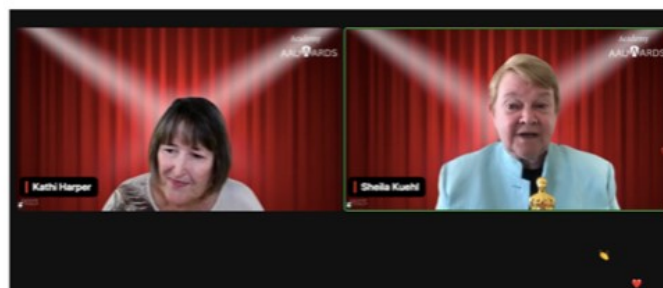


A model example of women blazing trails in STEM professions, engineer Eileen Vélez Vega [right] is Puerto Rico’s first female Secretary of Transportation and Public Works. Her responsibilities include maintaining one of the world’s most dense road systems, shown on this map.

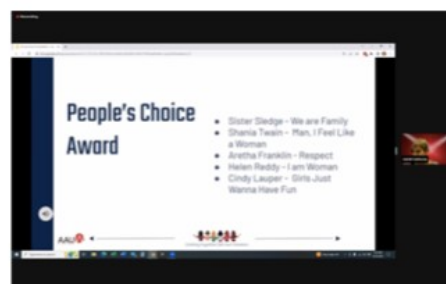
members dressed to the nines, and reported on the year’s activities like movie reviews! Speech Trek finalists gave “performances,” and the winner’s name was pulled from an envelop. The winning GovTrek video was screened, as was a montage of Tech Trek events across the state. The Branch Activity of the Year Award went to Alhambra-San Gabriel Branch for their “Colorful Stories” project, which provides local schools with children’s books featuring minorities.

From finances to legislation to AAUW Fund allocations, the all-day event had plenty of variety and was a wealth of information. (Fun fact: Did you know that the Fund once granted Marie Curie \$100,000 so she could purchase 1 gram of radium for her research?)

The day ended with “After Parties,” so we could break into smaller rooms for some great conversations.



State Public Policy Chair Kathi Harper [left] presents former Assemblywoman and Chair of the Los Angeles Board of Supervisors Sheila Kuehl [right] with an “Oscar” for her stellar work authoring women’s equity laws at each level of government during her career. Ms. Kuehl actually started out as a child actress!



There was even a Best Song category, providing five musical interludes throughout the day. Attendees voted for their favorite: Helen Reddy’s “I Am Woman.”

COFFEE AND CALIFORNIA CONCERNS

May meeting features Arts Visalia

Date: May 3, 2023

Time: 10-12

Place: Cafe 210

Pat Foster, artist and board member of Arts Visalia, will be with us to tell the history and ongoing work of Arts Visalia. Arts Visalia is an important contributor to art in our community by providing gallery shows and an arts learning center. We will have some hands on experience too. Come join us!

The June meeting will be June 7 from 10-12 at Cafe 210. It will be a brainstorming session for next year so bring at least 2 ideas for us to consider.

- Mary Ann Lawrence

NEWLY-ELECTED BRANCH OFFICERS

for July 1, 2023—June 30, 2024

Co-Presidents: LISA SILVA

LINDA TUCKER

President-Elect: JANIS LEHMANN

Program Vice President: SHERRI BENTLEY

Membership Vice President: SUZANNE BABCOCK

Membership Treasurer: JILL ROJAS

Treasurer: DONNA NOTTINGHAM

Honored Member Fund VP: NANCY HOLMES

Secretary: MARSHA BROOKS-SMITH

Communications Director: ALLISON BABCOCK

Elected unanimously at the Annual Meeting on Thursday,
April 20, 2023.

Very much appreciation goes out to our Nominating Committee:

Cathy Lovell, Chair

Jean Moritz

*And thank-you to all the candidates. Your volunteerism ensures the
health of our Branch moving forward!*

V i s a l i a - S e q u o i a A A U W

P.O. Box 6
Visalia, CA 93279

Email: visalia.sequoia.aauw@gmail.com

We're on the web!

Visaliasequoia-ca.aauw.net



AAUW's mission: To advance gender equity for women and girls through research, education, and advocacy.

AAUW.org

AAUW California's mission: AAUW California facilitates California branches in meeting the vision and mission of AAUW by providing programs, education and resources.

www.aauw-ca.org

