



Danville-Alamo-Walnut Creek (CA)



The Advocate, January 2022

Online at <https://daw-ca.aauw.net/newsletter/>

Contents

From the President	2
January Programs Update	3
<i>Women Finding Solutions: Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, January 13, 7:00 p.m. – Zoom</i>	3
<i>Let’s Get Social” – DAW branch event, January 5, 5:00 p.m. – Live</i>	4
California AAUW Reports	4
Inspiration, Adventure, and Connection, Oh My!	4
Using Your IRA for Charitable Donations	4
Recruiting and Inspiring New Members	5
DAW Branch Reports	5
<i>“With a little help from my friends: DAW scholarships help local women</i>	5
<i>“Can’t buy me love” ...but you can get an advertisement</i>	5
<i>“Please Mister Postman” ...deliver my DAW AAUW Directory</i>	6
<i>“You won’t see me” ...if you don’t sign a waiver before our events. New waiver requirement.</i>	6
<i>“Help” ...Tech Trek is funded; we just need volunteers!</i>	6
<i>“Ticket to ride” ...or to attend DAW events</i>	7
<i>“Twist and shout” ...at the state of Public Policies</i>	7
Membership Corner	9
<i>“Good day sunshine” – Meet Shveta Shourie</i>	9
In Memorium	10
DAW Interest Group Happenings	10
<i>“Revolution” ...Great Decisions launches in February</i>	10
From the Editor	11
From the Corresponding Secretary	11
From the Treasurer: Where to Send Expenses and Deposits	11
Our Wonderful Sponsors	12

From the President

By Joanne Quijano, President



As we contemplate the beginning of a new year, I'd first like to recognize some of our 2021 accomplishments. Despite the pandemic, we adapted, persevered, and kept our valuable branch initiatives active and well.

- Thanks to Bette Felton, Program VP, we had seven engaging program sessions on topics from racial awareness to women in the arts that underscored our mission of equity for women.
- Our 2020-21 Local Scholarship team, led by Diane Tinnes, reviewed multiple applications and awarded funding to 12 worthy local students.
- The Tech Trek team supported 16 virtual campers led by Deborah Wechsler, who was instrumental in building kits and coordinating their delivery to campers from the East Bay.
- Expanding Your Horizons went virtual with chair Judy Lauper coordinating our volunteer efforts and helping students pick up supplies.
- The Fundraising team overcame challenges in 2020-21 with Susan Terzouli devising safe distancing events like the "Takeout Dinner Days" with Montecatini and Mangia Mi, which were a big success. We also partnered with the Ruth Bancroft Gardens for two exclusive garden evenings.
- Asha Bajaj, Public Policy Chair, helped us expand our participation in Public Policy education and advocacy by coordinating with California and neighboring branch efforts.
- Our new board took office in July with eight new officers and seventeen continuing their positions to carry our branch initiatives forward into fiscal year 2021-22.
- We recruited 27 new members, up from eight in 2020, thanks to Claudia Schwarz, Membership VP, with her amazing energy and tenacity. Claudia and her team were at all our events and followed up every inquiry with enthusiasm.

In 2022 we'll implement ideas developed by the board with input from you, our members. A few highlights include:

- Hosting our annual Garden Tour in May, dependent on identifying a new chair for the Garden Tour team (let me know if you're interested!).

January To Do List

- **January 5, 5:00 pm, Member Social** [RSVP Here](#)
- **January 13, 7:00 pm, DEI Solutions Program**
Via Zoom – [RSVP Here](#)
- **January 20, 9:30 am, DAW Board Meeting**
- **Please donate! – Support the DAW fundraising campaign** [Click to Donate](#)
- **Volunteer with the branch!**
Learn about open Board positions on [the branch Website](#)

- Expanding opportunities through our membership and public policy teams for activism and volunteering. We're also planning to enhance our Interest Groups and create more opportunities for social interactions.
- Building a fundraising team to stage events that continue supporting our initiatives through the next fiscal year.

As you can see, we have a lot to be proud of and much work to do. Thank you for your ongoing commitment and support for our mission of advancing equity for women and girls. I'm so honored to be working with you.

This issue of the Advocate is bursting with information and like the recent Beatles docuseries "Get Back," digesting it will take time. We've incorporated Beatles' song titles to help it "Come Together."

Best wishes to all for a happy, healthy and energized New Year!

January Programs Update

"Got to get you back into my life" ...and back to DAW events. Sign up for these upcoming activities.

Women Finding Solutions: Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, January 13, 7:00 p.m. – Zoom

Join us virtually to hear inspiring stories from three local social justice activists with different perspectives. Find more details on [our AAUW site](#)

RSVP HERE

Lori Watson, CEO
of Race-Work, LLC



Tanya Earls,
Integrated Manager
Cardiovascular
Services, John Muir



Veronica Benjamin,
Co-Founder of
Conscious Contra
Costa

Let's Get Social" – DAW branch event, January 5, 5:00 p.m. – Live



Find out more about your Danville, Alamo, Walnut Creek (DAW) friends, community action and advocacy, and networking opportunities. Join us at the Auburn Lounge in Danville for a casual social event with a no-host bar. All county COVID protocols for indoor activity will be followed, so bring a mask and have your proof of vaccination ready. All DAW members are welcome!

[REGISTER HERE](#)

California AAUW Reports

Inspiration, Adventure, and Connection, Oh My!

By Charmen Goehring, Meetings Planner, meetings@aauw-ca.or

Join us for an exciting Annual Event adventure on April 30th without ever leaving your home (and PJs!)! We will kick off our fun with inspiring speakers from near and far, including AAUW's new CEO Gloria Blackwell, Policy Rockstar Lisa Maatz, and California's own Dancing Rocket Scientist, Jasmine Sadler. We will honor branch projects and meet our Equity Champion, before breaking for a quick lunch. When we return, the off-road adventure begins! Using the magic of Zoom breakout rooms, we will conduct virtual "open space" sessions. Using predetermined topics, hosts will start a conversation in their room with whomever shows up! You can stay in one room for the session or bounce to another. Connect with your fellow AAUW California members on a variety of topics related to AAUW, equity, women, and girls—the list of possibilities is endless!!

Using Your IRA for Charitable Donations

By Roli Wendorf, Chief Financial Officer, Finance Committee Chair, cfo@aauwca.org

In this season of giving, the AAUW California Finance Committee would like to remind you of another opportunity to donate if you are 70 ½ or older and do not itemize your deductions. Normally, distributions from an IRA are taxed. However, an individual who is age 70 ½ or older may donate to a qualified charity (e.g., a 501(c)(3) like AAUW Fund or AAUW CA SPF for Tech Trek) and not pay tax on the distribution. The donation must be paid directly from the IRA to the charity (the check drawn on the IRA must be payable to the charity). Even better, the distribution can be counted as part of your required minimum distribution (RMD).

Recruiting and Inspiring New Members

Take a moment to consider why you are grateful to be a part of AAUW. How has AAUW benefited you, what aspect of its mission inspires you, and what do you most cherish from your participation? If you can answer these questions, you have the beginning of your “elevator speech” to tell a potential member about AAUW. Consider how to bring up the topic, and incorporate this information— and you will be on your way to recruiting new branch members.

DAW Branch Reports

“With a little help from my friends: DAW scholarships help local women

By Rebecca Bhatt, Local Scholarship Chair, beckybhatt@gmail.com

Know a college-bound woman in need of financial support? Our branch offers scholarships to local women who attended school or lived in the Danville, Walnut Creek, Alamo area during high school to help them complete their academic degree programs. We’ve provided over \$110K in scholarships over the last nine years and this year we’re thrilled to be increasing our support from \$1500 to \$2000. Last year’s recipients are pursuing degrees in physical therapy, public health, psychology, computer science, art medicine and teaching.

Our LS committee members are Nancy Murray, Carole Allen, Liz Peters, Sosanna Kuruvila and Becky Bhatt.

Students can start applying now until the deadline, March 11, 2022. Encourage young women to apply! Share [the application link](#) and consider donating to this worthy cause.

“Can’t buy me love” ...but you can get an advertisement

By Marsha Anderson, Advertising Sales Manager

We’ve raised \$650 so far toward our 2021-2022 advertising goal of \$3,000. COVID has certainly affected small businesses; several of our previous advertisers have either left the area or revised their advertising priorities. I’ll renew efforts to interest new advertisers in 2022 by contacting 100 local small businesses after the holiday season. Our advertising revenues are important to the branch since they help defray the costs of our Directory and other operating costs.

Visit our branch website for [Sponsor and Advertiser Information](#) or contact: Marsha Anderson, marsha888@comcast.net

We’re grateful for the ongoing support of our current advertisers. Please look for their information on our website and at the end of the Advocate, and plan to use their services when possible.

“Please Mister Postman” ...deliver my DAW AAUW Directory

By Joanne Quijano, Directory Manager

The 2021-22 DAW Branch Directories are in the mail! Look for your copy soon with the latest listings for all our branch members. The new version is also posted on our website and you'll need your member password to view the information. You'll find the password listed on page six of both the old and the new Directory under our branch's contact information.

Visit the [DAW Members' page here](#).

“You won't see me” ...if you don't sign a waiver before our events. New waiver requirement.

By Joanne Quijano, President

The Board decided at our December meeting that attendees of general branch events will now be required to sign a waiver. The waiver will serve as a reminder to show proof of vaccination and follow current health guidelines when attending branch functions. It will also give us a way to contact participants, if necessary, after the event.

We feel it's our responsibility to proactively ensure that anyone attending events hosted by our Danville, Walnut Creek, Alamo (DAW) Branch is vaccinated and that we follow appropriate health related protocols. Everyone needs to work together and to keep all as safe as possible.

“Help” ...Tech Trek is funded; we just need volunteers!

By Deborah Wechsler, Tech Trek Chair

Thanks to an extremely generous donation from the estate of long-time member Patricia Foster who passed away in 2019, we are FULLY FUNDED for 12 camper positions at Tech Trek 2022 and well on our way to funding for 2023.

The Board voted in December to sponsor a field trip for the entire camp for 2022. The girls will take buses and get a tour of the Sonoma County Water Agency. Some of our funds help girls from areas that may not have some of the financial advantages of many in our Danville-Alamo-Walnut Creek area. Attendees come from as far as Petaluma and north, to Hayward in addition to our branch area.

Volunteers are still needed for the Tech Trek Committee. See more [details here](#) on our AAUW site.

Contact: Deborah Wechsler, deborah.wechsler@gmail.com

“Ticket to ride” ...or to attend DAW events

By Christine Ritter, Past President

EventBrite is our new software tool to RSVP for branch events. Starting with our “Let’s Get Social,” event this month, EventBrite makes it easy to sign up, get confirmation (with Zoom link, if applicable), add event info to your digital calendar and receive automatic reminders as the event date nears.

All you need is an email address to sign up. Try it now by [registering here](#) for our “Let’s Get Social” meeting January 5 at 5:00 p.m. at the Auburn Lounge in Danville.



Contact: Christine Ritter, christinenritter@gmail.com

“Twist and shout” ...at the state of Public Policies

Women’s Reproductive Rights - Where Are We Now?



by Claire Noonan, AAUW CA Public Policy

By January 22, 2022, the 49th anniversary of the Roe v Wade decision, SCOTUS (the Supreme Court of the United States) will have heard arguments on Texas SB 8 legislation banning pregnancy termination after six (6) weeks and Mississippi’s legislation (Dobbs vs. Jackson Women’s Health Organization) to ban abortion after fifteen (15) weeks.

What are the issues? For Texas, it isn’t about the constitutionality of the legislation. Instead, a decision will be made on the tactics used by the Texas legislature - delegating their enforcement duties to citizens - to preclude lawsuits against the State.

The decision on the Mississippi legislation will be straightforward. One, SCOTUS could overturn Roe v Wade. Two, the court could limit legal standing to challenges on state law, e.g. doctors wouldn’t be able to challenge on behalf of patients. Three, new legal standards for the evaluation of abortion regulations may be created so states aren’t required to show that the benefits of an abortion ban outweigh the undue burden to patients – reversing Planned Parenthood v Casey. (Women’s Health Policy, 11/21/2021)

One hundred six (106) state laws have been passed to restrict abortion in 2021. Activists, like AAUW, are bringing lawsuits before the Supreme Court. AAUW has submitted an amicus brief for Dobbs vs. Jackson Women’s Health Organization as to the constitutionality of the Mississippi law.

In addition, the ACLU and others have brought lawsuits against other Mississippi abortion-related legislation like regulations for informed consent, a waiting period before the procedure, and ban on telemedicine visits.

Surveys show that 60-70% of Americans approve of abortion in all or most circumstances. Only 20% think abortion should be illegal in all circumstances. (New York Times, Upshot (5/19/2021). AAUW and AAUW California stand with the majority, and the time to act is now. We must pressure the Senate to pass the Women's Health Protection Act. The legislation must become law in this session. Unfair changes in representation have occurred with redistricting. Votes in the 2022 mid-term elections that would elect representatives who would vote for this bill could be suppressed.

See the AAUW National website for more information about reproductive rights and what you can do to help preserve them. Click [AAUW National Reproductive Rights](#) Detailed information on the current position for women's reproductive health is available from the [Guttmacher Institute](#).

Abortion rights access

By Asha Bajaj, DAW Public Policy Chair



The Supreme Court declined to block a Texas law that banned terminating pregnancies after six weeks.

Abortion rights advocates counted one win, when the federal government announced it would allow patients to receive abortion pills prescribed for up to 10 weeks of pregnancy by mail, although some states will continue to have their own restrictions on mailing the medication.

In the upcoming session that begins in January, California legislators hope to push forward Senate Bill 245 by Sen. Lena Gonzalez (D-Long Beach), which would put an end to out-of-pocket costs paid by those seeking abortions that on average range from \$300 for a medication abortion to nearly \$900 for a procedural abortion, according to the California Health Benefits Review Program.

Renewed interest in the bill was sparked by Newsom and legislative leaders, who in September asked Planned Parenthood Affiliates of California and dozens of other supporters to develop a plan for the state to become a sanctuary for anyone denied abortion services in other parts of the country. The coalition, the California Future of Abortion Council, recommended 45 changes earlier this month to improve access for residents and create additional capacity should states outlaw abortion, including exhorting lawmakers to prioritize SB 245 and get it past the finish line.

Other news

- President Biden's Build Back Better bill languishes in the Senate as of now but is still undergoing modifications to get all the votes needed to allow it to pass.
- The omicron COVID-19 variant has created another wake up call for the urgency of universal vaccination.
- As we bid farewell to 2021, we hope for positive new beginnings and a coming together of our deeply polarized nation. Wishing everyone a safe, healthy, and happy new year!

Stay alert! Stay engaged! Stay involved!

“Good day sunshine” – Meet Shveta Shourie

By Shveta Shouri



New AAUW member, Shveta Shourie shares her biography of her impressive achievements so far and current passions.

Personal life

I am an entrepreneur, an engineer, passionate educator, lifelong meditator, mindfulness and growth mindset coach. I love to learn about people, their behaviors and perceptions and influence on their state and peace of mind. Currently, I live in Blackhawk with my husband, my 12-year-old daughter and father-in-law. I grew up in India in a very close-knit family with my parents and two siblings.

Education and career

I have always been an excellent student of science. After finishing my M.S. in Chemistry Honors, I was invited to The Royal Institute of Technology, Stockholm, Sweden as a Research Scientist. My project was in collaboration with AlliedSignal and funded by DARPA (The Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency) on the synthesis of Nano-engineered thermoelectric materials for space applications.

It led me to pursue a Masters in Materials Engineering here in San Jose State. Working with EAG Labs in the bay area I characterized the microstructural and chemical properties of technologically important semiconductor materials (i.e., thin films, powders, wafers, and microchips) for clients such as Stanford, Intel, NASA, Applied Materials, IBM.

Growing up I wanted to be a fashion designer; I saw the opportunity to fulfill my dreams and founded Shveta Shourie Designs. It was a tough journey but very rewarding. It taught me to be resilient and I made amazing friends along the way. My designs were in a boutique in San Francisco, and I was featured in a few magazines and TV shows.

Currently, I have my coaching business and I also consult in a leadership role at a digital marketing company, RightWave. I teach mindfulness and growth mindset in schools, companies, and coaching centers. You can find more about my endeavor at the [Mindful Presence website](#)

Current passions

I love taking walks in nature, meditating, reading. I am very curious to understand consciousness and how quantum physicists and biologists are trying to use science to understand it. I love listening to music and I am taking voice lessons. We will see how that pans out.

I have been very lucky to be able to follow my passion, to be able to change my career path, but I know it is not easy for a lot of people, especially women. I have always been a feminist but for the

past few years, I am more inclined to use the phrase 'gender equality'. I feel it also opens door for men to participate in discussions and contribute which we need to bring about a significant change. After moving to Danville, I was introduced to the AAUW chapter by a good friend. Now I am a member and I hope to contribute to AAUW's cause and advocacy of gender equality by being a part of the Tech Trek and Public Policy teams.

I am also passionate about teaching children to be more present, empathetic and resilient. With more screen time and social media exposure they are losing these attributes. I believe these attributes can reduce mental stress and one's inclination towards drugs and violence.

There is enough scientific evidence that the climate change is happening, and I want people to be aware of their actions and its impact on our environment. We try to be mindful in our house to not waste water, food, electricity, to recycle and reuse/ repurpose. It just feels the right thing to do.

Hopes and dreams

To summarize all my dreams and hopes, I can say that I envision my daughter to be living in a world where women have equal rights in every field of life be it their own body or work or household, where people are empathetic and there genuinely is no need for violence and where she is proud of inheriting a healthy and thriving planet to live on.

In Memorium

Longtime member Barbara Nexsen passed away on December 9th. Having joined AAUW in 1963, she was awarded an honorary 50-year membership several years ago. Always upbeat, and a gracious holiday host for the bridge group, she had many friends in our branch. We send sincere condolences to her husband, Bill. She will be greatly missed.

DAW Interest Group Happenings

"Revolution" ...Great Decisions launches in February

By Rebecca Bhatt, Chair Great Decisions

Our Great Decisions club enables members to be a part of America's largest discussion program about world affairs. Leveraging program materials developed by the [Foreign Policy Association](#), we meet nine times throughout the year for thought-provoking discussions on current foreign policy issues. Here's a look at our 2022 list of topics:

- "Changing Demographics" (Bonus Article) by Joseph Chamie
- "Outer Space" by Eric Berger
- "Climate Change" by Ron Bee
- "Russia and the U.S." by Allen Lynch
- "Myanmar and ASEAN by Hunter Marston
- "Quad Alliance" by Kevin Rudd
- "Drug Policy in Latin America" by Mónica Serrano
- "Industrial Policy" by Jonathan Chanis

- "Biden's Agenda" by John Ikenberry

Two meeting options are available:

- Monday nights: 7-8:30 p.m., led by Mary Granzotto at the Walnut Creek Mercer Building
- Tuesday afternoons: 1:30-3:00 p.m., led by Rebecca Bhatt at various members' homes pending Covid restrictions.

Contact: Rebecca Bhatt, beckybhatt@gmail.com

From the Editor

Got an idea for the Advocate? We welcome your contributions. Send ideas, articles and pictures to Editor Stephanie Denman, steph@denmans.us by the 15th of the month to appear in the next issue. Submissions should be in the following format:

- Articles in a .doc or .docx file, or in the body of an email
- Pictures in .jpg format (compressed)

You can find contact information about people mentioned in the Advocate on our [branch website](#) and in your directory. If you do not have a directory, contact Claudia Schwarz.

From the Corresponding Secretary





After many years of dedicated service, Pat Gross has retired from the position of Corresponding Secretary. If you know of an AAUW-DAW member in need of a birthday, wellness, condolence or congratulations card please send an email to daw.aauw@gmail.com.

From the Treasurer: Where to Send Expenses and Deposits

Please send expense vouchers or deposits to our AAUW P.O. Box 996 in Alamo, 94507 for expedited processing. Refer to our branch website for specific forms and instructions – Click on [Members Page](#).

Our Wonderful Sponsors

Know someone who may be interested in becoming an advertiser? Contact Marsha Anderson Landau, email: marsha888@comcast.net, or call (925) 351-8188.

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	<p><i>Stay curious...join us in lifelong learning.</i></p> <p>Bette Felton*</p> <p>www.scholarolli.com</p>

*DAW AAUW members are marked with an asterisk

The American Association of University Women (AAUW) is the nation's leading voice promoting equity and education for women and girls.

Mission: AAUW advances equity for women and girls through advocacy, education, and research.

Value Promise: By joining AAUW, you belong to a community that breaks through educational and economic barriers so that all women and girls have a fair chance.

Vision: AAUW empowers all women and girls to reach their highest potential.

The Danville-Alamo-Walnut Creek branch promotes and supports our AAUW mission through local scholarships, AAUW program support, panel discussions, Tech Trek, AAUW Fund, and topical guest speakers.

Stephanie Denman, Acting Editor
Danville-Alamo-Walnut Creek AAUW
P.O. Box 996, Alamo, CA 94507

