



July 2023 Advocate

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



Membership Brunch

Saturday September 23, 2023, 10:00 am

Crow Canyon Country Club, Danville

Plans are under way for the 2023 Membership Brunch – it’s our annual branch meeting that you won’t want to miss! There will be a lovely meal and time to visit with members and guests after our summer break in branch activities. The program will include some branch business, provide information about plans for the coming year, and have opportunities to connect with branch committees and Interest Groups. In addition, we’re excited that ***Cindy Silva, mayor of Walnut Creek***, will be our keynote speaker. Look for more details in the next Advocate.

Save the date!

Co-Presidents' Messages

By Ogie Strogatz, Co-President

Hi everyone! Please accept my heartfelt thanks for entrusting Monika and me to serve as your Co-Presidents this coming year. I look forward to pursuing opportunities together to contribute to our mission – advancing gender equity for women and girls through research, education, and advocacy.



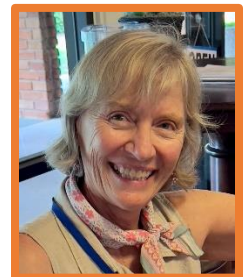
It is your advocacy that led me to AAUW in 2020. Since stepping away from paid work in late 2015, I have immersed myself in exploring different ways to give back to community, primarily as a volunteer progressive political activist. One of the roles I've picked up is Contra Costa County organizer for [Reclaim Our Vote](#), a national, non-partisan initiative to cultivate voter registration and turnout in states with the most severe voter suppression. DAW's Public Policy Chair, Asha Bajaj, contacted me in the summer of 2020 for Reclaim Our Vote support with the branch's postcard writing to turn out rural, elderly, low-income Black voters in the Southeast for the Presidential election. I was delighted to discover this local source of vibrant civic engagement and eager to find out more, so I joined the branch in 2021 to help Asha with Public Policy.

CA AAUW's portfolio of [Public Policy Priorities](#) is so robust! There is nothing more gratifying to me than the privilege of partnering with wise, caring women who are right nearby and deeply committed to bringing those priorities to life. Whether we're listening together at a monthly meeting to hear about local programs that champion gender equity; celebrating our middle school Tech Trek participants; powering through myriad Garden Tour tactics to raise Local Scholarship funds; or engaging in all the crucial behind-the-scenes branch operations that sustain us, I am consistently inspired to learn and do more.

By Monika Witte, Co-President

Why do I want to be involved as a leader in our Branch? The older I get, the more I realize that my time is precious, I only want to spend time on things that really are important to me. So – Why DAW, why now?

I believe that it's important to work towards a utopia that is equitable for everybody. Equal educational opportunities, equal opportunity for career advancement, pay equity, and the opportunity to set your own goals and to live your own life – for everyone.



I was so fortunate to have a supportive family, to grow up in California during an era when we had some of the best public K-12 schools in the country, to attend the University of California when it cost (my freshman year) about \$210 per quarter. In my career as an engineer there were times when my gender made my progress more difficult. But, on the whole, good mentors, great bosses, good colleagues and teams surrounded me. My success was not blocked or hindered because of my gender.

And I believe that times have now changed in some ways for the worse.

I'm excited to work with Ogie and I look forward to working with all of you to find ways that we can work together to support policies in our community, state and country that encourage gender equity. To support education (STEM and all education) for everyone – to move toward a world where women and girls can believe that they are in charge of their own lives.

By Chris Ritter and Joanne Quijano, outgoing Co-Presidents

It has been a wonderful honor to serve this amazing group of AAUW members as your Co-Presidents this past year. We hope you enjoyed the journey – especially with our monthly meetings providing time to reconnect with old and new friends and to learn how we can make a difference in the issues that matter to us. Thank you for all your efforts this year to make a difference for women and girls; from the outgoing board members and numerous group leaders to the many, many volunteers who’ve made our branch activities possible. We have a summary of our achievements later in this edition – we hope you find the successes as gratifying as we do. Your efforts moved us forward toward equity for women.



Our new Board of Directors is poised for action already, and we look forward to supporting these spectacular leaders! We have great hopes that our bonds will continue to grow stronger, and we will continue to use the power of our group to help women succeed in education, economic security, and leadership.

Now it’s time for a much-needed break! We wish you all a rejuvenating summer and we look forward to springing back into action starting with our September brunch.

Here’s to “Making a Difference”!

July/August Checklist

- **July 4** - Celebrate Independence Day!
 - **September 23, 10:00 am – Membership Brunch**
Save the date!
 - [Donate here](#) to support DAW branch programs
 - **Volunteer!** – Board and committee positions are open for 2023-24! Learn more [here](#)
-

Welcome to the 2023-2024 DAW Board Members



Ogie Strogatz, Monika Witte, Roseann Krane, Tena Gallagher, Chris Ritter

The votes were cast and counted; the entire slate of board candidates was elected. Thanks to all of the members who voted!

The newly elected board members take their positions starting July 1st along with continuing and newly appointed board members. Listed below is the management team that will carry forward our branch's mission in 2023-24.

Elected Board Members

Co-President – Ogie Strogatz
Co-President – Monika Witte
Programs VP – OPEN
Membership VP – Tena Gallagher

Funds-VP – Roseann Krane
Secretary – Kathleen Waters
Treasurer – Chris Ritter

Appointed Board Members

Advertising Sales – OPEN
Advocate Editor – Joanne Quijano (temp)
Advocate Circulation – Susetta Welm
Communication Co-Manager – Joan Trezek
Communication Co-Manager – Deborah Wechsler
Corresponding Secretary – Julie Grisham
Database/Directory – Joanne Quijano
DEI Officer – Teresa Cheung
Garden Tour Chair – OPEN
Fundraising Chair – Pat Morris
Hospitality Co-Chair – Nancy Dowell
Hospitality Co-Chair – Debbie Hammond

Local Scholarship Chair – OPEN
Local Scholarship Treasurer – Deborah Wechsler
Membership Treasurer – OPEN
Nominating Committee – OPEN
Parliamentarian – Deborah Wechsler
Publicity Chair – Linda Jimerson
Public Policy Chair – Asha Bajaj
Social Media Manager – Isabel Lau
Tech Trek Co-Chair – Lee Garverick
Tech Trek Co-Chair – Deborah Wechsler
Operations Team Chair – Teresa Cheung
Web Master – Teresa Cheung

As you can see, we have a great roster of board members for the new fiscal year! But there are still a few gaps to be filled by an enthusiastic candidate. We also have opportunities for members to join our many active branch committees. See our website for more information – [click here](#).

Installation and Member Recognition

About 50 members gathered at the Greenbrook clubhouse to share an evening honoring our current and incoming branch board members, as well as some special members. We enjoyed several salads, desserts, and beverages provided by the amazing Hospitality Team. Outgoing co-presidents, Joanne Quijano and Chris Ritter, led the program which was enhanced by a very effective new speaker system. You'll see some of the program information and member recognitions presented in this newsletter. One of the event's highlights was a chance to hear a brief recording from each of this year's very impressive Local Scholarship recipients. ([Click here](#) to watch the students' videos.) The incoming elected board members were inducted, and new co-presidents Ogie Strogatz and Monika Witte finished the event with a toast to all.



Here are some photos from the evening's event.

We Made a Difference in 2022-23!

By Chris Ritter, Outgoing Co-President

The following are important areas where our branch accomplished goals that we set at the start of our last fiscal year. Congratulations to all of the branch members who generously and enthusiastically volunteered to make this possible!

We Supported Women's Education

- Awarded 7 Local Scholarships including a pilot expansion to support a Renaissance Scholar.
- Raised over \$26,000 for next year's Local Scholarships from Garden Tour!

We Supported Women in STEM

- Sent 15 girls to Tech Trek camp last summer.
- Deployed \$15,000 from donations to fund 15 camperships this summer.

We Supported Rising Women Political Leaders and Women's Legislation

- First ever Gov Trek program with 15 East Bay attendees.
- We supported priority women's legislation at AAUW-CA Lobby Day.

We Strengthened Our Branch Effectiveness

- Applied for 501(c)(3) status to make all donations and dues tax deductible and reduce expenses.
- Rekindled member bonding and knowledge of focus area issues through regular monthly meetings.
- Welcomed 15 new members.

Membership Corner

Introducing Our Newest 50-Year Members

These two dedicated, long-time members have been rewarded with complementary AAUW National memberships as of the 50th anniversary of their joining the organization. We are truly honored to have them as members of our branch and thank them for 50 years of supporting AAUW!

Marian Bliss was born in Wisconsin, the eldest of three sisters with a Southern belle for a mother and a "Damn Yankee" for a dad. She graduated with a BS in Zoology from the University of Colorado at Boulder. Her husband was in the Navy, and four moves later, she was in Danville, living in the same house where she presently lives. She went to work for AT&T during its divestiture while going to night school and earning her MBA at Golden State University, then an MS in Systems Management through University of Denver, all paid for by the company. Marian married Erlan in 1982 and added two more middle schoolers to her two. Can you imagine having four middle schoolers in one house! Kathie Hixon and Marian were branch presidents in 2009-10 during the time Walnut Creek AAUW merged with our branch. Marian has been our official photographer of every Holiday Home Tour and Garden Tour. She has been on the Greenbrook Homeowners Board, the Role Players Ensemble,



and the Eugene O’Neil National Site Advisory Board. She is presently the California liaison for the National Society of Colonial Dames of America.

Beverley Nidick is a native Californian, born and raised in San Francisco and living in Danville and San Ramon since 1967. She graduated from UC Berkeley in 1957 with a degree in English, then UC graduate school for her elementary K-8 teaching credential. Beverley taught kindergarten in Oakland Unified School district and West Contra Costa Unified. She returned to school at Cal State Hayward for a MA in Education and a Reading Specialist Credential. After that, she initiated and taught seven years at Educational Resource Consultants, a private reading clinic in Danville. Following this she returned to West Contra Costa Unified to teach reading and English as a Second Language (ESL) in middle school for 15 years until her retirement.



Beverley has an amazing family! She and her husband Ernest have five children, twenty-one grandchildren (including stepchildren) and five great grandchildren. While many of their family members are scattered around the globe, including Australia, France, and

Switzerland, they are also fortunate to have family in the bay area in Alamo, Walnut Creek, and Santa Cruz. It has been wonderful for them to be able to enjoy all the children’s school and sports activities and granddaughter Carly received the DAW/AAUW Local Scholarship two years ago. Carly graduated Summa Cum Laude in Psychology from the University of Colorado this past May. Such a proud moment!

After retirement she became more active in AAUW and served as President, Secretary, AAUW Funds VP, Advocate Editor, EYH Chair and Tech Trek Chair. Tech Trek is still very important to her; having taught middle school, she understands how significant it can be to encourage girls in the STEM fields. In her day, girls were often told they could never be as good as a man in math and science. Beverley says baloney!! She feels that being a part of AAUW has been a blessing - not only has she had the satisfaction of working to improve the education of women and girls, but she has also made life-long, valuable friends. Beverley has also learned so much from her “AAUW Sisters” by participating in AAUW groups, such as Great Decisions, Evening Literature, Movie group etc. In addition, Beverley and her husband enjoy spending time with family, traveling, and gardening.

And the Winner Is...

Branch members met the challenge given by Tena Gallagher, incoming Membership VP, of making over 100 renewals before the date of our Installation event. With that challenge met, that evening Tena drew the name of one lucky winner of a free membership. **Congratulations to Beth Clark** whose name was picked!

There’s Still Time to Renew

Current DAW branch memberships are due by July 1st – but if you haven’t renewed yet, don’t worry, there’s still some time to get it done. Just visit the branch website – [click here](#) – and look for the instructions for “Renewing Members”.

Thank you for your continued membership and your support of advancing equity for women and girls!

2022-23 Branch Service Honorees

In March, the outgoing board selected two special branch members to be honored because of their dedication, tenacity, enthusiasm and outstanding work in support of our branch. These Branch Service Honorees were recognized at the Installation, and will be noted in the next Directory.



Bette Felton most recently did a great job stepping up to be the Chair for our recent Garden Tour. She handled this daunting role with her usual grace and aplomb. For the past several years she's been key to our branch speakers' programs, serving two years as Program VP and continuing to use her many contacts to provide great ideas for this year's programs. Since we didn't have a Garden Tour last year, she opened her lovely yard and vineyard for a wine "Sip and Stroll" fundraising event for the branch. In addition to doing much of the organizing, she contributed wine from her own vineyard to make it a wonderful, successful event.



Jacque Schubert has been the willing and enthusiastic leader for the Art & Garden Interest Group. Her able leadership and a wide variety of interests has made the group events well attended, and she encouraged a wide range of members to participate. She's also been happy to get involved with other branch activities, such as our bi-yearly financial review, and she's always been very welcoming of both long-time and new members.

Many thanks to both honorees for helping to make our branch strong and vital!

AAUW National News

Make a Difference to Support Student Debt Relief

By Meghan Kissell, Senior Director of Policy and Member Advocacy

As you have likely seen in the news, the U.S. Supreme Court recently issued rulings against affirmative action and student debt relief. You can find AAUW's full statements condemning these decisions [here](#).

The decision on *Biden v. Nebraska* regarding student debt relief by the court's conservative majority leveled a devastating blow against student borrowers. This decision deals an even heavier hit to the nation's millions of women borrowers — particularly Black and brown women, who face a disproportionate financial impact from student loan debt. This week, [TIME Magazine wrote](#) about the significant burden of student loan debt on women in an article featuring our CEO Gloria L. Blackwell. Undoubtedly, this misguided decision will have a snowball effect on women's economic security and that of their families. If you have a story about how student debt is impacting you, we invite you to [share your story](#) with us.

We are equally concerned about the decisions in *Students for Fair Admissions, Inc. (SFAI) v. President and Fellows of Harvard* and *SFAI v. University of North Carolina*. Institutions of higher education are

pathways to economic security and positions of power in our country. Affirmative action policies have been a critical part of ensuring racial and gender equity and providing redress for past gender, racial, and ethnic discrimination in higher education.

Despite these decisions, AAUW remains committed to fighting alongside you on behalf of women and communities of color to achieve equal access to affordable, quality higher education.

Update on AAUW's Oral History Project with PCI

By Katrina Sun Breese, Senior Director of Institutional Advancement

Thank you to those who shared information with your members about our comprehensive member data verification and Oral History Project with PCI (Publishing Concepts), and to those who reached out with questions and feedback. More than 9,000 members participated in the project, with over half updating contact information, and over 6,000 contributing member stories.

While we were pleased with the response, we're also sensitive to members who expressed concerns about the outreach. For that reason, we have decided to cease further communications from PCI to branch members. If branch members who received postcards wish to contact PCI, they can still do so by calling the number listed on their postcard. We've also updated [our FAQ page on the website](#) about the project with member feedback in mind.

New and Renewing Members Get Ms. Magazine for Free!

As you members join or renew for FY24, please remember that you can take advantage of an exclusive offer to receive one free year of the legendary *Ms. Magazine*, which includes four print issues along with digital updates! [Sign up today!](#)

AAUW California News

Branch Support

By Carol Holzgrafe and Sharyn Siebert, Directors, Branch Support co-chairs branch@aauw-ca.org

How We Learned to Love Committees - Sharyn and Carol have been your Branch Support directors for an entire year now and have learned a few things. Here are some of those things (plus some hints for you):

- People on the state board, advised by their committees, do affect how AAUW California determines policy and operates.
Hint: You should consider joining a committee so you, too, can have your voice heard – Committee Day will be in person this year (travel expenses are reimbursed as outlined in AAUW California Policies and Procedures).
- We met “movers and shakers” on the state board with terrific ideas and energy. For example, the brand new Gov Trek Program Director and her team rolled out the program so effectively that our branches needed to do nothing except recruit participants and facilitators. This program has the promising goal of helping shape future leaders and public servants.
- Our Branch Support Committee helped identify struggling branches so we could give them the help and ideas they needed to succeed. We couldn't have done it without them.

Nothing gets accomplished if members like you do not step up to the next level. After all, you are part of a statewide and national organization with impact at these levels. Think of the pride we all feel when an AAUW-supported bill is passed in Sacramento or Washington DC (with the help of their Public Policy committees)!

- One more thing we learned: our AAUW California Office Manager, Julika Barrett, can help with almost any question. She is terrific!

Each committee works on different issues—choose the one that interests you the most. You can find descriptions of all the committees [HERE](#). Unfortunately, the deadline for applying to join a committee was July 1. If you've missed that, you can help your branch president with the local Interbranch Council (IBC).

Public Policy

By Kathleen Harper, Director, Public Policy Committee Chair, publicpolicy@aauw-ca.org

Out with the Old, in with the New! - Old: This old-timer is coming to the end of my term on the board, and thus the end of my stewardship of the state Public Policy Committee. It has been my privilege and honor to serve in this capacity for the past five years, and I want to take this opportunity to acknowledge the efforts of branch leadership in facilitating your branches' participation in our many public policy projects over the years. It is also my pleasure to introduce you to your new Public Policy leaders, Amy Hom (Los Altos-Mountain View Branch) and Melissa Maceyko (Long Beach Branch) who will serve as cochairs for 2023-25. Trust me, you are in great hands!

Now for the New: I'm excited to announce that we have launched our new project, in which we'll be collaborating with Equality California to help ensure California schools remain free from bookbanning and curriculum censorship. A survey to assess what's going on in our state was sent to all branch public policy chairs on May 1st and the results are in. We received 61 responses from 50 of our branches from across the state, representing over 200 school districts. Fourteen chairs reported that this is, or might be, an issue in their districts, with another 29 projecting that it will, or could be, an issue in the future. Equality California is seeking our help in recruiting qualified progressive candidates for nonpartisan school board positions. The purpose is to counter the effects of outside groups and money backing candidates who do not share AAUW California's values of providing all students access to diverse curriculum and materials that represent historically accurate information. Forty-seven of our survey respondents reported that they are, or might be, willing to assist in this effort, and 57 felt that their boards would, or might be, willing to endorse qualified candidates.

I am so proud of our members' willingness to engage in this important project. We are at a critical juncture in the battle for the hearts and minds of our children and young adults. So far California has chosen the path leading to greater diversity and inclusion; these results tell me that AAUW California is ready to help lead the way.

The School Board Project subcommittee is planning to present a webinar with representatives from Equality California to more fully explain the project and discuss next steps. Date TBD. Stay tuned. Learn more about Equality California [HERE](#).

“Stay Home” Policy Statement

At the June branch board meeting, we adopted the following statement regarding direction to people attending branch functions. While we understand that people want to participate in person at our events, we also want to foster consideration for all members in creating a safe environment for everyone. Please consider this direction when you plan to attend a branch meeting.

If you are feeling ill in any way, or have been in close contact with someone known to have tested positive for COVID in the last 10 days, please do not attend any meeting!

Remember that COVID exposure remains a serious issue and that we need to be constantly vigilant. If you plan to attend a branch event, please stay home if you feel ill or if you have been exposed to COVID or any other significant communicable disease. We encourage you to be considerate of everyone attending a function, some of whom might be more susceptible than others. If you have any doubts, test, wear a mask, and err on the side of caution.

While there are inherent risks in attending an in-person event, with your help we will do our best to keep everyone safe at our meetings.

From the Editor - *Joanne Quijano*

Contribute to the Advocate - Send ideas, articles, and pictures by the 15th of the month to appear in the next issue. Please use the [Submittal Form](#) on our website to direct your contribution to the Advocate, or other DAW social media, to our communications team.

Submissions should be in the following format:

- Articles in a .doc or .docx file, or in the body of an email
- Calibri font, size 12
- Pictures in .jpg format (compressed)
- Permissions set for editing

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 Tena Gallagher.

From the Treasurer – *Chris Ritter*

Handle money matters here - Please send expense vouchers or deposits to our AAUW mailbox at: P.O. Box 996, Alamo, CA 94507 for expedited processing. Refer to our branch website for specific forms and instructions – Click on [Members Page](#)

From the Corresponding Secretary - *Julie Grisham*

Know someone who needs a note? - Julie Grisham, our Corresponding Secretary, sends cards on behalf of our branch. If you know of an AAUW-DAW member in need of a get well, condolence or congratulations card, contact Julie via email [here](#).

Our Wonderful Sponsors

We're always looking for new advertisers. Funds go toward branch expenses such as printing, creating the Membership Directory, and postage. Advertisers' names and businesses will appear in our fall Membership Directory, the monthly Advocate, and on our branch website. For more information, please visit our website at <https://daw-ca.aauw.net/support/>

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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.

Joanne Quijano, Editor
AAUW Danville-Alamo-Walnut Creek Branch

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