

Speech Trek Update By Ann Arneill

Get out your calendars and **schedule Feb. 20, 2021 from 9 a.m. to noon to attend the Speech Trek Contest** to be held via Zoom. You can sign up via Eventbrite starting Jan. 26 by clicking [here](#), and the Zoom link will be sent out two days before the contest date.



Students from the Elk Grove Unified High School District will participate in our public speaking contest. The topic this year is “Has social media helped or hindered the breaking down of barriers for women and girls?” We hope to see you there!

You can **stimulate your interest in the contest by participating in our Speech Trek Challenge on Jan.16 from 10:30 to 11:30 a.m. via Zoom.** You can sign up via Eventbrite now

by clicking [here](#), and the Zoom link will be sent out two days before the event. Members will discuss their ideas about the ways social media has helped or hindered breaking down barriers for young girls.

President's Message By Angela Scarlett

It's hard to believe, but 2021 is nearly upon us, along with a new U.S. president. Many of our members were disappointed when Hillary Clinton lost the presidential election in 2016. I remember hearing grim assessments about members living to see a woman elected to the highest office our country has to offer.



Sen. Kamala Harris winning the vice-presidency on President-Elect Biden's ticket was an essential step in the right direction. As a BIPOC woman of mixed Jamaican and Indian ancestry, Sen. Harris uniquely represents the evolving and vibrant, multicultural reality America has always been.

But more has been happening at the local level. On Dec. 15, 2020, the Sacramento County Board of Supervisors unanimously approved the Sacramento County Commission on the Status of Women and Girls. In July 2019, a Blue Ribbon Commission (BRC) convened to research the merits of a

Sacramento County Women's Commission. AAUW, especially our sister branch CHAR, has been an instrumental part of helping the BOS better understand both the challenges and opportunities women face in Sacramento County. To see the report go to: <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1XNNiwrIsrpanz52xcEPrFZNnBnZ6inVs/view> or view it on Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/sacwomensgirls> .

Three members of the AAUW Sacramento community have served on the Blue Ribbon Commission: Charmen Goehring (a joint member of Sacramento and CHAR), Marty McKnew and Danielle Metzinger. Charmen has been an AAUW member for 28 years, serving on boards and committees at the branch, state, and national levels. Charmen feels our branch's support and work toward establishing a Sacramento County Commission on the Status of Women and Girls has helped elevate AAUW's profile in Sacramento. It also put our values into action and may serve as a vehicle for future community work by establishing the Friends of the Commission organization.

Like Charmen, Marty has served in AAUW at several branches and the state, including two stints as president of AAUW Sacramento. Marty, along with fellow co-president Donna Holmes, initiated fundraising for our 100th Anniversary Research and Projects grant.

Danielle has been active in AAUW for several years, serving as a Funds co-director and on the scholarship committee. Danielle innovated our scholarship process and has helped on the board in other capacities. Here are Danielle's comments on her work on the Blue Ribbon Commission: I got involved with the Blue Ribbon Commission when they were still a grassroots group called Sacramento for Women and Girls. I attended their forum held on International Women's Day in 2019 (thanks to AAUW Sacramento announcing the event) and started attending meetings with the grassroots group. I facilitated a Listening Circle in May 2019 to contribute to their work. When the Blue Ribbon Commission was officially established in July 2019 I was appointed as a commissioner as well as a co-chair for the ad hoc advisory committee on women's commission models. The Blue Ribbon Commission brought together Sacramento County advocates and activists from all walks of life, including women who are executive directors at women-serving organizations, community leaders, educators, legal professionals and members of the community who wanted to contribute. Through the ad hoc committee, I facilitated research on existing women's commissions in California and beyond and incorporated the findings into the final report for the county Board of Supervisors. It's been incredible to be part of this work for nearly two years and see firsthand how a women's commission will be a valuable space and resource for advocates for women and girls.

Holiday Celebration Highlighted by Young Local Artists By Gloria Yost

Nearly 40 members of the AAUW Sacramento branch shared the holiday spirit on Dec. 12 at our annual holiday meeting. Activities included music from the Sac State clarinet quartet Connect Four, who shared a number of Christmas songs that were interspersed throughout the morning. Members also modeled their ugly holiday sweaters in an “Ugliest” competition. Winners were Diane Petersen, Angela Scarlett and Karen Burley.

The highlights of the morning were three local artists who told us about their artistic journeys and shared photos of their work. **Caiti Chan** is a current resident artist at the Verge Center for the Arts in downtown Sacramento. Her large-scale atmospheric abstractions can be found at <http://www.caitichan.com/>.



Franceska Gamez works with large murals and has done many pieces in the Bay Area and greater Sacramento. Two that we can view easily are in the SEA Bowl restaurant in Elk Grove and on 24th Street in Midtown Sacramento. She is associated with the Trust Your Struggle Collective, a group of visual artists and others dedicated to social justice and community activism.

Franceska’s work can be seen at <http://www.franceskagamez.com/>.

Omonivie Okade is a jewelry designer who owns her own business, Tula in Bloom, and shared some of the joys and trials of being an entrepreneur. Omonivie’s work can be purchased at <https://www.tulainbloom.com/>. She also does custom work and writes a blog.

An enjoyable morning was had by all.

Members Write Messages of Cheer for Sac State Students By Bonnie Penix and Gloria Yost



Students in need at Sac State were fortunate to receive grocery bags full of holiday foods from the ASI Food Pantry during November, December and January. They also received original messages of hope and cheer tucked into each bag. This is thanks to our branch members who participated in the card/letter writing campaign we held the last two weeks in November. Sixteen of our members wrote 188 messages! Some also sent monetary donations to

the Food Pantry on their own. Thank you to all who helped make the CSUS students' holiday more personal and special. They were most appreciative.

Membership Matters By Bonnie Penix and Jan Stuter

WELCOMING THE NEW YEAR

Happy New Year, and may 2021 be a healthy year for all!

AAUW CA advocates for increased access to quality, affordable healthcare, medical leave, family leave and affordable child care. AAUW also provides opportunities to advocate for women and girls to break through barriers. How spectacular is it, then, to realize that Vice President-elect Kamala Harris — a woman, a woman of color, a daughter of immigrants, a successful state attorney general and U.S. senator — will soon assume the second highest office in the land!

Outright sexism is less common today than in the past, but research shows that unspoken bias still results in unfair treatment, especially for women leaders. Women are 50% of the U.S. population. Yet, we hold just 23% of the House seats



and 25% of the Senate sets in the U.S. Congress. About a quarter of state legislators in the U.S. are women.

In 2021 AAUW will celebrate its 140th birthday, and AAUW CA its 101st. We will recognize these milestones together. Let's do that by inviting other women to join us. Why join AAUW?

- To be informed: learn about the issues affecting our lives;
- To do good: help women advance;
- To feel rewarded: improve opportunities for yourselves and others,
- Make new friends
- Have fun!

Remember: we are all part of the Membership Committee. Invite your friends, co-workers, neighbors and relatives to join AAUW. More of us working together can advance progress for women in education, career opportunities, pay equity and public policy.

We can inspire young women to reach as high as Kamala Harris has — and higher. Join us for a new year of fresh possibilities!

CELEBRATING OUR NEWEST MEMBER

A very warm greeting in this new year to our newest member: Mary Kay Williams! She graduated from California State Polytechnic University, Pomona, with a B. A. in Social Science, followed by an MS in Education from the United States International University in San Diego, California. She is not new to AAUW, having previously been a member in the Vacaville Chapter in 2001. Mary Kay retired from a teaching career and currently resides in Folsom, California. She is a regular attendee of our *Great Decisions III* Interest Group. Continuing education in world affairs is one of the very good reasons to join AAUW! Thanks to AAUW local member and Finance Director, Liz Jordan, for referring Mary Kay for membership to us!



Legacies, Contributions and More! By Charmen Goehring

As we near the end of this crazy year, I want to thank you for your generosity in support of our mission of equity for women and girls. Branch contributions to the different AAUW Funds totaled over \$8,000 this past fiscal year! The majority of donations were to The Greatest Needs Fund, which covers almost all of AAUW's programs and staff. If you are considering a year-end donation, the National Board of Directors will be matching contributions until Dec. 31.

I would also like to announce one of the newest members of the Legacy Circle -- Shari Beck! She joins a group of over 650 members nationwide who have committed to leaving AAUW a piece of their estate. There are many ways one can do this, and the process is very easy. By leaving a legacy gift, you help to ensure that AAUW is able to fight on behalf of women and girls for years to come. You can get more information at www.aauw.org or give Charmin Goehring a call. Here's to 2021!

Living Our Mission of Equity By Charmin Goehring



We invite you to join us in a monthly equity conversation looking at our own biases and what actions we can take to attract diversity to our branch and become better people in the process. We are reading the book **“So You Want to Talk About Race”** by Ijeoma Oluo and discussing what we have read along with exploring other issues related to race and equity. **We meet the second Wednesday of each month from 7 to 8 p.m. on Zoom.**

The Zoom meeting code is 737 420 3780 or you can join using by clicking on this [link](#).

We will discuss chapters 11, 12 and 13 on **Jan. 13 at 7pm**. If you have questions and to RSVP, please email Charmin at charminme@yahoo.com.

Sacramento AAUW Public Policy Update By Arlene Cullum

Our stellar Public Policy Committee arranged for virtual meetings with three elected official offices in December: **Congresswoman Doris Matsui, Assemblymember Kevin McCarty** and **Senator Richard Pan**. It was an exciting opportunity for us to have a “Meet and Greet,” in which an organization outlines its **mission, public policy priorities and further strengthens the relationship with the elected official**. Sue Miller, co-chair for AAUW State Public Policy, joined us on two of our virtual visits.



At our meeting with Matsui’s office, her Senior Staff for Women’s issues was extremely interested in our collective issues. She requested to continue the dialogue with us, be invited to AAUW forums in the future and be added to our newsletter distribution. We learned that the congresswoman will be working at the federal level to enact policies to provide student loan forgiveness up to \$50,000 during this current session, as well as other issues. As a follow-up, she was provided with the presentation from the California Budget and Policy Center on the *Women’s Well Being Index*.



Our committee met with Assemblymember McCarty who informed us that he will be sponsoring bills in the areas of (1) access to early education for young children, (2) college affordability/student debt and (3) police reform. McCarty reported that Assembly members have been requested by their leadership to limit the number of bills they submit. He anticipates that the number of bills submitted this year compared with other years might be reduced by 50 percent. He suggested that a focus of our organization’s efforts should be the impact on the economic well-being of women of color who have been most impacted by the economic fallout of the virus through job loss.

Our last visit was with Sen. Pan’s office. Two of his staffers outlined some of Dr. Pan’s priorities for the coming session: (1) promoting a Health Authority over Medi-Cal Managed Care Plans in our Geographic Managed Care model in Sacramento, (2) racism as a public health crisis and (3) coronavirus initiatives. Dr. Pan is also extremely interested in early childhood education. The director of his staff asked if AAUW would sign onto a **letter of support for the Health Authority**. **Sacramento AAUW was proud to endorse this proposal** which was presented to the Sacramento County Board of Supervisors on Dec. 8, 2020.

The State AAUW Spring Lobby Day is just around the corner! **Jan. 8 is the last day to register** for the event. **A webinar on “How To Speak To Your Legislator” Lobby Day training will be held on March 22, 2021 at 7pm.** Please sign up on the California AAUW website under upcoming trainings. **The State AAUW Lobby Day will be held on March 24, 2021.** More details to come!