

April Author's Event to Feature San Diego Author's Coming-of-Age Memoir By Kim Rutledge

Please join the AAUW Sacramento Branch for our annual Author's Event on Saturday, April 9 at 11 a.m. via Zoom. This year's featured author is **Jennifer Gasner**, author of the forthcoming memoir, "*Walking is Overrated.*"



At 17, Jennifer was diagnosed with Friedreich's Ataxia, a rare, progressive, neuromuscular disease. After the initial shock and denial wore off, she realized that her life was going to be full of joy. Her determination and sense of humor helped her meet the challenges she faced going from walking independently to using a walker, and eventually, a wheelchair.

She attended college at her home state's University of Wisconsin-Platteville where she received her BA in English. She was involved in the Student Activities Board and campus radio station, where she honed her love for music. She then went on to Western Illinois University for her MS in recreation.

After college, she began working with Independent Living Centers in Wisconsin and advocating for people with disabilities and learning about disability culture. She moved to San Diego by herself when she was 28, where she worked for various non-profits and UC San Diego.

In 2020, she became an Ambassador for the Friedreich's Ataxia Research Alliance, (FARA), advocating for research and bringing awareness of FA to the community. As a result, she participated in Rare Across America, meeting with legislators to discuss current legislation affecting more than 25 million Americans living with one or more rare diseases.

She is a member of the San Diego Memoir Writers Association and was Member of the Month in February 2020. Her short story, "Diagnosis," was selected for publication in "[Shaking the Tree Vol III](#)," which is available for purchase on Amazon. She is currently writing a coming-of-age memoir with the working title, "Walking is Overrated." Besides writing, in her free time she loves doing yoga, going to movies, and travelling. She lives in San Diego with her boyfriend Gregory and their two dogs, Wyatt and Ki.

Jennifer will read her story "Diagnosis" at the AAUW Author's Event and discuss her literary journey. **We will start the event with a brief business meeting and the presentation of the slate of officers for the 2022-23 Branch year. Please register to attend via Eventbrite [here](#).** You will be sent the Zoom link two days before the event.

Nominating Committee Report By Liz Jordan

With Two Positions for Membership Vote



The Nominating Committee, Linda Sparks, Vicki Nicholson, Nancy Lawrence, Cherril Peabody, and Liz Jordan, present an **incomplete slate of candidates for the Branch vote on April 9, Branch meeting and Author's Event.**

The slate is:

Secretary for a two-year term: Carole Cline.

Carole has just served one year as secretary, completing the previous term left vacant.

Finance Director for a two-year-term: Susana Mullen

Susana has an MBA in accounting and is retiring from an accountant position.

Open and Unfilled: President or Co-Presidents

This position is necessary for branch function. Leads the board action and in decision-making.

Open and partially filled: Co-Directors of Program

One member volunteered with qualification for this position; she needs a co-director. She is very experienced but will not serve as the sole director.

The Branch is slated to vote on April 9 at our branch meeting designated as the Author's Event. Every member can vote.

Job descriptions for open positions are available on the sacramento-ca.aauw.net website under the Members Only link. Anyone interested in serving in either of the two open positions, please contact Liz Jordan, Vicki Nicholson, Angela Scarlett, or Nancy Lawrence. Phone and email available in the Directory.

What Happened at the Branch Leadership Crisis Meeting? By Liz Jordan



On Wednesday evening, March 16, more than 35 members signed into a branch meeting, open to the entire membership. The goal of the meeting was to help solve a **leadership crisis**: to find members willing to serve the branch.

Who Will Lead? The annual Nominating Committee has not been able to find a volunteer[s] to serve as **President or Co-Presidents or as Program Director or Co-Directors**.

Other branch leadership needs discussed were for volunteers to lead our **Tech Trek Program** and one to lead our **Public Policy** activities.

Job Descriptions are available from Nominating Committee Chair Liz Jordan and/or by clicking through to Members Only link of the AAUW Sacramento website sacramento-ca.aauw.net.

Survey: The membership was alerted to this meeting by eblast and each eblast contained a link to a survey about branch activities. The survey gleaned responses from about a quarter of the membership and then comprised the focus for the meeting discussion. (*See article by Gloria Yost about what members responded*). The members attending this meeting were able to see some of the members responses, and then members were randomly assigned to one of five break-out rooms where they discussed one of the questions, as well.

The five questions from the survey, then discussed by the break-out groups, were:

1. What are your reasons for being a member of AAUW Sacramento?
2. Our mission is to empower women and girls. How do you think we can motivate our members to participate in mission-based activities?
3. What reasons do you have for serving or not serving on a committee or as a board leader?
4. Do you ordinarily participate in Branch meetings and programs? Why or why not?
5. If we reduced the number of our branch outreach activities, which ones would you eliminate? Or change and in what way? These four activities were discussed:
 - Scholarship – women 25 years or older, returning to college
 - Speech Trek – high school kids speak to a question about gender equity
 - Tech Trek – six middle school girls who have talent but may lack motivation go to STEM Camp on a college campus for a week.
 - NCCWSL – National Conference of College Women Student Leaders – conference once a year over Memorial Weekend at University Maryland.

Discussion: Volunteer recorders in each of the five breakout rooms kept notes and reported back to the larger meeting during the last half hour. The discussion was wide-ranging, and all possible ways to restructure branch activity were on the table. A strong possibility of a Strategic Planning Committee to work on streamlining branch activities and leadership positions is under discussion.

Please: Anyone willing to serve in either of the open board positions or on the Strategic Planning Committee is strongly encouraged to call or write Liz Jordan, Nancy Lawrence, Cherril Peabody, Linda Sparks or Vicki Nicholson. Please see the directory for contact information.

Membership Response to Recent Survey By Gloria Yost

AAUW Sacramento branch leaders put out a plea to members for help in dealing with a leadership gap and just under one fourth (42) of our membership responded with their ideas. In addition, these questions were discussed by the 35 members who participated in a robust exchange of ideas about the future of AAUW Sacramento. Below is a summary of responses.



We are members because:

We enjoy the friendship of other educated women and support AAUW's mission. We enjoy our interest groups and want to continue promoting education by helping women and girls.

We can motivate participation in mission-based activities with:

We want improved communication and sharing within our branch and more opportunities for more gratifying personal interactions. Our interest groups are important to us and could also incorporate some mission-based activities. We'd like stronger interpersonal links with those we empower through our outreach efforts. We also think we need to do more to broadcast our accomplishments

Our reasons for serving, or not, on committees or as board leaders are:

We serve because we think it's important and to share some responsibility for branch operations, and we like to be in the know and help with planning. We also appreciate learning new skills from fellow board members.

However, some of us have been there and done that, and though we might help on committees, we don't want to be in charge. Time commitment, health issues and concern about technical

proficiency are reasons for no participation. Some of us also find other organizations providing us with more focus and new input.

We do, or do not, participate in branch meetings and programs because:

Participation provides us an opportunity to keep up with the work of the branch and branch members, visit with friends and make new ones. We also get inspired by what we learn from women who are working to improve our community and the world.

Some of us don't find program topics to be engaging. We want business and announcements to be as brief as possible. Transportation and meeting times are difficult for some and Zoom is not a welcome alternative. Zoom can also be hard for those with young children.

We want to keep participating in all of our outreach programs, but if that isn't possible, eliminate NCCWSL. (National Conference of College Women Student Leaders)

Some of our ideas about other ways to change branch activities are:

Reduce the size of the board and streamline its activities to increase member willingness to serve. Embrace the fact that interest groups are a vital part of Sacramento Branch and the board should strengthen ties with them.

Eliminate some branch meetings and focus on doing the others well, perhaps getting out of a rut of doing the same thing again and again. Bring back WOW (Women of the World) or something similar, as we all need to be connected with the whole community. Do things more collaboratively with other groups and agencies to learn about problems and solutions.

“I'm so proud of all that we have done and will do to empower people to have better lives. These outreach programs make me feel like I'm part of the solution, especially as a retired person who no longer contributes in a paid position.”

President's Message By Angela Scarlett

Hi all,

When I started my presidency, one of my goals was to make our branch's board meeting

minutes and financial documents available to all members.

To that end, Karen Burley, our communications director, worked with AAUW National to add a secured web page to our website. I wanted to remind members that this is now a resource.



If you haven't visited our website before (it's at <https://sacramento-ca.aauw.net/>), let me show you what the main landing page looks like:



To navigate to the Members-only page, hover over the Membership link at the top and click on the "Members Only" link.



Once you are on the "Members Only" page, you will see a password prompt. I won't share this information here for security's sake, but you can reach out to Karen Burley or me for the password. Our contact information is in the directory.



When you are on the page, you will see links for our current governing documents, other archives, board meeting minutes, and financial records. I want to encourage our members to use this secured page to familiarize themselves with our branch business and documents. We welcome feedback!



If you have problems viewing the screenshots, click [here](#) to view a PDF, which might help.

Thanks,
Angela Scarlett, Branch President

Living Our Mission of Equity By Charmen Goehring

We hope you will join us in a monthly equity conversation learning about how racism affects us all, and what actions we can take to attract diversity to our branch and become better people in the process. Each month, we read a section of our selected book then meet to discuss what we have learned, along with exploring other issues related to race and equity. **We will meet the second Wednesday of each month from 7 to 8 p.m. on Zoom.** This is a joint CHAR/Sacramento activity. Others are welcome as well.



The Zoom meeting code is 737 420 3780 or you can join using this link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/7374203780>

We will be discussing chapters 6 and 7 of the book, “**The Sum of Us: What Racism Costs Everyone and How We Can Prosper Together**” by Heather McGhee on April 13 at 7 p.m. We have found it to be an enlightening read thus far. If you have questions and to RSVP, please email Charmen at charminme@yahoo.com.

Speech Trek Champion to Speak at May Branch Meeting By Ann Arneill



Maren DeMille, a sophomore from Pleasant Grove High School, is the first-place winner of this year’s Speech Trek Contest. She was awarded \$500.

Maren will present her speech at the May branch meeting on the topic, “**Has the US lived up to its pledge of liberty and justice for all? Would requiring the study of diversity, equity, and inclusion in a high school setting help ensure liberty and justice for all?**” She argues that the United States has not lived up to its pledge and that introducing a diversity, equity and inclusion curriculum into high schools could help ensure liberty and justice for us. **Join us at the May branch meeting to hear her very interesting speech!**



2022 CA Annual Event– A Real Adventure!

Calling all AAUW adventurers!

Grab your compass and join the expedition to AAUWland at the AAUW Annual Event on Saturday, April 30th 9-3 via Zoom. We will all be explorers, searching for new routes to connect to AAUW and its mission.



To launch the trip, the morning session will:

- Kick off with inspirational words from Gloria Blackwell, AAUW CEO, and Lisa Maatz, Senior Adviser, Ohio Citizen Action and former AAUW Policy Rock Star.
- Focus our telescopes on the year's accomplishments.
- Honor our AAUW expedition leaders with the announcement of the Named Gift Honoree, Equity Champion, and Top 10 Branch Fund Contributions.
- Review our advocacy efforts.
- Share important news and updates.
- Hear inspiring words of the three Speech Trek finalists.
- Listen to the hosts of the breakout sessions pitch their topics.

During the afternoon route we will:

- Be introduced to the accomplished candidates for the 2022-23 board of directors.
- Meet a dancing scientist, Jasmine Sadler, owner and founder, The STEAM Collaborative.
- Honor the three winners of the 2022 Branch Activity of the Year Award and hear about what they did.
- Award a Speech Trek winner.

Along the way, we will wind into unfamiliar territory. You will have the chance to venture out and “Choose Your Own Adventure” with a self-guided journey deep into the “topical” jungle of AAUW ideas that you might be interested in talking about.

There will be multiple Zoom breakout rooms hosted by Trail Guides, members who have offered to host informal conversations on topics they hope you might want to talk about. No agendas. No PowerPoints. No handouts. We'll just network and share thoughts, stories, experiences, and maybe some debate. You will be able to move freely back and forth between breakout rooms to stay and share or take off and find another!

Don your pith helmet and register for Adventures in AAUWland! [Click HERE to Register.](#)

Board Games Interest Group by Ruth Werner



The AAUW Board Games group has not been meeting during the pandemic. However, we will be giving it a try again and starting up in April. We meet on the last Friday night of the month at 7 p.m. in a member's home.

It's a group that plays for fun. We are not competitive. We keep score sometimes and sometimes not -- depending on the game. The games we usually play are Mexican Train, Rummikub, Quirkle and Splendor, but are open to new games. It's a great chance to visit and get to know your fellow AAUW members better.

Please join in the fun for a pleasant evening and escape from your daily routine. Contact Ruth Werner - her contact information can be found in the Branch Membership Directory.

Membership Renewal By Donna Holmes and Marty McKnew



Welcome to renewal time! National dues are increased to \$67 while State and Branch dues remain \$20 each for a **total of \$107**.

You have until June 30 to become a paid life member at the old rate for a savings of \$100. Simply pay \$1,240, 20 years of National dues, and never have to pay again! The whole amount is tax deductible in the year paid.

Fifty-year members do not have to pay any dues anymore. In our branch, 20 percent of our members are life members. **Look for an eblast in April on renewing your membership.**

Lots of hugs,
Donna & Marty

Celebrating April Birthdays! By Donna Holmes

Happy Birthday to All!

- Anne Rhodes 4/1
- Lori Gualco 4/2
- Carol Nyman 4/3
- RosaLee Black 4/7
- Theresa Chekon 4/9
- Sandi Schoenman 4/10
- Sandra Young 4/11
- Ann Pickens 4/17
- Pamela Saltenberger 4/17
- Janelle Kauffman 4/19
- Carol Doughty 4/22
- Loretta Hom 4/25
- MJ Hamilton 4/26
- Margaret Brown 4/27
- Ronni Riemer 4/28
- Dorothy Hodel 4/30



Book Groups By Sharon Anderson

Book Group 2:

A Long Petal of the Sea, by Isabel Allende, on April 5; coordinator is Carol Hayes

Book Group 3:

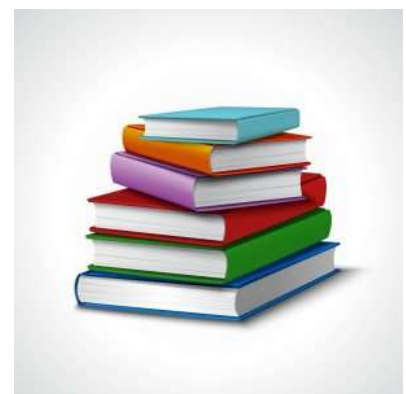
The Return: Fathers, Sons and the Land in Between, by Hisham Matar, on April 27; coordinator is Carolyn Meeker

Book Group 4:

Humankind, by Rutger Bregman, on April 13; coordinator is Nancy Lawrence

Book Group 6:

The Premonition: A Pandemic Story, by Michael Lewis, on April 18; coordinator is Angela Scarlett



Book Group 8:

Being Human, by Maggie O'Farrell , on April 25; coordinator is Diana Squire

Book Group 10:

The Code Breaker, by Walter Isaacson, on April 21; coordinator is Sandi Schoenman

Book Group 12:

Rebecca, by Daphne Du Maurier, on April 7; coordinator is Linda Cook

Book Group 33:

The Four Winds, by Kristen Hannah, on April 7; coordinators are Jane Pivetti, Nancy Lawrence