



Sand Scripts

December 2020

Volume 71: Issue 6

AAUW Mission

To advance gender equity for women and girls through research, education, and advocacy.



**Holiday Celebration
Saturday December 14,
2020 4:00 p.m.**

Dr. Mary Isaac will sing Holiday Favorites at our Virtual Holiday Celebration



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Zoom Branch Meeting Saturday December 12th 4:00

Cher Koleszar, our President Elect is inviting you to a **Zoom Holiday Celebration Party** on Saturday December 12th at 4:00 p.m. Pour yourself a glass of wine or beverage of your choice; then sit down at your computer, laptop, cell phone, iPad or tablet and prepare to enjoy Holiday music, share Holiday memories, networking and making new friendships with other members.

We will go down Memory Lane sharing holiday memories and photos with each other. Any one who wants to participate by sharing a holiday memory or holiday photo is welcome to join us. If you would like to share a holiday photo, please email it to Shelley Mitchell at shelleydmitchell@gmail.com.

Dr. Mary Isaac will be our special guest and she will sing favorite holiday songs. Mary is a passionate practitioner-researcher focused on female engagement in engineering and technology. Retired from General Electric after 30+ years, with degrees in engineering and technology, she volunteers regularly, mentors, presents, and publishes through organizations including FIRST, SWE, ASEE, ITFFA, NSTA and AAUW. She lives in Southern California near her grandkids and regularly entertains herself and others musically.

Dr. Isaac is a member of the AAUW, a Tech Trek Director in San Diego and the Director of last summer's Tech Trek Robotic Camp. She worked with QUALCOMM to create a week-long online Tech Trek robotics camp for 40 of the 128 Southern California girls who had originally been selected to attend the residential Tech Trek camps on college campuses. This group of 40 included Ariana Hill, the Tech Trek girl our branch sponsored for robotics camp.

So come and join us on December 12th..... and enjoy the music for a non-normal Holiday Celebration which is certain to be fun and festive.

By Laura Eaton

[Click HERE to Register](#)

After you register you will receive a confirmation email from Zoom that will contain the link for you to click on to join the meeting.

The Palm Springs Branch of AAUW will continue to follow state and county guidelines that prohibit in-person events. We are still getting together virtually, staying in touch and having a good



time.

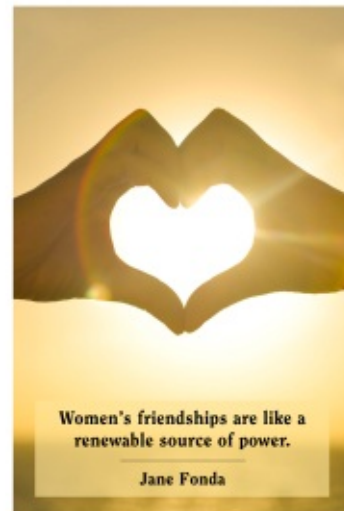
Zoom in and Join us!

Why I LOVE our AAUW Palm Springs Branch....

FRIENDSHIPS full of humor, political 'venting', sharing ideas, ways to improve the Branch, supporting each other through difficult times and knowing that our friendships sustain us.

FLEXIBLE, ALERT, LEARNING about new trends, our changing culture, and critical social media updates...genuinely adapting to what we might not have encountered in the past. We embrace a changing environment related to social justice, diversity, equity and inclusion.

The Time is Now !!



WISHING YOU VERY SHARING AND LOVING HOLIDAYS

Sharrell Blakeley, President of Palm Springs Branch

Financial

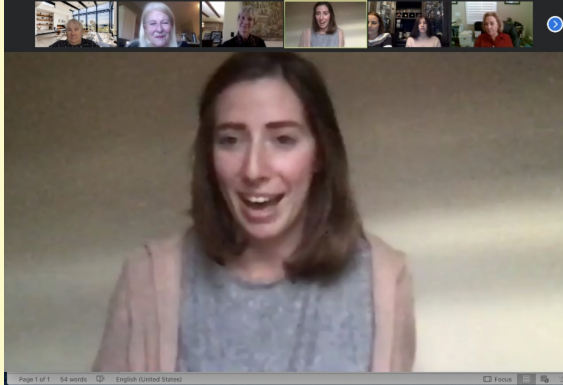
Happy holiday season to all of you. We will be celebrating in very different ways due to the pandemic. 2020 has been a very unusual year for us. Even though we couldn't get together, we were able to keep in contact through our Zoom meetings. Let us think positive that 2021 will bring healthier, happier times. Hopefully we will meet once again in person for our luncheon meetings, board meetings and interests groups. I look forward to seeing all of you at our Zoom Holiday Party.

Best Wishes from Gillian German
Finance Officer

Program

By Laura Eaton Program VP

**TECH TREK GIRLS MEET
HEATHER NARDONE-STEM
POSTER CHILD AT OUR
NOVEMBER MEETING**



We had a STEM-themed meeting this November with Heather Nardone, STEM poster child and Ariana Hill, Tech Trek girl as our speakers. We were joined by several Tech Trek girls who were selected for Tech Trek Camp, but were unable to attend due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Several Tech Trek Alumni students attended also.

Heather Nardone, the granddaughter of our Tech Trek Coordinator Sharon

Hubbard Salvatora and a college graduate in the STEM field spoke to us about her path from being good in science in 7th grade, to her current occupation as a COVID-19 screener at a Mass General Affiliate Hospital.

Heather's path led her to spending nine months as a Peace Corps volunteer in Rwanda. It was not an easy life. Heather lived off the grid, far from civilization in a house that had no water or electricity. There was literally no road home. The only way to reach her house was two hours off-road by motorcycle taxi. Basic communication was also a challenge. The native language of Rwanda is wildly different than English. Even after three-months of language training, Heather joked about how she could not converse with the people in her host family when she first arrived. Although Heather encountered hardships as a volunteer, she had an upbeat attitude about life in Rwanda and found her Peace Corps experience to be rewarding.

Heather's Peace Corps service was cut short by the COVID-19 pandemic. She now works on Nantucket island as a COVID-19 screener. She is involved with determining where individuals infected with COVID-19 end up in the system and how they get there. Difficult patient prioritization decisions must sometimes be made. Heather's experience as a COVID-19 screener has led her to appreciate the importance of Bioethics in medicine. Heather plans on applying for her Master's in this field in the near future.

Heather's presentation was a huge success! She is intelligent, genuine and delightful. She spoke about her experiences with humor and wisdom. The Tech Trek girls, who are on their own STEM path, were especially engaged by all she had to say. There were so many questions for Heather by members and Tech Trek girls alike that the meeting ran overtime but we were all having such a good time, no one noticed.



Ariana Hill, the Tech Trek girl the Palm Springs Branch sponsored for the Virtual Tech Trek Robotics Camp last summer spoke to our members about her experience at this summer's camp. She worked with the equipment supplied by the AAUW Laguna Beach Branch (circuit boards, LED's, servo motors, Arduino software etc.) to build her own robot. Ariana said

she had fun building her robot hat and highly recommended Virtual Tech Trek Camp to future Tech Trek girls. It was good to hear that Virtual Tech Trek Camp was a success from Ariana because AAUW California is developing a virtual camping approach for the 2021 season.



One AAUW.
One Mission.
One Fund

Thank You AAUW Palm Springs Branch Fund Donors!!
Total 9 months = \$3,276 - Most to Greatest Needs Fund
Branch Goal is \$4,025 by Dec 31st *

Honorary Donors - \$1,000+

Beth Bangert

Gold Donors - \$500 - \$999

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Lynn Osterick

Silver Donors - \$200 to \$499

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* If with to make a tax-deductible to AAUW Greatest Needs etc. or you've made a donation and your name does not appear above, please contact [Peggy Shippen shippen63@gmail.com](mailto:shippen63@gmail.com).

Gender Agenda

Cher Kolezsar, President Elect

Gender Agenda – Keeping it Light – Sand Scripts -December Newsletter
Cher Kolezsar

Why is it, I wonder, with the holidays upon us, that time always seems to fly by. However, with the many lifestyle changes required from 9 months of possibly contracting CoVID, ongoing isolation, missing visits with family and friends and let's not forget crazy, crazy national election antics, I'm looking forward to saying a not so fond farewell to 2020.

Yet, even with all these challenges facing us daily, I am grateful for and encouraged by our "cock-eyed optimist" resilience to continue and find ways to connect and adjust and to laugh at ourselves along the way! So, for December, I'm keeping things light and celebrating good communication!!!

This year found me enhancing sorely lacking tech skills as I learned how to Zoom with friends and family. Many of us were able to attend book clubs, Great Decision discussion meetings on-line classes and even Happy Hour gatherings whether we were in the Desert or in Michigan or even Canada. Plus, for me the payoff was that I was never ever late. Of course, it's pretty easy, even for me, to be on time if all your doing is perambulating from the kitchen to the bedroom or den where your laptop is fired up and ready to go.

I've also joined the ranks of the silent as I have texted my way through the year in an effort to stay current with the shenanigans of my grandkids and friends. Forget about ever getting a return phone call from them since most have forgotten how to talk!!! This was a real concession for me since I boycotted social media in response to the rumors and many untruths surrounding the election... it did not really matter though, since the pundits and fund-raisers found me through texts anyway. There is such power in the delete button.

Another adjustment that I enjoyed was a resurgence of the hand-written note I was so impressed by the many members and friends that wrote thousands of postcards across the nation to "GET OUT THE VOTE!!! I bought dozens of fun little notecards to send on a bi-weekly basis to my 6 grand-daughters who are spread all over the country. They loved them and of course, texted their thanks! Many of us sent thank you notes to local hospital personnel for the generous "above and beyond" care they provided for those hospitalized by COVID. It's so nice to see that a hand-written hello is still appreciated.

So, as we slide into the final month of this very tedious year, I am as always, a believer that good communication will lead us laughingly into the new year! Happy Holidays!



Update from AAUW

At its October 16, 2020, meeting, the AAUW Board of Directors voted to increase Individual Member dues for the next three years. The dues will rise by \$3 for Fiscal Year (FY) 2022, \$5 for

FY 2023 and \$5 for FY 2024, making the total dues amount for those years \$62, \$67 and \$72, respectively. All but \$3 of your annual dues remains tax deductible.

This decision wasn't made lightly. The board members couldn't be more grateful for our members — or prouder of the work you've done this year. We also recognize that all of us are navigating numerous challenges in these uncertain times. However, in order to preserve the viability of this organization we all love, the board needed to take action. Simply put, this measure is essential for AAUW to continue our mission to achieve gender equity.



Most nonprofits adjust their dues annually or every other year to keep pace with inflation and rising expenses. However, due to prudent budgetary management, AAUW has been able to keep its dues flat since July 2018. That means that, by the time the first scheduled increase takes effect, we will have maintained three years of dues stability.

Moreover, in recognition of the difficult economy we're in, the board planned for the initial adjustment to be the most modest. Over the course of the year, it works out to be only an additional 25 cents per month — what we hope is a small price to pay for maintaining our important work and community.

Current life members will not be affected by this change. New life memberships acquired after July 1, 2021, will reflect the higher dues' amounts. College and university membership fees will remain unchanged.

Please reach out to us with any feedback or concerns.

Thank you for your ongoing commitment to AAUW and our mission. On behalf of the AAUW Board, we are grateful for your understanding and look forward to continuing our work together.

Sincerely,

Julia Brown, Board Chair



Member Spotlight Pat Mauritzen

Membership in AAUW has always been important to me. My mother was active in AAUW, and I grew up admiring her friends in the organization. I heard about their interests, projects, and activities when I was her guest (about once a year) at a branch meeting/luncheon/speaker event held at the local university. The speakers were always fascinating! I knew that when I graduated from university I could join AAUW.



I have belonged to four different branches, and I served as the president of one of them. Being a member has enabled me to meet many new friends. I have enjoyed hearing about their different careers, hobbies, families, and travels. Opportunities, connections, education, and fun in AAUW continue!

In my free time I enjoy dining out, T.V. (especially PBS, Masterpiece Theater, Doc Martin, The Today Show (while I am reading two daily newspapers and enjoying my coffee), Law and Order, NCIS and other programs. I am active at Saint Margaret's Episcopal Church, in The Trojan League Associates of the Desert, the Coachella Valley Alumnae Panhellenic Association, the Kappa Delta Alumnae Association, and the California Retired Teachers Association.

In Our Thoughts: Please contact Pamela Roberts if you know of a member who could use some cheering up.

We recently sent a card to Joanne Bourquin who is recovering from a broken leg. The *Desert Sun* recently featured Joanne and Jack in a wonderful article. Click [HERE](#)



Dr. Joan Cartwright, a former branch member, Sun City resident and clinical psychologist passed away recently.

There will be no service at this time because of the pandemic. A Celebration of Joan's Life is on a CD and the family would like to share this with those who knew her. Please send your address to carolguidera530@gmail.com or Text your address to 530-682-2097. You can see her obituary [HERE](#)



Interest Groups

Our interest groups are actively meeting and having a great time! We want to be sure that our meetings are secure and safe, so we do not publish the links to join meetings in the newsletter. if you want to participate, just call or email the contact person to get the link emailed to you.

IT'S SHOWTIME!

Reel Revelers

Join us on **December 3 at 3:00 p.m.**

Our film is *Mudbound*,

"Mudbound offers a well-acted, finely detailed snapshot of American history whose scenes of rural class struggle resonate far beyond their period setting" Critical Consensus

Watch the film at home on Netflix and then join the group for a fun and interesting discussion.

Contact..... Marsha Riley.....mriley61@hotmail.com to receive your Invitation to Reel Revelers

Book Group: 12/16/2020 at 2:00

our book is *The Secrets We Kept* by Lara Prescott

Cathy Lauren will lead the discussion of this book!

Please join us on ZOOM

PLEASE LET MARY KNOW THAT YOU WILL attend by November 11 and she will send you the zoom link

Happy Hour meets once a month on Thursday afternoons at 4. Please contact

Great Decisions --2021

The Great Decisions foreign policy discussion group will resume in January. We meet on the third Tuesday of the month, at 10:00 a.m. We expect that for much, if not all, of the year we will be meeting electronically via Zoom. In the past, we have taken a break in the summer months. But this year we are tentatively planning to meet January through August, so we can participate in the National Opinion Ballot. The scheduled meetings and topics are listed below. Volunteer discussion facilitators are needed for each of the meetings. Please contact Judy Schurr (jschurr@earthlink.net) if you are interested in participating.

January 19, 2021

Global Supply Chains and National Security

February 16, 2021

Persian Gulf Security Issues

March 16, 2021

Brexit and the European Union

April 20, 2021

Struggles Over the Melting Arctic

May 18, 2021

China's Role in Africa

June 15, 2021

The Korean Peninsula

July 20, 2021

Roles of International Organizations in a Global Pandemic

August 17, 2021

The End of Globalization?

Tech Trek Program

PLEASE JOIN OUR TEAM this year. We are looking for new members to add to our wonderful existing team.

The Tech Trek team is starting to ramp up their efforts for the coming year. The Palm Springs branch of AAUW has had a wonderful program for many years and this is the cornerstone of our giving back to the community in helping middle school girls develop confidence in their Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) abilities and build a foundation that will carry them through their school years and into a rewarding career.

Team members work with the middle schools in the Coachella valley to identify girls that are a good fit for the program. The summer program for 2021 is being developed by a leadership staff from the state to offer a worthwhile experience through an online program (thank you COVID!). In 2022, we look forward to the classic Tech Trek experience where the girls are able to attend a one week STEM camp at one of the U of California schools, living in a dormitory and having hands on sessions in several disciplines ranging from aeronautics to medicine to natural science to name a few. Girls return from the experience with lofty and impressive goals for their future.

If you are interested in participating on the team or would like more information, please contact one of our co-chairs: Sharon Hubbard (slhub@rcn.com) or Janet Braslow (jhbraslow@aol.com).



A BIRTHDAY SUPRISE COACHELLA CITY HONORS FRIDA ARRIAGA 2019 Tech Trek Camper and Alumni

Frida Arriaga, now a math student at Shadow Hills High School and 2018 AAUW Tech Trek Camper Alum, was honored by the City of Coachella in a surprise celebration of her civic and school involvement. The surprise event - the unveiling and naming of a new "Frida Way" street in the City of Coachella took place on her 14th birthday.

I was honored to be invited to the event by Frida's family and sad, being in Oregon, I wasn't able to don my mask and attend in person. I spoke to Frieda's father, Manual Arriaga, before the event. Here – somewhat edited but mostly in his words – is his history of how events leading to "Frida Way" unfolded.

It all began in September 2016, when Frida, a 5th grader, began attending Coral Mountain Academy. It was obvious a traffic signal at the main entrance of the school was needed but the need became more urgent when Frida's friend almost got hit. Frida decided to run for Vice President. She made a campaign speech promising to advocate for a traffic signal and won.

Frida began petitioning by collecting signatures from parents. She submitted close to 800 signatures to Coachella City Mayor, Steven Hernandez, on November 2016. Jonathan Hoy, Coachella City Engineer, requested an analysis by a California Licensed Traffic Engineer who subsequently determined that the signal was needed. Frida invited Jonathan Hoy to come to her school. He told the school board, administrators, teachers and parents they needed to go to a City Council Meeting and request \$200,00 to fund the signal.

Frida and her mother made posters and flyers inviting parents to attend the City

Council Meeting. On March 8th 2017, Frida, accompanied by over 50 parents gave a presentation to the City Council, city staff and the general public (City Council Meetings are live streamed on the internet).

The presentation (above) resulted in the City Council approving \$100,000 - 50% of the cost to design and construct a new traffic signal at the school entrance. City officials also recommended going to the CVUSD Board Meeting to request the other 50% of the cost.

Posters and flyers were made again and on March 16th, 2017 Frida presented the petition at the board meeting mentioning that the city of Coachella had already contributed \$100,000. The board determined that they would evaluate the petition and discuss the project with the City of Coachella.

Time passed and the new school year, 2017-2018 began. Frida was now in the 6th grade running for ASB President. She asked her classmates to vote for her so she could continue to work for the unfinished traffic signal project. After a very competitive election, and an eloquent speech from Frida in front of more than 400 students, her supportive grandparents and classmates, Frida became ASB President.

At this same time, Frida's 69 -year-old grandmother, Virginia Arriaga, a Coachella resident and greatest supporter of Frida, started to feel chronic fatigue, loss of appetite and also started to lose weight. She had been at every meeting congratulating Frida at her accomplishments and also encouraged Frida to keep going when she realized that the traffic signal installation was taking longer than expected. She also taught Frida how to recite "The Lord's Prayer" when things were getting difficult." Three weeks later, after unsuccessful visits to many specialists Frida's grandmother passed away from a rare blood disease that happens to one person out of a million.

In January 2019, the City of Coachella invited Frida to attend the City Council Meeting (below) for final approval of the installation of the Traffic Signal. Mayor Hernandez mentioned that this is a prime example of how small kids like Frida can make a big impact in their community. The Mayor also said that because of Frida's petition, they had not only installed traffic signals but they had also spent over a million dollars on the street rehabilitation project. Frida thanked them for working together with CVUSD and installing the street signal for the safety of the kids."

Mr. Arriaga says his family is deeply honored that the City of Coachella is honoring Frida as such a young age as an example of our democracy in action and how much they care for the future of the city and youth.

Mr. Arriaga was willing to have me share that the women in his life have had an amazing influence on Frida. Frida's mother, Mirna, has a BS degree from Pueblo University in Mexico. Prior becoming a full-time mother to Frida and her brother, Imanol, Mirna worked as a substitute Math teacher. Frida's paternal grandmother, Virginia, worked for 14 years at Food for Less as a cashier. Living with the family, she became particularly close to Frida. Clearly, Frida has inherited her love of math, work ethic and values from these two wonderful women.

Frida's father, Manuel Arriaga, also has a BS degree from Pueblo University in Mexico and now teaches English and ELD at La Familia H.S in Thermal. His father, Manuel Arriaga, Sr. was also a teacher in Pueblo, Mexico. While in Mexico, Manuel Arriaga Sr., his wife Virginia and young son (Frida's father) Manuel, brought the community together and raised money to build a church in Pueblo. Clearly, Frida has inherited her sense of civic responsibility, persistence and responsibly for taking civic action from her grandparents and father.

Educated teachers today in Mexico make \$400 per month and can barely take care of their family. Such was the reason, Manuel Arriaga, Sr. (Frida's grandfather) came to the City of Coachella around 1998 (a long, hard trek) - so his family could have a better life he gave up his love of teaching and went to work in the fields then in maintenance at the LaQuinta Hotel. I couldn't help but think how hard it must have been for Frida's smart grandmother and educated grandfather – both so involved in their community - to give up all the relative comforts they had and come to America

so their son, Manuel and granddaughter, Frida and the rest of the family could have a better life. We in the Coachella Valley can't help but be grateful that the Arriaga family is part of our community.

Frida's favorite subject is still math; running cross country and track team and is active in the Ophelia Project, having learned about it from Peggy Mengel, our AAUW Palm Springs Tech Trek Alumni Club Chair. Manuel and Muria Arriaga are grateful for all AAUW-Palm Springs Branch has contributed daughter, Frida's educational growth and personal development.

By Peggy Shippen



Public Policy Update

As the election fades away, it's time to consider other issues that affect our daily lives. The first consideration should be the rights of our citizens, all our citizens. Black Lives Matter really created a storm of different reactions, but it drove home a point of view that we should all consider. Treating people the same deserves to be the right action. No more KKK or discrimination against our neighbors or fellow workers.



Women's Rights is another subject that is getting rightful attention. We should all get behind this movement. For too long women have been behind in success. I know in Afghanistan women walk behind the men but that is if a bomb goes off the man goes first. Well maybe that is not the best example. We should always be considered equal in life, not as second class citizens. American women protested to get the right to vote, so equality is also a right.

Pat Fredericks



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Sand Scripts is published monthly by the Palm Springs Branch of AAUW. Submissions are welcome. please send stories, photos, ideas and other contributions by the 15th of each month to shelleydmitchell@gmail.com

Photos Needed: If you are a photographer and have a photo of our beautiful Coachella Valley to share, please send it to shelleydmitchell@gmail.com

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