



Sand Scripts

February 2021

Volume 71: Issue 8

AAUW Mission

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



AAUW PS Branch Fundraiser for Women and Girls

February 13, 2021, 12:30 Via Zoom

“Hats Off”... Remembering our past Tech Trek Leaders

Honoring their many contributions to Palm Springs Branch and supporting AAUW Greatest Needs



*Dr. Lucille Fostveldt 1919-2011
First Tech Trek Donor
President 1990-2*



*Lillian Shuman 1930-2019
First Tech Trek Treasurer
President 2004-6*



*Elizabeth Nash 1941-2017
Tech Trek Advocate & Donor
President 2015-17*

**Come one and all... Zoom in for a Fun-filled Fundraiser
Wear your Favorite Hat or Make Your Own
Prepare to say in one sentence why you picked your hat...
...whether real, made-up, funny or serious.
Great prizes for most: Creative, Elegant or Wild/Wacky hat**

[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.

Please consider making a donation even if you're unable to attend the event!

\$ _____ **#9110 AAUW Greatest Needs Fund** allows AAUW administration the flexibility for to respond rapidly to needs and emerging challenges facing women and girls; to utilize your gift where it's needed most, ensuring the strength, relevance, and viability of AAUW into the future.

Your gift acknowledges how much you value AAUW's work for all women and girls!

Other AAUW Funds:

\$ _____ **#4450 Education and Training Fund** addresses the barriers and implicit biases that hinder the advancement of women by championing equal access to education and ensuring that education at every level is free from sex discrimination. Includes: STEM, Title IX, Pathways to Jobs, Fellowships & Grants, Research and Public Policy

\$ _____ **#4449 Economic Security Fund** ensures livelihoods for women through achieving pay equity for women providing training in salary negotiation and deepening women's retirement security and quality of life. Includes: Pay Equity, Title VII, Retirement Security, Work Smart/Online and Legal Advocacy Fund.

\$ _____ **#4452 Leadership Fund** supports the effort to close the gender gap in leadership opportunities by bolstering the participation of and increasing the number of girls and women in leadership roles, particularly in education and nonprofit organizations. Includes: Career, Workplace Training, Campus Action Projects and College Women Leadership.

Make checks payable to AAUW Fund. Write: "Greatest Needs" Fund # 9101 or fund # on check memo line.

Mail check to: AAUW Fundraising VP, P.O. Box 11423, Palm Desert, CA 92255-1423.

\$ _____ **STEM Projects for Palm Springs Branch** – Supports all STEM-related branch programs including but not limited to TT Camper Orientation, TT Camper Alumni Club and TT Campers who attend the Campus and/or Virtual TT Camp.

Make checks payable to: AAUW CA SPF. Write: "STEM Projects – Palm Springs Branch" on check memo line.

Mail check to: TT Treasurer, P.O. Box 11423, Palm Desert, CA 92255-1423.

Please attach a separate note if you wish your donation to be made in memory of Lucille, Lilliane or Elizabeth

A Thank You Confirming Your Tax-Deductible Donation to an AAUW Fund or TT (including whose memory it was made if indicated) will be sent to you within 10 days.

[click HERE to donate online](#)



President's Message

As we enter the New Year Messages, please make one of your resolutions that you will get more involved with the Branch. We will be continuing with our Zoom meetings and if you don't feel savvy enough to participate on Zoom, contact Shelley Mitchell and she can assist you.

It is time again to start thinking about Branch officers. Don't wait to be asked; just volunteer to take on any assignment that might interest you. You will never be alone... we have many willing mentors.

We need to nominate a President Elect, and other elected officers are open for volunteers willing to serve, too. Most of us have served for many years and a break would be nice for us. We also want to give others a chance to serve. Please step up. Contact Mary Schambach or Pat Fredericks if you are interested in leadership of our wonderful, strong, thriving Branch.

Here is hoping that the new year will be better than 2020. We will have a new Administration and vaccines will be available for this horrible virus. Hopefully civility, kindness, equity and love can be restored for once and for all. Happy New Year!

Sharrell Blakeley, President
Palm Springs Branch



Member Spotlight Yolanda Nava

1 How has AAUW empowered me?

Some of our members do not know that I am blind. I lost my sight in both eyes 11 years ago. I value my relationship with my AAUW members because I find I am in the company of smart, wise, fun, and educated women. We are the ones who will change the world. The advocacy work of our AAUW members has empowered young girls through technology and sports, and most recently, the new Latina initiative on the national level is much appreciated. I feel proud that AAUW is seriously engaged in countering racial and ethnic discrimination.



2. What is my favorite aspect of our PS branch?

My favorite aspect of our PS branch is enjoying the film and book club groups. We have a high level of thoughtful discussions.

3. Education/Life's work?

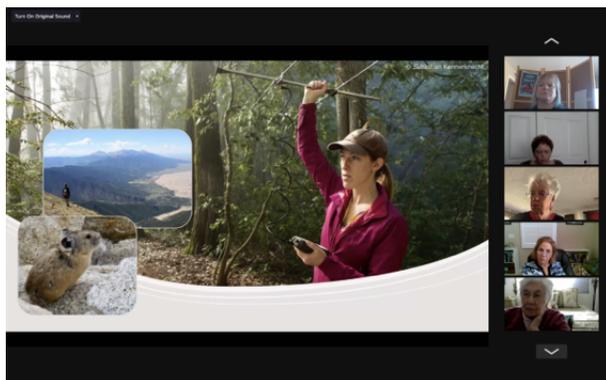
I had a career in Broadcast Journalism for 25 years as a News Reporter, anchor reporter, and a Capitol Reporter at CBS, NBC in LA and Sacramento as well as nationally. Most recently, I worked with former Governor of New Mexico, Bill Richardson.

4. What do I do for fun?

I love to travel and visit with my friends, now it's all on the telephone. I enjoy daily walks and Yoga. I have spent the past several years working on the manuscript for my inspirational memoir, "Through The Dark" to be published March 3, 2021, just in time for the Women's History Month. I used the COVID crises as an opportunity to go into Writer's Retreat at home and practically rewrote the entire book. I LOVE writing. Nothing I would rather do.

However, AAUW social and film meetings were a welcomed break from the computer's automaton voice. I miss everyone, and can't wait until we all are back together at the Grill.

You can enjoy a wonderful interview with Yolanda by [clicking here](#)



Program **Justine Smith Puma** **Guru,** **Our January Speaker**

By Laura Eaton

For our January meeting the impressive Justine Smith, Assistant Professor at UC Davis,

joined us via Zoom to talk to us about puma research in the Santa Cruz mountains with the Santa Cruz Puma Project.

Justine told us that the Puma Project has developed a GPS wildlife tracking collar that once placed on a puma tracks its location and behavior. The collar is one of the means by which the Puma Project collects data on pumas so it better understands their physiology, behavior and ecology.

Through the Puma Project's research efforts, it aims to develop a better understanding of the impact of habitat fragmentation (such as roads and housing developments) on mountain lion behavior, reproduction and movement.

One of the ways the Puma Project is helping pumas is through its involvement in the effort to create a tunnel under Highway 17 for pumas to safely cross.

Justine received an **AAUW National Fellowship** to help her study and research during the 2016-2017 Academic Year. Fellowships are AAUW's oldest and largest funding program.

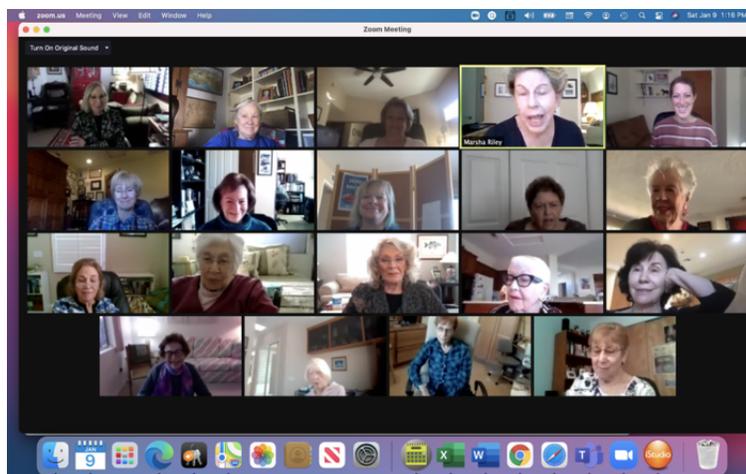
Fellowship candidates are evaluated on the basis of scholarly excellence and active commitment to helping women and girls through service in their communities, professions, or fields of research.

Justine stressed the importance of female mentors and is committed to mentoring other women wildlife biologists. Not only did the fellowship fund assist Justine by helping to finance her studies at the end of her PhD work but she in turn is assisting other women biologists with their burgeoning careers.

I received several calls and emails from members who wanted me to know how much they enjoyed Justine's presentation. She was well organized, knowledgeable and passionate about the preservation of the puma and the ecology of its habitat.

Justine Smith is an excellent example of how a portion of AAUW fund donations are used to promote women scholars, their communities, and in this case the Santa Cruz puma.

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!

AAUW Named Gift Honorees

Named gifts are AAUW's way of honoring members who have given extraordinary service to the branch or community. We honor them by making our donations to AAUW in their names. It is the highest honor a member can receive. Meet our 2021 Named Gift Honorees!

Pat Fredericks, our immediate past president, had to deal with something no president-elect even wants to think about—the unexpected death of our beloved president, Elizabeth Nash. Suddenly, Pat was forced to plunge into the role of President. She comforted the board and helped us to re-group, finishing the year with all of the enthusiasm Liz would have wanted! She went on to serve as President for two years, connecting us with community resources and making sure we remembered that advocacy is an important part of our mission. Pat has been there for us as she bounced back from surgeries, a pandemic, family challenges and her very busy schedule as an extraordinarily active community volunteer—and she always has homemade cookies or fudge to sweeten up whatever we had to deal with.



Louise Kermode joined AAUW because Tech Trek (TT) is her love. It's not only a way to give back to her community but also encourage young 7th graders to stay interested in STEM, go on to college and have the opportunity to engage in amazing careers.



Over many years, Louise has not only donated generously toward Tech Trek sponsorships, but she also has donated many hours of her time.

Every year, Louise and Angie Love drive out to middle schools in Thermal and Salton Sea and interview girls for TT selection. The first year they got lost – they could see the school but couldn't figure out for a while how to get to it. In the process they became great friends and look forward to traveling to the east end of Coachella Valley together every year.

Last year, the TT Team decided it was important to give newly selected Campers t-shirts that identified them as Tech Trekkers from our branch. Louise volunteered to support that endeavor and helped make it happen.

Marsha Riley has been there for our branch whenever we needed her. She is the first to pull out her checkbook when we need to raise funds to further our mission, but she contributes



much more than money. In this time of COVID, many branches lost their interest groups all together. Marsha went from being hesitant to try zoom to being a zoom cheerleader! She singlehandedly revived Reel Revelers and actively participates in the other groups. We are very excited to see what Marsha is planning for us when we are able to share lunches and outings—and we know she is already thinking about giving us something to look forward to.



Adele Ruxton has been a member of AAUW for 25 years. She has been an avid Tech Trek supporter and volunteer. Adele is the TT Bear Fairy, donating the adorable bears that we give our girls at our annual TT luncheon as a reminder of their camp experience. Besides her work with AAUW, Adele is active in Indian Wells Historic Preservation Foundation.

Gender Agenda – February 2021 -Cher Koleszar

A little earlier this week, I tuned into an AAUW national Town Hall meeting on eliminating the current two (2) and four (4) year degree education requirement for membership. It highlighted for me, once again, that although the content and need of an issue are important, it is all in how things are communicated that make a difference between people listening with an open mind and being closed to the thought of changing needs.

The first speaker presented the question, addressed the historical reasons why this by-laws change has failed previously to pass and discussed the cultural changes that warrant considering a change now during 2021 in the educational requirement. Her comments were full of data points and potential barriers to the change yet met with lots of registered members resistance to the change noting the “condescending language” that was used by the speaker. I saw the position as passionate, yes, it was very direct and somewhat challenging but from my perspective, not condescending. The data defined the proposed changes clearly and clinically, yet I was concerned that the negative comments showing immediately in the chat box would shut down active listening.

Kudos to Julia Brown, Chairperson of the National Board, who put a very human face on the issue and took all the heat out of the room while encouraging members to hear the needs and see how the education requirement precludes many talented and very successful women from having access to the organization. Most of us, just as Julia, have had interactions with women who would make amazing contributions to our “equity mission” yet had to tell them that they did not meet the requirements to do so. If our mission is really “equity for women and girls”, then it is worth an honest and open examination of the issue, the barriers to removing the education requirement, and the toolkit and other resources that have been developed to clarify the concerns of AAUW members. I spent much of yesterday reviewing all of the resources now available

on the AAUW website and was very pleased that the talking points and user-friendly strategies found in the toolkit uphold not only our “equity” mission statement but are a timely roadmap to capturing the goals of “diversity”, “equality” and “inclusion” for all women and girls.

The open comment period on this change will end on February 5, 2021 and I would encourage you to submit your thoughts and comments and for all members with questions and concerns, to listen to the recording of the public forum session of the January 19, 2021 Town Hall Meeting, as well as reviewing the toolkit and other resources, all available on the AAUW website.



Dues Increase for National

I assume that most of you have read the latest message from National’s Board President, Julia Brown. On April 7, 2021, the AAUW membership will begin the vote on an important proposal to amend the AAUW bylaws to open membership and eliminate the degree requirement to join AAUW.

Voting closes on May 17, 2021 and the vote result will be announced on 5/17/2021. You can go online to aauw.org and read about this issue on the subject: National Election.

National strongly supports this effort. Ms. Brown states: *“We believe this is an essential step toward making AAUW a more diverse and inclusive organization, better aligned with our mission, values and the needs of women today.”* This same proposal has been voted down before by membership and has devoted fans and advocates on both sides.

One side believes that the educational degree requirements should be maintained because AAUW is the premier organization, started in 1881, by a small group of female college graduates who banded together to open the doors for women's career advancement. And, that degree achievements are an essential foundation to encourage more women to pursue higher education. And, if the degree requirement is eliminated, what would become of our organization’s name as university women?

On the other side, we all recognize that many of our branches have members who are aging and we need membership infusion of young members, many of whom are not degreed. I know I, for one, often encounter bright, dynamic women who hold or did hold important positions in government, non-profits and business who strongly support gender equity for women and girls. I think if we asked every membership vice president in our branches, we would be surprised how many members we could

recruit without degrees. And, we would become a more diverse and inclusive organization with outreach to young women, women of color, and women who support our goals. Is it time to reconsider the needs in 1881 and our current landscape of recruitments?

Please let me know your thoughts. Both President Elect, Cher Koleszar, and I are attending the Zoom session on this issue on Tuesday, January 19th. Perhaps we could discuss our opinions at an upcoming Zoom meeting. I'm always interested to hear from you and welcome your thoughts on this issue before ALL of us vote between April 7th and May 17th.

Sharrell Blakeley, President
Palm Springs Branch



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.

Branch Happy Hour

Bring your favorite beverage and a snack and enjoy great conversation. Contact Laura Eaton for the link.

Reel Revelers

Howard and Roberta Young have chosen *Mank* on Netflix for the February Reel Revelers. They think it will lead to a good discussion since so many of us remember who the people in the movie are. The group will meet to discuss the movie on Thursday, February 4 at 3:00 p.m.

Remember to watch the movie before the meeting so you will be ready to comment. Contact Marsha Riley for the zoom link and to RSVP. Remember to bring your own popcorn!

Book Group

Wednesday, 2/17/2021 at 2:00 PST

Our book is *The Dutch House* by Ann Patchett

Mary Davey Schambach will lead the discussion of this book!

Please join us on ZOOM
 PLEASE LET MARY KNOW IF YOU WILL "ATTEND."
 When you RSVP THAT YOU WILL ATTEND, I WILL SEND YOU A
 "ZOOM INVITATION" TO SIGN INTO THE MEETING
 Please RSVP to maryschambach@yahoo.com by 2/12/21

Great Decisions 2021

The Great Decisions group will meet virtually via Zoom on Tuesday, Feb. 16, 2021, at 10:00 a.m. The topic will be Persian Gulf Security Issues. Please RSVP to Judy Schurr to obtain the Zoom meeting information.

2069? 2369? 2451?

WHEN WILL THE GENDER PAY GAP BE CLOSED?

By Ginny Hatfield, AAUW California Public Policy Committee

How long will it take? What can we do to make it happen sooner rather than later? These are questions that AAUW has been grappling with for decades. As we mark Equal Pay Day on March 24, perhaps there is hope that we can make progress in decreasing the gender pay gap in 2021, given a new administration that is committed to social justice and leveling the growing disparity between the haves and have not. We also now have women in the highest echelons of national leadership; and as we all know, when women are in charge, things get done!

According to the 2020 update to AAUW's *The Simple Truth*, it will take white women until the year 2069 to achieve parity with men based on the projected earnings ratio compiled between 1988-2019. For women of color the numbers are even worse. Black women will have to wait until the year 2369 – 350 years – as their earnings ratio has only advanced a mere 7% from 1988-2019. And Latinas find themselves in the worse scenario as their earnings ratio has only increased 4% from 51% to 55% during this period of time, projecting their year of parity to 2451! (AAUW, *The Simple Truth* 2020 update)

The reasons for these disparities in the gender wage gap are known – and understanding what's causing the problem is the first step to meeting it head on. Members are urged to read the summary of *The Simple Truth* update on our National website which lays out the problem, its causes and solutions. https://www.aauw.org/app/uploads/2020/10/SimpleTruth_1.8.pdf

AAUW is leading the charge to effectuate change and you are part of the solution with the work your branches undertake on behalf of women and girls. The more we educate ourselves and others about the scope of this gender wage gap with programs like Start Smart, Work Smart, NCCWSL, etc., the more we chip away at the disparity. What is your branch doing to make a difference in the Gender Pay Gap? Let us know what creative ideas you have come up with to spread the word in these days of social distancing, we'll share them on the web (send to publicpolicy@aauw-ca.org).

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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