



The Walk/Talk/Gawk hikers of Mid-Pen were on the move all summer. Here they take on the Purisima Creek Trail. More photos appear on Page 8.

## Kick-off party at Burton Park to launch new Mid-Pen year

Mid-Peninsula Branch of AAUW will launch the 2022-23 year with a gathering from 11 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. Wednesday, Sept. 14, at Burton Park, 900 Chestnut St., San Carlos.

Tables will be set up behind the tennis courts and next to the bocce ball lanes. Look for the AAUW banner.

The board will provide a variety of finger foods such as cookies, breads, fruit, cheese and crackers.

Mid-Pen's new slate of officers will welcome members back, catch up on summer activities and outline plans for the coming year.

It will also offer a chance to meet new members and reconnect with old friends as well as:

- Get all the latest information on Interest Sections..
- Learn about program speakers for the year.
- Pick up your directory.
- Check in with your Neighborhood Group about fall events.
- Meet the new Mid-Pen board members.

Everyone is encouraged to bring a friend who might enjoy the activities of the branch. Anyone who does bring a friend will be entered to win a \$30 gift card to Trader Joe's. (One entry for every friend you bring.)

Bring your own cup to be kind to the environment.

## From the co-presidents:



New co-presidents Chris Panero and Carole Farina

# Looking ahead to a busy year

By Chris Panero, co-president

We're making progress!

Life these days feels like two steps forward and one step back, doesn't it? But the Mid-Peninsula Branch has had a productive summer. First though, I'd like to thank Carole Farina, with whom I am co-President, for her helpful coaching in how to do the job. I have a lot to learn, and I thank her for her patience and kindness, and yours too.

Several neighborhood groups celebrated summer with get-togethers at Burton Park; the outdoor neighborhood meetings of my group (officiated by Sally Mellinger of Neighborhood 3) have lightened my mood and allowed good conversation with fellow members.

A number of Interest Groups continued to meet, including the French Conversation group, some of whose members journeyed to Carmel for the day to lunch with a member who was vacationing there. And the Walk, Talk, & Gawk group walked and talked and admired gardens and birds on weekly local outings, sometimes followed by lunch. As always, I'm impressed by the energy and adaptability of our members.

After a two-summer break from Tech Trek activities, our branch sponsored camp-

ers for the first time in Virtual Tech Trek, a one-week on-line program. Two girls from Central Middle School in San Carlos spent the week in sessions with intriguing titles such as Blowing in the Wind (wind turbines, maybe?) and a math workshop called The Magic of Paper. In addition, a Mid-Peninsula 2017 Tech Trekker alum, Esme Grenstam, served as a volunteer coach, working with ten campers on hands-on projects in the afternoon. Tech Trek staff sent supply boxes ahead of time to each girl and coach.

In a note to Barbara Haas, a member of our branch Tech Trek committee, Wendy Dougherty, the mom of one of our sponsored girls, said this:

"Thank you very much for all of the effort and support with the virtual Tech Trek for middle school girls last week. My daughter enjoyed participating. She appreciated the various speakers who shared about their field in STEM. We appreciated that she was challenged to learn new things and complete a project on wearable tech. . .

"It is important that she gets this type of exposure from female role models in the field of STEM to encourage her to pursue her goals. Thanks again for your support of this program."

## Who? What? When?

**Co-Presidents:** Carole Farina (cfarina@alumni.stanford.edu) and Chris Panero (cpanero@gmail.com)

**Membership:** Wilma Hoffmann (wilmahoffmann@icloud.com)

**Electronic distribution:** Cathy Chowenhill (cathychowenhill@comcast.net)

**Triad editor:** Micki Carter (mickicartr@gmail.com)

**Sunshine Lady:** Marge Haruff is our Sunshine Lady. Please contact Marge at mharuff@aol.com or (650) 591-9900 if you know anyone who would appreciate a card from Mid-Pen Branch.

**Know of a prospective member?** Please contact Wilma Hoffmann (wilmahoffmann@icloud.com)

**Board Meeting:** Tuesday, Sept. 6, at 11 a.m. via Zoom.

**Triad Deadline for October** will be Sept. 15. Please send articles in Word, Pages or Google.doc and photos (separately, not embedded) as large-format JPEGs to Micki Carter (mickicartr@gmail.com).

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Our Program chairs, Beth Swanson and Gail Landkusch have lined up some sensational programs for us this fall, and our membership chairs, Wilma Hoffmann and Barb Finnegan have been working all summer to recruit new members, make welcoming phone calls to those who joined in the last two years, and follow up on late renewals. We also had a fun August get-together for newer members at Coffeebar in Redwood City.

And finally, as announced previously, our branch recently lost long-time member Betty Torrez, a thoughtful, generous, and supportive member of our branch. Betty remembered AAUW in her bequests with a gift of \$10,000. Betty's amazing gift will be in a special projects fund until our branch decides where and how the money can best be used — perhaps as seed money for a cause we support.

As I write, Covid cases have receded a bit in both numbers and severity, but no matter what the future holds, we'll stick together and make things happen. Thank you for your kindness and support.

# Please welcome Stephen and Maureen Buchner

**Maureen Buchner**  
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**USF, BS Nursing '68**

**By Barb Finnegan**

Welcome a member new to our Mid-Peninsula branch, but who is already known to many of us. Maureen Buchner is currently co-president of the San Mateo Branch (along with her husband, Stephen).

Both Buchners decided to join our branch to facilitate the planning of joint programs between the two branches. They will be in Neighborhood 8.

Maureen graduated with a BS in nursing and began her practice at Oakland Children's hospital in the pediatric unit. She continued specializing in the care of children at San Diego Children's Hospital and then worked in the neonatal unit at LA County & USC Medical Center. Toward the end of her career she was an advice nurse in a pediatric office.

Maureen comes from a family of three; she was the youngest with an older brother and sister. Maureen and Stephen have been married 52 years and have three children — two daughters in San Diego and a son in Sunnyvale. Their son has two children.

Maureen has been a committed AAUW member for 25 years and has assumed numerous positions including VP Membership. She has also previously served as the President of the San Mateo branch.

She has been dedicated to the Tech Trek program for 18 years, functioning as director of the computer science pioneer Admiral Grace Hopper. camp, with prior experience as branch coordinator and a volunteer.

An example of her dedication is shown when the very first year as a one-day volunteer to check in girls, she willingly jumped to the weeklong stint as a dorm mom responsible for all the girls in her group, when the person who was supposed to do it resigned the first morning of camp. Fortunately, her husband had no problem being left alone for a week at the drop of a hat!

Maureen's diverse interests include reading, knitting and a large vegetable



**Maureen and Stephen Buchner are pictured at the New Members Coffee earlier this summer.**

garden.

We look forward to interesting programs with San Mateo as Maureen's passion is racial equity and women's rights.

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**By Wilma Hoffmann**

Stephen, who started as Stephen, shortened it to Steve for the next 50 years, and now prefers Stephen again, is Co-President of the San Mateo Branch with his wife Maureen. They are joining as dual members, with a goal of coordinating programs and sharing ideas.

How did Stephen end up involved in AAUW? Mostly because Maureen was so heavily involved in Tech Trek (see her introduction), and he got roped in to help!

He was a willing helper, in no small part because he recognized the value of Tech Trek and is convinced that education is essential for everyone.

Not only that, he has business skills and tech knowledge that are super helpful. First, he set up a Tech Trek video for a 2012 San Mateo general meeting (the initial hook!), then progressed to helping deal with the computers used by the Tech Trek Camps at Stanford. He ended up with 17 new computers delivered to his house on a pallet needing to be set up when the earlier Tech Trek computers were replaced, and finally updated all 17 to a new operating system. How many branches had such expertise among their members?

Having supported and helped Maureen as the Camp Director, when their prior treasurer resigned, he took over as Branch Treasurer. Maureen moved to president, so he went with her. Wow! They are both passionate about Tech Trek and the importance of education.

Maureen and Stephen met while he was a medical student and she a nurse at Oakland Children's Hospital, clearly a good thing since they have been married 52 years. That included his stint during the Vietnam War at the Naval Hospital at Camp Pendleton in Southern California.

Please welcome one of the few men in AAUW, and certainly the first in our branch.

# Meet new Mid-Pen member Sheri Simmons

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UC, Berkley, MBA '89

**By Barb Finnegan**

Welcome a new member to our Mid-Peninsula branch, who will be in Neighborhood 1.

Sheri has been a long-time member of AAUW supporting women's equity and rights but wasn't aware that there was also branch participation until renewing her membership this year.

She is interested in the social aspects of the branch and learning more about current issues, climate control, hilly hiking and, depending on time, women in literature.

Sheri is the second of five children, having two sisters and two brothers. She spent most of her youth in Hawaii and moved to California for college. Sheri graduated with a BS in combined sciences from Santa Clara University and an MBA from the University of California, Berkeley, in 1989.

Sheri and her husband, David, have been married 29 years, having met in graduate



**Sheri Simmons**

school. They have three children in their 20s, an older son who works in Seattle, and boy/girl twins who attend Cal Poly, San Luis Obispo, and Chico State University.

After her twins were born, Sheri stayed

home to raise her busy family for eight years, and then accomplished the daunting task of re-entering the work world in her same career field. Sheri works in global content and engagement marketing for Philips, a health technology solutions company.

She collaborates with customers to create white papers and case studies on their experience with advanced medical technology and contributes to engagement and content strategy for medical conferences.

Sheri restarted playing the ukulele right before the Covid shutdown, and her practicing flourished during the pandemic as she had twice-weekly Zoom meetings to play and sing with three generations of family members, including an 11-year-old niece and her 80+-year-old mother. Sheri describes it as a truly uplifting experience during a challenging time for everyone.

Describing herself as an "outdoorsy" and active person, she has played soccer on the local Menlo-Atherton women's recreational soccer league for over 25 years and encourages any other interested soccer players to join her. "It's a fun group with quite a wide age range."

Please join me in welcoming Sheri!

## Focus on climate



**Wilma Hoffmann and Sherry Booth of the Climate group volunteered to help with the Coastside Land Trust's habitat restoration workday in May. The Trust has a great program, the Junior Stewards Program, where they partner with local schools for a year-long science program for Grade 4 students. The students focus on eco systems, plants and fauna of the Coast area. Each class grows native plants from seeds and plants them in their own plot, this one in Wavecrest Open Space. High school students in environmental studies act as mentors. The journals the students keep of the experience from start to finish, they were told, are incredible. This day entailed putting down cardboard between the young plants and covering it with mulch to try to keep the weeds in check. Covid had prevented the usual weeding by students.**

# Elvira Monroe's advice: Respect yourself!

*This past May, Marilyn Zack had the opportunity to talk with Elvira Monroe, a member of the Mid-Peninsula Branch for more than 30 years.*

**By Marilyn Zack**

**Q: How long have you been a member of AAUW?**

I was a member for 25 years and then took a 30-year hiatus and rejoined six years ago.

**Q: Why did you join/what attracted you to the group?**

The initial attraction for me was the baby-sitting co-op. We hired a babysitter for board meetings. The members were new to the area and knew no one. I made lifelong friends. I discovered AAUW through the Welcome Wagon.

(Welcome Wagon was a city-wide program that sent volunteers to visit new residents and acquaint them with what the city had to offer. It included coupons from participating local businesses and information about various organizations.)

**Q: What are some of your favorite memories of group events or programs? These can be funny stories, or stories about events that were particularly inspiring to you, or events that AAUW had that really made a difference in your life or to the community.**

I chaired a supervised play group for pre-school activities and was very active in several groups. The Education Group studied various issues such as the lack of a public defender in San Mateo County.

Another time, I was quoted by State Sen. Anthony Beilenson in the California Senate on our study of abortion rights.

We also did a study of conditions in the women's jail where young women convicted of misdemeanors were housed with hard core felons.

And I loved the gourmet dinner parties with husbands.

The branch used to attend the San Carlos School Board meetings as observers (at that time, the board was made up of ultra-conservative men). When a seat opened on the board, I was urged to run, and I served two terms.

Another member put together my campaign. This was a result of our branch actively addressing issues. This great activity



**Elvira Monroe**

attracted many young women to legislative and education committees at the state level.

At this time in my life, I was divorced, with three children. I taught at Ravenswood and served on the school board. My plate was too full, and it was at this time that I left AAUW.

**Q: Are there any women in history (or current events) that have inspired you with their work?**

The woman who inspired me the most was my mother. She was a legal secretary. During World War II, she opened her home to Jewish families fleeing the Nazis and helped them re-settle.

During the Japanese internment, she took me to an internment camp at Tanforan to see what was being done to these people. She was a naturalist who taught my children self-worth and self-respect. She had a great impact on her grandchildren.

Other women who have inspired me are Mother Cecily Callahan, my teacher at Lone Mountain College, who nurtured my love of

writing and different cultures.

I would also add Rachel Carson and Eleanor Roosevelt to this list.

**Q: AAUW Mid-Peninsula has a long history of being involved in the community (joining Women's Marches, the Tech Trek program, etc). Do you remember any particularly interesting events that you were part of?**

I was the only woman on the school board in 1965. When the budget was being prepared, the chair told me I didn't have to bother with this. The men would take care of it. I remained in that discussion.

When the board was reviewing some

architectural plans, they told me I should be home with my children. That's where women should be as they took out their slide rules. I had my husband teach me to use a slide rule and I fully participated in that project.

It was the practice of the school board to rotate the chair. When it was my turn to be the chair, the original chair was so put out that he left the board.

**Q: Do you have any words of wisdom to offer young women today who may be facing discrimination?**

Persevere.

Respect yourself.

**Q: Do you have any words of wisdom to give to our new members?**

Get involved in every way you can.

A huge thank you to Elvira for her contributions to the branch, the community and the AAUW programs in general.

We are blessed to have members like her in our organization.

## Interest Sections

# Mid-Pen has added a new section: Hilly Hikers

## Team Mah-Jongg

A lively group of members play and continue to learn Mah-Jongg. It is a fun game and we are a friendly group

We have eight players and, thanks to Marilyn Zack, more are learning and wanting to play. We meet Tuesdays from 10 a.m. to noon at the San Carlos Senior Center.

Usually four to six players are able to attend and we look forward to more joining the group. For further information, contact Kathy Morrow.

## Gentle Walkers

The Gentle Walkers meet every Wednesday at 9:30 a.m. at Crestview Park located at 1000 Crestview Drive, San Carlos, (one block north of Brittan on the west side). We use the padded track and move at a pace that is comfortable. You are free to make short stops along the way to chat as well as catch your breath; we are not in a hurry. It is likely, as our legs and lungs become stronger, we will try out other flat trails. If interested joining, contact Victoria Kline at victoria.klinecosley@gmail.com or 650-315-6995.

## Book Bunch

We usually meet on the third Friday of the month at 10 a.m. Never joined us before? Now is your chance.

For our first meeting of the year, we will meet on the second Friday, Sept. 9, at the home of Ruthie Wilkins, 134 Iris St, Redwood City, 94070. Carolyn Miller will chair a discussion of *West With Giraffes* by Lynda Rutledge. Please RSVP to mfmiller34@aol.com, (650) 365-0208, mobile (650) 464-9173.

In October, we will revert to our third Friday, Oct. 21, when Wilma Hoffmann will lead a discussion of *The Book of Longings* by Sue Monk Kidd at her home, 909 Crestview Drive, San Carlos. RSVP to wilmahoffmann@icloud.com, (650) 595-3933, mobile (650) 387-4751.

## Walk/Talk & Gaww

The group continues to meet on Thursday mornings. Members of the group suggest walks, hikes, routes and the time and place to meet, and then someone leads and does the emails for that week. Stephanie



During the summer, the Spanish conversation group gathered for a luncheon meeting in the garden of Teddy Heinrich's home.

Katz is the contact (stk4@lehigh.edu).

## Hilly Hikers

We are NEW! If you enjoy having your endorphins kicking in on a hill or on a longer hike, we are the group for you. Our first hike will be the Moraga Stairway Walk, doing both sets of stairs to the top with its great view of the surroundings. Marilyn Zack is leading the hike, carpooling from her home, 17 Williams Lane, San Carlos, at 9 a.m. on Friday, Sept. 23. Contact her (650) 591-2353 or mobile (650) 454-0301. The plan is to hike once a month on the fourth Friday.

## All About Food

Join us as we explore the history, uses and benefits of foods and how to grow or prepare them. Take a turn leading monthly discussions or suggest a tasting or excursion. Meetings are at 4 p.m. on the fourth Thursday by Zoom or in person. Contact Carole Farina at cfarina@alumni.stanford.edu.

## Gamesters

Gamesters may have enough people to start meeting to play some fun games.

The dates, times and places will be chosen by the group. Contact Nancy Oliver at 650-592-5822 or nancy1oliver@earthlink.net.

## Women in Literature

Women in Literature (Jane Austen Book Club) could start up again. Dates, times, meeting places TBD. Contact Nancy Oliver.

## Historic Preservation

Sept. 10, 1-2:30 p.m., the Courthouse Docket at the San Mateo County Historical Museum will feature author Mary Jo Ignoffo and her book, *Captive of the Labyrinth: Sarah Winchester, Heiress to the Rifle Fortune*, revised.

Sept. 17, noon-4 p.m., Rancho Day Fiesta, celebrating California's Mexican Heritage at the Sanchez Adobe in Pacifica, with early California music, dances, craft activities, and take a picture in period costumes.

If you want to attend, contact Nancy Oliver at 650-592-5822 or nancy1oliver@earthlink.net.

Would you like to attend Cultural Events (plays, music, art, etc.) with fellow members? Contact Nancy Oliver.

## AAUW condemns decision to reverse Roe v. Wade ruling

By Gloria L. Blackwell,  
AAUW chief executive officer

The American Association of University Women strongly condemns the U.S. Supreme Court's decision in *Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health Organization*.

The decision overturns the landmark *Roe v. Wade* ruling that established abortion as a constitutionally protected right nearly 50 years ago and ignores the will of the American people, 80% of whom support legal abortion.

AAUW believes everyone has the right to make decisions about their own reproductive lives without government interference. Abortion access is vital to women's ability to control their lives, bodies and futures. Without reproductive freedom, there can be no equity.

Being able to choose whether and when to become a parent improves women's well-being and fosters economic security—a crucial component of AAUW's mission. This is particularly important in a country that lacks accessible maternal health care, paid caregiving leave and workplace protections for pregnant workers.

The Court's decision hurts all of us, but it will do the most harm to low-income people, women of color, immigrants, people with disabilities and LGBTQ+ people, because these groups already face substantial barriers to accessing reproductive services and health care.

While the Court's decision is a major setback for all Americans, AAUW remains steadfast in our commitment to protecting reproductive rights.

### Barbara Haas will serve as Neighborhood Coordinator

Barbara Haas has accepted the position of Neighborhood Coordinator, an important role with the Membership Committee, and advisor and link between Neighborhood Chairs and our Board.

AAUW Public Policy Chair remains open for someone with an interest in National's policy activity. Contact Carole Farina or Nancy Oliver for details.

## Public Policy

# When women turn out to vote, they change the conversation

By Ashley Dargent

Since 1881, AAUW has been a leading voice promoting education and equity for women and girls. AAUW encourages women voters to get involved in the political process and gain a better understanding of the impact legislative action can have on our lives.

The recent US Supreme Court *Dobbs* decision on abortion has stimulated action in many states across the nation, including California. Our legislature passed and Governor Newsom signed AB1666 which will enable a woman coming into California to receive an abortion to be protected from lawsuits originating in her home state. This bill was co-sponsored by AAUW CA!

A further step protecting a woman's right to make personal medical decisions is a Constitutional Amendment, Proposition 1, which will be on the Nov. 8 ballot. It would amend the California Constitution to prohibit the state from denying or interfering with an individual's reproductive freedom in her most intimate decisions, which includes the fundamental right to choose to have an abortion and the fundamental right to choose or refuse contraceptives.

AAUW CA supports this Constitutional Amendment.

Congressional races are particularly important this November. Redistricting after the 2020 Census has changed the boundaries of many Congressional districts.

In the current partisan climate, we need to be aware of what is at stake in both our national and state upcoming elections. Your current member of Congress may no longer represent you – be sure to become informed soon on the candidates for Congress in your district.

As you sort through all this, please reflect on priority issues affecting us, our daughters and granddaughters, and evaluate candidates' positions on these issues.

If you are a leader in your branch, make your October program a focus on the election. You may want to consider a Candidates Night. Before a partisan election, AAUW branches may host candidate forums to

which all major-party candidates in that election are invited.

Here are resources to get helpful, non-partisan information:

- AAUW CA website: [aauw-ca.org](http://aauw-ca.org) Public Policy section will soon have more detail on priority issues and questions to ask of candidates.

- AAUW website: [aauw.org/policy/advocacy/tool-kit](http://aauw.org/policy/advocacy/tool-kit) Ideas for branch activities, C/U partners, and specifics for 501 c 3 and 501 c 4 branches.

- CA Secretary of State website: [www.sos.ca.gov](http://www.sos.ca.gov) voter info, Ballot Initiatives.

- State and County Voter guides – mailed to all registered voters in October.

- [www.wedrawthelinesca.org](http://www.wedrawthelinesca.org) – maps of newly re-drawn congressional districts

Register to vote, if you haven't already! And if you have recently moved you need to update your information with your County Registrar of Voters! Voting is a powerful tool to bring about change!

## Mid-Pen needs a Public Policy chair to direct state's packed agenda

The state Public Policy Committee has set an ambitious agenda for the year ahead.

It will be planning a Voter Education campaign for November, introducing a new Title IX bill in December, revising the Public Policy Priorities for 2023-25 in January, setting our Legislative Agenda for 2023-24 in February, and planning a Member Lobbying event for March.

How can you help?

Mid-Peninsula Branch needs a Public Policy chair or co-chairs to be our contact with the state and national directors and keep our members informed.

Don't let us fall out of the loop. Please volunteer your time to keep the information flowing.

Contact Chris Panero or Carole Farina.



The Purisima Creek Trail through the pristine nature preserve of the San Mateo County Coast put the Walk/Talk & Gawk hikers of Mid-Pen to the test. This summer they also visited Coyote Point on the bayside of the county and Professorville in Palo Alto. If you'd like to be included in their adventures, contact Stephanie Katz at [stk4@lehigh.edu](mailto:stk4@lehigh.edu).



## Mid-Pen honored as Five-Star Branch

Congratulations to us!

Mid-Peninsula again received recognition as a Five-Star Branch. In all five focus areas, our branch has attained AAUW's recommended highest level of achievement.

Our excellent forms of communication; your Greatest Needs donations; the untiring work of our board members, coordinators and chairs; the variety of informative speakers, and the support of all of you contributed to keep our branch vital and praiseworthy.

Pat yourself on the back.

## Here's more on bright, low-income achievers

Did you watch our virtual program with Rebecca Zeigler Mano last year? She explained the unique way that her organization has helped more than 500 African students attain free, high-quality university degrees and return to work in African countries.

Here's a recent interview with Rebecca, at EdUp World Wise [Podcast](#).

Catch up on where students and alumni are and what they are giving back to African countries by going to this [link](#).

## Recent books by AAUW fellows and grantees

Looking for some riveting reading this summer?

We're pleased to present this stellar [selection](#) of recent books by our alumnae, including fiction, nonfiction, essays and poetry.

## New standards proposed for Title IX protections

In celebration of the 50th anniversary of Title IX on June 23, the Biden Administration proposed new Title IX regulations that would restore protections for student survivors of sexual harassment, clarify protections for LGBTQ+ students, and much more.

AAUW welcomes these long-awaited updates, and we are excited to work with the administration to strengthen and codify the proposal.