

Celebrating the wonder of Tech Trek 2023

By Sherry Booth

Our much-loved program, Tech Trek STEM camp for eighth grade girls, returned with a bang in 2023. Our last previous camp was in 2019 at Stanford University, but the pandemic arrived and for Tech Trek, as well as all of us, life as we knew it was upended.

AAUW women don't give up, however! This summer, our branch sent four girls to in-person camp at Sonoma State University and two girls to virtual camp. We also sent some volunteers and one heroic dorm mom, Vicci Mueller, who spent all week keeping girls on track. Thank you Vicci!

So how does a girl get chosen to attend Tech Trek?

The process of choosing girls for the program is a multi-step challenge for everyone involved. First, girls must be nominated by their math or science teacher and meet a number of challenging criteria. They must show interest and do well in math and science, exhibit strong academic habits, and have a character that is responsible, respect others, and be confident and eager to try new things.

Next, the parents must complete a ton of paperwork, and then the girls fill out applications and write an essay. Members of our branch then personally interview all the applicants and choose those who will attend camp.

This year's campers were from Central, Tierra Linda, Nesbit and Ralston Middle Schools.

I mentioned we had two camps this year — the in-person camp at Sonoma State University and a statewide virtual camp, which girls participated in from home.

See **TECH TREK**, Page 4



September's General Meeting was a combined Mid-Pen/San Mateo gathering at the Redwood Shores Library on Sept. 9, and it featured Tech Trekkers sponsored by both branches. Speakers included Sherry Booth, the Mid-Pen member who has shepherded Tech Trek for four years; Maureen Buchner, San Mateo Branch Tech Trek coordinator and president; and 10 Tech Trekkers.



President's Message

What a good time we had as we honored our Tech Trekkers

By Chris Panero

Our September Event, in partnership with the San Mateo Branch, was a happy occasion. Thank you to all who made it happen!

The board and others brought snacks and drinks, and Katherine Linneman staffed the food table.

Everyone welcomed members and guests and engaged our Tech Trek campers and their parents.

Sherry Booth and the campers made the Tech Trek displays. Stephen Buchner set up the AV system. Maureen Buchner recounted the local and state history of Tech Trek, and Sherry told us of her experience at camp as she helped with a class and a field trip.

Ten campers described their adventures at Sonoma State, Fresno State, and with virtual camp. One Tech Trek alum reported on her mentoring job with virtual camp, and another, her plans for a local Tech Trek Alumni Group (TTAG).

Margot Diltz distributed Directories, and Barb Finnegan and Stephanie Katz organized the welcome table and name tags. Cathy Chowenhill took photos for The Triad, and a whole lot of people, including our guests, muscled tables and chairs into place and back again.

It was a lovely group effort; thank you to everyone.

More:

• Mary Spring, Barb Finnegan, and Stephanie Katz worked hard from May through last week to get everyone's membership renewed. We're about 100 strong!

• Margot Diltz updated and assembled the 2023-2024 Branch Directory. Thank you to Nancy Oliver for proofreading.



Chris Panero

• See the inspiring article by retiring Tech Trek Branch Coordinator Sherry Booth on Page One of this issue. Tech Trek has a strong start for next year.

• Thank you to Carole Farina for taking on the position of Public Policy chair. Marty Moga and Susan Hall will assist her in sorting out the issues. Elsewhere in this issue, see articles and notes on AAUW-CA Public Policy initiatives for the ERA and the

fight against book banning, censorship and sexual harassment.

Who? What? When?

President: Chris Panero

Membership: Stephanie Katz and Barb Finnegan

Electronic distribution: Cathy Chowenhill

Triad editor: Micki Carter

Sunshine Lady: Marge Haruff. Please contact Marge if you know anyone who would appreciate a card from Mid-Pen Branch.

Know of a prospective member? Please contact Stephanie Katz or Barb Finnegan

Board Meeting: Tuesday, Oct. 3, at 10 a.m.; Redwood City Community Activities Building, 1400 Roosevelt, Redwood City.

Triad Deadline for November will be Oct. 15. Please send articles in Word, Pages or Google.docs and photos (separately, not embedded) as large-format JPEGs to Micki Carter.

Welcome returning member Julie Hitchcock to Mid-Pen

By Barb Finnegan

Welcome Julie Hitchcock to Neighborhood 10. Some of you may know Julie as she was a member of the San Mateo and Mid-Peninsula branches of AAUW before the pandemic and is now happy to rejoin us.

Julie grew up in San Mateo and has one brother who is an author and journalist. She met her husband at University of California, Davis, and they moved to San Diego where they lived for 43 years.

She graduated from San Diego State University with a BA in English, and a

minor in Spanish in 1970. She received her Secondary School teaching certificate from the same institution in 1971.

Julie taught high school for nine years, after which she and her husband began a wholesale flower business, growing and importing flowers to manufacture bouquets for grocery stores. This allowed them more time with their growing children.

She has three adult children, two daughters that live fairly close by in Northern California, and one son in Maryland. She is blessed with 10 grandchildren, seven boys and three girls.

Julie retired in 2010 and moved to Burlingame in 2011. She is experienced with Mah Jongg and has already played with our group.

She is also interested in joining the Walk/Talk & Gawk hiking group and potentially one of the book clubs.



Julie Hitchcock

Public Policy

Get acquainted with AAUW-CA goals, priorities

By Missy Maceyko, Co-Chair, AAUW California Public Policy Committee

After a year of wild weather in California, many of us may be thinking more about climate, environment and sustainability. How does our concern with the weather relate to AAUW California's Public Policy Priorities? Advancing gender equity is directly related to environmental sustainability. The inverse is also true.

The United Nations sustainable development goals, adopted in 2015, seek to push all countries to act to protect the planet, ensure widespread prosperity, and promote peace. Achieving gender equality, Goal No. 5, is a crucial element in this overall strategy.

Data also shows us that (un)sustainable production and consumption patterns, which harm the environment, tend to be gendered, with "green" choices being widely feminized.

While this is a global trend, we see this in popular portrayals of more planet-friendly consumption choices in the United States, as well, such as veganism, which tends to be marked as more "feminine" and less "masculine."

This example shows us that sustainable development Goal No. 5, promoting greater gender equality, alongside AAUW California's overall public policy mission of advancing equity for women and girls, is also important for achieving sustainable development Goal No. 12, which focuses on creating more planet-friendly and responsible production and consumption patterns.

Advancing Gender Equity is Advancing Environmental Sustainability (and vice versa). We know that having greater gender diversity in leadership improves organizations.

This is just one case in which we can see how sustainable development Goal No. 5 alongside advancing AAUW California's public policy priorities, can be important for achieving sustainable development Goal No. 13 (creating more impactful climate action).

What's a teacher to do when schools 'out' their students?

By Susan Hall

The Rocklin Unified School District Board last week passed a controversial policy concerning students' gender identity and name choices.

This school district holds a large number of the Roseville-South Placer AAUW members, the branch to which I belonged until I returned to the Bay Area.

School staff will be "required to tell parents if their child asks to be identified as a gender other than their assigned sex at birth" or to use pronouns that might suggest such identity.

Student body president Sophie Burns spoke before the vote: "This policy not only has the potential to make our schools an unwelcoming environment where students may be isolated, but also introduces the fears of outing students to parents or homes that are not safe spaces."

Parents and board members who differ say, "We believe that the relationship between parents and students and staff should be open."

What does this policy mean and where are we headed? The slightest suspicion of a student's personal identity varying from

what this school board deems "normal"—not clearly defined in the policy—might require a staff member to notify parents. A boy with a pony tail? A girl with very short hair and wearer of hiking boots? A male who enjoys playing a flute more than throwing a baseball?

Rocklin High School produced the current Giants baseball pitcher Webb, but it also produced one of the most remarkable music programs I have witnessed, with orchestras, bands, huge choirs, and musical prodigies, some of whom I know were LGBTQ students who until now felt safe at school.

AAUW's current mission is "To guarantee equality, individual rights and social justice for a diverse and inclusive society."

How does this suppression of rights happen? Voters need to pay attention to school board and city council candidates, many of whose mission is to change our schools to fit their personal beliefs at the expense of the mental health of students. This newest policy direction has been implemented in Chino, Temecula, and other California cities, and it can happen here.

Which public policy issue would you like to keep your eye on?

By Carole Farina

What's on California's legislative agenda? Do you have a particular concern?

Marty Moga is tracking the progress of the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA) that is designed to guarantee equal legal rights for all American citizens regardless of sex.

Susan Hall is following Book Banning and Curricula Censorship which is the hot topic of the Sept. 21 AAUW Webinar.

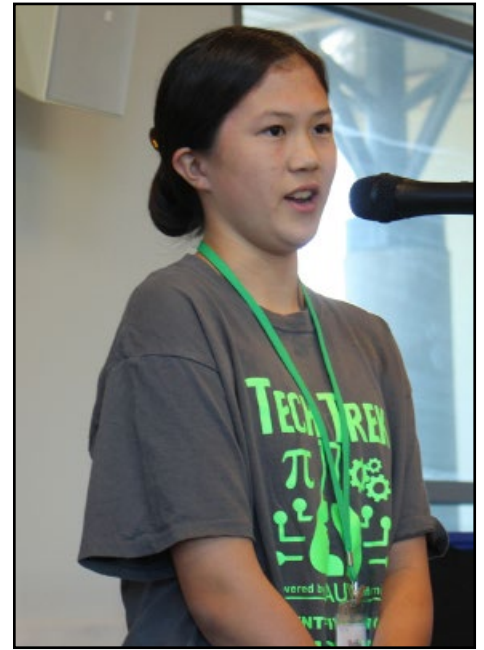
Or is it AB 933 that ensures survivors of sexual assault, harassment, and discrimination are protected against retaliatory and baseless defamation lawsuits.

What's being proposed to remedy for the inequities of women and girls? Assist us by taking a topic of your own concern and follow independently what is happening within our state or local community.

Leaders from AAUW CA inform us as to where California stands and what legislators are considering. We can alert members when action is needed.

Check out the AAUW CA Public Policy [site](#) for legislative issues, bill tracking, advocacy and more.

Contact Carole Farina for more information.



Tech Trek

Continued from Page One

The campers at Camp Johnson Sonoma State lived in dorms on campus, ate in the dining hall, and attended classes in campus classrooms. They took core classes every day in either robotics, forensics, engineering, or chemistry, heard from inspiring women speakers, took field trips and treks around campus, had an astronomy night, and generally were doing something from wake-up at 7 a.m. until lights-out at 10 p.m.

Virtual camp was structured similarly, with core classes, speakers, girls working in teams in virtual breakout rooms, and sharing their ideas. Before the first session, a very large box filled with all they needed to take part in virtual camp was delivered to their door and they were off!

Counselors and mentors worked with the girls on projects and provided support for them online. One of the junior counselors this year was a virtual camper from our branch last year — and she wants to do it again!

At the Sept. 9 General Meeting, the girls were a delight to chat with and hear from, and each one had something different to share. But again and again, they said how grateful they were to have this amazing experience, how much they loved it, how much they learned, what fun they had.

Their thanks to the branch was heartfelt, and hearing their stories reinforced what we

all know: give girls opportunities and they rise to the occasion. Tech Trek is a unique and rare opportunity that has a positive impact not only on the girls but on their futures.

Tech Trek is paid for by each branch. This year costs increased (\$1,200 per girl for in-person camp and \$500 for virtual camp). If you would like to help, donations to AAUW CA Tech Trek are tax deductible. Just make checks out to AAUW CA SPF and write Tech Trek-Sonoma or Virtual/Mid-Peninsula Branch, in the memo line and send it to Kathy Rafael, Tech Trek treasurer.

You can also donate [online](#). Again, for

the camp, choose Sonoma or Virtual.

After four years, I am stepping down as branch coordinator. My fellow coordinators, Barb Haas and Carolyn Seffens, have been terrific to work with and I want to thank them for all they have done. Tech Trek is a project of both head and heart that changes girls' lives. I am honored to have been part of that change.

But never fear, we have three women stepping up to carry on the program for our branch — thanks to Jane Fernald, Sheri Simmons and Barb Haas for taking over. Good luck and keep Trekking!





Lots of fun and laughter was shared by Neighborhood 5 when they got together in August at AutoVino in San Carlos for a unique afternoon! With a glass of wine from Woodside Winery in hand, they wandered through the many antique and exotic cars on display, followed by lunch prepared from an old school bus that had been converted into a working kitchen.



October's General Meeting will be Saturday, Oct. 14, at the Redwood Shores Library. A speaker from San Mateo County schools will discuss equity, social justice and inclusion in our schools. Come at 1:30 p.m. for socializing; the speaker and Q&A will begin at 2 p.m. Save the date!

Lions Club redistributes used eyeglasses to those who really need them

Ruthie Wilkins is collecting used eyeglasses for the Lions Club. They are given to folks who need them throughout the world. The Lions Club provides this service free of charge to the recipients. Leave your donations on the front porch of Ruthie's home.

SC Library is restarting its mystery book club

The San Carlos Library is restarting its Mystery Book Discussion Group that was halted during the Covid pandemic.

The first meeting is Friday, Oct 20, at 10 a.m., and the book is *The Thursday Murder Club*, by Richard Osman.

Interest Sections

Find a section to pique your unique interests

Movie Group

The Movie Group meets on the third Tuesday of each month in the mid- or late afternoon, depending upon the selected film. This is the bargain cost day in local theaters. We attend a movie, usually in Redwood City, occasionally in San Mateo, and then go to a nearby restaurant for dinner. Call or email Susanne Burrill.

Tea Time Fiction Group

Tea Time Fiction Book Discussion Group will continue to meet on the third Thursday of the month from 4-6 p.m. in the Hillsdale Nordstrom restaurant on Nordstrom's third floor. Kathy Rafael and Mikki Coffino are co-leaders so newly interested members can contact either one of us.

French Conversation

We plan to meet on Tuesday, Oct. 10, 1:30 p.m. at Leslie Pasahow's home in Menlo Park. We'll be reading and covering through p. 35 in our book *L'Homme qui plantait . . .* Please let Leslie know if you're coming! Questions? Contact Laverne Rabinowitz.

Team Mah-Jongg

A lively group of members play and continue to learn American Mah-Jongg. We meet Tuesdays and Wednesdays from 10 a.m. to noon at the San Carlos Adult Community Center at 601 Chestnut, San Carlos. Usually, four to six players are able to attend, and we look forward to more joining the group. Periodically, classes are offered for those who are new to the game. For further information, contact Kathy Morrow.

Climate Change

The Climate Change section meets once a month on the fourth Monday from 3:30 -5 p.m. Contact Victoria Kline for meeting details and to RSVP.

Book Bunch

The Book Bunch meets on the third Friday of each month at 10 a.m. The next book choice to be discussed on Friday, Oct. 20, is *The Dictionary of Lost Words* by Pip Williams (hosted by Mirna Hirschl). Please RSVP to Mirna if you plan to attend. Or, contact Carol Orton for more information.

Hilly Hikers

Hilly Hikers will continue to meet on the fourth Friday of the month. Wilma will be back to lead on Oct. 24. If someone from the group would like to nominate and lead the Sept. 22 hike, please contact the others though email. New members wanting to join should either contact a current Hilly Hiker or wait till Wilma is back Oct. 4.

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 3:30 p.m. on the second Thursday. Contact Carole Farina.

Walk/Talk & Gawk

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 Katz is the contact.



Carole Farina hosted the September meeting of the Book Bunch at her Redwood City home. She reports that the group had a rousing discussion of local young author's first publication, *Portrait of a Thief*.

Climate Change

Have you rededicated yourself to climate action?

M.A.D.

Make a Difference

Nature is not a place to visit; it is home.

— Gary Snyder

Have you...

- Changed to LED light bulbs?
- Carpooled?
- Shopped locally?
- Considered an electric appliance to replace a gas appliance?
- Avoided using plastic, such as bottle, bags, etc?
- Composted your kitchen scraps and yard waste?
- Brought your own bags when shopping?
- Been an informed citizen and exercised your vote?
- Changed your home energy source?
- Walked, biked or taken public, transportation?
- Thought about how and whether to travel long distances?
- Changed to an electric or hybrid vehicle?
- Cut back on red meat consumption?
- * Explored a plant based diet?
- * Have you planted native species in your yards?
- * Have you tried to choose products from companies who use resources responsibly?
- * Have you explored whether your investments funds support fossil fuels and deforestation?
- * Explored that your savings are with environmentally sustainable and responsible businesses?



We do not inherit the Earth from our ancestors; we borrow it from our children.

— Native American saying

- Adjusted your thermostat, checked your tire pressure, used less hot water, turned off electrical devices when not being used?
- Planted a tree at home or through an organization?
- Been less wasteful?

Some new 'R's to learn

To Reduce, Recycle and Re-use, add:
 Repair
 Refurbish
 Repurpose

Coastal Clean-up coming

The annual California Coastal Clean up is scheduled for Sept. 23.

Follow this [link](#) to find locations near you, and what to expect.

Please continue to share your ideas. Send us photos of your progress. This is everyone's column.

E-mail either of us with your input.

Elvira Monroe and Theoni Pappas



Ready for a little outdoor exercise before it rains?

It was the Walk/Talk & Gawk group (above) that posed on the Foster City levee after a September walk. On the left, the Hilly Hikers headed off to Pillar Point with a husband in tow! If you're interested in enjoying the great outdoors during the Peninsula's lovely fall weather, call Wilma Hoffman or Stephanie Katz to see which group suits you. (Maybe both!)