

Lots to cheer about at East Palo Alto Academy



By Lois Monroe

Those in attendance at the October General Meeting at the Redwood Shores Library had the opportunity to hear a dynamic and inspiring presentation by Amika Guillaume, principal of the East Palo Alto Academy.

She began her comments discussing DEI, Diversity, Equity and Inclusion. She explained that her family exemplifies diversity as the immigrant child of a Filipina mother and Czech father.

As she discussed each aspect of DEI, she involved the audience in reflection on how they may have experienced each issue in their personal life. She feels that Inclusion is the biggest challenge, and one that youth handle more easily than adults.

She shared the outstanding successes of the East Palo Alto Academy. There were ample statistics to provide proof, including facts like in 2019, 96% of the graduates went to four-year colleges.

The academy has a generous foundation that has raised \$1 million to sponsor programs. She is proud of the fact that EPAA spends \$15,000 per student, well above the California average of \$11,000.

The EPAA goal is to offer the support and tools that enable lives of choice and opportunity through education. Additionally, postsecondary support is available to students as well, which is unusual.

Amika has passion and a vision, and the students at EPAA are indeed fortunate to have her as principal.

Mid-Pen to hear about Hope House in November

By Lois Monroe

In the spirit of Thanksgiving, our Nov. 4 meeting will honor Hope House and its mission at the Redwood City Veterans Memorial Center at 1:30 p.m.

Janice Matre, Hope House program manager, will speak about Hope House and explain the changes that have taken place

in recent years.

She says her favorite quote is by George Eliot. "It's never too late to be who you were meant to be."

She exemplified that idea when she went back to school, College of San Mateo, in her late 50s and completed studies to be a Substance Use Disorder counselor. She did

her practicum hours at Hope House, was hired as a counselor, and 12 years later is the program manager there.

After her update, we will have the opportunity to hear the life experiences of some of the Hope House women. In the past this has been very inspirational.

See HOPE HOUSE, Page 4

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

President's Message



Mid-Pen President Chris Panero traveling in the Italian Dolomites.

Chris is in Europe but still worrying about us

By Chris Panero

Happy Fall! By the time you read this, we will have had our October general meeting with Amika Guillaume, principal of the East Palo Alto Academy, a public charter high school. She is an inspiring figure, and we're fortunate to have had her with us.

As you read this, I'm away on a trip that was delayed by the events of 2020, and am finding that I'm intensely grateful for the support of the board and other branch members who are managing the follow-up for upcoming tasks and events in my absence. I'm impressed with their creativity and persistence.

We have projects that are under way. Last year, with the Betty Torrez Memorial AAUW Scholarship, we were able to give a \$1000 scholarship to Anneka Gomez of Sequoia High School, who is current in her first

year at Arizona State University at Tempe.

This year's scholarship committee (Katherine Linneman, Margot Diltz, Nancy Oliver and Mary Spring) will think through last year's processes and make recommendations for moving forward. Committee members met in September to get started.

Susanne Burrill is working hard to line up times and book wrappers for our annual event at Kepler's Books in Menlo Park.

Recent attacks — both moral and physical — on school boards, as well as book censorship, have me seeing red, and also got the attention of AAUW California leadership. A recent webinar, Book Banning and Curricula Censorship in California, covered AAUW-CA's plans to defend and support state educators.

Individual members have a part to play too. You can download both the presentation

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, Nov. 7, at 10 a.m.; Redwood City Community Activities Building, 1400 Roosevelt, Redwood City.

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

Have any used eyeglasses?

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.

and toolkit [here](#). See the article on this topic by Susan Hall on Page 3 of this Triad.

Short Takes:

- Thank you to Margot Diltz for shaping up this year's 2023-24 Directory, and to Cathy Chowenhill for posting it on our website. You can refer to your paper copy or the online version. Click "Members Only" and enter your password. Notify Margot if you have changes or corrections.

- Have an idea, want to organize a trip, a protest, a rally, visit, or attendance at a performance? Let me know.

- If you enjoyed the film *Oppenheimer*, you might want to read the engrossing non-fiction book, *109 East Palace: Robert Oppenheimer and the Secret City of Los Alamos*, by Jennet Conant.

They're banning books! Why should you care?

By Susan Hall

Remove these books! *Charlotte's Web*, *The Wizard of Oz*, *Animal Farm*, *Lord of the Flies*, *To Kill a Mockingbird*.

Charlotte's Web depicts death and animals speaking when "only human beings should speak!" How about *The Wizard of Oz*? It's obvious all the evil therein, including rampant "socialism," talking animals and strong female characters.

Lord of the Flies shows bullying and violence. And *To Kill a Mockingbird* (the novel chosen as the No. 1 selection of Americans' favorite book) — well, there's a long list of objectionable material therein.

Banned Book Week was Oct. 1-7, but why should you care?

Under the guise of "protecting our children," book-banners are being elected to library and school boards, city councils and county offices. This month, a loud gang of protesters waving flags that purport to represent their moral beliefs, interrupted a school board meeting in San Jose.

Moms for Morality, a national movement to eliminate from public consumption all materials with which they disagree, is organizing school board protests, bringing people who don't live in or have children in the school district. In one instance in a Florida district, one adult was responsible for 70 removed books, none of which the adult had read.

A news report on CBS on Oct. 4 cites Judy Blume, James Patterson and Michael Connelly, along with 24 other writers, who are speaking out against the laws enacted in Florida and other states. According to PEN America, book bans increased by 33% over the last school year.

Laws not only ban books and teaching materials but also create criminal penalties for teachers, librarians, school administrators and bookstore owners for allowing "unacceptable" materials and instruction. In fear of serving jail time, many professionals are "self-banning" materials, removing books and teaching materials to avoid prosecution. These materials sit on shelves waiting for "reviews."



The list is too long to print here, but it is available online on multiple sites. Students will learn in history classes only the bits and pieces that censors allow. They will read sanitized literature that does not depict the broad range of cultural and ethnic diversity in America.

In several states laws have been passed to force schools, publishing companies, books stores and libraries to remove any/all books that have "offensive material." What is that material? Whatever those elected officials don't want students to learn about.

"Protecting our children!" is the universal outcry from those who will take over our country with oppressive laws that force one set of people's beliefs on the entire populace —even though current polls indicate that 70% of Americans oppose these bans. The Statue of Liberty welcome — "Give us your tired, your poor, your huddled masses yearning to breathe free" — will need the additional line "as long as you submit to authoritarian control of your human rights."

Wanted: One evening of your time to get to know your school boards

By Carole Farina

Attend a school board meeting in your district and fill out a checklist to give us feedback. Some meetings are both in person and by Zoom which makes it easy.

As an example, take a look at the Sequoia Union High School District School Board [website](#), or the San Carlos District [site](#). You will find the agenda, date, location or Zoom link and more.

Sit in on one of the elementary/middle school or high school district meetings.

Why? We want fact-based, comprehensive, inclusive curriculum for our students. Let's limit the influence of extreme views

on school policies.

AAUW CA sees the rise of organized groups who seek to undermine children's education. CA Public Policy has developed a checklist to help us assess each board and gives advice about being aware of what is happening in our own communities.

A first step is to know your school board.

To know the problem and solutions, view the Curriculum Censorship webinar and toolbox [here](#). The video can also be seen [here](#).

Contact Carole Farina or Susan Hall to volunteer.

Tech Trek alumna featured in LA Times article on CalTech

By Chris Panero

Did you know that more than one-third of U.S. secondary schools do not teach courses, such as physics, chemistry, or calculus, that are required for entry into STEM courses in some colleges?

Kimberly Miranda, a 2016 Tech Trek alumna from Redwood City (Sequoia High School '21), is helping her college, CalTech, to develop a work-around that allows mastery outside of the high school system.

Applicants that lack prerequisites can take courses offered by Kahn Academy or take the AP or IB exams after some other



type of self-study.

Miranda was interviewed recently by the Los Angeles Times, which reported that “Caltech undergraduates took the courses to assess whether all concepts were covered in enough breadth and depth to pass the campus placement exams in those subjects.

“Miranda, a rising Caltech junior studying mechanical engineering, took the calculus course and gave it a thumbs-up, although she added that students would probably want to use additional textbooks and other study materials to deepen their preparation for Caltech.”

Miranda had high praise for her Tech Trek experience, saying, “Tech Trek was really such an influential and memorable experience, so much so that I even talked about Tech Trek a few times in my Caltech application.

“A few weeks ago, we had a women-in-STEM program here at Caltech for high schoolers, and I was constantly thinking about Tech Trek and the impact it had on me as a young girl.

“You truly expanded my horizons, exposing me to so much science and tech that I had no clue existed.

“Not just that but then you filled me with the motivation to pursue what was once unimaginable to me. I’m so forever thankful for the experience you gave me!”



Janice Matre

Hope House Continued from Page One

Matre says her work is very challenging but that she feels she has made a difference.

We can make a difference, and express our sincere thanks, by donating needed items from the Hope House Wish List: underwear, sports bras, leggings, sweatpants and sweat-shirts in assorted sizes (although there’s a current need for XL-XXXL.

Amazon and Target gift cards are always welcome as well.

Bring your donations for Hope House to the meeting. Our branch has always been supportive of Hope House, so we hope we can give generously and show support once again.

The program will be held in the Sunset Room at the Redwood City Veterans Memorial Center, 1455 Madison Ave., Redwood City.

Mid-Pen member Clare Gardella has died at 91

By Lois Monroe and Marge Haruff

Longtime Mid-Pen member Clare Gardella, who died Sept. 30 at the age of 91, was a very accomplished woman. She lived in San Carlos for many years with her husband, Rich, and three daughters.

Among her successes was touching the lives of many children through teaching with the San Mateo County Special Education Program.

With an extensive travel background, she provided trip arrangements for many who used her services as a travel agent.

She also donated her time and leadership skills by guiding volunteers at Filoli as president.

She was involved in the early stages of the Villages of San Mateo County, and added to members’ enjoyment by planning day excursions to places of interest.

She exhibited similar talent by organizing Thursday matinee trips to the San Francisco Symphony, touring unique spots and lunching together before the concert.

With our branch, she was Fund chair and coordinated informative and well-attended Fund dinners. Her home on the hill, with its very beautiful views, rivaled the delicious, gourmet, multicourse holiday dinners served to members lucky enough to be in Neighborhood 4.

No services are planned.

Time to sign up for gift-wrapping

By Susanne Burrill

This year our Book Wrapping Fundraiser is scheduled for Dec. 14-23 at Kepler’s Books in Menlo Park, where we have participated for many years.

The hours run from 11 a.m. until 7 p.m., and we work in two-hour time slots. They are 11-1, 1-3, 3-5, and 5-7. Each slot is staffed by two volunteers.

This project has been an annual success because of the seasonal service we provide and the fun spirit we derive and share from our involvement.

The tips that we receive are our fundraiser. You will enjoy being involved!

A sign-up sheet will be available at General Meetings, and you should feel free to call me with your availability.

Public Policy

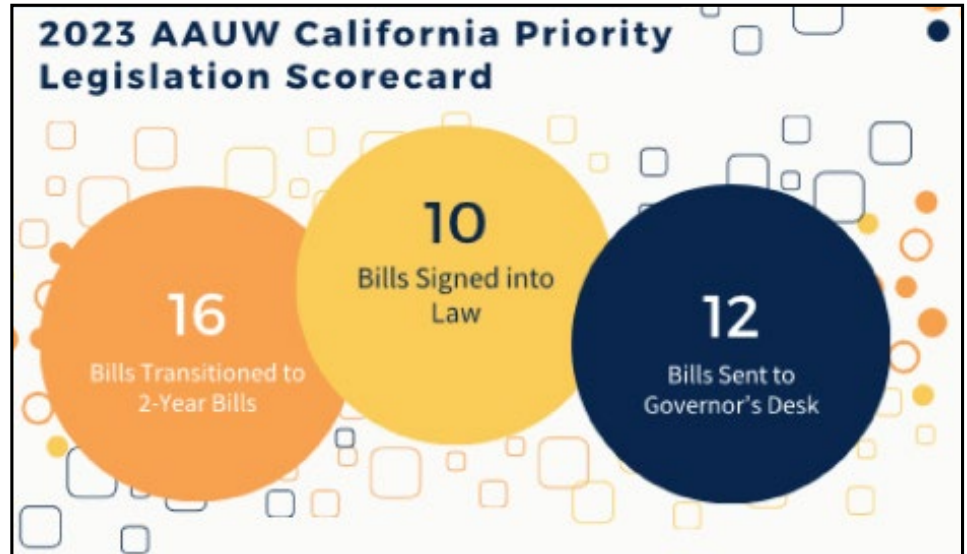
So how did AAUW-CA bills do this session?

By Amy Hom and Missy Maceyko, Co-Chairs, CA State Public Policy Committee

Sept. 14 was a tense day in Sacramento: the last day for each House to pass bills that could be sent on to the governor. After at least nine months of writing, researching, amending and lobbying, the legislative session drew to a close.

So how did AAUW California's priority legislation fare?

While, at the time of writing, AAUW California still has some priority legislation sitting on the governor's desk (he had until Oct. 14 to sign), we are happy to report that our priority bills did pretty well in this cycle!



Priority legislation

Note that legislation listed as a "two-year bill" will be reconsidered in the 2024 legislative cycle.

A-level bills

Our three A-level bills this year were AB 1394, AB 549, and SB 680. AAUW California was also a co-sponsor on AB 1394. While none of our A-level bills have yet been signed into law, AB 1394 is currently sitting on the governor's desk awaiting a signature.

AB 549 and SB 680 have both been transformed into two-year bills.

AB 1394. Sent to governor's desk. Authored by Assemblymember Buffy Wicks, and co-sponsored by AAUW California, this bill seeks to help child sex abuse survivors remove their images from social media platforms.

AB 549. Two-year bill. Authored by Assemblymember Lori Wilson. This bill would require all state agencies to conduct an evaluation of their own departments to ensure that the state does not discriminate against women through the allocation of funding and the delivery of services.

SB 680. Two-Year Bill. Authored by Sen. Nancy Skinner, this bill prohibits a social media platform from using a design, algorithm, or feature that the platform knows, or should have known, causes child

users to experience addiction to the social media platform.

B-level bills

Our four B-level bills this year were AB 524, AB 1071, AB 1078, and SB 36. AAUW California added AB 1078 later in the session at the request of the School Board Project Subcommittee, as it deals with preserving historically accurate and representative curricula for public schools in California.

We are excited to report that two of our B-level bills have been signed into law: AB 1071 and AB 1078. AB 524 is still sitting on the governor's desk, and SB 36 has been transformed into a two-year bill.

AB 524. On governor's desk. Authored by Assemblymember Buffy Wicks, this bill would prohibit discrimination against employees based on their status as a family caregiver.

AB 1071. Signed into Law! Authored by Assemblymember Joshua Hoover, this bill would authorize and encourage school districts, county offices of education, and charter schools to provide teen dating violence prevention education to all pupils in grades 7-12, and make TDV resources available on its website.

AB 1078. Signed into Law! Authored

by Assemblymember Dr. Corey Jackson, this bill expands the diversity of the social science curriculum, requiring instruction in social sciences to include a study of the role and contributions of people of all genders, Latino Americans, LGBTQ+ Americans, and other ethnic cultural, religious and socioeconomic status groups.

If the school district has not provided sufficient textbooks or instructional materials, their local control funding formula allocation will be reduced.

SB 36. Two-Year Bill. Authored by Sen. Nancy Skinner, this bill provides protections and support for any person fleeing prosecution, conviction or sentence from another state for seeking abortion, contraception, reproductive care, or seeking gender-affirming care in California. It also provides protections for any person assisting the person seeking that care.

For additional details about the bills that we supported at the C-level, or bills at any level, as well as access to the most current information, check out our bill tracker [here](#).

And if you would like to sign up for action alerts for AAUW California's Priority Legislation in 2024, you can sign up [here](#).

Note that the request to sign up for Action Alerts is for CA legislation as opposed to Two-Minute Activist run by AAUW National for federal bills.

Interest Sections

Join the Hilly Hikers to burn off holiday calories

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

Bonjour! We meet next at 1:30 p.m. on Tuesday, Nov. 14. If you'd like more information, please get in touch with Laverne Rabinowitz (Lrainbow24@yahoo.com). À bientôt!

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, Nov. 17, is *Mad Honey* by Jodi Picoult, hosted by Barb Finnegan. Please RSVP to Barb if you plan to attend or contact Carol Orton for more information.

Hilly Hikers

Hilly Hikers have changed their meeting date to the fourth Tuesday of the month. We will hike Nov. 28 to try to burn off some of the Thanksgiving calories! People wishing to join us should contact Wilma. Notifications with details will be sent as usual.

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.



All About Food group samples finds from international markets at Susanne Burrill's home while enjoying the sunset.

Climate Change

Fossil fuel industry settling in for the long haul

M.A.D.

Make a Difference

Studies show that climate anxiety and grief are on the rise. It is natural to feel resignation, fear and hopelessness. It's important to share our shattered hearts with those we trust. Yet we can't let these feelings drain our power to work for change. Environmentalists are not 'perennial profits of doom.' We simply know that taking on climate crisis is nowhere near as daunting as the project of failure.

—Shelley Silbert

Are we being hoodwinked?

Fossil fuels aren't going anywhere (by David Gelles of the NYTimes Oct.13.)

"It wasn't long ago that big fossil fuel companies were making bold claims about their plans to embrace a low-carbon future. Yet over the past year, many of those companies have walked back those commitments as they reaped outsized profits and made ambitious plans to expand their production of oil and gas... On Wednesday, Exxon Mobil signed a \$60 billion deal to buy Pioneer Natural Resources, a company that made its fortune through fracking. . .

"Exxon Mobil chief executive Darren Woods on CNBC explained, 'As the world looks to transition and find lower sources of affordable energy with lower emissions, fossil fuels, oil and gas are going to continue to play a role over time. That may diminish with time. The rate of that is, I think, not very clear at this stage. But it will be around for a long time.'

"Hundreds of new oil and gas projects have been approved in the past year. In the United States, that includes headline-grabbing new projects like the Willow development in Alaska and the Mountain Valley Pipeline in West Virginia. In places like Qatar, Norway, Brazil, China and India, new oil, gas and coal projects are getting approved practically every week."

"Fossil fuel companies are looking to technology to deal with carbon emissions, but as of yet no technology has emerged to offset the volume of mega emissions coming from fossil fuels. In addition, there is no carbon emissions tax in place to deter fossil fuel companies from expanding.

Al Gore points out that "everywhere you look in the world, the extremes have



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now seemingly reached a new level. The temperatures in the North Atlantic and the unprecedented decline of the Antarctic sea ice, both simultaneously. We see it in upstate New York, we see it in Vermont, we see it in southern Japan, we see it in India. We see it in the unprecedented drought in Uruguay and in Argentina.

"Every night on the TV news is like taking a nature hike through the Book of Revelation. Eighty percent of all the energy used in the world today still comes from fossil fuels."

"Fossil fuel companies are desperately trying to use their political and economic networks and their successful capture of policy in too many countries to slow down this transition. They don't disclose their emissions. They don't have any phase-

out plan. They're not committed to a real net zero pathway. They're greenwashing. They're performing anti-climate plotting."

What can we do?

We've got the power! Citizens can shift what we buy and how we invest, voting with our dollars. We can change how we engage politically, voting with our voices and at the ballot box.

—Shelley Silbert

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