

## What's in a name? Going to the mat in the battle over pronouns, titles

By Susan Hall

AAUW has a long history of fighting for equality as members realized that equality for women benefitted men and their families as well.

Not so long ago married women took their husband's last names, and in written documents were referred to by Mrs. John Smith, a time in most of our memories: the choice was Miss or Mrs. In the 1960s and beyond Ms. became accepted in most places, but with confusion about its meaning: a single woman never married? a "modern woman" rejecting Mrs.?

In November a woman teacher in Florida was fired for using Mx. She was told that only Miss or Mrs. was now acceptable for women. The pronoun wars have become heated as part of a larger movement to define people by the sexual identity on their birth certificates. We regularly receive documents with writers identifying their "preferred pronouns," the ones by which they desire to be called. These might be adults or children, in school or in the working world.

Using the plurals "they," "them" "their" seems awkward in the ears of the older generation who does not expect one person (singular) to use a plural pronoun. Current journalists often find themselves using singular pronouns for some and plural pronouns for others in the same article.

Yes, our world is changing, just as it did when women were given the right to vote, could finally apply for credit in their own names, could be Miss or Mrs. or Mrs. or even Mx.

AAUW is a "big tent" for everyone, and we will find ways to accommodate titles and pronouns in an increasingly complex world.



## Mid-Pen gathers to hear about the successes, plans of Hope House

By Bernie Mellott

Thank you to all who came to hear about the changes and positive things that are happening at Hope House at the Nov. 4 General Meeting. It was an afternoon of hearing and learning, not only from the Program Manager Janice Matre, but also from a young woman living as a resident, and an alumna, who is now a paid intern going for her degree in counseling. The afternoon was full of sharing, empathy and gratitude during this time of giving. The speakers were so excited with all the clothes, gift cards and checks they received. You were all so generous!

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

## President's Message

# Pick out your favorite Fund scholar for a Mid-Pen speaker

By Chris Panero

Ahh, Thanksgiving, my favorite holiday. It's a time to enjoy my friends and family while reflecting on all the things for which I am grateful.

Bernie Mellott said it well in her introduction to our Hope House speakers at our November general meeting, as she reminded us of our gratitude for the privilege of helping others.

In the wider world, AAUW and our branch are also a force: Think about how your AAUW Fund donations are changing the world as you explore the amazing adventures of the 2023 AAUW Fund scholars.

This year, each Fund scholar recorded a brief demo and explanation of their field of study. Take a look at some or all of the videos, and notify me and Jeanne George,



Chris Panero

the AAUW Fund chair, of which speaker(s) you'd like us to consider for our April meeting.

See each of the presentations [here](#). Scroll down to the bottom of the web page and see their photos and a brief description of their field of study.

Fund scholars and other AAUW beneficiaries are supported by your donations, particularly those donations given to the Greatest Needs fund. All donations are tax deductible.

## Short Takes

• Our local AAUW Interbranch Council (IBC) met recently via Zoom. At the meeting, San Mateo County branch presidents report on our successes and compare ideas. As always, I left feeling good about all our branch's activity level and accomplishments. The most popular activity is Tech Trek. Every local branch participates.

• Looking for a romantic movie? Consider *Cyrano*, with Peter Dinklage, available to stream on Prime Video and Apple TV.

• Did you know the San Francisco Bay Bridge has its very own troll? Read or listen to KQED's tale [here](#).

## 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, Dec. 5, at 10 a.m.; Redwood City Community Activities Building, 1400 Roosevelt, Redwood City.

**Triad Deadline for February 2024** will be Jan. 15. Please send articles in Word, Pages or Google docs and photos (separately, not embedded) as large-format JPEGs to Micki Carter.

## Say 'Yes' to leadership!

Our Nominating Committee will be convening soon. When they call you about filling an elected or appointed position for 2024-25, please, please accept!

Our branch has many people who have filled positions before and who will be glad to help. Without leadership, our branch does not function. Please say YES!

# With parity achieved, WIRE for Women closes

Dear WIRE for Women members,

As the Founder of WIRE, I am writing you to bring you up to date with the organization. In 2020, San Mateo and Santa Cruz counties achieved gender parity in non-partisan elected offices.

At that time the Board of Directors of WIRE determined that the "all volunteer" model of WIRE was not sustainable and therefore sought to merge WIRE with another organization that could continue WIRE's mission and activities.

After a long and earnest effort it was determined that a merger was not possible.

Christina Laskowski, a member of the WIRE board, deserves a great deal of credit

for all her time and effort both to complete the necessary legal work to officially close down WIRE and also to attempt to identify a merger opportunity.

And special thanks go to Allene Zanger and Kathy Anderson, both of whom served so ably as president as well as those of you who served on the board of directors.

Together we accomplished something about which we can be very proud. The women candidates who used WIRE's services were very appreciative of the organization and of course, we applaud them for running — winners and losers.

And lastly, to all of you members who supported WIRE, a big thank you. I am

confident that you will continue to encourage and assist women who choose to run for office in the future.

Progress in politics is often slow, but with WIRE we confirmed that together we can all make a difference.

I send my best regards and extreme gratitude to you all,

Carol Mayer Marshall

Founder, WIRE for Women

PS. For those of you who donated to WIRE, we are returning the remaining funds to each of you in the percentage of your initial donation.

# How to donate from your IRA to AAUW-National

Thinking of making a year-end contribution to AAUW from your IRA?

If you are older than 70 1/2, federal law allows you to make direct transfers up to \$100,000 per year per person to charitable organizations from your IRA, without the withdrawal being treated as taxable income.

To start, first contact your IRA custodian and follow their procedures to request a "Qualified Charitable Distribution."

The check sent must be accompanied by your name and address information in order for you to receive a written acknowledgment from AAUW-National.

Provide the recipient information below to your custodian, along with AAUW's Tax ID #52-6037388.

Before sending, please also notify us at [planned-giving@aauw.org](mailto:planned-giving@aauw.org) so we can keep an eye out for your gift. Be sure to include

the amount, your name, address, the designation of your gift (for example: Greatest Needs), and the financial institution sending your gift.

Please direct your check, drawn on your IRA account and made payable to AAUW, to: AAUW, Attn: Planned Giving—IRA Distribution, 1310 L St. N.W., Suite 1000, Washington, D.C., 20005.

## Goldin wins Nobel for AAUW-aligned research

By Nancy Major

One of AAUW California's Public Policy Priorities is to promote women in leadership positions, so it is a pleasure to report that Claudia Goldin, 77, is the first woman to win the Nobel Prize in economics without men as collaborators and the third woman to win overall.

She was also the first woman to be offered tenure in Harvard's economics department, in 1989.

Dr. Goldin's Nobel-winning study focuses on causes of the gender wage gap, the evolution of women's participation in the job market over the past 200 years, and the implications for the future of the labor force.

In a paper in the National Bureau of Economic Research, Goldin writes that, "the golden era of American women's rights lasted from 1963 to 1973."

Of the 155 important moments for advancement of women, 45% took place in those years during which women changed from having jobs to pursuing careers. This one factor is "among the grandest advances in society," according to Dr. Goldin.

However, her work also focuses on what we still have to do to continue to advance.

Another AAUW Public Policy Priority is economic security for all women including equity in the workplace, enforcement of workplace anti-discrimination statutes, access to job training for career development, and work-life balance, including access to quality affordable childcare and paid sick and care-giving leave.

These are exactly the factors studied by Dr. Goldin to understand why U.S. women earn 80 cents for every dollar a man makes, why men's wages are higher than women's in the same occupation, and why women lag



**Claudia Goldin**

behind men in the top jobs.

"Women are now more educated than men," Goldin told the Associated Press. "They graduate from college at much higher rates than men. They do better in high school than men do. So why are there these differences?"

In the first half of the 20th century, laws limited women's ability to work when mar-

ried or pregnant. In the second half of the century, birth control, later marriages and education resulted in substantial progress for women in the labor market.

However, a gender gap persists into the present day — a gap that is compounded by additional factors, such as class, race, ethnicity, and ability.

Dr. Goldin's research shows that, when gender is the primary factor for consideration, parenthood and lack of child care are the main factors contributing to the ongoing pay gap. As women are normally expected to shoulder caregiving responsibilities in the home, this pay gap begins a year or two after a woman's first child is born.

And yet, since the Comprehensive Child Development Act was vetoed by President Nixon in 1971, an act which would have created a national day care program, consistent and affordable access to quality child care options remains elusive for most American families.

While Goldin's research is not focused on solutions to entrenched problems related to gender and labor, other economists note the importance of her work for better understanding these issues, which is a critical step for creating meaningful social and legal change.

## Neighborhoods set dates for holiday gatherings

By Carolyn Seffens

The holiday season is fast approaching. A big thank you to our neighborhood chairs for planning our holiday parties.

Neighborhoods 1 and 2 will meet for lunch at Donato Enoteca restaurant on Jan. 6.

Neighborhoods 3 and 5 will be having a potluck dinner at Sally Mellinger's home

on Dec. 6.

Neighborhood 4 will be dining at the home of Barbara Haas on Dec. 13.

Neighborhoods 7 and 10 will go for lunch at a local restaurant in January.

Neighborhood 8 is planning to have lunch at Kabul restaurant on Dec. 6.

## Public Policy

# California law now prohibits book banning

By Kathi Harper,  
Chair Public Policy  
School Board Project

On Sept.25, Gov.New-som signed AB1078 into law, officially preventing school districts from banning books and censoring curriculum based on the materials' depiction of inclusive and diverse perspectives.

Specifically, the new law reaffirms, in the introduction, that:

- California supports accurate and inclusive education;
- the California Constitution guarantees pupils equal protection under the law;
- California schools have an obligation to combat bias against pupils within their schools;
- and accurate and inclusive education are essential to ensure the educational success of all pupils

It also requires the Department of Education to develop guidance and public educational materials to ensure that all Californians can access information about educational laws and policies that safeguard the right to an accurate and inclusive curriculum.

In addition it requires all school districts to have sufficient instructional materials for all students that align with approved content standards

It adds to the list of included topics in social sciences textbooks: the role and contributions of people of all genders, Latino Americans, LGBTQ+ Americans, and members of other ethnic, cultural, religious

and socioeconomic status groups

It reduces a school district's funding formula allocation if the district does not provide sufficient instructional materials pursuant to these provisions

It prohibits governing members of school districts from refusing to approve or

prohibiting the use of any book or instructional material on the basis that it contains inclusive and diverse perspectives.

It is not certain at this point how school districts will respond to the new law. We anticipate that most will comply, but suspect there are some that will not.

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# Public Policy News

A monthly dispatch from the AAUW California Public Policy Team

**WHERE IS THAT?**  
Find All Things Public Policy

Key links to your public policy resources:

- [Google Workspace](#)
- [AAUW Policy Leaders Manual from National](#)
- [Branch liaisons](#)
- Contact us at [publicpolicy@aauw-ca.org](mailto:publicpolicy@aauw-ca.org)

If you missed the last meeting on October 4, check out the [recording](#) and [slides](#).

To cut-and-paste the URLs in this issue, including those for text-based copies of the newsletter articles, go to page 6.

**WHAT IS THAT?**  
Promote Young Women's Leadership Development Through Gov Trek 2024

After a successful first year, Gov Trek is entering its second season. If you missed it last year--Gov Trek is a virtual program for high school junior and senior girls designed address the paucity of women in the halls of power and help young women consider careers in public service and elected office. The program is conducted online in seven two-hour Saturday sessions, each with a different focus related to political campaigning and pursuing a career in politics or public service. Learn more about the program and how to promote it [HERE](#).

**CA LEGISLATION**  
Final Scorecard - 2023 Legislative Session

Since our last newsletter, the 2023 legislative session wrapped up with the Governor signing several more of our supported bills. Read on to access a visual scorecard of our successes (on pages 2-3)!

**SAVE THE DATE!**  
Wednesday 12/06 @ 2pm PT  
Virtual Meeting

Second bimonthly meeting for branch public policy chairs. Amy and Missy will provide updates and branches will have the opportunity to share ideas. Click [HERE](#) for meeting information.

**TO DO:**

- Sign up for CA legislative Action Alerts [HERE](#).
- Please share the action alert sign-up link with anyone who you think may be interested--share within your branch, to friends and family, or to the general public through your social media networks. You can find a copy-and-paste shareable link on page 6.

**BILL TRACKER**

## Interest Sections

# Ready for movies again? Join the Movie Group

### 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 at 1:30 p.m. on the second Tuesday of the month. 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, Dec. 15, is *Afterlife* by Julia Alvarez (hosted by Katherine Linneman). Please RSVP to Katherine if you plan to attend. Or contact Carol Orton for more information.

### Hilly Hikers

Not surprisingly, the energetic Hilly Hikers keep having conflicts – they travel, often overseas but also to visit families within the U.S. Hence dates/days might vary. Make sure Wilma Hoffmann has your contact info to be kept in the loop. With the coming rain, the parks should be gorgeous in a few weeks, even if a bit muddy!

### 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.



The Climate Change Section gathered to hear Elaine Salinger of the Citizen Lobby Group, a non-partisan Climate Change organization in the Bay Area, who introduced us to En-ROADS, a website created by MIT, that can show a simulation comparing climate actions and solutions. This tool provides data to pass on to our legislators about the impact of climate change. Salinger also provided us with resources for communicating with legislators, corporations and educators. The presentation provoked a very lively discussion that will continue into November's meeting to determine what Action Plans we will focus on for 2024.

## Climate Change

### M.A.D. Make a Difference

“Governments are literally doubling down on fossil fuel production; that spells double trouble for people and planet. ... We cannot address climate catastrophe without tackling its root cause: fossil fuel dependence.”

**António Guterres,**  
United Nations secretary general



#### Look for 28COP UAE

The 28th annual United Nations Climate Change Conference, aka Conference of the Parties (COP28,) will be hosted by the United Arab Emirates in Dubai Nov. 30-Dec.12, hence its name 28COP UAE. It will provide a milestone opportunity for the world to come together, course correct, and drive progress to keep 1.5 Celsius within reach ... [and] meet the goals and ambitions of the Paris Agreement.

Will countries, their governments and businesses make serious commitments and take steps to limit the global temperature to 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels?

Will they commit to curbing and discouraging fossil fuel production? If present day actions continue, the outlook remains grim. A recent United Nations report shows that coal, oil and gas production continue to grow.

Unfortunately, many countries are actually boosting their fossil fuel production. These include:

- The United States' Willow Project will extract 600 million barrels of oil.
- Brazil's oil production will increase by



63 percent, with plans to more than double its gas output in the next decade.

- India's coal production will more than double is by 2030.

- In the next 12 years, Canada's 2050 net-zero law will allow its oil production to increase by 25%.

- Saudi Arabia and Russia intend to continue their production of fossil fuels, while other countries they supply seek alternative clean energies.

- Colombia banned all new oil drilling in January, but it continues to struggle with the transition.

- China, the UK, Germany, and Norway, intend to reduce fossil fuel energy production by 2030, But:

- China will continue to have the biggest emissions from its imports of oil, gas and coal from elsewhere.

- Although Norway has phased out its country's use of fossil fuels, it will continue to export oil and gas, and contends it will stop exporting when demand ceases.

- Although the UK has cut its emissions by 46% since the 1990 levels, it will grant new oil and gas licenses in the North Sea.

#### What does this add up to?

The 28COP UAE conference has its worked cut our for it!

Rather than curtailing fossil fuel production, countries and oil companies are ramping up production to take advantage of sales. Production needs to slow down, and politics and greed must take a back seat to reversing climate change.

#### What will it take to do right?

Your efforts, conscience, and a realistic carbon emission tax to break the onslaught of production.

#### Are they waiting to make more money before taking action?

Science and our own experiences tells us what lies ahead if concrete commitments are not made. More intense droughts, water scarcity, severe fires, rising sea levels, melting polar ice, catastrophic storms, declining biodiversity, global temperature increases, pest, invasive species, new pathogens and infections Soon we may see climate refugees!

#### Will we have to wait until demand decreases before supply slows down? Will that be too late?

It takes millions of voices, including yours.

There are those who say that efforts to rid fossil fuels override everything. Yes, the mining for oil, gas and coal must be drastically reduced, but we must continue to make changes in our lives that contribute to the fight for climate change.

We need to feel engaged!

When we write our legislators about fossil fuels, we need to also emphasize our commitment and what we are doing. Millions of voices can take the politics of greed and business interests out of fossil fuel and climate change.

There has never been a more important time when every voice needed to be raised.

Let's lobby our elected officials, but let's also continue to plant gardens, change light bulbs, conserve water. Let's rededicate ourselves to the changes we can make as individuals.



**“Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it's the only thing that ever has.”**

#### Anthropologist Margaret Mead

Please continue to share your ideas, or contact us with any questions. This is everyone's column.

E-mail either of us with your input.

**Elvira Monroe and Theoni Pappas**