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CORRECTION: The date for the DEI webinar on Mary Church Terrell is incorrect. It is scheduled for Sunday, Feb. 4th, not Feb. 24th.
January 2024

The holiday season has come and gone, and it is time to think about the task of finding your next board. One suggestion you might consider is getting the past five or six years of new members together for an informal discussion about how they can offer their skills and talents to help the branch. Fresh eyes and minds can often give energy to established programs and tasks.

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As Sandi Sees It

Sandi Gabe, President, AAUW California, statepresident@aauw-ca.org

WELCOME TO 2024!

Are you a list maker? I am. I have a love-hate relationship with them. While they guide me, they can also frustrate me when I feel like I'm not making much progress. But ultimately, they help me stay on top of things. Low tech? High tech? No matter what your style is, they work.

In December I polished off several different personal lists: shopping lists, baking lists, gift lists, and travel lists. I'll bet you did too.

January is a great time to take a pause and see how you're doing – both personally and professionally . . . and to give thanks to those who've helped you check things off your list. Remember that our volunteers want to be acknowledged and rewarded. So, if you didn't have that on your 2023 list, now's a good time to add it to your 2024 list.

Jump-start your 2024 list with these AAUW ideas:

- Get involved with your [peer group](#). Most groups meet monthly.
- Join [Lobby Days](#) and engage your local legislators.

- Attend the Annual Meeting on Saturday, April 27th. Missing the experience of the in-person events of the past? Have a watch party with your branch members. The theme hasn't been announced yet.
- [Nominate](#) a branch member as a state or branch-named gift honoree.
- Share your passion for AAUW by [applying](#) to be on the board.
- Thank your volunteers for their hard work.

Let me share a little secret with you. Sometimes I create a list of things I've done just so I can cross things off and feel a sense of accomplishment. It works to get me motivated!

Committee News

AAUW FUND [TOP](#)

Karen Vanderwerken, AAUW Fund Committee chair, aauwfund@aauw-ca.org

NOMINATE YOUR BRANCH AND STATE NAMED GIFT HONOREES. IT IS EASY.

Soon it will be time to recognize branch members for their outstanding service to AAUW.

Nominations for State Named Gift Honoree:

This award is given to an AAUW member who has done outstanding work to promote the programs and goals of AAUW Fund and/or AAUW California. Please submit only one nomination per branch.

Nominees should have proven leadership beyond their local branches at the inter-branch council and/or state levels. Substantial length of AAUW service and community volunteering is required.

(Current State Directors and State Leadership Team Members are ineligible.)

This form is due March 1st. Click [HERE](#) for the application.

Nomination for Branch Named Gift Honoree:

Every year the AAUW California Fund Committee honors AAUW California members who have done outstanding work in supporting the programs and goals of AAUW Fund and/or AAUW California. For branches, in particular, a Named Gift is a special way to pay tribute to an individual, a group, or an organization giving extraordinary service to AAUW.

Branches can nominate a Named Gift Honoree for each \$750 contributed to AAUW Fund by the branch or branch members on or before December 31st. However, limiting the number of nominees adds to the prestige of the award.

The form is due March 31st. Click [HERE](#) for the application.

Our Next Fund Peer Group Meeting:

It will be Thursday, February 8th, at 7 pm. Watch for the link to register.

Your continued efforts to fund AAUW are vital to our mission. Thank you!

What I need to know: It's time to begin thinking about nominations for State Named Gift Honoree and Branch Named Gift Honoree.

What I need to do: Review the requirements and applications and consider possible nominees to submit by the March deadlines.

Should I include this in my branch newsletter? Yes, you may wish to solicit ideas for nominees from your branch members.

BRANCH DEVELOPMENT [TOP](#)

Sharyn Siebert, Director, Branch Support branch@aauw-ca.org

Sigrid Moranz, Director, Leadership, leader-dev@aauw-ca.org

Marsha Swails, Director, Membership, membership@aauw-ca.org

LEADERS ON THE GO?

Does your branch, district, or Interbranch Council (IBC) need a speaker for an upcoming meeting? Board training? Membership attraction? Community involvement? Or????

AAUW California has a treasure trove of experienced and enthusiastic leaders who can speak on many subjects. All you have to do is ask. There will, of course, be paperwork (request and evaluation forms), a timeline (60 days), and requirements (you pay for any mileage, the speaker's meals, and an overnight stay if appropriate – this can usually be with a branch member host). Alternatively, most speakers are also available to join you through Zoom.

Click [HERE](#) to find the Leader on Loan (LOL) program. You can also find it by going to [Branch Tools](#), or by contacting the LOL representative, Carol Holzgrafe, at lol@aauw-ca.org.

The Leader on Loan program does not include AAUW Fellows. For those remarkable speakers, complete a request form [HERE](#). Kathryn Brown, our AAUW California Scheduler, will contact you about scheduling a speaker.

Branch Development Peer Group Meetings

Click [HERE](#) to register for our next Branch Development Peer Group meeting on Tuesday, January 23rd at 7 pm. If you missed any of the past Branch Development Peer Group meetings click [HERE](#) to go to the Peer Group page then scroll down to Branch Development to find links to the recordings.

What I need to know: The Leader on Loan program is now accepting requests for speakers to share their expertise on various AAUW subjects with branches or IBCs.

What I need to do: Complete a request form if you are seeking a speaker.

Should I include this in my branch newsletter? No, this information is for branch leaders only.

COMMUNICATIONS [TOP](#)

Dawn Johnson, Director, Communication Committee chair, communications@aauw-ca.org

EMAILS, OH EMAILS! WHERE ARE YOU????

Yes, we know. Some of you have not been receiving emails from AAUW California. When we launched our new Branch Officer Reporting System in June, we also changed the way our monthly *Board to Board* (B2B) and group messages are delivered. For the past several months we've fine-tuned and tweaked the system. In December we invested in upgrading to a dedicated IP address and that seems to have solved the problem. Since we made that change, very few messages have been undeliverable.

If you still can't find an email that you're expecting, please check your spam or junk folder. Way back in 2013 Gmail introduced new tabs such as *promotions* and *social* in your inbox to help organize your email. Sometimes our emails go there if you haven't disabled those folders. You can remove them following these simple YouTube [instructions](#).

WEBSITE EVOLUTION

Nothing stays the same for long, including our website. We're continually updating both the content and layout to give you a better experience and to help you find things. The [Branch Tools](#) and [AAUW California Business](#) pages have been given facelifts. Information has been reorganized and categorized. It's still a work in progress, but you'll be amazed at how much easier it is to find things. You'll find peer groups on the branch tools page.

B2B Bonus: Quick Tips for Things to Try

Still can't find what you're looking for? The website has a robust search function. Find the little magnifying glass next to the Facebook icon at the top of every page. Click on it, type your search term, and press Enter. You'll receive a list of options. If you don't see the topic you're looking for, try again using a less specific term.

What I need to know: AAUW California has taken steps to reduce the number of undeliverable emails. Several useful pages on the website have been reorganized and updated.

What I need to do: Monitor your email and review your settings to be sure you are receiving state communications. Additional instructions were provided in the [December 2023 B2B](#).

Should I include this in my branch newsletter? Yes, advise your members to update their email settings to avoid missing state communications and suggest they visit the updated website pages.

DIVERSITY, EQUITY & INCLUSION [TOP](#)

Charmen Goehring, Director, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion, diversity@aauw-ca.org

DO NEW YEAR'S RESOLUTIONS EVER WORK?

AAUW, including AAUW California, is striving for a culture of inclusiveness. This is one resolution that I hope all state and branch leaders will commit to working toward in earnest. We all want our branches to grow and prosper!

During the November branch DEI Peer Group chat, we talked about doing an informal [environmental scan](#) of our own branches. This can be done either by the DEI branch coordinator or with a group of members. The National DEI tool kit has an [Organizational Inclusiveness Stages handout](#) that is a great starting place. It will help branch members understand what an open, inclusive organizational culture looks like vs. a closed, exclusive culture. The next activity on the website is to examine our [current progress](#) in the areas of recruitment, retention, programming, leadership development, communication, and planning and decision-making. Please feel free to reach out to Charmen with questions and the results of your branch environmental scan.

Our next peer group chat will be Tuesday, January 16th, at 5:30 pm when we will talk more about how to conduct an environmental scan. We hope you will join us in examining how we are doing in our branches and in setting goals to help us move forward in becoming a more inclusive organization.

LEARN ABOUT A WOMAN WHO CHANGED THE FACE OF AAUW!

Join us via Zoom on Sunday, **February 4th**, at 3 pm to hear about Black activist Mary Church Terrell, her work for women's suffrage and racial equality, and her role in the integration of AAUW. A co-founder of the NAACP, Terrell became the first Black member of AAUW after winning an anti-discrimination lawsuit. We will hear from Dr. Alison Parker, author of *Unceasing Militant: The Life of Mary Church Terrell*, as she recounts stories and major successes in the life of this extraordinary woman.

Don't miss this unique opportunity to hear firsthand about this little known activist and her unusual history with AAUW. Register [HERE](#).

What I need to know: The DEI Peer Group is sharing steps that branches can take to informally evaluate their degree of inclusivity. There will be a webinar featuring author Dr. Parker discussing the accomplishments of Black activist Mary Church Terrell and her work to integrate AAUW.

What I need to do: Consider suggesting that members read Parker's book prior to the webinar and possibly holding a watch party.

Should I include this in my branch newsletter? Yes, share the information about the webinar so members can learn about this extraordinary woman and her influence on AAUW.

FINANCE [TOP](#)

Kathy Ford, Chief Financial Officer, Finance Committee chair, cfo@aauw-ca.org

HAPPY HALF-WAY THROUGH THE FISCAL YEAR – WHAT NOW?

Many branches will do fundraising activities for Tech Trek and other branch programs in the coming months. You can find information about the financial side of fundraising on the AAUW California website section [How to Manage Fundraising Finance](#).

The Finance Committee has held two peer group sessions that covered some of the issues related to fundraising. If you missed them, or need to access the information covered, check the Finance Peer Group section on the AAUW California website [HERE](#). The recordings and other session information are posted.

What's next – "What's All the HUB About?" will be held on Thursday, March 7th, at 6:30 pm and will cover how to handle new and renewal membership dues for the next fiscal year. Save the date and watch for the email with the link to register for the session. If you cannot make it, the session will be recorded and posted.

Good news – 100% of the branches paid their Fund assessments and AAUW California was able to contribute \$5,590 to AAUW National.

What I need to know: There are many resources to guide branches with their fundraising activities, including information on the website and recordings of previous peer group meetings focused on that topic.

What I need to do: Review the fundraising regulations to be sure you are in compliance when planning fundraising events such as for Tech Trek.

Should I include this in my branch newsletter? No, this information is for branch leaders only.

GOVERNANCE [TOP](#)

Dianne Owens, Governance chair, governance@aauw-ca.org

SAVE THE DATE, FEBRUARY 13TH AT 7 PM

The Governance Peer Group will meet on Tuesday, February 13th, at 7 pm to discuss the mandatory bylaws changes from AAUW National as well as how to make other changes to branch bylaws, if needed. The meeting details will be sent to all branch presidents and branch governance chairs in early February.

Even though 'Twill be the night before Valentine's Day, you won't want to miss a loving discussion of bylaws!

What I need to know: Governance will host a peer group meeting to explain the bylaws changes that National is requiring.

What I need to do: Watch for the meeting announcement and be sure your Governance coordinator and other appropriate branch leaders register to attend.

Should I include this in my branch newsletter? No, this information is for branch leaders only.

NOMINATIONS AND ELECTIONS [TOP](#)

Deanna Arthur, Nominations and Election chair, nominating@aauw-ca.org

2024 CALL FOR CANDIDATES

AAUW California is looking for enthusiastic, committed, and proven leaders to serve on the AAUW California Board of Directors. How about you, or is there someone you know with leadership talent?

We seek candidates for:

- Secretary (two-year term 2024-2026)
- Four Directors (two-year terms 2024-2026)
- One Director (one-year term 2024-2025)

The committee members will be contacting branch presidents and others who have been suggested to the committee. Encourage members in your branch who might like to run for state office, or maybe you yourself would make a great candidate! For more information, including a link to the application, click [HERE](#).

What I need to know: There are six openings on the AAUW California Board of Directors with varying positions and terms. Candidates are encouraged to step forward and be a leader.

What I need to do: Consider using your branch experience at the state level or encourage a talented branch member to apply for a position.

Should I include this in my branch newsletter? Yes, encourage your members to consider stepping up to a fulfilling and rewarding position on the state board. Share the website link for details and the application.

PUBLIC POLICY [TOP](#)

Amy Hom and Melissa Maceyko, Directors, Public Policy Committee Co-chairs, publicpolicy@aauw-ca.org

IT'S A NEW LEGISLATIVE SEASON—GET READY TO TAKE ACTION!

In January and February, the Public Policy Committee will be hard at work evaluating new bills for our 2024 Legislative Agenda. The committee, in collaboration with our legislative advocate and coalition partners, will select and analyze proposed state-level legislation that reflects [AAUW California's Mission](#) and [Public Policy Priorities](#).

As the committee is working through the legislative review process in January and February, we invite you to reach out to let us know of any proposed California legislation that you think the committee should review.

At the end of the review period, in early March, the committee will select 30 bills to prioritize. You will be able to review and follow these bills via our [online bill tracker](#), which will be updated for our 2024 agenda in mid-March. These bills will be the basis for our ongoing education and advocacy work throughout 2024.

An important part of this advocacy work includes Lobby Days, our annual event at which three of the 30 priority bills are pitched by YOU in pre-arranged visits with legislators in person or online.

Lobby Days will be held largely virtually on April 2 and 3, 2024. Be sure to register by February 15, 2024 in order to participate. The registration form will be emailed to all members on January 12th, but it is available now [HERE](#).

Training materials on the bills and the event will be posted on the state website in mid-March, and a mandatory training webinar will be held on March 25, 2024.

We encourage all AAUW California members to reach out to suggest legislation and participate in Lobby Days as your efforts are essential for the achievement of our legislative priorities: to promote gender equity and improve the lives of women and girls.

Please reach out if you have suggestions for priority legislation! And be sure to register for Lobby Days.

B2B Bonus: Quick Tips for Things to Try

In the new year, the Public Policy Committee will be launching a social media education and action-centered program focused on priority legislation. Sign up for Legislative Action Alerts [HERE](#)! Share the sign-up link with anyone you think may be interested. AAUW members and non-members are welcome.

What I need to know: The Public Policy Committee will begin the process of evaluating proposed legislation to select bills that align with our priorities. Lobby Days, which provide members an opportunity to advocate for important bills with legislators, are scheduled for April 2nd and 3rd.

What I need to do: Be sure your Public Policy coordinator shares the details about registering for Lobby Days.

Should I include this in my branch newsletter? Yes, members should be encouraged to sign up to participate in Lobby Days and to suggest bills that the committee may wish to review for support this year.

Program News

GOV TREK [TOP](#)

Shauna Oenning Ruyle, Gov Trek Program Director and Gov Trek Committee chair, govtrek@aauw-ca.org

LET'S FLEX OUR POLITICAL MUSCLE EVEN MORE IN 2024!

There's still time! The Gov Trek student registration deadline is January 20th. As of **December 31st**, we had **51** students registered, and we would love to double this.

Curious to see how your recruitment efforts are doing? Please find a link to the student registration spreadsheet [HERE](#). You can download the spreadsheet to your computer, and then sort on any column you wish. Sort by column B ("Your Closest AAUW Branch"), or column E ("City"), or column K ("High School Attending").

Donate to Gov Trek - Help women run & win! Thank you for your tax-deductible donations to the Gov Trek SPF fund at the state level. Your contributions as both individuals and branches will assist in providing prizes and Gov Trek merchandise to our future campaign competition winners.

- To make your donation by check, make payable to: "AAUW California SPF" and write Gov Trek in the memo field. Mail to: AAUW California Gov Trek, 729 Greenery Cir., Oceanside, CA 92057
- To make your donation online by PayPal, click [HERE](#)

Our heartfelt thanks for backing Gov Trek! With your help, we can inspire the next generation of women leaders to new heights.

Questions?

Email govtrek@aauw-ca.org

Gov Trek Treasurer: (951) 480-8300

What I need to know: There is still space available in the Gov Trek program and donations to support the awards component are welcome.

What I need to do: Review the registration spreadsheet to see how many students have registered from your branch or area. Continue to promote the program in your schools and community.

Should I include this in my branch newsletter? Yes, branch members can recruit students for this outstanding opportunity.

SPEECH TREK [TOP](#)

Lana Widman, Speech Trek Program Director, and Speech Trek Committee chair, speechtrek@aauw-ca.org

SPEECH TREK SEASON IS IN FULL SWING!

Sixteen branches are holding, or have held, Speech Trek contests this season. If your branch has already held your competition or is not holding a competition this season AND you receive an inquiry from an interested student, please refer them to the California Online Branch who will be holding their contest on February 17th. The Speech Trek coordinator for California Online is Cathy Foxhoven and she can be contacted at iambasque@gmail.com.

Don't forget:

Mark January 10th on your calendar for a Zoom meeting with Marlene Cain, communications consultant and former Speech Trek Program Director, who will provide tips on how to prepare your contest judges. To register click [HERE](#).

March 15th is the deadline for submitting the branch winner's online video to the state semifinals.

What I need to know: Speech Trek is underway with sixteen branches participating.

What I need to do: Refer interested students to the California Online Branch if your contest is over already or you are not planning to hold one. Remind your Speech Trek coordinator to attend the January 10th peer group meeting.

Should I include this in my branch newsletter? Yes, let members know students can participate through the California Online Branch if your branch has completed its competition or is not participating in the program.

TECH TREK [TOP](#)

Mary Isaac, Tech Trek Program Director, and Tech Trek Committee chair, techtrek@aauw-ca.org.

TECH TREK CALIFORNIA IS REBOOTING!

After a collaborative effort from task force members Lorraine Margon, Sharyn Siebert, Cynthia Miller, Carol Holzgrafe, Karelle Cornwell, and Nitu Shinde, the Tech Trek Committee is recommending two new 80-90 camper Tech Trek camps in 2024, one at Santa Clara University (Hopper) and one at Cal State Monterey Bay (Carson).

Pending board approval and the right level of volunteer support (including a co-lead), Cynthia will co-lead Hopper and we are on the hunt for co-leads for Carson. Welcome back, Cynthia!

Camps Blackwell and Hypatia at UC Santa Barbara will be on hiatus in 2024. Additional weeks are being offered at Fresno and Whittier in June to accommodate branches that were served in the past by the Santa Barbara camps.

Camps Hopper and Carson, plus the two additional weeks at Fresno State and Whittier, and one week each at UCSD, UC Davis, and Sonoma State, provide sufficient capacity (820) for the current residential requests (787).

Program and camp leaders are feverishly working to balance demand across the state so that reducing requests is not the only option for branches whose preferred residential camp is not available.

Memoranda of Understanding will be sent to branch presidents immediately after the January board meeting, to be completed by February 15th.

Click [HERE](#) to see the Tech Trek 2024 Timeline.

What I need to know: Tech Trek has made some changes to the residential camp schedule for 2024, including additional weeks at some campuses and two brand new camps at new venues.

What I need to do: Continue the nomination process if your branch is participating in Tech Trek and watch for information on camp allocations.

Should I include this in my branch newsletter? No, this information is for branch leaders only and is pending approval by the AAUW California Board of Directors.

AAUW California

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PO BOX 160067

Sacramento, CA 95816

United States

916-389-0220

Find us on social media

