



Shelter In Place Approved Activities



AAUW MISSION AND DIVERSITY STATEMENTS

American Association of University Women advances gender equity for women and girls through research, education, and advocacy. In principle and in practice, AAUW values and seeks an inclusive membership, workforce, leadership team, and board of directors. There shall be no barriers to full participation in this organization on the basis of age, disability, ethnicity, gender, gender identity, geographical location, national origin, race, religious beliefs, sexual orientation, and socioeconomic status.

2019–2020 Board

CO-PRESIDENTS

Chris Burchik
Lucy Weed

IMMEDIATE PAST PRESIDENT

Millie Kessler

CO-VICE PRESIDENTS, PROGRAM

Leslie Adams
MaryJane Keogh
Kathy Senti

CO-VICE PRESIDENTS, MEMBERSHIP

Betsy Hoffmann
Margo James
Alice Miller

CO-VICE PRESIDENTS, THE FUND

Elaine Graves
Millie Kessler

CO-VICE PRESIDENTS, SCHOLARSHIP

Julie Gin
Susan Walker-Christensen
Loranne Weir

VICE PRESIDENT, FINANCE

Claire Mailhiot

CO-RECORDING SECRETARIES

Judy Bracken
Pam Bugbee

Appointed Officers

ART & WIND FESTIVAL

Janet Williams

COMMUNICATION

Isabel Lau

CORRESPONDING SECRETARY

Lois Kamoroff

HOSPITALITY/FELLOWSHIP

Betsy Hoffmann
Andree Chagnon

NEWSLETTER

Marsha Froines
Carol Lombardi

PUBLIC POLICY

Cindy Alpert

TECH TREK

Marielle Boortz
Cordelia Hwang

TELEPHONE TREE

Renee Coles
Lois Kamoroff

AAUW San Ramon Information

Websites:

Branch Website: www.sanramon-ca.ca.aauw.net
Webmaster: Isabel Lau (Isabel.lau13@gmail.com)
Association website: www.aauw.org
CA State website: www.aauw-ca.org
CCC IBC website: cbc-ibc-ca.aauw.org

Branch mailing address:

P.O. Box 336, San Ramon, CA 94583

Branch e-mail address:

aauwsr@gmail.com

Facebook: San Ramon University Women/AAUW

Co-President's Pen



We hope that you are staying healthy in these unsettling and unprecedented times. After attending Joy's February program on getting organized, I am doing things that always get postponed: I just finished cleaning my pantry. Also, I am taking my dog on longer and more frequent walks, using my gym's app for online training, and baking. Not sure what my next project will be—garage?

The board had to make tough decisions, such as cancelling the March program, the April Fund luncheon, and April's program. Special interest group meetings were cancelled for most of March and all of April. (Please note most of these decisions were made before the shelter in place order.) **Please be sure to read your e-mails and newsletters for updates on future events.**

During the March board meeting, the slate of Board of Directors for 2020–2021 was approved by the board. It will be presented to the members in April. Since we are unable to have the members vote at the Fund Luncheon, we are going to use Survey Monkey, which is an online survey tool. An e-mail with a link will be sent during April.

The slate of nominated officers is shown on the right. Thank you to the nominating committee—Sally Scholl, Anne Hayden, Cheri Ng, and Julie Gin—for recruiting members. Please note that we need a Co-VP Fund board member. If you are interested, please contact Chris Burchik or me.

Even though the State Convention in April is cancelled, Chris and I are still taking donations for "Days for Girls." The Citrus Heights-American River Branch is preparing sewn bags and pads. They are collecting girls' underwear (specifically, girls' undies that are 100% cotton in sizes 10, 12, 14, or 16 in brief, hipsters, or bikini styles—no boys shorts or thongs. Darker colors, florals, and geometric patterns are best. No faces or eyes). White undies and washcloths are often included in packages; they can be dyed a darker color. They also need small travel-sized soaps. Please let Chris or me know if you want to donate any of these items; we will ship them to the Citrus Heights-American River Branch.

Please take the cautionary steps that the respective health services advise so we can get through this together. Take the time for your mental, physical, and spiritual health.

Lucy Weed
Co President with Chris Burchik

AAUW San Ramon Board Nominations

We thank our nominating committee—Sally Scholl, Anne Hayden, Julie Gin, and Cheri Ng—who met in February and successfully recruited members for the open positions for next year. On March 9, the board voted unanimously in favor of the nominated elected officers for the 2020–2021 board. All branch members will have the opportunity to vote online in April.

Slate of Nominated Elected Officers for the AAUW San Ramon Board for 2020-2021

CO-PRESIDENTS

Chris Burchik and Lucy Weed

CO-PRESIDENTS-ELECT

Janice Colby and Kathleen Shaub

IMMEDIATE PAST CO-PRESIDENTS

Chris Burchik and Lucy Weed

CO-VICE PRESIDENTS, PROGRAM

Leslie Adams, Mary Jane Keogh, and Kathy Senti

CO-VICE PRESIDENTS, MEMBERSHIP

Betsy Hoffmann, Margo James, and Alice Miller

CO-VICE PRESIDENTS, THE FUND

Elaine Graves

Open

CO-VICE PRESIDENTS, SCHOLARSHIP

Julie Gin, Susan Walker-Christensen, and Loranne Weir

VICE PRESIDENT, FINANCE

Claire Mailhot

CO-RECORDING SECRETARIES

Judy Bracken and Beth Robertson

AAUW Fund



You probably know that all of our events, including the Fund Luncheon, have been canceled in the wake of the current COVID-19 crisis. But in reality, that will mean support for girls and women is more important than ever. AAUW Fund is the way we support national efforts in these areas:

- Education and training
- Economic security
- Closing the leadership gap

Show your support with your donations. It's easy and every dollar makes a difference!

Here are the ways you can donate now:

- Round up your contribution when you renew your membership online. Our dues are \$99—why not round it up to \$100 or even \$200? Choose the Greatest Need giving or specify one of the strategic areas listed above.
- Make a separate direct donation on the national website. Log in with your AAUW member number (aauw.org can get it for you if you don't know what it is).
- Send a separate check directly to our branch at PO Box 336, San Ramon, CA 94583 made out to "AAUW FUND" and it will be forwarded for you.
- Use the link on our branch website sanramon-ca.aauw.net under "Funds."

Watch your snail mail for an "invitation" to NOT attend the Fund luncheon. We will miss hearing our speaker talk about her AAUW-funded research in person, but think about donating the \$30 directly to AAUW Fund instead. Just add your check to the return envelope!

Thank you for your support.

Millie Kessler
Co-Vice President, Fund with Elaine Graves

SAVE THE DATE!

Sunday, May 24 and Monday, May 25

Volunteers Needed



Our branch FUNdraiser at the San Ramon Art & Wind Festival will be held on Sunday and Monday, May 24 and 25. This FUNdraiser supports scholarships and administrative needs of our local branch.

Sign up early to volunteer for your favorite shift! We will have two carts at the festival, and each cart needs two volunteers for a short shift. Teens are welcome to help, but they need to be accompanied by an adult.

Shifts:

10:30 AM–1:00 PM

1:00–3:30 PM

3:30–6:00 PM

Selling ice cream products (especially if the weather cooperates) is FUN and easy!

New This Year

An electronic signup link will be sent to all members once we have confirmation that San Ramon will host the Art & Wind Festival.

Janet Williams
Art & Wind Festival Chair

Tech Trek



Due to the shelter in place order in Contra Costa County because of the COVID-19 threat, we cancelled and will reschedule our camper selection interviews. Our interviews of 12 seventh-grade girls from the four San Ramon middle schools had been scheduled for the evening of March 17, 2020. The Tech Trek camp deadline for submitting the names of our selected campers is April 15. We will either do in-person, phone call, or televideo conference interviews to select our 6 campers and 2 alternates before mid-April.

The COVID-19 situation is being monitored and people's health and safety is AAUW's highest priority. We will keep selected campers and alternates informed if any decisions or changes about the camp and social are made.

In the meantime, plans are still moving forward.

Before the Tech Trek camp, there will be a June Ice Cream Social, where our campers will meet other campers from Contra Costa County and the camp director to help prepare them for the camp experience.

Tech Trek STEM camp at Sonoma State University is scheduled for June 21–27, 2020. There, the campers will experience a week of living on a college campus, working on hands-on STEM experiments with like-minded young women, meeting role models with exciting careers, and much more.

The camper selection process is a joint effort of a committed group of volunteers on our San Ramon Branch Tech Trek committee. Our appreciation and thanks go to:

- School Liaison: Lois Kamoroff
- Reading subcommittee: Angela Godin (chair), Marsha Froines, Margo James, Sherri Hedman, and Isabel Lau
- Interview subcommittee: Judy Bracken (chair), JoAnne Barron, Pam Bugbee, and Harvalee Grimm

Opportunities are available for you to learn more about this fantastic Tech Trek program by visiting the camp during the camp visitation day (likely to be on Thursday, June 25). Contact Cordelia or Marielle if you are interested.

You will have a chance to meet the young women after they return from camp at our branch Annual Brunch, which is tentatively scheduled for September 12, 2020.

Save the Date!

February 15, 2021

Gianni's Tips for Change Fundraiser

This event raises money for the 2021 Tech Trek camperships.



Marielle Boortz and Cordelia Hwang
Tech Trek Co-Coordinators

Happy April Birthdays

Loranne Weir
Fiona Waterhouse
Patty Nobles
Patricia Kelly
Betsy Hoffmann
Priscilla Spinner

*April Showers
Bring
Spring Flowers!*

Membership



Membership Matters

Our membership renewal season will begin in late April. Look for an e-mail message sent to you from memberinfo@aauw.org with the subject “AAUW Membership Renewal for Fiscal Year 2021” that will contain your unique renewal link. You’ll see that you do not need to log in, just click on your link and renew! It is that simple. We strongly encourage you to renew by credit card using this e-mailed link. It is quick and easy for you, and it saves time, resources, and money for the branch.

If you prefer to pay by check, please print the e-mail that you receive. Note any changes to your contact information on the form and return the form with your dues check payable to AAUW San Ramon to
San Ramon Membership,
PO Box 336
San Ramon, CA 94583

As a reminder, AAUW Membership dues are **\$99**. National dues are \$59, of which \$56 is tax deductible as a charitable contribution, and \$3 is not (because it supports the AAUW Action Fund's Section 501(c)(4) Lobby Corps and get-out-the-vote activities). California dues are \$20 and branch dues are \$20. Life members pay only state and branch dues, and dual members pay only branch dues.

Please consider including a donation to the AAUW Fund with your dues. If you renew by e-mailed link, you will be given the option to include a donation at that time. If you pay your dues by check, the donation can be included. For example, if your dues are \$99 and you wish to donate \$10, write a check for \$109.

Many thanks in advance to all members who renew before the end of June. It really makes a difference in helping the branch to run smoothly and frees up more of our time and energy to focus on accomplishing branch goals and fulfilling AAUW’s mission.

Member Spotlight

Fiona Waterhouse



Fiona with her husband, Martin

Birthplace and other places I’ve lived: I was born in Imtarfa, Malta and grew up in Waterlooville, England. I moved to Walnut Creek in 1982. I’ve lived in San Ramon for 33 years.

Education: I have an ONC degree in Business Studies, which is similar to an AA degree.

Spouse: Martin P. Waterhouse. He retired from Chevron in 2015.

Children: None

Significant Mentor or Hero: My father, Robert L. A. Gillies

Current and Previous Employment: I retired from Oracle as a quality assurance manager in 2015, after 16 years. Before that, I worked in banking for 11 years, culminating as VP of loan operations for the Bank of San Francisco. I also worked for Lloyds Bank in England for 4 years in the back office.

Current Interests and Pastimes: I volunteer at Forest Home Farms in San Ramon on Saturdays and enjoy meeting the parents and children who participate in the various craft activities. I love taking painting and drawing classes at the San Ramon Community Center. I enjoy singing with the San Ramon Community Chorus and participating in performances four times a year. I belong to a local book club, which has expanded my horizons in what I like to read and is a great social gathering once a month. I love playing Pokémon, and I go with my husband. This hobby has taken us to many parks and places that we would not normally have visited in this area and gets us out walking and meeting people! We have been able to play this all over the world. We love to travel, and we usually spend Easter and Christmas in England to celebrate with our families. At other times, we enjoy visiting the U.S., Europe, or other countries around the world. I also enjoy crocheting baby blankets. I love going to the theatre and the opera.

Continued on next page

Membership, continued

Memorable Experiences/Adventures/Accomplishments:
Visiting St. Petersburg, Russia was a dream come true. Our two-day stay there was packed with so many of the city's highlights. The Hermitage and Winter Palace were stunning with amazing art and antiques. St. Catherine's Palace was breathtaking, both inside and out, especially as this has been rebuilt since it was almost completely destroyed in WWII. There is marvelous architecture on both sides of the River Neva, including major landmarks of the Peter and Paul Fortress and the Summer Gardens. The city is beautiful and romantic—in stark contrast to Moscow.

Something that Might Surprise People: I love roller coasters and rode the Pepsi Max in England when it was the tallest and steepest roller coaster in the world with a top speed of 74 mph! It had only a lap bar as the restraint.

Alice Miller
Membership Co-Vice President with
Margo James and Elizabeth Hoffmann

Local Scholarship



There is no update from the Scholarship committee at this time from either past scholarship recipients or about future scholarship recipients.

Shredding Event Fundraiser Update



At this time, we do not have an event scheduled for April. We are still considering having something later in the year (possibly June), but our day-to-day lives continue to change as we deal with the current health crisis. If we are able to schedule something at a later date, we will publicize this information as soon as possible.

Thank you again for your ongoing support for Local Scholarship.

Susan Walker-Christensen
Co-Vice President, Local Scholarship with
Julie Gin and Lorraine Weir

Salute Your Local Heroes



STEM Highlights

Ciara Sivels



From Culinary Arts to Nuclear Engineering

Ciara Sivels graduated from MIT in 2013. She took an unusual path to a research career in nuclear engineering for national security.

No one could be more astonished to find Ciara Sivels where she is today than Ciara Sivels herself. “Never in a million years would I have predicted that I’d be working as a nuclear engineer in a major research laboratory,” says Sivels. “My original dream was to be a pastry chef.”

Instead, Sivels, who grew up in rural Virginia, went to MIT and majored in nuclear science and engineering with a focus on nuclear nonproliferation, and a concentration in middle school education. She then earned a Ph.D. from the University of Michigan in nuclear engineering and radiological sciences, where she was the first African-American woman to graduate from this program.

Today, Sivels is on staff at the Johns Hopkins University Applied Physics Laboratory (APL), and engaged in projects related to national security. While details about her research remain classified, Sivels can reveal that she works on radiation transport simulations focusing on materials effects. “In lay terms, I look at how radiation interacts with and changes the properties of various types of materials.”

Ciara’s expertise in this area evolved during her graduate study and national security internships at Pacific Northwest National Laboratory, where she helped develop a unique detection system for radionuclides, a gas linked to explosions from nuclear weapons testing.

Although she must maintain a shroud of secrecy around her current work life, Sivels readily shares details of the remarkable journey she has traveled from her home in Hickory, Virginia to a prestigious national defense lab. It has been a trek marked by some lucky breaks, hard-won battles, a fascination for problem solving, and an abiding passion to give back to others.

“I didn’t have a traditional engineering past,” says Sivels. “I wasn’t interested in tinkering or building things, and I was all over the place in high school, doing things like culinary arts and church-related activities like praise dancing.” No academic subjects resonated with Sivels until she tried chemistry. Her teacher, taking note of both her engagement and good grades, suggested she think about chemical engineering in college. “I was making a list of schools all related to culinary careers, and he was telling me to think about much better colleges, places I’d never heard about.”

With her chemistry teacher’s help, she applied to several schools including MIT (where she was accepted). “I thought it would be a great experience to attend a university far away from home,” she says. She also decided to shift her major after she learned that chemical engineering involved “polymers and plastics and manufacturing things,” which didn’t appeal to her. Sivels thought that nuclear engineering might be a better match for her interests and thought the field seemed really interesting, so she decided to major in it.

Before Sivels officially started school, she completed MIT’s [Interphase EDGE](#) program, a summer school that helps admitted students fill academic gaps prior to their first year. “I had previously taken physics, but Interphase made me realize I didn’t know what vectors were, and I wasn’t up to speed on math,” she says. “I struggled, but the program was pivotal for me because it helped me assimilate to the academics faster than I would have and introduced me to a new group of friends.”

Her academic challenges were not over, though. “Growing up, learning had come naturally to me, but at MIT, things were really hard for the first time—I felt I might even fail a class,” says Sivels. “It wasn’t until junior year, after learning new study skills and thinking beyond cookie-cutter solutions, that I could take the tools I was given and really figure out how to solve problems.” Says Sivels, “MIT is where I became myself—a thinker and an engineer.”

Her social experiences at MIT also proved formative. “I was thrown into a melting pot full of highly motivated people who held different perspectives from me, and at a human level, I grew.”

Part of that growth came from her immersion in secondary-school teaching during her undergraduate years. In high school, she routinely tutored younger students and thought a career in education might ultimately prove rewarding. While earning her NSE degree, Sivels pursued a middle-school general science teaching degree and worked with students at a Cambridge, Massachusetts school. “I saw how important it was for students to learn from someone who looked like them—young, black, female—someone they could relate to,” she says.

Continued next page

STEM Highlights, continued

Sivels pivoted from a teaching career on to the advice of her advisor, Richard K. Lester, who was a department head at the time and is now associate provost. “He knew I wanted to teach, but he told me I hadn’t really given nuclear engineering a chance, that I’d just taken the classes but not tried research,” recalls Sivels, whose summers had exclusively been occupied by teaching internships. Lester pointed her toward opportunities that would “show me what nuclear engineering was really about,” she says. “I was lucky he was my advisor; he changed the course of my career.”

One of those opportunities included an internship at Pacific Northwest National Laboratory right after Sivels graduated from MIT. There, Sivels became engaged in experimental studies to detect the release of radioxenon gas from underground nuclear weapons testing, an effort driven by the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty. This research expanded to become the foundation of her graduate school studies at the University of Michigan.

“I helped develop a novel device to improve monitoring stations all over the world, where detectors run 24/7,” she says. “We fabricated something that could plug and play in existing technology at these stations.”

Now at APL, she leverages the knowledge and problem-solving skills she acquired at MIT and the University of Michigan to make “critical contributions to critical challenges that face the nation,” Sivels says. But she also makes contributions in other areas important to her. She was recently named one of the nation’s 125 [If/Then ambassadors](#), an initiative sponsored by the American Association for the Advancement of Science aimed at middle-school girls to further women in STEM fields. She also serves as a math mentor for elementary kids.

“Working with students is a highlight for me,” she says. “Maybe if they see someone like me doing something they never knew was possible, it might change their lives.”

Source: Leda Zimmerman, “From Culinary Arts to Nuclear Engineering,” *MIT News*, February 26, 2020. <http://news.mit.edu/2020/from-culinary-arts-to-nuclear-engineering-0226>

Chris Burchik
Co-President with Lucy Weed

SNIPPET

Cindy and Gary Alpert are happy to announce the arrival of their first grandchild! August Ryan Stathatos arrived on February 22 at 11:34 PM, weighing in at 7 lbs. 3 oz. and 21 inches long. Proud parents Stephanie and David are enjoying their new roles as Mom and Dad.



Self-Care While Sheltering

Shelter in place will certainly save lives—but it also reminds us why solitary confinement is used as punishment. Following are a handful self-care strategies to cope while maintaining social distance:

In a *New York Times* report, psychologist and author Dr. Harriet Lerner advises

- Use all means possible to stay connected to friends, neighbors, your adult children, anyone who matters to you—especially those who induce a sense of calm rather than chaos.
- Therapy, conversation, exercise, yoga, meditation, and religious and spiritual practices are good starting points.
- Also consider the healing impacts of making art, singing, journaling, and being useful to others.¹

A live chat with *Washington Post* advice columnist Carolyn Hax produced these suggestions from participants:

- Keep to a routine: Set the alarm, shower, and dress for a normal day. Be sure your schedule includes breaks, exercise, and something fun.
- Plan a “driveway visit” with a neighbor.
- Yoga beginners might check “Yoga With Adriene,” free on YouTube.
- Investigate online books and streaming video. One commenter suggested books about how people handled times of crisis and survived; another mentions watching *Foyle’s War*.
- Get outside. Walk the neighborhood or a park. It’s Spring! Got a backyard? Pull some weeds.
- Do something for others: Donate to a food bank or, if you can, offer to shop or cook for an isolated or vulnerable neighbor.
- Play music.²

Cartoon by
Mark Fiore
for KQED.org



Internet sites that may interest, inspire, distract, or soothe:

- Want to try meditation? Take a look at phone apps/websites Calm.com or Insightmeditation.org
- NASA’s Astronomy Picture of the Day. <https://apod.nasa.gov/apod/astropix.html>
- Marconi Union’s “Weightless”—available on YouTube as 1-hour and 8-hour tracks
- Sign up for <https://spotthestation.nasa.gov/> to get notification for when the Space Station will be passing over your area.³

More websites:

- On NPR.org, watch a couple of Tiny Desk Concerts or check out their Isle of Calm playlist.
- On Reddit.com, search for the “aww” subreddit: Kittens and puppies, ducks and who knows what else.
- Cornell’s website “All About Birds” offers several live webcams. Be sure to turn up the sound. <https://www.allaboutbirds.org/cams/all-cams/>
- Watch trains chugging by: If you have a railfan in the house, you probably already know about the live stream from the Tehachapi Loop.

1. Dr. Harriet Lerner quoted in Simran Sethi, “10 Ways to Ease Your Coronavirus Anxiety” *New York Times*, March 20, 2020.
2. “Carolyn Hax Live: How to Stay Positive During an Outbreak,” *Washington Post*, March 18, 2020.
3. Ibid.

An Open Invitation
from
Member Pauline Nolte and her husband, Robert Seymour

When our lives have returned to normal and we are allowed to travel again, Pauline and her husband Robert have extended an invitation to any of us who would like to visit them in their new home in Waterbury, Vermont.

Interest Groups

All Special Interest Group meetings/gatherings/events have been cancelled for the month of April.

Please keep your fingers crossed that activities will return to normal in May.

Stay home, play music, and save lives.



Joy Perkins
Designing Smart Solutions for Busy People
925-216-9883 • omnibusorganizing@gmail.com

A Glimmer of Good News

The deadline for filing taxes has been postponed to July 15, 2020.