



AVANTI

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sanfrancisco-ca.aauw.net

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September 2023

Month at a Glance

September 6, 7:30 p.m.

TTAG Committee Meeting

- Contact: Rosaura Valle

September 10, 3:00 p.m.

Tech Trek Welcome Back Party – IN PERSON

- Location: Sports Basement, 1590 Bryant St, San Francisco
- Contact: Barbara Spencer

September 11, 6:30 p.m.

Board Meeting – via ZOOM and IN PERSON

- Potluck at 6:30 p.m. and official meeting at 7:00 p.m.
- Location: Roli Wendorf Residency
- Contact: Roli Wendorf

September 13, 7:00 p.m.

Tech Trek Committee Meeting

- Contact: Roli Wendorf

September 18, 7:00 p.m.

International Book Group – via ZOOM and IN PERSON

- Book: *The Covenant of Water* by Abraham Verghese
- Location: 19 Wawona St. 94127
- Hostess/RSVP: Sheila Bost
- Zoom: Barbara Spencer

September 20, 12:00 p.m.

Lunch Brunch– IN PERSON

- Location: Inle Restaurant (Burmese, Noodles, Thai), 822 Irving Street, Ninth Avenues
- Hostess/RSVP: Mary Suter

September 28, 6:30 p.m.

Mystery/Adventure Book Group – via ZOOM

- Book: Members will suggest and vote on books for the next eleven months!
- Discussion Leader: Susan Peliks
- RSVP: Elaine Butler
- Notes: We are looking for mysteries, adventures, true crimes, and cozies!
 - Must be available in libraries or paperback at book stores
- New members are welcome to join at any time!

September 30, 10:00 a.m.

Women's Professional Networking Group Meeting – via ZOOM

- Contact: Roli Wendorf

Co-President Message



Renewal Deadline September 30th

The deadline to renew your AAUW membership for 2023-2024 is fast approaching! Unless you have renewed recently, your membership expired on June 30th, and the grace period to renew will end on September 30th. Your AAUW membership will expire if not renewed by then. You can either renew online by going to my.aauw.org or mail a check for \$93 made out to "AAUW San Francisco" and mailed to AAUW San Francisco, P.O. Box 31405, San Francisco, CA 94131. Note that checks take time to process, so please send them right away so that renewals get to national AAUW before September 30th.

Tech Trek

Our camps went off very well judging from the thank you notes we received from the girls. 14 girls attended two residential and one virtual camps. We will celebrate their success and hear their stories at our Tech Trek Welcome Back event to be held on Sunday, September 10 at 3:00 PM at the Sports Basement on Bryant Street. All are welcome to attend. We are also gearing

up for the 2024 camps. We need to raise funds to send another 15 girls next year. We look forward to receiving your generous donations once again for this educational and inspiring program. Please make your checks out to "AAUW CA SPF" and mail them to our branch address: AAUW San Francisco, P.O. Box 31405, San Francisco, CA 94131. We have created a Tech Trek Committee to plan and organize the 2024 camps. After many years of service to Tech Trek, Elaine Butler is stepping down as coordinator, but will continue to serve on the committee. Barbara and I are taking over as co-coordinators and will be helped by new committee members: Allison Petersen, Anne Leung, and Maggy Kepler, in addition to Elaine. We look forward to another successful camp year.

Women’s Professional Networking Group

Recently, several younger members have joined our branch who are either completing their graduate studies or have recently joined the workforce. To support them and others in the workforce, we are starting a new interest group, the Women’s Professional Networking Group. This group will provide a platform to discuss topics related to navigating the workplace, such as negotiating salaries, raises and promotions, building one’s brand, how to create a wider network, financial skills, mindfulness techniques, and so on, depending on the interests of the members. The first meeting of this group is planned on Saturday, September 30th at 10:00 AM on Zoom. Watch out for more information in your email!

Lunch Bunch

Finally, our recent Lunch Bunch gathering at Bursa Mediterranean Cuisine attracted a record 12 members! We enjoyed great company while chowing down tasty kebabs and wraps. These gatherings are held on the third Wednesday of every month, ably organized by Mary Suter. Contact Mary to be included. We hope to see you there!

Roli Wendorf, Co-President

Tech Trek

After many years serving as San Francisco Branch Tech Tech Coordinator, Elaine Butler has passed the torch to a new Tech Trek Committee. Roli Wendorf and Barbara Spencer will act as co-coordinators. Other committee members are Allison Petersen, Anne Leung, Maggy Kepler, and Elaine Butler. Along the way, we will still reach out to more branch members for help with specific tasks.

Please come to the Welcome Back Event on September 10, 3 pm, at the Bryant Street Sports Basement. Our recent campers and their families will be there, as well as members of TTAG (Tech Trek Alumnae Group). Tech Trek is a major focus of our branch, and it is heartwarming to hear from the girls.

Here are some excerpts from thank you notes we received from this summer’s Fresno Tech Trek campers: “Thank you for picking me...I learned how to code and apply it to make apps...” “I had an amazing experience and met so many other girls with similar interests.” “I learned a lot about programming to create a drawing app and javascript...”. “My favorite part was in my core



class, aerospace, where we made hot air balloons, rockets, moon rovers, and much more...”

Donations for next summer’s camper fees of around \$1,000 each may be made at any time by writing a check payable to AAUW-CA SPF and sending it to Barbara Spencer. You will receive an acknowledgement from SPF for donations of \$250 or more. Otherwise, we will acknowledge the donations.

Barbara Spencer, Co-President

It’s a “Barbie” World



Barbie is 64 years old. And ever since American business woman, Ruth Handler, launched the first doll in 1959, society has increasingly become a “Barbie” World. Since then, more than a billion dolls have been sold across the globe, and Barbie has been the star of countless commercials, TV shows, and movies.

However, Barbie has always been a controversial topic. To start, her “hourglass” frame and slim figure has raised concerns about unrealistic body types, not to mention questionable choices within the brand itself. In 1963, the “Barbie Babysits” doll was released along with a book titled *How to Lose Weight*, which advised girls, “Don’t Eat!” Then in 1965, the same book was sold with the “Slumber Party Barbie” set, along with a scale that was permanently set to 110 pounds. The doll has also faced controversy with their lack of racial representation and also racial misrepresentation, most memorably with the 2001 release of “Barbie Oreo School Time Fun” dolls. Critics harshly slandered the use of the term “oreo,” which has been commonly used as a derogatory slur towards black communities. Barbie even stumbles upon misogynistic

stereotypes for women within stem fields. After “Teen Talk Barbie” was released in 1992, the American Association of University Women became involved and pushed back against the doll’s 270 pre-programmed phrases, including one that said, “Math class is tough!”

In more recent years, the Barbie brand has attempted to address these concerns, creating more representation through “plus sized” and racially diverse dolls, alongside the promotion of stem careers. Additionally, Greta Gerwig’s blockbuster, *Barbie*, finally hit theaters in June 2023, placing the doll in a new light.

The blockbuster, with a \$162 million debut, tackles sexism and self-determination under a candy-coated exterior and witty jokes. Barbie has connected audiences across generations, displaying that feminists can all find a common ground. Additionally, the film addresses the damaging consequences to the extremes of masculinity and femininity. Barbie even teaches us lessons about womanhood, a community filled with contradictions that are empowering.

However, it is still clear that Hollywood needs larger representation for female directors, especially in the wake of WGA and SAG-AFTRA strikes. The disparity in resources between male and female directors is staggering, and women need more money and opportunities to make moves like *Barbie* a reality. Movies like this should not be “once in a lifetime,” but rather prolific, like Barbie herself.

Nevertheless, one message should be made clear:
women are capable of anything.

<https://www.rollingstone.com>

<https://www.nytimes.com>

<https://theeverygirl.com/barbie-movie-life-lessons/>

Caitlin Dainas, Avanti Editor

Courage Under Fire



World War II was not just a man's war. According to the National World War II Memorial in New Orleans, 350,000 women served their country. A great many served as nurses. Though they did not serve in combat roles, 432 women were killed and 88 were taken prisoner. Clara Gordon Main was one of the latter group. She was likely to have been the first American woman taken prisoner by the Japanese. The fateful day that changed Clara's life occurred just before Pearl Harbor, prior the U.S. officially entered the war. After war was declared on December 8th, U.S. military ships were required to disembark women crew members upon their next return to their home port. Women crew members were required to quit their positions. No American women in combat zones please. Clara's fateful day was in November of 1941. This new regulation came just a little bit late to keep Clara from being taken prisoner by the Japanese who were already poised to invade China. Serving in the Merchant Marines, Clara had previously been assigned as a stewardess aboard the SS President Harrison. Now the U.S. Navy would be using the Harrison for military purposes. Clara was the only female among the 156 crew members. As the ship cruised along the Chinese coastline, the captain received emergency orders from the US Navy to proceed to Shanghai. The ship was to transport a contingent of U.S. Marines to the Philippines ahead of the Japanese invasion. They were also to evacuate the U.S. Marine embassy guards based in Peking.

As December 8th dawned, the Harrison found itself confronted by a Japanese destroyer at the mouth of the Yangtze River. A Japanese plane dropped a note demanding the ship's surrender. The captain of the Harrison, realizing that escape was not possible, ordered full speed ahead and purposely ran the large liner aground to prevent it being turned over intact to the enemy. A long hole was torn in the [hull.as](#) the ship ran aground

causing it to begin to capsize. The order was given to the crew to abandon ship. Clara Main hurriedly gathered medical supplies and first aid materials as she prepared to board the last usable lifeboat. Three men aboard another lifeboat were killed when the wind caused their boat to bang into the turning propellers. It split in half. Several others including the chief steward were severely injured. As the tide rose, the ship eventually righted itself and settled on a nearby mudbank. Japanese marines stormed aboard the vessel. Clara's lifeboat got no further. It was ordered to go back to the ship with the injured crewmen all of whom became prisoners. It is speculated that Stewardess Clara Main was the first American female to become a POW.

While still on board the disabled ship, Clara distinguished herself by nursing the chief steward back to health. Other surviving crew members later interviewed stated that without Clara's care the chief steward most likely would not have survived. Some time later, the entire crew was interned at various Japanese POW camps in China and Japan. The SS Harrison was eventually repaired sufficiently for use by the Japanese. It was renamed the Kakko Maru. In 1944, as it cruised toward Japan, it was sunk by the American submarine the USS Pampanito.

It is believed that Clara was a POW in China for approximately two years. She was 55 years old at the time that her captivity began. She was eventually released in 1943. She survived the war and lived about thirty years more after the war ended.

Unfortunately for many women like Clara who served in the wartime Merchant Marine, they did not receive their official military credentials. After the war this meant that they were denied U.S. veteran status frustrating their attempts to gain benefits. (Actually, the Merchant Marine Academy did not even begin to accept women until 1974.). It was not until 2017, after seventy-five years of waiting, another Merchant Mariner, Sadie Carrie Owey Horton, was issued a US military ID. She is now officially recognized as a WWII veteran of the US Merchant Marine.

www.navylog.navy Memorial.org

www.womenoffshore.org

www.usmm.org

Pat Camerena

September Birthdays



Barbara Spencer	September 11
Mary Worth	September 18
Karen Cancino	September 18
Pat Metzgar	September 21
Janice Gonsalves	September 24
Mardi Kildebeck	September 25
Jane Hansen	September 30

AAUWSF Board

Contact Us:

aauwsfbranch@gmail.com

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Barbara Spencer
Roli Wendorf

**Tech Trek Alumnae Group
(TTAG) Coordinator**

Rosaura Valle

**Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion
(DEI) Coordinator:**

Kelly Joseph

For one thing we know beyond all doubt: Nothing has ever been achieved by the person who says, 'It can't be done.'



Eleanor Roosevelt

Avanti Editor

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 San Francisco Branch
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 San Francisco, CA 94131-0405
 Address Correction Requested

The American Association of University Women (AAUW), founded in 1881, is the nation’s leading organization advocating equality for women and girls. It has a national membership of 150,000. People of every race, creed, age, sexual orientation, national origin, and level of physical ability are invited to join.

AAUW California was launched in San Francisco in 1886 and began lobbying immediately. Check out our website <https://sanfrancisco-ca.aauw.net>



AAUW advances equity for women and girls through advocacy, education, philanthropy, and research

Marie Curie & AAUW

The year was 1919. Europe had been ravaged by World War I and radium was far too expensive for a scientist of modest means to afford for experiments. This was true even for one as famous as Madame Marie Curie. As a result, her groundbreaking research had reached a virtual standstill.

Then the AAUW came to the rescue. Members from Maine to California helped raise an astonishing \$156,413, enabling Madame Curie to purchase one gram of radium and continue her experiments that helped her create the field of nuclear chemistry and forever change the course of science. Madame Curie received the Nobel Prize for her work, but was not admitted to the French *Academie des Sciences* until she won an incredible second Nobel Prize...all because she was a woman. More than 75 years later, there are still only three women members.

Pay Equity

AAUW has been on the front lines fighting for Pay Equity for over a hundred years.

AAUW was there in the Oval Office in 1963 when President John F. Kennedy signed the Equal Pay Act into law.

AAUW was there in 2009 when President Barack Obama signed the Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act into law.

AAUW continues the fight for the passage of the Paycheck Fairness Act to ensure women have further equal pay protections. The pay gap is real.

AAUW will continue the fight to achieve pay equity; the economic security of American families depends on it.

Legal Advocacy Fund

Founded in 1981, the Legal Advocacy Fund (LAF) works to achieve equity for women in higher education by recognizing indicative efforts to improve the climate for women on campus; by offering assistance to women faculty, staff, and students who have grievances against colleges and universities; and by supporting sex discrimination lawsuits.

The LAF Board only approves support of cases which are currently involved in litigation, and that have the potential to set legal precedent.

The Legal Advocacy Fund’s annual Progress in Equity Award recognizes indicative and replicable college and university programs.