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AVANTI

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December 2023

Month at a Glance

December 6, 7:30 p.m.

TTAG Committee meeting

- Contact: Rosaura Valle

December 9, 10:30 a.m.

Branch Holiday Brunch

- Location: Mission Rock Resort
817 Terry A. Francois Blvd, San Francisco, CA, 94158
- Contact: Barbara Spencer

December 13, 7:00 p.m.

Tech Trek Committee Meeting

- Contact: Roli Wendorf

December 15, 1:30 p.m.

Friday Afternoon Book Group – IN PERSON

- Book: Days at the Morisaki Bookshop by Satoshi Yagisawa
- Location: Joanne Mandel's Home
12 Marne Avenue
- Contact/Coordinator: Michelle Mammini

December 21, 6:30 p.m.

Mystery/Adventure Book Group – via ZOOM

- Book: Vera Wong's Unsolicited Advice for Murderers by Jesse Q. Sutanto
- Discussion Leader: Susanne Peliks
- RSVP: Elaine Butler

Lunch Bunch

There will be no December meeting.

International Book Group

There will be no December meeting. However, we will resume in January by discussing two books:

- The Mountains Sing by Nguyen Phan Que Mai
- The piano Shop on the Left Bank by Thad Carhart

AAUW-SF HOLIDAY BRUNCH

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 9, 10:30 AM

MISSION ROCK RESORT

817 TERRY A. FRANCOIS BLVD

San Francisco, CA 94158

Please join us for an in-person Holiday celebration. Mark your calendars for brunch on Saturday, December 9 at 10:30 am at the Mission Rock Resort. Please RSVP by email to Barbara at by December 6 if you'd like to attend. Advance payment is not necessary. We will pay our share at our own tables after the brunch.

Co-President Message

Happy Holidays to all! I hope a number of you will be able to join us at our in-person Holiday Brunch on December 9 at Mission Rock Resort. Be sure to RSVP to me if you plan to attend. It's always fun to get together; the setting and food are great at Mission Rock Resort. I hope to see lots of you there.

Zoom Book Talk

We were privileged to hear from our new-ish member Dr. Tiffany Caesar about her soon-to-be-published book: *Archiving Africana Women Stories: African Centered Education in South Africa and Detroit*. Tiffany, who is an assistant professor at San Francisco State University, told us about her journey in coming to this book topic, her study of Black female educators, and their influence on her research and teaching style.

Tech Trek

The newly formed Tech Trek Committee (Roli Wendorf, Barbara Spencer, Maggy Kepler, Allison Petersen, and Anne Leung) have been preparing for next summer's camps. We hope to send 15 girls to camp, but it will ultimately depend upon the numbers of camps and available space. At this point we are waiting on the state director to make the documents available for this year's camps. In the meantime, we are happy to accept donations for our camper fees that will probably range around \$1200 for each girl. Please mail checks to me made payable to **AAUW-CA SPF**. I will then forward the checks to the camp treasurers.

Member News

We send best wishes to Andrea Laudate and Elaine Butler for speedy recovery from their recent surgeries.

I wish you all a very happy holiday season.

Barbara Spencer, Co-President

**Marguerite the Spy**

Marguerite Harrison came of age just as the 20th century began. At that time, the majority of women were still outsiders to the formal structures of political or economic life...They were subject to wide-ranging discrimination that marked them as secondary citizens. Marguerite definitely stepped out of that life path.

Having been born as one of two daughters of a well-to-do Maryland shipping magnate, she was raised as a society princess expected to get some limited education, then marry well, and raise a family. Her sister followed this path, but not Marguerite. When her father lost his fortune, the family fell on harder times. The man Marguerite married against her mother's vehement protestations, had no fortune, and died young, Marguerite was left with a young son to support. She had to land on her own two feet and learn to use her connections to reinvent a career for herself.

Her first attempt to do so saw her collaborating in many schemes to raise money to support a children's hospital

school for indigent convalescent children, eventually being named to the board of directors of the Women's Civic League of Baltimore. However her deceased husband's debts continued to pile up. She used her connections to secure a position as an assistant society editor with the Baltimore Sun newspaper. Despite the fact that she had no formal training, she advanced quickly within the newspaper. She was able to draw upon her society connections, travel background, and familiarity with foreign languages. By 1917, she was writing features about women's wartime labor.

After America entered WWI, Marguerite came up with the idea that she would like to investigate German women's wartime working conditions.. At that time there were no women war correspondents, so she became a spy. Again she would use her "connections". Just after the November 11,1918 armistice was signed, Harriet was sent to Europe supposedly with an assignment to report on political and economic matters at the upcoming peace conference. She was actually going to spy for the United States in the Soviet Union and Japan for the Associated Press. While attempting to assist American political prisoners, she was detained in the infamous Russian prison Lubyanka for ten months. With the pressure of some of her influential "connections", the Soviet Union finally set her free in exchange for food and other aid..After making her way into China, she was arrested again in 1923. Just barely avoiding a trial, she was released after she was recognized by an American aid worker.

Back in the States, Marguerite used her somewhat harrowing experiences to continue her journalistic career, again reinventing herself as an author. Her "connections" led her to become an important member and sponsor of the production team during the filming of an early ethnographic film entitled Grass.. She also appeared in the role of a reporter in that film about an Iranian nomadic tribe.

Most professional organizations, such as the Explorers Club, excluded women from participating as members. In response, Harriet joined the group of women who founded the Society of Women Geographers in 1925.



www.margueriteharrison.com

www.atlasobscure.com

www.womeninexploration.org

Pat Camerena

A Justice to Remember



On Friday, December 1st, former Justice Sandra Day O'Connor died at age 93 due to dementia and respiratory illnesses. Being the first woman ever elected to sit on the Supreme Court, Justice O'Connor left a profound legacy that often aligned with public opinion on controversial opinions like affirmative action, abortion, and religion. Although much of her legacy has been undone by the conservative court today, it is important that we honor her 26 years of service.

After growing up on an Arizona cattle ranch, O'Connor attended Stanford University and Stanford Law amidst widespread sexism. It was initially difficult for her to find a job, despite being at the top of her class, until she was appointed to an Arizona Senate vacancy in 1969. She proved herself to be a moderate negotiator and dealmaker by rising through the ranks to become the state Senate Majority Leader—the first woman to hold that position in any state. Sandra Day O'Connor then made her way to the judiciary after being appointed to superior court and elevated to the state court of appeals. Then, in 1981, Ronald Reagan appointed O'Connor as the first woman on the Supreme Court bench.

Although Justice O'Connor was a suggested conservative in her confirmation hearings, she proved to be a true independent jurist. Justice O'Connor was considered to be the court's swing vote, authoring opinions that preserved the separation of church and state, safeguarded Fourth Amendment rights against unreasonable searches, and enforced due process for criminal defendants. Additionally, in *Parenthood v. Casey* (1992), she struck a compromise for the right to abortion. Although the case had at first seemed destined to overrule *Roe v. Wade*, Justice O'Connor worked to negotiate and establish the "undue burden" test, granting leeway for states to restrict abortion rather than banning it outright. She continued to take the Supreme Court down a more liberal path. In *Shaw v. Reno* (1993), she authored an opinion that claimed racial gerrymandering was unconstitutional, and in *Grutter v. Bollinger* (2003), she upheld affirmative action in public universities.

Over Justice O'Connor's quarter century on the court, she reflected and echoed the beliefs of the moderate public, perhaps because she was the last sitting justice to have ever ran for an elected office. Since stepping down, she has been replaced by Samuel Alito—a substitution that has undermined her jurisprudence on affirmative action, campaign finance reform, and separation of church and state. However, we must remember the legacy of this independent justice who broke barriers, made compromises on political lines, and fought to uphold the Constitution.

<https://slate.com/news-and-politics/2023/12/sandra-day-oconnor-obit-sad-legacy.html>

Caitlin Dainas, Avanti Editor

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Life loves to be taken by the lapel and told: "I'm with you kid, let's go."



Maya Angelou

Avanti Editor

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 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.