



Be Brave, Bold, and Brilliant!

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Special Thanks to

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AAUW - Camarillo Past President

WE HAVE COME A LONG WAY LADIES

Bev Taylor

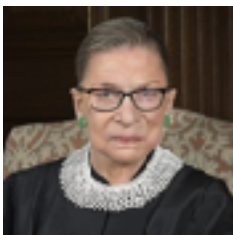
The American Association of University Women, AAUW, had two predecessor organizations in the United States. Each of these organization had as their purpose support for women who had a college degree. The first organization was the Association of Collegiate Alumnae (ACA) started in Boston in 1881. In a short time, branches were established in New York, San Francisco, and Washington, DC. A few years later the Western Association of Collegiate Alumnae was organized in Chicago. In 1921, The ACA merged with the Southern Association of College women to create the AAUW. The young organization had an early presence in California.

The presence of AAUW began in California in 1884 with one branch in San Francisco. In a few years, by 1921 there were thirteen active branches in California. According to their website, they are the state's most active and diverse organization for women with nearly 12,000 members in 125 branches, plus over 5,000 members-at-large.

Over the years many reports have been published by the AAUW. The very first was to prove they had a right to exist. The prevailing myth in 1885 was that a college education would harm a women's health and result in infertility. After the results of survey sent to 1,290 women were tabulated the data demonstrated that the answer was a resounding "No". The results were published in the Massachusetts Bureau of Statistics of Labor in the same year. This conflict still exists today as the choice many women have to make of career vs home.

AAUW, nationally speaks for equity for women and girls through advocating for education, philanthropy and research regardless of creed, age, gender, sexual orientation, national origin, and level of physical ability. We have proved over and over again the results of that first study in 1885 that we have a right to exist.

AAUW members, fellows and award winners pioneer advances for gender equity. Here are a few AAUW Trailblazers:



Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg
Supreme Court Justice
(1993-2020)
Received the 1999 AAUW
Achievement Award



Eleanor Roosevelt
First Lady of the United States
(1933-1945)
Started World Center for
Women's Achieves project with
AAUW member Mary Ritter Beard
to "write women back into history"



Marie Curie
First woman to win the Noble Prize.
AAUW members raised \$100,000
to buy a gram of radium
for her research.

MOM, DON'T YOU KNOW THAT GIRLS BECOME NURSES

AND ONLY BOYS CAN BE DOCTORS?

Mary Goldberg

This simple question spoken from a young daughter to her mother over thirty years ago started the Women in History (WIH) program. Sandy Hindy, a teacher and AAUW Thousand Oaks member, was determined to prove that this was far from the truth. She wrote monologues of five notable women, including Elizabeth Blackwell, America's first woman doctor. She portrayed them at her daughter's school during Women's History Month in March. Her daughter has gone on to become a doctor.

In 1987, AAUW Camarillo member Karen Normington learned of the program and brought the idea to her branch. A few years later, Kathy Van Slyke took over the program. Kathy made several changes to the program including expanding the research and women chosen, adding activities which followed state standards and copywriting the scripts. The purpose of the program became to supplement the school curriculum with in-depth profiles of women who have made extraordinary achievements and contributions. Volunteers visited classrooms giving first person portrayals in costume and with props.



This year, the WIH committee adapted to distance learning and prepared videos of volunteers who portrayed Carmen Camarillo and Sylvia Earle. They included links to supplemental materials and activities to be shown in K-8th grade classrooms in March.

Kathy Van Slyke wrote the Carmen Camarillo script in 2006. She thanked Geraldine Fitzgerald, granddaughter of Adolfo Camarillo, for the "excellent critique of this script and for the biographical material that she wrote." Shirley Randall and Val Rains contributed to the school version. In 2020, Camarillo Ranch Docents Beth Miller and Sherry Reynolds reviewed and made slight changes to the script.



Val Rains as a very regal Queen Elizabeth I



Kathy Van Slyke and Gloria Miele (as Eleanor Roosevelt) Adolfo Camarillo Birthday Celebration October, 2007

WHAT CAN WE DO WHEN WE'RE STUCK AT HOME?

**Mary Goldberg
and Betsy Metzgar**

Since the shutdown due to the COVID-19 pandemic, this became the number one question for organizations. For AAUW Camarillo, the choice became to cancel favorite and long running programs or switch to virtual meetings. Some activities such as a monthly bridge game were cancelled. New programs such as the "Antiracist Book Group" formed in response to the Black Lives Matter movement. The PM and the Non-Fiction Book Groups continued to be popular-even on Zoom. Monthly meetings are currently held via Zoom with a variety of speakers.

Knowledge Bowl is a "Jeopardy" type contest between local high schools. The program began in 1964 and was cancelled last March-before completing their 57th annual event. Each year, the Betty Rutherford Perpetual Trophy is held at the winning school. It remains at Newbury Park High School who won in 2019.

In 2019, the Creative Arts Workshop celebrated it's 50th summer. This three-week program for K-7th graders was started to offer the community an alternative to the summer school program offered by the school district. The program included classes such as art, drama, chess, magic and the popular Incredible Edibles. In 2020, they switched to a few virtual classes and collaborated with the kidSTREAM children's museum to distribute activity kits to be enjoyed at home.

In response to the pandemic, the AAUW Camarillo's Public Policy Committee is advocating for accessible, affordable broadband to enable local students to participate fully in distance learning. Advocacy efforts include AAUW representatives joining virtual meetings of the countywide Digital Inclusion Task Force. The branch was involved in a county-wide celebration of the Centennial of the 19th Amendment, as well as other virtual get out the vote efforts for the 2020 election.

AAUW Camarillo has received a number of recognitions for its contributions to the community. In 2020, the Camarillo Chamber of Commerce named them their "Service Organization of the Year." Founding member, Val Rains, received the Stan Daily Lifetime Achievement Award. AAUW also provides free online training in salary negotiation to narrow the gender pay gap. For more information on current AAUW-Camarillo programs and events, visit their website at: camarillo-ca.aauw.net

History of Camarillo Branch of the American Association of University Women Val Rains

When I first joined AAUW it was a study section of the Ventura Branch of AAUW. At that time each branch studied a one or more of suggested topics by National Headquarters. The year was 1963 and we were assigned to study India. The manner in which you divided your study was decided by each individual group. We had between 20 to 30 women attending our once-a-month meeting. We met in homes of the members. At one of our meetings, we discussed the possibility of forming our own branch. Donna Herleikson who was acting as the chair of our group was asked to meet with the branch under which we had been functioning which was the Ventura County Branch of AAUW to request our departure from their branch to form our own. Donna asked for a volunteer to accompany her

and I volunteered. We wanted to do this request formally and procedurally at one of their executive meetings.

We did this in either November or December of 1963, and began to research what was required from AAUW National, etc. All of this was completed in March or April of 1964 and we met in the Los Altos Library to sign papers with those individuals who would become charter members. There were 27 of us whose signatures appeared on the branch application form. Our names would appear as they were on our university/college records. We were officially chartered by National AAUW on May 14, 1964. We kicked off our year on September 14, 1964 with an Orientation Tea at the home of Mrs. Walter Worthy on Anacapa Street. When our first yearbook and directory was published, we already had 80 members with many coming as far as Thousand Oaks. We also were identified by our married names (sign of the times) with our maiden names also listed. These maiden names were ones under which we had received degrees. For membership application, one needed to present proof of their graduation from an accredited university or college and complete application forms. We would meet on Monday or Thursday evenings (many of us were young mothers and needed our husbands home to care for the children,) and members would receive a newsletter which contained announcements of dates, places and subjects of the general meeting as well as the study section meetings for the month. We would meet in member's homes, schools and restaurants.

The new membership included "a varied representation of professions and excellent cross-section of ages." It was the hope of the founding members that all would participate in meetings, social events and study sessions according to one's availability and interests. Our branch's program would offer "study, research, fellowship, work and sharing friendships." The work part of the program was to help fund scholarships for women. Those of us who have been in the organization for all of these years have formed long standing friendships that we cherish.

The executive officers that first year were: President, Mrs. Arne Herleikson (Donna), First Vice-President (Program) Mrs. Norman E. Jennette, Jr. (Jennette), Second Vice-President (Membership) Mrs. Roger T. Rains (Val), Treasurer, Mrs. Reginald Rutherford (Betty), Recording Secretary, Mrs. Fred F. Nunn (Micky) and Corresponding Secretary, Mrs. Richard Wingert (Meg). We also had Area, Implementation and Committee chairmen.

We chose Japan as one of our study emphases and in October had the Honorable Toshiro Shimanouchi, Consul General of Japan at a dinner meeting at Los Robles Inn of Thousand Oaks. His topic was "The New Japan." There weren't many large restaurants in our community in the early sixties, and we also had many members who lived in Thousand Oaks. We had general program meetings on "Ikebon-the fine art of Japanese Flower Arranging", Education in Japan, The Japanese Family and Haiku, Japanese poetry which still fascinates me today. Some of our general meeting topics were: Introduction to Genetics, Science in Medicine, The Impact of Divorce on the American Family and Genius; A Product of Heredity? So, you can understand that although Japan had been selected as our study topic under Cultural Interests, we also included Community and World Problems and Education topics. There seemed to be something for everyone. It was an exciting and exhilarating year and culminated with a Japanese Dinner, a summary and forecast and the most titillating production of a Japanese Kabuki Theatre presentation entitled "The Young Man on a Ladder." All the characters were white-faced and Meg Wingert as the young man, Hazel Braun, the Area Chairman for Cultural Interests was the village mayor and it was directed by Val Rains. It really was a hilarious production and a most enjoyable conclusion to our first year. It was held at the newly opened Chester's, a Chinese Restaurant whose owners were kind enough to offer us a combination Asian dinner.

On July 1, 1969 I became president and at the request of Jeannette Jennett, I called an emergency executive meeting to be held at her home on West Highland. The nature of the emergency was a serious rumor that Ventura County was going to purchase the closed Oxnard Air Base to convert into an airport similar to one in Burbank. AAUW had a stipulation that no formal action could be taken on a topic until it had been studied and the organization voted on said action. Normally the summer months were used to plan the year's programs, but that summer an alert went out announcing that we would have a special study group meeting to study the feasibility of a commercial airport in Camarillo. Well, study we did and we had a recommendation ready for the membership in the Fall.

We voted to oppose said airport based on environmental issues as well as many other factors that would impact our community. Then, many of us would be at the Ventura County Supervisors' meetings to testify against their purchase of the property from the federal government. The Oxnard Air Base had been closed and we lost almost 3/4 of the school population at Las Posas School. Once we helped make this issue public, the city under the leadership of Earl Joseph, then mayor, joined us in our opposition and testified at Supervisor's meetings. The Board of Supervisors then met in the older government building located in Western Ventura. I recall my two year old Pamela went to the meetings, and when I was called forward to testify, I would hand Pam off to one of the other members to hold. In that way, we could bring our young ones and we all worked together to keep them busy, quiet and cared for.

The city formed a Freeholder's Commission and as AAUW president I was asked to be a member of that commission. Our AAUW Camarillo Branch took the issue as far as we were legally allowed to do. Recognizing that this was an issue that needed the support of the community, we encouraged the establishment of Citizens Against Camarillo Airport with Mary Gayle and Jan Anderson as Co-chairmen. This organization was able to collect donations needed to hire a young attorney, Steve Stone, and they would help shepherd this important issue to its culmination. Under CACA, Donna Hereleikson, the past AAUW president, would be Chairman of the petition signature committee. She along with many of our fellow AAUW members and other interested community members were successful in gathering sufficient signatures in Ventura County to place the airport issue on the ballot. A general aviation airport with only corporate jets and privately owned small aircraft would describe the airport use. To this date, this description is still in place with the County. This to me is one of the most important AAUW contributions: the protection of the environmental health of our community, noise abatement, smog abatement and many other factors that would have changed the Camarillo community we love.

We also were instrumental in getting Betty Rutherford elected to the Pleasant Valley School District Board. Many of her fellow AAUW friends would be members of her election campaign committee. We also spent that year designing the new AAUW Creative Arts Workshop. This was Donna Herleikson's innovative and creative idea to establish an exciting summer school arts and science program for K through 6th grade students. We were a busy group of women and we felt as though we were contributing to the growth of our new city.

During that time frame, we began another program, Knowledge Bowl, which also is offered each year to high school student participation. This competition was the idea of another past AAUW president, Betty Rutherford. We spent the year organizing the program and developing questions that were used. I recall we had one question that was not correct at our first competition. We were corrected by one of the students. The question was, "The franc is the monetary system of what country?" We had France as the answer and quickly were informed by one of the students that there were two other countries that used

that monetary system. Those of us working on developing questions quickly recognized that besides making up the questions, we needed to check each one carefully for correctness.

On October 6, 1997, my husband Ted and I had the privilege to accompany Betty Rutherford, the first woman elected to the Pleasant Valley School Board, to her final resting place with her husband, Captain Reginald Rutherford USN in Arlington National Cemetery.

So many of us now reflect on how it was such a privilege to be involved with a newly organized group to help develop new programs that would benefit our community.

Do you have a comment, story or photo you'd like to share?

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