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August 2012

## President's Message

July is typically a time for vacations and travel for many and that includes my sister, Marcella Corcoran Kennedy, a member of the Oireachtas (Irish Parliament) who is visiting San Francisco from Ireland. Peggy Kavounas hosted a special member event at her home on July 28, where Marcella shared some of her thoughts on the status of women in Ireland. Marcella was delighted to meet the branch members present and respond to their questions. Photos and more details about this event are featured in this issue.

With no Board meeting held in July, we look forward to the Annual Board Retreat in August. The Retreat provides the Board with the opportunity to plan program activities and approve the Branch budget for the upcoming year. If you have any ideas you would like to share with the Board, feel free to email me directly at [corcoranfc@gmail.com](mailto:corcoranfc@gmail.com)

We look forward to seeing new and returning members and their guests at the International Dinner event to be held on August 24<sup>th</sup> at the Gold Mirror Restaurant.

Cathy Corcoran  
President

## Special Member Event

A special member event was held on Saturday, July 27<sup>th</sup> at the home of Peggy Kavounas, featuring Marcella Corcoran Kennedy, sister of San Francisco Branch President, Cathy Corcoran. Marcella was first elected to Dail Eireann in the 2011 General Election to represent the constituency of Laois/Offaly. Marcella is a member of the Joint Oireachtas Committee on Environment, Culture and the Gaeltacht (Irish Language region) and is

chairperson of the Fine Gael Internal Committee on Justice, Equality and Defense. She has campaigned to increase female representation in Irish political life. Marcella spoke about her background growing up in a political family (her grandfather and father were both local politicians), the status of women in Ireland and her experience thus far on the national stage. She was happy to share that legislation had recently passed requiring all political parties to meet a quota of fielding at minimum of 30% female candidates in the next general election. The members present, included visitors from the Half Moon Bay branch, asked lots of great questions comparing the Irish and U.S. political climates.



Marcella Corcoran Kennedy and Cathy Corcoran

## Public Policy

I'm delighted to be your new co-chair of the Public Policy Committee, and am looking forward to helping make a significant difference in the lives of girls, women and families in our community, as well as helping get more visibility for the branch.

For a few months I've been attending meetings of the San Francisco Commission on the Status of Women. As you may know, the commission is written into the City Charter, and this should mean it'll continue to be fully supported in future budgets.

My priorities have been to develop relationships with the commissioners as a representative of AAUW-SF, see where AAUW's work and the commission's goals intersect, and figure out how the commission works. I had lunch with Commissioner Nancy Kirshner-Rodriguez, to explore these intersections.

We discussed that introducing the Commission to TechTrek would be a good starting point. And the timing was perfect: at its July meeting, the Commission released its recommendations to the *Update on Girls in San Francisco: A Decade of Success and Challenges*. Their first recommendation was to "Increase Girls Participation in STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math)."

Because TechTrek mavens Elaine Butler and Michelle Mammini couldn't make it to the meeting, I spoke for them when public comment was allowed (only 2 minutes), and showed how AAUW-SF's TechTrek program ties directly to the Commission's recommendations. We're now waiting to find out when we'll be on a future agenda to give a full-on 10-15 minute presentation about TechTrek. We're planning to bring a couple of camp participants and instructors to tell their personal stories as part of the presentation.

Roberta Guise

### Tech Trek Report

The Send-off Party was a great success. We had 15 of the 16 girls and their families at Sports Basement. It was nice to see many AAUW members and to enjoy sweet creations brought by campers and members. Many thanks to Pat Camarena, Michelle Mammini, Pat Spencer, Corrine and Mitch Sacks and anyone else who came early to help set up. We were lucky to have the Camp Curie Co-Director, Eileen Hutchinson, as a

guest to answer the family questions. There were many questions and Eileen was gracious to stay until everyone felt confident about sending their girls away for a week. Deirdre, her friend, a former Olympian and woman of science also spoke. Pat Camarena gave each girl a bag of camp necessities. Now we will wait until the **Welcome Back on September 9th, 2-5, at Sports Basement.**

Elaine Butler & Michelle Mammini,  
Tech Trek Branch Co-Coordinator.

### Board Meeting

The Board retreat will be held on Saturday, August 18 at 10 AM at Cathy Corcaron's home: 3974 18 Street.

### International Book Group

International Book Club Discussion will be held on **Monday, August 16th at 7pm** at the home of Nancy Shapiro, 1683 42nd Ave. RSVP to: (415) 731-2654. We will be reading: *VOICE OF AMERICA* by E. C. Osondu.

### Afternoon With Books

**Friday, August 17, 1:30-3 PM**

We have decided to read an older book for the last meeting of our year. We are like the school year and will choose 11 books at the September meeting. Please begin thinking and reading now in preparation for the September meeting. Look for books that are well-written, lend themselves to discussion and are readily available at the library or a current paperback.

Location: Elaine Butler, 124 Amber Dr. SF  
Book & Author: **Autobiography of Alice B.**

**Toklas** by Gertrude Stein

RSVP: Elaine 826-3172 or

[elainebutler124@comcast.net](mailto:elainebutler124@comcast.net)

### Mystery/Adventure

**SPECIAL MEETING, Thursday, August 23, 7:30 PM**

We are having the author of our selection and AAUW member as a special guest.

Location: Pat Camarena's home, 157 Amber Dr.  
 Book & Author, **Mystery Montage** by Pat Morin  
 Reviewer: Andrea Laudate  
 RSVP Pat at 285-7589

### Travel Group

Mark your calendar for a trip to the Disney Family Museum in the Presidio. I plan to go on **September 22** - a Saturday. They are showing "Old Yellar " and having a special talk at 3 PM:

**Old Yellar** – Conversation with **Ron Miller and Kevin Corcoran**.

Admission is \$20 adults, \$15 seniors with an additional fee for the talk.

**I always wondered what happened to the cute action "Moochie".**

### International Dinner

Friday, August 24, 6PM at the Gold Mirror Restaurant. Contact contact Nancy Shapiro at: [nancy.shapiro@comcast.net](mailto:nancy.shapiro@comcast.net), home: (415) 731-2654 cell: (415) 519-6807

### Of Interest This Month

#### Thursday, August 9

From Creek Dams to Cormorants--a Modern Ecology of San Francisco Bay.

Ariel Rubissow Okamoto and Kathleen M. Wong discuss the natural and human forces that have shaped California's largest estuary, from the bay's stealthy currents to the developers and environmentalists who have altered its shores.

Longtime local science writers, Okamoto and Wong are the authors of *Natural History of San Francisco Bay* (2011), part of the California Natural History Guides series published by the University of California Press.

[Randall Museum](http://www.randallmuseum.org) Theater, 199 Museum Way, San Francisco CA 94114. 7:30-9 pm. For more information, go to [www.sfn.org](http://www.sfn.org) or contact Patrick Schlemmer at [JKodiak@earthlink.net](mailto:JKodiak@earthlink.net) or (415) 225-3830. Free and open to everyone.

### Who Knew? Pat Camarena

American golfer Margaret Abbott did not know that historical research would later mark her as the

first gold medal woman in the 1900 Paris Olympic games which were poorly organized. Only a few French women had played croquette before. Only one ticket was sold. Only Margaret's mother competed also tying for seventeenth. It was the first and only occasion when a mother and daughter competed at the same time. Only nineteen women competed. Charlotte Cooper won a gold medal for tennis in Paris in 1900 also. totally. This year, beginning August 28th, 2012th, 10, 500 participants are expected.

This year over 200 nations are involved for two weeks.. In 1900 events were spread over five months. In 1900 only twenty-two women participated; along with 975 men. Lots more women compete this year.

Enjoy the 2012 Olympics in London in 2012.

#### Avanti Articles

Please remember to submit Avanti articles to Corrine Sacks by the 25<sup>th</sup> of each month via email to: [cpsacks@yahoo.com](mailto:cpsacks@yahoo.com)

#### Get the *Avanti* Faster

If you'd like to receive the Avanti via email notice rather than US mail, please tell the Membership VP, and then a printed copy will not be sent to you. If you prefer, we will continue to print and mail the Avanti to you.

### Playing Now

#### Paula Campbell

**Les Miserables**, returning as **Les Miz, the 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Tour**, is a wonder. Gone are the huge mechanical diversions of the original production -- no turntables that fill the stage, no big stage machinery. This production allows us to appreciate the actors, the music, the choreography, the clever staging that uses video to create amazing effects. These video effects include an amazing chase through the sewers, Javert's suicide by jumping off the bridge – effects made possible by new techniques in video and lighting unavailable 25 years ago. In short – I found this production vastly

superior to the bloated original. Finally, I found I could concentrate on the music most of all – realize the operatic qualities of the score, appreciate the voices of the singers. Lending even more meaning to the story are the backdrops, which are copies of Victor Hugo’s original scene paintings.

Most of us are probably familiar with the story – our hero Jean Valjean, an escaped prisoner (convicted for stealing a loaf of bread for his starving family) is pursued by the relentless Inspector Javert. Valjean has reformed, rebuilt his life, dedicated himself to doing good, but none of that matters to the single minded Javert. Sub plots involve the lovely Cosette, a child of the streets Valjean rescues and raises as a daughter, various villains of both sexes, and the student Marius who loves Cosette, and is rescued by Valjean when he is shot on the barricades, during the student rebellion that fills the second act.

The cast is terrific – Andrew Varela is a perfect Javert, Lauren Wiley’s Cosette is the ingénue deluxe, and Timothy Gulan as the innkeeper/thief/villain brings the house down with his almost vaudevillian turn in the rollicking “Master of the House”. Peter Lockyer is vocally brilliant as Valjean, but sadly miscast. Valjean is a man of superior, almost superhuman strength. It’s when he rescues a man trapped under a heavily laden wagon by actually physically lifting the wagon, that Javert, still searching for him, realizes who that strongman is. Unfortunately, Lockyer is slight of build, very thin and reedlike which makes him utterly implausible for the role. Nonetheless, his singing, acting, emotional strength are wonderful.

Some of my readers may have read the poor review this production received in San Francisco. I couldn’t disagree more with the local review. I suggest you read reviews from other cities, such as Chicago, Detroit, Birmingham, Providence, Cincinnati, which tend to be glowingly positive. (nb. touring production did not play in NYC so no NY reviews.) This production lets us see the show

for what it was always meant to be, without the razzle-dazzle of those infamous turntables and other huge stage machinery. I can’t say enough about the production – except that I’d like to see it again – that’s how good it is!

Les Miserables, through August 26. Orpheum Theatre, 1192 Market Street (corner Market St./ Hyde St.), Tues – Sat 8pm, Wed, Sat, Sun 2 pm. Tickets at box office at the Orpheum, phone (888) 746-1799, or online <https://www.shnsf.com/Online/shnorpheum>

### Membership Updates

If you change your address, kindly notify the Membership Chair.

### State Directory

AAUW CA Directory is posted in searchable PDF format. Both documents can be found in the Forms & Documents section, under Branch Administration, [HERE](#). Hard copies of the directory are available for purchase. Send your request, with a \$10 check to AAUW CA Office, PO Box 160067, Sacramento, CA 95816-0067.

### Online AAUW Branch

There is an online AAUW California Branch at [www.AAUWCaOnline.org](http://www.AAUWCaOnline.org). Their dues are \$10 if you’re already a member.

### August Birthdays

Elizabeth Ray	August 15
Nancy Shapiro	August 25

### Birthday Not Announced?

If your birthday is not there and you’d like to have it included (or corrected), contact the Membership VP.

## Women Continue to Fight for Equal Access in Sports

After the 2012 Summer Olympics added Women's Boxing for the first time, the International Amateur Boxing Association (AIBA) tried to attach a string, or perhaps, one should say a hem, to the rules.

The AIBA wanted female boxers to wear skirts during competition. Their rationale: it would be easier to distinguish between male and female boxers. When charges of sexism broke out, the AIBA withdrew its silly recommendation.

On the bright side, the issue of mandating gender-specific clothing for a sport is small potatoes compared with the enormous challenges women and girls historically faced—and still face—in gaining equal access to athletic opportunities.

Female participation in high school and college sports was paltry until the 1972 passage of Title IX. There were few athletic programs for girls and young women, and those that did exist were underfunded. For those unfamiliar with it, Title IX is the landmark legislation that requires gender equity for girls and boys in federally funded education and activities programs.

Misconceptions about the law have triggered a passel of unfounded myths

- Opening opportunities for girls and women has not come at the expense of opportunities for boys and men. The numbers tell the story: As female participation in high school and college sports soared between 1972 and 2010—proving that girls and women are just as interested in sports as their male peers—male participation continued to climb during the same period.
- Title IX doesn't mandate quotas or equal funding for all sports. Funding is proportional to the numbers of participants. If a men's program gets axed, it's because of that school's priorities, not Title IX mandates.

Lesser-known aspects of the legislation:

- Title IX requires equal access in education. Although women continue to be underrepresented in science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) occupations, girls' achievement in these subjects has soared. For example, in the 1980s only 1 in 13 seventh and eighth grade girls scored in the top 1 percent on the math SAT. In 2010, the number had skyrocketed to 1 in 3.
- One doesn't immediately associate Title IX with remedies against sexual harassment in schools. Yet sexual harassment and bullying can be a violation of Title IX, subject to enforcement by the Department of Education's Office of Civil Rights. It's a systemic issue that the American Association of University Women (AAUW) reported on last year in its landmark study, "Crossing the Line."

To see how Title IX legislation works, Title IX at 40: Working to Ensure Gender Equity in Education presents the latest data and recommendations, and is available at [www.aauw.org](http://www.aauw.org).

When I was growing up in England, girls watched boys play soccer. On a recent walk I watched a group of girls in shorts and gear bags climb a chain link fence to get onto a soccer field. Within moments their bodies were flying through the turf, ball in perpetual motion, vivid proof of Title IX at work.

*Roberta Guise*

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**August 2012**

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thur	Fri	Sat
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13 <b>International Book Club 7PM</b>	14	15	16	17 <b>Afternoon With Books 1:30</b>	18
19	20	21	22	23 <b>Mystery/ Adventure 7:30 PM</b>	24 <b>Internat'l Dinner 6 PM</b>	25
26	27	28	29			

*You must be the change you wish to see in the world.*  
**Mahatma Gandhi**



### Avanti Editor

AAUW

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 equity for women and girls. Its national membership of 100,000 seeks to advance equity for women and girls through advocacy, education, and research. 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. It remains the state's most active and diverse organization for women with 14,000 members in more than 150 branches, plus 6,000 members-at-large.



# AAUW

**AAUW advances equity for women and girls through advocacy, education, 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.

### Educational Foundation

In 1873, a prominent Boston physician, Dr. E.H. Clarke, wrote a book arguing that too much study would give women brain fever and render their children sickly, if they were to have them at all.

The Association of Collegiate Alumnae (AAUW's chief predecessor) fought this contention in 1885 and won, by gathering data from its members to show that they had suffered no ill health from their college and postgraduate education. In 1888, the Western Association of Collegiate Alumnae (founded here in San Francisco) made educational history by establishing the first graduate fellowship for women (given to Vassar graduate Ida Street).

California is still the largest contributor, enabling the Educational Foundation to award nearly \$3 million in grants to women at the dissertation or doctoral level, and to those pursuing career-related or community-based projects.

### 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.