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AAUW EMPOWERING WOMEN SINCE 1881

THE SPHERE

Welcome to the Sphere Newsletter, the monthly e-blast sent to every member of the San Diego organization for a quick read of things to know and do in AAUW!

March joint program presents

2 women at top of their fields

Our March program will be a joint effort with the La Mesa-El Cajon branch and will feature two San Diego women leaders, San Diego County Sheriff Kelly Martinez and San Diego Tourism Authority CEO Julie Coker. The program is set for Saturday, March 9, at 9:30 a.m., at Foothills United Methodist Church, 4031 Avocado Boulevard in La Mesa.

Coker oversees her organization's efforts to promote San Diego as a top destination for meetings, conventions, overseas travelers and leisure visitors. The San Diego Tourism Authority is recognized as one of the best in the business and continues to set the standard for destination marketing organizations under Coker, who assumed the role in March 2020.

Coker's commitment to serving on boards gives her unique insight and notable influence in the tourism industry. In January 2023, she was appointed to the US Department of Commerce's US Travel and Tourism Advisory Board, joining thirty-one other leaders from the domestic travel and tourism industry in providing advice to the secretary of commerce on travel priorities. She also serves on the executive boards of the US Travel Association and Visit California, the boards of Meeting Professionals International, the San Diego Regional Chamber of Commerce, the San Diego Regional Economic Development Corporation, the San Diego Lodging Association, and Sharp Health Care.

Previously, Coker served as the president and CEO of the Philadelphia Convention and Visitors Bureau where she oversaw the 2017 NFL Draft and the 2016 Democratic National Convention.

From January 2018 to 2020, she served as co-chair for the US Travel's Meetings Mean Business Coalition and secretary-treasurer for International Association of Exhibitions and Events Executive Committee. From 2016 to 2019, Coker co-chaired the Shared Spaces Initiative to combat homelessness with Philadelphia's mayor, and in 2016, she served as the chair of the mayor's transition team for the Democratic National Convention.

Additionally, Coker is a member of the San Diego Chapter of The Links, Incorporated. In 2023, she received the Fearless Award from the San Diego Black Chamber of Commerce and was inducted into the All-Time Hall of Fame by Smart Women in Meetings.

In 2021, she was named a Phenomenal Woman in Business in the *San Diego Union-Tribune's* Phenomenal Women series. In both 2012 and 2019, the *Philadelphia Business Journal* named her among its Women of Distinction honorees. She was the 2017 United Negro College Fund Mayor's Ball Honoree for Civic Leadership and was named one of the *Network Journal's* twenty-five Most Influential Black Women in Business.

Coker is a graduate of Johnson & Wales University in Providence, Rhode Island, where she received a bachelor of science in hospitality management and graduated magna cum laude.

Martinez has served the residents of San Diego County and the Sheriff's Department since 1985. She began her career as a deputy working in the jails and then began her first patrol assignment serving the community of Fallbrook. Martinez spent twenty-two years at the rank of deputy sheriff, working in several assignments, including gang investigations, narcotic investigations, and criminal intelligence investigator.

As a sergeant, Martinez served the city of San Marcos before her selection to supervise in the Special Investigations Division. Her next assignment was to investigate employee misconduct in the Sheriff's Internal Affairs Unit before being promoted to lieutenant. As a lieutenant, Martinez served the cities of Encinitas, Del Mar, and Solana Beach as well as the communities of Rancho Santa Fe and Valley Center.

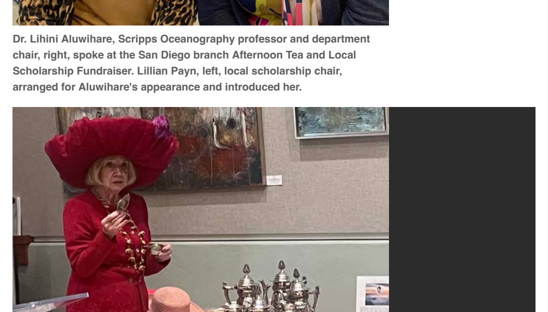
After achieving the rank of captain, she served the communities of Alpine and the back country of San Diego County. Martinez was promoted to commander and was assigned to oversee the Sheriff's Investigations Units. Her appointment to assistant sheriff put her in charge of the Law Enforcement Services Bureau. As undersheriff, she oversaw the day-to-day operations of the Sheriff's Department.

Martinez was elected sheriff in 2022. In that position, she is responsible for providing law enforcement services to 4,200 square miles of unincorporated San Diego County, nine contract cities, seven jails, and security for the courthouses. She is responsible for the department's $1.165 billion budget and more than 4,700 employees.

Martinez has a bachelor of science degree in criminal justice administration. She is a member of the International Association of Chiefs of Police, the San Diego County Chiefs' and Sheriff's Association, a lifetime member of the California State Sheriff's Association, Major County Sheriff's Association, and the Southwest Border Sheriff's Coalition.

She is a San Diego native and is married with one adult son.

Dr. Lihini Aluwihare, Scripps Oceanography professor and department chair, right, spoke at the San Diego branch Afternoon Tea and Local Scholarship Fundraiser. Lillian Payn, left, local scholarship chair, arranged for Aluwihare's appearance and introduced her.



Lynne Batchelor, branch recording secretary and Anglophile, adorned with her royally magnificent hat, explains the history of tea and teatime as she shows tea accessories and a fancy silver tea set.

The Afternoon Tea and Local Scholarship Fundraiser at the Serra Mesa/Kearny Mesa Library drew a crowd of 19 members and guests.

Research leader at Scripps speaks at tea,

encourages women to stay the course

By Lillian Payn and Donna Lilly

Trailblazing marine chemist, advocate for equity and diversity in higher education, wildlife photographer, and Prince's number one fan, Scripps Oceanography Professor and Department Chair Lihini Aluwihare spoke at our branch's Afternoon Tea and scholarship fundraising event on February 24 at the Serra Mesa/Kearny Mesa Library.

Dr. Aluwihare shared her career path, starting in Sri Lanka, then on to Zambia when she was seven and her father took a position at Zambia Consolidated Copper Mine. Aluwihare went to London for undergraduate studies, majoring in chemistry. For graduate studies, she found that there were more opportunities in the US.

Studying and graduating with a degree in chemistry and philosophy at Mount Holyoke in western Massachusetts opened doors to understand the challenges and opportunities that women encounter in STEM careers. She considered attending Columbia University but chose Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution on Cape Cod. Aluwihare received her Ph.D. from MIT-WHOI Joint Program in Oceanography/Applied Ocean Sciences and Engineering in early 2000.

After she completed her doctorate, Scripps Institution of Oceanography hired her as professor of Marine Chemistry to teach and conduct research.

As a chemist, her research methodology is unique at Scripps. She investigates isotopes as tracers of organic matter source and residence time. Her focus is on the diversity of microbial metabolisms in aquatic environments. Carbon, nitrogen, and phosphorus are of particular interest as indicators of the environmental oceanic issues.

Now a leader in her field, she is dedicated to her research on the production, transformation, and removal of aquatic organic matter and the role that biogenic molecules play in the ocean's biological carbon pump.

Dr. Aluwihare explained her research: "It's becoming increasingly important now as we think about how carbon flows in the ocean, and we're looking at how to manipulate the ocean's ability to take up carbon, to consider all the different processes that store carbon. And one of them is to try to increase the role of biology in storing carbon."

Aluwihare suggested that students can address the issues of climate change by having a good understanding of the ecosystem and finances on Wall Street. For example, kelp is affected by the loss of nitrogen influenced by heavy storms along the California coast. Students/researchers need to understand eDNA. Environmental analysis of kelp, coral, and other oceanic structures allows cost-effective and non-destructive biomonitoring with a high detection sensitivity in terrestrial and aquatic environments.

Aluwihare stated she is honored to serve as chair of the Academic Department of SIO, but she misses the lab research studies with students that gave her opportunities for fresh ideas. She advised her audience to continue mentoring and supporting students through scholarships and fellowships.

In discussing the path she took in her career path, she said, "Representation is so important. When I first came into this field, I was very conscious of the fact that I had been given an opportunity, so I did a lot of things early on in terms of outreach and supporting high school students and things like that because I felt that I needed to keep that door open for other women and people of color."

Aluwihare encourages women and people of color who are curious about a career in the world of science to stay open to opportunities, follow their passions, and believe in themselves and their abilities.

As she encourages young women to consider careers in STEM fields, she advises, "Microaggressions are real. What people do to make you feel bad about yourself, those experiences are all real, but don't let them get in your way of following what you love to do. It's an important thing to learn how to do, and it's not easy. You have to get to a place where you have enough faith in yourself to be able just to keep moving forward."

Gov Trek teams wrapping up

with electoral campaign contest

By Shauna Oenning Ruyle

It's no secret that US leadership has a diversity problem. AAUW California's Gov Trek is working to change this by investing early in girls' leadership development and awareness of careers in public service and elected office.

At Gov Trek 2024, young leaders from across California are delving into public service careers and elected positions at our 7-Saturday virtual political leadership program.

Participants teamed up February 24 to develop smart campaign strategies and relatable messaging for a realistic group campaign competition simulation. With internships and prizes up for grabs, it is a battle of #vision, #leadership, and addressing #policy issues that matter.

Gov Trek is wrapping up Saturday, March 16, from 10 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. with teams presenting their simulated electoral campaign packages in a contest. We'd like you to see them in action. You'll be amazed at the talent and enthusiasm of these remarkable young women when you hear their stump speeches, see their campaign ads, and voter outreach plans.

Come and see your future leaders! You'll even have a chance to vote for your choice for the winning team. See if your vote matches the judges' decision!

GOV TREK Finale & Campaign Competition 2024
Registration is required: [https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZwofuyvrjwpG9btHQh_1h nCfU0xwfi3GTzJ](https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZwofuyvrjwpG9btHQh_1hnCfU0xwfi3GTzJ)

Questions?
Email govtrek@aauw-ca.org

Lobby Days coming up in April; training in March

Lobby Days 2024 is scheduled for Tuesday, **April 2,** and Wednesday, **April 3,** and will be a wonderful opportunity to meet with state legislators and advocate for our priority bills. Meetings will be held via Zoom as well as in person in Sacramento.

A mandatory webinar training session will be held via Zoom on **March 25 (7-9 p.m.)**.
Participants will receive training materials prior to the webinar.

You MUST attend the webinar in order to participate.
Please register for the webinar below.

[Click HERE to register for the training webinar.](#)

Please contact publicpolicy@aauw-ca.org if you have any questions.
Thank you for helping share AAUW's voice on the issues you care about.

Voting on bylaws change opens April 3

This spring, AAUW members will be asked to vote on an amendment to the national bylaws recommended by the AAUW Board of Directors and AAUW Governance Committee that would open membership to any individual who supports AAUW's important mission of advancing equity for women and girls.

Voting opens on April 3 (Online voting is encouraged.) Voting closes on May 15, 9:00 a.m. PT and results will be announced online.

Amendment Summary

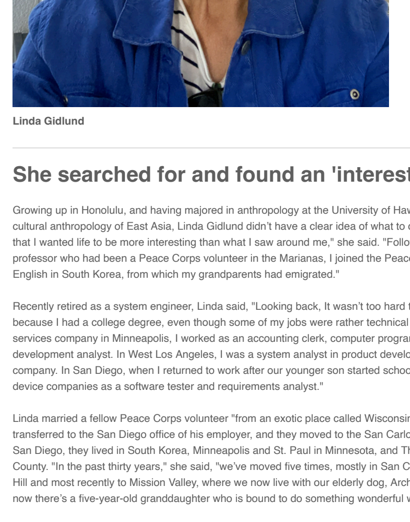
THE PROPOSED REVISION OF ARTICLE III WOULD:

- Replace the Individual Members paragraph of the Membership Qualification provision (currently Article III Section 2 a) with new language indicating the sole requirement for membership is support of AAUW's purpose.
- Delete the provision on Student Associates (currently Section 3) since students would be allowed to join as full members of AAUW thus eliminating the need for a Student Associate provision.
- Renumber Section 4 Dues as Section 3 and delete the reference to "categories of membership" in this section to permit the board to set different dues for student members as previously allowed when Student Associates were listed as a separate category rather than included as part of the Individual Membership category.
- Make no changes to Article III Section 1 or Sections 5 and 6 on Life Membership and Membership Decisions, except that Section 5 Membership Decisions, and Section 6 Affiliates would be renumbered as Sections 4 and 5, respectively, with no other change.

Member Spotlight

[Linda Gidlund](#)

*AAUW member since: 2006 and rejoined in 2018
*Fun Fact: Linda's next overseas travel destination is Provence & Lyon in 2025.



Linda Gidlund

She searched for and found an 'interesting' life

Growing up in Honolulu, and having majored in anthropology at the University of Hawaii with a focus on cultural anthropology of East Asia, Linda Gidlund didn't have a clear idea of what to do in life. "I felt vaguely that I wanted life to be more interesting than what I saw around me," she said. "Following the example of a professor who had been a Peace Corps volunteer in the Marianas, I joined the Peace Corps and taught English in South Korea, from which my grandparents had emigrated."

Recently retired as a system engineer, Linda said, "Looking back, It wasn't too hard to find a job back then because I had a college degree, even though some of my jobs were rather technical in nature. At a financial services company in Minneapolis, I worked as an accounting clerk, computer programmer, and product development analyst. In West Los Angeles, I was a system analyst in product development at an insurance company. In San Diego, when I returned to work after our younger son started school, I worked at medical device companies as a software tester and requirements analyst."

Linda married a fellow Peace Corps volunteer "from an exotic place called Wisconsin." In 1992, her husband transferred to the San Diego office of his employer, and they moved to the San Carlos neighborhood. Before San Diego, they lived in South Korea, Minneapolis and St. Paul in Minnesota, and Thousand Oaks in Ventura County. "In the past thirty years," she said, "we've moved five times, mostly in San Carlos but once to Bankers Hill and most recently to Mission Valley, where we now live with our elderly dog, Archie. We had two sons, and now there's a five-year-old granddaughter who is bound to do something wonderful with her life."

In 2006, Linda met a long-time AAUW member at a University of Minnesota Alumni Association event at the Mission Trails Regional Center. "She invited me to join her organization of interesting and vibrant women. I joined the La Mesa-El Cajon Branch but didn't participate much," Linda said. She left AAUW for some years when she was busy with family and work matters but rejoined in 2018.

"Equity for women is important," Linda said. "AAUW has helped me see that even in this day and age, there are women who struggle to afford college. I appreciate the efforts of all who work to offer scholarships and encouragement to such strivers."

Her message to new or potential AAUW members is: "If possible, take on a role or task to help run the branch.You'll learn interesting things, it's a great way to get to know other members, and it's for a worthy cause."

***Member Spotlight** is a monthly feature in The Sphere. If you have a suggestion of a San Diego chapter member to feature in coming months, please email Patricia Watts at pw4justice@yahoo.com*

Branch events

Check out the calendar of events in future issues of The Sphere to see what is coming up. Our most recent event was the Afternoon Tea and fundraiser at Serra Mesa/Kearny Mesa Library on February 24.

Calendar of Events

March

Joint branch program. March 9. 9:30 a.m. An intimate conversation with Julie Coker, CEO for San Diego Tourism Authority, and Kelly Martinez, San Diego County sheriff. Foothills United Methodist Church, 4031 Avocado Blvd., La Mesa.

Balboa Park Women's Tour. March 14, 20, 30. 11 a.m. to noon. Free tour to celebrate Women's History Month, focused on women's history in Balboa Park and San Diego. The public tour travels between treasured park landmarks and discusses the remarkable women who contributed to the park's rich history. The tour is hosted by the Balboa Parks Visitors Center and is in collaboration with the Women's Museum of California, San Diego History Center, and Forever Balboa Park. Tours meet at the Bea Evenson Fountain in front of the Fleet Science Center. Registration is required.

[Register Here](#)

Webinar Training Session for Lobby Days. March 25. 7-9 p.m. Via Zoom for those signed up for Lobby Days.

April

Lobby Days 2024. April 2, 3.

Voting begins on an amendment to the national bylaws. **April 3.**

THE SPHERE SUBMISSIONS

The deadline for submissions to The Sphere is the 15th of the previous month.
Please email submissions to Patricia Watts: pw4justice@yahoo.com

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Officers 2022-23

Listed below are the officers for 2022-2023. As you can see, we have a number of openings. If you know anyone who would like to help our wonderful branch, just let one of our Co-Presidents know.

Officers	
Co-Presidents	Jane Niemeier, Donna Lilly, Anne Hoiberg
Membership	Vacant
Finance	Sherry Eberling
Public Policy	Shauna Ruyle
Secretary	Lynne Batchelor
Chairs	
Sphere Newsletter	Patricia Watts
College & University	Donna Lilly
Scholarships	Lillian Payn
Tech Trek	Nanette Allen
Communications	
Historian	
Tech Outreach	

INTERESTED IN BECOMING A SAN DIEGO BRANCH MEMBER?

Become a member at an in-person event, and your national dues are cut in half! The total will be $74 for a new member if he/she joins at any in-person meeting. Total dues for 2022-2023 are normally $110. (Dues: national--$69 tax deductible + $3 for the action fund/state--$20/and branch $18).

AAUW is a community of more than 170,000 people standing strong for gender equity. Your membership makes our powerful voice even louder on critical issues affecting women and girls.

AAUW MISSION AND VALUES

OUR VALUES
Intersectional. Inclusive. Intergenerational. Empowering.
Though we are nonpartisan, we are not values-neutral: We fight to remove the barriers and biases that stand in the way of gender equity. We train women to negotiate for pay and benefits and to pursue leadership roles. And we advocate for federal, state, and local laws and policies to ensure equity and end discrimination.

OUR MISSION
Gender Equity & Economic Security
We've led the fight for fair pay and economic opportunity for women — and the battle continues: Women still get just 83 cents for every dollar paid to a man, and men continue to dominate the top roles and highest-paying professions.

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