

THE AAUW KEY

Palo Alto CA Branch

May 2016 • Volume 63 • Number 9



Tech Trek Dreams

Celebrating Tech Trek

The Branch's Tech Trek committee is happy to announce this year's awardees of our six camperships to Tech Trek! This year we interviewed 27 girls who were nominated by either their math or science teacher from these four schools: Jordan, Terman, JLS and St. Elizabeth Seton.

All the applicants filled out an application wrote 400-500 words on a topic that they found fascinating from either their math or science classes and met with our committee members. The essays were creative and fun to read and the girls a joy to meet.

<u>School</u>	<u>Awardee</u>
St. Elizabeth	Ashley Vega
Terman	Yasmine Alonso Brindha Jaeger
JLS	Duyna Mostaghimi Dayana Bazoco-Vazquez
Jordan	Jessica Fisher

This year, we also reached out to schools in the Ravenswood City School District, which serves East Palo Alto and eastern Menlo Park. Unfortunately, while 7 girls were nominated by their principals to Tech Trek (4 from Cesar Chavez Academy and 3 from East Palo Alto Phoenix Academy), none of the nominees followed through with an application. Later this spring members of the TT committee will meet with the district level administration for Ravenswood to see what we can do to better work with their schools next term.

This year's Tech Trek Committee: Mary Ashley, Harriet Bensen, Barbara Bowden, Betsy Colby, Marsha Duro, Barbara Evans, Judi Swope and Anna Zara

TECH TREK ESSAYS 2016

We are happy to share the application essays written by this year's six Palo Alto Tech Trek Campers. Along with completing an application form, the nominated girls were all asked to write 400-500 words about something that fascinated them in their math or science class. Their writing could take several forms: essay, journal entry, story or newspaper article.

Here are the first three essays; the next edition of *The Key* will include three more. All of our campers are currently in 7th grade and are 12 or 13 years old.



Black Holes – Brindha Jaeger, Terman

I have always found black holes interesting. From the time I first heard about them in cartoons, to the time in fifth grade when I actually learned about black holes. In fact, I *still* find them interesting. That's why I decided to write about them. Black holes fascinate me because they are so mysterious. If an object draws near the black hole, it gets sucked in. Or at least, that is what I thought before I was actually introduced to the science of black holes. In fifth grade, astronomers came to my class and demonstrated an experiment with a representation of a black hole. It was a thin black cloth held together at the ends by a wooden frame. There was also a shallow dip in the cloth portraying "the hole". The astronomers then rolled a small marble on

the cloth. I watched as the marble rolled deeper and deeper into the cloth gaining speed as it raced. It finally sank into the cloth. But where did it go? Many people imagine black holes as magnificent portals to some otherworld or dimension, but I have learned that they lead nowhere. I have learned that black holes are just enormous black orbs in space with an unfathomable gravitational field. Still, I wondered about them.

When I learned that black holes are regions of space-time from which nothing can escape, even, light, I thought black holes to be scary. I had even had nightmares about getting swallowed into a black hole; fortunately, as I got older, my dad started to shed more light on the subject and introduced me to escape velocity.

Well, he didn't exactly teach me about escape velocity in terms of black holes. He first taught me the equation: $G \frac{M}{R} = v_{esc}^2$. Of course I still wondered about black holes. So I decided to do some research on my own and found the CTC, or *Centre for Theoretical Cosmology*, the CTC taught me more about escape velocity, exploiting lots of valuable information. The CTC explained that the gravitational attraction increases when an object is condensed into a smaller volume, so the escape velocity for the object gets bigger. It makes it harder for things to escape, and eventually it reaches a point when even light, traveling faster than anything else, at a speed of 186 thousand miles a second, can't escape.

Black holes, even when I was in fifth grade, opened an astronomic window for me, and from that time I love to observe the night sky. And every time there is a solar eclipse or something cool happening in space, I will notice it.

From the moment that I stepped into room 730, and caught sight of a Neanderthal poster, I became curious to learn how science can explain the relationship between that picture and me. Starting from a young age, science and history books were among my favorite genres. Evolution fascinates me, because the science behind this theory unlocks the mystery of how we became such complex organisms.

Reading a picture book on *Homo sapiens* at an early age, peaked my curiosity. I was fascinated by the diversity and similarities of the species. Along with my interest, I had some questions that my parents could not explain to a seven-year-old. Later on I would thank them for allowing me to find out myself, which led to greater involvement in my scientific education. My intense curiosity drives me to learn more in depth about evolution.

One day while skimming through *Brain Pop*, I watched a video on Jane Goodall. Later on I discovered her breakthrough studies in a male dominated field, I began to appreciate her accomplishments more and more. Her maternal attitude towards chimpanzees was a key to her success in research. Wow, girl power! For example, when I go to school and see girls not raising their hands in science class, I try not to let that become me. Jane Goodall did not let her gender be a barrier for her and like her, I was to let my gender, instead, unlock new mysteries.

In summary, evolution fascinates me because it explains as to where and how we came to be, but also how as girls of our planet it is up to us to protect the Mother Earth for future generations. In the end, evolution engages me because I've been able to learn about the connections between our earliest ancestors and present day humans.

May 2016

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1	2 Mah Jong, 7:30 p.m.	3 Writers 1:30 p.m.	4 Evening Bridge	5	6 Board Meeting 1 – 3:00 p.m	7 Supper Club 7:00 p.m.
8	9 Drama Reading	10 Meditation 9:45 a.m. Mystery Books 1:30 p.m	11 Program About Islam Avenidas 7:00 – 9:00 See last page	12	13 Walkers 9:30 a.m.	14 Film Buffs 6:30 p.m. (NEW TIME)
15	16 Fam. History 11:45 p.m. Mah Jong, Evening Books, both 7:30 p.m.	17 Writers 1:30 p.m.	18	19	20	21
22 Wine Tasting 5 – 7 pm	23 Gadabouts	24	26	28	29	30
31						

The Board Meeting will be Friday, May 6 at Channing House, 850 Webster. Our hostess is Barbara Bowden. Valet parking is provided during construction. All branch members are welcome to attend. Note change of meeting day to FRIDAY!

With the exception of the Supper Club, you do not need to be a member of the section to attend a meeting, but call the hostess or section chair to see if there is space for you.

Monday Evening Books: Meets Monday, May 16 at 7:30 p.m. For **this month** we will meet at the home of Barbara Evans, 1096 Metro Circle, Palo Alto. The book for discussion is “The Dive From Clausen’s Pier” by Ann Packer. Please let Barbara know if you are coming or not. (856-0618).

Mystery Books: Meets Tuesday, May 10 at 1:30 p.m. at the home of Marcia Baugh, 490 Gary Court, P.A. Please let Marcia know if you are coming or not. (493-5125) or marciadbaugh@att.net

Drama Reading: We meet on the second Monday at 7:30 p.m. October through May. Call Mildred Saxman (799-7095) for further details.

Evening Bridge: Meets the first Wednesday of the month. More players needed. Call Wilma Milligan (493-6020) for further information.

Family History: The next meeting will be at CIBO, 3398 El Camino at 11:45 on May 16 for a no-host lunch. Topic is “Music Memories”. Members share stories from their families or general historic topics of interest. Please contact Betsy Colby for information at (325-5843) or elcolby@aol.com.

Film Buffs: Meets Saturday, May 14, at 6:30. at the Moldaw Residences, 899 E. Charleston, P.A. NOTE CHANGE OF TIME. Our hostess is Elsie Kent. Spouses are welcome. Call Marian Gex (324-7329) for information or email her (MarianGex@gmail.com) to be added to the list.

Gad-Abouts: Gad-Abouts meet year round on the fourth Monday of the month at 2 p.m to plan outings and adventures of all kinds. The next meeting will be April 25, 2:00 p.m. at Misao Sakamoto’s home, 4275 Suzanne Drive.

Please call Scotty Martinson (493-2902) for more information.

Mah Jong: Beginners and advanced players are invited to play Mah Jong, a Chinese tile game. Meets on the first and third Mondays at 7:30 pm. Please call Marcia Baugh for location and other details

Meditation: Meets the second and fourth Tuesdays, 10 a.m., at the home of Marcia Baugh, RSVP to Marcia Baugh (493-5125) or Marchiadbaugh@att.net. Call Charlotte Jackson (494-6973) for further information.

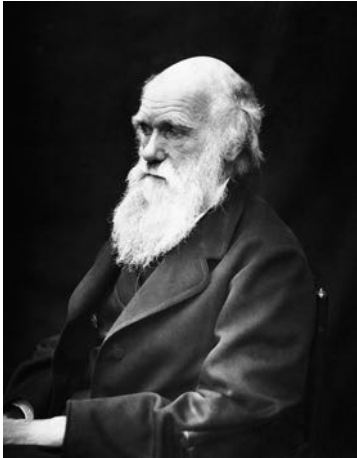
Supper Club: Meets on the first Saturday at 7 p.m. Call Sylvia Whitcher (948-4374) or Mary Morrison (493-0732) for information.

Walkers: Please call Mary Ashley (494-1829) for information or join the email list at meashley@pacbell.net.

Wine Tasting: Wine Tasting meets on the 4th Sunday of the month, from 5 to 7 p.m. **There is no meeting in December.** Call Carol Hansen, (328-0638) or Barbara Bowden (324-7585) for more information.

Writers: Meets Tuesday, May 3. at 1:30 p.m. and again Tuesday, May 17 at 1:30 p.m. Call Marcia Baugh (493-5125) or marciadbaugh@att.net for location and to RSVP.

Tech Trek Essays, Con't



By J. Cameron (Unknown) [Public domain], via Wikimedia Commons

Dayana Bazoco-Vazquez, JLS

There are many things that really interest me about science. Evolution fascinates me the most in science. Looking at how the earth evolved over time and how those adaptations helped us. That includes animals and our environment. We have evolved over the years becoming bipedal mammals

Charles Darwin was a naturalist and studied different animals and things in life; he came up with the idea of evolution. He studied how different animals evolved over time and how those adaptations can help them. Darwin noticed that tortoises seemed a little different in different places. While at the Galapagos Island, Darwin observed a tortoise on the island feeding on tall growing plants had a saddle shaped shell, which would allow their long necks to reach higher places. There are other different animals that evolved around time like wales and mice. Mice for example come in different sizes and colors depending on the environment they live. If a brown mouse lives in a white sandy beach, that mouse would most likely die. But now that they have new adaptations, thanks to evolution, they would have a better chance of surviving.

I want to be able to do this, study how all the animals have evolved around the years they have been on this planet. See how the body structures and the environment affected the animal making it adapt.

Not only does evolution fascinate me but also the different parts of the brain. I did know that the brain controls the body. I didn't know it was a really hard working organ that controls the functions in your body. Cerebrum is divided into four sections those are called lobes. Frontal lobe, Parietal lobe, Occipital lobe and the Temporal lobe are what help the brain and body function. The Frontal lobe is in charge of problem solving, Temporal lobe is in charge of memory, the Parietal is in control of sensory like touch and the Occipital lobe is in charge of vision. Cerebellum controls balance and movement. Recently in science class, three neurologists from Stanford came and brought different animal brains and human brains so we can look at them. I found it interesting that the wrinkles on our brain are there because the brain doesn't have enough space to store all our knowledge so the brain creates wrinkles. These are just some parts in our brains but I found the lobes interesting. The Occipital lobe, in charge of vision, is in the back of our head. The reason I found it amusing is because it would make more sense for that lobe to be in front of our head since our eyes are there. This really inspired me to become a neurologist and study the brains of animals including humans specifically on how the brain controls our emotions

World Affairs Council Meeting

Date: Wednesday, May 4

Location: Los Altos Youth Center,

1 North San Antonio Rd., Los Altos

Time 7:00 p.m. refreshments

7:30 p.m. Program

“China’s Challenges” with Dr. Thomas Fingar, Shorensteing Distinguished Fellow, Freeman Spogli Institute for International Studies at Stanford University.

Presented by

The Peninsula Chapter of the World Affairs Council.

More Events of Interest

AAUW Board Meeting

Friday, May 6
Channing House
Tenth Floor Lounge

Program on Islam

Date: Wednesday, May 11
Location: Avenidas Event Room Downtown
450 Bryant Street Palo Alto

Time: 7:00 – 9:00 p.m.

A social and cultural event to help us start to achieve a higher level of understanding with our Muslim neighbors.

Co-sponsored by Kiwanis of Palo Alto, the motivation for creating this event is the growing occurrence of bullying and mistreatment of Muslim children in the nation's schools. The mission of the Islamic Networking Group (ING) is "Educating for Cultural Literacy".

Editor's Note:



educating for cultural literacy
and mutual respect

On April 21, I was a guest at the Kiwanis Luncheon when Maha Eigenaidi spoke to us about her founding of the organization Islamic Network Group (ING) and gave us a brief summary of the information that will be shared further on May 11. She is a lovely and dynamic woman whose mission is to dispel untruths about her religion.

I know some of you will hear about this through Avenidas, but I felt that it was important to spread the words to all our members.

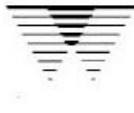
Some of us in the branch have talked about creating a program of this sort; in the absence of our own program, I strongly advise you attend this. Perhaps we will get some ideas for the future.

Although bullying was mentioned above, I feel one of the unrecognized problems is just the lack of friendliness that comes from ignorance. In the AAUW Girl Scout Science Club, we had a sad instance of this. A fifth grade girl whose mother brought her to the club meetings from Fremont was never made to feel welcome by the other girls.

I think because she wore the modest clothing and head cover that her culture expects of her, it was difficult for the other girls to treat her as one of them. It was almost as if they were afraid of her, afraid of the difference. When this girl decided not to continue in the club, it was disappointing for her and for us because we knew that we had failed her and the other girls also. It could have been a very special learning experience for them.

I hope to find ways to do better in the future. Maybe the May 11 program will suggest some ways to connect children and allow them the experience of friendship across religious and ethnic lines.

--Barbara Evans



The Key
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AAUW promotes equity for all women and girls, lifelong education and positive societal change.

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Section Calendar items may be sent to the Calendar Editor by the 10th of the month at: calendar@aauw-paloalto.org

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I certify that the above information is true and complete: Barbara Evans, Editor.