


THE CONNECTION
 of California

WEST CONTRA COSTA BRANCH

AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF UNIVERSITY WOMEN

Advancing gender equity for women and girls through research, education, and advocacy
westcontracosta-ca.aauw.net

VOLUME XXXX

NEWSLETTER 4

JANUARY-FEBRUARY 2025

**COME MEET EMILY CORWIN AND LEARN ABOUT
THE SAN FRANCISCO ESTUARY INSTITUTE**

Saturday, January 18, 2025

Christ Lutheran Church
 780 Ashbury (at Stockton), El Cerrito
 10:00 a.m. meeting gathering
 10:30 a.m. Talk



Emily Corwin, Director of Strategic Initiatives at the San Francisco Estuary Institute (SFEI) in Richmond, will discuss programs to restore the resilience of the Bay and its landscapes. Emily has over 20 years experience as a Water Resources engineer, with first-hand knowledge of the Bay Area’s water, wastewater, and stormwater sectors. She currently leads Nature-based Solutions Task Force at the American Society of Civil Engineers.

Emily studied Hydrology at the University of California, Davis, and Environmental Engineering at the University of California, Berkeley.

Maria LaForge, Program Co-Chair

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

We continue with our 2024-2025 Programs (See list Page 3). On **Saturday, January 18**, Emily Corwin spoke on behalf of the San Francisco Estuary Institute in Richmond. See write up on Page 1. And on **Saturday, February 15**, Crystal Merrill, Executive Director of the Read-Aloud Volunteer Program, explored how the joy and love of learning is fostered in children through the Program's reading and storytelling. See write up Page 6.

Our Board meetings on the fourth Tuesday of the month will remain via Zoom. The **next Board Meeting is Tuesday, April 22 at 2:00 pm**. There will be no Board meeting in March since I am out of town. All members are invited to attend.

Thanks for all your support. We are very busy people and have many commitments. I appreciate all you do for the Branch. I enjoy working with such special women.

Roberta Montgomery, President



IN MEMORIAM



MARIANNE SELF

I am sorry to report that Marianne ("M") Selph passed away on September 9 2024. M was an active member for over 18 years. She is our Public Policy Officer and regularly attended our Zoom Board meetings. She will be missed.

CAROLYN LINNARD

We were notified by **Carolyn Linnard's** son, Garth Tissot, that she had passed away on September 3, 2023. He said AAUW was very dear to her. Carolyn was an AAUW 50 year member.

Roberta Montgomery, President

2024-2025 PROGRAMS AND EVENTS

All meetings are at 10:00 am at Christ Lutheran Church, 780 Ashbury (at Stockton), El Cerrito. The talk starts at 10:30 am.

September 21, 2024

Our six WCCUSD middle school girls who attended the Tech Trek STEM residential Camp at Sonoma State University June 23-29, shared their camp experiences.

October 19, 2024

The League of Women Voters of West Contra Costa presented the California November 5 Election Propositions Pros and Cons.

November 16, 2024

Sisters in Crime mystery writer Ellen Kirschman talked about her new book and shared her unique and fascinating path to writing mysteries.

December 14, 2024 2-4 pm

Holiday Party at the home of Judy and Floyd Sam. Books and donations were collected for the Read-Aloud Volunteer Program and the Grant Birthday Book Project.

January 18, 2025

Emily Corwin spoke on behalf of the San Francisco Estuary Institute (SFEI) in Richmond.

February 15, 2025

Crystal Merrill, Executive Director of the Read-Aloud Volunteer Program, explored how the joy and love of learning is fostered in children through the Program's reading and storytelling.

March 15, 2025

Bonnie Cherry, an AAUW Fund Scholar, is researching law, organizations and security in Indian Country as a UC Berkeley PhD Candidate in Law.

April 26, 2025

Tess Taylor, El Cerrito's current Poet Laureate, will discuss the Poetry Program she has developed at El Cerrito High School and a Community Literary Series as well as her poetry.

May 17, 2025 11:30 am

End-of-Year Luncheon Romano's Macaroni Grill - El Cerrito Plaza.



CALENDAR – MONTHLY EVENTS

JANUARY 2025:

Meeting: 10:00 am at Christ Lutheran Church **Saturday, January 18, at 10:30 am** Emily Corwin will speak on behalf of the San Francisco Estuary Institute in Richmond. See write-up Page 1

Lunch Group: **Tuesday, January 21, 12 noon** at Bua Thai Kitchen, 1045 San Pablo Avenue, Albany RSVP Maria (cell: 1-925-899-3278; d.laforge@sbcglobal.net).

Board Meeting: using Zoom **Tuesday, January 28, 2025 at 2:00 pm.** All members are invited to attend.

FEBRUARY 2025:

CalACS-WCC Virtual Meeting: **Saturday, February 8, at 11:00 am** Karina Krarup Sand's talk: "*DNA-mineral interactions at the molecular level: implications for bacterial evolution and ecological inference*". See Write-up Page 5.

Meeting: 10:00 am at Christ Lutheran Church **Saturday, February 15, at 10:30 am.** **Crystal Merrill**, Executive Director of the Read-Aloud Volunteer Program, will explore how the joy and love of learning is fostered in children through the Program's reading and storytelling. See Page 6.

Lunch Group: **Thursday, February 20 at 12 noon** at H & J's Restaurant, 10841 San Pablo Avenue, El Cerrito. RSVP Maria (cell: 1-925-899-3278; d.laforge@sbcglobal.net).

Board Meeting: using Zoom **Tuesday, February 25, 2025 at 2:00 pm.** All members are invited to attend

MARCH 2025:

Meeting: 10:00 am at Christ Lutheran Church **Saturday, March 15, at 10:30 am** Bonnie Cherry, an AAUW Fund Scholar, will talk. She is researching law, organizations and security in Indian Country as a UC Berkeley PhD Candidate in Law.

Lunch Group: **Tuesday, March 18 at 12 noon** at Suzette Crêpes Cafe, 1226 Solano Ave. in Albany. RSVP Maria (cell: 1-925-899-3278; d.laforge@sbcglobal.net).

SUNSHINE

Know someone who needs a note? Sally Dunham is our Sunshine Chair and will send cards on behalf of our branch. If you know of a member in need of a get well, condolence or congratulations card, contact Sally at (510) 758-4094 or sallydunham1@gmail.com.

HEAR KARINA K. SAND'S TALK

DNA-mineral interactions at the molecular level: implications for bacterial evolution and ecological inference

The California Section American Chemical Society
Women Chemists Committee

Virtual Meeting
Saturday, February 8, 2025
10:30 am Chatting
11:00 am Talk and Discussion

Our member Elaine Yamaguchi has invited us to attend this CalACS-WCC virtual meeting. Information about Karina K. Sand, PhD and her talk is below. All are welcome! Please visit the CalACS website www.calacs.org to register for this meeting. **Register before Thursday, February 6, 12 noon.** The ZOOM link will be sent out by Brown Paper Tickets on or before the day of the event.

About the Speaker

Karina Krarup Sand, PhD, is an Associate Professor at the Globe Institute, Faculty of Health and Medical Sciences, University of Copenhagen, specializing in interdisciplinary research. Her work embodies a unique integration of geochemistry, microbiology, and evolutionary biology to understand and address pressing global health and environmental challenges. Sand's pioneering research in these fields has established her as a leader in the study of processes at the intersection of environmental surfaces and life. Dr. Sand also serves as Chair for Globe's Diversity Programme.

Her pioneering work in studying bio-mineral interactions at the molecular level has recently provided insight into parameters important for DNA preservation in sediments, and how sediments can be considered spatiotemporal gene archives for bacteria. Her work on studying the mechanisms driving bacterial uptake of genetic material stored on mineral surfaces link sedimentary processes to bacterial evolution. The work also provides an explanation for the observed extensive dissemination of antibiotic resistance genes in our environment and is directly relevant for mitigation strategies.

She is an advocate for collecting knowledge that is stored and curated in distinct research silos and co-founded the evolutionary geobiology consortium to drive knowledge collection aiming to address oncoming global threats to human and ecosystem health. Dr. Sand earned her MSc in Geology and her PhD in Chemistry from the University of Copenhagen. She has held various research and academic positions in Denmark, the United States, and the United Kingdom. Her career includes prestigious research fellowships. Her international experience has equipped her with a global perspective and an expansive network within the scientific community

Abstract

Extracellular DNA (eDNA) in the environment degrades rapidly unless adsorbed onto minerals, which enhances its stability. Currently there are vast amounts of DNA molecules preserved in our sediments. This mineral-bound DNA, although widely used to study past ecosystems, also poses significant implications for bacterial gene acquisition. By utilizing interfacial geochemistry, molecular level and bacterial approaches, this study explores (1) the role of mineral surfaces in DNA preservation in sediments and (2) the potential of soil bacteria to acquire mineral-adsorbed DNA through horizontal gene transfer (HGT).

The findings demonstrate that mineral surface properties substantially impact DNA stability, offering new insights into sedimentary DNA taphonomy. Understanding these interactions can enhance environmental DNA (eDNA) applications for ecosystem. Moreover, our data show that bacterial transformation of mineral-adsorbed DNA can lead to genetic diversity, and is influenced by mineral surface properties. These insights suggest that mineral-facilitated HGT could serve as a pathway for bacterial evolution, potentially affecting gene dispersal over extended temporal and spatial scales. In such an evolutionary scenario mineralogy and interfacial geochemical processes become central to the evolutionary process of maintaining fitness.



COME MEET CRYSTAL MERRILL AND LEARN ABOUT THE READ-ALoud VOLUNTEER PROGRAM

Saturday, February 15, 2025

Christ Lutheran Church
780 Ashbury (at Stockton), El Cerrito
10:00 a.m. meeting gathering
10:30 a.m. Talk

Crystal Merrill, Executive Director of the Read-Aloud Volunteer Program, will explore how the joy and love of learning is fostered in children through the Program's reading and storytelling.

Crystal is a product of WCCUSD, graduating from El Cerrito High School, which in part drives her interest in giving back to the school district. While getting her PhD from UC Santa Barbara (Materials, Engineering Department), Crystal did a 2 year stint at the University of Cambridge as a Visiting Scholar (senior graduate student to her advisor who moved universities), so she's lived outside of California... for a little while. Crystal's been with Read-Aloud since 2012, first as a volunteer, and moved through the ranks to become Executive Director in 2019.

Maria LaForge, Program Co-Chair



2025 Tech Trek Program: In November we requested 6 camper spots at Sonoma. Six was the maximum number of campers each branch could have at each residential camp. We also felt that six was most likely the number of campers we could select since we are still redeveloping relationships with the west county schools. We were **allocated 6 camperships at Sonoma June 22-29 camp**. The cost per camper is \$1,300. We have enough money to cover the costs. We completed the MOU. We are currently getting nominations from teachers at Korematsu and Mira Vista. We also hope to contact Pinole and DeJean.

Roberta Montgomery Tech Trek Coordinator

MEMBERSHIP DIRECTORY UPDATES

The Board decided that we would not print a new Directory. We will continue to use the **2019-2020 Directory with gold cover** that Ellen Mills and her husband Paul printed. Member information updates will be published in the Newsletter. I have extra copies of the 2019-2020 Directory. Let me know if you need one. **Note Diane Ichiyasu and Susan Walenta have new addresses. See below.**

All changes to date:

CORBIN, ROSEMARY **474 Western Drive, Richmond 94801, (510) 520-0404**

DADZIE, MEIGAN **PO Box 7273, Berkeley 94707, greenledger@gmail.com**

ICHIYASU, DIANE **2100 San Pablo Ave Apt 429, Berkeley 94702**

PLAYER, PATRICIA **(707) 603-8518** (new landline phone number)

SOUTO-MARTINEZ, MARTHA (Marty) **marthasoutomartinez@gmail.com** (not marty)

WALENTA, SUSAN **1100 San Pablo Ave #306, Albany 94706**

WEINTRAUB, MARSHA **marsha.weintraub@gmail.com** (email in the directory has an extra "e" at the end of her last name)
