

The Lodestone

December '25



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As mentioned at our November meeting, some Interest Groups will be closing out the year with their own small celebrations. Here's a summary of those and a nudge to you to join in! A great time of year to do a little exploring. Just call the coordinator and let her know--there is usually space for all!

Arts and Crafts Our holiday gathering is being held on Thursday, **Dec. 4th**. Come and meet some of the crafty women in the group! You might even see a few of our creations. We are having a potluck which will start at 11 am at the home of Teri McConnell. RSVP required.

Books: Mostly Fiction Our December meeting will be both festive and philanthropic. Members bring a used wrapped book for an exchange game. Additionally, members can bring a book to donate to Bright Futures for Youth, appropriate to any of the varied participants: The Friendship Club, NEO, and SAFE. The donated books will be delivered to Bright Futures for Youth after our **Dec. 11th** meeting.

Books: Non-Fiction Monthly, we share our thoughts on our latest read and enjoy a few tasty snacks. Our last three books have been fairly serious. We are looking to lighten things up in December by

reading *Raising Hare*, A Memoir by Chloe Dalton.

Working from home during the COVID lockdown, Chloe rescues and raises an infant hare, initiating a unique and lasting bond. This story is sure to bring joy!

Garden Group The Garden Group explores everything about plants and gardens with speakers, tours and some garden crafts. In November, we usually make wreaths. In December, we gather at a nursery cafe to enjoy holiday decorations and everything garden while we share a lovely lunch together (see photo, next page).

Hiking The Hiking group is closing out 2025 after enjoying hikes on the South Yuba Trail, Rowton Peak, Malakoff Diggings, the Independence Trail, and other destinations high and low. For 2026 we are looking forward to adventures at Fairy Falls, Foresthill Divide, Ananda Trails, Cascade Canal, and other beautiful places! Come and help us fill up our schedule at our **Dec 10th** planning meeting. For more information or to RSVP please contact marymenconi@gmail.com.

See next page for the other Interest Group greetings.



AAUW advances gender equity through education, economic security, and civil rights. See National's 2025 Strategic Plan: [2025 AAUW Strategic Plan](#) – [AAUW: Empowering Women Since 1881](#)

holidays HAPPY

Books: Evening

We take a break during the holiday season so are currently on hiatus. We'd love to have you join us in February, when we return. We meet at the home of Cathy Kalt in Nevada City. We are a smaller group, perfect for those who have obligations during the day. When we return in February we will be discussing *Ministry of Time* by Kalliane Bradley. We'd love you to join us! Please contact Kit Lofgren if you have questions or need more information. 408-209-2607 or kit@usellogic.com

Gallivanterers

To gallivant: To go about in search of amusement or excitement. That is what we do! This group includes singles and couples and we are open to all sorts of activities. There are physical experiences such as kayaking, biking, dance lessons.... There are cultural activities such as theater, dining, historical sites visits. There are intellectual activities such as escape room, speakers and learning new skills. And there are activities just to have fun such as game nights, BBQ's and karaoke. We do ask that as a member you occasionally take the lead on planning an event. I, Deb Cubberley, would be happy to help you organize the event but it will be the members that are responsible to brain-



Holiday lunch for the Garden Group at High-Hand Cafe/ Nursery, Loomis, December 2024

storming the events and making the initial arrangements for the activity. So, come join us and share your ideas for some great gallivanting.

Great Decisions

We are kicking off our year on Jan. 27. In our first meeting, we'll be covering Chapter 1: "America and the World: Trump 2.0 Foreign Policy," a topic rich for discussion.

Writing Group

Aspiring writers or writers wanting to work on their craft...we have opportunities each month to simply write together and opportunities to have your writing critiqued. Build your skills and connect with other members. Come join us!

AAUW Nevada County Board Officers and Chairs

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Co-Presidents	Carol McMillan & Diane Kellegrew
Secretary	Ann Gould
Finance	Peg Flanders & Karen Smith
Programs	Karen Hull
Membership	Lani Howard

APPOINTED OFFICERS

AAUW Fund	Jo Ann Schilling
Communications	Katherine "Bup" Greenwood
Facilities/Hospitality	Pamela Hertzler
Fund Development	Carol McMillan
Governance	Open
Interest Groups	Sue Van Son
Local Scholarship	Lisa Turlo

Lodestone

Public Policy
Publicity
Tech Trek
Website

Cece Royal

Melanie Heckel & Carolyn Feuille
Martha Rees
Martha Rees
Cece Royal

STANDING COMMITTEES (NON-BOARD FUNCTIONS)

Directory & Database	Emily Frost
Event Coordinator	Nancy Jeffery
Historian	Shirley Zeff
Photography	Sue Miller
	Martha Rees
	Bernadette Sylvester
Sponsorship Coord.	Jennifer Wilkerson
Ways and Means	Karin Quinn

As the calendar year comes to a close, here in our AAUW Branch, we have much to reflect on and celebrate.

Our programs informed and inspired, bringing in new members and enthusiasm. Tech Trek provided a life-changing week of STEM activities to seven young women at UC Davis and broadened the horizons of dozens more in Nevada County through a collaboration with Bright Futures for Youth. Our peerless Local Scholarship team awarded a record 29 grants totaling over \$75,000. Efforts to influence legislation at the national and state levels protected higher education and advanced equity for women and girls.

These efforts come at a cost and to cover them, we plan a major fundraising event, Quiz-ine, to take place in March (see separate article in this issue). We will raise funds for scholarships, as well as national initiatives and Branch expenses at a creative and fun event combining trivia, a baking contest, and silent

auction. However, if like me, you like to make many charitable gifts at year's end, I encourage you to use our **Donate** button or send a check payable to AAUW Nevada County to AAUW-NC at P.O. Box 326, Grass Valley, 95945. If you want to benefit a specific effort, please indicate in the Note field provided online, or on the "For" line of your check. Specific areas include:



*Carol McMillan
Co-President*

- Local Scholarships
- AAUW Funds for national initiatives
- Where Most Needed to have the Board decide where to apply your gift.

Thank you for everything you do for our organization.

I look forward to another great year ahead.



North Ridge Country Club, 7600 Madison Ave. Fair Oaks

You are invited! AAUW Fund Luncheon

Sponsored by your Capital Counties Interbranch Council

Saturday, January 31, 2026

11:30 – 2:00 PM

Registration, Silent Auction: 11:30

Luncheon begins at noon

Keynote speaker: *Deanna Arthur, California AAUW Fund Director, explains the complexity of AAUW Funds with updates on where the money is most needed.*

Scholars: *two current AAUW Fund Recipients share their educational journeys.*

Reserve your spot today; deadline for reservations is **January 20, 2026**. Eventbrite link up in December. To reserve & pay by mail, make your \$35 check payable to AAUW Sacramento & send to AAUW, P.O. Box 7872, Auburn, CA 95604.

Name _____ Branch _____
Phone _____ email _____



Please indicate your menu choice:

- ☐ Chicken Marsala w/mashed potatoes & veggies
- ☐ Butternut Squash Ravioli w/grilled veggies
- ☐ Shrimp Louie, 1000 Island dressing on side
- & Limoncello cake OR Fruit Cup (circle one)



So much news to report this month!

NATIONAL GOOD NEWS

The November election has spread hope that the U.S. has turned the corner with the election of candidates and a proposition that align with AAUW's mission and policies, which include increased representation of women in leadership roles:



1. Abigail Spanberger was elected Virginia's first woman governor with a 15 point lead over her opponent, and Ghazala Hashmi became the first Muslim woman elected to a statewide office in Virginia.
2. Mikie Sherrill becomes the second woman governor in New Jersey history.
3. Mary Sheffield will be Detroit's first woman mayor.
4. California voters overwhelmingly passed Proposition 50. Although this happened in California, there are nationwide implications that could help in upcoming elections to support AAUW's mission.

CALIFORNIA

This year, AAUW's lobbying efforts ended with mixed results.

BAD NEWS

First, the bad news. Our A-priority support bills that were vetoed or gutted:

SB 771 was vetoed. This was sponsored by AAUW-CA and would have held social media companies liable if their algorithms aid or abet users who are intimidating or threatening others in online spaces.



Melanie Heckel
Public Policy
Co-Chair

SB 418 was vetoed. This bill would have prohibited a health service provider from denying coverage for services based upon race, color, national origin, age, disability, or sex, including sexual preference or gender identity, intersex traits, and pregnancy.

AB 1098 was gutted and amended. This bill would have prohibited a post-secondary educational institution from discriminating against a student based on their current, potential, or past pregnancy or pregnancy-related conditions.

GOOD NEWS

Now, the good news! Of the fourteen AAUW-CA support bills that made it to the Governor's desk, eleven were signed into law including the following:

AB 621 heightens penalties for companies whose platforms distribute deepfake pornography.

SB 669 authorizes up to five rural hospitals throughout the state to partner with licensed birth centers to provide perinatal services in rural communities.

AB 260 enacts urgent protections to preserve access to medication abortion in California and shield patients and providers from hostile out-of-state or federal actions.

SB 627 bans law enforcement officers from wearing facial coverings during their duties – the first such law enacted in the nation!

(See next page for new local Public Policy focus.)

LOCAL – SCHOOL BOARD PROJECT

AAUW-CA is strongly supporting the School Board Project to enlist AAUW members to help schools and school boards navigate these difficult times in a way that supports equity and inclusion for all students. I am proud to report that our own member, **Cornelia Woodworth**, has joined the Public Policy Committee to take on this role. Not only is Cornelia already an elected school board member of the Nevada City School District (K-8) working for excellence, she is now monitoring the meetings of the Nevada Joint Union High School District. After monitoring two NJUHSD meetings she reported that:

1. Several members of the public spoke about feeling terrorized by ICE and asked them to adopt a policy similar to Tahoe-Truckee's District outlining various policies and legal foundations for how the district keeps Tahoe-Truckee students safe. By law, ICE is not allowed either to enter school grounds or to request student/parent data from a public school absent a court order.
2. Racism is a factor in our local high schools, as expressed by an ex-student and by Superintendent Dan Frisella, who reported on a racist incident across the street from Nevada Union H.S. with hateful and racist spray painting. He stressed that there would be punishment and an opportunity for restorative activities (cleanup).
3. Test scores are up in English Language Arts (ELA) and Math since the 2022-23 school year, but still concerning, with 63% in ELA and only 35% in Math meeting or exceeding standards.
4. Safety – The District has adopted anonymous community reporting tools (QR code, website, etc.)
5. Nevada Union has adopted: "Equity in diversity, strength in community" theme including a Campus Culture Solutions Committee comprised of students, staff and administration, and Bear River focuses on maintaining a safe, welcoming and supportive environment for all.

AAUW Fund: Year's End Message

This year has been a challenging time for AAUW's mission in support of women's rights, economic security, and access to higher education. Dismantling of the U.S. Department of Education undermines our ability to enforce civil rights laws and ensure equal educational opportunity. Critical programs are under attack, including Title IX, DEI initiatives related to college admissions, and campus programs supporting entry of women of color and women who are economically disadvantaged. The AAUW National office takes the position that we will not back down in our efforts to advocate for women through financial support and public advocacy. Nor will we stop trying to build on advances made by women through education and career development. If anything, we are doubling DOWN all over the country.

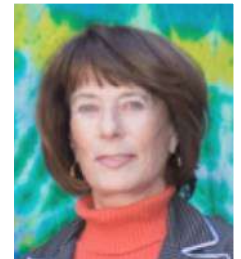
Our Branch has been generous in support of National's AAUW Fund through the years. We recognize that women scholars at colleges and universities are the leading edge for those who follow. They are the trailblazers opening up new positions for women in STEM, business, and political careers; they inspire other young women through bold and innovative leadership. There's no limit to what we women can do when we feel empowered. AAUW Fund provides multiple tools

and programs to help women empower themselves - including educational and career development grants, support of legal actions defending gender equity, salary negotiation workshops, and advocacy training.

In this current environment, where so much is under challenge, National is requesting help for two newer funds under the AAUW Fund umbrella: Defend Higher Education (Fund #4513) and Public Policy (Fund #4337). The primary fund we are asked to support is the Greatest Needs Fund (Fund #9110). This fund provides National with the flexibility it needs to direct funds to where they are most needed. Each of these three funds enables National to channel funds to specific current challenges. As we approach year end, please consider making a contribution to one or more of these funds.

Checks may be mailed to our Branch at P.O. Box 326, Grass Valley, CA 95945, payable to AAUW Fund, designating your choice of fund in the memo line, or contribute online by using the Donate button on our website; indicate the specific Fund in the notes field.

Thank you for your support!



Jo Ann Schilling
AAUW Fund Chair

Tavia Whitestone

by Ann Shulse

Tavia Whitestone is a freshman at Cabrillo CC majoring in Business Management and Art. She hopes to own an art business some day.

"Physiology is my favorite class right now. The teacher is awesome, and I love learning how our bodies work. I just finished an accelerated Intro to Business Management class. I'm also enjoying Intro to Marketing, English, and Intro to Library.

"Online classes are convenient, but I'll try for in-person classes next semester because they are more enjoyable and socially beneficial.

"Besides an art and dance class, I hope to take some classes that might give me new ideas."



Clara Mairs

by Melanie Heckel

"My time at UC Santa Cruz has been really meaningful so far.

"I've been balancing intensive Psychology coursework with research experience, dance classes, and mentorship roles on campus. I feel like I've grown both academically and personally this year.

"I'm also preparing for my study abroad program in Barcelona, which I'm incredibly excited for.

"UCSC has given me a strong sense of community, and I'm grateful for the support and opportunities I've found here.

"I'm looking forward to continuing my studies, building new experiences, and exploring the world abroad soon."



Saturday, March 21,
2026

4:00 ~ 7:00 pm

Peace Lutheran Church
Grass Valley



Spread the word to friends and neighbors that the FUN begins on **Saturday, March 21, 2026, from 4:00 - 7:00 PM** at the Peace Lutheran Church in Grass Valley! **QUIZ-INE!** Mark your calendar! (More details in January.)

Clever Trivia games (prizes), delicious Bake-Off foods (prizes), and an exceptional Silent Auction of generous personal services, get-aways, and other irresistible offerings! Quiz-ine is a chance to show off your baking talents or delight your taste buds and celebrate your brain's vast network of information! Engaging and entertaining!

What a thrill that this year our Branch positively affected the lives of 29 local women with over

\$75,000 in educational scholarships! Funding comes from generous donations and special events.

QUIZ-INE is our big, special event this year that will fuel the fire of our scholarship goals.

May every Branch member jump onto a team! You can volunteer to be a Bake-Off contestant or provide a silent auction item, to help with Catered Food, Trivia Games, Decorations, or Hospitality/ Set Up/Break Down.

Please email or text **Nancy Jeffery** najeffery@gmail.com or 530.802.1038 or **Carol McMillan** at mcmillancar@cs.com or 914.672.2190 with your choice. Please write "Quiz-ine" in the **subject** line of the email.
THANK YOU!

Interest Groups

Interest Groups are a great way to connect and build relationships. To learn more about any group, **click the group name** to open the AAUW-Nevada County Branch website

page. You can also find the coordinator's contact information in the AAUW Membership Directory or contact:
Sue Van Son sue@vansoninc.com.



Group	Day & Time	Activity
Arts & Crafts - Teri McConnell	1 st Thurs, 10:00 am	Dec: Holiday Party - Dec 4 Jan: Happy New Year! No gathering
Books: Evening - Cathy Kalt	4 th Wed, 6:00-8:00 pm	No meeting, resumes February
Books: Mostly Fiction - Robin Laverty-Reves	2 nd Thurs, 1:00 pm	Holiday book exchange and donation
Books: Non-Fiction - Peg Flanders	3 rd Tues, 1:00 pm	<i>Raising Hare: A Memoir</i> By Chloe Dalton
Gallivanterers - Deb Cubberley contact: Rose Tammi	Saturday, Dec 6 10 am - noon	Glass blowing demo/sales; possibly lunch?
Gardening - Brett McWilliams & Carol Raynsford	3 rd Thurs, 10-Noon	Holiday Luncheon at High-Hand Café/Nursery
Great Decisions - Susie Monary-Wilson	4 th Tues	No meeting: resumes in January. New workbooks ordered in late Oct.
Hiking - Mary Menconi	1 st Wed, 3 rd Mon	Holiday Walk TBD
Writing - Lisa Turlo	2 nd Mon, 10:00 am 3 rd Mon, 2:00 pm	Write-in Critique Writing

December 2025

Sun	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Sat
	1	2	3 Hiking: Holiday Walk	4 Arts & Crafts 10:00 am	5	6 Gallivanterers 10 am - noon
7	8 Writing 10-Noon	9	10 Hiking: 2026 Planning Meeting	11 Books: Mostly Fiction 1:00-3:00 pm	12	13
14	15 Hiking: TBD Writing 2:00-4:00 pm	16 Books: Nonfiction 1:00-2:30 pm	17	18 Gardening Holiday Lunch at High-Hand 10 am -1:00 pm	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31			



Gardeners



Hikers



Readers: Mostly Fiction



Arts & Crafters



Gallivanterers

Our expanding Branch

We are welcoming many new members this fall.

Here are those joining in October:

Bobbe Wilkes has a BS in biology and PhD in reproductive endocrinology from the University of Illinois. She is very involved in many organizations concerned with saving our environment. Her hobbies are hiking, gardening, science, botany, and geology. She is interested in participating in the Garden Group and the Hiking group as well as Branch help with educational opportunities and Tech Trek. She has a talent for writing.

Holly Mitten has a BA from Ohio State University and a JD from Case Western Reserve University. She had a private law practice but now enjoys cooking, hiking, reading, the arts and travel. She is interested in the Gallivanter and the Hiking Group. Her talents include event planning and public relations.

Gilda Buchanan received a BS in Electronics and Communication from the Mapua Institute of Technology in the Philippines. Her career included technical writing, courseware development and manufacturing management. Her hobbies are musical theater, music, and Bible studies. Her interests are in Tech Trek and Public Policy.

Cathy Lee Knight received a BA in English and Psychology as well as a MA from the San

Francisco Theological Seminary. She was a jail education teacher. She is interested in Arts and Crafts, Non-fiction Book Group, the Garden Group and Gracious Helpers.

Three new members joined at our November meeting:

Diane Virva has a BA in Spanish Education from Hartwick College. She retired from property management and CFO for Environmental Consulting. Her hobbies are landscaping, restoration and the outdoors. She is interested in Arts and Crafts, the Garden Group and the Hiking Group.

Eva Lamm-Ruben has a BA in Economics from UC Berkeley. After her work as a substitute teacher, she became involved in Hospice, SNMH Foundation, NC Historical Society, the Welcome Club, the Camera Club, and more. Her hobby is genealogy. She is interested in both book discussions. Her talent is photography.

Karen Bailey has a BA in Liberal Arts from CSUS and a teaching credential. After retiring from teaching, her hobbies are reading, hiking and photography. She would like to participate in the Non-fiction book discussions, Gracious Helpers and the Hiking Group.

Be sure to welcome these wonderful women at our interest groups and Branch program meetings.



New Member Orientation



SYRCL Exec Dir Aaron Zettler-Mann presented a program focused on restoring and preserving our natural environment, particularly our forests and water resources. [Click here for recorded program.](#)

Program Sponsors

These businesses and individuals have generously donated toward the support of our Branch. We are happy to thank them and acknowledge their support!

- [Bodacious Blooms Flower Farm](#), Karen Hull
- [Cassiopeia Skinspace](#)
- [Kimberly "Pepper" Pepe](#), Keller Williams Realty
- [KNCO News Talk 830](#)
- [Owens Estate & Wealth Strategies Group](#)
- [Ponderosa Physical Therapy](#)
- Allison Rapp
- [Sierra Tech Guy](#)
David Ball
- [Vital Health](#)
- [Westamerica Bank](#)
Bernadette & Ed Sylvester
- [Kim White, Attorney at Law](#)

