

The Lodestone

January 2026



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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](#)

Saturday January 17

9:30 AM—11:30

Peace Lutheran Church
828 West Main
Grass Valley



Understanding the Role of the Judiciary in Our Democracy

The primary roles of the judiciary in the American democratic system are to interpret laws, protect individual rights, ensure justice by resolving disputes fairly, check government power through judicial review, and uphold the rule of law. These functions help maintain the balance of power, safeguard constitutional rights, and ensure that laws are applied consistently and fairly, which are essential for preserving democracy.

Our January 17 program features three prominent judges who will speak on these roles and the importance of our judiciary in American democracy. Topics will include:

- An overview of federal and state court systems
- The difference in selection processes for federal and state judges/administrative judicial officers
- Services the Nevada County court provides to our community
- Judicial training and ethics
- How judges manage bias in legal decisions

We will also gain perspective on current legal decisions by looking at past Supreme Court cases. This discussion will provide an overview of stare decisis (the doctrine that precedent must be respected) and a perspective on Constitutional Crisis in American history.

See next page for judges' backgrounds.



Judge Babineau



Judge Kellegrew



Judge Punneo

*Huge thanks to our program sponsors:
Sierra Tech Guy, David Ball; and Kim White, Attorney at Law*

happy new year

Judge Kelly Babineau (cont.): Judge Babineau was appointed to the Nevada County Superior Court in 2023. She currently presides over Juvenile Dependency, Juvenile Justice, Family Law, and Domestic Violence.

Prior to her appointment, Judge Babineau worked predominantly in the criminal defense field, both as a public defender and private counsel since 1997.

Her work, both as an attorney and a judicial

officer, is fueled by her fundamental belief in public service. She strives to treat all that come before her with kindness, while ensuring all people are provided fair and equitable access to justice.

Her hobbies are hiking, gardening, cooking and hanging out with her husband and 4 cats.



Judge Kent Kellegrew (cont.): Judge Kellegrew was appointed to the bench for the Ventura County Superior Court in 1997 where he presided over civil, criminal, family and probate matters. Over his 24 years on the Bench in Ventura County he served as Presiding Judge of the Appellate Department and Supervising Judge of the East County Courthouse before his election as Presiding Judge for the entire Ventura Court system.

He was appointed to the California Appellate Advisory Committee where his expertise in constitutional law and trial procedure helped guide California's appellate practices. For 15 years, as faculty for California Judge's College, he taught Judicial Ethics and New Judge

Orientation, a required course for newly enrobed judges. He also was awarded Judge of the Year by the Ventura County Trial Lawyers' Association. Before joining the bench, Judge Kellegrew was a Senior Partner at Norman, Cormany, Hair and Compton specializing in complex litigation. Since 2020, Judge Kellegrew sits on special judicial assignment throughout California.

Judge Kellegrew and his wife live in Rough and Ready. His hobbies include making furniture and turning bowls.



Judge Jane Punneo York (cont.): Judge PunneoYork is one of the longest sitting trial judges in California. She served as a trial court judge in Fresno County for 22 years followed by 20 years serving as a trial court judge throughout northern California. She has worked in areas of family law, juvenile dependency, and criminal law.

As the presiding judge of the Central Valley Municipal Court, she served on the Executive Committee of the Fresno County Superior Court after trial court consolidation in 1990.

In Fresno County she organized and presided over the first treatment-based drug court. Twenty years later, she still hears from some of her drug court graduates.

Later, she also presided over the first felony level dedicated domestic violence case court calendar. She oversaw 5,000 cases in her 3.5 year assignment. She chaired the Fresno County Domestic Violence Roundtable for 4 years developing protocols among the various agencies involved in the prevention and

treatment of family violence.

Judge Punneo York also served on the Judicial Council of California, the administrative policy-making body of the state courts. She chaired Judicial Council Committees and California Judges Association Committees. She also served as a Special Master for the Commission on Judicial Performance on two occasions hearing disciplinary proceedings concerning other judges.

She has lectured in judicial education for the Judicial Council Center for Judicial Education and Research and the California Judges Association, the professional organization of state court judges; and for various agencies and organizations throughout her career.

She and her husband enjoy hiking and kayaking in the mountains. They have shared their home with many rescue dogs. She continues to ride her Morgan horse.



President's Message

At our September Branch meeting, members completed a survey inquiring about skills one had to offer our Branch. Almost all attending members responded. You identified an impressive range of skills from baking to bookkeeping, from graphic design to database development. To my delight, as a professional strategic planner, even strategic thinking was noted. Now, the work begins to match your talents and interests with the Branch's needs.

As Carol noted in the December *Lodestone*, the Nominating Committee will begin their work in January. The Nominating Committee is tasked with recruiting Board members, but they also are 'talent scouts' and assist with identifying where your skills and interests may be needed in roles from leader to committee member.

More and more, the work of the Branch is carried out by committees. While there is a leader that reports to the Board, the committee shares the work (and the fun). For example, the Local Scholarship Committee and Tech Trek Committee will soon kick off their recruitment phase. Without scholarship/ applicant readers and interviewers, this process could not happen. Similarly, the Branch Programs Committee work together to pull off eight robust Branch meetings/events a year. Do you see the tables decked out and the food ready when you come to a Branch meeting? Thank a Facilities or Hospitality team member. The Membership Committee reaches out to new members and members in need.

The Communications team is responsible for our vibrant website, *Lodestone*, and AAUW articles you read in the Union and on Yubanet. And there are even more opportunities to check out in public policy, historian, photographers, etc....

This year, we want to focus on the Fund Development Committee. This mighty group is responsible for recruiting businesses to sponsor our meetings and events. They will soon design a fundraising strategy to support scholarships in the upcoming year.

On a personal note, I joined the Branch in 2020 at the start of the pandemic. Being new to Nevada County, pandemic isolation left me without a way to meet people. When I heard that our Branch was starting a strategic planning process to address how to move forward post-pandemic, I asked to be involved. I am so glad I reached out. That act of volunteering was the beginning of many enriching friendships and a chance to use my skills for a worthy cause.

The Nominating Committee is searching for leaders and workers at all levels and across all committees. We LOVE self-nominations. If interested, reach out to aauwnevadacounty@gmail.com.

Help us work together to empower girls and women! --*Diane Kellegrew*



Diane Kellegrew
Co-President

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

Our System of Education Under Attack

Congress created the Department of Education 46 years ago. But today, the Trump administration is reducing/altering the role of the federal government in education.

The Department's purpose has been to:

- Enforce civil-rights laws in education;
- Administer federal student aid fairly; and
- Promote equal educational opportunities for all students

Over the past year, the Trump administration has worked to dismantle much of the Department's work and role. Some examples:

Civil rights are being ignored, such as not handling discrimination complaints, pressuring schools to dismantle diversity offices and discontinue teaching "divisive concepts."

Staffing cuts keep work from getting done.

Worse, shifting core work of the Dept. of Educ. to other agencies is creating gaps in enforcement. Threatening loss of funding or nonprofit status is being used to force compliance in schools.

Thanks to the Budget Reconciliation or "One Big Beautiful Bill," new barriers to students will shut out millions by slashing financial aid and various loan programs.

Despite the potential revenue to higher education institutions, international students are being denied visas, leaving many students blocked at borders.

AAUW is one of the longest standing organizations committed to improving the lives of women and girls. It is also the largest education funder of graduate work for women. AAUW is very concerned that these moves disproportionately harm women, students of color, low-income, LGBTQ+, and disabled students.

Threats to higher education:

The Trump administration has pressured many universities and colleges to follow Trump's proposed "Compact for Academic Excellence." Most schools have rejected the preferential treatment offered, and so may be threatened with a freeze on tuition and government funding, with cancellation of international student enrollment, and having to suppress criticism of conservative ideas and teaching.



*Carolyn Feuille
Co-Chair, Public Policy*

What You Can Do:

Please join your AAUW national, state and branch colleagues in preserving our rights and achieving equity.

Below are recommended Ways to **Take Action:**

- Read & explore the [AAUW Weighs In: Policy Updates](#) online. Pay attention to new alerts coming in January 2026.
- Attend virtual events,
- Support AAUW Public Policy Fund and the Defend Higher Education Fund.
- Write to and meet with elected officials, especially your members of Congress, and ask that they take charge of the Dept. of Education.
- Make donations – our dues don't cover Public Policy advocacy.
- Vote!
- Write letters to the editor and the Op Ed page of your newspaper.
- Become a Two-Minute Activist who writes succinct letters: <https://www.aauw.org/act/two-minute-activist/>.

Event alert!

Capital Counties InterBranch Council is sponsoring the annual AAUW Fund luncheon on Saturday, January 31 in Fair Oaks. This is a great opportunity to meet others from nearby branches and to hear from two of our Fund Recipients about their graduate studies and experiences and challenges. The keynote speaker, California's AAUW Fund Director, will present an overview of the various funds and explain which are most in need of contributions.

Our own **Karen Hull** has generously contributed a gorgeous photograph, professionally framed, of Monument Valley, Arizona, to be auctioned by our Branch at a Silent Auction held before the luncheon. The funds this item generates will go to our

Branch's AAUW Fund contribution.

See the "Save the Date" Flyer below for details about the Luncheon. There is a link to register for the event. You can select your menu choice at the same time. Registration closes on 1/20/26.



*Jo Ann Schilling
AAUW Fund Chair*

We'll arrange carpooling for anyone who is interested in sharing a ride. Email me if you need a ride or can be a driver at joannschilling@gmail.com. I encourage you to join us for a wonderful day!

—Jo Ann Schilling, AAUW Fund Chair



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.**

<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/aauw-fund-luncheon-tickets-1976494848297?aff=website>

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 _____



Menu choices (indicate at time of payment):

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



Moving into 2026

Happy New Year!!! Looking forward to getting the ball rolling on Tech Trek 2026. We plan to hold a committee meeting during the first week of January to finalize plans for the 2026 Nevada County Trekker selection process as well as review updates from AAUW CA. We have submitted the request for eight spots at the Tech Trek camp held on the UC Davis campus. In January, we will receive the Memorandum of Understanding, which lets us know how many spots we'll be granted at the Davis camp.

The Tech Trek camp at Davis is now called Camp Jemison. Last summer, alums who attended Tech Trek at UC Davis since it opened in 2011 had the chance to name the camp after an outstanding woman in Science, Technology, Engineering, or Math (STEM). The candidates either had a



Astronaut Mae Jemison

connection with AAUW or with UC Davis. **Mae Jemison**, engineer, physician, astronaut and **AAUW American Fellow**, received the

most votes out of the five candidates, which included: Helene Dillard, former UC Davis Dean of the College of Agricultural and



*Nancy Grace Roman
in her NASA office in the 60s*

Environmental Sciences; Jonna Mazet, veterinarian, epidemiologist and UC Davis Distinguished Professor of Epidemiology and Disease Ecology; **AAUW Member Nancy Grace Roman**, the first chief of astronomy at NASA and known as the “mother of the Hubble”; **AAUW Member Florence Sabin**, medical research scientist, who laid the groundwork for curing tuberculosis and was a pioneer for women in science with countless firsts and impacts in the field, including creating public health laws still in use today. If you get a chance, check out these extraordinary women.

There are lots of opportunities to volunteer locally or at Camp Jemison. If you're interested in learning more, please contact Martha Rees, mjkrees@yahoo.com.



*Martha Rees
Tech Trek Chair*

Committee News



*Lisa Turlo
LSC Chair*

The Local Scholarship Committee has been busy! **Lisa Turlo, Ann Shulse** and **Jennifer Wilkerson** have provided Nevada Union and Bear River High School students with tutoring on their scholarship application essays weekly since October. We wrap up in January when the application window

closes. Every week, I am inspired by these students!

Our leadership committee is gearing up for our LSC Full Team Meeting on January 21st at the Madelyn Helling Library from 12:00-3:00pm. Our reading teams will prepare for the latest batch of scholarship applications.

We are also preparing for the March 21st Fundraising Program, along with a huge team of volunteers. I hope to see you there!

Delaney Sherr — Running, Reptiles & Bugs! by Ann Shulse

Delaney Sherr enjoys environmental science, botany, ethnic studies, and track during her second year at Sierra College Rocklin. In the spring of 2026 she'll transfer to American River JC for the Outdoor Recreation Management program and join their track team.

Delaney enjoys college, making new friends, and being on the running team. Every Friday she has a hiking "date" with her Mom. During winter break she'll cross country ski and coach a young girl interested in running.



In the fall of 2026 she will transfer to CalPoly or Davis, majoring in environmental science, minoring in herpetology, and adding entomology as a second minor. If it's outdoors, she loves it!

Breanna Serger by Bonnie Curtis



Catching up with our second year re-entry scholarship recipient, Breanna Serger, we find her super busy with coursework and lamenting, "the biology class that is kicking my butt!"

She adds she is doing well overall and

expects to maintain her honor roll status at semester's end. Her plan is to transfer to CSU Chico in the fall of 2026 to earn her degree in social work.

Breanna is also a dedicated mother with two adult sons and a daughter in 4th grade. With her daughter's academic success as important to her as her own, she admits their mutual theme is SCHOOL. Determined duo!

Triniti Vega by Rhea Williamson

"Hi, my name is Triniti Vega, I'm currently a freshman enrolled at the University of Nevada, Reno. My experience with college thus far has been great; meeting new people and learning new things is really fun.

"I've decided to switch my major to kinesiology and I've also been an active member of the microbiology club. It's safe to say that I've been busy and having fun while away at college."



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	Jan: Happy New Year! No gathering Feb 5: Decorative Rock Wrapping
Books: Evening - Kit Lofgren	4 th Wed, 6:00-8:00 pm	No meeting, resumes February
Books: Mostly Fiction - Robin Laverty-Reves	2 nd Thurs, 1:00 pm	<i>I Cheerfully Refuse</i> by Leif Enger
Books: Non-Fiction - Peg Flanders	3 rd Tues, 1:00 pm	<i>Careless People</i> by Sarah Wynn-Williams
Gallivanter s - Deb Cubberley	Wednesday, Jan 28 9 am	Snowshoeing
Gardening - Brett McWilliams & Carol Raynsford	3 rd Thurs, 10-Noon	Master Gardener speaker
Great Decisions - Susie Monary-Wilson	4 th Tues	"America & the World: Trump 2.0 Foreign Policy"
Hiking - Mary Menconi	1 st Wed, 3 rd Mon	Jan 7 TBD Jan 19: Cascade Canal
Writing - Lisa Turlo	2 nd Mon, 10:00 am 3 rd Mon, 2:00 pm	Write-in Critique Writing

January 2026

Sun	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Sat
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7 Hiking : TBD	8 Books: Mostly Fiction 1:00-3:00 pm	9	10
11	12 Writing 10-Noon	13	14	15 Gardening Master Gardener speaker	16	17 General Meeting 9:30-11:30
18	19 Hiking : Cascade Canal Writing 2:00-4:00 pm	20 Books: Nonfiction 1:00-2:30 pm	21	22	23	24
25	26	27 Great Decisions 10-Noon	28 Gallivanter s Snowshoeing 9:00 am	29	30	31

New Book Group Possibility

Do you like a good **mystery**???

A new mystery book group is looking for members. If you are interested, please contact **Holly Mitten** by January 18th. She would like to

gather all potential members and have a conversation about how the group would work and when they might meet.

Email: holly@hollymitten.com

Phone: 650-799-6540



Arts & Craft, December Meeting



Arts & Craft, February Project



*Garden Group Holiday Lunch
High Hand Café, Loomis*



Hiking Group



*Mostly Fiction Book Group
Holiday donation of books to BFFY*



*Mostly Fiction Book Group
2025 December Social*



*Non-Fiction Book Group
December Discussion*

Get Involved: March Event & Membership



Saturday, March 21, 2026

4:00 – 7:00 PM, Peace Lutheran Church

**Sip, Savor, & Play at the lively
Quiz~ine Fundraiser!**



There'll be:

- ♦ A Trivia Game for Everyone
- ♦ A Bake-Off Contest for Everyone to judge
- ♦ A Silent Auction for Everyone
- ♦ Music, food, & drink for Everyone, of course!!

All to raise scholarships for women & girls!

Ticket sales in January 2026

NOW, WE NEED YOU—

Sprinkle YOUR magical talents over the fundraiser by:

- ♦ Offering a Silent Auction item (services like travel, yoga, exploring, dinners, classes, tickets, animal-care, consultations, etc.)
- ♦ Entering your scrumptious dessert in the Bake-Off contest!
- ♦ Joining a great team! Silent Auction and Bake-Off entries, Decorations!
- ♦ Considering which friends from the community you'd like to invite who would enthusiastically support education for women!

Please email or text your interest, suggestions, and/or choices soon to:

Nancy Jeffery

najeffery@gmail.com,
530.802.1038

or

Carol McMillan

mcmillancar@cs.com,
914.672.2190

Please write "Quiz-ine" in the subject line of the email.



Nancy Jeffery



Carol McMillan

A Great Way to Meet Members!



*Lani Howard
Membership Officer*

Joining the Membership Team is a good way to meet people in our AAUW Branch. We are the first welcoming faces that members and guests see when they attend a meeting. Since we have all the name badges for

members, we have a chance to associate a name with a face.

We help to recruit new members by giving them information about AAUW and our branch.

Let me know if you would like to join us in this new year. It is something you might be surprised to find is great fun!!

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!

- [Sierra Tech Guy, David Ball](#)
January Program Sponsor
- [Kim White, Attorney at Law](#)
January Program Sponsor
- [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](#)
- [Vital Health](#)
- [Westamerica Bank](#)



Ways & Means

Hello Everyone and Welcome 2026!



Karin Quinn
Ways & Means Chair

Here's a suggestion for your New Year's 'Wanting to change Everything' Resolutions. It just might be time to toss out that old AAUW T-shirt (wrong color, looking shabby) and get a new look. Or it could be time to don a new hat, get a spotless new apron for your wannabe gourmet look or start walking with a day pack. Many possibilities and remember

that the funds from these items help support our overhead expenses and rent for our great series of General Meetings each month.

Coming soon will be a new raffle item, description unknown now. And if any of you have a nice item you're willing to donate, please let me know.

You can see and purchase all these wares and more at our upcoming January General Meeting.

