

The Chico AAUW Grapevine



American Association of University Women - Chico Branch Vol. 33 No. 6 Feb 2021

Next Event...

Annual North Valley Interbranch Council Meeting
Saturday, February 6 at 1:00 p.m.
Zoom on a computer near you

AAUW advances gender equity for women and girls through advocacy, education, and research.

By joining AAUW, we belong to a community that breaks through educational and economic barriers so that all women and girls have a fair chance.

AAUW membership is open to all graduates holding a recognized associate (or equivalent), baccalaureate, or higher degree from a qualified educational institution.

In principle and in practice, AAUW values and seeks a diverse membership. There shall be no barriers to full participation in this organization on the basis of gender, race, creed, age, sexual orientation, national origin, disability, or class.

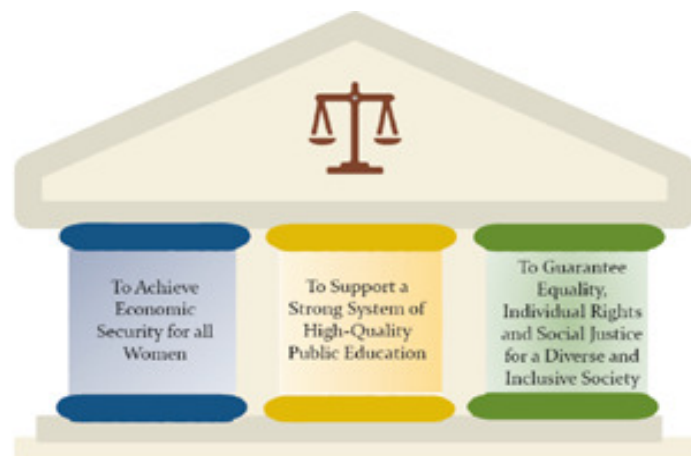
All members of the Chico, Gridley, Oroville, Paradise, and Marysville/Yuba City branches are invited to participate in the annual meeting of the North Valley Interbranch Council. It is always a great way to reconnect with our sister branch members. This will be a ZOOM meeting and links to the meeting will be sent a few days before the event.



Our speaker this year is **Kathleen (Kathi) Harper**, Co-Director of Public Policy (with Sue Miller) for AAUW-California. Kathi's talk will focus on the vital issue of AAUW's public policy agenda at the state and national level. Each branch will also report on recent and future activities and events and we'll have the chance to discuss common issues.

As member **Carol Holzgrafe** relates, "Kathi is on the AAUW California Board of Directors with me so I have come to know her fairly well. Every time she speaks she is thoughtful, articulate, and always knows what she is talking about. So, I know everyone

from our Interbranch Council (IBC) will enjoy hearing what she has to say at our Feb. 6 meeting. Don't miss it!"



The pillars of AAUW's public policy agenda



President's Corner

Branch Officers

President -

Jan Britton

Membership -

Mary Huntsinger

Betty Lusina

Finance -

Marilyn Myrick

Secretary -

Adele Arnold

Newsletter Editor -

Jana Lawton

Public Policy -

Carol Holzgrafe

Tech Trek Coordinator -

Joan Cleveland

Technology -

Helen Gesick

Historian -

Barbara Paige

We have swept through January already. How amazing is that! And we have had our first board meeting of the year. I am eager to share with you what we discussed and where we are moving on many issues.

We have exciting news about Tech Trek 2021. We are sending the girls we selected for 2020 to this year's virtual camp. These young women were unable to attend the Tech Trek camp at UC, Davis due to COVID-19. If we decided to select new girls for 2021, teachers would have to take time to give us the names and information about possible candidates for 2021. These educators are already overwhelmed with the many challenges of this year's online classes. We also would have to conduct all the interviews on Zoom, which is less helpful than in-person meetings. The Trekkers we selected in 2020 can now be considered for camp counselor positions when they are in high school. You have to be enrolled in a camp in junior high to be considered for the counselor jobs. We are proud of our 2020 Trekkers and look forward to finally sending these girls to a virtual camp. This year the Zoom camp cost will be \$400 instead of the \$900 required to cover the cost of staying at Davis.

We also voted to consider setting up an AAUW scholarship for either a new or reentry student at Chico State. Our Scholarship Committee has not worked directly with Chico State before. Our local scholarships are handled though the Chico Community Scholarship Association. As such, they select local high school seniors (and not reentry students), who can choose to attend a college anywhere in the country. With CSUC we can award reentry scholarships and support our local university. This allows us to have closer ties with CSUC, especially if we are also able to establish an AAUW student branch at CSUC in the fall. As we develop this plan, we will keep you informed

On Saturday, February 6, Kathi Harper will be the guest speaker on Zoom at the Interbranch Council Meeting. Kathi Harper is state co-chair of the AAUW's Public Policy Committee. The committee works as a non-partisan group in order to advance our mission for pay equity, voting rights, paid sick leave, and other important AAUW priorities. Find out how public policy works for these goals and what it entails to be a committee member. It should be exciting. Look for an email invitation a few days before the event so you can participate in this important meeting.

Jan Britton, Chico AAUW branch president

MEETINGS TO COME ...

Saturday February 20 at 3 p.m. - meet Deanna Schwab of Safe Space on our branch Zoom meeting. Schwab works tirelessly for Chico's homeless population along with our own Nancy Wirtz. Homelessness is a huge problem in our community, and this will be an important meeting to discuss this issue. You will receive an invite soon.

March - Get out your hiking shoes and your binoculars and head for Bidwell Park to see local birds in their habitat. Liam Huber will take us on a tour of lower Bidwell Park. He is an expert on local birds and will help us identify them by sight and sound while he explains differences in nest building and other habitat issues. Date to be announced with a back-up date in case of rain.



Branch News and Notes



A Conversation About Diversity

The National and State AAUW Associations have always encouraged branches to find ways to invite more diversity into their organizations. In Chico, we have a very diverse community, and yet our Branch doesn't reflect this reality very well. Our Board of Directors recently discussed the idea of having an informal 'Conversation About Diversity' focus group to begin the discussion about how we might reach out in our area to attract and invite women from the many ethnic and racial backgrounds represented in our area. This will be an informal group just to get the ideas flowing. AAUW has DEI (Diversity, Equity and Inclusion) resources to help Branches in this endeavor that we can peruse.

If you would like to be part of this informal focus group, contact Kathy Sweet at kathylsweet@gmail.com or by phone at 256-603-4993, and we will make a plan to get together in whatever way we can.

A Message from Catalyst

We are honored and in awe of how you all came together to provide gifts and holiday cheer to families in our housing programs this year. Your commitment to bring joy to these families shined through with every gift that was turned in. When we followed up with each parent they also expressed so much appreciation and shared that they truly didn't think Christmas would've been filled with gifts had it not been for your generosity. Everyone at the American Association of University Women has our gratitude for all their support and for helping us fulfill Christmas wishes for survivors and their families. We can't wait to work together next holiday season!

Carolina Cruz and Natalie Calcutta
and All Your friends at
Catalyst Domestic Violence Services



Branch News and Notes continued



Self-Inventory: A Learning Experience and Success Story

Last December over 20 AAUW Chico branch members completed a self-inventory regarding their lives since the onset of the pandemic. They reported significant behavioral changes in areas such as exercise, communication with loved ones, and time spent on self-improvement. Many reported a decline in spending, fewer appointments, and cancellation of travel plans. Expressions of gratitude for life and family and of distress over distance from family were especially poignant.

On the upside, some of us have begun new explorations and activities. Examples include educational endeavors, gardening, knitting, and investigation of family ancestry. Congratulations go out to Pam Bodnar who had the highest number of "Xs" on her inventory and included several additional items about her pandemic experiences!

The Scholarship Committee sends thanks to everyone who participated in the inventory and to all AAUW Chico members who made contributions to the Scholarship Fund recently. You donated over \$4,000! The branch plans to award four \$3,000 scholarships to graduating 2021 seniors in May. Ours is a special group of individuals, committed to the importance of education and support of Chico's young women in their post-secondary educational endeavors.



Kathy Sweet would like to bring this item to your attention: on PBS's *The American Experience* there is an amazing story about Elizabeth Smith Friedman, a woman who changed the course of WWI and WWII, and who wrote the book on codebreaking. The title is *The Codebreaker* and it's a fascinating story of one woman's unsung contribution to history. Her story was classified until recently but now can be told. I know everyone will find it worth their time!

Branch News and Notes continued

Don't miss the upcoming AAUW CA webinar called "She Who Thrives, Survives" to be aired live on Wednesday, February 24 at 7 p.m. The 90 minute production will cover secrets of successful branches: how they do it and why. Besides being informative, it should be fun. I know because I am a contributor and am working on the planning with my good friend, Sharyn Siebert. As members you should receive an emailed invitation to register. But you can also ask me for the registration link. Past webinars can be watched now. Just go to aauw-ca.org, put webinars in the search box, and select the same in the box to the right.

Carol Holzgrafe, AAUW-CA, Branch Assistance



AAUW Trivia Mania Continues A die hard group of trivia maniacs wants to continue our monthly game. Any and all newcomers are welcome. Contact Marilyn Myrick (530) 520-1543 to sign up and pay your \$10 fee for the next session. Join us on February 21 at 3 p.m. for a challenging 3-round game of Trivial Pursuit. Assignment to teams is random to keep things competitive but fun.



If you have never participated in a Zoom meeting, the Nonfiction Book Discussion Group has shared this screen shot of their recent meeting so you can get a sense of what it might be like. In a small group, like an interest section, all members can see and hear one another and carry on a reasonable conversation. There are invariably a few technical glitches to overcome but it has proven to be a boon to the ability to function during the pandemic when we cannot meet in person. If you haven't already done so, we hope you will consider joining in our Zoom branch meetings or sitting in on an interest section discussion. Call Jan Britton if you need help in making that first move to Zooming.

The CHICO GRAPE-VINE is published by the Chico Branch of AAUW. Items for inclusion can be mailed to Jana Lawton, newsletter editor, 1112 Bidwell Avenue, Chico, CA 95926 or e-mailed to jdawton72@gmail.com (preferred)

News from National

Your Decision to make in April

The Association (national AAUW) will again be putting the proposition to members that we eliminate the requirement of having a college degree to join our organization. Here are arguments I've heard from National AAUW about removing the membership requirement for degrees, plus some cons that I've consistently heard from current members.

One argument against removing the traditional educational requirement: It is a happy event to find a group of "like-minded" women with whom we can socialize and work for common interests such as equity, education, health issues, and more. Many members, are used to this social environment and find that it has worked well for themselves and AAUW in general.

However, much has changed in women's lives in recent years. AAUW must have new and younger members to replace those who are no longer active for one reason or other and to infuse new energy into our branches and communities. We need people who can take over for branch board officers who have taken on the mantle of leadership over and over again. Fresh faces, fresh ideas and enthusiasm have proven to be critical in keeping our California branches going. (Plus, Tech Trek!) They are the future as those of us from earlier generations were when we joined (and often still are). We must attract these younger women (and men too).

BUT, what about the proposed membership requirement, allowing anyone to join who wants to, no matter what their educational background is? The young are often put off and even offended by our remaining an 'exclusive' organization. Many companies and foundations will not grant funding to AAUW because of this excluding requirement and this has become a serious problem. So, do we hold to the old and comfortable ways – or do we change a bit, look to the future, and welcome every woman or man who wants to work with us to support the AAUW way?

A final word: as I said when the IRS insisted, in the mid-1980s, that we admit men as members: "No one will join us who is not interested in the same things we are." What do we have to lose? We need these people. Let's meet the future with open arms and make an even larger effect on the world! When the time comes in April, as much as I value the way we have been, I will vote for the way we will be in the future.

Carol Holzgrafe, Public Policy, Chico and Paradise; Director, AAUW California

And For Your Further Consideration . . . I agree with Carol's points and would like to add the following: Kim Churches (AAUW's CEO) has also pointed out that there is very unlikely to be an influx of new (previously unqualified) members if and when AAUW drops the degree requirement. That has not happened after previous rule changes. But it will remove a discriminatory condition that discourages women who might otherwise join AAUW, but who do not want to belong to an organization that excludes women based on a lack of the educational opportunities others have had. This stance seems particularly out of place since AAUW stands for educational opportunities for all women.

News from National and AAUW-CA

There was a time when women may have considered it a source of pride and achievement to join AAUW. Nowadays there are many worthwhile organizations who pursue goals of equity for women, and we need to compete for members. Also, it will make it easier (and less embarrassing) to approach potential new members, since we will not have to figure out or ask if they have a college degree. I too plan to vote for dropping the college degree requirement.

Satsie Veith, President/Facilitator Paradise; member Chico

WHEN WILL THE GENDER PAY GAP BE CLOSED? 2069? 2369? 2451?

How long will it take? What can we do to make it happen sooner rather than later? These are questions that AAUW has been grappling with for decades. As we mark Equal Pay Day on March 31st, perhaps there is hope that we can make progress in decreasing the gender pay gap in 2021, given a new administration that is committed to social justice and leveling the growing disparity between the haves and have not. We also now have women in the highest echelons of national leadership; and as we all know, when women are in charge, things get done!

According to the 2020 update to AAUW's *The Simple Truth*, it will take white women until the year 2069 to achieve parity with men based on the projected earnings ratio compiled between 1988-2019. For women of color the numbers are even worse. Black women will have to wait until the year 2369 – 350 years – as their earnings ratio has only advanced a mere 7% from 1988-2019. And Latinas find themselves in an even worse scenario as their earnings ratio has only increased 4% from 51% to 55% during this period of time, projecting their year of parity to 2451!

The reasons for these disparities in the gender wage gap are known – and understanding what's causing the problem is the first step to meeting it head on. Members are urged to read the summary of *The Simple Truth* update on our National website which lays out the problem, its causes and solutions.

AAUW is leading the charge to effectuate change and you are part of the solution with the work your branches undertake on behalf of women and girls. The more we educate ourselves and others about the scope of this gender wage gap with programs like Start Smart, Work Smart, or the National Conference for College Women Student Leaders, the more we chip away at the disparity. What is your branch doing to make a difference in the Gender Pay Gap? Let us know what creative ideas you have come up with to spread the word in these days of social distancing, we'll share them on the web (send to publicpolicy@aauw-ca.org).

Ginny Hatfield, AAUW California Public Policy Committee

Interest Sections Still Meeting

Mystery Book Group - Feb 17 at 3 p.m. on Zoom - reading story of choice from Arthur Conan Doyle's Sherlock Holmes mysteries (contact: Zoom host Denise Worth - 343-5711)

Ethnic Writers Book Group - Feb 24 at 1 p.m. on Zoom - reading *Seven Years in Tibet* by German author Heinrich Harrer (contact: Severance Dolan - (530) 433-0258)

Nonfiction Book Group - Feb 5 at 2 p.m. on Zoom (contact: Susan Critchfield - (530) 519-3460)

IPad Users Group - Feb 23 at 2 p.m. on Zoom (contact: Helen Gesick (530) 570-5185)

Foreign Policy Discussion Group - Feb 22 on Zoom - Discussion leader, Kelley Crockett will tackle the topic of the coldest war: toward a return to Great Power competition in the Arctic. The new year of discussions is just beginning. Please join if you are interested in becoming better informed about global issues and foreign policy (contact: Roxanne Ferry - 891-1722)

Evening Book Group - Feb 9 at 7 p.m. reading *The Nickel Boys* by Colson Whitehead (contact: Sue Blizman - 891-3489) New members are welcome.

