



# The Chico AAUW Grapewine

American Association of University Women - Chico Branch - Vol. 37 No. 7 Mar 2025

## NEXT BRANCH MEETING

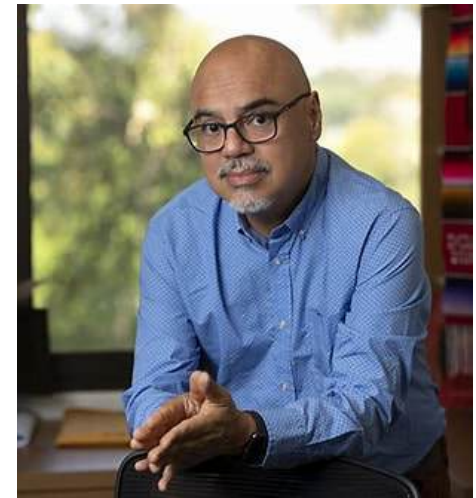
Discussion of the Book in Common: *Our Migrant Souls*

Sunday, March 16, 3 pm

Woodoak Condominium Clubhouse, 555 Vallombrosa Ave.

(To the left of the parking lot)

People all over Chico are reading the Book in Common and digesting and discussing the topic of migration as presented by Héctor Tobar. In *Our Migrant Souls*, the Pulitzer Prize-winning writer Héctor Tobar delivers a definitive and personal exploration of what it means to be Latino in the United States right now. Tobar is the son of Guatemalan immigrants. He is a graduate of UC Santa Cruz and the MFA program in Creative Writing at UC Irvine. His long career in journalism includes work for *The New Yorker*, *LA Weekly*, and the *Los Angeles Times*.



*Our Migrant Souls* was the winner of the Kirkus Prize for Nonfiction, named one of *The New York Times'* 100 Notable Books of 2023, and one of *Time's* 100 Must-Read Books of 2023. You can buy the book at local bookstores. Get your copy and prepare to join our guided discussion open to all branch members and friends.

Our appreciation to member Severance Dolan, a resident of Woodoak, for hosting this meeting. Visitor parking is available in a lot to the left of the main entrance and in spaces near the clubhouse. Avoid the covered parking which is for the residents. Woodoak is just across the street from the post office on Vallombrosa.

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 education institution.

In principle and in practice, AAUW values and seeks 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.



Chico (CA) branch

# Message from the Co-presidents

## 2024-2025 Branch Leaders

Presidents –  
Jana Lawton  
Michelle Rasmussen  
Membership –  
Mary Huntsinger  
Anne Russell  
Finance –  
Lyn Smith  
Secretary –  
Severance Dolan  
Program –  
Dori Moura  
Jan Britton  
Newsletter Editor –  
Anne Russell  
Public Policy –  
Carol Holzgrafe  
Tech Trek Team –  
Katy Azevedo  
Pam Bodnar  
Debbie Rosenow  
Carol Holzgrafe  
Diversity Team –  
Margaret Swick  
Jan Britton  
High School Scholarships  
Marilyn Myrick  
College Scholarships –  
Jan Britton  
Website –  
Helen Gesick  
Toni Reid  
Historian –  
Michelle Rasmussen

The weather is giving signals that spring is almost here and time to come out of our winter hibernation. We have much to look forward to over the next few months.

Our interest groups are going strong and allow members to share their experiences and thoughts on a variety of issues from foreign policy to many genres of books. We all love our alone time but who can deny the pleasure of sharing something you love to do with others: walking, writing, playing bridge, dining, or sipping wine? Try out a new interest section or create your own interest group and add some joy to your days.

The branch will hold a discussion of the current book in common, *Our Migrant Souls* on March 16. Book selections are made to give us new perspectives and insights into some of the important issues of our times. We hope you will join the conversation.

On April 26 we will host the Women of Distinction program (more in next month's newsletter) for our members and the public. This program honors local women, from many walks of life, who have made outstanding contributions to our community.

Also in April, some members of our branch will be going to Sacramento for the AAUW-California Lobby Days. We are slated to meet with our state representatives or one of their assistants to review bills supported by AAUW.



of them once approved. It is an excellent way to learn about all the good work going on behind the scenes in our branch.

Jana Lawton and Michelle Rasmussen  
*AAUW-Chico Co-Presidents*

Our *Strawberry Brunch* is in May, a glorious time in Chico to dine al fresco. We will get to meet the girls who are going off to Tech Trek camp at UC Davis this summer as well as vote on branch officers. We are looking for someone who would like to serve as Secretary for the branch. The job entails taking minutes at the once-a-month Board meetings, and keeping a permanent record



# Membership News

## AAUW Social Media

If you are on social media, be sure to like and share our posts on

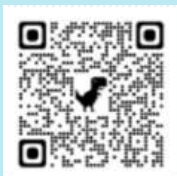
Facebook – [AAUW Chico](#)

Instagram – [@aauw\\_chico](#)

Our email  
[aauwchico@gmail.com](mailto:aauwchico@gmail.com)

Our website –  
[chico-ca.aauw.net](http://chico-ca.aauw.net)

Or  
Scan this code with your phone for more information



The more you interact with our content, the more likely potential new members will see it on their feeds.

Mary Huntsinger, Membership

## ANTIQUÉ APPRAISAL FAIRE

### WHAT'S IN YOUR ATTIC?

**Our Antique Appraisal Faire is coming soon!**

Sunday, March 23, 11 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Chico Women's Club, 592 E. Third Street, downtown Chico

Check your attic, garage, and basement for those objects you want to know more about, including an estimate for potential value. What most people want to know is what on earth that object is and, of course, its history. (They forgot to ask Grandma or Aunt Mabel before they were beyond replying.)

This annual event, our main fundraiser, sends six selected 8<sup>th</sup>-grade Chico girls to the Tech Trek STEM Camp for Girls at UC Davis in July. The cost for each girl this year is \$1,200.

Our Tech Trek committee will soon interview 22 girls and, as usual, will have a very difficult task of selecting only 6. Because of the generosity of our members and the public, each campership is free to these girls.

We need your help getting the word out to friends, family, neighbors, and acquaintances about the Appraisal Faire. You will find attached the Faire's flyer that can be copied and shared. If you have social media accounts, please post the flyer on Facebook, Next Door, Bluesky, etc. and bulletin boards around town.

Items that can be appraised include fine art, books, china, clocks, clothing, coins, furniture, glass, jewelry, dolls, photos, postcards, quilts, and toys. Appraisals for each item (or a set) will cost \$10. Bring photos of large items instead of hauling them in.

The charming Build-a-Girl returns as an additional fundraiser. The idea and art work are from the ever-creative Kim Cross (thank you, Kim!). You can help build a new girl by purchasing one or more body parts and attaching that part with Velcro (it sounds grisly but really is very cute). When one girl is built, we ring a bell to celebrate.

Each part costs a different amount, starting at about to "buy" a \$5 for a finger and increasing. A foot is \$50; the head will cost \$100. The goal for Our Girl is \$1,200, enough to send one girl to camp—a worthy cause.

Donations to Tech Trek, in any amount, are always welcome and should be sent to our treasurer Lyn Smith (see your branch directory for her address). Make out checks to "AAUW Chico" and note "Tech Trek Davis" on the memo line. Cash is also welcome!

# Membership News

Finally, at the Faire we provide self-serve soups, salads, rolls, desserts, and drinks for our appraisers, AAUW helpers, and Tech Trek girls. The wonderful Kit Oldham has been in charge of this for a number of years and has decided it is time to step aside after this year. So, we need someone to help with this for next year. Kit will be at the Faire this year and will be glad to show someone the ropes. She says, "It's really a very easy job." It involves getting sign-ups for food—usually donated by the members of the Faire committee—sending reminders a few days ahead, bringing the box of utensils, helping set up in the kitchen, and cleaning after (with help from others). A big thank you to Kit for all of her work. Please let me know if you and/or a friend would like to take on this job.

Also, a big thank you to the committee members who have volunteered their time to make this event so successful every year. And, of course, the biggest delight is seeing our former Tech Trekkers. This year we will also invite the newest ones to assist us. However, our biggest **THANK YOU** must go to Sam Kissée, our lead appraiser, and all the other appraisers who donate their time, expertise, and delightful personalities.

Don't forget to come visit!

Sue Blizman

## SCHOLARSHIPS

On February 13, three members of our scholarship committee were honored to join 25 organizations participating in the Chico Community Scholarship Association's (CCSA) selection process. We selected a group of very impressive students among 250 applications. After the interview process, AAUW Chico will again award four scholarships to high school seniors. Each girl will receive \$2,000, thanks to our generous membership.

We're excited for the winning university-bound students to receive the news at their schools' award nights in May. We wish them all success in their academic journeys!

## ARE YOU MISSING A RECIPE??



This yummy looking recipe for quesadillas was left at my house during last year's Strawberry Brunch. Please contact me if you would like it back.

Sue Blizman



# Membership News - cont'd

## SCIENCE FAIRE

Sierra View Elementary School held a science fair on February 18 for their students to display projects in scientific discovery. Students could choose to make a demonstration project (like a model of a horse's digestive system), a collection (a project that showed different kinds of mushrooms), or do an experiment using a scientific method. Their parent coordinator reached out to AAUW to help them judge the projects.

Bev McMillan and Jana Lawton had a most interesting morning reading all the information on the projects and leaving thought provoking and complimentary notes for the young scientists to read. They selected two projects to receive special commendation and prizes from AAUW (\$25 gift cards for books).

First grader, Ellowyn Bond experimented with using different liquids to help plants grow. Her hypothesis was clear, her experiment included multiple samples, she had a good analysis and conclusions of her experiment, and made a creative display to demonstrate what she did. She discovered that milk, apple juice, and soda pop created mold on the soil and killed the plants. What plants really want is just water.

Fifth-grade student Gracie Bond called her project Gummy Bear Growth. The name might sound frivolous but her experiment was not. She was testing the principle of osmosis and how different liquids affected the barrier on the gummy bear: one dissolved it, one dehydrated it, one expanded it. Her project board was well laid out and explained her experiment clearly.

Lots of good work going on at Sierra View School. We were happy to be a part of it.



Gracie Wilson



Ellowyn Bond

# Tech Trek

Our Tech Trek team is ready to go! The excitement is growing.

We will be interviewing 20 7<sup>th</sup>-grade student nominees from four local junior high schools: Chico, Marsh, Chico Country Day School, and Bidwell on March 5-7.

Six finalists will be selected to attend UC Davis Tech Trek STEM Camp in July 2025, spending a week enjoying exciting workshops and a week of university life.

The student candidates and their parents have been busy completing the Tech Trek application and registration.

These students were nominated by their teachers for their strong academic performance and interest in STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, & Math) areas.

Our selection process is never easy as we struggle to choose outstanding students to represent AAUW Chico at camp.

**TECH TREK FANS!** To watch our girls in action—From your browser, type “youtube aaauw tech trek davis 2023” or “aaauw tech trek davis 2023 youtube” (the search is not case-sensitive, so no capital letters are required). There are a lot of videos to watch! You will be delighted.

**NEEDED FOR TECH TREK at UC Davis**—July 12-19: Two more dorm monitors (dorm moms), the adult counselors who shepherd 10 nifty 8<sup>th</sup>-grade girls through the week. It can be a treat! Contact Carol Holzgrafe with questions.

Many thanks to our AAUW members and the community for the generous donations that make this opportunity possible every year.

Carol, Marilyn, Katy, Debbie, and Pam, The Tech Trek Team

## GREAT NEWS FROM A FORMER TECH TREKKER

Puneet Mann, a Chico Tech Trekker to UC Davis in 2013 and who returned in 2017 as a junior counselor, contacted Kim Cross recently with an update:

I was accepted to UCLA for medical school last week and I will be attending in the fall! I will be moving home in May so I would love to see you if you are free in the summer!

Best, Puneet



# *Tech Trek - cont'd*

## **OROVILLE TECH TREK FUNDRAISER**

AAUW-Oroville is holding its annual Women's History Month Tea/Luncheon on Saturday, March 8, 11:30, at the Presbyterian Church on Foothill Drive in Oroville. The speaker will be Alyssa Hoffmann, founder of Tiny Pines Foundation that provided Tiny Homes for Camp Fire survivors.

The menu will be a selection of salads, scones with butter and jam, and lemon bars for dessert. Plus, of course, tea! The cost is \$25. Contact Alma Short for Tickets at [almashort@comcast.net](mailto:almashort@comcast.net) or 530.520.8411.

We look forward to seeing our sisters from Chico and Paradise for this event!

Merrily Stover  
AAUW-Oroville  
530-354-4817

# Public Policy/Social Action

[Note: Residents of Paradise, Magalia, and Chico will find this familiar and important.]

## WE DIDN'T START THE FIRE!

**THE LA FIRES ARE A TRAGEDY. DEI IS THE SOLUTION,  
NOT THE PROBLEM.**

by Missy Maceyko, Co-Director, CA State Public Policy Committee  
Shared by Carol Holzgrafe

It is January 2025. Populous, beloved, and well-known neighborhoods in Los Angeles, one of the biggest metropolitan areas in the world, are on fire. For days, residents have been evacuating, firefighters have been going without sleep, and homes and iconic landmarks have been burning. Even those that are not in immediate danger are breathing in toxic air that can create diseases for generations. It seems like everyone in the city is grieving something or someone.

And yet, as the disaster unfolds, people in LA are engaging in a massive outpouring of collective mutual aid and community support for the people and animals who are displaced and suffering.

On the other hand, as Angelinos are left to cope with displacement, property damage, and loss, leading figures in national politics have seized the moment, not to offer support, but to immediately go on the attack. They are placing blame on who they felt was the most likely culprit for these horrific fires and their aftermath: Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI).

These accusations about DEI would be laughable were they not so problematic. Blaming DEI shows a lack of understanding of what DEI is and does while also simplifying a large and complex problem related to a multitude of factors such as weather, infrastructure, and climate change.

In sum, DEI experts say that diversity is valuable for many reasons—for addressing historical marginalization, yes, but also for increasing our problem-solving capacity and leading to innovation. Both inside and outside of the business world, ***diversity is associated with higher engagement, reduced turnover, and improved, and more objective, decision-making and problem-solving. Diversity of thought in inclusive teams has been found to lead to more innovation and better, higher-impact ideas.*** Indeed, as University of Michigan professor of Complexity, Social Science, and Management, Scott Brown notes, to solve complex problems in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, like climate change, we need diverse teams who can communicate across difference: “Groups of experts, at least as we’re accustomed to thinking about them, are going to have a hard time competing with talented teams of people with relevant diverse perspectives.”

We need to truly understand this problem in order to prevent future loss. Rather than vilifying DEI, we need to acknowledge that DEI is one of the best tools that we have to solve such a problem. We need to come together to leverage a diversity of experiences and perspectives.





# Public Policy/Social Action - cont'd

For the full article above and a fuller account of AAUW's (and others') view of DEI and its effects on our lives, click [here](#).

## TAKE ACTION!

**Are you feeling distraught & overwhelmed by the daily barrage of news?**

- AAUW California shares some **ways you can take action**, and they will continue to do each month. They recommend choosing at least one self-focused, one other-focused, and one politically focused action in which to engage.
- Click [here](#) to read an excerpt from the February issue of the AAUW CA Public Policy newsletter for details.
- Click [here](#) for how Project 2025 would impact AAUW public policy priorities.



## WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH

Since 1995, each president has issued an annual proclamation designating the month of March as "Women's History Month." The **National Women's History Alliance** selects and publishes the yearly theme. For March 2025 it is "Moving Forward Together! Women Educating and Inspiring Generations." Here is one such woman.

HELEN HAMILTON GARDENER, 1853-1925

An American teacher, suffragist, writer, and reformer, Helen Hamilton Gardener was incensed by the scientific "facts" there were used to hold women back in their fight for equality. In 1888 she gave a talk titled "Sex in Brain" at the convention of the International Council of Women in Washington DC. She argued against a physician's claim, made in the *Popular Science Monthly* in 1887, that because women's brains were lighter than men's, by extension, women must also be less intelligent. She promised to leave her brain to science after she died. Today it is well known that brain size is related to body size—and not a direct indicator of intelligence. That hasn't stopped scientists, even today, combing brains for evidence that women think differently from men.

# Interest Groups for Fun ... and Learning

**NOTE: Use the AAUW directory for contact information or email [aauwchico@gmail.com](mailto:aauwchico@gmail.com)**



## LES FLANEURS

Carol Holzgrafe (email/call for schedule and more information). A walking/talking tour of Chico and Paradise. Usually meets Tues, Thur, and/or Sat @ 8:30 or 9:30 am, depending on the season.

## WINE AND WHINE

Carol Holzgrafe (text/email for more information). Meets 3<sup>rd</sup> Wed, Mar 19, @ 5:30 pm. Good conversation, the best wine list in town (along with non-alcoholic drinks of course). Fascinating food menu to share. Please RSVP, bring friends, visiting relatives, new prospective members...

## OUT TO LUNCH

Mary Huntsinger (call/text for location and to make a reservation). Meets 2<sup>nd</sup> Thur @ 11:30 am. **Paradise and Chico branch members welcome!**

## WOMEN'S MICROFINANCE

Jana Lawton (call if interested in joining). Semi-annual meetings.

## WORDSMITHS

Jana Lawton (call for more information). Meets 2<sup>nd</sup> Sun, Mar 9, @ 2 pm. Hosted by Jana Lawton. **All writers welcome!**

## FOREIGN POLICY DISCUSSION

Jeannie Trizzino (text for more information). No meeting this month. Meets 4<sup>th</sup> Mon, Apr 28 @ 6:30 pm. Will discuss *AI and American National Security*, presented by Jeannie Trizzino and hosted by Lyn Smith. **New members welcome!**

## EVENING BOOK DISCUSSION

Elaine Schlinger (text for more information). Meets 2<sup>nd</sup> Tues, Mar 11, @ 7 pm in a member's home. Will discuss *James* by Percival Everett.

## ETHNIC WRITERS BOOK DISCUSSION

Severance Dolan (call for more information). Meets 4<sup>th</sup> Wed, Mar 26, @ 10 am in Carol Krok's home. Will discuss *The Eye of the Leopard* by Henning Mankell, led by Carol. **New members welcome!**

## FRIDAY BOOK DISCUSSION

Severance Dolan (email for more information). Meets 4<sup>th</sup> Fri, Mar 28, @ 10 am in Woodoak condominium clubhouse. Will discuss *Table for Two* by Amor Fowles, led by Marti Young. **New members welcome!**

## NONFICTION BOOK DISCUSSION

Carol Krok (email for more information). Meets 1<sup>st</sup> Fri, Mar 7, @ 9.30 am in a member's home for socializing; discussion starts promptly @ 10. **Currently at capacity.**

## MYSTERY BOOK DISCUSSION

Lyn Smith (call for more information). Meets 3<sup>rd</sup> Wed, Mar 19, @ 3 pm in Vicky Breeden's home. Will discuss *Endless Night* by Agatha Christy, led by Vicky. **New members welcome!**

## BRIDGE

Sylvia Hedlind (text/call if interested in joining). Meets 2<sup>nd</sup> Mon @ 1 pm. Group plays for fun with the goal of improving members' games. **Substitutes always needed!**

## IPHONE/IPAD

Helen Gesick (text for more information). Meets 3<sup>rd</sup> Tues, Mar 18, @ 2 pm. Bring your questions.



**American Association of University Women, Chico Fundraiser**  
**Antique Appraisal Faire**

Help send local middle-school girls to AAUW Tech Trek, a science and technology camp at UC Davis, Sponsored by the American Association of University Women, Chico, 530-891-3489



**Sunday, March 23, 11am to 3pm**  
**Chico Women's Club**  
**592 E. Third St. Chico**

**Prints, Books, China, Clothing, Coins, Furniture, Glass, Dolls, Photos, Postcards, Quilts, Toys, Jewelry, Antique Bottles. Please bring a good photo to show for large Items.**

**\$10 per item or matched set (jewelry, china)**  
**Bring photos of large items**

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