



The Chico AAUW Grapewine

American Association of University Women - Chico Branch - Vol. 37 No. 10 MAY 2025

NEXT BRANCH MEETING...

Hats Off to AAUW at our Strawberry Brunch
Saturday, May 3 from 10 a.m. to noon
462 Todd Court (just off Hicks Lane - north of Eaton Road)

Rain is predicted on Saturday. Rather than pressing our luck with the weather, Sue Blizman has offered to host our meeting in her home. The final program will be a delicious combination of branch business and a brunch potluck, and maybe a surprise or two. Wear a fun hat (your choice—sporty, elegant, gardeny??).

Bring a favorite brunch item for the potluck (fruits, breads, quiches, muffins, etc.—it need not be homemade). Beverages and table service provided. To make sure Sue has sufficient seating, an RSVP would be appreciated. Call Jana Lawton (530.894.1843) or send an email (jdlawton72@gmail.com) by Thursday. Feel free to invite someone who might enjoy becoming an AAUW member.

As luck would have it, the [Shape the Future Campaign](#) discount of 50% off national dues is available for new members (those entirely new to AAUW or rejoining after two or more years of not paying dues).

Branch officers for the coming year will be elected at this meeting! Several members have agreed to stand for election and we are also allowed to take nominations from the floor (as long as the nominee agrees).

- President - Jana Lawton and Michelle Rasmussen (as co-presidents)
- President elect - Lyn Smith
- Treasurer - Severance Dolan
- Secretary - Beverly McMillan

We hope to see you there!

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

Dear Members,

Our first year as co-presidents is almost over. We are reflecting on how well we were able to engage members in the “work” of AAUW. A big part of that effort is sharing knowledge about the issues with the goal of helping members find personal ways they can make connections. The newsletter is an important vehicle for that exchange of information, as are monthly programs. Anne Russell took on the job as newsletter editor this year. This job requires good design and computer skills which Anne has in abundance. When you rely on a dozen or more people to provide information every month, one also has to be a sort of herder of cats and we are grateful for her tenacity. Were you able to join us at some of our very memorable programs this year? Dori Moura and Jan Britton were instrumental in selecting interesting speakers on timely topics and we thank them for their efforts.

There are many things we do at a local level that make a difference in the lives of women and girls. Our appreciation goes out to all who served on committees that helped us raise funds for scholarships and Tech Trek, and for those who did all the behind-the-scenes work in selecting candidates for scholarships and Tech Trek. Many of you signed up to provide holiday gifts for client families of Catalyst Domestic Violence Services. We had members who routinely responded to public policy initiatives through AAUW’s Two Minute Activist program and a few participated in Lobby Days where there were direct conversations with our legislators and representatives about our public policy priorities.

There are always opportunities to help. We are going to continue as co-presidents next year and are looking for someone to serve as membership chair and also someone to lead the Tech Trek fundraising committee. AAUW-CA has excellent tips and instructions on how to handle the function of membership chair. Thanks to Sue Blizman’s leadership, there is an excellent team already in place for the Antique Appraisal Faire—our Tech Trek fundraiser. People on the team already know what to do; the chair just keeps thing running smoothly.

Thank you all for your contributions of dues, time, and donations in support of our projects. We hope you found your investment in the goals of AAUW worthwhile. We especially want to thank our fellow board members for their dedication and hard work. It has been a joy to meet with them monthly to strategize about all the ways we can make Chico AAUW a successful branch. That really means being a faithful partner along with all other AAUW branches throughout the country in helping to realize the goal of gender equity for women and girls.

Our new year starts in September. We hope you enjoy your summer.

Jana Lawton and Michelle Rasmussen, Chico AAUW co-presidents

Membership News

AWARDS CEREMONY THANK YOU!

The Women of Distinction award ceremony on April 26 was successful and lovely, thanks to our team of volunteers who brought it all together so well.

As chair of the Awards Committee, I want to extend an enormous thank you to members who submitted excellent nominations and for the committee that selected the honorées and presented them to our members.

Also, thank all of you who attended and brought so many delicious dishes. The food table was beautifully arranged by Jeannie Trizzino and Margaret Swick. They also kept the drinks flowing throughout the event.

I especially want to thank Jana Lawton, who brought and arranged the beautiful rose centerpieces, Kim Cross for her lovely white tablecloths, and Dori Moura for the lovely place settings.

And a well-deserved thanks to all the Tech Trek girls who seated the recipients, served guests food and drinks, cleared up the tables, and helped in a million other ways.

You are all greatly appreciated, especially those who set up and cleaned up afterwards. We could not have done this without any of you.

Jan Britton, Chair, Michelle Rasmussen, Margaret Swick, Jeannie Trizzino, Dori Moura, Jana Lawton, Katy Azevedo



ANTIQUE APPRAISAL FAIRE FINANCE RESULTS

ANTIQUE APPRAISAL FAIRE FINANCE RESULTS

Goal: \$7,200 for six girls to attend Tech Trek this summer
\$5076: 60 participants + 111 appraisals + \$295 from sponsors

This total includes our *Build-a-Girl project* plus very generous donations. Many thanks to all who helped make this event so successful and such fun.

Sue Blizman, Lead chair (p.s. It is never too “early” to donate!)

Membership News - cont'd

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

Our website –
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

AAUW FINANCIAL NEWS

As of April 1, 2025, National AAUW increased their dues by **\$2**, making their dues for 2025-2026 **\$74**. AAUW-CA is also increasing their dues for 2025-2026 by **\$10** to a total of **\$30**. AAUW-CA has not increased their dues for many years. With so many things increasing that affect business (such as rent, electricity, and postage), the increase seems prudent so they can continue to carry on a vital business.

Rest assured, AAUW-Chico **is NOT** increasing its dues and will remain at **\$18**, so the total to renew all of our dues or for new members to join our organization is **\$122**.

Please continue to support AAUW by renewing your dues either on-line at the [national website](#) under your name, or you may mail a check made out to **AAUW-CHICO** for **\$122** and send it to **Lyn Smith, 25 Abbott Circle, Chico, CA 95973**.

Dues are due by the end of June for many of us. *We really appreciate each and everyone of you for your faithful support of our mission.*

Lyn Smith, Finance Officer

Public Policy

LOBBY DAYS

Once a year AAUW California (AAUW-CA) organizes a day for us to visit our legislators in Sacramento and discuss three Assembly and/or Senate bills AAUW is concerned about. This April 8 I met with members Michelle Rasmussen and Jan Britton to do just that. Our team was joined by Claudia Chandler and Gwyn Baker of the Marysville-Yuba City branch.

After a coffee and pastry brunch in the offices of Kathy Van Osten, AAUW-CA's legislative advocate, and a pep talk by AAUW-CA Public Policy chair Missy Maceyco, we spread out and met with staff members of Assemblyman James Gallagher and the staffs of two other representatives.

The bills we discussed were **Senate Bill 418** which **AAUW supports**. If passed, health care coverage will not be denied to people on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, disability, or sex. The bill would define discrimination on the basis of sex to include, among other things, sex characteristics, including intersex traits, pregnancy, and gender identity.

Senate Bill 771 would extend protections from social media abuse because of the person's political affiliation, race, or sexual orientation, and punishes violations of that law with certain civil penalties or misdemeanors. **AAUW supports this bill.**

Assembly Bill 579 is one **AAUW opposes**. It has to do with whether parental lack of support to recognize a child's wish to use a different pronoun than that assigned at birth and refusal to allow gender affirming care for that child is classified as child abuse. (This bill was later withdrawn.)

Carol Holzgrafe



Michelle Rasmussen and Jan Britton at Lobby Days in Sacramento.

Public Policy - cont'd

STILL FIGHTING FOR EQUALITY

AAUW has a long history of advocating for policies that advance equity in education, economic security, and civil rights. Now more than ever, branches can have a critical impact in the fight for equity. Our own branch, as well as individual members, can take meaningful action to advance our mission of equity for women and girls. We can demonstrate commitment to non-partisan advocacy aligned with AAUW public policy priorities. We welcome ideas and input from our members on programs that would help us participate in this dialog. Let's get inspired by real examples from AAUW members around the country!

Deepen Understanding of Key Issues

- **AAUW Manhattan (KS)** branch hosted city commissioners and staff from the U.S. Senator's office for a round-table discussion on AAUW's mission and AAUW of Kansas legislative priorities.
- **AAUW Boise Area (ID)** branch hosted a conversation with a parent of a transgender youth to explore gender identity, current state and federal laws, and how to be a better advocate.

Build Coalitions and Be Allies

- **AAUW Indiana County (PA)** branch partnered with a local theater for a free public screening of *Ratified*, a documentary on Virginia's ratification of the Equal Rights Amendment.
- **AAUW Birmingham (AL)** branch visited the Hispanic and Immigration Center of Alabama (HICA) to learn how they support immigrant families with community resources.

Engage in the Policy Process

- **AAUW California** launched a "School Board Project" to mobilize members to speak out at school board meetings against book banning, curriculum censorship, and anti-LGBTQ+ policies. The training to be an effective speaker at school board meetings is available and your voices are needed.
- **AAUW Northwest Valley (AZ)** branch trained members on the state's "Request to Speak" program, enabling them to submit comments and request to speak on bills in committee.

Planning for programs and branch strategies for our 2025-2026 season will take place during the summer and we'd like to involve our members in the process. Be on the look out for a reminder email message so you can participate.

Jana Lawton

Public Policy - cont'd

VOTING AAUW CALIFORNIA

Your ballot to select the way forward for AAUW-California (AAUW-CA) was sent to your email on Saturday, April 26. Look for a message from “siteadmin@aauw-ca.org” with “2025 AAUW California Election” in the subject line. Members without email were mailed paper ballots. Eligible voters are those who were members as of March 14, 2025.

The ballot has three parts.

1. *Will you approve the latest public policy directions?* (See my Public Policy article in this edition for a brief description.)
2. *Will you approve a \$10/year increase in state dues?* That is, from \$20 to \$30.
NOTE: this is the first increase in 10 years!
3. *Vote for two new members of the AAUW-CA board of directors.* (I have information and an opinion on these; if you wish more information, contact me by text or email.)

For voting help, email connect@aauw.org. The deadline to vote is **May 13 at 2 pm PT**, so, don't delay!

DO YOU FAVOR THESE IDEAS? YOU WILL BE VOTING YES OR NO ON YOUR AAUW-CA BALLOT

Every two years our Public Policy Committee reviews the emphasis that will direct our legislative advocate in Sacramento as she interacts with our legislators about Senate and Assembly bills concerned with these efforts. They also guide our members as they attend meetings of city councils, school boards, and interact with the media. The priorities for 2025-2027 include the following,

Economic Security for All Women, including equity in the workplace, enforcement of anti-discrimination statutes, security in retirement, access to job training for career development, and work-life balance, including access to quality affordable childcare and paid sick and care-giving leave.

Social and Racial Justice for All Members of Society, including Reproductive health, equal access to affordable housing, freedom from violence, guaranteed civil and constitutional rights for all, protection and expansion of voting rights, and support for United Nations sustainable development goals concerning human rights and women and girls' concerns.

Equal Access to Quality Public Education

Vigorous enforcement of Title IX, equitable funding at all educational levels, removal of barriers to girls in STEM fields, civic instruction in ALL high schools, accurate historical information, access to resources including technology.

Increased Representation of Women

Leadership roles on corporate boards, access to leadership skills training, and programs to promote public service careers.

To read the complete list of priorities, [click here](#).

Carol Holzgrafe

Interest Groups for Fun ... and Learning

NOTE: Use the AAUW directory for contact information or email aauwchico@gmail.com



LES FLANEUSES

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. *The group will meet in the summer.*

WINE AND WHINE

Carol Holzgrafe (text/email for more information). Meets 3rd Wed, May 21 @ 5:30 pm at Hotel Diamond, 224 W. 4th St., Chico. Non-alcoholic drinks always available. Please RSVP, bring friends, visiting relatives, new prospective members. *The group will meet in the summer.*

OUT TO LUNCH

Mary Huntsinger (call/text for location and to make a reservation). Meets 2nd Thur, May 8 @ 11:30 am, at The Big Tuna Sushi Bistro at 1722 Mangrove, Suite 18. *Paradise and Chico branch members welcome! The group will meet in the summer.*

WOMEN'S MICROFINANCE

Jana Lawton (call for more information). Semi-annual meetings.

WORDSMITHS

Jana Lawton (call for more information). Meets Sun, May 18 @ 2 pm, hosted by Lily Loughlin. *All writers welcome! The group will meet in the summer.*

FOREIGN POLICY DISCUSSION

Jeannie Trizzino (text for more information). Meets 4th Mon, May 26 @ 6:30 pm. Will discuss *American Policy in the Middle East*, presented by Beth Tice and hosted by Jana Lawton. *New members welcome! The group will meet in the summer.*

EVENING BOOK DISCUSSION

Elaine Schlinger (text for more information). Meets 2nd Tues, May 13 @ 7 pm in a member's home. Will discuss *The Women* by David Grann. *The group will meet in the summer.*

ETHNIC WRITERS BOOK DISCUSSION

Severance Dolan (email for more information). Meets 4th Wed, May 28 @ 10 am in Jana's home. Will discuss *The Historians* by Cecilia Ekbäck. *New members welcome! The group will meet in the summer.*

FRIDAY BOOK DISCUSSION

Severance Dolan (email for more information). Meets 4th Fri, May 23 @ 10 am in Woodoak condominium clubhouse. Will discuss *Red Badge of Courage* by Stephen Crane, led by Sue Warwick. *New members welcome! The group will meet in the summer.*

NONFICTION BOOK DISCUSSION

Carol Krok (email for more information). Meets 1st Fri, May 2 @ 9.30 am in a member's home for socializing; discussion starts promptly @ 10. *Currently at capacity. The group will meet in the summer.*

MYSTERY BOOK DISCUSSION

Lyn Smith (call for more information). Meets 3rd Wed, May 21 @ 3 pm at Mary Huntsinger's home. Will discuss *Slow Horses* by Mick Herron. *New members welcome! The group will meet in the summer.*

BRIDGE

Sylvia Hedlind (text/call if interested in joining). Meets 2nd Mon, May 12 @ 1 pm. Group plays for fun with the goal of improving members' games. *Substitutes always needed! The group will meet in the summer.*

IPHONE/IPAD

Helen Gesick (text for more information). Meets 3rd Tues, May 20 @ 2 pm. Bring your questions. *The group will meet in the summer.*

