



The Chico AAUW Grapewine

American Association of University Women - Chico Branch - Vol. 38 No. 2 OCT 2025

NEXT BRANCH MEETING...

MONDAY, OCTOBER 6, 2025, 5 TO 7 PM
SOUPER SUPPER AT THE BUTTE COUNTY LIBRARY
1108 SHERMAN AVENUE, CHICO

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.

Our October meeting is usually the prime time to prep for an upcoming election. However, with only one item on the ballot—*Proposition 50*—we needed to find another topic of interest. Our speaker for the evening is Sondra Murphy. She will talk about *Annie Bidwell's* involvement in the women's suffrage movement. Ms. Murphy is a Chico native but has lived all over California, working as a librarian, reporter, and editor among other things. Her interest in Annie Bidwell was nurtured, in part, by being a Bidwell Mansion Guide from 2013-2024. Her presentation will feature the long-running commitment by Annie Bidwell in support of women's suffrage.



Our *Souper Supper* event is also a direct way to learn about and support AAUW Funds. Jana Lawton will give a short talk on the many ways in which AAUW Funds are used. She has also donated 25 of her hand-made bowls in support of the event. They will be available on a first come, first served basis as a thank you gift to anyone donating

\$35 or more to AAUW Funds at the Souper Supper. While there is no requirement to make a donation to attend the Souper Supper, there is also no limit to the amount you can donate to AAUW Funds.

If you can bring any of the food items we will need, please contact Michelle Rasmussen at 530.680.1648 and let her know what you can donate—soup in a crock pot, rolls/butter, or cookies. AAUW meetings are open to the public and you are encouraged to invite a spouse or friend to attend with you.



Chico (CA) branch

Message from the Co-presidents

2024-2025 Branch Leaders

Presidents –
Jana Lawton
Michelle Rasmussen
President-elect –
Lyn Smith
Membership –
Diane Bird
Susan Critchfield
Lyn Smith
Finance –
Severance Dolan
Secretary –
Beverly McMillan
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
Susan Critchfield
College Scholarships –
Jan Britton
Website – Helen Gesick
Helen Gesick
Toni Reid
Historian –
Michelle Rasmussen

Dear Members,

We were so happy to hear from some of our Tech Trek campers at the September meeting. Individually, they were quite reserved when recounting their experiences at the UC Davis and Santa Cruz camps. However, when they gathered as a group to answer questions at the end, they could not stop talking and laughing and regaling us with stories of what they had done at camp: **LOVED** the evening spent with professional women who spoke with them about their careers; **AMAZED** at just how much they didn't know about all the expenses involved in working and raising a family that they learned about at the Financial Planning Fair; **PRAISED** the women who taught their daily core classes for being so inspirational and such excellent teachers. They were all infused with youthful enthusiasm and excitement about their futures. Many of them, and two of their mothers, expressed how the Tech Trek experience has changed their lives.

We appreciate all the members, through their donations of time and money, who made it possible for them to attend camp. Look for information about how you can help with the formation of a Tech Trek Alumni Group to foster continued connections with AAUW and one another and to provide new learning experiences.

We presented our Presidents' Award for the 2024-2025 year to **Debbie Rosenow**. It is always great when new people join the branch. It is really gratifying when we see them as enthusiastic participants in our activities right from the start. In her first year, she volunteered to help at Tech Trek camp and was an instrumental member of our branch Tech Trek committee. She was the one to figure out how to manage all of our on-line documents and kept us on track. This year she volunteered at the Davis camp to take ten young women under her wing for the week. Our award is an acknowledgment that we know what a dedicated member Debbie has been and we appreciate her focus on the AAUW mission.



Michelle Rasmussen, Debbie Rosenow, and Jana Lawton

We are also really excited that we have several members who have stepped up to focus on the important work of membership; recruiting new members, retaining current members, and streamlining the record keeping. Linda Bird will be assisting Susan Critchfield along with able mentors Helen Gesick, Carol Holzgrafe, Michelle Rasmussen, and Lyn Smith. The new banner on the membership page of the newsletter will always be a reminder about what you can do if you know of someone who might be interested in joining AAUW.

We are confident this will be a great year for AAUW Chico. Hope you'll join us at the Souper Supper.

Jana Lawton and Michelle Rasmussen

Membership News

THE AAUW FUNDS

AAUW Funds has been named one of the best independent charities in America. Why do we raise money to support AAUW Funds? Because your support means that its good work will continue. Don't our dues cover AAUW operations? In short, no. Our mission statement declares that AAUW advances gender equity for women and girls through advocacy, education, and research. These have been our purpose, our goals, and our values since 1881. It takes time and money to make advances. Below is a short list of the many ways AAUW uses funds we donate to advance gender equity.

ADVOCACY AAUW Funds helps translate mission into action. We lobby for policy and legislation that affects the lives of women and families (including voting rights, fair pay, family leave, access to health care, medical research, and to all professions for which we qualify). The importance of continued advocacy in the face of contemporary challenges can't be overstated. Women's voices are essential in addressing societal issues.

EDUCATION AAUW Funds remains the largest source of funding exclusively for graduate women. AAUW awarded \$6 million in fellowships and grants to more than 285 outstanding women and community projects in the 2024-25 academic year. Of those, there are 31 AAUW Fund Fellowship and Grant recipients studying in California colleges and universities or doing projects in our communities. They represent a broad and diverse range of studies and interests and are an excellent example of the wonderful use of branch and member donations.

Education and training programs address the barriers and implicit biases that hinder the advancement of women, by championing equal access to education and ensuring that education at every level is free from sex discrimination. Economic security initiatives ensure livelihoods for women through achieving pay equity, providing training in salary negotiation, and deepening women's retirement security and quality of life. Leadership training supports the effort to close the gender gap in leadership opportunities by bolstering the participation of, and increasing the number of, girls and women in leadership roles, particularly in education and nonprofit organizations.

RESEARCH When AAUW wants to tackle a problem affecting women and girls they support research to analyze the issue and find solutions which can be implemented by branches across the country. When AAUW was first formed in 1881, many books and articles claimed that it was unnatural and unhealthy for women to be educated, especially at the college or university level. It was taken as fact that higher education would interfere with women's ability to have children. The first research project that AAUW undertook was to demonstrate scientifically that this theory was incorrect and that education at any level did not interfere with a woman's ability to have children.

More recently, in an era when women are increasingly prominent in medicine, law, and business, why were so few women becoming scientists and engineers? That research project culminated in a publication entitled *Why So Few*. The very successful Tech Trek project (initially funded as a community action grant in California) was an outgrowth of that research which indicated role models, mentoring, and encouragement could help turn the tide.

Thank you for your support!

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 share our content, the more likely potential new members will see it on their feeds.

SAD NEWS

Paradise and Chico AAUW branches regret to announce the recent peaceful death of valued member, **Madeleine Caton**. We've lost a lovely friend as well as a steadfast AAUW supporter.

There will be a memorial service but plans have not been announced yet.

["In Memoriam" will be added to Madeleine's entry in the new 2025-2026 , along with her daughter's address for those who would like to send a note.]

Our hearts go out to **Vickie Bernhardt** whose husband, James Richmond, died on August 22. Both Jim and Vickie worked at CSU, Chico for many years—each making significant and lasting contributions in their own fields of education. A celebration of life will be held on October 5 from 3 to 5 pm at the Butte Creek Country Club. Our sincere condolences to Vickie and the family.



AAUW's 2025-26 elected leaders: Severance Dolan, treasurer; Jana Lawton, co-president; Bev McMillan, secretary; Michelle Rasmussen, co-president; Lyn Smith, president elect.

ATTENTION INTEREST GROUP LEADERS!

Please contact **Susan Critchfield** with details of your upcoming meetings to be published in The Grapevine, such as place to meet, date, book to be read. Her contact details are in the Directory.

Thanks, Anne Russell, Editor

Membership News - cont'd

HIGH SCHOOL SCHOLARSHIPS 2026

Help Us Recruit!

If you know people who might want to become a member of our branch, invite them to a meeting and/or pass on contact information to aauwchico@gmail.com and we will follow up.

Help us keep our member directory up to date. If you have had a change of address, change of email address, or change of telephone number, send your new information to aauwchico@gmail.com. We will also forward this information to members so their directories will be up to date too.

As AAUW members who continuously strive to advance gender equity and reduce educational and economic barriers, our high school scholarship program plays a pivotal role. Because of your generosity last year, we are gratified to report that our branch awarded four \$2,000 scholarships to local high school senior girls to support them in higher education. These students are attending UCLA, UCSB, University of Portland, and University of Southern California. To keep our scholarship program going strong we are hoping to use this direct appeal method to raise scholarship funds for next year instead of having multiple fundraising events.

We hope you will again consider making a difference in a student's life. We are thankful for any amount you may choose to contribute, but we understand that not everyone can donate.

If you choose to donate to the AAUW high school scholarship funds, you can mail a check to Linda MacMichael. Please make out your check to CCSA (Chico Community Scholarship Association). Write AAUW Scholarship in the memo field of your check.

If you have any questions, you can text or call Marilyn Myrick.

Thank you for considering this request. We would appreciate contributions by October 20, 2025.

Note: Please use your AAUW directory to obtain addresses and telephone numbers.



LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS

The League of Women Voters will host a panel discussion on *The Intersection of Immigration and Criminal Justice: a Community Conversation*, on October 25, 2025, 10 am-12 pm, St. John's Episcopal Church parish hall, 2341 Floral Avenue, Chico.

Panelists will be representatives from Butte County community organizations. This is a conversation among community members and you are welcome to participate.

The League of Women Voters is nonpartisan.

Tech Trek

2025 TECH TREK IS OVER — ON TO 2026!

It was another successful summer of Tech Trek STEM camps! AAUW Chico sent six girls to UCD Camp Jemison at UC Davis and two girls to UCSC Camp Carson at UC Santa Cruz. Katy Azevedo and Debbie Rosenow volunteered as dorm monitors/mentors/assistants at Camp Jemison. The week was well-organized, long-lasting friendships were made, and girls left camp with more confidence and purpose. It was very inspiring for all involved!

Core classes offered this year at Davis were engineering, computers, genetics, plant biology, and anatomy. Field trips included the UCD Vet Training Center (with hands-on activities), Mondavi Performing Arts Center (stage/lighting/musical engineering), and Bohart Museum of Entomology (we held live stick bugs and hissing roaches.)

Campers spent an afternoon learning about forensic science. A team of CSI officers set up two mock crime scenes in the morning, then ate lunch with our dorm groups in the dining hall and answered questions about their careers and education (quite a treat!) Afterward, the officers helped guide small teams of students as they conducted an investigation of the crime scene using forensic reports, evidence logs, and witness accounts.

As usual, *Budget Night* was a hit, along with *Professional Women's Evening*. *Engineering Night* focused on building boats with cardboard and duct tape and then the girls had a competition at the end of the week at the Davis pool. The challenge: each boat had to hold two girls and float, then they were given paddles for racing across the pool. Such a fun event!



Tech Trek - cont'd

HIGHLIGHTS FROM CAMP JEMISON, TECH TREK DAVIS

When you ask a Tech Trekker about camp, the first thing you will see is the bright glint in their eyes and a broad, sincere smile. It's the same for a dorm monitor (DM).

From 6:30 am to 10 pm, DMs and Trekkers are truly non-stop kinetic energy. As DM, my first responsibility is to ensure Trekkers are safe and where they are "expected" to be on time. It is easier than you might expect as the Trekkers look forward to their classes and time with their new friends. There is an immediate bond created with our small groups—we like each other and find success in our Tech Trek family. Through fun and challenging classes, we are all learning and growing.

Each morning this year began with a riddle and a puzzle. Brilliant! Working together was exciting and brought out creative thinking each day, successful solutions earned points for our Tech Trek Team Cup challenge. Possibilities abounded and this was all before breakfast!

Trekkers then attended their core classes and DMs had free time—to visit classes, take a walk, or rest. Of course there was the daily DM meeting; wouldn't be a camp without adult meetings. I enjoyed the core classes, especially the plant biology. Ecological studies at its best. Special afternoon sessions were varied; I enjoyed making ice cream with a food chemist who talked about quality control and how there are scientists keeping our food safe. Evening sessions highlighted AAUW members, introduced financial responsibilities and cardboard boat races! Our boats both reflected our team theme: fishes. We carried our fish wind sock on field trips and even used it as a figurehead! Truly an unforgettable experience in floatation devices. Or not ... many sunk ships brought lots of laughter.

One of the best parts of being a DM, is dorm time, time when the girls are not committed to specific tasks (usually) and all can relax together. Downtime found Trekkers making creative flowers with pipe cleaners, playing UNO, kumihimo braiding, origami animals, or sharing enthusiastic reports of the day.

There are challenges in any role we take on and I always want the Trekkers to feel like they have a voice and are heard. So, we had a "roses and thorns" chart where Trekkers would write comments, anonymously, about the best and worst parts of their day. There are challenges for us all—how to connect, what to do with an attitude (we have all had them), how to stay focused on the prize. The notes were reviewed as a group and if there was a problem ("I am so tired"), it was addressed ("go to bed"). But by the end of the week, the first day's problem ("I miss my family") was replaced with "I don't want to leave so soon!" seven or eight times.

AAUW Tech Trek committees don't always get to hear the life impressions created after a week at camp but when we do get to reconnect with a Trekker, that same glint in the eyes and joyful smile return reminding us all—Tech Trek really does alter lives, giving young girls reassurance in their value as a global contributor in roles they may have never considered. So, thank you, AAUW, for trusting me with the Trekkers and supporting a very important program that has a legacy we can imagine and continue.

Katy Azevedo

Tech Trek - cont'd

QUOTES FROM TWO OF OUR 2025 TECH TREKKERS

From Savannah (Savvy)

"I was put into the genetics core class and had the most amazing teacher. We got to extract DNA from strawberries and we talked about under-appreciated women. We went to a vet hospital and saw real bones from huge and small animals including an elephant heart. We went to the Bohart Entomology Center [insects dead and alive], the Mondavi Center [for the performing arts] and learned about lighting, music, and what happens behind the scenes. We also made cardboard/duct tape boats that floated 2 people from one end of the swimming pool to the other. We learned about women in engineering and I saw I wasn't the only girl interested in STEM. I found a wonderful, accepting community here. I had such fun meeting new people. We also learned about budgets, careers, forensics, how EMTs [emergency medical technicians] are trained, and learned about having courage and believing in ourselves. Thank you so much!!"

From Samantha

"Thank you for giving me the opportunity to attend Tech Trek and to meet these amazing girls. I loved investigating a crime scene, enjoyed drawing blood from a (stuffed) dog's leg, saw a very pretty butterfly, and learned where it was from. I am very grateful to have met all these wonderful people at this program."

[Click here](#) for a short video of activities, interviews, learning, and fun At Tech Trek Davis 2025.

Tech Trek - cont'd



NEW!!

Join the Chico Branch Tech Trek Alumnae Group!

- DEVELOP LEADERSHIP SKILLS.
- LEARN TO NETWORK AND BE INVITED TO "JUST FOR FUN" EVENTS.
- GET TO KNOW YOUR LOCAL TECH TREK PEERS AND MENTORS.
- EXPLORE STEM FIELDS (Science, Technology, Engineering, Math).
- HOST EDUCATIONAL EVENTS IN OUR COMMUNITY.
- PREPARE FOR SUCCESS IN HIGH SCHOOL, COLLEGE, AND BEYOND.
- CONNECT WITH PROFESSIONAL WOMEN IN STEM FIELDS FROM OUR LOCAL AREA.
- LEARN MORE ABOUT STEM FROM CSUC STUDENT MENTORS.

The AAUW Chico Branch is looking for volunteers/supporters to help start TTAG.

Student leaders and adult advisors are needed to help get this "student club" started.

For the first year we would like to plan one fall event and one spring event, plus an informal social(s) where we have free food, good company, and planning time!

Becoming a member is optional and all activities are optional.

We value your input: please let us know what activities you would like to see our group do.

Interested in joining and/or getting more information?

Email us at: TechTrekChico@gmail.com

Provide your name, contact information, school, suggestions, and questions.

Public Policy

In response to inquiries from branch members about whether it's appropriate to be out on street corners with signs protesting what's happening in Washington, D.C., AAUW California says in no uncertain terms, **yes, it is!**

THE NEXT BIG PROTEST IS OCTOBER 18 – NO KINGS DAY 2

This year, AAUW California will focus on “Get Out the Vote” (GOTV) for Proposition 50 for the special election on November 4, 2025. The focus will be on providing information about and emphasizing the positive impacts of this measure.

Normally, AAUW California publishes a list of formal recommendations to support or oppose propositions. However, AAUW National has advised that, as an organization, *we are not able* to make a formal recommendation about Proposition 50. Instead, we will advance *information-centered messages, including those that emphasize the potential benefits of Prop 50*, for all Californians. In sum, as AAUW California members, *we can focus on providing Californians with information that is currently absent from public discourse*, namely that support of Proposition 50 will

- Preserve wider democratic norms in California
- Oppose Project 2025 implementation in California
- Continue to advance AAUW California's mission and public policy priorities

Check out [Proposition 50 and Get Out the Vote 2025 Guide](#) — a set of resources to educate and support your GOTV efforts, including a Prop 50 messaging guide, Prop 50 overview, FAQs, flier, voting timeline, and more.



Interest Groups for Fun ... and Learning

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



LES FLÂNEURS

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 3rd Wed, Oct 15 @ 5:30 pm at the Sicilian Cafe. Non-alcoholic drinks always available. Please **RSVP**, bring friends, visiting relatives, and new prospective members.

OUT TO LUNCH

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

WOMEN'S MICROFINANCE

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

WORDSMITHS

Jana Lawton (call for more information). **Will not meet this month.** Meets Sun, Nov 9 @ 2 pm, hosted by Lily Laughlin. **All writers welcome!**

FOREIGN POLICY DISCUSSION

Jeannie Trizzino (text for more information). Meets 4th Mon @ 6:30 pm. **No meeting in October. New members welcome!**

EVENING BOOK DISCUSSION

Elaine Schlinger (text for more information). Meets 2nd Tues @ 7 pm in a member's home.

ETHNIC WRITERS BOOK DISCUSSION

Severance Dolan (email for more information). Meets 4th Wed, Oct 22 @ 10 am. Will discuss *Independence* by Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni, hosted by Carol Krok. Please contact Severance for a list of selected books. **New members welcome!**

FRIDAY BOOK DISCUSSION

Severance Dolan (email for more information). Meets 4th Fri @ 10 am in Woodoak condominium clubhouse. Please contact Severance for a list of selected books. **New members welcome!**

NONFICTION BOOK DISCUSSION

Carol Krok (email for more information). Meets 1st Fri, @ 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 3rd Wed, Oct 15 @ 3 pm, at home. Will discuss *Bluebird*, *Bluebird*, by Attica Locke. **New members welcome!**

BRIDGE

Sylvia Hedlind (text/call if interested in joining). Meets 2nd 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 3rd Tues @ 2 pm. Bring your questions.

