

THE SPOKESWOMAN

<https://davis-ca.aauw.net>

Annual Planning Retreat

By Stephanie DeGraff-Hunt, Davis Branch President

To kick off the 2023-24 AAUW year, which started on July 1st, the board met on August 13 to discuss branch goals and plans. The big takeaway from this year's Annual Planning Retreat is to expand ways to collaborate with like-minded people who are determined to work towards positive changes in our communities and world. This ties in perfectly with the AAUW Mission to promote equity for women and girls through advocacy, education, philanthropy and research. To accomplish this, we decided that this year we will write a proclamation to be shared with the Davis City Council and community. We will write postcards or letters to voters and legislators at Celebrate the 19th gatherings and will write letters to the Editor regarding specific legislation. The AAUW-CA Public Policy Committee has provided action items for us to address such as writing our State Senators to vote YES on **Assembly Bill 524: The Family Caregiver Anti-Discrimination Act**.

The article under AAUW-CA News about **The California School Board Project** and information below about **The Equal Rights Amendment (ERA)** showcase the efforts of the Public Policy Committee to ensure that AAUW members have a voice in making positive changes in our communities and world.

The Equal Rights Amendment (ERA). This year marks the 100th anniversary of the introduction of the ERA. AAUW's 2023-25 Public Policy Priorities state that we advocate for ratification and passage of the ERA "to guarantee equality, individual rights, and social justice for a diverse and inclusive society." We are happy to report that multiple paths are being pursued in the current session of Congress to affirm the ERA as the 28th amendment. Right now, we could use your help to finally make this a reality!

One of the paths that looks fruitful for advancing the ERA is passage of a [discharge petition for House Joint Resolution 25 \(H.J. Res. 25\)](#). This will allow for a vote to remove the current ratification deadline for the ERA.

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September Calendar

Saturday, September 9 at 9 am: Book Group meeting by Zoom

Thursday, September 14 at 7 pm: Board Meeting by Zoom

Tuesday, September 19 at 5:30 pm: Celebrate the 19th Postcard Advocacy; email will follow

Sunday, October 1, 3-5 pm: Annual Fall Gathering and Tech Trek Reports

Annual Planning Retreat Continued

Here in California there are two members of Congress (CA-13, Representative John Duarte and CA-41, Representative Ken Calvert) who are a focus of critical outreach because of their demonstrated bipartisanship.

To expand our visibility and community engagement, we will continue to support Tech Trek Camp at UCD, support the idea of initiating Gov Trek at the High School, sponsor a STEM Night for Junior and Senior High School Girls in January 2024, hold a Yard Sale in October, participate in United Nations Association events, and support the AAUW@UCD Student Organization. We will strive to connect the AAUW@UCD students with local leaders such as Cecilia Aguiar-Curry (current CA Assembly Speaker) and Delaine Eastin (former CA State Superintendent of Public Instruction) to increase representation of women in leadership roles. We continue to expand our connections with former Tech Trekkers and encourage them to participate in AAUW. We will look into co-sponsoring events, speakers, and programs with other like-minded groups, as well as ideally support Speech Trek at the High Schools and develop a scholarship for graduating seniors.

We are a small group with ambitious goals and high standards; working together is what keeps us striving towards positive outcomes for our communities and the world.

Save the Dates for Upcoming Events

- Sunday, October 1 from 3 to 5 pm: Annual Friends and Family Gathering at the Cannery Ranch House, 2000 Cannery Loop in Davis. Celebrate the AAUW 2023-24 new year and hear this year's Tech Trekkers report on their UCD Tech Trek camp experiences. Additional details will be sent by email.
- Saturday, October 21: Yard Sale to raise funds for Tech Trek and branch projects. Start collecting gently used household appliances, kitchen items, furniture, books, and clothing for the sale. More information will follow by email.
- Saturday, January 20, 2024, noon to 2 pm: AAUW Fund Luncheon



Save the Date!
Saturday, January 20, 2024
Noon – 2 pm

Join us for the first in-person AAUW Fund Luncheon since 2020. Hear from your AAUW California state officers; be inspired by 2023-24 AAUW Fund scholars. Enjoy luncheon & speakers while benefitting the AAUW Fund.

*Northridge Country Club
7600 Madison Ave. Fair Oaks CA*

Reserve your spot today: \$40 to AAUW CHAR
P.O. Box 1555, Fair Oaks, CA 95628
Note "AAUW Fund Luncheon" on the memo line. Please specify your luncheon choice of either: Turkey w/mashed potatoes & veggies or Vegetarian Risotto.



August Celebrate the 19th

By Juliana Wells

The Three Ladies Cafe was relatively quiet when five of us started discussing “Barbie.” Karen Lemcke was the only one of us who had seen the movie, and suggested several articles she had read. Rhonda Reed brought her daughter’s Barbie kit for examination and inspiration. Laleh Rastegarzadeh and Shahla Farahnak expressed interest in seeing the movie after our discussion. Juliana Wells just took notes.

As usual, we started out talking about our current events: Rhonda said good-bye to her visiting family from Australia; Shahla just returned from San Diego, where she helped her granddaughter and family get safely through RSV; Juliana brought up Maui and the other fires causing smoke and damage. We decided the writing of postcards (a plan developed during the board planning retreat but not yet ready for implementation) was an activity that required more preparation and direction than we had available that day.

Previous to Barbie, most dolls were babies. The originator of Barbie watched her daughter play with paper dolls, and decided she wanted a more realistic model for young girls to identify with. To that end, she (Ruth Handler) had clothes for the basic Barbie which would allow her to act as a doctor, as an athletic competitor or as an astronaut, among many career choices.

This led to a sharing of past histories, where being a woman was not equalized or respected or accepted. This extended to other cultures and educational competency. It was suggested that perhaps our UCD students would benefit from hearing some of our personal histories as a way to connect with mentoring and on-campus counseling at the Women’s Resources and Research Center.

We compared the two current movies (Barbie and Oppenheimer) in that Barbie was one point of view, Ken was another. In Oppenheimer, women scientists and Native peoples were not well represented or were absent. This led us to the question: in other historic movies, what and who was omitted? Through Ken, the movie showed patriarchy in a different, interesting way regarding expectations for men. Karen found the responses of the theater audience intriguing. The movie definitely engages people and encourages reflection about traditional (outmoded) gender roles.

Cindy Eagan wrote and Amy Bates illustrated “The Story of Barbie and the Woman Who Created Her”. Other related writings are by Kate McKinnon (“Weird Barbie”) and The New York Times 8/19/2023 opinion article by Margot Robbie. After more members view the movie, another discussion may ensue.

Barbie: Feminist Role Model or Just a Doll?

By Cristele Moztarzadeh

Barbie is a cultural icon that has spanned generations of girls and women. Now "Barbie", the movie, has drawn record-breaking crowds, topping more than \$1 billion in revenues worldwide.

Our UCD intern, Cristele, shares her thoughts on growing up with Barbie, feminism, and the movie in response to Estelle Shiroma's questions.

Before you saw the movie, did you think Barbie portrayed a positive role model for girls?

I played with Barbie dolls all the time growing up. However, I didn't necessarily view Barbie as a 'role model' in the sense that I wanted to

be exactly like her. I realized very early that wanting to be like "Barbie" is not realistic. The doll is known for taking on hundreds of jobs and always being emotionally and physically perfect, and this alone is not possible. While I appreciated Barbie growing up as a source of entertainment and did learn some lessons from the fantastical adventures Mattel concocted for the doll, I think that the same way that the creator of Barbie Ruth Handler emphasizes that you shouldn't want to be Barbie, I use the idea of Barbie more as a foundation than an exact guideline of what a girl should be. It is important to not think of Barbie as a role model, but as a fictional character with fictional capabilities.

Did Barbie influence your views of girls/women as you grew up?

I do think Barbie influenced how I imagined a perfect girl should look; there were never any Barbie dolls with messy hair, no makeup, or sad faces to instill the notion that women cannot live up to society's unrealistic standards. This has an effect on girls, their main example of a woman being something they can never be no matter how hard they try. In some ways, I do think Barbie had a positive impact on me, particularly in the Barbie movies. I think the same way superheroes and G.I. Joe's gave boys the ability to think big and imaginatively, Barbie movies give girls a way of looking at the possibilities of life. While a lot of the movies do portray girls as princesses and magical, I don't think there is anything wrong with giving girls an imaginative outlet. The movies allow us to be a dancer, mermaid, fairy, musician, and secret spy agent with Barbie and expand our creativity in her quests.



Barbie: Feminist Role Model or Just a Doll? Continued

It is also notable that Barbie doesn't often depend on men to save her in the movies, but goes to other girl friends around her for support, thus portraying the beauty of female friendships in a world where girls are often pinned against each other to please men. In Barbie movies, Barbie almost always saves herself, with the help of those around her. This is unlike other films, like Disney princess movies, where the girls are saved by the male protagonist. I believe the Barbie brand imparts another valuable lesson to me and other consumers: the importance of embracing femininity in a world where it is often ridiculed and equated with weakness. Society enjoys dismissing anything associated with women, from liking the color pink to admirable careers where the majority of workers are female, like nursing or teaching. Even dolls are considered silly and childish, but 'figurines' - as boys are taught to call them - hold a more positive connotation. Barbie teaches girls that there's nothing wrong with pursuing success and femininity, and that things that are feminine are not inherently bad.

Do you think that society has sexist, contradictory, unattainable expectations for women?

I would venture to say that a large majority of women played with Barbies throughout their childhood. While the millions of little girls playing with Barbie all look different and have different dreams, the toy they all played with remained the same more or less - whether she was a veterinarian or teacher, Barbie was the best at everything she did. This leaves women thinking there is no room for failure. This pushes the idea that if girls are bad at something, they should just give up and try something else. A common real life example of this is how when girls cry when they first fail at something, they are babied and told it's okay, whereas when boys first fail at something, they are told to man up and try again and we know practice makes perfect. Not only is she perfect at what she does, but Barbie pushes a very specific western physical ideal. Barbie dolls define perfect as white, blonde, and with unrealistic bodily proportions that even researchers say are 1 of 100,000 in a real female. This unattainable physicality set by the male gaze leaves consumers of Barbie with expectations that cannot be met. The original Barbie sets contradictory standards for women as she can somehow do everything with a smile plastered on her face, she can easily meet unrealistic body standards and do every job bestowed upon her by Mattel.

What are your thoughts about what it means to be a girl and a woman?

I think my generation is learning that being a girl or woman simply means to be a human. We are working to prove that women are not less than their counterparts because of certain features or abilities, we are biologically different and this is not bad. Being a woman is a beautiful thing, and not every woman should have to fit certain standards to be considered womanly or feminine.

Barbie: Feminist Role Model or Just a Doll? Continued

How do you think patriarchy and feminism were explored/explained in the movie?

I think the 2023 Barbie movie was a great way for the creators of Barbie to shift their narrative of what she represents and what they hope to put out into the world with their product. After all, Barbie is a product, which I think was forgotten with all the glamorous outfits and inhuman capabilities she possesses as a doll with 200+ careers who still keeps a full-face of makeup and blowout hairdo. The movie makes Barbie, that was once a product, into a human to portray the idea that the only reason she was perfect was because she was not real.

What message(s) resonated with you in the movie? Did you have any favorite lines?

One of the most significant lines for me was said by Lawyer Barbie, which I suppose is fitting as I am a Political Science student. Lawyer Barbie says, "This makes me emotional and I'm expressing it. I have no difficulty holding both logic and emotion at the same time, and it does not diminish my powers. It expands them." I think this message is very important, and I love the idea of so many little girls around the world being exposed to it. Society, following the patriarchy, argues that women being emotional is a bad thing, but I think our enhanced ability to feel is one of women's greatest and under-appreciated assets.



Book Group Discussion on August 11

By Juliana Wells and Verena Borton

Participating in the discussion of “The Midnight Library” by Matt Haig were Barbara Durst (who guided the conversation), Verena Borton, Juliana Wells, Sally Ho, Karen Lemcke, Rhonda Reed, and Estelle Shiroma. We started out with comments about the devastation caused by the Maui fires just days before the meeting.

A quote at the beginning of the novel sets the stage:

“Between life and death there is a library, she said. And within that library the shelves go on forever. Every book provides a chance to try another life you could have lived. To see how things would be if you had made other choices... Would you have done anything different, if you had the chance to undo your regrets?”

The term regrets is the central theme in this novel. Nora Seed, the main character, is a 35-year old burdened with innumerable regrets about her relationships, about actions she has taken and those she did not take, depressed about losses, failures and her inability to make choices that work out well, ready to end her “useless” life. The individual books in the Midnight Library under the management of Mrs. Elm, the librarian who resembles Nora’s librarian from school days, magically offer her the opportunity to make a series of different choices that she regrets not having made before. She pursues her early swimming career that was expected to lead to the Olympics until she quit, she once more tries out her career as a songwriter and part of a promising band that she had abruptly abandoned and by doing so hurt her brother, seeing how a marriage she walked away from two days before the wedding might have turned out, exploring a future as a glaciologist and other possibilities. Nora finds out that her imagination of different choices having better results isn’t always realistic; some choices are successful, others disappointing. The imaginary experience ultimately turns her away from suicidal thoughts and leaves her with a sense of hope and creative energy.

Barbara posed several questions, asking for instance who would be our mentor/guide as the librarian is for Nora and in what location would we imagine trying out different choices? Several of us had imagined “what if” situations in our own mind, rather than in a specific location. On the whole we felt few regrets, just curiosity how things would have turned out if we had not chosen a certain career option, a certain school or geographical location or had not met a life partner as the result of a random choice. We decided it was difficult to find fame or perfection in one field while still maintaining balance in other pursuits. We can’t do it all.

Having just graduated from UCD, Sally has not yet had to face as many choices as the rest of us. Yet she cheerfully pointed out that if she had chosen to attend UCR rather than UCD she would not have found our group of AAUW women who have become good friends and mentors. So she definitely feels no regrets about her choice of university. It was wonderful to hear such a positive opinion.

Book Group Discussion on August 11 Continued

It is interesting that the author is a man who very effectively channeled a woman's thoughts. As Nora had imagined living different versions of herself in the Midnight Library, only less than a minute and a half had transpired in real time. Life sometimes changes in a few seconds. In that context Estelle told how her husband, Rich, was a pilot of small planes and had crashed, suffering major burn injuries. His life changed in a moment, but he has no regrets and finds meaning in reaching out to offer peer counseling to burn survivors.

After offering suggestions for future book selections, the discussion turned to the benefits of travel as a means of living in the moment and not planning a distant future. There were a number of examples of the value of recognizing different lifestyles and gaining a new perspective through experiencing a variety of cultures. As a way of traveling to other times, Barbara spoke about her extremely interesting experiences as a member of the Shakespeare Club. Membership is by invitation only. Contact Barbara if you are interested.

On Saturday, September 9, the book group discussed "Dinners with Ruth: A Memoir on the Power of Friendships" by Nina Totenberg. The selection for discussion on October 14 is "Be Mine: A Frank Bascombe Novel" by Richard Ford.

Member Spotlight: Karen Lemcke

By Juliana Wells

We highlighted our Davis branch board members in the April Spokeswoman, and Helen Thompson and Juliana Wells in previous editions. This month we are featuring Karen Lemcke.

Karen joined the Davis branch several years ago after actively participating in the AAUW Palo Alto branch for over twenty years. She was a working mom and moved her sister-in-law with three little sons into her home on an emergency basis. After serving as Program Chair for four years, she was

elected President of the Palo Alto branch. During her tenure she facilitated fundraising to complete an AAUW grant for Lupus research that had been initiated by the Humboldt branch.

When Karen moved to Chico, she joined the branch there and became a dual member. She was there during the catastrophic Camp Fire that burned down the town of Paradise. The Chico branch then encompassed Paradise branch members and distributed many gift cards for the survivors who had lost everything. (Davis branch members also participated in that gesture). Four years ago, Karen moved to Davis to help her mother, her sons and her grandkids, all living in Davis. Karen felt welcomed by Juliana Wells when she attended a September potluck for Tech Trek students with her 2-year old granddaughter.

After completing a Bachelor's degree at Chico State College majoring in Journalism with a minor in Political Science, Karen worked at an all news radio station (KXPR) as a news journalist. She later was a distributor of ads and literature in the Advertising Department for Atari Video Games and Computers. After taking specialized courses she got her Realtor's license and was a residential realtor in Palo Alto, San Jose, Chico, Paradise and Davis. Currently Karen is a Referral Realtor assisting homebuyers across the country, as well as a realtor and property manager in Davis and the surrounding areas of Chico, Sacramento, and the Bay Area.

Karen volunteered to be Davis AAUW's monthly Book Group coordinator and has been active in the Celebrate the 19th events. She readily shares fascinating personal and historical stories, peppered with humor, anecdotes and a generous spirit throughout.



UNA Update

By Verena Borton

Regional

Six members of the Davis UNA chapter, five of whom are also AAUW members, joined a virtual meeting of the UNA NorCal Division on August 26. Two chapters in the region have ceased to exist due to lack of leadership and several chapters (including Davis) are struggling to get paid membership numbers back up to prior levels. (UNA membership for youth up to age 26 is free.) A few of the chapters have returned to mostly in person meetings. Davis hopes to do so later this fall.

Local

We are preparing for the annual UN Day Proclamation by the Davis City Council and expect the UN flag to be flown at City Hall on October 24 to mark the 78th UN Day. The Trick-or-Treat for UNICEF campaign that UNA traditionally conducted with school children in October has been discontinued by the UNICEF organization as their focus has turned exclusively to digital events. The Davis chapter, however, continues to maintain a special bank account at First Northern Bank, 434 Second Street, Davis, CA 95616 specifically designated for “UNICEF Donations.”

National

UNA members annually advocate with their Representatives and Senators for full funding for the UN. This year developments in the budget process are particularly worrisome in terms of the U.S. House appropriations bill proposing the most dramatic cuts to international assistance in U.S. history. The House bill calls for elimination of all funding to the UN Regular Budget - a move that would result in the U.S. losing its vote in the General Assembly - as well as major cuts in funding for UN agencies and voluntary contributions. The Senate version is more favorable for international organizations but calls for maintaining the 25% cap on Peacekeeping funding, adding to \$1B in arrears. It is always useful to remember that the funding for all UN dues comes to less than 0.1% of the total federal budget. All are encouraged to let support for full funding of the UN be known to those who represent us in Congress. The one bright spot was the U.S. rejoining UNESCO in July, based on the assumption that the funding vote that was passed last December will materialize.

In early August UNA-USA announced Ose Arheghan as the 12th Youth Observer to the UN at the completion of Himaja Nagireddy's term. Arheghan plans "to champion education, amplify youth voices, and advocate for increased representation to bring about a more equitable and progressive tomorrow."

At the UN

The U.S. led the Security Council during August. Secretary of State Antony Blinken chaired an event devoted entirely to the topic of weaponizing food during conflicts and presented a U.S. pledge not to weaponize food in war. "Hunger and conflict are inexorably linked," Blinken told the 15-member Council. "Scarce resources heighten tensions between communities and nations. Warring parties weaponize food to subjugate local populations. Indeed, conflict is the largest

UNA Update Continued

driver of food insecurity, with violence and unrest pushing 117 million people into extreme deprivation last year.” Regretfully, half of all UN members abstained from joining the pledge. Only 11 of Africa’s 54 countries agreed. “Those who abstained don’t want to be caught in the middle of a fight among world powers or to be used to score political points” according to UN expert Jeffrey Laurenti. (Laurenti spoke to the Davis chapter in 2017.)

UNGA78 - United Nations General Assembly 78. World leaders will gather in New York September 18-22 to engage in the annual high-level General Debate under the theme, “Rebuilding trust and reigniting global solidarity: Accelerating action on the 2030 Agenda and its Sustainable Development Goals towards peace, prosperity, progress and sustainability for all.” Quite a mouthful, and an admirable but extremely challenging task.

AAUW National News

Public Policy Updates

By Meghan Kissell, MSW

Senior Director, Policy and Member Advocacy

As Congress returns to Washington, DC, this month, all attention will be focused on whether the U.S. House and Senate can come to an agreement on government funding bills that must be passed by the end of the fiscal year (September 30). The two chambers are far apart on education funding, and numerous provisions have been added to the bills, including measures to restrict abortion access and attacking members of the LGBTQ+ community, which will make them difficult to reconcile. These divisions invite both parties to play a game of chicken that could shut down the federal government unless sensible compromises can be agreed upon.

AAUW joins our coalition partners in calling on Congress to pass a budget that gives federal agencies the resources they need to provide Americans with quality health care, an education free of discrimination, workplace protections, and other critical civil and human rights. While some partisan actors will use these negotiations to score political points, AAUW will continue to be a voice calling for equity for women and girls.

Act — Take action on the most pressing policies

It’s back-to-school season! Over the past few weeks, students of all ages have been preparing for the start of a new school year — and so have parents.

The lack of access to paid time off in the United States creates significant challenges for working women. Access to sick leave is inconsistent throughout the workforce and nonexistent for the 20 percent of workers in low-wage and part-time jobs. Approximately 80 percent of the workforce doesn’t have any paid parental leave. The lack of universal paid leave disproportionately impacts women since they continue to be primary caretakers for children and older parents and often must miss work and lose income because of their caretaking responsibilities.

AAUW National News Continued

Congress can address these issues by passing a set of bills that would establish a national standard for paid family and medical leave and paid sick days. The Family and Medical Insurance Leave (FAMILY) Act would provide workers with up to 12 weeks of partial income when they take time for their own serious health conditions, including pregnancy and childbirth recovery; the serious health condition of a family member; the birth or adoption of a child; or to address the effects of domestic violence, or sexual assault. The Healthy Families Act would allow workers in businesses with 15 or more employees to earn up to seven job-protected paid sick days each year. These common sense policies would update current laws for the workplace to address the health and caregiving needs of employees.

Urge Congress to pass [the FAMILY Act and the Healthy Families Act!](#)

Learn — *Dig deeper into the issues that matter*

Public Education — As students head back to class, public education continues to be on the front line of conversations in state houses and on the presidential debate stage. A [new article from the RAND Corporation](#) examined the state of K–12 public education in the United States. One of the more troublesome findings is that it's become more common for math teachers to omit content that is required by their state's standards — and this issue is even worse in classrooms where most students are of color or from low-income households. The surveys referenced in the article also found that state restrictions on classroom discussions of politicized issues, such as race and gender-related topics, are affecting how teachers do their jobs.

AAUW is working to create equal opportunity for all students to reach their full potential and thrive. Our free online program, [STEMEd for Girls](#), paves the way for success in STEM subjects through high school and into college.

Title IX — The U.S. Department of Education (ED) is developing final rules to strengthen the civil rights protections in Title IX, the law that prohibits sex discrimination in federally funded education programs. The rules were expected to be finalized by October; however, that deadline is seemingly [highly unlikely](#). In June, AAUW joined a coalition of organizations in a [letter to the Biden-Harris administration](#) expressing our deep disappointment in the lack of urgency of finalizing these rules prior to the 2023-2024 school year. We will continue to urge the administration to not delay the needed civil rights protections for students.

Student Debt — In the wake of June's Supreme Court's decision overturning student debt cancellation, the ED has opened applications for a new, more affordable income-driven student loan repayment plan — [Saving on a Valuable Education \(SAVE\)](#). The new program comes as the current payment and interest pause ends this month and payments are set to resume in October.

AAUW National News Continued

Nearly 7 million federal student loan borrowers were still in college when the current payment pause began in March 2020, and many have not yet had to make a student loan payment. If you have student loans that are about to start, here are some steps you can take:

1. Find out who your loan servicer is, understand and manage your existing credit and debt, and choose a repayment plan that is right for you.
2. Find out if you are eligible for an income-driven repayment (IDR) plan such as SAVE.
3. Find out if you are eligible for loan forgiveness programs that were not affected by the Supreme Court decision. There are programs for public service employees, teachers, people who have been defrauded by for-profit schools, and individuals with disabilities.
4. If your federal student loans were in default before the pandemic, find out if you are eligible for the ED's [Fresh Start program](#), which offers an opportunity to get your loan status changed from "default" to "current."

The ED is also seeking [nominations for negotiators](#) from 14 constituency groups who will participate in public rule-making sessions beginning in October for a newly established Student Loan Relief Committee. Negotiated rule-making is required under the Higher Education Act (HEA) for any regulations related to federal student financial aid programs.

Engage — *Share the important work we're doing*

- Earlier this year, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) was sued over its approval of mifepristone, part of a safe and effective regimen commonly used in medication abortions. AAUW joined the United State of Women and 140 partners in a [People's Brief](#) to demand the courts uphold the law and protect access to mifepristone.
- Last month, the ED's Office for Civil Rights released guidance on "[Race and School Programming](#)" to provide schools with information on programs to promote racially inclusive school communities. The move was made in the wake of the U.S. Supreme Court's June decision that prohibited the consideration of race in higher education admissions.
- On August 25, Rep. Nikema Williams (D-GA-5) [introduced](#) a suite of AAUW-supported voting rights bills to ensure "free and fair access to the ballot" for all. Read the [community letter](#) applauding the bills' introductions and urging members of Congress to support them.
- AAUW hosted a [Moms' Equal Pay Day conversation](#) on August 15 (#MomsEqualPayDay), with partners from Equal Rights Advocates, MomsRising, and the Institute for Women's Policy Research, to discuss challenges facing working mothers. We also recognized Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander (NHPI) Women's Equal Pay Day (#NHPIEqualPayDay) on August 30.
- [Join AAUW](#) on October 5 for a social media storm to recognize #LatinaEqualPayDay. Latina women, including part-time and seasonal workers, are paid only 54 cents for every dollar paid to non-Hispanic white men.

AAUW-CA News

Our Dreams are Big, Our Goals are Ambitious

By Sandi Gabe, President, AAUW California, statepresident@aauw-ca.org

When you want to achieve something big, bring passionate women together to chart the course! That's what we did!

On August 19th, the AAUW California committee members gathered to strategize and set our direction forward. Together, we forged a roadmap that will guide us toward our shared goals and aspirations to:

- Develop resources to help branches build membership.
- Assist branches struggling with leadership needs.
- Strengthen connections among the state, branches, and national AAUW.
- Provide exciting new opportunities for members to engage.

Now, it's time to put our plans into action. I'm excited to highlight a few of our first steps.

- We merged several committees and peer groups into Branch Development; one-stop shopping for branch leaders as we focus our efforts on leadership development, membership growth, and branch support.
- Peer groups are launching this month bringing branch and state leaders together with our committee members to share best practices and learn from each other. The summary schedule and information about each peer group can be found on the website [HERE](#).
- Voted by Committee Day attendees as the "Project that will be most exciting to the branches!", Public Policy launches the School Board Project with a timely and informative webinar on book banning and curricula censorship.
- Our Google Ads for Nonprofits launch this month. With the opportunity to spend up to \$10k per month, we hope to expand the reach of AAUW and fill your roster with new members. This effort will be followed by our LinkedIn ad campaign designed to attract educators.

Like you, I need inspiration to keep moving forward. Having the opportunity to rub shoulders with talented, passionate, and committed members recharges my batteries and gives me hope that we'll continue to make a difference in the lives of women and girls. Click [HERE](#) for some inspiration from Committee Day.

AAUW-CA News Continued

Get Excited About Public Policy!

By Amy Hom and Melissa Maceyko, Directors, Public Policy Committee Co-chairs, publicpolicy@aauw-ca.org

The Public Policy Committee met in person in San Jose on August 19th as part of AAUW California's 2023-24 Committee Day. We spent the day together talking, eating, laughing, and planning some exciting public policy projects for the year ahead.

One of these projects, the School Board Project (SBP), created quite a buzz! Committee Day attendees, who came from all state committees, voted it as one of the state's most exciting undertakings in the coming year. We're excited, too.

The SBP will offer the webinar *Book Banning and Curricula Censorship in California? AAUW California to the Rescue!* on Thursday, September 21st, at 7pm. Kathi Harper, School Board Project Committee Chair, will explain the project, what we are doing, and how all AAUW California members can help. Click [HERE](#) to register for the webinar.

The webinar will give you tools to address a problem that is being faced by communities all across the state and the nation: attempts to elect regressive school board members who support book banning and curricula censorship.

In addition to the SBP, the Public Policy Committee is also making plans for our other core projects: creating a new monthly public policy newsletter for branch public policy chairs and presidents, setting our next Legislative Agenda, planning Lobby Days, and creating a new Action and Education Outreach campaign. Stay tuned! We will share more information about these projects in the coming months.

BE AS ACTIVE AS YOU CAN, BUT STAY A MEMBER.

Formatted By: Cristele Moztarzadeh