

THE SPOKESWOMAN

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

International House I-Fest - A Great Success

By Stephanie DeGraff-Hunt

Our hats are off to the organizers and volunteers for the successful International Festival (I-Fest) held on Sunday, October 6th. The AAUW Davis branch was a proud Community Sponsor of the I-Fest. It was inspiring to see and participate in such a joyful celebration of cultural vitality with music, dance, art, food, family, and friends. The impressive number of booths, performing groups, workshops, and activities showcased the diversity of our community. At I-Fest we had fun sharing and engaging with one another, highlighting how learning about each other adds a unique richness to our lives. We are so fortunate that we have events like the I-Fest to celebrate the aspects of humanity that lift us, unite us, and bring joy to our hearts. This year's I-Fest had to be revamped in a completely new way as Central Park is under renovation. The I-Fest organizers were creative in using the International House community room for workshops, the back lawn as a stage area for the performing groups, and the parking lot for food trucks. The wonderful sponsors' and vendors' tables were set up in the park area across from the Chancellor's House. It worked out quite well as there was room enough for everyone. The two drawbacks were that those of us at the tables outdoors could not see or hear the performers and there was less foot traffic coming by the tables. On the other hand, the opportunity to engage in thoughtful, in-depth conversations with people visiting the tables was rewarding.

The AAUW table was flanked by the United Nations Association and the League of Women Voters tables which allowed us to share information with table visitors and each other. Sahaya International was across from us where beautiful hand-stitched cards and handmade baskets were sold.

Annie Chen, a UCD graduate and former AAUW@UCD student member who attended the May 2018 National Conference for College Women Student Leaders in Washington, DC, visited Davis this past weekend. Estelle hosted Annie, who eagerly helped at our AAUW table on Sunday. Being the great networker that she is, Annie made

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October Calendar

Tuesday October 1st, 6:30: UNA Proclamation Reading at Davis City Council

Sunday October 6th, noon-6pm: International Festival at I-House

Thursday October 10th, 7pm: Monthly Board Meeting

Saturday October 12, 9am: Monthly Book Group Meeting

Sunday October 13th, 2pm-4pm: Annual Fall Friends and Family Gathering and Tech Trek Presentations

Saturday October 19th, 12:30pm: Celebrate the 19th: Visit Winters

Sunday October 27, 3pm to 5pm: United Nations' 79th Anniversary Celebration at I-House

connections at the Cool Davis table because the Tri-Valley Air Quality Climate Alliance, the non-profit that she works for, promotes similar goals. In turn, Brandon from the Cool Davis table visited our table to learn more about AAUW. He was impressed and said that what AAUW is doing is exactly what his mother actively supports. He took information to share with his mother and we strongly encouraged him to have her reach out to us.

It was incredibly hot, but Rhonda's pop-up tent and battery-operated fans offered relief from the heat. Marti's beautiful quilt provided welcome shade. Many thanks to all who came to the I-Fest and helped at the AAUW table. Being there together is what makes it special.



Estelle, Annie, and Stephanie tabling at the I-Fest

Recap of September Book Group's discussion of "One Big Open Sky" by Lesa Cline-Ransome

By Carolyn Van Hoecke



The Book Group met on September 14th, attended by Verena Borton, Estelle Shiroma, Barbara Durst, Judy Flores, Cathy Tkach, Karen Lemcke, and Carolyn Van Hoecke. The selection was "One Big Open Sky" by Lesa Cline-Ransome, one of the first to write about westward migration from an African American viewpoint. The author has written several young adult books based on a similar theme of giving up all that is known to embrace a totally unknown future. This story of resilience is written entirely in ballad free form poem style primarily from the perspective of Lettie, a spunky eleven-year-old girl who is the official bookkeeper and recorder of the story since she "knows her letters and her numbers."

BOOK REVIEW CONTINUED

Motivation for the plot is based on the dream of Thomas, Lettie's father, a former slave, now freed sharecropper in Mississippi, who yearns to be truly free and independent to govern land of his own. He decides to immigrate with his young family to territory available for homesteading in Nebraska. It is the spring of 1879 when his family of five, with nine other families, provision their wagons and start walking north on their five-month journey. Along the way, they encounter the hardships of dirt, insects, weather, terrain, accident, disease, bandits, poverty, and discrimination—along with the comforts of music, laughter, teamwork, and the abiding friendship that comes from shared experience. By fall, seven families are able to make it to the promised land and secure the parcels that they dreamed of owning. As Lettie approaches her twelfth year, she is surrounded by people who love her and has the whole open sky available to expand thoughts about her new life now actually full of freedom's possibilities.

Even though written for young adults, the book was selected for its good reviews and the interesting historical experience (the Black homesteader movement) which was largely unknown to us. Everyone enjoyed the rhythm and use of descriptive language and the alternate viewpoints of the three ages of women who are the narrators of the story. Participants also felt the audio version of this book was a soothing change from the political intensity of the prior month's selection, an experience enhanced by a very well selected cast of readers. Several commented on how pleasant this was with just the right amount of balance between history, romance and danger.

We considered the circumstances, strengths, and limitations of Thomas, who was left alone to cope after all members of his family had been sold off; he is essentially an orphan when freed. We felt his character was complicated by his unrealistic dreams of future success and were not disappointed that, even though it starts as his idea, he is one of the characters who dies before completing the entire journey. It is his wife Sylvia, the "older woman" narrator of the story, who seems to have the realistic common-sense approach that contributes to the success of the trip. One remembered quote from wife Sylvia "I'm tired of Thomas talking so big because he feels so small."

We were happy with the character of 16-year-old Philomena, third narrator of the story, the orphan addition allowed to join the family because she finances their trip with her secret savings, since Thomas has clearly underestimated the financial burden of the journey and runs out of money early on. Philomena has trained to be a schoolteacher and by mail had the promise of a teaching position in Nebraska but lacks funding for a train ticket. She essentially replaces Thomas as head of the family. As well as providing her schoolteacher cabin as a place to live at journey's end, she will become a good independent woman role model for Lettie. There was a thorough discussion of Lettie's 11-year-old character, especially her deep understanding of the animals and her ignorance of the behavior of adults as she attempts to understand and absorb her new life surroundings. We had a moment speculating on what will happen to this group in the imagined sequel.

BOOK REVIEW CONTINUED

Along the way, our own group members contributed many stories of ancestor's dangerous long distance immigration experiences. They were similarly organized to help each other and to fight and had to do both. There were enough instances that another exciting book could be written. We also discussed how much of the discrimination against married and working women wasn't improved until the Civil Rights Act of 1964. The book is highly recommended for all, both for self and as a gift to junior family members.

The next book group meeting will be by Zoom on Saturday, October 12th at 9:00 am to consider the newly published memoir "Lovely One – A Memoir" by Ketanji Brown Jackson. The book is available in hard cover, paperback, and Kindle.

Annual Yard Sale

By Rhonda Reed

Many thanks to all who donated and helped to put on our fall Yard and Bake sale on September 28th! We had quite an assortment of goods to select from and brought in around \$500. Money raised from the yard sale will be used to fund Tech Trek scholarships and branch projects. The weather was pleasant and we met lots of interesting people who were encouraged to contribute. It was a great FUN-raiser!



Davis branch members at the yard sale



Friends and Family Gathering on October 13th

All are invited to the Annual Fall Friends and Family Gathering at the Cannery Ranch House at 2000 Cannery Loop on **Sunday, October 13 from 2 to 4 pm**. Join us to get to know each other and to greet our new members who joined us from the Woodland Branch. Our four Tech Trekkers will present their reports on what they learned at camp this summer. We thank our gracious Cannery resident host, Laleh Rastegarzadeh, for making the rental of this facility available to us.

Save the Date: October Celebrate the 19th

By Shahla Farahnak

On Saturday, October 19, we will meet for lunch at [Chuy's Taqueria](#) at 208 Railroad Avenue in Winters at 12:30 pm. After lunch, for those who are interested and available, I will lead a stroll through beautiful downtown Winters to check out local stores, [Winters Center for the Arts](#), and the [Winters Museum](#). Current museum exhibits include Remembering Monticello (lost city under Lake Berryessa), Lost Japanese Community of Winters, and History of Winters.

During this time of the year, businesses in Winters should have their fall exhibits on display in time for the annual community-voted competition. For those who would like to make it a longer afternoon outing, you can visit local wineries, [Berryessa Brewing Company](#), or indulge in ice cream. Feel free to reach out to me (Shahla Farahnak at 530-304-2844) if you have any questions. If you are interested in carpooling from Davis, please contact Estelle at (530) 848-9361 or estelle.shiroma@gmail.com.

We look forward to this fun gathering and hope you can join us. For more information about the City of Winters, see <https://www.discoverwinters.com/>.

October 2024 UNA Update

by Verena Borton

United Nation's 79th Anniversary Celebration

Locally our board has been very busy collaborating with partners to prepare an engaging program for United Nations Day, to be held at International House (10 College Park) on Sunday, October 27, 3-5 p.m. The event is free and open to the public, with requested registration to assist in planning the logistics. We hope to see you there!



All 193 Member States of the United Nations adopted the “2030 Agenda” in 2015, aiming to fulfill the SDGs by 2030. Setbacks like the pandemic and lack of general knowledge of how the SDGs apply to ALL nations and require concerted efforts to address issues like poverty, food insecurity, gender equality, quality education, sustainable cities and climate action have made it highly unlikely that the Goals can be achieved in six more years.

UNA Davis and International House will present a focus on the Sustainable Development Goals to bring attention to the urgency of this concern. UCD Global Affairs SDG interns, under guidance of Jolynn Shoemaker, will give brief descriptions of all 17 SDGs that unfortunately still are not widely known by the general public, emphasizing their global as well as local applications. Executive Director Tracy Fauver of the local nonprofit Davis Community Meals and Housing will illustrate how many of the interconnected SDGs are applied in DCMAH’s varied services to the Davis community. A third component of the event will be a display of art by fifth graders from North Davis Elementary showing how the students interpreted the fuller meaning of the SDG of their choice.

Other Local UNA October Events:

October 1 marks publication of the eighth UNA Davis monthly newsletter. It was also the day when the Davis City Council presented the annual UN Day Proclamation and gave the chapter a chance to present brief comments about the United Nations and our local efforts to educate, advocate and inspire the public about the vital importance of a constructive U.S.-UN relationship. Board member Laleh Rastegarzadeh delivered that message.



UN Day Proclamation at the October 1st Davis City Council meeting

On the following weekend, UNA Davis was a Community Sponsor of International House's I-Fest, including six hours of joining other groups displaying our information with an outdoor booth, responding to many questions about the United Nations in general and our chapter events in particular.



Friends from Kyrgyzstan visit the UNA table at I-Fest

United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) High-Level Week 2024

The theme for the general debate of the 79th session of the General Assembly, under new leadership by Philemon Yang of Cameroon, was "Leaving no one behind: acting together for the advancement of peace, sustainable development and human dignity for present and future generations". In addition to speeches by world leaders from September 24-30, the **Summit of the Future** took place on September 22-23, as well as "High-level Meetings" on the existential threat of sea level rise, to promote the International Day for the Total Elimination of Nuclear Weapons, and on antimicrobial resistance.

Note of concern: **Where, where are the women?** Of the [133 heads of state or government](#) -- presidents or prime ministers -- scheduled to speak at UNGA79's high-level debate, only nine are women. That's a mere 6.8 percent of the total world leaders scheduled to speak.

To illustrate the innumerable ways in which the U.S. is actively involved with the UN, the White House published a fact sheet outlining accomplishments of the Biden-Harris Administration. Read the impressive list here: <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2024/09/24/fact-sheet-biden-harris-administration-accomplishments-at-the-united-nations/?emci=1966e197-717b-ef11-991a-6045bdee6681&emdi=056e5d47-ff7c-ef11-8474-6045bda8aae9&ceid=4942001>.

Summit of the Future

World leaders at the UN's Summit of the Future adopted three foundational agreements to safeguard our future for generations to come, capping arduous negotiations. Imperfect but important, the Pact for the Future, Global Digital Compact, and Declaration on Future Generations provide an essential basis for action — a floor, not a ceiling, for the stepped up cooperation we need in a turbulent world.

Read the takeaways by United Nations Foundation President Elizabeth Cousens: <https://unfoundation.org/blog/post/the-summit-of-the-future-my-thoughts-on-whats-next/?emci=1966e197-717b-ef11-991a-6045bdee6681&emdi=056e5d47-ff7c-ef11-8474-6045bda8aae9&ceid=4942001>.

UN Women in Gender Snapshot 2024

Of particular interest to AAUW should be the 2024 Snapshot.

“Gender equality is good for people, planet and peace, and investing in women and gender equality is urgent. If we don't, it will cost us. That is the resounding message of UN Women's latest flagship report, [Progress on the Sustainable Development Goals: The Gender Snapshot 2024](#).

With only six years remaining until the 2030 deadline for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) set by the United Nations in 2015 and endorsed by governments everywhere, UN Women's new flagship report highlights gender equality trends and points to **six actions** that could be game changers.”

18th Community Reading of the 31 Individual Articles of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights

On December 8, 3-5 p.m., UNA Davis will once again host the traditional participatory reading of the UDHR at International House. Seeking 31 volunteers to take part in reading each Article in a world language and an equal number to read the Article in English. If you wish to volunteer, please contact verena.borton@unadavis.org.

Swiss UN Ambassador with interests in women's issues presides over the Security Council during October



“Ambassador Pascale Baeriswyl of Switzerland to the United Nations chairs the rotating presidency of the Security Council this month. Although the Council's agenda is packed with a range of meetings, including a special debate on the women, peace and security topic, the violence spreading in the Mideast will surely cloud all other events, Oct. 1, 2024. JOHN PENNEY/PASSBLUE”



**UNITED NATIONS ASSOCIATION
OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA**

Davis Chapter

2024 Ballot Propositions: Support AAUW CA Public Policy Priorities

By Amy Hom and Missy Maceyko, Co-Chairs, AAUW California Public Policy Committee

This November, California voters will decide the fate of 10 statewide ballot propositions. While we encourage members to support additional propositions that may capture the spirit of AAUW California's Public Policy Priorities (PPPs), we suggest that four of the propositions on the ballot in 2024 deserve a YES vote from our members for their explicit alignment with AAUW California's PPPs.

[Proposition 2](#), Public Education Facilities Bond Measure (2024), proposes issuing \$10 billion in bonds to fund construction and modernization of California's public education facilities. \$8.5 billion would be allocated to K-12 schools and \$1.5 billion would support improvements at community colleges. [Many school facilities](#) are over 50 years old and require significant upgrades to meet current technological and education needs. [Research](#) shows that modernized school facilities correlate with better test scores, higher attendance, and improved teacher retention rates. The last time districts received state funding for infrastructure improvements was in 2016, when Prop 51 authorized \$9 billion in bonds. That money has now run out, and Prop 2 would help fund school projects totaling \$3.5 billion that have already been approved and are awaiting funding.

AAUW California supports “Adequate and equitable funding at all educational levels, including pre-school and post-secondary”, and we support a YES vote on Proposition 2.

[Proposition 3](#), Constitutional Right to Marriage, would amend the California Constitution to recognize the fundamental right to marry, and would remove the language banning same-sex marriage, passed by voters in 2008, from the state constitution. In practice, the ban has been nullified since a [Supreme Court ruling](#) in 2013 which allowed same-sex marriages to resume in California. Proposition 3 will enshrine the fundamental right to marry and protect against any potential future changes to federal marriage protections.

AAUW California supports “Guarantee of civil and constitutional rights for all, including all forms of gender identity and expression, and all family structures”, and we support a YES vote on Proposition 3.

[Proposition 4](#), Parks, Environment, Energy, and Water Bond Measure, would allocate the state to issue \$10 billion in bonds to fund various environmental, energy, and water projects. While there are a range of projects that ballot measure would fund that would benefit all Californians who are confronted with the impacts of sea-level rise, extreme

heat, wildfire dangers, and air/water pollution, proposition 4 would also require that 40% of the bond revenue be used to fund activities that benefit communities with lower incomes or that are affected by environmental changes or disasters. Also, as AAUW California's Public Policy Committee has pointed out in the past, [addressing climate issues and advancing gender equity is directly related to environmental sustainability, and vice versa](#).

AAUW California supports “Social and racial justice for all members of society, including equal access to quality affordable healthcare, housing and a healthy environment,” and we support a YES vote on Proposition 4.

Proposition 32, Raises Minimum Wage, would raise California's current minimum wage of \$16 per hour. Employers with 26 or more employees would pay \$18 per hour beginning in 2025. Employers with 25 or fewer employees would pay \$17 per hour in 2025 and \$18 per hour in 2026. California has a high cost of living and our current \$16 minimum wage is well below the estimated living wage needed to support a household's basic needs. Women and communities of color bear the burden of low-wage jobs. The California Civil Rights Department (CRD) [released data](#) showing that in 2021, roughly half of all Latino, Black, and Native American workers earned \$32,329 or less - \$10,000 less than the state's per capita income. 54 percent of all workers in California earning \$32,239 or less were women.

A minimum wage of \$18 will reduce income inequality and improve the standard of living for millions of California workers, especially women and people of color.

AAUW California supports “Economic Security for All Women”, and we support a YES vote on Proposition 32.

For guidance on additional ballot measures that are adjacent to, but not directly within, the scope of AAUW California's PPPs, please see this excellent guide provided by [the League of Women Voters of California](#).

Considering How Groups and Candidates Align with AAUW's Public Policy Priorities Highlight: Student Loan Debt

By Missy Maceyko, Co-Chair Public Policy, AAUW California

At the national and state levels, AAUW has been a leader in the fight for increased economic security for all women, becoming well known for putting out annual data on gender-based wage gaps. However, [wage gaps are only one part of the much bigger picture](#) of gender-based economic inequality. AAUW, following [contemporary socio-economic research](#), conceptualizes economic insecurity as part of wealth gaps and debt

cycles that are created by multiple factors, [including the ballooning cost of higher education](#).

[Education is critically important for social and economic mobility](#). In 2024, young college graduates still [tend to make more money than their counterparts](#) who do not have a college degree, and have higher earnings later in life. However, the value of higher education [has become a more complicated calculus](#) for many: as education costs have risen, overall income rates have remained stagnant and low interest borrowing and repayment options to cover these costs have, in many cases, decreased. Without intergenerational wealth, ongoing family support, or scholarship wins, many Americans must go into debt to obtain a higher education.

Women are disproportionately impacted by these increasing costs. [Women tend to make less money directly after graduation when compared with men](#). This, combined with many additional factors, such as the tendency for women to be primarily responsible for the financial and emotional costs of household maintenance, [such as caregiving](#), makes any accrued student debt much harder for women to repay. **As such, women in the United States owe \$929 billion, or two-thirds of the nation's student debt.**

As part of the larger commitment to economic security for women, AAUW has been a leader in pushing for policies that [meaningfully address massive increases in the cost of education and the student debt crisis](#). In California, reducing the cost of education and easing the financial burden of acquiring a degree remains central to AAUW California's Public Policy Priorities, as well. In California, our work to reduce the burden of student debt falls under three of our four Public Policy Priority Pillars.

- Economic security for all women.
- Equal access to quality public education for all students.
- Increased representation of women in leadership roles, including access to programs that promote participation in public service careers.

The issue of student debt, as an issue of women's overall educational access, social mobility, and economic security, also looms large in the current election cycle. Addressing student debt issues in ways that align with AAUW's PPPs may include:

- student debt relief for borrowers;
- making investments in public education;
- expanding federal grant access;
- ensuring the continuation of the [Public Service Loan Forgiveness](#) (PSLF) program, which eliminates federal student loan debt after 10 years of work at a non-profit or government agency;
- maintaining Income Driven Repayment (IDR) plans, [like SAVE](#), which take into account unique financial situations and eliminate interest-driven balance increases for borrowers who make on-time monthly payments.

Not addressing student debt issues at all or exacerbating these issues does not align with AAUW's PPPs. Actions taken that are not in alignment may include:

- widespread funding cuts for higher education;
- cutting loan forgiveness programs or slowing their functionality;
- eliminating the Department of Education.

While many candidates have tried to distance themselves from Project 2025, their openly stated and proposed policies may still be in alignment with the 900-page planning document's positions on the topic of women's economic security via higher education access and debt relief: [Project 2025 calls for](#) changing, rescinding, or repealing federal student loan forgiveness plans, including PSLF and debt relief through IDR.

As you prepare to vote, be sure to ask: what do the candidates who you are considering stand for? Do your own assessment by comparing candidates' public statements, policy positions, and voting history against AAUW California's Public Policy Priorities.



Are you ready to vote in California? If you are registered to vote, you should have received your Vote By Mail ballot. If you aren't registered yet, you can still do so until October 21st at <https://registertovote.ca.gov> or you can register in person on election day.

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

Formatted By: Emmi Kuimelis