

THE SPOKESWOMAN

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

President's Message

By Stephanie DeGraff-Hunt

Lobby Days 2025 were held on April 8th and 9th. Our team from Davis consisted of Rhonda Reed and me. On April 8th at 8:30 a.m., Rhonda and I met with AAUW members from all over the state in the conference room in the Old Senator Hotel, where our lobbyist, Kathy Van Osten, has her headquarters. After informative speeches over coffee and delicious pastries, we headed off to our respective appointments. Throughout the day, Rhonda and I met with staff members of the following Assembly Members: Rubio from District 48, Haney from District 17, and McKinnor from District 61. The staff members were all very courteous and receptive to our explanations of the viewpoints of AAUW advocacy. They were fairly new in their positions and had become involved with the Legislative world through programs and classes at Sacramento State University. Rhonda and I appreciated our meetings with them and their acknowledgement of AAUW's advocacy.

The first bill we advocated for was Senate Bill 771 regarding Social Media Platforms Endangering Californians, introduced by Senator Henry Stern and sponsored by AAUW California. The second bill, Senate Bill 418, to Ensure Equal Access to Care for All, was authored by Senator Caroline Menjivar. The third bill, which AAUW opposed, was Assembly Bill 579 and referred to as Yaeli's Law. This was the more complicated bill and opened up lots of discussion.

Bill packages with links to talking points, bill texts, and fact sheets are provided below:

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May Calendar

Thursday, May 8 - 7 pm: Monthly Board Meeting

Saturday, May 10 - 9 to 10 am: Book Group Meeting moved to May 17

Tuesday, May 13 - 2 pm PST: Last day of AAUW National voting period

Friday, May 16: Last Day of AAUW-CA voting period

Saturday, May 17 - 11:30 am: Book Group Meeting and Celebrate the 19th (see article)

Save the Dates!

Saturday, June 7 - noon: AAUW Board Installation and Meet the Trekkers (see article)

Sunday, June 22 - 9 am: Celebrate the 19th (Amendment) at the UCD Arboretum (details forthcoming by email)

- ***SB 771 – Social Media Platforms Endangering Californians (AAUW California Sponsored)***
 - [*SB 771 Talking Points*](#)
 - [*Bill Text*](#)
 - [*Fact Sheet*](#)
- ***SB 418 – Ensure Equal Access to Care for All***
 - [*SB 418 Talking Points*](#)
 - [*Bill Text*](#)
 - [*Fact Sheet*](#)
- ***AB 579 – Yaeli’s Law***
 - [*AB 579 Talking Points*](#)
 - [*Bill Text*](#)
 - [*Fact Sheet*](#)
 - [*AB 579 Framework for Understanding Implementation*](#)

Overall, Lobby Days offer a valuable opportunity to advocate in person while learning about and actively engaging with the legislative process.

Annual Business Meeting

The Davis Branch’s annual business meeting was held on April 21 at the Black Bear Diner. Twelve members and UCD student intern, Emmi Kuimelis, attended the meeting. President Stephanie summarized the AAUW 2024-2025 year in review, highlighting monthly activities such as the book group and Celebrate the 19th, Tech Trek at UCD, the annual Fall Friends and Family gathering with Tech Trek presentations, and special programs including the Women in Leadership forum, the International Festival, the annual AAUW Fund luncheon, and joint events with UNA-Davis.

A quorum was present to elect the incoming 2025-26 Board:

President: Stephanie DeGraff-Hunt

Secretary: Cathy Tkach

Fiscal Officer: Gail Johnson

Board Members-at Large:

Verena Borton

Shahla Farahnak

Gwendolyn Kaltoft

Laleh Rastegarzadeh

Rhonda Reed

Estelle Shiroma

Juliana Wells

Laleh Rastegarzadeh was announced as the recipient of the Named Gift Honoree for 2024. The Named Gift Honoree is awarded to members who have done outstanding work in supporting AAUW programs and goals. One Named Gift Honoree may be selected for each \$750 contributed by branch members to AAUW during the year. Laleh serves as a board member, not only for AAUW Davis, but also for several other community organizations, including UNA-Davis, International House, Sunrise Rotary, and Sahaya International. She graciously accepted the honor and said that she considers every branch member to be a mentor to her.

Members paid tribute to and shared memories of Marti Abbott and Debbie Nichols Poulos, who recently passed away.

A special thank you to Nan Yates for generously hosting our meals and beverages.



L to R: Laleh, Shahla, Judy, Karen, Carolyn, Verena, Gail, Stephanie, Nan, Rhonda, Rose Mary, Estelle, and Emmi.



Stephanie presents Laleh with the 2024 Named Gift Honoree certificate, as Nan looks on.

Save the Date!

On Saturday, June 7th, members are invited to launch a new Tech Trek year and a new season for our AAUW Branch. The highlight of the event is bringing together Tech Trekkers, their families, and AAUW members. Tech Trekkers, their families, and student interns who can attend will be the guests of members. Details of cost for members is forthcoming.

This festive, fun-packed luncheon will be held on Saturday, June 7th at noon at Ding How Restaurant, 640 West Covell Blvd. in the shopping center at the corner of Anderson Road and West Covell Blvd. Ding How is a family-owned restaurant that has been in Davis for decades. The restaurant provides a comfortable ambience for getting together and the variety of their dishes are always a treat. Please RSVP to Stephanie at sdegraffhunt@gmail.com

April 13 Book Group Recap of “*Sweet Fury*” by Sash Bischoff

By Carolyn Van Hoecke

For April, we chose a modern reinterpretation of *Tender is the Night*, originally set in the 1920s by F. Scott Fitzgerald. We were fortunate to be able to schedule an in-person discussion with author Sash Bischoff during her travels across the country on a book tour for her new novel *Sweet Fury*. On April 13, hostess Karen Lemcke opened her home to 15 members and guests for a 1920s style luncheon with oak furniture, pink rose trimmed dishes, charming teacups, pastel floral centerpiece, and fancy tea cakes on dainty plates. An abundant variety of salads was provided by members.

As soon as the nostalgic luncheon was finished, we zipped from the 1920s to the 2020s with a dizzying story that highlights, comingles, blends and distorts the relationships and behaviors of our 21st century characters with their 20th century counterparts. As soon as the reader feels secure in understanding what’s happening, the situation changes. The concept of the unreliable narrator was never so well used. Wait a minute —what??? Who???

Discussion leader Cathy Tkach started at the end of the story with a well-prepared series of deep literary questions, which allowed Sash to explain in considerable detail why the novel ends in such an open-ended coda, as well as her process from original

idea to finished work. The plot concerns the remaking of a movie of *Tender Is the Night*. Along the way, the author inserted dozens of “Easter eggs” into the story as quotes and symbols for the ardent Fitzgerald fans to decipher, in addition to the *Sweet Fury* characters mimicking in their real lives some of the attributes of the original story and/or author(s).

The foundation of the novel rests on the relationship between a psychiatrist and patient, but it becomes murky as to which of them needs the most help. Further, the protagonist is attempting to turn the original misogynistic view into a work of modern feminism that causes tension on the set of the movie as the characters hide information from each other and attempt to further their own agendas.

We were treated to an excellent discussion of the nitty-gritty of constructing the characters of a story from original seed of an idea to the hard work, as well as the fun, of development and the sometimes-frustrating negotiation of finally getting it to publication. It is not necessary to have previously read *Tender is the Night*, but for those who enjoy complicated literary puzzles, this is a good challenge to see if you can catch all the references. Most of us hadn’t read the book since college, but we still had a wonderfully enjoyable afternoon and learned a lot about the realities of being a successful author.

Our profound thanks to Sash for fitting us into her busy schedule, to Karen for hosting and to all who added delicious food and thoughtful commentary.

On Saturday, May 17, the group will discuss another newly published book, *Those Who Stayed – a Vietnam Diary* by local author Claudia Krich (see following article).

May Celebrate the 19th

On Saturday, May 17th at 11:30 am, AAUW members are invited to meet with Claudia Krich, a local author who recently published [*Those Who Stayed: A Vietnam Diary*](#) about her experiences 50 years ago in Vietnam.

Several of us from our book group attended Claudia's presentation in the Blanchard Room at the Mary S. Stephens Library on April 30, 2025 and are excited that we will have the opportunity to meet with her in a more intimate setting and have lunch with her while learning more about her experiences during a tumultuous and dangerous time. She will bring a few books to sell if you have not yet had the opportunity to purchase her book.

We will meet at Morgan's Mill at 1059 Court Street, Suite 105 in Woodland (Ph. (530) 650-5188). Depending on the weather, we will ideally meet out on the patio. There is plenty of parking and groups are welcome to push tables together, have lunch, and enjoy a good discussion.

Please RSVP to Stephanie at sdegraffhunt@gmail.com. Those coming from Davis may wish to carpool; let Stephanie know if you are willing to drive or need a ride.

April Celebrate the 19th

The Davis branch and UNA-Davis gathered together on Saturday, April 19th to celebrate Earth Day at a picnic near the Peace roses. See article in UNA Update.

UNA Update

By Verena Borton

To mark Earth Day and commemorate the 30th anniversary of the planting of 50 Peace roses as a gift from UNA Davis to the City of Davis in 1995, **AAUW and UNA teamed up to host an outdoor picnic on April 19th** near the roses, directly south of 600 A Street. Although attendance was small due to competing events, a good time was had with lively conversations and excellent food.



L to R: Edgar Trujillo, Lynn Dykstra, Estelle Shiroma, Stephanie DeGraff-Hunt, and Verena Borton display a poster board showing the planting of 50 Peace rose bushes in 1995. The group gathered at the site of the plantings, which still thrive today.

UNA Davis Advocacy chair Lynn Dykstra and fellow Board member Verena met in Davis with William Duncan, field representative for Congressman Mike Thompson, to call attention specifically to the effect of UN and USDA funding cuts on regional farmers who traditionally have sold significant parts of their crops to USAID for humanitarian distribution, as well as to local food banks and schools. In a report in the May UNA newsletter, Lynn illustrates how advocacy issues like these touch on multiple Sustainable Development Goals.

Approaching its 80th anniversary, **the United Nations is facing its greatest financial crisis** since its founding at the end of WW II. The effectiveness and efficiency of the UN system is under unprecedented scrutiny. While there has been talk of reform for years, structural changes are now firmly on the agenda - even the potential merger of UN entities is now openly being discussed.

With the constantly changing directions from the U.S. administration, many directly and indirectly aimed at the UN, it is difficult to write a conclusive report for the current period. Following are a few examples.

Reading in greater detail in the [May UNA Davis newsletter](#) is recommended.

US Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth announced that his department will end its women, peace and security (WPS) program, which supported women's equal roles on security teams, calling the relevant UN Security Council resolution, unanimously adopted 25 years ago, **"a program pushed by feminists and left-wing activists."**

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), central recently to our local focus in programming and the driving force for programs of all Member States since their unanimous adoption in 2015, have suddenly been rejected by the United States. Speaking at the General Assembly during a discussion about designating an "International Day of Peaceful Coexistence," American diplomat Edward Heartney rose in objection to the resolution, saying the United States would not support the General Assembly action because the resolution referenced the **Sustainable Development Goals which the United States now "rejects and denounces."**

FAO, the UN Food and Agriculture Organization, was one of the latest targets of an announcement by the U.S. to ensure a review that “every US taxpayer dollar we invest overseas and in international organizations is aligned with American interests.” FAO was informed the U.S. would reject the agency’s proposal for institutional renewal, favoring instead a “member-driven review process that produces practical and measurable reforms that improve the transparency, efficiency and accountability of FAO’s operations.” Furthermore, **“we request that FAO use clear and accurate language in its work and programming that recognizes that women are biologically female, and men are biologically male and ensure that its work does not include DEI programming and that FAO itself should not advance or undertake DEI efforts.”**

To end on a more positive and **Tech Trek relatable** note, **“Girls in ITC Day,”** celebrated on the fourth Thursday of April, encourages girls to pursue careers in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM). **Since its launch in 2011 by the International Telecommunications Union (ITU), more than 417,000 girls and young women have participated in over 11,500 celebrations across 175 countries.**

This year’s theme was “Girls in ITC for inclusive digital transformation.” The ITU is calling for more investment in girls’ digital education and expansion of access to technology. More young women need to become creators – not just consumers in the digital world, the agency argues.

Evangelos Sekeris, Greece’s permanent representative to the United Nations, who spoke as Greece assumed the monthly rotating presidency of the **Security Council** in May, said that although **time is long overdue for a woman to be the next UN secretary-general**, if “qualified male candidates think they are able to present a candidacy, they will do it. I mean, the membership has to agree. **But certainly, the tide is for a woman.**”

Mike Waltz, recently National Security Advisor, has been nominated to serve as the U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations. This position requires Senate confirmation.



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

Davis Chapter

AAUW National News

Vote Now

Voting instructions were sent by email on April 28, 2025. Members are voting on AAUW Board candidates and ballot initiatives. The election ends on May 13, 2025 at 2 pm PST.

For more information on the candidates and ballot initiatives, please visit [2025 Member Vote](#)

If you have any questions, or updates regarding your membership or changes to your address or email, please contact connect@aauw.org.

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AAUW-CA News

Vote Now

Members were sent an email on April 26, 2025 with a link to cast your ballot. The election ends on May 16, 2025. Members are being asked to vote to:

- Approve the Public Policy Priorities (PPP).
- Approve a dues increase.
- Elect the Board of Directors.

Public Policy Committee Sets AAUW California 2025 Legislative Agenda

By Missy Maceyko and Amy Hom, Co-chairs Public Policy Committee

The Public Policy Committee met over a weekend in mid-March for our most important meeting of the year, to set the Legislative Agenda for 2025. Prior to the meeting, our committee collectively evaluated over 60 bills related to AAUW's mission and Public Policy Priorities. During our two-day marathon session, we carefully considered each bill. We then voted to select and prioritize the top 25 bills, leaving room to add a few more bills that we know will be coming to us in the next few weeks.

Our three “A” priority bills are SB 771 “Social Media Platforms Endangering Californians”, AB 579 “Yaeli’s Law”, and SB 418 “Ensure Equal Access to Care for All”. All three of the “A” priority bills this year fall under the Social Justice pillar of our Public Policy Priorities.

The first “A” bill, SB 771 “Social Media Platforms Endangering Californians”, is authored by Senator Henry Stern and is sponsored by AAUW California. SB 771 clarifies that a social media platform may be liable for civil penalty under existing law if and when its algorithms or AI aid or abet individual users who are engaging in already unlawful intimidation of others in online spaces. While hateful speech is problematic, it is not illegal. However, it can cross the line into illegal action. When hate speech is “brought to the doorstep” of marginalized communities, for example if someone maliciously posts anti-immigrant messages on the virtual Facebook wall of an immigrant family, they are engaging in unlawful intimidation, terrorism, and threat. While social media platforms are not responsible for the speech of individual users, aspects of their platform such as algorithms or AI can be complicit in the targeting of marginalized groups, which is unlawful. Social media companies have recently intentionally turned away from providing safeguards that they previously provided for targeted vulnerable communities. They should be held accountable for that decision, in light of the real-world impacts of proliferation of online hate and their complicity in unlawful intimidation.

The second “A” bill, to which we are taking an opposition position, is AB 579 “Yaeli’s Law” authored by Assemblymember Leticia Castillo. This bill rests on the premise that denial of support for youth self-identity, including refusal to use a child’s name and pronouns, or refusal to provide or allow their gender-affirming care, is not harmful and therefore should not be considered child abuse under the law, and, accordingly, not be allowed as a basis for custody or removal decisions. This is problematic. Research shows that transgender children are more likely to experience anxiety and depression and are at greater risk of substance abuse and homelessness when they live in households that do not accept their gender identity. We oppose this bill because every child deserves to be protected from emotional and physical abuse, including the right to be removed from a harmful household to a more healthy environment.

The third “A” bill is SB 418 “Ensure Equal Access to Care for All” authored by Senator Caroline Menjivar. This bill would prohibit a health plan or a health insurance provider from denying coverage or denying benefits to a person based upon their race,

color, national origin, age, disability, or sex - including sex characteristics such as intersex traits, pregnancy, and gender identity. Access to gender-affirming care is a fundamental aspect of health equity and human rights. SB 418 will protect against discrimination on the basis of sex, while also sending a powerful message of support to the LGBTQ+ community, affirming that their needs matter. Creating an environment where all individuals can express their identities without fear is foundational to a strong democracy.

To see the full 2025 Legislative Agenda, please go to the Bill Tracking Report. This report is a living document that will be updated as the bills move through the legislative process, so you will always be able to see the latest status.

Take Action to Help Kids Feel Safe at School

By Kathi Harper, Chair, Public Policy School Board Project

Many of our members have expressed concerns about the potential for ICE raids in our local schools. These intrusions on school grounds are already happening in some places, and are having a significant detrimental impact on these families, especially for their children. Some of the ramifications have included:

- Parents not showing up at school events fearing agents might be there
- Students don't want to come to school, fearing their parents will be taken while they're gone
- Children not learning, consumed by fear of agents coming on campus to take them away

Here are some things you should know:

- Current law (*Plyler v Doe* 1982) held that all children, even undocumented, have a constitutional right to free public education
- In 2011, DHS issued the "Sensitive Locations" policy, which prohibited raids from certain places including schools
- Although the President has attempted to revoke the order, Executive Orders and Actions cannot change statutes or regulations
- There are currently 4 lawsuits challenging the attempted revocation; 3 from churches have been successful so far, 1 from a school in Denver has resulted in a denial of a request for a temporary injunction
- Current law also prohibits ICE entry on campuses without a warrant
- Even if they have a warrant to enter, that does not entitle them to have access to private/protected student records

Here are two things you can do:

- Urge your school boards/districts to issue a “Safe Zone” Resolution – template can be found here: [Guidance on Immigration Issues | NEA](#)
- Engage your branch members in a postcard-writing campaign to their school boards with following message:

WE STAND WITH

- Immigrant students
- LGBTQ+ youth

Congratulations to Our State Named Gift Honoree!

By Deanna Arthur, AAUW Fund Committee chair, aauwfund@aauw-ca.org

Kathleen Doty, of the Alhambra-San Gabriel Branch, was revealed as the State Named Gift Honoree during the Virtual Annual Event. Since joining her branch in 1985, Kathleen has served in most branch leadership positions, including president three times. She has also served on AAUW California committees and the state board as Secretary and Parliamentarian and, from 2014-2016, as president. Kathleen and her late husband, Jim, started the Colorful Stories program to give diverse books to local schools.

She hosted with her husband, and now her sister, “Dining with the Dotys”/”Dinner with Kathleen and her Sister,” where raffle tickets are sold, and the winner is treated to a gourmet meal for six. Proceeds go to the AAUW Fund. Kathleen has also long been active in her local community- serving on the PTA board of Ramona School in Alhambra, as a Girl Scout leader and lifelong Scout, as a board member for the local American Youth Soccer Organization, and on the board, including as president, of the California Association for Medical Laboratory Management. Thank you, Kathleen, for all you give to AAUW and your community!

BE AS ACTIVE AS YOU CAN, BUT STAY A MEMBER

“If you think you are too small to make a difference, you haven’t spent the night with a mosquito.” African proverb

Formatted by Emmi Kuimelis