

Thanks for Giving Tea Sold Out!

Saturday, November 8th, 2025 – 1:00pm

Central United Methodist Church Fellowship Hall

AAUW's annual Thanks for Giving Tea is once again a sold out event. It is gratifying that so many wish to support our Community Outreach Fund, which includes RIF (Reading is Fundamental), Tech Trek camp on a college campus for girls entering eighth grade, our high school mentoring program and scholarships for San Joaquin Delta College students.

This year we will have a wonderful variety of silent auction items. The centerpieces will feature beautiful pumpkins decorated with succulents. They will be for sale at \$30 each. AAUW will accept cash, checks, credit cards and PayPal, so come prepared. You will need a PayPal account and your smart phone for PayPal. All proceeds from silent auction items and centerpieces support the worthy projects of the AAUW Community Outreach Fund.

If you are unable to attend, please consider making a donation. For the \$50 price of a reservation, you will be recognized at our virtual table. Make out checks to Stockton AAUW Inc, and send to Stockton AAUW, P.O. Box 690663, Stockton, CA, 95269.

To make an online donation, go to aauwstockton.org. On the About Us page scroll down to the bar that says "Donate here and thanks."



President's Message



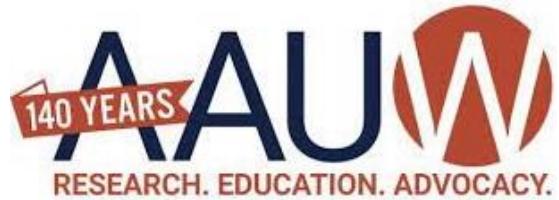
Do two wrongs ever make a right? I think it depends on the situation and the degree of wrongness. Take, for example, the successful maneuver by the Texas legislature and Governor Abbott to gerrymander a Republican win in five Congressional districts in Texas currently held by Democrats while attempting to preserve a Republican majority in the House of Representatives. This blatantly un-American tactic was requested by Trump to maintain the "rubber stamp" legislature he has now to offset the Constitutional ideal of "checks and balances" established in 1789.

In response to this, California Governor Newsom proposed, and the California legislature approved a redrawn districting map that could flip five seats currently held by Republicans to Democrats. Is this wrong? It depends on how you look at it. Newsom didn't start this, but, if we don't deliver a counter punch, the other guys win by default. The difference in California is that the redistricting has been referred to the electorate for a vote. This is something the Texas legislature did not do.

Sometimes the only response to a bully is to bully right back. I don't like it, but the thought of Republicans hanging on to a House majority considering the havoc Trump has already managed to create scares me. They have already ignored and weakened the Constitution and destroyed, literally, a portion of the White House. I firmly believe that the only way to prevent a Trump dictatorship, which seems to be on the agenda, is to fight back by any means necessary.

In fact, Trumpism seems to evoke Machiavelli, the Florentine author of the political treatise *THE PRINCE*. Machiavelli suggested that any tactic that would help the "Prince" keep power was permitted, no matter how manipulative, self-interested, deceitful, exploitive, and ruthless. There should be no regard for morality or the consequences for others. Trump seems to be striving to live up to this ideal. This must be stopped.

Sandra Mazzuola
President



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Mentor Program

Our girls had the opportunity to attend the "Dinner With A Stem Professional" event on October 30th, which is always a valuable experience for them. Sponsored by the San Joaquin County Office of Education, the girls rotated to 3 different tables for a dinner course with a professional in the STEM fields. By the end of the evening they were enlightened with a clearer view of the possibilities for their futures.



Those who will be attending the Thanks For Giving Tea will have the opportunity to meet these girls as they will be serving your tables. Be sure to chat with them to find out how our program benefits them.



It may look to some as if the mentor program merely provides "fun" activities for our girls. However, because many of the mentors are teachers or retired teachers all of our activities are planned with clear and measurable objectives. We see each activity as an opportunity to impart knowledge and an experience to increase their store of knowledge and view of the world. If the activity is also pleasurable we feel that it has definitely been successful!

Board to Board

A Communication from the
AAUW California Board to Branch Boards

A photograph of two women smiling. One is wearing a blue patterned top and the other is wearing an orange top.

Branch Development Peer Group meetings are scheduled for the second Tuesday of the month from September through May at 7pm.

The next Branch Development Peer Group will be on Tuesday, November 11th, at 7pm. Click [HERE](#) to register.

A stained glass window featuring a white chalice in the center, surrounded by a circular frame. The background is composed of various colored glass pieces.

First Unitarian Universalist
Church Of Stockton
-A Liberal Religious Community-
2737 Pacific Ave. at Bristol St.

Contact Us: stocktonuu.org (209)466-7743
contact@stocktonuu.org

We affirm and promote the inherent
worth and dignity of every person and
are a welcoming congregation.



Shelly Contreras

The Stockton Branch welcomes Shelly Contreras to our membership!

Born in Arizona, Shelly made Stockton her home in her 20s. She soon had three children: Matthew who has just earned his doctorate in Psychology, Sabrina, a nurse at Kaiser and Michael who is pursuing a career as a project manager in Las Vegas.

As a young mother Shelly ran a day care center until she enrolled at Delta College. Though her goal was to seek a degree in Criminal Justice

she soon realized that the way for everyone to lift themselves from their circumstances was through education. She began her career in educating those "outliers" at the San Joaquin County Office of Education mostly in the O.N.E. programs to educate those for whom traditional education would not suffice. Criminals, immigrants, pregnant girls and others had their needs accommodated in Shelly's classrooms. She eventually earned an administrative credential and spent several years overseeing state programs for pregnant teens.

Shelly was recently widowed at around the same time as she retired. She now says that she is crafting what the rest of her life will look like. She eagerly joined AAUW and has jumped in with both feet. She brings her considerable skills to the Mentor Program as well as other interest groups. We welcome her!

Directory updates:

Please Welcome the Following New Member:

Shauna Cantrell
2612 Cypress Ave.
Stockton, 95207
E-Mail: scuddlefeet@gmail.com
Ph: (209) 598-5982

(Joined on-line - no additional info available)

Change of Address:

Samantha Johnson
2511 Otto Dr.
Stockton, 95209
E-Mail: SamanthaJohnsonmpa@gmail.com
Cell: (209) 888-7692 (same)

Colleen Foster
3400 Wagner Hts. Rd #18
Stockton, 95209
E-Mail: malialani@comcast.net (same)
Cell: (209) 483-8467 (same)

The on-line Directory will be updated around Feb.
Please update your current records at home.

Claudia and Bette
Co-Membership Treasurers.

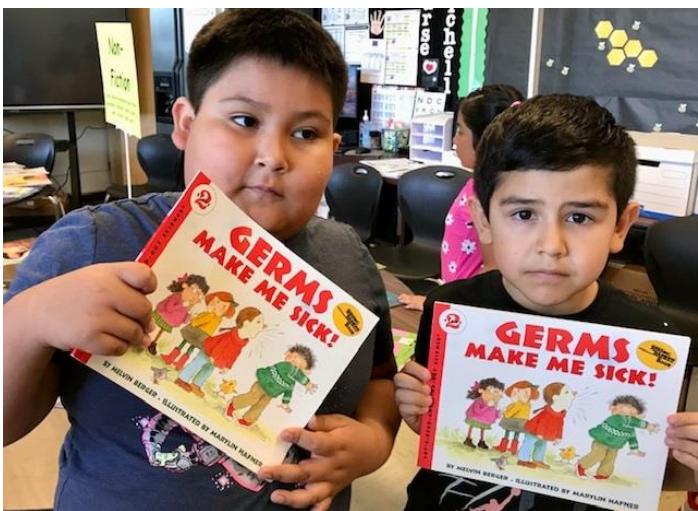


It's RIF Book Distribution at Van Buren Elementary!

It's September 23rd at Van Buren Elementary School in Southeast Stockton, and an excited group of kindergarteners, led by their teacher, enter the Parent-Teacher room that has been temporarily converted into the RIF Bookstore by AAUW/RIF Liaison for Van Buren Cindy Milford. The youngsters are about to experience their very first RIF Book Distribution Day.



AAUW volunteers Barbara Nash, Donna Hammel, and Diane Stauffer back up these Van Buren 2nd graders who contentedly return to class with a new free book from AAUW-Stockton Branch.



Are these 3rd graders preparing for a medical career? They both very seriously chose the same book.



These Van Buren 4th graders can't wait till they get home to read their new RIF books.

"Miss Cindy" invites the students to sit in the chairs edging the room. She has arranged colorful books on six round tables with signs indicating clusters of Non-Fiction, Fantasy Fiction, and Realistic Fiction books. The youngsters begin to "shop," following Miss Cindy in a line around the tables, their eyes spotting books that they'd like to open and maybe take home today. (Titles were ordered by Cindy using donations by AAUW individuals and Stockton Branch's Community Outreach Fund). Their teacher invites small groups of the again-seated youngsters to choose a book to read, till all are seated with their new books. Then the next-scheduled TK-3rd grade class arrives to shop, again assisted by AAUW volunteers **Barbara Nash, Diane Stauffer, and Donna Hammel**, who place inside each book cover a sticker on which youngsters will write their names when they return to their classrooms. The name sticker says: **"This new book for _____ is a gift from the American Association of University Women and RIF."**



AAUW volunteers Diane and Bill Oren, Barbara Nash, and Cindy Milford happily relax after interacting with VB 4th-6th graders.

A week later, 4th -6th graders will shop in the RIF Bookstore, assisted by AAUW volunteers **Barbara Nash** (helping again!) and **Diane and Bill Oren** on Bill's birthday, no less! Almost 400 books will be distributed on these two days to appreciative TK-6 students and to teachers for their absent students. Thanks go to all who have made this literacy-building experience happen!



DIVERSITY, EQUITY, INCLUSION

This month, I have submitted an article that has helped me to better understand one of the candidates in New York's mayoral race. Zohran Mamdani describes himself as a democratic socialist and everyone seems to be up in arms. Of course, this perked my interest, since I didn't know what that was, then I did some AI research. I now have a better understanding, so I am sharing what I learned with you. I hope you learn something, too.

-Barbara St. Urbain

Understanding Democratic Socialism

A Clear Overview

What Is Democratic Socialism?

Democratic socialism is a political and economic philosophy that combines democratic principles with a commitment to social and economic fairness. At its core, democratic socialism means that citizens have the right to participate in decision-making through voting and public discourse, while also working collectively to ensure that everyone's basic needs are met.

How Does Democratic Socialism Work?

- Democratic: The democratic aspect emphasizes that people have a voice in their government. Policies and leaders are chosen through open elections, ensuring that everyone's views are considered and respected.

- Socialism: The socialist element focuses on cooperation and collective responsibility. The government plays a significant role in organizing resources and services—such as healthcare, education, and housing—so that all members of society can access what they need to lead healthy, productive lives.

Why Do People Support Democratic Socialism?

Advocates of democratic socialism believe that society thrives when people work together and share resources. The goal is to promote fairness, reduce inequality, and offer support to those facing hardship. By prioritizing the well-being of all, rather than just a few, democratic socialism aims to create a more just and compassionate society.

Real-World Examples

- Universal Healthcare: In countries with democratic socialist policies, the government may provide healthcare services to all citizens, ensuring that no one is denied medical care because of financial constraints.
- Public Education: Education is typically free and accessible to everyone, allowing children from all backgrounds to learn, grow, and reach their potential.
- Democratic Participation: Citizens regularly participate in elections to choose their leaders and help shape new laws, ensuring that everyone's voice is heard in the political process.

In Summary

Democratic socialism is about balancing individual rights with collective responsibility. It encourages collaborative decision-making and works to ensure that no one is left behind. For community leaders, understanding this philosophy can offer valuable insights into fostering fairness, inclusion, and mutual support in society.

Public Policy Update

We are currently experiencing authoritarian efforts that challenge fair representation, trusted information, and democratic norms in our country. This unprecedented condition presents a significant threat to many of the things that AAUW members care about. Although California continues to have strong protections for women and girls, marginalized peoples, free speech, accurate history, sound science, and democratic norms, we are still subject to the laws, rules, and enforcement actions of the federal government. The approval of Proposition 50 by voters in November 2025 will approve redistricting efforts in California until maps are redrawn after the next census (2030). If Proposition 50 passes, we will experience a short-term loss of state democratic and people-centered control of an important aspect of democracy: redistricting. However, a short term loss of people-centered redistricting can also be seen as an investment in a democratic future in the long term, one in which we can have more, not less, of the will of the people recognized - all of the people, regardless of who they are. Redistricting should be in the hands of the people. Gender equity should be a consistent priority so that the dreams of a pluralistic democracy are one step closer to being realized. None of this is possible if our state is operating in a federal system in which democracy is no longer functional, instead leaning toward an authoritarian system that puts troops in our streets, that censors our speech, that erases historical facts, that does not rely on sound science in decision-making, that directly endangers the wellbeing of women and girls, and that dehumanizes important and valued members of our communities.

But there's another battle for power happening right in our neighborhoods - one that each of us has the power to influence. That battle runs through the nation's 13,500 school districts and 80,000+ school board seats that make up the largest category of elected officials in America. Well-funded right-wing groups recognize that in a democracy, power isn't just about who sits in Washington or state capitals, but about who controls local budgets, who builds the pipeline of future political leadership, and who decides what the next generation learns. Nearly one in five elected officials in America serves on a school board. These aren't just ceremonial positions. School

board members control [budgets often exceeding \\$100 million](#), make policy decisions, and hire superintendents. Many go on to seek higher office. They have the power to build educational infrastructure that either advances American values or opposes them. They can approve inclusive curricula, or ban books. They can move to affirm and protect LGBTQ students, or target them. They can build trust in public institutions and public servants, or tear them down.

Fewer than 10% of eligible voters typically participate in school board elections. This means every vote counts exponentially more, every donation goes further, and every volunteer can have immense impact.

Groups like [Moms for Liberty](#) and their mega donors recognize this. They've poured resources into installing candidates who claim to represent a majority of parents, but in reality, advance narrow political agendas. But here's the hopeful truth: when voters are given real choices and accurate information, they consistently reject extremism. Recent data shows that progressive school board candidates are winning at high rates across red, blue, and purple communities because the values they champion aren't partisan. They're American. Despite extremist claims, 76% of parents [support the schools their children attend](#). Large majorities of voters across party lines have [favorable opinions of librarians, oppose book bans](#), and disagree with efforts to restrict what can be taught in schools.

The redistricting battle is important and we shouldn't minimize it, but it's equally important that we pursue local pathways to power to protect our families and our neighbors from the extremism sweeping our country. The solution lies in recruiting, training, and electing school board members who will practice good governance, pursue academic freedom and excellence, and foster schools where every student belongs.

We must invest in voter education programs that cut through the noise of national politics to focus on local issues and elections that matter most to families and taxpayers. Doing so means recognizing that democracy isn't just defended in Washington—it's built and strengthened in communities. Every school board member elected is a training ground for future state legislators, governors, and members of Congress. They can build a pipeline of political power rooted in censorship, discrimination, and division or one of good governance, academic freedom, and inclusive communities that are an investment in democratic leadership for decades to come. They serve with the understanding that the future we choose for our public schools is the future we choose for our country.

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Vision: AAUW will be a powerful advocate and visible leader in equity and education through research, philanthropy, and measurable change in critical areas impacting the lives of women and girls.
Mission: **AAUW advances equity for women and girls through advocacy, education, philanthropy and research.**
Value Promise: By joining AAUW, you belong to a community that breaks through educational and economic barriers so that all women and girls have a fair chance.

November Calendar

Day	Date	Time	Event	Location/Contact
Tue	4	7:00am-8:00pm	California Special Election	Local Polling Place
Sat	8	1:00pm	Nov. Program: "Thanks for Giving Tea"	O'Connor Woods West Hall
Tue	11	7:00pm	Branch Development Peer Group Meeting	Online via Zoom
Thu	27	All Day	Happy Thanksgiving!	