



League of Women Voters
of San Joaquin County



Joint membership meeting of LWVSJC and AAUW Stockton

Saturday, October 4th, 2025
10:00 am to 12:00 pm

Registration and Refreshments at 9:30 am

O'Connor Woods West Hall
3400 Wagner Heights Road, Stockton

Information on parking/map will be provided closer to the event.

Program

Part 1

Olivia Hale

SJ County Registrar of Voters

"Safeguarding the Integrity of Our Elections"

Part 2

November 2025 Special Election: Proposition 50 (Redistricting proposal)





Are we in danger of developing into a fascist state?

One of the most alarming tactics used by the Trump administration has been the deployment of federalized National Guard troops, and even Marines, to quell what Trump called “rebellions” in major U.S. cities. Troops were deployed to Los Angeles under the Insurrection Act of 1807 following protests over ICE raids. In Washington, D.C., the same act was invoked to address crime and enhance safety for tourists. However, statistics show that the crime rate in Washington was already down by 30 per cent.

Trump has also threatened to send National Guard troops to Oakland, California, Baltimore, and Chicago, all of which have African American mayors. The mayors of Los Angeles and Washington, D. C., are also African American. Is this a coincidence? I doubt it. It's in keep with the administration's anti-DEI philosophy.

The Posse Comitatus Act of 1878 states that the government cannot use the military to engage in civilian law enforcement on American soil. Tackling crime is the job of civilian law enforcement; therefore the deployment of federal troops for that purpose is a clear violation of the law. In truth, soldiers have no training in civil law enforcement, and their deployment in U. S. cities is, at best, inappropriate, and, as I have stated, probably illegal.

One of the core components of fascism is military expansion and centralized control over all aspects of society. Fascism is associated with the use of force and limitations on opposition as methods to maintain authority. Often this is excused by citing untrue examples of lawlessness to give the maneuver a sense of legitimacy. Is this where we are headed?

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Volunteers Needed for Thanks for Giving Tea

Mark your calendars for Saturday, November 8th, 2025 for the Third Annual "Thanks for Giving" Tea and Silent Auction. It takes many people to put on an event of this size. People who enjoy cooking are needed to make Scones, Kahlua Balls, Chili Cheese Torta, or Lemon Posset, a type of pudding. People are also needed to help set up on Friday, November 7th and clean up after the tea. If you are interested in volunteering, contact Claudia Mennuti at cmennuti@comcast.net or (209) 603-7190.

The Silent Auction Committee is looking for donations including gift cards from local stores, restaurants, hair and nail salons, or food themed baskets, movie/concert/sports tickets, home items, or anything else of your choice. Ask for a donation the next time you go shopping or are at an event. In a recent email from Ronda Sanders, attached was a letter that can be used to give to a merchant to secure a donation. All branch interest groups are also being asked to donate a gift basket, or other items that could be auctioned off. Any donation would be useful as it could go towards create a basket or more valuable bid item.

This year we are also looking for experiences for the auction. Could you donate your time by donating any of the following? Can you teach knitting, crochet, or needlepoint, bake holiday cookies, make holiday hors d'oeuvres, give cooking lessons, create a charcuterie board, host a dinner party for guests at your home, offer a weekend at your summer house, provide a photography tutorial, give painting or drawing lessons, or anything else that you can imagine. For questions or to donate contact: Sue Kenmotsu skenmotsu@yahoo.com (209) 401-0183 or Anita Bautista (209) 279-6402 anitabautista@comcast.net.

Donations are needed in early October so we can plan accordingly.

Board to Board

A Communication from the
AAUW California Board to Branch Boards

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

- October 14th, 2025
- November 11th, 2025
- December 9th, 2025
- January 13th, 2026
- February 10th, 2026
- March 10th, 2026
- April 14th, 2026
- May 12th, 2026

The next Branch Development Peer Group will be on Tuesday, October 14th, at 7pm. Click [HERE](#) to register. The topic will be Branch Resources, AAUW California Calendar, and How to roll out "Volunteers First" in your branch.

Nominations and Elections

In 2026 we will be electing six new directors to our State Board – one board secretary, one One-Year Director, and four two-year Directors. It is not too early plan if you will nominate yourself or if you will encourage someone else to run for one of the positions.

✂ Directory updates:

We had 2 attendees at the Sept. meeting join AAUW. Please make a copy of their pertinent information for your records. A list of new members and changes to the current online directory will be coming in Feb.

Shelly Contreras

1721 W. Harding Way

Stockton, 95203

Cell: (209) 403-1473

E-Mail: shelita4358@gmail.com

UOP Grad - Masters in Education

Expressed interest in: Thanks for Giving Tea, RIF, Book Group, Bunco, DEI, Gourmet, Saturday Wisdom Group

Referred by Pam Mallett-Jones

Christy Dillemath

3400 Wagner Heights Rd #154

Stockton, 95209

Cell: (209) 401-9992

E-Mail: christydillemath@gmail.com

Cal state Hayward - BS Math

Expressed interest in DEI (too soon to choose)

Referred by Anita Bautista

Mentor Program

We have successfully kicked off the 2025/26 Mentor Program! On August 30th we met at the Cape Cottages Clubhouse where the current girls caught up with each other and welcomed the new girls. All 4 Tech Trek Campers will join us for the next 5 years. We learned a lot about our new girls and they and their parents learned a lot about our program. There is certainly a lot to tell! We are beginning our 18th year of operation and we are proud to say that we get better at it each year!



If you were at the September Branch meeting at O'Connor Woods you may have had the opportunity to meet 3 of our seniors. They told about what the program has meant to them and stole the hearts of all who were there.



We are meeting again on September 27th at the home of Pam Mallett-Jones for our next activity. The girls will have the opportunity to choose their ONE WORD for the year and make a new beaded bracelet to remind them of it daily. As an added attraction, Ms. Jessica (who is a former girl from the program!) will teach them to crochet so they might get a head start on those Christmas presents. Watch this space in the October Steamer for a report on that!



Celebrating Hispanic Heritage Month

Honoring Culture, History, and Contributions in the United States

Each year, from September 15th to October 15th, the United States celebrates Hispanic Heritage Month -- a time devoted to recognizing the rich histories, cultures, and contributions of Americans whose ancestors came from Spain, Mexico, the Caribbean, and Central and South America. This observance began in 1968 as Hispanic Heritage Week under President Lyndon Johnson and was expanded to a month-long celebration in 1988 by President Ronald Reagan.

The significance of the starting date, September 15th, is tied to the anniversaries of independence for several Latin American countries, including Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, and Nicaragua. Mexico and Chile also celebrate their independence days on September 16th and September 18th, respectively. Throughout the

month, communities across the nation host festivals, concerts, educational events, and art exhibitions that showcase vibrant traditions ranging from music and dance to cuisine and folk art.

Hispanic Americans have made lasting impacts on every facet of American life -- shaping politics, science, sports, literature, and beyond. Icons such as labor leader César Chávez, Supreme Court Justice Sonia Sotomayor, author Sandra Cisneros, and astronaut Ellen Ochoa serve as inspirations for future generations. Hispanic Heritage Month is not only a celebration, it's a reminder of the importance of diversity and the ongoing journey toward equity and inclusion.

By honoring Hispanic Heritage Month, we acknowledge the invaluable role Hispanic Americans play in enriching the nation's tapestry and reaffirm our commitment to fostering understanding, respect, and unity among all people.



**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.

DON'T FEEL GUILTY...

...if you are an AAUW Stockton Branch member and cannot make it to all the meetings, interest groups, activities. We know that you are busy. We've all been there with families and work and other responsibilities, so let go of the guilt about not being as active as you wish. We appreciate you being a member; we would like to see you at all our events, but we recognize your lives are busy. So know that we know that you are with us in spirit and support the mission to further opportunities for women and girls. When you do have time, make a plan to attend one specific meeting. Those are listed here. But whatever you do, do not feel guilty. You will join us when you are able.

October 4 th	O'Connor Woods	9:30am	Voting Rights
December 20 th	Brookside Country Club	9:30am	Holiday Social
January 17 th	O'Connor Woods	9:30am	Education
February 28 th	Stockton Hilton	9:30am	Women's Collaborative
March 14 th	Haggin Museum	9:30am	Women's History/Essays
April 18 th	Elsie May Goodwin	9:30am	Interactive Activities
May 14 th	Club Brookside	5:30pm	Spring Social
June 13 th	O'Connor Woods	9:30am	Scholarships/Named Gift

Public Policy Update

STEP 1: Self-focused. This month the focus is on **PUBLIC EDUCATION**.

STEP 2: Other-Focused: Education & Connection. Tell a few people (2-10) something about the important role that public education, in general, and school boards in particular play in maintaining a functional democracy. Tell a few people (2-10) something that THEY can do to ensure that school boards in California are contributing to, not detracting from, the norms of a pluralistic democracy.

STEP 3: Politically-Focused: Outreach to Legislators. Sign a petition to push federal representatives to rethink their funding choices around federal public education [Resistbot Petition: Properly Fund Public Education!](https://resist.bot/petitions/PRBIK) (<https://resist.bot/petitions/PRBIK>) You can also call your federal representatives and use this petition as a script. Respond to our upcoming action alerts for AAUW California's "A" priority bill, CA AB 1098, which expands educational access and success for pregnant students.

A Big Win For Public Education. On August 14th, 2025 a federal judge delivered a major legal victory for public education and civil rights. In *American Federation of Teachers et al. v. U.S. Department of Education et al.*, the court struck down the Trump–Vance administration's attempt to force schools nationwide to censor lessons, eliminate diversity and inclusion programs, and sign unlawful compliance certifications under threat of losing federal funding and facing criminal penalties. Judge Stephanie A. Gallagher ruled that both the administration's February 14 "Dear Colleague Letter" and its mandatory certification violated the Constitution and the Administrative Procedures Act, stating: "Plaintiffs have shown that neither challenged agency action was promulgated in accordance with the procedural requirements of the APA, and that both actions run afoul of important constitutional rights." This decision vacates both policies, protecting the ability of educators to teach honest history, support students, and foster inclusive learning environments.

Understanding the Urgency of Branch Participation in the School Board Project. Let's start with a brief historical overview on the importance of our free public school system and the important role it plays in preserving our democracy. Colonial America began the journey in Massachusetts Bay (1635) with the founding of the Boston Latin School, initially to promote the Puritan faith. Dame Schools providing reading skills for younger children were also established, and a Massachusetts law in 1647 demanded that every town comprising 50 or more families must provide a teacher to instruct on reading and writing. Our new nation began its journey into public education with the Land Ordinance 1785/NW Ordinance 1787 providing that the new western territories be allotted land for public school purposes. The founding fathers clearly connected the role of education in protecting our democratic republic. Thomas Jefferson proposed a system of broad, free, public education and strongly believed that "in order for a society to be self-governed, it had to be educated and free thinking." He saw the role of education as one giving "every citizen the information he needs...to understand his duties to his neighbors and country...to know his rights." During the 1830s, in the era of Jacksonian Democracy, focus was on the common man achieving the vote (dropping property requirements or paying taxes); our nation witnessed the beginning of a new era in public education espousing that an informed citizenry is essential for democratic participation and the health of the republic. A key focus was on the large number of immigrants arriving to the country; we needed to instill common values in all children to prepare them for their roles within our society. It's at this time that Thomas Mann (Massachusetts) led the nation in the Common School Movement, a driving force resulting in widespread free public education.

These hard-fought gains are under attack and it begins with local elections for school board members. Organizations with money are backing candidates who are attempting to restrict student rights and censure the curriculum/books available that would provide factual, open discourse. These efforts will have the exact opposite effect from the intentions of our forebears: a generation of children exposed to limited information and unprepared to engage in critical thinking necessary to fully realize the American experiment in democracy.

RIF Book Distribution at Kennedy Elementary!

Note #1: AAUW-Stockton has managed the national literacy program Reading Is Fundamental (RIF) for our community since 1978. Currently we serve three targeted Stockton Unified elementary schools: Grunsky, Kennedy, and Van Buren.

In the warm August 19th morning air at Kennedy Elementary School in North Stockton, a class of Transitional Kindergarteners line up outside an airy classroom that has been converted into a temporary RIF Bookstore by former Kennedy teacher and longtime AAUW/RIF Liaison for Kennedy **Cindy Milford**. The youngsters are about to experience their very first RIF Book Distribution Day!



AAUW/RIF Liaison Cindy watches future scientists trying to decide what to study: coral reefs, volcanoes, or the contest between an Ant and a Gorilla.

“Miss Cindy” invites the students to sit in the chairs edging the room. She has arranged colorful books on five long 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, passing familiar covers of Pete the Cat, Clifford the Big Red Dog, and the bright yellow National Geographic Kids books among scores of other titles ordered by Cindy and paid for by AAUW-Stockton’s Community Outreach Fund and by individual members’ donations. She admonishes the students to touch the books “with your eyeballs, not your hands!”



This 1st grader needs a name sticker from AAUW volunteer Carolyn Wischhusen so he can identify his new, free book about freight trains if it is misplaced.

After they have taken that initial cursory look at the books, Cindy announces that everyone will choose TWO new books! (Due to scheduling problems and volunteers’ health challenges in the last school year, Kennedy students haven’t had their two separate book distributions so are catching up now by getting two books at this time.) Their teacher invites five youngsters who have worked hard or who have been especially helpful and kind in these first days of the school year to be the first to choose their two books. Soon the rest of the class is also clutching their

new books. AAUW volunteers **Carolyn Wischhusen** and **Erica DeiRossi** 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."** Cindy asks the teacher to choose two books for each absent child. When the entire class finishes selecting books and sits down in their chairs, their teacher lines them up to return to their room. Cindy cautions them, "Hold your new books close to your hearts as you walk so your books don't slip out of your arms."

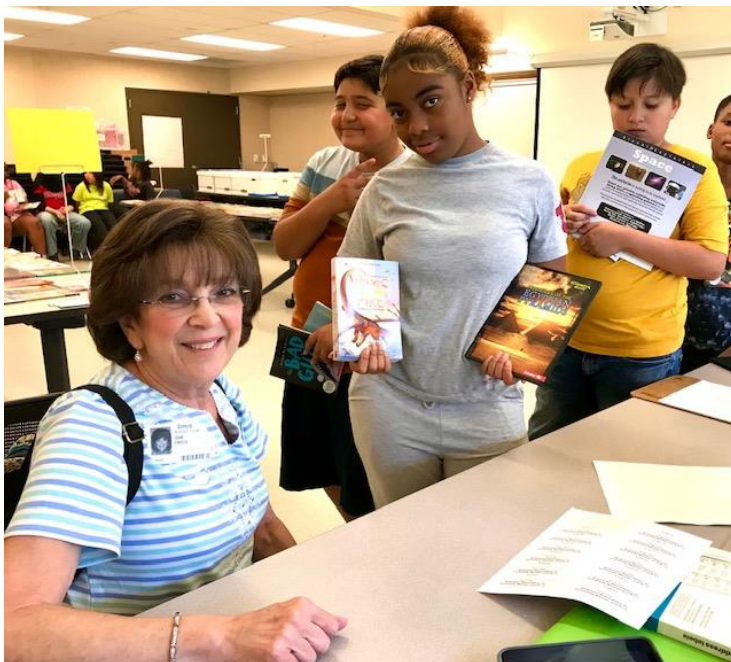


These 2nd graders eagerly start to read their new books or discuss the interesting stories with neighbors.

Note #2: In this "Era of Screens" where classroom materials usually appear on computers or whole class instruction screens, students of all ages still delight in turning the paper pages of an actual book. Your contributions to RIF have brought the joy of reading to many youngsters—like those pictured here!



Note #3: People who help AAUW-Stockton buy RIF books by donating to RIF during the 2024-25 school year (for example, with their recent spring dues renewal) will be listed with gratitude in a future Steamer. You may mail checks payable to AAUW-Stockton with RIF on the Memo Line to Stockton Branch, Inc., P.O. Box 690663, Stockton, CA 95269-0663.



6th graders wait for AAUW volunteer Joan Erreca to place a name sticker in each student's two books.

This pattern is followed that day by all nine TK-3rd grade classes. a new class every 15 minutes. The next day, six 4th-6th grade classes and four special day classes continue the pattern, assisted by AAUW volunteers **Diane Stauffer** and **Joan Erreca**. Most books are on or near that class's grade level with some easier or more challenging to accommodate all abilities. Various non-fiction and fiction titles tickle the interests of the youngsters. Over 740 books will be distributed on these two days to appreciative TK-6 students and to teachers for their absent students.

AAUW Stockton Branch, Inc.
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Vision: AAUW will be a powerful advocate and visible leader in equity and education through research, philanthropy, and measureable 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.

October Calendar

Day	Date	Time	Event	Location/Contact
Mon	9/29	6:00pm	October Board Meeting	Online via Zoom
Wed	10/1	All Day	Reservation Deadline	Betty Parsons - (408) 309-8958
Sat	4	9:30am	Oct. Program: "League of Women Voters"	O'Connor Woods West Hall
Tue	14	7:00pm	Branch Development Peer Group Meeting	Online via Zoom