

AAUW Enjoys the Arts

Saturday, April 18th, 2026 – 9:30am

Haggin Museum - 1201 N. Pershing Avenue

We gather on Saturday, April 18th for our branch meeting. Once again the Haggin Museum is pleased to host Stockton AAUW. Ronda Sanders, AAUW program co-vice president, is a docent at the museum. As a docent, she will present a digital slide show developed by docents titled "Making Space." Using paintings from the Haggin collection, participants will learn how to view and analyze landscape paintings in a way that is designed to enhance your enjoyment of the paintings.

We will then write postcards of encouragement to our mentor girls. Members may decorate their postcards however they wish, perhaps with a miniature landscape. The meeting is free. Bring a friend!



Looking up the Yosemite Valley
Bierstadt, Albert

When: Saturday, April 18th, 9:30am

Where: Haggin Museum - 1201 N. Pershing Avenue

Cost: The Meeting is Free for Members and Guests. RSVP Appreciated to Assure Seating.

Reservation Deadline: Wednesday, April 15th

Reply via your caller or call/text Reservation Chair Betty Parsons @ (408) 309-8958 bjpars_95120@yahoo.com

President's Message

All who work in our government, from the President to cabinet members, members of Congress, and members of the judiciary take the oath of office, vowing to “support, protect, and defend the Constitution of the United States against all enemies, foreign and domestic.” It seems, however, that members of the current Republican administration are not taking that oath seriously.

Let's take a closer look at how this administration is damaging the Bill of Rights, particularly the first amendment. The Bill of Rights defined that rights not granted to the Federal government were guaranteed to the people and to the states. These rights included freedom of speech, the press, religion, and the right to peacefully assemble. It also established the principle of separation of church and state. We have seen over just the first year of the second Trump administration how many of these rights are being stifled.

In the Trump administration, the federal government has been weaponized to suppress speech and to punish its critics. Protesters have been threatened and attacked, news outlets have been banned from covering White House events, and law firms critical of Trump have been sanctioned as have universities, which have also lost funding.

The administration has attacked PBS, removing funding. The Voice of America, a state-funded broadcaster, was dismantled following an executive order branding it anti-Trump. The Associated Press was denied access to White House events. News outlets, such as Gannett, have been sued for publishing information that Trump felt put him in a negative light. NPR, CBS, CNN, NBC, and ABC have all been investigated; some were sued because of their coverage of the election and debates. Colbert's late-night talk show was cancelled by CBS because of his criticism of Trump. Government grantees have been denied funding just for writing on a topic, such as climate change, that the administration doesn't like.

Trump wants to impeach judges who rule against him, and Speaker Mike Johnson suggested the wholesale elimination of federal courts. The principle of “Checks and Balances” has been threatened and isn't functioning the way it was intended. This has addressed attacks on the First Amendment only, so this is just the beginning. There will be more to come.

Sandra Mazzuola
President



2025-2026

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Mentor Program



March 7th saw us at the Haggin Museum for a day of art experience. Members Ronda Sanders and Jeanne Gaia met us in the museum before it opened and took us on a tour of the museum's fabulous art collection. They are both retired teachers as well as museum docents and really know how to present material in an interesting manner. After our tour they dropped us off at the classroom where mentor Jennifer Rieber had a project set up for us. The girls and mentors all took part in creating our own paintings with step-by-step directions from Mrs. Jennifer. Some of the girls took divergent paths to their finished projects, which we encourage! It was gratifying for all to finish the day with a lovely painting suitable for hanging!



This activity was an example of members supporting the Mentor Program without actually being a mentor. Ronda and Jeanne secured the site for our activity and shared their knowledge and time with us. We thank them for their contributions.



Reading Is Fundamental RIF.org

The students in grades K-6 at Lottie Grunsky Elementary each had a new book to read during their spring break!



Thanks to the Reading is FUNdamental (RIF) another Community Outreach program of the Stockton Branch, the students had the opportunity to browse hundreds of titles to choose a book to keep on. They were instructed to read it to their younger siblings, mom and dad, the cat and dog, even the man next door before trading it with a friend for another title. The RIF program aims to make lifelong readers of students in four Stockton schools by making reading materials accessible to them.



Tom Jones and Pam Mallett-Jones administered the program at Grunsky on March 11th, which also coincided with "Crazy Hair Day"!



The 2026 Inspirational Woman Writing Contest

They say good things come in threes. At the March 21st awards ceremony for the Inspirational Woman Writing Contest, attendees were witness to the truth behind this saying.

The three winners of our 2026 contest represent different grades, backgrounds, and school districts. However, all three young women possess the poise, intelligence, and work ethic to one day serve as leaders in their prospective fields. Thanks to the generous donation of an anonymous member of our association, AAUW is helping these young women attain enriching opportunities and experiences through increased cash prizes.

For members who could not attend the awards ceremony, the winning essays are featured below.

Many thanks to everyone who donates their time, energy, and funding to this contest—ensuring that

young people in our area have a platform to tell stories that are uplifting and important for us all.

The Handkerchief-- Syrell Louise M. Gatan
(1st Place, \$500 Prize)
12th Grade, Stagg High School

I feel like I'm the only young person who still carries a handkerchief everywhere. People give me funny looks when I pull it out, whether I'm wiping my hands, using it to hold a cold drink, or folding it into my pocket. My friends tease me about it all the time. But I don't really care. I like being clean. More importantly, it carries the memory of the most important person in my life.

Growing up in the Philippines, it was just me and my mom. She was a single mother, and even though life was never easy, she made everything feel full of love. My mom had this quiet way of teaching me important things – never yelling but always firm. I wasn't allowed to drag my feet, chew with my mouth open, or stomp up and down the stairs. She always said "Elegance isn't all about expensive pearls or clothes! It's about how you carry yourself, *anak*."

And she always made sure I carried a handkerchief.

At first I thought it was useless. Why carry a piece of cloth everywhere? But to her, it meant so much more. She made sure that I understood that it was all about being ready, respectful, and showing care in small ways. If someone spills something or starts to cry, I have something to offer. The handkerchief was her lesson for me to always bring kindness and grace wherever I go.

Every month, she would take me with her to church outreach programs. We would wake up early, pack bags of rice, canned goods, and toiletries, and travel hours to Gonzaga, a low-income community. By the time we arrived, people already knew her, relieved to see someone who could check their health. They greeted her with respect and even called her by name. As a nurse, she checked children's health, offered vitamins, and gently examined any medical concerns they had. Watching her, I learned that presence is what gives care its worth, turning small actions into something that can change how people feel seen and valued.

Those trips taught me what my mom had been trying to show me all along. Being prepared is not just about having something ready in your pocket. It is about being willing to show up for people, especially when they need you the most. The handkerchief became a small reflection of that

lesson, a reminder to move through the world ready to serve in quiet, ordinary ways.

Years later, she showed me the hardest form of that same love. Her greatest sacrifice was letting me go. She chose my future over her comfort, believing that the opportunities waiting for me in the States were worth the distance it would create between us. What sits in my pocket is small, but what it carries is the weight of everything she taught me about care – how to show up, how to notice, and how to give quietly, even when giving requires a profound cost.

Unwavering-- Maeve Cottin-Rack
(2nd Place, \$300 Prize)
11th Grade, Lincoln High School

My *Mamie* makes me laugh; she hums along to Nat King Cole while she bakes batches of delicious pastries, infused with her beloved *Grand Marnier*, and teases relentlessly, never lacking a snarky comeback. 5,824 miles and a 9 hour time difference away, she equips me with obscure French insults to wield against my second grade class nemesis. My *Mamie*, alongside three other elderly women from a human rights nonprofit, *L'Après*, stands for hours in the rain amid a busy town square in Lyon, holding up a banner demanding "*Liberté pour Palestine*" in large block letters. She opens her home to immigrant students seeking asylum and education, supporting efforts of *La Cimade*, an organization that defends immigrant rights and advocates against discrimination. My *Mamie* is mother to four children, taking care of my *Papi* for six years as he suffered repeated strokes, until his eventual passing in 2019. My *Mamie* is the strongest woman I know; in a time where the political and social atmosphere often feels hopeless, her stories and thoughtful approach to life encourage me to live authentically, empower me to think critically, and inspire me to strive for a better world.

My *Mamie*, Madeleine Cottin, was born and raised in French Algeria, second of three children and daughter to a seamstress and actor in a traveling theater group. At twelve years old, her family was torn apart by the Algerian revolution against French colonization; her teen years would be defined by the impacts of this war– tutoring Algerian classmates boycotting school in support of the revolution, witnessing neighboring businesses demolished by bombs, and even experiencing firsthand the moral controversy of determining what is "right" as her parents became increasingly divided by perspective– her mother's will to maintain the longstanding French government, and her father's belief that Algerians had the right to their

independence— contributing to their eventual divorce. My great grandfather, an advocate of progressive change, was targeted as an enemy of the *Organisation Armée Secrète (OAS)*, an extreme-right French militant group formed to prevent Algerian independence, and a bomb would be planted in my *Mamie's* home. At fifteen, she and her sister would be sent away to France to live safely with extended family, only visiting her parents and younger brother over the holidays.

However, when recounting stories of her childhood, my *Mamie's* words hold no bitterness. Instead, she reflects on the “notion of humanity” instilled in her by her father during this formative time, which she now passes on to her children and grandchildren. My *Mamie* values respect for others above all else; in our dialogues, she emphasizes the importance of knowing one's values and evaluating how they are enacted within society, assessing what *is* versus what *should be*. Perhaps what I admire most is her unwavering will, like a boulder withstanding a relentless current. She is unyielding in her values, but never without careful contemplation. When my *Mamie* speaks, I listen, and I learn.

The Art of this Woman—Vida Gonzales (3rd Place, \$200 Prize) 9th Grade, Lodi High School

Sunlight pours in through the window of my art class. In the background, you can usually hear a wide range of early 2000's music playing or the current hits playing off of Pandora on the Promethean board. Nearby, a woman sits at her desk either grading work or giving advice on how to do the project we're working on. Her name is Missy Selles, but all of us students refer to her as Mrs. Selles.

It takes a lot to be a teacher, but it takes even more to be a teacher that students genuinely enjoy being around. Mrs. Selles is one of those rare teachers that every student feels comfortable around. She's kind and always willing to help you if you need it. Whether she's talking to students about recent stats of Kings games, how strawberry Pop-Tarts will always be the best flavor, or complimenting our artwork, she creates an environment that's enjoyable to be in.

When you have a good teacher, not only can you feel the difference of being supported, you can see it. Students aren't afraid to ask questions and love having conversations. Last Thursday was her birthday, and students brought her goodies, wished her a happy birthday, and one student even surprised her with a birthday basket.

Mrs. Selles grew up with a grandma that always encouraged her creativity. She described her grandma as “like Martha Stewart.” When she was little her grandma would have arts and crafts tables set up for her so they could craft together after school, or on her summer break. They would move from one station to another depending on what they felt like doing that day. Mrs. Selles says she tries to emulate her grandmother because she's the nicest person she knows.

Like many inspirational women, she has a lot on her plate. She says that her biggest day to day challenge is time management. During her day-to-day life she balances three kids who all play sports, a full-time job as our art teacher, trying to create artwork, and everyday chores. Even through all of this she's always there ready to help armed with good music and a smile.

She says that her biggest accomplishment as a person is her children. In her career as a teacher, it's when students recognize her when she's out of school and she's told that she's impacted them in some way, shape, or form. In her career as an artist, it's having her art displayed in a nice hotel in Beverly Hills. Mrs. Selles may create art but she also creates confidence in her students. A lot of people may not have been impacted by the teachers that they have or had, but I know I have, and I bet any student who's had Mrs. Selles would say the same.



Winners: Maeve Cottin-Rack (2nd Place), Syrell Gatan (1st Place), Vida Gonzales (3rd Place)



DEI on March 29th and Beyond

For many, March 28th was the biggest day in the resistance against the Trump regime but, in fact, it was just the beginning. The hope was that 3.5% of the population would take to the streets showing their disdain for the Trump administration and all it stands for. A political scientist at Harvard has determined when that magic number is reached, the protest will be successful in making the change that it fought for. Let's presume that number was reached on the 28th. So, this is what's next for all of us who want change and a return to the values and beliefs that were espoused in the Declaration of Independence and the US Constitution. **We all need to:**

- Organize community forums to educate citizens about their rights and the importance of democratic institutions.
- Volunteer for or donate to organizations that protect civil liberties and promote voter registration.
- Contact elected officials regularly to voice concerns and demand accountability.
- Participate in peaceful protests, marches, or rallies to maintain public visibility of dissent.
- Support independent journalism and fact-checking initiatives to combat misinformation.
- Build coalitions with local groups to strengthen grassroots movements.
- Encourage friends and family to vote in all elections and stay informed about policy changes.
- Engage in creative activism, such as art installations, performances, or digital campaigns, to reach broader audiences.

- Run for local office or assist progressive candidates in their campaigns.
- Host workshops on nonviolent resistance and organizing strategies.

Once we have reclaimed our democracy, we can rest. Now is not that time. When you get tired or discouraged, talk to someone with similar beliefs and you will be re-energized or find a group to join that will do the same thing for you. It really works. Give it a try.



**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.

Directory Updates:

Helen Mar

Has moved to O'Connor Woods
3400 Wagner Heights Rd., Apt 308
All other info remains the same

Lolita Drullard

Has renewed her membership

New Member:

Wendy Baskette

3525 W. Benjamin Holt Dr.
Stockton, 95219

Cell: (209) 689-8458

E-mail: wbasque@gmail.com

College: Chico State

Expressed an interest in: Int'l Affairs,
RIF, Book and Gourmet Group

Referred by: Delores DeCarli, Diane Oren, Gayle Wooley
Please welcome our new member.

Thank you,
Claudia Mennuti and Bette Outlaw
Co-Membership Treasurers

Public Policy Update

1) AAUW-National is working on another alert to the Action Network this week with continuing to ask to write and call your senators to vote NO on the SAVE (Safeguard American Voter Eligibility) Act. The action page is here: <https://www.aauw.org/act/two-minute-activist/>.

2) Your Lobby Days team is waiting to be scheduled with Assemblymember Rhodesia Ransom. The 3 bills we've been asked to advocate for follow:

a. **AB 1766** – “Human Trafficking Prevention Education” – which requires the Instructional Quality Commission (IQC) to consider expanding human trafficking prevention education for students in grades K-12. Additionally, this bill requires the Commission to consider annual training for specified school personnel to ensure curriculum understanding. According to the Polaris Project, sex trafficking by family members is the most common recruitment strategy, so schools may be the only safe place for a student to seek help. Current law requires age-appropriate materials for 7-12 grade students, but we know that children younger than 12 are often vulnerable targets. AB 1766 would require the consideration of developmentally appropriate human trafficking & exploitation lessons for grades K-12 on the following:

- How to prevent human trafficking, including online and intrafamilial exploitation risks.
- Help-seeking strategies, healthy boundaries, healthy relationships, and bodily autonomy.
- How to stay safe from sexually exploitative materials and online deepfakes.

○How to recognize and report concerning behaviors.

b. **AB 1845** – Student Safety & Anti-Exploitation Act. This bill expands post-secondary institutions' Title IX implementation in California to include human trafficking. A study conducted among college students on 12 Southern California campuses found that 42% (!) of students reported having known someone who sold sex or was trafficked as a college student. Similar to AB 1766, it is critical for higher education institutions, students, faculty and staff to recognize the potential risks, behavior, responses, and indicators for human trafficking. Expanding existing strategies to prevent human trafficking recruitment is vital to protecting the safety of college students.

c. **AB 1876** – This is known as “The Equitable Care for All Act”, & codifies federal non-discrimination protections under Section 1557 of the Affordable Care Act in state law. This section makes it unlawful for any health care provider receiving federal funds to refuse to treat an individual on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, age or disability. These protections have been in effect since the ACA's passage, but given federal threats to scale back these protections, this bill would protect vulnerable groups, including LGBTQIA+ individuals, non-English speaking individuals, and pregnant individuals seeking abortion care services—from discrimination in any health program or activity that receives government funding.

3) Even though AAUW's School Board Project is about educational materials & banned books, I thought it appropriate to add here that a review of the local school boards' meetings show that Stockton & Lincoln Boards are reviewing & revising policies & procedures to better protect students from immigration & customs enforcement (ICE) on school grounds & in offices. Though I hate that it is necessary, I was glad to see them being proactive.

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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.

April Calendar

Day	Date	Time	Event	Location/Contact
Mon	13	6:00pm	April Board Meeting	Online via Zoom
Wed	15	All Day	Reservation Deadline	Betty Parsons – (408) 309-8958
Sat	18	9:30am	AAUW April Program: “AAUW Enjoys the Arts”	Haggin Museum