



## Saturday, March 21<sup>st</sup>, 2026 – 9:30am Haggin Museum - 1201 N. Pershing Ave, Stockton

With the start of spring and the designation of Women's History month, March is always a special time of year. Our upcoming general meeting will celebrate inspirational women at the Haggin Museum, **Saturday, March 21<sup>st</sup>**. Attendees will hear from the winners of our annual essay contest and be able to meet these impressive students and their families. After our student speakers, you will be treated to a Women's History Living Timeline presentation, featuring some of our Stockton AAUW Branch members. Celebrate our accomplishments, and renew your resolve to address our continuing struggles!

Come gain hope and inspiration with stories of leaders from the past and a glimpse into the leaders of the future!

**When:** Saturday, March 21<sup>st</sup>, 9:30am

**Where:** Haggin Museum/Victory Park  
1201 N. Pershing Ave., Stockton

**Cost:** This Meeting will be Free to Charge to Both  
Members and Guests, RSVP Appreciated to Assure  
Seating

**Reservation Deadline:** Wednesday, March 18<sup>th</sup>

Reply via your caller or Call/Text Reservation Chair  
Betty Parsons @ (408) 309-8958

[bjpars\\_95120@yahoo.com](mailto:bjpars_95120@yahoo.com)

# President's Message



"I am going to protect the women of our country," was a claim made by candidate Trump during his latest campaign. However, the opposite has happened, and women are less protected.

According to the National Organization for Women, what follows are some of the most impactful policies of this Republican administration:

- Endangered Americans' ability to afford and access critical medication, including contraceptives by imposing tariffs on foreign-made drugs.
- Attacked and defunded DEI programs at private sector companies. These programs prevented discrimination based on sex or nationality.
- Withheld food from hungry Americans by pausing \$500 million in Department of Agriculture emergency funding for food pantries, which single mothers rely on.
- Undid affirmative action requirements that help ensure women and workers of color have access to apprenticeship programs.
- Cut Medicaid and the Affordable Care Act, affecting women's access to health care.
- Shuttered reproductive health clinics by freezing funding for the Title X Family Planning Program and defunding Planned Parenthood.
- Demoting or firing high-ranking women in the military.

These are just some of the tactics used by the present Republican administration that harm women.

The month of March is Women's History Month, focusing on the contributions of women in the struggle for gender equity in the United States. Women have made vital advancements to history, culture, and society, achievements often overlooked. Instead of celebrating these achievements and promoting the progress women have made, the administration had set up policies that, in effect, block the advancement of women, economically, socially, and politically. These policies are in direct opposition to AAUW'S objectives to empower women and girls by encouraging them to pursue their goals and to promote gender equality.

It seems politicians are very good at promising one thing and delivering another.

Sandra Mazzuola  
President

2025-2026

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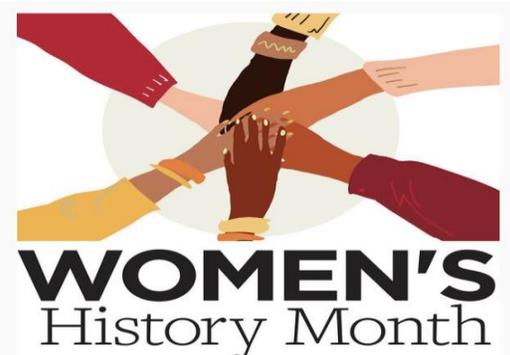
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# Public Policy Update

I have several items to cover this month.

First of all, **Lobby Days** – we are currently waiting to be assigned a meeting time with Assembly member Ransom to show our support for 2 bills related to human trafficking education & protection (AB1766 & AB1845).

Next, in November 2025, the **U.S. Department of Education** announced plans to move key education programs to other agencies – hollowing out civil rights enforcement and moving core K-12 and higher education functions into agencies that focus on labor, health, or foreign policy. AAUW reached out to Branch Presidents and Public Policy Chairs, asking them to sign on to letters to our U.S. Senators urging them to conduct congressional oversight and block the unlawful transfer of education programs and responsibilities. We gave an overwhelming response (67 branches) to sign on to letters to Sen. Padilla & Sen. Schiff!

February's action from AAUW-CA is to focus on **DEFENDING & ADVANCING REPRODUCTIVE JUSTICE**.

- **Step 1: Education.** If you missed it, watch the recent AAUW Silicon Valley branch webinar with Professor Leah Litman's update on legislative challenges to reproductive health and what we can do to respond. Find the recording HERE (<https://www.aauw-ca.org/leah-litman-speaks-to-aauw-on-roe-commemoration-webinar-thursday-jan-22-2026/>). You can also see the excellent program hosted by the AAUW Turlock branch exploring issues in reproductive health care and medical school training since the Dobbs decision. Find the recording HERE (<https://turlock-ca.aauw.net>). Watch the

PBS documentary, "Growing Up Trans", which shares the perspectives of parents, doctors, and kids on navigating gender and identity. Find this excellent documentary HERE ([Growing Up Trans \(full documentary\) | FRONTLINE](#)). Also, watch this very informative episode of John Oliver's Last Week Tonight about trans athletes. Find the episode HERE ([Trans Athletes: Last Week Tonight with John Oliver \(HBO\)](#)).

- **Step 2: Education & Connection.** Organize a watch-party for one of the excellent documentaries above. Have a group discussion about something you learned or something that surprised you. I'm sure there will be some of both here.
- **Step 3: Politically-focused.** If you haven't already done so, download the 5 Calls application. Once in the app, click on <https://5calls.org/issue/gender-affirming-care-ban/>.

## Standing in Solidarity with Minnesota

AAUW-California Public Policy has created the following petition language regarding ICE activities in Minnesota and throughout the country. You can send this statement to your Senators via Resistbot or you can copy and paste this language to send to your representatives manually, via email.

Petition Language: The recent activities of U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) in Minneapolis have been horrific - an escalation of an already socially and legally questionable series of law enforcement actions. As in other communities across the country, masked ICE officers have terrorized law-abiding people, ruptured tight-knit communities, broken happy families, and stolen innocent lives. The presence of ICE in our communities has also trampled on our individual and collective civil rights, ensuring regular violations of our fundamental rights to due process, to privacy, to protest, and to humane treatment—rights that are afforded to everyone who steps foot on American soil. A sharp increase in racial and ethnic profiling, based on the language that one speaks or the color of one's skin, has accompanied ICE activities. All of this has occurred, ironically, in the name of making our communities safer. With gratitude, empathy, and love, we stand in solidarity with the people of Minneapolis. We condemn the tactics of

federal officers who continue to interfere with our rights and who unnecessarily take our lives. We must see a return to policies and practices that seek to ensure that all who live, work, and visit the United States are free from violence in all its forms and wherever it occurs. We must ensure that anyone subject to harassment or violence based on race, ethnicity, gender, and nationality must have full protection and recourse under the law. Accordingly, we demand action. You must rein in these violations. We demand that you, our representatives, protect our civil and constitutional rights, which are being regularly infringed upon by ICE officers.

**Reproductive Freedom for All.** (excerpts from AAUW-CA newsletter) You will be seeing a shift in language from many organizations as they expand their original focus away from abortion & contraception access to “advance reproductive freedom for all.” In a moment when abortion access is shrinking for the first time in 50 years, should we not more narrowly focus on women and reproductive health rights?

The answer, of course, is no. This moment is not the time to have a narrow focus. Most organizations centering on women’s rights and gender equity have long acknowledged that [whatever affects one directly affects all indirectly](#). While we can have specific priority areas, we should do so with a better understanding of our common experiences. We should work in coalitions with an eye to how our priority areas are connected, creating strategies that clearly help us to advance together. This language is also an extension of the intentional move to actively bring diversity to historically white-dominant organizations; to honor the often unrecognized women of color who have been critical in reproductive justice fights of the past; and to more directly acknowledge the compounding burdens faced by women of color, whose fight for racial justice had already been inseparable from the fight for gender justice.

The shift toward “reproductive freedom for all” also points to the fact that any focus on women’s rights and/or reproductive health is equally inseparable from the larger fight for LGBTQ+ rights. These connections between shared struggles and [fundamental freedoms](#) have long existed, but after the overturning of Roe v. Wade, these connections have become perhaps more

apparent. This can be seen in the Dobbs decision, which overturned Roe, where Supreme Court Justice Clarence Thomas signaled that [similar reasoning might be used to roll back contraception access and marriage equality](#).

As a women’s organization that has historically focused on reproductive health, the turn to reproductive freedom means that we acknowledge the many and intersecting ways that marginalization happens, and how they are connected. So, to truly insulate abortion access and reproductive health, we MUST do things like protect the rights of trans women, support the inclusion of non-binary kids, advocate for the diversification of leadership, and push the need for affordable housing. These are all connected. We must also protect the democratic norms that are the bedrock of our advocacy, protesting against the militarization of law enforcement, resisting anti-immigrant policies, pushing back against the dismantling of public education, and calling out rising authoritarianism.

### **Celebrating International Women’s Day**

In 2026, we are watching the erosion of basic women’s rights throughout the world, a widespread turning back of the progress we have made on so many fronts; from reproductive rights, to access to education and income inequality. Especially in the United States, this backward movement is shocking & is compounded by the stagnation of important legislation and constitutional changes, including the Equal Rights Amendment and the Equality Act. However, the fight goes on, as we watch women from all over the world, from the United States to Iran to Ireland, standing up to once again demand more from their governments. It is in this context that we once again celebrate International Women’s Day on March 8<sup>th</sup>.

While International Women’s Day was marked for the first time in March 1911 by over a million people in Austria-Hungary, Denmark, Germany, and Switzerland demanding women’s right to vote, hold public office, and acquire gainful employment, we now tend to associate the holiday with the United Nations, which began celebrating International Women’s Day in 1975. Each year’s observance is centered on a particular theme or issue within women’s rights. The theme for 2026 is “Give to Gain.” Represented visually by a gesture of outstretched

hands to symbolize a request for both help and connection, this theme was selected to emphasize the power of collective generosity, reciprocity, and support in expanding opportunities for women. Individual giving may be financial, but it also means offering knowledge, resources, infrastructure, visibility, advocacy, education, training, mentoring, or time. These all contribute to women's advancement, which helps create a more supportive and interconnected world, overall. As part of this campaign, the UN is also calling on governments to "act boldly and decisively for all women and girls" in six priority areas that they feel can make a big difference to women's lives—areas that parallel AAUW California's public policy priorities in many ways:

- Fostering a Digital Revolution, defined as backing the Global Digital Compact so that everyone can benefit from technology and its potential.
- Targeting Zero Violence by investing in women's rights organizations already working to prevent and end violence.
- Freedom from Poverty by investing in social protection systems and public services to give women an equal chance to thrive.
- Establishing Greater Peace and Security by supporting women's leadership to build peace.
- Offering More Decision-Making Power to women everywhere by adopting laws that support women's participation in politics and business.
- Centering Climate Justice by prioritizing not only climate action itself, but women and girls in climate action, boosting their leadership and access to healthy environments and green jobs.

Let us not forget eternal vigilance is the price of freedom. On March 8th, and every other day, we will continue to stand together and demand more, from ourselves, our communities, and our governments.

There are many more Public Policy subjects for us to be aware of this month all around us. I'm afraid we might get fragmented as we think about all of this, so my suggestion is to find one area you feel strongly about & focus your month's activities there. But remember, *when women thrive, we all rise.*



No Kings 3 Protest: Raising Voices for Change at Delta College

### **Champion Democracy, Justice and DEI on March 28, 2026**

On March 28<sup>th</sup>, 2026, the campus of Delta College will become the epicenter of a passionate movement as members of the community gather for the No Kings 3 protest. Scheduled to take place from 10am to 1pm, the demonstration seeks to amplify concerns about authoritarian policies and advocate for the preservation of democratic values across the country.

The No Kings movement, now in its third major iteration, is rooted in the belief that leadership should be accountable to the people and not consolidated in the hands of a select few. This protest is expected to draw supporters from across the region, united by a common vision of fairness, inclusiveness, and shared governance. Organizers are encouraging attendees to participate peacefully, raise awareness, and bring creative energy to the event.

An essential element of any protest is the visual impact of posters and signs. These not only communicate messages to the public and media but also unite participants under shared ideals. Here are some compelling ideas for poster topics and slogans for the No Kings 3 protest:

- **Democracy, Not Dictatorship** – Emphasizing the need for participatory decision-making.
- **No Kings, Just Voices** – Highlighting the collective power of the community.
- **Power to the People** – A timeless call for grassroots leadership.
- **Accountability Now!** – Demanding transparency from those in power.

- **United for Change** – Promoting solidarity among diverse groups.
- **We Will Not Be Silenced** – Asserting the right to speak out and protest.

To make your poster stand out, use bold colors, clear lettering, and creative visuals. Consider adding relevant hashtags or QR codes linking to informative resources.

The No Kings 3 protest promises to be a vibrant expression of civic engagement at Delta College. Whether you are an experienced activist or a first-time participant, your presence and your voice will contribute to a meaningful call for democracy and justice. Let's come together, make a statement, and show that the power of the people can never be overshadowed.

# Mentor Program



Our mentor girls were on the go in February! We attended the annual Nor-Cal Science Festival held at Lodi High School on February 21<sup>st</sup>. The format allows for the girls to browse exhibits and instructional classes and participate in a variety of hands on activities. There were also scheduled "shows" about aerodynamics, magnetics and even dog psychology. There were places to make and do as well as consider and process. A lunch at In and Out Burger after the event provided time to debrief and socialize.



March will find us at the Haggin Museum for a tour of great artists with Ronda Sanders, Haggin Docent and Stockton Branch member, followed by the opportunity to create their own art with Jennifer Reiber.



Although we still encourage our girls to pursue the STEM areas where women continue to be underrepresented we want to provide activities for development in all areas. This is also another example of how Stockton Branch members can support our program without actually being a mentor. If you have a talent to share or a space we can use please contact Pam Mallett-Jones.

# 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.

The next Branch Development Peer Group will be on Tuesday, March, 10<sup>th</sup> at 7pm. Click [HERE](#) to register.

## Who Knew? Who's New Jody Bussey



We have several members (Pat Fluetsch, Amy Cooper, Jennifer Rieber, Della Richardson) who are responsible for inviting Jody Bussey to join Stockton Branch AAUW. Once you have met Jody, you will be thanking these ladies as well as welcoming Jody to our group.

Jody was born in Salt Lake City, Utah, and her parents moved to Sonora, California when Jody was a junior in high school. Anyone would find this move difficult if it weren't for the warmth she found in the Sonora community and which she finds in Stockton as well.

She has been married over thirty-five years and she and her husband have three children who are out of the home and being quite successful. Like their parents, the children are accomplished but especially in engineering areas. Jody is a

construction manager/engineer and works for a prestigious Sacramento firm that does major projects. She joined AAUW because of the mission of our organization. She will have more opportunities to become vested in all our projects if/when she retires, but she loves her work.

She went back to school after her children were born doing much of her background requirements at Delta College at night. She continued to Sacramento State and enrolled in the Construction Management degree program. She believes that being a returning student, a wife, and mother made her better at all three roles: "Going back to school in my thirties and working made me a better mom." Besides being stellar students, her children were involved in water polo so that required lots of hours for Jody between home, work, school, life. No wonder her favorite music is Bitter Chick music.

Jody works in Sacramento and has work projects primarily throughout northern California. She mentioned that one day saw her meeting the mayor of San Francisco, then donning work boots to talk to people on the job site and finally coming home to the responsibilities of home life. She wears lots of hats. She calls her car "a fortress of solitude."

She finds comfort in sailing with the family on the Delta. Besides travel on local waterways, she has traveled to Panama with close friends, to Tonga, to France. Her next planned jaunt is to Greece and then again to Panama.

Besides being a resident of Stockton, she is an advocate for this city. In her profession, she brings companies in to show the beauties of this unique area. There is so much more to discover about this intriguing lady; we are very fortunate to have her among our membership.

Welcome Jody Bussey!

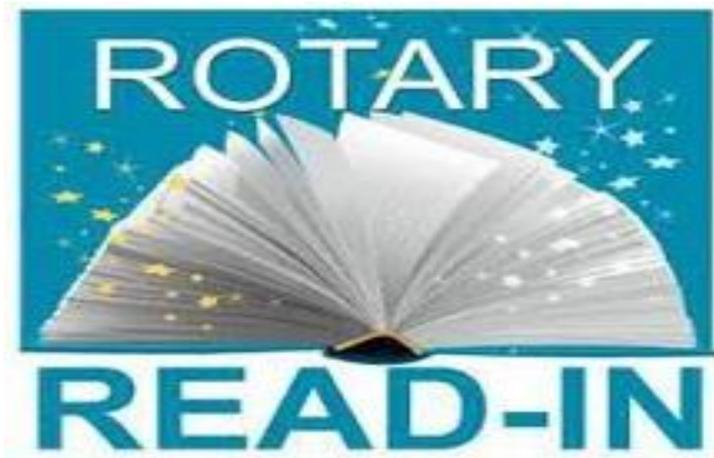


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We affirm and promote the inherent  
worth and dignity of every person and  
are a welcoming congregation.



The 25<sup>th</sup> annual Rotary Read-In arrived on Thursday, February 26<sup>th</sup>, at 10am! 858 volunteers descended on 74 schools in the City of Stockton to promote literacy among its 20,000 K-3<sup>rd</sup> graders.

Each member of our own AAUW team had purchased an age-appropriate book to read and then donate to a Kennedy Elementary kindergarten, first, second, or third grade class.



As pictured here, SUSD administrator Maylyn Paculba (far left) joined eight AAUW sisters who were volunteer readers, except for one as noted: Kim Bell, Dana Miller -Tart, Marilyn Platt, Pam Mallett-Jones, Betty Parsons, Diane Oren, Cindy Milford (team “manager/photographer”), and Rosa Solis.

The team members read, then gifted, their chosen books to their respective classes, after which they gathered to share their classroom experiences as they sipped and nibbled treats provided by Principal Chin. All agreed on the following:

- 👍 Teachers had instilled in their students procedures for gathering as a group, focusing on the presenter, etc.
- 👍 The volunteer readers felt joy at sharing their own love of books with such a responsive group of children.
- 👍 All agreed that the mood of the morning was positive.
- 👍 The principal seemed to appreciate our AAUW team’s heartfelt compliments about the students and the teachers.
- 👍 The Rotary Read-In was a resounding success!

## AAUW Read-In Team And Their Book Selections

TK reader: Diane Oren



As Diane Oren shared Giles Andreas’s story *Giraffes Can’t Dance* with the TK class, these youngest kindergarteners heard about the frustration of Gerald the Giraffe. His crooked knees and thin legs made it hard for him to dance, and animals made fun of him.



With encouragement from a friend, he (and the Kennedy students) learned how our differing gifts enable us to dance to our own tune!

### Kindergarten Reader: Betty Parsons



These kindergartners felt the Norwegian cold as Betty Parsons read Jan Brett’s story *Cozy in Love*. Hoping to impress his crush Lofti, big musk ox Cozy fights with a rival—but loses! Will he also lose Lofti? Or will his kindness and cleverness show her a more winning type of strength?



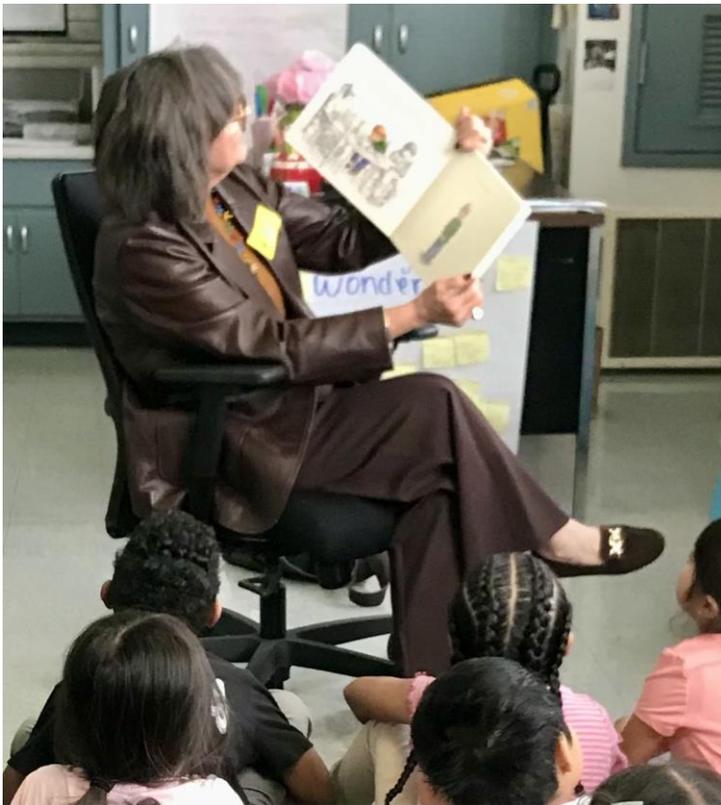
By the tale’s conclusion, oxen and children grasped a life’s lesson.

## Kindergarten Reader: Marilyn Platt



Kennedy Kindergarteners smiled as Marilyn Platt entertained them with *See You Later, Alligator* by William F. Buckley—yes, the conservative influencer of decades ago! Before he begins a trip, a tortoise says rhyming goodbyes to his many animal friends. Marilyn enjoyed reading the funny story as much as the “kinders” enjoyed hearing it!

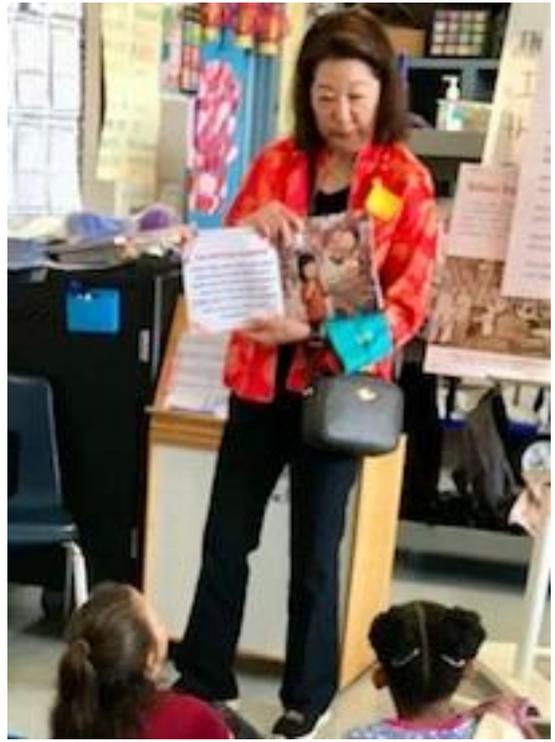
## 1st Grade Reader: Kim Bell



Kim Bell chose to read a personal-favorite book to her Read-In 1<sup>st</sup> grade class: Judith Viorst’s award-winning classic *Alexander and the Terrible, Horrible, No Good, Very Bad Day*. The book concludes that we all have bad days but gives hope that the next day will be better.

👉 The Kennedy youngsters then described one of their own awful days but were reminded of the story’s hopeful ending.

## 1st Grade Reader: Rosa Solis



Rosa Solis read *Horse New Year* to her assigned 1<sup>st</sup> grade class.



Sharing the story plus wearing her red silky jacket and saying that she could speak both Chinese and Spanish languages sparked a discussion about “culture” and “language.” Many students proudly raised hands to show that they, too, could speak Spanish. Their worlds and their pride expanded after the Read-In experience!

## 2nd Grade Reader: Dana Miller-Tart



Children in cold winter areas sometimes cannot attend school due to the snowy weather. Such stay at home breaks are called Snow Days. In *Pete the Cat, Snow Daze* by James and Kimberly Dean, Pete actually misses school people and activities.

👉 After reading, Dana asked the students how they'd feel about missing school, and they agreed with Pete: They'd prefer to be in class!

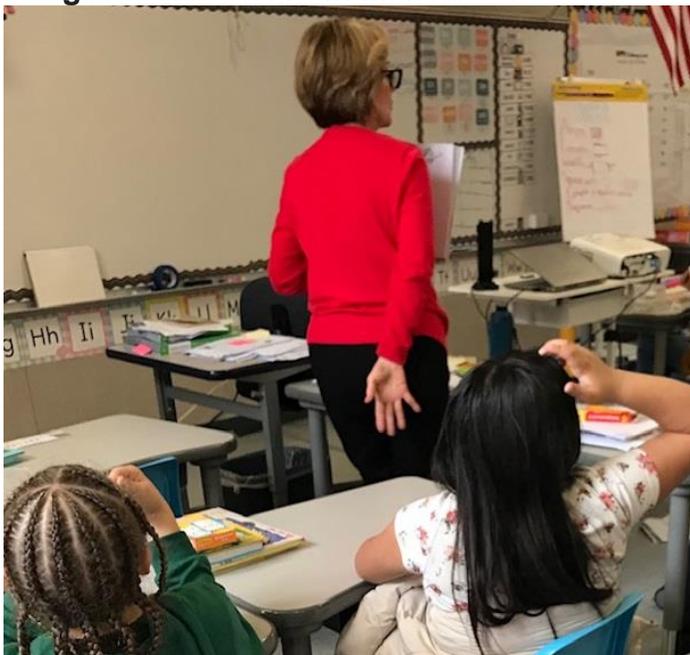
### 2nd Grade Reader: Maylyn Paculba



SUSD administrator Maylyn Paculba, joined our AAUW Rotary Read-In Team. She chose to share the NYTimes best-selling children's book *Be Kind* by Pat Zietlow Miller in which a young girl spills grape juice on her dress. Will classmates tease her or treat her with compassion?

👉 After reading the story to Kennedy 2<sup>nd</sup> graders, Maylyn asked them how they felt when others showed them kindness or the opposite. The book is a great discussion-starter.

### 3rd grade Reader: Pam Mallett-Jones



With dramatic flair and humor, Pam Mallett-Jones presented Dr. Seuss's rhyming *Miss Gertrude McFuzz* to

an attentive 3rd grade class. The bird heroine believes her one-feather tail is unattractive so she eats special feather-growing berries resulting in a much fuller tail, as suggested by Pam in this picture.

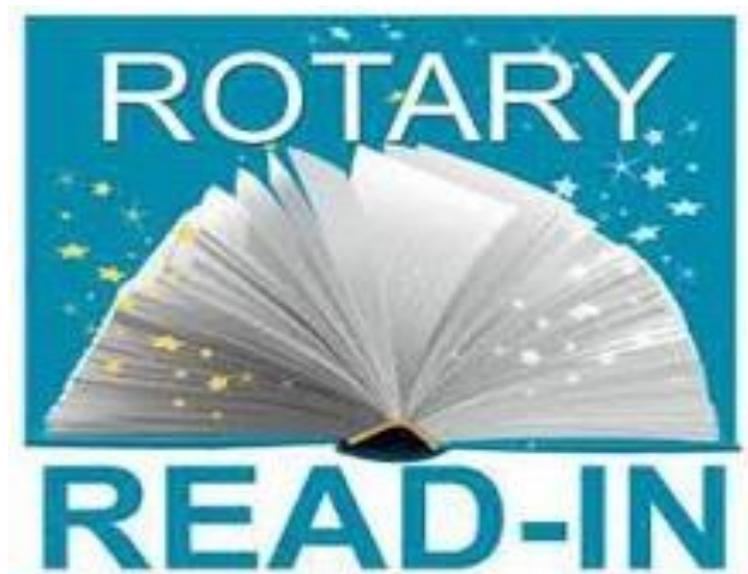
👉 The Bird and Kennedy 3<sup>rd</sup> graders learned that true beauty comes from within.

### 3rd Grade Reader: Erica DeiRossi



Kennedy 3<sup>rd</sup> graders delighted in Kennedy alumna Erica DeiRossi's book choice *The Snail and the Whale* by Julia Donaldson. The tiny and the huge creatures help each other, as depicted in rhyming text and gorgeous pictures.

👉 Erica's post-story writing activity supported that "helping" theme. Then she gave each student a snail-shaped key fob as a reminder of the story's message.



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.

## *March Calendar*

Day	Date	Time	Event	Location/Contact
Mon	9	6:00pm	March Board Meeting	Online via Zoom
Tue	10	7:00pm	Branch Development Peer Group Meeting	Online via Zoom
Wed	18	All Day	Reservation Deadline	Betty Parsons – (408) 309-8958
Sat	21	9:30am	AAUW March Program: “ Women’s History Month”	Haggin Museum
Sat	28	10:00am-1:00pm	No Kings 3 Protest	San Joaquin Delta College