

# AAUW

## THE INSIGHTER

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Our Supporters

### WEBSITE

Please visit our website <https://merced-ca.aauw.net/> regularly for information about programs and activities.



### UC Merced Needs You

UC Merced needs volunteers to participate in a 5 minute anonymous online survey studying local innovation with a focus on agriculture and food systems. Please share your experience as an innovator, entrepreneur, researcher, producer, or consumer to help us understand and advance innovation for economic development in the Central Valley:

[https://ucmerced.az1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV\\_0THlqpv5QsZel70?RID=CGC\\_JyXd1FZm3tmSdSE&Q\\_CHL=email](https://ucmerced.az1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_0THlqpv5QsZel70?RID=CGC_JyXd1FZm3tmSdSE&Q_CHL=email)

For more information, please contact Kimberly Gibson (kimberlygibson@ucmerced.edu | 209-228-0321) or visit our website <https://vista.ucmerced.edu/f3/>

Thank you!

“Life’s script is written in surprises; be the avid reader who finds joy in every unexpected twist.”

Oprah Winfrey

# PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

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Greetings Merced AAUW!

My hope is that you have enjoyed some downtime, some travel (escape from the heat really), and some unexpected discoveries during this long, long summer. I know I have!

As summer comes to an end (and aren't we all looking forward to some cooler weather?) the board members and I have been busy creating this year's Calendar of Events. We've lined up a very impressive list of women – all leaders in their fields – who will both interest and inspire you! It goes without saying that this year we are faced with all sorts of issues here in Merced, in California, and the nation. We hope that our topics provide you with an understanding of various issues.

Oh! And we've also planned some tours, a trip, and other surprises – just for fun!

Starting us off in September, we'll be gathering for our annual FALL BRUNCH. You won't want to miss this event! Stephanie Dietz, executive director of the Merced Community Foundation, will be our guest speaker. As always you will be signing up for Interest Sections AND we'll be announcing an exciting springtime trip opportunity.

So - let's gather together, welcome guests, swap stories, eat, and be merry at the:

Merced AAUW FALL BRUNCH

Saturday, September 14<sup>th</sup> (10 am – noon)

The “Mondo” building across from Bob Hart Square (entrance at 715 Canal Street)

AAUW members - \$10. -- your guest - \$5 (please bring one or more!)

Looking forward to seeing at our 2024-2025 kick-off! Bring a friend!

Becky Tietjen

Becky Tietjen, President

# RECAP OF APRIL PROGRAM



## SPRING BRUNCH RECAP

On April 27, 2024, AAUW held the General Meeting of the Merced Branch. A beautiful backyard setting with the best weather ever! We were so happy to see Jane recovering nicely! We had delicious quiche, fresh fruit, muffins, and almonds to snack on. Perfect for a light meal. It was joyful to chat and sip! Thanks so much to Linda Lucas for volunteering her home for our meeting.

Sue Chappell thanked everyone for pulling together to make this year's programs successful. Nice job Sue! Becky Tietjen pointed out that our branch is a very welcoming place and that it provides a place for a new generation of women to voice their opinion and work toward causes that are important. The following officers were installed. Good luck next year.

President	Becky Tietjen
Vice President	Sharon Spinardi
Past President	Sue Chappell
Secretary	Kathleen McElwain
Treasurer	Megan Anderson
Memberships	Dee Near
Science Camp	Kathleen Hull/Dena Traina
Website	Kathleen Hull
Newsletter	Dena Traina
Scholarships	Nancy Young Bergman
Programs	Ruth Wax, Linda Lucas, Jane Lawrence
Interest Sections	Nancy Barber

# SEPTEMBER PROGRAM



Figure O-1 Mondo Building - Location of Brunch



## SEPTEMBER PROGRAM

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Traditionally, our chapter has started the year off with a brunch. We have a fun brunch planned for this year!

WHEN: Saturday, September 14  
TIME: 10-Noon  
WHERE: Mondo Building, across from Bob Hart Square  
WHO: Members and Guests  
COST: Boxed breakfast \$10 for members; \$5 for guests

RSVP: Please RSVP by September 7th at [MercedAAUW@gmail.com](mailto:MercedAAUW@gmail.com) or call Jane Lawrence at 209-658-4490

Our special guest will be former City Manager **Stephanie Dietz** who will discuss with us the Merced Community Foundation and how that organization helps the Merced community.

President Becky Tietjen also will be talking about the year ahead and this will opportunity to sign up for sections.

We look forward to seeing you there!

Trivia about the Mondo Building currently owned by MCOE who is graciously allowing us to use it.

The Bank of Italy Building (a.k.a Mondo Building) is a three-story commercial building with basement, located at the central intersection of Downtown Merced, on the northwest corner of Canal Street and West Main Street. The Building is approximately 26,771 square feet. Its historic name is the "Bank of Italy Building", and "the factual construction date was in 1928. The Bank of Italy Building was designed by the notable architect, H.A. Minton and built by K.E. Parker Co. The building is rectangular in shape and set on the site with storefronts and window fenestration along Canal and Main Streets. The building boasts distinctive Classical Revival architectural styles and features. The building exhibits excellent craftsmanship, and artistic elements with its decorated cast stone columns, cornice and Corinthian capitals and decorative cast stone band. With the exception of a portion of the ground floor, which was modified in the 1950s, the building looks substantially similar to the way it looked historically, with most of the building's historic elements in good condition. NRHP #04001135



## SECTIONS

Interest Sections are a fun way to meet new friends and add fun and variety into our lives! Members of these interest sections meet in the home of the hostess for that month. Some sections also have co-hostesses. When signing up for a section, consider being an active participant by volunteering to host or co-host a meeting.

**Adopt-a-Highway:** Chair – Kem Shrum 209-489-8130 [kkshrum@yahoo.com](mailto:kkshrum@yahoo.com)

Become a part of the group of volunteers who clean up AAUW's 2 mile stretch on Hwy.140 just past Planada on the way to Mariposa. The group usually goes out early morning every couple months or so - about 4-6 times a year. The chair will send an email to let the group know date and time. Equipment is provided. We enjoy the great outdoors, chatting, exercise (walking a mile or two), and providing a service. Email Kem if interested.

**Almost Gourmet:** Chair – Karen Wallace 209-617-1709 [the.wallaces@comcast.com](mailto:the.wallaces@comcast.com)

This group meets 4 times per year (with spouse, partner, or guest included). This section is currently closed.

**Book Section 1:** Chair – Kathy Berkeley 209-581-1599 [bekeleykathy@gmail.com](mailto:bekeleykathy@gmail.com)

Meets the first Monday of the month at 2:00 p.m. from October through May at a member's home. Members read a fiction or non-fiction book of their choice and different reviewers share a favorite book each month. Once a year we do a group read.

**Book Section 2:** Chair Judy Smith 209-777-5345 [sierratrekker@comcast.net](mailto:sierratrekker@comcast.net)

Do you love a good mystery? This group is for you! Meets the second Thursday of each month at 3:00 p.m. Call or text Judy Smith.

**Book Section 3:** Chair – Sharon Wainwright [sharonlwa@comcast.net](mailto:sharonlwa@comcast.net)

Members meet the first Tuesday of the month at 9:30 a.m. and rotate between members' homes. We select a book to read, to be read by all, for each meeting, and a volunteer guides us through the discussions. Due to a large membership, this section is closed, but you are welcome to sign up on our waiting list.

**Book Section 4 (Evening Book Group):** Chair Dee Near 209-756-6086 [neard@comcast.net](mailto:neard@comcast.net)

Meets the fourth Thursday of the month at 7:00 p.m. at a member's home. This group has been meeting for 20 years. Everyone reads the same book and discusses it. A wide variety of genres are read. All are welcome. This section meets August through May. For summer 2024 the group read: Guardians of the Valley: John Muir and the friendship that saved Yosemite by Dean King and Husbands by Holly Gramazio.

**Bridge Singles:** Chair – Pauline Cuchna 209-658-6321 [samnila@sbcglobal.net](mailto:samnila@sbcglobal.net)

Meets on the last Monday of the month at 1:00 p.m. The group rotates between members' homes. Table snacks are offered. Subs are welcome. This section meets September through May.

**Bunko:** Chair – Cheryl Burke – 209-726-8481 [cdinesburke@gmail.com](mailto:cdinesburke@gmail.com)

Meets the fourth Monday of the month at 6:30 p.m. There is a lot of lively interaction for the members of this group. Since we have 12 members already, you are welcome to sign up for the substitute list. This section meets September through May with no meeting in December.



## MORE SECTIONS

**Chocoholics:** Chair – Diana Alexander 209-658-1647 [dianaalex51@gmail.com](mailto:dianaalex51@gmail.com)

Meets the third Wednesday of the month at members' homes at 7:00p.m. from October through May. Members should be prepared to either host or co-host one meeting per year. They prepare a special chocolate dish for the event. Chocoholics will be limited to twenty members in order to accommodate everyone in our homes.

**Knitting and Crocheting:** Chair – Dena Traina 209-777-5227 [traina.dena@gmail.com](mailto:traina.dena@gmail.com)

Meets the second Wednesday of the month at a member's home between 6:00-8:00 p.m. Beginners and experienced knitters/crocheters are welcome. Refreshments provided. This section meets all year.

**Let's Craft:** Co-Chair – Ashley McComb (209)761-7873 [leymc84@hotmail.com](mailto:leymc84@hotmail.com)  
Kimberly McComb [mccombkd@gmail.com](mailto:mccombkd@gmail.com)

Meets the third Friday of the month at 5:30 pm. We will rotate between local craft venues to offer a variety of experiences. The crafts will vary between floral arrangements, painting, and craft workshops, etc. This section is for all skill levels.

**Lunch Bunch:** Chair – Connie Brons 209-385-3837 [conniebrons@yahoo.com](mailto:conniebrons@yahoo.com)

Meets the last Thursday of the month at 1:00 p.m. at various restaurants. Members are notified by email as to the location. Be sure to RSVP by contacting Connie to ensure a reservation. This section meets all year round.

**Play Goers:** Chair – Robyn Farnsworth 209-382-0548 [yaya4three@gmail.com](mailto:yaya4three@gmail.com)

Members will see 5-6 plays during the year on Sunday afternoons. This section meets September through May. Will start up again as soon as theater schedule is published. New members are welcome

**Sierra Trekkers: Co-Chairs –** Judy Smith 209-777-5345 and Jennifer Foster 209-722-3649 [sierratrekker@comcast.net](mailto:sierratrekker@comcast.net) or [one4cats@att.net](mailto:one4cats@att.net)

Meetings will be held on the third Thursday of the month at 6:30 in members' homes (except for December). The September planning meeting maps out the tentative dates for hikes during the year. Hikes usually occur once per month. The emphasis is on hiking - - usually easy to moderate trails and occasionally a more strenuous trail. Weather permitting, a snowshoe hike in the winter months can be planned. The group occasionally travels for overnight /weekend adventures. One longer trip is scheduled each year to one of our State or National parks.

**Together Women Rise:** Chair – Jane Guerra 209-723-0384 [nickandjane@guerra.net](mailto:nickandjane@guerra.net)

Meets the first Monday of the month at 6:00p.m. at a member's home for a potluck dinner. Money is donated in the amount that would have been spent on a restaurant dinner to the organization featured each month. The mission is to empower women and girls living in extreme poverty by funding programs that foster good health, education, and economic self-sufficiency. Members become educated to various needs of women living in poverty around the world and participate in collective giving to make a positive difference. This group meets September through June. Members are asked to host or co-host one dinner. New members welcomed.

**Wine and Cheese:** Chair – Colleen Eisberg 209- 725-9082 [eisberg@sbcglobal.net](mailto:eisberg@sbcglobal.net)

Meets the last Friday of the month at 7:00 p.m. at various members' homes. The hostess and co-hostess determine the theme and prepare a selection of cheese and hors d'oeuvres. Spouses are welcome. This section meets September through May with no meeting in November or December. Sept 22 is the first tasting event of the year. Come share the story of your wine and share tasting with the group. New members welcomed.



## SECTION NEWS

### Knit Wits and Hookers

The knitting and crochet section pulled all of their best items together and submitted them to the Merced County Fair. The group enjoyed the activity and performed quite well. See some of the delightful entries.



## MEMBER NEWS

### Lawrence

Jane would like to thank all of you for the meals that were delivered to her doorstep. They were all delicious and greatly relieved the workload for her and Pope. She is back in the swing of things and is getting out to most of her activities.





### Should Politics be Personal?

Today marks 59 years since the Voting Rights Act was passed, a pivotal moment in voting rights history. As we honor this milestone, we're making a point that there's less than 100 days until a critical, decade-defining election.

For women and girls, politics isn't just abstract — it's deeply personal. Donate to support efforts to protect voting rights, educate voters, and create a more equitable society for all women and girls.

Right now, we're facing unprecedented challenges to our rights and equity, and we need your help to keep fighting as:

- Diversity initiatives face growing hostility in higher education.
- The gender pay gap persists, with women earning just 82 cents for every dollar earned by men
- Sexual harassment and violence continue to be prevalent issues in workplaces and campuses
- Access to affordable childcare remains a significant barrier for working mothers

Who sits in our statehouses, in Congress, and the White House directly impacts our future. Your voice — and your vote — have never been more important.

### DONATE TODAY

At AAUW, we're working tirelessly to educate voters on women's issues:

- Supporting the enactment of strong national standards for voting access
- Providing voter guides to help you make informed decisions
- Fighting anti-voter policies currently sweeping the nation

Your support makes this vital work possible. As we approach this crucial election, can we count on you to stand with us?

Together, we can ensure that women's voices are heard, valued, and reflected in the policies that shape our lives.



### Workplace Harassment

A female contractor repeatedly receives texts with lewd images from an employee at a firm she is working with. A mother of two is routinely subjected to comments about her appearance at the small restaurant where she works. Too many working people have no federal protections about workplace discrimination and harassment.

[Ask your members of Congress to support efforts to address workplace harassment and become a sponsor of the BE HEARD in the Workplace Act.](#)

The Bringing an End to Harassment by Enhancing Accountability and Rejecting Discrimination (BE HEARD) Act would ensure all workers can do their jobs without fear of harassment by building on existing civil rights laws to provide new protections for workers, while also safeguarding existing discrimination laws. We expect this AAUW-endorsed bill to be introduced today by Senator Patty Murray (D-WA) and Representative Ayanna Pressley (D-MA-7).

Women — especially Black women and other women of color — and LGBTQ+ workers are disproportionately affected by sex-based harassment at work, and sexual harassment, which often intersects with other forms of harassment and discrimination. This harassment negatively impacts workers' success in the workplace and ultimately their economic security

**. Congress must improve protections against all forms of harassment in the workplace, urge your members of Congress to act now!**

### Take Action

*“The only women who don't believe that sexual harassment is a real problem in this country are women who have never been in the workplace.”*

Cynthia Heimel, American Female Humorist  
Writer

