

THE VIEW FROM SAN RAMON

Volume 41, Number 3

November 2024

**Get Out
There and
VOTE!**

FRIENDSGIVING

**Don't Sit
This One
Out!**

Visit with and make new friends,
play a game or two while enjoying tasty delights!

It's a Friendsgiving Appetizer & Dessert Potluck!

Guests are welcome too!

Please Bring Your Favorite Appetizer or Sweet Treat

RSVP no later than November 15th

Let Karen know what favorite treat you are bringing to share. Be sure to put your contribution in the Evite comment section or email Karen directly.

WHEN: Thursday, November 21

TIME: 4:30 to 6:30 PM



WHERE: Bollinger Hills Cabana
2951 Morgan Drive
San Ramon, CA 94583

See Page 4 for More Information

AAUW MISSION AND DIVERSITY STATEMENTS

American Association of University Women advances gender equity for women and girls through research, education, and advocacy. In principle and in practice, AAUW values and seeks an inclusive membership, workforce, leadership team, and board of directors. There shall be no barriers to full participation in this organization on the basis of age, disability, ethnicity, gender, gender identity, geographical location, national origin, race, religious beliefs, sexual orientation, or socioeconomic status.

NOVEMBER

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
					1	2 7:00 PM Game Night Lucy Weed
3  Fall back	4	5 11:30 AM Lunch Bunch Margo James	6	7	8	9 9:00 AM Local Walking Group Lois Kamoroff
10	11 1:00 PM Daytime Readers Margo James					16 1:00 PM Bocce Kathy Senti
	6:30 PM Board Meeting via Zoom Veterans Day	12	13	14	15	
17	18 7:00 PM Night Book Group Cheri Ng	19 7:00 PM Bridge Chris White	20 1:00 PM Women in History Margo James	21 4:30– 6:30 PM Friendsgiving Event	22 7:30 PM Fourth Friday Flicks Chris White	23
24	25	26	27	28 	29	30

Snippets

Check the Snackables: These are short-term volunteer opportunities you might enjoy: See "Helping Hands" on page 4 and "New Member Mentors" in the Membership article on page 7.

Save the Dates

December 3 National Day of Giving
 January 16 Program: Details to follow
 February 19 Tips for Change, Virtue + Vice Restaurant, Danville

Watch for more information about our 2024–2025 events in future newsletters.

Presidents' Pen

Wiser Than Me



Happy November! Now that our October heat wave is over, it finally feels like autumn: time to prepare for upcoming holidays and events. Make sure to attend our Friendsgiving social event and potluck on November 21 for a chance to eat, socialize with each other, and get to know some of our newer members. Be sure to let Karen Rice know what you're bringing!

I wanted to share with you this wonderful podcast I've been listening to recently called "Wiser than Me." Julia Louis Dreyfus interviews famous women who are older than herself, discussing their accomplishments, their philosophies of living and aging, along with other fun conversational topics. I love that she revels in the wisdom of older women, with respectful insights into their past and present lives. One of my favorites was the one with Julie Andrews, my childhood idol. Who didn't love her in *Mary Poppins*, *The Sound of Music*, and *Victor/Victoria*? Her four-octave voice, so graceful and silky, was damaged due to a botched vocal surgery in 1997. At age 88, Julie is clear, humble, and possessed of a great sense of humor. When she talks of loss and grief, it feels like she could be sitting in your living room. Check out [Julia's podcast](#) and listen to the wisdom of other famous women.

What came to me as I was listening to these podcasts is that we all have incredible storage banks full of wisdom, courage, and experience. It's something we can draw on to share with others, enrich our lives, and carry forward as we move through life. AAUW is a great way to keep our minds and brains active when we engage with others through our varied activities and fundraisers.

Again, I encourage you all to take advantage of the many opportunities to get involved. Throughout the year, we will be asking you to participate in some of the background work needed to accomplish our mission. Please say "yes" whenever you can. It's fun and will add value to your membership!

Judy Bracken, Co-President

Your Vote Matters!

Take Action and VOTE!

Registered voters in California received their ballots in early October. Please remember to vote—your voice matters! Here are options on getting your ballot to the County Registrar of Voters office:

1. **Complete it and mail it in.** If you do this, mail early. Ballots must be postmarked by November 5 and received within 7 days of the election.

OR

2. **Complete the ballot and drop it in an official drop box within Contra Costa County.** Locations of San Ramon drop boxes are:

*12501 Alcosta Blvd., by the curved driveway for the Central Park Community Center (enter from Alcosta),
*9300 Alcosta Blvd., outside the Alcosta Senior Center,
*17011 Bollinger Canyon Rd., outside the Dougherty Station Center/Front Row Theater.

****There is no ballot box at San Ramon City Hall.****

OR

3. **Take your completed ballot to a Vote Center (polling place)** and hand it in on November 5, Election Day. You don't have to use the VBM ballot. You can vote in person and just hand in your unused ballot at a Vote Center. **Be sure to sign the envelope.** Signatures are required and verified at the County Election office.

Cindy Alpert & Judy Bracken
Co-Presidents



Happy November Birthdays!

Carolyn Fishel	5-Nov
Janet Kleyn	10-Nov
Ann Whitedove	11-Nov
Pauline Nolte	16-Nov
Linda Louie	21-Nov
Pamela Justin	27-Nov

Program

Fun and Informative Programs Coming Your Way

Friendsgiving

What better time than now to recognize our gratitude for all we have—most especially our near and dear friends and family? On Thursday, November 21, we are delighted to host our second Friendsgiving holiday event. This year, the Friendsgiving Celebration will be an **Appetizer Potluck** at the Bollinger Hills Cabana (details below). This is a no-cost, all-friends, fun celebration with social time, games, snacks, and loads of cheer!

For Friendsgiving, be sure to note what you would like to share in way of appetizer or sweet treat. See how to do so here:

What: AAUW San Ramon Friendsgiving Appetizer and Sweet Treat Potluck
When: Thursday, November 21
4:30 PM–6:30 PM
Where: Bollinger Hills Cabana
2951 Morgan Drive, San Ramon
Cost: Free to all, guests welcomed

Please RSVP to email invitation coming soon

BRING: Your favorite savory appetizer or sweet treat. When you RSVP, kindly share the type of dish you will bring in the Comments section OR email Karen Rice directly.

Thanks for Voter Information Forums

Thanks to our SR AAUW members and guests who attended the SRVUSD Board of Trustees Candidate Forum, which was held in concert with the Danville-Alamo-Walnut Creek branch and the League of Women Voters. We learned much about the candidates to help inform voters prior to election day (Tuesday, November 5). We were pleased that more than 50 people came out to hear the candidates. Thank you again to all our members and guests for your support!

CCTV Broadcast Available

Do you want to learn more about the candidates or propositions on the ballot for November? Here's a resource if you wish to learn more about the SRVUSD Board of Trustees Candidates and propositions: Click this [link](#) to our SR AAUW website for links to multiple resources. Or use these direct links:

Click for proposition information from LWV presentation:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ks8R0IDCoDE>
Click for YouTube recording from candidate forum:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Hjs-Gdy-Yy0>

2025 Program Plans

Save the date: Thursday, January 16. Program details to come.

In February, plan an evening out on Wednesday, February 19 for our annual Tech Trek Fundraiser at a NEW location: Virtue + Vice in Danville.

In April, we are pleased to share that there will be another joint program with both the Livermore-Dublin-Pleasanton and the Danville-Alamo-Walnut Creek branches. More information about this event is to come in the new year.

Please remember to RSVP for all AAUW events and programs, this way, we are sure to have all the proper materials and goodies for our attendees.

Excited to see you ALL at these upcoming events!
Janice Colby & Karen Rice
Co-VPs, Program



Helping Hands Needed

Programs and **Hospitality** would like support with planning and executing our events.

- **Programs** would like help with identifying and contacting potential speakers also with creating and planning future events. You would be assisting Janice Colby and Karen Rice.
- **Hospitality** would like help with set up, clean up, decorating, and organizing food and beverages at our events. You would be assisting Andrée Chagnon.

Both the above listed “Helping Hands” needs are snackable volunteer positions (short-time commitment, you decide on frequency).

Let Cindy Alpert or Judy Bracken know if you are interested.

AAUW Supports Measure Q

The AAUW San Ramon Board voted to endorse Measure Q, which renews the expiring \$144 parcel tax currently providing funds to the San Ramon Valley Unified School District. Measure Q funds go to retain teachers and protect STEM and reading arts programs. **No Measure Q monies go to administrator salaries or benefits.**

Such measures require a 2/3-majority vote, which is difficult to achieve, yet is critical to continue existing programs at the same funding level—so every vote counts! Measure Q aligns with the AAUW Public Policy initiative of providing equal access to quality public education for all students. **We encourage you to read about Measure Q [HERE](#), and to vote on November 5.**

Thank you!

Cindy Alpert & Judy Bracken, Co-Presidents

Fun Volunteer Opportunity

WHEN: November 9–11, 2024
9:00 AM–5:00 PM

WHERE: Veterans Memorial Building
400 Hartz Avenue, Danville

WHAT: Staff an exhibit from Quest Science Center
for 2–3 hours

The Town of Danville and Veterans Memorial Building of the San Ramon Valley will host a Pop-up Museum about space, robotics, science, and the military with lots of exhibits. This is a free, family-friendly event.

Quest Science Center, headquartered in Livermore and serving the Tri-Valley, offers family-friendly STEM events throughout the year. Quest participated at last year's Danville Veterans Day event and was a big hit with its hands-on, interactive exhibits.

Quest Science Center will provide a wind voyager tunnel exhibit. Attendees make parachutes out of coffee filters and test them in the wind tunnel. Two or three volunteers are needed to staff the exhibit in 2- or 3-hour shifts over the 3 days. Shift times are flexible. No STEM experience is needed—come join the fun and learn about wind!

Sign up to volunteer directly with Quest by contacting Dan Golub, Quest education director, [here](#). More information about Quest Science Center can be found here: <https://quest-science.org/>

Tech Trek

Update: Can You Help?



Planning for the 2025 Tech Trek Camper Selection process will begin in December! The first few big steps include contacting the four middle schools in San Ramon, receiving nominations from teachers, and contacting the students. While these tasks require only two or three people to help, we will also be seeking committee members to read the applications and interview the students. **If you have 2–4 hours to support these tasks, please contact Cindy Alpert or Kathy Senti.** We would like to confirm committee members by late November so we can jump into the planning in early December.

We are also in the early stages of establishing our Branch Tech Trek Alumnae Group. Kathy Senti is taking the lead on this project: It will start with developing a process to contact our Tech Trek alumnae (we have the data, just need to do it!), then deciding on ways to engage with the girls to keep them interested in STEM. Let us know if you would like to help with this fun, rewarding project!

Save the Date: Our big fundraiser will be held on **February 19, 2025 at Virtue + Vice Restaurant in Danville.** Please save the date to enjoy a tasty meal and catch up with friends. More details to come in January. And please consider donating to Tech Trek! The generous support of our members is much appreciated.

Cindy Alpert and Kathy Senti
Tech Trek Coordinators



Happy AAUW Anniversaries!

Sally Blackwell	35 years
Barbara Blalock	35 years
Anne Hayden	35 years

Local Scholarship



Gift Card Auction Results and Plans

The October results are in! We are grateful to all who generously participated, bidding face value or sometimes more. Because of you, we raised **\$385!**

We also want to thank the following local businesses who generously donated gift cards, certificates, etc. to our cause that were successfully bid on in October:

- Costco
- Target
- Chamois Carwash in Danville

We encourage our members to patronize these businesses and to share your appreciation for their support of AAUW San Ramon Local Scholarship. We also thank Judy Bracken for her generous donation of tickets to *Dragon Lady*, showing at the Leshar Center. One lucky member happily bid on these tickets.

We anticipate running one more LARGER Email Gift Card Auction in winter 2025, and we hope more members (and their families) will participate in the opportunity to receive a gift card/certificate while also supporting Local Scholarship. The following items will be up for bid:

\$50 Macys gift card, Danville Chocolates Candy Apple of the Month card (for a year), also a \$25 Danville Chocolates gift card, Bent Creek winery tasting and bottle of wine, Livermore Wine Trolley Sip and Savor Pairing Tour, \$50 Pacific Catch gift card, \$50 Safeway gift card, \$100 Costco gift card, \$40 Yersen Gelato Cakes gift card, \$50 Hazy Barbecue gift card, \$40 Esin gift card, \$25 Pressed (Danville) gift card, \$100 Luna Loca gift card, and \$20 Country Waffles gift certificate

Please watch for a newsletter announcement after the holidays, save up, and we thank you in advance for your generous participation.

Renaissance Scholar Update

We want to share this nice thank you from one of our Renaissance Scholarship recipients following our September Welcome event:

It was so great connecting with you and your colleagues this afternoon. I was truly inspired by all of the work that AAUW San Ramon has done (and continues to do) for women and girls within the community. I am so excited to be a member of this amazing organization and look forward to attending the upcoming events. I opened the gift basket once I got home and it brought tears to my eyes! Thank you all so much for your support and generosity. This basket will help me pay for utilities, food, and gas expenses, which is such a blessing considering I was recently laid off from my position of three years about two weeks ago. Again, I appreciate you all very much and please let me know if you need any support in the future! I am always happy to help in any way I can. Talk to you soon!

Warm regards,
Nicole Silliman

Susan Walker-Christensen and Loranne Weir
Co-VPs, Local Scholarship



Lunch Bunch at Cha Thai: L to R, Cordelia Hwang, Lucy Weed, Harvalee Grimm, Renae Buckser

DMV Drops Written Knowledge Test for Some Drivers Over 70

The California Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) announced that some drivers 70 years old and older without traffic violations on their record in California will no longer be required to take a written knowledge test beginning October 1.

For those renewing their license who are 70 and older, an office visit is still required for a vision exam and an updated photo. The DMV encourages customers to start their application online to minimize the amount of time it takes to complete the process in an office.

First-time drivers and those new to California will still be required to take a knowledge test, as will those renewal customers with poor driving records. See the DMV website at dmv.ca.gov for details.

Membership



Membership Matters

New Members

We are pleased to welcome new members **Chris Sweeney Elling** and **Maribel Fraser**, who both attended the Welcome Back event in September. We look forward to getting to know them!

New Member Mentors

Please help welcome new members by becoming a mentor. It's a snackable position without any particular time commitment or format, and it's a great opportunity to support and inform new members about our branch. Let us know if you're interested.

Supporting Our Special Interest Groups

The Special Interest Groups (SIG) are an ongoing source of fun and fellowship. They keep our membership strong and vibrant. Reach out to the SIG leaders if you're interested in sharing the good times yourself and with a friend. The SIGs are a great way to introduce potential new members to our branch.

Shape The Future

AAUW National continues to offer its branches the "Shape the Future" membership campaign, wherein the branch is able to extend a 50% discount off national membership dues for one year to a new member who joins at or soon after an AAUW meeting or event. The discount is **\$36**.



New Member Spotlight



Chris Sweeney Elling

Chris was born in Scranton, Pennsylvania. She moved to Southern California as a young adult, then later to the Bay Area, where she and husband, Martin, raised their son.

Chris attended college at the University of Scranton, Pierce College, and CSU East Bay. She received her RN degree and Certificate of Critical Care Nursing (CCRN) from Chabot College of Nursing. Chris practiced at Eden Sutter Hospital in Castro Valley for 44 years.

Chris loves to travel. She has been to over 30 countries and has driven across the United States and Canada twice. She has walked the entire Camino de Santiago, climbed Mount Kilimanjaro, and hiked the Inca Trail to Machu Picchu. Currently, she also enjoys yoga, plays pickleball, and participates in our Night Book Group.

Chris feels "very privileged and thankful for this opportunity to be with such strong and accomplished women." She is "especially thankful to Cheri Ng for her nudge to join," and is "looking forward to getting to know this organization and its remarkable accomplishments."

Your Membership Team
Harvalee Grimm and Margo James



Public Policy



Public Policy Priorities & the Election

Considering How Groups & Candidates Align with Our PPPs Highlight: Student Loan Debt

By Missy Maceyko, Co-Chair Public Policy, AAUW California

At the national and state levels, AAUW has been a leader in the fight for increased economic security for all women, becoming well known for putting out annual data on gender-based wage gaps. However, wage gaps are only one part of the much bigger picture of gender-based economic inequality. AAUW, following contemporary socio-economic research, conceptualizes economic insecurity as part of wealth gaps and debt cycles that are created by multiple factors, including the ballooning cost of higher education.

Education is critically important for social and economic mobility. In 2024, young college graduates still tend to make more money than their counterparts who do not have a college degree, and have higher earnings later in life. However, the value of higher education has become a more complicated calculus for many: as education costs have risen, overall income rates have remained stagnant and low interest borrowing and repayment options to cover these costs have, in many cases, decreased. Without intergenerational wealth, ongoing family support, or scholarship wins, many Americans must go into debt to obtain a higher education. Women are disproportionately impacted by these increasing costs. Women tend to make less money directly after graduation when compared with men. This, combined with additional factors, such as the tendency for women to be burdened with financial and emotional costs of household maintenance, like caregiving, makes any accrued student debt much harder for women to repay. As such, women in the United States owe \$929 billion, or two-thirds of the nation's student debt.

As part of the larger commitment to economic security for women, AAUW has been a leader in pushing for policies that meaningfully address massive increases in the cost of education and the student debt crisis. In California, reducing the cost of education and easing the financial burden of acquiring a degree remains central to AAUW California's Public Policy Priorities, where work to reduce

the burden of student debt falls under three of our four Public Policy Priority Pillars.

The issue of student debt, as an issue of women's overall educational access, social mobility, and economic security, also looms large in the current election cycle. Addressing student debt issues in ways that align with AAUW's PPPs may include:

- student debt relief for borrowers;
- making investments in public education;
- expanding federal grant access;
- ensuring the continuation of the Public Service Loan Forgiveness (PSLF) program, which eliminates federal student loan debt after 10 years of work at a non-profit or government agency;
- maintaining Income Driven Repayment (IDR) plans, like SAVE, which take into account unique financial situations and eliminate interest-driven balance increases for borrowers who make on-time monthly payments.

Not addressing student debt issues at all or exacerbating these issues does not align with AAUW's PPPs. Actions taken that are not in alignment may include:

- widespread funding cuts for higher education;
- cutting loan forgiveness programs or slowing their functionality;
- eliminating the Department of Education.

While many candidates have tried to distance themselves from Project 2025, their openly stated and proposed policies may still be in alignment with the 900-page planning document's positions on the topic of women's economic security via higher education access and debt relief: Project 2025 calls for changing, rescinding, or repealing federal student loan forgiveness plans, including PSLF and debt relief through IDR.

For additional helpful resources about the 2024 election and other pressing issues, please visit:

<https://www.aauw-ca.org/documents/2024/10/public-policy-news-october-2024.pdf/>

Catherine Lewis, Public Policy



Interest Groups

GAME NIGHT

First Saturday

Saturday, November 2; 7:00 PM

We will play at the home of Ann White dove.

Kindly RSVP

Questions? Contact Lucy Weed



LUNCH BUNCH

First Tuesday

Tuesday, November 5; 11:30 PM (Election Day!)

We will meet at Mendocino Farms in the San Ramon City Center. To join the email reminder list, contact:

Margo James



LOCAL WALKING GROUP

Second Saturday

Saturday, November 9; 9:00 AM

We'll walk around Annabel Lake at Bishop Ranch. The walkway is gravel and paved in some areas and an easy, flat terrain. Parking should be easy at the Target parking lot. Everyone is welcome, including your dogs!

RSVP if you would like to be a part of this interest group. Contact:

Andrée Chagnon

Lois Kamoroff



DAYTIME READERS

Second Monday

Monday, November 11; 1:00–3:00 PM

Via Zoom videoconference

Pat Kelly will lead the discussion of *How Can I Help You?* by Laura Sims. If you have questions or wish to be put on the email list to receive a Zoom invitation, please contact Margo James



LET'S GO!

This member-driven interest group can go anywhere, anytime! Just contact Chris White if you have an idea for a great outing to a museum, lunch spot, or other Bay Area event. She'll give you ideas about navigating tickets, ride-share, and other details.

Interest Groups

BOCCE

Third Saturday

Saturday, November 16; 1:00–3:00 PM

The next game will be at the Senior Center on Alcosta Blvd.—assuming no rain. You might want to wear a hat and bring some water. I will send reminder emails to the people who have told me they are interested in playing. If you have questions, please call or text Kathy Senti. Please bring your bocce balls if you have them.



THE NIGHT BOOK GROUP

Third Monday

Via Zoom videoconference

Monday, November 18; 7:00 PM

Terry Kalashian will review *A Day in the Life of Abed Salama: Anatomy of a Jerusalem Tragedy* by Nathan Thrall.

Questions? Contact Cheri Ng



TUESDAY NIGHT BRIDGE

Third Tuesday

Tuesday, November 19; 7:00–9:00 PM or so

Virtual and/or in Person

Host: Brenda Hill

We will play bridge via Zoom teleconference and BridgeBase and/or in person.

Kindly RSVP to Chris and let her know:

1. if you are interested in playing or not
2. if you wish to play in person or virtual



WOMEN IN HISTORY

Third Wednesday

Wednesday, November 20; 1:00 PM

Via Zoom teleconference

Cathy Nisen will lead the discussion of *The History Chicks Episode 235: Barbe-Nicole Clicquot*.

Margo James



FOURTH FRIDAY FLICKS (FFF)

Friday, November 22; 7:30 PM

Discussion Leader: TBD; Watch: TBD

We need a volunteer for December 27!

Contact Chris White

2024–2025 Board

CO-PRESIDENTS

Cindy Alpert
Judy Bracken

IMMEDIATE PAST PRESIDENT

Kathleen Schaub

CO-VICE PRESIDENTS, PROGRAM

Janet Colby
Karen Rice

CO-VICE PRESIDENTS, MEMBERSHIP

Harvalee Grimm
Betsy Hoffmann
Margo James

CO-VICE PRESIDENTS, SCHOLARSHIP

Susan Walker-Christensen
Loranne Weir

CO-VICE PRESIDENTS, FINANCE

Claire Mailhot
Archana Vashneya

CO-RECORDING SECRETARIES

Alice Miller
Nancy Vandell

OPEN POSITIONS

President Elect
Vice President, The
Fund Gov Trek Co-Chair

AAUW San Ramon Information

Websites:

Branch Website: www.sanramon-ca.aauw.net

Webmaster: Isabel Lau

Association website: www.aauw.org

CA State website: www.aauw-ca.org

CCC IBC website: cbc-ibc-ca.aauw.org

Branch mailing address:

P.O. Box 336, San Ramon, CA 94583

Branch email address:

aauwsr@gmail.com

Facebook: San Ramon University Women/AAUW

Instagram: @sanramonaauw

Appointed Officers

ART & WIND FESTIVAL

Janet Williams

COMMUNICATION

Isabel Lau

CORRESPONDING SECRETARY

Duties have been assumed by Membership

GOV TREK

Leela Gopal

HOSPITALITY/FELLOWSHIP

Andrée Chagnon

NEWSLETTER

Isabel Lau
Carol Lombardi

PUBLIC POLICY

Catherine Lewis

TECH TREK

Cindy Alpert
Kathy Senti