



Humboldt Inc. (CA) Branch



The Branch

February 2022
Vol 72, Issue 5



February Branch Meeting
Saturday, February 5, 2022
on Zoom
Social Time: 9:30 a.m.
Speaker: Valerie Reed at 10:00
a.m.

A Discussion on Tribal Wellness on the North Coast.
Our Speaker is Valerie D. Reed, Member of the Yurok Tribe, Chief Operating Officer, United Indian Health Services

Valerie was recently appointed Chief Operating Officer for United Indian Health Services, which has been providing health services to our Tribal Communities since 1968. Her prior role was implementing projects from the Community Health and Wellness Division, of United Indian Health Services (UIHS). She initiated planned, developed, and implemented culturally appropriate community, prevention and education programs that promote awareness of culture and traditions. She has managed several CDC grants focused on promoting the reduction of chronic risk factors to reduce death and disability from tobacco use, obesity, diabetes, cancer, heart disease and stroke, using a policy, systems and environment (PSE) approach.

Humboldt Branch AAUW Re-Entry Women's Scholarship Winners



Natalie Arroyo - \$1,000: With all that Natalie does in her day-to-day life, we would possibly need to describe her as an over-achiever. Returning to school to complete an M.S. in Environmental Science and Management, she is also working part-time, serving as a Coast Guard Reserve Officer, is a member of the Eureka City Council and an instructor in the undergraduate Environmental Science and Management Department. Natalie's "dream is to continue a life of public service and to make well-informed decisions about land, water, and natural resource management for the rest of her career".



Liesl Gustafson - \$1,000: Having to overcome serious health and personal problems has not deterred Liesl from pushing to accomplish her goal of completing a Bachelor's degree in Botany with a minor in Ecological Restoration (May, 2022). Having graduated from HSU with a Fine Arts degree (2006) Liesl is a strong student with clear and substantial goals to work at protecting and improving our environment. Her future holds a desire to complete a Master's program, become a Master Gardener and continue in her goal of being a benefit to her community in whatever the future holds for her.



Julia Neuman. - \$1,000: Having acquired a BA in Fine Arts and Child Development in 2002 at HSU, Julia has worked as a Classroom Supervising Teacher at the HSU Children’s Center, and a Mental Health Case Manager at the Humboldt Dept. of Health and Human Services. Her work with children has motivated her to return to school full time to achieve an MSW (2022) and then an LCSW so she can become a credentialed play therapist for the community. As part of her program, she is working (non-paid) as an Intern for the County while providing for the needs of her son.



Asia Anderson - \$2,000: Asia is on track to complete her Bachelor’s degree in Biochemistry in 2022 with a plan to work toward her PhD in the Biosciences and continue in research and teaching, with a goal of possibly returning to HSU as a professor. As a single mother returning to education after 20 years, she has a passion for learning which she shares with other students as an academic coach and STEM tutor in the Umoja Center at HSU while carrying a full academic schedule which includes ongoing research in the Biochemistry Dept.



Juhi La Fuente - \$2,000: Juhi has chosen to complete a Master’s degree in the challenging field of Fisheries Biology (May, 2023), complementing her strong interest in the marine sciences with the intention of continuing her education as a research assistant in the Fisheries Dept. With previous experience as an AmeriCorp volunteer and working in community outreach and science education programs, Juhi has developed a strong desire “to ensure that the next generation of women and girls feel seen, encouraged and represented” in the field.

President’s Message

The most important information to share right now is about the plans



for the meetings for the rest of the year. In answer to the email poll asking the question about attending in-person meetings, 30 members answered no, 11 answered yes, and 5 said they might in the later months. Most who wanted in-person meetings said vaccinations should be required. Based on the current Covid 19 situation and the member input, the Board decided to continue with virtual (zoom) meetings in February and March. We also decided to tentatively plan on in-person meetings for April and May. Reservations for facilities are in the works. The consensus was that in-person meetings would require proof of vaccinations with booster. At this time, masks are required at indoor gatherings by state and local regulations. Part of the plan is to make the meeting hybrid with a zoom option included for those unable to attend in person. Several Board members have experience with this type of meeting and can help set it up. We very much hope that we will be able to carry out this plan. It would provide at least 2 opportunities to get together at the end of our year, have social interaction time, and do our annual meeting business in May.

It's great that our Branch has been able to carry out many of our usual projects in spite of the pandemic. Meeting our 5 scholarship recipients at the December meeting was a highlight. We had a lively discussion as our honored women shared their educational experiences and goals for the future and answered our questions. We are so fortunate that these capable women will be part of the future of Humboldt County. Gina Rogers has made sure that the news was circulated to the community in three of the local newspapers.

I hope you can join us on zoom for a discussion with Valerie Reed on Tribal Wellness, an important issue in our community. The link will be emailed to all members.

Happy Valentine's Day to All,
Rosemarie Weaver,
AAUW Humboldt Branch President

Branch News Items

- Nancy Arroyo, mother of our scholarship recipient Natalie Arroyo, is a new AAUW member. Welcome Nancy!
- Gina Rogers is a new Board member. Her contributions this year have been awesome. Thanks, Gina!
- We need someone to take the position of Advertising Coordinator, held for many years by Gail Freeman. Please let an officer or Board member know if that's something you could take on in the summer. Previous advertisers need contacting and new advertising solicited to help finance the Directory and Newsletters.
- The Branch website at <https://humboldt-ca.aauw.net/> is full of helpful information. The public can access information about our Branch, upcoming meetings, activities and projects, membership process, etc. With the password listed in the Directory, members can also access Newsletters, Interest group listings, member contact information, and bylaws, standing rules, and policies. Thanks to Nancy Dean for keeping the website up-to-date.
- Alex Stillman provides a paperback book distribution for travelers in the Arcata Airport. She would welcome donations of paperback books for the collection.

Page Turners Book Group

A small group met on Zoom in January to discuss *The Rose Code* by Kate Quinn. This is an intriguing book about the codebreakers of Bletchley Park in England during World War II. Our selection for February is *The Lincoln Highway* by Amor Towles. It will be interesting to see if this book is as well-liked as the last novel we read by Towles, the very popular *A Gentleman in Moscow*. Meetings are on the third Wednesday of the month at 10:00 am on zoom.

Contact: Rosemarie Weaver,

Evening Book Group

We enjoyed our January discussion of *The Mountains Sing* by Nguyen Phan Que Mai about 20th century Viet Nam.

For our February meeting we decided to pick a novel by Elizabeth Strout. She has written several books. Her latest, *Oh, William!* is still only available in hardback and on kindle.

The best part of our meetings is that after we discuss the book we've read that month we all share what we are reading and what we wish we were reading. It often leads to hints on how to get more out of the library, members sharing books they have finished and some interesting conversations that are not about either of these.

The group meets on Zoom on the 4th Monday of each month at 6:30 p.m. Contact Chris Stenlund for more information and the zoom links.

Our branch recently lost two beloved long time members. We will miss them

Jean Ruth Fowler
1/16/1937 – 12/30/2021



Jean Fowler was a lifetime member of AAUW. She joined AAUW July 1, 1968 and was a very active member of AAUW. She never missed a Holiday Gala, always donating gifts, and inviting non-AAUW members so that more money could come in for the returning student scholarships. Jean helped many women in her active practice of being a psychotherapist, She was a smart, empathic, loving, kind person, who had a beautiful soul. She shared herself graciously with the AAUW members who attended for many years Drama Group and Crazy Cards at her home in McKinleyville.

Jean was born in Seattle and lived in Canada from the time she was 4 until 13 years old. She and her mother then returned to Washington and in high school Jean's love of theater and dance bloomed.. She was in several dance production proudly wearing the outfits her mother made. She still loved to "kick up her heels " the last months of her life. The drama group of AAUW did first readings of plays on a monthly basis and increased Jean's enjoyment of theater.

So many people enjoyed going to Crazy Cards, that Jean hosted, more years than anyone can remember. The definition of Crazy Cards revealed the wonderful personality of Jean. Crazy Cards is a group for people who like to laugh, think, and have fun playing non-bridge cards.

In the later years of her life, when she had retired she joined Reel People, now having the time to go to the most positive movies she could attend. She made people laugh when she sometimes did her version of what was taking place in the movies she talked about.

Jean became president in 1981-1990 of AAUW, while raising her two small boys Brett and Scott. She still found time in her life to join the Red Hat Society, and of course you often saw her wearing red which happened to be her favorite color.

Jean was a person you will never forget as she treated each person she encountered to be a special person and she was glad to have meet you.

Submitted by Dorothy Skjonsby

More information about Jean and her life can be found on the [Lost Coast Outpost](#).



Irene Hedgecock

Irene Hedgecock passed away recently shortly before she would have celebrated her 99th birthday. According to Irene's daughter Ginny, she is responsible for our wonderful luck in having Irene in our branch. According to Ginny, "After I had joined Humboldt Branch of AAUW and told my mother all about the great programs she looked up the San Jose Branch and became a member. Upon retiring in 1998 she moved to be closer to me and transferred to the Humboldt Branch. She not only went to the book and gourmet groups she was a caller, on the nominating committee, the scholarship committee and was instrumental in starting Reel People and brought Great Decision to Humboldt County.

With a BA in anthropology from Michigan State College and Teaching Credential from Cal State Fullerton her professional career included teaching at the elementary school level, eligibility worker., teaching ESL for adults and mentoring at the state level for new ESL teachers and programs. Her favorite a combination of anti-smoking and new language skills. Of course, my favorite was that she was a mother."

Thank you to Mary Lou Lowry for her contribution to our Scholarship Fund, in memory of Jean Fowler.



Childcare: An Overdue and Critical Investment

By Shelley Mitchell and Ginny Hatfield
AAUW CA Public Policy Committee

"It's past time that we treat childcare as what it is – an element whose contribution to economic growth is as essential as infrastructure or energy...and the single most important thing we can do to build a stronger economy over the next several decades," says Janet Yellen, the former Chair of the Federal Reserve Bank and now Secretary of the Treasury.

The state of U.S. childcare is deplorable compared with other developed nations, especially with respect to affordability. This fact has been brought home to us ever more vividly during the current pandemic. Women, who still bear the majority of child caring, have left the workforce in the millions due to the absence of basic childcare services and the cost associated with it.

Here are some sobering statistics:

- 56% of married families with children under 6 consist of households where both parents work
- The employment rate for single mothers raising a young child is 65%; it's 83% for single fathers who maintain custody
- The average American family with at least one child under 5 uses 13% of their income to pay for childcare
- Less than 20% of children eligible for a low-income federal assistance program are getting the funding
- 50% of Americans live in childcare "deserts" or areas where there are three children per every childcare opening
- In 24 states the average cost for infant full-time daycare exceeds the average cost of rent
- 97% of childcare providers are women, who are disproportionately women of color, making less than a living wage with no guaranteed benefits. In the US, the mean hourly wage for childcare workers is \$12.88, nearly \$3.00 less per hour than parking lot attendants, and \$5.00 less per hour than dog groomers.

This is a textbook example of a broken market, whereby the benefits of providing a service (in this case childcare) are not included in its overall value. Are our children really less important than our cars and dogs?

The consequences of not investing in quality childcare should have most Americans demanding action from their government leaders. Neglecting the care of young children is detrimental to their physical and mental wellbeing; it reduces productivity in the workforce; leads to lost wages and reduced retirement benefits for parents; it adds to the downward pressure on childcare workers, which in turn, impacts the quality and stability of childcare; and restricts future educational opportunities for family members.

There is hope on the horizon! *The Build Back Better Act*, now awaiting action by the Senate would provide universal preschool with high-quality childcare for 3- and 4-year-olds; increase wages for early childhood educators; upgrade existing childcare facilities, especially in high-need areas; and provide a sliding scale whereby parents would pay a reasonable percentage of their overall income to childcare costs.

Whether the legislation is included in the Reconciliation bill or taken up as a stand-alone bill, it deserves passage and your support. Childcare relief remains the top priority of AAUW California this year. Please be sure to contact your Senator and let them know of your AAUW membership and your commitment to ensuring our Nation's future.

AAUW is calling on the 117th Congress to ensure that a permanent paid leave program, childcare funding and the Child Tax Credit are included in the budget reconciliation process.

To find our more or to contact your senators, [CLICK Here](#)

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Editor:

Shelley Mitchell

Submissions welcome: deadline is the 20th of each month

Mission. To advance gender equity for women and girls through research, education, and advocacy.
Vision. Equity for all.

Values. Nonpartisan. Fact-based.

AAUW is the nation's leading voice promoting equity and education for women and girls. Since our founding in 1881, AAUW members have examined and taken positions on the fundamental issues of the day — educational, social, economic, and political.
