



The Branch

October 2025
Vol 76 Issue 2



October Branch Meeting

Saturday, October 4

9:30 a.m.

Wharfinger Building, One Marina Way, Eureka (Bay Room Downstairs)

It's Fall and harvest time. Bring your favorite home-made or store bought apple or pumpkin treat to share with the group.

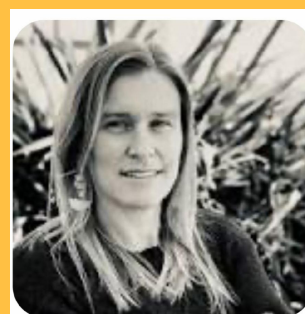
Food, Coffee or Tea - \$10.00

Coffee or Tea only - \$8.00

Please make your reservation by clicking [here](#) or calling Carolyn Miller at 707-798-1503. Reservation deadline either online or by phone call is Monday, September 29. Please make your reservation by the deadline. Late reservations cannot be guaranteed seating or food/beverage.

Speaker: Dr. Sara J Ray **How to Show Up for the Planet: Climate Change, Mental Health, and the Emotional Life of Climate Politics**

Dr. Sarah Jaquette Ray is a professor and chair of the Environmental Studies Department at Cal Poly Humboldt. She works at the intersection of social justice and climate emotions, particularly among youth activists and in higher education. An environmental humanist with a BA in Religious Studies from Swarthmore College, an MA in American Studies from UT-Austin, and a PhD in Environmental Sciences, Studies and Policy from the University of Oregon (where she was an AAUW Dissertation Fellow), Dr. Ray draws on an eclectic range of disciplines and epistemologies in service of climate justice and healing.



Ray is author of two books, *The Ecological Other: Environmental Exclusion in American*

Culture (U Arizona P, 2013), on the emotion of disgust in environmentalism and its implications for social justice, and *A Field Guide to Climate Anxiety: How to Keep Your Cool on a Warming Planet* (UC Press, 2020), an existential toolkit for the climate generation. She has co-edited multiple volumes bridging social justice and environmentalism, including *Latinx Environmentalisms: Justice, Place, and the Decolonial*, and *Disability Studies & the Environmental Humanities*. Another volume on how to center the big emotions of climate change in *he classroom is The Existential Toolkit for Climate Justice Educators: How to Teach in a Burning World* (UC Press, 2024).

Ray serves as a director on the board for the Rocky Mountain Ecodharma Retreat Center, and is a scientific advisor on the board of the Climate Mental Health Network. She has taught mindfulness courses on climate change and activism, and is a certified mindfulness teacher through the UCLA Mindfulness Awareness Research Center. She teaches, speaks, and publishes widely on the role of emotions in climate advocacy.

Shall we create less waste?

Perhaps we could even make it a fun tradition—bringing a favorite plate, mug and napkin to share stories about. Small actions like these not only reduces our environmental footprint, but also encourages mindfulness and camaraderie within the group. Every little bit helps, plus it builds sustainable habits as well as reduce waste in our landfills. Our hostesses will always have paper products on hand just in case one is in need. I appreciate you joining me. Alex Stillman

Fall is Re-entry Scholarship Season!

The Re-entry Scholarship process is up and running. As you know, last year our Branch helped six qualified and awesome women along their educational journey with \$12,000 in scholarships. This year there is about \$10,000 in the scholarship budget. We will be collecting applications in October, interviewing applicants and making decisions in November, and awarding the recipients at the Holiday Gala in December. There will be a mailing in November similar to previous years giving you the opportunity to contribute to this important mission of our AAUW-Humboldt Branch. It is the generosity of our members that makes these awards possible. If you know a woman who is a re-entry upper division or graduate student, please encourage her to go to our website for information and an application. Thank you.

Rosemarie Weaver, Autumn Chapman, and Committee

From the President: Welcome to Autumn in Humboldt!

I hope that you all had some time to unwind and enjoy the glorious summer weather. My desk sits in front of a window that doesn’t really have an inspiring view—I can see my garage doors and the breezeway between the mead hall and the garage. But I also see my clothesline. To me, clothes waiving in the breeze is a quintessentially summer view. It relaxes me and helps me find my focus—or spin off into daydreams. I’m not really sure which.

I am so pleased that AAUW Humboldt is so well organized. Over the summer the scholarships committee worked to get all of the forms and publicity ready, programs chair Alex Stillman arranged for an amazing array of speakers, Treasurer Katie Wright kept both Karole Ely and me up to date on new and renewing members, and Vice President Nancy Arroyo stepped in to preside at our September meeting while I was home caring for my husband after his ankle replacement. No doubt I’ve missed others who helped keep our well-oiled machine running. Please know that I appreciate each of you for your contributions.

In August, we learned that we achieved 4 out 5 stars in the AAUW 5-star program. I’m told that many of you wanted to know why we missed that 5th star. As far as I’m concerned, we are a 5-star organization regardless of what AAUW says!!! But they have definite criteria that we must meet. And we missed the criteria for the Advancement star.

I’m sure we can get there for 2026 with no problem. What are the criteria for the Advancement star? Well, we must achieve 3 of the following 6 options:

- Raise \$30/member in FY 26 for the Greatest Needs Fund
- Increase Contributions to the Greatest Needs Fund by 15% over FY25 (which ended June 30)

- Retain at least 80% of Branch Membership
- Recruit at least one Legacy Circle member from your branch in FY26
- Increase the number of individual donors compared FY25
- Make a branch contribution to the Defend Higher Education or Public Policy Funds

At AAUW Humboldt, we dedicate most of our fundraising to our local scholarships and Tech Trek. But AAUW also needs funds to be able to continue to do all of the great things they do. Perhaps we can each find \$30 to support the AAUW Greatest Needs Fund. If we met that criteria, it would probably mean that at least for FY26 we would meet the 15% increase criteria as well.

I look forward to seeing you at the October 4th AAUW meeting.
Beth

Interest Groups:

The Gourmet Interest Group had a great planning meeting this year with lots of fun ideas for the new year.

In October we are tasting the foods of Slovenia. January we are using the theme, “So Comforting”, foods we all love, and we are celebrating PI Day with all kinds of pies. In April we will “Rock Around the Clock” with food from the 50’s and in May, Descendants will take center stage with “Foods From the Past”.

It takes a lot of creative thought and we seem to be able to bring this together for one more year,

Thanks to Dorothy Skjonsby for hosting this meeting again this year. Carol Kinser, Gourment Group Chair



Do you want your interest group here? Let us know what your are doing, or even better, send a photo of your group doing it. All photos and articles may be sent to [Shelley Mitchell](#)



AAUW California Public Policy Proposition 50 Messaging Guide (2025)

Please use the following guide for messaging around Proposition 50 that aligns with AAUW California’s mission, public policy priorities, and non-partisan commitments.

CORE MESSAGING

It is important for members of AAUW California to have a strong education-focused and non-partisan message. As we have seen with the co-opting of the League of Women Voters by nefarious actors, taking a more proactive position on Proposition 50 can help to dispel misinformation for our members and the public while also protecting AAUW California’s voice. Having no position or even a neutral position creates a void that others can fill with misinformation.

Normally, AAUW California puts out a list of formal recommendations to support or oppose Propositions (e.g. vote yes/vote). As per guidance from National, as an organization, we are not able to make any formal recommendations about Proposition 50. However, we are able to advance information-centered messages, including those that emphasize the potential benefits of Proposition 50 for all Californians.

This means that as you engage in public outreach, we are asking you to focus on these kinds of information-centered messages, including those that emphasize the potential benefits of Prop 50 rather than using the language of recommendations.

- Through our outreach we are seeking to provide AAUW CA members and the wider public with reliable information about Proposition 50, which includes noting that support for Proposition 50 is a non-partisan move to: preserve wider democratic norms in California;
- oppose Project 2025 implementation in California; and
- continue to advance AAUW California’s mission and public policy priorities

PUBLIC MESSAGING DOS AND DON'TS

When writing postcards, social media messages, or representing AAUW California, please

keep the following in mind for external messaging. The language below is provided as a guide and a resource. You are welcome to draw from this document, in part or in full, for your external messaging.

OVERALL STATEMENT ON PROPOSITION 50 (2025)

Illegal mid-term redistricting efforts outside of California have been initiated in an attempt to eliminate the seats of federal House members who oppose a federal agenda that advances Project 2025 and authoritarian goals in order to elect candidates who will support such an agenda.

Although illegal mid-term redistricting efforts outside of California seem like a federal issue, they are now incredibly pertinent to Californians. Although California continues to maintain strong protections for women and girls, marginalized peoples, free speech, accurate history, sound science, and democratic norms—things that are in line with AAUW California’s mission and public policy priorities—we are still subject to the laws, rules, and enforcement actions of a federal government that is influenced by the directives of Project 2025, instead of the will of the people.

We should seek to support all efforts to preserve and advance democracy and AAUW California’s public policy priorities around gender-based equity and social justice.

The approval of Proposition 50 by California voters in November 2025 will seek to combat illegal efforts to silence opposition voices and advance an executive agenda influenced heavily by Project 2025. Approval of Proposition 50 will do so by approving redistricting efforts in California for the next election cycles, until maps are redrawn after the next census in 2030, triggered as a proportional response.

While this kind of redistricting response is often framed as escalation of a partisan conflict, in the current political environment, we should think carefully about what is being labeled as partisan. Partisan labeling can be reductive when the choice has become one of supporting authoritarianism or preserving functional democracy and protecting the rights of all people.

For more information [Click Here](#)

One Female (now “Dame”) Steve was a 1960s Tech Pioneer

Stephanie Shirley began and ran an amazing technological company run by women in the early 1960s. No one knows about her? She used the name Steve to gain a foothold in the male-dominated world,



She was born in Germany in 1933, and in 1938 her father hiked over the mountains with his two daughters, putting them on a train in Switzerland, the Kindertransport to London.. They were among nearly 10,000 children rescued by the British from Nazi-occupied territories.

As a refugee at age 5, she lived with a foster family in mid-western England, near the Wales border. She had found “a life worth living” but career opportunities for girls and women were limited and stultifying. When she started her software company in 1962, British women could not work on the stock exchange floor, nor even drive a bus. Her initial financing for her new company was about \$220 in today’s terms (\$17 then). She needed her husband’s signature to open the company’s bank account and deposit her own money.

Letters to other companies, asking for interviews, were usually ignored. Husband Derek Shirley, a physicist, suggested that she introduce herself in correspondence as Steve. She once later said that
“You can always tell ambitious women by the shape of our heads –
.....they’re flat on top by being patted patronizingly.”

The company has been worth about \$33billion. Stephanie was a prodigious philanthropist and was named Dame Commander of the Order of the British Empire. She passed recently at age 91.

Silicon Valley tech companies have remained predominantly male

Jean Guthrie Sources – *New York Times* and *SF Chronicle*



2026 Women’s History Tea Nominations

Each March we celebrate women from the past and present who have made a difference in Humboldt County. If you would like to nominate a recipient of this honor, please complete this nomination form and forward it to ehaynes@mnsi.net by December 31, 2025. The Board of Directors will be selecting recipients in early February. Please nominate a person or persons that you feel should be considered for this honor and explain why.

Your Name _____

I would like to nominate _____

In what way has this person/group made a positive difference in Humboldt County through her activities, education, occupations, or professions?

Please provide the contact information for your nominee:

EMAIL OR MAIL YOUR NOMINATION to:
Elizabeth Haynes (ehaynes@mnsi.net)
2615 N Street, Eureka, 95501

The Branch is published eight times a year by the Humboldt Branch of AAUW. Submissions of articles, news items and photos from members are welcome. Submit them by the 20th of each month to shelleydmitchell@gmail.com.

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