

THE AUDIENCE DISCOVERS AN UNKNOWN HEROINE OF THE LATE 1800s AT THE AAUW WOMEN'S HISTORY TEA

Shirley Gilbert, author of "The Story of Victoria!"

The 10th Annual Women's History Tea took place on Saturday, March 5 at the Fremont Adult Center before a sold-out crowd of over 109 members and guests.

The sumptuous tea was lovely and beautifully served by cheerful young students. The Women's History Tea team prepared a delicious luncheon with the help of many additional volunteers who helped create the feast. Co-president, Steve Cho, welcomed everyone and announced several upcoming AAUW events.

The star of this year's Women's History Tea was Victoria Woodhull — one of the most fascinating and controversial American women of the late 1800s. Yet, sad to say, she is largely unknown today.

Narrators Shirley Gilbert, Jo Szeto, Pauline Weaver, and MaryLouise Bailey
Shirley Gilbert brought her story to life with her carefully researched and professionally written script. Narrators Pauline Weaver, Jo Szeto, MaryLouise Bailey and Shirley Gilbert told the story of Victoria Woodhull with the help of clips from the video America's Victoria.

Shirley introduced the program by explaining that the audience was about to take a "wild and wonderful journey" into the life and times of an outrageous and courageous woman. Susan B. Anthony called Victoria a "bright glorious, young and strong spirit." Gloria Steinem referred to her as "an example of human courage."

Victoria Woodhull came from a very poor family. She and her family of 12 lived in a rundown shack and had only three years of formal education. In spite of these barriers, she became the first woman to operate a brokerage firm on Wall Street; the first woman to address a Congressional Committee; the first woman to initiate and run her own broadly circulating newspaper for women and men; and, in 1872, the first woman to run for President of the United States.

Al and La Verne Minnard Woodhull's presidential election platform featured equal rights for women, regulation of monopolies, nationalization of railroads, an eight-hour work day, abolition of the death penalty, welfare for the poor — and free love!

While she ran for president, she published her own newspaper that both women and men read. In it, she uncovered many shocking scandals in which men took unfair advantage of women. At the time of the election in November, 1872, Victoria published a story about an adulterous Protestant preacher, Henry Ward Beecher. Because of this article she was unfairly jailed and was actually behind bars on election day! Because

she was controversial, Victoria has not had her rightful place in history. However, her story is beginning to be told.

At the end of the presentation, Shirley Gilbert thanked Victoria for all her work on behalf of women. She also thanked the narrators and the Women's History team led by Liz Poe and Janice Longo. Co-president, Kathy Bray, thanked everyone for attending this informative program during Women's History Month.