



The Advocate

February 2025


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“When we’re talking about diversity, it’s not a box to check. It is a reality that should be deeply felt and held and valued by all of us.” - Ava DuVernay, filmmaker

Exploring Issues of Identity in our Schools

Thursday, Feb 20, 2025
Kairos Hall, Danville Congregational Church
989 San Ramon Valley Blvd, Danville




6:00 pm Doors open
6:15 to 7:15pm Program
7:15 pm Q & A


All are welcome!

Join us for an active conversation looking at gender and identity questions. A knowledgeable panel including parents, a recent student, PTA, attorneys, and SRVUSD staff will share perspectives.

What are some of the identity issues in our schools, and why are they important?



Co-hosted by SRV Council of PTAs
and AAUW DAW



[Click here for more about the speakers](#)

Climate Action in Contra Costa

Thursday, March 20, 2025, 6:00 – 8:00 pm
Danville Congregational Church



As we look forward to Earth Day observances in April, we are pleased to have Lynda Deschambault, a newly elected member of the East Bay Regional Park District Board of Directors, as our March speaker. She will provide an overview of the key climate crisis challenges facing Contra Costa County, the most salient unmet needs in responding to them, an orientation to her work as a newly elected member of the park district board, and actions we can take to help tackle climate change.

Save the date!

President's Message

By Deborah Wechsler, President

What an inspiring start for 2025! Our January joint program with the Orinda-Moraga-Lafayette Branch on mitigating inequity in perinatal outcomes for people of color was very well-attended. The powerful panel of experts gave us a lot of detailed information. Read more about this event later in this issue.

To be honest I am feeling a bit of mental whiplash. The timing coincidence of celebrating Martin Luther King Day, recognizing all that he contributed and the kind of person he was, with the inauguration of a president of sharply contrasting values and principles, and the untimely passing of Cecile Richards, a long-time activist for women and former President of Planned Parenthood, gives one pause.

Nevertheless, we persist! Our Co-Program VPs, Monika Witte and Ogie Strogatz, are hard at work firming up our 2025 programs, which promise to deliver new learnings and ways to continue to make a difference in our communities.

We are contributing to the narrative and to actions that will counter the culture of exclusion.



February Checklist

- **February 5, 1:00 pm (PDT) - AAUW's Winter Member Gathering**
[Click here](#) to register
- **February 12, 7:00 pm – DEI Discussion about *Restrictions Apply***
[Click here](#) for more information
- **February 13, 3:00 pm – OML Branch Fashion Show Fundraiser**
[Click here](#) for details
- **February 20, 6:00 pm – Third Thursday Member Meeting – Exploring Issues of Identity in Our Schools**
[Click here](#) for more information
- **February 25, 5:30 pm – San Ramon Valley Unified School District Meeting**
[Click here](#) for more information
- **March 18, 5:30 pm – San Ramon Valley Unified School District Meeting**
[Click here](#) for more information
- **March 20, 6:00 pm – Third Thursday Member Meeting – Climate Action in Contra Costa**
Save the date!
- **March 31, 7:00 pm – Lobby Days Training Webinar**
[Click here](#) to register for the webinar
- **April 8 and April 9 – Lobby Days**
[Click here](#) to register to participate
- [Click here](#) to buy your tickets for the quilt raffle and support the Creative Endeavors Scholarship fund
- [Donate here](#) to support DAW branch programs



Orinda-Moraga-Lafayette Branch Events

Fashion Show

February 13, 3:00 pm to 6:00 pm

979 Moraga Rd, Lafayette



You're invited to the **AAUW Orinda-Moraga-Lafayette (OML) Branch's Annual Fashion Show**! This fun event will feature fabulous fashions, bubbly, nibbles, and live jazz piano music – and 10% of sales will go to fund OML scholarships.

It all happens at the Harper Greer store in Lafayette. Recruit your friends and plan to attend for a great time and to help our neighbor branch raise scholarship funds.

[Click here for details](#)

OML General Meeting: Reproductive Rights and Their Impact on the Progress of Women

Tuesday February 18, 2025, 9:30 am

Serbian Church Community Hall, 1700 School St., Moraga

Guest speaker Beth Parker will explore the history, progress and status of reproductive rights in the United States; important milestones; impact on economy, education and families; and to the extent available, legislative activity addressing these rights today. There will be an opportunity to brainstorm how our communities, policy holders and other stakeholders can weigh in and help develop advocacies for women.



[Click here to visit OML website](#)

Local Scholarship Update

Countdown for Accepting DAW Scholarship Applications!

Our DAW Local Scholarship Team is continuing to welcome applications for the branch's college scholarships this month. Interested students must apply by the March 1, 2025, deadline. Information about the types of DAW scholarships, who is eligible, and instructions and forms for applying are all found on the branch website - [click here](#).

Please share this information with anyone who might be interested!

DEI Notes

By Ogie Strogatz, DEI Officer

"The way to right wrongs is to turn the light of truth upon them." — Ida B. Wells, journalist

As we honor Black History Month this February, I invite you all to join me on Zoom, Wednesday, February 12, from 7:00-8:00 pm, for a discussion about *Restrictions Apply*, a 2021 documentary that explores the issues of covenants, conditions, and restrictions in California home title deeds. The film follows San Luis Obispo resident Jaime Lewis as she discovers racist language in the title deed for her home, then decides to reach out to her neighbors and share the information. When the community learns that the problem is systemic, they act together to remove the language from their home deeds, demonstrating how white activists can address issues in their own communities that are rooted in centuries of racism in America.

I encourage you to watch *Restrictions Apply* (18 minutes in length) prior to our meeting. Please click [here](#) to access the film, and let me know (ogstrogatz@gmail.com) if you'll be joining us on Feb 12. I gratefully acknowledge AAUW California DEI Director, Dr. Lata Murti, for bringing the documentary to my attention.

And another excellent Black History Month (BHM) resource to share, thanks to AAUW California President Charmen Goehring – take the BHM Challenge (at the right) with 28 days and 28 ways to celebrate.

I'll close by offering a head start on the list: please click [here](#) for an indescribably beautiful performance of "Lift Ev'ry Voice and Sing"; it's bound to give you a boost!

#BECAUSEOFTHEMWE CAN

BHM CHALLENGE

- AFFIRM A BLACK CHILD
- DONATE TO AN HBCU OF YOUR CHOICE
- FIND A PERSON IN BLACK HISTORY THAT YOU SHARE A BIRTHDAY WITH
- SHARE A PHOTO OF AN ANCESTOR
- RESEARCH BAYARD RUSTIN
- WATCH THE "THEY'VE GOTTA HAVE US" DOCUMENTARY
- TAKE A VIRTUAL TOUR OF THE NMAAHC
- BUY & READ A BOOK BY A BLACK AUTHOR
- RESEARCH BARBARA JORDAN
- FIND AN EVERY DAY ITEM CREATED BY A BLACK INVENTOR
- INTERVIEW AN ELDER
- RECREATE AN ICONIC BLACK PHOTO
- RESEARCH FLEET WALKER
- SUPPORT A BLACK BUSINESS
- DOWNLOAD 3 BLACK-OWNED APPS
- COOK A FAMILY RECIPE
- RESEARCH ELLA BAKER
- CALL YOUR STATE REPRESENTATIVE & TELL THEM TO AUTHORIZE THE VOTING RIGHTS ACT
- HELP SOMEONE REGISTER TO VOTE
- RESEARCH BROCK PETERS
- LEARN ABOUT HISTORIC BLACK LANDMARKS IN YOUR CITY
- DONATE TO A BLACK CHARITY/FOOD BANK
- RESEARCH PEG LEG BATES RESORT
- LEARN THE FULL VERSION OF LIFT EV'RY VOICE AND SING
- DONATE SUPPLIES TO A BLACK TEACHER
- OPEN UP AN ACCOUNT WITH A BLACK OWNED BANK
- RESEARCH IDA B. WELLS
- PLAN A VIRTUAL CELEBRATION WITH YOUR FAMILY ON THE 28TH

BECAUSE OF THEM WE CAN

28 DAYS, 28 WAYS TO CELEBRATE

DAW Branch Election

By Holly Sauer, Nominating Committee Chair

Our AAUW DAW Branch Board Is Rewarding and Fun

With the new year comes identifying candidates for our executive board for the next year. We are a very active branch and were recognized by AAUW National with three stars in their FY24 Five-Star Program for our outstanding work in Communications and External Relations, Programming, and Public Policy and Advocacy. We want to make it to five stars! We also have a lot of fun while achieving wonderful results, as shown in all the pictures of our members in our newsletters and on our website.

AAUW DAW needs you! Our nominations committee is now looking for members to join our board for the upcoming 2025-2026 fiscal year. We have many positions, both large and small. Co-chairing a position with a friend is welcomed in addition to chairing alone! Many board positions work with committees to lighten the load and enjoy time together.

Please review this February newsletter and the ones that have come before! There's also lots of great information on our website - [click here](#). And you can see a list of all of the board positions, just [click here](#).

Which activities do you identify with? If there is anything you would like to do, or you want to get involved and want ideas, please contact me via email at hollygr8f8@gmail.com. I would love to talk with you and help you get involved.

January Member Meeting – Recap

Addressing Racial Disparities in Maternal and Infant Health Outcomes

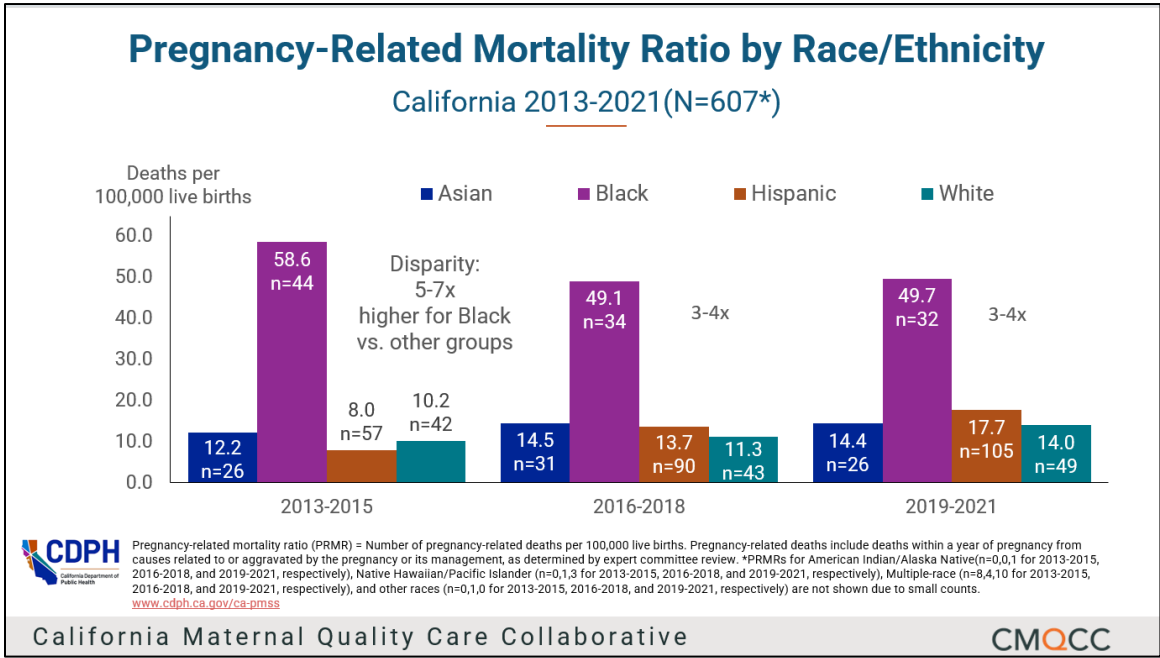


From left -Natalie Berbick, Adiam Mengis, Christina Oldini, and Patrisha Cherry Mayo

Our January general member meeting was held in collaboration with the AAUW Orinda-Moraga-Lafayette (OML) Branch. It was a well-attended meeting, with about 75 people, (roughly split one-third DAW, two-thirds OML) in attendance. The presenters were Natalie Berbick and Adiam Mengis from **Contra Costa Health**, and Christina Oldini from the **California Maternal Quality Care Collaborative (CMQCC)** at Stanford. Ms. Berbick and Ms. Mengis began the program by describing Contra Costa

Health's **Family, Maternal, and Child Health** programs and their overall goals. One of the programs is the **Perinatal Equity Initiative (PEI)**, which is a statewide California program started in 2018 under then Governor Jerry Brown. The Perinatal Equity Initiative is intended to address the causes of persistent poor birth outcomes and to identify best practices to improve disparities in infant mortality. The disparities are significant: the Black infant mortality rate is 2-4 times higher than the rates for other ethnic groups statewide. Also, Black mothers are 3-4 times more likely to experience maternal complications and mortality.

Ms. Oldini described the California Maternal Quality Care Collaborative, which was founded in 2006 at Stanford Medicine together with the State of California, in response to rising maternal mortality and morbidity rates. One of the things that CMQCC does is collect and provide data to 281 collaborating hospitals in Washington, Oregon and California. Their overall mission is to eliminate preventable morbidity, mortality, and racial disparities in maternity care across California. Ms. Oldini also shared the significant disparities in outcomes for black women. More details are in the following slide:



We learned what actions Contra Costa Health and CMQCC are taking to improve outcomes overall. To view the presentation slides, which include links to resources if you'd like to learn more, [click here](#).

AAUW California

Nominations and Elections - Certainty in Uncertain Times

By Elaine Johnson, Nominations and Election chair, nominating@aauw-ca.org

One thing is certain, that we are living in uncertain times. Our challenges are great, which means it is important to support unity and strong leadership within our organization. This spring we will be electing a president-elect, chief financial officer, and three board members. [Click here](#) for more information about the various positions to be filled. The application deadline for candidates is March 1, 2025. [Click here](#) for the application. Every member with an email address will receive an email invitation to vote. The voting period will be April 26th-May 16th.

Consider applying or nominating someone for these critical positions.

AAUW California Public Policy News

Lobby Days – Coming Soon!

By AAUW California Public Policy Committee

Please join us for Lobby Days 2025! The event will be held on April 8th and 9th and is a wonderful opportunity to meet with state legislative offices and advocate for AAUW California's priority bills. Meetings will be held in person at the Capitol on Tuesday, April 8th, and virtually via Zoom on Wednesday, April 9th. We encourage all AAUW California members to participate. A mandatory

training webinar will be held on Monday, March 31st to equip you with everything you need to know for a successful meeting.

For more information about Lobby Days 2025, see the article [here](#). If you are interested in participating, please complete **BOTH** of the following steps:

Step 1 - Register for the Lobby Days event by February 21st. Register for Lobby Days [here](#).

Step 2 - Register for the mandatory training which will be held on Monday, March 31st, 7-8 pm Pacific. Register for the training webinar [here](#).

We hope that you will join us in this act of advocacy to promote our legislative priorities and advance our values.

Why AAUW Public Policy Priorities Matter

by Nancy Major, Member AAUW California Public Policy Committee

Why do AAUW's Public Policy Priorities matter? They shape the actions that we take as an organization, socially and legally.

AAUW's mission is to advance equity for women and girls. Our Public Policy Priorities guide how we encourage active citizenship toward the goal of advancing our mission. There are four branches to our Public Policy Priorities: Economic Security, Equal Access to Quality Public Education, Social and Racial Justice, and Increased representation of Women in Leadership roles. Each of these priorities is further broken down into several action-oriented subcategories, such as enforcement of Title IX and passage of the ERA. Our 2023-25 priorities can be seen by [clicking here](#).

As active participants in society we can help shape the laws and society that govern us, such as healthcare, environmental policies, sex education, curriculum and book banning, housing, childcare, voting rights, immigrants' rights, sexual harassment, domestic violence, racial and LGBTQ discrimination, and Title IX enforcement. We "advocate" or promote our mission through research, education and lobbying for legislation on the international, national, state, and local levels.

History has shown that our advocacy has made a big impact on national, state and local laws. In California alone, you can see the laws that AAUW sponsored, authored, and/or promoted, including those that were passed in the most recent session on the AAUW California Bill Tracking Report; [click here](#) to view the report. AAUW is also doing impactful work internationally, working to curtail human trafficking and promote civil and human rights for all immigrants, including through participation in the UN Convention on the Elimination of All forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW). Over the next four years, there will be a lot of opportunities to use this legislative advocacy to push back against attempts to overturn long standing human rights and civil rights protections.

Our Public Policy Priorities also shape our efforts to push forward programs that break through educational and economic barriers for women such as speaker programs, scholarships, oversight of local school boards, leadership and salary training, STEM opportunities for students, and Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) programs.

Why do our Public Policy Priorities matter? They make us the most effective advocates for our collective mission to protect and expand gender equity. At the branch and individual levels, we can take advantage of as many opportunities as possible to operationalize our Public Policy Priorities, and through this work to actively promote AAUW's mission. AAUW as an organization relies on the

branches to stay informed and to keep track of where our Public Policy Priorities may fall short, to form coalitions with local allies who have similar missions, and to assign branch members to focus where we can have the most impact.

AAUW National

Join us for AAUW's Winter Member Gathering!

Hear from our dynamic speakers, including AAUW Board of Directors Chair Cheryl Sorokin and CEO Gloria L. Blackwell, as they share key updates and celebrate the incredible contributions of our donors, members, and branches. We look forward to seeing you on February 5 at 1:00 pm Pacific time.

[Register here.](#)

What Every Woman Should Know About Social Security

Curious about how Social Security fits into your financial future? Don't miss the webinar on March 25 at 10:00 am Pacific time. Join Trisha Mentzer from the SSA as she breaks down essential benefits and programs tailored for women, helping you make informed decisions at every life stage. [Register here!](#)

Note: you'll need to login to your AAUW National account to register for these events.

Stay Connected: Re-Subscribe to AAUW Emails

Do you think you may be missing out on vital updates and important announcements from AAUW National? Don't let valuable information slip through the cracks! Ensure you stay connected with us by re-subscribing to AAUW emails. Simply [click here](#) to re-subscribe and guarantee that you'll receive all the latest news, webinars, and opportunities from AAUW National.

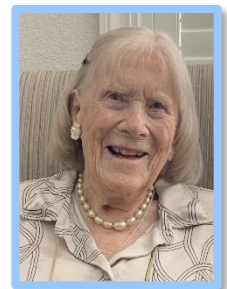
Membership Corner

In Memoriam

We are saddened by the recent passing of a long time AAUW DAW Branch member. Our condolences go out to her family; Phyllis will be fondly remembered by her many AAUW friends.

Phyllis Duggan was an active and enthusiastic honorary life member of AAUW, with a passion for fundraising to support community college students. Active in the Episcopal Church, she served on the altar guild at St. Luke's in Rossmoor. Additionally, she served as a docent at the Asian Art Museum in San Francisco for over a decade. Born in Oakland, she served in WW II as a WAVE and has lived with her husband, Curtis, and family in the East Bay since 1966.

In lieu of flowers, please consider a donation to the Food Bank of Contra Costa and Solano Counties. There will be a celebration of Phyllis' life on April 5, 2025; the family welcomes her AAUW friends. Please email PJDCOL2025@gmail.com for details.



Participate in Contra Costa County Governance – Apply to be a Civil Grand Juror



SUPERIOR COURT OF CALIFORNIA
CONTRA COSTA COUNTY

Do you have what it takes to be an engaged citizen? Join the Civil Grand Jury to make a difference! The jury holds local city and county government agencies accountable for their actions, ensures that tax dollars are spent

wisely, increases transparency and improves oversight in local government.

The Contra Costa County Superior Court is accepting applications for Civil Grand Jury service for the 2025 to 2026 term. The members selected will serve from July to June. About 75 applicants will be selected to be interviewed by the selection committee. The committee will nominate about 30 applicants from which the final 19 applicants will be selected by random drawing.

The application deadline is March 7, 2025. To learn more, [click here](#), or call (925)608-2621.

“Stay Home” Policy Statement

While we understand that people want to participate in person at our branch events, we also want to foster consideration for all members in creating a safe environment for everyone. Please consider this direction when you plan to attend a branch meeting.

If you are feeling ill in any way, or have been in close contact with someone known to have tested positive for COVID in the last 10 days, please do not attend any meeting!

Remember that COVID exposure remains a serious issue and that we need to be constantly vigilant. If you plan to attend a branch event, please stay home if you feel ill or if you have been exposed to COVID or any other significant communicable disease. We encourage you to be considerate of everyone attending a function, some of whom might be more susceptible than others. If you have any doubts, test, wear a mask, and err on the side of caution.

While there are inherent risks in attending an in-person event, with your help we will do our best to keep everyone safe at our meetings.

From the Editor - Joanne Quijano

Contribute to the Advocate - Send ideas, articles, and pictures by the 23rd of the month to appear in the next issue. Please use the [Submittal Form](#) on our website to direct your contribution to the Advocate, or other DAW social media, to our communications team.

Submissions are preferred in the following format:

- Articles in a .doc or .docx file, or in the body of an email
- Calibri font, size 12
- Pictures in .jpg format
- Permissions set to enable editing

Find contact information about people mentioned in the Advocate on our [branch website](#) and in your directory. If you do not have a directory, [click here](#) to send us a request.

Comments about the Advocate? – I’m always interested in making improvements to the newsletter to better meet our members’ needs. Please let me know your comments and suggestions at jtq@sbcglobal.net.

From the Treasurer – Chris Ritter

Handle money matters here - Please send expense vouchers or deposits to our AAUW mailbox at: P.O. Box 996, Alamo, CA 94507 for expedited processing. Refer to our branch website for specific forms and instructions – Click on [Members Page](#)

From the Corresponding Secretary - Julie Grisham

Know someone who needs a note? - Julie Grisham, our Corresponding Secretary, sends cards on behalf of our branch. If you know of an AAUW-DAW member in need of a get well, condolence or congratulations card, contact Julie via email at juliegrisham@sbcglobal.net.

Our Branch Sponsors

We are proud to acknowledge our loyal branch sponsors. We appreciate their support, which goes directly to fund DAW projects that include scholarships for local college students, Tech Trek camperships, and community education programs. For more information about becoming a sponsor, please visit our website at <https://daw-ca.aauw.net/sponsorships-2024/>



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* AAUW DAW members are marked with an asterisk

The American Association of University Women (AAUW) is the nation's leading voice promoting equity and education for women and girls.

Mission: AAUW advances equity for women and girls through advocacy, education, and research.

Value Promise: By joining AAUW, you belong to a community that breaks through educational and economic barriers so that all women and girls have a fair chance.

Vision: AAUW empowers all women and girls to reach their highest potential.

The Danville-Alamo-Walnut Creek branch promotes and supports our AAUW mission through local scholarships, AAUW program support, panel discussions, Tech Trek, AAUW Fund, and topical guest speakers.



The Advocate

Online at <https://daw-ca.aauw.net/newsletter/>

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