

Co-President's Message from Gloria Miele

Happy holidays, friends. I hope you had a wonderful Thanksgiving. Our tales of Thanksgiving are quite different from the reality of pilgrims and Native people coming together to share a meal. Many Native people consider it a national day of mourning that reminds them of the genocide of their people and stolen land and traditions due to colonization. Learn more about the truth of Thanksgiving at this [helpful website](#).

As many of you know, I had double partial knee replacement October 31 and have had a good recovery so far. I'm moving around and hope to see many of you at the Holiday Social at Cantara on December 18. I want to thank and acknowledge my co-president Kay, who has kept our ship afloat and then some while I have been somewhat underwater. What a joy to have a wonderful partner and friend.

2026 will bring a lot of exciting AAUW events starting with our Interbranch Council Luncheon. You will not want to miss this panel of legal experts discussing our First Amendment rights in the current political environment. In February, we are planning a mixer that will be focused on love - love of community, love of each other, love of yourself. Location and details to be announced. In March, we will have our signature Women in History and Knowledge Bowl programs. Details on volunteering are found in The Beacon. And in April we will have a Women in History Fashion Show fundraiser to support all our programs.

Also important at this time is for us to have our eyes on what's happening in the federal government. As a women's advocacy organization focused on equity in education, actions to dismantle the Department of Education are very concerning. The recent reclassification of several professions dominated by women as "non-professional" will have a direct impact on

Co-President's Message Cont'd

the financial wellbeing of women. These as well as ongoing immigration actions that are hurting families and children are top of mind as the year winds down. Contact your legislators and spread the word in your networks. Fighting back is working with this administration. As historian and author Timothy Snyder says in his book, *On Tyranny*, do not obey in advance. Keep reading the Public Policy updates in the Beacon.

If you're like me, you might find yourself struggling to get into the holiday spirit with everything going on.

What can we do?

Support your neighbor. From inviting someone to share a holiday meal to donating to Food Share, Friends of Fieldworkers, toy drives, or other beloved community organizations, our efforts are needed more than ever. Check out member initiatives to help the community, listed in the Beacon!

The board voted to make a donation to the Ventura County Community Foundation's [Neighbors Support Fund](#), which focuses on providing direct support to families in need in our community. We are distraught over the cruelty and violence of ICE raids in Ventura County and throughout the nation. The enduring impact of these traumas will impact families for years. We hope that joining with VCCF and the Neighbors Support Fund will be a positive force for our neighbors.

I hope you find joy in community, family, and friends this holiday season. I hope to see you on the 18th or soon after.

Best, Gloria

Meet, Mix and Mingle at Cantara Cellars!

Happy Hour/Membership Gathering

Thursday, December 18th, 4-6pm

[126 N. Wood Road](#)

(off 101 between the Central and Springville exits)

Come for Happy Hour at Cantara Cellars in west Camarillo for some holiday cheer. We will provide some light nibbles to share, and beverages are buy your own. Cantara has a broad selection of craft beer and wines, as well as non-alcoholic beverages available. Bring a friend, who will get a special membership rate if they join at the event! RSVPs appreciated but not necessary aauw.camarillo.president@gmail.com

Cantara Cellars website: cantaracellars.com and phone number: 805-494-9600.

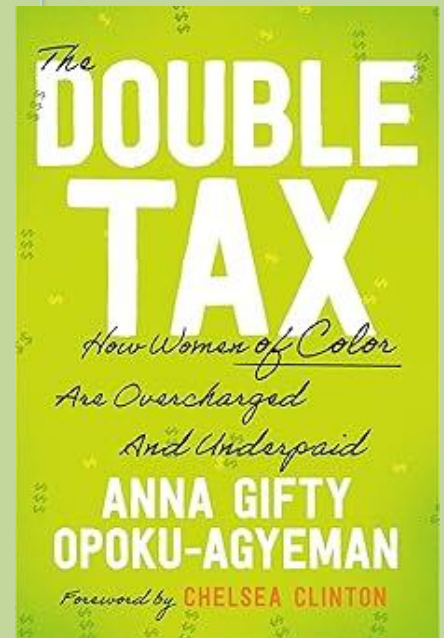
The Double Tax: Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee Reads

Looking for another good read?

The Double Tax: How Women of Color Are Overcharged and Underpaid by Anna Gifty Opoku-Agyeman is a groundbreaking analysis of the disparities women navigate that require extra money, time, and effort, as well as the unique barriers Black women face, compounding the costs of racism and sexism.

Meticulously researched with a combination of data and personal stories, Harvard PhD candidate in Economics, Anna Gifty Opoku-Agyeman highlights these gaps while offering solutions from a local to global scale.

Contact Gloria at Gloria@strongerleader.com if you're interested to meet to discuss the book (Zoom or in person) in January. I'll have an extra book available to gift to the first person to claim it at the holiday social!



IBC Luncheon – January 24, 2026



Ventura County Interbranch Council Annual Luncheon

The First Amendment

Saturday, January 24, 2026

11:30am–2:00pm

Lunch and program: \$40 per person

Los Robles Greens, Thousand Oaks

Across the nation, the boundaries of free speech are being tested. From challenges facing journalism, higher education, and peaceful protest to debates over academic freedom and viewpoint diversity, questions about the First Amendment are taking on new urgency. How can we make sense of these shifts and protect the core freedoms that sustain a democratic society?

This year's IBC luncheon will tackle these questions head on with a panel led by Brandy Price J.D., Dean & Chief Academic Officer at the The Colleges of Law in Ventura and Santa Barbara. Panelists include College of Law Professors Eric Lane and Judge Brian Hill and College of Law Students Allison Wooten and Massimo Genovese.

**Join us for an in-depth discussion
with legal experts in our community.**



**FOR TICKETS GO TO
[BIT.LY/VCIBC2026](https://bit.ly/VCIBC2026)**

OR

SCAN HERE



**YOUR PAYMENT
RESERVES YOUR SPOT**

Tickets available at bit.ly/VCIBC2026 (preferred) or
email aauw.camarillo.president@gmail.com to pay by check

Women In History – Volunteers Needed!

Greetings!

Our long-running program, Women in History, is gearing up for our 39th year!

This year we will be presenting seven amazing women to Camarillo elementary school children. This program depends on volunteer performers and we invite you, our membership, to be part of this fun and educational program! Volunteers will be provided with scripts, props, costumes and training. The women chosen for WIH 2026 are:

Mary Anning (Grades K-2) 19th century fossil hunter from England whose discoveries contributed to the development of paleontology.

Mary Blair (Grades K-5) Artist, animator and designer who revolutionized Disney's visual style with bold, modern designs for films and theme park attractions.

Ellen Ochoa (Grades 2-5) First Hispanic/Latina woman in space who flew in 4 space shuttle missions and was the first Hispanic/Latina director of NASA's Space Center.

Eleanor Roosevelt (Grades 3-6) Diplomat, activist and longest serving First Lady. This script also briefly acknowledges other influential women in American political history in honor of the U.S. 250th anniversary.

Madame C.J. Walker (Grades 3-6) An African-American woman who was an entrepreneur in the beauty industry, philanthropist, political and social activist and the first female self-made millionaire in America.

Maya Lin (Grades 3-8) Chinese-American architect, sculptor and artist best known for designing the Vietnam Memorial in Washington D.C. and environmentally themed works that address environmental decline.

Marie Curie (Grades 5-8) Discovered radioactivity, pioneered cancer treatments and was the first person to win a Nobel Prize in both chemistry and physics for her groundbreaking research.

Performances at all PVSD elementary schools will be the week of March 2, 2026 and for all non PVSD elementary schools the week of March 9, 2026. In addition to committing to a day or two of performances, we ask all volunteers to participate in one training session for their chosen character to be scheduled the last week of January and the first week of February 2026. These training sessions are mandatory for all volunteers. We will specifically focus on each woman to be portrayed, clarify volunteer responsibilities and provide more time for individual performers to ask questions and go over the scripts. Also, performers will be able to select their costumes if their character requires one.

Women In History, Cont'd

Please consider volunteering! Your friends and family members who are not in AAUW are welcome to volunteer too! If schools cannot recruit volunteers, those students miss out on the program. We need YOU to make this program available to any school that wants it.

Volunteers are encouraged to share the same racial identity as the characters they portray.

For information, please contact Cheryl Mastrovito:

aauwcamarillowihistory@gmail.com

Here is the link to the volunteer form. **Please submit by December 8.**

[Women in History Volunteer Form](#)

Knowledge Bowl, Mary Goldberg

Save these dates! We will present our 62nd Knowledge Bowl on:

- March 11th at Del Sol High School
- March 18th at Buena High School
- March 25th at Adolfo Camarillo High School

The first AAUW Camarillo Knowledge Bowl was held in 1964 and was the idea of our second AAUW president, Betty Rutherford. Eleven public and private high schools in Ventura County will be participating next March.

The Sign-up Genius link to volunteer will be in the January 2026 Beacon.

Mary Goldberg
Knowledge Bowl Chair

Out and About in LA

AAUW Camarillo ventured to Los Angeles for the touring production of Shaina Taub's Tony-award winning musical SUFFS at the Hollywood Pantages. The show is timely and moving, and it was wonderful to get together with members and their guests and a theater of like-minded folks to experience it in person. Attending the show in the context of everything that's been going on in our country (including what's covered in this month's Public Policy section) was an act of resistance, and an inspiration for us to keep marching...

Thank you to Kay Wolverton Ito for organizing/coordinating the group tickets (for the 21 of us!) It was a lovely way to spend a Saturday!



2025 -2026 Calendar Highlights

- 12/9/25 10:30am Non-fiction Book Group - Panera Bread Oxnard at The Collection
- 12/10/25 5pm Board Meeting – All are welcome. [AAUW Camarillo Zoom Link](#)
- 12/15/25 4pm PM Book Review 4:00 p.m. - Marie Callender's Camarillo
- 12/18/25 4pm-6pm Happy Hour at Cantara Cellars
- 1/13/25 10:30am Non-fiction Book Group - Panera Bread Oxnard at The Collection
- 1/14/25 5pm Board Meeting – All are welcome. [AAUW Camarillo Zoom Link](#)
- 1/24/26 11:30am-2:00pm IBC Luncheon, Los Robles Greens Thousand Oaks
- 3/2026 Women In History and Knowledge Bowl
- 4/18/26 2-4pm Women in History Fashion Show Fundraiser

Non-Fiction Book Group, Barbara Hilburn

The AAUW Nonfiction Book Club meets once a month on the second Tuesday at 10:30am in the Panera Bread Co. at The Collection, Oxnard.

Please email me if you are interested. Thanks.

Barbara Hilburn

hilburndesigns@gmail.com

Next meeting is December 9 - *Something Lost, Something Gained: Reflections on Life, Love, and Liberty* by Hillary Clinton

Future Books:

- ***Plagues Upon the Earth: Disease and the Course of Human History*** by Kyle Harper – January 13, 2026 (704 pages)
- ***Apple in China: The Capture of the World's Greatest Company*** by Patrick McGee - February 10
- ***Breaking the Age Code: How Your Beliefs About Aging Determine How Long and Well You Live*** by Becca Levy - March 10

P.M. BOOK REVIEW, Diana Dingler

Our next meeting will be on Dec. 15 at 4:00 p.m. at Marie Callendar's where we will review the book **The Secret Book of Flora Lea** by Patti Callahan Henry where a world war and a fairy tale collide in the British countryside.

Reading ahead for Jan. 26 is *The Heaven and Earth Grocery Store* by James McBride.

For any questions, please contact Diana Dingler, ddingler2028@gmail.com

AAUW Camarillo Bridge Group, Cyndy King- LeVander

Did you know that AAUW Camarillo has a Bridge group? We meet every second and fourth Friday of the month at 1:00 PM, at the hostess's homes. We have two tables and meet for about 3 hours of playing bridge plus enjoying a sumptuous dessert. We take off major holidays.

If you're interested in joining or have questions, please contact Cyndy via email at: cking5151@gmail.com

Tech Trek Alumnae Group (TTAG), Gladys Ochangco

We had another terrific TTAG meeting in November which included a bountiful Friendsgiving Potluck and a wonderful guest speaker. After our TTAG girls sat together to eat and share what they are thankful for (especially friends and family), Ritzel Ngo of Ngo Family Law shared her career journey and experience as an attorney.

She took us through the challenges of having immigrant parents who could not offer much advice about how to do college/university here in the U.S. Nevertheless, she was fortunate to find mentors who took her under her wing at Cal State Northridge and helped her get into a UCLA program for undergraduates interested in pursuing law school. Ritzel likened the program to Tech Trek as it was an opportunity meet monthly with like-minded students at UCLA to learn about what it might be like to be a lawyer, to grow and gain confidence as leaders, as well as providing mentorship that helped her continue her education and develop her career.

She tied in STEM by sharing that several of her law school classmates at Gonzaga Law School were engineers who'd had successful STEM careers and decided to switch to law as patent attorneys etc. Ritzel often works with accountants and other professionals with strong math skills who she relies on to better explain financial transactions to a Judge in her court cases. She also shared some of the various types of law she's practiced including several years at the Federal Reserve Bank in San Francisco where she handled compliance and regulatory matters. She has also taught continuing education classes for attorneys.

Ritzel is very supportive of both AAUW and Tech Trek and the mission to advance gender equity for women and girls. She encouraged our TTAG girls to reach out to her personally if they have questions or have an interest in a law career. Thank you, to Starleigh-Tech Trek '2024 for inviting/ coordinating with her mom to be TTAG's Guest Speaker this month!



Thank you to the Gene Haas Foundation!



Thank you to the [GENE HAAS Foundation](#) for their generous, continued support with a 2025-2026 grant for \$11,000. These funds advance our efforts in sending 8th grade girls to Tech Trek Camp at UCSB and Whittier College, providing local scholarships for returning female students to CSUCI, and encouraging our Tech Trek Alumnae Group (TTAG).

Public Policy by Kathy Long

Our country was built on a free and open public education system, one that over time has tackled many societal ideological swings; race, gender, open classroom, closed classroom, and many others long forgotten. Today, under the current administration, the U.S. Department of Education is re-directing programs to the states and distributing the Department responsibilities to four other Federal departments: Dept. of Labor, Interior, Health and Human Services, and State. This re-organization is not based on any strategic study or recommendations coming from the states, nor educational professional organizations.

Most recently of concern and generating comments and objections from both AAUW National and California, are the proposed Priority and Definitions on “Promoting Patriotic Education.” The Department’s prescriptive and revisionist definitions include “the influence of Western Civilization, including ancient Greece, Rome, and Judeo-Christianity” and “the role of faith.” And further, to mean a “presentation of the history of America grounded in an honest, unifying, inspiring, and ennobling characterization of the American founding principles and the concept that commitment to American aspirations is beneficial and justified.” This reads to be removing from history anything seen as objectionable to a single political network.

AAUW historically has supported robust, high-quality instruction in American history and civics. The Department of Education’s proposal “standing alone, to privilege one worldview, narrowing rather than enriching student’s understanding.” Both our national and state organizations have gone on record urging the Department to withdraw the proposal and pursue a content-neutral, evidence-driven strategy that equips teachers, empowers students and strengthens our democracy.

Public Policy Cont'd (page 2 of 2)

Extremely concerning tied to the above is the Departments' education awards of \$4.5 BILLION in funding through competitive grants to support K-12 education throughout the country. The grants will now include this supplemental language of "promote patriotic education" if fully adopted. And, will measure the grants' strengths on the application of this proposal.

LOCALLY some great news besides the November 4th election results! We now have a record number of women serving in our state legislature. 38/80 members of the State Assembly and 21/40 members in the State Senate! So, a total of 59 women of 120 total legislators in the state! And on November 17th our very own Senator Monique Limon was officially sworn in as the 50th President ProTempore of the California State Senate! January 5, 2026, a public swearing-in ceremony will take place in Sacramento. CONGRATULATIONS SENATOR LIMON! If you'd like to send congratulations: <https://sd21.senate.ca.gov>

If interested in Public Policy committee, contact Kathy at kathylong220@gmail.com

Your Donations Mean A Lot

Thank you to all our supporters and donors. We could not run our amazing programs without you.

Kathy Long and Debra Bagley used this **QR code** to make donations at Kick Off! Give it a try!

Or you can [CLICK HERE](#)

Vanessa is always willing to take a check too!



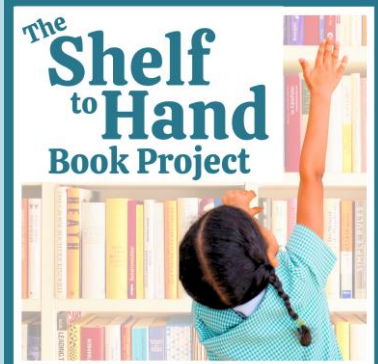
Welcome New Members!

We are happy to welcome the following new members to our Camarillo branch. Several joined during our kickoff event which was wonderful. It has been a very busy time and with the holidays coming up we hope to come together in the new year and have an opportunity to get to meet and know each other better. They are now part of our legacy of advancing equity for women and girls through research, education and advocacy. Welcome New Members! We hope to see you at our holiday social December 18th!

Barbara Cranfill	Karen L Hartman	Margaret Campbell
Dianne Lange	Kristina Prosser	Mary E. Gillette
Donna Nagaoka	Laura Miller	Vilma Contreras

Member News - Opportunities to Help

Camarillo Branch member Heidi Marquardt is spearheading a book drive for local school district (PVSD) middle school classrooms. You can get involved by donating new or gently used books, volunteering for the drive, or making a donation to offset project costs. **See the Shelf to Hand Project flyer for details – Book Drive on Saturday 12/6/25!**



Camarillo Branch member Stephanie Zierhut is also working to get books into the hands of children. Please contact Stephanie if you are interested in learning more about the initiative to launch Imagination Library of Ventura County which focuses on younger ages, birth to 5 years old.

Stephanie Zierhut email:
zierhutstephanie64@gmail.com

YOU CAN NEVER GET ENOUGH BOOKS INTO THE HANDS OF ENOUGH CHILDREN

HELP LAUNCH
Imagination Library of Ventura County
as the new local program partner for Dolly Parton's Imagination Library!

WHY WE NEED YOU:

- PHASE I / FUNDING:** Help raise our target of \$200,000 to receive matching funds from the State of California and support from the Imagination Library.
- PHASE II / REGISTRATION:** Once we meet our goal, we can register Ventura County children ages birth to five, to receive books monthly free of charge to the family.

DONATE TODAY: The cost to provide one child with 12 monthly books for one full year is only \$15.50

Donate by check:
Make check to: **BURNON INC**
In the memo add: **Imagination Library of VC or ILVC**

Mail to: Imagination Library of VC
PO BOX 4982
THOUSAND OAKS CA 91359

Donate Online:

LET'S GET BOOKS TO KIDS IN VENTURA!

Member News – Book Drive 12/6/25

BOOK DRIVE

**Saturday,
December
6th**

The
**Shelf
to Hand**
Book Project

OUR

MIDDLE SCHOOLS NEED BOOKS!

Collecting:

- New, like new, gently used
- Middle Grade or “MG” - books written for upper elementary/pre-teens
- Must be Fiction or Narrative Non-Fiction
- For more information, scan the QR code



Partnering with
The Bookworm
93 E. Daily Dr.
Camarillo, CA
(805) 482-1384

Most of our local middle schools have no funding for libraries or physical book collections.

Many middle school students have zero or limited access to physical books at school.

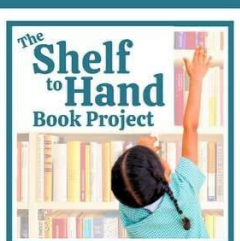
*“Today a reader,
tomorrow a leader.”*

~ Margaret Fuller



Learn more

www.reachforbooks.com/the-shelf-to-hand-book-project



Book Drive
for the PVSD
Middle Schools

Saturday
December 6th

96 E. Daily Drive

Next to Eggs 'n Things

10:00am-4:00pm

We Need

**5000
BOOKS!**
**AND
LOTS OF
VOLUNTEERS**

In Memoriam

Jeannette Jennett

February 19, 1932 - November 24, 2025

We recently learned of the passing of Jeannette Jennett, a founding member of AAUW Camarillo Branch. An accomplished educator, veteran, wife, mother, leader, and friend, she was an advocate for social justice, education, and community well-being, notably leading opposition to Camarillo airport expansion in the 1970s. She will be greatly missed. [Read more](#) about her remarkable life.



Janet Lindgren

December 21, 1927-October 20, 2025



Janet Lindgren

TACOMA - Mary Janet Lindgren, a decades-long advocate for education in Ventura County, died at age 97 on October 20, 2025. Known for her community service in Camarillo and beyond, Janet lived in Camarillo, CA for 55 years, from 1965 to 2020.

Born December 21, 1927, in Minden, Nebraska, Janet graduated from Iowa State College. Janet moved to Camarillo in 1965 from Rolling Hills Estates, CA where she had helped establish Palos Verdes Hills Nursery School that is still thriving today. After arriving in Camarillo, she immediately launched into volunteerism in education: In 1966 she was the first President of the Camarillo PTA Council.

Janet had a positive impact on the lives of countless children and teens through her service on the Ventura County School Board: 22 years as a board member of the Oxnard Union High School District, followed by eight years as a member of the Ventura County Board of Education (President 2003). She worked tirelessly to improve the quality of public education, including serving on task forces for curriculum, legislation, budget, vocational education, pre-school, and welfare-to-work. She served on the California County Boards of Education for 5 years (President 2002). These were elected positions, and her broad community approval and active campaign committees made her the winning candidate for decades.

She will be missed by people in the many organizations she served. Janet was an active member of Camarillo United Methodist Church for over 50 years, a member of the Camarillo chapter of PEO for 50 years, a charter member of the Pleasant Valley Hospital Auxiliary and a hospital volunteer, an active member in the Republican Women's Organization, American Association of University Women, and the National Women's Political Caucus. Janet was well-respected for her sharp, analytical mind and for her thorough preparation for important decision-making in each of these organizations. Janet was the beloved wife of 70 years to Larry Lindgren, who passed away in 2019. Janet is survived by her daughter Martha and sons Fred and Brian, six grandchildren and five great-grandchildren. She is also survived by her sister Marcia Kuska and her sister Cynthia Hoover.

A service to celebrate Janet's life will be held on Saturday, March 21, 2026, at 2:00 p.m. at the Camarillo United Methodist Church, 291 Anacapa Drive, Camarillo CA 93010. In lieu of flowers, donations may be made in her honor to the Camarillo United Methodist Church.



Order Your Name Tag Today



The 1 ½ by 3" aluminum full color badge has a magnetic fastener. Follow these easy steps and the badge will be mailed directly to you from Aswell Trophy in Oxnard.

The cost of the badge is \$30: \$18.00 plus \$12.00 shipping.

Send an email to Aswell Trophy at aaaswell@aol.com.

1. Identify yourself as AAUW Camarillo branch member and you want to order a name badge.
2. Provide your name, home address, phone number and email contact information.
3. Aswell will send a photo of the badge in a few days via email for you to approve. They will also attach an invoice. Once approved, the badge goes into production.
4. When the badge is ready, Aswell will call you for credit/debit card payment and ship directly to you.

Camarillo Branch Board of Directors and Chairs 2025-2026

Kay Ito & Gloria Miele

Co-Presidents

Aauw.camarillo.president@gmail.com

Glabe Siegfriedt

VP, Membership

VP, Programs: **Open**

Colleen Robertson

Recording Secretary

Vanessa Otto

Treasurer

Barbara Britt

Corresponding Secretary

Kathy Long

Public Policy

Gloria Miele

Diversity, Equity and Inclusion

Scholarships: **Open**

Cathy Trevino, Janet Lindquist,

Kathy Long, Peg Eldredge

Past Presidents

Kay Wolverton Ito

Communications and PR

Jennie Baker

Tech Trek Alumnae Group (TTAG)

Gloria Miele

Beacon Editor

Gladys Ochangco

Beacon Design and Layout

Membership

AAUW Camarillo Branch - Need to renew?

Annual dues are **\$130**
(\$74 National, \$30 CA, \$26 Branch).

1. Mail a check for **\$130** payable to "AAUW Camarillo Branch" to: AAUW Camarillo Branch, P.O. Box 862, Camarillo, CA 93011.

2. Online at AAUW National – my.aauw.org
Scroll down to "Don't have an account?" to reset your password and begin the online process using your email address, not your member number. Once logged in, you will join by selecting 3 membership types: National, California and Camarillo Branch Member (select CA-0132 Camarillo).

Tips and reminders for the online renewal:

- **Complete the password reset the very first time you login.**
- **If you don't receive the password reset email, be sure to check your spam folder!** The password reset email will come from: American Association of University Women infosf@aauw.org. Subject Line: **AAUW Password Reset Requested.**
- **Make sure to use your email address and not your member number when logging in.**
- **You can log in but my account says I'm not a member.** You have created a new account in error and a duplicate record new member number. National must fix this so please let me know if this happens to you!

If you have any questions at all, please don't hesitate to contact, Glabe Siegfriedt Membership VP at siegfriedtg@gmail.com or 805-415-9516.



New Member Form: Please print

Name _____

Address _____

City/State/Zip _____

Phone: (H) (____) _____

(C) (____) _____

E-Mail: _____

Dues Schedule: Circle one:

General Member **\$130**

Student Affiliate \$0

(Includes local, state & National Dues)

Check Payable: "AAUW Camarillo Branch" and mail to:

AAUW Camarillo Branch

P. O. Box 862

Camarillo, CA 93011

aauw.camarillo.president@gmail.com