

Co-President's Message

What a year last month was. Did anyone else have that feeling about January? The relentless images of masked militarized violence, the murder of two pure hearted helpers in the streets of Minnesota, the continuous and coordinated lies by the federal government about what we could see with our own eyes. Immigration actions in Ventura County have also been relentless, and we see the chaos and fear this causes for families, especially women and children. Last month, the Executive Board approved a statement about ICE and distributed it to local media and elected officials (letter on next page). It was published on the Opinion page of the Ventura County Star on January 25th. We are proud to stand with our community and speak out for safety and civil rights.

Also in January we saw the National Park Service ordered to remove an exhibit about enslavement from the President's House at the Liberty Bell, as well as exhibits and signage describing the traumas of Native Americans, the internment of Japanese Americans, anything that is seen as "critical" of America. As an organization committed to education, the attempts to eliminate history are profoundly troubling.

And let's not forget that the DOJ is also over 40 days late in releasing the Epstein files as required by law, continuing to shield the powerful men who abused girls. I swing between exhausted to distressed to enraged. These feelings often fuel me to speak the truth. I hope you feel you can do the same. The IBC luncheon last month highlighted the current state of the First Amendment. See some important takeaways in these pages.

In all, as some smarter women than I have said, we are stronger together. We have to keep showing up for one another and our communities, with our time, talent, and treasure. We have plenty of upcoming programs and volunteer opportunities in the coming months. Join us!

Let's start by getting together in February to show each other support, to celebrate our wins and commiserate our struggles. Join us February 11th at Twisted Oak Tavern, where we will have our board meeting at 5 o'clock, then social time from 6pm on.

Let's also spend some time this month focused on Black History, commemorating a Century of Black History celebrations! More at <https://asalh.org/black-history-month/about/>.

In solidarity, Gloria

Statement on ICE Activity at the Local, State, and National Levels

The Camarillo, California branch of American Association of University Women (AAUW Camarillo) encompasses western Ventura County communities including Oxnard, Ventura, Ojai, and up to the Santa Barbara County line. AAUW Camarillo stands in firm opposition to the harmful and discriminatory immigration enforcement practices carried out by U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE). As a nonprofit committed to advancing gender equity for women and girls through research, education, and advocacy, we see the detrimental impact these actions are having across the county, specifically on women and their families. Masked agents without clear identification have violated Constitutional Rights to due process and have caused fear, disruption, and trauma across entire communities, trauma that will have longstanding consequences for all of us. ICE raids have had a chilling effect on community trust and well-being.

We call on local leaders to take immediate action:

- Prohibit the use of masked or unidentified agents.
- Enforce Constitutional rights to due process.
- Ensure that local law enforcement, in accordance with established City and County policies and the California Values Act (SB 54), will not assist with or participate in the enforcement of federal civil immigration laws.
- Take action to protect all individuals from acts of intimidation and aggression perpetrated by ICE agents.
- Demand proof that Federal ICE agents employed by the Department of Homeland Security have undergone comprehensive training in use of force and lethal weapons.

AAUW Camarillo condemns the increasingly violent and illegal actions of federal agents, and expects immediate, meaningful action from electeds and government agencies to address this national human rights crisis, from local impacts to global implications.

February Social at Twisted Oak – We would LOVE to see you!



Wednesday, February 11, 6-8pm

We had a great turnout at the membership gathering in December so we're doing it again! This month's social get-together will be at Twisted Oak Tavern, located at 2433 Ventura Boulevard in Camarillo. Non-members are welcome to join us so feel free to bring a plus-one (or more than one – the more the merrier).

Twisted Oak has many food options so come hungry, especially if you will be coming at 5 to join our monthly board meeting. All members are always welcome to sit in on board meetings.

Twisted Oak website: www.TwistedOakTavern.pub and phone number: (805) 549-4919

Members Running for Office

As a non-partisan organization and non-profit, AAUW does not endorse candidates. However, we certainly want to share when our members are running for office. The California primary is June 2, 2026, and two of our members will be on that ballot.

- **Michelle Ascencion**, currently the Ventura County Clerk and Recorder, is running for reelection
- **Karen Sher**, current President of the Oxnard Union High School District Board of Trustees and Trustee for Area 3, will be running for Ventura County Superintendent of Schools

More information about our member candidates will be in the March Beacon.

Knowledge Bowl, Mary Goldberg

Which team will take the Betty Rutherford Perpetual Trophy back to their school?
Join us for this exciting program and meet our terrific students, coaches and volunteers.

Check-in and instructions are at 5:30pm, followed by the rounds each night.
We are usually finished by 8pm.

The dates and locations for Knowledge Bowl 2026 are:

March 11	Del Sol High School 1975 Camino Del Sol, Oxnard	Practice, rounds 1-4
March 18	Buena High School 5670 Telegraph Road, Ventura	Rounds 5-8
March 25	Adolfo Camarillo High School 4660 Mission Oaks Blvd., Camarillo	Rounds 9-11, awards

To volunteer, go to the Sign-up Genius [link](#)

I'll send the Rules and Question/Answer sheets the Thursday before each competition.

For more information, contact Mary Goldberg at 805-248-4572
or email marymgoldberg@gmail.com

2025 -2026 Calendar Highlights

- 2/10/26 10:30am Non-fiction Book Group - Panera Bread Oxnard at The Collection
- 2/11/26 5pm Board Meeting & 6pm Social @ Twisted Oak Tavern – All are welcome.
- 2/23/26 4:00pm PM Book Review – Marie Callender's Camarillo
- March 2026 Women In History and Knowledge Bowl
- 3/15/26 12:30pm-1:30pm Women in History Presentation, Camarillo Public Library
- 4/8/26 5pm Board Meeting – All are welcome. [AAUW Camarillo Zoom Link](#)
- 4/18/26 2-4pm Women in History Fashion Show Fundraiser

IBC Luncheon 2026 - The First Amendment

This year's Interbranch Council (IBC) luncheon was held on Saturday, January 24 at Los Robles Greens in Thousand Oaks. After some social time and brief updates from the Thousand Oaks, Simi Valley and Camarillo branches, a lunch buffet was enjoyed by nearly 60 guests. The program for the luncheon was an in-depth discussion by a panel of legal experts from the Colleges of Law (campuses in Ventura and Santa Barbara), moderated by Brandy Price, Dean and Chief Academic Officer of the Colleges of Law. Dean Price posed current, real-world scenarios to the panel and asked them to expound on how the First Amendment was or was not implicated. These scenarios included:

- The Columbia University ban of pro-Palestinian protestor encampments
- FCC Chair Brendan Carr's reaction to talk-show host Jimmy Kimmel's remarks about Charlie Kirk's death, resulting in a suspension by ABC
- The deplatforming or suspension of individuals on social media (e.g. "I'm in Facebook jail"), as well as pressure from the Administration on social media companies regarding content found on these platforms
- The Supreme Court upholding the law banning Tik Tok's operation in the United States unless the company gets sold to a non-Chinese owner

If you would like to watch the recording of the panel discussion, you can find it on our YouTube channel [here](#). You can turn on closed captioning to better follow the discussion.

We are grateful to branch member and attorney Deborah Meyer-Morris for coming up with the idea of an expert panel discussion of the First Amendment and connecting us to Dean Price and the Colleges of Law faculty and students.



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 February 10 - *Finding My Way* by Malala Yousafzai

Future Books:

- ***Breaking the Age Code: How Your Beliefs About Aging Determine How Long and Well You Live*** by Becca Levy - March 10
- ***Genesis: Artificial Intelligence, Hope, and the Human Spirit*** by Henry A. Kissinger, Eric Schmidt, and Craig Mundie - April 14
- ***A Peace to End All Peace: Creating the Modern Middle East 1914-1922*** by David Fromkin - May 12

P.M. BOOK REVIEW, Diana Dingler

We will meet on Monday, Feb. 23 at 4:00 p.m. at Marie Callendar's to review the book ***Beirut Station***. The main character is a female who is both a spy and fights personal sentiment. An interesting look at the Cold War. Tension abounds.

In March, we will review the wonderful book ***How the Penguins Saved Veronica***.

For questions, contact Diana at 805 987-8013.

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

Megan S. (Tech Trek 2023) reached out to our TTAG members to recommend changing plans for our January meeting so we could join the statewide AAUW Tech Trek Alum watch party of the award-winning film *Space, Hope and Charity* -- about the life of Dr. Charity Woodrum, "and her journey from rural Canyonville, Oregon, through poverty and personal tragedy, to studying the stars at the NASA's Goddard Space Flight Center."

It was a powerful documentary, not just about an amazing Woman in STEM and the wonder of astronomy, but about resilience in the face of unimaginable tragedy and sadness, and the life-changing power of kindness and human connection.

After the movie, our discussion touched on Dr. Woodrum's persistence and pursuit of her PhD in Astrophysics, and her very cool work at NASA and with the James Webb Space Telescope. One alum brought up the fact that she had never heard of sneaker waves (there was a scene filmed at Moonstone Beach in California as a scientist explained it). We talked about the importance of having a strong support network like Charity had. One alum summed up the film: "sad but also uplifting." What a meaningful way to share an evening of learning, reflection and inspiration.

Thank you to Megan and her mom/AAUW Camarillo member, Cynthia See, for hosting us on 1/24/25 for the Saturday movie night, and for providing popcorn and snacks.

Here is a [link](#) to the film trailer and website. Dr. Charity Woodrum was the guest speaker for the Oregon Online Branch's Virtual Event on 1/27/26.

The event recording is posted on their [youtube channel](#) (Highly recommend!)



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

AFFORDABILITY--the word of the year. What does that mean to you, to our community, to our families?

In a recent article by Jamshid Damooei, Professor and Executive Director of the Center for Economics of Social Issues for Cal Lutheran University, he details the challenges coming from the latest data from the Economic Policy Institute: In our county, a family with two adults and two children needs an annual income of \$170,791 before taxes to afford their basic needs; child care may account for 30% of their after-tax income and transportation another 15%. This data still reflects living paycheck to paycheck, and it is very challenging to make these wages in our county. Only two occupational areas –Management and Legal—historically pay an annual salary of \$160,000 or more. Buying a home here with the median price of \$965,750; monthly mortgage payments of \$6,200 is not realistic for most families. The current median family income is \$122,868. Dr. Damooei goes on to write on how we got here and what possible public policies are needed to move us to an affordable climate that provides for childcare, housing, job/career ladders and nonprofit investment. You can find his article on the Star's edition January 11, 2026.

The Gender Pay Gap has been and continues to be a significant piece of the affordability puzzle for women. Despite pay discrimination being illegal for over half a century, the gender pay gap remains a glaring inequity, undermining both workers' livelihoods and the strength of our economy. In 2023, women working full-time year-round earned just 83% of the median annual salary paid to men — \$55,240 compared to \$66,7901 — leaving women and their families at a persistent financial disadvantage. In 2023, women were twice as likely to work part-time than their male counterparts. When you include women who work less than 35 hours a week or in seasonal jobs in the analysis it reveals that there is not just one gender pay gap, but rather many gaps — resulting in losses in earnings, benefits, and wealth.

Mothers have 28% less lifetime earnings than women without children, and their earnings decrease by 3% with each additional child. Caregiving responsibilities and high cost of childcare, were cited as reasons for 79% of women who exited the workforce in 2021. Reduced lifetime earnings for women result in the loss of

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Social Security retirement benefits, with mothers receiving 16% less retirement benefits than women without children. Info from AAUW National. Equal Pay Day March 25, 2026. Affordability is impacted by many variables.

With a final note, Ventura County Congresswoman Julia Brownley recently announced she is not running for re-election after serving the 26th District since 2012. Known for her leadership on the Veterans Affairs committee in Congress, she has championed many bills to benefit the health and well-being of our veterans. The following is from a recent report out from her District: "This year alone, my office opened 1,726 constituent cases, helping veterans and their families access health care and earned benefits, assisting small businesses in securing critical loans, and helping older Americans receive the Social Security benefits they are owed. We also helped return \$9.7 million to constituents and responded to 75,152 letters, calls, and emails from community members on issues ranging from healthcare, affordability and federal education funding, to concerns about immigration, and government accountability and transparency." We will report out as the Congresswoman wraps up 2026 this year in appreciation.

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!



Membership News, Glabe Siegfriedt

Welcome New and Renewing members that joined or renewed AAUW in the last quarter of 2025! Thank you for being a changemaker and supporting the critical work that AAUW does at the Capital to the local level here in Ventura County.

Barbara Cranfill	Martita Martinez-Bravo
Jeanette Woodburn	Merrill Berge
Karen L. Hartman	Patricia Thomas
Kristie Akl	Susanne Lammot

If you need help with your membership or know someone that wants to join the AAUW Camarillo chapter, please let me know. My email sigfriedtg@gmail.com or cell 805-415-9516.

Member Updates

Congratulations to Shari Zieger and her husband who will move to Sacramento this month to be closer to family, especially their 18 month old granddaughter. We were delighted that she made the time to join us at IBC before her big move. Shari was Membership Treasurer for many years and an active supporter of AAUW Camarillo. She will be missed!!

RIP JoAnn Cataldo, retired educator and long time AAUW member. She volunteered for many branch activities over the years, notably Beacon copy editor and Speech Trek coach. We send our deep sympathy to her husband, Fred Martin, and all who loved her.

Happy 100th Birthday, Jerrie Newman.

We all hope to grow up to be like Jerrie.
Here's to many more vibrant years
ahead for our centenarian member.



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

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Diversity, Equity and Inclusion

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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 info@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