

~ AAUW ~

EMPOWERING WOMEN SINCE 1861

*"Women belong in all places where decisions are being made.
It shouldn't be that women are the exception."*

Former Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsberg

"In the future, there will be no female leaders. There will just be leaders."
Technology executive, author and philanthropist Sheryl Sandberg

*"I can promise you that women working together—linked, informed
and educated—can bring peace and prosperity to this forsaken planet."*
Chilean-American author and journalist Isabelle Allende

**Given the global and domestic gyrations today,
the AAUW-OML Branch's Program Committee
has its work cut out in the coming year.**

This year's programs aim to address key issues and challenges, bringing together our membership of 130 strong as a collective force in educating and advocating. Some of this will be reflected in our monthly General Meetings.

- **September General Meeting ~ September 16**
Showcase of our branch's initiatives in education, scholarships and mentoring. Showcase provides an overview of the many initiatives we are involved in.
- **October General Meeting ~ October 21**
Important Public Policy Issues.
- **November ~ November 18**
Hear a speaker on Nutrition and Healthy Lifestyles – important information to fuel the body and spirit.
- **December ~ Dates to be announced**
Two holiday parties to celebrate!
- **January ~ January 20, 2026**
Diversity, Equity and Inclusion program.
- **February ~ Date and location to be announced**
We will be exploring more topics of interest.
- **March ~ March 17, 2026**
An AAUW Fund recipient will speak about her journey.
- **April ~ Date to be announced**
Our annual Scholarships and Tech Trek Awardees program.
- **May ~ Date and location to be announced**
May Luncheon honors branch achievements and our Distinguished Woman.

Chris Laszcz-Davis, Co-VP, Programs

Mark Your Calendars!

TUESDAY
SEPTEMBER 16, 2025

SHOWCASE
9:30 ~ 11:30 am

Orinda Community Church
Fellowship Hall
10 Irwin Way, Orinda

The OML Branch Board of Directors for 2025-26

President: Denise Burian
President Elect: unfilled
Finance: Peggy Cabaniss
Programs: Chris Laszcz-Davis
and Gail Chesler
Membership: Laura Wittenberg
AAUW Fund: Danielle Ginestro
Secretary: Marcy Place

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... from DENISE'S PERSPECTIVE



Here I am with my family at the top of the Eiffel Tower on a trip to Paris back in June.

community outreach projects recommend their budgets, the Board of Directors meet on it and ultimately approve budgets that we take to the full membership for a vote in September.

Many of us are already preparing for the September 16th meeting. Projects and special interest groups are developing their schedules for the year. The book groups are meeting to choose books, DEI group is setting up the lending library, etc. If you want to be a part of any group, whether it be volunteering for one or more of our projects, or enjoying good company in special interest group activities, please refer to our directory for the name and contact info for the person(s) in charge. I can assure you that any and every group will be happy to have you get involved. It is the best way to make friends and contribute to a worthy organization. I personally have benefited so much from a feeling of worth and accomplishment in my retirement years by being very active in AAUW. And cherish the friends I've made.

You heard about the June In/Out Board meeting in which we plan for the next year. We also discussed some of our strengths and opportunities. One of our strengths is that we do have a high number of active branch members - more than 50% do volunteer for one or more (or many) activities throughout the year. And many participate in special interest groups. We positively impact over 400 young people every year through our projects. It takes our village of volunteers and donors to do that. And the board and I are so thankful for everything you do/contribute to our success. We could not do it without you.

We also can't do it without leadership. This is an area that is an opportunity for OML as an organization. We do need members to step up and into leadership positions. Our President-elect position has been vacant for two years. We are going to change that position to Senior Vice President, so our Executive Committee will have a full slate, without that person assuming the next President's position. But obviously that does not help us fill the future President position.

Summer is flying by. I hope you are having a relaxing and enjoyable summer. Some of us will be getting to work to plan for our September to May activities. August is the time that our

Luckily people have agreed to be President and we have not been leaderless. Some branches have co-Presidents so that the job is shared, and this is an option for OML too. No one wants to start as President – it's good to work your way up to it. We realize the best way to “get your feet wet” and be ON the board a couple of years before assuming the President's position, Agree to be the Secretary, or AAUW Fund, or co-Public Policy, or co=chair any of the other positions. I know that the current persons who are chairs of our priorities will be happy to mentor and support you. We will have an opening in publicity as of October, volunteer for it and get to know the board members and how our organization operates. You can also come to a board meeting anytime and see how our meetings are run. There really aren't that many formal decisions we make, other than schedule, budgets (we recommend to full membership), slate of officers (we recommend to full membership), reviewing financials, and from time to time amend the budget or approve a special project cost. Issues come up from time to time but not often. Most of our meeting is planning for our next membership meeting and listening to reports on status of our projects. It is not exciting, but important for a viable organization.

Think about it. I may be calling you in August to ask for help in a specific area of need. If you can say yes to at least try, that will be appreciated. We cannot sustain this wonderful organization without you and your leadership abilities. We will be working on a succession plan, please contact me if you have ideas or you want to help.

Denise Burian, President

It's Budget Time ~ !\$\$

The Board will be discussing the 2025/26 budget for the Branch Operating Fund and Community Outreach projects. If you are not directly involved in developing budgets, but would like to be included in the discussion about budgets, let Denise know and she will let you know when the discussion about budget occurs prior to approval/recommendation to membership.

Preliminary discussion about the budgets by Project will be held on August 5th at 1:30 pm. The full board will discuss the budget on August 12 at 1 pm. Contact Denise for more information.

FOCUS ON ... TECH TREK SUMMER CAMP

OML Tech Trekkers, Counselors, Dorm Moms and Workshop Leaders had an AMAZING Time at Camp at Santa Clara University!!

The six enthusiastic rising 8th grade girls who attended Tech Trek camp at Santa Clara University in July were delighted with their special experiences bonding with “like-minded girls” who love science and math and seeing their possible futures in a variety of STEM careers. It was a very busy week! The morning core classes were packed with hands-on activities. Some of the activities included evaluating finger prints and using logic to follow the clues to solve a “murder” in forensics. Climate science included counting pieces of plastics in the stomach contents of albatrosses and learning about oil spills and how melting glaciers affect the ocean. Campers dissected flowers and examined the parts under a microscope, learned about insect pollinators and seeds that exploded out of seed pods in botany. Engineering classes included making roller coasters, mousetrap cars, stomp rockets and arcade games.



Anna Ginestro and her partner with her robot.

Snacks were served every evening – called “kale salad” as a camp joke!



Build It Night was the grand finale! *(Photo at left.)* The girls learned about structural engineering and each dorm group built a structure of their own imagination and design using rolled up newspapers. The constructions included a swing carnival ride, a castle, a monument to Tech Trek, a Ferris

wheel, a miniature golf game, a bi-plane and a rocket!

OML was very well represented at Tech Trek camp! Molly Mudgett was co-director and taught robotics. Six Tech Trek girls attended camp at Santa Clara University: Surya Spitzer, Molly Eichenberger, Olivia MacDiarmid, Ana Ginestro, Helen Liu and Emily Pongpairoj. Farah Falahati attended camp at Fresno State University and Mao Yoshikuni attended virtual camp – we are eager to hear about their experiences! Jan Cushman, Karen Feeney, Toni Fannin were dorm moms each keeping track of 12 girls. Tech Trek Alumnae. Isabelle Culinco, Aria Falahati, Viviana Sanchez worked very hard as junior counselors. Gail Chesler taught soldering to make a flashlight and former Tech Trekker, Giorgia Stankus taught STEM Lingo coding.

A huge thank you to everyone who donated to support our very successful Tech Trek campers!

Jan Cushman, Chair, Tech Trek



Forensics with safety glasses: girls in Forensics core class identifying unknown substances.

On the field trip to the Valley Wastewater Recycling Plant we learned how household effluent water is processed to make water clean enough to drink – and they handed out bottles for us to try! A lecture on thermodynamics preceded making ice cream.



Karen Feeney and Aria Falahati making a flashlight by soldering

In chemistry class the girls explored the vitamin C content of beverages – what has more vitamin C? Orange juice, lemonade or Red Bull?

TECH TREK REUNION

Tech Trekkers, families, counselors, dorm moms, workshop leaders and Tech Trek supporters! Please join us! The Miramonte Gardens Clubhouse in Morgan is reserved for our Tech Trek reunion on Sunday, August 24, from 3:30-5 pm.

We are eager to hear from everyone about their experiences at Tech Trek – Santa Clara University, Fresno State University and virtual camps.

Have a great rest of your summer! See you in August!

SCHOLARSHIP UPDATE

Several members on the Scholarship Committee have been working with Gail Chesler and National this summer on updating and clarifying our application for 2026. We hope to have it live and ready to go on our website by October. We will continue to offer one \$2000 scholarship at each of the local high schools and two \$2000 scholarships for the Saint Mary's College High Potential Program. We honor women who have shown leadership through their community engagement.

Scholarship hopes to continue our fundraising efforts by partnering with Tried and True Tutoring to scheduling ACT and SAT practice classes and exams at the local high schools. We are also planning on holding a fashion show at Harper Greer in April. We decided to discontinue our sneaker collection because the organization we worked with started deducting \$3 a bag service fee. We are currently looking for a new fund raising idea.

The Scholarship Committee meets the first Thursday of the month. If you are interested in joining the Scholarship Committee or would like more information, please contact Bonnie Fend at brfend@sbcglobal.net. Jill Eberhard and Jill Fernald will be continuing as co-chairs.

Our first Scholarship meeting of the year will be **Thursday, September 4th at 1:30 pm**. We will meet at Joan Foster's house, 146 La Espiral, Orinda. *Join us!*

Bonnie Fend, Chair, Scholarship

BURCKHALTER UPDATE

School starts soon and we are making plans for reading some great books to the students.

Committee members and anyone interested please plan to meet at Janette Maher's house on **Thursday, August 14th at 1 pm**.

**Janette Maher,
Chair, Burckhalter**



Mark Your Calendars!
SHRED PAPERS ON SITE
AAUW-OML SHRED DAY

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 11
9 am to noon
5A Rent-A-Space
455 Moraga Rd • Moraga



2024-25 AAUW-OML SPONSORS/ ADVERTISERS

*AAUW members

LAFAYETTE

Asian Accents – Original Designs in Jewelry by K. de Groot*
Creative Alterations – Josef Jamkochain
DIABLO FOODS
Persons Plastic & Reconstructive Surgery – Barbara Persons, MD FACS
The Service Outlet – Marc Harvey
Todd Bunch, Lamorinda's Handyman
Ware Designs – Fine Jewelry

MORAGA

AAAAA Rent-A-Space
E's Auto Service & Repair, Inc
Golden Palace Restaurant
National Assoc. for Advancement of Female People – Diane Bell*
Town Bakery and Cafe
ViaVienté – Lana Reichick*

ORINDA

CASA ORINDA
Meadow View Winery
Soraya Golesorkhi*
– Coldwell Banker Realty

WALNUT CREEK & Beyond

Bay Alarm Company
Milner's Jewelers – Countrywood Shopping Center, Pleasant Hill

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love your SUPPORT.**

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their ad in the Directory!**

NEW LEADERSHIP PROGRAM ~ SAINT MARY'S COLLEGE



In June 2024, the Women and Gender Studies Department, Myrna Santiago, Director and Maria Ruiz, from Saint Mary's faculty, lead their first ***New Leadership Program***. There were 17 participants. Last June, the program launched our first NEW Leadership Institute

for Undergraduate Women, a residential summer program that encourages young women from the Northern California region to become involved in politics, and think about running for office in the future. In January 2025, we followed up with a ***Women in Leadership*** breakfast to strategize about the development of NEW Leadership in 2025. The OML Branch of AAUW was fully supportive of both efforts, assisting us in securing speakers for the Institute in June 2024 and catering the breakfast in January 2025. (See photo below.)

This past June at our AAUW-OML board meeting I made a proposal that the branch be a sponsor of our C/U Partnership's Women and Gender Studies Women Leaders in the Current Political Climate, to be held on September 4th. All AAUW-OML members are invited to attend (see the Save the Date announcement.) The conference is being held to create ongoing events at Saint Mary's College for women leaders who desire to support and advocate for women's issues through community, non-for-profit organizations and government programs.



Women continue to be notably underrepresented in political and public leadership roles. This gap limits diverse perspectives in policymaking and affects decisions that shape communities and economies. Pro-

grams like the NEW Leadership Institute are critical in addressing this imbalance by empowering young women with the tools, networks, and confidence to enter public service and political spaces.

Why it matters? I have extracted the following information from the Saint Mary's NEW Leadership Program website: The nonpartisan week-long residential summer institute immerses participants in developing the skills, knowledge

and network necessary for effective political engagement, advocacy, and public service. Modeled after Rutgers University's highly successful program, this program initiative brings a vital leadership training experience to California. It's participants engage in an intensive curriculum designed to demystify the political process and inspire active involvement. Hosted by Saint Mary's College, the program fosters a collaborative environment where students from diverse backgrounds unite with a shared commitment to leadership and civic engagement.

The mission and goals of AAUW and AAUW-OML is fully aligned with those of our C/U Partners as we continue to work for equity for all women and girls through education, advocacy, philanthropy and research. Your participation and support will help to make on impact leading to change. Please join in our mission to empower change through programs like the New Leadership Intensive by attending the Women Leaders Conference on September 4th. Contact me for more information and to learn how you can get involved at laura.wittenberg.mft@gmail.com.

Laura Wittenberg, Saint Mary's College Liaison

SAVE THE DATE

**WOMEN'S AND GENDER STUDIES
& NEW LEADERSHIP
INSTITUTE CONFERENCE:**

***Women's Leadership
in the Current Political Climate***

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 4, 2025
**Hagerty Lounge,
Saint Mary's College**
9:50 a.m. – 5:30 p.m.
**Elected officials, speakers,
lunch and reception**

PUBLIC POLICY IN ACTION

AUHSD District Elections Are Coming?

The Acalanes Union High School District was legally challenged in June to do away with “at-large” elections for the school board members and to divide the district into five relatively equal districts. State law governs what actions the district can take under a strict timeframe.

The background: In June the district got a “demand letter” from Kevin Shenkman of Malibu who has sued over 175 school districts in the state for not having “by trustee area” elections in compliance with the state law (he has earned over \$15 million in the process). Apparently another attorney, who has also been suing school boards and city councils around the state, Scott Rafferty of Walnut Creek, showed up at the Acalanes School Board and offered his services to fight Shenkman’s demand. Apparently, he has sent already a bill to the district for \$36,000 for his services. So it all sounds REALLY ugly!

The Acalanes Union High School District will be evaluating maps to figure out how to divide the area into election districts. The lines are not drawn according to school boundaries nor city boundaries, but rather based on “community of interests.” Yes, it may appear that our communities are similar but there may be differences between areas in Walnut Creek compared to Lamorinda that will be revealed in a detailed analysis. For example, census data used to divide districts is data for ALL residents, including children, not just voters. So households in Walnut Creek may have more children, making that area entitled to more representation. But then again, there’s Rossmoor with no kids.

Public workshops are being held in August prior to the drawing of the new “trustee area” maps and then again in September after the maps are drawn up. This would be prior to the public hearing to adopt the maps in October. These dates are outlined in the link to the AUHSD website found below.

Our Public Policy and School Board Project members will be attending meetings to follow the process. This is something that affects all of us and will be in place for the 2026 AUHSD elections. *I encourage you to get involved.*

For more information and opportunities to be heard:
District website and FAQs:
<https://www.acalanes.k12.ca.us/Page/4266>

Denise Burian, President
Shari Simon, Co-Chair, Public Policy
Karen Feeney, OML School Board Project

**Will My Vote Be Challenged if My Name Is Now Different Than on My Birth Certificate?**

Here is a short blurb on the SAVE Act, directly from the AAUW National website:

Tell the Senate: Oppose the SAVE Act

- On April 10, the U.S. House passed the so-called Safeguarding American Voter Eligibility (SAVE) Act (H.R. 22). Now it’s up to the Senate to stop this dangerous voter suppression bill.

What the SAVE Act would do:

- Require every voter to present a paper citizenship document—like a birth certificate or passport—each time they register or re-register.
- Undermine current methods like online, mail-in, and automatic voter registration by requiring in-person submission of documents.

What it means in practice:

- Up to 21 million U.S. citizens could be blocked from voting due to lack of access to required paperwork.
- Disproportionate harm to people of color, voters with disabilities, older adults, and women—especially those whose names have changed due to marriage or divorce, adding costs, confusion, and barriers to voting.

The Truth: Every voter already affirms their citizenship during registration. This bill creates unnecessary hurdles and opens the door to mass disenfranchisement. Tell your senators: Oppose the SAVE Act and protect fair, accessible elections. Your letter will be even more impactful if you tailor the sample letter provided for you!

Questions? Reach out to advocacy@aauw.org.

BECOME A TWO MINUTE ACTIVIST
Let AAUW help you *Make Your Voice Heard*.

Join AAUW’s Action Network by signing upfront for the TWO-MINUTE ACTIVIST. AAUW will send you emails periodically about upcoming legislation. When you click on the link they send, a letter will pop up that is already written to our two senators or our Rep. Mark De Saulnier asking them to vote either for or against a specific legislation. A recent example was one on voting no on the current budget bill going through Congress.

You will be asked to fill out your name and address (they want to know that you live in their district), and the letters will be automatically sent to them. You will even receive a follow-up response from the legislator a few days later. To sign up, click this link:

<https://www.aauw.org/act/two-minute-activist/>

SPECIAL INTEREST ACTIVITIES

**CRITICS' CHOICE BOOK
GROUP ANNUAL MEETING**

**Tuesday, August 5
at Andrea Green's home
10:30 pm**

**Note: A date change from
Wed., July 23**

Calling all avid readers who want to read 10 recent best sellers for a total cost of \$30! There are a few spaces left in the Critics' Choice pass-around book group. You read one book each month from October through July or August, and then pass it on at the beginning of the next month. Plus, you keep the last book. We will have a meeting on August 5 at 10:30 am to select books for this year. All are welcome to attend at the home of Andrea Green, 1210 Larch Ave, Moraga.

We need groups of 10 or 11, so, first come...first served! Send a check for \$30, made out to Andrea Green, to the address above or bring it to the meeting.

GOLF

**Monday, May 14 & 28
10 am • Diablo Hills Golf Course**

The golf group gets together twice a month for casual play in a golf course in Walnut Creek. Contact Janita Gee for more information, jgee17@yahoo.com.

BOCCE BALL

**First & Third Mondays • 10 am
Moraga Commons Bocce Courts**

We meet for casual play at the Moraga Commons on the first and third Mondays, weather permitting. **We also play Tuesday evenings in league play.** Contact Mary Leigh Miller at mlmiller602@gmail.com for more information and if you are interested in being part of the league, which runs from late April until the end of August.

EVENING SALON

**Thursday, August 14 • 6 pm
Home of Liddy Clark**

Evening Salon is a casual discussion group trying to make sense of the current issues of the day. We share snacks and wine and enjoy each other's company. The August Salon will be at the home of Liddy Clark in Orinda. We will meet at 6 pm for light supper potluck in her lovely back yard, with a possible presentation by Fire Wise. Discussion will begin around 7 pm. Contact Denise Burian or Liddy Clark for details. Contact Denise Burian, denburian@gmail.com, to get on her email contact list.

DEI – BLM ALLIES GROUP

**Monday, August 4 • 3 pm
Joanie Jump's home**

We are meeting this month at Joanie Jump's home, 737 August Drive in Moraga. We will be selecting books for our Lending Library which begins at September Showcase. If you have a book that you think is relevant and would like to donate it to our library, please contact Joanie or Denise Burian and we will pick it up. Contact Denise Burian, denburian@gmail.com, for more information.

GREAT DECISIONS

**Wednesday, August 6 • 9:30 am
Joan Schwimmer's home**

Joan Schwimmer has invited us to her house for Topic #7, *AI and American National Security*. Artificial Intelligence (AI), especially generative AI, is often claimed as an emerging technology that will disrupt all facets of society. This will be a very interesting and informative meeting. Please email Joan at joanschwimmer@hotmail.com to let her know if you are coming. Joan's address: 6 Netherton Ct, Moraga. Email Judy Helder on judyhelder@gmail.com for more information.

**ANYONE WHO HAS READ
THE BOOK**

**Friday, August 15 • 10:30 am
at Judy Peak's home
102 Coral Drive, Orinda**

**Bring a sandwich,
Judy will supply drinks
and dessert at lunch.**

Book: *Tell Me Everything*, by Elizabeth Stout, fiction, 326 pages. Set in Crosby, Maine, returning characters deal with a shocking crime, fall in love yet choose to be apart, and human desires are handled with empathy and compassion. Mary Mlynek will be the discussion leader. RSVP to Judy: j.peak@comcast.net, (925) 376-0540

**Anyone Who Has Read the Book
Book List for the Year**

We will be meeting at Orinda Books at 10 am starting in September.

- **September:** *The Writing of the Gods*, *The Race to Decode the Rosetta Stone*, by Edward Dolnick, non-fiction, 336 pages.
- **October:** *A Woman of No Importance*; *The Unknown Story of a Spy That Helped Win WWII*, by Sonia Purnell, non-fiction, 368 pages.
- **November:** *The Hazelbourne Ladies Motorcycle & Flying Club*, by Helen Simonson, 432 pages.
- **December:** *Sipsworth*, by Simon Van Booy, fiction, 240 pages.
- **January,** *Empress of the Nile*, by Lynn Olson, non-fiction, 448 pages.
- **February:** *James*, by Percival Everett, fiction, 303 pages, National Book Award Winner.
- **March:** *Time of the Child*, by Niall Williams, fiction, 300 pages.
- **April:** *The Ride of Her Life: The True Story of a Woman, Her Horse, and Their Last Chance to Journey Across America*, by Elizabeth Letts, non-fiction, 336 pages.
- **May:** We meet and choose from the nominated books.

AUGUST 2025 AT A GLANCE

1 FRI – PASS ALONG YOUR CRITICS' CHOICE BOOK

This will be your book to keep.

4, 18 MON – BOCCE BALL

9:30 am – Moraga Commons bocce ball courts

Read more on page 7.

4 MON – DEI-BLM ALLIES GROUP

3 pm – Home of Joanie Jump

Read more on page 7.

5 THU – CRITICS CHOICE BOOK SELECTION MEETING

10:30 am – Home of Andrea Green

Read more on page 7.

6 WED – GREAT DECISIONS

10:30 am – Home of Mary Mlynek

Read more on page 7.

11, 25 MON – GOLF GROUP

Contact Jan Gee for time and venue, jgee17@yahoo.com.

12 TUE – BOARD MEETING

1 pm – Orinda Community Church

14 THU – BURCKHALTER MEETING

1 pm – Home of Janette Maher

Read more on page 4.

14 THU – EVENING SALON

6 pm – Home of Liddy Clark

Read more on page 7.

15 FRI – ANYONE WHO'S READ THE BOOK

10:30 am – Home of Marilyn Evans

Read more on page 7.

24 SUN – TECH TREK REUNION

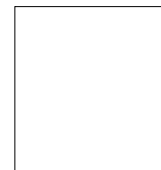
3:30-5 pm – Miramonte Gardens Clubhouse

Read more on page 3.

IMPORTANT NOTICE TO ALL SPECIAL INTEREST COORDINATORS:

If your group decides to meet on a different day or time than normal, please contact our Calendar Coordinator, BONNIE GALLOGLY, so she can update the website calendar.

AAUW-OML
Database Coord.
7 Mariposa Lane
Orinda, CA 94563



September 2025

Look for more information in the September Triad

4 THU – LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE MEETING and RECEPTION

9:50 am - 5:30 pm – Hagerty Hall, Saint Mary's College

Read more on page 5.

4 THU – SCHOLARSHIP MEETING

1:30 pm – Home of Joan Foster

Read more on page 4.

9 TUE – BOARD MEETING

1 pm – Orinda Community Church

16 TUE – SHOWCASE

9:30 am – Orinda Community Church

OF INTEREST TO OUR MEMBERS

**Wednesday, September 3rd
7:30 p.m. Walnut Creek Library**

How do Washington's latest actions affect Contra Costa County residents?

Join the League of Women Voters Diablo Valley and a panel of government leaders to discuss the impact of DOGE and the 'Big Beautiful Bill' on our local communities.

To register, email: Unite.rise@lwvdv.org