

## JANUARY GENERAL MEETING Focusing on DEI

**TUESDAY,  
JANUARY 20, 2026**  
Orinda Community Church • 9:30 to 11:30 am

### **ICE ACTIVITY AND IMMIGRANT RIGHTS IN CONTRA COSTA COUNTY**

**WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW  
AND WHAT CAN YOU DO**

The DEI committee has organized a panel presentation of organizational leaders who are providing services to the immigrant community.

They will be informing us on the challenges immigrants are currently facing in Contra Costa County, and the impacts to businesses, schools and churches. We will learn about what actions, if any, we can take to mitigate these impacts.

*Read more info on page 2.*

#### **INSIDE THIS ISSUE**

- Photos from the Holiday Parties & Burckhalter Toy Give-away Program  
**Page 3**
- Public Policy & School Board Meeting Updates  
**Page 4**
- STEM, Scholarship & Tech Trek News  
**Page 5**
- Members' Corner Interviews Bonnie Gallogy  
**Page 6**
- Distinguished Woman Notice  
**Page 6**

**TUESDAY  
FEBRUARY 17, 2026  
General Meeting**

### **REPRODUCTIVE RIGHTS UNDER SEIGE**

**Program Speaker:  
Beth H. Parker, Esq.**

Last year, Beth Parker addressed our AAUW group highlighting the history, progress and status of reproductive rights in the United States.

This year, she will share further erosive activity by our Administration. Planned Parenthood has been defunded and huge attacks, and consequent roll backs, of sex education have occurred. Title X, the premiere program for birth control for low income women is threatened. Don't miss this informative meeting!

*Please Note:*  
**Our February 17  
General Meeting will be  
held at the Serbian  
Church in Moraga.**



### ... from DENISE'S PERSPECTIVE

Dear Members, It is Christmas Eve morning as I am writing this. The calm before the "storm" in my house. Seven grandkids are visiting, along with their parents, of course. I am blessed. Not only by my family, but by my membership in AAUW-OML. I have gained so many great friends, plus an organization through which I can make a small difference. I hope you have found this as well.

You are receiving this on January 1st. I hope you had a healthy and nice holiday season. New Years marks a time for introspection and expectations. I ask you to think about how to play a bigger role in OML, as our nomination committee is beginning work in January on the 2026-27 slate of officers. Our branch is engaged in many major projects that will come to fruition this spring. Scholarship and Tech Trek interview and choose their awardees, the STEM Conference in March 7th (sign up to volunteer in January as OML members get first dibs), our Burckhalter librarians are operating the library every week, and DEI is prepping for the January 20th member meeting and operating our book lending library. And our fundraising committee will be busy planning an event, probably in March. The Program Committee and Public Policy Committee are also very active. Our partnership with Saint Mary's College (SMC) is solid. More than 50% of our members volunteer for one of the projects above and also contribute. It is very appreciated.

I try to give a shout out to everyone who volunteers their time and treasures OML because it is no small thing. For some of us, it is our primary organization or one of them and we give a lot of time. It is worth it. Not only for the relationships we develop, but our activities impact 200 students at Burckhalter, 180 middle school girls through STEM and Tech Trek, And 40-50 high school girls in the ambassador and high school monitor programs. At least 6 college women (or soon to be) through significant scholarships giving them a head start to the year. That is about 430 we directly impact. Not to mention the impact we have through our public policy, DEI and SMC partnership. Thank you.

#### Some dates to remember:

- STEM Conference registration opens on January 12th. We expect to fill all 180 spaces in 7-10 days so if you know of anyone who should register, they should be ready on January 12th.
- I encourage you to tell your friends about the January 20th meeting on "Ice Activity/ Immigrant Rights in CCC: What You Need to Know and What You Can Do." There is so much going on in our country right now, I couldn't begin..... but I believe that how immigrants - undocumented and documented- and people of color are being treated in the US right now by our own government is the humanitarian issue of our day. Let's find out what is really happening in our County and is there something we as individuals (or group) can do about it? I hope so and am looking forward to finding out. That doesn't even get to the attack on women and how quickly we are losing the ground we gained over the last 100 years. This is a crisis as well so I am proud that AAUW and AAUW CA are providing ways for us to respond and try to impact public policy. Check out the Public Policy article, as well as the Public Policy page on our website to stay up to date on direct action.

I look forward to working with you in 2026.

**Denise Burian, President**

### DEI PRESENTATION of ICE ACTIVITY in OUR COUNTY

The DEI Committee is sponsoring the January meeting with a panel discussion on current ICE activity in our county and suggestions for what we as individuals can do to make a difference at this critical time.

The panelists represent local organizations that help immigrants navigate the court system, find jobs, housing, food, etc. Confirmed panelists include leaders from East Bay Sanctuary Covenant and Indivisible Resisters Contra Costa.

The goal of the panel presentation, facilitated by OML member, Ogie Strogatz, is to inform our members about what is happening in Contra Costa. We'll hear how our immigrant neighbors, friends, and families are directly affected, what rights they have, the services available to them, their safety and their ability to remain in the United States.

The panel also will share the impact of ICE activities on local churches, health-care providers, schools, food banks and businesses, along with suggestions for volunteer activities and also where to donate.

**This general membership meeting is open to the public. Tuesday, January 20, 2026 at Orinda Community Church, 10 Irwin Way, Orinda. Socializing begins at 9:30 am. The program begins at 10 am.**

**The OML Board did not meet in December.**

**Look for highlights of the January meeting in the February Triad.**



## FOCUS ON ... DECEMBER HOLIDAY PARTIES and BURCKHALTER TOY DONATIONS



Many thanks again to Barbara Bell and Peggy Cabaniss for hosting two enjoyable holiday gatherings. Each home was abound with tasty, home-prepared food, and there were plenty of drinks on hand to toast the season!



### *See the Smiles at Burckhalter!*

Thanks to your kind donations, students got to choose a special toy as a holiday gift from AAUW members.



Photos provided by K. de Groot and Janette Maher.

## PUBLIC POLICY

**Declassification Of Professional Fields Affects Loan Eligibility**

Recent federal actions affecting higher education are slated to directly affect who can afford advanced training. As part of the “One Big Beautiful Bill,” the federal government has adopted a new student-loan framework that relies on a narrow definition of which graduate programs qualify as “professional degrees, dating back to the late 1960’s.” The law takes effect January 1, 2026, with Department of Education implementation expected by June 2026.

Under this change, most graduate students would be limited to \$20,500 per year and \$100,000 total in federal loans, while a smaller group of traditionally designated professions would retain access to much higher borrowing limits.

The programs excluded from the higher loan caps include nursing, physical therapy, occupational therapy, architecture, accounting, education, and social work—fields that now require advanced degrees and licensure and that remain predominantly female-dominated. The practical effect is that loan-limit changes are likely to fall most heavily on women pursuing essential public-service careers.

Applying outdated classifications to today’s educational landscape ignores how professional training requirements have evolved, risks limiting access to fields already facing workforce shortages and disproportionately harms women, even as broader efforts to weaken the Department of Education—including staffing cuts and the transfer of core responsibilities to other agencies—undermine civil-rights enforcement.

**For more information the dismantling of the Department of Education, see these resources below:**

- AAUW National: Dismantling the U.S. Department of Education. What’s happening & why it matters: [Click Here](#)
- What the Department of Education’s Professional Degree Proposal Really Means for Employers: [Click Here](#)
- Full list of degrees not classed as “Professional” by the Trump Administration: [Click Here](#)

## EMBRACE ACTION

**Thursday Jan 22, 2026 1-2 pm.** AAUW Silicon Valley Branch will host a virtual event on reproductive rights featuring **Leah Litman**, host of the popular Strict Scrutiny podcast. To register, [Click HERE](#)

**Saturday Jan 31, 2026 9 am-12:30 pm,** Half Day Symposium via Zoom – “AAUW School Board Project: Defending the Frontline of Democracy.” Title IX has been weakened, inclusive curriculum restricted, and book bans have expanded nationwide. School boards have become focal points for efforts to censor classrooms and marginalize LGBTQ+ students. K-12 institutions are under pressure to abandon diversity, equity, and inclusion policies. The AAUW California School Board Project is equipping members to speak up at local school board meetings, support values-aligned candidates, and build strong local coalitions. Learn more & Register, [Click HERE](#).

**Shari Simon, Chair, Public Policy**

SCHOOL BOARD  
OUTREACH UPDATE**School Board Project Update**

The Public Policy Committee’s School Board Project is looking for members interested in monitoring the Lafayette and/or Moraga school board meetings. They typically meet once a month (see dates below).

This would be a perfect role for someone interested in public education and helping to make sure that local schools continue to provide high quality, fair curriculum and a safe environment for all students. If you are interested, please contact Karen Feeney.

**Upcoming school board meetings for January:**

- Lafayette Elementary School District: Wednesday, January 14, 6 pm.
- Moraga Elementary School District: Tuesday, January 13, 6 pm.
- Orinda Elementary School District: Monday, January 12, 6 pm.
- Acalanes High School District: Wednesday, January 14, 2026, 7pm

**Karen Feeney,  
School Board Liaison**

The Public Policy Committee meets on the second Monday of the month at 1 pm. Our next meeting will be on Monday, January 12 on Zoom. Contact Shari Simon for the link at [sharsimon55@gmail.com](mailto:sharsimon55@gmail.com).





## STEM CONFERENCE UPDATES

We had productive planning meetings in Dec for both the STEM Ambassadors and the STEM Committee. Our promotional flyer is finalized. Feel free to share it with anyone in the area with middle school girls. Registration for our conference opens on January 12.

Five of our Ambassadors along with a former Teck Trek participant volunteered at the 'It's a Wonderful Xmas Celebration' hosted by the Lamorinda Sunrise Rotary on Dec 7.



Here is a photo of some of them helping to serve hot chocolate to the participants. From left to right: Claire Casado, Surya Spitzer, Ashley Sang and Sophie Westin

It is time for us to officially start to register volunteers to help with our STEM Conference on March 7th. If you can help, **please fill out this volunteer form**. If you have a specific role you like to help with, please fill this out now to reserve your favorite spot. We appreciate all the help to make this impactful conference a success. Or use this QR Code to sign up to volunteer.



**Kim Lockett, Co-Chair, STEM Conference**

## TECH TREK

**OIS, JM and Stanley Teachers will be Nominating Girls for Tech Trek in January!** Lana Reichick, Marcy Place and Karen Feeney will be contacting the three intermediate schools in early January to request teacher nominations for girls who will be asked to apply to Tech Trek camp this coming summer. AAUW California Tech Trek staff will have a video aimed at teachers by early January to help explain the camp and the nomination and selection processes. The selected girls will attend camp at Santa Clara University on July 5-11. I will send invitations to past Tech Trekkers inviting them to apply to be camp counselors. If you would like more information about California's Tech Trek program, check out the update website: <https://www.aauw-ca.org/tech-trek/>

**Jan Cushman, Chair, Tech Trek**

## MEET OUR 2025-2026 SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENTS

Scholarship continues to feature one scholarship awardee each month. Jenna was actively engaged in her community and looked for ways to better her community and the environment.



**JENNA KESSLER**  
**Acalanes High School**  
**Class of 2025**

Jenna Kessler packed a challenging academic schedule and significant service commitments into her school and community in her four years at Acalanes High School. She impressed us with her varied community service. On campus, she was active with the Blueprint newspaper, the community Outreach and Improvement program, a trombone player in the school band for nine years and a math tutor.

Jenna was an important member of the Blueprint (Acalanes school newspaper) team all four years. For her, this activity was a big help in re-connecting with school and community after the Covid lock-down. Researching, interviewing, and writing brought her a sense of confidence and satisfaction. Being the founder of the Community Outreach and Improvement Club at Acalanes gave her the leadership skills needed to branch out in her other endeavors. She organized a successful volunteer fair at Acalanes. Her foundation has continued this year, so all her hard work was not lost. Globally she volunteered with the green school alliance which helps schools become sustainable. It was her Community Outreach program that gave our Scholarship Committee a glimpse into her conscientious "follow-through." Jenna also organized a successful sneaker drive each year, which collected shoes from the students and brought money into our Scholarship fund.

Outside of school, Jenna worked tirelessly all 4 years of high school with Friends of the Lafayette Library. She found that she really enjoyed her time helping in the Lafayette library. We know that Jenna will continue to serve her community and world. She currently is attending Skidmore College in upstate New York and studying environmental science.

Our January Scholarship meeting will be Thursday, January 8th at 1:30 pm. We will meet at Maryellen Judson's house, 825 Reliez Station Road, Lafayette. We will begin preparing for our interviews in March. Join us!

**Bonnie Fend, Chair, Scholarship**

## MEMBERS' CORNER



Members' Corner features Bonnie Gallogly this month. A long standing member of OML, she quietly works to serve her community in many ways.

**We asked Bonnie to tell us about her younger years.**

A. I was born in Long Beach, CA, at the Los Alamitos Naval Hospital where my father was stationed in Communications for the U.S. Air Force during WWII. In 1953, our family was sent to Tachikawa Air Force Base in Japan as part of the occupation forces after the war. We learned many years later my future husband was also on that base with his family. As an Air Force brat I spent my childhood living in many locations: California, Japan, Biloxi, MS; Long Island, NY; Bedford, MA; and finally San Antonio, TX, where I graduated high school and went on to the University of Texas at Austin. I married in 1971 after my husband returned from a tour in Vietnam. We moved to Riverside, CA; Dover, DE; and then to the East Bay when he left the Air Force. He started working for Flying Tigers Airline and I began teaching middle school in Riverside. I transitioned to teaching high school at Moreau Catholic in Hayward where I spent 35 years teaching Home Economics, while raising our two children.

**How did you discover and join AAUW?**

A. On my retirement in 2008, my friend Jan Coe led me into AAUW-OML. I was Membership Chair a number of years. I started a Constant Contact news brief before taking on the webmaster, database and master calendar roles. Since I do not have any special tech training or coding talents, it has been a long learning journey to work on our website. It became much easier when we connected with the Association's national website. They provide support when needed.

**Tell us about the other things you do to support your community.**

A. I have always been committed to supporting women's issues. I participated in fundraising for OML priorities during many years when some of our branch members volunteered selling beer at Niners games at Candlestick Park. I also sell OML directory advertising. I joined the Acalanes chapter of DAR where I am the Veterans Representative overseeing a variety of veteran support programs. "Wreaths Across America" is the largest project that I coordinate for our chapter. Over 6,500 cemeteries nationwide have wreaths placed on veteran graves on the same day in mid December. This is dear to my heart since in my family my father, husband, brother and daughter have all served in the Air Force.

Since 2010, we have been a custodian family of two breeder Labradors for Guide Dogs for the Blind in San Rafael. Our first dog Carmody had three litters of 36 puppies; 18 of those puppies continued into working roles. Our current dog Gladys had her first litter. Those five puppies will return for evaluation and training in January. She will likely have her second litter in spring 2026. Guide Dogs is a wonderful nonprofit that changes lives. We love participating in their mission.

**Lana Reichick, OML member since 1989**



## DISTINGUISHED WOMEN AWARD for 2026

Start the new year by taking time to write a letter of recommendation for the women you think should be considered for the Distinguished Woman Award in 2026. Even if you have written in past years, write again. Old letters may have been purged. You may also nominate more than one member.

Criteria to be considered and highlighted in your letters include her commitment, contributions, and achievements in these areas:

- AAUW-OML Branch
- Her Community
- Her Career/Profession

Qualities of a Distinguished Woman:

- Friendship
- Personal & Professional Growth
- Initiative
- Achievements
- Commitment to the Mission of AAUW

Be proactive in influencing the selection of the Distinguished Woman for 2026. Submit your letters by email or postal mail no later than February 15th. Send your email letters to DWA Chair Lana Reichick at: [lanasan@aol.com](mailto:lanasan@aol.com). Or write to her address in the OML Directory. Please use "DWA 2026" in the subject line.

The DWA Committee will announce the decision at the general meeting in March 2026.

**Lana Reichick,  
Distinguished Woman, 2025**



## SPECIAL INTEREST ACTIVITIES

**ANYONE WHO HAS READ  
THE BOOK****Friday, January 16 • 10 am****Orinda Books****276 Village Square, Orinda**

Book: *Empress of the Nile* by Lynne Olson, 448 pages, non-fiction. The first female French archeologist, a gutsy, determined woman whose passion from childhood was Egypt, one of her most spectacular accomplishments was seeing that the Ramses temple not be flooded by the waters of the Aswan Dam. We also learn about Egypt's history in the 20th century. There are many photos. Discussion leader-Judy Peak. For more information, contact Mary Mlynek, [ml\\_mlynek@yahoo.com](mailto:ml_mlynek@yahoo.com).

**DEI GROUP****Wednesday, January 14 • 2 pm****Home of Joanie Jump'**

The DEI Committee will meet on Wednesday, January 14 at 2 pm at the home of Joanie Jump. We will discuss the content we will provide at the January 20th general meeting, which is sponsored by DEI. The topic is "Ice Activity/Immigrant Rights in Contra Costa County," with a panel discussion by leaders of groups that support immigrants/families in CCC. It will be moderated by Ogie Strogatz, a joint OML and Danville, Alamo, Walnut Creek member who is active in this space herself. We will also discuss the DEI book library and how to increase its usage by our members. All members are welcome to be part of the DEI committee. Contact Denise Burian for more information: [denburian@gmail.com](mailto:denburian@gmail.com)

**GOLF****Monday, October 13 & 27****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](mailto:jgee17@yahoo.com).

**GREAT DECISIONS****Wednesday, January 7 • 10 am****Home of Judy Helder****18 Inverleith Terrace, Moraga**

The books have arrived! Come for coffee and a short meeting with the opportunity to pick up your books. The discussion meetings will begin on Wednesday, February 4. For more information and to RSVP, contact Judy Helder: [judyhelder@gmail.com](mailto:judyhelder@gmail.com) or (925) 980-0151.

**FINANCIALLY SAVVY WOMEN****Tuesday, January 6 • 1 pm****Home of Peggy Cabaniss****743 Crossbrook Drive, Moraga**

Our goal is to review and understand **ES-TATE PLANS**: wills, trusts, health care directives, general power of attorney for business transactions. We will also talk about sharing and discussing your estate plans with your family – does your family know how your estate will be divided when you pass, how to have a family meeting, pros and cons of sharing the details with family members. If you have missed earlier sessions of this special interest group, come join us for the January meeting. For more information, contact Peggy at [pcabaniss7@gmail.com](mailto:pcabaniss7@gmail.com).

**EVENING SALON****Thursday, January 8 • 7 pm****Home of Mary Leigh Miller****602 Rheem Blvd., Moraga**

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. Contact Denise Burian, [denburian@gmail.com](mailto:denburian@gmail.com) or Marilyn Evans, [marilynbevans@att.net](mailto:marilynbevans@att.net) for details or to get on the email contact list. Reminders will be sent prior to the meeting.

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TO ALL  
SPECIAL INTEREST  
COORDINATORS:**

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



## JANUARY 2026 AT A GLANCE

**1 THU – CRITICS CHOICE BOOK GROUP**  
Pass along your book.

**6 TUE – FINANCIALLY SAVVY WOMEN**  
1 pm – Home of Peggy Cabaniss  
*Read more on page 7.*

**7 WED – GREAT DECISIONS**  
10 am – Home of Judy Helder  
*Read more on page 7.*

**8 THU – SCHOLARSHIP MEETING**  
1:30 pm – Home of Maryellen Judson  
*Read more on page 5.*

**8 THU – EVENING SALON**  
7 pm – Home of Mary Leigh Miller  
*Read more on page 7.*

**12, 26 MON – GOLF GROUP**  
*Read more on page 7.*

**12 MON – PUBLIC POLICY MEETING**  
1 pm – on Zoom.  
*Read more on page 4.*

**13 TUE – BOARD MEETING**  
1 pm – Orinda Community Church

**14 WED – DEI GROUP**  
2 pm – Home of Joanie Jump  
*Read more on page 7.*

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

**16 FRI – ANYONE WHO’S READ THE BOOK**  
10 am – Orinda Books  
*Read more on page 7.*

**20 TUE – GENERAL MEETING**  
**Ice Activity and Immigrant Rights in Contra Costa**  
**9:30 – Orinda Community Church**

**24 SAT – DEADLINE for FEBRUARY TRIAD**  
Send articles to Mary Leigh Miller, [mlmiller602@gmail.com](mailto:mlmiller602@gmail.com)

**February 2026**  
*Look for more information in the February Triad*

**10 TUE – BOARD MEETING**  
1 pm – Orinda Community Church

**17 TUE – GENERAL MEETING**  
**Reproductive Rights Under Siege**  
**Speaker: Beth Parker**  
**9:30 – Serbian Orthodox Church, Moraga**

## NEWS FROM OTHER BRANCHES

### INNOVATIONS IN NINTH GRADE LEARNING –“COHORT LEARNING”

**Thursday, January 15, 6 pm**

**Danville-Alamo-Walnut Creek Branch**

**Danville Congregational Church • 989 San Ramon Valley Blvd, Danville**

Remember ninth grade? It’s all different now! Come to the DAW branch’s program to learn about the innovative Freshman Interdisciplinary Cohort Model in San Ramon Valley Unified School District.

This educational approach aims to create a transformative environment where students and teachers flourish through meaningful, collaborative, and innovative practices. In SR-VUSD, the effort is three years old and thriving with enthusiasm and impact!

Join DAW to hear from students and teachers about how learning and innovation is growing! Everyone is welcome to attend. Presented by the AAUW Danville-Alamo-Walnut Creek branch. For more information and to RSVP visit: <https://daw-ca.aauw.net/2026january/>

