



# Vantage

## Gender Equity for All!

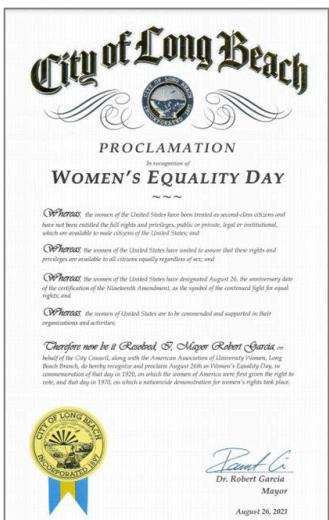
*Celia Mejia and Erin Murphy, Program Co-Vice Presidents*

Our February branch meeting will focus on the work of the City of Long Beach Commission on the Status of Women and Girls, a relatively new but highly active advisory body dedicated to advancing gender equity across our city.

Established to advise the Mayor and City Council, the Commission for Women and Girls works to identify and address issues affecting women and girls through research, advocacy, and policy recommendations. Its mission emphasizes improving safety, representation, opportunity, and quality of life for women and girls of all ages and backgrounds, using an intersectional lens that recognizes how race, income, age, ability, immigration status, and other identities shape lived experience.

During the 2024–25 year, the Commission focused on building a strong

foundation for long-term impact while also engaging deeply with pressing community concerns. Commissioners received briefings and testimony from local advocates, nonprofit service providers, City staff, and subject-matter experts on issues including domestic and intimate partner violence, sexual assault and survivor support, human trafficking prevention, mental health and trauma-informed care, early childhood and family supports, economic equity, and housing instability. The Commission also advanced concrete recommendations to City leadership, such as advocating for the City of Long Beach to formally recognize **Women's Equality Day on August 26**.



At the February meeting, we will explore what the Commission has learned in its inaugural year, why its work matters for women and girls in Long Beach, and how community members and organizations like AAUW can stay informed and engaged. We hope you'll join us for this timely and informative discussion.

RSVP to Charlotte Joseph by January 31 at:

[aauwlongbeach.reservations@gmail.com](mailto:aauwlongbeach.reservations@gmail.com)

Visit our Website for more info: <https://longbeach-ca.aauw.net/>

### AAUW Mission:

To advance gender equity for women and girls through research, education, and advocacy.

### AAUW Vision:

Equity for all.

### AAUW Values:

Nonpartisan.  
Fact-based.  
Integrity.  
Inclusion and Intersectionality.

### AAUW Diversity Statement:

In principle and in practice, AAUW values and seeks an inclusive membership, workforce, leadership team and board of directors. There shall be no barriers to full participation on the basis of age, disability, gender, location, national origin, race, religion, sexual orientation, or socioeconomic status.



# From the Co-Presidents

by Jane Hansen and Barbara Hall, Co-Presidents

## The Rocky Path to Equal Pay

The recent demolition of the East Wing of the White House – long home to the offices and initiatives of First Ladies – has reignited concern about how women's leadership is preserved in our national memory. While the White House Executive Residence and the National Park Service confirmed that artifacts were archived and a digital record created, the loss of the physical space is still deeply symbolic, raising questions like: Whose contributions are preserved in public view? Whose history is protected, and whose is quietly sidelined? \*

Fortunately, many organizations and writers have documented the contributions of women in science, education, and civic life. They bring historical figures to life in creative ways, such as in the 2024 theatrical release of "Suffs". This musical by Shaina Taub makes women's history accessible by presenting the stories of a handful of fearless women who fought to get the right to vote – a mostly ignored tale covering the period of 1913-1920. The song "If We Were Married" touches upon the economic disparities for women in that era when Doris Stevens, a suffragist, sings to President Wilson's chief of staff: "If we were married, my earnings would be in your name, and I couldn't control my own spending or open a bank account or sign a contract or hire a lawyer. Economically speaking, I'd die by becoming your wife."

Washington, D.C. may have been the heart of the suffragist movement, but the fight continued here in Long Beach, too. On **Friday, February 27<sup>th</sup>** the "Suffragist Bus Tour", narrated by author Gerri Schipske, will bring the inspiring stories of local suffragists to life. Contact JoAnn Kuroda, [sojoinlb@aol.com](mailto:sojoinlb@aol.com) by Feb 15<sup>th</sup> to hop on the bus! Friends are welcome!

Another important date related to economic disparities is **March 4, 2026: Equal Pay Day**.

Almost one year ago, on Equal Pay Day 2025, AAUW released its report, [The Not So Simple Truth About the Gender Pay Gap](#), revealing that women working full-time, year-round earned just **83 cents for every dollar earned by men**, down from previous years. The gaps are even larger for women of color, LGBTQ+ women, and women with disabilities.

The **Paycheck Fairness Act** seeks to provide more effective remedies for wage discrimination based on sex and prohibits retaliation against employees who report wage discrimination. This Act was first introduced in 1997 and subsequently reintroduced many times since, only to fail passage in the Senate. Bill champions **Rep. Rosa DeLauro (D-Conn, age 82) and Senator Patty Murray (D-Wash, age 75)** are still up against Business groups that oppose the bill due to fear that employers will face frivolous lawsuits under the proposed requirements; it is stalled in committees for both chambers.

## Calendar Dates to Note

February 2	Groundhog Day
February 7	Branch meeting
February 14	Valentines Day
February 16	Bd Mtg.
February 16	Presidents Day
February 17	Ramadan Begins
February 18	Ash Wednesday
March 7	Branch meeting

## Contact Us

Mail: [aauwlongbeach@gmail.com](mailto:aauwlongbeach@gmail.com)  
 Web: <https://longbeach-ca.aauw.net>  
[www.facebook.com / aauwlongbeachca](https://www.facebook.com/aauwlongbeachca)

For Vantage Editor: **Rebecca Low**  
[rlow1@hotmail.com](mailto:rlow1@hotmail.com)

**Call to Action:** Support the Equal Rights Amendment to the United States Constitution as the 28th Amendment.

Sign the ERA Petition at [www.Sign4ERA.org](http://www.Sign4ERA.org), founded by Carolyn B. Maloney, Member of Congress, 1993-2023. Although the required number of states have ratified the ERA, a time limit set by Congress has created legal and political debate about whether the amendment can be recognized. AAUW supports the legal argument that the ERA has met all constitutional requirements to become the 28th Amendment.

\*Source: National Women's History Alliance (NWHA),  
[Home - National Women's History Alliance](http://Home - National Women's History Alliance)



## Public Policy

by Juliet Wurr, Public Policy Chairperson

This year AAUW-CA is introducing a new approach to Lobby Days that prioritizes in-district meetings. Experience from the last two years of Lobby Days in Sacramento revealed that in-person meetings with legislators were increasingly difficult to schedule and were often postponed or even cancelled at the last minute. By contrast, when legislators are in their home districts, they are more likely to respond to requests from constituents for a meeting.

AAUW California's public policy team is tracking bills that support our public policy goals. An AAUW-CA sponsored bill on human trafficking and enforcement, and other bills, will be shared in February. Lobby Days' participants will study them and prepare to advocate for them with our two Legislators:

State Assembly District 69: Assemblyman Josh Lowenthal

State Senate District 33: Senator Lena A. Gonzalez

By now, AAUW-CA, has announced team rosters, including the Long Beach branch members who will represent us. At the February meeting you will meet our representatives.

Their schedule will be as follows:

February 9: Team Leaders begin scheduling district meetings.

March 16: Bill packets available (bill language + talking points)

March 23: Lobby Day Training Webinar

March 26-April 6: Legislature's Spring Recess



### **March 27-April 17: Meeting window for in-district meetings**

Lobby Days are a wonderful opportunity to observe your state government at work and to interact with your own representatives. The bills we will be supporting have been chosen to support AAUW-CA's public policy goals.

## Get Empowered

AAUW is taking a multipronged approach to battling the gender wage gap. A key component is arming women with the tools and resources they need to do their part.

- **Work Smart & Start Smart Salary Negotiation**
- **Fellowships & Grants**
- **Virtual Economic Empowerment Webinars**
- **Legal Advocacy Fund**
- **AAUW Webinars**

**Take a look at these resources :**

<https://www.aauw.org/resources/programs/webinars/>

<https://www.aauw-ca.org/lobby-days-2026-advocate-for-bills-to-advance-aauw-values/>

# Members have Fun!

by the International Cuisine team

## Wednesday, January 28, MOVIE & LUNCH

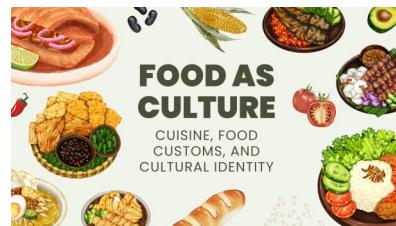
### Art Theatre, 12:15 pm

"Sentimental Value" (Swedish subtitles)  
2025 E. 4th Street, Long Beach  
Purchase tickets at the box office  
[arttheatrelongbeach.com](http://arttheatrelongbeach.com)

### Lola's Mexican Cuisine

2020 E. 4th Street, Long Beach  
Lunch is on-your-own  
[lolasmexicancuisine.com](http://lolasmexicancuisine.com)

**RSVP**  
Faye Alperin  
562.659.0051  
[fayealperin@gmail.com](mailto:fayealperin@gmail.com)



### Nomination Committee – Members Needed

The Nomination Committee is still seeking **2-3 members** to join the team. If you are interested in supporting our leadership transitions and helping recruit the next slate of officers, we'd love to have you!

Please contact the Committee Chair, Amy La  
at [amylaphd@gmail.com](mailto:amylaphd@gmail.com) if you are interested.



# Branch Business

by Cacelia Kim, Secretary

Note from Amy La:

Just wanted to let the AAUW members know that the Los Angeles Commission on Women has named "our" **Alyce LaViolette** one of the "Women of the Year" for their big event on March 9. It is called the Ruby Celebration and anyone can attend at the Biltmore in LA. Email [laccw@bos.lacounty.gov](mailto:laccw@bos.lacounty.gov) or call 213-974-1455.



Note from Ellen Mathis:

I am officially submitting my resignation as Mailing Chair for the Long Beach Branch for the remaining 2025-2026 year. I have fallen several times recently. My balance is terrible. I've been going for testing, which continues. I am using a cane/hiking pole often. I have not driven since the beginning of December. I shipped my car to my son in Tampa. I am getting used to the change using INSTACART for my shopping. Becky Low did my job for the January VANTAGE. Thank you so much Becky.

We are looking for someone to take on this small but important activity for AAUW. If you have questions, suggestions, or are willing to volunteer... feel free to contact me.

THANK  
YOU

# Tech Trek Update

by Valerie Armstrong, Tech Trek Branch Coordinator

Five Tech Trek campers from 2025 shared their favorite camp experiences in a panel discussion at the January 10th AAUW meeting. The panelists, who are now in the 8th grade, represented three LBUSD middle schools: Mila Cannone, Hughes Middle School; Sally De La Cruz, Powell Academy; Nuuausala Leilua, Powell Academy; Allison Rodriguez, Nelson Academy; and Kayla Torres-Cupa, Nelson Academy.

The January 10 event was also our branch's annual fundraiser for Tech Trek. AAUW Long Beach raised over \$4,000 from the event, based on our deposits as of January 19th. Due to the generosity of our members, we have raised enough funds to cover all 2026 campers.

The Tech Trek Committee requested 12 camperships for 2026: six at UC Santa Barbara and six at Whittier College. Due to an overwhelming number of requests for Whittier College, we were allocated five spots rather than six. We received our requested six camperships at UC Santa Barbara, so we will have a total of 11 campers this summer.

AAUW Long Beach received nominations from six middle schools for Tech Trek 2026. The participating schools this year are Hamilton Middle School, Hughes Middle School, Jefferson Middle School, Muir Academy, Nelson Academy, and Colin Powell Academy. The Tech Trek Committee will interview all campers who have completed their applications by the March 1st deadline. The committee members are Tobi Balma (Website Coordinator), Pat Ferrer (Treasurer), Nicole Gracie (Tech Trek Alumni Coordinator), and Valerie Armstrong (Tech Trek Branch Coordinator). Those selected will be notified by April 1, 2026.



## Tour the Town

by JoAnn K and Faye A.

# SUFFRAGIST BUS TOUR

**LONG BEACH SUFFRAGISTS WHO FOUGHT FOR OUR RIGHT TO VOTE**

**Some of our stops where early suffragists lived and worked:**

- Bouton Creek**
- Tichenor House**
- WCTU march site**
- LB Suffrage HQ**



**February 27, 2026**  
**10:00 am ~ 2:00 pm**  
 Bus loads and returns to Target 2270 Bellflower Blvd  
**Lunch ~ 2<sup>nd</sup> & PCH**  
 on-your-own  
**\$25 per person**

**Tour narrated by**  
**Gerrie Schipske**  
 author, LB native, City Councilperson, political activist

**RSVP JOANN KURODA**  
**SOJOINLB@AOL.COM**  
**(562) 429-6923**  
**BY FEBRUARY 15, 2026**

**Tour requires a minimum of 25 participants**

**AAUW**  
 Long Beach Inc. (CA) Branch

Long Beach native, Gerrie Schipske, is the author of a series of eight books about her hometown: "Rosie the Riveter in Long Beach," "Early Aviation in Long Beach," "Early Long Beach," "Historic Cemeteries of Long Beach," "Historic Hospitals of Long Beach," "Remarkable Women of Long Beach," "Suffragists of Early Long Beach," and "The Case of the Missing Librarian."



### Note from National:

We are thrilled to announce the opening of the [2026 AAUW Annual Art Contest!](#) This is your opportunity to showcase your artistic talents and have your work featured in our annual notecard collection, distributed to members nationwide.

### How the Art Contest Works:

AAUW members can submit up to two entries featuring their photography or a digital photo of their painting, drawing, sculpture, collage or other form of art through our AAUW Art Contest page. Sign-up is easy and only requires your email address or AAUW member ID!

[Entries are open now through January 30, 2026.](#)

# BRANCH INTEREST GROUPS

Joining an interest group (or several) is a great way to get to know other members on a more personal level. Make new friends while participating in fun, informative and educational activities.

Interest groups are for the benefit of AAUW members only; guests may attend meetings a maximum of 3 times before they are required to join. To start a new group, submit a description to the Co-Presidents. They will help you move forward with your idea.

**The Book Chat group** is off to a fresh start. Lamis is kind enough to have all the meetings at her home. We will meet again in February. We share about a book we have read, and tempt other group members to read it also. We try books one might not have considered. If a member prefers, she can share about a recent trip instead. Contact Lamis and join us for our Bookchat gathering at 10:00 am.

Contact: **Lamis Hashem** at 562- 221- 9361 / [theHashemFamily@gmail.com](mailto:theHashemFamily@gmail.com)



**Cultural Adventures & International Cuisine Group** plans trips to museums and other points of interest several times a year. It is usually a mid-week tour with lunch scheduled. We also plan meals at different ethnic restaurants, usually dinner with an easy drive. Join a group that checks out museums, other interesting locations, and special restaurants. Ideas for both groups are welcome!



Contact for Adventures: **JoAnn Kuroda** at 562- 429-6973 / [sojoinlb@aol.com](mailto:sojoinlb@aol.com)  
Contact for International Cuisine: **Faye Alperin** at 562-659-0051/ [fayealperin@gmail.com](mailto:fayealperin@gmail.com)



**Great Decisions Groups** are self-moderated groups that meet to discuss issues of world importance, guided by the Great Decisions book published annually by the Foreign Policy Association. This short-format publication highlights eight thought-provoking foreign policy challenges currently facing America. The program provides materials that help members share opinions and ideas on critical global issues.

Each person pays for their own copy of the Great Decisions book. Books for 2026 will be ordered NOW and will be available in January. Please contact Rita Powell, chair, for additional information. Two groups meet starting in February: One group meets in person every other Friday afternoon. Contact: **Deloris Mayuga**  
Second group meets on Zoom every other Wednesday at 6:30 p.m. Contact: **Carol Clanton**



**Literary Ladies Group** meets to discuss and compare thoughts on a selected book, fiction or non-fiction. The group comes together to hear thoughts and insights from others in the group. Each member takes a turn recommending and leading the group. The book selection for February is *The Revenge of the Tipping Point* by Malcolm Gladwell. We share this information so even if you aren't able to join us, you have reading suggestions. When: meets the second Monday of each month from 12:15—2:15 p.m. at a local restaurant  
Contact: **Sharon Westafer**, 562-493-4749.



**Public Policy** members prepare for our Branch's participation in state Lobby Days 2026. We meet with local and State elected representatives to learn their priorities for the coming year. We stay abreast of AAUW California's legislative agenda, and after three bills are identified for Lobby Days branch committee members research the issues. Our branch participates in Lobby Days either via Zoom or in Sacramento.

An authorized member of the LA County Interbranch Council, AAUW may collaborate with approved partner organizations to work toward common local and state goals. The group passes on knowledge and information to all branch members. Contact: **Juliet Wurr** at 202-716-4145 / [jwurr@hotmail.com](mailto:jwurr@hotmail.com)



**The Residential Rentals group** started in 2009! We discuss topics relating to residential rentals – things of interest/importance/concern. We keep each other informed.  
When: the 3<sup>rd</sup> Wednesday of odd-numbered months, 10-11:30 a.m.  
Where: at the dining room table in our homes or ZOOM  
Contact: **Ellen Mathis** [epmathis@verizon.net](mailto:epmathis@verizon.net) or **Joan Gustafson**, [jwg221@aol.com](mailto:jwg221@aol.com)



**International Cuisine** committee is looking for new suggestions for our dining experiences.

Please contact **Faye Alperin** with your new ideas. All are welcome.

**NEW! Please RSVP** by email to Reservations Chair Charlotte Joseph to let us know how you will attend. Use this email address !

[aauwlongbeach.reservations@gmail.com](mailto:aauwlongbeach.reservations@gmail.com)

**Deadline to RSVP is February 1.**  
Zoom link will be sent before the meeting.



Need some resources to share with others that highlight the AAUW mission and goals?

<https://www.aauw.org/resources/policy/advocacy-toolkit/>

## **AAUW BRANCH MEETING**

**Saturday, February 7, 2026**

**9:30 am Social Time to Mingle**  
**10:00-11:00 Business Meeting**  
**11:00-12:00 Program**

**Place: Long Beach City College Room 208**  
4900 E. Conant St. LB 90808

Building O2 is on the southwest corner of Clark and Conant, behind and to the west of Rosie the Riveter Park. Enter Conant from Clark, turn left into the 1st driveway. Bldg O2 is the 2nd building on the right. Look for signs.

**Guests and /or Potential Members are welcome to RSVP and attend any part of the meeting.**



### AAUW Long Beach Branch

Send address changes for AAUW Vantage to P O Box 15023, Long Beach, CA 90815

PLEASE  
PLACE  
STAMP  
HERE

