



1 MARCH 2026



AAUW National Mission: To advance gender equity for women and girls through research, education, and advocacy.

AAUW California Mission: AAUW California facilitates California branches in meeting the vision and mission of AAUW by providing programs, education, and resources.



President’s Message:
by Kathi Farber

Happy St. Patrick’s Day! 🍀

March is shaping up to be another busy and exciting month. Tech Trek is going strong, with over 40 nominations already!

Dues Reminder:

AAUW National is increasing dues by \$2 on April 1st. If you renew by the end of March, your dues remain **\$149** to AAUW Coachella Valley. If you need to know when you’re renewal date is please email me.

You may renew by:

• **Zelle:**
aauwcoachellavalley@gmail.com

• **Check:**
PO Box 11423, Palm Desert, CA 92255

On a fundraising note, Lilly Pulitzer is donating a generous gift card to be included in a beautiful raffle basket for our March or April luncheon — it’s going to be amazing!

We only have two more luncheons before the year winds down, so be sure to join us. We are planning to have amazing speakers for these two luncheons!

I’m also looking forward to you all meeting our President-Elect, Andee Steinman. She will be propelling our branch forward with great enthusiasm and fresh new ideas!

Thank you all for your continued support and enthusiasm — it’s making a real difference!

Kathi Farber

In this newsletter you can expect:



President Message



Feb. Events



Message from our President Elect!



Messages from State



Donation Letter



Branch Roster



Month of: March 2026

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1	2	3 Book Club 2pm 📖	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17 Board Mtg 4-5 PM @ RAP ✓ Foundation Room 101	18 Lunch Bunch @ California Bistro 12 PM	19	20	21 Luncheon @ Palm Valley Country Club 11:30 AM
22	23	24	25	26	27	28 Palm Valley School Gala w. Andee
29	30	31				

SAVE THE DATES FOR THE REST OF OUR YEAR!

LUNCH BUNCH- 3 rd Wednesday of the month at 12:00pm

BOOK CLUB- 1 st Wednesday of the month at 2:00pm

HAPPY HOUR- 4 th Thursday of the month at 4:00pm

End of year Mixer meeting May 15



Luncheon - RSVP Here!



Celeste R. Townsend, President and CEO of the California Indian Nations College or aka CINCollege will be our guest speaker at our upcoming March luncheon. President Townsend is a doctoral candidate and is associated with the Guidutikad Paiute, Ft. Bidwell Indian Community. CINC is a local two year degree institution located near the UCR Palm Desert Campus and offers a culturally responsive academic curriculum rooted in Native American values and integrates Native American cultures, tradition and languages in higher education. CINC receives support and funding from local tribes. CINC also offers adult education program in partnership with the Coachella Valley Unified School District.

The luncheon meeting will be held at the Palm Valley Country Club at 11:30 am on March 21st.

The Menu includes:

Classic Ham and Swiss Melt; side salad. Drinks include: Ice Tea, Lemonade, Coffee, Decaf, Water Station. Dessert will be Cheesecake with Fruit.

We will have our monthly opportunity drawing well worth the excitement! One lucky winner will take home a gorgeous Lilly Pulitzer wine bag filled with a bottle of wine, a \$200 gift certificate, and other thoughtfully curated surprises — a package valued at \$400! It's the perfect mix of fun, flair, and fabulous prizes — and you won't want to miss your chance to win. Be sure to join us on Saturday, purchase your drawing tickets, and add a little extra excitement to your luncheon experience.

We can't wait to celebrate with you
— and see who the lucky winner will be!



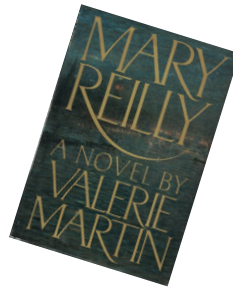
Firebirds Fundraiser Re-Cap!

Our hockey fundraiser was a success — and so much fun! Members and friends came together for an exciting night of hockey, laughter, and community spirit. One of the highlights of the evening was seeing several of our past campers in attendance. Watching them enjoy the evening alongside our members was truly special. Thank you to everyone who attended and helped make the night such a success. Events like these not only raise important funds, but they also strengthen the connections that make our community so meaningful. We can't wait for the next one!





Book Club



The power of the past. The enduring trauma of loss. The need to find answers to try to bring order to the world. These are just some of the things we discussed at the February 3 Book Club on We Don't Talk About Carol hosted by Susan Golden (thanks, Susan!!) The discussion was very lively and particularly thought-provoking.

Our next Book Club meeting will be at **Elaine Levey's house on Tuesday, March 3 at 2 p.m. March's selection will be Mary Reilly by Valerie Martin, a reimagining of Robert Louis Stevenson's classic Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde.** The novel is narrated by Dr. Jekyll's young housemaid who has survived an abusive childhood and becomes very connected to Jekyll as he struggles with his own demons.

Upcoming Book Club selections
April 7 The Briar Club by Kate Quinn
May 5 The Ghost Writer by Julie Clark

March 3 Location: Elaine Levey, 78708 Platinum Drive, Palm Desert (Sun City)
To RSVP: Contact Elaine at 818-326-2277 or elainlev@gmail.com
When you arrive at the gate (Washington and Del Webb) give Elaine's name and her address.

If you have any questions or need more information, please contact Pam Jennings at 310-944-0076 or psjenning@gmail.com.

Looking forward to seeing you on March 3!!

Lunch Bunch

Our next lunch bunch will be Wednesday March 18 at 12pm at:
California Bistro
69820 Highway 111
Rancho Mirage



https://maps.apple/p/_f.jYYCpHV4flv

Come join us at this cute new restaurant getting rave reviews.

Please RSVP to Sheila Warren -
sheilawarren25@yahoo.com or 818-422-9560 no later than Monday March 16.

Other Monthly Events:

There will be no Out & About this month, but we will resume next month!

Our Happy Hour is currently on hold, but we will update with the details as soon as we can. Be on the look out!

Message from our President-Elect!



Greetings AAUW Members,

My name is Andee Steinman, and I am the President Elect of our Branch. I have met many of you at various branch events over the last few months. I thought it would be a good idea to introduce myself to those for whom I have not met.

I have lived in the Coachella Valley for more than 25 years. In my professional life, I work in education and nonprofit spaces. I have been an educator, administrator, nonprofit executive, and I now run a business, The ConsultEd. My firm focuses on educational and nonprofit consulting, as well as program development and implementation.

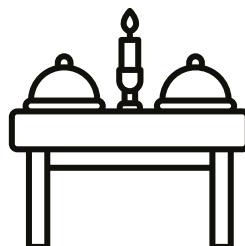
My husband James is an educator in the Coachella Valley Unified School District, and we have a grown son, also James. In my spare time I am an avid knitter, cook, and reader.

As for AAUW, I am in the study phase. I am grateful to Kathi for being my coach and mentor, as I prepare to start my journey as President. It is important to me that I get to know our membership, and your hopes and desires for our Branch's work. To that end, I would appreciate it if you would take the time to complete a survey which asks you to share what you think are the most immediate priorities for the board this year. The link address for the survey is: <https://bit.ly/AAUWStrategicPlanSurvey>

Also...

Andee Steinman will be hosting a table at the Palm Valley School Gala on March 28. There are four tickets available for AAUW members who would like to attend. First come, first served! Please email her at andee.steinman@gmail.com to secure your spot!

There will be dining and dancing!



Abortion Access or Reproductive Freedom?

The Positive Turn Toward Reproductive Freedom and Intersectionality Post-Dobbs

By Missy Maceyko, Co-chair, Public Policy Committee

In November, Ginny Hatfield and I attended an in-person meeting for one of our key coalition partners, the California Coalition for Reproductive Freedom (CCRF). Because most of our work with CCRF has been done virtually, I was excited to finally meet some of the members of this coalition in-person. I was doubly excited to meet them at the historic LGBTQ center in downtown Los Angeles, currently the largest LGBTQ organization in the world.



CCRF was founded in the 1980s to help advance "the effectiveness of policy and advocacy in women's health and reproductive health rights" in California. AAUW California is a member of this coalition because we have long had similar goals, focusing our advocacy heavily on issue areas like sexual and reproductive healthcare (e.g., abortion and contraception access), maternal health (e.g., healthcare access), and parenting families (e.g. access to quality affordable childcare).

As of 2026, CCRF has expanded their original focus, stating that they "advance reproductive freedom for all." This shift in language aligns CCRF with larger trends, including our own at AAUW California, as organizations that have historically focused almost exclusively on women and/or on a narrower set of issues, like abortion and contraception access, have shifted their name and their mandate. Even NARAL Pro-Choice America, a famous abortion rights organization, has re-named itself "Reproductive Freedom for All."

Why the seemingly expanded focus with the shift toward "reproductive freedom for all"? In a moment when abortion access is shrinking for the first time in 50 years, should we not more narrowly focus on women and reproductive health rights?

The answer, of course, is no. This moment is not the time to have a narrow focus. Most organizations centering women's rights and gender equity have long acknowledged that whatever affects one directly affects all indirectly. While we can have specific priority areas, we should do so with a better understanding of our common experiences. We should work in coalitions with an eye to how our priority areas are connected, creating strategies that clearly help us to advance together..

The move toward the language of "reproductive freedom for all" is also an extension of the intentional move to actively diversify historically white-dominant organizations; to honor the often unrecognized women of color who have been critical in reproductive justice fights of the past; and to more directly acknowledge the compounding burdens faced by women of color, whose fight for racial justice had already been inseparable from the fight for gender justice.

Abortion Access or Reproductive Freedom, con

The shift toward “reproductive freedom for all,” as indicated by the choice of location for our CCRF meeting, also points to the fact that any focus on women’s rights and/or reproductive health is equally inseparable from the larger fight for LGBTQ+ rights—a collective struggle connected through shared gender marginalization and the fight for our bodily autonomy. We all fight to be who we are because of and in spite of assumptions about gender, which influences our ability to make informed decisions about our bodies and our families, and our support and inclusion in the workplace. We all deserve to be paid equally and treated humanely regardless of others’ assumptions about how we should look and act, based on our sex/gender/sexuality.

These connections between shared struggles and fundamental freedoms have long existed, but after the overturning of *Roe v. Wade*, these connections have become perhaps more apparent. This can be seen in the *Dobbs* decision, which overturned *Roe*, where Supreme Court Justice Clarence Thomas signaled that similar reasoning might be used to roll back contraception access and marriage equality.

But really, these shared struggles are even bigger. As a women’s organization that has historically focused on reproductive health, the turn to reproductive freedom means that we acknowledge the many and intersecting ways that marginalization happens, and how they are connected. In essence, we will not achieve our goals related to reproductive health unless we protect the fundamental freedoms of all people and support democratic norms. So, to truly insulate abortion access and reproductive health, we **MUST** do things like protect the rights of trans women, support the inclusion of non-binary kids, advocate for the diversification of leadership, and push the need for affordable housing. These are all connected. We must also protect the democratic norms that are the bedrock of our advocacy, protesting against the militarization of law enforcement, resisting anti-immigrant policies, pushing back against the dismantling of public education, and calling out rising authoritarianism.

Accordingly, one of my favorite parts of the in-person CCRF meeting was a working session where we shared ideas about how we might strategically act, as individual organizations and as a coalition, in the face of federal challenges to the things we care about:

- Sexual and reproductive health care
- Maternal health and pregnancy justice
- Parenting families
- Reproductive health care work force and clinic infrastructure
- Protecting trans communities, immigrant communities, people with disabilities, people in incarceration systems, and other historically marginalized populations

The work of CCRF and AAUW California, and the move toward the language of reproductive freedom, gives me hope. It shows awareness of the need for all marginalized groups to come together—and through forums like CCRF meetings—provides an actual forum for us to actively work in coalition to preserve our fundamental rights and plan for our collective futures.



Celebrating International Women's Day March 8th, 2026

By Asha Bajaj, Member AAUW California Public Policy Committee

"Oftentimes today looking back, we think about discrete and distinct movements. We think that the Black movement was one movement and then that the Chicano movement was over here and then there was the Native American movement, but all those movements, and the individuals within those movements, were connected and we knew that one movement would not be successful without the other." - [Angela Davis](#)

"Human rights are women's rights" This declaration by Hillary Clinton at the Beijing conference in 1995 to mark the forward progress of women's rights-expansion globally seems to ring a little hollow today. In 2026, we are now watching the erosion of basic women's rights throughout the world, a widespread turning back of the progress we have made on so many fronts; from reproductive rights, to access to education and income inequality. In the United States, this backward movement is compounded by the stagnation of important legislation and constitutional changes, including the Equal Rights Amendment and the [Equality Act](#).

However, the fight goes on, as we watch women from all over the world, from the United States to Iran to Ireland, standing up to once again demand more from their governments. It is in this context that we once again celebrate International Women's Day on March 8th.



While International Women's Day has a much longer history, marked for the first time in March 1911 by over a million people in Austria-Hungary, Denmark, Germany, and Switzerland demanding women's right to vote, hold public office, and acquire gainful employment, we now tend to associate the holiday with the United Nations, which began celebrating International Women's Day in 1975. It has since been commemorated annually by the UN, with each year's observance centered on a particular theme or issue within women's rights.

The theme for 2026 is "[Give to Gain](#)." Represented visually by a gesture of outstretched hands to symbolize a request for both help and connection, this theme was selected to emphasize the power of collective generosity, reciprocity, and support in expanding opportunities for women. Individual giving may be financial, through donations, but it also means offering knowledge, resources, infrastructure, visibility, advocacy, education, training, mentoring, or time. These all contribute to women's advancement, which helps create a more supportive and interconnected world, overall. When women thrive, we all rise.

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As part of this campaign, the UN is also calling on governments to "act boldly and decisively for all women and girls" in six priority areas that they feel can make a big difference to women's lives—areas that parallel AAUW California's public policy priorities in many ways.

- Fostering a Digital Revolution, defined as backing the Global Digital Compact so that everyone can benefit from technology and its potential.
- Targeting Zero Violence by investing in women's rights organizations already working to prevent and end violence.
- Aiming for Freedom from Poverty by investing in social protection systems and public services to give women an equal chance to thrive.
- Establishing Greater Peace and Security by supporting women's leadership to build peace.
- Offering More Decision-Making Power to women everywhere by adopting laws that support women's participation in politics and business.
- Centering Climate Justice by prioritizing not only climate action itself, but women and girls in climate action, boosting their leadership and access to healthy environments and green jobs.

Let us not forget eternal vigilance is the price of freedom. On March 8th, and every other day, we will continue to stand together and demand more, from ourselves, our communities, and our governments. As we all celebrate, please consider what you will Give to Gain gender equality in 2026.

STATE SENATOR STEVE PADILLA'S COMMUNITY TOWN HALL

Join Senator Padilla at the Desert Recreation District Gymnastics and Performing Arts Center to share your thoughts on issues that matter most, learn about his work in Sacramento, and discuss priorities for our community's future.



**DESERT RECREATION DISTRICT GYMNASTICS
& PERFORMING ARTS CENTER**

81725 US Highway 111 Indio, CA

THURSDAY, MARCH 5

5:30 PM TO 7:30 PM



Register for this town hall using the QR code!

Questions? Feel free to contact our Coachella Valley District Office at: (760) 398-6442



Our Donation Letter:

American Association of University Women (AAUW) Coachella Valley is excited to kick-off our 2025-2026 fundraising campaign with the goal of raising \$50,000 to send Coachella young women and girls to STEM Camp as well as provide supplemental STEM-related educational and mentoring opportunities throughout the school year. In addition, these funds will provide young women and girls the opportunity to participate in National Conference for College Women in Student Leadership (NCCWSL) to pursue careers in public service and elected office, as well as scholarships at the college level.

AAUW Programs are focused on creating inspiration, excitement, and confidence for young women interested in science, technology, engineering, and math. Fostering a love of learning for young women through these key areas is necessary to cultivate a more diverse, inclusive, and robust workforce with the potential to create impact and change for years to come. We work to pair program participants with a variety of online and in-person learning opportunities as well as find mentors who will support and challenge them through formative educational years in junior high and high school. Our Tech Trek program provides these young women with additional resources and tools for continuing education in college and on into a professional environment.

AAUW Coachella Valley (AAUW CV - Tax Id # 33-2078532) is a 501c3 which makes YOUR DONATION tax deductible! You can review all our programs at aauwcoachellavalley.com

We are asking for YOUR SUPPORT to help make a difference in the lives of our Coachella Valley young women and girls. Throughout the year, AAUW is writing grants and holding fundraising events—our 76th Anniversary, a Purse Auction, and smaller networking silent auctions — to generate funds for our Tech Trek STEM, Tech Trek Alumnae, Gov Trek, NCWSSL (college) programs and the AAUW National Fund. We appreciate donations of gift cards, merchandise, experiences and more. If you are interested in providing cash support for our programs, please contact our vice president of fundraising, Amy Dailey (betterthanbutter@mac.com) or Kathi Farber (farberkathi@gmail.com) for more information.

We thank you for your consideration and appreciate your support in helping us achieve our fundraising goals so we can elevate the next generation of Coachella Valley young women and girls looking to lead the way in STEM, leadership, and government careers.

Sincerely,

Amy Dailey
Vice President of Fundraising – AAUW Coachella Valley

Kathi Farber
President AAUW Coachella Valley

Advocating for women & girls since 1881 and into the future!

AAUW - CV Branch Board Roster

ELECTED OFFICERS: (Voting Members)

President: KATHI FARBER, 209 404-7659, farberkathi@gmail.com

President-Elect: VACANT

Vice President-Fundraising: AMY DAILEY, 760 554-0685,
betterthanbutter@mac.com

Vice President- Membership: VACANT

Vice President-Program: AURORA WILSON, 760 333-9707, wilsonpl@verizon.net

Secretary: JAN McCLEERY, 925 978-6563, janmccleery@yahoo.com

Financial Officer: TINA BYRNE, 949 750-0750, tinaraeb@icloud.com

APPOINTED OFFICERS: (Voting Members)

Grant Writer: CAROL MARCUSE, 707 337-5905, cmarcuse@aol.com

Branch Coordinator Tech Trek: BOBBI KELLEHER, (760) 421-3799,
roberta.kelleher52@gmail.com

TT Tea Chair:

TT Orientation Chair:

Public Policy/Gov Trek Coordinator: FRANCESCA MCELHATTEN, 310 570-7271,
freepiritphotos@yahoo.com

Communications Coordinator / Newsletter: LESLIE MARTINEZ, 760 222-7917,
leslie.j.m29@gmail.com

APPOINTED CHAIRS / OFFICERS: (Non-Voting Members)

STEM (TT) Treasurer: PHYLLIS DUNN, 760 851-5678(c) 760 200-2821(h),
pndunn@verizon.net

TTAG Co-Chair: AURORA WILSON, 760 333-9707, wilsonpl@verizon.net and Jill
Hartley (425) 301-0038, jill_hartley@yahoo.com

Mtg Coordinator Chair: VACANT

College /University Co-Chairs: CAPRICE LEINONEN, 425 761-0503,
capriceinseattle@gmail.com and Shelley Mitchell 707 496-8689
shelleydmitchell@gmail.com

Parliamentarian: BETH DITMARSON, 503 701-7948, dndbkp@yahoo.com

Interest Groups Coordinator: VACANT



Thank you for reading!

WEBSITE:
https://aauwcoachellavalley.com/
SOCIALS:
Facebook: AAUW Coachella Valley Branch Instagram: @aauw.cv