



*Founded in 1923, AAUW's Mission is to advance gender equity for women and girls through research, education, and advocacy.*

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*Karen Dumont, Editor  
Judy McGuire, Photo Editor*

## February General Meeting

February is American Heart Month. In 2021, heart disease was the leading cause of death for women in the United States. With this in mind, Dr. Sarah Ruiz will give us an overview of heart disease and offer some heart-healthy tips.



Dr. Sarah Ruiz has been practicing as a registered dietitian and certified diabetes care and education specialist for over 10 years in El Paso, Texas. Prior to becoming a dietitian, she completed a culinary degree at Le Cordon Bleu in Austin, Texas. She holds a PhD in Interdisciplinary Health Sciences from the University of Texas at El Paso (UTEP). She currently holds a position as an Assistant Professor in the Human Nutrition and Dietetics program at New Mexico State University (NMSU). She is also the owner of Sun City Dietitians, a private practice founded in 2019, which provides medical nutrition therapy and diabetes education, the latter holding an American Diabetes Association accreditation.

This meeting will be held on the second Saturday, February 8 at the DACC Workforce Center, 2345 Nevada Ave. The program begins at **10:00 am** preceded by a "social time" from 9:30 - 10:00 am.

*RoseAnn Hernández & Tricia Brainard, Programs Chairs*

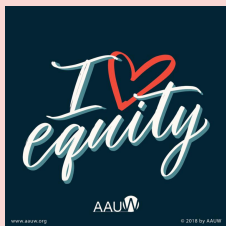
## From our Co-Presidents Donna Yargosz and Lynette Schurdevin



Although it's the shortest month, February still packs quite a punch, weatherwise or activity-wise. Our local branch has benefitted from an active, can-do Board of Directors. Members seem to appreciate the work the Board does: Wrangling donations for Girls Can!, Scholarships, and Tech Trek. Keeping everyone aware of public policy. Arranging for speakers for the General Meetings. Providing coffee at General Meetings. Creating beaded items for sale. Encouraging new members to keep our branch lively. Organizing the luncheons. Keeping members informed of upcoming events and items of interest.

We love all these things. But it takes people to make it all happen. Right now we need people (not many, just a few) to step up and take their turn in a Board position: Co-President, Fundraising Chair, Parliamentarian, and Historian. (If you feel that you may not know how to do the position, don't worry. There are plenty of people to guide you along.) If you are willing to help out, please contact the nominating committee: Michele Rasch, Barb McGuffey, and Shirley Armstrong. Phone calls will be going out to ask for help. If you are called, please say yes. And, thank you.

*Donna Yargosz and Lynette Schurdevin, Co-Presidents*



## PUBLIC POLICY UPDATE

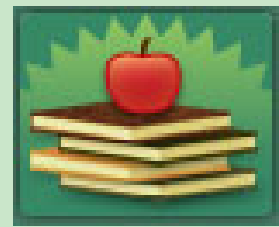
Paid Family and Medical Leave (PFML) has long been a priority of AAUW. It has been introduced several years in a row in the New Mexico legislature but has never passed. Another attempt is being made in the current 2025 New Mexico legislation session (Jan.

21-March 22). Sponsored by Representative Christine Chandler (D-Los Alamos), the Paid Medical Leave Act (HB 11) would pay an eligible applicant a portion of the employee's wages in order to care for aging family members, bond with newborn children, or cope with medical crises. It would be funded by contributions from businesses and workers based on wages, with higher-paid employees contributing more into the fund than lower-paid employees.

AAUW-NM encourages you to contact your local state representatives and senators to advocate for PFML. To find your district, your local legislators, and their contact information, go to the New Mexico legislature website at <https://www.nmlegis.gov> and click on "Districts." You can also track the progress of the Paid Medical Leave Act (HB11) at this website.

*Kate Mangelsdorf, Public Policy Chair*

## ACADEMIC OUTREACH



Las Cruces (AAUW-LC) supports equity and education for girls and women per:

**“Girls Can!” for 6th grade girls!** Girls Can! is an annual career exploration conference coordinated by AAUW-LC, offered to all 6th grade girls in Dona Ana County, and presented by professional women at Dona Ana Community College. A variety of hands-on interactive career workshops are presented to spark the girls’ interests and encourage them on their educational paths. Brochures are given to every public school in the county to promote attendance. *Fundraising and many volunteers are needed to make it happen!*

**Tech Trek NM for 8th grade girls!** Tech Trek NM is an annual 5 day summer camp for girls who have completed the 7th grade, going into 8th, and are interested in STEM. A limited number of girls from throughout the state are selected to attend. For consideration, each girl must submit an application through AAUW-NM and participate in an interview. The camp is held on a college campus and is coordinated by AAUW-NM. *AAUW-LC supports it monetarily and with volunteers.*

**True Grit Awards for graduating high school senior girls!** AAUW-LC created its True Grit Awards for girls who have overcome obstacles to be able to graduate from high school and pursue a post secondary education. True Grit Award application information is distributed each year to Las Cruces Public High Schools prior to graduation. In order to receive an award, a 3 part essay application must be submitted to an AAUW-LC selection task force. The task force reviews and scores each application and makes the recipient selections from the top scores. A monetary award is given to each recipient after she has submitted proof of active enrollment in a post secondary institution following high school graduation. *The amount and number of awards is determined each year by the AAUW-LC Board of Directors based on funds raised.*

**NMSU AAUW-LC Endowed Scholarships for undergraduate students who have completed at least one semester of college and maintain a 2.5 GPA!** The scholarships are administered through NMSU Scholar Dollar\$/Financial Aid Office. The scholarships are awarded each new academic year and are given to students attending NMSU-Las Cruces and NMSU-Dona Ana Community College. Students must complete the NMSU Scholar Dollar\$ application to qualify for a scholarship. *The amount of each scholarship is based on the Earnings Fund of this endowment account.*

**Promotion of AAUW Fellowships and Grants for female NMSU students** who are currently enrolled in or are contemplating graduate school.

*Londa Seiffert, Academic Chair*



# Diversity, Equity and Inclusion

## **Black History Month**

Feb 11: **International Day of Women & Girls in Science**

Feb 15: **Parinirvana Day (Buddhist festival)**

Feb 19: **Day of Remembrance of Japanese American Incarceration During World War II**

Feb 20: **World Day of Social Justice**

Feb 26: **Maha Shivarati (Hindu)**

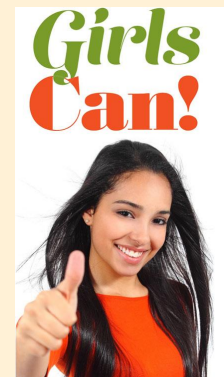
Feb 28: Mar 19: **The Nineteen Day Fast (Bahá'í)**

Feb 28: Mar 30: **Ramadan (Islam)**

*Tricia Brainard, Diversity Coordinator*

## Girls Can!

**Girls Can!** is less than a month away, and we are mostly ready. I want to use this column to send a general “Thank You” to all who have helped and are continuing to help make sure that it is a huge success. This includes dozens of members who do and have done multiple tasks for many of the 29 years that AAUW has sponsored the event. I also thank those who are working on **Girls Can!** for the first time. IN LARGE PRINT, I specifically want to extend extra gratitude to Laura Bemis, Kay Brilliant, and Londa Seiffert, who have guided me through this the entire way in my first year as coordinator. Thank you! Thank you! Thank you! and another THANK YOU!



If you have not already done so, you can still sign up to volunteer for **Girls Can!** Email [mona.trempe@gmail.com](mailto:mona.trempe@gmail.com) and let her know that you would like to be added to the list. We will meet bright and early on Saturday morning at DACC East Mesa Campus at 7:00 a.m.; by 12:30, we will be ready to celebrate our success. Speaking from experience, you probably will find that the morning whirls by and that you will revel in your experiences for many days afterward.

You will get a full report on *Girls Can! 2025* in the next OMV.

*Pat Johnson, Girls Can! Coordinator*

## Save the Date! – AAUW-NM State Convention

You may have received a flyer about the State Convention in your email. Or, it may have gone into Promotions, Junk, or Spam. (We've been having “issues”...)

Date: April 25 and 26, 2025

Place: Comfort Inn, Mesilla

Dinner on Friday night at Luna Rossa

There will be business meetings, speakers, and more on Saturday.

The details are still being worked on. As the convention is in our town, we expect that some/many of our members will want to attend. We will also mention this event at the February and April General Meetings. (No General Meeting in March) In the meantime, watch for updates in one email box or another.

## Membership Matters

Please consider bringing a guest to general meetings and Interest Group meetings (with an OK from the host). Our branch is the largest in NM with over 90 members!

**Guests** will be offered the opportunity to join at any official AAUW general meeting or event to receive a one-time 50% discount on NATIONAL Dues through the AAUW National "Shape the Future" (STF) campaign. Since this **STF discounted \$74 total annual dues payment** must be received at the event/meeting, please suggest that your guests bring a CHECK or CASH with high hopes they will want to join!

**WELCOME NEW MEMBERS: Terrye Doyle** (guest of Judy Gilbert) and **Shari Glassmen** (guest of Kay Brilliant), who both **JOINED** at the January 11, 2025 AAUW regular monthly meeting with the STF discount.

**Renewal Reminder! Annual Dues are \$110:** National (\$72)+State (\$18)+ Las Cruces Branch (\$20). If you renew online, you must select New Mexico for State and Las Cruces for Branch to be a member of our Branch. If you prefer, you can renew by check for \$110 made payable to AAUW-LC in person at our meetings or by mail to: P.O. Box 1081, Las Cruces, NM 88004.

Click here for a pdf of the [2024-2025 Membership Brochure](#) that you can give to prospective members.

If there are any questions, feel free to contact:

*Barbara McGuffey & Michele Rasch*, Membership Co-VPs



### Going Places First 2025 Event

On Friday, January 17, nine AAUW LC members and one guest visited Spaceport America, an hour north of Las Cruces. Spaceport America is the first purpose-built commercial spaceport in the world.

We also were treated to the USAF Thunderbirds, practicing in the airspace above us! Michele Rasch, Judy Gilbert, and Judy McGuire all experienced the official Air Force training centrifuge. Although we became a bit nauseated, the experience of spinning was worth it! Space travelers included Judy Gilbert, Leslie Fisher, Rosella Vialpando, Marsha Hokkanen, Barbara McIntosh, Reba McGear, Michele Rasch, Judy McGuire, and Kay's husband, Tom.

Stay tuned for the next **Going Places** adventure! Contact Michele Rasch for more information.



Michele Rasch and Judy Gilbert "enjoying" the centrifuge spin.



Mock-up of the official space craft that takes people with \$\$\$ into space.



AF Thunderbirds parked. They practice here every January.

## February is American Heart Health Month

February is American Heart Month, a time to raise awareness about heart disease and encourage people to focus on their cardiovascular health. The first Friday of February is **National Wear Red Day**, which is a day to specifically raise awareness about heart disease in women.

### **Heart disease is a leading cause of death**

In the United States, heart disease is the leading cause of death for men, women, and people of most racial and ethnic groups.

### **Risk factors for women**

Some risk factors for heart disease in women include:

- Family history
- Pregnancy
- Birth control
- Hormonal changes during menopause
- Obesity
- Unhealthy diet
- Lack of exercise
- Drinking too much alcohol
- Diabetes
- Smoking

### **Go Red for Women**

The American Heart Association's (AHA) **Go Red for Women** movement aims to increase awareness of women's heart health. The iconic red dress pin has been a symbol of women's heart health for more than two decades.

### **WomenHeart**

WomenHeart raises awareness about heart disease in women, advocates for better healthcare policies, and provides support to those in need. They also have an initiative called **#29DaysofHeart**, which shines a light on Black women's heart health.

Meetings are held on the second Saturday at the DACC Workforce Center, 2345 Nevada Ave. The program begins at **10:00 am** preceded by a "social time" from 9:30 - 10:00 am.

*RoseAnn Hernández & Tricia Brainard* Program Chair

## Interest Groups

Please use your Yearbook for member addresses, phone numbers, and email addresses.



**Anything Goes Book Group** will meet on February 10 at 1:30 pm to discuss *The Buddhist on Death Row* by David Sheff Contact: **Anne Chase**.

**Anything Goes Fiction Book Group** will meet on February 24 at 1:30 pm to discuss *Demon Copperhead* by Barbara Kingsolver. Contact: **Judy McGuire**

**Bridge** Our bridge group will meet at 1:15 pm on the 2nd and 4th Thursday of each month. Contact: **Carol Ann Council**

**Great Decisions** 2025 Discussion Group will begin in March of 2025. We welcome new members! Email **Susan Hychka** saying that you are interested, and we'll order a \$35 briefing book for you from the Foreign Policy Association. You can pay for that when the books are delivered.

Great Decisions monthly discussions are thought-provoking and fun. Topics for 2025 include 1) American Foreign Policy at a Crossroads, 2) US Changing Leadership of the World Economy, 3) US-China Relations, 4) China, the West, and the Global South, 5) International Cooperation on Climate Change, 6) The Future of NATO and European Security, 7) AI and American National Security, and 8) American Foreign Policy in the Middle East: Taking Stock and Looking Ahead.

### Going Places

Contact: **Michele Rasch**

**Chinese Mahjong** Hong Kong Style, or Chinese Mahjong, meets on Wednesday afternoons at 1:00 pm at Rita Worrell's home. Instruction is available for beginners. Contact: **Rita Worrell**

### **Want to know more about an Interest Group?**

Contact the named "**contact**" for each Interest Group described above. Interest groups offer an opportunity to get to know other AAUW LC members in a more relaxed and informal environment. All are welcome.

### **Thinking of you.....**

When you learn of a member who has medical issues, personal loss, or a reason for celebration or recognition, please contact **Judy McGuire** so she can show our support with a personalized card.



## All Above Board

You can click here for your copy of the 2024-2026 elected and appointed leadership team.

### 2024-2026 Board of Directors

Your elected and appointed **Board of Directors** meets monthly on the 1st Monday from 9:30 to 11:30 a.m. Once the Board approves meeting minutes, they are made available to you by clicking on the **link** in the following month's OMV.

Click here for the latest **Board-approved minutes**:

## Communications

In addition to the *Organ Mountain Views* (OMV), we maintain a Website and Facebook page. All Branch emails will be sent by **Donna Yargosz** or **Lynette Schurdevin**, Co-Presidents, and/or **Kathy Cooke**, Email Coordinator.

**AAUW-LC Website** is maintained by **Sonia Walterbos**. Contact her with comments, additions, or questions.. *(click on the link above: "AAUW-LC Website")*

A **Facebook** Page for AAUW LC is maintained by **Sonia Walterbos**. Be sure to "like" our page so you will get updates. *(click on the link above: "Facebook")*

*NOTE: There are three **green tabs** at the end of this newsletter that will take you directly to our website, AAUW NM website, and/or National AAUW's website.*



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## Comments and questions

If you have suggestions or comments about the OMV or wish to advertise here (cost is \$50/year), please contact **Karen Dumont**, editor.

[dumontkm@gmail.com](mailto:dumontkm@gmail.com)

Thank you for reading



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