



ISSUE 6: VOL: XXIV

February, 2026



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

NOTE: If reading this in email or online, click on [view entire message](#) when you get to the end, as the OMV may be "clipped."

*****Also, remember that words underlined in bright blue are links to click on for additional information.*****

Karen Dumont, Editor

General Meeting

Our January program having been postponed, we are glad to present it this month.

Our speaker for February is **Dr. Tricia Brainard**, Director of Adult Education at DACC. Her doctoral study was about White racial privilege. She will be leading a program on Cultural Humility – “Oops, now what? (Repair, Reflection, and Cultural Humility). Tricia is also one of our own VP of programs.

At a time when white nationalism and xenophobia are gaining volume—and transgender people and many Black, Indigenous, People Of Color (BIPOC) communities are experiencing renewed targeting and cultural erasure—how we “show up” with one another matters. This program will explore the shift from cultural competence to cultural humility, questioning the idea that anyone can ever be fully competent in someone else’s lived experience. Together we’ll talk about practical ways to reduce harm: recognize bias, repair when we get it wrong, and build more inclusive practices going forward.

Additionally, we are asking the membership to complete this survey regarding Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging by Feb 1. Here's the link and web address: <https://tinyurl.com/AAUWLCDEI>

The February General Meeting will be held Saturday, Feb 14 (happy Valentine's Day) at 10 am at the Doña Ana Community College Workforce Center at 2345 Nevada Avenue, Las Cruces. The meeting will be preceded by a "social time" starting at 9:30 am.

The link for the 2025-26 Yearbook is found on the AAUW Website under Las Cruces Branch Officers towards the middle of the page. You can also access it by clicking on this link: [2025-2026 Yearbook](#). The password is shared at each branch meeting on the overhead projector in the meeting agenda.

RoseAnn Hernández & Tricia Brainard, Program Chairs

From our President

February is filled with many interesting and fun events. From Library Lovers Day to Heart Healthy day to wear red day on February 7. And of course, Valentine's Day, which is also League of Women Voters Day.



Please note that Donna will have some last-minute items for sale for Valentine's Day, which is our monthly member meeting day.

As we celebrated Martin Luther King, Jr in January with a great turnout at the NAACP brunch, we now celebrate National Black History Month in February. On February 17 we will recognize Presidents' Day.

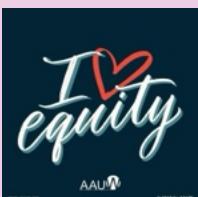
And best of all February is Celebrate Chocolate month.

Looking forward to seeing you at our February meeting.

Lynette Schurdevin

Public Policy

AAUW has long advocated for affordable child care as an important step in increasing gender equity and narrowing the gender pay gap. New Mexico has made a huge advance in this area. Starting last November, New Mexico became the first state in the U.S. to offer universal child care at no cost to all New Mexicans.



How does this work? Income eligibility requirements have been removed from New Mexico's child care assistance program, so that families can now have free child care regardless of income. Governor Lujan Grisham's office has estimated that this will come to a yearly savings for families of \$12,000 per child. Funding goes directly to child care providers. (1)

Currently the state budget has enough money to fund universal child care only through this summer. Funding after this time is uncertain. The budget negotiations during the January 20-February 19 2026 legislative session will determine how long this program can continue. State lawmakers have proposed far less money to sustain the program than the Governor's office has requested. (2)

AAUW members know that affordable child care is a vital component in the fight to increase women's equity in education and the workplace. Let's hope that New Mexico's political leaders find a way to make universal child care permanent.

1 "New Mexico is First State in the Nation to Offer Universal Child Care", Office of the Governor, Sept. 8, 2025. <https://www.governor.state.nm.us/2025/09/08/new-mexico-is-first-state-in-nation-to-offer-universal-child-care/>

2 Chacón, Daniel J., "New Mexico Gov. Michelle Lujan Grisham 'disappointed' LFC Is Proposing Smaller Hike for Child Care," Santa Fe New Mexican, Jan. 7, 2026.

https://www.santafenewmexican.com/news/local_news/new-mexico-gov-michelle-lujan-grisham-disappointed-lfc-is-proposing-smaller-hike-for-child-care/article

Kate Mangelsdorf, Public Policy Chair

Academic Outreach

Did you know that???



NEW MEXICO RANKS #20 NATIONALLY FOR HIGHER EDUCATION.

New Mexico's continued investment in tuition-free college through the Opportunity Scholarship has put the state at No. 20 in the nation for higher education, ranking high for affordability, accessibility and support for the community.

NEW MEXICO IS ONE OF ONLY TWO STATES IN THE NATION TO SEE SUSTAINED ENROLLMENT GAINS SINCE 2020. This is attributed to the state funded Lottery and Opportunity Scholarships. New Freshman enrollment is up over 9% whereas most public universities have seen a 5% decline in enrollment. This past year, 42,479 New Mexicans benefited from the Opportunity Scholarship and 15,962 received the Lottery Scholarship. Since its launch in 2020, 22,939 New Mexicans have completed undergraduate credentials - from certificates to bachelor's degrees - with Opportunity Scholarship support. The Opportunity Scholarship received national recognition from College Promise, a nonprofit advocacy group that promotes college accessibility. New Mexico now ranks 21st nationally for state higher education systems, up from more than 40th six years ago.

NEW MEXICO COLLEGE GRADUATES RANK HIGH FOR ECONOMIC MOBILITY. The 2025 "State Opportunity Index" produced by the Strada Education Foundation reports that 70 percent of New Mexico college graduates achieve a positive return on investment (ROI) over 10 years. The ROI metric reflects graduates who earn more than workers with only a high school diploma and whose 10-year earnings exceed the cost of their degree. New Mexico is one of only 14 states with better than 70 percent of graduates achieving a positive ROI. Nationally, states range from 53 percent to 82 percent on this measure.

However in 2024 a statewide survey of 10,000 NM public college students reported that **almost two thirds experienced food or housing insecurity** and this may lead to the inability to complete their college education. (Information resource: NMHED)

Our scholarship programs help to ease the financial burden of college. Thank you for your contributions!

Londa Seiffert, Academic Chair

AAUW-LC OBSERVES MLK DAY



AAUW Members Julia Brown, Pat Johnson, Penny Scribner, Kathie Davis and guests

Pat Johnson, Kathy Cooke, Jean Roach, Toni Terrell, Patrick McGuffey

Bailey Herrington, Karen Dumont, Terrye Doyle, John Doyle, RoseAnn Hernandez, Rosella Vialpando, Rita Worrell, Judy Hill

The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) Dona Ana branch held its annual observance of Martin Luther King Jr. Day on January 19 at the Las Cruces Convention Center.

AAUW Las Cruces Branch celebrated with three tables, which brought our branch recognition in signage, in the program leaflet and in the presenters' acknowledgements, as well as providing enjoyable companionship for those attending. Barbara McGuffy did a great job pulling together our effort.

This is an example of our cooperation with other organizations sharing our mission of equal treatment.

Karen Dumont, Editor



Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

February

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](#)

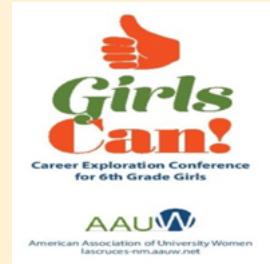
Feb 15: [Maha Shivaratri \(Hindu\)](#)

Feb 27: Mar 19: [Ramadan \(Islam\)](#)

Girls Can!

March 7, 2026 is just around the corner! Are you ready for **Girls Can!?**

If the trend from previous years continues, we will have close to 400 participants. We have sufficient workshops for more than 400 girls, and we have enough space, but to make the day go smoothly.



We need volunteers!

Girls Can! 2026 will take place from 7:30 a.m. until noon on Saturday, March 7 at Doña Ana Community College (2800 Sonoma Ranch Boulevard).

Can't commit to the 4 ½ hours? Let us know when you can be there, and we will have a job for you! We need help before the event too, so there are many ways to be part of the fun.

If you signed up to help at the January meeting, thank you! We'll be in touch with you soon.

If you haven't signed up yet but would like to help, please contact Leslie Gibson, who is finding and organizing volunteers. Phone/text your interest and availability to Leslie at 612.412.5404 or email appetips@gmail.com.

Pat Johnson, Girls Can! Coordinator

February Sale! Deep Discount on Beaded Items!

As mentioned at the January General Meeting, we did very well from the sale of beaded items from September through December. We took in about \$1,600 from sales to members and over \$100 from sales at the Tombaugh Gallery. All proceeds benefit the Scholarship Fund.

We have a few items of this and a few items of that leftover, and they must go. These last few things will be offered at the February 14 General Meeting at much reduced prices. They include: salad server sets for \$10, cheese spreaders for \$5, semi-precious gemstone bracelets for \$10, and beaded tree ornaments for \$1.

As usual, we will have name tag lanyards for \$10. Some lanyards will go up to Albuquerque to the Regional/State convention this Spring, so we are working hard at creating new ones for our own use here. If you want a new lanyard to go with an outfit, for example, come and see us at a table in the back of the room. Selection is limited on everything, so don't dawdle.

Submitted by *Donna Yargosz*

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 New Mexico.

Click here for a pdf of the [2025-2026 Membership Brochure](#) that you can print or email and give to prospective members.

Michele Rasch & Jennifer Burk, Membership Co-VPs

Valentine's Day Period Poverty Drive Saturday, February 14th



AAUW-LC will collect donations of feminine hygiene products from our members at our Saturday, February 14th meeting. Our initial effort, in September, was enthusiastically delivered to our local college campuses, and made available through the NMSU Aggie Cupboard and DACC Comfort Casita.

What we heard? Generous thanks from the staff and the volunteers at both sites. Any federal grant that previously supported the campus food pantry has ended and will not be renewed.

Why? Period Poverty is experienced by 1 in 5 New Mexico women each month. AAUW New Mexico's Public Policy Priorities include Improving Economic Security and Health Lifestyles. By refilling the dedicated shelves at each Food Pantry, with free feminine hygiene products, college students can find reliable support for their personal needs.

What to shop for? Packaged tampons or sanitary pads (any size). Smaller packages of 16-20 items make it easy for distribution.

What if I forget?

We are collecting packaged items only. If you want to participate, but forget to bring something, bring any items to any future meeting. We will not be collecting cash donations.

THANK YOU!

Laura Bemis



Going Places with AAUW

On Friday, January 16, 7 intrepid members of AAUW left early in the morning to follow the Geronimo Trail Scenic Trail to the classic, old west ghost town of Chloride, located in Sierra County, 2 hours north of Las Cruces.

The road to this once prosperous silver mining town is truly gorgeous providing us

with many "Oh look at that!" moments. The day was chilly, but brilliant. We were met by Linda Edmund, whose family has been lovingly restoring Chloride over several decades. She led us through the museum, once the General Store. The Museum is full of former merchandise left over from its general store period. We shopped at the Gift Store, once the dance hall and saloon. Crafts from 30 local artists were on display.

Our final stop was on the hill overlooking the town where the original inhabitants of the town are buried. We all agreed it was a beautiful, final resting place for these townspeople.

Michele Rasch, Going Places Coordinator



Interest Groups

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



Anything Goes Book Group will meet on February 9 at 1:30 pm to discuss *1984* by George Orwell. Contact: **Anne Chase**.

Judy's Book Group will meet on February 23 at 1:30 pm to discuss *Atmosphere* by Taylor Jenkins Reid. Contact: **Mary Barker**

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 Contact: **Susan Hychka** for a briefing book and further details.

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**

Playing and Singing for Fun meets on the 2nd and 4th Thursday mornings at 10 am. The group has chosen ukuleles as our main instrument but other instruments are welcome. Contact: **Reba McGear**.

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 [Roseann Hernández](#) so she can show our support with a personalized card.

All Above Board

You can click here for your copy of the 2025-2027 elected and appointed leadership team.

[2025-2027 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. All Branch emails will be sent by **Lynette Schurdevin**, President, and/or Michele Rasch, 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")

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.



Click on the box below, and it will take you to the AAUW 2025 Work Smart Webinars





Your Name

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Title 2 (optional)

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(click on the underlined link)

Go to AAUW.org and click on the following link to see all the discounts and membership perks.

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February 2026 Series begins February 3rd.
“Understanding Modern Media:
From Newsfeeds to Wellbeing”
Dates: February 3rd, 5th, 10th, and 12th

Courses offered at DACC Auditorium- East Mesa
2800 North Sonoma Ranch Blvd.
Lectures are 10:30 am - 12:00 pm

For Course Schedule and Registration
Click on QR Code or go to this website
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Comments and questions

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dumontkm@gmail.com

Thank you for reading



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