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**September 2024**

**Your 35,000-word essay  
*How I Spent My Summer Vacation* is due tomorrow.  
Please submit it in cursive.**



Dear <<First Name>>,  
Welcome to the *California Connection*, the monthly missive sent to every member from your state organization for a quick and informal read of things to know and do in AAUW!

## **Things to Know**





Our new state president, Charmen Goehring, officially took office July 1st while you were either drafting a spreadsheet at work, reading *Moby Dick* in French, or departing on a cruise ship the size of Arkansas. She and our newbie and O.G. directors and officers crafted plans for the year during a retreat on a steamy weekend in Davis. In between sweaty strolls, the consumption of breakfast pastries, and icebreakers that they wished actually involved ice, they drafted the guiding theme for the year: *Standing Together for Equity*. We welcome this fresh leadership and, as our first show of support, we will not suggest that Charmen wear an inaugural gown. Well, maybe just the high heels.



If you have noticed fewer state-wide webinars lately, it's not that we have become tired of telling people to mute themselves so we don't hear *Yellowstone* in the background. It's because our work to support branches shifted to a peer group structure. Glad you asked what that is. We've assembled our branch leaders into peer groups based on their similar responsibilities. All finance officers are in the Finance Peer Group. All Tech Trek coordinators are in the Tech Trek Peer Group. All membership chairs are in the Branch Support Peer Group. And so on. Middle school band leaders and farriers do not have a peer

group. Peer groups meet regularly to be trained, learn information that matters only to them, share tips from each other, and bond a bunch. No worries though. We'll still do state webinars for all members on broader topics. So don't delete your Zoom account or stop wearing nice clothes just on top.

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Ah....strategic planning. Rarely are two such simple words so dispiriting (with the exception of income tax, final exam, and lost luggage). But, like root canals, strategic planning is a necessary evil. So your state leaders drilled down (get it?) during their planning retreat and identified the guiding priorities for their work this year. We thought you'd like to see them (the priorities, not the leaders, since they might be in the shower).



## Things to Do

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The Paris Olympics had close races in the riveting canoe slalom, the women's sculls, and the polling of people who thought Tom Cruise's stunt was awesome. Our presidential election promises a photo finish too. Every vote will matter. **Every single one.** Urge your branch to participate in a GOTV campaign, which is NOT the name of a new TV streaming service. Register for the Public Policy webinar on Monday, September 23rd, at 7 pm, and learn how you and your

branch can help *Get Out The Vote (GOTV) in a Polarized World*. Also, check out National's extensive election-related materials and how-to videos [HERE](#). If the words "close race" are a painful reminder that you stuffed your running shoes under the bed in 1997, we give you permission to leave them there. Instead, take a seat and watch this [VIDEO](#) for a deep dive into election issues that AAUW cares about, such as student debt, voting rights, DEI in education, the ERA, etc. Those shoes probably had embarrassingly outdated velcro straps anyway.



If you missed Burning Man, the Olympics, or the Indianapolis 500 because of an aversion to porta-potties, you can still be part of a big gathering! AAUW National is hosting a membership party for AAUW peeps to honor supporters and branches, highlight last year's accomplishments, and update all of us on what will be happening in FY25. Register [HERE](#) for the September 10th webinar at 1:00 pm and get the rhapsodic energy of being in a crowd without hygienic concerns.



Do we see your hand raised in the back? We should. Undoubtedly, your branch is asking right now for volunteers to help do what needs doing. What are you good at? What do you want to be better at? What makes you feel warm and fuzzy (recognizing that being warm is not a favored condition this month)? Find

a role that rewards both you and AAUW. It is not necessary to volunteer for anything that requires spandex costumes, an understanding of the laws of motion, or the ability to use Disney ride apps.



**See you next month.  
Don't worry. Essay grades will be held in  
confidence.**



AAUW's mission: To advance gender equity for women and girls through research, education, and advocacy.  
[AAUW.org](https://www.aauw.org)

AAUW California's mission: AAUW California facilitates California branches in meeting the vision and mission of AAUW by providing programs, education and resources.  
[www.aauw-ca.org](https://www.aauw-ca.org)



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