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AAUW  California
Connection



April 2025

On April 18, 1930, BBC Radio reported that there was no news and played piano music for 15 minutes.



We will not be doing that.

Dear Randa,
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

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Two years ago, we made the grievous error of stating that Charlie Brown awaited the Great Pumpkin. Our eagle-eyed readers leapt to their laptops to tell us we made a mistake and it was actually Linus. And now we've done it again. We failed to acknowledge that the hard-working Lompoc-Vandenberg Branch was one of the seven California branches to achieve top recognition in the prestigious Five-Star Program. But, wait, there's more. We also fat-fingered a misspelling of Jeannette Rankin's last name in our quiz on trailblazing women. Apologies to all. We're such blockheads.



Attention cat ladies. This one's for you. Ancient historians recount that the Persians defeated Egypt in a 525 BCE battle by holding live cats aloft, knowing the Egyptians would not unleash arrows and endanger an animal they considered sacred. It's a funny scene to picture. Not so funny is picturing the battle to preserve the U.S. Department of Education. We need a better defense than cats. AAUW has unsheathed its claws by launching a multi-pronged campaign to defend equal access to higher education. It includes an opportunity to make a directed donation specifically to the new [Defend Higher Education Fund](#) (#4513) to support the effort. The funds will not be used to purchase cats.





Remember hearing about “lifelong learning?” One thing we love about working in our branches is that we get to learn new things. It’s even more fun when we can apply what we learn to our non-AAUW life (is there such a thing?). Case in point: dozens of members logged in to former president Sandi Gabe’s webinar on how to use the graphics program [Canva](#) to create slick, professional, and appealing materials. Not all of them were planning on creating tri-fold membership brochures or banners big enough to drag from a crop duster. Some of them just wanted to learn something new. And they did. First, they found out how to use *Canva* to easily make videos out of their vacation photos. Second, they learned that zebras and giraffes are interchangeable species. [IYKYK](#). Watch the recording [HERE](#) to see what we’re talking about.

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Things to Do

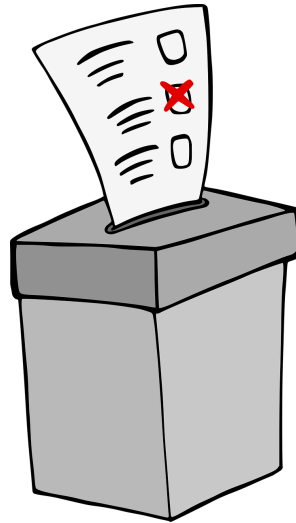
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Today’s homework assignment: Hold your school boards accountable. Register [HERE](#) to learn how to be an effective observer at a school board meeting and monitor the proceedings to ensure compliance with California laws. Learn what those laws are regarding book banning, curriculum censorship, discrimination against LGBTQ+ students, and more. The webinar will be held on Zoom, not in the school cafeteria, on Thursday, April 24th at 6:30 pm. Hosted by the Public Policy Committee’s School Board Project, in collaboration with [Public School Defenders Hub](#), the training will feature Briana Mullen, co-founder and

executive director of [Education Justice Academy](#) and Kathi Harper, former AAUW California Director and Public Policy chair.

- Extra credit: Actually ATTEND a local school board meeting.
- Extra, extra credit: File a complaint if you observe non-compliance.
- Extra, extra, extra credit: Create a papier-mâché diorama of the meeting.



Isn't it exciting when you turn on the TV and a new season of your favorite show has dropped? *Yellowstone*. *Bosch*. *He-Man and the Masters of The Universe*. And don't forget *The Handmaid's Tale* with 10 new episodes featuring Elisabeth Moss's eyeballs ([IYKYK](#)). AAUW California is dropping a new season too. We're electing new directors and officers for next year, as well as seeking approval of a state dues increase from \$20 to \$30 annually and our proposed Public Policy Priorities that will guide our future advocacy efforts. Check [HERE](#) for all the deets on the issues and how to vote. You will receive your ballot when the election opens on April 26th (Look for an email with the subject *2025 AAUW California Election Ballot* or check your spam folder.) Not voting is like skipping episode three and then wondering what's going on.



The famous author T.S. Eliot opined in his epic poem, *The Waste Land*, that “April is the cruellest month.” Must have been doing his taxes. For AAUW members, April is much less dreary. We have the Annual Event! Register [HERE](#) to join us on Zoom on April 26th from 9 am - 2:30 pm to toast how we are *Pivoting 4 Our Future*. Hear inspiring speeches. Try to guess who will win Speech Trek. Join the breakout rooms to explore roles for action in today’s unsettled world. Anticipate the final reveal of who won the coveted awards of Branch Activity of the Year, State Named Gift Honoree, and DEI Champion. Check out the packed schedule [HERE](#). There’s a lot to celebrate. T.S. Eliot didn’t know what he was talking about. All he got was the Nobel Prize.

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Last month we challenged you to guess what these historical “female firsts” had in common:

- ~~ Jeanette Rankin (first woman elected to Congress)
- ~~ Shirley Chisholm (first Black woman elected to Congress)
- ~~ Marjorie Child Husted (the brains behind Betty Crocker)
- ~~ Janet Reno (first female U.S. Attorney General)
- ~~ Nancy Pelosi (first female Speaker of the House)

**Wrong answer: They all milked cows.
Right answer: They were all members of AAUW.
Duh.**



AAUW's mission: To advance gender equity for women and girls through research, education, and advocacy.
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



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