

California Woman

2025
Spring
Edition



Respect Tradition

Embrace Change!

It has been my honor to serve as the 2024-25 California Federation of Business and Professional Women's President. This year our organization celebrates its 105th year of advocating for working women. We deserve to be proud of this tradition. But the world has changed during the past 105 years and we need to embrace new technologies and use them to strengthen and grow our membership. Please consider serving our organization by running for an office (nominations are still open) or volunteering to assist in a chair capacity.

Annual Conference

You are invited to be part of our Annual Conference, including the Pre and Post Board of Directors Meetings, from Friday, May 16 to Sunday, May 18, 2025. The meetings will be held in person at the Courtyard by Marriott Los Angeles-Burbank Airport and on Zoom.

This is an opportunity for CFBPW members to engage in vital discussions surrounding the direction of our organization, including a vote on Bylaws amendments and the rewrite of our Policies and Procedures. Our Program Chair, Rosemary Enzer, has engaged three interesting and informative speakers for us. Please see Rosemary's article for details.

The Call, Registration Form, and Agenda are included in this publication. Also included are the proposed bylaw amendments and the proposed revised policies and procedures. Please mark your calendars and prepare to actively participate in shaping the policies that impact our organization—your voice matters!!

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One break from tradition at this Annual Conference is that the Installation Banquet will be held on Friday instead of on Saturday. Sher Singh will be installed as the 2025-26 President but I will continue to preside as President during the Conference on Saturday. Sher will conduct the Post-Board of Directors Meeting on Sunday meeting where she will introduce the new leadership team and her goals for 2025-26.

Public Policy Conference Recap

Our 65th annual Public Policy Conference in February was very successful once again due to the hard work of our Program/Public Policy Chair, Rosemary Enzer, and our Bill Screening Committee led by Elaine Aftergut, Vice Chair of Public Policy. We had three speakers, awarded our Legislator of the Year, were informed about bills from our Bill Screening Committee, and played a fun Women's History bingo game. All of the speakers were in person. We began our day with a special guest and speaker, Emily VanVleck, the National Vice President Advocacy

We were pleased to renew our long-standing relationship with the California Commission on the Status of Women and Girls. Executive Director Darcy Totten presented information about the Commission, her take on the current political situation, and the California Women's Well-Being Index. Our luncheon program included the presentation of the 2025 Legislator of the Year Award to Assemblymember Stephanie Nguyen. Our final speaker of the day was Jenya Cassidy, Executive Director of the California Work and Family Coalition.

Revised Policies and Procedures (P&P)

Our P&P were extremely outdated. Please read the article by our Bylaws and Resolutions Chair, Trudy Waldroop, in this publication. A copy of the revised P&P was included with the Call. It is also on our website.

In closing, I would just like to extend my sincere thanks to everyone who stepped up this year to serve our federation and to support me. As I stated at the beginning of this message, it has truly been an honor to serve as your 2024-25 President.

I hope to see many of you at the Annual Conference!

Sincerely,

Anne Marie

**California Federation of Business and Professional Women
Annual Conference and Board of Directors Meetings
May 16-18 , 2025**

Agenda

Friday, May 16

9:00 a.m.	Registration
9:30-11:30 a.m.	Pre-Board of Directors Meeting
Noon-1:30 p.m.	Lunch/New Member Spotlight Juliann Rooke, Chief Executive Officer, Descanso Gardens, Member of the Burbank Club
1:30 p.m.	Annual Conference Call to Order Reports Election of Officers Budget
2:30 p.m.	Break
2:45 p.m.	Conference Business Bylaw Amendments Reports
4:15 p.m.	Recess
6:00 p.m.	Dinner & Installation

Saturday, May 17

9:00 a.m.	Registration
9:30 a.m.	Memorial Service
10:15-11:20 a.m.	Conference Continues Unfinished Items from Friday Policy & Procedures Revision
11:50-1:15 p.m.	Lunch/Speaker Nikki Perez, Mayor of the City of Burbank
1:15 p.m.	Business Continues
2:30 p.m.	Break
2:45 p.m.	Speaker: "Cyber Security", Celia Bullard, Member of the East Valley Club
3:15 p.m.	Business
5:00 p.m.	Adjourn

Sunday, May 18

8:30 a.m.	Executive Committee Meeting
9:15 a.m.	Registration
9:30 a.m.	Post Board of Directors Meeting
11:30 a.m.	Adjourn



CALIFORNIA BUSINESS & PROFESSIONAL WOMEN

- CALL:** To CFBPW 105th Annual Conference
and Board of Directors Meetings
- TO:** CFBPW Board of Directors
Past State Presidents
District Presidents
Members
- WHEN:** Friday, Saturday, and Sunday May 16-18, 2025
- LOCATION:** Courtyard by Marriott Los Angeles-Burbank Airport
2100 Empire Avenue – Burbank, CA 91504
1.818.843.5500
- DEADLINES:** **Hotel reservations must be made by April 21, 2025**
Conference Registration must be **received** by Friday, May 6, 2025
- RATES:** Single/Double @ \$219 Plus Occupancy Tax of 15% (\$251.85)
Rate does not include breakfast.

ROOM RESERVATIONS

To book your room for this CFBPW rate call **1.818.843.5500**.
Reservation deadline for this rate is Monday April 21, 2025. No Shows will be billed.
You may also check **Extended Stay America** at 2200 W. Empire Avenue, Burbank CA 91504, just a 3-minute walk from the Courtyard. Their number is **1.818-567-0952**.
Please feel free to shop around for the best rate. CFBPW has not contracted for rooms or rates.

NEAREST AIRPORT & TRANSPORT

Burbank Airport – The hotel does not provide shuttle service. Taxi or Uber/Lyft are your best options.

PARKING

Day use parking is complimentary. Overnight discounted to \$15/night

BPW/CA wishes to demonstrate an environmental ethic in its meetings and encourages all attendees to participate at their level of comfort. CFBPW is working closely with the Courtyard Burbank Hotel to coordinate Green practices. When possible, communication will be done electronically with minimal paper use.

CALIFORNIA FEDERATION of BUSINESS & PROFESSIONAL WOMEN
105th Annual Conference
May 16-18, 2025 – Marriott Courtyard Burbank
CFBPW REGISTRATION FORM

PLEASE PRINT ALL INFORMATION – Please, one form for each person attending

FIRST NAME: _____ LAST NAME: _____

E-MAIL _____ PREFERRED PHONE: _____

_____ *will be attending via Zoom and understand the registration fees below apply.*

May 16-18, 2025 – Annual Conference Registration

2024-2025 STATE POSITION: (Please check only one.)

State Officer: _____ Standing Chair: _____ Member: _____
 Past State President: _____ Special Chair: _____ First Timer: _____
 District President or Alternate: _____ District Representative: _____ **Guest *:** _____

** Note: Guests do not pay the registration fee...only meals and any late meal charge incurred.*

REGISTRATION: (FOR ALL, IN PERSON OR VIA ZOOM)

Zoom Registration – \$ 50 _____
In-Person Registration
Early Bird – Received on or before Monday May 6, 2025 \$ 45 _____
Received Between– May 6 and May 12, 2025 \$ 50 _____
Received (email, fax or telephone) after May 12 and onsite \$ 60 _____

MEALS – (Please select)

Friday Lunch – Turkey-Provalone Wheat Wrap \$45 _____
Friday Installation Banquet – Chicken Cordon Bleu \$55 _____
Saturday Lunch – Chicken Picatta \$45 _____

Plus \$5 late fees for each meal received after May 6 \$ _____

TOTAL AMOUNT ENCLOSED – PLEASE MAKE CHECK PAYABLE TO: CFBPW \$ _____

POST CONFERENCE BOARD OF DIRECTORS REGISTRATION -
POST CONFERENCE BOARD REGISTRATION IS INCLUDED IN CONFERENCE REGISTRATION.
HOWEVER, PLEASE INDICATE YOUR PARTICIPATION

2025-2026 STATE POSITION: (Circle Only One)

State Officer: _____ Standing Chair: _____ Member: _____
 Past State President: _____ Special Chair: _____ First Timer: _____ **Guest *:** _____
 District President or Alternate: _____ District Representative: _____

MAIL CHECK, MADE PAYABLE TO CFBPW, AND THIS FORM TO:

Katherine Winans – CFBPW Registration
1171 Chaparral Court, Minden NV 89423

PHONE/FAX NUMBER: 775 267 0539

Email form to: jkw@gbis.com

YOU MAY PAY USING ZELLE. SET THIS UP THROUGH YOUR BANK ONLINE. NO FEES CHARGED.

SEND THROUGH ZELLE USING THIS EMAIL: bpwvsd@gmail.com

With Zelle payments you still need to mail or email the registration form as above.

SPECIAL REQUIREMENTS:

____ If you have a disability and require accommodation to fully participate in this activity, please check here.
 You will be contacted to discuss your specific needs.

____ If you have dietary restrictions, please let us know: _____



FRIDAY 16 MAY, 2025.

**INSTALLATION TO THE THEME OF
A TANGO NIGHT**

WEAR YOUR GOLD AND CRIMSON RED!

COME, LISTEN AND LEARN AT THE CFBPW ANNUAL CONFERENCE *Speakers on Diverse Issues Will Highlight the Meeting*

We look forward to a series of interesting speakers on a variety of topics at the 105th Annual CFBPW Conference on Friday, May 16, and Saturday, May 17.



Juliann Rooke
Executive Director of
Descanso Gardens

You won't want to miss this New Member Spotlight at our Friday luncheon. Juliann Rooke, the CEO of Descanso Gardens and a member of the Burbank Club, will share information with us about Descanso Gardens. This spectacular venue sits on 150 acres of cultivated and wild land nestled into a natural bowl by surrounding mountains. It is a botanical garden, a living museum and urban oasis just 20 minutes from downtown Los Angeles.

Saturday's luncheon speaker will be Nikki Perez, the Mayor of the City of Burbank. Mayor Perez was raised by parents who immigrated here from El Salvador and Guatemala. She was elected with a record breaking 17,958 votes becoming the first Indigenous and openly LGBTQIA+ Council Member in the City of Burbank. Mayor Perez will welcome members to the City of Burbank and describe her journey to become an elected official.



Nikki Perez
Mayor of the City of Burbank



Celia Bullard
East Valley BPW Club

Rounding out the programming for the Annual Conference is a presentation by Celia Bullard, Treasurer of East Valley BPW Club in Sierra Mar District. Celia will discuss cybersecurity tips for keeping ourselves and our families safe from cyber criminals. Among other topics, she will talk about ID protection sites (and fake ones), adding credit cards to your wallet, using Zelle and Venmo.

We hope to see you in Burbank or on Zoom for two days of interesting and information programs. Make your plans now to attend.

Rosemary Enzer
CFBPW Program/Projects Chair

VISIT TO DESCANSO GARDENS

We're a botanical garden, living museum,
and urban oasis
20 minutes from downtown Los Angeles

<https://www.descansogardens.org/>



You probably have a favorite place to walk and enjoy nature. My place is Descanso Gardens. It is a 15 minute drive from my house but that is time well spent.

The Garden is a magical place with a rose garden, a Japanese tea garden, an ancient oak forest, a lake which feeds a stream which meanders down through the gardens, redwood trees, and in the spring, tulips.

I took these three photographs on one of my recent trips there.

Anne Marie



The Old Oak Forest



NEW CEF BROCHURES AVAILABLE

CALIFORNIA BPW EDUCATION FUND, INC.

ABOUT US:

California Federation of Business and Professional Women's mission is to promote and support equity for working women in all stages of their lives and to promote personal empowerment and professional development through advocacy, education and information.

The California BPW Education Fund is a non-profit public benefit 501(c) 3 corporation which provides interest free educational loans, convertible to grants, to BPW members and their immediate families.

ELIGIBILITY:

Loans are made to members of the California Federation BPW and their immediate families (both women and men) who are U.S. citizens and residents of California. Student members are also eligible.

VISIT: www.bpwcal.org for additional information, a membership application, or a loan application.

MEMBERSHIP:

\$85/year plus local club fee Student membership: \$30.

At large membership is available without a club fee

USES OF FUNDS:

Funds must be used for Education in an accredited school or college, accepted by the CBPWEF Board to cover:

- * Tuition and/or fees
- * Books
- * Supplies
- * Undergraduate degrees
- * Re-entry students
- * Career change
- * Advanced degrees

Special member benefit: Loans in some cases may be converted to grants based on academic performance and financial need.



Updated brochures for the California BPW Education Fund (CEF) will be available at the Annual CFBPW Conference. The brochures include the current dues and mailing address. Members, please pick up some to distribute to your club and district—and potential members.—who may be interested in applying for an educational loan.

If you are not attending the meeting in person, but would like copies of the brochure, please contact Rosemary Enzer at renzer3335@aol.com and they will be mailed to you.

10 GREAT REASONS TO JOIN BPW

- * Career Development
- * Continuing Education
- * Legislative Advocacy
- * Leadership Experience
- * Lasting Friendships
- * Making a Difference
- * Personal Development
- * Giving Back
- * Learning
- * Having Fun



For additional information regarding loans or to make a tax-deductible donation contact CEF at:

710 South Main Street,
Burbank, CA 91506

<https://bpwcal.org/cfbpw-education-fund/>

California Business and Professional Women Education Fund, Inc. (CEF)

CEF is a non-profit organization; donations are tax deductible



LOANS AND GRANTS

ARE AVAILABLE!



We help dreams come true!

CEF has money to loan! We currently have no new loan applications and, thanks to you, our members, we have a very healthy treasury. CEF is a great membership recruiting tool. Look around you and see who is enrolling in a college and may need extra help. These are our potential members!

Rosemary Enzer, President
California BPW Education Fund, Inc.



DID YOU KNOW



- **By the end of World War I there were many California women who joined the world of business and professional workers.**
- **The first National Federation President was from California. Her name was Gail Laughlin, an attorney and activist from San Francisco.**
- **In 1947-1972 we adopted the Philippine Scholarship, awarding scholarships to women college students to come to California for graduate study at our universities.**
- **In 1970 we had raised money to purchase a station wagon for use by the Chinese Nurses in Taiwan.**

[Wikipedia Gail Laughlin - Search](#)

~ **Trudy**

A report from your Bylaws/Resolutions Chair

A few months ago President Anne Marie asked some of us (Parliamentarian Sandy Thompson, Web Coordinator Linda Wilson, and Bylaws Chair yours truly) to serve with her on a Task Force to review and update our Policies and Procedures (P&P). The task is now complete for you the members to see and review and will be approved by you at Annual Conference.

We began this task with our first of six zoom meetings and many, many e-mails with each task member looking at a number of P&P paragraphs. Drafts went back and forth via e-mail and zoom meetings until we felt we were finished and ready to present to you the members.

In summary, we added P&P items that were passed since 2020, corrected some grammar and punctuation, consolidated and regrouped a couple of items, and returned a couple of old items to the document. New to P&P we added a section on how to do resolutions and a section on web links policy. For the finished product we added a nice cover page and a table of contents so members can see at a glance what the contents of the P&P contains and what page it is on.

This document was sent via e-mail to all members on March 31 in the Call to Annual and it is also posted on our website under Members Only tab. This task prompted the 3 proposed bylaws amendments also sent to all members via the Call to Annual on March 31.

Please read and review. Bring any questions or amendments to the Annual Conference on May 17.

Yours truly,

Trudy Waldroop

2024-25 Bylaws Chair

llovebpw@yahoo.com

APPROVED: AMJ

UPDATE ON THE EQUAL RIGHTS AMENDMENT

(ERA)

BEFORE LEAVING OFFICE IN JANUARY 2025 PRESIDENT BIDEN SAID IT WAS HIS OPINION THAT THE ERA WAS RATIFIED, BUT HE DID NOT TELL THE U.S. ARCHIVIST TO PUBLISH IT AS THE 28TH AMENDMENT TO THE CONSTITUTION. IT IS UP TO CONGRESS TO ACT ON THE RATIFICATION OF THE ERA. THE NFBPWC WEBSITE (NFBPWC.ORG) HAS A PLACE WHERE YOU CAN CONTACT YOUR CONGRESS MEMBERS VIA E-MAIL, CALL, X (FORMERLY TWEET) OR SEND A VIDEO IN SUPPORT OF ANY BILLS ON THE ERA.

THE ERA HAD TO START OVER IN THE 119TH CONGRESS. MARCH 25, 2025 (MURKOWSKI AND HIRONO) INTRODUCED SJ RES 38, WHICH SAYS IT IS THE OPINION OF THE SENATE THAT THE ERA HAS PASSED AND IS THE 28TH AMENDMENT TO THE CONSTITUTION. AS OF APRIL 2ND THE COMPARABLE HOUSE BILL HJ RES 80 (PRESSLEY) HAS 138 CO-SPONSORS - 137 DEMOCRATS AND ONE REPUBLICAN - MICHAEL LAWLER (NY-17TH). TWENTY-FOUR OF THE CO-SPONSORS ARE FROM CALIFORNIA.



WEBSITE COORDINATOR'S REPORT

Please send your calendar of programs for the year (or for the upcoming month) to lindalwilson@juno.com or Linda Wilson, 1000 E. Newmark Avenue #22, Monterey Park, CA 91755 so that your webpage (each Club and District has a webpage on the State website) can be updated. Location and times of meetings should also be on your webpage so people can find out about your Club and District. Photographs can also be added to your webpage. Clubs will be electing officers for 2025-26, please send me your list of officers for 2025-26. Please take a look at the State webpage <https://bpwcal.org>. There is a great deal of information on the pages. There is an Events page so that is used in addition to your Club's page to publicize your programs.

New or other items added to the State webpage are the following –

- 1). The home page under the first blog is information on the Annual Conference including the Call, registration forms, proposed Bylaws changes and proposed Policies and Procedures. This is also repeated on the **"Events"** page and the **"Members"** page.
- 2). Under the **"Clubs"** tab are the Districts and the Clubs. The Districts and Clubs list their officers, chairs, meeting dates, programs and photos of previous meetings. With the start of the new BPW Year, Clubs and Districts will probably be changing officers. Downtown Sacramento had their election in March so their officers are up-to-date. The Districts and Clubs need to keep this information up-to-date by sending the information to this Chair.
- 3). Under **"Membership"** tab there is information on the next NFBPWC Biennial Assembly, the BPW International Regional Conference and the BPW-International Congress.
- 4). Under **"CFBPW Education Fund"** tab is the address to send donations or to apply for funds. It now has the list of donations in memory of members who have passed away or donations in honor of members. Some recent donations in memory of are Marjory Hopper, Jackie Melvin and Lynn Brandstater.
- 5). Under **"Awards and Recognition"** tab are recognitions of people for "Women of Achievement," "Young Careerists and other awards given by Clubs, Districts and CFBPW. Remember to send photos of the honorees to this Chair along with their award.

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- 6). Under the "**New Members**" tab are photos of new members. Congratulations to East Los Angeles-Montebello (two new members) and Downtown Sacramento (one new member) since Winter Board. Remember to send photos and names of new members to this Chair.
- 7). Under the "**Legislation**" tab is a list of bills that the CFBPW Bill Screening Committee has reviewed and on which they have taken positions. If you have any bills for the new session of the California Legislature that you would like considered, please send them to Elaine Aftergut efarcl@aol.com.
- 8). Under the "**Events**" tab are the programs/meetings that have been reported to this Chair. There is usually a month at a time on the page.
- 9). Under the "**Members' Only**" tab are the latest issue of the "California Woman," Memorial Reporting Form, Dues Transmittal Form for 2025-26, CFBPW Bylaws, Model Club Bylaws, information on membership recruitment and various presentations that could be used at the Club or District level. Remember the password is CFBPW.
- 10). The photos for CFBPW Winter Board and Public Policy 2025 are under the "**Photo Gallery**" tab.

Please use the CFBPW webpage (<https://bpwcal.org>) and submit information to this Chair to keep it up-to-date.

Linda L. Wilson
Website Coordinator



BUSINESS AND PROFESSIONAL WOMEN CALIFORNIA NORTH DISTRICT

CALL to 2025 District Annual Conference

TO: BPW California North Members
CFBPW Executive Committee
CFBPW District Presidents

WHEN: Saturday – April 26, 2025

LOCATION: Your place - **Virtual Only**

CONFERENCE REGISTRATION RSVP Deadline is Monday, April 21, 2025.

Tentative Agenda

9:15a Zoom Check-in
9:30a Call to Order
Introductions/Roll Call
Reports: Executive Committee, Club Presidents and Chairs
Business
10:15a Recess
10:30a Programming – Workshop – Membership Development
District support of Sher Singh as incoming CFBPW President
11:30a Break
11:45a Presentation – “*Are Women Losing Ground? The answer is YES*”. - **Jill Derby**
12:15p Officer Installation & Planning for 2025-2026
1:30p Adjournment

REGISTRATION INFORMATION

Please provide all requested information below and email this form to:

Katherine Winans @ jkw@gbis.com or -

call 775.267.0539 -

or mail to 1171 Chaparral Court, Minden, NV 89423

Please RSVP to the 2015 Annual Conference to Katherine by Tuesday, April 21, 2025

Name: _____ Club: _____
Email: _____ Phone: _____

In what role will you be attending the meeting? (**Please select only one**)

- District Officer District Chair Club President/Alternate BPW Member
 Guest This is my first District Conference (First Timer)

Annual Conference Registration: NO COST

But please RSVP and provide the above requested information.

Message from Sierra Mar

Happy Spring. Before we celebrate renewal, I would like to remember our past year. It was packed with fellowship, learnings and interesting topics. We kept up with the happenings at CFBPW and NFBPW through our state and national representatives, we joined our local clubs in fellowship, we learned about a variety of topics such as scams targeting seniors, diamonds, missing and lost people and a program for formerly incarcerated women. We also learned about propositions on the November, 2024 ballot, we tracked the progress of ERA through our legislative reporter, Linda Wilson, as well as other state initiatives shared by JoAnne Mitchell.

While we were practicing our leadership skills we were also doing community service. El Monte BPW raised funds and provided scholarships for women, East Valley BPW club collected women's hygiene products for "Period Poverty" and East Los Angeles-Montebello BPW provided gift cards for families selected by the Boys and Girls Club of the West San Gabriel Valley.

Now Spring is arriving. We can see the daffodils rising from the cold soil. Trees and plants are greening up. And so begins our next fiscal year. May we renew our commitment to working women whether they work in their homes or in the office. May we continue to honor a Woman of Achievement and a Young Professional this year. It has been an honor to serve in such a dedicated group as Sierra Mar District. Now it is time for new leadership to take the helm. Election of officers is scheduled at our Spring conference on April 19th.

Karen Roberson

VALLEY SUNSET DISTRICT

Valley Sunset District has just completed a busy year of conferences and social events, beginning with our June Planning meeting held at Mimi's Café where we decided on themes, venues and host clubs for the 2024-2025 BPW year.

Our Fall Conference once again honored our Women of Achievement from our clubs and the District. Our own Marjory Hopper was honored posthumously as the District Woman of Achievement for her many years of service to BPW at the local, district, state, national and international levels.

Zizette Mullins, member of the City Council, was the Burbank honoree. She has served both the City of Burbank and the City of Glendale. A former business owner, she was the Burbank City Clerk before her election to the Council

The Conejo Valley Club's Woman of Achievement was Captain Jennifer Seetoo, the first female commander of the Lost Hills/Malibu Los Angeles County Sheriff Station. Captain Seetoo spent a year training police officers in Jordan and Iraq and worked on the Joint Terrorism Task Force for the Department of Homeland Security.

Our Annual Holiday Luncheon was held once again at the historic Smoke House Restaurant and was hosted by the Executive Committee.

Valley Sunset's Winter Conference, hosted by Conejo Valley BPW, focused on climate change. The keynote speaker, Kathy Kelly, former vice president of NFBPWC, shared her expertise with us in her presentation: "BPW's Efforts and Tips to Make a Difference in Your Community." The afternoon speaker, Ryan Valencia, an Assembly District Director, spoke on "Climate Change, the Role of Sacramento and Local Communities."



Carrie Prado
Director of Programs
Home Again LA

Our Annual Conference on April 26 will be hosted by the District's members at large and will focus on Housing Security.

Carrie Prado, Director of Programs for Home Again LA, our morning speaker, will describe the services offered by the non-profit homeless agency. Since 2010, HALA focused on providing shelter in partnership with local congregations who provided overnight accommodations. Since then, it has expanded to five core programs: *Shelter, Homeless Prevention, Rapid Rehousing, Outreach and Transitional Housing.*

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Robert Newman, with the Homeless Outreach Program for the City of Burbank, will discuss how the program has worked to reduce homelessness within the city, in collaboration with its partners. Since 2019 they have invested in initiative-taking outreach.

The Annual Conference agenda also includes the installation of our new officers for 2025-26: Cherril-Lou Jacobson, President and Sandy Thompson, Treasurer. Other officers will be elected at the meeting. Sally McMahon will serve as the installing officer.

Rosemary Enzer, President

MY JOURNEY TO ORISSA-INDIA ...

I WAS HONORED TO BE INVITED TO BE A SPEAKER AT THE INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE 2025 AT RAMA DEVI WOMEN'S UNIVERSITY, ORGANIZED BY MAA RAMA DEVI CHAIR, IN BHUBANESWAR, ORISSA INDIA.

THE TITLE OF THE CONFERENCE WAS:

**WOMEN'S JOURNEYS OF RESILIENCE AND EMPOWERMENT,
STORIES AND STRATEGIES: SPIRITUAL STRENGTH"
ON FEB 28TH AND MARCH 1ST 2025.**

I SPOKE ON MY LIFE JOURNEY AND THE ROLE OF FORGIVENESS ON MARCH 1, 2025.



I WAS INTRODUCED AS THE IMMEDIATE PAST PRESIDENT OF THE CALIFORNIA FEDERATION OF BUSINESS AND PROFESSIONAL WOMEN AND PRESIDENT OF INDO-AMERICAN CHAMBER OF COMMERCE OF NORTHERN CALIFORNIA.





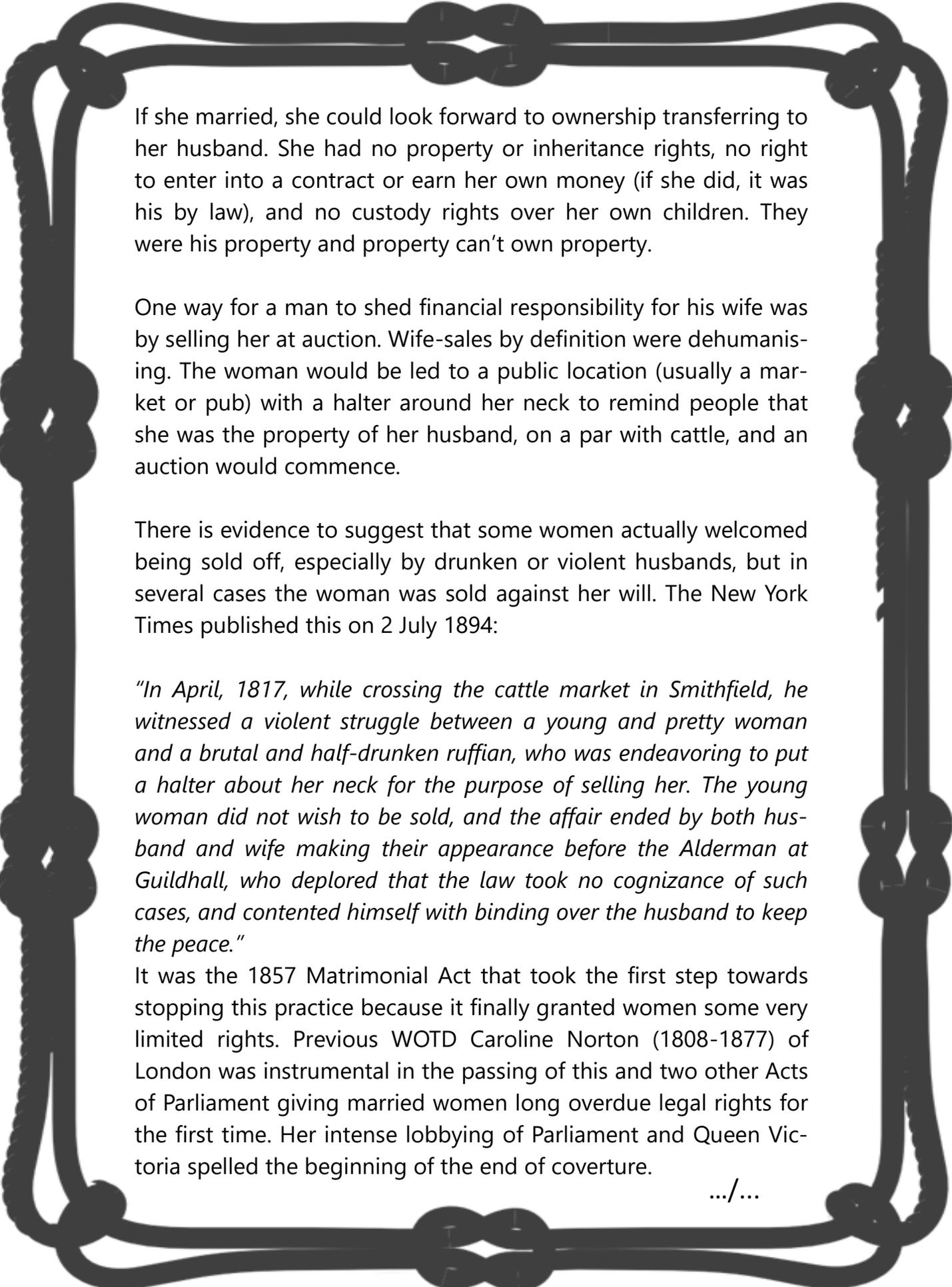
Woman of the Day is Mary Anne Thomson of Carlisle. I can't tell you when she was born or indeed anything about her other than the fact that OTD in 1832, she was sold at auction by her husband for the knockdown price of 20 shillings plus a dog.

I really wish I was making this up but I'm not. Between 1760 and 1880, about three hundred wives were sold. Unbelievable, isn't it? Yet it was only possible because in law, the common law principle of coverture held that a married woman was no more than a chattel - the property - of her husband.

In those days, it was very difficult, if not impossible, for a woman to live well without marrying unless her family was wealthy and generous. The average single woman was denied more than basic education, denied access to employment outside teaching, nursing and cleaning, and she was the property of her father.

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If she married, she could look forward to ownership transferring to her husband. She had no property or inheritance rights, no right to enter into a contract or earn her own money (if she did, it was his by law), and no custody rights over her own children. They were his property and property can't own property.

One way for a man to shed financial responsibility for his wife was by selling her at auction. Wife-sales by definition were dehumanising. The woman would be led to a public location (usually a market or pub) with a halter around her neck to remind people that she was the property of her husband, on a par with cattle, and an auction would commence.

There is evidence to suggest that some women actually welcomed being sold off, especially by drunken or violent husbands, but in several cases the woman was sold against her will. The New York Times published this on 2 July 1894:

"In April, 1817, while crossing the cattle market in Smithfield, he witnessed a violent struggle between a young and pretty woman and a brutal and half-drunken ruffian, who was endeavoring to put a halter about her neck for the purpose of selling her. The young woman did not wish to be sold, and the affair ended by both husband and wife making their appearance before the Alderman at Guildhall, who deplored that the law took no cognizance of such cases, and contented himself with binding over the husband to keep the peace."

It was the 1857 Matrimonial Act that took the first step towards stopping this practice because it finally granted women some very limited rights. Previous WOTD Caroline Norton (1808-1877) of London was instrumental in the passing of this and two other Acts of Parliament giving married women long overdue legal rights for the first time. Her intense lobbying of Parliament and Queen Victoria spelled the beginning of the end of coverture.

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But back to Mary Anne.

Her sale was recorded in the Annual Register, an annual reference work recording and analyzing major and noteworthy events, first written under the editorship of Edmund Burke (he of Burkean representation fame) in 1758, thus:

"...placed his wife on a large oak chair with a rope or halter of straw round her neck. He then spoke..."I have to offer to your notice my wife, Mary Anne Thomson...she has been to me only a born serpent. It is her wish as well as mine to part forever...I took her for my comfort and the good of my home, but she has become my tormentor, a domestic curse, a night invasion and a daily devil."

"She can read novels and milk cows...she can make butter and scold the maid; she can sing Moore's melodies and plain her frills and caps. She cannot make rum, gin or whisky but she is a good judge of the quality from long experience in testing them."

His asking price was 50 shillings (about £237 in today's money) but after an hour, it was knocked down to 20 shillings (about 95 quid) plus a Newfoundland dog. The buyer was a farmer from Carlisle and Mary Anne went off with him.

The last recorded wife-sale was in 1913 in Leeds when a woman deserted by her husband took him to court for non-payment of maintenance and gave evidence that he'd sold her to one of his workmates for £1 (about £125 in today's money).

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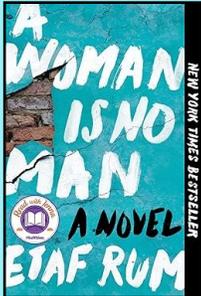
Coverture was finally knocked on the head of 23 October 1991 by the Law Lords in their famous 1991 ruling in *R v R*, although I'd like to give a special mention to the women of Dublin who interrupted a wife-sale in 1756, rescued the woman, and put the husband in the stocks overnight.

Mary Anne, I hope you had a better life with the Carlisle farmer than the bloke who drove you to drink. Pass me the gin.



Book Reviews

By Linda L. Wilson



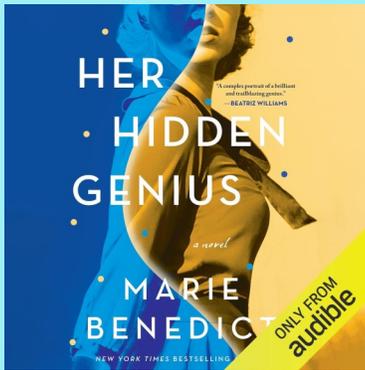
A WOMAN IS NO MAN by **Etaf Rum** takes place on the West Bank of Palestine and the United States. The main characters are Isra and her daughter Deya. The story is loosely based on the author's life. The author had an arranged marriage at the age of 19 which is customary among Palestinians even in the United States.

The story opens in 1990 with Isra in the West Bank of Palestine. She is a reader and dreams of another life. Her father does not approve of her reading so she has to hide the books from him. Her father interviews potential husbands. She knows she will have to do what he says because in the past when she tries to not follow his orders he beats her. The father also beats his wife when she does not do what he wants. It appears to be the way it is in Palestine. He decides she is to marry a young man from America, who came with his mother to select a wife in Palestine. Isra marries the man from the United States and immigrates with him to Brooklyn. The area they live in is heavily Palestinian. They live downstairs in his parents' home. Now that she is there, the mother turns over many of the duties of the home including the cooking. Isra is not allowed to go out of the home unless her husband accompanies her. She has no friends and no chance to learn about her new country. Her husband has a sister who sneaks books in for her. The sister is also expected to marry young to a man selected by her parents. She wants to go to college and not marry young.

After setting the scene for Isra, it skips to 2008 with Deya, who is Isra's daughter, in her last year of school and wants to go to college. She also is a reader. Deya has three younger sisters. She has been told that her parents died in a car accident. Her grandparents want her to have an arranged marriage and forget about college or go to college after marriage. She does have a chance to interview the potential husbands.

It skips back to Isra's story and how disappointed her husband and in-laws are when she has a baby girl. That is followed a couple years later with another baby girl. She is blamed for not having a boy. Her husband is under stress for having to financially support his family. He then starts beating his wife for not doing something right. The cycle continued because his mother had been beaten until she discovers her husband is drinking and holds that over him as a Muslim is not to drink. Isra's husband has also started drinking, but she does not use this against him. Isra blames herself for not being good enough.

It then returns to 2008, and we learned the sister of Isra's husband has run away rather than get married in an arranged marriage. We also learn that Deya's parents did not die in a car accident. The story keeps going back and forth from 2008 to 1990 so we have Isra's full story. Deya's story is not complete when the story ends. It is an interesting book and could only be written from someone from that culture because an outside person would be accused of racism as not every Palestinian woman and child is beaten as the book seems to indicate. This gives readers a chance to experience another culture. ■



HER HIDDEN GENIUS by Marie Benedict

is a fiction book, but based on Dr. Rosalind Franklin's life. She came from a wealthy Jewish family in London of two boys and two girls. She was the odd one in the family in that she devoted her life to science although her parents kept encouraging her to marry and start a family. They did not mind her having a career, but not one which took over everything in her life.

The book covers from 1947 when she started as a researcher in a lab in Paris to her death in 1958 at the young age of 35 from cancer. She had a degree in Physical Chemistry

from Cambridge University.

At the lab in Paris she learned to use X-ray crystallography to study the composition of coal. She is treated as an equal researcher with the other men and women who work there. She falls in love with her supervisor Jacques – not knowing that he is married. When she finds that he is also having an affair with another researcher, she decides she needs to pay attention to her parents who want her to return to London.

She gets a job at the King's College where her assignment is to work on the structure of DNA. She is a perfectionist when it comes to science wanting to verify everything, but she does not carry out safety protocol as to radiation. Many others in the lab do the same throwing away the results of the radiation tests. She works long hours, but the place is not congenial as was the case in Paris. Wilkins one of the researchers thought he was the boss which he was not. He ended up stealing her research and giving it to Watson and Crick, who are credited with discovering the structure of DNA.

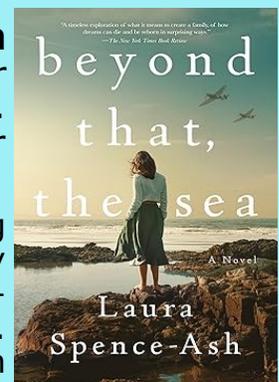
Their discovery was based on her research for which she received no credit. I thought the book was interesting telling a little-known story about a woman who did not get credit for her work. Some of the detail about her tests may be more than many people would like to hear. I think this would make a very interesting movie.

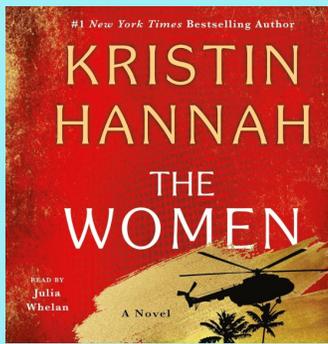
BEYOND THAT, THE SEA by Laura Spence-Ash

is the story of a young girl – Beatrix "Bea," whose family sends her to the United States from London in 1940 by boat to keep her safe. It is her dad who wants her to go and be safe. She thinks it is her mother. They do not know the host family.

The book is short chapters which can be completed during commercials on TV. Each chapter is what one of the seven family members thinks or does. The family members are Bea and her parents plus the two parents and two sons of the family she lives with. One son (William) is a little older than Bea and the other son (Gerald) is a little younger than Bea. Later Rose, who becomes the wife of William, the oldest son, has chapters.

At the beginning it tells through Bea and the others Bea's adjustment to the United States and their dealings with her and their lives. Bea's American family lives in Boston, but they spend a lot of time at their place in Maine in the summer. In 1945 Bea returns home. Chapters continue to rotate between Bea and the others. It ends in August 1977. Bea has returned to the United States, has married and has a daughter. It is fairly light reading. ■





THE WOMEN by Kristin Hannah is a fiction story of Frances "Frankie" McGrath, who served as a nurse in Vietnam.

Frankie came from a wealthy family who lived on Coronado Island, California. Her father maintained a wall of photos of male relatives including her grandfather and great-grandfather who served in the military. Her father did not serve. Her brother Finley volunteered to serve in the Navy and was sent to Vietnam. His photo went on the wall. Frankie was looking at the wall during the going away party for her brother. A friend of her brother pointed out that women could also serve and be heroes.

After getting her nursing license, she decided to do that. The Navy and Air Force rejected her because of her lack of experience, but the Army accepted her.

Before she left, her brother was killed in Vietnam. When she told her father, she had volunteered, he rejected her and told her women could not serve. Her mother did keep in touch with her in Vietnam.

Through Frankie's eyes you see how awful it was there. She did become a great nurse. She fell in love with a doctor, but as he was married, it never went any further. She did also fall in love with the friend who said women could be heroes and who had become a doctor. She did not know he was married. She thought he was killed in Vietnam. It follows Frankie after the war and coming home. She was spit on for serving there. She had PTSD, but the VA told her there were no women in Vietnam.

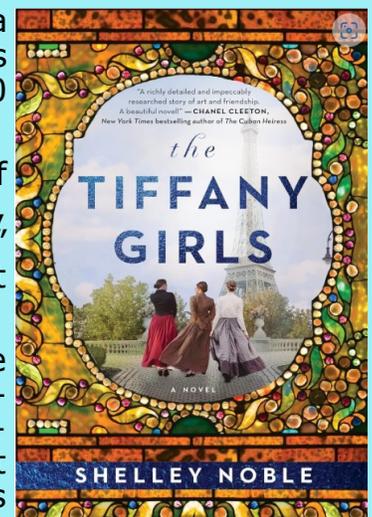
It is an interesting story and keeps you reading. It is more than 400 pages. The places in the book in Vietnam are real. The author had thought to fictionalize the places, but after doing research with nurses who served there, she decided to use the real places. I recommend the book.

THE TIFFANY GIRLS by Shelley Noble is a fiction book about the girls who put together the "Four Season's Windows" for Louis Comfort Tiffany's exhibit at the 1900 World's Fair Exhibit in Paris.

The story concentrates on five of the girls with most of the story about Emile Pascal, whose father was an art forger, and Grace Griffith, who does political cartoons for the "Sun" newspaper under the name G.L. Griffith because she does not think they would publish cartoons from a woman.

Emile had run from Paris ahead of the Police who came to arrest her for forgery as her abusive father who was the forger had disappeared. She does not let those at the Tiffany factory in New York know her background because she does not think they will hire her. Clara Driscoll, who supervises the girls doing the glasswork, and Tiffany are real people.

Once the windows are complete, Emile, Grace and Clara accompany Tiffany to Paris to set everything up. Emile is very afraid that she will be recognized which does eventually happen. Read the book to see what happens to her and the other "Tiffany Girls." ■





THE NIGHTINGALE by Kristin Hannah is a fiction story of two sisters – Isabelle and Vianne. The story starts in 1995 in Oregon, but then goes back to a little before World War II in Paris and continues on until after the war. The one in the first chapter has cancer for the third time and knows she is dying. In the next chapter Vianne is living in a small town in the south of France with her eight-year-old daughter and husband. The war has started, and her husband is leaving to go fight the Nazis. No one thinks the German Nazis will take over France.

Meanwhile the younger sister gets expelled from another boarding school for sassing back. The story backtracks some more to when Isabelle and Vianne's dad is drinking. After their mother dies the drinking becomes worse. He does not want anything to do with either daughter. Vianne gets pregnant and marries her lover. They are happy. Isabelle gets sent to another Catholic Boarding school. Isabelle tries to find a home with her dad in Paris, but he does not want her there. Her sister is not happy with her in her home after the Germans take over France, and she is forced to have a Nazi soldier stay at her home. Vianne is afraid that Isabelle will say something to the soldier and get them killed or deported. Isabelle leaves.

Isabelle wants to help the resistance movement. She becomes a messenger for the resistance and then leads Allied soldiers who were shot down over the Pyrenees to Spain and safety. Meanwhile, Vianne is trying to survive at her home with food rations becoming less and less. She also is trying to make contact with her husband who is in a German POW camp. Both become heroines in their own way surviving and saving people. I would recommend the book. It is a long book at 567 pages. There are a lot a really sad moments, and you find out how bad World War II was.

THE BORROWED LIFE OF FREDERICK FIFE,

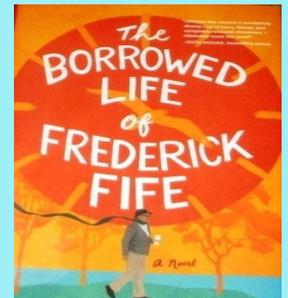
by Anna Johnston an Australian author, takes place in Australia so has a few Australian English words in the story which are not defined. They add flavor to the story. I had heard the book was funny. When I started the book, I thought it was pathetic.

Fred is broke and is to leave his apartment due to not being able to pay his rent. The reason he is dead broke, he spent all of his and his wife's money trying to combat the cancer which ended up killing his beloved wife Dawn.

He is walking along a river when he encounters a dead man in a wheelchair. He realizes the man belongs to a group up the hill from a local nursing home. When he tried to wheel the chair up the hill, it falls over, and the man falls out into the stream. Fred tries to rescue him, but ends up losing his wallet and hits his head. The dead man and Fred's wallet are washed away. The nurse from the nursing home finds him and gets him in the wheelchair and wheels him up the hill to the group.

They think he is Bernard, who was washed away as he looks like him. He tries to tell them, he is not Bernard, but as Bernard has Alzheimer's, they do not believe him. They take him back to the nursing home where he gets free room and board. Fred gives up trying to tell them the truth and settles in. The nurse tries to give him Bernard's medicines which he is able to toss out. A bird picks it up and comes back the next day for more. Fred cannot see with Bernard's glasses so he finds others in lost and found. Bernard was incontinent so Fred has to fake that. Fred is a nice person. Bernard was not.

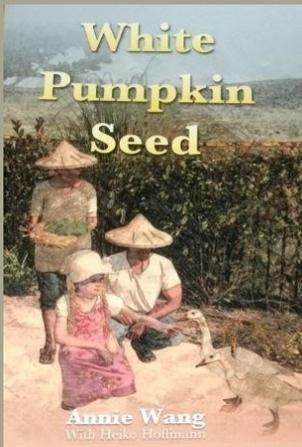
The staff decides it is either the bump on the head of the Alzheimers, which has changed him. Chapter two is about Hannah and her family. Hannah's older sister Sadie has cancer. The dad is not nice and leaves the day of Sadie's funeral. I thought this was the family of the nurse as she also had a very unhappy home life, but it is much later when the reader finds out who Hannah is. About a third of the way in the story becomes very heart warming. I would recommend the book – just don't give-up early. There are funny parts. The author indicates this is being made into a movie. She does not say who is doing it – Australian movie or a Hallmark movie? It would make a Hallmark type movie. ■





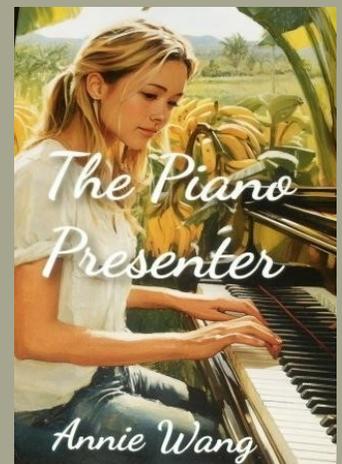
Annie Wang, the author of WHITE PUMPKIN SEED, was one of the speakers at the November 2023 **Hollywood BPW** meeting. Annie was there with her German husband.

Annie was born in Taiwan. She met her husband in Germany, and they lived for awhile in Australia. They are now U.S. citizens. She speaks, English, Mandarin and German. Their son is in college, but as a three-year-old child he was featured in "The Los Angeles Times" newspaper as a child piano prodigy. Annie played piano during part of our lunch time. This was the last meeting that Marjory Hopper chaired and where Lynn Brandstater received Hollywood's Susan B. Anthony Award.



WHITE PUMPKIN SEED is a novel based on Annie Wang's story. At the beginning of the story Vanessa returns to Australia, her birthplace, on an author tour. Vanessa was born in Australia, but adopted and grew up in Taiwan. Her adopted parents were goose farmers and not that well-to-do. She was made fun of in school because she had blond hair, a comparatively big nose and round eyes. They thought she was American. When she got good grades, they said the teacher favored her. Her best friend lived next door with an abusive father. Her parents wanted her to learn English so they scrapped together money to hire an English tutor. This short novel (116 pages) tells about her childhood, learning English, becoming an award-winning piano player, looking for her birth mother and the circumstances of her birth. I recommend it.

Wang has a new book out called **THE PIANO PRESENTER**. A lot happens in this short novel which Wang says is based on real events with the names changed. Ava Moon Wang grew up in an unhappy family in Taiwan. Her father was abusive to his wife. They are poor farmers. Unbeknown to her parents, Ava learns to play the piano. How this happens is explained later in the story. Ava graduates with a music degree and gets a job playing piano and selling music instruments at which she is very successful. She sells musical instruments to a family headed by a gangster. Later, the gangster helps her. There is a robbery, embezzlement and kidnapping and more in this 176 page novel.





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CALIFORNIA FEDERATION OF
BUSINESS and PROFESSIONAL WOMEN

c/o Katherine Winans
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