

The Ebell Insider

we're so glad you're here!

Hello again! I'm excited to welcome you to our first member newsletter of 2026. There's lots going on (as always), and I hope you'll stay and read all about it in the following pages. First, though, I want to catch you up on what some of you may have missed hearing your Board talk about at our semi-annual Business Meeting last week.



All of our committees are chaired by members of the Board of Directors, nominated after careful screening by the Nominating Committee and approved by you, the members of The Ebell.

At our Business Meetings, each of the committee chairs (plus our CEO and COO) reports on what her committee has accomplished over the previous six months and what it plans to achieve by the next meeting.

All of this activity is guided by the need to ADVANCE OUR MISSION—"to inspire women and create community through arts, culture, education, service, and stewardship of our historic building and collections"—and four additional priorities that grow out of that: PROGRAMMING, GROWTH, MASTER PLANNING, and PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE.

Every committee has been incredibly busy and productive, but some highlights this time around came from Christy McAvoy's report for the House, Theatre & Grounds Committee, noting that our architects have completed the concept phase of our Vision 2050 campus retrofit and accessibility project and are due to complete the next (schematic) phase by late April. At that point, we will be in a position to review issues of project cost and feasibility. Linda Dean also reported for the Advancement Committee that formation of the Centennial Council, a group of generous leaders and trusted advisors who will help support our Vision 2050 fundraising efforts, is well underway.

COO Camille Schenkkan reported on the tremendous leaps we've made in technology for operations, finances, and membership, and CEO Stacy Brightman discussed long- and short-term planning for programs, communications, etc. Lee Braly of the Finance Committee explained that our investments and expenses have been managed very effectively, and Rosa Bravo of the Membership Committee revealed that 117 new members have joined The Ebell in the first half of the fiscal year!

I hope you'll contact me or Amelia Comer (amelia@ebellofla.org) with any questions or suggestions you may have, and that you'll enjoy the rest of this newsletter!

Yours truly,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Randi Jones". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Randi Jones

President, The Ebell of Los Angeles

Calling All Members and Angelenos: Help Us Share Ebell History – We Need Your Photos!

LAURIE SCHECHTER

The Ebell of Los Angeles has been a vital part of our city's cultural, civic, and philanthropic life since 1894. As we prepare for an important milestone, we are reaching out to our members—and to the wider community of Angelenos—for help.

In celebration of the 100th anniversary of The Ebell's Wilshire Boulevard campus in 2027, The Ebell of Los Angeles is partnering with Arcadia Publishing to produce a commemorative photo history book. To ensure this publication fully reflects our rich and varied story, we are seeking vintage photographs from 1894 through 2000.

We welcome images of The Ebell buildings and interiors, members' events, performances, teas, lectures, luncheons, committees at work, and portraits or candid photos of Ebell members and leaders. We are also especially interested in photographs connected to other California Ebells, particularly the Ebell of Oakland, whose history is closely intertwined with our own and represents another important chapter in California's Ebell legacy.

Your photographs—whether formal or informal, professional or personal—will help bring Ebell history to life and preserve it for future generations.

Photos are needed as soon as possible, but no later than the end of February. We are happy to work with digital images or to carefully scan original photographs and return them promptly.

If you have images you are willing to share or would like more information, please contact Laurie Schechter (laurieschechter@gmail.com) or Christine Cao, Ebell Archivist, (christine@ebellofla.org). Thank you for helping us celebrate and preserve the enduring legacy of The Ebell.



Building Toward Our Centennial: Introducing the Centennial Council

LINDA DEAN

As The Ebell of Los Angeles prepares for its second century of service and cultural leadership, we are taking thoughtful steps to ensure this historic institution remains a vibrant cultural anchor for generations to come. One of the most exciting of these steps is preparing to celebrate the Campus Centennial, grounded in the long-term vision we call Vision 2050.

Vision 2050 reflects a shared commitment to caring for The Ebell's historic campus while expanding its role as a living platform for culture, creativity, civic engagement, and women's leadership in Los Angeles. It is both a preservation effort and a forward-looking investment, ensuring this remarkable place continues to welcome artists, students, audiences, and members for decades ahead.

To help guide this work, The Ebell is establishing the Centennial Council, a distinguished circle of philanthropic leaders and trusted advisors stepping forward at a pivotal moment in our history.

The Centennial Council serves as an advisory leadership body guiding the long-term priorities, campaign strategy, and the realization of our Centennial and Vision 2050 goals. Membership reflects an extraordinary level of commitment, with Council members pledging \$50,000 or more over five years (typically \$10,000 annually or customized). We are profoundly grateful to the founding members who have already stepped forward to help launch this effort. Their early leadership sends a powerful signal about what is possible for The Ebell's future. They share a deep belief in this institution and in the responsibility of caring for a historic civic and cultural home.

As we build this circle, we warmly invite members and friends who feel called to help shape The Ebell's next century to join this effort. As in 1894, and in 1927, we will build The Ebell's future together.

In the coming months, you will hear more about the Centennial Celebration, Vision 2050, and ways to participate. Your support, through membership, annual giving, volunteer leadership, and legacy planning, is foundational to this effort. Thank you for being part of this community and part of this moment.

The Ebell/Flint Scholarship Program: The Impact of an Ebell /Flint Scholarship

CAROL IMPARA

The Ebell Scholarship is in the news! Alice Brooks, the cinematographer of *Wicked* and *Wicked: For Good*, was interviewed in the *Los Angeles Times* last November, in an article which mentions her Ebell scholarship. Brooks, who received an Ebell/Flint Scholarship in 1997, also spoke with Ebell Senior Manager of Marketing and Communications, Ilana Turner, to describe how it supported her education:

“At USC, you have to pay for your own film stock to make your movies—at the time we shot on film—so you had to be able to pay for your own processing and your film stock and all of that... The USC scholarship covered my schooling, and then The Ebell scholarship covered the reason I was there — which was to make movies.”

The Ebell/Flint Scholarship is still helping in multiple ways! Candice Brittain is currently at Pasadena City College, studying dental hygiene, but took the time to describe what it meant to her to be selected as an Ebell Scholar.

“...I imagine the generations of women before me who also opened that envelope, whose names you spoke aloud in committee meetings, whose stories mattered to someone beyond their own kitchen tables or late-night study sessions. I think of those women, and now, somehow, I get to be among them.

Your support does more than help cover tuition. It gives shape to belief, yours in me, and mine in myself...Not a reward for perfection, but an invitation to keep going. To learn, to lead, to carry the light forward.”

I love the idea of generations of women paying it forward to Los Angeles County college and university students (men and women). The Ebell/Flint Scholarship has made a difference since 1919!



Photo from the February 7, 2026
Ebell/Flint Scholarship Breakfast

Hands Across The Ebell

CHERYL FINLEY

Hands Across The Ebell is a subcommittee of Membership. Our purpose is to keep members who do not use email informed of the Ebell activities and to send handwritten cards of good cheer and condolences. We do this by using snail mail.

If you know members who do not use email, let us know who they are. Also, if you know a member who has had a loss or is celebrating a joyful occasion, please email Amelia Comer amelia@ebellofla.org. We can only reach out to members you tell us about.

Also, if you are interested in joining us in our stuffing of envelopes and writing personal notes, please contact Cheryl Finley, Chair Cherylfinley62@yahoo.com.



Juniors Bring Holiday Joy Through Angel Tree

COLLEEN FISCHER

This holiday season, the Juniors Committee embraced the true spirit of giving by supporting two incredible nonprofit organizations: Good Shepherd Center and Harvest Home, both Ebells Rest Cottage Association grantee organizations. With support from the Social Service Ambassadors, the Juniors launched an online Angel Tree to ensure that women and mothers, especially those without family or other sources of support, felt seen, loved, and celebrated during this special time of year.

The process began with heartfelt outreach to both organizations, asking for the names of women who might otherwise be overlooked. Those who hadn't yet had someone step forward to brighten their holiday. With these names in hand, the Juniors curated an online list of requested items, ranging from essentials to thoughtful gifts, and invited Ebells members to join in the effort. A special thank you to all the members who purchased items in support of the Juniors' efforts.

The response was overwhelming. Volunteers purchased gifts and gathered at The Ebells on Monday, December 15, for a festive wrapping session filled with laughter, ribbons, and holiday cheer. Just two days later, on Wednesday, December 17, the beautifully wrapped presents were delivered to Good Shepherd Center and Harvest Home. The gratitude was palpable. One staff member from Harvest Home shared:

“We've heard a lot from the moms at Harvest Home, particularly this current cohort, that most of them didn't have particularly happy holidays growing up, and many didn't ever receive gifts. So, to give them not just physical gifts, but the gift of being seen and valued, means the world to them. It sets them up to have their own holiday traditions and happy Christmas memories with their babies for years to come.”

For the Juniors, this project was more than an act of service; it was a celebration of community, compassion, and connection. They are deeply grateful to the Social Service Ambassadors and every member who contributed to making this holiday season brighter for women who needed it most.



Spotlight: Black History Month

This February, The Ebell of Los Angeles offers a month-long celebration of Black History Month with programming focused on how Black History informs and uplifts the art, culture, and scholarship of inspiring and talented African Americans and People of Color today and as we build the future. All Ebell members and guests seeking joy and enlightenment are welcome.

"As an active member of the Ebell Programs Committee, I've chosen to assist in curating memorable events for BHM, with a spotlight and focus on our own Ebell members... Women of Achievement eager to share their accomplishments and incredible life stories. Among them, we have featured renowned artist and Ebell member Phoebe Beasley, our own Regina Jones — publisher of Soul magazine, the Honorable Yvonne Brathwaite-Burke — an honorary Ebell member, TV news reporter Glenda Wina (Ebell member) and many others. It is my honor be part of the Committee." — Madelyn Murray, member Ebell Programs Committee

[Black History Month Programming](#), includes an [LA VOICES: ICOYLA concert](#), [I, Too, Sing America](#) and a [fireside-chat style discussion of Allyship and Collective Responsibility](#).



Spotlight: Women’s History Month

Given its origins in women’s suffrage, it’s only natural that The Ebell is gearing up to celebrate Women’s History Month with a [full slate of March programming](#) — anchored by the Ebell + LA Festival (formerly the Open House) on March 22, 2026 from 11:00 am to 4:00 pm.

According to Ebell CEO Dr. Stacy Brightman, “The Ebell is the home of Women’s History Month in Los Angeles because we don’t treat women’s history as a moment — we treat it as a movement. Our campus was built by women who believed in the power of education, culture, and civic engagement long before women had access to many of those spaces. That history inspires us to celebrate contemporary trailblazers, elevate today’s voices, and create space for the next generation of women to lead.”

Those voices include California Surgeon General Dr. Diana Ramos appearing as part of the Distinguished Voices series; scholars who submit to [The Ebell Institute Symposium](#); and the artists on display at [A Woman’s Place: Framing The Future](#), the Ebell’s juried art show.

Stacy concludes, “The Ebell is where history meets possibility.”



Wendy Hammers

Turning Pain into Purpose

LAURIE SCHECHTER

A Career in Performance

Ebell member Wendy Hammers embodies the spirit of creativity and resilience that has long defined The Ebell of Los Angeles. A keynote speaker, actress, comedian, writer, and writing community facilitator, Wendy is known for her roles in film, TV, theatre and more. You may have seen her in *The Sopranos* and *Curb Your Enthusiasm*, on *Oprah* or at The Ebell! She has built a career grounded not only in performance but in authenticity and courage.



An Ebell Volunteer and Collaborator

An Ebell member since September 2023 when she joined at the Ebell Open House, Wendy is now a familiar face and presence. In May of last year, with Ebell member and co-producer Suzanne Weerts, she created and presented *Sassy Southern Stories*, an evening of contemporary southern-themed readings by some of LA's best writers and storytellers. A year ago, she brought us her *50 Shades of Gray*, a humorous talk on embracing age and loving your body. Wendy will be appearing in conversation with fellow member Suzanne Weerts in Coffee Talk: Champagne Girl in a Budweiser Family at The Ebell Tuesday, February 10, 2026. Wendy is also a proud member of The Ebell Write Club.

Facing Adversity: Turning Pain into Purpose

One of Wendy's most significant personal milestones has been her journey as a pancreatic cancer survivor. Facing diagnosis and treatment with remarkable honesty, she chose to speak openly about her experience, confront fear, educate others, and foster connection. Turning "pain into purpose," she now tells her "breaking up with cancer" story to organizations nationwide.

The Importance of Humor, Honesty, and Community

Whether in front of an audience or among fellow members at The Ebell, Wendy reminds us that humor can be healing, honesty can be transformative, and community can make even the hardest chapters more hopeful. We are proud to count Wendy among our Ebell members and volunteers.

Arden Teplow: Art & Therapy

Member Arden Teplow is a therapist by training, but an artist at heart, having begun painting at an early age. After a hiatus of more than 30 years, she returned to this creative hobby while undergoing treatment for ovarian cancer. (She is now cancer-free.)

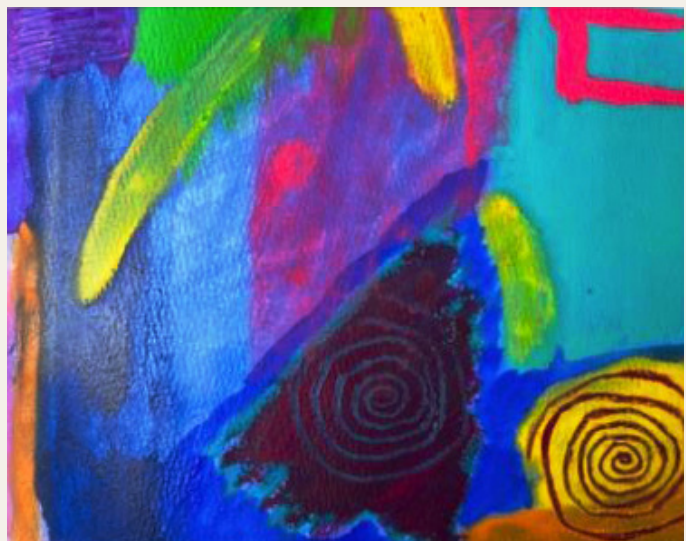
For Arden, painting is a source of deep joy and focus, offering a meditative intensity that allows her to momentarily step away from the world. Her submitted work, *Storm*, is an acrylic inspired by scenes she witnessed and photographs she took during a summer trip to Maine.



Julia Smith: Art & Instagram

Julia Smith has always been an art lover, but she only picked up painting herself two years ago, when she came across an advertisement for a gouache paint class on Instagram. She was attracted to the vibrancy of colors, enrolled in the class, and began having fun.

Being older, I didn't care if I made mistakes or was any good, which helped in my learning process," said Julia. She created her featured work during a lesson on color and shape. Julia has put her painting career on hold for a while, as she plans for the arrival of her first grandchild.



Aleka Corwin: Art & Italian Inspiration



Ebell member Aleka Corwin is a Los Angeles-based mixed-media artist and educator whose work blends imagination, memory, and material reinvention — transforming everyday material such as toys, scraps of paper, packaging, photos, and craft supplies into compelling visual narratives. Aleka recently had the opportunity to lecture in Italy on inspiration and creativity to a group of study-abroad students from CAL POLY and Pacifica Graduate School. During her presentation, she compared Roman and Renaissance art (left) to her own work (right). Can you see similarities?

Art History at The Ebell



The Ebell has a long history of supporting artists! Check out this year's juried art show, *A Woman's Place: Framing The Future* at the [opening night reception](#) March 19, 2026.



Our Congratulations

Marni Eliza Zipper, daughter of Ebell and costume committee member **Amy Phillips** (pictured, right), and Jack Stuart Federman were married on September 27, 2025 at a private home in Hancock Park. The mother-of-the-bridewore a beaded green and pink 1960s gown. We wish the couple a lifetime of happiness as they begin their married life together in Hancock Park.



On October 28, 2025, for Breast Cancer Awareness Month, Ebell member **Sharon Lippman** appeared before the Beverly Hills City Council led by Mayor Sharona Nazarian to highlight vital, no-cost resources for breast cancer patients and survivors. As a survivor diagnosed in 2020, she introduced Sharsheret, Tower Cancer Research Foundation/Magnolia House, and Cedars-Sinai's Cancer Wellness, Survivorship Rehabilitation & Resilience Program — organizations whose services she has personally benefited from. Sharon was congratulated and commended for her important work of promoting awareness, supporting research, and honoring the lives of breast cancer patients and survivors.



Bulletin Board *continued*

Founded by Ebell member **Paulinda Schimmel Babbini** in loving memory of her daughter Robin who passed away from ovarian cancer at the age of 20, The Ovarian Cancer Circle hosted its 16th annual “Teal There’s a Cure” Luncheon and Boutique in November, raising more than \$100,000 for the G.O. Discovery Laboratory led by UCLA professor of medicine Dr. Sanaz Memarzadeh.

Since 2010, The Ovarian Cancer Circle has donated over \$1 million to Dr. Memarzadeh’s research efforts at the forefront of innovative ovarian cancer research. Congratulations to Paulinda on this milestone achievement and for her dedication to such a personal and worthy cause.



Our Condolences

Sadly, we share the news that Ebell member **Beate Gertraud Kessler-McDermott** passed away on December 24, 2025 in her Los Angeles home, surrounded by her husband Neil, her two daughters, grandson, son-in-law, and beloved poodle Daisy.

A talented artist and fashion designer, Beate was active in the Historic Collections Costume Committee and a recent participant in our member art show. Beate was diagnosed with stage four Pancreatic Cancer in January 2025 and died of related causes. A Celebration of Life / Remembrance will be held in her family home in March.



Photo at right from Beate’s Facebook account.

If you have news (births, deaths, weddings, anniversaries, etc.) that you’d like to share with other members in our next quarterly newsletter, please send your information to newsletter@ebellofla.org.



Private Ebell Members Facebook Group

JOIN THE CONVERSATION, SHARE YOUR UPDATES, AND STAY IN THE LOOP WITH OUR MEMBER FACEBOOK PAGE

Want to see what's happening right now in our community? Looking for a space to connect, share, and support each other in real time? Have you joined the [Ebell Members Facebook Group](#)? We hope so! It's the perfect place to find community online, and to share mission-aligned events, your work outside the Ebell — and fun photos with fellow members, like these:



If you haven't yet joined, please [CLICK HERE TO JOIN](#) this excellent members-only group — and start posting! Please also [follow us on Instagram](#) to like and share our posts. Any time you engage with our accounts on social media, it helps raise the profile of The Ebell across LA and beyond!

[CONNECT HERE](#)

Caught on Camera



Members Painting



Marciano Art Foundation Field Trip



Distinguished Voices: Nellie Scott



Caught on Camera

