

EDEN

THE

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THE EQUINOX WITHIN

By Nikki Pattillo

BEVERLY HILLS WOMEN'S CLUB

110 YEARS

QUESTIONS AS A NEW SUPERPOWER

By Susan Browne



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MEET OUR TEAM

THE EDEN

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An interview by Dina Morrone

The
BEVERLY
HILLS
WOMEN'S
CLUB

A LEGACY OF GRACE, LEADERSHIP,
AND PHILANTHROPY



Each year, the National Women's History Alliance selects the theme for Women's History Month, which is nationally celebrated every March. The 2026 theme is *Leading the Change: Women Shaping a Sustainable Future*.

For this year's Women's History Month, The Eden Magazine chose to feature a women's organization that has been in Beverly Hills for 110 years and is still going strong thanks to its current members and leadership.

Founded in 1916, the Beverly Hills Women's Club is the oldest continually operating organization in the City of Beverly Hills, aside from the local government, which was formed just two years earlier. Since its inception, the Club's mission has been steadfast: **Advancement in all lines of general culture - the opportunity for social service - and the upbuilding of a community Spirit in the City of Beverly Hills.** These forward-thinking women incorporated the Club in California in 1921, purchased a triple lot on Chevy Chase Drive in 1923, federated with the General Federation of Women's Clubs in 1924, and commissioned architects Gable & Wyant to design the clubhouse in 1925. Today, the building is designated Landmark #3 by the City of Beverly Hills and is listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

From the beginning, the BHWC members have been civic and cultural leaders. The Club's first president, Mrs. Force Parker (Mary Katherine Moore Parker), attended the 1920 Democratic National Convention just weeks before the 19th Amendment, granting women the right to vote, was ratified. Over the years, members and supporters have included women who inspired imaginations worldwide, such as Mary Pickford, Gloria Swanson, Judy Garland, and Amelia Earhart. Earhart was a featured speaker at a 1935 BHWC event advocating for an independent Beverly Hills Unified School District, which became a reality in 1936, thanks in large part to the Club's leadership.

Essential early members of the BHWC included: Betty Blake, the wife and business partner of Will Rogers; Margaret J. (MJ) Anderson, the original proprietor of the Beverly Hills Hotel and donor of the city's first public park; and Mildred Davis, the wife of filmmaker Harold Lloyd. After marrying in 1923, Davis stepped away from a successful acting career to devote herself to building the Lloyds' estate, Green Acres, and to the Beverly Hills Women's Club, which she joined in 1925, following in the footsteps of her mother-in-law, Mrs. Elizabeth Fraser Lloyd, a lifelong member of the Beverly Hills Women's Club.





Historic Electric Fountain donated by the BHWC to the City of Beverly Hills in 1931 that sits to this day on the corner of Wilshire Blvd. and Santa Monica Blvd

These women spearheaded the effort by the Beverly Hills Women's Club to procure and donate one of the first electric fountains in the nation and the first to the City of Beverly Hills in 1931, where it has graced the corner of Wilshire Blvd. and Santa Monica Blvd. ever since. Even many of Beverly Hills' street names: Whittier Drive, Spaulding Drive, Reeves Drive, Greenway Drive, and Burton Way reflect the families of women whose leadership helped shape both the Club and the city itself.

I sat down with Hollis Leech, the current president of the club, who serves as the 48th President and Board Chair of the Beverly Hills Women's Club, to learn a little bit more about the club.

Hollis is an entrepreneur by nature and a CEO by profession. A graduate of the University of Southern California, she has built an entrepreneurial career in Los Angeles spanning more than three decades and is closely tied to her longstanding commitment to women's issues and community service. She is the co-founder of three companies, one service-based and two in healthcare information technology, and has produced award-winning software and new media products for 7th Level in partnership with Disney and Monty Python. Her career has also included work with NBC and Imagine Television. She is a member of Visionary Women, the Council of the Library Foundation of Los Angeles, and the Women's Political Committee, and has previously served on the boards of the Benedict Canyon Association and the Los Angeles chapter of the National Association of Women Business Owners. Her leadership and entrepreneurial achievements have been recognized by both the Governor of California and the U.S. Small Business Administration. Hollis resides in Benedict Canyon with her husband, Dr. Christopher Saigal, a surgeon and Executive Vice Chair of the Department of Urology at UCLA.



Private garden and veranda at BHWC.





Amanda Hill, BHWC Officer & Corporate Secretary, Nancy Hunt-Coffey, City Manager of Beverly Hills and BHWC member Nicole Mutchnik, Chair of the ADL Board of Directors.



BHWC leadership with Beverly Hills Mayor Sharona Nazarian in the newly GRACIE adorned Salon



BHWC member Monica Mahoney with her guests Michele Trout and Deborah Sharpeat at the GRACIE book signing, celebrated at the BHW

Hollis, how did you first learn about the Beverly Hills Women’s Club, and what attracted you to joining?

I became aware of the Beverly Hills Women’s Club shortly after I moved to the area in 2003. The Spanish Colonial Revival clubhouse graces the corner of Chevy Chase Drive and Benedict Cañon Drive, surrounded by lush green lawn; it’s hard to miss when driving by. I first entered the clubhouse soon thereafter to vote, as the clubhouse has long served as a local polling place for the community. I became involved in the club itself in 2020, when a major windstorm downed a huge tree on top of the clubhouse, and I volunteered to help, eventually being elected to the board. Today, I am delighted to serve as the 48th president of the Beverly Hills Women’s Club. Between the legacy, location, and ladies of the club, there’s no place quite like it!

What is the main mission of the club, and how has it changed over the years?

The mission of the club has remained the same for 110 years, since the club’s inception in 1916: **Advancement in all lines of general culture - the opportunity for social service - and the upbuilding of a community Spirit in the City of Beverly Hills.**

Such a great mission! Those who are attracted to this mission naturally create a particular club culture. Events and activities that are cultural, philanthropic, educational, and or civic in nature are natural fits for the club. Keeping the mission front and center attracts a wonderful group of dynamic women doing interesting things in their lives, their community, and at the club.

Is the club owned by the city of Beverly Hills?

The Beverly Hills Women’s Club is 100% owned and operated by the Beverly Hills Women’s Club. Brilliantly, the early members of the club incorporated the Beverly Hills Women’s Club in the state of California in 1921. Pretty forward-thinking considering women just got the right to vote federally the year before. By 1923, the club, an independent corporation, raised the funds for the BHWC to purchase the club’s triple lot in the estate section of Beverly Hills and by 1925 had raised the funds to retain the architectural team of the day, Gable & Wyant, to design and then erect the 7,500 square foot clubhouse we enjoy to this day. Last October, the clubhouse celebrated its Centennial, a milestone that has inspired the design enhancements that have been underway for the last two-plus years. The clubhouse has always been gorgeous, with fabulous bones. Now we’re making it even more gorgeous.



The very first BHCW President, Mrs. Force Parker (Mary Katherine Moore Parker) photographed at the 1920 Democratic Convention in San Francisco



BEVERLY HILLS
WOMEN'S CLUB
— Since 1916 —



Early BHCW member, Betty Blake, wife and business partner of Will Rogers who was then known as the most famous person in America and the first Honorary Mayor of Beverly Hills. The couple hosted the horse show that raised the funds to construct the clubhouse in 1925.



Margaret Jane Boag Anderson, circa 1890. The original proprietor of The Beverly Hills Hotel and an early and important member of the BHCW, until her death in 1930.



BHCW clubhouse shortly after completion.



Mildred Davis and her mother-in-law Elisabeth Fraser Lloyd spearheaded the BHCW's Electric Fountain donation to the City of Beverly Hills.



BHCW Landmark Designation 2013





Orsie's Kumsi, a toy poodle, and an entrant in the Beverly Hills Dog Show to be held on tomorrow and Sunday, is shown with Bette Krueger, well known woman polo player. The little dog is two years old and has six points toward a championship in his class.



BHWC members tree planting, circa 1935



BHWC members circa 1940

Founded in 1916, the Beverly Hills Women's Club is the oldest continually operating organization in the City of Beverly Hills, aside from the local government.

Tell me about some of the ongoing events and activities the club schedules.

We have an amazing in-house team that ensures our member activities and events are top-notch. The dynamic BHWC membership comprises members from many groups, who, in turn, bring fabulous speakers and programming to the club. The ballroom seats 200 on the club's handsome wood-and-leather vintage chairs, including member name plaques, and includes a lovely stage, making it a super venue for speakers and audiences. During my tenure alone, many leaders and luminaries have graced the club's stage, including U.S. Senators, Congresswomen, County Supervisors, Mayors, City Councilmembers, authors, playwrights, and performers. I'm struck, after all this time, by how many recent visitors, just during my tenure, include the moniker "first": Admiral Linda Fagan, the first woman to ever lead a major U.S. military branch as Commandant of the U.S. Coast Guard and the Coast Guard's first female four-star admiral; Senator Mazie Hirono, the first Asian American woman to serve in the U.S. Senate (HI); Senator Jacky Rosen, the first synagogue president to serve in the U.S. Senate (NV); Lindsey Horvath, the youngest woman ever elected to the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors (since 1852!) and who serves on the first all-female LA County Board of Supervisors; Mayor Karen Bass, the first woman to serve as the Mayor of Los Angeles; Mayor Dr. Sharona Nazarian, the first Persian-American woman to serve the City of Beverly Hills as Mayor (and to be elected to the Beverly Hills City Council); Nancy Hunt-Coffey, the first woman to serve Beverly Hills as City Manager; Shana Epstein, the first woman to serve the City of Beverly Hills as Director of Public Works; and Lily Gladstone, the first Native American woman to be nominated for an Oscar and to win a Golden Globe.

What is the BHWC's involvement with charities?

Over 110 years, the Beverly Hills Women's Club has engaged in many philanthropic activities and provides a superb

setting for special events for numerous non-profit organizations. The club's relationship with the American Red Cross dates back to at least World War I. Then during World War II the clubhouse served as an official Red Cross Center. In recent years, the BHWC has partnered with the American Red Cross to host blood drives, overseen by the enormously energetic BHWC member (and neighbor) Valeda "Val" Andler. Val has served as a volunteer Red Cross nurse for more than 75 years! This year she turns 99! The club has also had a long-standing relationship with the Salvation Army, in particular, the Salvation Army's Westwood Transitional Village, a 40-unit homeless transitional housing facility where two-thirds of the population are children. Other charities the BHWC has recently supported include Downtown Women's Center, Inner-City Youth Orchestra of Los Angeles, Not Today Cancer, and UCLA Mattel Children's Hospital. Non-profit groups that have hosted events at the BHWC during my tenure include the Los Angeles Philharmonic, the Pacific Council, the French Heritage Society, Save Iconic Architecture, Skylight Theatre, and the Century City Chamber of Commerce Women of Achievement Gala.

Who are some of the keynote speakers and guests that visited the club in recent years?

In addition to the women I named as "Firsts", the club has recently hosted author talks and book signings with renowned creative director Jennifer Gracie of GRACIE, and designer and humanitarian, India Hicks, as well as a Rosetta Getty fashion show. We've hosted women's health talks with leading physicians including Dr. Karol Watson MD, PhD, Director UCLA Women's Cardiovascular Health Center & UCLA-Barbara Streisand Women's Heart Health Program; Dr. Tamara Horwich MD, MS, Medical Director of UCLA's Cardiac Rehabilitation Program and Co-Director of the UCLA Women's Cardiovascular Health Center and Dr. Rebecca Lane, MD, a pelvic and reconstructive surgeon and Assistant Professor of Clinical Obstetrics & Gynecology



Karen Corman, Dr. Sharona Nazarian, Tara Riceberg and Lillian Raffel at BHWC March 2024.



Guest speaker at BHWC, Admiral Linda Fagen, the first woman in American history to lead a military service as Commandant, U.S. Coast Guard, December 2024.

The Beverly Hills Women's Club is like no other club in Los Angeles. For six generations, local women volunteers have sustained this club. Now it's our turn to ensure the legacy of the Beverly Hills Women's Club continues.

at USC Keck School of Medicine. Many women in government leadership positions, including Senator Tammy Baldwin (WI) and Senator Angela Alsobrooks (MD), and more than a dozen Congresswomen, including California Representatives Laura Friedman, Sydney Kamlager-Dove, and Zoe Lofgren. Local leaders, too, including Los Angeles County Supervisors Janice Hahn and Holly Mitchell, as well as Los Angeles City Councilmembers Katy Yaroslavsky, Nithya Raman, and Heather Hutt. Men do visit from time to time, too! Former U.S. Ambassador to Norway Marc Nathanson, former U.S. Ambassador to India (and former Los Angeles Mayor) Eric Garcetti, and Los Angeles District Attorney Nathan Hochman have all recently participated in illuminating discussions at the club.

Tell me about the current plans taking place to improve the building and the clubhouse?

Thanks to the design leadership of Jaime Rummerfield of Jaime Rummerfield Interior Design and a \$1 million gift from BHWC board member and philanthropist Koni Rich, a spectacular design revitalization project is underway at the BHWC. Last summer, the exterior stucco got a new shade - a Benjamin Moore custom color now referred to as Beverly Women's Club Pink. It's a subtle but beautiful pale pink shade that nods to the Landmark's female nature. The 1,700-square-foot garden room is the one space that was converted from its original 1925 purpose, as an outdoor lanai, to an interior space in the 1950s, with both the north and south ends of the grand room relegated to storage closets. The floor-to-ceiling windows of this space view the club's gorgeous veranda and gardens. It made no sense to forfeit so much prime real estate to storage closet space. Also, the acoustics were never right since the space was enclosed and the concrete floor was covered in faux-wood linoleum (modern

flooring in the 1950s!). This room is getting a major facelift. Last summer, out went the closets, which immediately enlarged the entertaining space in this gracious room. The interior was freshly painted Navajo White and gorgeous, custom, hand-painted GRACIE garden wallpaper went up in the salon, and a hand-painted GRACIE tiger in ante space of the gentlemen's room. The veranda furniture was refreshed: black wrought iron painted Navajo White, and the old store-bought striped cushions were replaced with custom green cushions with pink piping and a pink BHWC logo hand-stitched on each seat back. The original aging metal veranda ironwork switched from black to Balsam Green, and the veranda and window awnings were striped Winchester Sage and Timid White. This summer, a two-and-a-half-year-in-the-making custom STARK carpet will replace the garden room's 1950s linoleum flooring. Spectacular pink crystal chandeliers and sconces will adorn the space. The entire room is being painted Fresh Sod and then covered in custom lattice painted Navajo White. Custom banquettes are being added, outfitted with the most beautifully rich fabrics. The garden room will transform from a nice big room with lovely views to a super-chic club space for members and guests to gather. The ballroom has been outfitted with new custom velvet curtains that really set off the room's regal feel. New audio-visual equipment enhances the large 1940s stage screen that descends from the stage rafters. The ballroom's original wood floors are being refurbished, with walls and beams receiving detail custom painting motif. In January, philanthropist Lynda Resnick gifted the BHWC \$75,000 so that all the 110-year-old clubhouse windows can be expertly refurbished this spring. Looking ahead, we are focused on completing a \$5 million capital campaign and securing a \$10 million endowment fund to ensure the club continues to thrive.



BHWC salon, as reimaged by Jaime Rummerfield Interior Design.



The clubhouse has always been gorgeous, with fabulous bones. Now we're making it even more gorgeous.





BHCW formal entry featuring hand-carved crest above the front doors.



Donna Gillman and Amanda Hill

I've heard about the wellness programs you offer members. Tell me about that.

Adrienne Howard is our resident Pilates and Movement Educator extraordinaire. Following a career on Broadway and as a Radio City Rockette, Adrienne spent 10 years spearheading Pilates at Equinox Boston, Washington DC, NYC, West Hollywood, and Beverly Hills before making BHCW's Pilates studio her "home" studio. We're proud to offer exceptional Pilates equipment, generously donated by members and Equinox West Hollywood – creating a lovely, dedicated space where members can tone, strengthen, and maintain a healthy routine.

Jessica Halford leads weekly garden dance cardio. Jessica is a Movement Specialist, Broadway Performer, and Educator who adds vitality to members' mornings in the beautiful BHCW garden (thanks to the garden dedication by BHCW Board Member, horticulturist, and long-time Beverly Hills resident, Rose Johnstone Weinstein and her company, GARDEN!).

Garden Tai-Chi is also something we have offered in the past and, due to popular demand, plan to bring back to the club this spring.

The clubhouse also serves as a wonderful home base and destination for countless wonderful walks, long and short, along the tree-lined streets of Beverly Hills. BHCW member, Gertrude Fyle Reeves, who joined the BHCW in 1928, was the wife of Jack Reeves and daughter-in-law to John Joseph Reeves, the famed horticulturist responsible for Beverly Hills' unique treescape, planting a single species of tree along each street, contributing to the distinctive landscape of Beverly Hills' neighborhoods.

Where do you see the future of the club?

The Beverly Hills Women's Club is like no other club in Los Angeles. For six generations, local women volunteers have sustained this club. Now it's our turn to ensure the legacy of the Beverly Hills Women's Club continues. We're modernizing the organization and transforming it into a professionally staffed contemporary club with all the modern technology and amenities expected from a discerning, well-traveled, modern woman who appreciates a private spot where you never know who you will run into, but surely it will be someone interesting and likely a neighbor whom you otherwise may never have even met.



BHCW wellness specialists Adrienne Howard and Jessica Halford enjoying a club veranda social.



BHCW Board member
Rose Johnstone Weinstein



Dina Morrone-Rivkin, on stage at the BHCW club for Valentine's Fashion Show



Historic camellias adorn the BHCW clubhouse.

Please spotlight for us some of the club's current members.

There are so many incredible women who are a part of the club. It's difficult to choose whom to highlight. Here are just a select few to show the depth and range of our members.

Nicole Mutchnik is a nationally respected civic leader and Chair of the ADL Board of Directors, known for building trust and advancing solutions across government, nonprofit, and business sectors. **Koni Rich** is a visionary patron of the arts and a transformative leader at the Beverly Hills Women's Club. Together with her husband, Tony Award-winning Broadway producer Geoff Rich, she has become a vital supporter of Los Angeles' arts and cultural institutions. **Alyssa Litoff** is an Emmy Award-winning producer whose work has shaped national conversations through rigorous journalism and cultural storytelling. **Dina Morrone-Rivkin** is an acclaimed writer and solo-show performer who has provided voice-over for several Emmy and Oscar-winning television shows and feature films. **Donna Gillman** is a dedicated civic leader and lifelong Beverly Hills resident whose service reflects a deep commitment to education, youth, and community life. **Alison Kaplan** has devoted much of her time since the pandemic to philanthropic endeavors. She has recently been involved with Jewish Federation Los Angeles, the Organization of Social Media Safety, CHLA & Beauty Bus. **Ann Marie Scaglione** spent more than two decades with Park West Gallery, where she has held several key roles, including becoming the only female principal auctioneer in the company's 50-year history. **Rose Johnstone Weinstein** is co-founder of the non-profit GARDEN!, an organization that provides job training to those reentering the workforce. Since 2022, Rose and her team at GARDEN! have worked pro bono regularly and diligently to transform the club's private

garden and street-facing grounds into the rich oasis it is today. **Jaime Rummerfield** is the Design Leadership Award Honoree by the DLN and was named Interior Designer of the Year by the National Arts Awards Council. She is touted by the Hollywood Reporter as one of Hollywood's Top 20 Interior Designers; her work has been featured in over 150 design magazines and publications, including *Elle Décor* and *Architectural Digest*. **Amanda Hill** is an attorney and a graduate of Pepperdine University and the University of North Carolina School of Law. In addition to her legal career, Amanda manages her family's business. She has been a member of the Beverly Hills Women's Club since 2021 and currently serves as Corporate Secretary, applying her legal background to support the Club's governance and operations.



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- Dr. Sharona Nazarian
(Beverly Hills Mayor)
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(Beverly Hills Commissioner)
- Amanda Hill
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- Adrienne Howard
(Pilates & Movement Educator)
- Alison Kaplan
(Socialite)
- Hollis Leech
(Entrepreneur)
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