

Women in Kenya

East Africa Women's League Newsletter

June 2025



Let's Eat Cake



After the AGM we had Cake & Music to celebrate the centenary of 4 branches, then Thika and Nakuru had their own celebrations .



The above is a cartoon that was on the front cover of our magazine in 1995, drawn by Jaqui Nandhra of Burnbrae Branch. Not a lot has changed, except the prices perhaps..

Your house committee is putting on events almost every Friday, see page 4 for details.



East Africa Women's League 2nd Council

Thursday June 26th 2025
10:30 for 11 am start

Hosted by: Nanyuki Branch

Timau Sports Club
Lolomarik Farm
Timau

- Council Meeting ✓
- Bring & Buy - Flowers & Vegetables ✓
- Keynote Speaker ✓
Juliana of the Yaaku Community

1,500/-
Coffee & Lunch

For Further Information:
Robin Davies 0721 343115

Recommended hotels:

Le Rustique, Peak Place, Kongoni's
Timau River Lodge, Nanyuki Sports Club
or via TripAdvisor / booking .com.

EAST AFRICA WOMEN'S LEAGUE

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From the desk of our National Chairman

I hope this message finds each of you well and in good spirits. I want to express my deep appreciation for the energy, compassion, and commitment that you all continue to pour into the mission of our League. Your efforts—both seen and unseen—are what keeps our foundation strong and our future hopeful. This past month, I had the honour of celebrating the 100-year anniversaries of our Thika and Nakuru branches. I was truly inspired as I listened to the stories of the women who laid the groundwork in those early years—visionaries who led with strength, purpose, and heart. Their courage lit the path we walk today. Hearing the rich history of these branches rekindled something powerful in me: a passion not to let the team down. It reminded me that what we do now isn't just for today—it's part of a legacy. We should continue to ensure that others can read about our efforts and be inspired to carry the torch forward. Let's keep the fire of the League burning, not just in our hearts but in the stories we tell and the lives we touch.

Let me leave you with these words by Maya Angelou:

"I come as one, but I stand as ten thousand."

Together, we represent generations of strength, resilience, and grace.

I look forward to seeing most of you at 2nd Council, in Nanyuki.

With warmest regards,

Stephanie Majuma Mwrite

Chairperson

East African Women's League



Benevolence Talking with Benevolence Chair, Anna McFerran she asked me to remind all league members that benevolence is there to help any member in times of need, not just for in-hospital treatment or expensive medicines. She particularly mentioned that they may be able to assist towards dental treatment, hearing aids, glasses and other aids that members may require as they age... While the form may seem daunting, the reward could be life saving. Contact Anna on 0722-767243 or macairy@gmail.com

Alzheimer's Prevention Through Nutrition

Alice is a nutritionist and chef, with a passion for empowering people to take charge of their brain health. She combines scientific expertise with easy, delicious solutions — making lifestyle changes accessible, practical, and inspiring. Alice has an MSc in Nutrition, and over the past 9 years has worked as a chef in 5 countries. She is committed to spreading the message that food is medicine for the mind. Alice sees clients online and at Karen Surgery, Nairobi.

Topic:

- Understand why prevention is the cure for Alzheimer's
- Learn how only 2% of cases are genetic — the rest is influenced by lifestyle
- Learn the science behind how nutrition can affect brain health and function
- Discover the most important brain-boosting foods and nutrients
- Get practical meal ideas and lifestyle strategies
- Find out how small changes today can prevent and/or slow cognitive decline.

Together with:

Alice Coulson ANutr

Registered Nutritionist



WEDNESDAY 9TH JULY



AT 10:00 AM

alice@alicecoulson.com

Being held in the Community Room at Spinner's Web on Wednesday 9 July, at 10 am. Entry 500/- includes a cuppa and biscuits. Please email rosslyneawl@gmail.com or SMS Jane Parmley on 0721551652 so we know number of attendees.

From the Editor

Following discussions with many members and your executive committee it was decided that for this year we would try having a bi-monthly newsletter that will be distributed to the branches as a soft copy rather than the once a year very costly magazine that never seems to find its way to all the members. The format of this letter is such that branches can, if they wish, print it for those members who are unable or do not want to read it online.



By publishing bi-monthly we will be better able to keep all the branches up to date with HQ happenings and other branches past and upcoming activities! To this end we have also introduced a new WhatsApp group for inter Branch connection. I sent an invitation to all Branch Chairmen asking them to nominate a member from their branch to be their connection person, who will monitor the group and pass on anything they think may interest their club members. The group can also be used to publicise any branch happenings and report on meetings.

I must offer a huge thank you to **Clare Jethwa** for her sterling service as Women in Kenya Editor for 8 or so years... Now you have me (with my failed O'level English language) ably assisted by Alice Abok & Nelly Ayodo, plus anyone else who would like to volunteer to help with the next edition. This newsletter is for all members of all branches and its yours to share with friends family and particularly prospective new members... Please do not hesitate to contact me with any thoughts and suggestions about the content and layout. Does the 2 columns work for those reading on a tablet or smart phone??. If you don't tell I won't know what works and what doesn't!

Cathy Coyte, Eldoret Branch, 0713459201

cathycoyte@gmail.com

SAVE THE DATE: SATURDAY 5TH OF JULY THE 2ND ANNUAL KAI MEMORIAL CUP TOUGH RUGBY TOURNAMENT



@NONDIES CUBS RUGBY CLUB
NGONG RACECOURSE

MORE INFORMATION TO FOLLOW SOON



Call/Whatsapp - 0795994177
E-mail: nondiescubs@gmail.com

For further information please call Susie Edwards. She is also selling raffle tickets 150/- each or 1,000 for a book of 10. Raffle prizes include : 2 Nights for 2 at the amazing Hildana Lodge in Taveta and a 10,000/- travel voucher from Lets Go Travel, and many many others almost rivaling the League's Christmas Raffle. **Susie Edwards - +254 715 777377**

108TH AGM

Members arriving for the AGM on March 20th were welcomed into Anderson Hall with classical music being played by Ritchie (Age 15) on the piano and two friends. Another innovation from our National Chairmen was a change to the seating arrangement, instead of just chairs we also had tables to rest our papers (*and later eat lunch*) plus a sound system, so everyone could hear!



After the official call to order, opening prayers and the acceptance of last year's minutes, **Co-National Chairman Anne Sanders** opened her report by welcoming the members present, expressing gratitude to the Balloting Committee & HQ staff for their commitment and hard work preparing for this meeting and to her **Co-Chair Stephanie Mwite** for facilitating the Zoom link to Branches. Anne then went on to talk about the diversity of the League, members from all corners of the world – harmonizing the varied cultural and religious backgrounds into the spirit we use to raise money to assist the less fortunate and to enable the groups we support to thrive. She requested that we maintain this spirit of empathy, compassion, respect and trust throughout our meetings, no matter what position one holds in the organization we are all equal cogs in the machine that makes our volunteer organization strong. Following this very uplifting talk Anne announced that she would be stepping aside as Co-Chairman, she felt that the League would be better served with a single Chairman, and wished Stephanie all the very best. Anne concluded by thanking everyone for their support during the past year and encouraging all members to continue their work within their branch because ***"Your activities are the heart of the League"***.

Co-Chair Stephanie Mwite opened her remarks by clarifying that Harrison House is a totally separate entity from the League, run by a separate set of trustees. It was agreed that it was not appropriate to have an open discussion on the subject as it was not an agenda item for this meeting. (*Space does not allow us to report fully, currently the sale is ongoing and a full report will be made once that has been completed. Ed*)

With regards to this year's chairman's project details were still being worked out and will be announced at 2nd council.

Honorary Treasurer Rose Kinuthia announced that the 2024 financials are still with the auditors and would be presented at 2nd council, she was duly reelected Treasurer.

Stephanie Mwite was confirmed as Chairman for 2025-26 with Zone Vice-Chairmen: **Sue Haworth**, **Redempta Muibu**, **Cherry Ritchie** and **Ludmilla Shitakha**.

Cathy Coyte agreed to be Magazine Editor while **Clare Jethwa** was thanked for her 8 years of service in that position.

There were reports from **Anna McFarran** about Benevolence, **Veronica Hammond** about Kilifi Branch and **Susie Edwards** gave a short history of Machakos/Ulu. (these are reported separately in this or later newsletters ed.)

In any other business, **Claire Jethwa** proposed that the amendment to the constitution that was passed last year saying that Past National Chairs could not be elected to the Executive committee be revoked, this proposal was passed.

1st Council

After a short health break and more music from the trio on stage the 1st council meeting for 2025 started with National Chair, Stephanie Mwite, presiding. The council confirmed the following to the League Executive committee: **Beryl Achieng**, **Lady Justice Mary Angawa**, **Frances Cattermole**, **Susie Edwards** and **Joyce Ogundo**. Chair of the balloting committee, Frances Cattermole, announced the branch officers and members of the standing committees. The Zones for Vice Chairmen were kept the same as last year with Cherry Ritchie taking over the Coast Branches from Marlene Burnett.

The outgoing Chairman of the Executive Committee's report was read by **Claire Jethwa** as **Jane Parmley** was currently in the UK being introduced to her first grandchild. After reporting that it had been an **"interesting"** year Jane quoted from an outgoing executive chair report of 1994 ***"Meetings though long are always varied and lively. The input from members of this Committee has been thoughtful and stimulating. Debate we certainly had"***

Likewise ***"As in the past, the year had a busy agenda covering a wide range of subjects..... We have deliberated long and hard over changes" One of our primary interests is what you are all doing in your Branches"*** while these quotes accurately described the past year Jane noted the big difference in that year 16 members put themselves forward for the executive committee while currently we struggle to get 8 ladies to stand.

Jane went on to thank all the members of the committee with a special mention of Monisha Menezes for taking the minutes and managing to put things in some sort of order, and to Christine in the office for dealing with all the bits and pieces.



Following the official closure of the meeting there was a cake to celebrate the 100th anniversary of 4 branches Gilgil, Machakos/Ulu, Nakuru, and Thika celebrated their Centenaries. Coffee and an excellent lunch were served by Spring Valley Branch.



Friday Market Happenings

May 16th: A Blooming Affair!

Organised by Executive Officer **Christine Anderson** Hall was bedecked with beautiful and inspiring flower (and veggie) arrangements. The demonstration ended with a surprise inter-branch contest won by



Muthaiga .

June 13th Plant

Sale organized by Nancy Warshow and the Lavington Branch.



Embu Branch held a "White-Elephant" Sale

Upcoming Friday Events

June 27th: Farmers Choice

July 11th: City Branch is providing an **African Brunch** along with **Kenchic & Adult Wellness by GoodLife**

July 18th: Chair Exercises with Joyce & a talk about deafness.

July 25th: Farmers Choice

Aug 2 –18: HQ Closed

Aug 22nd: Kenchic, Chair Exercises, Assisting the Elderly

May 23rd Chair Exercises

Ably led from the stage by Joyce McIntyre, 22 ladies took part in Chair "yoga" which is to become a regular Friday happening, often linked with some sort of wellness talk.



The Branch COUNCILLOR

The League is run for and by the members but, obviously, the day to day running cannot involve every member. This handled by the Executive Committee which meets monthly and the Council which meets three times a year – in March, late June and November. Each Branch nominates one or more Councillors depending on the number of members in the branch. The total number of Councillors cannot exceed 50, so the Balloting Committee determines the number per branch each year.

A Councillor must have been a member of the League for not less than two years and must be a full member of the branch she wishes to represent. Her job is to attend the Council meetings and report back to her branch with details of what happened at the meeting.

Council meetings are open to ALL members but not everybody is able to attend. The Councillor **MUST** attend two out of the three meetings a year unless she has obtained permission to be absent. If a resolution comes up before Council which requires a

vote (it will have been notified on the Agenda sent out beforehand), then the Councillor is expected to find out the wishes of her branch on the matter and vote accordingly and this is dependant upon what is being voted on. The first and third Council meetings are normally held in Nairobi, the second meeting is usually up or down country. A Councillor may nominate a member of her branch to hold a proxy vote, but the name of the proxy voter must be notified to the Balloting Officer and the Chairman of Executive before the start of the meeting.

Article 91 of the By-Laws reads:

1. The Councillors shall:

- attend Council meetings and vote where necessary.
- report back to their Branch the proceedings of any Council meeting.
- assist and advise the Branch Committee in running the Branch in accordance with the constitution and objects of the League.

Frances Cattermole

Around the Branches

Thika @ 100

One hundred years ago, on 15th May 1925, the very first meeting of the Thika Branch of the EAWL convened at the Blue Post Hotel, overlooking the Chania Falls. A lunch party was organised for the same date, at the same location, in 2025, to commemorate this impressive milestone. Eleven branch members and one associate member (80% of the total current membership) were joined by **National Chairman, Stephanie Mwite, Zone Vice Chairman, Sue Haworth, and Chair of Executive, Frances Cattermole**, for the celebrations

With everyone seated comfortably and the necessary refreshments to hand, **Branch Chairman, Sarah Flowers**, kicked off the gathering with personal histories of some of the amazing, capable, resilient and brave ladies who had preceded her in that role. Up until the 1960s three branches covered the same area: Thika; Ruiru and Makuyu / Mitubirin there was a brief story about an outstanding lady from each. Some of the tales were in sharp contrast to today, for example travel from Nairobi by ox wagon, bicycle and wading rivers (related with background noise of hooting matatus and bodabodas), but the aims and goals of assisting those less fortunate, still ring true today.

After a toast to the branch and its first 100 years, everyone



tucked into a delicious lunch washed down with some celebratory bubbles and accompanied by lots of fun, laughter and reminiscences. The meal was rounded off with a lovely cake and rendition of "Happy Birthday", provided by the hotel staff.

Sarah Flowers

Eldoret

Eldoret's May meeting was held in the lovely Kaptagat garden of **John & Anna Boyd-Moss**.

Days before that a contingent had visited the Eldoret School for the Hearing Impaired to present a cheque for 50,000/- which was the proceeds from our Easter Basket Raffle, which will go towards fitting out their science lab.



While there we were delighted to see that the beds we had donated about 20 years ago were still in good repair and being used by the students.

NAKURU @ 100

On Saturday 24th May we celebrated our centenary with a sponsored walk and fun day out for all of our members and many from our Nakuru community on Kenana Farm, Njoro.

About 120 adults and children came through the gate and all enjoyed walks of varying lengths around the farm, visiting the Friesian dairy herd and the beautiful racehorse mares with their foals in the fields. The weather gods were definitely smiling on us as, despite the forecast and the previous days of regular downpours, the rain held off !!

We were honoured that our National Chairman Stephanie came and supported us with all her family, they were welcomed warmly!

There were stalls of every variety ranging from homemade soaps, beautiful stitched items, plants, macramé items, cold pressed oils, herbs, cheese, cakes and biscuits, jams, ice cream to a white elephant stall. We had printed 1000 greetings cards depicting the Nakuru tapestry, which along with eco-friendly veggie bags were for sale on our Branch table.

There was fun for the kids, face painting and the corn hole game as well as plenty of space to run and bike around.



A huge beautiful birthday cake was made by our very talented member Lishad Matharu and with a song especially written by AI, we all sang, blew out the candles and did a bit of dancing!! (I wish I could have included a video of the song in this newsletter Ed)

Cheryle gave us a short history of our branch and Janet thanked everyone and with Redeemer they cut the cake!!

We then raffled 3 food hampers which generated some extra fun and funds.

A sumptuous lunch was provided by **Kembu Cottages**, all organized by **Andrew and Zoe Nightingale** and with a bar on site, we all got stuck into the lunch, cake and drinks!!

We raised over **377,000 ksh**, a very successful day was had by all.



**Janet
Manuel**



Rosslyn Branch - Bingo 20 members and friends gathered at **Gayle Davidson's** home to be challenged by bingo caller extraordinaire Jolene who kept everyone amused with her "Bingo Speak" and challenged with cross and outline patterns as well as the usual full house and complete line. There was lots of prizes kindly supplied by **Jacquie Resley** from **Spinners Web**.

A total **9,550/-** was raised for Rosslyn's Charities .



Kisumu Branch—Resurrected

On Friday 13th June a group of 16 ladies came to the **Pabari** residence in Kisumu to meet with the EAWL National Chairman, **Stephanie Mwite**, to discuss the resurrection of the Kisumu branch. **Rosa Okwaro** gave an overview of the League to the ladies before the National Chair arrived and continued to give more information.

The gathering consisted of old Kisumu branch members and other interested ladies. After some constructive discussions the ladies agreed to be members.

There will be another meeting in two weeks to decide on the office bearers.



Brief History of Machakos/Ulu Branch

Machakos district is mentioned by the earliest explorers and pioneers and described as vast tracts of land teeming with wildlife, rugged hills and drought as a frequent experience! Machakos Fort was the capital of Kenya when the railway came to a halt in the swampy plain while the engineers figured out how to descend into the rift valley, and it was here that Nairobi began and grew into the capital and city that it is today.

The EAWL was started in Nairobi in 1917. When in 1925 they started to form rural branches Machakos was one of the first to be formed along with Thika, Nakuru and Gilgil, all important agricultural areas. Mrs Vivian Percival was the first District Vice President. Ulu followed soon after, headed by Mrs (later Lady)F O'B Wilson, the two branches amalgamated in 1933. Mrs Wilson took over as president of the League after Gertrude Grogan died in 1943. She was a founder member of ACWW, alongside Lady Eleonor Cole, and was the EAWL representative for many years. Now, Machakos member, Judith Juma has been appointed as Deputy World President of the ACWW. Mrs Claire Wilson became the youngest National President of the League in 1951.

The branch played a leading role in the work of the Red Cross during the second world war, heading the hospitality list for soldiers, sailors and airmen. During the war years and the depression that followed the branch continued doggedly with their welfare work consistently welcoming newcomers to the district, caring for women and educating children. Many schools were founded on farms by the branch to educate the workers' families.



Gilgil Branch had a super meeting on June 5th at Kate Kayes' Home with guest Speaker Janet Naiseku.

Janet talked about her life growing up as a Masai woman and running away to avoid circumcision.



The Christmas parties and annual fixtures were apparently legendary together with the swimming galas at the Wilson's to raise funds for a nursery school in Machakos as well as Gertrude's Garden hospital, the Lady Northey home, Weal House, Harrison House, Flying Doctors and many more. Rather puts us to shame!

Machakos members were always active on Council and the suggestion that reminiscences of early settlers should be recorded came from Machakos. The pioneer scrapbook "They Made it Their Home" was the result.

In 1977 Mrs Peggy Howden told council that the number of children disabled by polio was increasing rapidly, which led to the successful Immunization program led by Mrs Jill Simpson in Naivasha & Nakuru.

The branch has waxed and waned over the years, but managed to keep the spirit up and keep on keeping on. At times the membership has been so depleted that meetings were held over the Farmer's Radio network, due the large distances between homesteads and difficulties of travel. No roads, only game trails.

More recently we can boast that this was the only branch that met daily for breakfast meetings – I will leave you to figure that one out! We as a branch can be proud of our service given to the League over the years and we should be striving to continue the legacy and improve on it. Machakos has always been known for our hospitality and socialising. So to continue this tradition we will be holding a **Pioneer's Picnic** in the drought prone vast tracts of land, teeming with wildlife and rugged hills to celebrate our centennial year on **20th September 2025**. I do hope that many of you will join us – it is not such a wearisome journey 100 years on..

Susie Edwards