



# *BONFIRE*

San Jose Branch

Empowering Women Since 1881

## **President's Message about the AAUW San Jose Annual Meeting**

As the shelter in place order has been extended through May 3, we will not hold the in-person Annual Meeting and Luncheon on May 2. We do need to find an alternative way to hold our annual election of the AAUW San Jose Board. I am exploring those options and will inform the membership of a new date and method. I will also try to find the simplest way for members to join an electronic gathering so all will feel included, assure we have a quorum, and provide a way for those who don't have access to technology to vote should they want to. One advantage of an electronic gathering is that many more people can attend because space and cost are not an issue!

As I will be figuring this out in April, you may already have received an email from me with the new arrangements. But just in case, I wanted to place this notice in our May BONFIRE.



**“To advance gender equity for women and girls  
through research, education, and advocacy.”**

## President's Corner

### Peg Carlson-Bowen



I am writing from the beginning of April to readers living in the beginning of May. I hope you are all well, have enough to eat, that all you know have a roof over their heads and the devices that will help all of us develop a working knowledge of Zoom, FaceTime, WebEx, or Skype. It seems to me that many previously reluctant to use technology are bravely learning they are more capable than they ever thought they could be. Give yourselves a well-deserved pat on the back.

As we watch the national news feature Santa Clara County's own Dr. Sarah Cody, or Dr. Deborah Birx, or the many other female medical professionals and scientists, I am struck by how relevant our AAUW mission is. Though some hardy women fought their way into these fields before Title IX was passed in 1972, that landmark legislation was originally conceived to guarantee women the right to attend medical school and law school. We often hear about it with regard to sports, but that is an evolution of its original intent.

This is why AAUW matters. Women doctors are fighting in hospitals and public health departments. Female EMTs are showing up when called. Women scientists are developing vaccines. Women engineers are redesigning ventilators. And men, raised with different values than before, are welcoming to the women in the fight.

Of course, the lifelong friendships we have made in AAUW matter, too. That is who is inviting us to a Zoom meeting, that is who is delivering a meal to our door when we need it, that is who is at the end of the phone because that darn technology is too hard to figure out. But our mission matters to the wider world more than ever now. We can be proud of our past and face the future with renewed purpose.

Stay safe and be well.

## 2020 AAUW Election

Your voice — and your vote — are vital in our 2020 election. The Directors you elect to AAUW's Board will work alongside CEO Kim Churches and her team to continue implementing AAUW's trailblazing strategic plan.

AAUW depends on strong, skilled and experienced leadership to advance our mission of gender equity and economic security for women and their families. So please take the time to carefully review this year's candidates — then cast your ballot. We need your vote to strengthen the future of our organization.

**You have until 6 pm EDT on May 18 to [vote online](#).**

Enter your member number and PIN sent to you in email from AAUW on April 8.

If you prefer a paper ballot, you may request one by April 17 by contacting Connect ([connect@aauw.org](mailto:connect@aauw.org) or 800.326.2289). Paper ballots must be postmarked by 11:59 pm EDT on May 1.

Questions? Contact Connect at [connect@aauw.org](mailto:connect@aauw.org) or 800.326.2289.

Link to vote online:

<https://www.aauw.org/resources/member/governance-tools/national-election/>





### Tips for Using Zoom Safely

Peg Carlson-Bowen

Many of you may have taken the recent AAUW CA training on how to host Zoom meetings. This has been a SUPER tool for many of us, but a few security precautions are useful to prevent what is called "ZoomBombing" -- this is where uninvited strangers enter a meeting and share inappropriate content.

Here are some tips from the FBI, Zoom and other experts to prevent Zoombombing\*:

Keep meetings and classrooms private. Do this by requiring a meeting password (Zoom recently made this the default for meetings). Additionally, the "Waiting Room" feature can help hosts control who enters.

Do not share invites to Zoom meetings on social media. Instead, send the meeting invitation and password directly to attendees.

Use the random meeting ID automatically generated by the application so it can't be shared multiple times. According to Zoom's website, this is safer than using a "Personal Meeting ID."

Change screen sharing settings to "Only Host" so no one but the host can control the screen. The host can also mute participants in their settings.

Lock a Zoom session that has already begun so no one else can join. Do this by clicking "Participants" in the bottom of a Zoom window, then clicking "Lock Meeting". However, this will also lock out latecomers who have been invited — but a good lesson in being punctual, isn't it?

Remove participants by hovering over their name in the Participants menu, and clicking the "Remove" option. The removed participant will not be allowed back in, according to Zoom's website.

The FBI advises users to make sure they have the most updated version of Zoom's software. A recent security update added default passwords and disabled the ability to scan for meetings to join.

\* Note that some of these may only be available in the paid version.

### May 2020 Calendar

In compliance with the County mandated "Shelter in Place" the AAUW San Jose Headquarters is closed. No meetings will occur on site for the month of May. Interest Group Chairs and Committee Heads may elect to conduct meetings remotely via Zoom, Skype, etc. They will contact members with details/instructions.

As yet, no decision for on-site June meetings has been made.

Stay in. Stay safe. Stay healthy.



**Coming Together for a Cause**

Jan Giroux, Gifts for Teens

During this extraordinarily difficult time in the world, we need to focus on the positive more than ever. We can do that by counting our blessings and thinking of those who are less fortunate in our community. That is what Gifts for Teens is doing and we could use your help. With sheltering in place still a reality, our Gifts for Teens buyers are burning up the Internet looking for bargains for our annual teen holiday gift bags. Cash donations to Gifts for Teens during this time would allow us to purchase needed items now.

Your monetary donation and generosity could be used towards:

- \$30 — buys and fills 1 tote bag of gifts
- \$90 — buys and fills 3 tote bags of gifts
- \$100 — buys socks for 65 boys
- \$100 — buys food certificates for 16 teens

For questions or monetary donations, contact [Elaine@Gifts4teens](mailto:Elaine@Gifts4teens) or visit [www.Gifts4teens.org](http://www.Gifts4teens.org). Please make checks payable to ISPF-AAUW of SCC, notate GFT on memo line and mail to Headquarters, attention AAUW-Gifts for Teens.

Knowing that you made a difference is someone’s life is a boost we all need at this time. Thank you.

**“Nothing is worth more than laughter. It is strength to laugh and to abandon oneself, to be light.”**

**– Frida Kahlo**



**June Soiree Postponed**

Mary Jane Vitkovich, Neighbors Helping Neighbors

The Neighbors Helping Neighbors June soiree for all AAUW members is an event at which a non-profit is invited to speak and members can donate items needed by that non-profit. Due to current circumstances, we are postponing the event until late summer/early fall.

We are all called to be "neighbors helping neighbors" during these times. People in service roles are our neighbors that especially need recognition and support. I encourage everyone to say a simple "thank you" to anyone in our community who is providing our lifeline to essential services.



**March 2020 Bridge Winners**

Bobbie Eckerman

- First Monday: Sandy Bonnet, Lida Kluzek
- Second Monday: Judy Kumagai, Pat Seaman, Rosemary Busch
- Second Thursday: Cancelled
- Second Friday: Darline Wilson, Bobbie Eckerman
- Third Friday: Cancelled
- Fourth Tuesday: Cancelled



### **An Update on Evelyn Gonzalez, Past Local Scholarship Recipient**

Cheryl Markman, Local Scholarship Committee

Evelyn Gonzalez received an AAUW San Jose Local Scholarship in 2019. She transferred to Santa Clara University in the fall of 2019 and has been devoting most of her time to her education as a full-time student. She will graduate in the spring of 2021 with a Bachelor's degree in Political Science and is considering going to law school afterwards. Evelyn is also the mother of a six-year-old boy which, it goes without saying, is quite time-consuming. Nonetheless, she manages to squeeze in time to invest in her personal growth.

Evelyn became a mother at sixteen. Since then she has focused on making their lives better and creating a healthy and stable environment for both of them. In her own words, she went through harsh times — poverty, domestic violence, incarceration, and an unhealthy family environment. It led her to give up on life and to engage in criminal activity in her neighborhood. At age fifteen she was incarcerated. With that experience she came to want something different for her future. And she knew she had potential to accomplish her goals and go above and beyond.

What Evelyn went through was painful, but she is grateful for it because that is what drives her toward her goals. She now understands what leads certain people to engage in criminal behavior and to become addicts. She feels very lucky to have experienced this because now she can advocate for this contingent and help to change their lives. She wants to become a leader, a healer, and to work with legislators to open doors to alleviate some of the burdens that this population faces.

Evelyn is involved in juvenile justice reform, participating in various organizations toward that end. In 2016 she founded the Youth Advisory Council, a collaboration between the Santa Clara County Probation Department and Fresh Lifelines for Youth. In this program, she shares her story and encourages the youth to successfully complete their probation terms. On campus, she attends panels related to social justice. Recently, she spent time at the Santa Clara Law School where she attends events for political science majors. This quarter, Evelyn met with district representatives from all over the nation, which has helped her to better understand the world of legislators. She also met with a professor who specializes in film and documentaries; together they hope to develop a project to share her story.

Because of the AAUW scholarship, Evelyn is able to invest much more time to school and learning. She can focus in class without having to worry about financial stability, and can be a part of organizations and associations that get her closer to her goal. It also allows her time for personal growth. All of this is helping her to build a better future for herself, her son, and her community.



**Coronavirus:  
Its Devastating Economic Impact on Women**

Louise Persson, Vice President, Legal Advocacy Fund

Sending you every good wish for health and safety during this crisis. Unfortunately, and unsurprisingly, women are being impacted unequally in this pandemic, as revealed by AAUW National.

The issues we have long been fighting for are now urgent:

Low-wage workers — 54 percent of whom are women — are bearing the brunt of the coronavirus pandemic as they lose jobs by the millions.

Those who have been working part time — again predominantly women — often don't have basic employee benefits, including health insurance coverage. The increasing numbers of gig/contract workers also have no benefits.

The nation's lack of paid sick and family leave is endangering both the physical and economic well-being of countless American families.

Retired women — who are twice as likely as men to be living at or below the poverty line — are more vulnerable than ever.

And the burden of student debt — two-thirds of which is held by women — is especially difficult for those who are unemployed.

As the crisis eases, society will focus on rebuilding the economy — we need an economy that treats women fairly. AAUW members in San Jose and nationwide need to support issues that will bring equity to women in our economy.

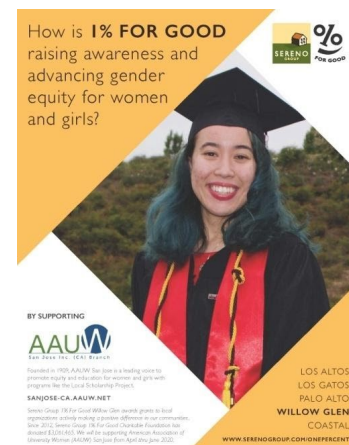
**City Lights Theater Fundraiser Update**

Cheryl Markman, Local Scholarship Committee

Unfortunately, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, City Lights has had to postpone its production of "The Little Foxes," which was set to open in May. As you know, this show was to have been a fundraising opportunity for Local Scholarship. The theater hopes to bring this play to the stage in 2021-22. We will keep you posted. In the meantime, stay safe and stay healthy.

Group 1% For Good Willow Glen awards grants to local organizations actively making a positive difference in our communities. Since 2012, Sereno Group 1% For Good Charitable Foundation has donated \$3,061,465. Each quarter, Sereno agents from the various offices pool their profits and donate 1% of that amount to a worthy local non-profit. They will be supporting AAUW San Jose's Local Scholarship program from April thru June 2020.

Featured on the poster is 2018 Local Scholarship recipient, Patricia (Tricia) Rich, who is currently enrolled in the Education Master's program at USF.



Take Action Now

While we are “sheltered in place,” we can take time to reach out to our legislators to remind them that there is work to be done. Here’s what you can do:

Send a letter to your Senator and Assembly member to encourage action in California. You can copy the letter below or compose your own letter. Go to websites to send an electronic message.

Write a postcard to Senator Feinstein and Senator Harris thanking them for stepping up as co-sponsors of the Paycheck Fairness Act currently in the Senate.

Or, write a simple postcard to any of your elected officials stating:

*Please support robust legislation to ensure gender pay equity and extend the deadline for passing the Equal Rights Amendment.*

Sign your letter or postcard with your name and address.

To Your Representative:

While no life has been unchanged, the current pandemic highlights the nation’s economic inequities. Low-wage and part-time workers are losing jobs and may have inadequate healthcare; more women hold these kinds of jobs. Retired women have fewer reserves; many had lower income during their careers. Women hold a higher portion of student debt; it takes longer to pay off debt with a lower salary.

As a member of AAUW, I belong to a community that strongly advocates for pay equity. Passing a federal law like the [Paycheck Fairness Act](#) will help protect everyone in all states. But until that happens, I urge you to work to make improvements to California equal pay laws so that fair pay is an accessible reality for everyone. The AAUW scorecard shows specific areas where there are gaps in California law: [https://www.aauw.org/aauw\\_check/pdf\\_download/show\\_pdf.php?file=Gender\\_Pay\\_Gap\\_California](https://www.aauw.org/aauw_check/pdf_download/show_pdf.php?file=Gender_Pay_Gap_California)

Women are increasingly the primary or co-breadwinner in their families. Shortchanging women hurts not only women, but children, families and communities. Please commit to working for robust legislation that guarantees full gender pay equity.

<i>Your Name &amp; Address</i>	Jim Beall State Capitol Room 2082 Sacramento, CA 95814 916 651 4015	Senator Dianne Feinstein 331 Harte Senate Office Building Washington, DC 20510
Assemblymember Ash Kalra P.O. Box 942849 Sacramento, CA 94249-0027 Tel: (916) 319-2027	Representative Zoe Lofgren 1401 Longworth House Office Building Washington, DC 20515 Phone: (202) 225-3072	Senator Kamala Harris 12 Hart Senate Office Building Washington DC 20510
Assemblymember Evan Lowe P.O. Box 942849, Room 4126 Sacramento, CA 94249-0028 Tel: (916) 319-2028	Representative Ro Khanna 221 Cannon House Office Building Washington, DC 20515 Phone: 202-225-2631	Representative Anna Eshoo 202 Cannon House Office Building Washington, DC 20515

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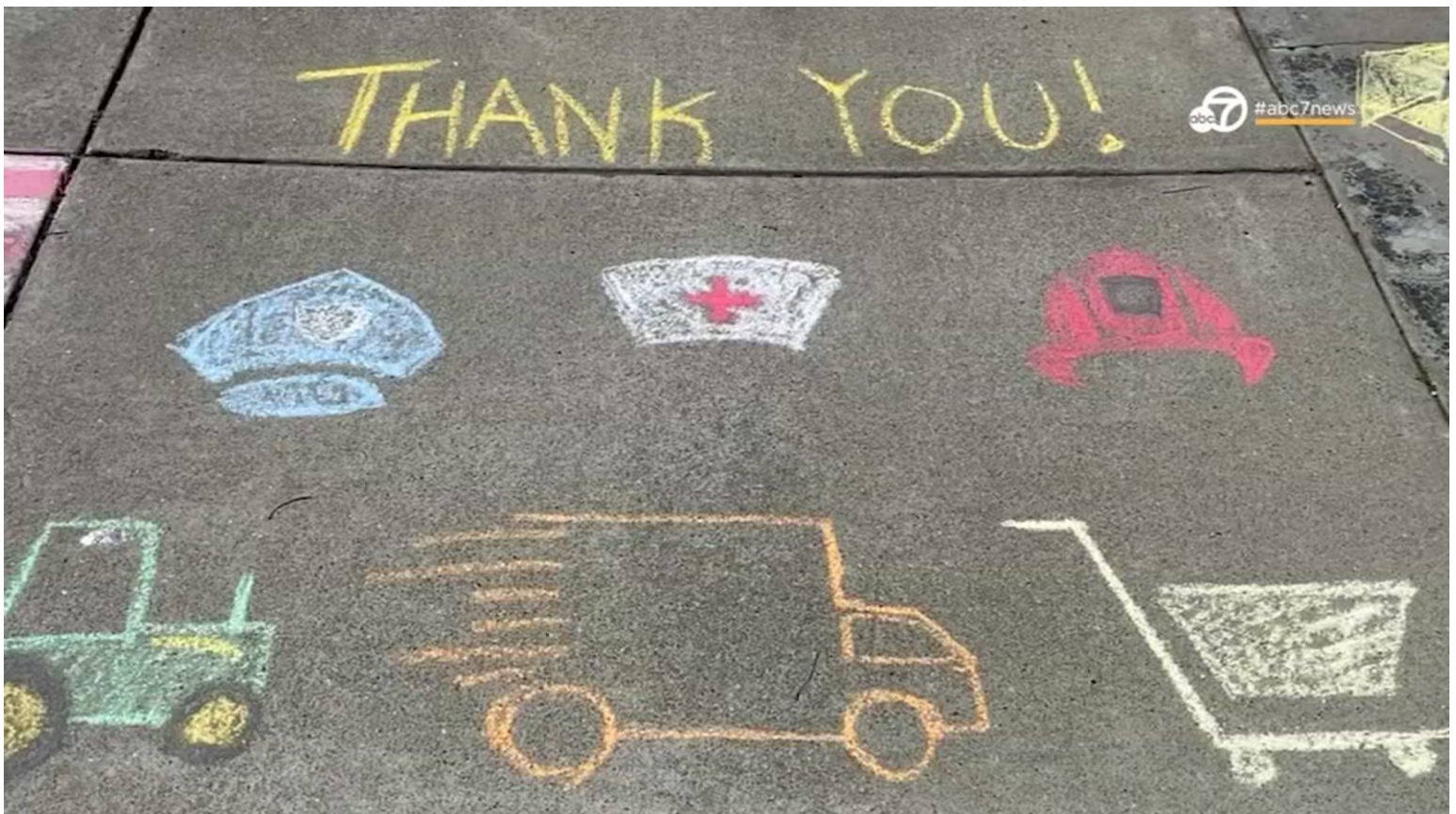
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The sole purpose of this publication is to convey the association's business to its membership. Only articles and announcements related to Branch business will be considered for inclusion.

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*Empowering Women Since 1881*



See the San Jose Branch Website at [www.aauwsanjose.org](http://www.aauwsanjose.org) for more information.