

**BONFIRE**

San Jose Branch

Empowering women since 1881

Public Policy Activities Recap

Susan Karlins, Public Policy Committee Chair

AAUW San Jose members, friends and family sent over 2,000 letters to low-propensity voters across the country, urging them to participate in the democratic process by voting. While we're all winners for helping with this effort, hats off to Dr. Tara Sood, who wrote 400 letters, and Marna Taylor, who wrote 260! Each of them got support from family/friends; isn't that what success often entails?

We supported 16 California legislative bills this year, writing letters and making calls to legislators, committees, and the governor. While most of these bills were signed by Governor Newsom, he did veto four of the AAUW CA-supported bills that our Branch worked on, including AB 1906 (health of pregnant corrections officers), AB 2405 (housing), AB 3216 (rehire rights of COVID-related layoffs), and SB 1383 (safety of domestic workers).

On Thursday, October 1, seven Public Policy Committee members presented to 40 Branch members on the 12 California ballot measures coming up in this election. Thanks to all for an informative evening. The slide deck is available at [CA ballot propositions overview](#).

At the Public Policy Committee meeting in November, we will consider post-election work and legislative visits for the new year. Please join us via Zoom on Thursday, November 5, at 7 pm: <https://yearup.zoom.us/j/98670478168>.

A Video - When Women Won the Vote

Presented and Performed by the Readers Theater

Video Link Submitted by Helen Christensen — AAUW Sunnyvale-Cupertino Branch

The AAUW Sunnyvale-Cupertino Branch Readers Theater presents a YouTube video WHEN WOMEN WON THE VOTE for viewing and sharing with your friends and family members. The video is a short history of the women's suffrage movement on the 100th anniversary of the 19th amendment to the US constitution. Here is the link, which is about 30 minutes long. Please listen to the end so you can also enjoy the beautiful music.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3bZuqgKY6w0>



Peg Carlson-Bowen
President's Corner

BONFIRE deadlines are early in the month, so as I sit here at the beginning of October, I imagine you at the end of October, still wondering where our country is going. Due to the number of mail-in/drop-off ballots, we may not even know the results of the election until later in November (hopefully!).

How can we cope with so many unknowns in our lives? Our October Third Wednesday talk on coping, delivered by NAMI (National Alliance of Mental Illness), should help. But this isolation and political turmoil takes a toll, doesn't it? What else can we do?

My hope is buoyed by the Local Scholarship recipients we heard about at our Fall Gathering. I am encouraged by the ongoing effort to creatively have a Tech Trek program in 2021. There will be 400 youth who receive backpacks from Gifts for Teens this year -- showing the dedication of that group for doing what is possible, and not focusing on limits. Families helped by Neighbors Helping Neighbors and the Supportive Family Housing agency will know that someone cared to help, even during a pandemic.

When preparing for the Fall Gathering, I was impressed by how many interest groups overcame online challenges and fears and are meeting via Zoom. I worked all summer with Branch officers, chairs and volunteers to connect with renewing members, welcome new members, wrestle with budgets, celebrate a new roof on Headquarters, create accommodations for COVID-19 public health guidelines, and on and on.

We make a difference every day in our community and that is not nothing. Amid the national chaos, our mission doesn't change and we are the ones moving it forward. Every renewed membership, every volunteer effort (no matter how small), every encouraging word you share with a friend, contributes to our ability to persevere. So, sit back for a moment, pour yourself your favorite beverage, and raise a glass to YOU.

As Gloria Steinem said, "The future depends entirely on what each of us does every day. After all, a movement is only people moving."



Suffrage Centennial Celebration Wrap-Up

Sharon Bouska

Women's Equality 2020 Commission



Have you seen the new Forever postage stamp? It was released last month and, of course, you can see what it commemorates! The centennial commemoration of the 19th Amendment is coming to an official end, as will this column. However, I am exploring ways for members to be informed of upcoming events that concern and celebrate activities and experiences that empower women and girls. If there is time to publicize an event in the BONFIRE, I will do so. If not, I will post it on our website and/or our Facebook page.



Watch for my new "Stay Engaged" column in the BONFIRE, which will highlight the movement to make August 26 a national holiday to honor the hard work it took to pass the 19th Amendment, and the work still happening to ensure an inclusive, participatory democracy. If you have any ideas or suggestions for items for this column, please send them my way:
aauwsj2020@gmail.com. Stay engaged!



Neighbors Helping Neighbors

Mary Jane Vitkovich,

Neighbors Helping Neighbors Co-Chair

A great big "thank you" to members who contributed items to the October drive for toilet paper and bath mats. We collected 533 rolls of toilet paper and 53 bath mats for Family Supportive Housing in downtown San Jose. Your support is greatly appreciated! Please see our notice in this month's BONFIRE on our upcoming drive in November.

"Warm Your Neighbors' Soles" Sock Drive

Mary Jane Vitkovich,

Neighbors Helping Neighbors Co-Chair

On Saturday, November 14, from 10 am to 2 pm in the AAUW San Jose parking lot, Neighbors Helping Neighbors will be collecting new socks for two local community service organizations — Front Door Communities and Santa Maria Urban Ministry. These nonprofits serve homeless and economically disadvantaged people in downtown San Jose. Donate new socks, white or dark colors, for men or women. Bins will be located in the parking lot. Questions? Contact Mary Jane Vitkovich at neighbors@aauwsanjose.org.

Covid and Headquarters Use

Pamela Dougherty,
Building & Properties Committee Chair

I have spoken to some of our special interest group coordinators. We all want to get back to Headquarters and face to face; however, at this point the AAUW-CA and National recommendations will stand for the near future. AAUW CA is evaluating these issues continuously as California and the County of Santa Clara review the dynamics of, and responses to, the virus.

While we cannot have meetings at Headquarters, we may access it to perform minimum basic essentials under the guidelines approved by the County of Santa Clara: no more than four people in the building at one time, observing social distancing and mask wearing.

Judy Burt continues to pick up the mail, advise appropriate parties as to receipt of important information and seek guidance for handling. Judy does not deliver mail. Please be sure you obtain a key to Headquarters if your position requires access to pick up critical information. If you are in a compromised group, please let me know so we can support you relative to Headquarters access without putting you at risk.

KUDOS to all who have found safe ways to support our causes and activities while following the Covid guidance. The creativity with ZOOM has been incredible.



Gifts For Teens's Mission Not Deterred by Pandemic

Jan Giroux, Gifts for Teens



"The show must go on." That seems to be the motto this year for the Gifts for Teen's steering committee. Even though the number of holiday gift bags has been decreased, there has been no lack of enthusiasm, creative thinking and can-do spirit from the committee and community.

In accordance with the County Covid protocols, our bag assembly and filling were taken outside. Thank you to AAUW for their generosity in allowing us to use the Branch Headquarters parking lot. With shade tents, distancing, masks and sanitizers, members of the committee along with a limited number of volunteers from National Charity League (NCL) and Pioneer High School assembled hygiene bags and school kits on September 19. The backpacks and totes will be filled on two dates in mid-October and ready for agency pickup shortly thereafter.

Besides our usual warm hooded sweatshirts, hygiene kits and fun items, hand sanitizers were added this year. For more information or to donate, visit www.gifts4teens.org.

An Update on Djalaica De Guzman, Past Local Scholarship Recipient

Cheryl Markman, Local Scholarship Committee

Djalaica De Guzman was awarded an AAUW Local Scholarship in 2020. Majoring in Nursing at San Jose State University, she expects to graduate in May 2021. Djalaica notes that the scholarship came at an especially advantageous time for her. She had just moved into a new house with sorority friends when the pandemic began. To make matters even worse, she and her family were in a very rough financial situation since most of them had lost their jobs due to the pandemic. Paying for tuition was going to be really challenging. Happily, our scholarship allowed her to move into her new house comfortably. Additionally, Djalaica was very excited to be rehired at Barry's Fitness Center in mid-August, which affords her the opportunity to indulge in her passion for exercise and staying active.

In early September, Djalaica was offered a job at Santa Clara Valley Medical Center as a Health Services Assistant in the Traumatic Brain Injury and General Rehabilitation Unit. She is excited to learn more and to gain experience in a hospital, working with patients with this type of acuity challenge. This will give her the opportunity to explore a specialty in which she is interested. Djalaica notes that Valley Med is known for this unit and is actually recognized as the only high performing hospital in California for rehabilitation services.

Although graduation is still several months away, Djalaica is already looking into new graduate residency programs. Building the courage to make the big move to a big city away from home, she is reaching out to hospitals in Los Angeles, looking into applying to really great programs such as UCLA, Cedar Sinai, and Children's Hospital LA. She is also applying to many in the Bay Area.

In the just-for-fun category, along with trying to stay active, when she has the chance Djalaica loves "expanding her self-care treatments such as Netflix and skin care routines." One of the shows she's watched recently is about real estate in Los Angeles, which is what inspired her to move there and to maybe get a real estate license in the future. She obviously has a broad range of interests!

New Member Profile

Claire Campodonico, Sunshine Chair



DEBBIE McCORMICK earned her BS in Urban Planning from California Polytechnic Institute in Pomona. She has enjoyed her career as a Land Use Planner. Her friend, member Leticia Cowan, referred her to our Branch. Debbie is very enthusiastic about becoming involved in the mission of AAUW.



Give The Gift of Education Tuesday, December 1 — Saturday, December 5

Diane Trombetta, Local Scholarship 2020 Holiday Campaign Committee Chair

Let's wrap up this year of virtual gatherings by joining together to support the 2020 Holiday Campaign to raise money for our Local Scholarship Program. Our Holiday Boutique has always been a joyful and inspiring community and member event. By participating in this year's first-time-ever online campaign -- Tuesday, December 1 through Saturday, December 5 -- and supporting the local college women who need us, we can experience the same satisfaction of coming together to fulfill our AAUW mission; to advance gender equity for women and girls through research, advocacy, and education.

You can still "fill a basket" with the gift that women students need now more than ever; a four-year college degree that can lead to wider career opportunities, future professional success, self-confidence, economic stability, and a lifetime connection to AAUW. The price tag of a college education has more than doubled over the past generation, and women take about two years longer than men to repay student loans. The more we give in scholarships, the less these students will need to borrow.

You can double the impact of your donation -- thanks to a generous gift from AAUW members, donations will be matched, dollar for dollar, up to a total of \$5,000. Plus, every \$100 donated entitles the donor to a ticket for a drawing to win one of six unique prizes: a two-night Santa Cruz Harbor vacation package, a king-size hand-stitched quilt, a gourmet wine gift basket from Joseph George Winery, or handmade fused-glass jewelry and hand-woven scarves.

In 2020 we gave over \$100,000 in scholarships, averaging \$5,000, to 22 students. Celebrate the holidays and ring in the New Year by supporting exceptional women in 2021 who, against all odds, are determined to obtain a college education. Donating to our Local Scholarship Holiday campaign will be easy, and supporting our Local Scholarship program will keep you smiling all year long. So, make a note of the dates December 1 through 5, and tell all your friends and family members about the Campaign. Details of how to access the special Campaign page on our Branch website will be published in the December BONFIRE. Join the fundraising and give the gift of education!



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November 2020 Calendar

Submitted by Tynka Dees, Calendar Editor

In compliance with the County mandated "Shelter in Place" and National AAUW guidelines the AAUW San Jose Headquarters is closed for meetings. No AAUW physical meetings will occur on site/off site for the month of November. Use of the parking lot is only authorized under specific Gathering Protocol and must be cleared with Pam Dougherty, B&P Chair. (Other Interest Group Chairs and Committee Heads may elect to conduct meetings remotely via Zoom, Skype, etc. They will contact members of the interest group with details/instructions.)

Mon Nov 2 6:30 pm - 8 pm Neighbors Helping Neighbors ZOOM ([Bobbie Baker](#))
 Tue Nov 3 10:30 pm -11:30 am German Conversation ZOOM (RSVP [Barbara Snyder](#))
 Wed Nov 4 6:30 pm -7 pm AAUW Board Social Hour ZOOM ([Peg Carlson-Bowen](#))
 7 pm -8:30 pm ZOOM AAUW BOARD Meeting ([Peg Carlson-Bowen](#))
 Thu Nov 5 7 pm -8:30 pm Public Policy Committee ZOOM ([Susan Karlins](#))

Sun Nov 8 11:30 am - 1:30 pm Film Fans ZOOM (RSVP [Linda Snashall](#))
 Mon Nov 9 6:30 pm -8:30 pm Light Gourmet ZOOM (RSVP [Cheryl Markman](#))
 Tue Nov 10 10:30 am -11:30 am Conversacion Espanol ZOOM (RSVP [Barbara Snyder](#))
 Sat Nov 14 10 am -2 pm Neighbors Helping Neighbors Parking lot drop off ([MaryJane Vitkovich](#))
 6:30 am -9:30 pm Couples Gourmet ZOOM (RSVP [Harriet Tower](#))

Mon Nov 16 9:30 am - 11 am Exploring World Literature ZOOM ([Diana Taylor](#))
 7pm International Gourmet ZOOM ([Jan Bartolotta](#))
 Tue Nov 17 10:30 -11:30 am French Conversation ZOOM (RSVP [Barbara Snyder](#))
 Wed Nov 18 7 -8 pm Third Wednesday - No Program Scheduled ([Sari Fitzwater](#))
 Thu Nov 19 10 -12pm Family History ZOOM ([Susan Brundage](#))
 7:00 -8:30 pm Mystery Lovers ZOOM ([Sharon Shephard](#))

Mon Nov 23 9:30 am - 11am Building and Properties Committee ZOOM ([Pamela Dougherty](#))
 1 pm - 4 pm Interbranch Council ([Peg Carlson-Bowen](#))
 Tue Nov 24 7 pm -8:30 pm Great Decisions PM ([Sharon Shephard](#))

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**PERIODICALS
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AAUW San Jose Branch *Established 1909*

Save the Date

Give The Gift of Education

Tuesday, December 1 — Saturday, December 5

Diane Trombetta, Local Scholarship

2020 Holiday Campaign Committee Chair

Article inside on page 6.



Empowering Women Since 1881
See the San Jose Branch Website at www.aauwsanjose.org for more information