



# BONFIRE

San Jose Branch

Empowering women since 1881

## THIRD WEDNESDAY PROGRAM MARCH 17 @ 7 PM

AAUW advocates for, conducts research, and supports education for all women. But not all women can join until and unless they obtain a traditional degree. This year's Bylaws vote will give members the opportunity to open membership to those friends, colleagues and other community advocates and activists who do not hold a traditional degree. This Third Wednesday meeting will review the National and State Board's rationale behind opening membership up to support equity and our mission.

This meeting will be for members only and will be held via Zoom. Click on the link below to join the meeting on March 17 at 7 pm.

Join Zoom Meeting <https://zoom.us/j/96867543585?pwd=UFpGT29SMEFMdkNGZXZwZG5jMVEzdz09>

Meeting ID: 968 6754 3585

Passcode: 342294

+1 669 900 6833

### President's Corner

When people ask “What does AAUW stand for?” I think most of us answer, “American Association of University Women.” But it seems to me, that’s not quite the right answer. AAUW stands for a lot more than a few letters. AAUW is a wide-ranging, multi-tiered organization that addresses so many facets of what is holding women and all of society back. AAUW stands for data-based research highly respected in Washington. AAUW stands for women facing discrimination, providing legal and logistical support for lawsuits whose outcomes help many, including women in the military who have been victims of sexual harassment and assault. We stand for women’s bodily autonomy by supporting reproductive health choices. We stand for bias-free classrooms and workplaces and are champions for Title IX compliance in colleges and schools. We stand for remarkable individuals pursuing higher education, many times against formidable odds. We identify, sponsor and follow legislation at the state and federal level against archaic laws that hold us back. We stand for equal pay. We engage with local governments to form community-wide initiatives like the hundredth anniversary of the 19<sup>th</sup> amendment, leading to a better awareness of the barriers we still need to fight for women of color today. We stand for our entire local community, helping other organizations help those in need. And we do it all while creating our own AAUW community that introduces us to friends for life. There is, literally, no other organization like it. So next time someone asks you, “What does AAUW stand for?” tell them the whole amazing story of who we are!



**Peg  
Carlson-Bowen  
President**

## An Important Question and Vote for 2021 AAUW California Annual Virtual Meeting Registration Link and Topics

Peg Carlson-Bowen

Between April 7 at 9 am and May 17 at 2 pm, all AAUW members will have the opportunity to vote on an important bylaws amendment that will eliminate the degree requirement for membership. Click [here](#) to learn more about the rationale for the proposed bylaws change brought by the [AAUW Board of Directors](#) and the AAUW Governance Committee.

Plan to attend (via Zoom) the AAUW California Annual Meeting on April 17 to hear AAUW Board Chair Julia Brown as she brings us all the news from AAUW National and the latest about the proposed bylaws change. Registration is required. Click [here](#) to register.

## AAUW State Elections

Peg Carlson-Bowen

AAUW California currently has a full slate of candidates for our State Board. Please click [here](#) to visit the state nominations and elections page and see the bios of the candidates: Sandi Gabe, President-Elect; Roli Wendorf, CFO; and Directors Carol Holzgrafe and Judy Cavin Brown. We will also be voting on the state's Public Policy Priorities. The state voting period is April 16 - May 7, 2021.

Nominations are still open until March 16, 2021, so if you are thinking about joining the state board but are not quite ready to commit, please let the Nominations and Election Committee know so they can give you personal attention and answer your questions.

Please vote in both elections and please consider running for office — whether it is National, State, Interbranch Council, or local branch.

Note: If you are interested in serving on our local AAUW San Jose Branch, please contact [Peg Carlson-Bowen](#). We have positions open, and many hands make light work! Job sharing is an alternative in some positions.



## Neighbors Helping Neighbors Coat Drive Mary Jane Vitkovich

"If I cannot do great things, I can do small things in a great way"  
Martin Luther King Jr.

A great big "Thank you" to all of you who donated to our diaper/baby wipe drive. We collected 5,475 diapers/pull ups and 12,900 baby wipes. The drive was hugely successful because of your generosity.

Here is another opportunity to give to our neighbors. We are holding a "gently worn jacket/coat" drive on March 13, 11 am -1 pm in the AAUW parking lot. Donated items will be given to Santa Maria Urban Ministry. Please contact [Mary Jane Vitkovich](#) you have questions.



Jan Giroux, Vickie VonBergen,  
and Mary Jane Vitkovich

## Looking for a Few Good Coaches

Karelle Cornwell, **Tech Trek**

Tech Trek is going virtual this year and we're looking for coaches! What do you need to be a coach? You need to be an AAUW member, enjoy working with girls 12 to 13 years old, and be willing to learn new tools. The Virtual Tech Trek Coach provides the social and/or technical foundation the campers need while on their Tech Trek virtual adventure, helping them negotiate their journey while also helping AAUW achieve the camp's objectives of increasing campers' interest in studies and careers in STEM fields.

If you're interested in being a coach or would like more information about the camp and the role of a virtual coach, send an email to [techtrek@aauwsanjose.org](mailto:techtrek@aauwsanjose.org). Being involved in Tech Trek is a great way to support AAUW's mission of advancing gender equality for women and girls through research, education and advocacy.

## Local Teens Helping At-Risk Teens

Elaine Benoit, Gifts for Teens

Caring compassion for needy teens inspired local high school volunteers to fill this past year's Gifts for Teens holiday gift bags. In the fall, when older adults were not available to help in person because of Covid-19 restrictions, enthusiastic teenagers volunteered to assemble bags. Teens from both Pioneer High School, and teen girls who are members of the service group National Charity League, enabled us to safely fill the popular backpacks and totes.

Useful and fun gifts were packed for local homeless and foster care youth.

The Pioneer High School story is noteworthy! One girl's concern for the plight of homeless and couch-surfing teens mobilized an entire group of high school students to help out in the community. Three years ago, a caring girl named Sammy started the student-run Gifts for Teens group on the Pioneer campus. Students organized a successful sock drive and spread awareness that teens were helping other teens. The school project grew yearly to include crafting over one thousand handwritten notes of encouragement for low-income youth. Homemade cards emotionally touch the vulnerable needy teens, reinforcing that they are special and truly matter. The Pioneer GFT Club is currently writing and decorating notes, collecting apparel and making colorful friendship bracelets. They have shared their ideas with a student group at Leland High School that is now getting involved. GFT Club members were the majority of volunteers filling our 2020 gift bags. Expectations are that these teen leaders will again serve as 2021 bag assembly workers.

It is exciting to see compassionate and aware teens reaching out to help teens in need that they have never met! These young people are making a positive impact in San Jose.



Pioneer GFT Club teens displaying SF Giants donations

## THINGS YOU MAY NEED TO KNOW...

### News from the State College/University Committee

Contact: Donna Lilly, C/U Committee Chair, [cu@aauw-ca.org](mailto:cu@aauw-ca.org)

Seventy-four branches in California awarded over \$800,000 in scholarship funds to 442 scholars during the 2019-2020 academic year. These figures include 47 scholars who attended the May 2019 National Conference of College Women Student Leaders (NCCWSL) in-person conference at the University of Maryland. Currently, 18 branches of those contacted do not award college scholarships. The good news is all branches raise funds for Tech Trekkers and even better news is that many Tech Trekkers are also honored to receive college scholarships from branches to pursue their STEM dreams. San Jose is proud to award \$100,000 annually and Healdsburg is delighted to report that \$81,000 in scholarship awards support many re-entry as well as returning students. Laguna Beach's scholarship appeal raised \$27,000 during this past pandemic year. Congratulations to all participating branches!

### Save a Spot at NCCWSL

AAUW invites you and hundreds of college students to attend the National Conference for College Women Student Leaders virtual leadership training and networking conference on May 25-26, 2021. Early Bird registration is February 28, 2021. Click [HERE](#) for further information, registration, and FAQ. Tell your college and university students to apply for a free scholarship to NCCWSL prior to the deadline.

Early Bird registration fee for AAUW members and paying scholarship students is \$95. The registration fee has been decreased this year due to the conference being virtual. On March 1, the registration fee will increase to \$125.

NCCWSL offers college students professional skill-building workshops in addition to well-known speaker panelists. This is your opportunity to enable a college student to learn the skills of a leader. You can pay the \$95 registration fee as an individual or ask your branch or interbranch council to cover the cost. You may consider registering for the conference yourself to enhance your own leadership skills.

Kudos to the Diamond Bar-Walnut Branch members and California State Polytechnic University Pomona for funding 14 students to attend NCCWSL in May 2019.



## THINGS YOU MAY NEED TO KNOW...

### FINANCE (State)

**Roli Wendorf**, Chief Financial Officer, Finance Committee Chair, [cfo@aauw-ca.org](mailto:cfo@aauw-ca.org)

#### MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL

Starting March 16, it will be time to renew your AAUW membership for the upcoming fiscal year, 2021-2022. Any new members joining after March 15 will get the remainder of this year free along with next year's membership.

Some branch members still have not renewed their membership for the current year (2020-2021). A message was recently sent out to all finance officers by Angela Cooper of AAUW National outlining the procedure for those renewals. If you need that information, let me know. National dues will be \$62 for the coming year, of which \$59 is tax-deductible.

#### State Membership Dues

State dues remain the same at \$20 but are NOT tax-deductible as AAUW California is a 501(c) (4) entity. Here is a reminder of who does and does not pay state dues. For more complete information, check the website [here](#).

1. 50-Year Honorary Members are exempt from paying state dues but paid Life Members must pay full state dues (\$20).
2. State dues will be waived for past state presidents.
3. State dues will be waived for representatives from college/university (C/U) partner institutions.
4. Students from AAUW C/U partner institutions do not pay state dues, but other students pay half (\$10).

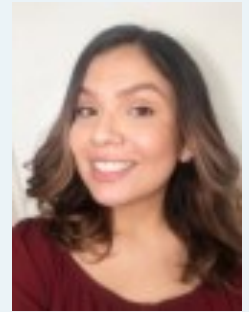
Note: The San Jose Branch membership committee will be sending out the membership renewal instructions soon.

*“Thousands of candles can be lighted from a single candle, and the life of the candle will not be shortened. Happiness never decreases by being shared.”*

**Buddha**

## An Update on Elvira Cervantes, Past Local Scholarship Recipient

Cheryl Markman, Local Scholarship Committee



Elvira Cervantes was awarded an AAUW Local Scholarship in 2020. Currently attending San Jose State University, she will graduate in the spring of 2022 with a BA in Psychology. She is also seeking approval to minor in Child and Adolescent Development. Additionally, Elvira has applied for an Applied Behavior Analysis position, a job in which she would work with autistic elementary school children to help the students improve their behavior. This will allow Elvira to gain experience working with children with learning disabilities.

Upon graduation from SJSU, Elvira plans to attend California State University-East Bay, where she will work toward a Master's degree in School Psychology. Her ultimate goal is to work with children in elementary schools as a school psychologist. She wants to work at public schools in order to give back to her community and to help children in low socioeconomic status environments overcome hardships. Elvira also intends to earn the credentials required to teach part-time at a community college. She wants to teach psychology because she wants to help older students as well as children.

Before the pandemic, Elvira volunteered every weekend at Most Holy Trinity Catholic Church, a local church/private school in San Jose, where she helped by doing the administrative work. She also volunteered every weekday at the YMCA, working with children aged 5 to 10 years old. She hopes to return to these activities when the COVID restrictions are reduced.

Recently, Elvira adopted an eight-week old puppy and named him Max. Being a German Shepherd, he is a big puppy who "is a handful and requires a lot of play," and training. Working and playing with Max has helped her be happier during the pandemic. He has also helped her be more active, and she loves taking him to the park or on walks. So, for now, what little free time Elvira may have, is devoted to Max.

## New Member Profiles

Claire Campodonico

**TERESITA FORD** studied at the University of Washington where she earned a BA in Criminal Justice as well as a Master's of Public Health. Living in Willow Glen and often taking her children to the library next door, she saw our building and signage. As a mother of two young girls who values education, she felt the call to join. Teresita is employed as a financial advisor with Edward Jones. Welcome, Teresita!

**DENISE LLOYD** graduated from UC Davis with a degree in Environmental Science. She has been employed by Western Digital Technologies, Inc., Hitachi and IBM, most recently as a Senior Environmental Health Services Manager. The mission of AAUW, Gender Equity, resonates with Denise as she and her husband raise their two teenage daughters. Her sister first told her of AAUW. Welcome, Denise!



**March 2021**

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 February. 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.)

Tue Mar 2	10:30 - 11:30 am	German Conversation ZOOM (RSVP <a href="#">Barbara Snyder</a> )
Wed Mar 3	6:30 - 7 pm	AAUW Board Social Hour ZOOM ( <a href="#">Peg Carlson-Bowen</a> )
	7 - 8:30 pm	ZOOM AAUW BOARD Meeting ( <a href="#">Peg Carlson-Bowen</a> )
Thu Mar 4	7 - 8:30 pm	Public Policy Committee ZOOM ( <a href="#">Susan Karlins</a> )

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Mon Mar 8	6:30 - 8:30 pm	Light Gourmet ZOOM (RSVP <a href="#">Cheryl Markman</a> )
Tue Mar 9	10:30 - 11:30 am	Conversacion Espanol ZOOM (RSVP <a href="#">Barbara Snyder</a> )
Thu Mar 11	2 - 4 pm	Great Decisions AM ZOOM ( <a href="#">Jill Osofsky</a> )
Sat Mar 13	10 am - 2 pm	Neighbors Helping Neighbors Parking lot drop off ( <a href="#">Mary Jane Vitkovich</a> )
	6:30 - 9:30 pm	Couples Gourmet ZOOM (RSVP <a href="#">Cheryl Markman</a> )

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Sun Mar 14	11:30 am - 1:30 pm	Film Fans ZOOM (RSVP <a href="#">Linda Snashall</a> )
Mon Mar 15	9:30 - 11:30 am	Exploring World Literature ZOOM ( <a href="#">Diana Taylor</a> )
	6:30 - 8:30 pm	International Gourmet ZOOM (RSVP <a href="#">Jan Bartolotta</a> )
Tue Mar 16	10:30 - 11:30 am	French Conversation ZOOM (RSVP <a href="#">Barbara Snyder</a> )
Wed Mar 17	7 - 8:30 pm	Members only National AAUW vote information ( <a href="#">Peg Carlson-Bowen</a> )
Thu Mar 18	10 am - 12 pm	Family History ZOOM ( <a href="#">Susan Brundage</a> )
	7 - 8:30 pm	Mystery Lovers ZOOM ( <a href="#">Sharon Shephard</a> )

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Mon Mar 22	9:30 - 11 am	Building and Properties Committee ZOOM ( <a href="#">Pamela Dougherty</a> )
	1 - 4 pm	Interbranch Council ( <a href="#">Sharon Bouska</a> )
Tue Mar 23	11:30 am - 1:00 pm	Lunch Bunch ZOOM ( <a href="#">Diana Taylor</a> )
	7 - 8:30 pm	Great Decisions PM ZOOM ( <a href="#">Sharon Shephard</a> )
Thu Mar 25	2 - 4 pm	Great Decisions AM ZOOM ( <a href="#">Jill Osofsky</a> )
Fri Mar 26	1:30 - 3:30 pm	Local Scholarship ZOOM ( <a href="#">Ruth Dusan</a> )
Sat Mar 27	10 - 11 am	New Member/Prospective Member Open House ( <a href="#">Leticia Cowan</a> )

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**BONFIRE ARTICLE SUBMITTAL  
RULES:**

The sole purpose of this publication is to  
convey the association's business to its  
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**PERIODICALS  
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AAUW San Jose Branch *Established 1909*



**Virtual New Member/Prospective New Member Open House  
March 27 - 10 to 11 am**

Members and prospective members are invited to an informal Coffee and Conversation on March 27 at 10 am - 11 am. Grab your favorite cuppa something good and maybe a little snack as we cover the highlights of what the AAUW San Jose branch has to offer.

Learn more about AAUW San Jose ... a group of over 250 members who enjoy a variety of opportunities to get social, participate with service-oriented/community giving projects, including nonpartisan political advocacy, learn how to sign up and attend any of our monthly meetings and presentations, etc. Be sure to register here on our Eventbrite link:

[https:// www.eventbrite.com/e/aauw-san-jose-coffee-convo-open-house-tickets-140446383915](https://www.eventbrite.com/e/aauw-san-jose-coffee-convo-open-house-tickets-140446383915).

Zoom information to be sent out via your registration. Hope to see you there!



*Empowering Women Since 1881*

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