



## President's Corner



**Peg Carlson-Bowen**  
President

To live out our value of Equity for ALL, I support this change below, as does our National and State Board. I am confident it will benefit us as an organization, and strengthen our support, and advocacy for all women and girls.

Peg

## Living our Vision of Equity for All Should We Eliminate the Degree Requirement?

AAUW's vision is 'Equity for All' and our membership practices should align with our vision. AAUW promotes and advocates for equity, yet we do not allow those without a degree to join our organization.

- One of AAUW's values is inclusivity and our membership practices should align with our values.
- AAUW does not qualify for grants from companies and foundations that value diversity, inclusion and equity. We are losing out on funding that could help us move forward with our mission and vision.
- There are many paths to education beyond colleges and universities. Education comes in many forms, including Career Technical Education, on-the-job training, and similar education routes.
- We are missing out on valuable contributions by people who are just as passionate as we are about our mission and values.
- You do not need a degree to believe in or advocate for our mission.

### “Members May Ask”

If we drop the degree requirement, how can we say that we still care about education?

Education is foundational to our mission and will remain a focus for AAUW. Dropping the degree requirement will only impact who may join our organization, not the work we do.

Don't we need to honor the legacy of our founding mothers by retaining the degree requirement?

Times have changed since the founding mothers began the Association of Collegiate Alumnae (ACA), which later became AAUW. Just like our founding mothers, we can be role models for positive change in the world. But we cannot have the impact we seek when our membership criteria don't match our mission and values.

continued on page 2

The only reason members support dropping the degree requirement is to gain more members, isn't it?

Eliminating the degree requirement will bring membership in AAUW into alignment with our mission and values. This will allow AAUW to qualify for grants from corporations and foundations that value diversity, inclusion and equity that we are not qualifying for today.

Won't dropping the degree requirement end what is unique about our organization?

Unfortunately, AAUW might be more unique for its exclusionary practice of requiring members to have a degree. We believe strongly in equity, diversity and inclusion, yet we are not practicing these values with this membership requirement.

Won't we have to change our name if we drop the educational requirement?

No, AAUW has brand recognition and, in fact, the initials have not represented our organization for a long time. We work internationally, we are more than an association, we allow members with associate degrees to join and we have allowed men to join since 1987!

I joined AAUW to be with like-minded women — won't allowing non-degreed members change that?

Shared values do not come with a college degree.

It's not that hard to get a degree these days. Why can't they just get one?

Barriers to education still exist. While college is an option for many, others face significant barriers, like skyrocketing educational costs, childcare, elder care, transportation, working multiple jobs, and language barriers. And some may simply opt to pursue careers that do not require a college degree. This doesn't make them less interested in equity or less susceptible to the bias and discrimination that women face. At AAUW's founding, women who lacked a degree had limited career options. In the twenty-first century, that's no longer true. Women today are firefighters, pilots, entrepreneurs, artists, politicians, manufacturers, and so much more. Having a degree does not exempt women from discrimination, just as not having one doesn't make women unqualified to advocate for equity and fair treatment. Those on the receiving end of discriminatory treatment often make the strongest and most convincing advocates for the change we need.

## **The national election will be from April 7 to May 17.**

Each member with an email address on file at National will receive a personalized email with online voting instructions. If you do not have an email address on file, you can request a paper ballot until April 16 by calling AAUW at 202-785-7700.

## **Branch 2021-2022 Board of Directors Election**

Peg Carlson-Bowen

This year's AAUW San Jose Board of Directors election will be held remotely on the following timeline:

April 5 - Paper candidate bios and ballots will be mailed to members without email addresses

April 9 - Candidate bios will be distributed via email

April 30 - Electronic ballots will be distributed via email

May 5 - Deadline to vote

May 19 - Online Zoom installation meeting (see invitation on page 6)

---

## **AAUW Annual Dues to Increase in Fiscal Year 2022**

Katherine Oven, Membership Treasurer

In late October 2020, the AAUW National Association informed all branches that there will be an increase in individual member dues for the next three years. The dues will rise by \$3 for Fiscal Year (FY) 2022, \$5 for FY 2023, and \$5 for FY 2024, resulting in Association dues of \$62, \$67, and \$72, respectively. The Association board did not make this decision lightly, recognizing that everyone is navigating numerous challenges in these uncertain times. AAUW has been able to keep its dues flat since July 2018; however, this measure was deemed essential by the board for AAUW to continue its mission to achieve gender equity.

There is no change in State and Branch dues for FY 2022. When renewal forms are mailed out to all Branch members in April, the \$108 in annual dues for regular members will reflect the following elements:

Association Dues \$62

State Dues \$20

Branch Dues \$26

As in the past, 50-Year Honorary Members pay no dues. Association Life Members will continue paying \$46 annually (for State and Branch dues), and Dual Members will be charged \$26 for their second branch membership.

College and university Association membership fees will remain unchanged.

---

## **What's Happening at Headquarters?**

Diane Trombetta, Building & Properties Committee

Although we haven't been able to enjoy our Headquarters this past year, the Building & Properties Committee has continued to work on repairs and upgrades. The next time you attend a gathering at Headquarters (mid-to-late 2021 perhaps), you might see some solar panels on the roof. Our building permit is wending its way through the San Jose City bureaucracy for installation of about 12 panels. They will generate enough power to cover most of our electricity usage, and they represent a major upgrade to the building as well as a benefit to the environment. We have also begun the major repairs recommended in a recent home inspection (the last one was done in 2014). As of mid-February, we can plug our vacuum cleaner into one of three properly grounded outlets, bare wires in the basement and on the front porch roof have been covered, hanging wires in the basement are tacked up, and there's a new weatherproof cover on the junction box next to our front steps. Our final major repair in 2020-2021 will be a new concrete walkway into the basement, including installation of a sump pump to prevent the periodic flooding into the basement. No more sandbags! Our duties may not be glamorous, but we love our work: keeping our house safe and solid and upgrading it gradually over time.

## Public Policy News from AAUW National

Kathi Harper, Public Policy Co-Chair AAUW California

On February 2, 2021, my co-chair Sue Miller and I met via Zoom with AAUW Public Policy Director Kate Nielsen and her assistant Robin Lucas, along with state public policy chairs across the nation, to get updates on changes to the public policy landscape with the new administration and Congress. Here is a summary of what we thought members would like to know.

AAUW Public Policy team sends notice of our priorities for the new year:

1. AAUW Public Policy team sends notice of our priorities for the new year
  - a. Letter to the President, focused on
    - i. Women's Economic Security
    - ii. Education Access
  - b. Letter to 117th Congress
    - i. Passing the Paycheck Fairness Act
    - ii. Passing the Equity in Education Act
  - c. Both found at [aauw.org/resources/policy/documents](http://aauw.org/resources/policy/documents)
2. Also outlined Admin and Congressional Priorities
  - a. Biden-Harris in the 1st 2 weeks – 41 Exec orders
    - i. Covid, including student-debt relief and opening of schools
    - ii. Anti-discrimination, including removing barriers, DACA relief and a Task Force to reunite families
    - iii. Protecting women's health at home and abroad, including access to abortions
  - b. Coming Legislation from Congress
    - i. Covid relief – 1.9 Trillion package
      1. Paid sick & family leave extended thru Sept (14 weeks)
      2. Increase minimum wage to \$15
      3. Assistance to those at risk of losing jobs &/or their homes
      4. \$3B to help women with food relief for their families
      5. \$25B emergency fund for child care providers
    - ii. Raise the Wage Act (\$15 by 2025) — reintroduced Thursday
    - iii. FAMILY Act (emphasis on access to paid leave) — end of this week
    - iv. Paycheck Fairness Act – HR7
      1. AAUW working on since 1997
      2. Reintroduced 2/1
      3. Strong bi-partisan support
      4. Prohibits retaliation for discussing pay
      5. Closes loopholes in Equal Pay Act
      6. Can't use prior salary HX in hiring decisions
      7. Members can help: Toolkit at [aauw.org/resources/policy/pfa-toolkit/](http://aauw.org/resources/policy/pfa-toolkit/)

## Postcards to Voters

Susan Karlins, Public Policy Committee



More than 250 state legislative bills have been introduced to make it harder to vote across the US. Join us to write postcards to disenfranchised voters of color in Virginia to inform them how to reactivate their voter status. These must be mailed by April 17 so that Virginians can register by May for their primary election. Contact [Susan Karlins](mailto:susan.karlins@aauw.org) to request postcards in batches of 20. Indicate if you can pick them up at her house in Campbell or if you need them delivered (include address).

## An Update on Diana Rendler, Past Local Scholarship Recipient

Cheryl Markman, Local Scholarship Committee



Diana Rendler was awarded the Edie Kerr Scholarship in 2020. She will graduate from San Jose State University in May 2021 with a Bachelor of Arts degree in Sociology with a concentration in Social Change and a minor in Public Policy. She used the AAUW Local Scholarship money to pay for her senior year of college, allowing her to work and save for graduate school. After graduation from SJSU, Diana plans to take the 2021-2022 school year off to work and save for law school and to gain more experience. Her goal is to go into civil rights law. She will apply to Santa Clara University School of Law, but will also research other schools that have concentrations in civil rights or public interest law.

Diana has volunteered for Showing Up for Racial Justice (SURJ) for two years and continues to do so. Within SURJ, she works with the Education Working Group, a group that works to educate internally and externally about white privilege, white supremacy and structural racism. They create and run workshops to educate themselves and others about structural racism and what can be done to dismantle it.

Also within SURJ, Diana worked to increase voter turnout for the 2020 elections. Then in the Georgia run-off, she wrote postcards and held an event to teach other people how to make turnout-the-vote postcards.

Diana also participates in and is on the coordinating committee of a coalition that aims to remove the police from the San Jose Unified School District schools. Finally, just for fun during lock down, Diana has been exercising and reading books.

## New Member Profiles

### Claire Campodonic

**MELISSA FULLER** received her MS in Occupational Therapy in 2007 from San Jose State University. Later in 2021, she plans on earning her MS in Public Health from this school as well. Her friend, Alissa Shaw, first told her about AAUW. Melissa joined primarily in order to stay informed about the issues women face. Welcome, Melissa!

**CHRISTINE KINGSLEY** studied at UC Berkeley, where she earned her BA in Native American Studies and her BS in Physics. She continued her studies at the University of Maryland receiving a Masters in Information Technology Management. She is employed as a Technical Program Manager. Christine is a long-time donor to AAUW and has now decided to get involved on the local level. Welcome, Christine!



*“I raise my voice not so I can shout, but so that those without a voice can be heard. We cannot succeed when half of us are held back.”* Malala Yousafzai



## AAUW San Jose Branch 2021-2022 Board Installation

May 19 - 7 pm

Peg Carlson-Bowen

All members are invited to the installation of the AAUW San Jose Branch 2021-2022 Board at 7 pm on Wednesday, May 19, via Zoom. This event will reflect the personality of our new President, Sonia Wright, in that it will be a lot of fun! Come for the usual pomp and circumstance of the official installation, but stay for the good times together. After the year we've had, it's time to put enjoyment at the top of our list.

Zoom Info:

<https://zoom.us/j/98400260292?pwd=NjR1NVZKSjlobW9YOUpwa2I4eGxWQT09>

### Things You May Need to Know...

#### AAUW California Annual Meeting, April 17, 2021

*Dianne Owens, President, AAUW California, [statepresident@aauw-ca.org](mailto:statepresident@aauw-ca.org)*

Our AAUW California Annual Meeting will be held via Zoom for the second year. No travel, no hotel reservations, and no lunch, once again. But, that means you can attend at no cost from your office, living room, or kitchen.

You will learn what has been happening in California this past year and it is a lot! You will see the three Speech Trek Finalists, learn who our 2020 State Named Gift Honoree is, and see the first Equity Award given to former State Senator Hannah-Beth Jackson. AAUW Board Chair, Julia Brown will join us and we have a special event brought to us by past Co-President Cathy Foxhoven.

Don't delay. Plan to join us on April 17 at 9:30 am by registering [HERE](#) now!

#### DO YOU BELONG?

*Elaine Johnson, Director, [diversity@aauw-ca.org](mailto:diversity@aauw-ca.org)*

A sense of belonging is critical for AAUW members to feel valued. The new interactive DEI (Diversity, Equity & Inclusion) Toolkit includes the following explanation in the key terms and concepts section.

So if diversity means the characteristics that make us unique, and inclusion refers to behaviors and actions, then what is **belonging**? And why is it important?

**Belonging** is feeling like you are a part of something, that you actually matter. It isn't necessarily about being liked — but rather being needed.

AAUW needs all of these things together, (diversity, inclusion, and belonging) for our branches to continue to grow and thrive.

The [DEI Toolkit](#) provides guidelines for participants about discussions of uncomfortable issues. The toolkit provides resources for every branch whether small, medium, or large with a format for discussions that encourages participation. That participation might be as an active listener or a vocal contributor.

**April 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.)

Mon Apr 5	6:30-8 pm	Neighbors Helping Neighbors ZOOM ( <a href="#">Bobbie Baker</a> )
Tue Apr 6	10:30-11:30 am	German Conversation ZOOM (RSVP <a href="#">Barbara Snyder</a> )
Wed Apr 7	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 Apr 8	2-4 pm	Great Decisions AM ZOOM ( <a href="#">Jill Osofsky</a> )
	7-8:30 pm	Public Policy Committee ZOOM ( <a href="#">Susan Karlins</a> )
Sat Apr 10	6:30-9:30 pm	Couples Gourmet ZOOM (RSVP <a href="#">Cheryl Markman</a> )
<hr/>		
Sun Apr 11	11:30 am-1:30 pm	Film Fans ZOOM (RSVP <a href="#">Linda Snashall</a> )
Mon Apr 12	6:30- 8:30 pm	Light Gourmet ZOOM (RSVP <a href="#">Cheryl Markman</a> )
Tue Apr 13	10:30-11:30 am	Conversacion Espanol ZOOM (RSVP <a href="#">Barbara Snyder</a> )
Thu Apr 15	10 am-12 pm	Family History ZOOM ( <a href="#">Susan Brundage</a> )
	7-8:30 pm	Mystery Lovers ZOOM ( <a href="#">Sharon Shephard</a> )
<hr/>		
Mon Apr 19	9:30-11am	Exploring World Literature ZOOM ( <a href="#">Diana Taylor</a> )
	6:30-8:30 pm	International Gourmet ZOOM (RSVP <a href="#">Jan Bartolotta</a> )
Tue Apr 20	10:30-11:30 am	French Conversation ZOOM (RSVP <a href="#">Barbara Snyder</a> )
Wed Apr 21	7-8:30 pm	Viruses Vaccines and You ( <a href="#">Sari Fitzwater</a> )
Thu Apr 22	2-4 pm	Great Decisions AM ZOOM ( <a href="#">Jill Osofsky</a> )
Fri Apr 23	1:30-3:30 pm	Local Scholarship ZOOM ( <a href="#">Ruth Dusan</a> )
<hr/>		
Mon Apr 26	9:30-11 am	Building and Properties Committee ZOOM ( <a href="#">Pamela Dougherty</a> )
Tue Apr 27	12-1 pm	Lunch Bunch ZOOM ( <a href="#">Diana Taylor</a> )
	7-8:30 pm	Great Decisions PM ZOOM ( <a href="#">Sharon Shephard</a> )



San Jose Branch BONFIRE (USPS 857-400)  
Published monthly except for July by AAUW  
San Jose Branch, 1165 Minnesota Ave. San  
Jose, 95125-3324

Periodicals Postage Paid at San Jose, CA  
Postmaster: Send address changes to AAUW  
San Jose Branch, 1165 Minnesota Avenue,  
San Jose, CA

**President:** Peg Carlson-Bowen  
**BONFIRE Editor:** Ruth Dusan  
**Editorial Staff:** Elin Bolt, Copy Editor;  
Tynka Dees, Calendar Editor; Jan Giroux,  
Proofreader; Barb Purdy, Layout Editor  
**Distribution:** Ruth Dusan & Linda Guyer

**Change of Address:** Katherine Oven

#### **BONFIRE ARTICLE SUBMITTAL RULES:**

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.

San Jose Branch  
**AAUW Headquarters**  
1165 Minnesota Avenue  
San Jose, CA 95125-3324  
Phone: 408-294-2430

**PERIODICALS  
POSTAGE PAID**

AAUW San Jose Branch *Established 1909*



## **"Viruses, Vaccines and You"** **Presented by Linda D. Caren, PhD** **3rd Wednesday Program** **April 21 at 7pm**

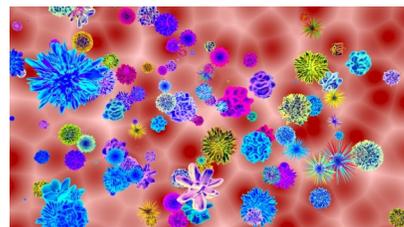
Viruses are the most prevalent biological entity on Earth. They infect everything: animals, plants, and bacteria. Our bodies are teeming with bacteria and viruses: we are super organisms harboring these indispensable microbes. Surprisingly, we could not live without them. Fortunately, we have developed vaccines that can preemptively control some harmful viruses. This lecture will describe how vaccines are made and how our immune system responds. Questions are welcome.

Linda D. Caren is a Phi Beta Kappa graduate of Ohio State University. She earned her A.M. and Ph.D. in Medical Microbiology at Stanford University. She taught immunology, medical microbiology, and related courses at Santa Clara University, Loyola Marymount University, and other colleges. After retiring as emerita professor of biology, CSU Northridge, she continued teaching at SJSU, UCSC extension, Osher, and other venues.

To attend the presentation, use the following link: <https://zoom.us/j/98332627900?pwd=L1ZDY3c0clhEcnRpZWFWwNXgrWVBmdz09>.

Meeting Id: 983 3262 7900 Password: 237268

Non-AAUW members are welcome to attend as well, so invite your friends.



*Empowering Women Since 1881*

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