



President's Corner



Peg Carlson-Bowen
President

AAUW's annual election started on April 7. You should have received an email from "Shannon Wolfe, AAUW" with your member number and access code. All you need to do is click on the "Vote Now" button to vote. Voting is open until 2 pm Pacific Time on May 17.

Included in the vote is a proposal to remove the requirement for a degree in order to join, which requires a change to AAUW's national bylaws. Though the decision will be by member vote, the National and State Boards endorse the change. There have been multiple sessions on this topic at the National, State and Branch levels. I hope you had the opportunity to attend one. I attended several, to hear out all the different views. You might have questions others had:

HOW MIGHT THIS BYLAW CHANGE AFFECT OUR BRANCH?

It will help protect the future of AAUW by opening up opportunities for funding. Because our current educational degree requirement can be deemed discriminatory and not in keeping with our mission, some foundations and corporations will not donate to our organization since it is counter to their criteria of equity. Declining membership, now at 50,000, only provides 15-20% of the annual budget. This is not enough to support branch and member services.

It will make it easier for our branch to recruit a more diverse membership, including those who did not have the opportunity to attend college years ago. These new members may bring new energy and viewpoints critical to our branch's ability to meet the needs of our community through our mission. It will also remove the embarrassing situations when we must tell someone they do not qualify, such as a government official, a non-profit leader or even a Tech Trek parent. Remember, Eleanor Roosevelt and Lily Ledbetter would not qualify for AAUW membership with our current educational requirement.

It will update the relevance and image of our branch as the world reckons with inequality and systemic racism, much of which disproportionately affects women. It might open up more opportunities for collaboration. Having a limiting membership requirement can be considered discriminatory and off-putting to other local like-minded groups. It will no longer limit our membership by penalizing women who cannot attain a degree due to today's skyrocketing educational costs, childcare, elder care, transportation, working multiple jobs and language barriers.

Today, there are more alternatives to college degrees which have burdened women with two-thirds of the national college debt. With more careers open to women (i.e., firefighters, pilots, entrepreneurs, artists, politicians, manufacturers, retail managers, and more), our branch may have the potential for a variety of new members!

WHAT WON'T CHANGE IF THIS PASSES?

It will not affect AAUW's status as one of the leaders in graduate grants and fellowships. Due to the generosity of our members our fellowships and grants are fully endowed and will continue in perpetuity.

It will not affect the name – AAUW. Like the YWCA and NAACP, much of the original meanings are no longer accurate. For example, we are international, not just American. We have been open to individuals with associate degrees since 2005 and open to men since 1987. You may not realize it, but the acronym AAUW is well-known and well-regarded in the halls of Congress and in state capitals. Changing it would mean energy would be diverted to rebuilding "brand recognition."

It will not affect the honor of having earned a degree in times when so few women attained this achievement. Today, with women outpacing men in earning all degrees for decades, we can be proud that we were instrumental in breaking down the barriers for women who followed us.

No matter what you decide, please do vote in the election. Your vote is your voice.

What "Orange Tier" Means for AAUW—Governor Newsom's Projected June 15 Dropping of Tiers

Pamela Dougherty, Building & Properties Committee

Per AAUW CA and Santa Clara County, some current business restrictions may be lifted. However, we are still classified as an "Office (non-essential businesses)," which requires that we still adhere to specific capacity guidelines. Although the new county guidelines allow internal meetings there are strict room capacity guidelines that we must adhere to with any meeting.

Specific capacities for Headquarters are as follows:

- Living Room – 5 people
- Dining Room – 3 people
- Office – 3 people
- Kitchen – 2 people
- Parlor – 2 people
- Bathroom – 1 person
- File Room – 1 person

Please contact [Dr. Tynka Dees](#) if you contemplate using one of the rooms to ensure that there won't be a conflict. It is also critical that whomever organizes the meeting ensures that all specific COVID-19 guidelines are followed as posted on the outside bulletin board.

For outdoor meetings, which may occur in any outdoor location including the Headquarters parking lot or any local park, the CDC requirements for facial covering and social distancing are still mandatory.

Message from AAUW CA President Diane Owens, April 4, 2021

"As we move into the transitional stage of COVID-19 and we are seeing the light get brighter at the end of the tunnel, questions are coming about having AAUW meetings.

Since there are 58 counties in California with 58 different County Health Departments, here are our best recommendations for the next few months.

- Follow CDC guidelines for masking, social distancing and traveling.
- Follow your county guidelines for how large a group can meet in one space -- inside or outside.
- Remember that our AAUW insurance probably will not cover COVID related illness.
- Be smart, be cautious and stay safe as we move toward our "new normal." We have made it this far and we are getting closer to the end! Won't it be nice to see each other again?"

Safety of our members is paramount, and while we do look forward to expanding our chances of getting together, each of us must move at a pace that is appropriate for our age, health, vaccine status, family contacts, etc. In any event, we must follow CDC guidelines as noted above. As circumstances are varied, each member should review the guidelines to ensure compliance in their own particular situation: loved ones who can't get a vaccine, the member's own vaccine status, available space, etc.

Public Policy Update

Susan Karlins, Public Policy Committee

The Public Policy Committee has been active with voter engagement and legislative outreach. Thanks to the many of you who wrote 700 postcards to disenfranchised Virginia voters to inform them how to re-register and encourage them to vote in their off-year primary elections for statewide office. If you're interested in writing to encourage new voters in Georgia or Arizona, contact [Susan Karlins](#).

As part of AAUW CA's Lobby Day on March 24, we met with San Jose area State Senators Laird and Cortese and provided help to branches meeting with their LA and Central Valley legislators. On April 6, we met with Assemblymember Ash Kalra, whose bill on public university voting centers we supported in 2019.

Message from AAUW CA:

The Future for Roe v. Wade and Choice

Claire Noonan, California Public Policy Committee

The times they are changing — a new president and vice-president who support pro-choice, but a sixth very conservative justice is added to the Supreme Court.

Abortion rights activists stress state-by-state vigilance to be aware of how reproductive choice is now used as a political tool, says Ilyse Hogue, recently retired president of NARAL. New anti-choice bills are mainly introduced by the white male religious minority, except in Montana with six abortion-limiting bills introduced this year by conservative female legislators and one male. For instance, extreme 2021 legislation in Tennessee will allow fathers to veto an abortion. A Texas bill will require a fetus to have a lawyer. Arizona's new bills propose to criminalize a woman who gets an abortion and the doctor who performs it.

During a pandemic, telemedicine is valuable to prescribe pills for medication abortions. In July 2020, the federal courts temporarily suspended the doctor's visit rule for the first pill, mifepristone, but in January 2021 SCOTUS reinstated the rule. Fortunately, in April the acting Commissioner of the FDA in the Biden Administration said that the agency would temporarily stop enforcing the rule.

Those restrictions had a particularly significant impact on low-income communities, which often include women of color, with many of them stressed economically by the year-long pandemic. Clinics especially in the South, like [West Alabama Women's Center](#), are constantly searching for money sources to provide reproductive services as well as current needs for newborn assistance. The center focuses on providing financial assistance to the under-served, even when services are 'temporarily' deemed "non-essential." Despite efforts to provide full-spectrum reproductive health care access, dwindling numbers of clinics from the Sun Belt across the Deep South curb the availability of services. In the Navajo Nation, Covid infection is so high that patients need a doctor's note to leave the tribal area for a clinic appointment.

Consequently, vigilance means watching the power of the courts, encouraging reversal of the Hyde Amendment, and backing codification of the Roe v. Wade decision. As you know, each woman in California can choose, but support for organizations that oversee the reproductive health rights of women in America are worth the effort.

Wildflower Run 2021

Carol Fitting, AAUW Morgan Hill



Traditionally, Team AAUW Los Gatos/Saratoga Walkers, has supported the Morgan Hill AAUW Branch by participating in their annual "Wildflower Run," an event including runners, walkers, families, open to all, with a choice of 10K or 5K routes. Participants receive a t-shirt, all kinds of free goodies from dozens of gathered vendors, a "finisher" ribbon, and an official "clocked" time (for serious

competitors). Best of all is the pride of contributing to a worthy cause -- educational scholarships for women -- while enjoying a morning walk with friends in the beautiful Morgan Hill countryside. It's a truly festive, uplifting event, which many of us have attended for decades.

In spite of a new pandemic type virtual event this year, Annual Supreme Organizer, Jane Bishop, led 16 of us with photographer (pictured), on a 7 mile (10K) walk along West Cliff Avenue in Santa Cruz on March 24, 2021 - a spectacularly perfect day, with cold air, strong breeze and bright hot sunshine.



Warm Hearts Drive Recap

Mary Jane Vitkovich, Neighbors Helping Neighbors

Thank you to our generous members who contributed to the Warm Hearts drive for Santa Maria Urban Ministry on March 13. In total, 145 coats, sweatshirts, socks, and other warm clothing items were donated. Our gratitude to Kim Pugh who collected and dropped the items off.



Another "Thank you" goes out to Margaret McCartney, who hand knits baby sweaters for the Sacred Heart Community Service's layette program.

Save the Date

NHN Donation Drive - Saturday, June 5, 11 am to 1 pm

Mary Jane Vitkovich, Neighbors Helping Neighbors

We will be hosting a donation drive for HomeFirst, a provider of services, shelter, and housing opportunities to the homeless. More details will follow on what we will be collecting.



An Update on Yaneth Gutierrez, Past Local Scholarship Recipient

Cheryl Markman, Local Scholarship Committee

Yaneth Gutierrez has suffered more than many of us from the pandemic due to reduced working hours, which caused her to have to consider putting her studies on hold. But when she was awarded an AAUW Local Scholarship in 2020, she no longer had to make that decision. Her scholarship money was enough to pay for not only her own tuition at SJSU, but also her daughter's, putting her one step closer to being the first of her siblings to earn a degree and to become a lawyer. By the end of the fall semester, both Yaneth and her daughter had earned a 3.7 GPA and were on the Dean's List.

In addition to continuing her coursework and studying for the LSAT, Yaneth volunteers with Services, Immigrants' Rights and Education Network (SIREN), a nonprofit organization that specializes in immigration law as she wants to become an immigration lawyer. Because of her work with SIREN, Yaneth was tapped by the Executive Director of Human Agenda, another nonprofit organization specializing in immigration law, to assist with the Solidarity Organized for Los Olvidados (SOLO) program. SOLO is an organization that seeks to help undocumented immigrants from many parts of the world now living in Santa Clara County. Yaneth was asked to help with the distribution of over \$350,000 through the SOLO fund. Due to the success of her performance with this project, she successfully secured another \$67,000 grant, which was enough funding to help 67 families.

In spite of these successes, Yaneth has had to endure being away from her parents, still in Mexico, for the past 22 years. Both her parents contracted the COVID-19 virus. Her father passed away from the disease and her mother is still recovering. Yaneth was not able to be with her father, nor is she able to help care for her mother.

Yaneth feels that the AAUW scholarship was a blessing that made a huge difference in her life. Because of it, her commitment to help her community is stronger than ever because it helped her believe that opportunities can happen. She expects to graduate from SJSU in May 2021, with a degree in Political Science; the next step for Yaneth is on to law school.



Gifts for Teens Already Gearing Up for December Holiday Celebrations

Cheryl Markman, Gifts for Teens

As always, and maybe even more so during the COVID-19 pandemic, low-income teens do and will need some holiday cheer. Through your generosity, Gifts for Teens will again be able to provide holiday gifts for the neediest local teenagers, the homeless, and children in foster care group homes. Duffel bags for the boys and sturdy totes for the girls are filled to the brim with popular items, both practical and fun. Each bag and tote includes warm clothes, personal care items, school supplies, \$25 store gift cards, jewelry and cosmetics for the girls, games and sturdy Bombas socks for the boys, plus many more fun and useful gifts. Be assured that the teens really appreciate these festive holiday gifts, often the only ones they receive.

Cash donations received now allow us to take advantage of the many spring sales promotions. Please contact [Jan Giroux](#) to help.

Things You May Need to Know ...

NOMINATIONS & ELECTIONS

Janice Lee, Nominations & Elections Chair, nominating@aauw-ca.org

WHY DO WE NEED YOUR VOTE?

Your vote in this year's annual state election will impact the following areas:

- Who represents you on the Board of Directors
- Public Policy Priorities for 2021-2023
- Changes to the bylaws

There are three positions to be filled on the Board of Directors and the nominees are:

1. President-Elect: Sandi Gabe (uncontested)
2. Chief Financial Officer: Roli Wendorf (uncontested)
3. One Director: (choose one)
 - Judy Cavin Brown
 - Carol Holzgrafe

AAUW California's Public Policy Committee reassesses policy directives every two years in light of the ever-changing cultural and legislative landscape. To keep AAUW California aligned with our mission to advance equity for women and girls and remain consistent with our values of fair and equitable opportunities for our diverse society, vote "yes" on the ballot for:

1. Economic Security for All Women
2. Equal Access to Quality Public Education for All Students
3. Social and Racial Justice for All Members of Society
4. Changes to the bylaws

We urge you to vote "yes" to two changes related to the Board of Directors structure.

1. The addition of a one-year term Director elected in even years to serve opposite the President-Elect position, which is elected, in odd years. In doing this, we will eliminate an increasing imbalance of positions elected in even years. (Currently, 8 out of 12 positions are elected in even years) This imbalance represents a challenge in even years to fill all the board openings and to maintain a level of continuity of experience on the board in the face of high turnover.
2. Separately, to align with the best practice of having an odd number of voting members and for budgetary efficiencies that would not affect board effectiveness, we recommend reducing the number of board positions from twelve to eleven.

If we have your email address, you will get a link to vote online; a mail-in ballot will be sent to you if we do not have your email address.

Voting period: April 16-May 7, 2021

Click [HERE](#) for details on candidates, public policy priorities, and changes to the bylaws.

When you vote, It MATTERS!

May 2021

Submitted by Tynka Dees, Calendar Editor

The county is starting to open up but for May we are still having meetings via ZOOM. Only a very few people could meet at headquarters masked, vaccinated and still with distancing. Pam Dougherty has the information in her May Bonfire article on maximum limits per room. We are still severely limited. Use of the parking lot is only authorized under specific Gathering Protocol and must be cleared with Pam Dougherty, B&P Chair.

Mon May 3	6:30-8 pm	Neighbors Helping Neighbors ZOOM (Bobbie Baker)
Tue May 4	10:30-11:30 am	German Conversation ZOOM (RSVP Barbara Snyder)
Wed May 5	6:30-7 pm	AAUW Board Social Hour ZOOM (Peg Carlson-Bowen)
	7-8:30 pm	ZOOM AAUW BOARD Meeting (Peg Carlson-Bowen)
Thu May 6	7-8:30 pm	Public Policy Committee ZOOM (Susan Karlins)
Sat May 8	6:30-9:30 pm	Couples Gourmet ZOOM (RSVP Cheryl Markman)
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Sun May 9	11:30 am-1:30 pm	Film Fans ZOOM (RSVP Linda Snashall)
Mon May 10	6:30-8:30 pm	Light Gourmet ZOOM (RSVP Cheryl Markman)
Tue May 11	10:30-11:30 am	Conversacion Espanol ZOOM (RSVP Barbara Snyder)
Thu May 13	2-4 pm	Great Decisions AM ZOOM (Jill Osofsky)
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Mon May 17	9:30-11am	Exploring World Literature ZOOM (Diana Taylor)
	6:30-8:30 pm	International Gourmet ZOOM (RSVP Jan Bartolotta)
Tue May 18	10:30-11:30 am	French Conversation ZOOM (RSVP Barbara Snyder)
Wed May 19	7-8:30 pm	AAUW Board Installation ZOOM (Peg Carlson-Bowen)
Thu May 20	10 am-12 pm	Family History ZOOM (Susan Brundage)
	7-8:30 pm	Mystery Lovers ZOOM (Sharon Shephard)
Sat May 22	10-11 am	New Member/Prospective Member Open House (Leticia Cowan)
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Mon May 24	9:30-11 am	Building and Properties Committee ZOOM (Pamela Dougherty)
	1-4 pm	Interbranch Council (Sharon Bouska)
Tue May 25	12-1 pm	Lunch Bunch ZOOM (Diana Taylor)
	7-8:30 pm	Great Decisions PM ZOOM (Sharon Shephard)
Thu May 27	2-4 pm	Great Decisions AM ZOOM (Jill Osofsky)
Fri May 28	1:30-3:30 pm	Local Scholarship ZOOM (Ruth Dusan)



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RULES:**

The sole purpose of this publication is to
convey the association's business to its
membership. Only articles and
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**PERIODICALS
POSTAGE PAID**

AAUW San Jose Branch *Established 1909*



AAUW San Jose Branch 2021-2022 Board Installation Wednesday, May 19 - 7 pm



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>



Empowering Women Since 1881

See the San Jose Branch Website at www.aauwsanjose.org for more information