



Fall Gathering
Saturday, October 29, 10 am - noon
Willow Glen United Methodist Church Hall
Corner of Minnesota and Newport
(across from AAUW San Jose)

Each fall, AAUW San Jose kicks off its year of activities with a Fall Gathering, showcasing our interest groups, highlighting accomplishments of our Community Action Projects (Gifts for Teens, Local Scholarship, Neighbors Helping Neighbors and Tech Trek), and presenting a current topic of interest.

This year, our Public Policy Committee will present their "Proposition Exposition" -- a non-partisan, short-and-sweet review of the seven propositions on the November 8 ballot, including who's supporting each side, the implications of a 'Yes' or 'No' vote, and who's funding all those TV commercials you've been seeing! More details are provided in the Public Policy Committee Events and Updates article later in this newsletter. Invite your friends to this ever-popular Public Policy event!

Come to meet new members and reconnect with friends you haven't seen in person for a while.

Masks are optional, but welcomed. Refreshments will be outside and the main event will be in the church hall.

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President's Corner

By Sonia Wright



I want to talk about student college debt this month. None of my donors at San Jose State University have asked me the question, “why should I continue to fund scholarships if student’s debts are going to be forgiven.” But some of my colleagues have faced this question. This is an Executive Order, not legislation. Future students can’t benefit from the current forgiveness.

Scholarships provide gift aid to students that come without any obligation to pay it back, even if that obligation seems less likely now. Some students in need may not seek loans because they are concerned about the obligation to pay it back, as a result they may not be able to continue their studies. Many students decide against accepting student loans because they are afraid of the potential financial burden when they graduate. It's been found that the latter can be true particularly for first generation and Latinx students. Of San Jose State University’s recent graduates, 33% left with loan debt.

AAUW applauds President Biden’s announcement to forgive \$20,000 of student loan debt for Pell Grant recipients, \$10,000 for many other borrowers, and to extend the federal student loan payment pause for all borrowers. We are pleased that the Administration heeded many of the recommendations in a recent AAUW report. American women hold nearly two-thirds of the nation’s student-loan debt. The Administration must provide permanent solutions to canceling student debt and expanding loan-repayment programs.

Save the Dates!

The annual AAUW CA Fund events, now on Zoom, will be coming in October and November. This year, there will be four events from which to choose (or attend all four!):

- Saturday, October 15, 10 am-noon
- Saturday, October 22, 10 am-noon
- Sunday, October 23, 1-3 pm
- Saturday, November 12, 10 am-noon

We have a record number of Fellows and grant recipients this year in California -- a whopping 49! Registration is required. Click [HERE](#) to register for one or more events.

Public Policy Committee Events and Updates

Susan Karlins, Public Policy Committee

Our NOVEMBER Public Policy meeting will take place on Wednesday, OCTOBER 26. Among other topics, we will be finalizing our "Propositions Exposition: Introduction to this Year's Ballot Propositions." Join us to learn about the seven statewide propositions that will appear on the November ballot. As always, they are confusingly worded and hard to decipher. Plan to join us at the AAUW San Jose Annual Fall Gathering at Willow Glen United Methodist Church on Saturday, October 29 from 10 am – 12 pm, to prepare for voting this November.

Over the past few months, members of the Public Policy Committee have advocated for AAUW California-supported bills by contacting legislative offices and writing to legislators and the relevant legislative committees. Topics have included abortion and health insurance, human trafficking and hotels, insurance coverage for breast exams, and domestic violence and eviction. We have been able to reach over 14 legislators and just under 1/3 of the legislative committees. In a future BONFIRE we will be able provide final data on outcomes.

Public Policy members are also contacting Title IX Coordinators to get an updated list, asking San Jose mayoral candidates for their views on AAUW priority issues, and getting out the vote!

There's still time to help get out the vote in the critically important November 8 election in neighboring Nevada, where reproductive choice is among many important issues. Contact publicpolicy@aauwsanjose.org to get 20 letters to write to infrequent voters of color in Nevada.

You have several weeks to write letters — 20 letters takes about 90 minutes. They are due to be mailed on October 29.

Condolences

We express our sincere condolences to Bobbie Eckerman, longtime and very active Branch member in the Bridge Group, on the recent passing of her husband, Jim.



Gifts for Teens Duffel Bags and Totes Assembly

Cheryl Markman, Gifts for Teens

First of all, a heartfelt thanks from the Gifts for Teens committee to all of you who donated Target and Walmart gift cards, which will be included in the duffel bags for boys and sturdy totes for girls. The next step is to fill all 600 of those duffel bags and totes, which will be distributed in December to low-income and homeless teens in the San Jose area. We got off to a strong start on September 17 thanks to our morning shift of National Charity League Moms and Daughters who assembled hygiene bags and to our afternoon shift of Pioneer's Gift for Teens Club. Our next assembly days are full with volunteers from NCL, Saint Francis High School students, Leland Robotics Club, and various Sororities. The assembly will take place in the parking lot of Branch Headquarters. We are very grateful to the Branch for providing us with this space for the final phase of the Gifts for Teens project. If you're interested in volunteering, put it on your calendar for next year. We would love to have you.

Additional Request from Gifts for Teens

Gifts for Teens will be storing items being collected for the upcoming duffel bags/totes distribution in the Parlor and the Basement from approximately October 8-28. It is kindly requested that Branch members please remove any items needed from the cabinets in the Parlor before that timeframe. Thank you!



When Women Vote, They Change the Conversation!

AAUW California Public Policy Committee

AAUW California supports the passage of Propositions 1 and 28 on the November ballot in California.

Proposition 1. The decision by the Supreme Court of the United States to overturn Roe v. Wade dealt a serious blow to the rights of women to make their own decision about their bodies. This spurred many state legislatures to act to ban abortion, some with no exceptions for rape, incest, or endangering the life of the mother. Abortion bans in other states have already taken effect. Yet polls in many states show a majority in support of protecting the rights of women to choose to have abortions. Currently women are coming from other states to obtain abortions in California. An Abortion Access website is being formed in our state to enable and assist out-of-state women with travel arrangements, housing, medical appointments and other matters.

California Legislators, recognizing the remote possibility that at some future time state legislation could ban abortions, took timely action in June to pass SCR 10. This put Proposition 1, the Constitutional Right to Reproductive Freedom, on the November ballot. Passage of Prop 1 will amend the California Constitution, stating "Section 1.1 is added to Article I thereof, to read: SEC. 1.1. The state shall not deny or interfere with an individual's reproductive freedom in their most intimate decisions, which includes their fundamental right to choose to have an abortion and their fundamental right to choose or refuse contraceptives. This section is intended to further the constitutional right to privacy guaranteed by Section 1, and the constitutional right to not be denied equal protection guaranteed by Section 7. Nothing herein narrows or limits the right to privacy or equal protection."

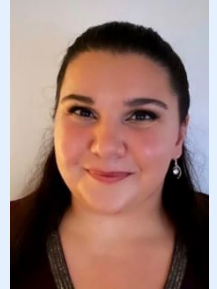
AAUW CA has begun a Social Media campaign to educate and encourage voters to support Prop 1. Weekly messages contain important facts. If you don't use social media, we urge you to email the messages to others who do!

Proposition 28. In the context of AAUW CA's Public Policy Priorities in support of Education, AAUW CA supports Proposition 28, The Arts and Music in Schools – Funding Guarantee and Accountability Act. Studies on educational achievement prove that arts and music education improve student learning. Music education has been shown to improve cognitive development and spatial reasoning while the dramatic arts improve reading comprehension. Arts and music education has also been shown to improve school attendance and individual self-confidence and motivation to learn, particularly among poor and other at-risk students. Yet these programs are usually the first cut when school budgets are reduced. Prop 28 would provide a minimum source of annual funding coming from the state General Fund to K-12 public schools to supplement arts education programs. School districts would be held accountable to use the funds for hiring certificated employees and purchasing supplies and materials. Read the full propositions on the Secretary of State website, www.sos.ca.gov/elections/ballot-measures. Become informed, and vote on November 8, 2022!!

PLEASE NOTE: There was an error in the AAUW California September Newsletter article. The article provided a link to AAUW National's Get Out the Vote Toolkit; however, the link was to their old site. The site has been updated and the new and correct link is:

<https://www.aauw.org/resources/policy/advocacy-toolkit/>.

An Update on Sofia Vartanian Two-Time AAUW Scholarship Recipient



Sofia Vartanian received her first AAUW Local Scholarship in 2020 and a second one in 2021. Having transferred to UCLA in the fall of 2020, she graduated in June 2022 with a Bachelor of Science in Biology with departmental honors. While at UCLA, Sofia continued with her passion for educating others of all ages on public health concerns by being actively involved with Bruins Public Health and Timmy Global Health clubs. Among the many ways she contributed to the community, she presented to elementary school children, wrote informative blog posts, volunteered at a local soup kitchen, worked as a COVID-19 tester and as front desk staff at LA Fitness.

Sofia earned an internship with Health Care Transformations (HTC) in the summer of 2021, where she worked as a digital marketing intern researching ways to digitize critical information commonly presented to patients in healthcare. By doing so, HTC can now advertise to medical organizations and encourage them to use videos rather than simply regurgitating information or passing out handouts which eventually get lost. On-demand videos can help patients by allowing them to watch at their convenience videos dealing with common diagnoses, treatment logistics, pre-surgery protocols and much more, while saving time for healthcare providers. This allows patients time to absorb the information presented to them and to prepare questions for their provider, thus increasing the quality of care received.

Sofia also helped other transfer student communities by being a student speaker at West Valley College's "Roots to STEM," "Women in STEM," and Counseling 005 class, encouraging and advising future transfer students on their unique paths. Additionally, she became a UCLA transfer student mentor for the 2021-2022 school year, and plans to continue for the 2022-2023 school year. She also joined a research group and is still active post-graduation at UCLA, focusing on biodiversity to help combat climate change, and is actively looking to gain more clinical and shadowing experience while diligently studying for the MCAT.

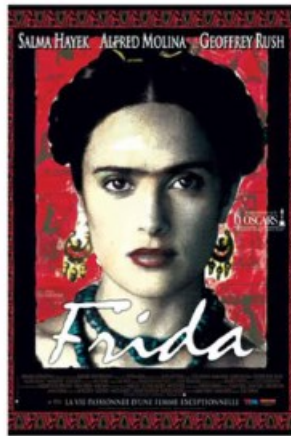
Sofia's favorite memory at UCLA was having the honor of performing in Schoenberg Hall at UCLA with her Persian ethnomusicology class, where she sang a song in Farsi and recited a Persian poem in Armenian (her cultural background). During her free time, she volunteers at the Hollywood food coalition, explores Southern California's coastline, hikes, and spends time with her family and friends.

The [San Jose Social Justice Film Festival](#) is a showcase for general release films you might not have caught when they were first released. The films present redemptive stories of marginalized people and ecosystems bravely overcoming challenges and bringing hope, compassion and light to a world in need of inspiration. Some are deeply insightful and thought-provoking, and some are fun and joyful. Black, Asian, Women, and LGBTQIA communities are included. The festival started in September, but goes into October.

Covid considerations: For those looking for Covid-conscious entertainment, please note that they have blocked off every other row of the auditorium and the box office system will automatically force two seats on either side of your order to go offline after you make your reservation so you have distance between yourself and the next party.



October 7, 2022



October 9, 2022



October 11, 2022



October 12, 2022



*October 29 & 30,
2022*



Spotlight on Jean Boyden

Ruth Dusan and Grace O’Leary

How did you discover AAUW San Jose?

AAUW found me when I moved in next door to an active member, who lost no time in recruiting me. In those days (more than 50 years ago) most of us were stay-at-home moms with an urgent need for adult company and stimulating conversation. One of my earliest meetings centered on the value of purchasing what is now Headquarters. At my first regular meeting, the President and Board members were in a reception line, all of them wearing hats (and perhaps gloves, but I'm not sure about the gloves). I remained a member through that period and later through 25 years of employment, and now through retirement.

How long have you been a member of AAUW?

The data show Jean has been with AAUW more than 50 years, is an honorary life member, and a Past President.

What do you like most about being a member of AAUW?

Over the years AAUW has given me leadership training, wonderful role models as more members joined the work force, expanded my interests, allowed me to support women at both the graduate and undergraduate levels, and, of course, making so many friends to name a few.

Is there anything else we can do to improve the membership experience?

AAUW has supported and offered activities appropriate for our membership at various stages of their lives. In the early years, women focused on studying topics. More recently, the discussion centered on how members could participate if they only had a few hours a month. We have gone from study to action, including lobbying. And we became more focused on community issues. I'm sure new members will come up with other ways to improve.

How would you like to be remembered?

I hope to be remembered as someone who supported the Branch whenever I could. While I worked, I dropped out of activities but remained a member. Later, I dedicated time to the Finance Committee and other administrative duties as well as supporting new activities and groups. Now I have gotten lazy — only participating in what I still love. That includes Great Decisions, Mystery Lovers, and our Past Presidents luncheons. No matter how I participated, I have always felt I got far more from the Branch than I was contributing to it.

Mary Ellen Heising Spotlight Update

We hope you enjoyed reading the Spotlight article about Mary Ellen Heising. We inadvertently omitted an additional question/response; here it is:

How would you like to be remembered? What would you like members to know about you?

Although I'll soon be 90 and no longer live in San Jose, I would like people to know that I'm still learning, I'm still in leadership positions, and every day I use skills I learned from AAUW.

October 2022**Submitted by Tynka Dees, Calendar Editor:**

Santa Clara County has removed our mask requirement for indoor meetings. You no longer have to fill out the vaccination certification form. If any member is uncomfortable with unmasked members or simply wishes to remain safe, masks are always welcome. If you are un-vaccinated, we would appreciate it if you wore a mask. If you are a leader of the group meeting please keep a sign in sheet, just in case we need it for checking contacts in future. Please check with the organizer whether the meeting has changed and will be ZOOM or in person.

Mon Oct 3	6-8 pm	Neighbors Helping Neighbors (Bobbie Baker)
Tue Oct 4	10:30-11:30 am	German Conversation ZOOM (RSVP Barbara Snyder)
Thu Oct 6	7-8:30 pm	Public Policy Committee ZOOM (Susan Karlins)
Sat Oct 8	7 am-6 pm	Parking Lot Packing Gifts for Teens (Elaine Benoit)
	6:30-9:30 pm	Couples Dining (RSVP Karen Hook)
Sun Oct 9	11:30 am-1:30 pm	Film Fans (RSVP Linda Snashall)
Mon Oct 10	6:30- 8:30 pm	Light Gourmet (RSVP Cheryl Markman)
Tue Oct 11	10-1130 am	Book Discussion (Lida Kluzek)
	10:30-11:30 am	Conversacion Espanol ZOOM (RSVP Barbara Snyder)
Wed Oct 12	11 am-1 pm	Art Appreciation (RSVP Jan Bartolotta)
	5:30-6 pm	AAUW Board Social Hour (Sonia Wright)
	6- 7:30 pm	AAUW BOARD Meeting Hybrid (Sonia Wright)
	7-8:30 pm	Wednesday Night Book Group (RSVP Renee Sommerfeld)
Thu Oct 13	1-4 pm	Bridge 2 nd Thursday (RSVP Bobbie Eckerman)
Fri Oct 14	10 am-1 pm	Bridge (RSVP Lida Kluzek)
Sat Oct 15	7 am-6 pm	Parking Lot Packing Gifts for Teens (Elaine Benoit)
Mon Oct 17	9:30-11am	Exploring World Literature Hybrid (RSVP Diana Taylor)
	6:30-9 pm	International Gourmet (RSVP Jan Bartolotta)
Tue Oct 18	7 am-6pm	Parking Lot Packing Gifts for Teens (Elaine Benoit)
	10:30-11:30 am	French Conversation ZOOM (RSVP Barbara Snyder)
	1-3 pm	Knitting Know How (RSVP Margaret McCartney)
Wed Oct 19	7 am-6pm	Parking Lot Packing Gifts for Teens (Elaine Benoit)
Thu Oct 20	10 am-12 pm	Family History Hybrid (Susan Brundage)
	7-8:30 pm	Mystery Lovers Time/ Meeting To Be Determined (Sharon Shephard)
Fri Oct 21	10 am-1 pm	Bridge (RSVP Lida Kluzek)
Mon Oct 24	9:30-11 am	Building and Properties Committee (Paul Bowen)
Tue Oct 25	7 am-6pm	Parking Lot Packing Gifts for Teens (Elaine Benoit)
	12-1 pm	Lunch Bunch (Diana Taylor)
	1-4 pm	Bridge 4 th Tuesday (RSVP Bobbie Eckerman)
	7-8:30 pm	Great Decisions PM ZOOM (Sharon Shephard)
Wed Oct 26	7-8:30 pm	Public Policy Committee ZOOM (Susan Karlins)
Fri Oct 28	1:30- 3:30 pm	Local Scholarship To be determined (Tynka Dees)
Sat Oct 29	10 am- 12 pm	Fall Event 1420 Newport Ave Corner Newport and Minnesota With Proposition Discussion (Membership)

San Jose Branch BONFIRE

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