



## President's Corner

By Sonia Wright

"Remember the tongue has no bones, but is strong enough to break a heart. So be careful with your words." -- Irina Swart

Kindness or criticism? Which characteristic do you want to exemplify? I talked with a past Branch president recently, who mentioned the best lesson she learned as president was "don't criticize what you don't want to end up doing when the person you criticize quits on you." Good advice.

There is no doubt that our social fabric has changed in the last two years. I read a *New York Times* article about kindness. I've been noticing, the lack of kindness and the jump to criticism both in the workplace and in society. I've also followed several articles in *The Chronicle of Higher Ed* about educators leaving the profession in droves after the last two years.

Those of us in the work world are overworked, underappreciated, understaffed, exhausted by the intensification of criticism, and suffering what my nursing colleague calls low-level depression caused by the stress. Frankly, I don't think it's just in the education field or work world. It also applies to AAUW.

We've spent the last two plus years in awkward and depersonalizing circumstances: face masks, screens, difficulty hearing and being heard. Bottom line: increased stress. As the *New York Times* article pointed out, stress can keep people from being kind to others. However, research shows, when people model kind and helpful behavior, it has a healthy impact on spreading goodness in a community. We have four wonderful CAPs (Community Action Projects) that provide opportunities for you to share your kindness: Local Scholarship, Neighbors Helping Neighbors, Gifts for Teens and Tech Trek, as well as a very active Public Policy group. Or if you're really inspired, volunteer to step into a leadership role on the board.

As a New Year's resolution, I ask you to be careful with your words, give people the benefit of the doubt and be kind to one another this next year.

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## AAUW Diversity Statement

In principle and in practice, AAUW values and seeks an inclusive membership, workforce, leadership team and board of directors. There shall be no barriers to full participation in this organization on the basis of gender, race, creed, age, sexual orientation, national origin, disability, or class. Adopted by the AAUW Board of Directors, June 1988; revised October 1988, October 1992, February 1993, June 1994, June 2000, January 2005, July 2009, July 2011, April 2016, April 2017, June 2018

Our San Jose Branch welcomes all individuals who support our mission: To advance gender equity for women and girls through research, education, and advocacy.

## Membership Committee Seeks Big Sisters/Big Brothers for New Members

Leticia Cowan and Peg Carlson-Bowen

That's right! We've been adding so many new members (17 just in 2022!) that we need your help! Membership is introducing a new Big Sister (or Big Brother) program to help our newest members get familiar with, and be confident about, activities as they get involved in various interest groups and other programs. We will be asking for volunteers from Interest Groups, Public Policy/Advocacy, Community Action Projects, committees and the Board to take on someone new and help them explore and feel comfortable at AAUW San Jose. Let's roll out that red carpet, whether in person or via Zoom, remind newcomers of group meetings, follow up with them via e-mail, text or phone, meet for coffee or lunch, or possibly ride together to the next meeting (all COVID permitting). We will coordinate with chairs to gather volunteers — Margaret Bard has offered to help us organize an informational meeting for Chairs.

Membership Co-Vice Presidents will also be following up with each new member via phone and e-mail to answer questions, render assistance, or just listen so that we can help to make our Branch stronger through greater participation.



## Making a Resolution of KINDNESS

Sharon Bouska and Peg Carlson-Bowen

Ah, January. The month of new beginnings, new hopes, new resolutions. Past Presidents Peg Carlson-Bowen and Sharon Bouska are asking each one of us to make the resolution of KINDNESS part of our daily lives. Why? The past two years have been unusually hard on all of us. Recently, some of that stress has spilled out in somewhat unhelpful criticism of AAUW San Jose's volunteers who make the 'infrastructure' of our organization run smoothly. We are offering a way to help us all practice KINDNESS. Each month we will include a small blurb about KINDNESS — submissions from members are welcome! As a Russian proverb says, "Kindness is like a spring day."

The KINDNESS idea for this month is to recall this saying before we speak, or write, especially in situations challenging our organization: "Does my input reflect the mission of uplifting women and girls? Is it necessary? Is it helpful? Is it kind?"



**AAUW Morgan Hill is ramping up for the 40th annual Wildflower Run on March 26, 2023 - see flyer for details (also note that there is a \$5 discount code for all AAUW members!).**

**New Member Profiles**  
Claire Campodonico



ERIKA ENGBRETSON received her BS in Accounting from Santa Clara University. As a CPA, she was employed for almost 30 years as an auditor at a large public accounting firm. She now works at Willow Glen United Methodist Church, across from Headquarters, as their Manager. After we held our Fall Gathering there, she decided to join us. Erika is a strong proponent of girl and women power, as she has two daughters. She is an avid runner, loves the outdoors and continues to improve her vegetarian cooking repertoire.

PAMELA BUSTILLO earned her BS in Sociology from Santa Clara University. She manages graduations at San Jose State University. Her team reviews students' records to assess their readiness for graduation. Pam has long been a foodie and loves a good red wine. She and her husband enjoy their travels and hope to go to England in 2023. Pamela learned of AAUW at the Women's Leadership Conference. Welcome Pamela, we are all so glad you have joined us in pursuit of our mission.

JANE HILLS holds several degrees. At the University of Leicester in the UK, she studied English and American Studies. At Cambridge in the UK, she completed her post-graduate work in Education. And, at the University of Houston in the US, she earned her Master's in Literature. Jane is a grant writer for several non-profits. When she was working with Catholic Charities, she became friends with a nun who was a member of AAUW. Sometime after that, she searched for us on social media and found our Branch!

ELISA KOFF-GINSBORG studied at Syracuse University in New York, earning her BA. Continuing her education, she earned her Master's degree from Rutgers University in New Jersey. Next, she matriculated at Catholic University of America in Washington, DC where she obtained a Master's in Social Work. Elisa is a leader in the non-profit field. She learned of our Branch from member Leticia Cowan. She decided to join AAUW as she believes wholeheartedly in its mission and is eager to learn more about its public policies.

BETH REDMOND graduated from Brigham Young University in Utah where she earned her Bachelor's degree. She is now retired from a career in bookbinding. She lives right around the corner from Headquarters. Beth is adamant about supporting the mission of AAUW and is eager to learn more about the programs we offer. She was referred by member Katherine Oven.

CANDACE RONEY graduated with a BA from San Jose State University, and went on to earn her Master's in Public Administration there as well. She also holds a Certificate in Non-Profit Management. Candace has close friendships with several of our Branch members. In the not too distant future, she looks forward to retiring from her profession as a Chief Executive Officer with a foundation. She looks forward to exploring public policy and leadership opportunities within our group. We are so glad you have joined us, Candace!

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**Nominating Committee for 2023-24**

Linda Goldberg, Parliamentarian

The Nominating Committee will be forming soon to choose officers for the 2023-24 fiscal year. Please be aware that any Branch member may propose names as potential Nominating Committee members. If you, or someone you know, would like to serve on the committee, please contact [Linda Goldberg](#).



### **Spotlight on Virginia Beck**

Ruth Dusan and Grace O'Leary

Virginia Beck, Past President of our San Jose Branch, was kind enough to provide the candid answers below. We thank you, Virginia, for giving us a brief glimpse of who you are.

#### **How did you discover AAUW San Jose?**

I have been a member for 42 years so I don't remember how I discovered it. I remember why I joined. I left college in the middle of my sophomore year to get married and had my first two children. I went back to college, after moving to California, at SJSU — at age 28. I got my degree at 30 and then got my master's degree. I was very proud that I had finished my education and discovered AAUW, probably through a friend. In those days you had to actually show your degree. I can remember going to Fall Event, becoming a member and showing my degree. I remember how proud I was because of going back to school.

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

I like associating with educated women who care about the world and others. And show it through their actions. I like women who are always looking to learn, who are always looking to expand themselves. I find that learning is challenging and rewarding.

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

We need to remember to always keep connected with members. To not just take their membership dues and then never follow up. People need personal connection and don't need a lot. People just need to know that you are interested in them — and that's fine — but others may need more. It's very important for someone on the Board or on committees to actively connect with members.

#### **How would you like to be remembered?**

I have a mission statement. My mission statement is: she cared about others, she did her best, and is grateful for what she has.

#### **What would you like members to know about you?**

That's it!

## January 2023

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 Jan 2	10 am-1 pm	Bridge 1 <sup>st</sup> Monday (RSVP <a href="#">Bobbie Eckerman</a> )
Tue Jan 3	10-11 am	German Conversation ZOOM (RSVP <a href="#">Barbara Snyder</a> )
Wed Jan 4	5:30 -6 pm	AAUW Board Social Hour In person & ZOOM (( <a href="#">Sonia Wright</a> ))
	6- 7:30 pm	AAUW BOARD Meeting In person & ZOOM (( <a href="#">Sonia Wright</a> ))
Thu Jan 5	7-8:30 pm	Public Policy Committee ZOOM ( <a href="#">Susan Karlins</a> )
Sun Jan 8	8:30-10 am	Weekend Walkers ( <a href="#">Judy Burt</a> )
	11:30 am-1:30 pm	Film Fans (RSVP <a href="#">Linda Snashall</a> )
Mon Jan 9	6:30-8 pm	Neighbors Helping Neighbors ZOOM ( <a href="#">Bobbie Baker</a> )
	6:30- 9:30 pm	Light Gourmet (RSVP <a href="#">Cheryl Markman</a> )
Tue Jan 10	10-1130 am	Book Discussion AM The Book Woman of Troublesome Creek by Kim Richardson ( <a href="#">Lida Kluzek</a> )
	10-11 am	Conversacion Espanol ZOOM (RSVP <a href="#">Barbara Snyder</a> )
Wed Jan 11	11 am-1 pm	Art Appreciation (RSVP <a href="#">Jan Bartolotta</a> )
	7-830 pm	Wednesday Night Book Group Daring to Drive A Saudi Woman's Awakening by Manal al Sharif (RSVP <a href="#">Renee Sommerfeld</a> )
Thu Jan 12	9:30-11 am	Great Decisions AM Hybrid ( <a href="#">Monique Lee</a> )
	1-4 pm	Bridge 2 <sup>nd</sup> Thursday (RSVP <a href="#">Bobbie Eckerman</a> )
Fri Jan 13	10 am-2 pm	Duplicate Bridge (RSVP <a href="#">Lida Kluzek</a> )
Sat Jan 14	6:30-9:30 pm	Couples Dining (RSVP <a href="#">Karen Hook</a> )
Sun Jan 15	8:30-10 am	Weekend Walkers ( <a href="#">Judy Burt</a> )
Mon Jan 16	9:30-11am	Exploring World Literature Hybrid My Life by Golda Meir (RSVP <a href="#">Diana Taylor</a> )
	1-4 pm	Interbranch Council ( <a href="#">Peg Carlson-Bowen</a> )
	6:30-9 pm	International Gourmet (RSVP <a href="#">Jan Bartolotta</a> )
Tue Jan 17	10-11 am	French Conversation ZOOM (RSVP <a href="#">Barbara Snyder</a> )
	1-3 pm	Knitting Know How (RSVP <a href="#">Margaret McCartney</a> )
Thu Jan 19	10 am-12 pm	Family History Hybrid ( <a href="#">Susan Brundage</a> )
	7-8:30 pm	Mystery Lovers ZOOM A Banquet of Consequences by Elizabeth George ( <a href="#">Sharon Shephard</a> )
Fri Jan 20	10 am-1 pm	Bridge (RSVP <a href="#">Lida Kluzek</a> )
Sun Jan 22	8:30-10 am	Weekend Walkers ( <a href="#">Judy Burt</a> )
Mon Jan 23	9:30-11 am	Building and Properties Committee ( <a href="#">Paul Bowen</a> )
Tue Jan 24	12-1:30 pm	Lunch Bunch ( <a href="#">Diana Taylor</a> )
	1-4 pm	Bridge 4 <sup>th</sup> Tuesday (RSVP <a href="#">Bobbie Eckerman</a> )
	7-8:30 pm	Great Decisions PM ZOOM ( <a href="#">Sharon Shephard</a> )
Thu Jan 26	9:30-11 am	Great Decisions AM Hybrid ( <a href="#">Monique Lee</a> )
Fri Jan 27	1:30- 3:30 pm	Local Scholarship Hybrid ( <a href="#">Tynka Dees</a> )
Sat Jan 28	10 am- 12 pm	Prospective Members and Member Meeting Coffee and Conversation Back porch ( <a href="mailto:Membership@aauwsanjose.org">Membership@aauwsanjose.org</a> )
Sun Jan 29	8:30-10 am	Weekend Walkers ( <a href="#">Judy Burt</a> )

### San Jose Branch BONFIRE

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AAUW BONFIRE San Jose Branch *Established 1909*

## "Brave Little Nell: The Eleanor Roosevelt Story" Presented by AAUW Los Gatos-Saratoga Branch Friday, January 27, 2023 - 11 am Immanuel Lutheran Church Fellowship Hall, 14103 Saratoga Avenue, Saratoga, CA 95070 Admission is FREE



Join us for an imaginative "meet and greet" with one of history's most famous women. Beloved and despised, belittled and adored, Eleanor Roosevelt faced tragic losses and challenges as a child and as a young woman. Despite hardships, she went on to become a passionate advocate for human rights.

Bay Area actress Laurie Strawn brings Eleanor's story to life, sharing the former First Lady's personal history along with the remarkable life and times that Mrs. Roosevelt lived in. Laurie has performed in theaters throughout the Bay Area for more than 15 years.

For additional information, call or email Sumi Tanabe: (408) 253-6191, [atanabe@hotmail.com](mailto:atanabe@hotmail.com).