



## President's Corner

by Linda Goldberg

If you were able to join the AAUW CA Annual Meeting, you heard Meghan Kessell, from National, talk about the strengthened Title IX rules just issued by the U.S. Department of Education. They include strong protections for students experiencing sexual harassment and ensure equal education opportunities for pregnant, parenting and LGBTQ+ students. These rules go into effect on August 1. I am sure that this will be a focus for our Branch going forward next year as we ensure the Title IX representatives in schools have the information and support they need.

As Tynka Dees' term as President begins, I hope that each of you will find the time to do a little bit more. It is true that it takes a village and we have so many wonderful projects deserving of your time and attention. There are still a couple of open spaces on the Board for next year; namely, President-elect and Communications Liaison, plus many committees that would welcome your participation. I can guarantee you will receive more than you give.

It has been my pleasure to serve as your president for this past year. My deepest appreciation goes to all of the members who have been such a great support to me and who all give so generously of their time. It is so impressive to work with a group that is so capable and conscientious. THANK YOU ALL.



## Neighbors Helping Neighbors



## June Soiree!

Speaker: Alfonso Mendez, Santa Maria Urban Ministry  
Collecting Peanut Butter & Cereal Boxes

**Mon., June 3 at 6pm**  
AAUW Headquarters





## Neighbors Helping Neighbors Soiree Monday, June 3, 6 pm

You are invited to the social event of the year, the Neighbors Helping Neighbors June Soiree! Come and join us on a lovely June evening with food, drink and vibrant conversation. The fun starts at 6 pm with both inside and outside seating. Dress is casual.

Alfonso Mendez from Santa Maria Urban Ministry will be our speaker at 6:30 pm. The Branch has a long and productive relationship with this non-profit, including our yearly Warm Hearts Drive. We will be collecting peanut butter and boxed cereal for Santa Maria. Please contact [Mary Jane Vitkovich](#) if you have questions. Hope to see you there!



## Mark Your Calendars for June 22 Membership Renewal Party Renee Sommerfeld, Membership Committee

The membership renewal packets (including the opportunity to make a donation to AAUW San Jose's Community Action Projects) were sent out in early May to all members who need to renew for the coming fiscal year.

The packet contents are hard to miss - a green renewal form and a blue CAP donation form! Instructions are also provided for those who wish to renew online with a credit card. Please return your completed form(s) and check(s), or pay online, by June 30, 2024.

Another way to renew, and have some fun as well, is to join us at our Renewal Party at Headquarters from 5 to 7 pm on Saturday, June 22. Bring your forms and checkbook or credit card and you can renew on the spot. Appetizers and beverages will be served. And please do come out and socialize even if you've already renewed!

*welcome*

## Welcome to Our Newest Member Claire Campodonico

MARIA GOETTSCH was born and raised in San Jose. She graduated from UC Berkeley with a degree in International Business Development. She now lives in Germany, where she is a member of AAUPW in Munich. Visiting her mother here recently, she noticed our building's signage and was intrigued. She decided to join our Branch at a Coffee and Convo. Maria, we are so glad you have joined us!

## Amazing Response to Member Survey

Do you need further proof that AAUW San Jose members are the best? Well, here it is – more than 55% of our members completed the online member survey (the national average for internal surveys is closer to 30%). A big "thank you" to everyone who took the time to share their thoughts.

Here are some highlights:

- Most members receive Branch information from either the BONFIRE or email messages, and are satisfied with these channels.
- More than 350 optional comments were submitted, which included praise for existing communication efforts, as well as constructive suggestions on how to improve.
- Many expressed interest in additional programming on a range of topics, most especially on topics related to health and wellness.

In the coming months, a team of Branch leaders will do a deep dive into the responses and look for ways to incorporate suggestions into planning for our efforts this Fall and into 2025. Thank you again to everyone who participated!



### Tech Trek Campers Selected and Gearing Up Cheryl Markman, Tech Trek

Earlier this year, a number of local middle schools were contacted, encouraging them to nominate applicants for a chance to attend one of this summer's Tech Trek camps. When selecting schools, we reach out to schools in which the families may not otherwise have the opportunity to send their children to camp. Although not all schools that are contacted choose to participate, this year, four schools chose to do so. They are, Renaissance Academy at Fischer, Renaissance Academy at Mathson, River Glen and University Preparatory Academy.

Of the 27 girls nominated by their teachers, 16 successfully completed the application. The application included submitting an essay telling us about an area of science, technology, engineering or math (STEM) that they are most interested in and why, and what they have done to further their knowledge in this area. In March, they were interviewed in person by several members of the Tech Trek committee.

Based on the applications and interviews, 11 girls were chosen to attend the camps. We are sending seven to Santa Clara University (Camp Hopper) and four to either CSU Monterey Bay or UC Santa Cruz (Camp Carson). They and their families have been notified of their selection and are currently busy filling out the forms that are required to attend camp.



## AAUW San Jose Branch Named Gift Honoree for 2023-2024

By Mary Jane Vitkovich

Annually the AAUW San Jose Board honors an individual or committee who made an outstanding contribution to our Branch. This year's honoree is Susan Karlins, co-chair of the Public Policy/Advocacy Committee.

Susan joined our Branch in 2016 and immediately became involved with the Public Policy committee. She has worked tirelessly over the past years to actively lead and motivate our members to support policies that break through educational and economic barriers. Susan's leadership created a "can do" attitude amongst the committee and throughout the Branch. Her enthusiasm is boundless!

Here is just a sample of some of Public Policy activities she helped accomplish through her leadership:

- Sent over 1,000 postcards to encourage voter registration
- Wrote numerous letters of support for passing legislation
- Sent letters to SCC Board of Supervisors supporting the re-establishment of the Urgent Care OB-GYN clinic at Valley Medical Center
- Attended numerous Board of Education meetings in Santa Clara County to advocate for bias-free education

Susan, we thank you for all you do and your impressive representation in our community as an active AAUW member.



## Local Scholarship Investment Account: Year-End Report

Tynka Dees, Local Scholarship Committee

As some of you may remember, in 2020 the Interbranch Special Projects Foundation opened a tax-exempt brokerage account at Fidelity Investments for the benefit of our Local Scholarship Community Action Project (LS CAP). This Local Scholarship Investment Account (LSIA) has received your tax-free gifts of stock and cash over the last four years. Donations have been invested in two mutual funds, one a total-market index fund, and the other an index fund screened for sustainable environmental, social, and governance practices. Thanks to your generosity, a healthy economy, and conservative money management, a few thousand dollars has grown to over \$131,000! These funds are a cushion against "lean" years when donations may drop, and it will allow us to give more and larger awards over time.

The LSIA has also allowed us to expand the scope of support we can offer to students in special situations. This year, for example, we were able to pay the transportation costs and exam fees for one of our graduates, enabling her to take the Medical College Admission Test and enter medical school. Thank you, generous members, for keeping our LS CAP alive and well!

## Public Policy/Advocacy Update

Susan Karlins, Public Policy/Advocacy

If you are one of the 42 Branch members who together have written 1,665 postcards to potential primary election voters in Georgia and Virginia, thank you very much! This summer, we will begin writing letters to encourage participation in the General Election. If you're interested in participating, please let us know at [publicpolicy@aauwsanjose.org](mailto:publicpolicy@aauwsanjose.org).

The pro-censorship group, Moms for Liberty, is gearing up to lobby school boards in response to the recently released Title IX Guidance from the Department of Education. If you're interested in attending your District Board meeting in support of AAUW values, please contact [publicpolicy@aauwsanjose.org](mailto:publicpolicy@aauwsanjose.org).

Thirteen of our members are writing letters of support for 29 bills on AAUW California's legislative agenda this year. This is far greater participation than in past years! Our One Person/One Bill Project is featured on the AAUW CA website at <https://www.aauw-ca.org/san-jose-branch-kicks-off-annual-one-person-one-bill-program/>. Below is a screenshot from our April 17 Kickoff. If you would like to join us, our next meeting is Wednesday, May 15 at 7 pm via Zoom. <https://us06web.zoom.us/j/87531558423?>



**“Equity is a choice. Inclusion is an action. Belonging is an outcome.”** In AAUW, we must not be satisfied to simply talk the talk. We must back up our words with actions by walking the walk.

Ruth Brown, AAUW of Michigan, State Public Policy Director, quoting Arthur Chan

## Spotlight on Christine Hawkins

Ruth Dusan and Grace O'Leary



Grace was delighted to visit with Chris Hawkins as she prepared answers for her Spotlight. We thank you, Grace, for securing this interview with Chris. It's also delightful to read.

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

I was originally a member of the Simi Valley Branch for a few years. In 1985, I moved to San Jose to work for San Jose Unified. At the elementary school where I worked, there was a car that had the AAUW license plate frame. The car belonged to long-time member Nancy Hooton. She introduced me to Branch members, activities and Headquarters. We both have been members of the Wednesday night book club for years.

### **How long have you been a member of AAUW?**

Between Simi and San Jose, I have been a member for over 35 years.

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

Where do I begin! I enjoy meeting and talking to members. I admire the many issues the organization deals with in relation to equity and how they have expanded to include other issues. I also enjoy all of the groups you can join and how we are kept up on national issues. There is something for everyone. Also, the workshops and seminars on leadership skills.

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

I noticed in the BONFIRE they were going to start having members help new members. There are so many organizations you can join today as compared to 30 years ago. But even then and now, AAUW provides opportunities for members for leadership, political issues, projects and friendship. I like the idea of members being there for new members. It gives the new members a closer look of what the Branch is like and a new friend to answer any questions.

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

I was a special education teacher for over 36 years, both public and private schools. I was very active in AAUW for several years and believe the experiences have helped with the leadership positions I held. I received a lot of mentoring from past presidents, enabling me to take on some issues both at school and AAUW that I would not have been able to do alone. I am proud of the women's history project the Branch worked on with Virginia Beck at the San Jose Historical Museum. I enjoy being retired, reading and working on genealogy. I was elected President of the Branch in 1993, and knowing I would serve until 1994 made the summer very busy. I learned a lot about managing my responsibilities and continuing to be an admired and respected teacher with a challenging position. My AAUW experiences were very helpful to me then, and when I took on the history project, which was school-wide in San Jose fourth grades.



## Spotlight on Sonia Wright

### Ruth Dusan and Grace O'Leary

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

A co-worker recommended I join the group that his wife belonged to (AAUW). I knew nothing about it, but he arranged for me to meet his wife and attend a branch meeting. This is the fourth branch I've belonged to. I have immediately sought out the local branch wherever we have lived.

#### How long have you been a member of AAUW?

After going to two of the branch meetings with Jack's wife Barbara, I joined the branch and got involved. That was 1985, when I was 26 years old. I was the youngest member and all of the members in the Roseburg Oregon branch were over 50. My first branch meeting I sat up front between two 90-year-olds and they both fell asleep during the program. I was asked to take notes at the meeting because the secretary didn't show up. I had to go to the second meeting because I had to present the minutes. I was so impressed with the passion of these women, that I just had to join. I set a goal to get more people my age to join. Over a five-year time span, half the branch were 30-year olds. However, the older members became my best friends, going to state conventions, skiing club, putting on a state convention, fundraising for AAUW, and doing an AAUW grant funded community action project.

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

The shared mission. As an old boss of mine used to say when he saw people in suits like him, "These are my people," he would declare. I enjoy the camaraderie and friendships I've made through the four branches I've belonged to.

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

Good question. Not for me, but I wonder what we need to do to keep younger members engaged like I was engaged as a young person.

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

My first career was in public relations. I swore I would never be in education because my parents were teachers. Within five years of graduating from college, I was working at a community college. My mom said, "I thought you said you'd never be in education." My reply was, "I'm working for a college, but my career is public relations." I got to eat my words 10 years later, when I taught journalism part-time while still doing the PR Director job. Over those 20 years, I was involved in AAUW to learn leadership skills and learned fundraising by serving on the United Way leadership team. I started my second career 19 years ago, when we moved to California for my new career as a Foundation Executive Director at Napa Valley College. Then I was at College of the Siskiyous in a similar capacity, and then came to San Jose State University ten years ago as a major gift officer, where I have met all kinds of interesting people. My husband Joe is retired, and his official job is taking care of me -- I don't do laundry, clean the house, grocery shop or cook (only occasionally do I cook). I don't sit still well, so in addition to AAUW activities, I'm a stained glass and fused glass artist. I make jewelry from my fused glass pieces. Additionally, I do paper crafts, making cards and origami. I enjoy walking, swimming and traveling to learn about new places.

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

As someone who made a difference and improved the world in some small way.

## June 2024

Submitted by Tynka Dees Calendar Editor

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. **The most up to date calendar is always on our website.**

Sun Jun 2	Time to Be Determined	IBC Tech Trek Ice Cream Social ( <a href="#">Tech Trek</a> )
	9-10:30 am	Weekend Walkers (RSVP <a href="#">Judy Burt</a> )
Mon Jun 3	10 am-1 pm	Bridge 1 <sup>st</sup> Monday (RSVP <a href="#">Bobbie Eckerman</a> )
	6-7:30 pm	Neighbors Helping Neighbors Soiree ( <a href="#">Bobbie Baker</a> )
Tue Jun 4	10-11 am	German Conversation ZOOM (RSVP <a href="#">Barbara Snyder</a> )
	1-4 pm	Film Fans Time to Be Determined (RSVP <a href="#">Nancy Wheeler</a> )
	1-3 pm	Mahjong ( <a href="#">RSVP Shelley Powers</a> )
Wed Jun 5	5:30- 6 pm	AAUW Board Social Hour ( <a href="#">Linda Goldberg</a> )
	-7:30 pm	AAUW BOARD Meeting ( <a href="#">Linda Goldberg</a> )
Sat Jun 8	6:30-9:30 pm	Couples Dining (RSVP <a href="#">Karen Hook</a> )
Sun Jun 9	9-10:30 am	Weekend Walkers (RSVP <a href="#">Judy Burt</a> )
Mon Jun 10	6:30- 9:30 pm	Light Gourmet (RSVP <a href="#">Cheryl Markman</a> )
Tue Jun 11	10-11 am	Conversacion Espanol ZOOM (RSVP <a href="#">Barbara Snyder</a> )
	10-11:30 am	Book Discussion AM This Tender Land by Kreuger ( <a href="#">Sandy Bonnet</a> )
	1-3 pm	Mahjong ( <a href="#">RSVP Shelley Powers</a> )
Wed Jun 12	11 am-1 pm	Art Appreciation (RSVP <a href="#">Jan Bartolotta</a> )
	7-8:30 pm	Wednesday Night Book Group Hybrid ( <a href="#">Renee Sommerfeld</a> )
Thu Jun 13	1-4 pm	Bridge 2 <sup>nd</sup> Thursday (RSVP <a href="#">Bobbie Eckerman</a> )
Fri Jun 14	9:30 am-1:30 pm	Duplicate Bridge (RSVP <a href="#">Lida Kluzek</a> )
Sun Jun 16	9-10:30 am	Weekend Walkers (RSVP <a href="#">Judy Burt</a> )
Mon Jun 17	9:30-11am	Exploring World Literature (RSVP <a href="#">Diana Taylor</a> )
	6:30-9 pm	International Gourmet (RSVP <a href="#">Jan Bartolotta</a> )
Tue Jun 18	Noon-1pm	French Conversation ZOOM (RSVP <a href="#">Barbara Snyder</a> )
	1-3 pm	Mahjong ( <a href="#">RSVP Shelley Powers</a> )
	6-7:30 pm	Membership Meeting ( <a href="mailto:Membership@aauwsanjose.org">Membership@aauwsanjose.org</a> )
Wed Jun 19	11:30 am-2 pm	Program Event Planning Zoom (RSVP <a href="#">Ruth Dusan</a> )
	7-8:30 pm	Public Policy ( <a href="#">Susan Karlins</a> )
Thu Jun 20	6:30-8 pm	Mystery Lovers ( <a href="#">Sharon Shephard</a> )
Fri Jun 21	10 am-1 pm	Bridge (RSVP <a href="#">Lida Kluzek</a> )
Sat Jun22	5-7 pm	Renewal Party ( <a href="mailto:Membership@aauwsanjose.org">Membership@aauwsanjose.org</a> )
Sun Jun23	9-10:30 am	Weekend Walkers (RSVP <a href="#">Judy Burt</a> )
Mon Jun 24	11am-1230 pm	Building and Properties Committee ( <a href="mailto:buildings@aauwsanjose.org">buildings@aauwsanjose.org</a> )
Tue Jun 25	10-11 am	Italian Conversation ZOOM (RSVP <a href="#">Barbara Snyder</a> )
	1-3 pm	Mahjong ( <a href="#">RSVP Shelley Powers</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> )
Wed Jun 26	12-1:30 pm	Lunch Bunch ( <a href="#">Diana Taylor</a> )
Fri Jun 28	11 am-12:30 pm	Local Scholarship Potluck (RSVP <a href="#">Tynka Dees</a> )
Sun Jun 30	9-10:30 am	Weekend Walkers (RSVP <a href="#">Judy Burt</a> )



## July 2024

Submitted by Tynka Dees Calendar Editor

The most up to date calendar is always on our website.

Mon Jul 1	10 am-1 pm	Bridge 1 <sup>st</sup> Monday (RSVP <a href="#">Bobbie Eckerman</a> )
Tue Jul 2	10-11 am	German Conversation ZOOM (RSVP <a href="#">Barbara Snyder</a> )
	1-4 pm	Film Fans Time to Be Determined (RSVP <a href="#">Nancy Wheeler</a> )
	1-3 pm	Mahjong ( <a href="#">RSVP Shelley Powers</a> )
Sun Jul 7	9-10:30 am	Weekend Walkers (RSVP <a href="#">Judy Burt</a> )
Mon Jul 8	6:30- 9:30 pm	Light Gourmet (RSVP <a href="#">Cheryl Markman</a> )
Tue Jul 9	10-11 am	Conversacion Espanol ZOOM (RSVP <a href="#">Barbara Snyder</a> )
	1-3 pm	Mahjong ( <a href="#">RSVP Shelley Powers</a> )
Wed Jul 10	11 am-1 pm	Art Appreciation (RSVP <a href="#">Jan Bartolotta</a> )
Thu Jul 11	1-4 pm	Bridge 2 <sup>nd</sup> Thursday (RSVP <a href="#">Bobbie Eckerman</a> )
Fri Jul 12	9:30 am-2 pm	Duplicate Bridge (RSVP <a href="#">Lida Kluzek</a> )
Sat Jul 13	6:30-9:30 pm	Couples Dining (RSVP <a href="#">Karen Hook</a> )
Sun Jul 14	9-10:30 am	Weekend Walkers (RSVP <a href="#">Judy Burt</a> )
Mon Jul 15	6:30-9 pm	International Gourmet (RSVP <a href="#">Jan Bartolotta</a> )
Tue Jul 16	Noon-1pm	French Conversation ZOOM (RSVP <a href="#">Barbara Snyder</a> )
	1-3 pm	Mahjong ( <a href="#">RSVP Shelley Powers</a> )
	6-7:30 pm	Membership Meeting ( <a href="mailto:Membership@aauwsanjose.org">Membership@aauwsanjose.org</a> )
Wed Jul 17	7-8:30 pm	Public Policy ( <a href="#">Susan Karlins</a> )
Thu Jul 18	7-8:30 pm	Mystery Lovers ZOOM ( <a href="#">Sharon Shephard</a> )
Fri Jul 19	10 am-1 pm	Bridge (RSVP <a href="#">Lida Kluzek</a> )
Sun Jul 21	9-10:30 am	Weekend Walkers (RSVP <a href="#">Judy Burt</a> )
Mon Jul 22	11 am-12:30 pm	Building and Properties Committee ( <a href="mailto:buildings@aauwsanjose.org">buildings@aauwsanjose.org</a> )
Tue Jul 23	10-11 am	Italian Conversation ZOOM (RSVP <a href="#">Barbara Snyder</a> )
	1-3 pm	Mahjong ( <a href="#">RSVP Shelley Powers</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> )
Wed Jul 24	12-1:30 pm	Lunch Bunch ( <a href="#">Diana Taylor</a> )
Sat Jul 27	10 am- 12 pm	Reunion Scholarship Recipients (Past and Present) and Prospective Members and Member Meeting Coffee and Conversation ( <a href="mailto:Membership@anjose.org">Membership@anjose.org</a> )
Sun Jul 28	9-10:30 am	Weekend Walkers (RSVP <a href="#">Judy Burt</a> )
Tue Jul 30	1-3 pm	Mahjong ( <a href="#">RSVP Shelley Powers</a> )



### San Jose Branch BONFIRE

Published monthly except for July by AAUW

San Jose Branch, 1165 Minnesota Avenue,  
San Jose, CA 95125-3324

President: Linda Goldberg

BONFIRE Editor: Sonia Wright

Editorial Staff: Elin Bolt, Copy Editor; Tynka

Dees, Calendar Editor; Jan Giroux, Proofreader;

Barb Purdy, Layout Editor

Distribution: Sonia Wright & Linda Guyer

Change of Address: Renee Sommerfeld

BONFIRE ARTICLE SUBMITTAL RULES: The sole purpose of this publication is to convey the association's business to membership. Only articles and announcements related to Branch business will be considered.

San Jose Branch

1165 Minnesota Ave., Suite 100

San Jose, CA 95125-3324

Phone: 408 294 2430

Email: [www.aauwsanjose.org](http://www.aauwsanjose.org)

June-July 2024

AAUW BONFIRE San Jose Branch *Established 1909*



*Empowering Women Since 1881*

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