



# BONFIRE

San Jose Branch



## AAUW Annual Member-Only Meeting Willow Glen United Methodist Church - Kohlstedt Hall

1420 Newport Avenue, San Jose

Doors open at 12:30 pm

Register Here:

<http://bit.ly/2025aauwsjannual>

Join us in discussing important yearly updates and voting on next year's officers. Light snacks/drinks will be provided. You will not want to miss our amazing guest speaker Lisa Mallette, Executive Artistic Director at City Lights Theater Company of San Jose. We look forward to seeing you there!



### President's Corner Tynka Dees



At our annual meeting on April 12, we will be electing our Board for next year. Lisa Mallette, Executive Artistic Director of City Lights Theater Company, will be our guest speaker after our election.

AAUW California Annual Event is Saturday, April 26, from 10 am - 2 pm on Zoom. This year's theme is "Pivoting 4 Our Future." More information on the AAUW California website soon.

Assemblymember Ash Kalra has chosen AAUW San Jose as the recipient of the Assembly District 25 2025 Leadership in Education Award in honor of Women's History Month. This is an award for the entire Branch. You ALL are doing good work!

Please take care of yourself and your family, and be kind to yourself. And remember, our sisterhood helps us all, so be kind to one another.



"To advance equity for women and girls through education, research, and advocacy"



## A Brief History of AAUW San Jose Headquarters Archives Committee

Have you ever wondered how the house on 1165 Minnesota Avenue became AAUW San Jose Headquarters?

- 1845:** The 1165 Minnesota Avenue property was part of a Mexican land grant.
- 1911:** A family purchased the lot and built a house on 1165 Minnesota Avenue.
- 1920:** Michael Holt, a retired wheat farmer from Merced, purchased the Minnesota Avenue house for \$7,900.
- 1950:** Branch member Edith Jarman bequeathed her San Carlos Street (San Jose) home to the Branch, but her bequest was challenged in court by a family member. In 1958, after the longest trial in San Jose history to date, the house was sold and AAUW San Jose was awarded 45% of the proceeds, over \$50,000.
- 1965:** Long-time Branch members Doreen and Calvin Townsend gave the Branch a grant deed of two acres on Herald Avenue. Wanting a more central location, the Branch sold the Herald Avenue lot for \$32,500.
- 1968:** After a thorough search, the Branch purchased the house at 1165 Minnesota Avenue for \$40,000 and moved in on September 1. Repairs and remodeling began, and some say that has never stopped!



## Looking for a Few Good Dorm Moms

Karelle Cornwell, Tech Trek

Are you seeking a rewarding opportunity this summer? Consider being a Dorm Mom at Tech Trek. By helping with the camp, you can make a meaningful difference in a girl's life. Dorm Moms are important to the campers and to the smooth running of the camp. We couldn't have Tech Trek without them.

Tech Trek will have two camps. One will be held at the University of Santa Clara from July 6-12, the other will be held at UC Santa Cruz from July 13-19. If interested in helping to make this one week at camp an inspiring experience for girls, contact [techtrek@aauwsanjose.org](mailto:techtrek@aauwsanjose.org).



## Summary of Repairing the Brain and Spinal Cord Program

Cheryl Markman

The February program was a fascinating talk about brain and spinal cord injuries by Dr. Marco Lee, Professor of Neurosurgery at Stanford University and former Chief of Neurosurgery at Santa Clara Valley Medical Center.

Brain research, which dates back to 1535, shows that male and female brains are actually physiologically different. In general, male brains are larger and dominate in abstract thinking and spatial orientation; while female brains have more left-to-right side neurological connections, making them "superior" in that sense. Beginning in 1919, neurosurgery focused simply on removing the problematic parts; for example, blood clots and aneurysms. Current research is focused more on functional neurosurgery, restoring lost function to damaged areas of the brain or regenerating function by creating new sources of function.

Areas of focus in functional surgery include:

Movement disorders, such as Parkinson's – possible treatments include deep brain stimulation and vibrotactile stimulation

Locked-In Syndrome – loss of control of body movement while cognition and memory are unaffected; with new technology the patient's thoughts can be directly translated into written word images

Stroke and Stem Cell Therapy – stem cell development can be enhanced to replace areas permanently damaged by stroke

Addressing Alzheimer's disease – Dr. Lee noted that it is the most common form of dementia. In 2023, Alzheimer's affected 4.1 million women over the age of 65 out of the 6.7 million sufferers in America. Basic stages of the disease include progressively worsening memory loss, difficulty performing daily tasks and loss of language and motor skills, ultimately resulting in the loss of most cognitive and physical abilities. The recent discovery of the glymphatic system offers a new area of study. "The sewage system of the brain" functions to clear the interstitial fluid of the brain of waste products including beta-amyloid proteins, thought to be associated with dementia. Interestingly, the glymphatic system operates only during sleep. So, get a good night's sleep, eat well and exercise!

To see results of the post-program survey, click on: <https://bit.ly/AAUWFebSurveyResults>.





## Take Action – Ways to Contact Your Legislators

Peg Carlson-Bowen, Public Policy/Advocacy

Even one act helps to make your voice count. Phone calls are weighted the heaviest, but all contacts are counted. Here are different tools to help:

The app and website [5 Calls](#) makes it easy to reach out to federal legislators. Call to oppose the abolition of the Department of Education, which will impact enforcement of existing sexual and gender-based violence protections under Title IX. 5 Calls provides a background/status on the issue, identifies your legislators based on your location, and provides a concise script! Leverage others' diligent work to make your task lighter and your voice heard.

Wondering why to bother calling your elected officials? A millennial Congresswoman shares her experiences and explains why it is important: [AOC on why call Congress](#).

Contact legislators, urging them to back efforts to get money flowing to relevant organizations and programs to raise awareness about and prevent sexual assault violence (e.g., Department of Justice, Office of Violence Against Women). Use the text app [Resistbot](#): text SIGN PNNWWO to 50409. Or sign up via Facebook Messenger (a no-cost option with many options for “publishing” and/or sharing your comments with others) to contact legislators, urging them to back efforts to get money flowing to relevant organizations and programs to raise awareness about and prevent sexual assault violence (e.g., Department of Justice, Office of Violence Against Women).

For more information on Public Policy, access the AAUW CA Public Policy Newsletter here: <https://www.aauw-ca.org/documents/2025/03/public-policy-news-march-2025.pdf>



*Some old-fashioned things like fresh  
air and sunshine are hard to beat.*

-Laura Ingalls Wilder





## Brand Consistency is Key | New Brand Guidelines Rolling Out

Michele Bertolone, Communications Consultant



Just as we're more inclined to trust friends with stable, consistent personalities, we're more likely to trust brands that always look and feel the same. That's why the world's most recognizable brands develop and enforce strict brand guidelines.

In January the AAUW San Jose Board directed the Communications Consultant to create a Branch Brand Guideline Document. This has been completed, approved by the Communications/PR ad hoc committee and posted on the "Members Only" page on our Branch website (<https://sanjose-ca.aauw.net/members-only/>).

Increasingly, our dedicated Communications Team has been creating materials for our members. When this happens, you can assume that guidelines are being met. For members who prefer to create their own materials, careful review of this set of 10 slides is strongly suggested.

As of May 1, communication materials going out via Branch communications channels (posted/handed out in the community, social media, etc.) will be reviewed by the Communications Team. Materials which do not reflect our Branch guidelines will be returned for refinement. To help members during this transition period, the Communications Team is ready to answer your questions and edit your materials, as timing permits. Please reach out early if you think you would like help. You can also contact [Michele](#) directly.

*welcome*

### We Welcome Our Newest Member Claire Campodonico

LISA SUCRE learned of our Branch from one of our flyers posted at the Rose Garden branch of the Santa Clara County Libraries. Originally from San Antonio, Texas, she relocated to the Bay Area in the mid-eighties. Lisa is currently a student at San Jose City College. She is on track to earn her AA degree soon. Her majors are Political Science and Environmental Studies. She has worked as an Administrative Associate and a Project Coordinator within government and academic environments. We are so glad you have joined, Lisa!





**Gifts for Teens Committee** - left to right, top row: Lyd Franzese, Karlie Arkin, Elaine Benoit, Leslie Saviage, Sharon Bouska, Beverly Bassett, Barb Purdy, Barbara Handly  
Bottom row: Paula Sexton, Rise Berry, Jan Giroux, Lois Schultz. Absent, Cheryl Markman



### **Gifts for Teens – Our Committee is the Best** Cheryl Markman, Gifts for Teens

The Gifts for Teens committee consists of a group of enthusiastic and hardworking women whose goal is to help deserving underserved teens in our community. Thank you to committee member Beverly Bassett for this description of what we do.

Committee member Beverly Bassett described the work, “Gifts for Teens is a 'behind the scenes' volunteering endeavor. We all work very hard to make sure the items we purchase and pack into the gift bags are top quality, and we hope they are what the teens need and want. The teens never know who does all the work bringing the bags to fruition. We truly enjoy knowing the gifts in the bags bring the teens joy and happiness during the holiday season when they may not have much to enjoy.”

She continued, “I have had various 'jobs' with Gifts for Teens, everything from hauling boxes and filled gift bags to purchasing school supplies, gift cards and teen-appropriate clothing, to reaching out to donors for monetary donations. Everything that I do I know will benefit a teen even though I may think the task is mundane. The teamwork of the volunteers is amazing because we all know the end goal is to give local teens something special. That's the reward - helping someone who will never know you exist but will benefit from your efforts.”

Branch members interested in helping throughout the year should contact [Elaine Benoit](#). Committee involvement includes attending six planning meetings during the spring and early fall, preparing items to be included in the gift bags in the summer, and helping with bag assembly on any or all of two Saturdays in mid-September and mid-October.



**Spotlight on Jan Giroux**  
 Ruth Dusan and Grace O’Leary

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

I discovered AAUW San Jose at a Gifts for Teens community bag assembly. The work group I was assigned just happened to be all members of AAUW San Jose. Their enthusiasm and friendliness inspired me to look into this organization further. Subsequently, I attended one of the new member get-togethers and decided to join.

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

Since 2012.

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

The camaraderie, social activism, and community involvement were big draws, as I was newly retired from the workforce. The focus on girls and young women was also a plus, as well as broadening my social contacts outside of the workplace.

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

I think the Coffee and Convo idea is great and encourages new members to feel included, as well as gives social time to established members. It’s also a great way to attract new members and keep ongoing member relationships strong, especially through the hardship of the pandemic. The Special Interest Groups offer a variety of activities from which to choose, and the CAPs offer a more active, hands-on way to support women, girls, and the community at large.

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

I retired from my work as a registered nurse but not from life. The AAUW San Jose Branch keeps me active and allows me ways to give back to my community. I enjoy volunteering for local nonprofits and traveling with my husband.

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

I’d like to be remembered as an active and engaging woman who still has a lot to offer.



Branch member Bobbie Baker visits with long-time member Barbara Bettencourt, who is now homebound



**Past President's Lunch on Feb. 22.** From bottom left going up and around: Sonia Wright, Cheryl Markman, Barbara Snyder, Linda Snashall, Edna Robison, Diane Trombetta, Carol Fitting, Bobbie Baker and Peg Carlson-Bowen.





**Community Engagement Series**

# The Cosmos and Quest to Discover Extraterrestrial Life



**Sat., May 10th at 1:30 PM**

(Doors open at 1 PM)

Willow Glen United Methodist Church - Kohlstedt Hall

Join us for an unforgettable talk as Dr. Jill Tarter reveals her 35 year quest to uncover extraterrestrial life and the mysteries of the universe!

Please register:  
[bit.ly/aauwtarter](https://bit.ly/aauwtarter)



**Free Community Event - *Guests Welcome!***

**Doors open at 1pm**

**Register Here: [bit.ly/aauwtarter](https://bit.ly/aauwtarter)**

Prepare for an exciting afternoon with Dr. Jill Tarter, Chair Emeritus of the Search for Extraterrestrial Intelligence (SETI) Research. She is a pioneering astronomer with over 35 years at the forefront of the search for extraterrestrial life! Named one of the 50 Most Important Women in Science by *Discover Magazine*, she'll share fascinating insights from her remarkable career. Light refreshments and snacks will be provided — don't miss this captivating talk!

## April 2025

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.**

Tue Apr 1	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> <a href="#">Linda Snashall</a> )
Wed Apr 2	5:30– 6 pm	AAUW Board Social Time ZOOM ( <a href="#">Tynka Dees</a> )
	6-7:30 pm	AAUW BOARD Meeting ZOOM( <a href="#">Tynka Dees</a> )
Thu Apr 3	2-3 pm	Great Decisions AM Hybrid ( <a href="#">Monique Lee</a> )
Sun Apr 6	9-10:30 am	Weekend Walkers (RSVP <a href="#">Judy Burt</a> )
Mon Apr 7	6:30-8 pm	Neighbors Helping Neighbors ZOOM ( <a href="#">Bobbie Baker</a> )
Tue Apr 8	10-11:30 am	Tuesday AM Book Group James (RSVP <a href="#">Sandy Bonnet</a> )
	10-11 am	Conversacion Espanol ZOOM (RSVP <a href="#">Barbara Snyder</a> )
	1-3 pm	Mahjong ( <a href="#">RSVP Shelley Powers</a> )
Wed Apr 9	10 am-1 pm	Art Appreciation (RSVP <a href="#">Jan Bartolotta</a> )
	7-8:30 pm	Wednesday Night Book All You Have to do is call HYBRID ( <a href="#">Renee Sommerfeld</a> )
Thu Apr 10	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> )
	1:30-3:30 pm	Archive Committee (RSVP <a href="#">Diane Trombetta</a> )
Fri Apr 11	10 am-1 pm	Duplicate Bridge (RSVP <a href="#">Lida Kluzek</a> )
Sat Apr 12	1-3 pm	Annual Meeting Willow Glen United Methodist Church Elections and speaker Lisa Mallette Executive Artistic Director City Lights (RSVP <a href="#">Ruth Dusan</a> )
	6:30-9:30 pm	Couples Dining (RSVP <a href="#">Valerie Merklin</a> )
Sun Apr 13	9-10:30 am	Weekend Walkers (RSVP <a href="#">Judy Burt</a> )
Mon Apr 14	6:30- 9:30 pm	Light Gourmet (RSVP <a href="#">Cheryl Markman</a> )
Tue Apr 15	Noon-1 pm	French Conversation ZOOM (RSVP <a href="#">Barbara Snyder</a> )
	1-3 pm	Mahjong ( <a href="#">RSVP Shelley Powers</a> )
	3:45-5:15 pm	Membership meeting ( <a href="mailto:Membership@aauwsanjose.org">Membership@aauwsanjose.org</a> )
Wed Apr 16	1:30-3 pm	Program Event Planning Zoom (RSVP <a href="#">Ruth Dusan</a> )
	7-8:30 pm	Public Policy ZOOM ( <a href="#">Susan Karlins</a> )
Thu Apr 17	2-3 pm	Great Decisions AM Hybrid ( <a href="#">Monique Lee</a> )
	6:30-8 pm	Mystery Lovers ( <a href="#">Sharon Shephard</a> )
Fri Apr 18	10 am-1 pm	Bridge (RSVP <a href="#">Lida Kluzek</a> )
Sun Apr 20	9-10:30 am	Weekend Walkers (RSVP <a href="#">Judy Burt</a> )
Mon Apr 21	9:30-11 am	Exploring World Literature Hybrid Braiding Sweetgrass (RSVP <a href="#">Candace Roney</a> )
	6:30-9 pm	International Gourmet (RSVP <a href="#">Jan Bartolotta</a> )

Tue Apr 22	10-11 am	Italian Conversation ZOOM (RSVP <a href="#">Barbara Snyder</a> )
	1-4 pm	Bridge 4 <sup>th</sup> Tuesday (RSVP <a href="#">Bobbie Eckerman</a> )
	1- 3 pm	Mahjong ( <a href="#">RSVP Shelley Powers</a> )
	7-8:30 pm	Great Decisions PM ZOOM ( <a href="#">Sharon Shephard</a> )
Wed Apr 23	12:30-1:30 pm	Lunch Bunch (RSVP <a href="#">Cheryl Markman Sueann Snow</a> )
Thu Apr 24	9:30-11 am	Great Decisions AM Hybrid ( <a href="#">Monique Lee</a> )
	1:30-3:30 pm	Archive Committee ( <a href="#">Diane Trombetta</a> )
Fri Apr 25	1:30-3 pm	Local Scholarship ( <a href="#">Beth Redmond</a> )
Sun Apr 27	9-10:30 am	Weekend Walkers (RSVP <a href="#">Judy Burt</a> )
Mon Apr 28	11am-12:30 pm	Building and Properties Committee ( <a href="mailto:buildings@aauwsanjose.org">buildings@aauwsanjose.org</a> )
Tue Apr 29	1-3 pm	Mahjong ( <a href="#">RSVP Shelley Powers</a> )

*Don't wait for someone to bring you flowers. Plant your own garden and decorate your own soul.*

- Luther Burbank



### San Jose Branch BONFIRE

Published monthly except for July by AAUW  
San Jose Branch, 1165 Minnesota Avenue,  
San Jose, CA 95125-3324

President: Tynka Dees

BONFIRE Editor: Sonia Wright

Editorial Staff: Elin Bolt Copy Editor; Tynka  
Dees, Calendar Editor; Jan Giroux & Cheryl  
Markman, Proofreader; Barb Purdy, Layout  
Editor

Distribution: Nancy Wheeler & 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

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)

April 2025

AAUW BONFIRE San Jose Branch *Established 1909*

## SAVE THE DATE



**COFFEE & CONVO**

*No agenda or speakers!  
Just coffee & conversation!*

**AAUW**  
San Jose

**Sat. May 17**  
10 AM to 12 PM at HQ  
Guests Welcome

AAUW San Jose Headquarters  
1165 Minnesota Avenue,  
San Jose

Come to a casual get-together for members and those interested in our programs and interest groups! We will have coffee and tea and some early morning goodies. Learn about our 501 (c)(3) Community Action Projects, fun and informative events, actions to advocate for women's education and pay equity. Ask questions of long-time members, reconnect with members you haven't seen in a while, and meet new friends. Prospective members are especially welcome!