



**Mission:** To advance gender equity for women and girls through research, education, and advocacy.

**Vision:** Equity for all.

**June and July 2025 Edition**

**Editors: Diana Cardenas and Deanne Purcell**

## **Sybil Ludington's Revolutionary Ride**

Let's get ready to celebrate Summer!

The months of June and July host Flag Day and Independence Day, both days to celebrate being an American and reflect on the many wonderful women who shaped our great country. Thanks to my friendly history buff, Deanne, here is a story of an amazing girl who most of us probably have never heard of, but it's definitely a story to share with July 4 coming next month.

On the night of April 26, 1777, 16-year-old Sybil Ludington climbed onto her horse and set off on a mission: a 40-mile ride to muster local militia troops in response to a British attack on the town of Danbury, Connecticut. Riding all night through rain — and traveling twice the distance that Paul Revere rode during his famous midnight ride — Sybil returned home at dawn having given nearly the entire regiment of 400 Colonial troops the order to assemble. Following the battle, General George Washington personally thanked Sybil for her service and bravery. Although every American school child knows the story of Paul Revere — largely thanks to the famous poem by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow — unfortunately few are taught about Sybil Ludington's courageous feat.

In 1935, New York State erected a series of historic markers along her route, and a statue of her by renowned American sculptor Anna Hyatt Huntington was erected in Carmel, New York in 1961. In 1975, she was honored on a U.S. Bicentennial stamp that depicted her on her horse. And, since April 1979, runners have also challenged themselves with the Sybil Ludington 50K Run, an ultramarathon that approximates the route she traveled on her ride. While her midnight ride has never been given the same recognition as that of her famous contemporary, Sybil Ludington's place in history is now secure and her story is a powerful reminder of the many daring girls and women who served their country during the fight for independence.

Wishing you all the joys of Summer and see you in September!  
Kelly



# President's Message



In March, Shirley sent the board some documents about Women and Civil Rights, some of them straight out of the laws of Texas! What caught my attention most was the comment she made at the end of the message. “Here we are in 2025 when Diversity, Inclusion, and Equity have changed from shared goals to shameful. Go figure.” So, I am sharing one of the “Shameful Articles” with you.

"Tea and Equality", an article about First Lady Lou Hoover including Jessie DePriest, wife of African American congressman Oscar DePriest, among the invitees to tea at the White House on June 12, 1929, and the controversy about including Mrs. DePriest.

Jesse DePriest was the wife of the only African American member of Congress and she received a handwritten invitation to socialize with the new first lady, Lou Henry Hoover. The article details how the White House had to walk back the “socialize” part of the invitation and state that it was an “official act.” It further details how segregationists tried to block the swearing-in of Congressman DePriest but House Speaker Nicholas Longworth, who was married to the daughter of President Teddy Roosevelt, outmaneuvered them by swearing in all of the members at one time.

The article goes on to describe the chaos that ensues after the tea and, as you might imagine, is not very pleasant.

But in our branch, Diversity, Inclusion and Equity are still shared goals and I am going to ask for your help in achieving this goal. It is a goal of our branch, and one of my priorities, that we find a DEI Officer for our branch this year. So, I am asking if one of you is willing to serve in this new role and help us make this position a reality.

If you are interested, please let me know. I have the information on the roles and responsibilities and will pledge my support to you as you take on this initiative on behalf of our branch and AAUW.

# Installation of Officers

*by Dr. Vickie Natale*



**The AAUW Corpus Christi Branch held its installation of new officers for 2025 -2026 during a luncheon on May 3, 2025, at the Blue Clove Restaurant. Annie Huckabee led the ceremony to install Dr. Jo Rios as Program Vice President, Alka Khanolkar as Membership Vice President, and Dr. Vickie Natale as Finance Officer. President Kelly Gonzalez thanked outgoing officers, Dr. Diana Cardenas and Leslie Peart, and presented yellow roses to both outgoing and incoming officers.**

**After announcements, business items, and updates from Book Finders, Community Outreach, and the STEM committee, members enjoyed a meal and the opportunity for fellowship.**



# AAUW May Luncheon



# Del Mar College STEM Camps to Engage West Oso Jr. High Girls' STEM Club in Summer 2025

*by Diana Cardenas*

Fourteen enthusiastic members of the West Oso Jr. High Girls' STEM Club marked the end of April by gathering after school with their STEM teacher, Beatrice Esquivel; Jennifer Gonzales, Chairperson of AAUW's STEM Committee, and Director of Career Development at Del Mar College; and speaker Dara Betz, Workforce Programs Director at Del Mar College.

Ms. Gonzales explained the purpose of the gathering—to increase the girls' understanding of the broad range of STEM careers and the opportunities available in terms of subject matter and skills. She introduced an accomplished speaker, Dara Betz, who began her professional career with the U. S. Army and for 35 years she trained in geospatial technologies. Her experiences connected with the National Science Foundation's focus on drones in air space. Ms. Betz stressed that her passion is connecting girls with STEM and encouraging their potential.



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# Del Mar College STEM Camps to Engage West Oso Jr. High Girls' STEM Club in Summer 2025

*by Diana Cardenas*

As Director of Workforce Programs at Del Mar College, Ms. Betz works with industry partners to achieve the success of the programs. For summer 2025 she obtained free summer camps for teens from city schools. In detail Ms. Betz called attention to 7 summer coding camps scheduled for July 2025. She described the activities of each day using the elementary coding camp as an example. On the first day students will be grouped in teams. Collaboratively, they will learn to use software to carry out a goal, and they will understand the necessity of team work and positive interactions. Ms. Betz explained a 2024 summer camp that introduced students to robotics and the exciting engagement of the “Ultimate Team Challenge.” Teams competed against each other. Each team prepared for public presentations of their projects, demonstrating their knowledge, technical skills, and effective collaboration to family members and friends. These presentations were also competitions.

Summer 2025: The beginning camps will be offered from July 14- July 18. The advanced camps are scheduled for July 21- 25. Any girl who is interested in gaining a place in a camp will apply and also write an essay that explains why she would like to experience a STEM camp at Del Mar College.

Ms. Betz took time to ask each girl about her best school subject and career interest after graduation. Each girl was pleased to respond. In talking to them Ms. Betz recognized a girl who participated in a summer camp in 2024 and achieved much. Ms. Betz invited this girl to function as a mentor to students in a beginning camp in July 2025. The student eagerly described her positive experiences in her 2024 summer camp, her skills and achievements, and fun engagement with other.

Other participants included Nina Fischer, Outreach Specialist at DMC, an AAUW Member; and Diana Cardenas., both members of AAUW’s STEM Committee.



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# West Oso STEM Students Tour Del Mar College Campus

*by Dr. Vickie Natale*

Jennifer Gonzales, our Branch STEM committee chair, coordinated arrangements for STEM students from West Oso Middle School to tour the Del Mar College Oso Creek Campus on May 3, 2025. The tour introduced 15 girls who are in 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup>, and 8<sup>th</sup> grades to three major programs at Del Mar College.

- ♦ Dr. Daisy Zhang – an AAUW Branch member – is a professor of biotechnology at Del Mar College. She named and demonstrated numerous pieces of equipment used in the biotechnology program, including incubators, sterilizers, centrifuges, microscopes, autoclaves, spectrophotometers, and high-performance liquid chromatographers (HPLC). The lab can perform PCR (polymerase chain reaction) tests that target specific DNA sequences for analyzing crime scene DNA. Dr. Zhang explained that different cell samples must be stored at four different levels of temperature. The students experienced one of these by walking into the cold storage room that is set at -20°. Dr. Zhang also emphasized that both hard skills (lab work) and soft skills (including writing) are critical to science programs, and she encouraged the girls to continue to do their best in school if they are interested in a STEM program.
- ♦ Nelda Sanchez, an advisor at Del Mar College, introduced students to the architectural, drafting technology, and construction management programs. She talked about the variety of jobs in these programs, including commercial, housing, and military applications. Above all, safety is imperative, and buildings must be built to withstand hurricanes and floods, especially for this area. The students viewed 3-D imaging equipment and 3-D printers as well as sample products made by the DMC architectural and drafting students.
- ♦ Lisa Pollakis, professor and program director, spoke to the girls about the culinary and hospitality management programs. The students toured the variety of commercial baking and cooking facilities, each designed specifically for different types of baking and cooking. Ms. Pollakis stressed that math is involved in culinary arts, including measurements in recipes, temperatures, speed, and cost analyses. She also stressed that cleaning is essential in this business and talked about different temperatures needed for washing, rinsing, and sanitizing.

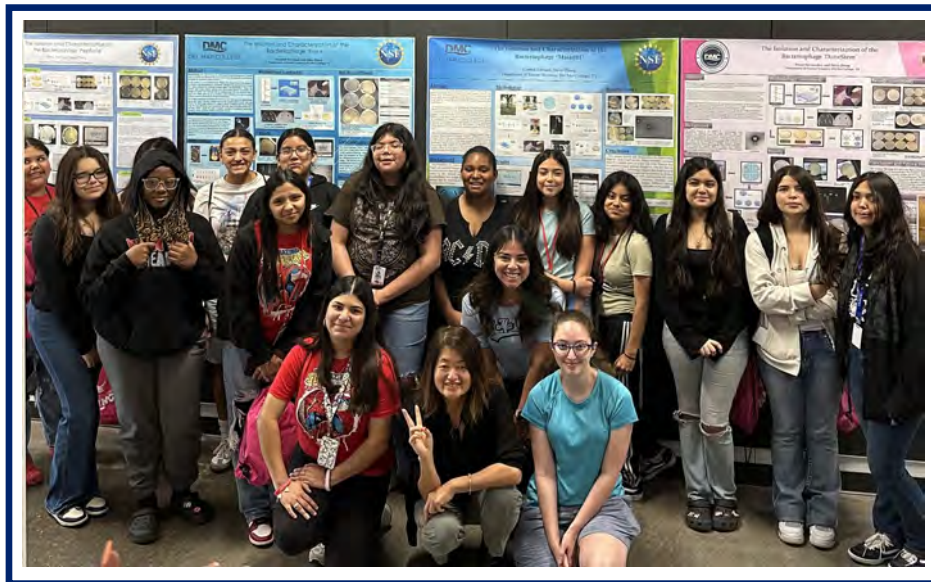
The students were very attentive to each speaker. When asked at the conclusion of the presentations what interested them most, some students talked about the biotechnology program, while others spoke about the architecture program or the culinary arts program, illustrating the positive aspect of showcasing multiple career options to young students.

We thank the speakers who demonstrate examples of successful female role models in STEM programs, and we thank Beatrice Esquivel, STEM Coordinator at West Oso Middle School, who chaperoned the students and worked with Jennifer Gonzales on the arrangements. Also attending the event was Branch member Dr. Vickie Natale.

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# West Oso STEM Students Tour Del Mar College Campus

## Group Photos



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# West Oso STEM Students Tour Del Mar College Campus

## Biotechnology



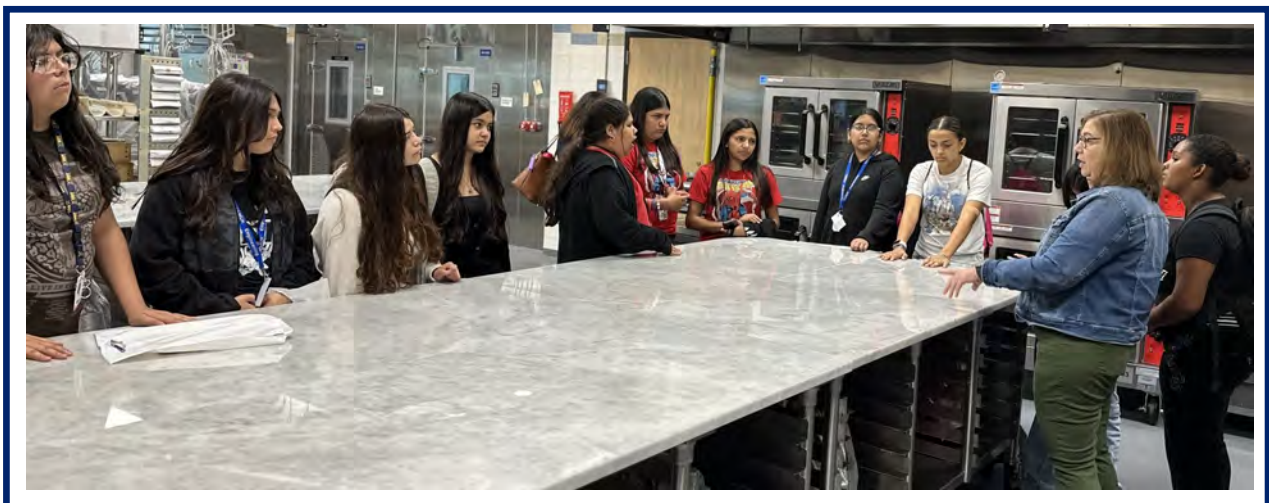
## Architecture



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# West Oso STEM Students Tour Del Mar College Campus

## Culinary Arts





# Miller High School Senior Girls: Celebrating Achievement

*by Diana Cardenas*

On Wednesday, May 7, 2025, thirty-eight individuals gathered in the Miller High School Library to recognize ten Miller High School senior girls for their academic achievement, dedication, and commitment to their goals. This special event was organized by members of the Community Outreach Committee with its chair, Diana Reyes, and Miller High career counselor Melissa Jimenez.

Diana Reyes, the chairperson of the Community Outreach Committee, welcomed the group composed of senior girls, their parents, counselors, teachers, administrators, Del Mar College (DMC) AAUW members, their advisors, and principal Dr. Aurelio Tamayo. She explained the mission of AAUW is to support education goals for women and girls.

To reinforce the emphasis on academic achievement, Chairperson Reyes asked that all AAUW members, counselors, teachers, DMC AAUW members, the librarian, and the principal introduce themselves and identify the colleges and universities where they earned their degrees. She also recognized the accomplishments of the seniors and thanked them for sharing personal essays that describe their future goals, plans, and dreams: owning a business, becoming a nurse, teacher, speech therapist, ultrasound technician, music performer, physical therapist assistant, or a marine biologist. She thanked the counselor, Ms. Jimenez, for months of work to help us recognize the senior girls and organize the celebration.



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# Miller High School Senior Girls: Celebrating Achievement

by Diana Cardenas

Cheryl Sanders, AAUW member and Associate Vice President for Student Affairs at Del Mar College (DMC) and advisor to the DMC AAUW group, shared the excitement of its members to participate in the recognition of the honorees. She lauded their achievement to balance study, school groups, and extracurricular activities. Mrs. Sanders also mentioned that some honorees already have Del Mar College credentials in Health Science and Cosmetology. She invited the Del Mar bound senior girls to join AAUW when they become Vikings.

She introduced Arianna Rios, Secretary of DMC AAUW and a proud Corpus Christi native who graduated from Coles High School. Arianna majors in Communications with a focus on Public Relations, and she works as a reporter for the DMC newspaper *The Foghorn*. Ariana's future plan is to attend TAMUCC. Arianna congratulated the senior girls on their achievements and strengths. She noted that the girls proved that they belong in every space where learning and leadership happen. Also, she stressed that education is a tool, and knowledge is power to lead, to uplift, and to rewrite the narrative. They are the mentors of the younger generation. [Arianna's entire speech is located on the next page.]

AAUW Corpus Christi Branch gave each honoree a beautiful card handmade by Alice Hartlaub. Those heading to Del Mar College also received a \$200 book gift card from the Del Mar College Bookstore and the honoree attending UTSA received a \$200 book gift card from the UTSA Bookstore. Recipients also received a \$25 Walmart gift card. The Del Mar College AAUW members gifted each honoree a beautiful, hand painted—with a personal initial—canvas tote bag full of items useful for their college days.

Participants who attended the celebration include the Miller counselor Melissa Jimenez and Principal Dr. Aurelio Tamayo; AAUW Corpus Christi Community Outreach Committee members Diana Reyes, Diana Cardenas, Catherine Cox, Alka Khanolker, Vickie Natale, and Shirley Selz; DMC AAUW advisors Cheryl Sanders and Belinda de la Cruz; and DMC students Arianna Rios, Anai Austin, Rosalynn Cardenas, and Veronica Rivera.



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# Arianna Rios, Del Mar College AAUW Secretary, Addresses Miller High School Seniors

Good morning everyone! My name is Arianna Rios, and I am so honored to be here with you all on this beautiful day.

Today isn't just about finishing high school. It is about honoring the journey you've taken as young women, the challenges you've faced, and the strength you've shown along the way.

Some people say school isn't for everyone but I believe it *is*, especially for every one of you sitting here today. You've proven that you belong in every space where learning and leadership happen.

After reading some of your essays, I learned that many of you are the first in your families to graduate and that is *huge*. Give yourself a round of applause!

Whether you've juggled jobs, clubs and sports. Whether you've overcome personal challenges. Or whether you simply showed up, even on your hardest days. You deserve to celebrate yourself. So let's hear it. *Give yourself that round of applause*. Be proud of *yourself*. You've earned it.

Now listen to me very carefully for what I'm about to say next.

Education is one of the most powerful tools we'll ever have in this lifetime. And it's something that NO ONE can ever take away from you.

Knowledge is power.

It opens doors, breaks down barriers, and gives us the confidence to use our voice. Not just for ourselves, but for others who can't or haven't been heard yet.

As educated women, we have the power to lead, to uplift, and to rewrite the narrative.

There will be times where someone tells you- you can't do it. But remember: YOU CAN DO anything that you put your mind to.

You are all proof that education is powerful.

As you get ready to take your paths into the "real world," always remember:

Be bold. Take risks. Speak loudly and live proudly. You are the future. And one day you will lead younger generations. No matter what path, what degree, what job field you end up in. There will be someone just like you- looking up to you.

I cannot wait to see where you lead the rest of the world.

You are ready. You are worthy. And you are powerful.

Congratulations, Class of 2025. Go change the world.



# West Oso Junior High School Girls' STEM Club

## Members Surprised with Gift from AAUW

*by Diana Cardenas*



After school on Wednesday, May 28, members of the West Oso Junior. High Girls' STEM Club gathered with their STEM teacher, Bea Esquivel, for the last time on the next to the last day of the school year.

The AAUW STEM Committee and its leader Jennifer Gonzales gave each girl a surprise: a pink t-shirt with a STEM theme design on it to reinforce their identify as STEM students. The girls were delighted with the gifts and smiled while they displayed the t-shirts for a photo.

Throughout the school year these STEM girls demonstrated enthusiasm and commitment to their club's purpose: participating in panel discussions by women STEM professionals; attending presentations about summer STEM camps at a local college; and undertaking field trips to visit biomedical labs, architecture classrooms, and culinary arts teaching sites.

Their STEM teacher Bea Esquivel, Jennifer Gonzales, and other members of the AAUW STEM Committee helped organize these learning activities. As I was leaving, I heard a student say that she planned to attend one of the summer STEM camps at Del Mar College.

The STEM teacher, the STEM club, and the work of our AAUW's STEM Committee created a positive impact on student motivation and learning in STEM fields.



# Announcements

## Reminder: 2025-2026 Membership Renewal

If you have not already done so, this is a friendly reminder that June is the renewal month for annual dues for many members. Membership dues can be paid by credit card online through the [AAUW website](#). If you prefer, you can mail a check to Vickie Natale, Finance Officer. Check your yearbook for the address.

If you joined AAUW in the past three years, your renewal date for membership dues is the month of the year in which you first joined. You can check on your renewal date by logging into your account on the AAUW's [Community Hub](#). Dues for 2025-2026 are \$99.



## Donations for the NCCWSL Conference

The call was made for donations to help support our Del Mar College students who are attending the NCCWSL conference on May 28-30, and Branch members were generous. We collected \$400 in cash to help the students with food and other incidental expenses they will incur while traveling. In addition, members purchased \$292 worth of popcorn products sold to raise funds. THANK YOU to all the members who provided cash donations and to those who purchased popcorn to raise funds.

- \* Susan Birchfield
- \* Bea Blomquist
- \* Diana Cardenas
- \* Catherine Cox
- \* Peggy Duran
- \* Nina Fischer
- \* Kelly Gonzalez



- \* Vickie Natale
- \* Deanne Purcell
- \* Sylvia Rendon
- \* Shirley Selz
- \* Nancy Wesson-Dodd
- \* Sylvia Whitworth

# Interest Groups

**Out-to-Lunch Bunch:** Susan Birchfield, chair. Enjoy a delightful lunch on the third Tuesday of the month at local restaurants. They will meet on June 17 at 12:30 at Maggie's Family Kitchen located at 5334 Everhart Rd. They will also meet in July. Details will be sent to the group.

**Bridge:** Lessie Hoffman, chair. This group meets at Silverado Smokehouse, 4522 Weber Road at 12:30 pm on the second and the last Friday of the month from January through November as well as the second Friday in December. Lessie also offered to teach newbies how to play if you contact her personally. RSVP

**Classics:** Annie Huckabee, chair. This group meets on the last Wednesday of the month at local restaurants. On June 25, a discussion will be held on *The Custom of the Country* (1913) by Edith Wharton. On July 30, a discussion will be held on *The Custom of the Country* (1913) by Edith Wharton. Location and time for each meeting is to be determined. RSVP

**Playgoers:** Michelle Balis, chair. If you have signed up for this group, Michelle will email you one week before a performance. Let her know if you want to see Nunsense at Aurora Arts Theater the weekend of June 6, 13, or 20. Also let her know if you want to see Wizard of Oz at the Harbor Playhouse the weekend of June 6 or 13 and Hairspray July 18-August 17. RSVP.

**Poetry Appreciation:** Leslie Peart, chair. This group meets at Switchgrass Landing, Omni Bayfront at 900 N. Shoreline Blvd. on the second Wednesday of the month at 6:30 pm. RSVP. June's topic is A Sense of Place. July's topic is Amanda Gorman.

**Wine and Cheese:** Susan Birchfield and Josefina Villarreal, co-chairs. The group meets on the second Sunday of the month, 5 pm—7 pm (October through September) at different homes. RSVP to Susan. They will be meeting on June 8 at 5:00 pm hosted by Mary Sherwood and Josefina Villarreal at Mary's house. They will also meet in July. Details will be sent to the group.

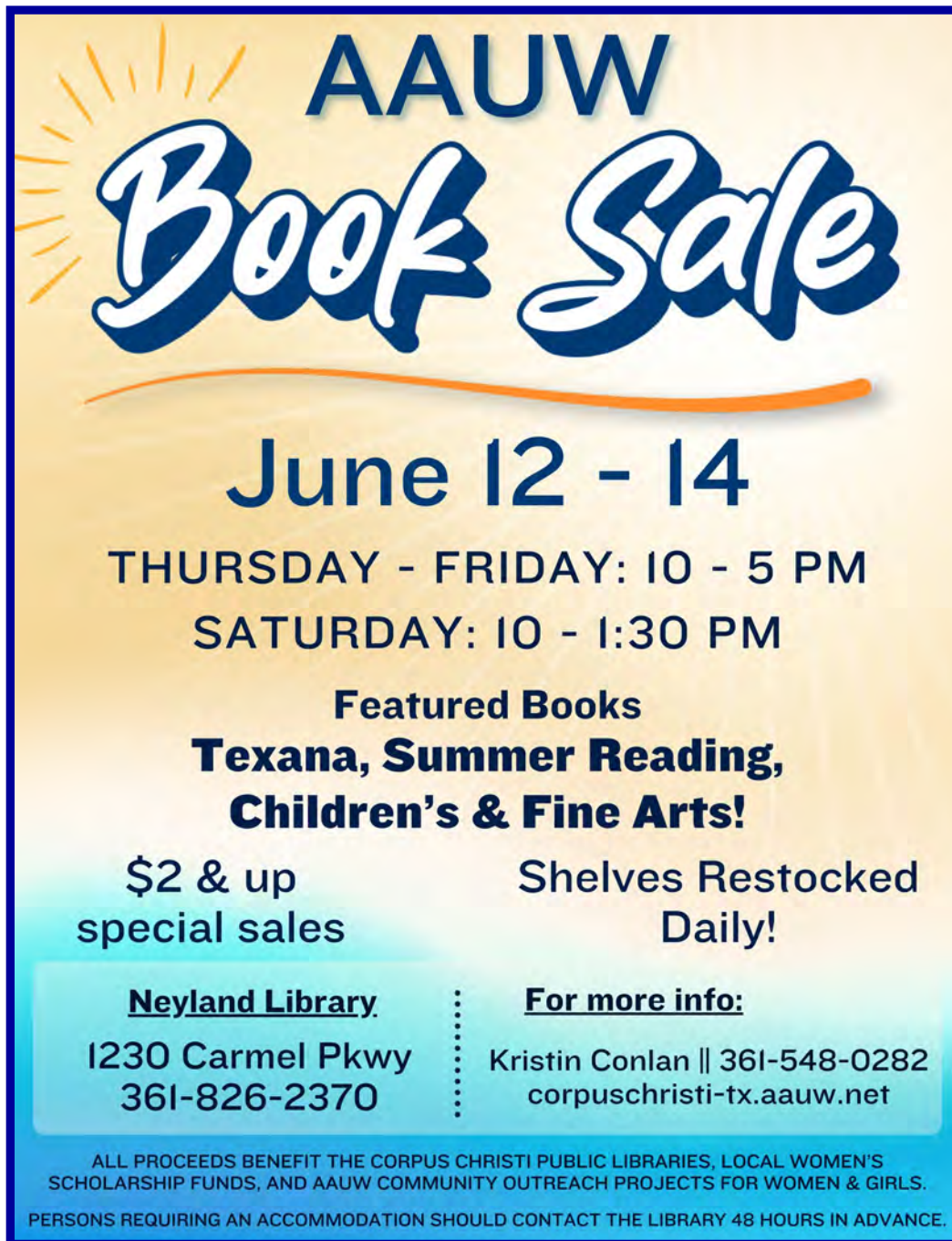


# AAUW - CC Upcoming Events

**\*June 12-14, 2025** - BOOK SALE, Neyland Library

**\*June 28, 2025** - Board meeting, HEB House, 1:30 – 5:00 pm

**\*September 2025** - Fall Membership Welcome Meeting - TBA

A promotional poster for the AAUW Book Sale. The top half has a yellow background with the text 'AAUW' in blue and 'Book Sale' in a large, white, cursive font with a blue outline. Below this, the dates 'June 12 - 14' are written in blue. The times for Thursday-Friday (10-5 PM) and Saturday (10-1:30 PM) are listed. The featured books are 'Texana, Summer Reading, Children's & Fine Arts!'. The bottom half has a light blue background with contact information for Neyland Library and a note about proceeds benefiting local libraries and women's scholarship funds.

**AAUW**  
**Book Sale**

**June 12 - 14**

**THURSDAY - FRIDAY: 10 - 5 PM**  
**SATURDAY: 10 - 1:30 PM**

**Featured Books**  
**Texana, Summer Reading,**  
**Children's & Fine Arts!**

**\$2 & up**  
**special sales**

**Shelves Restocked**  
**Daily!**

**Neyland Library.**  
**1230 Carmel Pkwy**  
**361-826-2370**

**For more info:**  
**Kristin Conlan || 361-548-0282**  
**corpuschristi-tx.aauw.net**

ALL PROCEEDS BENEFIT THE CORPUS CHRISTI PUBLIC LIBRARIES, LOCAL WOMEN'S SCHOLARSHIP FUNDS, AND AAUW COMMUNITY OUTREACH PROJECTS FOR WOMEN & GIRLS.  
PERSONS REQUIRING AN ACCOMMODATION SHOULD CONTACT THE LIBRARY 48 HOURS IN ADVANCE.



# Happy Birthday Wishes

## June

Alice Hartlaub.....June 18

Susan Birchfield.....June 22

### *June Interesting Facts*

#### **Birthstone**

Pearl, Alexandrite, Moonstone

#### **Birth Flower**

Rose

#### **Zodiac Signs**

Gemini - May 21 - June 20

Cancer - June 21 - July 22



# Happy Birthday Wishes

## July

Kelly Gonzalez.....July 21

Jo Rios.....July 22

Dottie Ewing.....July 28

## July Interesting Facts

### Birthstone

Ruby

### Birth Flower

Larkspur

### Zodiac Signs

Cancer - June 22- July 22

Leo - July 23 - August 22

