

**September Branch Meeting by Zoom**

**September 12, 2020, 10:00 am.**

**Maryland Legislative Priorities: A Panel Discussion**

The abbreviated Maryland legislative session will be reviewed and a discussion of the issues of AAUW’s interest anticipated in the upcoming legislative session. Speakers include: **Senator Susan Lee, Catherine Hill** (Exec. Dir., Women’s Caucus of the Maryland Legislature), and **Stephanie Hall** (Exec. Dir, Black Caucus of the Maryland Legislature). Moderator: **Kate Campbell Stevenson**, immediate past co-President of Maryland AAUW.

**The ZOOM URL will be sent by email prior to the meeting.**

Message from the President:

**The New Normal**

 It’s almost September and time to begin our 2020-21 AAUW journey within a world that has profoundly changed.  The media talk about the “NEW NORMAL.”    All of our communities, including our AAUW community are being challenged and transformed as a result of the pandemic and we must continue to react and adjust in the coming months and years.  My new normal includes virtual meetings, different modes of shopping; lots of reading; knitting; watching TV;  listening to music;  interacting with friends and family via e-mail and virtual chats;  doing  on-line morning yoga/exercises;   walking my dog; cutting my own hair, cleaning out closets and worrying about the future.

The Kensington-Rockville branch also will have a new normal.  Our branch is evolving in response to the restrictions and challenges of social distancing and the on-going merger with the Bethesda-Chevy Chase Branch.   As announced previously, this year will be a “trial marriage” between the two branches.  Starting in February 2020, the leadership of the 2 branches have been researching, discussing options and planning a joint program for the coming year.  Over the next few months, the two branches will be integrating the interest groups and social gatherings.   At the end of the year, a decision whether to proceed with a formal merger including a new name, new bylaws, a unified budget and other matters will be made... We welcome any suggestions that you have on the 2020-21 virtual programs or the merger.

My thanks to all the branch members who contributed to the first stage of the merger process and to the Maryland State and branch program officers and others who have been working  within the new normal to continue to advance the AAUW agenda and  develop  interesting and varied virtual programs for the coming year.

Ruth Spivack

***Member News:***

**Jennie Forehand**

Her devoted husband, Bill, has informed us that **Jennie Forehand** has been moved to an assisted living facility, a few miles from their home in Indianapolis. Jennie, whose career as a dedicated Maryland state delegate and senator spanned decades, was a long-time branch member. Jennie championed AAUW issues throughout her legislative years in Annapolis. She was instrumental in introducing AAUW Maryland to STEM well before it became a national issue. The state sponsored “Math Science for Middle School Girls” for many years. Her Alzheimer’s challenges led the Forehands to leave Rockville to live near their daughter. Her address will remain the same: 6046 Creekbend Blvd, Indianapolis, IN 46217.

**Public Policy Issues:**

**The 2020 Election and AAUW’s Policies and Priorities**

AAUW is committed to open and fair elections, nonpartisan voter education efforts that will promote equitable political participation and representation and in appointed and elected office, and the expansion of voting rights.

AAUW has a gender agenda for the 2020 election which outlines the organizations top priorities for advancing the economic security of women and their families. Kim Churches, chief executive officer of AAUW, said “While we are a fiercely non-partisan organization, we are not values neutral: Throughout our 140-year history, we have advocated for laws that improve the lives of women and girls—and we’ll continue to do so.”

**Highlights of the AAUW Gender Policy Agenda include**:

* **Supporting new laws to close the gender pay gap**: Despite their advances in the workplace, women still are paid on average just 82 cents for every dollar paid to a man.
* **Implementing paid sick and caregiving leave:** The U.S. does not guarantee paid time off for illness or caregiving leave. Enacting such policies would benefit not only individuals, but employers and the economy as well.
* **Reducing student debt:**Women hold two-thirds of the nation’s $1.46 trillion educational debt and need more programs and policies to alleviate the burden.
* **Instituting robust protections against harassment:**Sexual, racial, and other forms of harassment in the workplace and academic institutions impede the ability of women to fully access education and achieve economic security**.**
* **Expanding opportunities in STEM:**These are the most rapidly growing fields, yet women and girls continue to face bias and discrimination that hinder their success.
* **Protecting and expanding the right to vote.**Voting discrimination is a threat to the very foundation of our democracy; ensuring the right to vote is an essential first step toward establishing all the other policies AAUW advocates.

 With respect to the protection and expansion of voting rights, it is important to remember the history of voting rights and be aware of challenges to the fundamental right to vote While the 15th Amendment in 1869 and the 19th Amendment in 1920 advanced the rights of all men and then all women to vote, it was not until 1965 with the passage of the Voting Rights Act of 1965 that decades of racially discriminatory practices like literacy tests, polls taxes and Jim Crow laws that the right to vote free of racially discriminatory practices was achieved. The 1975 amendments to the Voting Rights Act expanded this landmark legislation. However, the Supreme Court decision in 2013 *Shelby County v. Holder* invalidated a key provision of the law, allowing local jurisdictions to enact discriminatory and restrictive voting laws without federal interference.

**Maryland Legislative Agenda for Women**

*Message from Maryland Legislative Agenda for Women of which our branch is a member. The Agenda is an important voice in Annapolis, if you are not an individual member please think of joining so you can have a voice in selecting the important legislative issues for women to come before our Maryland legislators.*

MLAW STATEMENT ON RACISM\*

The \*Maryland Legislative Agenda for Women (MLAW)\* unequivocally supports the Black Lives Matter movement and stands in solidarity with African American communities as an ally in the fight against systemic racism, racial injustice, and discrimination.

Diversity and equity are two of the core values through which MLAW strongly advocates for its legislative priorities centered on addressing issues of concern to women and that also disproportionately affect communities of color.

Too often, well-intended advocacy efforts ignore the unique challenges of
the very communities the efforts aim to support. We are committed to
ensuring that we are not just opposed to systemic racism and racist
policies, but that we as an organization are actively working towards
anti-racist solutions. As we work collaboratively with our members and
partner networks towards solutions, we will be more deliberate about
establishing meaningful relationships and dialogue with the communities
being supported.

To that end, the MLAW Board of Directors will ensure the following:

1. all legislative proposals submitted for consideration for the
annual MLAW Legislative Agenda must include information about racial impact and be reviewed by the Board of Directors using a racial equity lens.

2. The MLAW Legislative Agenda will include at least one racial equity
bill per legislative session.

3. Presenters, sponsors, and advocates for proposed legislation and
attendees at our events will be representative of the diverse and wonderful
communities that we seek to uplift and support.

4. MLAW's Board of Directors and membership will represent diversity in
perspectives, ideas, culture, backgrounds, race, and ethnicity.

5. MLAW will ensure broader and consistent outreach to gain a more
diverse membership and increase engagement in MLAW's education and advocacy efforts.

*For over 25 years MLAW has provided a non-partisan, independent voice for Maryland women and families, and we will continue to strive to be an
organization that is committed to advocating for anti-racist, progressive
legislation and policies that promote and protect the wellbeing of
Maryland women and their families and provides them opportunities to
develop their full potential.*

**Fall Branch Meetings:**

Due to COVID-19 all fall meetings with be held on ZOOM with phone call-in numbers available. You will be sent an invitation by email for each meeting. A brief greeting and business session will be presented by the President. We are working on having an open chat time before or after each meeting. Other “social” events are being planned.

**October 10, 2020, 10:00 am.**

**Living in the Age of Coronavirus-especially for Older Adults**

We are pleased to have as our guest speaker**, Dr. Marie A. Bernard**, Deputy Director, of the National Institute on Aging (NIA) of the National Institutes of Health (NIH).

**November 7, 2020, 10:00 am**

**Moving Forward with Black Lives Matter**

How is Montgomery County addressing these issues? A panel of speakers will look at ways the MCPS, police, and other agencies and groups in our county address Black Lives Matter. Moderator, **Jacqueline Gray**, AAUW State Diversity Chair.

**December 12, 2020**

A Holiday ZOOM. Meet AAUW Fellows, scholarship recipients, and a celebratory toast to Women.

[***Up***](file:///%5C%5CUp)***c*oming Zoom Events:**

**August 29, 2020 Saturday at 3pm.**

AAUW Maryland is hosting a Zoom discussion of the movie “13th”.

To participate in a Zoom meeting, please contact one of the AAUW MD program co-chairs, Tracy Lantz (tklantz@verizon.net) or Pat Stocker (patstocker@aol.com) for the URL.

**Interest Groups**

**Le Groupe Français**

Ruth Spivack raspivack@gmail.com

 Le Groupe Français meets on either Monday or Thursday evening via ZOOM to read and discuss French literature.  In September, we will select a new work.  Contact Ruth for the URL.

***GREAT DECISIONS***

Anita Rosen

anitarosen123@gmail.com.

The Next Great Decisions Group is September 18, 2020 at 2:00 p.m. Chapter 6: China and Latin America will be thediscussion**.** Contact Anita for the URL.

***Literature Group***

Margaret Schweitzer margaretsfchweitzer@gmail.com

**The Literature Group will meet on Tuesday, September 15 at 1:00 p.m. via ZOOM.**

**We will be discussing " Being Mortal:  Medicine and What Matters in the End," by Atul Gawande.**

**In *Being Mortal*,  a #1 New York Times bestseller, Dr. Atul Gawande tackles the hardest challenge of the medical profession: how medicine can not only improve life but also the process of its ending.  The book is available at the MC Public Library.**

**Contact Margaret for the URL.**

Contact Anita for details.

**Deadline for the October Newsletter is September 20**

**Newsletter Editor Circulation Editor**

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**AAUW advances equity for women and girls through advocacy, education, philanthropy, and research.**

***The Afternoon Literature Group***

Judy Burr judyb429@verizon.net

October 17, 2017, the group will be discussing My Brilliant Friend by Elena Ferrante

**AAUW Vision Statement: *AAUW will be a powerful advocate and visible leader in equity and education through research, philanthropy, and measurable change in critical areas impacting the lives of women and girls.***

**AAUW has been empowering women as individuals and as a community since 1881. For more than 135 years, we have worked together as a national grassroots organization to improve the lives of millions of women and their families.**

**In principle and in practice, AAUW values and seeks and inclusive membership, workforce, leadership team, and board of directors. There shall be no barriers to full participation in this organization based on age, disability, ethnicity, gender identity, geographical location, national origin, race, religious beliefs, sexual orientation, and socioeconomic status.**

**AAUW Kensington-Rockville Branch**

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