

**February Branch Meeting**

**Saturday, February 13, 2021 10:00 a.m.**

**ZOOM MEETING**

**Activism and Youth:  March for Our Lives**

March for Our Lives (MFOL) is a youth-led advocacy group, formed to address and rectify the prevalence of gun violence in our country.  Originally founded by survivors of the February 14, 2018 shooting at Marjorie Douglas Stoneman High School in Parkland, Florida, it has expanded to more than 250 local or state chapters of student activists. Representatives and the members of MFOL were an essential part of a coalition of youth-led organizations, including climate change organizers and Black Lives Matter, who led the turnout of youth in the 2018 and 2020 elections.

Our speakers represent different aspect of MFOL. Tatiana Washington is an advocacy associate for MFOL from Baltimore, Maryland, where she runs a non-profit organization 50 Miles More.  Linnea Stanton is a regional director (of MFOL chapters) from Milwaukee, Wisconsin.  They will speak to us about activism in general and how their work at MFOL has inspired and challenged them.

**The Zoom connection will be sent prior to the meeting**.

Message from the President:

The following is a potpourri of observations on diversity: some historical January events, a new AAUW diversity, equity, and inclusion toolkit; diversity as a multi-dimension entity; and eliminating the educational requirements for AAUW membership to diversify AAUW membership.

**January commemorations of diversity:**  The month of January includes the birthday of MLK Jr. which is commemorated on the 18th as a federal holiday and starting in 1994 observed as a national day of service. It is a call to Americans from all walks of life to work together to strengthen communities, to bridge barriers and to provide solutions to pressing national problems. On January 20 is the anniversary of the 1920 founding of the American Civil Liberties Union by Roger Baldwin, Congresswoman Jeannette Rankin (the first women to hold federal office in the U.S.), and several labor leaders. On January 21, the day after Donald J. Trump’s inauguration, the Women’s March was held in Washington and elsewhere in the world to advocate for legislation and policies regarding human rights, women’s rights, and other reforms. Thus, this month is an opportune moment to think about working together to strengthen our communities, to bridge barriers, create solutions to social problems and move us closer to fulfilling Dr. King’s dream. In doing so, it is important to grasp the full extent of what diversity entails.

**AAUW Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Toolkit**: This resource was recently launched by AAUW’ s Inclusion and Equity Committee to promote the empowerment of women and girls through the contribution of diverse voices contributing different perspectives. The new Toolkit provides resources for branch members and students to incorporate these values into their daily lives. The Toolkit is available at: https://www.aauw.org/resources/member/governance-tools/dei-toolkit/

A highlight of the toolkit is a listing of the extensive dimensions of diversity which goes well beyond the usual age, race, ethnicity, and gender. The full range of diversity issues include:

• age

• color

• education

• ethnicity and national origin

• gender and gender identity

• immigration status

• income and socioeconomic status

• marital status

• occupation

• parental status

• political beliefs

• physical and mental ability

• race

• religious beliefs

• sexual orientation

• veteran status

Although all the issues are important, the growing polarization of our country, culminating in the January 6 insurrection at the U.S. Capitol calls for immediate attention to the issue of political belief or ideology. Political ideology is defined in the toolkit as “the manner or the content of thinking characteristic of an individual, group, or culture.” It is important to learn to listen to opposing views. One solution to help bridge the political divide can be found in Marsha Luce’s initiative found in the Community Forum section of this months’ newsletter.

Ruth Spivack

**A Time for Giving**

**\*Greatest Needs Fund, #9110**. This general fund is for unrestricted gifts, which are used when and where they are most needed, thus providing flexibility to respond to new and emerging challenges facing women and girls.

To donate: Start with aauw.org. Then click Donate. Greatest Needs will be at the top of the list of donation choices. Use your credit card, or write a check, as above, designating your preferred fund(s). If you do not state a preference, your gift will go to Greatest Needs.

\***Montgomery College Foundation**. Gifts support scholarships for women returning to school, while supporting themselves and dependent(s).

To donate: Give online with credit card at <https://www.montgomerycollege.edu/alumni-friends-donors/foundation/donate.html/>. Or write check payable to Montgomery College Foundation, with “AAUW Kensington/Rockville Scholarship” in the memo line. Mail to Montgomery College Foundation, 9221 Corporate Blvd, 3rd Floor, Rockville, MD 20850.

**Proposed elimination of AAUW’s educational requirement:**

This spring, AAUW members will vote on a proposed change recommended by the AAUW Board of Directors and AAUW Governance Committee to eliminate the degree requirement for membership.

At the virtual Maryland Winter Meeting on January 16, 3 AAUW members from Kensington-Rockville and Bethesda Chevy Chase branches (Dian Belanger, Janet Wert Crampton, and Pat Stocker) and Eileen Menton (Maryland State Communications Co Vice-president) debated the pros and cons of the change. One of the pro arguments is that eliminating the educational requirement would encourage new membership, especially of minority women. The con arguments countered that membership would not significantly increase due to the proposed change.

More Information on the proposed change is available at the Open Membership Toolkit:

<https://www.aauw.org/resources/member/governance-tools/national-election/open-membership-toolkit/>

Talking Points for the Proposed Change to the Degree Requirement for Membership:

<https://www.aauw.org/app/uploads/2020/12/Full-Talking-Points-FINAL.pdf>

Now through February 5, 2021, members can provide thoughts and comments on the proposed changes to the AAUW bylaws at <https://www.aauw.org/resources/member/governance-tools/national-election>. In addition, members will vote and can provide comments on AAUW Public Policy Priorities.

Voting on the proposed change will open on April 7 and close May 17, 2021, 5:00 p.m. ET. Members can vote either on-line or request a paper ballot. To be approved, 5% of AAUW membership must vote and the measure must be approved by two-thirds of the votes.

**Community Forum:** **Bridging Political Division: - Marsha Luce**

AAUW K-R would like to start a small group (6-8) discussion to bridge the political division in our country. Ideally, the group needs to be evenly divided or a mix of liberal and conservative participants. The group will use the format provided by Living Room Conversations.

The organization [Living Room Conversations](https://livingroomconversations.org/) <https://livingroomconversations.org> is a **simple way to heal divides**. It is a conversational model developed by dialogue experts to facilitate connection between people despite their differences, and even identify areas of common ground and shared understanding. They provide Conversation Guides to facilitate discussion on a broad range of topics. C Guides with the goal of making them across the political and cultural

If you are interested on helping to develop this project, contact Marsha Luce,  marsha.luce@verizon.net.

The Civic Circle making a difference in Montgomery County and beyond. – Kate Campbell Stevenson

In the past year I became aware of an outstanding Silver Spring non-profit, The Civic Circle ([**www.theciviccircle.org**](http://www.theciviccircle.org)) It’s programs are so relevant and needed right now to address our national challenges. A quick summary: their Vision– All the nation’s children should know and embrace their civic rights and responsibilities as Americans.**..and** Mission– Bring democracy and civic values alive for primary school students through music and drama, using assemblies and after school programs that celebrate civil discourse, media literacy, community service, and public leadership.

Since the pandemic began The Civic Circle quickly adapted to virtual programming and is currently expanding their focus to include programs for middle and high school students.

Congressman Jamie Raskin (in happier times) interviewed Eliza Newlin Carney, for his “Local Heroes” series. I recommend you take a moment to listen to this 7-minute interview and learn more about Carney and The Civic Circle. Click[***here***](https://youtu.be/AhuK-B8lvtI)to watch her interview**.** I have been actively connecting Eliza Newlin Carney to The Maryland Women’s Heritage Center, The Youth Activism Project and other local and state non-profits to partner and help rebuild civics education and leadership throughout Maryland. I welcome AAUW members’ input and suggestions of any further connections to be made to promote these extremely valuable civic education programs. Please contact me. If not now- WHEN?! Thank you. Kate Campbell Stevenson **Kcamstev@aol.com**. Immediate Past Co-President, AAUW Maryland, Kensington-Rockville Branch Co-President, 2018-2019

January Branch Meeting: The speaker, Mark Medish from *Save Our Republic*, graciously agreed to have his talk and the following discussion recorded. The file is too large for me to attach here. Pat Stocker has forwarded it to Eileen Menton and she will be posting it on the AAUW Maryland State website.

**Interest Groups:**

**GREAT DECISIONS**

Anita Rosen

anitarosen123@gmail.com

Bobbe Mintz

Bobbeandherb@comcast.net

The next Great Decisions Group is February 19, 2021 2:00 p.m. **Chapter 2 of the new book. – *The Future of Persian Gulf Security.***

For questions and further information, contact Anita or Bobbe.

They will send the URL prior for the meeting and a video link.

Contact Anita for details.

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***Literature Group***

Margaret Schweitzer margaretfschweitzer@gmail.com

 The Literature Group will meet at 1 p.m. on February 16 on Zoom.

We will be discussing "Americanah" by Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie.

Karen Braun will lead the discussion.

Ifemelu and Obinze are young and in love when they leave Nigeria

 for the West.  Despite her academic success Ifemelu is forced to grapple

what it means to be black in America.  Obinze ends up in London in his undocumented life there.

Please contact Margaret Schweitzer for the URL.  All are welcome

Contact Anita for details.

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**Le Groupe Français**

Ruth Spivack raspivack@gmail.com

Le Groupe Francaise will meet on Zoom on Tuesday, February 16 at 5:30.  We will read "Le Secret de Maitre Cornille" by Daudet.

Please contact Ruth Spivack for the URL.

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**Upcoming Meetings:**

January 31, 2021 Women’s Legislative Briefing, presented annually by the Montgomery County Commission for Women, will be held virtually.  Reservations:  <https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/cfw/WLB.html>

February 4, 2021 AAUW MD Advocacy Day – see Public Policy article and prepare to contact legislators!  Contact roxann.king1@gmail.com for details

April 25, 2021 Submit articles for the next issue of the Marylander to aauw-md@aauw.net

May 22, 2021 AAUW MD 2021 Convention (probably virtual) Check the AAUW MD calendar for ongoing updates at <https://aauw-md.aauw.net/calendar/>

**Deadline for the March Newsletter is February 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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