

**March Zoom Branch Meeting**

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

**The Sandy Spring Slave Museum and African American History of our Area.**

Natalie Williams, from the Sandy Spring Slave Museum and African Art Museum, will share the history of the African American people of Montgomery County dating back to pre-Civil War times. Sandy Spring was one of the first free settlements of African Americans during the 19th century. Ms. Williams will talk about the purpose and content of the museum. She will share some fascinating genealogical information about Sandy Spring, Quakers, and African Americans in Montgomery County.

Natalie Williams is a member of the Sandy Spring Slave Museum and African Art Gallery Board of Directors and serves on the Education and Outreach Committee She is a lifelong resident of Sandy Spring and a family genealogist. Ms. Williams has done extensive research on the Black Kinship Communities of Montgomery County, MD tracing their roots through the African Diaspora into slavery, the journey to freedom on the Underground Railroad, and the continued existence and prosperity of the kinship communities today.

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

The museum contact information: sandyspringslavemuseum.org.

18524 Brooke Rd, Sandy Spring, MD 20860.

Message from the President:

During the January discussion with the youth of March for Our Lives, several members mentioned the dearth of civic education in our public schools. As a long-time advocate for immigrants, I decided to write about the U.S. naturalization process.

Of the new U.S. citizens in FY 2019, 14 percent were born in Mexico, 8 percent in India, and 5 percent each in the Philippines and China. Immigrants from these four countries, together with those from Cuba, Vietnam, the Dominican Republic, Iraq, El Salvador, and Jamaica comprised the top ten countries of birth for newly naturalized citizens.

In FY 2019, 55 percent of the newly naturalized lived in one of five states: California, with 18 percent; followed by 12 percent in Texas; 11 percent in Florida 10 percent in New York and 4 percent in New Jersey. The Washington-Arlington-Alexandria metropolitan area was one of the five top metro areas for naturalization in the same fiscal year.

From a historical perspective, naturalizations have increased dramatically in recent decades. Naturalizations reached an all-time high in FY 2008, increasing 59 percent from 660,000 the prior year to 1,047,000. This came because of impending application fee increases and the promotion of U.S. citizenship in advance of the 2008 presidential election. Between 2010 and 2019, an average 730,000 immigrants received U.S. citizenship annually. In 2020, the Trump Administration attempted to discourage naturalization with a large fee increase and a change in the civics portion of the Naturalization test.

In October 2020, the USCIS fee for the cost of naturalization was supposed to increase by more than 80%, costing individuals $1100 to apply. However, a motion for preliminary injunction temporarily halted the implementation of the USCIS final fee rule.

The 2020 Civics Test requires that applicants now to answer 12 out of 20 questions correctly (instead of six out of 10) and many of the 128 questions are more complex than on the previous test of 100 questions.

 Do you know the answer to the following questions that are included in the current USCIS civics test?

Why is the Electoral College important?

What are three rights of everyone living in the United States?

Why did the United States enter the Vietnam War?

**What is the purpose of the 10th Amendment?**

**Name one leader of the women’s rights movement in the 1800s.**

**The Nation’s first motto was “E Pluribus Unum.” What does that mean?**

**Note: The entire 128 questions and answers are available at** <https://www.uscis.gov/sites/default/files/document/crc/M_1778.pdf>

Ruth Spivack

 **Branch Merger Vote**

The Kensington Rockville AAUW Branch Board of Directors voted to defer the merger between Kensington-Rockville branch (KR) and Bethesda Chevy Chase (BCC) branch. They voted to continue having joint programs and interest groups, but separate dues, officers, and newsletter.   This will continue for the 2021-22 year and a decision to merge or not can be raised again.

**State Legislative Update**

Since the Maryland Legislature is still in session, and AAUW Marylanders are responding to action alerts from MLAW and AAUW. Here is some good news from our State Public Policy Chair, Roxann King.

The override voting for both 2020 MLAW bills being considered was successful. There will now be a pre-release unit for women prisoners and there will be mandatory background checks for ALL gun sales, including shotguns and rifles, and including private and gun show sales. Additionally, a bill from the MLAW 2019 Agenda was made into law through override of the veto: The Prescription Drug Affordability Act creates an independent board with the authority to evaluate high cost drugs and set fair rates for Marylanders to pay.

**Update on Hospital Patient’s Bill of Rights**

 In 2019, AAUW Maryland joined a coalition of 24 advocacy groups to successfully support the Hospital Patient’s Bill of Rights which was passed unanimously by the Maryland General Assembly and signed into law by the Governor. In the 2021 Maryland legislative session, however, this law is threatened by proposed legislation in House Bill 25 (HB25), cross-filed as Senate Bill 311 (SB311).

HB25/SB311 will undermine patient rights by denying patients legal recourse for egregious medical errors, patient dumping, or discrimination against vulnerable patients and minorities. The bill greatly expands the number of hospital employees who would receive blanket immunity to civil and criminal liability during and six months after health emergency. Without civil or criminal liability, there would be no consequences for hospital “employees, agents, or contractors” failing to provide patients with safe, respectful, and informed healthcare

Hearings were held in the Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee on Feb. 2 and the House Judiciary Committee on Feb. 3. AAUW Maryland wrote a letter of opposition to the bill along with numerous advocacy groups and the Maryland Attorney General, Brian Frosh.

Anna Palmisano

**Branch Scholarship Goes Gender Neutral**

For Montgomery College to comply with current U.S. Department of Education Office for Civil Rights Title IX rules, AAUW Kensington-Rockville Branch will make its Montgomery College scholarship gender neutral. The branch board of directors approved the new language using Montgomery College recommendations:

“ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA: From this time forward, this scholarship will support students of all backgrounds who meet the following criteria and who are committed to increasing the representation of women in the workforce:

 \* Students with financial need as verified by the Montgomery College Scholarship Office

 • Students with family responsibilities

 • Students returning to school for a career path different from their current occupation

All other elements of the original agreement remain the same.

Janet Wert Crampton

**A Time for Giving**

**\*Maryland Women of Distinction Fund, #4355.** For the past decade AAUW Maryland has been Platinum Sponsor of this signature event of AAUW’s annual **National Conference for College Women Student Leaders** **(NCCWSL)**. We are short funds of the $20,000 needed to qualify for the 2021 virtual ceremony, our major national project. The deadline is 1 April 2021. Please see the September 2020 *Marylander* for more about NCCWSL and why we support this life-changing experience.

To donate: Go to aauw.org. Click on Donate at upper right. Near the bottom, in smaller print, click on NCCWSL, then on Maryland Women of Distinction Fund (#4355, if numbers are given). Insert your dollar amount below that and click Donate button below. You’ll need your credit card information. Or, write a check to AAUW, Maryland Women of Distinction Fund #4355. Write “Credit Kensington-Rockville (MD) Branch” in the memo line. Mail to AAUW Development Office, P O Box 98045, Washington, DC 20090-8045. Contact AAUW staff at development@aauw.org or call 202-728-7629 if you need more information.

**\*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.

**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.

**Interest Groups:**

**Le Groupe Français**

Ruth Spivack raspivack@gmail.com

Le Groupe  Français will meet on March 16 at 5:30 p.m. on ZOOM.  We will begin reading "La Farce de Maître Panthelin," a medieval comedy

Please contact Ruth Spivack for the URL.

 Contact Ruth for the URL.

**GREAT DECISIONS**

Anita Rosen

anitarosen123@gmail.com

Bobbe Mintz

Bobbeandherb@comcast.net

The next Great Decisions Group is March 19, 2021 2:00 p.m. **Chapter 3 –Brexit: taking stock and looking ahead*.***

For questions and further information, contact Anita or Bobbe.

They will send the URL prior for the meeting.

Contact Anita for details.

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***Literature Group***

Margaret Schweitzer margaretfschweitzer@gmail.com

The Literature Group will meet on Tuesday, March 16 at 1:00p.m. to discuss "The Woman who Smashed the Codes" by Jason Gagone.  Joyce Graf will lead the discussion.  It is the story of Elizabeth Smith who broke security codes during World War II.

All are welcome to join.

Please contact Margaret Schweitzer for the URL.

Contact Anita for details.

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**Upcoming Meetings:**

March 4, 2021 Tuesday Zoom "Branch Social" at 4:00 p.m. See attachment for the URL.

April 10, 2021 Branch meeting AAUW: Our History and Our Legacy, presented by Dian Belanger, with invited guests speakers. The meeting will focus on our roots as well as our current challenges and future plans.

April 7 and close May 17, 2021, 5:00 p.m. ETVoting on Proposed elimination of AAUW’s educational requirement 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.

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

May 22, and 23 2021 AAUW MD 2021Virtual State Convention.The Power of Women Voters

**Deadline for the April Newsletter is March 20**

**Newsletter Editor Circulation Editor**

Margery Sullivan Ruth Spivack

msullivan@niaid.nih.gov raspivack@gmail.com

**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**

**6540 Wiscasset Rd**

**Bethesda, MD 20816-2113**