**AAUW Maryland Fall Conference**

**Saturday, October 15, 2022**

**9:30 through lunch**

**Casey Barns Community Center**

**810 South Frederick Avenue (Rte 355)**

**Gaithersburg**

Our Kensington-Rockville Branch, instead of meeting independently on the third Saturday of October, will instead join with our friends across the state at AAUW Maryland’s 2022 Fall Conference that day. With critically important midterm elections just days away, this meeting will focus on voting rights and responsibilities, in particular improving voter participation among younger eligibles.

Karla Silvestre, the featured speaker, is the Director of Community Engagement at Montgomery College, Vice President of the county Board of Education, Latino liaison for the county’s Office of Community Partnerships, and manager of the Gilchrist Immigrant Resource Center. With so much relevant background, she will have much of value to share, after which we will discuss how we can help get more Millennials and Gen-Zs to the polls.

And, we will cheer on our hosting Gaithersburg members as they celebrate their branch’s 50th anniversary!

Do join us for a morning of information, purpose, and fun. **Registration form is attached.**

Dian Belanger and Anita Rosen

Co-Program Vice Presidents

[dobelanger@comcast.net](mailto:dobelanger@comcast.net)

[anitarosen123@gmail.com](mailto:anitarosen123@gmail.com)

**President’s Message**

Fall is already here, by the calendar and by the wonderful cool weather we are having. So, our program year has started, and I am hoping I see as many of you as possible at the great programs that have been planned by Anita and Dian.

This year, we celebrate three anniversaries: Kensington’s 75th, Rockville’s 65th and Kensington-Rockville’s 20th! In honor of that, we would like to have a small group write a history for us. There are a fair number of documents describing our various projects which we gathered and shared at our March meeting and I am sure there are boxes and photos in many of our homes. If you are interested, please let me know.

The project to support women’s reentry from prison is getting organized – we have a potential leader and more to come.

Finally, we would like to start a study group to explore what today’s teachers are facing in the public school environment and to consider ways we can help. This is a seed at the moment, but if you would like to frame that discussion and begin those conversations, I would be happy to hear from you.

I hope everyone had a safe and interesting summer and that we have good conversations in the months ahead.

Jeri Rhodes

**Member News**

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| BETTY ANN MONTGOMERYBetty Montgomery, a lifelong member of our branch died August 2, 2022. Betty, a native of Washington, D.C., worked for many years for the Montgomery County Public School syst  em in the Central Office. After taking classes throughout her life as a military spouse, she proudly obtained her bachelor’s degree from the University of Maryland.  Betty was a proud alum who eventually endowed the University of Maryland Global Campus with the Minor-Montgomery Scholarship in honor of her family Betty joined AAUW in 1992 and became an active member. From this, she was selected to be a part of the AAUW People to People International Program’s delegation to China. She was also an active member of the Alpha Kappa Zeta sorority and a dedicated member and deacon of her church, the Bethesda United Church of Christ. According to her obituary, she often said, “Be the change in the world that you want to see”.  **Backward and Wrong**  ***Dobbs v. Jackson Women’s Health Organization***  The Supreme Court’s *Dobbs v. Jackson Women’s Health* opinion, which overturns *Roe v. Wade*, is appalling. That a right so basic to human personhood as bodily autonomy, a right entrenched by half a century of settled law, has been uprooted by five individuals, four of whom will never know pregnancy, is the antithesis of justice. The right to choose abortion is consistently supported by a solid super-majority of Americans, which in a democratic society should mean something. Moreover, Justice Samuel Alito’s arguments are neither credible nor just in any category.  Constitutionality. Alito says there’s nothing in the constitution about abortion. True. There’s nothing about women, or uteruses or fetuses, either. In 1787, women had no role in any aspect of preparing or securing our new form of government, Abigail Adams’s pleas and the frustrations of numerous contemporary women notwithstanding. Married women did not legally exist.[[1]](#endnote-2) By the way, the Constitution says nothing about sliced bread or radios or astronauts either—yet these then-unheard-ofs are celebrated as human progress. The framers deliberately wrote a broad framework, knowing that society and needs change over time. They expected future adjustments.  History. According to AHA historians, Alito cites history 67 times in his Dobbs justification, arguing that if a right is not explicitly named in the Constitution, to be honored it must be “deeply rooted” in our “history and tradition.” He cites treatises written in the 13th and 17th centuries! But, in fact, even these focus on post-“quickening,” as did common law.[[2]](#endnote-3) His cherry-picked data greatly exaggerate the number of states that criminalized abortion prior to the 1860s. Columnist George Will repeats that “an abortion right is not deeply rooted in the nation’s history and traditions.”[[3]](#endnote-4) Apparently neither has checked numerous sources that verify the not-illegal commonness of abortion in colonial America and well into the nineteenth century. Popular literature openly advertised, in coded language, abortion-inducing potions and methods (however dubious their safety or effectiveness).  Politics. Alito and others insist that abortion decisions be returned to state legislatures.  University of Notre Dame law professor O. Carter Snead writes that “abortion law and policy must be restored to our political branches” because a “decision by nine unelected judges” has “poisoned our politics, our institutions, and our civic discourse.”[[4]](#endnote-5) That’s certainly true, but with gerrymandered districts, voter suppression, and violations of all sorts of civil rights in several states, this is no democratic solution. By dumping the, “mistaken” in his view, 1973 Court decision, Will agrees that the 50 state legislatures will “reacquire the traditional right to set policy regarding the legal status of prenatal life.”[[5]](#endnote-6) Does a woman, or, say, an 11-year-old girl impregnated by familial rape,[[6]](#endnote-7) enjoy no legal status in this nation? Her agency over her own body can be jerked away simply by crossing a state line?  Privacy. Why is any law or policy (government say-so) appropriate before viability? Why is Alito’s and other Supreme Court justices’ personal privacy sacrosanct (fair enough) while an individual’s right to privacy regarding her very selfhood is violated at the will of politicians and strangers who know nothing of her life and circumstances?  Health. The Constitution says nothing about health or medicine. Women don’t need political permission to undergo, say, a mastectomy—the removal of a gland designed to feed a baby. When a pregnancy is forced, or unwelcome for any reason, a woman’s health and even her family’s well-being are affected. Politicians know nothing about the intimate personal lives of their constituents, and shouldn’t. Health decisions are rightly personal, not political.  Religion. The Constitution is a civil covenant among “We the People.” It guarantees individual freedom of religion, including the right to reject religion. Those who oppose abortion for religious reasons had under Roe, and should have, the right to not have one. But they do not, and should not, have the right to impose their religious views on others whose beliefs, reasoning, and understanding of science differ. Mutual respect is essential to maintaining harmony in a broadly diverse society.  Roe mattered. Its fundamental rights must be restored by law.  Dian Belanger |  |
| Historian Jill Lapore compellingly speaks to the absurdity of this argument in “Of Course the Constitution Has Nothing to Say About Abortion,” *The New Yorker*, 4 May 2022.  American Historical Association, webinar: “Abortion, Choice, and the Supreme Court: History behind the Headlines,” 6 July 2022.  George Will, “Alito’s draft is less a refutation of Roe than a starting over,” Washington Post, 4 May 2022, A21.  O. Carter Snead, “The leak shows why abortion must be returned to the states,” *Washington Post*, 6 May 2022, A.21.  Will, “Alito’s draft.”  This story, told some years ago by the author’s father-in-law, a former family court judge in Minnesota, was written before the case of the 10-year-old Ohio girl’s rape and abortion in Indiana was reported. |  |

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**A Time for Giving:**

\***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.

**\*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.

**Interest Groups:**

**Literature Group**

Margaret Schweitzer [margaretfschweitzer@gmail.com](mailto:margaretfschweitzer@gmail.com)

The Literature Group on Oct 11 at 1:00 pm on Zoom will be discussing***. Klara and the Sun by Kazuo Ishigura***. Nancy Silver will be the leader.

The Zoom URL will be sent prior to the meeting for both the meeting .For more information contact Joyce Graf: joyce@Tregraf.com

**Great Decisions**

Anita Rosen

[anitarosen123@gmail.com](mailto:anitarosen123@gmail.com)

Bobbe Mintz

[Bobbeandherb@comcast.net](mailto:Bobbeandherb@comcast.net)

The group will be discussing **Chapter 7-**

**Foreign Policy, Economic Power, and US Industrial Policy.**

Time Oct **21 2022, 2pm, PM Eastern Time (US and Canada**

Zoom URL will be sent prior to the meeting for both the meeting.

For Information contact: Anita or Bobbe

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**Le Groupe Francaise**

**Ruth Spivack** [**rasspivack@gmail.com**](mailto:rasspivack@gmail.com)

Le groupe will meet October18 at 6:45 pm.

The URL will be sent out prior to the meeting**.**

**Upcoming Events:**

**October 13 at 7:00 pm Montgomery County School Board Forum will take place online (ZOOM) Thursday, October 13 at 7:00 pm.  AAUW Maryland is a cosponsor. Details on attached flyer.**

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

**Newsletter Editor Circulation Editor**

Margery Sullivan Ruth Spivack

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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](mailto: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.**

**Le Groupe Francaise**

**Ruth Spivack** [**raspivack@gmail.com**](mailto:raspivack@gmail.com)

Le groupe will meet October at 6:45 pm.

The URL will be sent out prior to the meeting**.**

**AAUW Kensington-Rockville Branch**

**6540 Wiscasset Rd**

**Bethesda, MD 20816-2113**

1. Historian Jill Lapore compellingly speaks to the absurdity of this argument in “Of Course the Constitution Has Nothing to Say About Abortion,” *The New Yorker*, 4 May 2022. [↑](#endnote-ref-2)
2. American Historical Association, webinar: “Abortion, Choice, and the Supreme Court: History behind the Headlines,” 6 July 2022. [↑](#endnote-ref-3)
3. George Will, “Alito’s draft is less a refutation of Roe than a starting over,” Washington Post, 4 May 2022, A21. [↑](#endnote-ref-4)
4. O. Carter Snead, “The leak shows why abortion must be returned to the states,” *Washington Post*, 6 May 2022, A.21. [↑](#endnote-ref-5)
5. Will, “Alito’s draft.” [↑](#endnote-ref-6)
6. This story, told some years ago by the author’s father-in-law, a former family court judge in Minnesota, was written before the case of the 10-year-old Ohio girl’s rape and abortion in Indiana was reported. [↑](#endnote-ref-7)