**AAUW Kensington-Rockville Branch**

**Ingleside at King Farm - Derwood Room**

**1615 A Piccard Drive or 701 King Farm Boulevard, Rockville**

**Annual Holiday Sweets and Savories Potluck**

**Sunday December 15, 2023, from 2:00-4:00 pm**

**The Club Room**

Join new and old members, spouses/partners and guests for food, drink and socializing for a celebration of many diverse holidays in December.

In addition, we have invited branch scholarship recipients from Montgomery College and AAUW Fellows to join with us to celebrate our branch and the season.

For members only, bring a hot or cold appetizer or a dessert for 8-10 to share with others. Hot and cold drinks and wine will be provided. We look forward to celebrating the season together.

**President’s Message**:

Thank you, Marcia Elbrand, for touching us deeply with your poetry at our November meeting! Your introspection, whether amusing or heart-rending, and your ability to share it in just a few, but just the right, words left us with much to ponder. We look forward to more. How fortunate we are to have you in AAUW and our branch.

I, along with Anita Rosen and AAUW members from around the state, attended the 30th annual Fall Agenda Conference of the **Maryland Legislative Agenda for Women (MLAW)** on Saturday, November 23rd. We were in good company with representatives from a wide range of women’s organizations as well as individual advocates and a few men of kindred spirit.

You will recall that Catherine Hill, the new and first MLAW Executive Director, spoke to (and joined) our branch in September. She outdid herself, attracting a record number (270) of attendees—so many that the spacious room over-flowed; edibles and printed programs ran out.

The memorable program included a film on the history and significance of MLAW, which has seen 119 MLAW-supported bills passed thus far. US Senator Chris Van Hollen opened the conference, citing the current unsettling political realities but challenging us to remain hopeful but vigilant, informed and engaged. He remains positive, citing checks and balances and the confirmation of more than 200 new federal judges. He congratulated Marylanders for passing Ballot Question 1, constitutionally protecting reproductive rights by a 71% majority.

Other luminaries included Ariana Kelly, Legislative Leadership Award-winning former delegate, and state senator, now Executive Director of the Maryland Commission for Women. “Rage and spite” drove her initial run for office, she said, to appreciative laughter. Lt. Governor Aruna Miller, the first woman and Indian American in that office, boasted that Governor Wes Moore’s cabinet is the most diverse ever, with 50% women and 50% people of color.

Then we listened as passionate advocates urged the acceptance of their respective causes for MLAW’s priority focus during the upcoming legislative session. All were worthy, tough decisions ahead. See Anita’s summary.

See page 1 and do join us for our **DECEMBER HOLIDAY GATHERING!**

Please let me know how you’d like to be more involved in AAUW, on whose founders’ shoulders we all stand 143 years later!

Dian Belanger

dobelanger@comcast.net

**MLAW Legislative Proposals for 2025**

Fourteen legislative proposals were presented at the MLAW Fall Conference. They will be voted on by MLAW members within the next few weeks. All fourteen were presented by their lead legislative sponsors or by a representatives of the lead group, and all are quite compelling. They include such topics as solitary confinement for women in Maryland prisons; women’s prelease programs; updating MD birth certificates to include name or gender changes and markers; protection from retaliatory litigation for sexual assault survivors; protecting quality nursing home care to insure that 75% of skilled nursing revenue goes toward direct care; preventing local HOA’s and local jurisdictions from prohibiting operation of day care service, Other areas include parity for loan assistance repayment for dental hygienists who work part-time; abortion care access funds; drug expenses; nurse home visits for newborns; firearm relinquishment, and several others of importance.

To read the complete proposals, go online to MLAW at: <https://mdlegagendaforwomen.org/fall-conference/>

Then scroll down the page to 30 Legislative Proposals

To have a chance to vote on which issues will be undertaken this legislative session, join MLAW at: <https://mdlegagendaforwomen.org/join-mlaw/>

**Women’s Legislative Briefing- New date**

Remember, the 2025 chosen bills will be available at the Women’s Legislative Briefing (WLB), along with sessions about many of these bills and important issues facing women and families in Maryland. This year the WLB will be held on a Saturday, January 25, 2025, at the Campuses at Shady Grove, from 11:30 am – 5:30 pm. The theme is: EMPOW(HER): Breaking Barriers to Success.

Year-end donations to AAUW greatest needs fund and to Montgomery College. No more NCCWSL

**Interest Groups**:

**Le Groupe Francais**

Ruth Spivack raspivack@gmail.com

The **Le Groupe Français**will meet on Monday, December 9 at 7 p.m. via ZOOM.  The Zoom link will be sent out prior to the meeting.   We will continue the novella, “Carmen” by Prospere Merrimee, starting on page 67.

**Great Decisions-Live!**

Anita Rosen anitarosen123@gmail.com

Bobbe Mintz Bobbeandherb@comcast.net

There is no Great Decisions for December. Next meeting is on January 11, 2025, at Ingleside at 10:00 am. We will start the new 2025 Book Year, and the meeting will be on- line if there is inclement weather.

For further information, contact Anita or Bobbe

**The Literature Discussion Group**

**Ella Iams** **ella.w.iams@gmail.com**

The Literature Group will not meet in December, but they are busy reading Abraham Verghese’s 775-page novel, **The Covenant of Water**. They will next meet to discuss it on Tuesday, January 14 at the home of Ella Iams at Ingleside, 701 King Farm Blvd, Apt 427, Rockville.

**The Covenant of Water** is a 2023 novel by physician and author Abraham Verghese. It tells the story of an Indian Malayali family living in southwest India, in the Kerala state. From 1900 to the 1970s, the narrative follows three generations of a family seeking the answers to a strange secret.

Ella will lead the discussion and will host the meeting. Let us know you are coming; RSVP to ella.w.iams@gmail.com.

**Calendar of Upcoming Events:**

Jan 18. Anna Palmisano our guest speaker with important information on hospital wait times.

Jan 18 1:00-3:30p AAUW Maryland Winter Board Meeting via Zoom

Jan 25 Women’s Legislative Briefing, Saturday, at the Campuses at Shady Grove, from 11:30 am – 5:30 pm. The theme is: EMPOW(HER): Breaking Barriers to Success.

**Deadline for the next Newsletter is December 20.**

Newsletter Editor Circulation Editor

Margery Sullivan Ruth Spivack

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

AAUW NATIONAL MISSION: AAUW advances equity for women and girls through advocacy, education, philanthropy, and research. VISION: AAUW will be a powerful advocate and visible leader in equity and education through research, philanthropy, and measurable change in areas impacting the lives of women and girls.

**Kensington-Rockville Branch**

**6540 Wiscasset Rd**

**Bethesda, MD 20816-2113**