**AAUW Kensington-Rockville Branch**

**Ingleside at King Farm - TBA**

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

**Saturday, January 11, 2025**

**10:30 am**

**January Branch Meeting**

Guest Speaker

**Dr. Anna Palmisano**

**"How to Fix Maryland's Long Emergency Room Wait Times."**

Maryland has had the worst emergency room wait time among 50 states for the past eight years, according to data from the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services. While the average ER wait time in Maryland is over four hours, many patients who need emergency care may wait as long as 24 hours to receive care.

Long ER wait times are more than just an inconvenience; they measurably increased risk for patients, especially those who are elderly or vulnerable. Why are the wait times so long in our state? Are the problems fixable? Who is responsible? Join our speaker to learn much more and engage in a lively discussion about a topic that touches all of us.

Dr. Anna Palmisano leads Marylanders for Patient Rights—a coalition of 22 Maryland and national advocacy groups whose goals are to support the rights of hospital patients, reduce ER wait times, and protect those in long term care. AAUW is a founding member of the coalition.

Anna has a Bachelor of Science degree in Microbiology from the University of Maryland, and a Master of Science and Ph.D. in Biology from the University of Southern California. She was a Hancock Fellow at the University of Southern California, a National Research Council Fellow in planetary biology at NASA-Ames Research Center, and she has led five research expeditions to Antarctica to study sea ice microorganisms.

After 21 years in federal service, she retired from the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) where she was the Associate Director of Science for Biological and Environmental Research, funding basic research in bioenergy, systems biology, genomics, and climate and environment science.

**President’s Message**:

I loved the warm, friendly, vibrant sounds of our December holiday gathering! (Noise quality and volume have told me much since childhood.) Not only did we enjoy a fine turnout, but also a delightfully varied array of savories and sweets to enhance our socializing. This potluck was lucky, seemingly planned though it wasn’t.

As always it was a pleasure to share our Montgomery College scholarship winners’ letters of appreciation. We were told that none of the three current Kensington-Rockville Branch scholars could be there in person, so I was happily shocked when Nelly Kra and her husband walked in, unannounced. They had attended our Spring luncheon, where she expressed warm gratitude for our financial assistance last semester. Funded again, she felt the need to thank us again, which touched me deeply, and I know that others were also moved.

Do send your scholarship donations to the MC Foundation without delay, to aid the planning for student support next fall.

Also, while AAUW is no longer sponsoring NCCWSL, the National Conference for College Women Student Leaders, it will continue under different leadership, and we can (I would say should) still fund scholarships for NCCWSL attendees. Any amount is appreciated.

Voting on priorities for the Maryland Legislative Agenda for Women (MLAW) members’ advocacy in the upcoming legislative session is over, and we’re waiting to hear what final bills we have helped to choose. Our branch’s voters prioritized abortion care access, limiting the use of solitary confinement in state prisons, and protecting sexual assault survivors from retaliatory litigation. But many other proposals were worthy, and the votes of the many member organizations, including AAUW Maryland, are still being tabulated. Stay tuned—and think about doing some personal advocacy in Annapolis!

Finally, put Saturday, January 11th on your calendar and attend KR member Anna Palmisano’s report on her hard work and progress in health care advocacy for Marylanders. She proves that one person’s efforts can make a difference. Also, don’t miss the Women’s Legislative Briefing (WLB) on Saturday, January 25th, at the Universities at Shady Grove. This huge, diverse, purposeful annual session was initiated decades ago by the Montgomery County Commission for Women, since then jointly sponsored by the Prince Georges CCW.

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](mailto:dobelanger@comcast.net)

**Women’s Legislative Briefing**

**The exciting Women's Legislative Briefing (WLB) will be held on Saturday, January 25th at the Campuses at Shady Grove, 9630 Gudelsky Drive Rockville, MD 20850 from 1:30am - 5:30pm EST. Early Bird registration is $45 through January 22nd, $55 after 5:00 pm on the 22nd.  AAUW Kensington-Rockville is a co-sponsor.  To register go to** [**https://www.eventbrite.com/e/2025-womens-legislative-briefing-registration-1081123542619**](https://gcc02.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.eventbrite.com%2Fe%2F2025-womens-legislative-briefing-registration-1081123542619&data=05%7C02%7Cmsullivan%40niaid.nih.gov%7C3cec47689ac1490e802308dd22148f86%7C14b77578977342d58507251ca2dc2b06%7C0%7C0%7C638704193884448095%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJFbXB0eU1hcGkiOnRydWUsIlYiOiIwLjAuMDAwMCIsIlAiOiJXaW4zMiIsIkFOIjoiTWFpbCIsIldUIjoyfQ%3D%3D%7C0%7C%7C%7C&sdata=6PQ0NAhA0CTijGhFamQsZghnNotK8VEWV7SJAtRV6c8%3D&reserved=0)

INTEREST GROUPS:

**Le Groupe Francais**

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

The **Le Groupe Français**will meet on Monday, January 27 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.

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**Calendar of Upcoming Events:**

**The Literature Discussion Group**

**Ella Iams** [**ella.w.iams@gmail.com**](mailto:ella.w.iams@gmail.com)

The Literature Group will discuss 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](mailto:ella.w.iams@gmail.com).

**Great Decisions-Live!**

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

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

NOTE New Day and Time for Meetings! The last Friday of the month at 10:00 am

What: Chapter 1. American Foreign Policy at a Crossroads

When: Friday, January 24, 2025, 10:00 am to 11:30.

Place: Derwood Room at Ingleside King Farm. Coffee and drinks available for purchase. Cafe available for lunch or BYOL.

Master Class Zoom video Thursday, Jan 23, 7:30 pm. A URL will be sent.

For further information, contact Anita or Bobbe

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 January 20.**

Newsletter Editor Circulation Editor

Margery Sullivan Ruth Spivack

[msullivan@niaid.nih.gov](mailto:msullivan@niaid.nih.gov) [raspivack@gmail.com](mailto: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**