



Empowering Women
Since 1881

AAUW Gaithersburg Branch

NEWSLETTER

June-August 2020

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The pandemic is still dictating the cancellation of our monthly branch meeting. Person-to-person meetings of the board of directors are also cancelled but board members may expect a possible teleconference call.

Liz Hessel will be the temporary presiding officer in June. Then on July 1 Edie Allison will start her term as president for the coming fiscal year.

The newsletter will hibernate as usual in July and August. Hang in there. We'll see what the fall brings.

AAUW Still Needs You

AAUW continues to work for education and equity. For example, AAUW continues its educational grants and fellowships — 200 awards worth \$3.5 million were given this April. In addition, your branch expects to fund fall 2020 scholarships for students at local colleges and universities. Your support today strengthens the branch and Association into the future.

To renew you have two choices:

1. Click on the link in the AAUW email you received May 20 or 21 and complete your renewal online. You do not need to sign in or provide your membership number to renew with this link.
2. Send your check for \$87 to the branch treasurer: Edith Allison, 11224 Troy Road, Rockville, MD 20852.

If you have any problems renewing or questions about your membership contact Edie at 301-231-0109 or edieallison-at-comcast.net.

MADAME CURIE AND AAUW

Madame Marie Curie was working on the properties of radium, an element she had discovered. But now she had run short of the supply of radium she needed to continue her research on its qualities. She lacked the money to buy more.

At that time, a gram of radium cost \$100,000 (\$1,359,650.79 today). AAUW helped raise money to purchase the gram of radium Curie needed. In 1921 President Harding presented her with the radium on behalf of the women of America. After Curie died in 1934 the funds passed eventually to AAUW to be used for the Marie Curie Fellowship. Thus we see that AAUW not only helped Curie's then current work but continued to manage the funds dedicated to her for long afterwards.

As we renew our AAUW membership, for now is the time, shall we wonder about the next Madame Curie we are helping?

[Thanks to the AAUW website for the information on Madame Curie.]

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TEMPORARY PRESIDING OFFICER'S MESSAGE

- *Liz Hessel*

Greetings to everyone as we continue with Social Distancing. It is nice to see spring flowers and leaves on the trees and have warmer weather. We hope you are staying healthy.

The Board recently held a conference call meeting and discussed Transition to Officers elected for the next year, funding scholarships, and how the Branch might operate over the next year. The term for the newly elected officers starts July 1. We will not have a formal Installation this year.

The Board is considering various options to operate until the limits imposed by the Covid Virus are lifted. Having meetings by Conference Call and Zoom are being considered. We are also discussing how to maintain a sense of community among the members during this time. The Board members will be contacting each Branch member by phone to check in with them and get their ideas on future activities. We know that many people screen their phone calls to eliminate Spam Calls. If you receive a call from

someone saying they are an AAUW Board member, **it is not a Spam Call.** Please answer it or return the call when you have an opportunity. We truly want to reach every member.



AAUW is both an organization with a mission and a group of friends. Our Branch is a mix of many new members as well as women who have participated for over 40 years. Many of our long term members have developed very good friendships. While we are social distancing and practically isolated, it is harder to develop and maintain friendships. It is clear that it will be a while before things return to "normal" when we can see each other at meetings or special interest Groups, or catch up with friends over a cup of coffee. We encourage each member to reach out to other members – give them a call or send them an e-mail. Just check up on them and let them know you care. **If you want to have friends, you need to be a friend.**



Mary Wykes's family surprised her with a "Card In My Yard" set into her lawn for her 95th birthday. Mary said, "I gave myself a new push lawnmower for my birthday and am getting good exercise mowing my own lawn this spring."

PATHWAY TO RATIFICATION - JUNE TO AUGUST 1920

- *Dorothy Camara*

We now reach the end of our coverage of the struggles of our intrepid suffragists in seeking ratification of the 19th Amendment to the Constitution that would give women the right to vote. Here is the story of the struggle in June through August one hundred years ago.

June and July 1920

The pathway to ratification is stalled. One more state needs to ratify to make the 36 necessary for passage of the 19th Amendment, but no state has ratified since March. Carrie Chapman Catt and Alice Paul have launched efforts to organize their supporters to counterattack the fusillade of negative campaigning by the liquor, steel and cotton mill industries. A bright note shines as both Democratic and Republican conventions endorse the amendment. However, Warren Harding, running on the Republican ticket with Calvin Coolidge, frustrates the suffragists by wavering in his support. On the Democratic side, James Cox and his running mate, Franklin D. Roosevelt, are strong supporters. Interestingly, their wives share obverse views: Florence Harding is a staunch supporter; Eleanor Roosevelt does not feel it is her place to have political opinions.

August 1920

The Hermitage Hotel in Nashville is a madhouse. It has become the headquarters for both suffragists and anti-suffragists in the battle for ratification in the pivotal state of Tennessee. The prime mover and organizer of the pro-suffragists is Carrie Chapman Catt. The "Chief," as she is called by her supporters, works from Suite 309 of the Hermitage Hotel, suffering from the muggy heat and from occasional problems with her heart. From Washington, D.C., absent of funds for travelling, fiery Alice Paul organizes supporters. From all over the country, suffragists and anti-suffragists are converging on the Hermitage Hotel, aware that, if the Amendment passes in Tennessee, women throughout the country will vote for the next president this very year. If it fails in Tennessee, then the Amendment is finally lost--the end of the day for this 70-year battle of the suffragists.

The main hall of the Hermitage is a hotbed of chicanery and influence peddling. The careful observer sees money changing hands as votes

are bought. One sees the double-crossing of delegates, once firmly pledged one way, change their support. Then men disappear surreptitiously from the hall, finding their way to the "Jack Daniels Suite." There the liquor interests ply them with whiskey (despite Prohibition's being in effect), hoping to influence their vote or make them stuporous enough not to appear for roll-calls.



Ratification by Tennessee remains totally unpredictable. In the House of Delegates, pro and con votes wobble back and forth. But the most astounding switch in votes comes when young Harry Burn, up to then a firm anti, votes yes after reading an appealing letter from his mother. The Amendment is carried by one vote. Harry Burn, reacting to the fury of the anti delegates against his perfidy, escapes the chamber through a window.

Thus, on August 18, 1920, the state of Tennessee completes the ratification of the 19th Amendment. Women throughout the United States have the right to vote. The Amendment received final approval by the U.S. Congress on August 26. In the 1920 presidential election, about 10 million women went to the polls, supporting the Republican party that championed their cause and helped to elect Warren Harding as president of the United States in a landslide.

So ends the 70-year struggle of this band of suffragists to win the right to vote. Some see it as one of our country's most significant historical events. They say that by enfranchising half the population, it expands women's contribution to society and will be a turning point in the lives and status of women. Some, alas, await it to be the end of the American family.

[Ed.: For the dramatic picture of the ratification process in Tennessee, you would do well to read "The Woman's Hour: The Great Fight to Win the Vote" by Elaine Weiss. Among other sources for these articles, the Internet was particularly useful.]

BOOK SALE Update

- *Liz Hessel, Chair of Book Sales*

It is not clear when our next book sale will take place but we are able to do some preparations for it. We continue to accept book donations.

Are you willing to help while you are staying home?

We need help with the following activities:

- **Can you design a book mark** (with the book sale information) which could be used for advertising?
- **Can you design a flyer** advertising the book sale? It will be sent to interested organizations and individuals?
- **Are you good with computers?** We need someone to take responsibility for a data base of potential customers who receive either a postcard or e-mail announcing the book sale dates.
- **Are you willing to look up books on Amazon** to determine their selling rank? That information guides us with respect to how to price the books.
- **Can you Identify websites** and social media sites where we can post book sale information?
- **Do you have storage space in your garage where we might stack some boxes?**

SCHOLARSHIPS

- *Liz Hessel*

Without holding the book sale, our Branch has limited funds to support scholarships for the next year. In June we will decide how to divide the limited funds available. As you can imagine, the need for scholarships has risen in the current economic crisis and it would be a shame for the students to drop out due to lack of financial support. If you would like to make a donation to specifically support scholarships, please send a

We pay \$268/month to store books for the next book sale. If you are willing to let AAUW stack some boxes in your garage, we will save money by avoiding rental of another locker as we collect more books. We're not asking for your whole garage, just space for some of the incoming boxes.



If you want to help with these or other book sale activities, send Liz Clark an e-mail at Liz-at-meral.com or call 301-840-1258.

Children's Books

Children who receive *Free and Reduced Lunch* at school continue to be provided with food which is being dispensed at their school. We received a request from Gaithersburg Middle School for children's books to distribute along with the food. All children's books we receive the next month will be donated directly to the school for this purpose. We know how important it is for kids to read and they have time now that they are being home schooled.

check by June 9th to Edie Allison, 11224 Troy Road, Rockville, MD 20852.

Make your check payable to "AAUW Gaithersburg," and in the memo line write "Scholarships."



GREAT DECISIONS

- *Mary Wykes, Coordinator*



It doesn't appear as though we will be able to meet on June 24 as planned with Averill Farrelly leading us in discussing Topic 5 in our

Foreign Policy Association study guide: "Panic at the Border: U.S. Relations with the Northern Triangle" by Michael Shifter and Bruno Benetton, both of the Inter-American Dialogue.

It has been our practice in the past not to meet in July and August. Hopefully we can resume on Wednesday, September 23, when the topic for discussion will be "China's Road into Latin America." Details will be sent members when known.

Meanwhile, stay safe and stay home!

LITERATURE GROUP

- *Mary Wykes for Coordinator Jean Young*



We hope we will be able to resume our monthly meetings of the Literature Group in September. At that time we will each

recommend two books for discussion and the group will vote on which they wish to select. Meanwhile some suggestions for this year which were not chosen sound worthy of consideration for next year or possibly for your summer reading. They are:

- Madame Fourcade's Secret War by Lynne Olson
- The Life We Bury by Allen Eskens

- Road to Character by David Brooks
- Pioneers by David McCullough
- Eleanor Oliphant is Completely Fine by Gail Honeyman
- Oliver Twist by Charles Dickens
- Hunt for Red October by Tom Clancy
- We Were Eight Years in Power by Ta-Nehisi Coates

HERSTORY

We were just about to talk about Stacey Abrams in our HerStory Group when the pandemic close-down swooped in. It would have hit the mark since Abrams is on the short list of potential vice-presidential candidates. We are looking forward to discussing her and other new stars when our group meets again. Anita Taylor is the group coordinator. You can reach her at ataylor33-at-comcast.net if you have questions or ideas.

AAUW GAITHERSBURG BRANCH

Website: gaithersburg-md.aauw.net

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