



Empowering Women  
Since 1881

# AAUW Gaithersburg Branch

NEWSLETTER

February 21

## February 2021

### FEBRUARY VIRTUAL BRANCH MEETING

Tuesday, February 16, 2021

Log in to Zoom meeting: 7:00pm\*

Presentation begins: 7:15pm

#### AGEISM – HOW IT IMPACTS EVERYONE

Heather Reichardt, VP-Programs, will make a presentation on the issue of ageism including a discussion regarding the current impact of ageism and what we can do to eliminate this form of discrimination impacting people of all ages and circumstances. Additionally, ageism intersects with many other forms of discrimination, not just older workers.

NOTE: All members will receive an email with the Zoom information about a week before the meeting and a reminder email a day before. Nonmembers can email [hjr1234\[at\]gmail\[dot\]com](mailto:hjr1234@gmail.com) and Heather will add them to the Zoom list to attend the presentation.

\*New meeting start time

#### Virtual Board Meeting

Tuesday, February 9, at 7:00pm

Log in to Zoom meeting: 6:50pm

Board meetings are open to all members. If you want to attend, please email Heather Reichardt: [hjr1234\[at\]gmail\[dot\]com](mailto:hjr1234@gmail.com) to receive a Zoom meeting invitation/link.

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## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

- *Edie Allison*

I am writing this on MLK day and just one day before what I hope will be a safe if unusual inaugural. I am somewhat fondly remembering growing numb with cold while standing on the Mall as a new president took the oath of office.

Looking forward, I expect that it is going to take all of us working together and with our elected leaders to understand and repair our politically polarized and economically and educationally inequal society.

Narrowing the focus to look at attainable goals for February:

Make sure you are preregistered with the county to be notified when and where you can schedule your appointment for your Covid-19 vaccination. Go to <https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/covid19/vaccine/>.

You can share your opinions about important legislation with the Maryland General Assembly, which is meeting from January 13 through April 12 this year. Most activities will be conducted on line rather than in person. This has one advantage; you don't have to drive to Annapolis to be involved. One piece of legislation in particular deserves your attention – a 2019 bill implementing the Kirwan Commission recommendations to reform Maryland education was vetoed by the Governor. The House is expected to debate and vote on overturning the veto starting February 8. The legislation proposed a \$4 billion-per-year program to expand pre-K programs, increase salaries and standards for teachers, add more vocational programs in high school, and increase support for schools with high concentration of students from poor families. [To put this large number in perspective, Maryland state K-12 education funding was \$8.1 billion in 2020, but state funding represents less than one-third of education funding in Montgomery County.]

To investigate other legislation of importance to AAUW Maryland branches, see the legislative priorities of the Maryland Legislative Agenda for Women, MLAW, a state-wide coalition of women's groups and individuals formed to provide a non-partisan, inde-

pendent voice for Maryland women and families. You can read about these AAUW-Maryland-supported laws and connect with the sponsoring delegates at <https://mdlegagendaforwomen.org/>.



Members will be voting on two AAUW questions this spring:

To approve the latest biennial public policy priorities, which more clearly state AAUW's commitment to addressing systemic racism, providing equitable access to all levels of education for all and emphasizing the importance of high-quality data collection, disaggregated by race, ethnicity and gender, to better inform policy decisions.

To revise the organization's bylaws to open membership by eliminating the degree requirement for membership. Anyone who supports the AAUW mission would be eligible for membership.

The comment period is open until February 5. Online voting will be from April 7 to May 17. Paper ballots may be requested.

As the branch works on a gradual return to normal, we are starting the year with our first 2021 interest group meeting, on Zoom. We plan to meet to discuss the Great Decisions 2021 topics presented by the Foreign Policy Association. Contact Mary Wykes if you would like to join the monthly discussions that start February 18 or 19. Alternatively, if you are interested in reviving the Literature or Her-story groups call me at 301-231-0109.

## BOOK SALE

### - Liz Hessel, Chair of Book Sales

You might be wondering about the book sale. We continue to collect books for a sale when the pandemic is over. So continue to encourage your friends to save books, CDs and DVDs to again raise scholarship funds for women. Depending on the rate of vaccinations, maybe we can have a sale in the fall. But this will be determined by the environment and whether people will feel at ease to come to a sale where many others are present.

In the meantime, YOU can help with the sale and its preparation. We always need help in picking up books, looking up prices on the Internet, sorting, placing advertising, organizing volunteers, and other tasks. Many volunteers are needed, so think about how you can help, and contact me at 301-717-5076 or at [liz\[at\]meral\[dot\]com](mailto:liz[at]meral[dot]com).



## HOLIDAY IN THE TIME OF COVID

### - Dorothy Camara

There was no bedecking the table with bowls of salad and dishes of brownies. Instead we Zoomed. This was our holiday party in December in the time of covid.

Thanks to Zoom magic, Lois Liggett traveled in from Vermont and Jean Hirsch from Kansas, joining the rest of us, perched there on our computer screens like partridges in a pear tree. And to remind us that this was a party after all, Aurora Sevilla bounced into the picture, sporting a jolly Santa Claus hat.

The heart of our gathering was the presentation by

Wynne Roos. Using harps of two different types, she delighted us with playing peaceful renditions accompanied by explanations of the harps, thus bringing music to our souls and to our intellect.

So, despite that Grinch Covid, we came together for our holiday party and celebrated. Happy New Year to all!



## NEWS FROM THE DISTANCE - LOIS LIGGETT

*Mary Wykes shares a Christmas letter she received from our Vermont member, Lois Liggett.*

Dear Family and Friends,

In early October, we drove to Louisville Kentucky for the wedding of John (our grandson) and Ellen....We drove our Tesla charging it in the southern Adirondacks...and in Louisville. Attending the wedding were two of our three daughters, nine of our eleven grandchildren, and all four of our great grandchildren. The rehearsal dinner and the wedding reception were both held on the 83-acre farm....Both events were conducted essentially outdoors because the weather was warm and good ventilation was a consideration. Everyone wore a mask. The wedding was wonderful, and we are still feeling its warm glow in this cloudy, snowy December....

Inspired by a workshop presented by the Northeast Organic Farmers Association, we grew a dent corn called Wapsie Valley. We now have two and a half quarts of dried kernels awaiting a native American process called nixtamalization. This process helps create a chemical change in the proteins in corn so that essential proteins

become bio-available for humans....Nixtamalization leads to corn flour called masa with an authentic Mexican taste.

A few years ago, we planted three chestnut trees, an American-Chinese hybrid. This year they produced (small) chestnuts for the first time.

[I am] working to find a publisher for [my] book "What Do You Feed Your Pet Ravens: A Lexicon for Norse Myths." Using common semantic threads of Northern European languages, [I have] proposed new interpretations of Norse myth gods, goddesses, animals and places....

May your home be filled with the joy of Christmas.



# LITERATURE GROUP

## - Mary Wykes



We are still reading but not currently meeting because of the pandemic. Here is some news from two of our members.

Hi all,

I am forwarding Sandy’s email to you. It is so interesting and I don’t think you got a copy.

The book I am presently reading is “The Soul of an Octopus.” It is most interesting and it’s hard for me to put it down.

Sandy sent an email earlier with the names of several books that she recommended we read. I look forward to hearing from the other book group members re the books they are reading.

Jean Young

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Dear Jean,

My apologies for not getting back to you on your last message. I guess like everyone this pandemic has affected us in so many different ways and one of mine has been distractions that keep me from taking care of things that come up in a timely manner. I loved your suggestion of Isaac's Storm, the book about the Galveston hurricane. I got it from the library and I also finished it. I felt that the actual description of the hurricane and the fallout was the best part. The early pages with all the details and history of the people connected with the weather service in the early days was too involved especially with their scandals and other things that were included prior to the actual storm. I know it was necessary to show the sequence of the evolution of the weather service but somehow it seemed a bit much of the book.

A different book that I thoroughly enjoyed that is non-fiction - Sudden Seas by R.A.Scotti. It is about the 1938 hurricane and the weather service and focused on two communities one on Long Island and one in Rhode Island and showed also the weather service and the way they sent messages about storms coming up the East Coast. It was interesting what was going on in Long Island and on Narragansett Bay in Rhode Island as the story went back-and-forth from the communication of the storm and what was going on in each of those communities and how it hit them and affected those areas also a very good read not as heavy as the Galveston story but just as destructive.

We also have not been getting out as much but have tried to take a little road trip at least once a week just to get out of the four walls. We are also lucky that the recreation center is less than a mile from us and we walk on their sidewalks and various loops that are available. We are also lucky because five minutes away is the Kings Valley Park. It has extensive walking trails as well as baseball and soccer fields. Of

course all those things are closed so it makes a wonderful area to walk without worrying about any number of people because it is very very lightly used by very many walking.

We are thankful that the vaccine has arrived and perhaps will move us in a better direction for recovering from the damage that this virus has caused in so many communities as well as businesses and offices and schools. Who knows we may even be able to return to our literature group in the fall of 2021. Wouldn't that be absolutely wonderful to see everybody in person again!! I am so looking forward to that possibility.

I do think of you all frequently and I'm glad to hear that you are in good health still and that everyone else seems to be safe and healthy. I hope that your new year begins well and that you have several things to look forward to. The best to you and 2021, Sandra [Finerty]

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On Oct 29, 2020, at 12:18 PM, Jean Young <jsy592[at]comcast[dot]net> wrote:

Thank you, Sandy. I don’t seem to get time to read and I keep coming across books I want to add to my stash. I now have 24/7 caregivers and they keep me busy with various things. I do get out to go around the block (with a caregiver pushing my wheelchair) and do spend a good bit of time on the computer.

I try to squeeze in some reading time each day. The books I am reading are very “deep” and take a long time to read. That’s probably the way non-fiction is, though. The James Herriot books read fast, though, and I do enjoy them.

I see Jane Carroll when I go around the block but outside of that I do not hear from any of our group. My family from Chicago came for a week’s visit this month and were given permission to stay in my villa with me. Son Bob in Derwood drops in from time to time and I do have several devoted visitors.

I don’t see that this virus is letting up and we certainly need some attention from the government in order to have some improvement, I think.

Keep well. I think I will send an email around listing all the books our group is reading so we can keep the group together.

Jean Young

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## GREAT DECISIONS

- **Mary Wykes, Coordinator**



The Great Decisions foreign policy interest group will resume meetings via Zoom with the first topic of the 2021 study guide on Friday, February 19 at 2:30. The discussion will be on the timely topic "Global Supply Chains and U.S. National Security," as written by Jonathan Chanis, manager of New Tide Asset Management (a company focused on global and resource trad-

ing), as well as a Columbia University instructor.

Judy Sholes will send instructions for joining the Zoom meeting to members of the interest group. New members are welcome — this is a great time to join us we begin a new study guide. I have extra copies of the study guide, so if you are interested in joining, please call me or email me at 302-717-1040 or mary[dot]wykes[at]aol[dot]com.

## LITERATURE GROUP

- **Mary Wykes**



From: Sandra Finerty  
<finmhd[at]aol[dot]com>  
Sent: Wednesday, October 28, 2020 10:59 AM  
To: Jean Young

<jsy592[at]comcast[dot]net>  
Subject: Re: a visit

Dear Jean, what a great idea! I I am always looking for ideas for new books to read. I have put in a hold on the book you're reading about the Galveston hurricane. A number of years ago I read about a hurricane in 1938 that hit Rhode Island so badly and it was so interesting because I recognized all the places they talked about and it was extremely well written with reference to the difference there was in weather reporting hurricanes coming up the East coast.

I will look through the list I have read so far during the pandemic and a couple of them have been on the bestseller or suggested lists and I will do that sometime today.

Thanks for your email, Sandra

Sent from my iPad

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On Oct 27, 2020, at 9:46 AM, Jean Young wrote:

Hi all,

Well, we are still not able to meet but I do hope everyone is using this time to do some reading. Why not send an

email to the group with the names of the books they are reading and would vote for if we were meeting?

As for me, I tend to have a great many going at the same time, but I am concentrating on Isaac's Storm, a story of the Galveston hurricane. I also have a book by James Herriot "Dog Stories" which I read from time to time. Also Search for Red October is on Kindle waiting for me.

Hope you are all having to live with the coronavirus in a constructive way!

Jean

Jean Young  
592 Russell Avenue  
Gaithersburg, MD 20877

### AAUW GAITHERSBURG BRANCH

**Website:** gaithersburg-md.aauw.net

*Advancing equity for women and girls through advocacy, education, philanthropy and research.*

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# **AAUW GAITHERSBURG CALENDAR OF ZOOM MEETINGS**

Board Meeting	Tuesday, February 9 - 7 p.m.
Branch Meeting	Tuesday, February 16 - 7:15 p.m.
Great Decisions	Friday, February 19 - 2:30 p.m.

The American Association of University Women  
Gaithersburg Branch  
437 Fellowship Circle  
Gaithersburg, MD 20877