



AAUW Gaithersburg Branch

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

NEWSLETTER

April 2023

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Gaithersburg AAUW VIRTUAL BRANCH MEETING!

Tuesday, April 18, 2023

Log in to Zoom meeting: 7:00pm

Presentation begins: 7:15pm

TOPIC:

Feeding Montgomery County's Hungry

Speaker: Mardia Dennis

Director of Development and Communications

Manna Food

Please join to hear about the ongoing efforts to mitigate hunger in the county - yes, even in Montgomery County - from one of the non-profit organizations at the forefront of the fight.

Board Meeting

Tuesday, April 11, 2023, at 7 p.m.

Zoom

The AAUW Gaithersburg Branch Board of Directors will meet on Tuesday, April 11 at 7 p.m. via Zoom. The Zoom code will be sent by email. These meetings are open to all branch members.

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Meeting information and more is on the **BRANCH WEBSITE**

Go to <http://gaithersburg-md.aauw.net> for information about upcoming meetings and other events, and current and past newsletters.

Presidents Message

- Edie Allison

Women's History Month in the US is March. I am writing this article during the official Women's History Month, but you are reading this in April. I don't see any problem with my calendar. Women need and deserve more than a month of recognition and celebration. The commemoration started with International Women's Day, which began in 1911 but was generally forgotten in the US until 1969, when a small march was held in Berkley, California. Interest grew with celebrations and conferences on women's history until 1980 when President Jimmy Carter declared the first National Women's History Week. By 1987 it became Women's History Month.

To commemorate the underappreciated contributions of women, the American Association of University Women, AAUW, has an amazing feature, "Women of AAUW." You can start the tour on the AAUW home page and scroll through vignettes and longer stories about almost 60 women who were AAPG founders, members, fellows and award winners. I encourage you to check out, Nobel Prize winners, Supreme Court Justices, legal and social pioneers, members of Congress, and First Ladies. I guarantee you will find amazing women that you never knew about. Hint: this section may move off the home page of AAUW, but you should be able to find it with the search feature, and if you want more information than AAUW had room for, Google the woman's name.

While scrolling through these biographies, I noticed a geologist who I never heard of but who had a famous last name, Hoover. This was enough to catch the attention of a geologist, but her contributions to Girl Scout Cookies are an important gift to Women's History Month. Lou Henry Hoover founded the first US West Coast branch of AAUW and founded racially integrated Girl Scout troops in Washington, DC, and Palo Alto, California. She was First Lady of the United States from 1929 to 1933. Her other accomplishments include being the first woman to receive a geology degree from Stanford University, and being President of the Girl Scouts of America when the organization adopted a national plan to bake and sell cookies to support scouting.

The Maryland legislature is about midway through its session. A package of bills drafted in response to the overturning of Roe v. Wade is progressing through

both chambers. Senate Bill 786 and House Bill 812 that prevent public disclosure of the home addresses of healthcare individuals who perform abortions and protect the data of patients have received preliminary approval by mid-March. The bills also offer protections from out of state criminal proceedings. Not long ago it was unimaginable that we needed to protect medical providers and patients in Maryland from anti-abortion zealots in other states, but conservative state legislatures around the country are working hard to impose their views on other states.



There is even more good legislation coming out of the 2023 Maryland General Assembly session. Three bills that AAUW Maryland and the Maryland Legislative Agenda for Women, MLAW, have supported have passed the legislature and on their way to Governor Moore for signature:

HB 705, Right to Reproductive Liberty, passed 99-37. The companion bill, SB798, passed 32-15. As of March 18, this bill is soon to be on its way to the Governor. It sets up a referendum on a state constitutional amendment establishing an individual's right to reproductive freedom

HB 3, Maryland State Police Gun Center - Firearms Surrendered Under Final Protective Orders, passed both chambers and will be sent to the Governor. The bill establishes procedures to assure the security of firearms required to be surrendered under protective orders.

HB 4, Repeal of Marriage as a Defense to Sexual Crimes, unanimously passed both chambers and is on its way to the Governor! This bill, which would eliminate the antiquated prohibition on prosecuting sexual crimes against a spouse, was first introduced in 2020. The bill is co-sponsored by Senator, now Secretary of State, Susan Lee and Senator Jeff Waldstreicher, both Montgomery County.

GAITHERSBURG AAUW USED BOOK SALE RETURNS

I'm happy to announce that our traditional AAUW Gaithersburg used book sale will resume in **April of 2024** after being suspended since 2020 due to COVID-19. Asbury Methodist Village has generously agreed to allow us to use their community rooms again for the event. Adequate space is not available this spring, but we are trying to locate smaller space at an alternate location in the fall to hold a "mini" book sale to reduce our book inventory. We will keep the Branch posted regarding this. Meanwhile, we continue to collect books.

Many members may not be aware of the history of the sale which began over 40 years ago on a much smaller scale on the steps of *Asbury's* Administration Building. Since 2004 it has been held in the Rosborough Community Rooms. What began as a simple fundraiser has grown into a robust community event with several broad goals: to encourage education and reading by providing the community with books at modest prices; to raise funds for scholarships and for mentoring and advocacy programs for women and girls, and to promote a cleaner environment by recycling over 40,000 books annually. The sale has always been popular with the community with approximately 800 shoppers attending.



With book sale proceeds, in the last 20 years AAUW Gaithersburg has provided financial assistance in the education of more than 115 deserving local female

students at *Montgomery College* and the *Universities at Shady Grove* and also made contributions to the AAUW national graduate programs. Students we support are going into profes-

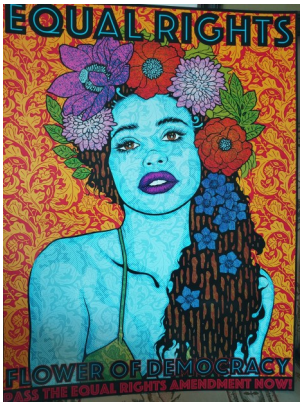


sional careers in many fields where women have been underrepresented and become role models for younger women. During the sale we provide free books to about 50 families who are unable to afford books for their children and local nonprofit organizations are invited to come at the conclusion of the sale to collect any unsold books which are of interest to them or their clients. Organizations receiving free books have included nearby elementary schools, *Manna Food Center* (provides books to preschool children during family food pick-ups), *Identity, Inc.*, *The Rockville Science Center*.

The success of the sale is dependent on many volunteers, both members, students and community friends. *Montgomery County Volunteer Center* provides a system to recruit volunteers and *Montgomery Public Schools (MCPS)* advertise the opportunity to their students. Local high school and middle school students earn Student Service-Learning credits for helping sort books, and book loving college students and adults from the community also assist us.

We hope that **every member** can contribute to the success of future book sales by helping with some of the many tasks that are involved. Helping to collect or sort books is of course important, but many tasks do not involve lifting books or boxes, such as preparing advertising or publicity, contact with other community groups, looking up book prices on the internet, supervising students as they sort books, serving as a salesperson during the sale. Perhaps you are familiar with a nonprofit organization that would benefit from receiving unsold books.

AAUW Maryland Artists 4 ERA Event Was a Success!



Well over 100 people attended the Artists for ERA reception and silent auction in Catonsville, Maryland on Friday, March 3. This was the second successful iteration of this event held in Maryland. The first was sponsored by the Garrett County AAUW branch in the fall of 2022. These events are held to raise funds for the effort to get the Equal Rights

Amendment fully ratified and added to the Constitution.

The event raises money by conducting a silent auction of several ERA-oriented posters that have been signed by the artists. There was also a raffle of one poster that was going out of print. Two of the posters are pictured above.

Attendees came from all over the state, and a few came from out of state to see the posters and participate in the discussions about the art and the ERA. In addition to viewing and bidding on the beautiful posters, those in attendance enjoyed delicious hors d'oeuvres, desserts, and drinks.

The highlight of the discussions included a panel of high school and college age women who discussed their perceptions of the state of equality and how they are navigating a world where we do not have full equity or equality. These young women were quite

knowledgeable about the topic and had wonderful insights. One of the young women,

who is a junior in high school, is the state director for Generation Ratify, a youth-led organization pushing for ERA ratification.

The second panel of women who have been in the workforce for 10-15 years discussed their experiences with harassment and discrimination. They each had stories of how they overcame these events.

Gaithersburg resident, Eloho Basikoro, Ph.D., was one of the speakers. She talked about how she used her knowledge of negotiating for a better salary to find a better job and a much better salary.

The event raised over \$2,000 for the ERA Coalition's work. It was a fun and productive evening even though it was cold and rainy. Members of the organizing committee for the Artists4ERA event included **AAUW**: Tracy Lantz (State President), Carolyn Fisher (State Diversity Chair), Roxann King and Debby Chessin (Anne Arundel Co.), Denise Gray (Baltimore), Beth Hayden (Howard Co.); **Maryland Women's Heritage Center**: Bea Dane; and **Catonsville Dismantling Racism Committee**: Nancy Henderson.



Pictured are left to right, AAUW Gaithersburg members Carolyn Fisher and Heather Reichardt and Gaithersburg resident, Eloho Basikoro.

AAUW MARYLAND STATE ANNUAL MEETING

Saturday, April 15, 2023, 9 AM – 4 PM, Virtual and in Columbia, MD

The morning program topic is: Inequalities in Health Care Affecting Women and Girls -What is the "Fourth Trimester?" Health officials consider this a crucial period after the birth of a child. Unfortunately, the United States has a growing problem with providing adequate healthcare to women who have recently given birth. The rate of maternal death in the U.S. is nearly 3 times that of other developed countries. We will hear from two experts in this field to understand the reasons behind this startling statistic and what can be done to improve healthcare and monitoring for new mothers. Often the baby gets all the attention. The signals that the mother is struggling are missed or dismissed.

Speakers include **Dr. Jameta Barlow, PhD, MPH, Assistant Professor of Writing at George Washington University.** Dr. Barlow is a community health psychologist who utilizes decolonizing methodologies

to disrupt intergenerational trauma, chronic health diseases and structural policies adversely affecting Black girls' and women's health.

Ms. Lee Taylor-Penn, MPA, MPH, Policy Director, Maternal Mental Health Leadership Alliance (MMHLA). Lee Taylor-Penn is a public health advocate passionate about promoting health equity through evidence-based policy making, research, and community engagement.

Registration to attend on Zoom (\$15 charge) or attend in person (\$50-\$55) is available at the AAUW Maryland website, <https://aauw-md.aauw.net/>.

MEMORIAL SERVICE FOR FRED MARKS, APRIL 15

The memorial service for Fred Marks, husband of long-time branch member Patsy Marks, will be held at 11:00 am on Saturday, April 15 at the Pathway Baptist Church in Gaithersburg. Fred died in late December. You may send notes to Patsy at 5957 Quinn Orchard Rd. #140-6, Frederick, MD 21704.

GREAT DECISIONS

- **Mary Wykes, Coordinator**



The Foreign Policy Association Great Decisions interest group will meet via Zoom at 2:30 on Friday, April 21. The timely discussion topic "China and America: Back to the Future" will be led by Averill Farrelly. The Study Guide article author is David M. Lampoon, Professor Emeritus, Johns Hopkins University's School of Advanced International Studies and author of numerous books on the topic.

New members are always welcome. Contact Mary Wykes, Coordinator at 301-717-1040 or Mary [dot]Wykes[at]aol[dot]com for the Zoom link and a copy of the study guide material.

HERSTORY INTEREST GROUP MEETS EARLIER THAN USUAL, Saturday, April 1, 2 pm

- **Maria Roberts**

Herstory is early, Saturday, April 1, at 2 pm. Anna Fraker will present April's mystery woman and here are some hints: She changed her name but signed her citizenship papers and marriage license with her altered birth name. She was the "first" in her outstanding achievement. The 2004 Kerry-Edwards presidential ticket was formed at her dining room table.

This month's Herstory is scheduled a week early to avoid the Easter weekend, so please come Saturday, April 1, 2 pm, at the Parkview Club Room of Asbury Methodist Village.



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 EVENTS

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|------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| HerStory – In person | Saturday, April 1- 2:00 p.m. |
| Board Meeting – Zoom | Tuesday, April 11, 2023 - 7:00 p.m. |
| Branch Program – Zoom | Tuesday, April 18, 2023 – 7:00 pm |
| Great Decisions – Zoom | Friday, April 21 - 2:30 p.m. |

The American Association of University Women
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