



AAUW Gaithersburg Branch

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

NEWSLETTER

February 2024

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Gaithersburg AAUW VIRTUAL BRANCH MEETING! Tuesday, February 20, 2024

Log in to Zoom meeting: 7:00pm

Presentation begins: 7:15pm

Program

Wonder Book – AAUW Gaithersburg Book Sale Partner

The second round!

We are presenting the program we missed hearing from Chuck Roberts in October 2023 due to technical problems.

Chuck Roberts, the long-time owner of Wonder Book will talk about how his business has grown, his excursions to international book festivals, how his company keeps millions of books out of the trash and how he identifies special and rare books.

Additional information about the program and the Zoom link will be sent with closer to the meeting date.

Board Meeting

Tuesday, February 13, 2024, at 7 p.m.

Zoom

The AAUW Gaithersburg Branch Board of Directors will meet on Tuesday, February 13 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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Presidents Message

- Edie Allison

President's Message, February 2024

Welcome to the first newsletter of 2024, a year that is bound to be memorable. The branch used book sale returns in April after a Covid-forced absence, interest groups, HerStory and Great Decisions continue, and it is leap year. Next month I will share news and ideas for supporting women's issues being considered by Montgomery County and the Maryland General Assembly. It is, of course, and election year but the branch leadership will stay out of partisan politics, although we will continue to support gender equity.

The National Burden of Student Loan Debt

Student debt, because of its unequal impact on women, has been an AAUW issue for many years. In June 2023, the Supreme Court struck down a Biden Administration plan to forgive \$400 billion in student loans.

Student loan debt is the second highest consumer debt category after mortgages, totaling \$1.766 trillion. This reflects the fact that 20% of American adults with an undergraduate degree and 24% of postgraduate degree holders have outstanding student debt. That totals over 43 million borrowers. Women and minorities bear the brunt of this debt: Male students are most likely to get financial help from parents and family. Female students are 49% more likely to borrow federal student loans than their male peers. A compounding problem is that women are more likely to carry large amounts of student debt primarily because their salaries after graduation are much lower than what non-minority men can earn. The loan burden of minority graduates is significantly higher. These summary data are from the Education Data Initiative, a non-profit research organization.

The student loan burden does not reflect frivolous spending but the high rate of tuition inflation relative to wages and the cost of living. The U.S. Department of Labor statistics show that in 1970, five hours of work per week at a minimum-wage job could pay a year's tuition at a state public university. By 2020, 28 hours per week were required to pay tuition.

The cancelled 2022 student loan forgiveness initiative would have wiped out up to \$20,000 loan debt for millions of borrowers, but other active and ongoing loan forgiveness programs have benefitted about 3.6 million borrowers. Currently, various elements of the complicated and often poorly managed systems of loans are being mitigated by major government efforts to find and correct accounting errors and provide retroactive credits and forgiveness initiatives for people with disabilities and those working in public service jobs. Current programs also cancel remaining balances for individuals that have made uninterrupted loan payments for 20 years. A new initiative announced in January will cancel the loan balance for students who borrowed under \$12,000 and have been repaying their loans for 10 years.



For low-income students, Montgomery College is a great option, but it still puts an economic strain on low-income families. Montgomery County, the state of Maryland and student tuition are the major sources of funding. In 2024, both the county and state are expecting declines in revenue, threatening to reduce higher-education funding that had increased over the past two years.

AAUW Gaithersburg branch dedicates most of the proceeds of its used book sale to provide scholarships to financially deserving women students studying for non-traditional careers. Contributions by members also support these scholarships. Clearly, the need for financial assistance for college has not gone away.

2024 Book Sale is Coming – April 11-13, 2024

Gaithersburg AAUW Book Sale began about 50 years ago! Help us make this the most successful ever.

The annual Book Sale will resume in April at Asbury Methodist Village after being suspended due to Covid. Proceeds from the sale fund scholarships for eligible female students at Montgomery College and The Universities at Shady Grove.

The Book Sale's success derives from a variety of help from members and friends. Many of these activities can be accomplished without going out in the cold and do not require lifting heavy boxes.

Every member to asked to consider what they could do now to help prepare for the sale and generate donations and customers.

Can you help with some of these tasks?

Help designing materials to use in advertising and marketing.

Contact senior citizen organizations and living complexes and provide sale information to share with their members.

Provide Home School networks book-sale information.

Identify organizations such as book clubs, women's clubs, professional associations, or neighborhood groups that would post the book sale information on their website or newsletter.

Post printed flyers on Community or library bulletin boards in your neighborhood.

Collect Cloth bags (like you take to the grocery store) for us to give to customers on Bag Day (Saturday).

Make a poster for display during the sale that tells how we use the proceeds (scholarships and AAUW educational and advocacy activities).

Contact local TV stations to post information on their Community Bulletin Boards.

Sign up members to work preparing books and providing service to sale customers.

Help look up book values on the internet to identify books deserving special pricing. (We will give you guidance)

Post book sale information on electronic web sites

If you enjoy working with students, we need help supervising student volunteers during sorting and the sale.



Are you willing to serve on a book sale subcommittee?

- We need help coordinating areas, such as marketing, publicity, pricing, and book sorting.
- We need help organizing and supervising volunteers.
- Are you willing to recruit volunteers to work at the book sale? These could be older adults, scout groups or other volunteer organizations.
- Are you willing to help wherever we need assistance?

Can you help stimulate book donations?

- Contact friends to ask for donations of books, DVDs, sheet music. We are particularly seeking children's books and recently published books. We can pick up book donations.
- Help identify organizations or groups that might have books to donate and could publish a request for donations or provide information about the sale dates.

To help with these or other tasks, let Liz Hessel know about your interests! Contact her at [liz\[at\]meral\[dot\]com](mailto:liz[at]meral[dot]com) or 301-840-1258.

We all take pride in the funds raised by our Branch for scholarships. The students who receive the scholarships are *role models of the future*. They have been generally near the top of their class and have also shown great leadership, often being the first in their families to attend or graduate from college. They frequently faced challenges as their families struggled to find to support them to attend college. Their interests are broad, but their leadership potential has been evident. Let us pull together to have another successful sale!

Letters from Out-of-State Branch Members

Mary Wykes, a dedicated letter writer, who corresponds with branch members that now live out of state, has shared Holiday greetings from Marilyn Leist, Lois Liggett, and Anita Taylor. If you would like to write to Anita, Lois, or Marilyn, Mary Wykes can provide their address.

Anita Taylor now lives in a senior community in Winfield, Kansas, near family. She reports she is in good health and is well settled, although she misses the amenities of Maryland. Anita plans to come back for a visit with friends in Montgomery County in 2024. We will keep you informed of her visit plans.

Lois Liggitt reports from Montpelier, Vermont, that she and her husband Walt are having health issues, he with Parkinson and Lois with a recurring cancer. On the bright side, Lois' second

book, *Bone (&Body) Lessons: Culture, Measurement and Language*, was published in November 2023. It is a change from her 2022 book on Norse myths but reflects her expertise and experience in gerontology and physical therapy.

Marilyn Leist reports from Lafayette, Colorado, that her daughters and grandson are doing well and experiencing new and innovating career opportunities, Lorraine as Associate Pastor for the Montview Boulevard Presbyterian Church, Rosemary as she returns to real estate while working for T-Mobile, and Jan as Resident Artist at the Penland School of Craft in North Carolina.

In Memoriam - Lousie Chatlyne

Chuck Chatlyne recently shared the sad news that Louise, his wife of 56 years, died November 24, 2023. Louise was a long-time member of Gaithersburg branch and continued her membership in the branch after she moved about four years ago to Huntington Beach, California, to be closer to her granddaughters. Anna Fraker remembers that in addition to her active involvement in the branch, she was active and contributed her time to her synagogue, her profession, and other groups. Louise represented the Gaithersburg branch at Montgomery County Interbranch, which supported joint projects of the county AAUW branches. In this position, she helped promote the Sonya Kovalevsky Day at Montgomery College. She was also active in the book sale and branch planning meetings, and on two occasions, she hosted the June picnic and planning meeting in her home.

If you wish to send condolences to Louise's husband Chuck, contact Maria Roberts at [meroberts27700\[at\]cs\[dot\]com](mailto:meroberts27700@cs.com) for his e-mail address.

GREAT DECISIONS February 16, 2:30 pm meeting

- **Mary Wykes, Coordinator**



Great Decisions Foreign Policy discussion group will meet Friday, February 16 at 2:30 via Zoom.

The very timely topic for discussion is "The US and the Middle East"—the first topic in the 2024 FPA Discussion Guide, authored by Marc Lynch, Professor of Political Science at George Washington U. Averill Farrelly will be our discussion leader.

As we start the new guide, this is a great time to join this interesting group. For our zoom link or copy of the guide material, call Coordinator, Mary Wykes, 301/717-1040 or email at Mary[dot]Wykes[at]aol.com.

AAUW HerStory: Saturday, February 10, 2 pm in-person meeting

- **Maria Roberts, Coordinator**

Herstory Interest Group will meet on Saturday, February 10 at 2 pm in the Parkview Club Room of Asbury Methodist Village. Maria Roberts will present the story of a woman highly accomplished in her field. She was US-born African-American, but her mother thought it would sound

more prestigious if she registered at college as Mexican, born in Pueblo, Mexico.



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

HerStory – In person	Saturday, February 10 - 2:00 p.m.
Board Meeting – Zoom	Tuesday, February 13 - 7:00 p.m.
Great Decisions – Zoom	Friday, February 16 - 2:30 p.m.
Branch Program	Tuesday, February 20 – 7:00 p.m.
2024 Used Book Sale	Wednesday – Saturday, April 10-13
AAUW Maryland Spring Convention hosted by Kensington-Rockville Branch	Saturday, April 20

The American Association of University Women
Gaithersburg Branch
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