



# AAUW Gaithersburg Branch

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

NEWSLETTER

Dec. 2025-Jan. 2026

## DECEMBER 2025—JANUARY 2026 PROGRAMS

### Holiday Giving

**AAUW Gaithersburg suggests several funds to consider in making holiday contributions:**

**AAUW Gaithersburg Scholarship fund at Montgomery College, Two options:**

- o **Mail a check** to Montgomery College Foundation, 9221 Corporate Blvd, 3rd Floor, Rockville, MD 20850. List AAUW Gaithersburg Scholarship on the Memo line.
- o **Donate online at [www.Montgomerycollege.edu](http://www.Montgomerycollege.edu):** Click the Donate button, At the next window, select "Other" in the "Find a Designation" box and write "AAUW Gaithersburg Scholarship" in the Comments box, then fill in the usual donation information.
- o *All donations to the branch scholarship at Montgomery College are tax deductible.*

**AAUW National funds:** either click the Donate button on the AAUW.org website or mail your personal check made out to AAUW Inc and listing the selected fund on the Memo line to: Edith Allison, AAUW Gaithersburg Treasurer, 11224 Troy Road, Rockville, MD 20852.

- o **AAUW National - Greatest Needs Fund** provides support for AAUW to sustain core operations, advocacy efforts and program expansion. Contributions to this fund are tax deductible.
- o **AAUW National - Public Policy Fund** "champions gender equity through education and advocacy for inclusive policies that remove barriers to success in higher education and workplaces." Your contribution to this fund is not tax deductible.
- o **AAUW National- Defend Higher Education Fund** enables AAUW to elevate the critical higher education issues impacting women, mobilize advocates across the country, and provide strategic resources to students, staff and faculty on campuses. Your contribution to this fund is not tax deductible.

### December Meeting Postponed Until Spring

### **JANUARY BRANCH DISCUSSION ON THE FUTURE OF THE BOOK SALE**

DATE AND TIME TO BE ANNOUNCED:

send questions or suggestions before the meeting or at any time to:

[aauwgaithersburg@gmail.com](mailto:aauwgaithersburg@gmail.com)

### **Branch Board Meeting**

- **The board will not meet in December**
- **January Board Meeting: Monday, January 12, 2026, at 7:30 pm**

Branch board meetings are switching from the Second Tuesday to the Second Monday of each month through January 2026. The board meetings are open to all. Contact Heather Reichardt for the Zoom link.

—> *Other Important Meetings Continued on page 3*

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## PRESIDENTS MESSAGE

### - Heather Reichardt

Happy holidays to everyone! The current weather is certainly matching our expectations for a cold and cloudy late fall/early winter. I don't mind it, yet.

Thank you to those who attended the branch meeting about Gaithersburg's Financial Empowerment Center. I was disappointed that I could not attend. I heard it was enlightening. I would appreciate hearing from anyone who attended to get your impressions of the topic.

I was able to attend a wonderful social event on November 20 with Edie Allison and Carolyn Fisher. We went to the Alumnae Recognition Award dinner which was held at American University's Washington College of Law. AAUW CEO Gloria Blackwell mentioned to the audience that the Washington College of Law was founded by women in 1896. As a graduate of American University, I am proud to have that connection.

The event was lovely. The awardee, Yie-Hsin Hung, received a \$5,000 grant from AAUW in 1985 to help pay the tuition for Harvard Business School. The grant was for women studying typically male subjects. Fast forward 40 years, and she is now the CEO of State Street Investment Management, an international investment management firm. Her talk covered her long career which included many twists and turns, including being passed over for promotions solely because of her gender. She received her BS degree in mechanical engineering from Northwestern. Her decision to pivot to business school obviously changed her life!

### Holiday Gathering

I am looking forward to our December 6 social at the Gaithersburg Library. We will view our member, Mina Parsont's, movie about her and her sister's experience as children in occupied France. Mina is one of our longest serving branch members. Our event will include some light refreshments. Please join and bring along friends and family so they can get to know our wonderful branch!

### Holiday Giving

AAUW National is always encouraging us to donate beyond our dues. There is a new effort to donate to the new, strategic funds before year-end. While we can donate to one or all of these funds, please note **that AAUW Maryland has set a goal of \$10,000** in donations to the Public Policy Fund by the end of the fiscal year (June 2026). The Public Policy Fund supports National's efforts to "champion gender equity through education and advocacy for inclusive policies that remove barriers to success in higher education and workplaces." Examples include fighting for 1) legislation supporting women's success in higher education, 2) educational environments that are inclusive

and free from harassment, bullying and sexual assault by supporting vigorous enforcement of Title IX and other civil rights laws, among other strategic areas of focus ([www.aauw.org/about/strategic-plan-2025](http://www.aauw.org/about/strategic-plan-2025)).



The two new funds to which we can donate, in addition to the (tax deductible) Greatest Needs Fund, are:

- Defend Higher Education Fund\*
- Public Policy General Fund\*

\*Note that both the Defend Higher Education Fund and the Public Policy General Fund are not tax deductible, given their lobbying and advocacy focus.

### League of Women Voters (LWV)

As of November 7, AAUW National has joined the LWV in a new initiative called "Unite and Rise 8.5." This campaign "aims to build a movement of 8.5 million individuals to unite and rise up against the anti-democratic action of this administration." The effort is already active and continues through to the 2026 midterm elections. It is also part of their larger "Women Defend Democracy" campaign. You can sign up to be one of the 8.5 million at this website: [www.lwv.org/uniteandrise](http://www.lwv.org/uniteandrise). There is a button - "Commit to Unite and Rise" - that leads to a simple form. They are not asking for money, just your name and email. I just signed up! (Search press releases on the AAUW national website for their full announcement.)

Personally, I appreciate AAUW partnering with another noteworthy women's organization to defend our democracy. We need all the help we can get to overcome the damage the country has suffered recently.

Even with the concerns we all may have at this time, I wish everyone a safe, warm, and peaceful holiday season. I thank each of you for your support of the branch. As always, feel free to contact me with suggestions or ideas for activities, speakers or just to chat!

Best regards,

Heather

## OTHER IMPORTANT MEETINGS (Continued)

### OTHER IMPORTANT MEETINGS

AAUW HerStory will not MEET in December.

JANUARY HERSTORY WILL MEET JANUARY 10, 2026 AT 2:00 pm IN PARKVIEW CLUB ROOM, ASBURY METHODIST VILLAGE

- *Maria Roberts, Coordinator*

Herstory Women's History group will meet on Saturday, January 10, 2026, at 2 pm in the Parkview Club Room of Asbury Methodist Village.

Linda Pickle, PhD, will introduce us to a brilliant scientist whose work not only advanced medical knowledge but also led to major policy change, opening medicine and public health careers for other women.

At the meeting, before the presentation, a small prize will go to a person who correctly guesses her identity.

From outside Asbury, enter the campus at the gatehouse, 301 Odendhal Avenue, Gaithersburg. Then drive straight ahead to a T-intersection, turn right, drive a short distance to Parkview, Building 211 at the top of the hill.

GREAT DECISIONS WILL MEET FRIDAY, DECEMBER 19, AT 2:30 PM VIA ZOOM

- *Mary Wykes, Coordinator*

The Great Decisions Foreign Policy discussion group will meet December 19 at 2:30 pm to discuss the chapter on "International Climate Cooperation in an Era of Geopolitical Turmoil" led by Averill Farrelly.

New members are always welcome. For zoom link and a copy of the Foreign Policy News article by Dr. Julie George, a Fellow at the Center for International Security and Cooperation at Stanford University, contact coordinator Mary Wykes at 301-717-1040.

GREAT DECISIONS GROUP LUNCH MEETING THURSDAY, JANUARY 15 at 1:00 pm

Great Decisions group will meet to schedule the discussion topics for 2026 on Thursday, January 15 at 1:00 pm, at the Blue Note Restaurant (lower level, Hefner Community Center, 417 Russell Avenue, in Asbury Methodist Village.) Detailed directions to the meeting location will be sent closer to the event date.

## MEMBERSHIP CORNER

### - Dr. Carolyn Fisher

Members, your support for AAUW-Gaithersburg is highly valued.

#### **New Member:**

AAUW-Gaithersburg welcomes a new member. Her brief introduction is below:

- Colleen Dolak has worked in development, supporting funding for higher education and social justice organizations for the past 12 years. She received her bachelor's in communications from Notre Dame of Maryland University in 2002 and a Master's in Nonprofit and Association Management from the University of Maryland Global Campus in 2017. Colleen resides in Rockville, MD.

#### **Membership February 1, 2026 Count Preparation**

We will be checking our roster and verifying the branch membership in preparation for the official February 1 count, which includes memberships processed through January 31, 2026. Reports will be available by mid-March.

#### **A Healthy Membership: News to Peruse**

In the spirit of wishing all members good health (physical and mental), I

would like to share some news about national awareness and recognition.

December is National Safe Toys and Gifts Month—an observance that was started by the nonprofit organization—[Prevent Blindness](#), to encourage age-and ability-appropriate gift-giving during the holiday season, especially for children under age three. You can review a [Safe Toy Checklist](#). Furthermore, the [National Public Health Information Coalition \(NPHIC\)](#) on its website reports that December is a key time to promote toy safety and reduce preventable injuries in children. NPHIC highlights that resources from the [Consumer Product Safety Commission \(CPSC\)](#) and the [American Academy of Pediatrics](#) provide valuable guidelines for choosing safe toys.

Happy Holidays

Wishing you a Happy New Year

AAUW-Gaithersburg

Membership VP

Dr. Carolyn J. Fisher

#### **AAUW GAITHERSBURG BRANCH**

**Website:** [gaithersburg-md.aauw.net](http://gaithersburg-md.aauw.net)

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

#### **President**

Heather Reichardt  
[hjr1234\[at\]gmail\[dot\]com](mailto:hjr1234[at]gmail[dot]com)

#### **Vice President for Membership**

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#### **Treasurer**

Edie Allison  
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**SAVE THE DATE: ATLANTIC REGIONAL CONFERENCE, SEPTEMBER 2026****Access The Hotel Room Block [Here](#)****IN MEMORIAM: LOIS LEGGITT**

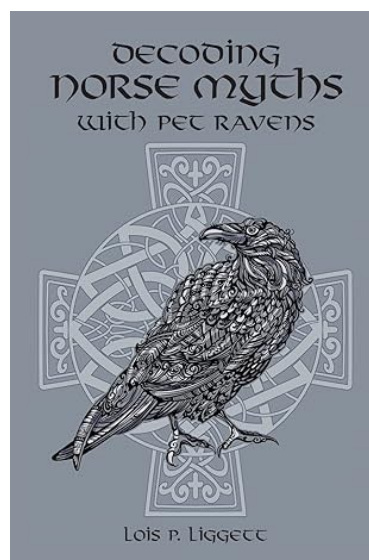
Lois Liggett, 20-year member of the Gaithersburg branch, died on July 20, 2025, at her home in Montpelier, Vermont.

While living in Gaithersburg, Lois held numerous branch offices, including: program VP, membership VP, and chair of the International Relations/Great Decisions group. She continued to actively participate in branch meetings after moving to Vermont.

Lois held degrees in Physical Therapy and Gerontology and worked as a physical therapist in hospitals and nursing homes around the world, including Zimbabwe and Japan.

Her broad interests including energy and holistic healing, linguistics and Norse myths, led to her publication of two books, "Bone (& Body) Lessons: Culture, Measurement, and Language" and "Decoding Norse Myths with Pet Ravens." Lois described her book and broad interests in Norse myths at a branch presentation in March 2021.

Lois is survived by her husband of 63 years, Walter Stewart Liggett Jr., daughters Diane (Brendan) Fahy, Beverly (Walid) Qoronfleh, Sarah (John) Spellman, and 11 grandchildren.



## THE OCTOBER “NO KINGS” DEMONSTRATION

- *Averill Farrelly and Judy Sholes*

Saturday, October 18 seemed to be a beautiful day for a “demo.” As we walked from the parking lot near the Holiday Inn to the line of demonstrators along Montgomery Village Avenue, the moderate temperatures, low humidity, and gentle breezes added encouragement to our endeavor. Judy Sholes and Averill Farrelly carried their homemade signs and water bottles. Soon we were approached by a woman with a large bag, who offered a sign to anyone without a one at this demonstration and who would promise to make good use of the sign in the future. Now Ed Farrelly had a sign as well.

As we waved our signs at the passing cars, many people honked in support of our message. One young woman stopped her car in front of us and scooted over to her open passenger window to thank us for our participation. She then handed one of our fellow demonstrators a dozen long-stemmed red roses to be shared with other protestors. Both Judy and Averill found that the roses not only lasted for the two hours of the demonstration but also decorated our homes for more than a week.

The “No Kings” organizers seemed concerned with the welfare of those who were demonstrating. They walked along the line of demonstrators making sure everyone was feeling well and had enough water, and asking if they needed anything. Two men walked by twice, counting the number of participants. We had not focused on the demographics of the protestors, but when we overheard one person saying to his companion as they walked by “there sure are a lot of old people here,” we realized that we were a mostly white, older group.

Yes, we plan to participate in future “No Kings” demonstrations. Judy plans to organize a demonstration on Darnestown Rd. near Quince Orchard Rd. and Quince Orchard High School. Averill and Ed will go back to the intersection of Frederick Rd. and Montgomery Village Ave. where large groups gather for each demonstration.

Judy is keeping in mind the research by Harvard Professor and author Erica Chenoweth, who has determined that when peaceful protests reach 3.5 percent of the population, the demonstrators are able to bring about change. For the United States, 3 1/2 percent is 12 million people. The three major resistance rallies this year went from 3 million in March, to 5 million in June to 7 million in October. We are over halfway there!



Visit our website: <https://gaithersburg-md.aauw.net/>

Like us on Facebook:

<https://www.facebook.com/GaithersburgAAUW>

# **AAUW GAITHERSBURG CALENDAR OF EVENTS**

## **December 2025 Calendar**

HerStory –will not meet in December

Branch Board will not meet in December

Branch Meeting – Gaithersburg Library

Saturday, December 6 – 11 am – 1:pm

Great Decisions December – Zoom

Friday, December 19 – 2:30 pm

## **January 2026 Calendar**

HerStory – in person

Saturday, January 10 – 2:00 pm

Board Meeting - Zoom

Monday, January 12 - 7:30 – 8:40 pm

Great Decisions January – in person

Thursday, January 15 – 1:00 pm

Branch Meeting - Zoom

Tuesday, January 20, 7:00 pm

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