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# ATLANTA BRANCH NEWS

## 2015-2016 Leadership

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AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF UNIVERSITY WOMEN

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## Annual Branch Meeting to be held May 14 at Cross Creek Cafe

For this year's annual Branch meeting, we will return to the Cross Creek Cafe (1221 Cross Creek Parkway NW, Atlanta). Our business meeting will begin at 11 am, and we will be electing new Branch officers for 2016-2018. Lunch will follow and each person will order from the menu and receive an individual bill.

Following lunch, we have special entertainment provided by actresses from Shakespeare Tavern, who will present Act I, Scene V, from *Twelfth Night*. This scene was featured in the Shakespeare Tavern's recent all-female production, *Lady Shakes*. This is an event not to be missed! Please respond to your invite by May 14.

## 2016-2018 Slate of Officers

The Nominating Committee (Bea Meyer, Mary Lynn Merkle, Betty Slater, and Wendy Venet) presents the following candidates for Branch offices:

**Co-Presidents:** Blondie Chitunya Wilson and Mary Lynn Merkle

**Program Vice Presidents:** Betty Arden and Amira Saleh

**Co-Treasurers:** Alta Birdsong and Phyllis Miller

**Nominating Committee:** Myra Carmon, Cele Covatta, Huiping Du, Mary Hanson, and Wendy Venet

We will elect these officers at our annual May meeting. Please thank these candidates for giving so generously of their time to serve the Branch.

## President's Message

### Myra Carmon

The 2016 AAUW of Georgia State Convention was held on April 16th at Warner Robins, Georgia. Eight members from the Atlanta Branch attended. Highlights of reports presented follow:

Laurie Shaw (Membership Chair) reported that there was a decline in membership from 263 to 220 this year. The Atlanta Branch received several awards including the Certificate of Achievement for the Branch with highest number of new members; Top Contribution Award for 2015-2016 for highest dollar contribution; Second Highest Dollar Contribution with \$740.00 and for Highest Dollar Contribution for Legal Advocacy Fund with \$3500.00 with per capita contribution of \$60.34.

Our very own Mary Lynn Merkle (Treasurer) reported that finances are in order.

Debbie Karvey (Communication Chair) reported on the status of various bills from the 2016 legislative session. Some of the bills include:

HB 757 Religious Freedom Bill: passed but vetoed by the Governor

HB 859 Campus Carry Bill: on Governor Deal's desk. AAUW of Georgia opposes; call Governor (404-656-1776) to veto the bill.

SB 242 Family Care Act: was held up in rules and did not pass.

SB 104 Rape Kit Law: was passed; old rape kits can now be processed.

## President's Message Cont.

HB 364 QBE Residency test: effort to decrease testing in public schools.

Diane Sakmar (Co-President) reported on Title IX. Title IX is 45 years old. The Federal Coordinator for Title IX encouraged giving information to coordinators in schools. Diane took copies of the document to Cartersville City Schools and to Georgia Highlands College. The Title IX coordinators were appreciative of the materials. Areas identified as needing attention were athletic equity, bullying, and gender differences. A Title IX Resource Guide was given to each branch president with the challenge to make appointments with Title IX Coordinators, present the Title IX Resource Guide, and discuss the topic with them.

The keynote morning speaker was Dr. Juanita Johnson-Bailey from UGA, Director of Women's Studies. She is a researcher who studies gender identity. Hers was a solid presentation and she related many experiences in the US and Africa promoting gender equity. Dr. Johnson-Bailey was the recipient of the AAUW 2015 Eleanor Roosevelt Award.

Janet Bunker, Vice Chair of Finance (AAUW Board), spoke after lunch. She showed a brief video about barriers and bias, the topic of the latest AAUW research report, and recommended members check it out.

Co-presidents Yetta McMillian and Diane Sakmar conducted the business meeting. One item that stimulated discussion was the Membership

Payment Program (MPP) which is a program to renew memberships online; the branch treasurer will receive notification of the renewal. This process will become mandatory sometime this year. This will be discussed at the April 30th Board Meeting and the May 14th meeting.

**The nominating committee reported the following state officers for next year:**

Yetta McMillian (Cobb) will be co-president with Myra Carmon (Atlanta)

Treasurer: Mary Lynn Merkle (Atlanta)

Communications VP: Faye McCord (Cartersville-Bartow)

Public Policy: Debbie Karvey (Cobb)

Membership: OPEN

Bylaws: Evelyn Merk (Houston-Peach)

AAUW Funds: Marlene Humphry (Houston-Peach)

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## Announcement:

The April 30th Board meeting for the Atlanta Branch will be held at Wendy Venet's home at 10 am.

## Cele Covatta Receives Cool Girls Award

Our Atlanta Branch member, Cele Covatta, has served as our Cool Scholarships project lead person for the last three years. She has planned programs, recruited the help of fellow Branch members, supported the individual girls by sharing resources and ideas, has provided meaningful gifts, encouraged journal writing, and headed up the essay contests.

All of this did not go unnoticed by the Cool Girls, Inc. professional staff. In celebration of the 27th anniversary of Cool Girls, they have selected 27 volunteers out of the hundred who have served for the award. And Cele is one of those. Of course, Cele wanted to credit AAUW Atlanta with this. But we all know that Cele has been greatly responsible for the Cool Scholars success story.

As a young college student, she wanted to try many things—a true renaissance woman—but she settled on social welfare. Her very first position out of college at age 22 was in the Kentucky Dept. of Human Resources. Her job was to “advise” low-income mothers on how to manage their families and finances in the slums of Louisville. Feeling completely inadequate, she nevertheless rose to the task. We who have worked with Cele are not surprised.

Cele has lived many places as a military wife and has traveled

extensively. One trip being planned is to New York City in October as a part of one of those major birthday celebrations. Her son, Trey McDonald, and her two amazing grandsons will be wishing her the happiest of birthdays.



Cele eventually received a degree and certification as a Marriage, Family and Child therapist. She and her husband, Dr. Terry Orme, shared a private practice in clinical psychology. But when Terry passed away in 2012, Cele closed the practice and became a “professional volunteer.”

She still wants to “do everything”—reading, needlework, cooking, lectures, concerts! With her multitude of talents and energy, aren't we lucky that she has chose to be a part of the Atlanta Branch!

# How GSU is springing into action on our campus and preparing for NCCWSL 2016

**By: Jennifer Stetler and Alicia Kovacevic**

Springtime is a time of renewal and growth and this especially true for the ladies of the Georgia State University (GSU) student chapter. These busy bees have been promoting leadership, awareness, and their voices for several campaigns, workshops, and advocacy events. Some of the campaigns on our campus include Getting Out Vote, Great American Condom Campaign, and Ask for Consent! On top of these campaigns, the ladies held two events in March for Women's History Month. The first event included a tabling event that celebrated local Georgia women, such as Nina Anderson Pape, Helen Wyatt Snapp, Juliette Gordon Low, Rebecca Stiles Taylor, and Alice Walker. Our second Women's History Month event was a screening of "A Path Appears" to raise awareness on human trafficking in conjunction with a Show of Force.



Even with the student chapters' excellent turnout in March, the ladies of GSU student chapter are preparing to attend National Conference for College Women Student Leaders (NCCWSL). Alicia Kovacevic, Mariam Shakeel, and Jennifer Stetler were recipients of the national scholarship for NCCWSL. These ladies will travel June 2 to the University of Maryland in College Park, MD to learn more about leadership and opportunities for their student chapter.

## Membership

**By: Kay Collins**

The dues for national, state and branch membership remain the same. For most members that is \$ 77.00 for the fiscal year July 1, 2016-June 30, 2017. Make your check payable to AAUW-Atlanta Branch and send it to the Membership VP: Kay Collins. Or you may bring your payment to the contemporary literature group, board meeting or even the May branch meeting! Life members please call me if you have questions but payment is the same as last year. Students, please call or email me as depending upon your situation, the dues may change. Also, please verify that your listing in the Handbook is correct. If not, please send change to Kay! There are some exceptions to dues amount so call or email if you have questions.

# Faces of Women Will Appear on Currency—Eventually

By: Myra Carmon and Ruth Yurchuck

While the value of our currency won't change, having the faces of women on our folding money reflects a change in the way we value women in America. Treasury Secretary Jack Lew recently announced that Harriet Tubman, former slave and abolitionist, will replace Andrew Jackson, former President and slaveholder, on the face of the \$20 bill. Jackson's image will be placed on the reverse side of the \$20.

Alexander Hamilton's portrait will remain on the front of the \$10 bill but on the reverse side, portraits of five suffrage leaders will appear, depicting a 1913 march in support of women's right to vote. The five are Lucretia Mott, Sojourner Truth, Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Alice Paul, and Susan B. Anthony. It is thought that the popularity of the current musical, *Hamilton*, and some recent biographies of the first Secretary of the Treasury had some bearing on keeping Hamilton's portrait on the face of the bill but these are unofficial reasons for the decisions.

Abraham Lincoln's picture remains on the front of the \$5 bill and back will now depict famous events at the Lincoln Memorial, including Marian Anderson's 1939 performance (organized by Eleanor Roosevelt) and Martin Luther King's 1963 "I Have a Dream" speech.

Secretary Lew directed the Bureau of Engraving and Printing to expedite redesign of the \$5 and \$20 to coincide with the centennial of women's suffrage in 2020, but production of the \$10 will take precedence. These bills are not likely to go into wide circulation until the 2030's.

This will be the most extensive change in American currency since 1929. The revised bills will use the theme of democracy to illustrate the battle for inclusion by various groups. The curator of the National Numismatic Collection at the Smithsonian's National Museum of American History, Ellen Feingold, said "the fact that women's history is being included and honored on American banknotes is a huge shift, a huge moment."

As Maria Anglin, writing in My San Antonio.com, neatly summarized events: "The ladies will eventually get a bill, we'll just have to wait patiently—the way we waited for the right to vote, own land or wear pants. Not that it will change what our money is worth. It just speaks volumes about our values."

## Travel Group

By: Betty Arden

The AAUW Travel Group will meet at 10 am on May 12 to carpool to the Atlanta Botanical Garden to view the new exhibit, "Chihuly in the Garden." The exhibit features over 20 dazzling installations. Staggering in scope and size, each wondrous work is composed of hundreds of pieces of glass.

Lunch will follow at Linton's, the new garden-to-table restaurant which opens on April 30th. Call Betty Arden for questions and to let her know you will be coming.

## Cool Scholars Meeting

By: Cele Covatta

The final meeting of Cool Scholars took place April 16, 2016 at the Arthur Blank Family YMCA. AAUW presented gifts to the seven graduating Seniors, cosmetic totes filled with Health and Beauty aids as they go off to college. Eight essays were submitted and will go to readers for judging next. The girls will be taking their annual road trip in July, with AAUW providing sponsorship. They will be carrying out a service project in Appalachia. Chairperson, Cele Covatta, was honored as a Top27 volunteer. Cool Girls is celebrating its 27th birthday. Atlanta branch has contributed generously to this excellent group. Many thanks to all those who have given of time and energy.



## Contemporary Literature

By: Kay Collins

We meet at 10:30 AM, Monday, May 2 at the home of Mary Hanson. We will discuss "All the Light You Cannot See" by Anthony Doerr. Kay will lead discussion and Cele will provide re-freshments. Please bring suggestions for good reading next year. Our June 6 meeting will be the selection of next year's titles! We will decide if we want to have a pot luck lunch or other type of meeting in June. Also, bring your dues renewal. It is the same amount as last year. Call Kay if you have questions about either of these.

## Calendar

Board Meeting— April 30 10am at the home of Wendy Venet

Annual Meeting – May 14 11am at Cross Creek Cafe

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