



Atlanta Branch News

Co-President's Article

A WEATHER REPORT ON PUBLIC EDUCATION

Mary Lynn Merkle

I, unashamedly, am an advocate. That's because I spent years in the public schools as a student and then as an educator—in elementary classrooms, high school, and universities. Public education is one of the few ways in which the American people can have life-changing opportunities. At this time there are heavy clouds over public education, and storms are brewing.

The Tornado:

Great efforts are being made to use public monies to subsidize private schools. Private charter schools pop up. Often times they are technology savvy. That's because there are often fewer professional employees and lots more computer learning. The truth is a computer with a learning program is much cheaper than a teacher. But at what cost!

And what about those of us who have "extra" money after paying for life essentials and invest it in art, in music, in our alma maters (all of which are important), and then declare our tax deductible gifts; therefore, public education funds get an even smaller piece of the pie. And so those public schools in areas that are most in need of augmented funding receive less.

The Hurricane:

Professional Teacher Associations (unions) are under attack. Those of us who were active members of Education Associations know that it's about much more than money; although the promise of a living wage helps encourage young professionals to go into this important career. It's also about ...

(Continued on next page)

2017-2018 Leadership

Co-Presidents

Blondie Chitunya-Wilson

Mary Lynn Merkle

president@aauwatlanta.org

Program Vice Presidents

Betty Arden and Amira Saleh

programs@aauwatlanta.org

Membership Vice President

Kay Collins

membership@aauwatlanta.org

Board Secretary

Suzanne Mutic

secretary-board@aauwatlanta.org

Branch Meeting Secretaries

Susan Diffenderfer and Marcy Nader

secretary-meeting@aauwatlanta.org

Finance Officers

Alta Birdsong and Phyllis Miller

treasurer@aauwatlanta.org

College/University Relations

Betty Slater and Carol Allain

universityrelations@aauwatlanta.org

Diversity

Susan Diffenderfer

diversity@aauwatlanta.org

Historian

Wendy Venet

historian@aauwatlanta.org

Hospitality

Betty Arden

hospitality@aauwatlanta.org

Public Policy

Diana Witt

publicpolicy@aauwatlanta.org

Continued on pg. 2

(Co-President's Article, continued)

... class size, it's about providing appropriate settings so special needs students can succeed, and it's about curricula and special programs.

It's about "extras" like music and art and sports (think Title IX) being available for *all* students.

The Typhoon:

College costs are continuing to rise much faster than much of the rest of the economy. A young person can apply for scholarships and/or loans. Or they can work and go to classes in addition. Many students must do all three. After four years (or five or six if they are working), the student graduates with a huge amount of debt. Sometimes even though their dream was to teach, they simply can't afford it.

Oh, yes! The storms are many, and they are damaging.

But wait—the clouds are opening up! You read a letter in our last newsletter from the Dresden Elementary School Education Foundation (DESEF) to whom we have given goods and money and TIME. Thanks to Bea Meyer for this effort. This school and its foundation work very hard to provide exemplary educations for all its students—even though 98% of the students come to school each day from a home in which they do not hear the English language.

Atlanta Branch has not settled for "wringing hands" for this school. We've stepped up without philanthropy funds, with our books, and some of us are giving our time as well.

It's all about community. And a big part of that community is the schoolhouse with its educational, social and, yes, philanthropic opportunities.

Leadership, continued

Public Relations

Sharon Bevis-Hoover
publicrelations@aauwatlanta.org

Scholarship

Wendy Venet
scholarship@aauwatlanta.org

Web Information

Terry Eshenour
webmaster@aauwatlanta.org

Contemporary Literature

Kay Collins
contemporaryliterature@aauw...
atlanta.org

Travel Group

Betty Arden
travel@aauwatlanta.org

Advisory Board Chair

Kay Collins
advisory@aauwatlanta.org

Publications

Madison Hoover
publications@aauwatlanta.org

AAUW Funds

Dana Gordon
aauwfunds@aauwatlanta.org

Philanthropy Chair

Cele Covatta
philanthropy@aauwatlanta.org

Communications Chair

Ruth Yurchuck
communications@aauwatlanta.org

Bylaws Chair

Pat Bevis
bylaws@aauwatlanta.org



MEETING OUR MEMBERS: DIANA WITT

Mary Lynn Merkle

It is a pleasure it is to introduce Diana Witt, our nominee for 2018-2020 Branch co-president. She has been an integral part of the Atlanta Branch for the past 16 years. During these years Diana has served as Program vice-president, newsletter editor, Public Policy chair, and Bookfair representative and was Branch co-president (from 2007 to 2009).

Diana was born in New York City, but has also lived in Connecticut (where she attended high school), in Pennsylvania where she attended Bucknell University, and Minnesota. When her husband Lenny was newly employed at Kennesaw State University, they moved to Georgia. Diana and Lenny have two adult children, son Stephen Witt and daughter Emily Witt. Both are successful writers. They have added a granddaughter, Jane Schneider, who is now 18 months (11 months when accompanying picture was taken).

With a Master's degree in Library Science Diana's career began as a reference librarian. Then she was employed as an indexer for the New York Times, and there she found her niche. She has worked at a freelance indexer since 1980, a profession that requires her to read over 60 books a year on a wide range of subjects. She is very good at what she does and just recently received the Hines Award for service to the American Society for Indexing.

When Betty Slater was Branch president, she received a call from Diana. Diana had been an AAUW member prior to moving to Atlanta. So it was a priority for her to connect with the Atlanta Branch! And, as we know, the rest is history!

Although Diana enjoys knitting and cooking in her spare time, she and Lenny definitely enjoy traveling, particularly bike riding. In the past they have pedaled from Vienna to Prague, from Budapest to Vienna, from Bordeaux to the Atlantic Coast, in Brittany and Anjou. This year their plan is to cycle through part of the Loire valley.

Atlanta Branch is an important part of Diana's life because it continues her intellectual and educational pursuits. She loves good discussions and informative programs. It would be her dream to grow the membership, particularly increasing the number of younger women. Right on!

We wish you a wonderful co-presidency, Diana!



The Buckhead's Bookdrop says Thank you Darwin Womack!

As I live in the Buckhead Library area near the beautiful Atlanta Buckhead Shopping Center, I was really feeling pretty low as my red and white colors were fading away and my door would not open properly. Along comes, Mr. Darwin Womack, Mary's kind husband, to the rescue. Thank for bringing me back to life! I really stand out now and ready to take on more books!

**Membership Renewal**

Kay Collins

I will start accepting renewal dues in April. The National board voted to increase due by \$10.00 to \$59.00. The branch is considering adjusting dues to compensate for this increase. As soon as the final amount is confirmed, you will be notified.

Travel Group

Betty Arden

The AAUW Travel Group will meet at 10 am on April 12th at the Toco Hills Shopping Center Kroger store, at the corner of Lavista Road and North Druid Hills Road in northeast Atlanta. Car pools will drive to the BAPS Shri Swaminara Mandir, located at 460 Rockbridge Road, Lilburn. The BAPS temple is the largest Hindu temple in the U.S.

Atlanta Technical College Visit

Betty Slater

It was such a pleasure to meet with Dr. Jamar H. Jeffers, Director of Institutional Advancement, at Atlanta Technical College. Hopefully, Atlanta Technical College will join as a College/University partner. After meeting with Dr. Jeffers, I learned they have a way of helping students so that they can continue their education. They call this a Bridge Gap Scholarship in which they aide students who are experiencing financial hardships. The college helps these students by providing funds that helps each student to pay for their specific need. (Much like we do with our local scholarship program.) It is our hope to link with the college to share our information about local scholarships to students.

The programs at the Atlanta Technical College give so many people an opportunity to learn a variety of skills. When talking with Instructor Sheba Steps of Electrical Systems Technology, she stated that several women are taking this program. Mr. Jim Gale, Early Childhood Care and Education, shared that they have about 125 women in the program who secure jobs in the local area. When talking with Dr. Jeffers, I asked if any of the students wanted to continue on to college if that was possible. He said that each student who gets a degree from the technical college can transfer 50 credits to another college. It was such a pleasure to visit and tour Atlanta Technical College with Dr. Jeffers. I look forward to their membership as a college/university partner.

Congratulations to our member Jenniffer Stetler for the birth of twin boys, Jacory and Jayden!

Jenniffer says, "It was a hard delivery with emergency c-section with Jacory at 5 lbs 3 oz and Jayden at 6 lbs 15 oz. Jayden was in the NICU and Jacory was always with me. Here are some pictures of the boys; the large boy is Jayden."



Nominating Committee Report

The Nominating Committee composed of Chair Mary Hanson, Myra Carmon, Cele Covatta, Wendy Venet, and Huiping Du has completed the slate of officers for the 2018-2020 years. These officers will be elected and then installed at our May 5 th Annual Meeting.

Co-presidents:

Huiping Du
Diana Witt

Co-Vice presidents for Program:

Billie Collier
Betty Slater

Co-Vice presidents for Membership:

Marge Anderson
Phyllis Miller

Finance Officer:

Susan Diffenderfer

Please come to the May meeting and show your support for these seven women who have volunteered to give their time and their talents in service to Atlanta Branch.

From March Travel Group

Mary Lynn Merkle

The Travel group toured Habitat for Humanity's Restore located in the Reynold's Town area. Restore has building supplies, appliances, furniture, and a few books and knick-knacks. They sell these items to the public, and then use that money to furnish newly built homes. Imagine! They are planning to build over 50 houses in the Atlanta area this year.

Pictured (left to right) are: Cecelia Cantrell, Myra Carmon, Phyllis Miller, Betty Arden, and Kay Collins.



Member Survey

Kay Collins

A survey has been distributed to all branch members via email or USPS asking for your opinions to guide the leadership. The purpose is to provide the new and future boards with information for philanthropic projects, to increase attendance at branch meetings and to gain new members. A few have completed this and we THANK YOU! However, most have not. It will take a few minutes to respond thoughtfully about our branch meetings, philanthropic activity in addition to Bookfair (or not) and possible collaboration with other like-minded groups. Please complete the survey. If you did not receive it from Madison Hoover, Feb. 2 and Mar. 13, please let me know: Kay Collins, 404-266-2183 or via email, kayjcollins@bellsouth.com. The subject line of the email should read "AAUW Member Survey", and it should come from Survey Monkey. Look in your spam/junk mail folder if you didn't find it in your inbox. I have not received it via the mass distribution so I know some of you did not either!

Contemporary Literature

Kay Collins

We will meet Monday, April 2, 10:30 AM at the home of Mary Hanson. We'll discuss "The Other Einstein" by Marie Benedict. Questions? Call Kay Collins.

Table of Contents

Co-President's Message	Pg. 1-2
Meeting Diana Witt	Pg. 3
Buckhead Bookdrop	Pg. 4
Membership Renewal	Pg. 4
Travel Group	Pg. 4
ATC Visit	Pg. 5
Congrats Jenniffer!	Pg. 5
National Committee Report	Pg. 6
March Travel Group Summary	Pg. 6
Member Survey	Pg. 7
Contemporary Literature	Pg. 7

Calendar

Contemporary Literature	4/2
Travel Group	4/12
Spring Convention	4/13-14

www.aauwatlanta.org

