



# Atlanta Branch News

November 2019 Newsletter: Volume 70, Issue 4

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## **PRESIDENT’S LETTER: AAUW UPDATE**

By: Diana Witt

Congratulations everyone! Our 60th AAUW Bookfair is now history. Although exact figures are not available, preliminary results indicate that we did as well as last year despite having 100 fewer boxes of books to sell. The Bookfair Steering Committee is processing the final expenditures and deposits and will soon determine branch disbursements.

I am also pleased to announce two new Co-Chairs for our Scholarship Committee. Our former chair, Mary Hanson, had to step down. Terri Roland and Velma Tilley have graciously agreed to take on this very important committee. Please give them your thanks and support when you see them. I am very grateful to have them on the Board. Mary Lynn Merkle now chairs our Philanthropy Committee, and again, I am very grateful for her service. Both the Finance Committee and AAUW Funds Committee are working hard right now; we hope to have all our 2019 obligations completed by the end of November. We will keep you posted.

The rest of the AAUW year is moving faster than any of us can possibly keep up with. Our next program is Saturday, November 16<sup>th</sup> at the Lenox Grill in the Atlanta Marriot Buckhead. It’s almost two weeks before Thanksgiving, so you can enjoy your lunch without guilt! Our Holiday Party is going to be different this year. It will be a brunch event on Saturday, December 14<sup>th</sup> from 10AM to 12:30pm at the home of Gillian Horsley-Heintz. This is always a festive occasion, so plan to attend! You can visit with our scholarship winners, bid at the Silent Auction, and honor our name grant honorees.

As our busy holiday season approaches, I hope everyone has rested and recovered from our Bookfair labors. Enjoy the fall and some cooler weather. (Finally!)

Thanks to all for your commitment to AAUW and its mission.

Diana Witt,

AAUW Atlanta Branch President

*Leadership continued*

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**ATLANTA'S WESTVIEW CEMETERY: CELEBRATE 60 YEARS OF BOOKFAIR AND LENOX SQUARE**

by Betty Slater

On Saturday, November 16<sup>th</sup> Atlanta Branch members will enjoy a program about Atlanta's historic Westview Cemetery, presented by historian Jeff Clemmons. We will meet from at 11:00 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. at the Lenox Bar and Grill located inside the Atlanta Marriott Buckhead Hotel and Conference Center (3405 Lenox Road, Atlanta, Ga 30326) across from Lenox Square. We will also hear the results from our 60<sup>th</sup> Bookfair. You can visit the history of Lenox Square where Bookfair began 60 years ago.

Members can either valet park at the hotel or park at Lenox Square and walk across the street to the Marriott Hotel. You will be able to order from the menu, enjoy the celebration, and hear stories about Westview Cemetery.

Respond to your evite by November 12<sup>th</sup>, contact Billie Collier or Betty Slater programs@aauwatlanta.org to RSVP.

It will be a great meeting and we look forward to seeing you there!

**CELEBRATE!!**

By: Mary Lynn Merkle

The 2019 Bookfair is now part of history, so let's celebrate jobs well done! All members, friends, and family members who contributed to the success are invited to a celebration party at Marlowe's (in Dunwoody Village) on Sunday, December 8<sup>th</sup> at 2:00 p.m.

In addition to being treated to great refreshments, we will hear the final tabulations of our profits and distribution amounts to the branches. We will also learn the names of our 10 Super Workers and have an opportunity to commend them.

Circle the date! Come be a part of the celebration!

**CONTEMPORARY LITERATURE MEETING**

By: Kay Collins

We will meet Monday, November 4<sup>th</sup> at the Sandy Springs Library (395 Mt. Vernon Highway, Atlanta, 30328/404-612-7000). We are gathering at the usual time; 10:30 am. All are welcome.

Questions? Contact Kay Collins,  
contemporaryLiterature@aauwatlanta.org

## **TRAVEL GROUP**

By: Betty Arden

The AAUW Travel Group will meet at the DeKalb History Center (101 East Court Square, Decatur, Georgia) at 10:00 am on November 14<sup>th</sup> to view the "Silk and Stitch" exhibit. The exhibit covers the time period of 1870 through 1960, and has a collection of gown, jewelry, belts, and handbags. Lunch will follow at a Decatur restaurant.

If you have questions, contact Betty Arden at [travel@aauwatlanta.org](mailto:travel@aauwatlanta.org)

## **COOL SCHOLARS PROGRAM UPDATE**

By: Betty Slater

The Atlanta Branch helped to start the Cool Scholars program, now a part of the Cool Girls program. Girls attending the Cool Scholars program get aid with selecting a college to attend, meeting admission standards, and preparing admission applications. I recently learned about the success of this program from the program coordinator, Ebony Gamble, when we both attended a fundraiser. She reported that many of the girls who started the program have now graduated from college. It was great to hear how our Branch volunteers helped these girls make positive choices, avoid risky behaviors, stay in school, and lead healthy lives. Thanks to all the members who gave their time to the Cool Scholars program!

## **STUDYING ABROAD IN MADRID: A LIFE CHANGING EXPERIENCE**

By: Keresa Richards

“Traveling – it leaves you speechless, then turns you into a storyteller.” – Ibn Battuta

Nervous, excited, and curious were all emotions I felt leaving Atlanta Hartsfield-Jackson International Airport to Madrid, Spain. The first week abroad was hard. I was missing home, feeling lonely, and having a difficult time getting adjusted to a new environment. Taking one step at a time pushed me forward to a point of acclimation and I now feel at ease navigating this new culture. I will break my study abroad experience into academics, travel, and culture.

### **Academics:**

I am studying at the Universidad Pontificia Comillas, a business school in Madrid. I speak conversational Spanish, but I chose all English classes for ease of understanding. Currently, I am taking International Business, International Marketing, Human Resource Management, and Leadership & Change Management. These classes will all go towards my marketing and strategy degree at Emory University. I will also translate this knowledge into my future career as a Strategy Consultant for Ernst and Young.

### **Travels:**

Traveling has been on my favorite parts of studying abroad. Each time I visit another country, I am filled with gratitude. I am extremely blessed to experience different places, cultures, and people. My travels have helped me create a more dynamic outlook on life through expanding my horizons. I have traveled to Barcelona, Ibiza, London, and Brussels since being abroad and have trips planned to Lisbon, Birmingham, and Salamanca for the rest of my stay.

## Culture:

Each place has its own flavor that we like to call culture. Spaniards live a more relaxed lifestyle. I like their emphasis on immersing yourself in the current. In one of my many moments of relaxing with new friends, I tried Paella. This has become one of my favorite Spanish dishes. Another cultural difference is although the Spaniards have healthy habits in terms of organic food and active lives, they smoke cigarettes a lot. I believe this is common in Europe. However, I am still not used to being around so much smoking.

I am glad I took a leap of faith and decided to study abroad. During this time, I've learned so much about not only the world but myself. Getting out of your comfort zone truly forces you to get comfortable with yourself. Although I encountered some growing pains, I am proud of my growth abroad and look forward to the rest of my time here! I will be returning to Atlanta at the end of December to finish the last semester of my undergraduate career. College went by so fast, but I will cherish the memories for years to come.

## **RESPECT FOR ALL!**

Mary Lynn Merkle

AAUW seeks equity and justice for women and girls. Atlanta Branch adheres to that goal not only through our philanthropic funds but also through our hands-on efforts as a group and as individuals.

There is one minority population that we don't often consider: fellow Georgians who are incarcerated. Regardless of the reason for their imprisonment, we should support use of their prison time for rehabilitation; preparing the prisoner for healthy and secure independence when they have completed their sentence and are released.

Georgia has one of the highest rates of incarceration in the country with a population of 53,000 in state prisons and an additional 43,000 in other prisons around the state. A 2017 study found that pre-trial detentions greatly contribute to this large number. At that time the cost per day per inmate in Decatur, GA was \$33.00 (\$1,000. per month). The cost per day at Georgia State prison was \$58.00—almost \$21,000. annually. Add to these costs the supervision of about 25,000 on parole and 464,000 on probation (where the seriously overtaxed officers juggle as many as 400 cases at a time). WHAT TO DO!

Through the efforts of former Governor Nathan Deal (AJC, 4/06/16) many steps were taken to alleviate the numbers and increase the successes. There are programs for attaining a GED, high school graduation, and/or vocational training. It has been shown that for every dollar spent on such a program results in a future savings of \$5.00. And studies indicate that those who achieved a GED or high school graduation during imprisonment have a 29% lower rate of recidivism after three years. Unfortunately, only inmates who get approval and then are able to pay all the costs can work toward a post-secondary education.

During Governor Deal's tenure, Georgia Senate Bill 365 was passed. This Bill created a path to success through behavioral treatment programs addressing (among others) cognitive-behavioral change and substance abuse. Those who complete the program satisfactorily (about 1/3) leave with a Program and Treatment Completion Certificate, a valuable part of their resume as they reintegrate.

State agencies have just been directed to reduce their budgets by 4% next year and by 6% the following year. The Department of Correction's ability to provide such programs as those described above may necessarily be curtailed by these cuts. They will have a total of approximately \$112 million less to spend in those two years. The plan now is to spend less on state prisons, transition services (which help in reintegration), and training programs. The Department of Juvenile Justice will face a cut in their funding of \$35 million in just two years.

Here is an important insight offered by an inmate at the San Quentin Penitentiary, “Nobody is just the crime they committed. We are all so much more than the worst thing we have done.” It’s important for us to remember that they are not criminals—they are men and women and juveniles who have committed a crime. They are individuals who are currently paying the price of their freedom for that crime. Opportunities for change and growth should be made available to them. Then, when their time for release comes, successful reintegration into their communities will benefit all of us.

## **UPCOMING EVENTS**

November 4<sup>th</sup>: Contemporary Literature Meeting

November 9<sup>th</sup>: Board Meeting

November 14<sup>th</sup>: Travel Group Meeting

November 16<sup>th</sup>: Branch Meeting

December 8<sup>th</sup>: BookFair Celebration

December 14<sup>th</sup>: Holiday Celebration

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### **Quote of the month**

“My travels led me to where I am today. Sometimes these steps have felt painful, difficult, but led me to greater happiness and opportunities”

~ **Diana Ross**

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*[aauwatlanta.org](http://aauwatlanta.org)*