



Atlanta Branch News

March 2020 Newsletter: Volume 70, Issue 9

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MARCH MEETING

By: Betty Slater and Billie Collier

Please plan to attend our March 21st meeting to be held in one of our favorite venues, Cross Creek Café (1221 Cross Creek Parkway, Atlanta, 30327; 404.351.1550). The meeting will begin at 11:30 am and conclude at 2:00 pm. Our guest speaker is Jeff Graham, Executive Director of Georgia Equality. We will order from the menu. Please respond to the evite or email hospitality@aauwatlanta.org by March 18th. You can also contact either Betty Slater or Billie Collier.

RESCHEDULED HEART HELPERS MEETING

Dr. Gina Lundberg, Clinical Director of Emory Women’s Heart Center, will be presenting the postponed Heart Helper program planned for February but cancelled due to inclement weather. The meeting will be held at the Family Life Center, located behind the Second Ponce de Leon Baptist Church (2715 Peachtree Road, Atlanta, GA). Please contact either Betty Slater or Billie Collier programs@aauwatlanta.org by April 15th if you plan to attend.

PRESIDENT’S LETTER: AAUW UPDATE

By: Diana Witt

Hello everyone: We are entering the last few months of our AAUW 2019-2020 year. Our Philanthropy and Scholarship committees are already at work, and the Nominations Committee will soon reach out to find women in our Branch who are willing to serve in our various officer positions for the 2020-2022 cycle. I urge branch members, especially some of our newer members, to seriously consider serving in one of these positions.

Most of our branch activities involve narrow, targeted time commitments. I know that all of us lead busy, active lives, and have six ways to spend every minute. But a few hours a month or over a period of months is not a huge time commitment. Meetings can now be kept to a minimum, as much can be done via e-communication, e-voting and even teleconferencing. There are projects and tasks, like Bookfair, that involve a significant time commitment, but only for a short period of time (a week or less).

Leadership continued

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Please search your calendars to carve some time out to serve in a position with the AAUW Atlanta Branch. We need and welcome new faces and new ideas. And if you can't run for an office, consider serving on a committee. AAUW, both nationally and locally, is doing great work.

In our current cultural and political climate, AAUW's work has never been more necessary. It would be wonderful if some of the newer Branch members could join our dedicated and experienced band of repeat volunteers and help us fulfill our mission. Let's work together to make the Atlanta Branch as strong and effective as it can be.

Diana Witt
President, AAUW Atlanta Branch

SAVE THE DATE FOR OUR UPCOMING BRANCH MEETING!

Saturday, May 2nd: Pearl Cleage: Novelist, Essayist, Playwright, and Poet, 11am to 2pm at Colonnade Restaurant.

POVERTY AFFECTS EVERYONE

By: Velma Tilley, Philanthropy Committee

Atlanta is the 8th fastest growing large city in the country. Consider the influx of the movie industry and other industries locating in and around Atlanta. Next consider how housing has changed since the 1980s.

A bit of our history: For most of the 20th century, Atlanta was known for its public housing. Techwood Homes opened as the nation's first government-owned housing project in 1936. Leading up to the 1996 Olympics, the Atlanta Housing Authority owned approximately 14,000 individual units across 43 properties with about 5000 of those deemed uninhabitable. Then to prepare for the Olympics, the demolition began. By 2011, there were no more public housing projects in Atlanta at all. Where did all these people go? And who were these people? They were a diverse population of poor, mostly people of color, and without a political voice.

Another historical note: Housing for another group of people was affected by the 2008 financial crisis, sometimes called the collapse of the housing bubble. A broader population was involved in this event. Maybe more middle class? Maybe less predominately people of color? Maybe not.

Whichever part of our diverse population is most affected, what is the effect of all this displacement on children and adolescents? What is the effect of housing insecurity on poverty, mental health and education?

Although AAUW has taken particular interest in education, all three – education, mental health and poverty - are intertwined.

Someone is indeed interested in these things. Dr. Melanie R. Covert, an assistant professor of psychology at Brenau University, is conducting research focused on American Poverty/American Dream. She is interviewing residents of low income housing as well as collateral participants such as school administrators and teachers from Title 1 schools for her study. In her own words, “Collecting in depth information regarding subjects’ educational experiences allows one to understand how educational quality, consistency and interruption are impacted by housing and housing quality, food insecurities or income disparity.” Dr. Covert further states, “Qualitative narratives give voice and context to those statistics which are available regarding these populations, give points of inquiry for future researchers and suggest the potential for uncovering previously undiscovered patterns within the constructs of Housing, Poverty, Mental Health and Education.”

Hiring an assistant would facilitate completion of her research and she has contacted our Branch for financial assistance, which the Philanthropy Committee is presently considering. Dr. Covert stressed that the information gathered, reported and made available could be of great benefit to those members of our community most hampered by poverty.

The Philanthropy Committee is reviewing her proposal. What do you think?

PUBLIC POLICY ALERT: GEORGIA

By: Cecilia Cantrell, Public Policy Chair

Budget discussions at every level, household, state or federal often cause glazed eyes and distracted minds. But budgets at every level create a personal impact, of which we may not be fully aware. The Georgia Legislature and Governor Kemp are currently debating major budget items that will impact all of us for years to come. Health care issues are tied to the debate, especially the Kemp proposal to give insurance companies tax dollars to “help them pay for care of customers” and allow insurance companies to weaken consumer protections instituted by the Affordable Care Act.

Georgia has approximately 28 million people who are uninsured. From my perspective as a retired health provider and educator, efforts to cover citizens should certainly exceed any attempts to use tax dollars for greater profits and concessions to an industry that has raked in incredible profits often at the expense of consumers.

Further, earlier diagnosis, treatment, and better preventive measures maintain healthier Georgia citizens. During seasons of contagious illnesses such as influenza, access to care can help all of us stay healthier. So, the proposed 9% cut in the Centers for Disease Control in the Federal budget is short sighted and may have detrimental effects on the health of the nation, as well as individuals.

We can’t afford to let our eyes glaze over, or let our minds take refuge in easier subjects. Please follow both budget debates closely and speak up for wise use of tax dollars.

CONTEMPORARY LITERATURE MEETING

By: Kay Collins

We will meet Monday, March 2nd at Peachtree Presbyterian Church (3434 Roswell Rd., Atlanta, 30305); room 2309. The meeting will start at 10:30am. We'll discuss "Unsheltered" by Barbara Kingsolver. The church is in the Buckhead area on Roswell Road between Peachtree Road and Habersham. The building, Family Commons, is between the sanctuary and the separate chapel; there is a tiny children's play area beside an entrance in the front. Park in the lot behind the building or between the building and the chapel. The room is on the second floor. Elevators are available.

Contact Kay Collins, contemporaryliterature@aauwatlant.org with questions.

TRAVEL GROUP

By: Betty Arden

We will visit the CNN Center "Behind the Scenes" tour on Thursday, March 12th. Please meet at the Ansley Mall Kroger at 10:00 am to car pool to CNN at 190 Marietta St. NW. The tour cost is \$16.50. We will share the cost of parking. Following the tour of about an hour, we will eat lunch nearby. Wheel chairs are available as there are some stairs.

For further information, contact Betty Arden at travel@aauwatlanta.org

UPCOMING EVENTS

March 2nd: Contemporary Literature Meeting

March 12th: Travel Group Meeting

March 21st: Branch Meeting

March 28th: Board Meeting (March 28th from 10am -12pm at The Mansions at Decatur, 2677 Lawrenceville Highway, Decatur, Ga 30033)

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