



# Atlanta Branch News

September 2020 Newsletter: Volume 71, Issue 1

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## **A Look at our Future**

*By: Cele Covatta*

Several months ago, in what seems like an alternate universe, I made some notes with this message in mind. John and I had just gotten back from a cruise of the Snake River and Columbia River gorge, which followed Lewis and Clark’s Corps of Discovery. Their mission, commanded by President Thomas Jefferson, was primarily to find an overland route to the Pacific.

Despite incredible hardships, they completed the mission, and made rich American history. They had to constantly change and reinvent their methods. At one point, they did something quite remarkable, offering an equal vote on where to winter in the late 1800s to York, a slave, and to a woman, Sacajawea, Bird Woman.

We stand on the shoulders of this remarkable woman, who was a teenager with a neonate, enduring the hardships of the expedition side by side with the male members of that expedition. William Clark observed that a woman travelling with a war party is a token of peace. Women remain strong symbols of peace, but also strength, throughout this weary world.

In this time of unrest and uncertainty, we must remain true to our mission. AAUW has been involved in empowering women and girls since 1881. We are celebrating 100 years of women's suffrage, and yet we are very clear that our work is far from over.

Faced with so many changes in our organization, and challenged with new ways of carrying out the vision while staying true to our mission, we must stay strong, committed and work in concert to get things done. We must exercise our hard won right to vote in November.

Patience and courage in plenty will be required as we leave this unprecedented year and move forward into the next decade. We are in the process of reinvention, and hopefully renewal. We will not stop now.

Wendy and I are here and want to hear your thoughts and ideas.  
 Cele Covatta, Co-president

*Leadership continued*

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**Bookfair News**

*By: Mary Lynn Merkle*

The Covid-19 pandemic has created strange times. We have become used to protecting ourselves and others through masking, social distancing, and often just staying home. And another significant consequence, cancellation of our 2020 Bookfair.

It has been a huge disappointment for the three metro Atlanta branches, because this event has traditionally been a big resource for the philanthropic efforts for us all.

However, lest you think that all Bookfair activities has been put on pause, there is still much activity! We continue collecting books from individual donations and from book drops. Many of us still put in many hours in the bookroom hours sorting and pricing donations and we are selling a lot of books online, including wrapping and mailing them. And, most importantly, we are brainstorming ideas for continuing to sell our books in new and helpful ways. We always welcome new ideas!

As Steering Committee chair, I would like to recognize just a few members who have greatly helped us navigate a very difficult summer: Debbie Karvey (Cobb), Linda Logsdon (North Fulton), Sharon Bevis-Hoover (Atlanta), Velma Tilley (Atlanta), Judy Lambert (Atlanta), and Barbara Buchanan (Atlanta). And a “pat on the back” for all the rest of us who do what we can when we can to work toward fulfilling our mission—equity and justice for women and children.

**An Introduction**

*By: Ansley Dyer*

Hello to the AAUW Atlanta Branch! My name is Ansley Dyer, and I am the 2020-21 Communications Intern. This May, I graduated from Oglethorpe University with a BA in Communication Studies. I minored in German Cultural Studies, a program which I designed for myself and had approved by the university. While at Oglethorpe, I wrote an undergraduate thesis on memes used as political discourse on social media. I am looking at getting it published.

Aside from my work with the Branch, I work part-time at the Fannin County Library as an Assistant Librarian. My future goals include going to graduate school and furthering my studies in communications or pursuing a MLIS degree.

When I’m not working, I like to read, write, and play games of any form. Anything that has a story interests me! Currently, I’m reading

a nonfiction book called *Underland*, which is a narrative describing humanity's fascination with the underground and how human history has been shaped by that which lies beneath. The author visits famous caves, crypts, mines, and interviews scientists, miners, and spelunkers. It's a beautifully written memoir of one man's journey through the past below our feet.

I enjoy getting to know new people, so feel free to email me at [publications@aauwatlanta.org](mailto:publications@aauwatlanta.org) I look forward to working with the Atlanta Branch.

Stay safe, everyone!

## **Membership Update**

*By: Membership Co-chairs Marge Anderson and Phyllis Miller*

Hello, From Membership. Thanks to everyone who stayed with us and rejoined the Atlanta Branch in a timely manner!

We have 66 members, of which three are Honorary Life Members (those who have been AAUW members for 50 years): Betty Arden, Sally Byers and Pat Bevis.

Honorary Life member Edith Miller passed away on April 28, 2020. Edith enjoyed many pursuits including years supporting the AAUW Atlanta Branch. She was 100 years old. Two are paid Life members: Alta Birdsong and Alice Lamont.

Student member Monique Gilmore attends Agnes Scott College. We honored our previous Communications Intern, Keresa Richards, with a "Give-A-Grad-a-Gift;" she graduated from Emory University this spring. Ansley Dyer is our 2020-21 Communications Intern; she graduated from Oglethorpe University this spring and plans to attend graduate school in the near future.

And we have five new members:

Ruthelen Williamson  
Decatur, GA 30033

Barbara Presley  
Fairburn, GA 30213

Judith Venderver  
Atlanta, GA 30327

Nancy Jordan  
Decatur, GA 30033

Naomi Alvis  
Marietta, GA 30067

2020-2021 Handbooks should be available in early September; they will be placed in the Bookroom. Please look for an email notifying you when they are available for pickup.

## **The Archeology of the Self and Racial Literacy**

*By: Mary Lynn Merkle*

AAUW recently offered its membership a webinar entitled “The Archeology of the Self: Sustaining Racial Literacy in the Movement for Change.” I immediately signed up because of my position as Branch Diversity Chair and but more importantly, because of my personal endeavors toward equal justice for all people.

Dr. Yolanda Sealey-Ruiz (a former AAUW fellow) carefully explained the importance of every person to examine their thoughts and feelings about equality--not only of justice but also of opportunity. She called this deep probe into our own racism, the “Archeology of self”.

As a white woman I have often been given opportunities that I never questioned. Those opportunities gave me the skills and the experiences that allowed me to step further up the ladder of success. It never occurred to me that those same opportunities were not available to everyone if they worked hard enough. These preceding sentences are just my initial attempts to dig into my own history.

In these current times of racial tensions, it becomes so important for all parties to come to the table, to speak our truths, to figure out some solutions that are fair and that will unify us. It’s nothing that can be done easily or quickly, but it’s absolutely essential work for all of us. In fact, according to Dr. Yolanda, this is a lifetime work. She suggests what when we identify our own racism, we must “interrupt” it. And when we hear or see racism from others, we must name it, particularly when we are in some type of educational setting.

I hope you can tell that I was truly moved by this webinar. The good news is that you can find a recording of the entire program on the AAUW website. Please take the time to experience it for yourself. Dig carefully and thoughtfully.

## **Literature Group Update**

*By: Kay Collins*

The first meeting of the year will be via Zoom. On Wednesday, September 9, 10:30 a.m. Cele Covatta with Ansley Dyer will host. Because of the COVID-19 virus threat, we will meet virtually until safe to meet in person. The discussion of “Where the Crawdads Sing” by Delia Owens is scheduled. If you have not received an email from Kay Collins, please call her to be added to the distribution list. Please watch for emails and Newsletter notifications for future meeting information.

## **AAUW Travel Group Update**

*By: Betty Arden*

Because of the ongoing threat of the coronavirus, the AAUW Travel Group will not resume meeting until early 2021. Watch the Newsletter for further notices.

## **Why do we Send Bookfair Monies to Washington?**

*By Dana Gordon, AAUW Atlanta Branch Funds Chair*

There are mandated IRS requirements for non-profit organizations, which the Atlanta Branch must meet. Our Branch is one of 1,000 local branches receiving their IRS status as AAUW subordinate organizations. This means every organization approved as an AAUW-affiliated entity must sign an IRS-approved AAUW

Affiliate Agreement appropriate to its designation. AAUW and all its branches are responsible for complying with IRS regulations concerning the acceptance and use of all donations. Each entity has annual IRS filing requirements.

Funds raised under the AAUW name must go to support AAUW's national programs, activities, and services and other directly mission-related purposes, i.e. scholarships that we award in Atlanta and the local philanthropies we support. AAUW national has the right to oversee its branches and how they conduct business in their name.

AAUW relies on the monies received from its branches to run its national programs and activities. They are required to report to the IRS, all monies received directly and/or from its branches. Therefore, it is important to receive monies from branches by December 31st of each year so that they complete their IRS reporting.

**FYI:** Atlanta Branch has two financial year ends: June 30th, the AAUW fiscal year end, and December 31st, the end of the IRS fiscal year end. Atlanta Branch must report to the IRS monies raised/earned in the fiscal year from January 1st to December 31st, including incurred expenses and distribution of monies. In the last few years, we have contributed from \$10,000 to \$13,000 annually to AAUW Funds.

#### **From our Immediate Past President, Diana Witt**

*By: Diana Witt*

I want to thank everyone in the AAUW Atlanta Branch, and especially the Board for the lovely gift certificate you sent me. My husband and I are having great fun trying to decide how to spend it, especially in this shut-down environment. Here in NH, we thankfully have not experienced the rise in cases that are causing so much pain and suffering as you currently have in Georgia.

However, we also have fewer medical facilities here, and everyone in our age demographic is being very careful. So we most likely will spend some on some good wine, and devote the rest to buying good books for our granddaughter. She is only 3 and half, but it's never too early to start cultivating good AAUW habits in young girls. I know I'm her grandmother, but I can already see she has a first class brain, and it's my job as an AAUW member to do everything in my power to make sure she gets to use it.

Although we have made a new life here in New Hampshire, I miss you all very much. If this thing ever lets up, I will get active in AAUW up here. I was very much hoping to come to Atlanta for Bookfair, volunteer for some shifts, and spend time on other business in Atlanta. I don't know now when that will happen. But I promise to stay in touch and will try to time any visit to Atlanta with an AAUW meeting if we ever get to have them again.

It was a privilege serving as your president for another term, and I'm very sorry to be stepping down without the chance to see everyone again. The loss of human contact with people you care about is just one of the many injuries Covid-19 has inflicted on us. I know I am leaving you in good hands. I am continuing my membership in AAUW Atlanta, as well as the Georgia and national memberships. I want to continue to support all of our efforts and look forward to all branch news and activities. I wish you all a safe and productive 2020-2021 AAUW year, and look forward to continued association with the branch, and with AAUW in the future.

Diana Witt

## News of Interest from a Branch Member

By: Brenda Kempster, Author

Greetings to my fellow AAUW Atlanta Branch Members from author Brenda Kempster!

If you are feeling confined to your home these days, and who isn't, then you might like to escape through the pages of my political suspense novel series, taking you on a journey around the world via twists and turns with an eclectic line up of characters!

To set your trip in motion, I would like to give you a quick introduction to my novels, and hope it motivates you to add them to your reading list.

**The Foundation Game Series** is a story of a global web of deceptive activities concealed under the auspices of a nonprofit, or "third sector" foundation, highlighting the conflicts between the public good and personal quest for wealth and power.

**Book 1: *Beginning*** introduces the main characters Margo Maxwell and her nemesis Jonathan Ross in a fast-moving thriller about unethical behavior implicating their nonprofit organization. The characters become involved in situations that span the globe from London, to Costa Rica, to Germany and the United States.

**Book 2: *Deceptions*** continues the saga, with the main characters crossing paths once again as they become even more involved in deceptive activities, taking the reader through suspenseful money laundering and international covert entanglements involving the CIA, FBI and the U.S. defense industry.

My novels are available on Amazon in both paperback and eBook. I hope that you will be left asking *what happens next?*

**Book 3: *Transactions*** will be released in the Fall.

Your comments and reviews are appreciated, and I am happy to meet with book clubs online!

Here's a sample of a few pages of Book 1.

[https://read.amazon.com/kp/embed?asin=B089T8RPVT&preview=newtab&linkCode=kpe&ref=cm\\_sw\\_r\\_kb\\_dp\\_ntUoFb4BZ05XH](https://read.amazon.com/kp/embed?asin=B089T8RPVT&preview=newtab&linkCode=kpe&ref=cm_sw_r_kb_dp_ntUoFb4BZ05XH)

Best wishes, and happy reading!

### Quote of the month:

"You gain strength, courage, and confidence by every experience in which you really stop to look fear in the face. You are able to say to yourself, 'I lived through this horror. I can take the next thing that comes along.'"

—Eleanor Roosevelt

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