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December Program Update

By: Velma Tilley

We are postponing our traditional holiday gathering for this year and hope to regroup in the spring at Gillian Horsley's lovely home. However, we will not let any pandemic deter us from a fun event! We are pleased to announce an online production of Tea for Three by Broadway actress Elaine Bromka. Tea for Three is a one woman show about First Ladies Pat Nixon, Lady Bird Johnson, and Betty Ford. They speak poignantly and humorously about life in the White House. Ms. Bromka has performed this piece before large AAUW audiences to rave reviews prior to the pandemic. A trailer of the show is available online to preview.

We will watch it in our individual homes over coffee (or tea, or a Bloody Mary, if you like) still on December 12 at 10:00 a.m. Tickets are \$20 each. Look for an evite from Ansley soon which will include payment instructions. All Members without a computer should buy a ticket by sending a check to Sharon Bevis-Hoover and then go watch with a friend if you can do so safely. After the program, which lasts about an hour and fifteen minutes, Ms. Bromka, will join us for a "talk back" via Zoom. Watch for further updates. Call Velma, Cele or Wendy with any questions.

See you there!!

Presidential Message

By: Wendy Venet, Branch Co-President and Branch Historian

In her victory speech on November 7, 2020, Kamala Harris, the first female, Black and South Asian American to be elected vice president, declared that "every little girl watching sees that this is a country of possibility." What a momentous year of milestones! In addition to Harris's historic electoral victory, we celebrate the 55th anniversary of the Voting Rights Act and the 100th anniversary of the Nineteenth Amendment. In her victory speech, Harris acknowledged the struggle for the franchise by wearing a white pantsuit, the color worn by suffragists,

Leadership continued

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and by proclaiming, “I stand on their shoulders.”

The fight to gain constitutional voting rights endured for seventy-two years. When Elizabeth Cady Stanton advocated for including female enfranchisement in the Seneca Falls Convention’s Declaration of Sentiments in 1848, the notion of votes for women was considered radical even by the delegates who assembled at the historic meeting. For decades, it remained a fringe issue, endorsed by a tiny minority of progressive Americans. By the turn of the twentieth century, a growing number of Americans had embraced the notion of votes for women. Many of those advocating suffrage were members of women’s clubs and organizations, including members of AAUW and its predecessor organizations, the Association of Collegiate Alumnae and the Southern Association of College Women. Their efforts would be pivotal in moving this issue from the fringes to the mainstream.

This year marks yet another milestone: the 115th anniversary of the Atlanta Branch. In reflecting on these milestones, all of us should renew our dedication to activism. Currently, some of us serve on the AAUW Board. Many of us work in the Bookroom—and we can always use more volunteers. Sarah Rondeau has suggested another path: that interested members might honor the legacy of Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg by donating money to the Branch for local philanthropy. We must focus on recruiting new members. In this season of celebration, let us remember our many milestones and the legacy of those who came before us by making the Atlanta Branch bigger and better.

AAUW thanks to AAUW Atlanta

By: Kim Churches, AAUW Chief Executive Officer

Dear AAUW Atlanta (GA) Branch leaders and members,

Goodness, what a whirlwind of tumult 2020 has been! With the election over (but not fully over yet), and with the ongoing challenges as we continue to work from home during the pandemic, I hope this note finds you and all your branch members safe and well.

I learned from our team that your AAUW Atlanta (GA) Branch has made generous gifts to our Economic Security Fund, Education & Training Fund and Leadership Fund. As we are working on our 2021 Gender Agenda and priorities to impact women and girls today and tomorrow, this could not have come at a better time. Please share my personal thanks with all those whose passion for AAUW’s mission made these gifts possible.

Your gifts provide important support, especially now. The pandemic has exacerbated and highlighted inequities that run deep and we’re meeting

the moment. In fact, I recently wrote an op-ed in Newsweek about just how impacted working moms are and what policy and actions are needed right now. I'm proud to report that your national staff is as hard at work and as motivated as we've ever been to secure equity for all women and girls.

Thank you, thank you, thank you – and I hope to “see” many of you on a Zoom AAUW webinar soon!

With gratitude,
Kim

Contemporary Literature Update

By: Kay Collins

The December meeting of the group will be Monday morning, December 7 at 10:30 am via Zoom. We'll discuss *The Giver of Stars* by Jojo Moyes. If you are on the coordinator's distribution list, you will receive the Zoom log-in info on Sunday afternoon, December 6.

If you want to be included, contact Kay Collins:.

Heartbound Ministries update

By: Cele Covatta, co-president AAUW Atlanta Branch

In mid-October, we heard from our colleagues at Heartbound ministries with a request that we donate children's books for a special reading and giving program to make the holidays a bit more joyful for women currently incarcerated and separated from their families. We have been making book donations, and giving some funds to this excellent program, brought to our attention by Sarah Rondeau, for some time.

Nancy Jordan, Wendy Venet, and Ruthelen Williamson quickly culled their Youth literature category, and were able to put together a generous donation. Ruthelen, a retired preschool teacher, purchased a number of books for younger readers. Heartbound's Emily Lloyd met up with me to receive the donation on election day. The accompanying photo of this lovely young woman shows just how pleased Heartbound is with our efforts. As always, so many good things come out of the Bookroom!



Did I Really Hear That?!

By: Mary Lynn Merkle

AAUW as an organization and Atlanta Branch truly support diversity, equality and justice—not only for women and girls as in our mission statement-but for all minority populations and marginalized people.

On Thursday, November 19th AAUW presented a webinar on micro-intervention with a former AAUW fellowship recipient, Sarah Alsaïdi.

Surely, we have all found ourselves in a situation where a negative comment about a particular minority was heard or an inappropriate joke was told. There's that instant when we are asking ourselves what we should do. If we speak up, what might we lose: a friendship, popularity or acceptance in a group, or perhaps even a promotion? And will we regret saying nothing? This workshop was designed to help women select an intervention with the best chance to succeed in making a difference. Alsaïdi defines this as “micro-interventions.”

Those who experience micro-aggressions are divided into three groups. Group 1 is the individual target (the person to whom or about whom the name or statement is addressed). Group 2 consists of the advocate or ally who is actively working and using his/her power to intervene. Group 3 members are the by-standers. They have an awareness that something isn't right.

Recently I have had some experiences that put me in Group 1. This bias is called Ageism, and I've decided that there's a fine line between being courteous and thoughtful and being overly eager to “help” me. How about you? Have you felt the sting as a member of a minority population?

On a personal level I feel I am an advocate for two groups. I spent many years teaching high school special education before a lot of integration into academic classes. Frequently one of my students would come back to class and break into tears (or alternately, questionable vocabulary). I would get the name of the bully, check his/her schedule, and pull him out of his class and into the hallway. When the bully is “educated” about mental handicaps, about great efforts to achieve successful and especially about the bully's powers to make a difference in another student's school experience, an attitude and behaviors were often changed. Time consuming? Yes! But important to both my student and to the (hopefully) former bully.

Some of you know that we have two gay sons, and my husband and I have been advocates for them and for the LGBTQ community for almost 35 years. The simplest micro-intervention when I hear a gay slur or joke or name, I simply say, “I have two gay sons, and that really hurts my feelings,” and then I answer questions if and when they come.

You may be an advocate for a minority population. It would be wonderful if you would be willing to share experiences and micro-interventions in future diversity articles. One by one, we can all make a difference.

For other marginalized people I must admit to being just a by-stander. I can usually identify negativity when I see or hear it. I may just scowl or grimace. I may just say, “Oops!” I may ignore it. But I think I can do better, and I'm not ready to give up on myself. Ms. Alsaïda made clear that we all have biases. Our first step would be to name them, examine why, and then educate ourselves. Then we can become serious interventionists so that all of us experience respect and opportunities to be all that we can be.

*This webinar will be available on the AAUW website around Thanksgiving. I have given you only a glimpse of the information and strategies that Ms. Alsaïda discussed.

There's A New Drop In Town

By: Mary Lynn Merkle

For many years we had this wonderful bookdrop at the Whole Foods located on Briarcliff at LaVista. Week after week fifteen to twenty-five boxes of books were picked up and delivered to the bookroom. And then about a year-and-a-half ago that Whole Foods closed. Our drop had to be removed, and the decrease in book donations was noticeable. We began to look for new locations and made inquiries with no success.

Our co-president, Wendy Venet approached the Target store located at 2400 North Druid Hills (near the Briarcliff intersection). She presented our case and got a "We'll be in touch." Wendy didn't give up but went back again and yet again. Voila! Her last quest was successful, and we received permission to place our bookdrop (pictured here) in the Target parking lot out from the storefront.



Now our next step is to let our friends and neighbors know about this new location. Our bookroom sorters and pricers are ladies-in-waiting!

Notice: Early Voting for Senate Runoff

By: Betty Slater

Early Voting Dates for Georgia Senators elections will be on Monday, December 14 through Wednesday, December 30 if you want to vote before Tuesday, January 5th.

Quote of the month:

"In the rush of early morning,
When the red burns through the gray,
And the wintry world lies waiting
For the glory of the day..."
—Louisa May Alcott

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