



Atlanta Branch News

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Table of Contents

Co-President’s Message.....1
 AAUW of GA Convention.....2
 Westside Market.....3
 Meet Belinda Dapreis.....3
 Diversity Article.....4
 May Branch Speaker Pearl Cleage....5

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Continued on pg. 2

Co-President’s Message

By: Cele Covatta

In this grand scheme of humankind, one hundred years is infinitesimal. When we consider one hundred years in light of Women’s rights, it is a period of magnificent accomplishment. It is so very far from being fully accomplished.

In Women’s History month, we celebrate the likelihood that an African American woman will sit on the Supreme Court at last. Replacing Stephen Breyer looks to be an uphill battle, but replacing him with a woman of color goes such a long way toward increasing gender equity on the high court.

Women now account for over 60% of all professionals in higher education and have been earning the majority of master’s and doctoral degrees for decades. We have not yet closed the gender pay gap. Women still earn 82.3% of what men are paid. Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony were among the early proponents of “Equal Pay for Equal Work.” The gap is even more pronounced when considered by race. Closing this gap remains unfinished business.

Our work with AAUW-Atlanta has a strong focus on education and scholarship. Our local accomplishments are certainly something of which we can be very proud. We have refused to be daunted by the changes in the way we have traditionally raised money, and are still engaged in the process of developing new and better strategies. (See Wendy’s article in this newsletter).

The accompanying picture (see page 2) is actually a puzzle I worked at the beginning of the pandemic. We stand on the shoulders of these remarkable women. I so enjoyed learning more about them and their work on behalf of the same issues for which we share passion.

We are so proud to be part of this, and our work goes on. Wendy and I are grateful to be part of it, and so thankful to all of you.

Cele Covatta, co-president
 AAUW-Atlanta

Leadership continued

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AAUW of GA Convention

By: Mary Lynn Merkle

HAVE YOU REGISTERED YET?!

April 23! That's the day for the AAUW of Georgia 2022 Convention—the first on in three years. (Registrations due by April 15th)

Byron, Georgia Welcome Center! That's the place.

9:30 a.m.! That's the time.

Gloria Blackwell! Our new national CEO will welcome us on Zoom and will share national concerns and ideas as well as our questions.

Cathy Cox! This very accomplished woman is our keynoter.

All day! That's when we get to reconnect and share with our fellow AAUW members across the state.

If you would like to attend but are reluctant to drive down to Byron or would like travel companions, please contact Mary Lynn Merkle. There are some carpool possibilities.

It will be a good day! It'll be a better day if you're there!

Westside Market Attracts a Variety of Customers

By: Wendy Venet

Since the AAUW opened a retail booth at Westside Market in the Toco Hill shopping center, feedback from shoppers has been enthusiastic. Buyers like the variety of books represented in our booth and the opportunity to purchase vintage titles and sets. They love that our profits benefit scholarship recipients.

Our booth has found customers from unexpected places. In December, a buyer representing an Atlanta business purchased several hundred dollars of books to fill a bookcase that would serve as a backdrop when her employer holds virtual meetings. More recently, a book dealer from Cumming, Georgia purchased books at Westside, then contacted Atlanta Branch via our website and visited our workshop at Habersham Estates to purchase titles directly from us.

To date, our best client has been Eagle Rock Studios in Norcross, Georgia. A decorator and a “stager” visited our booth in late 2021, purchased many books, then visited Habersham Estates to make two additional purchases. All told, Eagle Rock Studios spent more than \$2,000 on AAUW books, including “colored books” (hard cover books with dust jackets removed), some of which had no obvious market and might have ended up in recycling bins. Eagle Rock is filming a new TV series called Tom Swift aimed at a teenage audience. When it premieres, we can all look for our books filling bookcases at “the manor.”

Efforts are ongoing to publicize the Westside booth. Fran Russell and Karen Ludwig working with webmaster Terry Eshenour sent a mailing to our book sale email list. Karen is working to update content on the Atlanta Bookfair website. You can help by telling your friends about our booth and by sharing any ideas that you might have about how to promote it with the Bookfair Steering Committee chaired by Debbie Karvey of the Cobb Branch.

Meet Belinda Dapreis

By: Cele Covatta



Belinda Dapreis

Meet Belinda Dapreis, our newest Board member! Belinda, a 2021 scholarship recipient, immediately joined the branch upon attending this year’s Membership Tea, and we wasted no time in recruiting her to deliver books

to needy schools of which she is aware. Working with one of her sons, she has loaded up many boxes of donations for delivery.

Most recently, she has consented to taking over as Board Secretary as some shifting has been in order with the injury of Ruth Yurchuck. The good news is that Ruth continues to improve, and that Belinda brings a breath of fresh air (and youth!) to the current Board.

TRANSGENDER: What Does it Mean? And Why Do We Care So Much?

By: Mary Lynn Merkle

Recently transgender issues have been much in the news.

The Attorney General of Texas (with the backing of the Governor) ruled that under child protection laws any parents who initiate gender-affirming treatment programs should be investigated.

The Florida legislature (also with the Governor's blessing) passed laws that essentially said there should be no elementary classroom conversations concerning sexual orientation or gender identity. Governor DeSantis stated that such a law was necessary in order to stop "them" from injecting transgenderism into the kindergarten.

Lia Thomas, a member of the University of Pennsylvania women's swim team and a transgender woman, has been pilloried by news outlets, sports teams from other universities, and even her fellow teammates and their parents.

According to psychotherapist Caitlin Lawrence: "Although it may seem that it is becoming more common, the medical condition has always existed. The difference is that now more people have the space and safety to explore their gender."

So, what's it all about?

The preferred term by psychologists is gender dysphoria. The psychological definition is: "a person's gender identity is different from the gender they were thought to be at birth." We know that at birth there is a quick look at the genitalia, and the gender is determined. Through the years of research, however, we have discovered that gender identity and sexual identity are much more complicated than that.

Research indicates that the most common age for gender dysphoria is seven. This, then, is when parents (who may or may not have previous hints) must determine what course of action to take. And the optimal time for hormone treatments is prior to puberty. There are difficult decisions to make, and current legal and societal attitudes do not make them easier.

So what do we do about it?

Gov. Cox (R) of Utah and Gov. Holcomb (R) of Indiana both vetoed legislation which would have disallowed trans children to fully participate in sports. Gov. Cox specified that he did this because of his concern about youth suicide.

The courts in Texas have overturned the decision made by the Attorney General citing The Civil Rights Act of 1964, Title VII.

Disney workers in Florida went out on strike because of their company's slow response to the "Don't Say Gay" bill.

National child health and wellness groups are openly urging lawmakers to vote against these bills that are so hurtful for trans youth.

Many corporations and businesses are speaking out.

And what about us?

We can stand behind the right of all children and adults to be themselves, to feel valued, and to have the freedom to develop their full potential—even the transgender persons. Speak up! It's not always easy, but it's always important!

May Branch Meeting Speaker: Pearl Cleage, Alliance Theatre Playwright, Shares with AAUW Members

The May 14 meeting for the Atlanta Branch of AAUW will be held at the Cross Creek Café beginning at 11:30 a.m. Pearl Cleage, our guest speaker, is Distinguished Artist in Residence at the Alliance Theatre. She will be sharing some of her experiences as a playwright, as well as her passion for inspiring teenagers to create and write their ideas into plays. She has guided the Palefsky Collision Project for 10 years as Playwright and Mentor working closely with Atlanta teenagers on an original show every summer.

In the past 30 years, she has premiered 10 plays on Alliance stages. In addition to her work with the Alliance, Ms. Cleage is a New York Times bestselling novelist and a much-produced playwright. Her play *Flyin' West* was the most produced new play in the country after its premiere at the Alliance in 1992. A 2019 production of her play *Blues for an Alabama Sky* won critical praise at the Keen Company in New York City and a British production is scheduled for an upcoming production at the National Theatre in London. She is currently working on an original play, *Digging in the Dark*, written to be performed outdoors in the Woodruff Arts Center Piazza, and a song cycle to commemorate the upcoming 50th anniversary celebration of Maynard Jackson's election as Atlanta's first African-American mayor.

Ms. Cleage has great respect for AAUW and its mission to advance equity for women and girls through advocacy, education, philanthropy and research.



Pearl Cleage

The slate of officers will be voted on by email, and the new officers will be installed at the May meeting. Evites to be sent closer to May!

Contemporary Literature Meeting

By: Kay Collins

The Contemporary Literature group will meet Monday, May 2 and Monday, June 6. The location is to be determined. A blast email will be sent with the details closer to the time of each meeting. At the May meeting we will discuss “West with Giraffes” by Lynda Rutledge. The June meeting is our annual meeting where we select next year’s great reads! If you’d like to suggest books, please send your titles to Kay Collins, kayjcollins@bellsouth.net. The suggestions must be books that you or someone whose opinion you trust have read. Any genre is considered; it must be readily available and discussable.