



Atlanta Branch News

January 2023 Newsletter: Volume 74, Issue 1

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President’s Message

By Velma Tilley

I LOVE a New Year! While I never stay up until midnight on December 31, I always set my alarm for 11:55 p.m. so that I can watch the New Year come in, preferably while seeing and hearing fireworks outside my window. There is something about the opportunity for new beginnings that instills my love for January 1. For some of us those new beginnings may be big; for some small; and perhaps, if you are like me, there is a repetition to the new beginnings we want to create. No matter.

What can new beginnings mean for Atlanta AAUW? Thanks to the pandemic, we have already had to shift and change the way we do many things, from how we sell books to how we schedule our Travel Group. But change does not have to be fearful. Change can mean opportunity. Change can be positive and exciting.

What are your ideas for positive and exciting changes for Atlanta AAUW as we dance into 2023? I hope you will share your ideas with me. And I will share my ideas with you....

February Branch Meeting

Please join us at 11:00 AM on Saturday, February 11, for our next meeting at the Toco Hills (Avis Williams) Library, 1282 McConnell Drive, Decatur. This library is off of Clairmont Road, near the intersection with North Druid Hills Road. There is a second parking lot in the back of the building with an elevator up to the main floor.

The speaker will be Joanna Hurley from Hurley Elder Care Law. Her topic will be “Women Aging Smarter.” Light refreshments will be served. Don’t forget to RSVP to the Evite.

Leadership continued

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Public Policy Update

The 2023 Georgia legislative session opened on Monday, January 9. The day included the setting of a schedule for the entirety of the session, which will run until adjournment sine die on March 29. In his inaugural address on Thursday, Governor Kemp outlined his plans to cut taxes, refund \$2 billion in tax revenues to Georgia taxpayers through property tax refunds and income tax rebates and provide \$2000 salary increases for state employees and teachers.

There were more details when Governor Kemp released his budget proposals on Friday. The Governor proposes that over \$2.1 billion from the Revenue Shortfall Reserve (also known as the Rainy Day Fund) be refunded to taxpayers. These refunds would take the form of income tax rebates ranging between \$250 and \$500 per taxpayer, and Homeowner Property Tax Relief grants worth approximately \$500 to the average property owner. The budget also contains a proposal that \$566,966,153 be allocated to provide a \$2,000 cost-of-living adjustment for state and Regents employees, Pre-K teachers and assistant teachers, and certified K-12 personnel.

The budget contains proposals for numerous discretionary spending increases, reflecting record-breaking tax collections Georgia has experienced over the last two years. Before releasing the proposed budget, Governor Kemp first announced that State tax revenues were up 7.5% year-over-year for December 2022, a \$224.9 million increase over December 2021. How, or if, those funds will be spent remains to be seen as this session progresses.

NEWS FROM NATIONAL AAUW

By Mary Lynn Merkle

AAUW State Presidents hold bi-monthly meetings, and the January meeting centered mostly on governance. Malinda Gaul, chair of Governance and a national board member, led the meeting and announced a major overhaul of the national bylaws. The current national bylaws have not been amended for several years, so a sub-committee of the Governance committee did a major slim-down.

The membership (us) will have the responsibility to vote for these changes during April and May. All of us will get emails (or regular mail if there's no email on record) with this information. There will also be voting for new directors for the national board.

If you want to know more about the changes, check the Community Hub, found at the all-member website. A comment section available until the end of January.

If the newly revamped bylaws are approved by the membership, it will be necessary for all the affiliates to change/update their bylaws as well. According to the plan, they will have three years to do this. Also planned is offering alternative structures dependent on the needs of the specific affiliate.

The membership requirement (no degree needed) will not be on the ballot this time. However, it undoubtedly will be on the ballot in 2024. Most of the seven state presidents participating in the “zoom” meeting were very vocal on behalf of changing the requirement, and all were encouraged to publicize and advocate for the need to change. Malinda noted that in the 2022 election, only 25% of the membership voted. The membership requirement for no degree needed a 67% approval and failed, even though the vote for approval was over 50%.

National seems to be trying to work out organizational difficulties and to be more helpful to local affiliates and members. It would be advantageous for us to support them in these endeavors.

NEWS FROM AAUW OF GA

By Mary Lynn Merkle

IT’S A DATE!

April 22nd! That’s the date to circle on your calendar—the date that AAUW members from around the state will gather in Atlanta for AAUW of Georgia’s annual spring convention.

Atlanta Branch is the host branch for this year’s convention, and plans are underway to provide information (about current immigration issues), to find out more about ranked choice voting, and to have an interesting and fun day.

The planning committee members are: Marge Anderson, Rose Cannon, Belinda Dapreis, Betty Slater, and Mary Lynn Merkle. We welcome any ideas you might have for making this convention even more worthwhile and enjoyable. Contact any committee member to share your idea(s).

Red is a fine “circling” color!!

Need Help with Book Donation Pick Up



Debbie Karvey, chair of the Bookfair Steering Committee, has said, “We need the product to do our book sales!”

AAUW Atlanta Branch has been allowed to place a book drop in the Peachtree Battle Shopping Center, providing that we could make it fit easily into their location. Their management group painted the book drop, and Karen Ludwig made sure that a clear sign was placed prominently.

This book drop and the Buckhead Library book drop have been very successful in getting “the product,” those books! However, we need more members to help pick up the books and bring them to the bookroom for sorting and processing.

Please contact Betty Slater or Myra Carmon if you can help with the book pick up. You will be given a key to the book drop and to the Pharr Court location where we take the books.

You can certainly help the branch by helping to pick up our important product!

BookRoom Update

By Cele Covatta, Bookfair Steering Committee Representative



Some good things have resumed at the BookRoom this Fall. In November, Heartbound Ministries picked up about a dozen boxes of books for the prison libraries they support throughout the state. Heartbound has been able to maintain a presence, although much curtailed, during the pandemic shutdown, and is beginning to get things moving well again. They will be picking up books that we cannot sell regularly, putting them to good use for incarcerated people.

Lee Arrendale prison has been able to hire a librarian, Holly Clawges, which allows volunteer, Virginia Dilkes, to set up a regular schedule to pick up and deliver our donated books there.

Many thanks to the tireless BR volunteers who continue to assist in this philanthropy. Please consider working with us. We need more hands and hearts to do this work.

Call the BookRoom at 404-261-7646, or Cele Covatta.

HOLDING A WINNING TICKET!

By Mary Lynn Merkle, Diversity Chair

Are you as concerned as I am about the violence that seems to be mushrooming in our beloved Atlanta community? The reports of children hurting (even killing) other children are particularly devastating. So many of us were teachers, parents, aunts, etc. of children. We remember well the fragility of teenage egos. So why is this happening? And how can it be stopped? One thing is sure; hand wringing doesn't work!

One of our Atlanta branch members, Belinda Dapreis, recently was given the opportunity to work in a highly esteemed research program. In her research on BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, and People of Color) contributions to the publishing industry, she found that there were not enough stories introduced to children from a larger pool of diverse writers. It would appear that the power of oral histories and the sharing of multicultural experiences and heritage can help children develop a better sense of self, no matter their family structure or environment. She continues to research these possibilities.

As the mother of three sons, she is committed to helping all children learn and thrive in the best ways possible. She spends time and energy bringing awareness to underserved communities through organizations such as Outdoor Afro, YMCA, PTA, and others. Additionally, she finds time to coach sports, to be a soccer and robotics mom, and to be a classroom volunteer.

So, who is holding the winning ticket? Belinda's boys, all the children with whom she comes in contact, the parents of those children, the children and their parents who may benefit from her research. Oh! And Atlanta Branch, too!

Contemporary Literature

The book club will discuss "The Plot" by Jean Hanff Korelitz Feb. 6 at the home of Mary Hanson in northeast Atlanta. If you are interested, please contact Kay Collins for details. In March we will discuss "Matrix" by Loren Groff. The group usually meets in the morning of the first Monday of the month. The list of books with dates is in the Handbook.

Travel Group

The Travel Group will be meeting on Thursday, February 16, at the Computer Museum of America, at 5000 Commerce Parkway in Roswell. They will meet at 12 noon, when the Museum opens. There is a \$10.00 admission fee for seniors. After the meeting, opportunities will be available to lunch together nearby. Members are encouraged to visit the Museum website, computermuseumofamerica.org, to learn more about their fascinating exhibits. For further details, contact Betty Arden.

Membership Update

By Carol Brantley, Membership Chairman

Please welcome the newest members of the Atlanta Branch of AAUW:

Kathleen T Rivers

Frida Mahoney

Two student members:

Andrea Green

Zoli Smith

Please encourage your neighbors and friends to join AAUW.

Donation Thank You Note

By Velma Tilley

We are grateful to Rose Cannon's Stone Mountain Women's Ladies' Golf League that donated \$253 to our Community Fund last fall. The Golf League already donates books to us on a regular basis and we were their chosen charity at their fall tournament.

Thank you!