



Atlanta Branch News

September 2023 Newsletter: Volume 74, Issue 3

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2023-2024 Leadership

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Branch Meeting Secretary

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Diversity

Mary Lynn Merkle

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President’s Message

By Velma Tilley

I wanted this newsletter to highlight gratitude and thanks because we have received so many such expressions over this past year. See what your hard work has wrought!

I am thankful for the Atlanta AAUW. I am thankful for you women who have been laboring these many years. For you who were part of AAUW at your mother’s knee and who stepped in as you came of age. For you who came along when a friend invited you. For you who are new and have jumped right in to work and to participate. And for you who can no longer actively participate but who support our work with your donations and your financial commitment. For you who pick up books, lift boxes, sort and shelve, take packages to the post office, get your spouses to move tables, sign up on Sign-Up Genius, show up, buy, sell, serve as officers, serve on committees, participate in the Literary Group, participate in the Travel Group, come to meetings, get our programs, and all the other things it takes to raise money to make it easier for women to finish their degrees and advance in their chosen fields.

This work matters. It matters to us as individuals. Why else would be doing this? It matters to the people who donate their books to us. It matters to the public who buy our books for a bargain. It matters to our scholarship recipients.

Books Matter! I am thankful for this organization of educated women committed to educating women.

Thank you.

September Branch Meeting

Membership Tea and Celebration of Scholarship Winners

Date: Sunday, September 24

Time: 2:30 pm

The meeting will be at Second Ponce Baptist Church on 2715 Peachtree in the Community Wellness Center. This is behind the church and there is ample parking.

Leadership continued

Historian

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historian@aauwatlanta.org

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Bookfair Steering Committee

Cele Covatta

bookfairrep@aauwatlanta.org

Come and celebrate with our scholarship winners. Light refreshments will be served following the program.

2023 AAUW Atlanta Branch Local Scholarship Winners

Tereh E. Dann

Kennesaw State University

Bachelor of Applied Science in Information Technology

Patreece L. Lewis

Savannah College of Art and Design

Masters in Painting

Cristina L. Likins

Savannah College of Art and Design

Bachelor of Fine Arts Interior Design

Samantha Sanchez

Georgia State University

Bachelor of Fine Arts

Shevonese M. Smith

Mercer University

Doctor of Nursing Practice

Elizabeth Pate Woolverton

Savannah College of Art and Design

Bachelor of Fine Arts

AAUW of Georgia's Fall Board Meeting

By: Mary Lynn Merkle

AAUW of GA fall board meeting will be held on Saturday, September 23rd at Carlyle Place, 5300 Zebulon Road, Macon, from 9:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. Representing Atlanta Branch are president Velma Tilley and immediate past co-president Mary Lynn Merkle. Although only board members may vote, all are welcome to attend. If interested, send a check for \$15.00 to Laurie Shaw at 5200 Zebulon Road, Apt. 2114, Macon, GA 31210. Check with Velma or Mary Lynn about car-pooling.

AAUW Georgia Officers 2023-2024

President—Laurie Shaw (Houston Peach)

Treasurer—Marlene Humphry (Houston Peach)

Communications VP—Daisy Bourassa-Dowd

Recording Secretary—Belinda Dapreis (Atlanta)

Website/Cherokee Rose Newsletter—Daisy Bourassa-Dowd

Bylaws—Evelyn Merk (Houston Peach)

Public Policy—Debbie Karvey (Cobb County)

Immediate Past Co-President—Mary Lynn Merkle (Atlanta)

Contemporary Literature

By: Kay Collins

We'll meet Monday morning, October 2, 10:30 am, at the home of Mary Hanson. (This is the same location where we've met recently). The next meeting will be November 6.

Mary will contribute coffee and water. You may bring something to share if you'd like.

Meeting Dates and Book Titles:

10/2 *Between the Mountain and the Sky: A Mother's Story of Love, Loss, Healing and Hope*, by Maggie Doyne. This is the story behind Blink Now, one of the organizations that the Branch supports with our philanthropy funds.

11/6 *Lessons in Chemistry*, by Bonnie Garmus.

DIVERSITY REALITIES

By: Mary Lynn Merkle

Definition from a 1975 copyrighted dictionary: Diversity: (1) the condition of being different, (2) an instance or a point of difference.

Another from Ferris State University (Michigan): Diversity is the range of human differences, including but not limited to race, ethnicity, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, age, social class, physical ability or attributes, religious or ethical values systems, and political beliefs.

What a positive change we've made! In fact, one of AAUW's major efforts is in the area of DEI (diversity, inclusion, and equity). There have been a number of workshops for sharing information and ideas about this important facet of our community. I am assuming that we all share the belief that diversity in the community and in our membership strengthens us and leads to innovations. Right?

But a recent mailing from the Southern Poverty Law Center, a national organization reported that in 2022 they found 523 organized hate groups in our 50 states. They also found 702 antigovernment groups, some of which undoubtedly include hateful statements and activities toward diverse populations. Not one state is free from these groups. Georgia has a healthy number of them, most of them located in North Georgia. The targeted

populations range from 109 White Nationalist, 63 anti-LGBTQ, 17 anti-immigrant, 14 neo-Confederate, 10 Christian identity, and even one male supremacy.

What can those of us who believe in the positive attributes of diversity do?

The most important thing we can do is be informed and speak up whenever and wherever we hear hate speech. It's important to use "I" statements and to share personal experiences. There might be occasions when those conversing might not realize that you are a member of one of these diverse populations. By carefully and courteously sharing your story, you may be able to change minds. I have often been in such a situation as the mother of two gay sons. By sharing my story and theirs I have been able to successfully inform good people about the GLBTQ community (and their families). If everyone, no matter our differences, is treated respectfully with equal opportunities for access to involvement and empowerment, we will continue our efforts toward a more just society.

We can each continue to be part of the solution!

Thank You Notes From Near and Far!

Books for Africa:

Dear Cele,

Thank you for your generous donation to Books for Africa! Your \$1,000 donation will fund the delivery of 2,000 books to African children. Can you imagine their delight at opening a new book every day, when previously their library had no books?

You help make our vision of an Africa rich in books possible. Here are some updates for you:

Please review the enclosed survey from our recent book recipients. I'm pleased to report that 36 recipients in 13 countries reported that the books they received were of high quality and they feel very satisfied with the books received...

On behalf of an African child who is currently reading a book, thank you.

Sincerely,

Vat

Patrick Plonski, PhD
Executive Director
bfa@booksforafrica.org | www.booksforafrica.org

Blink Now:

The link is to a video thanking the Branch and Alta Birdsong, who has taken a personal interest in this organization.

Dear Alta and Mary Lynn,

Maggie shares her love and gratitude to you and all members of the AAUW for your support with this [video from Nepal](#).

Thank you for your love and care of our girls. It is truly changing their lives in the most meaningful way through quality education, bolstering them forward for successful higher education and careers!

Warm regards,

Bidisa

Bidisa Rai, Director of Development
The BlinkNow Foundation
201-973-5236
bidisa@blinknow.org | www.blinknow.org

Thank you from Webmaster Terry Eshenour:

Atlanta Branch,

Thank you for the Houck's Restaurant gift card. Houck's is an after church favorite destination.

My greatest reward is associating with dedicated volunteers. Thank you for welcoming me to participate.

Sincerely,
Terry

Message to Members of the Atlanta Branch of AAUW

By: The Philanthropy Committee

If you have recommendations for donations of AAUW funds, please let the Philanthropy Committee know. Donations to support projects or organizations must meet AAUW criteria. Funds cannot be allocated to projects or organizations with religious affiliations, so check this very carefully before recommending.

Please send recommendations to Myra Carmon (mcarmon@gsu.edu) chair of the Philanthropy

Committee. Members of the committee include Phyllis Miller, Funds Chair, Rose Cannon and Betty Slater, Scholarship Chairs; Nancy Jordan, at large; and Velma Tilley and Sharon Bevis-Hoover, ex officio.