



Atlanta (GA) Branch

# Atlanta Affiliate News

September, 2025 Newsletter: Volume 77, Issue 1

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## 2025-2026 Leadership

### **Co-Presidents**

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## **Co-President's Message**

By Karen Ludwig

# To Be Or Not To Be?

## *We Need Your Input!*

AAUW Atlanta is now entering its 121<sup>st</sup> year\*. We need to ask (and objectively answer) some questions – as an organization and individually as members – if we are to continue to be a sustainable organization into a 122<sup>nd</sup> year as AAUW Atlanta.

What makes a volunteer organization sustainable? By definition, a sustainable volunteer organization is one that can maintain operations, continue to deliver meaningful services, attract, and retain volunteers, adapt to change, and leave a positive legacy through the efforts of an engaged membership.

Does AAUW Atlanta fit this description? If not, can we work together to address the issues standing in our way of becoming one? Only you as a member can provide the answers and your leadership team is asking for your input TODAY to determine what we will become TOMORROW.

We are including a short 'scorecard' of what it takes to become a sustainable volunteer organization. We ask you to consider whether you would answer 'yes' or 'no' to each question ('maybe' is intentionally NOT provided as an option). We also ask that you provide your input over the coming weeks to help your leadership team make decisions about how we move forward into the future. Please feel free to provide your thoughts to any member of the current leadership team in any way that works best for you (email, phone call, or in person at an upcoming membership meeting or social gathering).

GET YOUR PENCILS READY!



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Cele Covatta  
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**Pillars of Sustainability Scorecard – How Are We Doing?**

<b>Does AAUW Atlanta Provide ...Can You Provide?</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>
1. <b>A clear mission &amp; vision?</b> Does our purpose resonate with you? Are you able to easily articulate our mission, vision, values?		
2. <b>Strong leadership &amp; governance?</b> Are you interested, willing and able to step up to a leadership role if called upon to do so in Atlanta AAUW?		
3. <b>Robust volunteer management and recruitment?</b> Are you willing and able to actively support AAUW Atlanta's volunteer activities? Are you willing and able to participate in recruiting new community members to join AAUW Atlanta?		
4. <b>Financial stability and resource diversification?</b> Are you willing and able to contribute volunteer hours supporting fundraising, resource planning and fiscal management?		
5. <b>Community involvement/partnerships?</b> Are you willing and able to help forge and maintain relationships with beneficiaries of our fundraising efforts and/or fellow organizations?		
6. <b>Adaptability &amp; innovation?</b> Are you willing and able to actively contribute your thinking on how our organization can anticipate change and respond proactively?		
7. <b>Measure and communicate impact?</b> Are you willing and able to contribute your input to help our organization define goals, share results, and gather feedback to help us become a more successful organization?		

What we hear (or don't hear) from you will directly influence how we move forward into the 2026-2027 year. We are hoping to hear from you (all!!)

Your Co-Presidents

Huiping Du

Karen Ludwig

\*AAUW Atlanta has a history stretching back to 1905. Originally organized as a branch of the South Association of College Women (SACW), when the SACW and the Association of Collegiate Alumnae (ACA) joined forces in 1921, we became a part of the American Association of University Women (AAUW).

## **Upcoming Affiliate Events**

### **Contemporary Literature**

The book club will meet on **Monday, September 8** to discuss "The Winners" by Fredrik Backman. The discussion will be at the home of Mary Hanson, at **10:30 am**.

To get the specific address and book list, contact Kay Collins, [contemporaryliterature@aauwatlanta.org](mailto:contemporaryliterature@aauwatlanta.org)  
The full schedule is in the new Handbook to be distributed at the September 13 affiliate (branch) meeting.

### **Annual September Membership Tea and Celebration of Scholarship Winners**

On **Saturday, September 13, at 2:30 p.m.** please join us as we gather for our new year and to celebrate our 2025 Scholarship winners. This year's meeting will be an Ice Cream Social (cookies for the lactose intolerant) and will be held at the Cross Creek Café at Cross Creek Golf Club, 1221 Cross Creek Parkway NW, Atlanta 30327.

This is the perfect opportunity to meet some of our scholarship winners and bring a guest who might be interested in AAUW, so feel free to bring a friend. New members at the meeting will go home with an AAUW gift bag! Please be sure to sign up through the Sign-Up Genius, which will be emailed soon.

### **Sidewalk Sale on September 27**

Our fall sidewalk sale at Westside Market will take place on Saturday, September 27. For those interested in helping with the sale, look for a Sign-Up Genius in the next few weeks.

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### **NEW MEMBER ANNOUNCEMENT:**

Cobb, Charlene F.  
University of Illinois, Chicago, BS  
Northern Illinois University, MS  
National-Louis University, Ed.D.  
200 River Vista Drive, Unit 423  
Vinings, GA 30339  
847-909-5936  
[charcobb@gmail.com](mailto:charcobb@gmail.com)  
Retired from public schools, part-time literacy consultant

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## **“A Time to Take Action”**

By: Velma Tilley

Dear Sister Atlanta AAUW Members:

As you ponder the message from our co-Presidents above and as you consider your responses to the questions raised, I want to add this as Public Policy Chair and current President-Elect. Life happens. I say this because life has happened to my husband, Stan, and me. Not something terrible, but this summer we determined that our season in Atlanta has come to an end. We are moving to Washington, D.C., in September for family reasons. As you can see, this leaves Atlanta AAUW without a Public Policy Chair and without a President-Elect. You should note that I agreed to be President-Elect when absolutely no one else had agreed to take it. The fact that we are having trouble getting officers does not bode well for the longevity of our wonderful organization. But perhaps its season, too, has come to an end. Only y'all can decide. In the meantime, let me speak to the urgent public policy needs of the day.

Look at your handbook and see the AAUW Public Policy priorities. We are in a time of crisis in this country. Education is under attack. History is under attack. Our own CDC was hit with over 500 rounds of ammunition in the recent attack which occurred near a daycare center and which killed a young police officer. Even if Atlanta AAUW disappears, your voice does not. Find your passion on one of these issues. Volunteer with the ACLU, protest, make phone calls, write your congressional and local representatives. For every email or call they receive, they assume 40 other people feel as you do who have not written or called. Donate to the causes you believe in if you have some extra pennies. We cannot let our democracy die on the eve of its 250<sup>th</sup> anniversary. Stand strong. I'll be thinking of you from the streets of D.C.

Peace.

Velma

## **“HOW DID WE GET HERE?”**

By: Mary Lynn Merkle

I am an older (often referred to as “senior”) white female. In today's world, I feel seen and respected. Then I remember a time back in the early 70's. I was in a study group at my church, and I raised a question about an important committee being all-male (remember Gloria Steinem?). I was told that we could speak through our husbands. I fumed, but I was silent. Across the board we women were in the minority—not in numbers, but in representation.

Then, after fuming done by lots of women and even some men, came change.

Currently the self-identification of some groups of people are no longer being recognized. Think especially of the transgender person who is told there is no such thing—except, of course, when they are identified as transgender and rights are taken away. Think of people of color who worry about their security (and their children's) not from robbery or assault, but by our government. Think of people of faiths that are not Christian. They are concerned not only about their own safety but also the security of their places of worship. Because I'm older, I get all sorts of special benefits. I've been receiving social security and medicare for almost twenty-five years. Of course, I paid in! But—do the math! So often when buying tickets to all sorts of places, there's a special price for me. We women and we seniors have gained respect, esteem, and lots of perks. It didn't just happen. We had to work for it.

Now it's time for us to work again so that others who self-identify differently receive the same! It's time to speak up and speak out. That's what equity and justice are all about!

Mary Lynn Merkle  
Diversity Chair

## Summer Bookfair Update

By Wendy Venet



This spring, AAUW received a large donation of cookbooks from the Atlanta History Center.

On June 21, we held a one-day sidewalk sale at Westside Market with these and other books and made \$1,000. Earlier in June, independent book dealer Zeliha Karakus visited us in the bookroom and purchased \$581 from our “dealer shelves.” Bookroom volunteers have focused on cleaning and decluttering our workspace at Habersham Estate Condominiums. A dozen surplus 8-foot tables have been donated to recreation centers in Fulton and DeKalb Counties. Additionally, we gave away seven red bookcases to female entrepreneurs with businesses at Westside, Kim Arenas (pictured) and Tamara Grant. Some of us remember those bookcases as ones we used for paperback books at our annual mall sales. Donating surplus tables and bookcases gives the bookroom more space for books. We have two

more red bookcases to donate. Please contact me or call the bookroom if you know someone who might want them.

## “Who Is Pastor Doug Wilson, and Should He Worry Us?”

By: Mary Lynn Merkle



Pastor Doug Wilson is a self-proclaimed Christian Nationalist. His headquarters are in Moscow, Idaho; but he has established twenty-four centers and churches in the U.S. and in other countries. That’s the “who.”

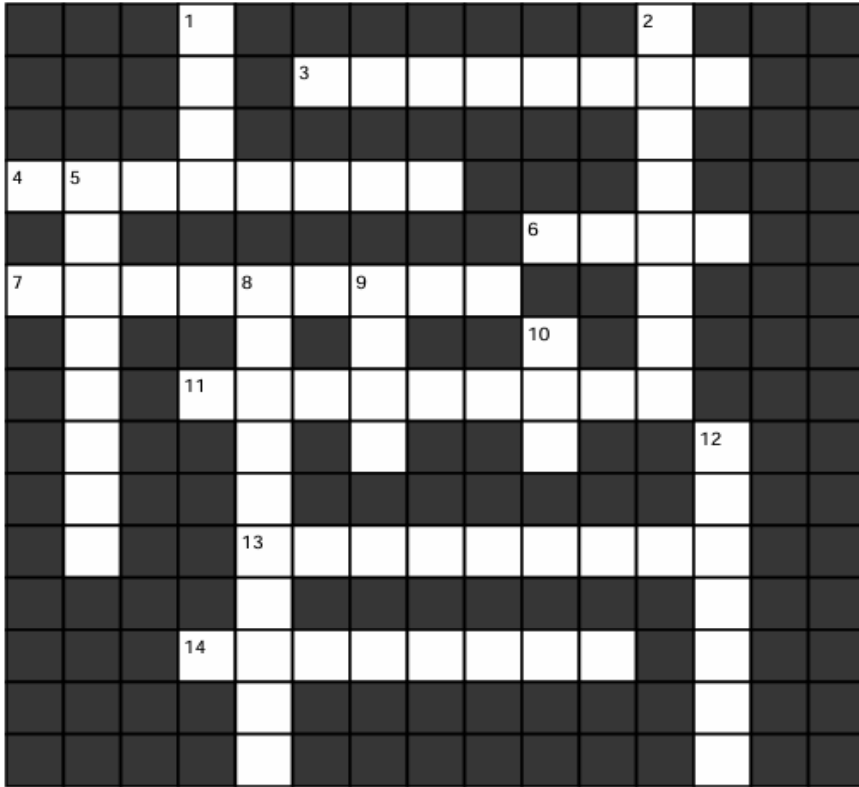
At the 2024 National Conservatism Conference (Google it—you will be surprised at the number of senators who were confirmed speakers.) Pastor Wilson, in a speech, said he would like a Christian patriarchal country. That’s the “why,” and he does not work alone. At a later time, when being interviewed in a news segment, he questioned the need for the 19th Amendment in our U.S. Constitution. And then—the U. S. Defense Secretary, Pete Hegseth, reposted the interview on X.

That’s only two people, right? In further reading, it became apparent that there are several U.S. Representatives and Senators willing to submit legislation and/or vote for such a change. There are programs, actions, and changes that have come about in 2025 that we never thought possible. And then they were! We must keep ourselves vigilant—not only for the rights of others, but for our own! I believe in “thresholds” and the power of women who work together to set them and maintain them.

## Fun and Games

### AAUW Atlanta Newsletter Crossword

Interlocking Across & Down • Medium Difficulty • Newsletter themes



#### Across

3. What extra tables and red bookcases were given away?
4. Type of sale held at Westside Market.
6. What new members receive at the event.
7. Form of government members are urged to defend.
11. Member who freely gives time to help the group.
13. Large donation from the Atlanta History Center.
14. Market where sales and donations are featured in the update

#### Down

1. What the Nineteenth Amendment secured for women.
2. Summer effort that brought in \$1,000.
5. Sweet treat served at the September social.
8. Golf club/café location for the fall gathering.
9. Organization at the center of this newsletter.
10. September membership social where winners are celebrated
12. What a volunteer org must do to reach its 122nd year.

Across Answers: 3. DONATION 4. SIDEWALK 6. GIFT 7. DEMOCRACY 11. VOLUNTEER 13. COOKBOOKS 14. WESTSIDE

Down Answers: 1. VOTE 2. BOOKFAIR 5. ICECREAM 8. CROSSCREEK 9. AAUW 10. TEA 12. SUSTAIN