

## Hagerstown Branch

February 2021

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**American  
Association of  
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### The President's Message

It has been a year now since COVID-19 first arrived in the United States. One year ago, this month, members of our branch gathered at the Agricultural Center to learn about native plants. I walked out with all sorts of plans for my garden that would be somewhat stymied by closed greenhouses as the virus shut businesses down right at the beginning of the planting season. Still, my time at home has resulted in a garden and property that looks the best it has ever looked.

One year ago, the Board was making plans for our Founder's Day luncheon where we would learn about Women's Suffrage in Washington County and the Book Sale was about 10 weeks away. We had to cancel both events for safety and compliance with the governor's orders. The many plans to recognize this historic year for women fell by the wayside as our focus became the pandemic. And yet, women have arrived in leadership positions they had been denied including not only the Vice President of the United States but our own Mayor Emily Keller.

A year ago, we asked for individuals who were interested in serving on the Board. None of those who stepped up knew that we would be meeting by Zoom for much of the year. Still your Board has faithfully met, worried about you and strived for ways to keep our branch going financially and socially. You should know that they are a creative group, ready with ideas and suggestions whenever a program we planned last June can not be held at this time. I am grateful for their faithful service.

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**AAUW MISSION STATEMENT**

*"Advancing equity for women and girls, through advocacy, education and research".*

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## AAUW Newsletter

**President's Message continued:** You should also know that the bookroom workers tackled a mountain of books that were dropped off during the stay-at-home orders. Working in smaller groups than before, they have sorted, priced and boxed those books. Finally, after nearly 9 months, the room looks good. The Book Sale Committee is working on alternate ways to turn those books into funds for our scholarship programs.

In addition to gardening and painting in watercolor, I have used the "extra" time I had this year to expand my reading to include books about racism in America. As a child who watched the cities burn in the 60's, I confess I thought that laws had been passed to make things equal for everyone. I have had my eyes opened. Take a moment this month and read one book by a black author or a book about injustice in our country. [The Color of Law](#) and [White Fragility](#) were two that I found enlightening about economic injustice. Maya Angelou's five-part autobiography is eye-opening.

I spend a lot of time these days wondering what else I have assumed that was not true. I continue to be in awe of how humans adapt and move forward. With the vaccines rolling out, there is hope. More than one member of our group has expressed the thought that they can see the light at the end of the tunnel. I hope that 2021 brings us time together, time to gather and mourn those we have lost and, best of all, time for laughter and joy.

Charlotte



The annual tablescape display at the Washington County Museum of Fine Arts is a virtual event this year due to the restrictions and cautions in response to the pandemic. You can view the beautiful and creative tablescapes at [wcfma.org/amazing-tablescapes](http://wcfma.org/amazing-tablescapes). Of particular interest this month are the tablescapes entitled *Black History Matters* and *Black Beauty Elegance*. You also have the opportunity to vote for your favorite setup with a donation.

While you are doing virtual look-arounds you might want to visit the Arts Council website to view the Washington County Art Educators Show February 6--March 4 or the musical programs offered by the Maryland Symphony.

## **Book Sale**

The community continues to donate books and non-print material which the book ladies process. In the period between July 1-December 31, 2020 over 10,000 pieces were processed. The construction project across the street is expected to be complete in late fall so the committee anticipates resuming the sale in the spring 2022. Factoring the number of books acquired in a 6 month period and the amount of space the books occupy the committee is working with a third party vendor to sell the books to continue funding scholarships. That partnership has generated adequate funds in the last six months of 2020 so there is confidence in continuing with the vendor. Special book events, such as the curbside paperback grab bag in October, are being brainstormed and ideas are welcome.

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# Legislative Alert!

## **OPPOSE HB 25 and SB 311 Catastrophic Emergency Healthcare Workers Protection Act**

HB 25 and SB 311 would immunize businesses from liability even when they caused COVID-related illness or death by failing to take reasonable steps to keep people safe. This immunity would be retroactive and would extend 180 days beyond the end of the pandemic emergency. Immunizing businesses from accountability to workers, patients and consumers would encourage businesses to be careless with public health and safety. If businesses know that they do not have to worry about government enforcement or the possibility of lawsuits, they have far less incentive to make changes needed to keep people safe. AAUW Maryland believes that everyone is entitled to high-quality, affordable, and accessible health care, especially during public health emergencies.

Furthermore, the immunity provision is so broad it could be read to cover almost any act or omission, not just malpractice that causes patient harm or death, but also failure to provide safe workplaces for their employees that results in harming front line health care workers.

The goal of SB 311/HB 25 is to make it impossible for individuals, patients or workers, to bring meritorious claims of negligence by corporate health care providers. AAUW Maryland opposes this bad faith attempt to use a national pandemic as a vehicle for corporately backed “tort reform” legislation that would deny Maryland consumers and frontline emergency workers their day in court when they have meritorious claims against health care providers.

**AAUW Maryland strongly urges you to contact your state representatives and urge them to OPPOSE SB 311 / HB 25.**

### **Your Message:**

Hello. I am a member of the American Association of University Women of Maryland (AAUW MD). I urge you to vote AGAINST SB 311 (or HB 25). Please protect the patients and healthcare workers of Maryland during this pandemic crisis.

Senator Paul Corderman, [paul.corderman@senate.state.md.us](mailto:paul.corderman@senate.state.md.us), 301-858-3125

Senator George Edwards, [george.edwards@senate.state.md.us](mailto:george.edwards@senate.state.md.us), 301-858-3565

Delegate Mike McKay, [mike.mckay@house.state.md.us](mailto:mike.mckay@house.state.md.us), 301-858-3321

Delegate William Wivell, [william.wivell@house.state.md.us](mailto:william.wivell@house.state.md.us), 301-858-3347

Delegate Neil Parrott, [neil.parrott@house.state.md.us](mailto:neil.parrott@house.state.md.us), 301-858-3636

Delegate Brenda Thiam, [brenda.thiam@house.state.md.us](mailto:brenda.thiam@house.state.md.us), 301-858-3125

## AAUW Newsletter

### **AAUW Board of Directors Statement on Open Membership:**

The AAUW National Board of Directors strongly supports elimination of the degree requirement for membership and will put the requirement up for a membership vote this spring. This important change is a critical step in bringing AAUW's bylaws and membership requirement in line with our mission of advancing equity for women and girls. While AAUW is fiercely committed to educational attainment for all women, given our commitment to inclusion, this is simply the right thing to do.

Proposals to eliminate the degree requirement for membership have come before the membership for vote a number of times. The Board feels very strongly that, while the degree requirement made perfect sense at AAUW's inception, this requirement is now counter to our mission and limits our ability to build the capacity needed to increase our impact as an organization.

Members can comment on the proposed amendment from January 11 through February 5, 2021, 5:00 p.m. ET. Voting will open on April 7 and close May 17, 2021, 5:00 p.m. ET.

We encourage respectful debate, which has always been a hallmark of the AAUW community. Please send any [comments](#) to let the Board know of your thoughts on this proposal and exercise your vote this spring.

**Locally**, President Charlotte participated in a virtual state meeting at which the proposed change in membership requirements was discussed. She reported to the board that the majority of Maryland leaders seem to be opposed to changing the requirement of a 4-year degree on the merits that it will not increase membership, won't attract minority members who are very proud of their degrees, the organization doesn't need to be attractive to funding sources as the national scholarships are endowed and other activities are functions at the state and branch levels, and AAUW is respected as it is organized as an effective lobby. The window of the comment period will have closed by the time this newsletter is received but the opportunity to express your opinion by voting on the issue should not be missed: April 7—May 17.

### **Proposed Calendar of Activities**

<b>Date</b>	<b>Event</b>	<b>Location / Hostess</b>	<b>Time</b>
Mon. February 15	Afternoon Lit.	Zoom	1:30 p.m.
Tues. February 23	Evening Lit.	Zoom	7:30 p.m.
Mon. March 1	Board Meeting	Zoom	7:00 p.m.



## AAUW Newsletter

### **Afternoon Literature Group**

Afternoon Literature will meet on Monday, February 15, at 1:30 PM via Zoom. Susie Latimer will be presenting the book talk. If you are not a regular attendee but would like to join, call or email Barbara Irvine to be added to the invitation list.

### **Second Friday Lunch Group**

There will be no Second Friday Lunch in February.

### **Evening Literature Group**

The Evening Lit. group meets the **4th Tuesday of the month at 7:30 pm.**

Due to the continuing uncertainty of the coronavirus and the varying comfort level of our members in going to others homes, meetings will continue holding meetings via Zoom. **An invitation will be sent out about a week ahead of the meeting.** If you have not used Zoom or have questions, contact Jo Ellen Allenberg for help. It is hoped you will join the group!

The February book will be *The Downstairs Girl* by Stacey Lee and will be reviewed by Susie Latimer.