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May Newsletter deadline:

April 15, 2021

Stay Informed

Branch website:

aauw-whc.org

National website:

aauw.org

April 17, 2021

"Herd Immunity"
We Are In This Together



Jane Wood discusses park transformations, living with nature, and the changes we are seeing in the Houston area. This will be peppered, of course, with Jane's wonderful bits of humor along with her expertise on nature. You won't want to miss this timely and interesting presentation.

We have been dealing with a pandemic for over a year that is threatening our health, our livelihoods and even our lives. We are trying to get enough of us vaccinated to achieve what health experts call Herd Immunity.

The same can be said for species that today are threatened or endangered and are trying to get enough of their kind "immunized" to escape extinction and achieve herd immunity, or safety in numbers.

Jane puts a spotlight on news making efforts in the Houston area to expand our habitats for man and nature, and ensure the survivability of some of the most vulnerable among us. "Herd immunity" is a metaphor to help us understand that we are in this together.



Jane received her Master Naturalist certification in 2017.

She serves as a volunteer providing education, outreach, and service dedicated toward management of natural resources within our community. She is a 10 year member of our AAUW West Houston Chapter.

Join us on Zoom on **April 17, 2021, at 9:45 a.m.** The link will be sent prior to the meeting on April 16 or 17.

Cindy Hickock
Program Vice President

President's Message

Dear West Harris County Members,

Georgia Kimmel is a treasure! I have been fortunate to be on state Public Policy Zoom meetings with Georgia. The knowledge she brings from her work at MAM is invaluable. Now, she has offered to meet weekly with the lobbyist hired by Texas AAUW to promote our mission in Austin. We are in good hands with Georgia. Please join me in thanking her stepping up!



for

Vote on National By-laws and Public Policy

At the Zoom meeting put on by the Texas AAUW Board, Malinda Gaul, National Board Member, told us that in the last election only 12% of the membership voted. To my chagrin, I have to confess that I was one of the 88% who did not vote. I can do better! We can do better!

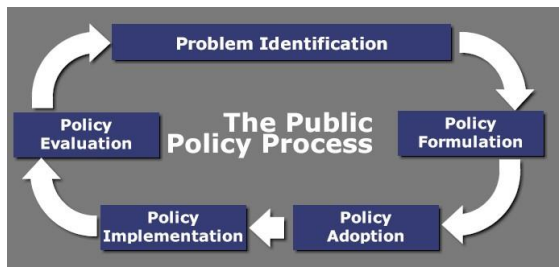
Ballots

If you have an email registered with AAUW National, you will receive your ballot by email. We will let you know when the ballots have been sent. Those without email will receive a paper ballot.

If you would like a paper ballot, please email me at morriscs@aol.com or Carolyn Stoffel, Membership Chair, at c-stoffel@sbcglobal.net.

Please read the revised National Public Policy Priorities below.

*Sincerely,
Carolyn Morris
President AAUW-WHC*



2021–23 AAUW Public Policy Priorities

*The Public Policy Priorities underscore AAUW's mission to advance gender equity for women and girls through research, education, and advocacy. The work of AAUW builds upon responsible public participation, and the following priorities provide a basis for AAUW members' actions at the local, state, national, and international levels. Implicit in each is support for government agencies administering programs, including adequate appropriations, effective and accountable administration, and provision for citizen participation. We advocate public discussion to ensure enlightened decisions on these priorities. We work to increase the number of women, **and the diversity of backgrounds they represent, including race, ethnicity, gender, and sexual identity**, ~~and other~~ underrepresented populations in policy- and other decision-making positions. Our positions are shaped by our commitment to being nonpartisan and fact-based, and to acting with integrity. We strive for our work to be inclusive and intersectional, collaborating with diverse allies and coalitions to achieve equity for all.*

Basic to all of AAUW's public policy efforts is the understanding that true equity requires a balance between the rights of the individual and the needs of the community. AAUW opposes all forms of discrimination and supports constitutional protection for the civil rights of all individuals.

AAUW believes that high-quality public education is the foundation of a democratic society and the key to improving economic prosperity and gender equality. We advocate equitable access to education and climates free of harassment, bullying, and sexual assault. We support academic freedom, civic education, protection from censorship, bias-free education, and responsible funding for all levels of education, including early childhood education and programs for students with disabilities. We advocate for increased *and more equitable* access to higher education, *that is affordable and yields high quality credentials or degrees especially for women in poverty*. We promote *intentional, equity-focused equitable* efforts to close the persistent *learning and opportunity achievement* gaps that disproportionately affect *students from* low-income *and minority groups* ~~children and students from communities of color~~.

AAUW promotes the economic, social, and physical well-being of all persons. Essential to that well-being are an economy that provides equitable employment opportunities; reduction of poverty; a living wage; quality, affordable dependent care; paid family and medical leave; safe, livable, and affordable housing; quality, affordable, and accessible health care for all, including reproductive health care; and a clean, healthy, and sustainable environment. We support a Social Security system that provides inflation-protected, guaranteed lifetime benefits with a progressive benefit formula, spousal and widow benefits, and disability and survivor benefits. We support robust and strong Medicare and Medicaid systems and oppose any efforts to undermine them, including privatization and block grant proposals. AAUW recognizes that gun violence is a public health crisis.

AAUW believes in the right to privacy and freedom from violence. We firmly believe in the separation of church and state. We support a fair, balanced, and independent judiciary. We support public budgets that balance individual rights and responsibility to the community. We see an urgent need for meaningful campaign finance reform, open and fair elections, and nonpartisan voter education efforts that will promote equitable political participation and representation in appointed and elected office.

AAUW ~~supports~~ *believes in the need to end white supremacy and address structural and systemic racism*. Efforts to improve racial, ethnic and gender justice *must be embedded into every initiative and will work to eradicate intersectional bias as well*. This includes *working to eradicate intersectional bias and* creating a *diverse* culture of involvement, respect, inclusion, and connection, where the richness of *diverse* ideas, backgrounds, and perspectives is fully appreciated, *understood* and utilized.

AAUW believes that global interdependence requires national and international policies against human trafficking and that promote peace, justice, human rights, sustainable development, and mutual security for all people. We support the civil and human rights of all immigrants, including a fair and just path to legal status. We support a strengthened United Nations and its affiliated agencies. We advocate implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action from the 4th World Conference on Women and subsequent declarations. We affirm our active participation in the U.N. Commission on the Status of Women and our commitment to ratification of the U.N. Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW). We support international family planning programs that are consistent with AAUW policy.

Biennial Action Priorities

National priorities inform state and local action. Biennial priorities for national action are chosen according to the criteria of viability, critical need, strong member support, and potential for distinctive AAUW contribution or leadership. ~~Based on the National Board's adoption of the 2018 strategic plan for AAUW, national public policy priorities are focused first on our major areas of focus: education and training, economic security, and~~

~~leadership.~~ Additional policy priorities are also critical to ensure equity for all. No further order of importance for the additional priorities is implied.

To support a strong system of public education that promotes gender fairness, equity, diversity and inclusivity, and to address the barriers and implicit biases that hinder the advancement of women and girls, AAUW advocates

- Vigorous enforcement of Title IX and all other civil rights laws pertaining to education
- Adequate and equitable funding for **and access to** quality public education, **including early childhood education**, for all students
- Opposition to the use of public funds for nonpublic elementary and secondary education and to charter schools that do not adhere to the same civil rights and accountability standards as required of other public schools
- Increased support for and protection of programs that meet the needs of girls and women in elementary, secondary, and postsecondary education, including strong promotion of science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) education and comprehensive sexual health education
- Increased support for and access to affordable higher education for women, **including alleviating the debt burden that disproportionately impacts borrowers of color and exacerbates the racial wealth gap.** ~~and disadvantaged populations.~~
- Support for practices that halt the flow of students from schools to prisons, including reforming school disciplinary practices that disproportionately punish girls and students of color

To achieve economic security for all women, AAUW advocates

- Pay equity and fairness in compensation and benefits
- Equitable access and advancement in employment, free from systemic barriers and biases, including vigorous enforcement of employment discrimination statutes
- Closing the gender and race gaps in leadership opportunities for women of all backgrounds
- Greater availability of and access to a high standard of benefits and policies that promote work-life balance, including quality and affordable dependent care and paid family, medical, and sick leave



- Programs that provide women with education, training, and support for success in the workforce, including nontraditional occupations and women's entrepreneurship
- Strengthening programs, including welfare and career and technical education, to improve postsecondary education access, career development, and earning potential
- Strengthening retirement benefits and programs, including pension improvements and protecting Social Security, Medicare, and Medicaid from privatization
- Access for all women to the full range of health care services to ensure economic security
- Increasing the number of quality jobs that pay a living wage

To guarantee equality, individual rights, and social justice for a diverse and inclusive society, AAUW advocates

- Vigorous enforcement of and full access to civil and constitutional rights, including affirmative action and expanding voting rights
- ***Complete, accurate and timely collection of data, disaggregated by race, ethnicity, and gender identity to inform policy decisions and the apportionment of political representation***
- Self-determination of one's reproductive health decisions
- Universal access to quality, affordable health care and comprehensive family planning services, including expansion of patients' rights
- Freedom from violence and fear of violence, including hate crimes, in homes, schools, workplaces, and communities
- Support for U.N. programs that address human rights and women's and girls' concerns
- Freedom in the definition of self and family, ***including protection from discrimination*** and a guarantee of civil rights for all family structures
- Passage and ratification of the Equal Rights Amendment



Membership

Thank you to all the wonderful members that volunteered to call fellow members to check on them after the freeze. We did have a few members that had some pipe problems and hopefully plumbers and whoever else was needed have put things back together. Spring is in the air!

It is almost time for membership renewal. Please keep in mind that National has proposed an increase in dues and some by-law changes. There will be an announcement in your email soon about a discussion via Zoom concerning by-law changes.



Other news is we are going to think positive that come August we will be able to have our Membership Coffee IN PERSON! We will announce the date and place as soon as our venue is confirmed. Until then, wear your mask, wash hands, and stay safe so we can keep the virus numbers down and celebrate together.

*Stay safe,
Carolyn Stoffel*

Time to Think About Dues Again!

This has been a rough year for our branch and I for one am looking forward to resuming normal activities, with real people. We have zoomed and laughed together for a long time, and soon we may be meeting in person again. It is going to be wonderful to build our relationships back up with all the activities in West Harris County groups.



Our yearly dues are coming, well, due, soon, and payments made after March 15 will count for the coming fiscal year, July 2021-June 2022.

You can send a check to me, Diane Roberts, if you wish, and I will take care of the renewal, but soon you will be receiving a personalized email from AAUW national, and you can pay with a credit or debit card, with the link in that email, or mail it to me directly. The national portion of the dues is \$62, state dues are \$13, and West Harris County dues are \$11, for a total of \$86. If a person already a member of another branch wants to join with us, dual memberships are \$11.

Send checks to Diane Roberts, 5607 Saint Paul St., Bellaire, Tx77401, or look for a dues renewal email that will be coming from the AAUW national office.

Diane Roberts
Finance Officer



New Officers Elected

The results of the election of West Harris County Branch officers conducted in March electronically by Survey Monkey are in. Please welcome the following:

- **President-Elect:** Anne Amador
- **Vice President for Program:** Lilian Care
- **Vice President for AAUW Funds:** Debbie Campbell
- **Corresponding Secretary:** Becky French
- **Finance Officer:** Diana Tiberia

These new officers will be installed at the branch meeting in June.



Public Policy



2021 Texas Legislative Session: Meet our AAUW lobbyist

The Texas legislature has reached the bill filing deadline; no additional bills can be filed this session. The final count on March 12 was 2,363 Senate bills and 5,104 House of Representative bills filed. Nearly 2,000 of those bills were filed during the last week.

All bills that can become law are being considered in committees. Any bill that is not reported out of committee before the end of April “dies” in committee. That will be especially true of a large number of bills this year as the Texas budget and the energy crisis are taking up much of our legislator’s time. Remember we have less than 80 days left in the 87th Legislative session.

Texas AAUW has hired a lobbyist, Kevin C. Stewart, to be our liaison with elected officials at the capitol during this legislative session. Mr. Stewart is an attorney and political consultant based out of Austin. He graduated from the University of Texas for both his undergraduate and law degrees. His law studies focused on health law, the legislative process, and statutory interpretation. Kevin is the author of the Texas Legislative Law Handbook and a member of the Legislative and Campaign Law Section of the State Bar.

Mr. Stewart has developed a detailed list of bills that match our Texas AAUW legislative priorities, including women’s health care, pay equity, and job training and advancement.

He has also helped us identify bills where our efforts are most likely to produce favorable outcomes and detailed how to accomplish our legislative goals by identifying individual legislators to approach.

Going forward, he will track the movement of the priority bills through the committee process and help us develop strategies to allow Texas AAUW to have the greatest impact. He will communicate Texas AAUW views and influence action by lawmakers in order to enact legislation through the following steps:



- Privately support a bill. On our behalf he will work behind the scenes with legislators and their staff to get a bill to the next stage of the process.
- Publicly support a bill. He will notify the committee members that Texas AAUW supports the bill. Our support will then be on the legislative record. That record is accessible to the public.
- Provide written comments. Together with our lobbyist a letter will be drafted to committee members regarding a bill. These are delivered in person or emailed by our lobbyist to staff.
- Engage our members in the process. AAUW members may be asked to reach out to legislators on specific bills. AAUW would only do this a very few times in a legislative session. Be ready for an alert should we need to promote a bill that is under consideration.
- Provide in person testimony. Our lobbyist would request AAUW to identify members who can provide testimony should we need it. This typically is done by a member who is eager and knowledgeable about the issues/topic and can appear in person to testify.

Mr. Stewart will make our public policy efforts more effective and AAUW more influential at the Texas capitol.

Georgia Kimmel
Public Policy

WISE Activity Group

Please join us on **Monday April 5th at 10:00** as we continue our conversation about Jane Goodall and her continued work on conservation.

We will be listening to Lessons on **Advocacy Strategies** and **Communication**. She will share the many ways to help, and how we should think—and act—locally, especially when we feel hopeless in the face of problems. Any freeze stories you want to share? ***Dr. Jane is one of the best storytellers in the world.*** Learn her techniques for communicating effectively with anyone—even if that person doesn't share your point of view. She will share her tips for making presentations fun for her audiences - and for herself.



We will share an update on Aspiration in Computing Award for high school awards. This will include building mentorships for our young leaders interested in nature and conservation. Please see <https://www.aspirations.org/award-aic-publicity-toolkit-schools> for connections to your outreach goals.

You can sign up for her course at <https://www.masterclass.com>. Please let Karen North Coordinator know if you would like to join our Zoom conversation at knorth@me.com. She will send a Zoom link on Sunday April 4th.

Karen North



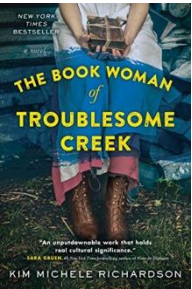
APRIL, 2021 ACTIVITIES & INTEREST GROUP NEWS

Sharon Jorgeson, Activities Coordinator

Book Groups

All groups are meeting via Zoom until further notice. Please contact Coordinator or Co-coordinator if interested in joining the group and to be put on contact list. Group members will be contacted prior to each book club meeting with Zoom information.

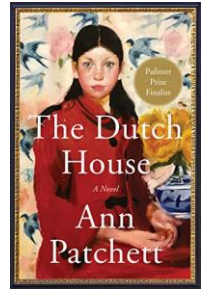
Afternoon Contemporary Literature



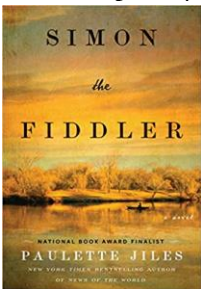
Wednesday, April 7, 1:30 p.m. The Bookwoman of Troublesome Creek by Kim Michele Richardson. Coordinator, Daphne Scharar, 713-412-2140, dascharar@gmail.com, Co-Coordinator, Linda Morgan, 281-293-0976, amorgan352@sbcglobal.net.

Evening Contemporary Literature

Monday, April 5, 3:30 p.m. The Dutch House by Ann Patchett. Coordinator, Jo Glidewell, 936-327-2085, WCGLIDE@gmail.com. Co-Coordinator, Sharon Jorgeson, 281-703-5939. sjorgeson@gmail.com.



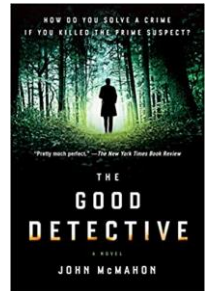
Contemporary Readers



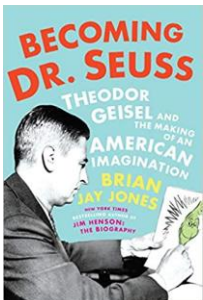
Wednesday, April 7, 1:00 p.m. Simon the Fiddler by Paulette Jiles. Coordinator, Margaret Gruss, 281-589-0411, mgruss@att.net. Co-Coordinator, Sharon Pope, 713-376-0940, slpope@comcast.net.

Mystery Book Club

Tuesday, April 20, 1:30 p.m. The Good Detective by John McMahon. Coordinator, Melba Armstrong, 281-392-3190, armstrong.melba@comcast.net. Co-Coordinator, Pat Pease, 713-824-1681, popease@aol.com.



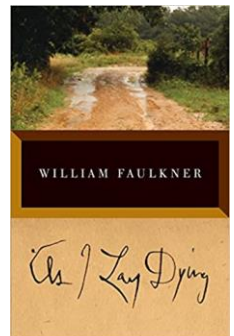
Enjoying History Book Club



Monday, April 12, 1:30 p.m. Becoming Dr. Seuss by Brian Jones. Co-Coordinator, Nancy Guilloud, 713-785-6336, nanguilloud@aol.com, Nancy Gusler, 713-464-5932, ntgusler@gmail.com.

Outstanding Literature

Tuesday, April 13, 9:30 a.m. As I Lay Dying by William Faulkner. Coordinator, Leigh Rappole, 281-596-0161, leighrap@aol.com. Co-Coordinator, Barbara Butler, 713-305-0570, barbarabutler1959@att.net.



Hiking Honeys



Hikes have been suspended indefinitely. When we start up again you will receive a notice from your coordinator. If you are interested in joining the Honeys, contact Melba Armstrong at 281-392-3190 or armstrong.melba@comcast.net.



Melba Armstrong

Garden Divas

Wouldn't you love it if you had a source of fresh herbs throughout the year? You're in luck - the Garden Divas are going to create a wine bottle hydroponic herb garden during the April ZOOM session. This should be a fun way to focus on growing plants in an easy affordable and unique way. The goal is to make it as cheap and easy as possible for you to construct your garden using materials most of you will already have at your home.

Simply put, hydroponic gardening is a method of growing plants without soil. It's a way to nurture a huge variety of edible plants (think herbs, veggies, even some fruits) indoors all year round, regardless of what Mother Nature is doing outside your door. A hydroponic system doesn't take a lot of space (unless you want it to). It will work just about anywhere and plants will actually grow faster than if you were growing in-ground. *Hydro* is the Greek word for water, and *ponos* means work. In hydroponic gardening the water does the work - in this case, the work of delivering nutrients to the plant roots.

Materials:

- Wine bottle
- Cotton yarn or string
- Rubbing alcohol
- Match or lighter (and safety goggles if you have them)
- Thin piece of felt or something to use for a wick
- Pool noodle (or some form of foam or felt) to be used to support plant
- *If you made the Microgreens, you may have left over coca peat*
- Herb of choice
- Fertilizer
- **(optional)** Hanger



I saw a picture using an Ikea wine rack (\$12.99) so I splurged and bought one

This wine rack holds 4 bottles.

If you are interested in having a summer of herbs, please let Coordinator Susan Boon know via smboone@gmail.com. If you are NOT on the Diva email list and want to be please let me know. We will be creating our gardens **April 6 at 10:00 a.m.** via ZOOM. Please have your materials ready then.

Susan Boone

Great Decisions



Great Decisions Thursday Afternoon Group 2021

This group will meet on Zoom, **Thursday, April 1, 2021 from 2:00 to 4:00 p.m.** The topic for discussion will be China in Africa. On **April 15** the group will discuss The Two Koreas. All meetings will be via ZOOM until further notice. Please contact Coordinator, Martha Ewell if you would like to join this group or have any questions, 713-782-2084 or marthaewell@att.net.

Great Decisions Inside the Loop

This group meets at **3:30 p.m.** on ZOOM. The Zoom link will be sent in time for the meeting. All AAUW members are welcome. *For dates of April meetings and to be included on the notification list*, contact Coordinator, Pat Thomsen at 713-302-8899, patthom2@sbcglobal.net or Co-Coordinator, Linda Marlin at 832-533-31265, marlinl@comcast.net.

Great Decisions Evening Group

This group meets from **7:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. the 2nd and 4th Wednesday** through May. The April meetings are on **April 14 and April 24**. The topics will be China and Africa and The Two Koreas. For additional information contact Coordinator, Willette Norman at 281-497-3626 or willetten@gmail.com.



Bridge Groups – Various

1st Thursday (7:00 p.m.) Jane Judson 713-528-6105

3rd Thursday (10:30 a.m.) Peg McNealy 281-679-7299

3rd Monday (10:00 a.m.) Melba Armstrong 281-392-3190

The bridge groups are not planning on meeting in April.

If there is a change to this, you will be advised by your coordinator.



Byway Birders

April is a great time to visit High Island to look for spring migrants and observe cormorants, egrets and spoonbills at the rookery. The admission is \$8.00. Even if you don't own binoculars there is plenty to see. There are picnic tables and the Ocean Grille is located at 2275 HWY 87, 77650. Currently, there is construction work on the weekends on IH10 so you might want to consider going during the week. For more information contact Coordinator Pat Dach at 281-701-5846 or patdach@gmail.com.

Pat Dach

Classic Gourmet

Classic Gourmet will not meet in April. Please join us **May 8** for (hopefully) our last ZOOM dinner. Please contact the co-coordinators: Barb Cook 713-705-7832 or Kris Bybee-Finley 304-610-8708 for information about the dinner.

Nouveau Gourmet

The Nouveau Gourmet group will not meet in April. Information about the May dinner will be in the May News letter. Please contact coordinator, Diane Statham at 281-497-6259 or distatham@msn.com.



Vicarious Voyagers - An interest group for travelers

Vicarious Voyagers completed their programs for this year. No more have been scheduled at this time. Future plans to be determined. For further information contact Coordinator Diana Guarniere at 832-465-5578 or guarniered@gmail.com.

Diana Guarniere



<i>Rose Ennis</i>	<i>Apr 3</i>	<i>Vita Como</i>	<i>Apr 18</i>
<i>Elizabeth Martin</i>	<i>Apr 03</i>	<i>Hazel Kjos</i>	<i>Apr 18</i>
<i>Jane Campbell</i>	<i>Apr 4</i>	<i>Janet Thrasher</i>	<i>April 21</i>
<i>Beryl Hogshead</i>	<i>Apr 5</i>	<i>Diana Guarniere</i>	<i>Apr 22</i>
<i>Carol Trujillo</i>	<i>Apr 8</i>	<i>Fran Macy</i>	<i>Apr 22</i>
<i>Martha Armstrong</i>	<i>Apr 10</i>	<i>Patricia Driscoll</i>	<i>Apr 24</i>
<i>Pamela Ossorio</i>	<i>Apr 10</i>	<i>Barbara Kyse</i>	<i>Apr 25</i>
<i>Marjorie Poole</i>	<i>Apr 11</i>	<i>Carolyn Morris</i>	<i>Apr 25</i>
<i>Nancy Allen</i>	<i>Apr 12</i>	<i>Anne Amador</i>	<i>Apr 29</i>
<i>Carole Ballew</i>	<i>Apr 12</i>	<i>Mary Lou Kelly</i>	<i>Apr 30</i>
<i>Patricia Cordrey</i>	<i>Apr 13</i>	<i>Wendy Stackel</i>	<i>Apr 30</i>
<i>Susan Dunten</i>	<i>Apr 13</i>		

Updates & Corrections

Anna Belle Anderson
 Royal Estates of League City
 500 Enterprise Avenue, Apt. 204
 League City, TX 77573
 Ruth Fowlers new address published earlier needs a correction. It should
 be East Sandy Lake Road, #210.
 Nancy Bowden's phone number
 281-460-8511