



West Harris County Branch

AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF UNIVERSITY WOMEN

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January 2023 Newsletter

Issue 5

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February 2023 Deadline:

January 15, 2022

Stay informed

Branch website: aauw-whc.org

National website: aauw.org

AAUW WEST HARRIS COUNTY BRANCH

SATURDAY, January 21, 2023 AT 9:30 a.m.

Tracy Gee Community Center, 3599 Westcenter Drive and Zoom

For our first speaker in the New Year, we have invited the Hon. Helen Mann, retired Vice Consul for Press and Public Affairs at the British Consulate in Houston. In 2004, Helen retired from her duties after serving more than 30 years in that role.

Helen will share her experiences working at the Consulate. She will talk about her 30 years of Royal visits, giving us a behind-the-scenes look at what goes into making these visits proceed without a hitch!

After her retirement, Helen decided to make Houston her home as she fell in love with our city soon after moving here. She is very active in our local arts scene enjoying opera, classical music, and the theater. Some of us may have seen her on our local Channel 8 (PBS) show, "Manor of Speaking", which was the Downtown Abbey talkback show hosted by Ernie Manouse. "Manor of Speaking" aired after every episode of Downtown Abbey and Helen was a regular guest taking part in the discussions of each episode.

*Lillian Care
Program Director*



Dear West Harris County Members,



Happy New Year! I'm looking forward to our next year together, to continue learning, laughing, questioning, and challenging myself with you all.



Your generosity in funding the Thomsen-Baker-Telfer Scholarship Fund is inspiring! In the new year I'm hoping to brainstorm with you some ways that we, as a Branch, might approach fundraising for the scholarships, making it more of a Branch-wide project. Since EYH ended a few years ago, there hasn't been a focused Branch endeavor to take its place, and I frequently hear from members how much they miss having such a project. Perhaps Thomsen-Baker-Telfer can fill that void. I am, of course, open to any and all suggestions you have, so let me hear from you! May 2023 be a year of wonder and growth for us all!



Anne Amador, President

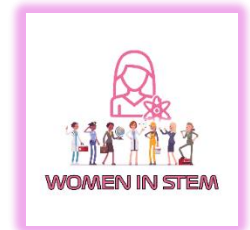
Thomsen-Baker-Telfer Scholarship – A New Year and A New Scholarship

Have you made your New Year's Resolution? AAUW members are passionate about their support for women. Perhaps 2023 is the year to donate to AAUW-WHC's own Thomsen-Baker-Telfer Scholarship Fund. Your donation will support Houston women pursuing STEM careers and help you accomplish your New Year's Resolution!

In 2023, the Thomsen-Baker-Telfer Scholarship fund will be giving three area high school senior women \$3,000 each—an increase from last year's \$2,000 scholarships. We have already received over \$6,000 of the \$9,000 we need.

We have set a goal that 25% of our AAUW members will participate in funding these scholarships. All donors will be invited to a luncheon to celebrate the Thomsen-Baker-Telfer Scholarship and the AAUW National Fund drives.

Your 2023 Resolution can help us support women in STEM fields. If you'd like to donate by check, make it out to Thomsen-Baker-Telfer Scholarship Fund and mail it to Carolyn Morris, 11159 Riverview Way, Houston, TX 77042. If you prefer to donate electronically, we accept Zelle. Zelle is available through most major bank apps under transfers and incurs no additional fees to either the donor or to our fund. To use Zelle, enter the email address thomsenbakertelferscholarship@gmail.com. Happy New Year from the TBTS Fund Committee



The Thomsen-Baker-Telfer Scholarship Board

Membership

HAPPY NEW YEAR TO All! I hope you attended the Holiday Dinner in December. Poupette Farnell and helpers did a fantastic job coordinating a great turn out of members. It was a spectacular start to the Holidays. Several of our new members from the August Coffee attended; their information was listed in December Newsletter. We have two additional members to add this month.

Marguerite Scott
203 Austin Sq. Apt.401
Houston 77077
megdscott45@gmail.com
713-724-4168

Sara Nizzero
703 Wellington Point
Houston 77094
sara.nizzero@gmail.com
281-928-4870



Please welcome these new members as they join in the many activity groups. Thank you for being an active group.

Carolyn Stoffel, Membership Vice President

Public Policy

EVERYTHING IS BIGGER IN TEXAS – EVEN THE AMOUNT OF SCHOOL BOOK BANS! TEXAS LEADS THE NATION IN SCHOOL BOOK BANS!



AAUW members love to read!! This is evident by the multiple book groups that are ongoing in our branch alone. Books in these groups are selected through a process. Any book can be considered. Consensus is reached. Participation is by choice. What if access to books were limited or unavailable? We would be outraged! Much attention has been focused on the second

amendment of the U.S. Constitution and the right to bear arms, but **closer attention needs to be paid to the first amendment** which recognizes freedom of religion, speech, press, peaceable assembly and petitioning of Government for redress of grievances. These freedoms are under attack by special interest groups through inuendo, misinformation and censorship. **It is imperative that we become aware and vigilant of what is going on in our own backyard.**

Nothing could be closer to our own backyards than local schools, libraries and independent Blue Willow Bookshop owner and branch member, Valerie Kohler. When Texas Rep. Matt Kraus first announced his list of books to investigate in the fall of 2021, Valerie posted a statement expressing her opposition in her business newsletter. With Valerie's permission, her statement is posted again in this public policy section of our branch newsletter.

Blue Willow Bookshop is appalled by Rep. Matt Krause's Texas House Committee investigation into public schools' libraries. The freedom to read is a constitutional right that should be cherished and celebrated, not exploited as a tool for personal political gain. Not only does this censorious investigation deny Texans that right, but the list of books in question blatantly targets stories centering on BIPOC and LGBTQIA characters, as well as educational books on subjects such as sex, gender, and American history.

Censorship doesn't belong in Texas classrooms—educators do. Rep. Krause's demands, which steamroll the reconsideration policies and procedures each library already has in place, actively keep Texas educators away from their students and prevent them from doing their jobs during a public health crisis that Krause himself has shown little urgency to address.

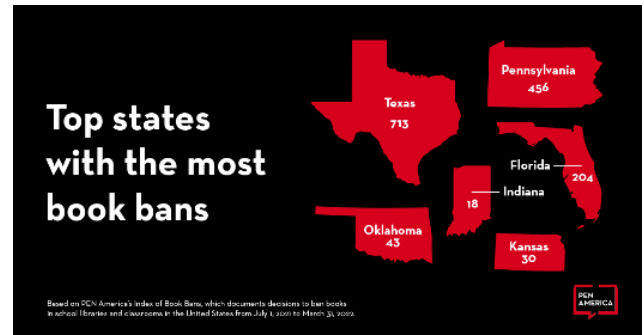
Dr. Rudine Sims Bishop said it best: Books are “windows, mirrors, and sliding glass doors.” It is so important for all readers to see themselves in books and to have the opportunity to get a glimpse into the lives and experiences of others—even if they “might make students feel discomfort.”

Blue Willow Bookshop is proud to have hosted and supported many of the incredible authors on the list of books to be “investigated,” and we look forward to continuing to work with our amazing Texas educator partners to get these books into students' hands.

Parents have the right to decide what their own children do or do not read. No one has the right to make that decision for others, specially not democratically elected officials. We will always defend the freedom to read—and celebrate each book that provides a window, mirror, or sliding glass door.

This past fall, AAUW-Texas surveyed all members to determine which topics were of most importance to pursue as an organization. Of the multiple topics on the list, book banning was among the top four selected by members to be the AAUW public policy priorities for 2022-2024.

In August 2022, The Texas Library Association published an article titled *Restrictive School Board Policies Threaten the Right to Read*. “The new school year was barely a day old before school districts across Texas began announcing new policies designed to restrict access to books in school libraries and classrooms, to the detriment of students and their families. **While they justify these steps as being in the best interest of their communities, these actions are driven by political pressure from individuals and organized groups working to impose their own agendas on Texas public schools and every single family that sends children to these schools**”



According to analysis in a report titled *Banned in the USA: The Growing Movement to Censor Books in School*, released in September, 2022 by Pen America (a 100-year-old organization focused on the protection of literary expression and human rights) **the large majority of book bans underway today are not spontaneous, organic expressions of citizen concern. Rather, they reflect the work of a growing number of advocacy organizations that have made demanding censorship in schools of certain books and ideas part of their mission.**

This climate is increasingly **undermining the professional discretion of educators and librarians** when it comes to matters of public education. This is disrupting the potential for effective relationships between parents, teachers and administrators that can actually serve to advance student learning and civic engagement.

The Pen report paints a deeply concerning picture for access to literature in schools, and diverse literature in particular, in the coming (this) school year. **Book banning and educational gag orders are two fronts in an all-out war on education and the open discussion and debate of ideas in America.** Students have First Amendment rights to access information and ideas in schools, and these bans and legislative shifts pose clear threats to those rights.



Currently, in our own backyard, all book vendors are under a moratorium in SBISD until a new policy is formed. Our valued Blue Willow Bookshop is among those on this moratorium list. Also included are author visits, and Scholastic Book Fares. **The SBISD school board approves all vendors.** The SBISD school board meets on Monday, January 9 and January 23 at 6 p.m. at the SBISD Administration Building, 955 Campbell Rd.

The Free Speech Center at Middle Tennessee State University describes the negative effects of book banning: “Removing books has a negative impact **because it is censorship.** When you censor certain ideas and beliefs, you create a more xenophobic and ignorant society. **This is teaching students that it is okay to stop an idea or viewpoint from being heard because they don’t agree with it.** Book banning affects society by having a ripple effect that **impinges the rights of other readers.** While families have the right to restrict their children from reading certain books, they can’t enforce that on other families.”

Diana Guarniere

Public Policy (continued)

Learn from our Texas State Representatives



If you are interested in the upcoming Texas Legislative Session, tune in online to get the latest on new policies up for debate, the politics that could play out and the people who will make it all happen. Use the following link:

[watch: Texas lawmakers, local leaders and reporters discuss the 2023 legislative session](https://www.texastribune.org/events/) at <https://www.texastribune.org/events/>

You can also tune in to YouTube options: **A Preview of the 88th Legislative Symposium 2023**. There are four videos of the presentations given on December 8, 2022, in Austin at a meeting organized by The Texas Tribune. Health care; Taxes; The Border; and Public Education are presented by Texas State Representatives.

Georgia Kimmel
WHCB Public Policy Chair

Funds

This month we thank everyone who "attended" our Home Alone Fall Ball non-event, possibly taking advantage of National's offer to match each donation through their website.

Next up, planners are discussing our Donors Luncheon and May Style Show. Watch for updates!

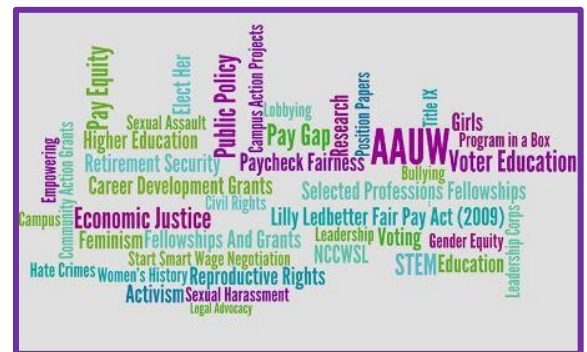
Supporting Our National Mission by credit card (preferred) remains fast, convenient, and safe. To help WHC stay on state leaderboards while supporting our national mission, simply follow the steps at westharriscounty-tx.aauw.net/funds/. For help with these instructions, contact **Debbie Campbell** or **Diane Statham**.

Or give your check made payable to AAUW Funds to either Debbie or Diane. They will then arrange to deposit your check locally and donate to National ([aauw.org](https://www.aauw.org)) by Branch credit card on your behalf.

Supporting Local Scholarships for Houston area high school senior girls pursuing college studies in a STEM field is also easy. Just make your check payable to **Thomsen-Baker-Telfer Scholarship Fund** and mail to **Carolyn Morris** at 11159 Riverview Way Houston TX 77042-7309.

Save time and effort by donating immediately through Zelle to thomsenbakertelferscholarship@gmail.com.

Thank you for supporting women and girls locally and around the nation!



Debbie Campbell and Diane Statham
AAUW Funds Vice Presidents

JANUARY 2023 ACTIVITIES & INTEREST GROUP NEWS

Sharon Jorgeson, Activities Coordinator

Hiking Honeys



Our January hike will be in Hermann Park and will be led by Jane Wood. However, a conflict has occurred for Jane on the 3rd Thursday of January (January 19). We will attempt to reschedule the hike to another day in January subject to a consensus of our Hiking Honeys roster. Contact: Melba Armstrong, 281-392-3190, Armstrong.melba@comcast.net

Gourmet Groups – Classic and Nouveau Combined

Please join us Saturday, **January 14, 2023** for our 3rd dinner in this year's series. This dinner will feature Laredo style beef fajitas. Our hosts will be Laura and Rob Cahill. To receive menu information or you have questions, please contact the coordinators: Barbara Cook 713-705-7832 or Kris Bybee-Finley 304-610-8708.



Bridge



We currently have one bridge group. The group meets on **Third Thursday at 10:30 am**. Contact Coordinator Peg McNealy at 281-679-7299 or peg525@gmail.com to join the group as a substitute.

If you are interested in joining a new group and playing bridge on a regular basis, contact Sharon Jorgeson, 281-703-5939 or sjorgeson@gmail.com. Days and time to be determined later by those joining the group.

Byway Birders - San Benard National Wildlife Refuge

On Friday, **January 20**, Byway Birders will go to San Bernard NWR. We should see a variety of wintering birds as well as ducks, geese, and Sandhill Cranes. Bring binoculars, hats, snacks, drinks, and bug spray. Please let Miriam Vyles know if you are going and if you want to carpool or if you plan on meeting her at San Bernard. Her email is mvyles123@gmail.com or 713-501-7945



We will meet at San Bernard at **9:00 a.m.** It takes about an hour and a half to get there. We would like to eat at Didos on the river. If someone is not comfortable with that it is OK. We have eaten there many times and if it is not cold, we can eat outside on the patio. Please let Miriam know if you are going.

Book Groups

Afternoon Contemporary Literature

Wednesday, January 4, 1:00 p.m. Let the Great World Spin by Colum McCann at La Madeleine 1001 Westheimer Road.

Coordinator, Cheryl Smith, 402-651-2445
ccherylsmile@gmail.com, Co-Coordinator,
Linda Morgan, 281-989-6499,
amorgan352@sbcglobal.net.

Contemporary Readers

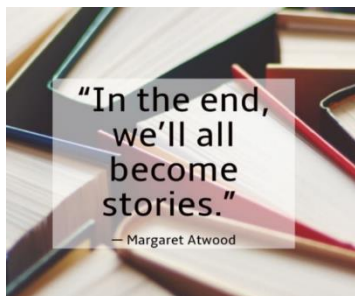
Wednesday, January 4, 1:00 p.m. Bewilderment by Richard Powers. For more information, contact Coordinator, Sharon Pope (713-376-0940), or Co-Coordinator, Cathy Urquhart (832-454-5017).

Enjoying History Book Club

Monday, January 9 at 1:30 p.m. We will discuss Blood Acres by Douglas Swanson. Melba Armstrong will lead the discussion via Zoom. Please email me with any questions. Nancy Guilloud, nanguilloud@aol.com.

Evening Contemporary Literature

Monday, January 2, 5:00 p.m. at Los Tios Restaurant. The One-Hundred Year Old Man Who Climbed Out the Window and Disappeared by Jonas Jonasson will be discussed. Coordinator, Jo Glidewell, 936-327-2085, WCGLIDE@gmail.com.



Mystery Book Club

Tuesday, January 17, 1:30 p.m.

Hidden Depths by Ann Cleeves

Leader: Melba Armstrong

Hostess: ZOOM

Contacts: Melba Armstrong, 281-392-3190,
armstrong.melba@comcast.net and Pat Pease
popeace@aol.com.

Outstanding Literature

The group will meet on Tuesday, January 10, at 9:30 a.m. at La Madeleine, 10001 Westheimer Rd. 77042 to enjoy breakfast and discuss The Turn of the Screw by Henry James. Coordinator Leigh Rappole, lseighrap@aol.com, 281-596-0161.

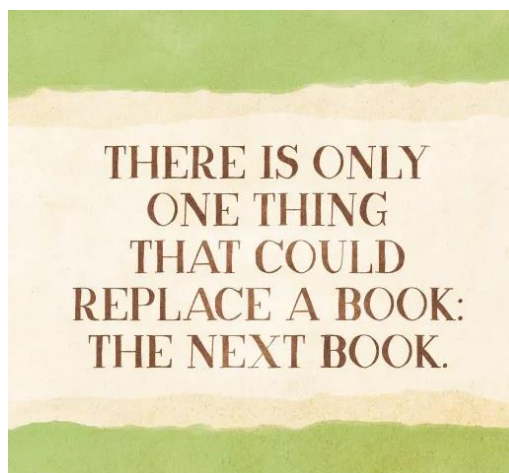
Zoom Eclectic Book Group

Thursday, January 26 at 2:30 p.m.

The Chancellor by Kati Marton

Discussion Leader – Margaret Carlson

The Zoom Eclectic Book Group meets by Zoom. We welcome all members and guests. You may come for just one book or the entire year. Please email Carolyn Morris at morriscarolyn16@gmail.com for the Zoom invitation. Join us for the lively conversation and friendly faces.



Culture Group

Start the New Year with Something New! We begin the new year with AAUW's Cultural venture to MFAH's Nancy and Rich Kinder Building on **Wednesday, January 25th**. Lunch at Cafe Leonelli on the MFAH campus will be first and then we will have docent guided tours through the museum's newest exhibit galleries.



The Kinder is a stunning architectural treasure exhibiting MFAH's international collection of modern and contemporary art. Cost of the trip is \$19. Lunch is on your own. Leaders of this Cultural Activity are AAUW members, Gail Rickey and Cynthia Wier, both of whom are MFAH docents. Our Precinct 3 bus will leave from the usual spot, Parking Lot B on Barryknoll behind Memorial City Mall, promptly at **11:00 a.m.** Don't forget to bring \$1 for the bus driver's lunch.

To reserve a spot for this destination, please send your check for \$19 to Gail Rickey at 13114 Holston Hills Drive, Houston, 77069, payable to Gail. If you have any questions, contact Gail Rickey at patrickey@aol.com.

Save the Date

Lunch at Culinary Institute Lenôtre

AAUW is going back to Culinary Institute Lenôtre on **February 9, 2023**, for a tour and luncheon. Our visit will include a demonstration by the students before we are seated for a three-course meal and loads of fun! There is a choice of beef chicken or fish for the main course. Culinary Institute Lenôtre is Houston's opportunity to enjoy French food as one hopes to find when visiting Paris! Third generation Lenôtres, of the well-known Lenôtre chefs on Rue St. Antoine in Paris, developed this phenomenal culinary school upon their arrival in Houston. Described as a "hidden diamond for French cuisine" by a client who reviewed the dining experience for the school's website, the school trains chefs in food preparation and presentation.



To reserve a seat at the table (and on the bus), send a check for \$42 payable to Mary Peterson at 1277 Country Place Dr. Houston, TX 77079. Space will fill up quickly. Don't forget to include your selection of an entrée (fish, beef, chicken). Note any food allergies with your payment. The bus will leave from Memorial City Mall at the Barryknoll Parking lot at 10:30 a. m. with an expected return at 2:30pm. Bon Appetit!

If you have any questions contact Mary Peterson, mpetersonread@gmail.com or 713-530-9614.

WISE - Women Interested in STEM Education

Happy New Year to all of our AAUW members. Try to stick to those resolutions for 2023! Our group will not be meeting in January, but Carolyn Morris and Rose Ennis are working on some activities for February and April. Mark your calendar for these upcoming events.

Carolyn Morris will be discussing water and the Ike Dike on **Monday, February 13th at 10:00 a.m.** This is an important community issue to be aware of in Houston.



Rose Ennis will be reviewing New York Times best seller The Song of the Cell: An Exploration of Medicine and the New Human by Pulitzer Prize winning author Siddhartha Mukherjee on **April 17th at 10:00 a.m.** At previous meetings our group discussed the impact of the telescope in the exploration of deep space, and now we will pursue the impact of the microscope on the cellular level over time. Thrilling! Fascinating for sure! Warning—this book is full of scientific discoveries and will take time to move through so purchase it now or listen to the audio version. If you don't have time to read it, come anyway. You will definitely learn many new and interesting things regarding the cells and modern medicine's use of them. Look for details in the March newsletter.

Our meetings are always a good time to invite a new or potential member to see what AAUW is all about. Join us at for coffee, tea, and snacks on **February 13th at 10:00 a.m.** RSVP to Carolyn at morriscarolyn16@gmail.com or 713-560-1889. A map to Carolyn's house and gate directions will be sent as a reply to your RSVP.

If you have any questions about the meetings contact Karen North, Rose Ennis, or Carolyn Morris

Great Decisions



Great Decisions has three groups that meet February through May. Check future newsletters for further information. The Thursday Afternoon Great Decisions Group meets the **first and third Thursdays, 2:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.** For further information, please contact Coordinator, Martha Ewell, tel. 713-782-2084. The Tuesday Afternoon Group meets the **first and third Tuesdays, 2:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.** For further information please contact Coordinator, Pat Thomsen at 713-466-7995 or patthom2@bcglobal.net. The Wednesday Evening Group meets the **second and fourth Wednesdays, 7: p.m. to 9:00 p.m.** For further information please contact Coordinator, Willette Norman at 281-497-3626 or willetten@gmail.com. Please contact one of the coordinators to be placed on their contact list and to order the reading materials used in the discussions.

Garden Divas - THE GIFT OF THE MAGI - The Holy Tears of Frankincense

The Garden Divas Group is pleased to have Dr. Karen Cottingham from the Herb Society of America-South Texas Unit for our **Tuesday, January 10, 2023**, meeting. The title of Karen's talk is: *THE GIFT OF THE MAGI - The Holy Tears of Frankincense*.



The following is an excerpt from an article she wrote for *Herbs Make Scents*. In her presentation we will learn about the “Magi’s precious gift of frankincense. Prized for its medicinal qualities, its sublime fragrance, and the unimaginable wealth associated with its harvest, this golden resin quite literally changed the course of human history and structured the ancient world. The “tears of the gods,” as frankincense is sometimes called, were instrumental in establishing worldwide trade relations, power, and wealth. Fabulous cities and immense fleets of ships were financed by the fragrant gum.”

After Karen’s presentation, we will enjoy KALE AND WHITE-BEAN SOUP, made from a recipe by Donna Wheeler appearing in an issue of *Herbs Make Scents*. “This Mediterranean diet gluten-free soup is both hearty and light with protein from the turkey and beans, fiber from the beans and vegetables, and plenty of flavor all around!” A vegetarian version will be available. The recipe includes rosemary and thyme. Optional: Please feel free to bring other herbs, toppings for the soup, or munchies. I’m sure by January we will all be ready for a light lunch.

Since the weather in January is always unpredictable, we will meet at the home of Carolyn Morris, 11159 Riverview Way, Houston, TX 77042. Please RSVP to Susan Boone at samboone@gmail.com. Before the meeting, Susan will send you the gate code and a map to Carolyn’s home.

Susan Boone
samboone@gmail.com

Happy January Birthday!

Joyce Pritchard	Jan 01	Edie O'Brien	Jan 07
Pat Thomsen	Jan 01	Anita Woods	Jan 09
Julia Ray	Jan 02	Nancy Guilloud	Jan 11
Poleteme Sappenfield	Jan 04	Particia Loeffler	Jan 11
Barbara Butler	Jan 06	Frances Mayberry	Jan 16
Margaret Chapman	Jan 06	Suzanne Dalati	Jan 22
Meredith Griffis	Jan 06	Roslyn Metchis	Jan 30

