



West Harris County Branch

AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF UNIVERSITY WOMEN

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February 2025 Deadline

January 15, 2025

Stay informed!

Branch website: aauw-whc.org

National website: aauw.org

AAUW WEST HARRIS COUNTY BRANCH GENERAL MEETING

SATURDAY, JANUARY 11TH

from 9:30 a.m. to 12 p.m. at the

TRACY GEE COMMUNITY CENTER



Breanna Haile



Katy Vittoria

What happens to youth in foster care when they turn 18 and are no longer children under the State’s care? Without support for this transition, many young people in foster care are suddenly thrust into the world of adulthood with no preparation. Fortunately, in Harris County, we have The Hay Center.

The Hay Center is a program of Harris County Resources for Children and Adults, a public/private partnership that provides much needed services to foster youth transitioning to adulthood in our community.

Breanna Haile, Director Program of Operations and Advancement, and Katy Vittoria, Director of Housing and Foundation Advancement will speak to us about the important services The Hay Center provides. Both have many years of experience working with the foster care system as well as other agencies serving at-risk youth. Come hear about their work that encompasses furthering education, employment, housing, and many more goals for transitioning youth.



President's Message



Season's Greetings Everyone! We had a wonderful Holiday Dinner at the Altharetta Yeargin Art Museum. Not only was the museum beautifully decorated by the dinner committee, but we were also treated to a visual treat of the collections there. Its inception was explained to us by museum personnel as how it originated from Altharetta Yeargin and her husband's world travels and their collections. These collections were donated to the Spring Branch Independent School District, and we learned how the museum was funded and built. I hope everyone had a great holiday season and is now ready to enjoy the many activities that are planned by the various cultural groups along with the great speakers scheduled for the coming monthly meetings. Again, Happy New Year.

Jo Glidewell, President



The Grinch Who Stole Christmas Holiday Party 2024

Top Grinch





HOLIDAY PARTY WRAP-UP

Dear Holiday Party Team Extraordinaire,

Diana Guarniere, Pamela Ossorio, Susan Boone, Kathryn Motard, Brenda Moss, Kate Conlan, Mickie Adams, Debbie Campbell, Mary Ann McMordie, Jo Glidewell, Rose Ennis, Sharon Jorgeson and Group Leaders, Mary Andersen, and Diana Tiberia are an incredible group of women! I was amazed with the quality of problem solving that went on throughout the process and into the event. Thank you for nudging me when I needed to up my game.

Diana, Pamela, Susan and Kathryn thank you for jumping up from the table at Corner Bakery and heading over to Carrabba's to research the meal possibilities. The food was delicious. Diana, as usual, your attention to details made working with Carrabba's easy. Kathryn, we are glad you were able to get out of the hospital in time for the party. Pamela, we hope you will be feeling better soon.

There were so many fabulous comments about the event. The tables were beautiful and the entrance hall festive. The poinsettias, greenery, and pencil holders along with the twinkling lights were the perfect holiday table decoration. The artistic white trees, greenery and candles in the entrance were just right for the museum venue. Brenda, Susan, Kate, and Mickie, you outdid yourselves.

Debbie, thank you for organizing the name tag table and jumping in with helping hands. We are all amazed with how you manage your office for AAUW Texas, go to school full time, work with stroke patients, and still were able to show up and help with the party set up.

Mary Ann was shuttle driver extraordinaire. We absolutely could not have pulled that off without her. A disaster was avoided by using the Carrabba's parking lot.

Jo did a great job as mistress of ceremonies. I particularly like the time she waved me away and mouthed. "I've got this." And.....she did!

Rose's coffee was just the right touch. As one person at my table said, "What is cannoli without coffee?"

Sharon, thank you for sending out the request for door prizes. The results we had were amazing. Diana, lots of people were asking about the cute bags used to wrap the door prizes.

Mary Andersen you are my personal AI! You edit my writing, make sure I get out committee notices, and generally make me look good. Thank you for making sure that our dinner list was accurate.

Susan, thank you for printing the Grinch story, game, and meal cards. They were spot-on-professional. We are all so thankful that you share your computer talent.

Diana Tiberia thank you for collecting the money for the meals. Without you, our branch could not function. Your coordination with this committee was priceless.

As one of the 10 Grinchy-est people at the party, I want to say a special thanks to Susan, Diana, and Jo for making the Grinch theme a success. I came home with not one but 2 Santa hats!!! Mary Peterson loved the Grinch toy and book she received for being the top Grinch at the party. The theme set a light hearted mood for the night.

All in all, I think we made a great team. Thank you for rushing in to help!

Carolyn Morris

MEMBERSHIP

It's okay to ask someone's name. It's not the end of the world if you cannot put name to face or face to name. My worst moment happened when I was in my mid-30's and said to someone, "How nice to meet you." She shook my hand and said, "We've had dinner at your house." Oops. "Twice," she stated poignantly and dropped my hand. After that, my husband learned to be by my side during corporate events, whispering names and pertinent info in my ear. Thankfully, we wear nametags at our AAUW meetings. Nowadays I try to say a person's name three times to lodge it into my mental database and learn something about them. I always introduce myself by stating, "Kris with a K" to help people remember me. But remember...it's okay to ask for a person's name. It's even better if you give your name first to help someone who may have forgotten yours.

Kris Bybee-Finley, Membership Vice President

AAUW WHC members enjoying outings



AAUW WHC members enjoying dinner at Birraporetti's after an Alley Theater performance



AAUW WHC December birthday lunch group

PUBLIC POLICY



How to Contact Your Texas Legislators

Communicating with your local and state officials can be as simple as writing an email or making a phone call. You can visit your official's local office or attend town hall meetings. If possible, get to know your representatives before Legislative session begins. When the Texas legislature is in session you can testify during hearings, talk to lawmakers and their staff at their Capitol offices.

Texans can easily find their representatives, and their respective contact information, through Texas Legislature Online, TLO. Here are

the steps:

- Log on to TLO <https://capitol.texas.gov/>.
- In the page's lower right corner find "Who Represents Me?" Enter your address. You will see your elected representatives from national to Texas state level.
- Click on the legislator you are wanting to contact and a screen will pop up with a box in the upper right hand corner titled E-MAIL YOUR _____. That has a form to create an email to your selected representative.

To maximize your impact, it is best to have researched the issues and bills being considered. You can do this through TLO. Near the top center of the home page, you will find "Search Legislation." Be sure to select the current Legislature, "89(R) – 2025" to get bills for the current session. You can enter the number of the bill. If you don't know the specific number for the bill, you can use the "Word/Phrase" option. That will show you several bills that are related to your interests.

When you contact a legislator by email about a topic or bill, be specific and state your concerns in a positive, polite manner. Start with the positive before the negative. List Bill number(s) when available.

To go beyond an initial email or call, ask for the legislative aide for that topic to contact you and give your contact information. If you contact your legislator in person, plan to stay 10 -15 minutes or less and when calling the office, be prepared and talk only a few minutes.

Express your stand on a certain issue by providing specific examples of why you support or oppose an issue, bill, or law. Be brief and focused on one issue. Elected officials or their staff want your perspective on how a bill impacts you. The staff will keep track of how many people take a position on a bill or issue. Watch this example from Texas Impact, "Faithful Advocacy: Betsy Calls Her Legislator", <https://youtu.be/uWgYO4uID7Y?feature=shared>

You can make a difference. Just remember that specific legislation may take three or more legislative sessions to get enough traction to be passed. That means you might need to be dedicated to more than one legislative session.

*Meg Scott-Johnson, Public Policy Committee Member
Georgia Kimmel, Public Policy Chair*



JANUARY 2025 ACTIVITIES & INTEREST GROUP NEWS

Sharon Jorgeson, Activities Coordinator

Garden Divas



The Divas venture into the New Year on **Tuesday, January 7th** with a visit to Thomson + Hanson Stone House. A quiet sophistication permeates every Thompson + Hanson environment. You'll find that within the walls of the shops and the meandering paths of the nurseries, an environment has been created for those who enjoy the opportunity to bring something fresh to the table, always with an eye to shaping tranquil spaces that people love to inhabit. Whether wandering through rows of flowers and fragrance, browsing carefully curated pieces in the shops, or simply savoring the view in the shade of an oak tree, the hope is to provide an experience that puts you at ease, surrounds you with beauty, and leaves you inspired. The Stone House, located in River Oaks, 3600 W Alabama, has been home to Thompson + Hanson for over twenty years. We are planning lunch at Tiny Boxwoods, 3614 W Alabama; it is located just adjacent to the nursery that inspired it all and is a pocket of tranquility where people are happy to just be, sipping espresso on the patio or sharing a crisp salad and time with friends. We will carpool from the West side of town, leaving the Memorial City parking lot off Barryknoll at **9:30 a.m.** For divas living closer to River Oaks, I will send a list of potential carpool options the weekend before. If you are interested in joining us for this trip, please email Susan Boone, <mailto:smboone@gmail.com> or call at 713-854-7537, and you will be included in the lunch count.

Byway Birders

Weather permitting, Edie O'Brien will lead Byway Birders on a Duck Hunt **Friday, January 10th**. We should leave Houston by **8:00 a.m.** We will visit Cross Creek Ranch Greenway and Flewellen Creek Park in Fulshear. It will involve walking on pavement and grassy trails. The address is 6450 Cross Creek Bend Lane in Fulshear. There are a lot of good eating spots nearby if you want to have lunch with the group. Please let Edie know if you plan on going. Edie.O'Brien@yahoo.com or 281-467-9047.

Gourmet Groups – Classic and Nouveau Combined

Please join us **Saturday, January 11th** at **11:00 a.m.** for brunch at the home of Sharon and Eric Jorgeson. The menu and recipes will be sent after Christmas. If you have questions, contact the coordinators: Barbara Cook 713-7057832 or Kris Bybee-Finley at 304-610-8708.



Hiking Honeys



On **Thursday, January 16th**, our hikers will be exploring the Nature Discovery Center and hiking the trails at Russ Pitman Park plus nearby Evelyn's Park. These parks are in Bellaire, just inside Loop 610 on Evergreen Dr. between Bellaire Blvd and Newcastle Street. Russ Pitman Park was the inspiration of Hana Ginzburg, a visionary, who wanted a place where Houston's natural heritage of prairie and wetlands could be shared and appreciated by Houstonians of all ages. The inspiration for

the Nature Discovery Center located in Russ Pitman Park was The Discovery Room at the Natural History Museum of the Smithsonian Institute. Evelyn's Park is situated on the land previously occupied by Teas Nursery and we will spend time exploring the whimsical sculpture "Move One Place On" which includes 150 hidden elements from Alice in Wonderland. More information, including where to meet at the park, and lunch plans will be provided to the Hiking Honey roster members closer to the date of the hike. We will carpool from the lot on the south side of Barryknoll across from the movie theater in Memorial City Mall and plan on leaving at **9:30 a.m.** For those carpooling from Memorial City Mall plus anyone planning to meet at our destination, please arrive by 10:00 am. Please contact Mary Ann McMordie at mamcmordie@gmail.com if you would like to join us.

Metropolitan OPERA Opportunities

Happy New Year to fellow opera lovers! The famous Verdi opera, *Aida*, will broadcast live from the Metropolitan Opera in New York at Cinemark Theatre Memorial City on **Saturday, January 25th at 11:30 a.m.** (note early start time)! *Tosca* in November was outstanding and *Aida* in January will be exceptional. Music Director Yannick Nezet-Seguín will conduct this opera full of all the pomp and circumstance of ancient Egypt. Verdi's operas, as mentioned in the previous newsletter, continue to be performed throughout the world. *Aida* was first performed on December 24, 1871 at the Khedivial Opera House, Cairo, Egypt. Next, with Verdi in attendance, it had its European premiere on February 8, 1872 at La Scala in Milan, Italy. This opera of love, loyalty, and betrayal should not be missed. New staging by Michael Mayer will include dazzling animations and intricate projections taking attendees inside towering pyramids and gilded Egyptian tombs. *Aida's* Triumphant March is a classic for all times and should not be missed. The costumes, sets, arias, and the Met's superb chorus are awaiting your arrival!



Join us after the opera as we walk over to the Cheesecake Factory following the opera to chat about the opera and catch up with each other.

Three Ways to Get Tickets:

- Send a \$25. check at least 10 days before the opera to Rose Ennis, 1607 Prairie Mark Lane, Houston, TX 77077, or
- Purchase ticket at Cinemark Box Office upon arrival, or,
- Purchase on line with Fandango.

Culture Group

On **Wednesday, January 22nd**, the Cultural Interest Group will be visiting POST HOUSTON located downtown near Buffalo Bayou. It has a long and storied history. Established as a depot next to Houston's Grand Central Station in 1934, the present-day structure was designed by the same architectural firm that built the Astrodome. The new building became the Houston headquarters of the USPS in 1961. In 1984, the Post Office was named after Barbara Jordan, the first African American woman elected to the Texas Senate. The HUGE structure was redeveloped in 2015 as the POST, one of the jewels on the downtown scene, a hub for culture, food and recreation. Noteworthy is the rooftop Skylawn and garden, a state-of-the-art Music Hall and an International Food Hall with 25+ vendors. You WILL enjoy the food and the view! We meet at our usual Memorial City Mall parking lot (12125 Barryknoll) at **10:00 a.m.** and carpool to the POST. Our free guided tour will start at 11:00 a.m. Early arrivers can wait inside at the Eden Plants and Coffee Shop on the first floor. The POST is located at 401 Franklin Street, 77201. Parking is free for the first 90 minutes and \$5.00 for each additional hour. Payment is by credit card only. We will eat lunch in the International Food Hall, also credit card only. Please RSVP to Debbie Rossi at drossi1584@gmail.com or text her at 713-248-7520. Let me know if you can drive or if you will be meeting us there.



SAVE THE DATE - Friday, February 21st !

Going back to our roots at the Clayton Family

After a long absence, the Culture Interest Group will return to our city's renown Genealogy Center in the Museum District. If you are interested in family history research, OR wish to explore the William Clayton Family history, their home, this is a trip you cannot miss! Started as a small special collection of the Houston Public Library in 1921, the genealogy research center relocated to the Clayton estate in Houston's historic Museum District. This was the former home of Houston businessman and statesman William Lockhart Clayton and wife Susan Vaughan Clayton. Built in 1916-17, the Clayton's Georgian Revival house features Tuscan columns, paneled pilasters, an elliptical fanlight over the front door, and fanlit dormers on the roof. The home became a Texas Historic Landmark in 1988. A special guest on our tour of the center and home will be a descendant of the Clayton family, who will share stories of growing up in the area. There is no cost for this event except for lunch at Cleburne's Cafeteria. Send an email to Elizabeth Martin (elizamart349@gmail.com) for more information or to sign up. We will meet at the Memorial City Parking lot on Barryknoll at 9:10 a.m. where we will carpool to the Museum District. You can also meet us at the library at 5300 Caroline St., at 9:50 a.m.

Bridge Group

Fun and friendship await you in the active AAUW bridge group. If you are interested in getting on the sub list or would like more information, contact the coordinator. We meet on the **3rd Thursday (10:30 a.m.)** each month. Peg McNealy, 281.679.7299.

Great Decisions: Afternoon and Evening Groups

Great Decisions inside the Loop will start on **Monday, January 13th at 3:00 p.m.** on Zoom. For more information, please contact Pat Thomsen, patthom75@ATT.net or Linda Marlin, LMarlin505@gmail.com



Afternoon Contemporary Literature

We will meet on **Wednesday, January 8th at 1:30 p.m.** (no lunch this month) at Eagle's Trace, 14703 Eagle Vista Drive. We will discuss We Begin at the End by Chris Whitaker. Meeting Place: new spot!!!! Turn left as you enter and go north on main drive to Mockingbird Plaza. Use the C10 entrance and there will be someone there to direct you to Cardinal Run. Please contact Co-coordinator Linda Morgan at 281-989-6499, amorgan352@sbcglobal.net, or Co-Coordinator Cheryl Smith at 402-651-2445, ccherylesmile@gmail.com, for more information.

Contemporary Readers

On **Wednesday, January 8th at 1:00 p.m.**, we will discuss Tom Lake by Ann Patchett. Our group will meet at MDUMC West Campus, 13186 Memorial Drive, Room 462, in the TJ Maxx shopping center., For more information, contact Coordinator Sharon Pope, 713-376-0940, spope576@gmail.com or Co-Coordinator, Cathy Urquhart, 832-454-5017, curquhart80@gmail.com.

Enjoying History Book Club

We will meet on **Monday, January 13th at 1:30 p.m.** in the library at Tracy Gee Community Center. We will discuss Mirage: Napoleon's Scientists and the Unveiling of Egypt by Nina Burleigh. Peggy Edwards will be our leader. Please contact Nancy Guilloud with any questions, nanguilloud@aol.com

Evening Contemporary Literature

Please join us on **Monday, January 6th at 5:00 p.m.** at Los Tios Restaurant on Kirkwood and Memorial. We will discuss The Heaven & Earth Grocery Store by James McBride. Please contact Coordinator Carole Ballew at caroleballew@yahoo.com or call 832-656-0775 for more information.

Mystery Book Club

We will meet on **Tuesday, January 21st at 1:30 p.m.** at the Tracy Gee Library to discuss The Late Mrs. Willoughby by Claudia Gray. The discussion leader is Pamela Ossorio. Please contact Pat Pease, 713-824-1681, popease@aol.com, or Kris Bybee-Finley, 304-610-8708, brazitku@gmail.com for more information.

Zoom Eclectic Book Group

ZOOM Eclectic Book Group will meet on **Thursday, January 16th at 2:30 p.m.** to discuss Horse by Geraldine Brooks. Our leader is Marie Helmy. All meetings occur on ZOOM. Members and guests are welcome to join us for one or all the books. Please contact Carolyn Morris carolynmorris16@gmail.com 713-560-1889 or Pat Thomsen, Co-coordinator, patthom2@sbcglobal.net, 713-302-8899.



JANUARY BIRTHDAYS

| | | | |
|------------------|--------|------------------|---------|
| Joyce Pritchard | Jan 01 | Anita Woods | Jan 09 |
| Pat Thomsen | Jan 01 | Nancy Guilloud | Jan 11 |
| Julia Ray | Jan 02 | Frances Mayberry | Jan 16 |
| Teme Sappenfield | Jan 04 | Lisa Rankin | Jan 18 |
| Barbara Butler | Jan 06 | Suzanne Dalati | Jan 22 |
| Marggie Chapman | Jan 06 | Glenda Higgins | Jan. 22 |
| Eddie O'Brien | Jan 07 | Roslyn Metchis | Jan 30 |

Please add the following to your directory

Returning Member:

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Arlene Baker

Spelling of city in address should be
 Towson

New Member

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New Member

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