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AAUW OF
GEORGIA
NEWSLETTER

Cherokee Rose



Announcements:

Have you checked your email from CEO Gloria Blackwell sent on Jan. 19th? Scroll to the bottom part and click for your FREE one-year subscription to Ms. Magazine!

AAUW of GA Convention will be on Sat. April 22nd at the Central Congregational United Church of Christ, Atlanta, GA.

Reading Is Fundamental

From the Houston-Peach Branch: Several Reading is Fundamental book distribution dates are coming up! Books will be distributed on Tuesday, February 7 and Tuesday, May 9 at Cherished Children.

Mark your calendars!

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April Convention – Coming Soon!!

PLAN NOW, ENJOY LATER!

Atlanta Branch's Convention Team is busy planning a day that will be both informative and lots of fun and fellowship.

Our theme this year is **“Immigration: What It’s All About!”** Our keynote speaker will be **Kembra Smith**, an immigration attorney practicing in Atlanta. With 35 years of immigration and court experiences, she will have much to share with us about the immigration situations that seem to be troubling to so many. **Kembra has requested that we submit questions to her at least two weeks prior to the Convention.** Send them to Mary Lynn Merkle (merkle1651@att.net). There are several other “irons in the fire,” so stay tuned.

We will meet on **Saturday, April 22nd** at the **Central Congregational United Church of Christ** located at **2676 Clairmont Road, Atlanta**. It is just off the I-85 Clairmont Road exit.

AND!! Atlanta Branch member Gillian Horsley will host a cocktail party for our out-of-town guests on Friday evening—even more opportunity to fellowship!



Belinda

Read on and feel the pride of having this outstanding young woman be a part of the AAUW of Georgia leadership team.

Belinda is a graduate of Georgia State University, where she completed an Associate of Arts, Associate of Science, and Bachelor of arts degree in the past two years. She returned to higher education during the pandemic to complete her undergraduate degree and became active on the Dunwoody and downtown campuses. From 2019-2022, Belinda was an active member of the Honors College, Women in STEM Experience, S.P.A.C.E club, and the Student Leadership Program.

She has moderated panels, produced talks, and shared her love of literature through poetry. After earning her way into the Honors College, she was also selected as a research fellow for the Humanities Inclusivity Program through the Center for the Advancement of Students and Alumni (CASA) office at Georgia State. She is most grateful for the support and mentorship she received through the paid research program, generously funded by the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation. She now has her goals set on entering a graduate program in the fall and pursuing a career as an academic, hoping to create curriculum and teach perspectives courses combining multidiscipline pedagogy. Belinda's research on BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, and People of Color) contributions in the publishing industry reveals that more stories should be introduced to children from a larger pool of diverse writers. She believes in the power of oral histories and that sharing multicultural experiences and heritage can help children develop a better sense of self, no matter their family structure or environment.

As a proud single mother of three sons, Belinda founded Georgia State's first student parent organization open to all students on GSU campuses. Parenting Panthers is a registered student organization dedicated to identifying and servicing student parents and their families while they complete their educational goals. Belinda has also devoted her skills and experience to bringing awareness to underserved communities through national organizations like Outdoor Afro, YMCA, PTA, and the National Collegiate Honors College. At recent national NCHC conferences, she presented on the utilization of national parks as a positive determinant for healthy lifestyles and the institutional benefits of student parents in higher education.

Belinda remains a committed community leader. She was recently selected by the mayor of Chamblee to serve as a member of the Georgia Initiative for Community Housing (GICH) 2023 cohort in an effort to seek solutions for affordable housing in Chamblee. She continues to engage with children of all ages— as a baseball and basketball coach, soccer and robotics mom, and a reading volunteer at Huntley Hills Elementary.

Belinda is currently conducting postbaccalaureate research on communication pedagogy and works as an enthusiastic writing tutor for GSU at the Dunwoody campus while she decides on a graduate program.

And still—she finds time to volunteer for AAUW leadership positions at both the Branch and the State levels. Thank you, Belinda, for your service!



Coming Attraction: Our AAUW of Georgia Website!

Karen Ludwig, an Atlanta Branch member, and **Terry Eshenour** (Atlanta Branch webmaster) have been revitalizing our State website. It's not ready yet; but it won't be long.

Karen has been developing a workable menu, an attractive format that will be easy to use, and a plan to easily add and update. Along the way she and Terry have sought input from a small committee composed of Co-presidents Laurie Shaw and Mary Lynn Merkle, Communications VP Daisy Bourassa-Dowd, and Debbie Karvey (Cobb County). At each of our Zoom sessions we continue to be impressed at how completely Karen considers the options available.

Once this re-do of the Website is completed, it will be up to us (all of us) to provide current and interesting content for placement. In our internet world of today, this will be an excellent communication and information tool.

A special thank-you to Karen and Terry for taking on this all-important project!

A Rosy Future for AAUW of Georgia

We all want AAUW of Georgia to thrive—to grow bigger and stronger in its ability to facilitate equity for women and girls and to make a difference. **That's why the 2022-2023 Nominating Committee will soon be seeking women for the open leadership positions.**

The open positions are: (1) **Co-president** to serve with Laurie Shaw who will be in the second year of a two year term, and (2) **Communications Vice-president** to replace Daisy Bourassa-Dowd who has moved to South Carolina but graciously agreed to serve out the second year of her term from her new home state. Both are positions that are important if we want to create a bigger, stronger foot-print.

Consider the strengths that you have to share. If you are willing and able to fill either of these offices, call or email any member of the Nominating Committee. They are: Marlene Humphry (Houston-Peach), Sharon Dawson (Houston-Peach), Rosetta Coyne (Valdosta), Bea Potter (Cobb County), and Yetta McMillan (Cobb County).

News from National

Elections at the national level are coming in April and continuing through May. We will all get either an e-mail ballot or a postal service ballot. In addition to electing directors to the National board we will be voting on a major bylaws rewrite. Some of us old-timers will recall the many times that we had to update Branch bylaws because of amendments made in the national bylaws.

A sub-committee of the Governance Committee composed of members (most of who were attorneys) looked at the bylaws and the many amendments, and they decided to start at square one. They have carefully slimmed the document down so that it will serve its purpose and will not need to be amended so much in the future.

There is an opportunity to see these proposed bylaw changes and also the proposed Public Policy Priorities on the national website. There is also a comment site, but it is only available until January 27, 5:00 p.m.

If the proposed bylaws pass, the affiliates will have three years to update their bylaws to concur with national. The Governance Committee is suggesting that this might be the time for affiliates to simplify as well. National leaders are planning to propose some alternative structure dependent on the needs of the individual affiliates.

The question of membership requirements will not be on the ballot for this election. You can be sure that it will be presented again in 2024.

Information about the 5 Star Program is on the website. Those branches that are interested in obtaining those designations will have until June 30th to complete the forms for that recognition.

Statement from Mary Lynn Merkle - I believe that National is working very hard with a much reduced staff. We (and they) are not happy about slow responses and communication difficulties. Our responsibility is to be persistent in letting them know what we need, —and then to recognize their efforts when there's success. We need them, and they definitely need us.

Statement from Laurie Shaw - Members—please review your email address in the National AAUW website. Paper ballots will only be sent to those members who have no email listed. If you have changed email or if it was inadvertently entered incorrectly, you will not receive an email link to vote. To make your voice and your vote heard, be sure your email address is correct!

News from AAUW Cobb County

For the AAUW Cobb County 2022 holiday book discussion members gathered in December at the festive home of Barbara Hammond to share a potluck luncheon and to discuss the book by Lynda Rutledge, [West with Giraffes](#). It was a joyous time brimming with holiday cheer and the warmth of friendship.

Holiday Greetings to all! Stay warm, bask in the warmth of family and friends! And best wishes for a healthy and happy 2023!



News from AAUW Valdosta Branch

AAUW Valdosta Branch is taking every opportunity to help improve the lives of others locally and internationally.

Rosetta Coyne - During our September meeting, key updates were shared by our local officials regarding basic voting procedures and protocols in Georgia. Many of our members were inspired and made the extra effort to be trained in voting registration. As an AAUW Branch in action, the members celebrated Constitution Day at Valdosta State University's Odium Library by both participating in voter registration and the reading of the US Constitution.

During this first meeting, we embarked on a life changing mission to raise monetary support for the relief efforts of Ukrainian women and children refugees. Due to a personal encounter with a German driver who directs rescue missions to the Ukraine border on weekends (information learned while visiting my family stationed at The NATO School in Oberammergau, Germany) a series of extraordinary events slowly evolved.

Last March, the real time relief effort stories shared on the way to the Munich Airport by our German driver then later shared at the April AAUW Spring State Board meeting fueled a lot of interest



Some details included:

- The organized church relief efforts consisting of rescuing women and children at the Ukrainian border while bringing a fleet of vehicles full of supplies to sustain war affected communities occurred late in the evening.
- Young men who were approaching 17 years old were rushed to the border to save them from the mandated stay to serve as soldiers.
- The driver (like many other German families) was hosting a 6 month pregnant mom with her five year old son while awaiting permanent housing.
- The cell phone is the only means of communication between refugees and family members remaining in Ukraine enduring unpredictable devastating attacks.

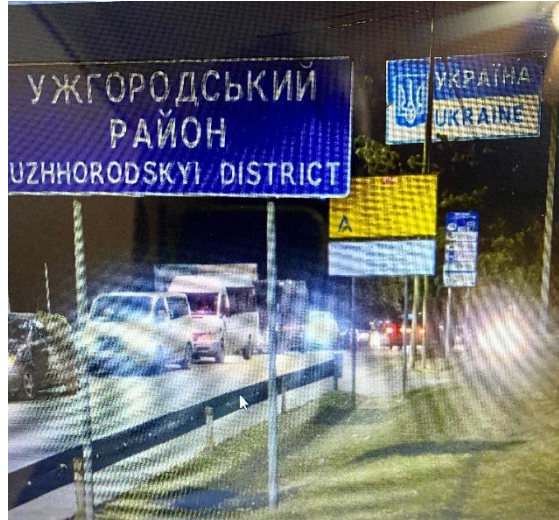
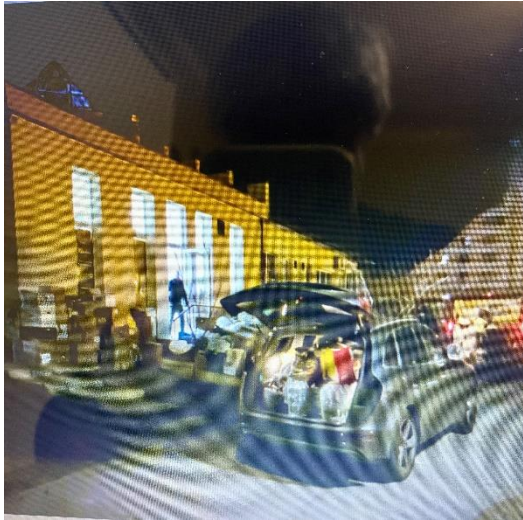
The State AAUW board decided that the funds collected during the spring silent action would be used to support the Ukraine rescue mission. The Valdosta Branch collected donations from September through November and added to the total donation making it a sum total of \$300. This donation was given to the Christian Church directors during the week before Christmas in Germany. A link with pictures and news stories were sent with a thank you email.

The October monthly meeting was dedicated to cyber security and updates. Sheila Hall- Richardson, our chapter webmaster presented a very informative program.

Finally, 2022 ended with AAUW Valdosta Branch membership hosting an annual holiday gathering celebrating foods and holiday traditions with international students attending Valdosta State University. Some of these students will play an active role in AAUW Valdosta Branch's 25th Annual Middle School Girl's Summit titled I.G.N.I.T.E. - (Inspiring Girls with New Ideas to Transform and Empower) scheduled for March 4th. – Submitted by Rosetta Coyne, branch president

News from AAUW Valdosta Branch Continued

Pictures from Ukraine rescue mission



AAUW Valdosta Branch pictured at November's International student meeting. (left)

AAUW Valdosta Branch pictured at new faculty orientation at Valdosta State University. (right)



News from AAUW Atlanta Branch

Atlanta Branch has been doing the work necessary to raise \$45,000 to fund its current philanthropy projects, including scholarships for women and donations to charities, local and beyond, that benefit girls, women and families. There is a core of truly dedicated volunteers who work the Book Room, along with the Cobb Branch volunteers, doing yeowoman's work in getting books ready for shipping or sale at Westside Market in Atlanta. They are joined by some of the rest of us when it comes to special Sidewalk Sales at Westside that have been remarkably successful. Our Contemporary Literature Group is still vibrant and our Travel Group, temporarily sidelined by Covid, is now back in business. We enjoy getting together for fellowship and learning at our five general branch meetings through the year. We welcome new members at any time!

Baby News!

Communications Vice-President, Daisy Bourassa-Dowd, welcomed her second baby on January 29th, 2023. Samara Ann Dowd was born at 4:21am weighing 7 lbs 3.7 oz and was 20 inches long. Samara wasn't due until February 20th, so she arrived 3 weeks and 1 day early. Daisy spent the entire day ignoring signs of labor insisting they were false alarms but to her surprise, Samara was ready!

Samara now shares her late great grandmother's birthday (on her father's side). Her paternal grandmother has predicted the exact date to be her birthday for months. Samara's name is derived from the names of her paternal grandmother, Samantha, her late maternal great-grandmother, Mary, and her late aunt, Sara.

Samara's brother, Dean, was born 11 weeks early and spent 39 days in the NICU in 2021. Samara was still considered premature, but far enough along that she did not have any NICU time. Daisy and Samara were released from the hospital on Monday 1/30. Dean is only 15 months old and still doesn't know what to think of this new housemate of his.

Daisy is supported tremendously by her husband, Matt, and her mother, Shirley (who now goes by her grandmother name "Gemmy"). Gemmy moved to Columbia, South Carolina from Baton Rouge, Louisiana in August to help care for Dean and now Samara. The Dowd household is truly blessed to have 3 generations under one roof. Samara is rapidly approaching 1 month old! She looks different every day! Here are a handful of pictures of Samara and one of Dean:

