

JANUARY PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Happy New Year and welcome to 2021! Have any of us been this anxious for a new year and the promise of what it will bring in our lives? I look forward to the distribution of the vaccine and our ability



to meet and work in person again. I feel that our branch has “rolled with the punches” and found new ways to keep working together and even growing with new members. Who knew Zoom would become such a valuable tool six months ago?

Fundraising is very important to our mission to advance gender equality for women and girls through education. Our Book Sale is the vehicle to do this work.

Our members have continued to sort and box books under the leadership of Kristen Alpert and Carrie Clary. On December 12,

Kristen and Carrie, with the organization and deployment skills of Fran Rasmussen, organized the movement of hundreds of boxes of books from our two storage facilities to the Brevard Music Center. You will read another article in this newsletter detailing this work (see page 3). We witnessed unbelievable teamwork, aided by a local boy scout troop. We hope this venture will help us procure income that we need to provide scholarships to women and girls in our community.

Speaking of books, AAUW NC partners with the NC Library and Historical Association each year to recognize a North Carolina author. This year, five books were placed in consideration. Meg Cannistra, a new author, has been chosen as this year's recipient for her book, *The Trouble With Shooting Stars*. One reviewer called this book “a great story about accepting trials in life.” This seems an appropriate story for both children and adults in 2020. A copy of this book is being sent to each branch president to donate to their local public library on behalf of their branch. Ms. Cannistra will be receiving her award at the AAUW NC Convention scheduled for March 19 and 20, 2021. More details will be shared about the Convention as I receive them.

The national AAUW organization is very good at sharing the work they are doing on behalf of women and girls. The webinars they provide cover a variety of topics. As the new Biden-Harris administration prepares to take office, AAUW is asking them to focus on equity issues, including an increase to the minimum wage, pay equity and making gender and racial equity a priority. Our state chapter also provides webinars on important state and national topics. Be on the lookout for emails detailing what will take place in the New Year. (Aren't you glad you became a Zoomer?)

COMING EVENTS

Jan 6 2:00 p.m.	Book Group Zoom
Jan 12 1:00 p.m.	Board Meeting Zoom
Jan 13 7:00 p.m.	Branch Meeting Zoom
Feb 3 2:00 p.m.	Book Group Zoom



Photo by Cindy Donaldson

January Program

Getting Girls Outside: The Joys and Benefits of Playing in the Woods

Do you remember the joy of playing outdoors when you were a child? What seemed like having fun with siblings and friends was actually an important part of growing and learning as a child. This unstructured play as children is important to developing healthy, self-assured adults. Research from the University of Wisconsin and other educational and health organizations now informs us that this outdoor time as children not only helped our physical growth, but also nurtured our social/emotional, cognitive and sensory skills. It even helped to increase our attention spans.



Unfortunately too many children today are content staying indoors, too often involved with screens or passive activities. Even here in Transylvania County where we are surrounded by expansive forests and natural areas, there are many local children who do not play outdoors regularly or even know of the many local options available. In one of our prior presentations the speaker from the Muddy Sneakers program related that a local fifth-grader, when in Pisgah National Forest for the first time, asked, “Who put all of this here?”

Our January 12 AAUW program will feature an interesting presentation on the importance of children today, especially girls, spending time in outdoor play and healthy activities. Our speaker Wendy Manner will share information both from personal experience as a mother of two children and professional experience as the Staff Director for Rockbrook Camp. She is also the leader of one of the two active Girl Scout troops in our county, leading those scouts in activities such as hiking and rock climbing. A former house parent at White-water Cove Group Home for children as well as a foster parent for several years, her experience with a wide variety of children has led Wendy to be a firm believer in the importance of outdoor play in healthy child development.

Wendy shared, “We live in an area rich with opportunities that are available throughout the year. Our bodies need the stimulation of being outdoors and in the woods. For children this not only supports physical and intellectual development but also helps build confidence.” With her experience as a parent, camp staff director, Girl Scout leader and foster parent for a number of years, she has a wealth of experience to share on how to support girls in finding the joy and benefits of playing in the woods.

Her AAUW presentation promises to be an engaging one. Please plan to join us for this wonderful program.



Due to the pandemic our January 12, 2021 meeting will be presented at 7:00 p.m. via Zoom. A Zoom link will be sent via email to all members a few days before our meeting. If you would like to invite a guest to join our meeting, you are encouraged to share the Zoom link with them. If you would like a Zoom tutorial, e-mail Cindi Spillman for an appointment or visit the resources section at www.zoom.us.

Please plan to join the Zoom meeting by 6:50/6:55 p.m. to ensure a timely start for the presentation. A short AAUW business meeting will follow this program.

Linda Thompson



Photo by Cindy Donaldson



Photo by Kristen Alpert



Photo by Cindy Donaldson

Book Sale Update

December was a busy month! With the approval of the Board, we moved forward with our plan to sell some of our books through a third-party online retailer, ThriftBooks.com. We undertook this new approach to fundraising in order to offset the loss of revenue from our cancelled book sale this summer.

On December 12, we moved a total of 564 boxes of books from the Book Nook and storage unit to the Brevard Music Center, loaded them on pallets, and shrink-wrapped them. With the tremendous help of AAUW volunteers and scouts and parents from our local Boy Scout Troop, we accomplished all of that in just 1.5 hours! It was a great team effort. Many thanks to everyone who helped out. The pallets were picked up by Thrift Books on December 14. We will keep the membership updated on income generated through their online sales.

We now have the necessary space to begin the collection of books for our regularly scheduled book sale at Brevard College in June. Please continue to tell friends and neighbors that we are ready and willing to accept their donations of clean, salable books! Yellow boxes for book donations will be deployed throughout Brevard in the coming months.

Fran Rasmussen and Book Sale Chair Kristen Alpert; see more photos on p. 4.



Photo by Kristen Alpert



Photo by Cindy Donaldson



Photo by Cindy Donaldson

Public Policy Update

AAUW NC Public Policy Issues Include Broadband Expansion

Public policy representatives from nine AAUW NC branches met in early December to discuss policy issues which might develop as branch priorities for “action” issues in 2021. Margie Maddox, newly appointed AAUW NC Public Policy Chair,



moderated the Zoom conversation. Several ideas were listed, identifying both common and diverse interests as a focus to move public policy to the front of AAUW NC agenda in 2021.

One concern which was expressed from all branches on the Zoom call was the lack of access to broadband internet expansion, especially in the more rural parts of the state. The current COVID crisis has exposed the lack of internet service for students of all ages across many communities. Access to telemedicine compounds the problem for anyone who faces health issues.

On December 10, 2020, Governor Cooper and the legislative leaders of the NC General Assembly reached a compromise to help ensure that broadband internet expansion would receive federal funding. Funds from unspent CARES Act money in the state’s general funding would be used to promote the continued expansion of internet expansion access all across North Carolina.

The leaders of the NCGA stated they are committed to broadband internet expansion and intend to formally appropriate the money in a bill, once the long session actually begins in January 2021. Additionally, Attorney General Josh Stein has suggested that the \$14 million payment Dish Network must pay the state in the “robocall” telemarketing settlement be used for broadband internet expansion. This proposal may mean that potentially \$30 million would be available to help with broadband internet expansion across North Carolina.

Though the rural-urban divide across our state is a given, expanding broadband internet could be a topic around which local partners could join AAUW NC and build an “informal alliance” to address this issue. The broadband issue/conversation will continue when public policy chairs Zoom again in January.

Karla Atkinson, Public Policy Chair

More Photos from the Mighty Book Move

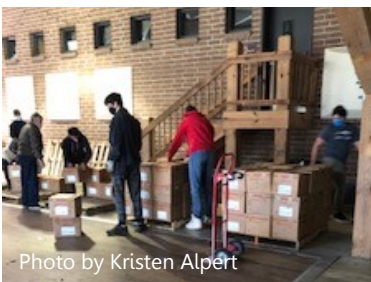


Photo by Kristen Alpert



Photo by Cindy Donaldson

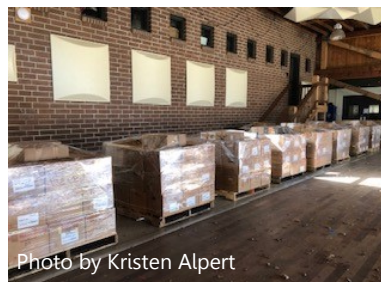
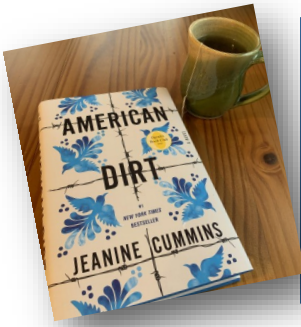


Photo by Kristen Alpert



Photo by K. Alpert



Book Group News

On Wednesday, Jan. 6, 2021 at 2:00 p.m. (on Zoom), the AAUW Book Group will discuss *American Dirt*, by Jeanine Cummins. On Wednesday, Feb. 3, 2021 at 2 p.m. (on Zoom), the book will be *A Woman of No Importance*, by Sonia Purnell. Contact Carol Carrano for more information.

AAUW BREVARD BRANCH OPERATING FUND

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If you or family members are looking for a gift idea, please consider contributing to one of the AAUW college endowments. You can link to the forms at: <http://brevard-nc.aauw.net/donate/> . Gifts to BRCC scholarship endowment must be mailed to the school with the completed form.

(President's Letter, cont'd. from page 1)

Remember that Roberta and Fran are convening the Nominating Committee for 2021 Officers and Committee Chairs. I know that they will find a slate of candidates to present for your approval in the spring that are as talented and skilled as the women I have had the honor of working with this year. Please be open to their call.

Finally, I hope you will join us for our first member meeting of 2021. **This meeting will take place at 7:00 pm on Tuesday, January 12, rather than noon as listed in the Directory.** The speaker will present a program on the "Joys and Benefits of Playing in the Woods." Many thanks to Cindi and Nancy for providing such a rich slate of programs. I hope you will make it your New Year's resolution to join us each month. We miss seeing your faces on our screens. The plus side to Zooming is that you can wear comfy clothes and not deal with inclement weather as you hear interesting presenters. Stay healthy. I wish you many blessings that this new year will bring.

Cindy Donaldson, President