

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



In a time when things often seem to move so slowly, the time to write my last President's message seems to have come so quickly. Thank you for taking the time to read my missives. I hope that they kept you abreast of all things AAUW. On July 1, 2020, I shared the following remarks with the members of our Board of Directors at the Installation of Officers. We were just beginning to understand how COVID was changing our world.

"I wish I could be speaking to our entire membership today and celebrating a new year for our AAUW Brevard Branch. Because of COVID our manner of doing business has had to change. Media, including broadcast, print and social media, keeps talking about the 'new normal'. I'm not sure any of us will have the definition of the new normal for a long time to come. As an organization, we have to be dynamic and fluid and do what needs to be done to keep our Brevard Branch viable.

As a group of officers, as well as our membership as a whole, we need to revisit what the value of AAUW is in our life and our community. We need to reexamine WHY we became members and why we keep renewing our membership each year.

What is the value of AAUW in our life?

- ◇ Is it the friendships and times to socialize with each other?
- ◇ Is it the monthly programs that we attend that keep us on a path as lifelong learners?
- ◇ Is it mentoring young women from our local colleges and public schools and supporting them with scholarships provided through our yearly Book Sale?
- ◇ Is it advancing gender equality for women and girls?

I'm guessing that most of us would say any or all of these things would be our personal why. I believe that personal why will drive our work now and in the future. It will help us retain our current membership and attract others."

—*President's message continued on p. 5*



Don't miss the Book Sale Quilt Raffle!

(See page 7.)

May Membership Meeting & Picnic



Have you replied yet? So far, 25 of us plan to meet on Monday, May 17 at 1:00 pm to witness the Installation of new officers and celebrate a great year with a picnic.

We will hold this meeting at the **Depot Railroad Avenue Park, 390 Railroad Avenue**. We will begin our Business meeting with the Installation of Officers. You will have an opportunity to meet the women who will lead us in the coming year. After the meeting, we invite you to stay for a picnic lunch and catch up with each other on the past year.

Details:

- * We will follow all of the Governor's Executive Orders concerning COVID safety. Please make sure you have a mask. We will set up tables and chairs that follow social distancing recommendations.
- * Please bring your own food and beverage for lunch (alcohol is not permitted at the Depot). Please bring your own cups, plates and tableware.
- * There are tables and chairs, but if you prefer to bring your own "outside" chair, so you can spread out, please do so. There is a great garden to enjoy.
- * There is ample parking at the Depot.
- * **Please RSVP by contacting Cindy Donaldson. Only respond if you are coming.** We should be well within the Governor's guidelines for the number of people at an outdoor meeting.
- * Since we do not have a Hospitality Committee this year, we need everyone to clean up after themselves before they leave.

Please join us in this celebration. Let's hope that we get full cooperation from the weather!

—Cindy Donaldson, President



It's Renewal Time

Membership renewal forms for 2021-2022 will be mailed in early May. AAUW has announced a \$10 increase in dues, to be phased in over three years. National dues for next year are \$62, reflecting a \$3 increase. Total dues for next year will be \$83 (\$62 national + \$11 state + \$10 local).

A friend of the branch has donated funds to cover a limited number of national memberships. If the amount of dues is a financial hardship for you, please contact Laura Ledford.

Many members use this time of year to make donations to one of the funds listed on the renewal form. AAUW has recently revised the names and descriptions of these program funds to better align them with the organization's current initiatives. For information on these changes, click on the **AAUW Funds** link located on the Donate page of our branch's website.

—*Laura Ledford, Treasurer*

**Don't
forget...**

If you are coming to the May Membership Meeting & Picnic, contact Cindy Donaldson to let her know you're coming! See page 2. And don't forget to VOTE in the AAUW Bylaws Election—see below.

One Last Reminder

The AAUW membership is now voting on an amendment to the the AAUW Bylaws which, if passed, would eliminate the current educational requirements for AAUW membership. In order to pass, bylaw amendments require a two-thirds affirmative (yes) vote of the required quorum (5%) of those eligible to vote. All members may vote. Changes to the Bylaws would be effective immediately.

Voting for all members opened on April 7 and will close at 5:00 pm on May 17. Every member should receive instructions and a unique link for voting, unless a member sends a specific request for a paper ballot. It takes less than a minute to vote!

I have spoken to several of our branch members about this upcoming vote. Roberta Carver and I have had some especially good conversations. Please feel free to contact either of us if you have questions or concerns about the upcoming proposal. There are also resources about the proposal on our national AAUW web site; the national AAUW Board supports passage.

The reasons I am supporting the proposal are simple:

- *It is the right thing to do.
- *It is in keeping with our mission to advance gender equity.
- *You do not have a degree to be strong advocates for our mission.
- *The education requirement is counterproductive to recruiting diverse as well as younger members; there are many paths to education beyond college/university.
- *Corporate/foundation support for AAUW initiatives depends on demonstrating our commitment to inclusion, equity and diversity through policy as well as practice.

Thank you for voting ...

—*Karla Atkinson, Public Policy*

The Cost of Vouchers – At What Expense?

State and local tax dollars are the primary funding sources for charter schools and vouchers. Over the past decade, per-pupil spending in public schools has declined by six percent in North Carolina, leaving our state ranked the sixth lowest in the nation on this measure. **HB32/SB671**, the latest North Carolina effort to further develop the Opportunity Scholarship Program (vouchers), continues to threaten adequate funding for public schools in North Carolina, when our schools are desperate for funding and our legislators face the court-ordered funding requirements of the *Leandro* decision.

Opportunity Scholarships are funded with vouchers to low-income families, presumably to help low-income families escape failing schools. This program directs millions of dollars each year to religious and private schools. Some schools that benefit have discriminatory practices that exclude students and families based on religion and sexual orientation.

In the 2019-2020 school year, 12,285 students received Opportunity Scholarships to attend 456 North Carolina private schools. The total cost of these scholarships was more than \$48 million. HB32 proposes to expand program eligibility to students who are already enrolled in a private school, increase the amount of the voucher, and extend marketing and administration support for the voucher program. HB32 would also merge the Savings Account Program with the Opportunity Saving Account program, which puts tax dollars on a debit card to spend on private educational services in lieu of attending a public school. Under HB32 vendors will be allowed to charge “transaction or merchant fees” up to 2.5% of all spending.

This past July, North Carolina was sued in the case of *Kelly et al. v. North Carolina*. Plaintiffs argue that public tax monies going to private schools is a constitutional violation of the separation of church and state. Moving forward with HB32 before this case is decided is foolish. In addition to legal issues, the Opportunity Scholarship program has not used all the money already allotted by the General Assembly under current law. Historically, the voucher programs have continued to lack oversight and accountability.

Several members in the NC House and Senate are supporting this legislation either as an individual bill or rolled into a budget bill. Please write our representative (Jake.Johnson@ncleg.gov) and senator (Chuck.Edwards@ncleg.gov) to express your concerns about expanding Opportunity Scholarships at the expense of maintaining quality public education in North Carolina.

—*Karla Atkinson, Public Policy*



In Remembrance

We have been informed that Delmas Brown, husband of former member Becky Brown, passed away at the end of March. Delmas was a strong supporter of our Book Sale. He helped to sort paperbacks and worked to set up and take down the sale, among many other activities. Delmas did this in support of our branch and Becky, who chaired the sale. Becky, an embroiderer, even created an AAUW shirt for him.

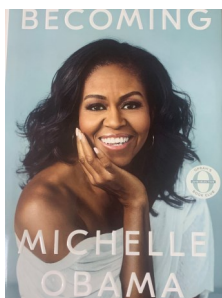
Notes of sympathy and comfort can be sent to:

Becky Brown
Sugar Creek Villas
323 Skylark Circle
Greer, SC 29650

Welcome New Member!

New member Deborah Weisberger moved to Brevard in August, 2019 after previously living in Kentucky and Tennessee. With a BS in Zoology and MS in Biology, she was a Professor of Biology at Western Kentucky University.

She and husband Joe, have five children and three granddaughters. Her hobbies include reading, knitting and hiking.



Book Group

On Wednesday, May 5, 2021 at 2:00 pm, we will discuss *Becoming*, by Michelle Obama. On Wednesday, June 2, 2021 at 2:00 pm, we will discuss *Leadership in Turbulent Times*, by Doris Kearns Goodwin.

Contact Carol Carrano for further information.

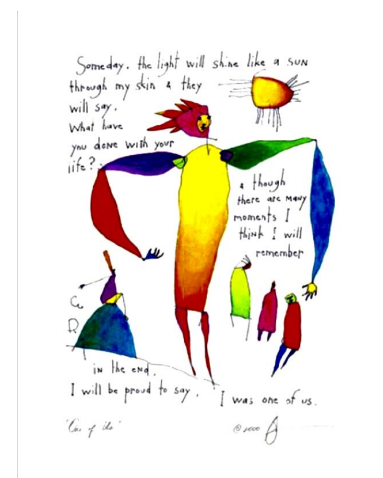
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Collaboratively as a Board of Directors, we have tried to use this as our framework this year. I want to thank the Board for their hard work. While it wasn't always easy, it was gratifying to see how things can pull together in a challenging circumstance. I look forward to working with Rhae and the new Board as they begin to emerge from COVID-19 restrictions that will offer their own unique challenges.

Please plan to join us on May 17 at 1:00 pm for our first in-person Member Meeting of the year and Installation of Officers. Let's all collectively think positively about great weather so that we can celebrate in style!

In closing, I'd like to share the words of Brian Andreas, a wonderful artist and storyteller. These words come from a print given to me by my coworkers when I left my last position. They sum up how I feel about this past year.

*Someday, the light will shine like a sun through my skin and they will say,
What have
you done with your life?
& though
there are many
moments I
remember
in the end
I will be proud to say,
I was one of us.*



Be well,

Cindy Donaldson, President

Book Sale Note

Good news!

Brevard College has confirmed that we may hold our book sale this year during the last week of July. We are hopeful that current local health department restrictions will be lifted if/when state regulations are lifted in June. That said, we will plan for the sale with the following tentative schedule:

- Thursday, July 22 Morning: College floor coverings laid, college tables and chairs delivered
 Afternoon: AAUW floor coverings laid, tables, supplies and half of boxes moved in from storage unit 91, tables set up
- Friday, July 23 Morning: Books moved from the Nook and storage unit 91 to Brevard College Boshamer Gym
 Afternoon: Unpack books
- Saturday, July 24 All day: Unpack books
- Sunday, July 25 Noon-7 pm: Sale opens**
- Monday, July 26 10am - 7 pm: Sale
- Tuesday, July 27 10 am - 7pm: Sale
- Wednesday, July 28 10am - 7 pm: Half-Price day
- Thursday, July 29 10 am-3 pm: Open to public
 3-5 pm: Local non-profits invited to take books at no cost
 5-6 pm: Pack remaining books for used book dealer,
 take down tables, pack supplies for return to Nook and 91
- Friday, July 30 9 am: Return all tables and supplies to Nook and storage unit 91



Please note that requirements for masking, social distancing and numbers of people allowed in the gym will most likely still be in place. The sale may have a bit of a different flavor this year but we are very excited that we can begin planning in earnest.

Many of you have been involved in the book sale and some of you will be experiencing it for the first time. There are jobs for everyone, regardless of your activity level and ability. Please expect to be contacted by one or more of us on the book sale committee about what you will be doing, and when and where. We are really in great need of some strong people to help move the packed boxes of books. If you can enlist any friends, neighbors or know of some young people who might help, please let us know. Please contact Kristen Alpert or Carrie Clary if you are interested in being part of the book sale this year. My sincere thanks to all involved in this amazing endeavor.

—Kristen Alpert, Book Sale Chair



Book Sale Raffle

This beautiful queen-sized quilt with matching wall hanging and pillow cases were handmade by AAUW member Kathy Pierson and will be raffled at the book sale. Our sincere thanks to Kathy for her generous gift!

—Kristen Alpert

AAUW BREVARD CONTRIBUTIONS

Blue Ridge Community College Endowment Donations

Donor:

Carole Pohl
Carole & Jim Pohl

In Memory of:

Grace Roy
Delmas Brown

Brevard College Endowment Donations

Donor:

Karla Atkinson
Cindy Donaldson
Cindy Donaldson

In Memory of:

Grace Munro Roy
Grace Munro Roy
Mary Lou Rhodes

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/>

Bridge

After a 13-month hiatus due to COVID, our AAUW Bridge Group met again in April. We were all happy to be playing cards and enjoying each other's company again. Thank you to Linda Thompson for hosting this month's gathering, and congratulations to Carol Carrano as the high score winner for the afternoon. The Bridge Group will play on Tuesday, May 25 at 1:00 pm in Diane Hodson's home. We invite all fully-vaccinated AAUW members who enjoy a social game of bridge to join our group. If you are interested, please contact Linda Thompson.