

AAUW Howard County Branch NEWSLETTER



OUR MISSION: *To advance equity for women and girls through advocacy, education, philanthropy, and research.*

February 2026 Message from your Co-Presidents

Hello Members and Friends,
Snow! Well, it *is* winter! We hope you have not had any weather-related problems. Please be careful during these frigid days of icy spots where a fall could ruin your day. We have great events on the calendar for the months ahead, starting with our annual **Book Bash**, on **Saturday, February 7th**. Susan Hailman has put together a good lineup of presenters and books centered around the theme of “We Need Another (S)hero”, and Beth is going to have you search your memory for the answers to women-related trivia questions. Prizes will be given.

Painting at **Pinot’s Palette** will boost our scholarship fund. Please register now for Sunday, February 22, 2026 at 2 pm at <https://www.pinotspalette.com/ellicottcity/event/862978>. It is important to let them know you are with AAUW so that we will receive a portion of the proceeds. Invite a friend or family member! Registration caps at 34 seats. Don’t miss out.

We welcome new member, Samedra Carter. She is joining this month and plans to attend the Book Bash. Learn a little more about her under Membership notes.

Included in this month’s newsletter are highlights from the AAUW MD Winter Meeting, Public Policy, and the Regional Conference that will take place in September.

Please read the newsletter for all the activities we have going on and pay particular attention to the calendar, so you don’t miss out on those things of interest. If you have suggestions for ways we might be of service to women in the community, or a social activity you would like to see happen, please let Beth or me know. We are always open to new ideas.

See you in February - *Beth Hayden & Suzanne Soules, Co-Presidents*

February Branch Meeting

The Book Bash *We Need Another (S)hero*

**Saturday, February 7
11:30 AM – 2:00 PM
Union Jack's Restaurant
Mall at Columbia**



PROGRAM

Only 1 week left to RSVP for our February 7 Book Bash!

Contact Susan Hailman, Program VP, by February 4. shailman@comcast.net

What do Eleanor Roosevelt and Dolly Parton have in common? What was the biggest challenge Jacinda Ardern faced as New Zealand's prime minister? How did a bureaucrat save the Peace Corps at a critical juncture? How did Jessica Mitford and Hedy Lamarr act as political disruptors? Why are writers as different as Maya Angelou and Mel Robbins (S)heroes?

Our (S)heroes will range from first ladies and prime ministers to spies, authors, activists and pop stars. We'll learn more about women we thought we knew and discover the heroism of women we might never have known. Food for thought for all of us in these difficult times!

We'll order individually from Union Jack's menu, compete in a little trivia contest, offer a book swap and there will be a trivia game with prizes. Feel free to bring a friend. We need to know you're coming by **February 4** so Union Jack's can plan seating.

TRIVIA GAME and PRIZES

Try to guess the "Sheroes" and you could win a prize!

BOOK SWAP

A favorite part of Book Bash! Bring a book to describe briefly and give away.

COLLECTING FOOD FOR HCC FOOD PANTRY

Please remember to bring non-perishables for the Howard Community College Fueling Dragons Food Pantry! Many students have increased need for food as budgets tighten!

Fun in the Afternoon for our HCC Scholarships *Paint and Sip at Pinot's Palette*

Sunday, February 22

2:00 – 4:00 PM

Create the scene “Magical Winter Wonderland”

Sign up now to support our HCC scholarships. Invite friends and family to join you. No need to be an artist – Everyone will leave with a beautiful painting. Yes, Really!

On a winter afternoon, Sunday, February 22, come and share the fun of painting together at Pinot's Palette as we raise money for our scholarships given to Howard Community College students. We will be led by a professional painter to create the colorful scene below, *Magical Winter Wonderland*. This event is open to the public. Maximum seating is 36 people. If 12 people mention AAUW when they sign up, the owner will give our organization 20% of the income for the event. Sign up now; invite family and friends.



DATE: Sunday, February 22, 2026

TIME: 2:00 – 4:00 PM

PRICE: \$44.00

LOCATION: 11105 Resort Road, Suite 105,
Turf Valley Towne Square, Ellicott City
Refreshments provided.

Sign up below.

The link below will take you directly to the painting and sign-up area on Pinot's Palette website. **IMPORTANT NOTE:** As you sign up, you will see a box on the lower left of the screen “Click to Enter Seating Requests” where you can name people you want to sit with AND mention “AAUW Member” or “AAUW Guest” to ensure our contribution from Pinot's Palette.

www.pinotpalette.com/ellicottcity/event/862978

Public Policy

Public Policy -- MLAW Announces 2026 Legislative Agenda

Based on rankings by organizations across the state, including AAUW, the Maryland Legislative Agenda for Women (MLAW) has selected 10 bills it will support in the 2026 session of the Maryland General Assembly which opened on January 14th. Our Branch ranked six of these as our top priority (see *) and has signed on as a supporter of MLAW's agenda.

The bills are listed below and [described in more detail here](#). The bills selected are:

- Stop Silencing Survivors *
- Protection of Students from Sexual Exploitation in Schools *
- Family and Law Enforcement Protection Act *
- Protection of Identity of Victim of Sexual Assault *
- Prescription Privacy Protection Act for Abortion Medication
- Comprehensive Rehabilitative Prerelease Services-Female Incarcerated Individuals (The Monica Cooper Prerelease Act)
- Coerced Debt Bill *
- The Maryland Reproductive Justice and Pregnancy Outcome Protection Act *
- Timing of Hearings between TPO and FPO, and Relief for Financial Loss
- ICE Enforcement Activities (title TBD)

ADVOCACY DAY

AAUW Maryland Advocacy Day is planned for Tuesday, February 17 in the morning (weather permitting). Join the group to support bills that our state AAUW organization is supporting. The more participants attend, the greater number of legislators we can contact and request to support our bills.

Membership

Please welcome new member Samedra Carter. She plans on joining us for the Book Bash. Here is her introduction of herself.

My name is Samedra Carter. I was born in Harrisburg, Virginia, but I consider Maryland as home, having lived in Maryland the majority of my life. Currently I work at the Law Department in the city of Baltimore and am a non-traditional student taking classes at Morgan State University.

I identify as a social activist, womanist, and feminist. I am deeply committed to justice for women and believe that women deserve to be heard and seen. My hobbies include swimming, reading, skating, and writing. I am interested in exploring book binding and pottery very soon.

I am a very proud and active auntie. Aside from my personal life, I value community and enjoy being amongst like-minded women and look forward to meeting and connecting with other women. I look forward to connecting, building, and growing with other women through this group.

We are happy to have Samedra join our membership and look forward to her participation.

Suzanne Soules, Membership VP

Why Join AAUW?

January is Mental Wellness Month and a perfect time to join our AAUW Howard County Branch for a great social connection that is critical for mental well-being. According to the National Institute on Aging, a connection to others is critical particularly for many older adults to avoid experiencing social isolation and loneliness, which can lead to poor health, cognitive decline and depression. Of course, you can join us any time at <https://howardcounty-md.aauw.net/>.

Branch Activities



AAUW Readers Group at the January meeting where they discussed *The Art Thief* by Michael Finkel.

Meetings are held every other month; the next meeting will be in March, announced on page 6 below. You are welcome to join the discussion.



The **2026 AAUW Regional Conference** **Unfinished Revolution: Together We Stand**, will be held the weekend of **September 25-27 in Lancaster, Pennsylvania**. Please plan to join your friends and AAUW colleagues from 13 states at the [Lancaster County Convention Center & Marriott Hotel in Lancaster, PA](#)

The **Program** will begin with a welcome and update from AAUW CEO Gloria Blackwell on Friday at 1:30 pm and end on Sunday at 12:30 pm. Our own Kate Campbell-Stevenson of the Kensington Rockville Branch will perform her one-woman show on Friday evening! One of the Keynote Speakers will be Celine Stewart, CEO for the League of Women Voters. Other amazing speakers will address current topics of interest to women and address the [AAUW Policies for 2025-2027](#) in areas such as Education, Economic Security, Bodily Autonomy, Voting Rights, Sexual Harassment in the Workplace, America's Media in Crisis, Reproductive Health Research and Social Justice and Civil Rights.

Conference Early Bird Registration is now open for \$249 until July 19, 2026 and \$295 thereafter. Registration includes attendance at all speaker events, materials and workshops as well as Friday dinner, Saturday breakfast and lunch, and Sunday breakfast. Saturday dinner is on your own or an optional dine-around experience at local Lancaster restaurants with conference attendees.

Be sure to make your **Room Reservation** as soon as possible! There are only 50 rooms left in the room block reserved for AAUW. The special discounted rate of \$225 per night plus taxes is available only until [August 24th](#). A 2-night minimum is required and parking is an additional \$15 per day. Your room reservation may be cancelled up until the week of the event.

Here's the conference link: <https://www.aauwatlanticregionalconference.net/> and the registration link: <https://www.aauwatlanticregionalconference.net/conference-registration>. Check out the conference registration page for details on the refund (serious illness, natural disaster, etc.) and transfer policy.

Please contact Tracy Lantz tklantz@verizon.net or Heather Reichardt hjr1234@gmail.com with any questions. Looking forward to seeing you there!

Interest Groups

ADVENTURES IN DINING

Feb - No meeting due to Book Bash
Mar 10 - Kelsey's Rt 40 (**Note second Tuesday instead of usual day**)

Apr 7 - El Azteca, Clarksville

May 5 - TBD

June 2 - Hudson Coastal, Maple Lawn

I will send out an email prior to each event for RSVP's.

Carol Phelps, carollphelps@gmail.com

GREAT DECISIONS

The Great Decisions group will meet on February 17 at 2:00 PM. Topic #2: "The End of an Era: Trump's Tariffs in Historical Perspective." We have **a new location** for our meetings: Brighton Gardens of Columbia, a Senior Sunrise property. The address is 7110 Minstrel Way, Columbia.

Arrive a little early so you have time to sign in at the front desk. We will meet in the Activity Room.

Contact: Diane Roca
dbroca@comcast.net

FOOD BANK

AAUW Volunteers for the Howard County Food Bank

Join a fun AAUW group to help stock and wrap local fresh produce. Mark your calendar for Friday, April 3, from 10 AM -12 noon. For any questions, please reach Laura Violand at 410-733-5732. violand123@gmail.com

The Food Bank is set up to look like a regular food market and is located close to Snowden River and Broken Land Parkway on Gerwig Lane.

AAUW READERS

All meetings will take place at the East Columbia Library in the 50+ Center. Starting time is 10:30 a.m. followed by an optional lunch at a nearby restaurant. **All Branch members are welcome.** If you would like to be added to the distribution list, please let Debbie Munley know via email debbiemunley@verizon.net.

March 19, 2026 **James**

By Percival Everett

May 21, 2026 **Chesapeake**

Requiem: A Year with the Watermen of Vanishing Tangier Island

By Earl Swift

July 16, 2026 **Clara and Mr. Tiffany**

By Susan Vreeland

Contacts: Jean Salkeld (410) 992-4198

jesalkeld@gmail.com and

Debbie Munley (301) 776-7388

(debbiemunley@verizon.net)

LUNCH BUNCH

We will meet on Thursday, February 26 @ 11:30 am, Nordstrom Cafe, Columbia Mall. Join us for conversation and a casual lunch, no RSVP necessary. Hope to see you there!

Caroline Tunison

301-346-1750



2025 – 2026 AAUW Howard County Branch Officers

Co-Presidents: Beth Hayden (410)-707-2018 and
Suzanne Soules (858) 775-1942

First Vice President: Position open

Financial Officer: Bea Dane (410) 299-8403

Programs Vice President: Susan Hailman (443) 994-5453
Asst. Peggy Wong (410) 997-7019

Philanthropy Vice President: Position open

Meetings/Social Co-Vice Presidents: Carol Phelps
carollphelps@gmail.com and Kathy Silks (717) 315-5440

Secretary: Debbie Munley (410) 381-6351
Alt. Caroline Tunison (301) 346-1750

Education Vice President: Cindy Graham (214) 912-5656

Public Policy Vice President: Position open

Membership and Diversity Vice President: Suzanne Soules (410)
872-8603

Communications Vice President: Diane Roca (443) 255-1628

Adventures in Dining: Carol Phelps: carollphelps@gmail.com

AAUW Readers: Jean Salkeld (410) 992-4198 and
Debbie Munley (301) 776-7388

Howard County Food Bank: Laura Violand (410) 733-5732

Great Decisions: Diane Roca (443) 255-1628

Lunch Bunch: Caroline Tunison (301) 346-1750

Website Manager: Position open

AAUW Howard County Branch Calendar 2026

2026

JANUARY

31 – Women’s Legislative Briefing, by the Montgomery County Commission on Women;
11:30 AM-5:00 PM; Universities at Shady Grove, 9630 Gudelsky Dr, Rockville, MD 20850

FEBRUARY

3 – 2026 MLAW Legislative Briefing; 5:30 pm; Free via Zoom. Register at MLAW website
<https://mdlegagendaforwomen.org/2026/01/22/2026-legislative-briefing/>

7 – Book Bash and Branch Meeting; 11:30 am – 2 pm; Union Jack’s restaurant, Columbia

17- Great Decisions; 2 pm; Brighton Gardens, 7110 Minstrel Way, Columbia

22 – Pinot’s Palette “Paint and Sip” Fundraiser for scholarships; 2:00-4:00 pm; Turf Valley Town Square, 1075 Resort Road, Ellicott City

26- Lunch Bunch; 11:30 am; Nordstrom Café

MARCH – Women’s History Month

3 – Board Meeting; 2 pm; location TBD

10 -- Adventures in Dining; Kelsey’s Restaurant and Irish Pub, Route 40, Ellicott City

(Note change from usual day)

? – Girl Power; 2-5 pm; Johns Hopkins Applied Physics Lab; Laurel

14 – Branch meeting; 5:00 pm followed by program of Commission for Women at 5:30,
E. Columbia 50 + Center.

17 -- Great Decisions; 2 pm; Brighton Gardens, 7110 Minstrel Way, Columbia

19 – AAUW Readers; 10:30 am; 50+ Center East Columbia Library

26 -- Lunch Bunch; 11:30 am; Nordstrom Café

APRIL

3 - Help at Howard County Food Bank

7 -- Board Meeting; 2 pm; location TBD

7 - Adventures in Dining; El Azteca, Clarksville

14 -- Branch Meeting – Diversity Program

21--Great Decisions; 2 pm; Brighton Gardens, 7110 Minstrel Way, Columbia

24 – Lunch Bunch; 11:30 am; Nordstrom Café

? — AAUW Maryland Annual State Convention

MAY

- 5 -- Adventures in Dining; 5 pm; location TBD
- 6 -- Board Meeting, if needed; 2 pm; location TBD
- 12 -- Last Branch Meeting, Potluck, New Officers; location TBD
- 19 -- Great Decisions; 2 pm; Brighton Gardens, 7110 Minstrel Way, Columbia
- 21-- AAUW Readers; 10:30 am; 50+ Center East Columbia Library
- 28 -- Lunch Bunch; 11:30 am; Nordstrom Café

JUNE

- 2 -- Adventures in Dining; 5 pm; Hudson Coastal, Maple Lawn
- 16 -- Great Decisions; 2 pm; Brighton Gardens, 7110 Minstrel Way, Columbia
- 25 -- Lunch Bunch; 11:30 am; Nordstrom Café

JULY

- 7 - Adventures in Dining; 5 pm; location TBD
- 10 -- Help at Howard County Food Bank

SEPTEMBER

- 21 -- Great Decisions; 2:00 pm; Brighton Gardens, 7110 Minstrel Way, Columbia
- 26 -- 28 - Mid-Atlantic Regional meeting, Lancaster, PA