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Items for the March Newsletter

**DUE Wednesday,
February 19, 2025**

shirlenejustice@gmail.com

February Membership Meeting

featuring

Dr. Martha Wofford,

Retired Audiologist and Lecturer



Billie Jean King,

Champion for Equity in Women's Sports

When: Saturday, February 8, 10:00 a.m.

Where: Balcones Country Club, [8600 Balcones Club Dr.](#)

Cost: \$35.00

Contact: Anita Knight, dbasknight@aol.com

Martha Wofford was born and raised in the Texas Panhandle. She was awarded her bachelor's and master's degrees and Doctorate of Philosophy in Communication Disorders by the University of Texas at Austin. After finishing school, Martha worked as an audiologist at the UT Medical Branch in Galveston, then taught audiology at Southwest Texas State University in San Marcos and Lamar University in Beaumont. Most of her career was spent as an assistant clinical professor at Baylor College of Medicine in Houston and as chief of audiology and speech pathology at the VA Medical Center in Houston.

Now retired, she teaches seminars on different topics of interest.

Her neighbors know her as "that lady down the street who brings us cookies covered in cat hair."

Her presentation for our branch meeting will focus on Billie Jean King, a champion of women's equity in sports.



Lunch will be pot roast with two sides or vegetable plate with assorted mini desserts (\$35). Beverages only (\$10). Please RSVP no later than January 31. The headcount for our event must be turned in to Balcones Country Club a week in advance. Cancellations or "no-shows" may still be asked to pay for their lunch.

Message from the President

Love is in the air!!

Last year, our branch meeting was held on Valentine's Day, and I brought roses to share. It was nice to have the scent of roses wafting through the room during our meeting. This year, our meeting will fall near Abraham Lincoln's birthday, and I'm disappointed that I won't be able to attend. It would have been fun to show up in a stovepipe hat to honor good old Abe.



We're a little more than halfway through our fiscal year. We have been working hard to accomplish the goals we established at the beginning of the year. I want to give you an update on a few of those goals.

- Strategic Focus 1: Increase Membership—Our co-VPs for membership have been very busy recruiting and retaining members. At last count, nine new members joined since July 1, 2024.
- Strategic Focus 2: Centennial Scholarship—At the end of December 2024, we had raised a little over \$10,000 for the AAUW Austin Centennial Scholarship. This is fantastic work. We are two-thirds of the way to funding the scholarship. Let's gear up and raise the last \$5,000 so that we can begin helping students in early childhood education complete their education.
- Strategic Focus 3: Action Plan – The public policy committee, led by Chair **Anita Knight** and unofficial Co-Chair **Mary Ellen Scribner**, has been very busy getting the word out and coordinating marches and visits to the capitol on issues of vouchers, book bans, women's health, benefits to low and middle-income families, and voting rights. The Southwest Book Club organized a donation project for single moms through Travis County's community center. Kudos to **Debbie Starr** and **Brenda Hahne** for coordinating this effort.

We are continuing to work on strategic focus 4 and 5, but it will take more time for results to appear.

February symbolizes love, with Valentine's Day on Feb. 14. But it also symbolizes equality. It has been designated as Black History Month in honor of Abe Lincoln and Frederick Douglass, strong abolitionists who were born in February. This designation is a great reminder that AAUW is working for equality for all women and girls.

In closing, I have a personal announcement. I will be moving to League City (south of Houston and where NASA is located) in February/March to be closer to my brother and sister-in-law. It's bittersweet because while I'm looking forward to more time with my family, I will miss all of my friends in the Austin area. I intend to finish out my presidency and hope to be able to continue being a member of the Austin branch, although it will be a distant membership. I will most likely find another AAUW branch in the Houston area and become a dual member. Until then, you will continue to hear from me, at least through August.

Happy Valentines Day! Hug your loved ones, let friends know that you care, and give a warm smile to those who may need it.

January Meeting Recap

Submitted by Larayne Dallas

Our January speaker, Sharon (Shari) Wilcox, PhD, uses her training as a geographer to protect wildlife and restore populations. She especially tries to understand the human interactions that lead to population declines among wild animals and what can be done to modify or ameliorate human effects.

Shari is the senior Texas representative for the national environmental nonprofit organization Defenders of Wildlife.



Interestingly, the group was her first employer out of undergraduate studies. Her dedication to the work led her to obtain advanced degrees, including a doctorate at the University of Texas at Austin. After deciding that she prefers a more active role in conservation, Shari left full-time teaching to return to Defenders of Wildlife. (She continues teaching and has classes at both UT-Austin and at UT-San Antonio.)

Shari's talk focused on the ocelot. We learned that these reclusive, nocturnal animals are barely hanging on in Texas. In the state, the ocelot population has been reduced to a dangerously small number. There may be as few as 60 individuals in Texas. Along with the small number is the problem of reduced genetic diversity. Fortunately, ocelots live in some other areas of the hemisphere, and there is hope for artificially expanding the gene pool.

The decline of the ocelot followed loss of habitat, vehicles on highways, and an odd fad for having ocelots as house pets. Working with people on behalf of the ocelot, Shari and comrades have advocated for sponsorship of breeding programs, new protections for habitat, highway bridges to allow safe ocelot crossing, and educational programs to help make more of us aware of the situation.



Guest Speaker Shari Wilcox, Pam Wolfe, and Nancy Andren



Devon Austin, Suzanne Angel, Sharon Babot



Mary Ellen Scribner and Resa Dunn

The Nominating Committee Begins Its Work

At this time each year, the board selects a nominating committee whose task is to nominate willing members to assume leadership roles in the branch. Each year, it is difficult to identify members willing to serve. Here are the positions the committee is trying to fill.

1. **Two Co-Presidents.** Typically, a president serves for two terms, and the terms are staggered so that an incoming and an outgoing president work together. Because this year we have had only one president, we need to recruit two people to serve.
2. **Co-Vice President of Programming** to work in partnership with Sarah Averill, the other co-vice president. -
3. **Two Co-Vice Presidents of Membership.** One will serve a one-year term, and the other will serve a two-year term.
4. **Historian.** Although the nominating committee is not responsible for identifying a historian, we are seeking a volunteer to fill this position.

What It Matters

Without dedicated individuals willing to take on leadership roles, the branch cannot and will not continue. It is that simple. In addition, board participation has advantages beyond the organization's health.

1. You will meet and become friends with women who will enrich your life. Austin branch board members are a wonderful breed. They have chosen to get off the bench and onto the field, and you will be enriched by their company.
2. Board service at its best allows you to share your best self—your emotional connection to the work, commitment to the overall mission, life experience, skills, and knowledge. There are precious few tables you will sit at that will need all of what you bring the way our board does.
3. The branch board is not a typical fund-raising board. Therefore, the time you spend participating in board activities directly relates to organizational functions and the mission. Service on this board is not a big time commitment. (Co-Presidents – 10 hours per month, Co-Vice Presidents Programming (10 hours per month, Co-Presidents Membership – 10 hours per month)

Nominating Committee Members are:

- Marsha Endahl-Kramer – Chair
- Shirlene Justice
- Ruth Subramanian
- Resa Dunn
- Berta Lloyd

Please get in touch with Marsha (MEKSpirit66@gmail.com, 512.906.6566) if you are interested in serving in any capacity or know a good candidate.

Thank you very much for your careful consideration of our request.

Policy Update from the Public Policy Committee

Submitted by Policy Chair Anita Knight

What's on YOUR mind and heart this new year? Does public policy (politics) give you fits or starts? Consider the following inspiring quotes:

Poet Robert Frost: *"In three words, I can sum up everything I've learned about life: It goes on."*

President Jimmy Carter: *"My faith demands that I do whatever I can, wherever I can, whenever I can, for as long as I can with whatever I have to try to make a difference."*

President Biden: *"We must hold on to hope. We must stay engaged."*

Cecile Richards: *"When it was all on the line, what did you do? And the only acceptable answer is everything we could."* (In one of her final public appearances, at the Democratic National Convention in August 2024, she reflected on what she would share with her grandchildren if they asked about her life in advocacy.)

Heather Cox Richardson: *"This is literally how you change a society. You start with small groups at the local level who build community."* (Who among us has signed into a [Red Wine & Blue](#) webinar or wants to join a [TroubleNation](#) team? But Texas Freedom Network, founded by Cecile Richards, also states: *"Just like Cecile, we're self-proclaimed troublemakers."*)

What is on the radar with the Trump administration and the 89th Texas Legislature?

Texas lawmakers proposed spending billions of dollars over the next two years to create a school voucher-like program, cut property taxes, raise teacher pay, shore up water infrastructure, and continue the state's presence at the southern border, according to initial budget drafts that House and Senate leaders filed recently. Stay in touch with our local media, your school boards, and elected officials.

PUBLIC EDUCATION: Our own AAUW members **Mary Ellen Scribner** and **Nita Hornbeck**, assisted **Cecile Richards** in 1995 in founding the Texas Freedom Network, a nonprofit organization focused on supporting public education. Given the state's projected surplus for the next two-year budget cycle, let's hope we see a significant increase in public school funding without the competition of vouchers. Tell your representatives that public funding belongs in public schools.

ABORTION: January 22 marked 52 years since *Roe v. Wade* was decided: the landmark U.S. Supreme Court decision that recognized the right to abortion in the U.S. and protected our constitutional right to make decisions about our bodies. In the years since, that right has faced relentless attacks, and *Roe* was ultimately overturned by the U.S. Supreme Court in 2022, pushing the U.S. into the shameful position of being one of just four nations to ROLL BACK protections for abortion rights over the last 30 years. Some of you signed the postcard petition that TX Impact is sponsoring to amend the abortion ban in Texas. This will continue until as many as 10,000 are collected to submit to the Texas Legislatures in February. Texas Lt. Gov. Dan Patrick has recently indicated that he supports clarifying the medical exception the state's abortion law, specifically addressing when doctors can legally perform life-saving abortions. The *Zurawski v Texas* documentary movie (story of how she nearly died when care was delayed during a miscarriage) will be shown at the January United Women in Faith legislative event, and you may find it online for a fee.

Pills now account for about two-thirds of abortions, and pro-abortion activists have succeeded in making the pills available even in states with tight restrictions. Whether the Trump administration clamps down on the interstate mailing of pills is the biggest question about its abortion policy. See League of Women Voters position paper on abortion: [2025 League of Women Voters Action Paper](#)

ERA:

We honor President Carter's unwavering support for the Equal Rights Amendment. The Constitution does not impose time limits for the ratification of amendments. President Carter solidified his place in history by courageously challenging those who opposed the ERA's ratification. Notably, he extended the so-called time limit, reaffirming his belief that equality should not be bound by arbitrary constraints.

On January 17, 2025, President Biden declared that, in his opinion, the Equal Rights Amendment was the law of the land. He said that 38 states had ratified the Equal Rights Amendment, an anti-sex-discrimination law Congress passed in 1972 — enough to make it the U.S. Constitution's 28th Amendment. HOWEVER, no court in the country has recognized the amendment's legitimacy, and the national archivist hasn't published it, despite efforts from activist groups to have the amendment recognized. Some states, including Texas, have their own ERAs. So stay tuned and optimistic!

Texas: Equality under the law shall not be denied or abridged because of sex, race, color, creed, or national origin. This amendment is self-operative. *Texas Constitution, Article I, § 3a (1972)*

EQUAL PAY/ PAY EQUITY – included in AAUW-TX priorities for the 2025 legislative session, but primarily for child and health care, such as:

- Support family leave
- Support increasing wages of home health nursing personnel and other professions that women predominately staff
- Support childcare funding and increased wages for childcare workers
- Support continued improvements of the Texas Rising Star program, a state quality rating and improvement system for child care programs
- Support policies that would give families more access to high-quality childcare.

Other public policy events to consider:

AAUW Member Gathering, Wednesday, February 5, 3 p.m. CT – to share updates on our work in policy, fellowships & grants, and membership, celebrate our achievements, and learn about our latest initiatives.

Gun Violence Prevention Advocacy Day, Feb. 27, 9-1:00, a rally

<https://texasimpact.org/event/gun-violence-prevention-advocacy-day/>

AAUW Legislative Day, March 17, 2-6:00 PM at the Capitol - The focus of our meetings will be public education.

“Be a bush if you can’t be a tree. If you can’t be a highway, just be a trail. If you can’t be a sun, be a star. For it isn’t by the size that you win or fail. Be the best of whatever you are.”

From Dr. Martin Luther King’s 1967 speech at Glenville High School

Austin Branch Centennial Endowed Scholarship Fund UPDATE

We are well on our way to achieving our goal of raising \$15,000 to endow a scholarship for an Austin Community College student entering the early childhood field. As of December 31, we have raised \$10,515.44 from thirty-three individuals and three matching contributions. Our goal is to raise \$15,000 in three years. We are doing great! Thank you to everyone who contributed.

If you have not already done so, please remember to make your tax-deductible contribution to the Austin branch centennial endowed scholarship fund. To contribute, go to the ACC Foundation website by clicking [Make A Donation](#). You may choose an amount or enter a different amount. Then, enter your credit card information. Last and most important, you will *Choose your Designation* from the dropdown menu. **IMPORTANT:** Select *AAUW Austin Centennial Endowment*, then *Give Now*.

If you want to write a check, you may download, print, and complete the [DONATION CARD](#) and mail it with your check to:

Austin Community College Foundation
6101 Highland Campus Dr.
Building 3000, Suite 4270
Austin, TX 78752

Named Gift Nominations

It's time to send in your nominations to honor members' contributions to the branch and AAUW.

Named Gifts

Each year, members of the Austin branch are selected to be honored as recipients of "Named Gifts." We think of our colleagues who have, for example:

- Held a position for the branch and exceptionally completed duties,
- Led a project,
- Served over time in multiple roles,
- Represented the branch to other groups in an outstanding manner or
- Always said, "Yes."

At this location, you may copy a [Nomination Form](#). If you prefer, it is acceptable to make nominations by explaining your support of the nominee without using the form. Please send submissions by **April 1, 2025**, to **Linda Welsh** at lawelsh@gmail.com or by mail at 2023 Cervin Blvd., Austin, TX, 78728.

Branch Fundrai\$ing News 2024-25

Submitted by Joyce Pulich

Thanks to everyone who has supported the branch's fundraising efforts. See's candy bar sales have generated **\$1,209** after expenses. Candy bars are still available for purchase at meetings until all are sold. Holiday ornament sales generated **\$160**, and up until now, card sales total **\$314** and will continue to be available. Change for change has produced **\$200**—remember to bring your jar or bag of change to branch meetings.

The Book People gift-wrapping team of **Kate DiPronio, Jackie Hardee, Brenda Hahne, Berta Lloyd, Joyce Pulich, CeCe Schubert, Kathy Stewart, and Cathy Werner** generated **\$500** in tips while spreading the word about AAUW to customers.



SAVE the DATE

Mark May 2 on your calendar for a Kendra Scott event at the South Congress store. The date gives you time to buy Mother's Day gifts while helping a good cause. The store will donate a percentage of profits to the branch.



Mahjong Training and Orientation



Join us to learn more about the new branch interest group, Mahjong. This is your opportunity to learn more about the game and decide whether or not you want to join. Please RSVP to **Connie Munoz**.

When: Thursday, February 27, 2025

Time: 1:00 p.m.

Location: Lamar Senior Citizen Center, 2874 Shoal Crest Ave.

Contacts: Connie Munoz (comunoz1@yahoo.com or 361.813.8012 Cell)

Berta Lloyd (berta.lloyd@yahoo.com or 206.660.1812 Cell)

In Memoriam

Sara Bolton Ezell

October 1, 1938 – January 19, 2025



Our condolences go out to the family and friends of long-time branch member Sara Ezell. You may read her obituary and learn about service arrangements [HERE](#).

Celebration of Life

Saturday, February 1, 2:00 p.m.
Weed-Corley-Fish Lake Travis Chapel
411 Ranch Road 620 South
Lakeway

Yearbook Additions

New Member

Suzan OConnor

Suzan.Oconnor@gmail.com

(210) 260-7372

2621 Coralbush Drive

Leander, TX 78641

Also, please review your contact information in the yearbook and report any updates to Sharon Babot at sharonbabot@gmail.com.

Contemporary Literature

Submitted by Mary Ellen Scribner

The contemporary literature interest group is very pleased with the outcomes of its fall/winter service project which was assisting the Women's Storybook Project of Texas with its annual end-of-year inventory and its annual holiday book drive at Barnes & Noble in La Frontera. **Gayle Kanies** and **Cathy Werner** participated in the book drive, and inventory takers were **Ann Berasley**, **Resa Dunn**, **Nancy Ennis**, **Louise Jordan**, **Martita Lopez**, **Joyce Pulich**, **Mary Ellen Scribner**, and **Lisa Sura**. Overall, the project was an introduction for most of the group to the nonprofit Women's Storybook Project, a Texas original initiative that enables mothers incarcerated in one of the state's prisons for women to maintain some contact with their children through reading and recording storybooks. We were so impressed that several of us want to continue volunteering in other ways throughout the year. The project also welcomes cash and children's book (new) donations.

<https://storybookproject.org>

Project Team Members



Nancy Ennis, Joyce Pulich, Ann Berasley



Lisa Sura, Mary Ellen Scribner, Resa Dunn, Martita Lopez



Joyce Pulich, Nancy Ennis, Mary Ellen Scribner, Ann Berasley, Louise Jordan

February Interest Groups

Art Tours

When: Wednesday, February 5, 10:00 a.m.
Where: Neill Cochran House Museum, 2310 San Gabriel Street
Host: Berta Lloyd
Contacts: Pat Beal, patrbeal@gmail.com,
Terry Whaley, whaleyterry@gmail.com

Bridge Group

When: Second and Fourth Thursday, 1:00 – 4:00 p.m.
Where: Lamar Senior Activity Center, 2874 Shoal Crest Ave
Contact: Elaine Penn, epenn9915@gmail.com

Central Book Club

When: Monday, February 10, 10:30 a.m.
Where: La Madeleine, 5493 Brodie Lane
Book: *The Heaven & Earth Grocery Store* by James McBride
Facilitator: Joyce Pulich
Contact: Linda Quintanilla, quintalin@gmail.com

Contemporary Literature

When: Monday, February 3, 7:00 p.m.
Where: Zoom
Book: *The Covenant of Water* by Abraham Verghese
Leader: Lisa Sura
Contact: Mary Ellen Scribner, maryescribner@gmail.com

Creative Stitchery

When: Wednesday, February 19, 10:00 a.m.
Where: Home of Jackie Hardee, 1811 Running Brook
Project: Pin Cushion
Hostess: Jackie Hardee
Contact: Zosia Hunt, zjhunt@sbcglobal.net
Beverly Locklin, bklocklin@outlook.com

January Art Tour Learning about Ansel Adams at the Harry Ransom Center



Berta Lloyd, Cathy Werner, Shirlene Justice, Pat Beal, Marsha Endahl-Kramer

Creative Stitchery December Meeting, Holiday Luncheon and Sing-a-Long



From front clockwise: Lynn Cooksey, Katherine Pew, Janet Cobb, Suellen Mills, Beverly Locklin, Mary Ellen Scribner, Resa

Hiking Group

Hike

When: Thursday, February 6, 10:00 a.m.

Where: Bull Creek District Park and Greenbelt, 6701 Lakewood Drive

Leaders: Jackie Hardee

Hike 2

When: Saturday, February 15, 10:00 a.m.

Where: Buescher State Park, 100 Park Road 1E, Smithville

Leaders: Linda Welsh

Contacts: Cathy Werner, cathy.werner3586@gmail.com,

Kate DiPronio, klee523@gmail.com

Friday Morning Book Review

When: Friday, February 7, 10:00 a.m.

Where: Hyde Park Church of Christ, 310 West Avenue B

Book: *Solito: A Memoir* by Javier Zamora

Reviewer and Hostess: Sheryl Beirne

Contact: Judy Reinhart, jareinhart@att.net

Mystery Book Group

When: Tuesday, February 25, 11:00 a.m.

Where: BJ Brewhouse, The Shops at Arbor Walk, 10515 MoPac

Topic: Edwardian Era (1901-1910) or Regency Era (1811-1820)

Contact: Pam Wolfe, piwolfe@yahoo.com

Out-to-Lunch

When: Tuesday, February 18, 11:15 a.m.

Where: Blue Corn Harvest Bar and Grill,
212 West 7th Street, #105, Georgetown

Planner: Berta Lloyd

Contact: Elaine Penn, epenn9915@gmail.com

PEARS

When: Sunday Brunch, February 16, 1:00 p.m.

Where: Este, 2113 Manor Road

Contact: Milli Stecker: mstecker@austin.rr.com

Wine Tasters

No February Meeting

Contact: Elaine Penn, epenn9915@gmail.com

PEARS Top Photo: Milli Stecker, Philip Craft

Middle: Mark and Janet Widoff, Barbara and Fred Worley, Ruth Rubio, Larry Sclerandi

Bottom: Marsha Endahl-Kramer, Jerry Martinson, Berta Lloyd, Bill Boyd.

Hiking Group at Lou Neff Point on Town



Sarah Averill, Ginny Tannebring, Gayle Kanies, Guest, Cathy Brady, Kate DiPronio, Ruth Rubio, Jim Kanies, Linda Welsh Suki Steinhauer

PEARS at The Roaring Fork for Dinner



Southwest Book Group

When: Monday, February 10, 10:30 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

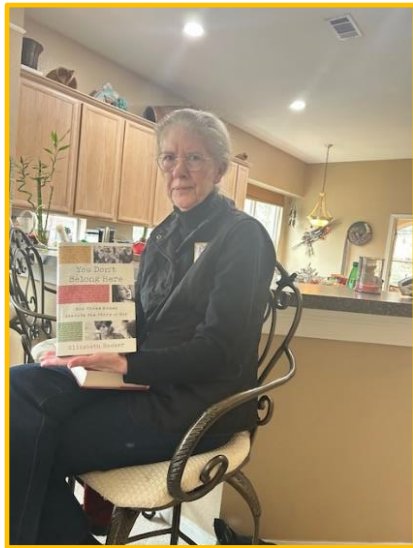
Where: Home of Ines Garcia, 6310 Abilene Trail

Book: *Me and Earl and the Dying Girl* by Jesse Andrews

Facilitator: Sylvia García

Host: Inés García

Contact: Brenda Hahne, bwhahne@gmail.com



Mary Braunagal Brown recommending *We Don't Belong Here* by Elizabeth Becker



Ginny Tannebring who recently turned 91 years old.

Southwest Book Group January



Above: Brenda Hahne, Kathy Stewart, Sylvia Garcia, Linda Gassert

Middle: Brenda Hahne, Kathy Stewart

Below: Cece Shubert, Marsha Endahl-Kramer



Culture and Cuisine

When: Thursday, February 13, 6:30 a.m.

Theme: Morocco

Where: Home of Roberta Coffin, 8505 Cima Oak Lane #A, Austin

Co-Hosts: Roberta Coffin and Ann Gibbs

Contact: Shirlene Justice, shirlenejustice@gmail.com

January Culture and Cuisine featuring Spanish Tapas and Wine



Roberta Coffin, Joyce Pulich, Anita Knight, Brenda Hahne



Marsha Endahl-Kramer, Shirlene Justice, Phyllis Folarin, Terry Whaley, Anita Knight



Brenda Hahne, Pam Watson



Warren Pulich, Shirlene Justice