

HAPPY NEW YEAR  
2024!

### *Inside this Issue:*

President's Message	p 2
Winter Social Recap	p 3
Policy Update	p 4
Policy Save the Dates	p 5
Centennial Photo Gallery	p 5
Member Profile	p 6
Silent Auction Results/Fundraising Update	p 7
Branch and State Awards	p 8
Yearbook Additions	p 8
Letter to the Editor	p 8
Interest Groups	p 9-10

### Items for February Newsletter

**DUE January 17, 2024**

[shirlenejustice@gmail.com](mailto:shirlenejustice@gmail.com)

## January Membership Meeting

featuring

**Kavya Nath**

Austin Community Foundation



*Women's Issues are Community Issues:  
Status Report on Women & Children in Central Texas.*

**When:** Saturday, January 13, 10:00 a.m.  
**Where:** Balcones Country Club, [8600 Balcones Club Dr.](#)  
**Cost:** \$35.00  
**Contact:** Jackie Hardee, [jshtxtx@yahoo.com](mailto:jshtxtx@yahoo.com)  
Brenda Hahne, [bwhahne@gmail.com](mailto:bwhahne@gmail.com)

Kavya has been a member of the Women's Fund Steering Committee since 2021 and will serve as 2024 Grants Committee Chair. In this role, she'll oversee the strategy and implementation of the Women's Fund annual grant cycle to award \$500,000 to area nonprofit organizations making an impact on the economic mobility of women and their families. Kavya is currently the Product Marketing Manager at Meta. She enjoys spending time with her husband and two children around Austin.

Attendees will get a deep dive into the most recent report published by the Women's Fund in 2023. Kavya will share information about how the fund's strategic pillars - child care, education, housing, and women's health - are the cornerstone issues impacting women's economic mobility. She will give an overview of the history of the Women's Fund, its evolution towards an equitable trust-based grantmaking process and share how the fund partners with local nonprofits on proven solutions that can make a difference.

Lunch will be King Ranch Casserole, unless a vegetarian option is preferred. If you are only having beverages (\$10) and will not be staying for lunch, please let us know in the evite.

## Co-President's Message

Each January I have a retreat with my friend Rebecca to reflect on the past year and explore intentions for the coming year, culminating with an aspirational collage. This year will be particularly important since there have been so many transitions and challenges personally and throughout the world. Time spent in reflecting and setting intentions is well spent.



For AAUW Austin, January is a time for a mid-year review and recommitment to our mission. We have had a great year thus far – reconnecting at our Summer Social, interesting and informative fall programs, a meaningful centennial celebration, important public policy actions, effective fundraising, active and stimulating interest groups, and good food and conversations at our winter social. These activities reflect our values of **connection**, **camaraderie**, and **advocacy**.



This reminds me of one of my beloved pictures, showing how working together can accomplish more than working alone – we might even end up with a whole basket! We need each other to accomplish our mission of empowering women and girls.

**Pramila Jayapal** points out in *Use the Power You Have* the importance of the wisdom and perspective we bring to the table, changing the conversation and improving the results. As we move into an important election year, our collective focus and actions can assure access to free and fair elections without intimidation.

Hope to see many of you at January's program as we get an update on the status of women and children in Central Texas.

In Sisterhood,

Linda Welsh, Ph.D.

Co-President, AAUW, 2023-2024

## Winter Social Highlights

Tasty treats, good company and conversation, and time to leisurely peruse\* the pictures and proclamations from our centennial celebration in the relaxed setting of the Balcones Country Club, made for a delightful afternoon. Folks had an excellent time with no complaints, except maybe about parking!

How valuable to spend time with friends, new and long-standing, to enjoy each other's company! Many thanks to the past presidents and all who brought treats to enjoy. A special thanks to Past President **Larayne Dallas** and our Co-VPs of Program **Brenda Hahne** and **Jackie Hardee** for ensuring a comfortable, relaxing setting for our gathering.

\*In looking up *peruse* to make sure it was spelled right, I learned it is a contronym – a word with two opposite meanings – to examine closely and carefully or to skim – so however you perused the displays the word works!



# Winter Social Photo Gallery



Special thanks to Marsha Endahl-Kramer for her excellent and ebullient photographs. Marsha did an outstanding job of capturing the fellowship and joy that our members experience when they are together.

# Policy Update from the Public Policy Committee

Submitted by Policy Chair Anita Knight

The state public policy committee under Chair **Pat Rehm** will continue to focus on issues related to our AAUW mission: education, women's healthcare, gun violence, fair pay, and voting rights in fair elections. Mary Ellen Scribner continues to follow and inform us about book bans.

**CLIMATE:** Several local folks attended the 28<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Conference of Parties (COP28) in Dubai, including TX Impact CEO **Bee Moorhead**. The best results were the establishment of the [Loss & Damage Fund](#) (established on Day One of the summit), the connection between climate change and health, and the final statement about "transitioning away from fossil fuels..." The last-minute global pact calls for "transitioning away from fossil fuels in energy systems, in a just, orderly and equitable manner." John Kerry said that the deal nations struck in Dubai is "the most important decision since the Paris agreement."

It's been 27 years since the first COP, and this is the first year that human health has been on the official agenda – but it's quickly become one of the most popular issues. The Catchphrase of the day: "The climate crisis is a health crisis." Now, after years of discussions, the link between health and climate finally gained recognition at COP! The inaugural Health Day at COP28 in Dubai on December 3 marked a significant milestone in acknowledging the connection between climate change and health. The event secured a substantial one billion in funding for mitigation and adaptation programs, with a focus on transforming health systems and safeguarding vulnerable communities. A new [Declaration on Climate and Health](#), signed by 124 countries, underscored the need to prepare healthcare systems for climate impacts and emphasized government responsibility for public health.

**TEXAS LEGISLATURE:** With our support and activism, Texas Freedom Network continues to fight back against political extremists who want to turn back the clock. The far-right's scheme to defund our public schools and subsidize tuition at private, unregulated, and religious schools was rejected by a bipartisan majority 84-63. Governor Abbott should have gotten the clear message: We support public education, and we will NOT allow private schools to discriminate with our tax dollars. Per email from my Texas Representative, **Donna Howard**: "Our public schools are the foundation of our democracy and a constitutional imperative of the State of Texas. Though the Governor is insistent on passing a voucher scheme, I am determined to continue working with my colleagues to protect public schools and defeat any future voucher program." **Do any of you want to share a yard sign, like those that I ordered from Texas Impact, to thank reps like Donna Howard for keeping public dollars in public schools?**

**ELECTIONS:** Our volunteer efforts to encourage citizens to actively participate in our democratic form of governance is so important! When we emerge from the holiday season, we will have just over 30 days to encourage citizens to register to vote and update their addresses until the February 5<sup>th</sup> primary election voter registration deadline. On the February 5<sup>th</sup> deadline, we expect to be able to register voters at dozens of locations throughout Travis County to be able to vote in the March 5 primary election. Let's recruit additional *active* VDRs to join Travis County's *Civic Engagement Army*, or your county Voter Registrar can appoint you and give you the county-specific procedures. [Online video training](#) is available in Travis County and can be viewed at any time.

Vote411, the online guide from the League of Women Voters, will become live on Feb. 2, 2024. Stay tuned for SBOE elections – ½ of current state board of education members come up for re-election in spring.



## Policy Reminders and Save the Dates



**On January 20, 2024, women will take the streets!** As we approach January 22, 2024, the anniversary of Roe v. Wade, Women's March will reaffirm the commitment to reproductive freedom for all. **Get in where you fit in on this #BiggerThanRoe weekend of action.** March, rally, host a house party or canvass your neighborhood. **Be there. Take action in your city or state.**

Did you sign the ERA petition – see <https://www.sign4era.org/>

**Women in Faith LEGISLATIVE DAY, January 28-30 at Holiday Inn Midtown in Austin.** See <https://texasimpact.org/event/uwf-2024/>

### Changing the Conversation, Theology of Reproductive Justice

**Sunday, February 11, 2024 2:00 – 4:00 p.m.**

Presenter, **Rebecca Todd Peters** is a feminist and Christian social ethicist who serves as a professor of Religious Studies at Elon University.

For information, go to [Changing the Conversation](#).



## *Celebrating 100 Years Photo Gallery*

To view the photos taken during our Centennial Celebration, click on the photo below.



## Member Profile

Submitted by Ruth Subramanian

### Maria Luisa “Lulu” Flores

Lulu Flores has been a member of AAUW National and the Austin Branch for many years. As a long-time member of the National Women’s Political Caucus, serving on the national board for over twenty years and national president for four years (2007-2011), Lulu became familiar with AAUW and its work on issues of education, equal rights, and pay equity. Because of the partnerships of these organizations and as a university graduate, she naturally became a dues-paying member of AAUW to support its mission and work.

Lulu is a proud graduate of Laredo Junior College (now Laredo Community College - AA 1975) and the University of Texas in Austin (BA High Honors in government, 1977) and the UT Law School (JD, 1980).

Lulu began her career working in the Texas Legislature employed by State Representative Irma Rangel, the first Mexican American woman elected to the Texas Legislature, in 1978 while she was attending law school. Representative Rangel was a pioneer who rose to serve as chair of the House Higher Education Committee for many years. After working a few legislative sessions as Rep. Rangel's chief of staff, Lulu continued her career in public service working as director of legislative programs for the State Bar of Texas for almost eight years and then as the assistant director for alternative fuels policy and legislation/governmental affairs at the Texas Railroad Commission for ten years. She then left state employment after an almost twenty-five-year career and joined her husband and law partner in their law firm, Hendler Flores Law, PLLC.

Lulu is a name partner at the firm and is also serving her first term in the Texas Legislature as State Representative of House District 51, representing east and south Austin and southeast Travis County. In addition, Lulu also serves as a volunteer in the Hispanic Bar Association of Austin (HBAA), heading up their community service activities and serving on the HBAA Charitable Foundation Board. She is the immediate past president of the National Women's Political Caucus Foundation and serves on the NWPC Political Planning Committee. Lulu is an active member of LULAC Council 650 and the Austin Art League Group 1. She has a long history of service on boards of many local and state community organizations, including Planned Parenthood, Texas Advocacy Project, SAFE, YMCA of Austin, Mexic-Arte Museum, and the Austin Arts Commission, to name a few. She continues to support and contribute to these groups.

Lulu is the youngest of nine children born to Ernestina S. and Francisco J. Flores in Laredo, Texas. All her siblings have college degrees, and following in their father’s footsteps, two others in addition to Lulu became lawyers. Lulu and husband Scott M. Hendler have no children, but she is an aunt and great aunt to many nieces and nephews, mentors a family of five, and has seventeen “grand mentees”.

She is a former dancer and member of Roy Lozano’s Ballet Folklórico de Texas, dancing with the group for twelve years after joining at the age of twenty-eight and learning the art for the first time.

# Silent Auction Results – A Big Success!

## And

## Other Fundraising Updates

The virtual holiday auction generated **\$1,587**. This is less than we made last year but is still a nice amount. The revenue goes to the national [AAUW Greatest Needs Fund](#). Thanks to everyone who contributed items and/or services for the auction. The project could not have happened without **Cathy Werner's** time and effort setting up the website and sending out the emails. Many thanks and hugs to her.



At the Centennial Celebration, many members bought raffle tickets for the prizes: a large handmade quilt, two bottles of William Chris wine, a fifty-dollar Barnes & Noble gift card, and AAUW tote bags. The raffle generated **\$730** that went to the branch fellowship fund at the University of Texas at Austin. Thanks to everyone who bought a ticket and congratulations to the winners.

The **Change for Change Challenge** continues to be successful and helps to underwrite branch meeting lunch costs for members who need financial assistance. Be sure to bring your bag or jar of change to the next branch meeting.



A large beautiful, handmade quilt sold for **\$140** at the silent auction during the winter social. There is only one quilt remaining to put on silent auction at a branch meeting in 2024.

The Book People giftwrapping project generated **\$195** in tips compared to **\$154** last year. The money went to the national AAUW Greatest Needs Fund. Thanks to **Cathy Werner, Berta Lloyd, Sharon Babot, Kate DiPronio** and **Anita Knight**, who made it a success with their excellent giftwrapping skills.



Delicious See's candy bars are available for purchase beginning January 1. This is perfect timing for Valentine's, Easter, or just because. The fundraising team hopes that all members will purchase some of these treats while supporting AAUW national goals. The price for milk chocolate and dark chocolate bars is \$3 for one or \$10 for four. Members who order \$30 worth – 12 bars – can have them delivered to their homes. Place your order with **Joyce Pulich** at [joycepulich@sbcglobal.net](mailto:joycepulich@sbcglobal.net) or **Susie Angel** at [susierangel@aol.com](mailto:susierangel@aol.com).

The funds team wishes you happy holidays and reminds you to keep putting coins in your **Change for Change** jars or any receptacle and bring it the January branch meeting.

## Looking Ahead to Branch and State Awards

The start of a new year means that it is time to think of award nominations. For the Austin branch, we will be selecting Named Gift Honorees. At the State level, since it is a state conference year, our branch has the opportunity to make a nomination apiece for the AAUW Texas State Outstanding Member and for the AAUW Texas State Outstanding New Member.

The immediate Past President chairs the Named Gift Honoree Committee, with four others serving on the committee. Prescribed members are the current AAUW Funds Chair, the Interest Group Coordinator, and a past Named Gift Honoree. One additional member is a representative from the general membership. In state conference years, the committee is responsible for choosing the Named Gift Honoree and for making nominations for the state awards.

If you would like to serve as the at-large member of the award committee, please let me know. Recommendations on recognizing outstanding members are welcome at any time. Please submit the name of your nominee along with the suggested award and why the individual deserves recognition.

Larayne Dallas ([ldallas@austin.utexas.edu](mailto:ldallas@austin.utexas.edu)), serving as Immediate Past President

## Yearbook Additions/Revisions

### New Member

#### **Cynthia Roberts**

11508 Trinity Hill Drive

Austin, TX 78753

Email: [cahroberts.austin@gmail.com](mailto:cahroberts.austin@gmail.com)

Phone: 512-698-7902

Also, please review your contact information in the Yearbook and report any updates to **Sharon Babot** at [sharonbabot@gmail.com](mailto:sharonbabot@gmail.com).

## Mary Ellen Scribner's Letter to the Editor

Representing our branch, Mary Ellen Scribner is a regular contributor to the *Letters to the Editor* section of the Austin American Statesman. Her most recent letter was published on Sunday, November 26. You may read her letter by clicking on the photo.

If you feel strongly about a position that aligns with AAUW's mission and want to express your opinion by writing a letter to the editor, please identify yourself as an AAUW member.





# January Interest Groups

## Art Tours

Wednesday, January 24, 10:00 a.m.

[Canopy Studios](#), 916 Springdale Road, Austin

Planner: Pat Beal

Contacts: Pat Beal, [patrbeal@gmail.com](mailto:patrbeal@gmail.com), 512-762-9924

and Nurit Yaskil, [yaskil@aol.com](mailto:yaskil@aol.com), 858-775-3771

## Bridge Group

Thursday, November 14 and 28, 9:30 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

Lamar Senior Activity Center, 2874 Shoal Crest Ave

Contact: Elaine Penn, [epenn9915@gmail.com](mailto:epenn9915@gmail.com),

512-579-4545

## Central Book Club

Monday, January 8, 10:30 a.m.

La Posada Restaurant, 6800 West Gate Blvd, #143

Book: *Inéz of My Soul* by Isabel Allende

Facilitator: Ruth Rubio

Contact: Linda Quintanilla, [quintalin@gmail.com](mailto:quintalin@gmail.com),

713-202-8525

## Contemporary Literature

Monday, January 8, 7:00 p.m.

Zoom

Book: *The Weight of Ink* by Rachel Kadish

Leader: Roberta Coffin

Contact: Mary Ellen Scribner

[maryescribner@gmail.com](mailto:maryescribner@gmail.com), 512-698-5539

## Creative Stitchery

Wednesday, January 17, 10:00 a.m.

Project: Pillowcases

Home of Beverly Locklin, 7507 Long Point Drive

Hostess: Beverly Locklin

Contact: Beverly Locklin, [bklocklin@outlook.com](mailto:bklocklin@outlook.com)

[512-343-0782 \(h\)](tel:512-343-0782), [512-633-2902 \(c\)](tel:512-633-2902)

## Culture and Cuisine

Thursday, January 11, 6:30 p.m.

Location: Home of Anita Knight, 529 Buckeye Trail

Theme: Africa

Hosts: Anita Knight, Judy Reinhart, and Zosia Hunt

Contact: Shirlene Justice, [shirlenejustice@gmail.com](mailto:shirlenejustice@gmail.com),

512-507-1003

## Hiking Group

### Hike 1

Thursday, January 4, 10:00 a.m.

Capitol Mall

Leader: Anita Knight

### Hike 2

Saturday, January 20, 10:00 a.m.

Hamilton Pool Loop/Pedernales River

Leader: Laurie Altman

Contact: Roberta Coffin,

[rwc@scriptacommunicates.com](mailto:rwc@scriptacommunicates.com), 714-679-8697

## November Art Tour South Congress



Upper L to R: Joyce Pulich, Jonesie Abernathy, Kate DiPronio, Nancy Andren, Berta Lloyd, Cathy Werner, Linda Welch, Louise Jordan

Lower row L to R: Anita Knight, Nancy Ennis, Margene Beckham, Jackie Hardee



### **Friday Morning Book Review**

Friday, January 5, 10:00 a.m.

Location: Hyde Park Church of Christ, 310 W 43rd St

Book: *The Hammer of Eden* by Ken Follett

Reviewer/Host: Carol Fritz

Contact: Judy Reinhart

[jareinhart@att.net](mailto:jareinhart@att.net), 512-345-5936

### **Mystery Book Group**

Tuesday, January 23, 11:00 a.m.

BJ Brewhouse, The Shops at Arbor Walk, 10515 MoPac

Theme: Reader's Choice

Contact: Pam Wolfe, [piwolfe@yahoo.com](mailto:piwolfe@yahoo.com)

512-388-5433 (h), 512-925-7865 (c)

### **Out-to-Lunch**

Tuesday, January 16, 11:15 a.m.

P.F. Chang, 10114 Jollyville Road

Planner: Resa Dunn

Contact: Elaine Penn, [epenn9915@gmail.com](mailto:epenn9915@gmail.com)

512-970-5051

### **PEARS**

Saturday, January 20, 5:00 p.m.

Location: Nido at the Loren, 1211 W Riverside Dr

Host: TBD

Contact: Milli Stecker: [mstecker@austin.rr.com](mailto:mstecker@austin.rr.com),

512-468-1088

### **Southwest Book Group**

Monday, January 15, 10:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.

Host: Sharon Babot, 370 Cattle Trail Drive, Dripping Springs

Book: *A Woman of No Importance*, by Sonia Purnell

Facilitator: Dixie Schurle

Contact: Debbie Starr, [dbbstrr@gmail.com](mailto:dbbstrr@gmail.com)

### **Wine Tasters**

Sunday, January 21, 3:00 – 5:00 p.m.

Theme: TBD

Host: Elaine Penn

Contact: Elaine Penn, [epenn9915@gmail.com](mailto:epenn9915@gmail.com)