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### Items for May Newsletter

**DUE April 20, 2022**

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

## AAUW Austin Branch April Meeting

**When:** Saturday, April 9, 10:00 a.m.  
**Where:** Norris Conference Center [2525 W Anderson Ln.](#)  
**Speaker:** Jim Ritts, CEO and Executive Director, Austin Theatre Alliance  
**Topic:** History of Live Theatre in Austin  
**Cost:** \$30.00  
**Contact:** Judy Reinhart, [jareinhart@att.net](mailto:jareinhart@att.net)

Since May 2011, Jim Ritts has served as the Chief Executive Officer and Executive Director of the Austin Theatre Alliance . The Alliance oversees the management and operational responsibilities for the Paramount Theatre, State Theatre and Moontower Comedy Festival.



Mr. Ritts has a long list of impressive companies where he has been the CEO, most recently of Primedia Television, but also Primedia Digital Video, and before that, Digital Entertainment Network. He is the co-founder of Channel One Network which is the largest source of news and information for teenagers in the United States. This award winning twelve-minute news broadcast is seen by more than eight million students and 400,000 educators daily across the country. Since its first broadcast in 1990, Channel One has garnered over 200 news and educational programming honors. It was also the parent company for Hacienda Productions, which developed and produced primetime programming for teens and young adults, producing primetime programs for MTV and WB Television Networks.

[speaker bio continued on next page]

## **Speaker Bio Continued.....**

Mr. Ritts was the Commissioner of the Ladies Professional Golf Association for four years when it experienced unprecedented growth including 48.4 percent increase in prize money, expansion of television coverage and added seven new tournaments worldwide. He has worked with ABC Sports and ABC's Monday Night Football.

He received his bachelor's degree from the University of Texas at Austin and a master's degree from the Medill School of Journalism at Northwestern University. In 1997 he was honored as a Charter member of Medill's Hall of Achievement.

Mr. Ritts has held board positions with eight different organizations and currently he sits on six different boards.

## **PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE**

### **New Beginnings**

Spring is here again - it is time for our new beginnings. Together with our wonderful traditions and our record of creativity and accomplishments, we are at the time of year when we have opportunities to try new things. We are installing our new officers and leaders. It is a time for new ideas and the continuing of successful ideas that make Austin AAUW the shining example that it is. As we prepare to welcome our new leaders, let us assure them of our support and our pride as they step forward to share their talents and intelligence with all of us. A special thanks to all who will be elected this month and installed in May and all who are returning to share their expertise. We are proud of all you, and we look forward to a wonderful coming year with your leadership. Welcome and thank you for sharing with all of us. We appreciate you very much.



Evelyn Farmer  
Co-President



# March Meeting Recap

Submitted by Anita Knight

Karen Kocher, who is a prolific, creative and very busy professor and multimedia producer, shared over an hour with us at our March ZOOM meeting, detailing her experiences with the history and people of Austin, particularly its environmental ethos or its “Green Identity”.



Her life here in Austin started when she came to the graduate school at UT Austin in the 1990s. She was not used to the 100+ temperature, so she started swimming in the Barton Springs pool. That inspired her to pursue the history of the springs, including a documentary for her master's thesis. She learned how special Austin was as the Capital of Texas, the recognition of the value of its natural beauty and the civic engagement and controversy over the Barton Springs.

To start the presentation, Karen welcomed us to add in the CHAT what our special environmental concepts or memories are. Members shared the following topics/themes that she addressed: recycling and reuse, Zilker Park, Greenbelts, Lady Bird Lake, involvement in the local Green party in the early 80s, preservation and sustainability of natural resources, SOS, Barton Springs, preserving the natural environment in spite of development, the all-night Council hearing that resulted in SOS, pollution in Lady Bird Lake, important environment and climate issues, tireless efforts of Save Our Springs over the years, being able to kayak in the middle of the city.

Karen then relayed stories and photos of the players in the “Save our Springs” movement, such as Beverly Sheffield (Director of Parks & Recreation Department and founding member of the Austin Audubon Society) and Roberta Crenshaw (who promoted open space in conflict with local land developers). The Austin Environmental Council was formed in 1970 with numerous supporters including the AAUW (Austin Branch), along with the League of Women Voters, Austin Audubon Society and the Sierra Club. In fact one of the Austin Branch presidents in the 60s, Betty Himmelblau, was mentioned as an activist and one of the Austin City Council’s first women members. Betty had told Larayne that she was disappointed that the Austin Branch wasn’t more active, so Larayne launched an *ad lib* poll online to ask who thought our public policy should include an environmental focus — and 100% of the poll respondents voted YES.

Marian Wernicke asked about the role that Lady Bird Johnson played in the development of the greening of Austin, and of course Lady Bird was influential in funding and beautifying the Town Lake shorelines, although our first “hike and bike trail” was on Shoal Creek. For the USA Bicentennial in 1976, Austin’s gift to the Nation was her concept of greenbelts parallel to our creeks, described as an “Emerald Necklace”, which unfortunately was not always open to everyone in the era of segregation and separation.

We might be interested in viewing some of Karen's media projects. On Austin PBS, KLRU-TV, there is "Origins of a Green Identity: Austin's Conservation Pioneers", a 57-minute documentary film. Narrated by Austin novelist, Sarah Bird, the film explores Austin's early efforts to preserve Barton Springs and Barton Creek, and ultimately to develop a city with publicly-accessible green spaces along Austin's waterways.

<https://www.pbs.org/video/origins-of-a-green-identity-73yqcb/>. See also [Home - Living Springs](http://livingspringsaustin.org) (livingspringsaustin.org)

"Without great parks, the City lacks the very core of that ineffable thing that we call community and for that reason they must exist; and those that love them must accept this burden to fight for them."

*Roberta Crenshaw*

Karen's current project, to be finished and launched this month for Earth Day, is the **Barton Creek TimeStream**, an interactive installation charting 50 years of the struggle to protect Barton Creek.

# Membership Renewal Time

Renewal Time: Simple – Easy - All Online



This month you will be receiving your membership renewal notification from [memberinfo@AAUW.org](mailto:memberinfo@AAUW.org). By simply clicking on the personalized link included in this email, you can directly access your own account and make your payment online.

No checks to write, stamps to find, or need for that trip to the post office. For those who prefer to write a check, mailing information will be included at the bottom of the renewal notification email. Renewal forms will also be available online at <https://austin-tx.aauw.net/join/>.

National dues are increasing by \$5.00 this year. State and Branch dues remain the same. Combined, the dues for 2022-23 are \$91.00. This is the second of three planned incremental increases. Ever increasing expenses, combined with a greater-than-ever need to proactively support our membership and our mission necessitated this decision.

For those who are interested, AAUW does offer a Paid Life Membership. Basically, this option equates to the prepayment of 20 years of National dues at the current rate. Life Members are still required to pay State and Branch dues on an annual basis. For further information, contact Ruth Subramanian, Co-Membership VP at [ruthsindia@yahoo.com](mailto:ruthsindia@yahoo.com), (678) 764-8898 or Milli Stecker, Co-Membership VP at [milli1251@gmail.com](mailto:milli1251@gmail.com), (512)468-1088.

## April 2022 – National Poetry Month

Inspired by Black History Month and Women's History Month, the Academy of American Poets marked April as National Poetry Month to turn the attention of the world towards the art of poetry. The goal of National Poetry Month is to encourage us to look upon poetry as a way of expressing feelings and thoughts. The main focus of this month is to create awareness about this less explored genre and to practice poetry in our daily life.

As an organization that supports equity for women, we can honor those who paved the way by reading poetry that informs and inspires our work. You may access a list of books and poems from and about the Women's Suffrage Movement by clicking [Poetry from the Suffrage Movement](#).

For suggestions on how you can celebrate National Poetry Month at home or online, the Academy of American Poets has compiled a list of activities on their website. You can peruse the suggestions by clicking [National Poetry Month](#).

# Branch Fundraising Update

Submitted by the Fundraising Committee

The See's candy bar sale is going well, thanks to all of you who have already purchased some and/or made donations. We will be selling the bars at the in-person branch meeting on April 9. The price for milk chocolate and dark chocolate bars is \$3 for one or \$5 for two.



Members who order \$20 worth (8 bars) can have them delivered to their homes. Place your order with Sharon Babot at [sharonbabot@gmail.com](mailto:sharonbabot@gmail.com) or Joyce Pulich @ [joycepulich@sbcglobal.net](mailto:joycepulich@sbcglobal.net). Because the sales are going so well, we are not going to sell at Suds Monkey the last weekend of March.

Unfortunately, the Austin Fund Committee has had to cancel several of our in-person fund raisers this year. Hopefully, you have been gathering up your change to donate to the AAUW Austin Fund.

*Please count your change, write your name and the amount on a piece of paper and place it in the jar. Also, don't forget to bring your change to the April 9 (in-person) Branch Meeting.*



We gave out jars last fall for change collection and we hope you over filled them. You do not have to bring back the jar. Any vessel will work!!

Even though we will be collecting the change at the **April Branch Program**, we know some of you cannot attend. If you cannot attend the meeting, please contact **Joyce Pulich** (south) [joycepulich@sbcglobal.net](mailto:joycepulich@sbcglobal.net) or **Pam Wolfe** (north) [piwolfe@yahoo.com](mailto:piwolfe@yahoo.com) or any committee member (2021-22 Yearbook, page 6) and we will pick up your change.



The Spring Fling Concert scheduled for May 15 is cancelled for now. Over the summer the fundraising team will be considering additional projects for the fall. Members who have fundraising suggestions, please email [joycepulich@sbcglobal.net](mailto:joycepulich@sbcglobal.net) and [dbbstrr@gmail.com](mailto:dbbstrr@gmail.com).

**We appreciate your financial contributions to advancing gender equity!**



# Policy Update from the Public Policy Committee

Submitted by Policy Chair, Mary Ellen Scribner



If you want to earn an A+ for Citizenship this month, you are going to be busy! Firstly, **EARTH DAY 2022** is April 22. We do enjoy our special dates to mark events, cultures, important anniversaries, etc., but we need to make every day an earth day if we expect our children and grandchildren to inherit a habitable planet. Let's begin with recycling--this link tells you everything you need to know about recycling: <https://www.earthday.org/7-tips-to-recycle-better/>. For some other ideas how you can do your part to combat the serious consequences of climate change, you might want to start with a check of your carbon footprint—makes you think and offers some ideas: <https://www.nature.org/en-us/get-involved/how-to-help/carbon-footprint-calculator/>. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), the United Nations body for assessing the science related to climate change, has released its *Climate Change 2022: Impacts, Adaptation and Vulnerability* report: <https://www.ipcc.ch/report/ar6/wg2/>.



In the wake of politically motivated efforts to ban books on certain topics from school and even some public libraries, the Texas Library Association has launched **Texans for the Right to Read**, a statewide coalition opposed to book banning. I hope that many of you will want to go to [RightToReadTexas.com](https://RightToReadTexas.com) to learn more and perhaps join the coalition and then share the link with other like-minded folks. The launch also featured an outstanding panel discussion in a webinar

sponsored by TLA and the publication *Booklist*. Community stakeholders were well-represented by an author, two high school students, two educator/parents, and Central Texas legislator Erin Zwiener. It was no small effort getting my hands on a link for a file that is too large to share via email, but I was able to copy it from *Booklist* archives. I hope it works for you because it is well worth the 71 minutes it takes to watch it! You may access the webinar by clicking [Freedom to Read Roundtable](#).

One more recently released annual report of interest to us is the Southern Poverty Law Center's *The Year in Hate & Extremism 2021*. "The SPLC tracks both hate groups and antigovernment extremist groups – which, combined, make up some of the most extreme elements of the hard right. Hate groups vilify others based on such immutable characteristics as race, religion and gender identity, while groups in the antigovernment movement believe that the federal government is tyrannical, and traffic in conspiracy theories that often malign the same marginalized communities that hate groups target." Information is our best tool for confronting this extremism. Even just skimming the rather lengthy report will serve us well, especially when communicating with our legislators: [The Year in Hate & Extremism 2021](#)

And don't forget to keep your eyes on the SBOE this month as they take testimony regarding the review and revision of the Texas public schools social studies curricula: <https://tea.texas.gov/about-tea/>.



Design, Connect, Create is based in Dallas/Ft. Worth area and has summer camps in Austin. Go to their website: <https://www.designconnectcreate.org/> for details on the camps and how you can volunteer.

**Girlstart** needs volunteers for their April 9<sup>th</sup> Conference. They are looking for women in STEM to present and volunteers to help the day of. Go to their website: <https://girlstart.org/> to fill out the volunteer form.

On the [STEMecosystem.org](http://STEMecosystem.org) forum, six groups presented and discussed how they are contributing to girls in STEM. Our two local groups, **Latinitas** and **Girlstart** were part of the six. The other groups were: Girls Scouts of Central Texas, FIRST Texas which sponsors girls robotics teams across the state, Design, Connect and Create, and the home organization, which is based at UT Austin and sponsors GirlDay at UT (virtual this year) as well as helping others in the Austin area.

Want to become a Citizen Scientist? Here are some ways to do so.

**Nature's Notebook** – volunteers document changes in plants, animals and insects. Regional campaigns include Mayfly Watch and Pesky Plant Trackers. You can choose from 1400 species to watch in North America. This is a mobile app.

**Crowd the Tap** – volunteers test the water and pipes in their homes to provide a map of pipe infrastructure in the US. Test kits are available to test your water chemistry. [Crowdthetap.org](http://Crowdthetap.org).

**GLOBE Observer** – sponsored by NASA this project seeks to understand our environment and climate through crowd sourced observations. This project is app-based.

**The Happiness Project** – volunteers play games and are asked to rate their happiness level. This data is used by researchers to figure out how expectations contribute to happiness. <https://scistarter.org/the-happiness-project>.

**Exoplanet Watch** – volunteers are asked to look for exoplanets via their backyard telescope. If you don't have a telescope, you can analyze data that others post. <https://exoplanets.nasa.gov/exoplanet-watch/results>.

If Spring has you thinking of gardening you might want to try one of the kits from Back to the Roots, [backtotheroots.com](http://backtotheroots.com). They were selected as a Best in STEM honoree from STEM.org. These are recommended by member **Anita Knight**.

Report prepared by Nancy Andren

## Attention Interest Group Leaders:

2022-23 Interest Group descriptions and calendars/schedules are due to **Berta Lloyd** by June 1, 2022. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact Berta at [berta.lloyd@yahoo.com](mailto:berta.lloyd@yahoo.com), (206) 660-1812.

Please copy **Shirlene Justice** on your email so that she will have the information to include in the newsletters. [shirlenejustice@gmail.com](mailto:shirlenejustice@gmail.com)

## March Interest Groups

### Creative Arts

#### Art Tours:



**What:** Join Artist Maria Montoya Stayton, Chair of Bastrop Cultural Arts Commission and Co-Chair of [Bird City Bastrop](#), for a tour of two galleries on historic Main Street in Bastrop. Enjoy the work of multiple artists at The Bridges Building, 920 Main Street and R.A. Green Mercantile at 1020 Main Street. For those who want to learn more about Bastrop's historic district, the Bastrop Museum and Visitor's Center is located at 904 Main Street.

**When:** Wednesday, April 27, 10:00 a.m.

**Where:** Meet at Pine Warbler Parking Lot (intersection of Water and Pine Streets in downtown Bastrop)

**Planner:** Linda Welsh

**To RSVP:** Marsha Endahl Kramer, [MEKSpirit66@gmail.com](mailto:MEKSpirit66@gmail.com), (512) 906-6566

#### Creative Stitchery:



**When:** Wednesday, April 20, 10:00 a.m.

**Project:** Four Corners Apron

**Where:** Home of Suellen Mills, 3304 Shady Valley Drive

**To RSVP:** Beverly Locklin, [bklocklin@outlook.com](mailto:bklocklin@outlook.com), (512) 633-2902



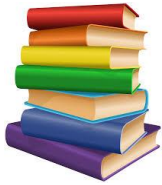
## Book Clubs and Literary Exploration

### Central Book Club:



When: Monday, April 11, 10:30 a.m.  
Where: IHOP, 1101 South MoPac Expressway  
Book: *The Yellow House*  
Editor: Sarah M. Broom  
Facilitator: Joyce Pulich  
To RSVP: Mary Lou Bell, [maryloubell@gmail.com](mailto:maryloubell@gmail.com), (512) 940-6480

### Contemporary Literature:



When: Monday, April 4, 7:00 p.m.  
Where: Zoom  
Book: *The Golden Thread: How Fabric Changed History*  
Author: Kassia St. Clair  
Leader: Milli Stecker  
To RSVP: Mary Ellen Scribner, [maryscribner@gmail.com](mailto:maryscribner@gmail.com), (512) 698-5539

### Friday Book Review:



When: Friday, April 1, 10:00 a.m.  
Where: Hyde Park Church of Christ, 310 W 43rd Street  
Book: *The Woman of Troublesome Creek*  
Author: Kim Michelle Richardson  
Reviewer: Della Quintanilla  
Hostess: Della Quintanilla  
Contact: Judy Reinhart: [jareinhart@att.net](mailto:jareinhart@att.net), (512) 345-5936

### Mystery Book Club:



When: Tuesday, April 26, 11:00 a.m.  
Where: BJ Brewhouse, The Shops at Arbor Walk, 10515 MoPac  
Topic: Main Character Has Name in Title of Book  
To RSVP: Pam Wolfe, [piwolfe@yahoo.com](mailto:piwolfe@yahoo.com), (512) 925-7865

### Southwest Book Club:



When: Monday, April 11, 10:00 a.m.  
Where: Home of Brenda Hahne, 6202 Tasajillo  
Book: *The Henna Artist*  
Author: Alka Joshi  
Facilitator: Debbie Starr  
Host: Brenda Hahne  
To RSVP: Sharon Babot, [sharonbabot@gmail.com](mailto:sharonbabot@gmail.com), (707) 373-1317

## Friends, Food and Conversation



### Culture and Cuisine:

When: Thursday, April 21, 6:30 p.m.  
Where: Home of Lynn Cooksey, 2208 Matthews Drive  
Theme: France  
Co-Hosts: Lynn Cooksey, Anita Knight and Brenda Scholin  
To RSVP: Shirlene Justice, [shirlenejustice@gmail.com](mailto:shirlenejustice@gmail.com), (512) 507-1003



### Out-to-Lunch:

When: Tuesday, April 19, 11:30 a.m.  
Where: Mandola's Italian Kitchen, 4301 W William Cannon Drive, E-1  
Planner: Suellen Myers and Jonesie Abernathy  
To RSVP: Elaine Penn, [epenn9915@gmail.com](mailto:epenn9915@gmail.com), (512) 970-5051



**Pears:** Pears will not meet in April and will begin meeting again in May.  
When: Sunday, May 1, 2:30 p.m.  
Where: Meeting at Umlauf Sculpture Garden followed by dinner at El Mesón, 2038 S Lamar Blvd.  
To RSVP: Milli Stecker, [milli1251@gmail.com](mailto:milli1251@gmail.com), (512) 468-1088



### Wine Tasters:

When: Saturday, April 21, 4:00 p.m.  
Where: Home of Elaine Penn, 912 Dartmoor Drive  
Theme: Malbec  
Contact: Elaine Penn, [epenn9915@gmail.com](mailto:epenn9915@gmail.com), (512) 970-5051

## Bridge Groups



### Group A

When: Every Thursday, 9:30 a.m. to Noon  
Contact: Elaine Penn, [epenn9915@gmail.com](mailto:epenn9915@gmail.com), (512) 579-4545

### Group B

When: Second Wednesday, 4:00 p.m.  
Contact: Lynn Cooksey, [lcCooksey@austin.rr.com](mailto:lcCooksey@austin.rr.com), (512) 477-2774

### Group C

When: Fourth Wednesday, 1:00 p.m.  
Contact: Sara Ezell: [slezell@aol.com](mailto:slezell@aol.com), (512) 633-6178

Please call first to check with the hostess and the location for Bridge Group B. Groups A and C are full but are accepting substitutes.

## STEM



### STEM Coordinating Group:

**SAVE the DATE** for May meeting.

When: May 4, 2022 10 a.m.  
Where: Home of Nancy Andren, 80 White Magnolia Circle, Lakeway.  
Theme: Planning Meeting  
Contact: Nancy Andren, [texasnancy@austin.rr.com](mailto:texasnancy@austin.rr.com), (909) 709-7616

## The Great Outdoors

### Hiking Group:

#### Hike 1

When: Friday, April 1, 10:00 a.m.  
What: Circle C Hiking Trails  
Where: Northwest corner of Escarpment and Slaughter Lane  
Park in spots close to Mangieri's Pizza.  
Leader: Debbie Starr  
Contact: Roberta Coffin, [rw@scriptacommunicates.com](mailto:rw@scriptacommunicates.com), (714) 679-8697



#### Hike 2

When: Saturday, April 16, 10:00 a.m.  
What: Babot Property  
Where: 370 Cattle Trail Drive, Dripping Springs  
Leaders: Sharon Babot  
Contact: Roberta Coffin, [rw@scriptacommunicates.com](mailto:rw@scriptacommunicates.com), (714) 679-8697

