



# HIGHLIGHTS

IN EQUITY

## AAUW Heights-Hillcrest-Lyndhurst, Ohio Branch

A newsletter for members and friends who support gender fairness  
May 2022, Volume 2021-2022, Issue 8

### How to Protect Yourself against Cyber Attacks



#### PROGRAM WORTHY

Donna Black, Program Chair

#### Next Meeting:

Please join HHL Branch via Zoom on Wednesday, May 25, 2022 from 6:45 pm to 9:00 pm for our monthly meeting. We will discuss, and make simple, the things you need to know to

understand and avoid typical Cyber Attacks.

PLEASE bring a recent college graduate or an old friend that might be interested in membership with our organization. The next generation needs to know what we know if they are ever to experience justice and equity in treatment and pay in the work force. The old generation must share what we have learned to help the next generation move forward and improve upon the gains we already made and yet are constantly faced with losing.

Once again, because of the Covid-19 pandemic here in Ohio, we will meet via Zoom.

*Donna*



AAUW HHL is inviting you to a scheduled Zoom meeting on May 25 at 6:45 pm

Time: Gather for social time May 25, 2022 at 6:45 PM Eastern Time (US and Canada)  
Program will begin at 7:00, followed by installation of officers and a short business meeting.

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81724795351?pwd=ZG8wUHM2STBrbjRYbVdsMkYWEJPDz09>

Meeting ID: 817 2479 5351

Passcode: 386603

One tap mobile

+19292056099,,81724795351#,,,,\*386603# US (New York)

+13017158592,,81724795351#,,,,\*386603# US

(Washington DC)

#### Looking Ahead—

June 22, 2022

6:45 pm



End of the program year get together for fun and bonding. Bring family photos to share.



**Table of Contents—**

April program..... 1  
 President's Column—Kay..... 2,5  
 Mother's Day Reflections..... 2,4  
 AAUW Fund—Marilyn ..... 2  
 Public Policy—Kathe ..... 3  
 Phyllis' Reflection..... 3  
 Dues Update—Nancy..... 4  
 Birthdays..... 4  
 Around Northeast District..... 4  
 Fab Lab Revisited—Kay..... 4  
 Donna's Reflection..... 5  
 Diversity—Cindy ..... 6  
 It's About Justice—Meryl..... 7,8  
 Washington Update..... 9,10



**AAUW Fund—Marilyn Kornowski**

My little Hummel purple pig already has a lot of coins jiggling around in it. I'll turn those coins into bills and start the coin collecting process again. The bills will go into the AAUW Fund to help someone who applies for some money to help them finish their doctorate.



*Marilyn*

**President's Column—Kay Rasmusen**



I was excited last month as we heard from the 7<sup>th</sup> grade science teacher, Sarah Cusick, from Monticello Middle School in Cleveland Heights that the student she recommended for Be Wise Camp, Ja'Nyri Brown was accepted to the camp. We are

grateful to our member Clara McCann for her sponsorship of students interested in attending the camp.

I also was happy that we finally got to see The Fab Lab at the Early Learning Village. I don't think I knew what a fab lab (short for fabrication laboratory) really was until this program. Read more about the Fab Lab on page 4.

Finally, I was happy and appreciative that our newest member of AAUW HHL, Komeisha Rose, agreed to be Secretary. Our current officers, Donna Brown and Phyllis Benjamin, Program Vice President and Membership Vice President respectively, agreed to continue as officers and were voted in by written ballot as we were wrapping up our visit at the Fab Lab. We now have a full slate of officers for the 2022-2023 year. At the May meeting we will install Komeisha, Donna and Phyllis for two-year terms.

*Kay*

**Some Thoughts About Mother's Day—**

I've started reading the book *Three Mothers: How The Mothers of Martin Luther King, Jr., Malcolm X, and James Baldwin Shaped a Nation*, by Anna Malaika Tubbs. Author Tubbs found it astounding that Alberta King, Berdis Baldwin and Louise Little, the mothers of these famous men, were not acknowledged much during or after their lifetimes. She decided to research their lives to right this wrong. She found they had greatly influenced their sons' lives. She hopes by telling their history and stories about

these mothers, and other women of color, our perspectives of motherhood on a cultural level will be shifted. She also wants to make lives better for moms and everyone they impact in today's world.

Another book I have been reading is by the comedian Louie Anderson, *hey mom: Stories For My Mother, But You Can Read Them Too*. He wanted to encourage people to ask their parents the questions before they pass away. In homage to his mom, he writes the questions he wanted to ask and stories about his life in this book. He also wrote his book to understand some things about himself and his mom, and he wants to understand more.

I started asking my friends to share a word or sentence about their mothers, and I thought about the mothers of our HHL AAUW members, the group of talented women who have stayed the course of fighting for women and education. Many have dedicated hours to being a part of AAUW, attending meetings, being officers, working on task force projects over the years. They have developed friendships along the way. I would consider these women famous in a way also, as they have influenced and supported each other to grow in various ways as members, and to help AAUW support women over the years. Would our members share with me something about their mothers? I sent out an email requesting their help. I was pleasantly surprised at the wonderful responses. Please read below the words and stories they sent to me.

**The Mothers—**

**Jan Bowden:** My mother, Margaret, grew up on a farm in western Pennsylvania. She was one of 11 kids: three girls and eight boys. Her mother died when she was 9 so she

5

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## Empathy Made Known—

Recent studies report that readers of literary fiction are more empathetic than other people! I, at first, was happy with this statement. Then I began to think about how I also love nonfiction. Empathy lives at the heart of all that we think and perform. Empathy is quite complex. I realize that it is not pity, not kindness, not mercy. It involves deep understanding as we move in different directions.

My AAUW colleagues, as they interact with each other, are empathetic. Feelings, thoughts, capacity to understand what another is feeling. To understand others is one aspect.

Jesmyn Ward in 2013 won the National Book Award for her memoir, *Men We Reaped*. She writes about the deaths of five young men, including her brother. She uses empathy in this simple passage while washing dishes in the kitchen sink. Her brother, Joshua, stands near her. Ms. Ward writes: "Joshua looked through the screen and it was as if he saw me clearly with my soapy hands, my wrinkled fingers, my jaw grinding with frustration and self-abasement, and he hated me. Both of us are on the cusp of adulthood, and this is how my brother and I understood what it meant to be a woman: working and full of worry."

Joshua didn't just watch Jesmyn, he felt hatred toward her. We learn that Joshua endures fierce beatings from their father. He hates his sister because she does suffer from harsh treatment. Joshua's hurtful feelings run deep.

Joan Didion wrote *In The Year Of Magical Thinking*. She steps away from her own story to write about the universal experience of grief. To do so, she quotes experts, writers, and philosophers from Sigmund Freud to C.S. Lewis, from D.H. Lawrence to Emily Post. She writes about scientific studies done with grieving geese and dolphins. She writes, "Time is the school in which we learn."

Gayle Brandeis, author of *The Art Of Misdiagnosis*, reaches the conclusion that through sharing her writings and hearing from people who read her writings, "I know my readers see me as I truly am, human and flawed and vulnerable and real. I can show myself at my lowest and people are willing to meet me there."

"Reverence for all life," said Albert Schweitzer.

We show empathy and then we receive empathy given back to us.

*Phyllis*



## Public Policy—Kathe Mayer

A reminder to those of you interested in what is going on in the State and Federal legislatures. Information often appears at AAUW National. If you sign up for the *2-minute activist*, you will receive an email when a major issue relevant to AAUW interests is on the agenda.

Jan Ressenger says that the Federal Charter Schools Program needs reform. Ohio gets an F for its lagging support for the public schools because too much money goes to vouchers and charter schools. *Policy Matters Ohio* "speaks to the need for much stronger rules and regulations to rein in for-profit charter management companies that have been ripping off Ohio's taxpayers for two decades."

Our state constitution says public education is an essential public good; however, for decades charter schools have grown, not to improve students' education, but to line pockets of those running charter schools. Many charter schools forced to close because of poor performance have reopened by the same owners. They change names and keep the same staff without improving student performance. If charter schools receive federal funds, then they should be good schools but according to *Policy Matters* today many are not.

The US Department of Education has proposed that Federal funding for new charter schools require owners to demonstrate the need for the new charter school in a community impact study. *Policy Matters* also recommends that they show evidence that residents have engaged in the planning. Regardless of federal funds that a charter school may receive, they still get much of their funding from local school districts. Vouchers provided by district and State funds have also hurt local schools.

Charter schools were originally created as a way for educators to try new ways of teaching and working with students. When successful, these innovations would be brought into the entire school district. This has not happened. Instead, there has been no sharing of good ideas.

*Kathe*

### May birthdays:

None

### June birthdays:

- 1 Mary K. Evans
- 6 Marilyn Kornowski
- 6 Honey Massey
- 16 Jennifer McCann
- 23 Nancy Stellhorn
- 30 Jan Bowden



## Dues Notice—Nancy; Around Northeast Ohio; Birthdays



### Finance Officer—Nancy Stellhorn

#### AAUW HHL Dues Are Payable Now—

Seven paid and counting! Thanks to Phyllis, Donna, Jan, Cindy, Meryl, Kathe, and Nancy for paying AAUW HHL dues. I will enter your payments on AAUW's new online Membership Community Hub.

As I see it now, regular members can renew by check to their branch finance officer or online through the Community Hub and choose OH 4035 Heights Hillcrest Lyndhurst Branch. Payment is by credit or debit card. With the new dues payment system, dues entered in their system after May 15 are expected to expire on June 30 of the following year. However, dues paid mid-year are slated to expire one year from date of payment. Oh dear, the webs we weave!

If you prefer, please send me your renewal check payable to "AAUW HHL." You can mail it to Nancy Stellhorn who will be happy to see that your membership is paid to national, Ohio and branch. *Nancy*

names etched on it. Of course, I would have loved to see children working in the Lab and see more of how they work on the projects they do.

The Fab Lab managers/teachers have impressive bios. Andrea Fields is an educator and civil engineer focused on digital fabrication for STEM education. Meg Somerville is also a Fab Lab Manager at the ELV. She provides standards-aligned STEM lessons for the littlest learners with the hopes of cultivating an interest in science, technology, engineering and math.

The Fab Lab is a work in progress; they are constantly getting new equipment and new things to make. Soon the Fab Lab will be open to the public, as stipulated in their grant. It will be interesting to see how that will be accomplished. Right now it is just for the pre-school students and their teachers. The next step is they will be able to have the family of the students visit, such as an older sibling or an aunt work with them at the Fab Lab. The Lab is a spacious room with equipment lining the walls and an area where students from 3 to 6 years old can play with Legos, or work on a design or an art project. It is a very inviting environment.

*Kay*

### The Fab Lab—

I knew our branch had wanted to visit the Fab Lab at Case Western Reserve University at one time. From what I understand Fab Lab was started to help out third world countries. "Give ordinary people the right tools, and they will design and build the most extraordinary things." The fab lab concept grew out of a popular class at MIT, "How to Make (Almost) Anything." Then, a collaboration between Grassroots Invention Group and the Center for Bits and Atoms, the Media Lab at MIT was funded by a grant from the National Science Foundation. The goal was to show how an underserved community can be powered by technology at a grass roots level. The first lab started outside MIT was in India. Now there is communication among a global community of Fab Labs I Norway, South Africa, Ghana, Kenya and Iceland.

We were shown how students learn how to program a robot. They do a lot of robotic stuff since kids love robots, said Meg Somerville one of the Fab Lab managers. Meg uses children's literature as a basis in the curriculum. She teaches students to question and then to make a hypothesis and to do simple experiments to test their hypothesis. For example, "How do you think the polar bears stay warm with their fur, or a whale with its blubber? Students work together on projects.

The students learn how to use tools, such as different kinds of screw drivers. They learn how to put together a see-through bank with materials made at the lab. Fab Lab Manager Andrea Fields used the laser printer to set up the pattern on their computer – controlled laser printer to make us a cardboard coaster with our

### Around Northeast Ohio—

On May 16 at 6 pm, Northeast Ohio Branch will meet for dinner at Hellriegel's in Painesville and will learn more about RSVP—Retired Senior Volunteer Programs.



On June 7, Northeast Branch will meet at Panera Bread, Creekside in Mentor for a planning session and board meeting.

On Thursday, May 19th at 6 pm Medina County Branch will hold its Annual Spring Banquet. Miss Molly's Tea Room, 140 W Washington St., Medina.



It costs you nothing to do this. Your help is needed to provide mammograms for those who cannot afford one.

Check out our branch website  
for the latest branch information  
<https://hhl-oh.aauw.net>  
and our blog: <https://aauwahl.wordpress.com>  
and find us and like us on Facebook:  
<https://www.facebook.com/AAUWHHLOH>

## Donna's Reflection; More about AAUW Members' Mothers—Kay



### Justice And Equality are Not the Same Reflect on This

Justice does not always mean equality.  
Equality does not always mean justice.

Being treated justly according to the law can be quite meaningless if a law is written with disparity built in. Think about Jim Crow laws, abortion legislation, or banking loopholes the rich and corporations can access but the poor cannot.

Treating people equally according to law, culture and custom is not just justice if the practice structurally denies specific citizens opportunities and rights preferential others have access to. The conservative attack on the right to vote comes to mind.

Waiting too long to read pending legislation frequently places voters in an unpleasant double-bind. We must take definitive action and scrutinize candidates long before one becomes a legislator. By understanding their political platform and alerting others before they become a problem is essential.

These are the kinds of issues AAUW branches must become informed about so we can discuss issues with those we know as influential community leaders. Can we commit to doing a better job at this in our next program year?

If you are not a member, join AAUW now and we will see you at the next meeting.

If you are a member, as always, I ask you to revisit your personal reasons for joining AAUW and be part of the energy that transforms your loving vision for humanity into a reality. Spring into action. Commit to working with the branch by dedicating your talents and skills to our agenda.

*Donna*

### Mothers, continued from page 2

and her sisters took over household duties as well as helping their father with farm chores; continuing to help even after their dad remarried. She went to college and became an elementary teacher (at that time college tuition was free to PA residents who attended a state college and you could work on campus for books and room & board. You could teach in an elementary school with only two years of college.) After mom met my dad (in church, by the way) and they married and had me, she stopped working to raise me and then my younger sister. Mom was a "professional" volunteer. She volunteered for many groups having told us that even though we couldn't afford to make financial gifts to worthy causes, we definitely could give of our time. She was very loving and always supportive of me and my sister; for example, when I was a couple of weeks into my freshman year of college, I wrote back home to ask my parents to come and get me, because I

was so homesick and wanted to come home. I did not know that my mother saved that note until she gave it to me framed when I graduated from college. She believed that I should stay, do well and graduate, and she was right.

**Phyllis Benjamin:** Rachel, known as Ray, my mother, was born in Brooklyn, New York. She spent her childhood living in poverty. She dealt with emotions and feelings about her parents who had emigrated from Russia to escape anti-Semitism. Sadly due to family needs, she was removed from school in the sixth grade to work folding dresses in a garment factory. This ended her formal education.

Fortunately, she married Samuel at age 16. Sam was the first of five children to graduate high school and then receive a college degree. He worked as a manager for a steel company. There is no question that early deprived situation affected her interactions with her own three children.

**Marjorie Morrison:** My mother championed education, reading to me as an infant and later instilling in me the desire to pursue a college degree even though neither she nor my father attended school beyond high school.

**Nancy Stelhorn:** My mother was an intelligent and perceptive leader who also became a 50-year AAUW member. We were different in many ways but we shared a respect for one another.

**Clara McCann:** Thank you for the opportunity to celebrate my mom, Mariah who was the granddaughter of a slave. Married to a mine worker at 14, she was a widow at 16 with two children. She remarried (second cousin of her first husband—not sure if it was his family's way to take care of her—just speculation) and had four more children by age 26 (me included). She was an equal partner as a sharecropper (the post Civil War land rental trap) in a very rural Alabama during the depression years and later moved to Detroit, Michigan during the great migration. As I reflect, I can imagine the hardships and struggles she must have endured just to survive. I am so appreciative of her strength and courage. She lived to see all four of her sons serve in the military and four of her children attend college.

**Cindy Goldberg:** Hello Kay, thank you for asking about our mothers. My mother was born in Romania and came to America as a "babe in arms." Both sides of my family came to escape the difficulties Jewish families had in Europe. I am a first generation American. The word I would use to describe my mother is resilient. Her family wanted her to quit school and work as a hat steamer to save money to put her youngest brother through college. She fought to be allowed to continue her education and became an administrative assistant. My mother valued education above all, and my mother and father saw that my sister and I received college educations. I am forever grateful to her commitment and resilience.

*Kay*

Diversity—Cindy Goldberg, Co-Chair



**The Amazing Life of Betty Reid Soskin—**

Spring is here, at least on the calendar! With spring comes a renewed sense of hope and rebirth. We see things once thought to be withered and dead come alive, and we



take joy in the wonders of creation. Spring is also a time of reflection. We think of youth, our own and that of those around us. Many feel opportunities waning. We look toward the younger generation to be the achievers and creators. We wish them well.

As we look at the life of Betty Reid Soskin we realize that energy and ambition are not merely traits of the young. Betty Reid Soskin has had an amazing life full of achievement, struggle and challenge. She is an inspiration to all of us not to consider our life in terms of years but in terms of our striving for a better world for ourselves and those around us.

From Wikipedia—"Betty Reid Soskin is a retired ranger with the National Park Service, previously assigned to the Rosie the Riveter World War II Home Front National Historical Park in Richmond, California. Until her retirement on March 31, 2022, at age 100, she was the oldest National Park Ranger serving the United States. In February 2018, she released a memoir, *Sign My Name to Freedom*.

Betty Charbonnet was born September 22, 1921 in Detroit to Dorson Louis Charbonnet and Lottie Breaux Allen, both Catholics and natives of Louisiana. Her father came from a Creole background, and her mother from a Cajun background. Her great-grandmother had been born into slavery in 1846. She spent her early childhood living in New Orleans, until a hurricane and flood destroyed her family's home and business in 1927. Her family then relocated to Oakland, California. She graduated from Castlemont High School in Oakland.

During World War II she worked as a file clerk for Boilermakers Union A-36, an all-Black union auxiliary. Her main job was filing change of address cards for the workers, who moved frequently.

In June 1945, she and her then husband, Mel Reid, founded Reid's Records in Berkeley, California, a small Black-owned business specializing in Gospel music.

She was divorced from Mel Reid in 1972, and subsequently married William Soskin, a psychology professor at the University of California, Berkeley. In 1978, after Mel Reid's health and finances had declined, she took over management of the music store, which led to her becoming active in area civic matters and a prominent community activist. Reid's Records closed on October 19, 2019.

She later served as a field representative for California State Assembly Women Dion Aroner and Loni Hancock, and in those positions became actively involved in the early planning stages and development of a park to memorialize the role of women on the Home Front during World War II. Those efforts came to fruition when Rosie the Riveter/World War II Home Front National Historical Park was established in 2000, to provide a site where future generations could remember the contributions



**The Rosie Memorial** in Rosie the Riveter/World War II Home Front National Historical Park, Richmond, California

women made to the war effort.

Reflecting on her own role in planning for the park's creation, and on how she brought her personal recollections of the conditions for African American women working in that still segregated environment to bear on the planning efforts, she has said that, often, she "was the only person in the room who had any reason to remember that ... what gets remembered is a function of who's in the room doing the remembering."

In 2003, she left her state job and became a consultant at the park she helped create before becoming a park ranger with the National Park Service in 2007 at the age of 85.

She started with the parks service at age 84 after working with the agency on a grant to reveal "untold stories" of Black people's efforts in the US during the second world war, and became a permanent employee in 2011.

Soskin's duties included conducting park tours and serving as an interpreter, explaining the park's purpose, history, various sites, and museum collections to park visitors. She has been celebrated as "a tireless voice for making sure the African American wartime experience – both the positive steps toward integration and the presence of discrimination – has a prominent place in the Park's history."

"Being a primary source in the sharing of that history – my history – and giving shape to a new national park has been exciting and fulfilling," she said. "It has proven to bring meaning to my final years."

Soskin's work brought attention to the unique contributions of women of color during the second world war.

"As a woman of color, my history with the park is a bit different. My experience was not as a Rosie the Riveter; that tended to be a white woman's story. Black women had been working outside their homes ever since slavery," she said.

Soskin said in 2015, at the age of 93, "Wish I'd had [the] confidence when the young Betty needed it to navigate through the hazards of everyday life on the planet. But maybe I'm better able to benefit from having it now – when I have the maturity to value it and the audacity to wield it for those things held dear."

Her stories made a profound impact on the parks service, the NPS director, Chuck Sams, said. "Betty's efforts remind us that we must seek out and give space for all perspectives so that we can tell a more full and inclusive history of our nation," said Sams in a statement.

On March 31, 2022, Soskin retired from the National Park Service; she was the oldest serving park ranger at the time.

In conclusion I would like Betty Reid Soskin's story to inspire us. We should not think of our lives in terms of a foreshortening of years. In each of our own ways we can imagine a productive life and a challenging life. For each of us these lives will be different but they represent a future of care, concern, commitment and involvement. Perhaps this summer is a time for us to imagine our future and our continued involvement in the world around us. Our lives are not over, perhaps they are just beginning. Have a wonderful summer!

Fondly, *Cindy*, for the Diversity Committee

**AAUW Diversity Policy:** AAUW values and seeks a diverse membership. There shall be no barriers to full participation in this organization on the basis of sex, gender identity, race, creed, age, sexual orientation, national origin, disability, or class.



### It's About Justice— Meryl Johnson



#### **SPEAK Banned Books Freedom Book Club**

March 2, 2022

In past issues of our newsletter, you read letters to the editor written by members of SPEAK (Students Promoting Equity and Knowledge), a group of thirteen students I convened to advocate against the censorship bills, HB 322 and 327. To keep the students engaged, I formed the SPEAK Banned Books Freedom Book Club. Our zoom discussion was so rich and enlightening, I decided to create a transcript. Only three students were able to participate, but their wealth of knowledge and insight was plentiful:

- Owen Ganor, Rocky River High School – *The Bluest Eye* by Toni Morrison
- Lily Steiger, University of Rochester (Beachwood graduate) – *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings* by Maya Angelou
- Kayla Blake, Cleveland School of Science and Medicine – *The Hate U Give* by Angie Thomas

#### **Interviewed by Meryl Johnson:**

*Why do you think your book was banned?*

Owen: I think the main reason is the story speaks about incest. Also, some other reasons could include some of the language. But I feel there's no good reason for a book to be banned.

*Think about your friends. I think what you just said is what some parents may want their children to avoid. Do you think that's something that your friends wouldn't be able to handle?*

Owen: No, absolutely not! I feel like anyone could handle this book. It's hard in places. I feel that's why we should read it in the first place. Not every book that you read in school is going to make you feel the way that many of these banned books make someone feel. I think that's the reason to read them and talk about them, to get different perspectives. People have to see how they felt reading it.

*How would you convince a parent not to ban this book?*

Owen: My immediate response would be, don't ban the book. You shouldn't be silencing a writer. It provides a window into something they never have and never will experience, by diversifying their kind of view of the world. It's not just your suburban wonderland everywhere.

*Same question to Lily*

Lily: I would tell them to read the book before they say they want to ban it. I feel like a lot of the books they just hear things about it, but they've never actually read it for

themselves. Sure, there's a lot of controversial topics, to them. But, if you read it and you're able to expand your world view a little bit, you would realize they should not be banned. It's like critical race theory, a lot of people just don't understand what it is. If they take the time to educate themselves, then their minds might change.

*Why do you think your book was banned?*

Lily: There is rape of an eight-year-old by a father figure, and references throughout the book. I don't agree with any book being banned, but I would respect their opinion more if they read the book because it is an informed decision.

*Do you think they should keep all students from reading the book because they read it and didn't like it?*

Lily: I do not think so. They don't have the power to make that decision. Only that other child's parent can do that. But to ban it at the school, or state or wherever, that's not their place to make that decision.

*Kayla, why do you think your book was banned?*

I had looked up exactly why the book was banned, and it said because of strong language. But I honestly think it was banned because it really criticizes law enforcement and police officers and a lot of people don't like that. Then it also ties into a lot of racism because Kahlil was a Black man who got shot in his car and like Lily said I think it's tied into critical race theory – we shouldn't learn about this because it will be harmful. But I think they really just want to hide the truth of what's going on. Like Owen said I think it's important for people to read a book like this because people need to realize that what you see on the news, that's not everything behind it. A Black person who gets shot by a cop – that's not just another name or another face, there's an actual story behind it.

*How does a character change from the beginning of the book to the end?*

Owen: At the start, Pecola is just a young girl who is yearning to fall under what society considers beautiful at the time. She wants blue eyes and lighter skin after seeing Shirley Temple advertisements, like Barbie dolls. Throughout the book things start to get worse for her. She starts as an innocent child and at the end she develops schizophrenia after being raped by her father and has a complete psychotic break. She believes that she actually has blue eyes; that's why everyone is looking at her, instead of the actual reasons of being raped by her father and losing the child as well.

*How do you feel about Pecola wanting to be white?*

Owen: (after a long pause) I can see why she would want to be white in that time period, right after the great

## Forum Page—Its About Justice—Meryl —continued from page 7

depression, trying to kind of escape the world that she lives in. I think that Pecola believes that if she were white, she would not be in her home situation.

*How does a character change from the beginning of the book to the end?*

Lily: The general theme is the loss of innocence for Maya (she was Marguerite at the time) and her brother because they start out as best friends and they tell each other everything. When she is raped, the man tells her he would kill her brother if she told him about it. So suddenly she's forced to grow up because of this. Then her brother starts keeping things from her and they're forced to grow up quickly.

Kayla: The main character, Star, at the beginning was a normal teenager. I don't think she had too much of an idea for a purpose in life. She was pretty much innocent. Then, after she saw what happened to her friend, she was traumatized. She became an activist, speaking out about what happened to her friend and started taking after her dad who was also an activist.

*Were there any lessons learned as a result of reading your book?*

Lily: You have to use your voice. In that period of time when she (Maya) wasn't speaking, nothing changed. She was just repressing herself. She eventually realized that she had to use her voice to advocate for her race.

Owen: I can't really say I learned a lesson from this book, but I can definitely say this book opened my eyes to a world I was not familiar with. It tells the story of one family, one community, but it applies elsewhere.

Kayla: I don't think there was a specific lesson, but it opened my eyes a little more to the horrors of police brutality and how it affects people. To average everyday people who can't relate, it just seems like another Black face or just another person who died. But it's not like that. This is a person who had a personality, who was a human being. I think sometimes people just look over that, or minimize it.

*Would you recommend this book to a friend? Why or why not?*

Kayla: I would recommend it to the people who think it might be harmful, so they could make an informed decision. I don't think it's smart for one person to ban a book for hundreds or thousands of people. I do have a lot of friends who would be interested in reading it.

Owen: Yes, I would. I feel there's little to no conversation as to why the books are good or why we shouldn't be reading them. I might give them the general story line so they can anticipate what they're going to read about, but I would

definitely recommend it. For *The Bluest Eye*, in particular, I would recommend it so people could have the same eye-opening experience I did.

Lily: Yes, I definitely would recommend this book, especially with her having just been put on the quarter as the first Black woman put on a quarter. It's very important for everyone to know her story, because all the white men on the quarters—we know who they are, we know what they did, so reading this autobiography is important in light of that event.

*Give me a closing statement about banned books in general.*

Owen: Something I forgot to say earlier, for a lesson. Be comfortable with your own self, no matter what, no matter what society tells you to do, what your family tells you to do. Just be true to who you are.

Lily: Don't be afraid of expanding your world view. I know it can be scary. Those ideals that you were raised with – it can be scary to challenge them but society doesn't progress when everybody is in the same bubble. We have to learn from each other, and banning books is not the way to learn from each other.

Kayla: Over the years I've learned there are multiple different perspectives. Everybody has different perspectives as we have different walks of life. Because there are so many different perspectives, we need to take the time to learn from everybody. Let's open our minds up and at least hear what everybody has to say. We don't have to agree with everything, but we can at least hear each other out. Banning books is not the way to do that. Everybody should have access to another opinion, and we shouldn't close our minds to the possibility.

Meryl

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Listen to Meryl every Saturday on

"It's About Justice"

1:00 to 2:00 pm, WRUW, 91.1 FM



## AAUW Washington Update—



### AAUW Community Hub Update—

Thank you for your patience as we continue to make improvements to the AAUW Community Hub. To better serve you, we've created a comprehensive online guide that provides resources, training and instructions on the new system. We're sending this note to all state and branch presidents, finance officers and membership vice presidents so you can help spread the word to your affiliates.

I'm pleased to share that, using Community Hub, you can now:

- Renew your individual membership through the Community Hub Personal Snapshot. Log in or create your account to get started.
- Access our training videos for detailed instructions on how to manage your membership and make donations.
- Learn how to process new members, renewals and donations for your affiliate.
- If you, as leaders, have specific questions or need live support, please don't forget that the Connect team holds virtual "Office Hours" every Thursday at 3:30 p.m. ET. Register now for the next open slot. You can also email [connect@aauw.org](mailto:connect@aauw.org).

Finally, I'd like to remind you that leaders can request to have AAUW file their 990N forms for tax purposes through the Community Hub from Sunday, May 15, 2022 through Saturday, October 15, 2022.

I hope these updates are helpful. We will continue to keep you informed, and please bookmark our new online guide, which will always reflect the latest information.

### Join the Community Hub—

If you haven't already, please set up your account in the AAUW Community Hub, your personal portal into AAUW. You'll need an account to renew your membership, donate and update branch activities. Need help? We got you covered. Visit our "Systems Update" page, <https://www.aauw.org/?s=systems+update> for instructions on how to log in.

### All workplace discrimination is dangerous and hurts our nation's workers and families.—

Nearly a full year ago, the Pregnant Workers Fairness

Act (PWFA) passed the House of Representatives in a bipartisan 315-101 vote. Despite overwhelming support, this critical piece of legislation continues to stall in the U.S. Senate. Pregnant workers cannot wait another day.

### We are giving senators a deadline: pass the Pregnant Workers Fairness Act by Mother's Day!—

Despite federal protections for pregnant workers, loopholes in the law continue to endanger them. *This is unacceptable.* The Senate must ensure all workers have the tools and resources they need to challenge discrimination and all employers have the incentives they need to comply with the law. This is where YOU come in: **Every** Tuesday until PWFA passes is a national day of action:

1. Contact your senators and demand action
2. Engage on social media (*use the #PWFA4MothersDay hashtag!*)
3. Ask your friends and family to join you

### Urge your senators to get ready for Mother's Day by protecting working moms and all pregnant workers now!

This spring, as we slowly emerge from an isolating two years, I love seeing how our community has mastered technology to foster broad and deep connections, while also moving toward hybrid events and safe in-person engagement. It's been a joy to connect with so many of you at virtual state conventions, and I feel energized by your continued efforts to engage in mission-related activities and advocacy.

I'm also proud and grateful to have the opportunity to provide insight to the media on the vital importance of gender equity in education and the workplace. In the last month alone, I was quoted in 48 articles and interviewed by the Washington Post, MSNBC, CNBC, the BBC, Forbes, Bloomberg and many other major outlets.

In addition, I'm thrilled to share that Nikole Hannah-Jones, Pulitzer-Prize-winning creator of "The 1619 Project," will keynote the 2022 National Conference for College Women Student Leaders (NCCWSL) in May. Hannah-Jones is a staff writer at *The New York Times Magazine* and the inaugural Knight Chair in Race and Journalism at Howard University.

Gloria Blackwell

AAUW Chief Executive Officer

The purpose of AAUW is to advance equity for women and girls through advocacy, education, philanthropy, and research. AAUW is organized, and shall be operated, exclusively for any or all charitable, educational, scientific, or literary purposes that may qualify it as an organization described in section 501 (c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986.

## AAUW Washington Update—



Last week, the leak of a draft opinion in the *Dobbs v. Jackson Women’s Health Organization* case indicates that the U.S. Supreme Court may overturn the landmark decision in *Roe v. Wade*, which established abortion as a constitutionally protected right. As serious as the implications of this decision may be, first it’s worth remembering that, until a Supreme Court ruling is official, the law has NOT changed. And second, know that AAUW is working closely with coalition partners to direct our members on the best next steps as the situation unfolds. The silver lining around this week’s news: Times of crisis often inspire a surge in activism, and we encourage both longtime advocates and new supporters to make their voices heard. The U.S. Senate has already reacted and is finally scheduling a vote for next week on the Women’s Health Protection Act! As the Senate approaches this historic opportunity, we urge you to use our new **Rallying for Abortion Rights toolkit to take action!**

Thank you for your commitment to gender equity,  
The AAUW Public Policy & Legal Advocacy Team

### **Act — Take action on the most pressing policies**

May marks Asian American and Pacific Islander Heritage Month, a time to pay tribute to the generations of Asian and Pacific Islanders who have enriched America’s history and stand in solidarity with them against anti-Asian racism. In addition, on May 3, we marked the date that Asian American, Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander (AANHPI) women had to work into 2022 to be paid what white, non-Hispanic men took home last year.

Following a new methodology that calculates the pay gap for all workers (not just full-time, year-round workers), the most recent statistics indicate that AANHPI women are paid 75 cents for every dollar earned by white, non-Hispanic men—and the disparity widens further when you look past the average:

- Pacific Islander women are paid \$0.66.
- South Asian women are paid \$0.61.
- Southeast Asian women are paid \$0.59.
- Native Hawaiian women are paid \$0.57.

AANHPI women deserve better. To make pay equity a reality, we need you.

The bipartisan Paycheck Fairness Act passed the U.S. House of Representatives more than a year ago. Now the Senate must move this bill forward to ensure all women

have the tools they need to challenge discrimination and all employers have the incentives they need to comply with the law. **Urge your senators to pass the Paycheck Fairness Act now!**

### **Learn — Dig deeper into the issues that matter**

**Eight-hour MOMibuster to Focus on Caregiving**— On Saturday, May 7, advocates, caregivers and parents staged an eight-hour filibuster called a “MOMibuster.” The online event was organized by MomsRising, the Care Can’t Wait Coalition and more than 100 allied organizations, including AAUW. A full-page advertisement promoting the “MOMibuster” was featured in the *New York Times* on May 6. The effort raised awareness and called for action on important “Care Economy” issues, policies, resources and services necessary to help families meet their caregiving needs, including:

**Paid family and medical leave.** The U.S. does not currently guarantee paid annual family or medical leave for illness or caregiving. Employees need tools to balance work and family responsibilities. Any emergency paid leave policy should provide the same protections to all workers.

**High-quality, affordable child care.** Good child care is critical for healthy development and builds a strong foundation for lifelong wellness and economic success. It also gives working parents peace of mind, reduces absenteeism, and improves employee retention.

**Protections for pregnant workers.** Despite federal law, many people who are pregnant still risk being forced out of the workplace simply for following doctors’ orders. The Pregnant Workers Fairness Act would require reasonable health accommodations and provide protections against workplace discrimination for mothers and all pregnant workers.

### **Engage — Share the important work we’re doing**

On May 3, partners from the Student Borrower Protection Center and Student Debt Crisis Center joined AAUW’s Public Policy team to explore the realities and possible misconceptions about student debt. Watch the [webinar recording here](#) to learn more about the student debt crisis.

AAUW joined more than 50 organizations to highlight the importance of affordable, reliable and flexible child care for domestic violence survivors and urge Congress to expand access to child care in upcoming economic recovery legislation.

Congratulations to Delaware and Maryland for being the newest states to pass bills ensuring paid family and medical leave! Maryland’s *Time to Care Act* was enacted on April 9 after the state legislature overrode the governor’s veto. Now, the *Healthy Delaware Families Act* is awaiting the governor’s signature.