



## BRIDGEPORT BRANCH NEWSLETTER FALL 2020

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### **Our Mission Statement**

AAUW advances equity for women and girls through advocacy, education, philanthropy and research.

### **Our Value Promise**

By joining AAUW, you belong to a community that breaks through educational and economic barriers so that all women and girls have a fair chance.

### ***From the President's Desk...***

This year, 2020, continues to be one for the record books—from the Coronavirus beginning in March, to summer tropical storms, hurricanes and wildfires. What's next? Well unfortunately, it's not going to be the general meeting we planned for Saturday, September 26 at Boothe Memorial Park in Stratford. Hopefully you received our earlier message that this gathering has been cancelled. So, what else is new? We have not been together since our December Social in 2019, but our Board is discussing arrangements for a possible replacement program for later this fall (on Zoom, of course!).

I'm still hoping we'll be able to safely come together for one of our favorite annual events, the **Holiday Social, scheduled for Saturday, Dec. 5** at 1 p.m. "Covid willing," we'll meet in the hall of my church, Unity Hill United Church of Christ, in Trumbull. Following social distancing and sitting six feet apart, it will be good to share warm fellowship and wonderful goodies. This year's scholarship recipients and the Principal of Wilbur Cross School will be invited as our special guests. And don't forget those wonderful warm knitted clothing items we'll still be collecting for the students at Wilbur Cross. Stay tuned for more information as we get closer.

Another downside of Covid-19 is that many of you have not yet been able to meet and get to know **Nana Amos**, our new AAUW CT President. But the good news is, Nana eagerly responded when we invited her to introduce herself in this newsletter, and share some of her exciting plans that have already begun moving AAUW CT forward into the future. As you'll see, one of her priorities is improving member communications, and that's why you'll also find a profile of Communications Intern **Marielis Cruz** who has been working with state leadership this year to expand communications in ways that will bring our organization closer together. Thank you to Nana and Marielis for the work you are doing, and for taking the time to keep us informed

Lastly, a few reminders...I hope you have remembered to renew your AAUW membership for the year ahead. We have some planning to do and are eager for your input. September 7, 2021 marks the 90<sup>th</sup> anniversary of our Branch, and we want to celebrate! Please let me know if you have any ideas for observing this milestone, or if you would like to serve on the Anniversary Planning Committee.

And if you have never visited our Bridgeport Branch website, please do so. Our webmaster, **Chris Bonosky**, does a great job keeping it up to date and us better informed. Thank you, Chris! Our website is located at: [www.aauw-bpt.org](http://www.aauw-bpt.org).

These are very trying times, with lots of new words in our vocabulary – Zoom, YouTube, social distancing, virtual meetings, pandemic and so on. But together, as AAUW members, we'll get through this and evolve with the times—we are AAUW strong!

Please stay well and be safe!  
Carole

**Carole J. Fanslow**, President  
AAUW Bridgeport Area Branch  
(203) 375-1284  
[fanslow@juno.com](mailto:fanslow@juno.com)



## **Message from Nana Amos, President, AAUW Connecticut**

I became involved in AAUW upon the suggestion of Lin Rising, who invited me to serve on the AAUW/CT College and University Partnerships Steering Committee over 15 years ago. When I learned that Connecticut was in need of a State President last year, I threw my hat in. I felt at the time it was important for me to get more deeply involved. AAUW membership in Connecticut is, and has been, on a decline. Thus, stepping into this position as President, I knew we could not afford to continue to do business as usual. We needed to take a step back and take stock of who we are as an organization, who we serve, how we serve our constituents, and how we infuse excitement in the work we care about. In essence, how could we best mobilize to advance opportunities for women and girls? We needed to be extremely deliberate not to maintain the status quo, in order to build again.

And that is what we are doing. Over the past six months, and certainly for the next six months, my goal is to realign and strengthen our organization, as well as our overall operational efficiencies on the state level. I want to ensure that we have:

- sustainable systems in place regardless of who is at the helm
- transparency, to improve our communications within and amongst our branches
- solidified partnerships with our colleagues doing work in this same space throughout our state

Most importantly, I hope we can turn the tide and create excitement in this organization once again. I want to attract a new cadre of young people, beaming with pride in our work to advance gender equity, and with renewed energy to boldly advance this mission forward. We are looking for all the help we can get, so if you would like to help in this endeavor beyond your branch commitments, feel free to contact me to lend a hand, and/or just to share your ideas.

Warmly,  
Nana Amos  
[nana.amos@uconn.edu](mailto:nana.amos@uconn.edu) or [aauwofct@gmail.com](mailto:aauwofct@gmail.com)).

### **Nana Amos Call to Action:**

*Every election cycle we hear the phrase "This is the most important election of our lifetime." Given where we are nationally and what we have experienced this year alone, I believe this indeed is one of the most important elections of our lifetime. Thus, the call to action over the next few months is simple: VOTE. Not only should you plan to vote, but also encourage everyone you know to vote. Be alert, ready to combat and call attention to concerns of voter suppression especially in marginalized communities. Share information broadly about how voter registration and mail-in ballots should be done as early as possible. Let our voices be heard both locally and nationally. In the words of Ida B. Wells-Barnett, "The way to right wrongs is to turn the light of truth upon them." Vote, so that your truth cannot be mistaken. AAUW/CT stands with you.*

## ***Introducing Marielis Cruz, Communications Intern, AAUW of CT***

“I am a recent UConn graduate with a BA in English and double minor in Psychology and Women’s, Gender and Sexuality Studies. I have interned with the UConn Ballard Institute and Museum of Puppetry as their Marketing Intern. My job entailed promoting their workshops and events, sending out press releases and Mailchimp emails, and being a personal photographer for their events. My second internship was at the UConn Women’s Center as their Writing Intern. I worked on the newsletter with the Editor and have a few articles written by me. I was also in charge of the daily digest which incorporated campus news, the Center’s ongoing and upcoming events/programs, campus awareness, and created a new section called Current News to connect the campus to current events nationally and globally. I, then, moved on to work as the Marketing Chair for the Women’s Center. I worked with my partner to create content and promote our events. When the semester was cut short due to the pandemic, I worked remotely for the remainder of the semester.

As of late June 2020, I have been the Communications Intern for AAUW CT. My role for AAUW is to build and strengthen our communications. I will share with you a few tasks that I have done so far. One of the major tasks is updating the content of the state website. The website is a work-in-progress and new content will be added soon. There will be a new change to the appearance of the website mirroring the National website. I have been collecting member information to have an updated State Roster.

New social media platforms have been implemented (Twitter and Instagram). This will aid us in creating a stronger presence in the state and promote our events and programs. Social media is a great way to provide and share information and we can easily connect with other AAUW states. I am a part of the workshop series by creating and promoting the events. The first one in the series was Finance 101: Taxes with Amber Whitehead. There will be more workshops in the future. I have created a Calendar for Branch Presidents to add their events, and have one central medium to keep up to date with other branches across the state.

Currently, I am working on creating a template for the State Newsletter and the new Internship Program. The internship roles will help AAUW maintain communication throughout the year and in the future, and create opportunities for professional development.

I look forward to witnessing the growth of the organization and the continuation of advocacy and work for gender equity. Members may tune in to read our call-to-action in the State Newsletter coming in September.”

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### **Member News**

*Please note the following changes in your AAUW Bridgeport Member Directory:*

#### **Barbara Buxton**

The Nathaniel Witherell  
70 Parsonage Road, Rm. 322B  
Greenwich, CT 06830

**Holly Franquet** (added new phone number and email address)

cell phone: 203-455-7858; email: [hfranquet@ecmc.org](mailto:hfranquet@ecmc.org)

**Emily Green** (correction to street address)

1658 Stratfield Rd.

**Gretchen Hamilton** (added email address)

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

**Claire Shumofsky** (new address, email & phone numbers)

161S-C Picard Drive, Apt. 1307, Rockville, MD 20850

[cshumofsky@gmail.com](mailto:cshumofsky@gmail.com), Home: 301-417-4412; Cell: 203-394-2329



We wish **Velma Charlesworth** a very Happy Birthday as she turns 101 on September 29<sup>th</sup>!



## **Bridgeport Study & Discussion Group Meetings**

While Coronavirus restrictions have caused changes to regular activities and schedules, we are continuing to meet as best possible. If you are looking for new things to do while spending more time at home, maybe this is a good time to try out a meeting. Perhaps you'll decide to continue on a regular basis.

**AAUW Morning Book Club** meets the fourth Tuesday of *most* months from September through May, at 10 a.m. Any Bridgeport Area Branch member is eligible to join. At this time, meetings are being held via Zoom. If you have questions or would like to join us, please contact **Merrilyn Decker** at [merrdeck@aol.com](mailto:merrdeck@aol.com) or **Nathalie Taranto** at [nstaranto@att.net](mailto:nstaranto@att.net) to get the Zoom meeting information.

Morning Book Club discussion programs and leaders for 2020-21 are so far:

<u>DATE</u>	<u>BOOK(S)</u>	<u>LEADER</u>
Sept. 22	<b><u>The Engineers Wife</u></b> , by Tracey Enerson Wood	<b>Cindy Sullivan</b>
Oct. 27	<b>(Open)</b>	-----
Nov. 17	<b><u>Thank You for Being Late</u></b> , by Thomas Friedman	<b>Merrilyn Decker</b>
Jan. 26	<b>(Open)</b>	-----
Feb. 23	<b><u>No Stopping Us Now</u></b> , by Gail Collins	<b>Nathalie Taranto</b>
Mar. 23	<b><u>Simon the Fiddler</u></b> , by Paulette Jiles	<b>Marcia Eigel</b>
Apr. 27	<b><u>No One is Too Small to Make a Difference</u></b> , by Greta Thunberg	<b>Gerry Dunbar</b>
May 25	Final Selection of books for next season	<b>All Members</b>

## **AAUW Evening Book Group**

The Evening Book Group meets at 4 p.m., following social distancing guidelines. Please call in advance of any meeting to confirm the meeting is taking place. If you have questions, contact **Gretchen Goethner** (203) 254-8481 or **Mary Misevich** (203) 255-3804. (You are most welcome to join, whether or not you've read the book).

**Sept. 16**                    **The Dutch House**, by **Ann Patchett**  
Reviewer/Hostess: Mary Misevich, 453 Surrey Lane, Fairfield (203-244-3804)

- Oct. 21**                    **The Splendid and the Vile**, by Eric Larson  
Reviewer/hostess: Louise MacCormack, 415 Asbury Ridge Rd, Shelton (203-451-2841)
- Nov. 18**                    **Big Lies in a Small Town**, by Diane Chamberlain  
Reviewer: Julieanne Owens; Hostess: Mary Misevich, 453 Surrey La., Fairfield (203-244-3804)
- Jan. 20**                    **The Faith Club**, by Idliby, Oliver and Warner  
Reviewer/Hostess: Mary Misevich, 453 Surrey Lane, Fairfield (203-244-3804)
- Mar. 17**                    **Crossing to Safety**, by Wallace Stegner  
Reviewer/Hostess: Gretchen Goethner, 30 Cartright St., Bridgeport (203-254-8481)
- TBA**                        **Spring Dinner/Planning Meeting**

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### Contemporary Global Issues Study Group

Meetings are on hold at this time. For information or updates, please contact **Merrilyn Decker** at [merrdeck@aol.com](mailto:merrdeck@aol.com).



### A Few Notes

The **Finance Committee** is seeking new members. This is a great opportunity to become involved in the Branch without a large time commitment. To find out more, call **Gloria Francesconi**, Vice President of Finance at: 203-268-4985.

**Contest Announced!** - The Bridgeport Branch newsletter needs a name! If you've read this far, then you know that our AAUW Branch is committed to keeping you informed about activities and events through a variety of channels. But after going nameless for a while, we think it's high time this publication had an official title, so we are asking for your suggestions. All ideas are welcome (and the winning submission will receive a prize -- TBD)! Please send your ideas by October 25<sup>th</sup> to editor **Liza Hickey** at: [lshickey@aol.com](mailto:lshickey@aol.com).

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The next AAUW Bridgeport Branch newsletter will be published later this fall. If you have news to share, including member updates, events or articles on topics of interest, please send to **Liza Hickey** by October 25<sup>th</sup> at [lshickey@aol.com](mailto:lshickey@aol.com), or call 203-381-0071 with any questions.

AAUW Bridgeport Branch website: [www.aauw-bpt.org/](http://www.aauw-bpt.org/)  
AAUW CT website: <https://aauw-ct.aauw.net/> AAUW National website: [www.aauw.org/](http://www.aauw.org/)



## **AAUW Bridgeport Branch Calendar 2020 – 2021** (9/18/20)

***\*Due to Covid-19, many of our planned meetings and activities will be virtual, but subject to change. We will adjust and provide updates as necessary — hopefully, with more in-person gatherings to look forward to!***

Sept. 22	Tue.	10 a.m.	<u>Morning Book Group</u> – via Zoom (Facilitator, Cindy Sullivan)
Oct. 1	Thu.	6:30 pm	<u>Finance Committee Meeting</u> – via Conference Call
Oct. 21	Wed.	4 p.m.	<u>Evening Book Group</u> – Hostess Louise MacCormack, Shelton
Oct. 27	Tue.	10 a.m.	<u>Morning Book Group</u> – (Book & Facilitator, Open)
Nov. 9	Mon.	7 p.m.	<u>Board Meeting</u> – home of Carole Fanslow, Stratford
Nov. 17	Tue.	10 a.m.	<u>Morning Book Group</u> – via Zoom (Facilitator, Merrilyn Decker)
Nov. 18	Wed.	4 p.m.	<u>Evening Book Group</u> – Hostess Mary Misevich, Fairfield
Dec. 5	Sat.	1-3 p.m.	<u>HOLIDAY SOCIAL</u> - Unity Hill United Church of Christ, 364 White Plains Rd., Trumbull
Jan. 20	Wed.	4 p.m.	<u>Evening Book Group</u> – Hostess Mary Misevich, Fairfield
Jan. 25	Mon.	10 a.m.	<u>Board Meeting</u> – Trumbull, at Spring Meadows or home of Gloria Francesconi, (snow date: Tues. Jan. 26)
Jan. 26	Tue.	10 a.m.	<u>Morning Book Group</u> – via Zoom (Book & Facilitator, Open)
Feb. 23	Tue.	10 a.m.	<u>Morning Book Group</u> – via Zoom (Facilitator, Nathalie Taranto)
Mar. 17	Wed.	4 p.m.	<u>Evening Book Group</u> – Hostess Gretchen Goethner, Bridgeport
Mar. 23	Tue.	10 a.m.	<u>Morning Book Group</u> – via Zoom (Facilitator, Marcia Eigel)
Apr. 12	Mon.	7 p.m.	<u>Board Meeting</u> – home of Gretchen Goethner, Bridgeport
Apr. 27	Tue.	10 a.m.	<u>Morning Book Group</u> – via Zoom (Facilitator, Gerry Dunbar)
May 15	Sat.	Noon – 3 p.m.	<u>ANNUAL MEETING &amp; Scholarship Luncheon</u> , Blue Goose, Stratford
May 25	Tue.	10 a.m.	<u>Morning Book Group</u> – Final Selection of Books for 2021-22
Jun. 7	Mon.	7 p.m.	<u>Board Meeting</u> – home of Gerry Dunbar