



Catherine Cox, President



March Edition 2024

President's Message

Spring is almost here! I enjoyed yesterday watching and hearing grackles and monk parakeets competing for territory in some oak trees. All seemed to be speaking at once. AAUW will be active too this spring though not quite as garrulous as these birds. We will welcome Sandy Salinas, Principal of Miller High School, as our guest speaker on Saturday, March 2. I am interested in hearing her views on how high school girls are doing since their isolation due to Covid 19.

For April, our branch will have two Saturday meetings. The first on April 6 is a "Watch Party" to engage by Zoom in the AAUW Texas Bi-annual Conference. (Please see details for this in a separate item in this newsletter.) On Saturday, April 13th, we will have our Branch Membership Meeting. Our speaker will be Joanne Salge, who will be talking about xeriscaping, an important means of gardening for preserving water.

At this second April meeting, we will also be voting to fill the vacating branch offices, so it is very important that you come and take part in this vote. Our slate of names for three offices are: Kelly Gonzalez for President, Sharon Trott for Vice President for Funds, and Janet Hilton for Secretary. Nominations are also welcome from the floor. I thank the nominating committee: Shirley Selz (Chair.), Diana Reyes, and Judy Harral for their work.

I wish also to thank Book Finders for its phenomenal February book sale. The sale brought in a record \$2,900, money that will be used for scholarships and AAUW Outreach and Stem activities. My congratulations also go to Book Finder Co-chair Kristin Conlan, who has been nominated for "AAUW Texas Valuable Member Award." You may not know that Kristin has served terms as both VP for Membership and VP for Programs. Well done, Kristin, for this latest recognition! Also, I wish to congratulate Vickie Natale, who has been placed on the slate for AAUW Texas Finance Officer. We are very proud of Vickie and know that she will be a wonderful state officer.

Finally, with Spring comes planning for our celebration of 20 graduating seniors at Miller High School. Thank you, Community Outreach and our Del Mar affiliate, for helping to make this event truly special for twenty young women and their families.



Mission: To advance gender equity for women and girls through research, education, and advocacy.



Corpus Christi Branch Meeting
Saturday, March 2, 2024, 10:30 a.m.

YWCA, Community Room
4601 Corona Drive

Topic: Identifying and Nurturing
the abilities and Aspirations of High School Girls

Speaker: Sandy Salinas-DeLeon
Principal, Miller High School
and Metro School of Design



Becoming principal in 2021, **Sandy Salinas-DeLeon** is the first woman to lead the city's oldest high school (formerly Corpus Christi High School) with its reconceived curriculum that melds academics and the arts.

This magnet school engages students from 7th to 12th grades. Salinas-DeLeon notes that every teacher and staff member work "to identify the abilities, talents, and potential of students and to provide opportunities to develop them."

To educate girls to become healthy, safe, enlightened, and empowered to determine the course of their lives and futures, she underscores curriculum that emphasizes problem-solving, effective communication, collaboration (team work), and creativity.

In 2021 Miller Metro Prep students made history by winning 1st place at the CCISD UIL "One Act Play."

In 2021, 2022, and 2023 AAUW Community Outreach Committee members collaborated with Salinas-DeLeon and Career Counselor, Gerald Padilla, to plan a celebration of twenty senior girls who had demonstrated achievement and commitment in their classwork and future goals.

AAUW Corpus Christi Branch

NOMINATING COMMITTEE REPORT

The Nominating Committee, appointed by the Board of Directors at its meeting on January 27, is composed of Shirley Selz, Diana Reyes, and Judy Harral. The Committee was tasked with nominating members for the positions of President, AAUW Funds Vice President, and Secretary for the 2024-2026 term. See Bylaws Art. X, Sec. 2. The election will be held at the annual membership meeting in April under the procedures provided in Art. XII.

The Nominating Committee is pleased to report that the following nominees will be announced at the March meeting and will be nominated at the April 13 meeting as follows:

President – Kelly Gonzalez

AAUW Funds VP – Sharon Trott

Secretary – Jan Hilton

On behalf of the Committee, we are grateful to the nominees for their willingness to be nominated for these important leadership positions.

Shirley Selz, Chairman
Nominating Committee



FYI

Reminder of Date Change
for April Branch Meeting

Saturday, April 13, 2024

CONGRATULATIONS



Kristin Conlan

Nominee for AAUW Texas Outstanding Member of the Year—2023-24

Kristin has served on the Board of Directors for many years, as Vice President for Programs (2013-2014, 2014-2015), as Vice President of Membership (2017-2018, 2018-2019) and, as Co-chair of Book Finders (four years). Congratulations, Kris, on this well-deserved honor!



Vickie Natale

Recommended by the State Nominating Committee to become AAUW Texas Finance Officer

We are very proud that our branch Finance Officer has been wooed by the AAUW Texas to serve as an officer at the state level. With her usual dedication, Vickie has decided to complete her term as branch Finance Officer. We wish Vickie all the luck as she moves forward to help AAUW at the state level.

We will have the opportunity to vote for Vickie and other state officers between March 9 and March 23. Please examine the January AAUW Texas Newsletter to review the state's proposed bylaw changes and the slate of nominees for state office.

February 3, 2024
Branch Meeting

Fostering an Appreciation of Poetry

By Diana Cardenas

On Saturday, February 3, 2024, Professor Robin Carstensen, Director of the Creative Writing Program at Texas A&M University-Corpus Christ, gave, to 30 members, an enthusiastic presentation about her function as the first woman “Poet Laureate of Corpus Christi,” an honor bestowed upon her by city leaders. Accomplished and community-oriented, Dr. Carstensen embodies a love of country, a passion for teaching and mentoring, a pursuit of learning, and a commitment to young poets.

As a young woman, she served in the Air Force as a sergeant and then as a medic. After, she followed her desire for intellectual development to universities: a bachelor’s degree, and MFA, and a Ph.D. in English at University of Oklahoma.

As “Poet Laureate,” her purpose is to foster creative writing among community groups and students at various levels. She mentors budding poets and writers of fiction. This mentoring parallels with her dynamic, university teaching activities—instructing and guiding undergraduate and graduate students. Dr. Carstensen developed new undergraduate and graduate courses designed to meet student needs and propel them toward their potential as readers, evaluators, and editors for the literary publication, “The Windward Review,” an exposition of original poetry, fiction, photography, and art works. “The Windward Review” embraces work and topics that may be excluded in other expositions: equity, women’s rights, immigration, intersections of cultures, and protecting our environment.

Professor Carstensen read to our attentive members her work. In “Waiting in Line Waiting for Gaea*,” the poet expresses joy in simple, comforting surroundings--looking at a puppy: “two black oval marks on the littlest terrier’s backside, spots that look like continents ...” and watching squirrels outside “doing frolic.”

In late February, at a city-wide gathering, titled “People’s Literary Festival,” held at Del Mar College and All Saints’ Episcopal Church, Dr. Carstensen and other accomplished poets, fiction writers, and essayists presented their works. Also, high school students received the “Robb Jackson Award for High School Poets”: 1st, 2nd, 3rd place winners and 7 honorable mentions, \$750 total amount.

With excellent teaching, mentoring, and enriching community activities, Dr. Carstensen distinguishes herself as “Poet Laureate of Corpus Christi.” For our meeting she proudly wore the attractive, august medal of a woman champion.

**Gaea: Greek name of earth/ Personification of earth.*



Dr. Diana Cardenas, AAUW Program Vice President; speaker Dr. Robin Carstensen; and Dr. Catherine Cox, AAUW President.



From Kristin Conlan

The Bookfinders are delighted to report that we have had our most successful book sale ever, earning a little over \$2,900 at our recent sale. We worked extra hard to refresh our shelves with new selections and added an additional "Dollar Sale" cart to the two we had offered at past sales. A special thank you goes to Sheri Roussel, who delivered innumerable boxes of outgoing books to Half Price Books on our behalf. Also, a huge thank you to the members who volunteered to work the check-out table each day.

We have received several large (20+ boxes each) donations of books over the past month. Processing these books is very time consuming and even somewhat overwhelming. New volunteers are both wanted and needed. We would love to have you join this hard-working and dedicated team! Please consider donating the gift of your time to become a Bookfinder.

AAUW Community Outreach Committee

From Kelly Gonzalez



The Outreach Committee is working on the Miller High School Senior Celebration. This year's event will be held April 30 at Miller High School. This event helps recognize 20 senior girls who will be attending college after graduation. The event works to recognize students who are not in the top ten percent but who are good students, good citizens and who will be continuing their education. The branch hosts a recognition ceremony and each student receives \$100.

We are also working with the YWCA on possible ways to recognize Equal Pay Day on March 12. The next meeting of the Community Outreach Committee is **Monday, March 11**. We meet at the YWCA at 6:00. Dates for the rest of the year are Monday, April 8 and Monday, May 13.

All branch members are invited to attend the meetings. Please contact Kelly for additional details.

SCIENCE

TECHNOLOGY

ENGINEERING

MATH

From Janet Blanke

I am thrilled to announce that **Jennifer Gonzales** is the new chair of the AAUW STEM Committee. I am moving to Asheville, NC in a few weeks, and I know that the STEM Committee is in great hands with Jennifer! It has been my pleasure to be part of the Corpus Christi AAUW branch since 2016 and to get to know and work with all of the wonderful members of this branch! I will miss you all!

AAUW Texas State Conference

WATCH PARTY!

April 6, 2024

AAUW Texas is hosting a statewide conference on April 6, 2024, via a Zoom meeting. **The conference is free for all AAUW Texas members and is scheduled for 8:30 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. Our Branch will host a WATCH Party at the YWCA so that members can attend together for networking and socializing.** We will set up coffee, water, and light breakfast snacks for the morning hours, and we will have pizza delivered for lunch. In order to make appropriate preparations, we will send out an email to members in March asking for your reservations. The state is providing a reimbursement for food at the Watch Party, so we will need a good headcount.

The theme of the conference is “Charting a Course Through the Challenge of Change.” The schedule for the half-day conference is:

8:30 Set-up/Sign-In
9:00 Mini-session-Sustainability Paula Jernigan
9:30 Keynote Speaker- Dr. Bottazzi
10:15 Break
10:30 Mini-session- DEI Chasity Crawley
11:00 Business Meeting
11:30 Break
11:45 Mini-session- Networking, Joyce LeBombard, LWV Texas
12:15 Keynote Speaker- Dr. Malinee Neelamegam
1:00 Closing

We will be sending out the email shortly asking if you plan to attend. Please mark your calendars and plan on an enlightening conference, along with a special opportunity to share food and conversation with your AAUW friends.



Equal Pay Day, 2024

March 12 is Equal Pay Day. AAUW National explains that the day “marks the current state of the gender pay gap; 84% for full-time workers and 78% for all workers (including part-time and seasonal).” A typical woman would have worked approximately 2 ½ months for free to catch up to a typical non-Hispanic white man. We commemorate March 12, to remember that pay is still unequal in this land of opportunity. The following dates are a bitter reminder that many women are left far behind financially due to race, ethnicity, and gender identity.

- Asian American, Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander Women’s Equal Pay Day – **April 5** (Asian American Women make 99% of the average non-Hispanic white male. See the date below for Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander women.)
- LGBTQIA+ Equal Pay Awareness Day – **June 15** (not enough data has been collected to know exactly when this day should be.)
- Black Women’s Equal Pay Day – **July 27**
- Moms’ Equal Pay Day – **August 15**
- Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander (NHPI) Women’s Equal Pay Day – **August 30**
- Latina’s Equal Pay Day – **October 5**
- Native Women’s Equal Pay Day – **November 30**

To help redress these inequities, AAUW National has a legal advocacy fund and provides information about filing lawsuits under Equal Pay Act of 1963 (EPA) and Title VII. Click on <https://www.aauw.org/resources/legal/laf/equal-pay-act/> for more information.

The YWCA will not be holding an Equal Pay Day event this year. AAUW—Corpus Christi typically helps to sponsor this event.



Playgoers

From Michelle Balis

Here is the Spring schedule for Playgoers:
Macbeth at TAMUCC on Thursday March 7.
Oklahoma! at Harbor Playhouse on Friday,
 March 22.

*25th Annual Putnam Spelling Bee: the
 Musical* at Del Mar on Friday, April 26
 9 to 5: the musical at Harbor Playhouse on
 Saturday, June 1.

Let me know if you are interested in
 attending.



The Lunch Bunch

will be meeting on Tuesday,
 March 19th, at 12:30. We will be
 meeting at Marco's Lunch Club
 located at 525 S Staples.

From Susan Birchfield



Wine and Cheese

will be meeting on Sunday,
 March 10th, from 5 to 7 at
 Mary Sherwood's home.
 Everyone is asked to bring an
 appetizer or a bottle of wine.

FYI

Library News from Michelle Balis

Banned Book Club discusses various classic titles that have been banned at some point somewhere. We meet on the Third Wednesday of the month at 4:00. (Let me know if you want a virtual invitation) March's title is *The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy* by Douglas Adams.

Game On! . Join us for board games or other games for a group of fun-loving adults. We meet the third Tuesday of the month so our next meeting is on Tuesday, February 20 at 4:30.

Starting in March:

- Best Seller Book Club on Tuesday, March 26 at 10:30. Join us in reading some not-so-recent Best Sellers. March's title is *Pride and Prejudice* by Jane Austen.
- Color Me Happy on Friday, March 15 at 10:30 am. Come for some Adult coloring time!

Anita & W.T. Leyland Public Library
1230 Carmel Parkway