



Corpus Christi (TX) Branch

American Association of University Women

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

Vision: Equity for all.

October Edition 2024

# October Membership Meeting featuring guest speaker Julia Kwedi

**When: Saturday, Oct. 5 at 10:30 am**

**Where: YWCA, 4601 Corona St. 78411**

Ms. Julia Kwedi, meteorologist at KRIS 6 TV, broadcasts the weather on weekday afternoons and the weekend as a member of the weather team. A transplant from Maryland, she spent her life in the Maryland area. Julia is a graduate of Salisbury University with a degree in Atmospheric Science and also in Broadcast Journalism.



Previously she worked at NBC News Washington as the assistant to the Bureau Chief and Deputy Bureau Chief.

As young as 5 years old, Julia loved to watch storms. Often her mother cautioned her: "Step away from the window." All her life Julia followed her childhood passion.

Julia is excited to learn about the Coastal Bend, make a home here, and serve the community.

Julia and STEM: Julia has helped promote the mission of our AAUW STEM program. Last May, as part of a five-member panel of local STEM professional women, she addressed many West Oso ISD middle high school girls who demonstrate an interest in STEM. She encourages girls to embrace their passions and dreams. When she is not forecasting, Julia enjoys reading, binge watching K-dramas, and listening to music.

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# President's Message



Kelly Gonzalez, President

September really set the tone for 2025. Starting with the YWomen Vote Watch party on September 7 and ending with our Membership Drive Meeting on September 8, we are off to a very good start.

Thank you to all of who could make the membership meeting and to those of you who could not, you were missed. It was great to meet members who have recently joined and we welcome the two new members who joined at the meeting.

I was lucky enough to attend the YWomen Vote Watch party and it was such a great event. The focus of the event was on Generation Z women. I admit I don't know much about the different generations, but my boys are Millennials and I knew that Gen Z was the next generation after them. While there are some differences in the what years make up different generations, the consensus is Gen Z was born between 1997 and 2012.

The YWCA Women Vote survey offers a comprehensive view of the top social and economic priorities among women voters. The survey findings provide insight into the perspective and priorities of this group as we are nearing the Presidential Election. Here are some of my main takeaways from the event.

Overall, the top 3 priorities of all women were the economy and the cost of living, healthcare and mass shootings and gun violence. Gen Z women prioritized abortion access, racial justice, police violence and childcare more than other generations, with less emphasis on the economy. When asked to think objectively about all women, not just themselves personally, domestic violence was the number one answer.

There are some misconceptions about Gen Z and, like many, I was guilty of believing some of them. Participating in this event helped me realize how wrong I was and I have a much different opinion of them now. The biggest misconceptions are: They care more about Likes than change. They are uneducated; and They don't care about what's going on in the world.

What I learned is they care and they care very deeply. Gen Z has never known a world without gun violence and school shootings. One of them noted this during the event. She stated that whenever she goes anywhere, and the first thing she did when she arrived at the auditorium for the event, was to look for the exit doors so she knows how to keep herself safe. I thought it was interesting that this was not a top priority for Gen Z and wonder if it has become a way of life for them, which is heartbreaking

I learned that these women are strong, independent and involved. They actively participate in their communities and are committed to change. Community is very important to them and they tend to think in terms of community versus self. They are more likely to be subjected to cyber bullying than others, which they admit is due to them being online so much.

In listening to the event and discussing with the others in attendance, I was reminded that we are more alike than we are different. We need to listen to each other and work together to achieve the change we want to see.



**American Association of University Women**  
**Empowering Women Since 1881**

*Presents*  
*An Enlightening*  
*Virtual Seminar*

**THEY CAME  
 FOR THE SCHOOLS**

**October 10, 2024**  
**6:00 PM Central Time**  
 (US and Canada)

**One Town's Fight Over Race and Identity,  
 and the New War for America's Classrooms**

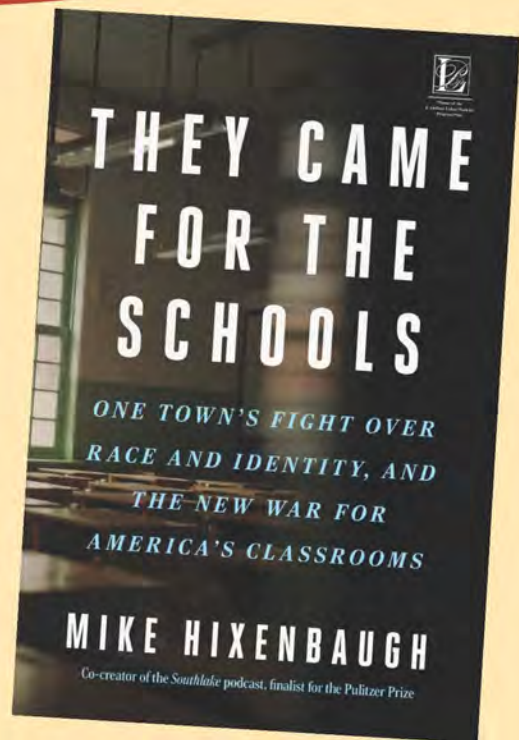
**By Mike Hixenbaugh**



- **Co-creator of the Southlake Podcast**
- **Finalist for the Pulitzer Prize**

[mikehixenbaugh.com](http://mikehixenbaugh.com)

[aauw-tx.aauw.net](http://aauw-tx.aauw.net)



**Join Zoom Meeting**

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88119861882>

Meeting ID: 881 1986 1882

AAUW is a non-partisan, non-profit organization working to improve the lives of women and their families.



## *Y Women Vote-2024 National Town Hall*

# Hear Their Voices, Feel Their Passion, Shape our Future

*Story by Dr. Diana Cardenas*

On Saturday, September 7, 2024, an enthusiastic group of community residents gathered to watch a national Town Hall video on the role women can play in elections. Those present were AAUW President, Kelly Gonzalez; AAUW member Diana Cardenas and Nancy Wesson Dodd, Executive Director of the YWCA; along with Alice Hawkins, League of Women Voters; Hannah Mitchell, community volunteer; and Tammy Rolle, former (1960's) Voter Registration team member. This town-hall was hosted by Amy Kiddy Villarreal, Operations Manager at the YWCA.

In this video, viewed at all YWCA facilities, the national YWCA CEO, Margaret Mitchell, welcomed all participants, and she noted that the YWCA is dedicated to systematic social change by hearing all voices.

Ms. Mitchell reported that 8 million new voters have the potential to vote in this election: Eight million of the most diverse, well-educated, technologically advanced people who care deeply about the challenges to the American people. For women this fact translates to power.

The local participants were immediately attracted by the engaging, articulate, conscientious, and community-minded (and impressive) women who spoke during the three-hour Town Hall video meeting. A positive, enthusiastic tone characterized addresses, presentations, personal narratives, and panel discussions that brought these women together from different parts of our nation.

Women of various ages, ethnic, racial, eco-

nomie, social, and geographic backgrounds and differing educational levels and employment experiences spoke during many segments of the town hall. Panels of women included college seniors about to graduate, young professionals, women with decades of advocacy endeavors, members of groups that focus on intergenerational collaboration, and community organizers. For example, a Native American woman who strives to improve access to education and improved health for others on the reservations, and a young woman with daily, challenging disabilities who lobbies local and state representatives for access to effective health care and insurance.

### **National Survey**

Many of women in these panels responded to the national survey conducted in 2024 by partners HIT Strategies and YWCA USA among women and nonbinary/gender expansive voters. The online opt-in survey reached 4,200 women between June 21, 2024, and July 8, 2024. Respondents included White, Black, Latina, Asian American, Pacific Islander, Native America and disabled women.

Of concern are the perceptions of some respondents that "government does not work" for them, that "government works for the wealthy." These perceptions may be the cause of apathy and cynicism.

However, the overall responses reveal reflective answers and identification of key concerns among women. To illustrate, responses of Generation Z participants, the most diverse generation, encapsulates the generative

# Hear Their Voices, Feel Their Passion, Shape our Future

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thinking of the young. They see themselves in community, in relationships with others.

## Survey Highlights

Women identified the following needs that motivate them to vote:

- Expanding access to affordable, high-quality childcare and also affordable housing.
- Expanding workforce training that increase women's access to high-skill, high-wage jobs.
- Ensuring that workplaces are free from sexual violence, harassment, and discrimination and strengthening protections against domestic violence, assault, stalking, and online harassment.
- Ensuring mental health care and physical health care for all women.
- Addressing climate change that threaten lives and livelihoods.

Underlying all needs is racial justice policies.

## Local Participants' Comments

During a break, we participants commented on the media coverage of the mental health of women and the importance of protecting mental health, highlighted by our country's most talented (most gold medals) Olympian woman who publicly announced a hiatus to safeguard her mental health. The national survey reflects the importance of this reality for women who responded.

## Recommendation

Listening-to the voices of women and to all who contributed with their presentations and discussions, the message is clear: We can learn from one another. Essentially, this Town Hall is a call to action. What is needed is activism to see real results. And women can achieve this.

For everyone who participated in this Town Hall the next step is to mobilize citizens to vote to promote positive change. Among all panels a key concept that emerged is how to create paths to voting and how to identify and address obstacles to voting. The answer requires harnessing the power of women to vote. Each woman can vote and invite others to vote.

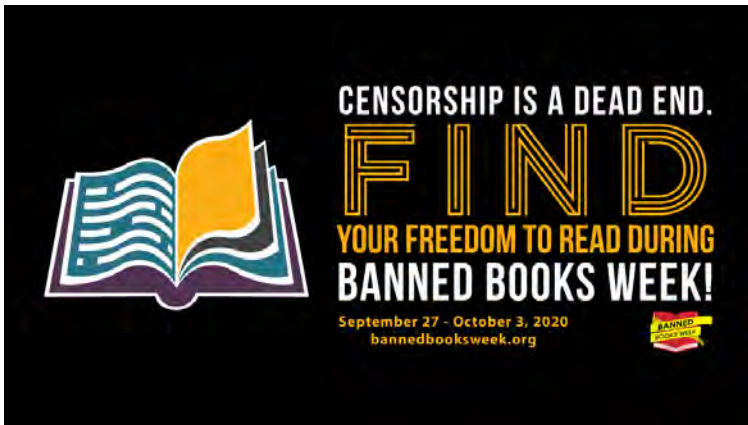
**Deadline to Register to Vote is October 7th!  
County Courthouse, 901 Leopard St. Suite 301**



Right to Left. Kelly Gonzalez, AAUW President; Nancy Wesson Dodd, AAUW member and YWCA Executive Director; Diana Cardenas, AAUW VP Programs; and Alice Hawkins, League of Women Voters. Not pictured: Hannah Mitchell, Tammy Rolle, and Amy Kiddy Villarreal.

# Corpus Christi Public Libraries Board News

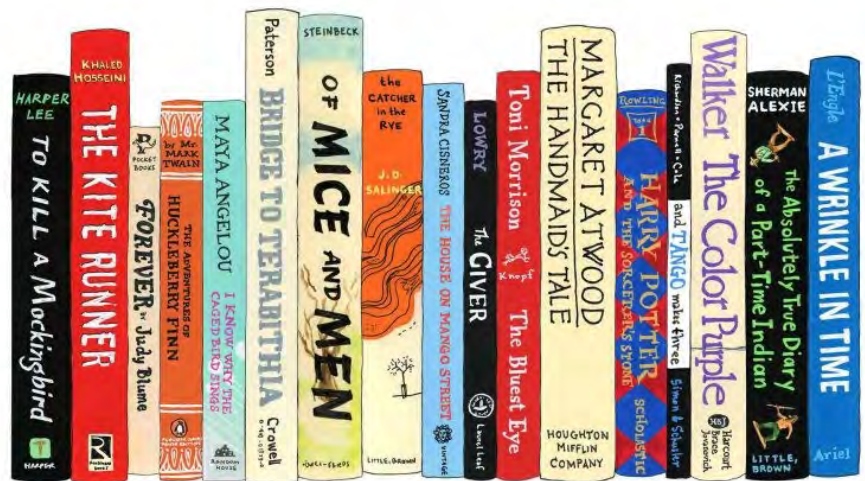
Story by Vickie Natale



Some of you know that I served on the Corpus Christi Public Library Board (CCPL) for several years. The City Council appoints members of the Board, and all members are required to reapply every two years to show their continued interest in serving for up to six years. I submitted my application for reappointment last fall, but at the November 14, 2023, City Council meeting, the three incumbents who had applied for reappointment were re-

jected by a majority vote in favor of representatives of two new right-winged conservative groups: [Citizens Defending Freedom](#) and [Moms for Liberty](#). These groups have strongholds that began in Florida, but they are now active and spread across America, including Texas, and one of their principles is censorship of books.

There are now five members on the CCPL Board who are representatives of CDF and/or MFL. These five individuals are trying to rewrite the Library's Collection Development policy. They voted to approve proposed policy changes at the September 3, 2024, Library Board meeting. The proposed changes are now in the hands of Laura Garcia, Executive Director of the CCPL. The library staff has the authority to accept or reject any or all of the proposed changes. However, if the Library Board does not like the decisions of the library staff, the Board has the right to submit their proposed changes to the City Council for consideration. Knowing that these groups have five votes on the current City Council has emboldened them, and they fully plan to take that course of action.



The [proposed changes to policy](#) will allow the Library Board to effectively ban any book that they so choose from our PUBLIC library. The proposed changes include the following, to name a few:

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# Corpus Christi Public Libraries Board News

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*Story by Vickie Natale*

- Removes reference to diversity, equity, and inclusion
- Removes reference to the American Library Association, a professional organization for librarians nationwide that speaks out against book banning
- Removes the parents' responsibility for what their children are reading and places that responsibility on the librarians
- Removes the determination of obscenity from the court's interpretation under what is termed the "Miller Test" and replaces that with the definitions in the Texas Penal Code. This action could criminalize the work of our librarians if it is determined that they have allowed a book that meets this new definition to get into the hands of someone under 18 years old.
- Removes the court's interpretation that requires a book to be read and judged in its entirety for its literary contribution. This allows a book to be challenged and banned based on one word. A new Library Board member stated at a recent meeting, "just one word can sexualize our children," which is why they want to remove the requirement to read the entire book.
- Removes the sentence that "patrons are free to choose what they want from the collection... but not to restrict the freedom of others to choose." They want to be the judge and jury to restrict not only what their own children read, but what children and teens in other families have access to read.
- Removes the City Manager or designee as the final decisionmaker on a book removal and places that decision in the hands of the Library Board. This will give them total authority over book banning.

If you are as alarmed as I am about these well-organized efforts to begin banning books at our Corpus Christi Public Libraries, please join our efforts to combat the momentum they have achieved. We encourage you to attend the Library Board meetings, and speak out against these efforts. Attend the City Council meetings, and speak out against these efforts. Write to the Mayor and City Council members to let them know that you are strongly against this change in the policies and against book banning. Become informed about the candidates who are running for City Council and the school boards who are members and representatives of CDF and MFL or who have voted in the past to support the ideology of these groups, and then vote accordingly in November. Be sure to sign up and attend the webinar sponsored by AAUW Texas with speaker [Mike Hixenbaugh](#) who has written about the struggles that include book banning in a small Texas town. This is no longer something happening somewhere else in America; it is happening right here in Corpus Christi. If you wish to know more about our local struggle, contact me.



# Interest Group News



*Wine and Cheese*  
*Sunday, Oct. 13th*  
*at 5 pm*

Wine and Cheese is scheduled to meet at on Sunday, Oct.13th, at 5 pm, and is being hosted by Donna Mehle and Catherine Cox. We will be meeting at Donna’s home. Please RSVP to Susan Birchfield if you plan to attend.

*From Susan Birchfield*



The Lunch Bunch will be meeting at 12:30 pm on Tuesday, October 15th. We will be meeting at Switchgrass Landing, located at in the Omni Hotel, 900 N. Shoreline Blvd. Please RSVP to Susan Birchfield if you plan to attend.

*From Susan Birchfield*



[\(1\) AAUW-CC | Facebook](#)

We would love to have pictures and short video clips from your AAUW activities! Please send them to either Lara or Kay at [aauw.cc.social@gmail.com](mailto:aauw.cc.social@gmail.com). Also include what the picture or video is, the date, and who is in the picture or video. We would like to showcase our members! Our social media email address is [aauw.cc.social@gmail.com](mailto:aauw.cc.social@gmail.com)



## Special Interest Groups



AAUW Bookfinders are still waiting for the conclusion of the renovations at Neyland Library, so sale dates for this year remain pending. But we continue to be working !! This long "time-out" has allowed us to play catch-up with boxes and boxes of books that have been long awaiting processing and cleaning. Due to the work being done in the building, the books on all the shelves and in boxes have become quite dusty, so additional cleaning has been required.

The on-line sales are still progressing at a steady pace, earning much needed income to fulfill the missions for our chapter. Many thanks to Debby Wilkins for her daily dedication to the on-line endeavor. Please consider contributing a few hours a week as a member of the Bookfinders Committee. For more information contact Kristin Conlan.



AAUW Community Outreach Committee is in the process of planning the YTeen Christmas shopping event. The event will be on Saturday, December 14th from 1:00 -3:00 pm at the YWCA.

We invite you to join us by volunteering at this wonderful event. Volunteers are needed to help the girls with shopping, gift wrapping, making the Christmas ornament and helping with hot chocolate and cookies. You also have the opportunity to donate gift bags, tissue paper, bows, tape. Please mark your calendar for December 14 and plan to join us.

**NOTICE** - change in time and date for future committee meetings.

Meetings will be held on the last Thursday of the month at 12:15 at the YWCA. Next meeting is on **Thursday, October 31.**

# Photo Gallery

