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March 2021

MARCH 2021 CALENDAR

March 3	Wed 1-3PM	Afternoon Book Club
March 9	Tue 12:30PM	Mah-Jongg (Virtual)
March 10	Wed. 7PM	Meeting/Speaker
March 17	Wed 7 PM	Great Decisions
March 23	Tue 10AM	Cultural Trip (Hike)
March 23	Tue 7PM	Evening Book Group



GENERAL MEETING

Date: Wednesday, March 10, 2021

Place: Online ZOOM

Time: 7:00 pm

Speaker: Erica Michalowski – “The Con Artist’s Playbook”

Our speaker, Erica Michalowski, MSW, is the Community Outreach Director for AARP Connecticut. She will be joined by two colleagues, Byron Peterson and Pete Stair, to present an informative program from AARP’s Fraud Watch Network.

One of the many fruits of this pandemic has been increased internet and telephone fraud, especially targeting older Americans.

Those of us with Social Security checks and retirement savings are particularly vulnerable.

Please plan to join us and learn how to spot, avoid, and report fraud and scams.

---Gerri, Program Chair

PRESIDENT’S MESSAGE

Despite the cold temperatures, it’s been an eventful month. The Afternoon Book Group started us off with a review of the book, Fast Girls, at which the author, Elise Hooper, was our featured guest! Elise presented some pictures of the participants of the 1936 Berlin Olympics and was a most engaging speaker.

On February 10, Tom Schuch, joined our LCV monthly “Valentine” meeting to give an informative talk entitled “Connecticut’s Version of the Green Book”. His discussion was chock full of interesting facts, including pictures of hotels and restaurants that African-American citizens could safely access during a trip anywhere in the United States. It was unsettling to know that this book was a popular and necessary accompaniment for traveling African-Americans until after the Civil Rights Act of 1965. I jotted down a few of the local places Tom mentioned and was able to find one in New London when visiting there!

Tom proved to be an excellent choice as the speaker commemorating Black History Month. Both

February events were attended by around 35 members, a terrific turnout.

Our Great Decisions trio presented its first topic of the new year, “Global Supply Chains”, the Evening Book Group reviewed the popular and controversial Caste, Margie led a group on a Pop-Up hike at the Old Saybrook Town Park, and online Mahjong continues with a small group participating.

I hope that some have been able to make comments on the proposed change to the AAUW National Bylaws. Members of our Lower Connecticut Valley affiliate will review the pros and cons of this change at our April meeting. This will provide preparation for the national vote from April 7 to May 17. We hope that all affiliate members will participate in this important vote!

Vaccination news among our group members has been encouraging. Many of us have been fortunate to receive two vaccine doses, and others at least one. Hopefully, we are on our way to more in person meetings! If you know of anyone who needs help accessing her vaccination, please let me or any of the officers know. I am sure one of us would be glad to assist.

The officers, board members, Scholarship Committee, and Book Author Luncheon Committee are so grateful to all the members and their guests who donated their luncheon reservations to our scholarship fund.

Because of their kindness, Lower CT Valley will be able to continue funding scholarships this year, despite having to cancel the luncheon. We are fortunate to have such a wonderful supportive community.

March will usher in the Spring Equinox. While the snow outside looks very wintery, spring is on the way! I look forward to the warmer weather and to our March 10 meeting when we will hear from AARP on the topic of fraud, “The Con Artist’s Playbook”. I hope to “see” you then.

---Mary Jane, President

AAUW National Proposed Bylaw Change: Degree Requirement for AAUW Membership

This Spring, AAUW members will vote on proposed changes recommended by the AAUW Board of Directors and AAUW Governance Committee that would eliminate the degree requirement for membership. This proposal was made three years ago but it did not pass. AAUW National would like to address the issue again.

Please take a few minutes to read the rationale for the proposed change and the text of the existing bylaws, with the proposed changes. It is definitely worthwhile! Here is the link for that information: <https://www.aauw.org/resources/member/governance-tools/national-election/2021-comment-bylaws/>

For additional comments on key talking points, and answers to questions that you might have about this change, use this link to the membership toolkit : <https://www.aauw.org/resources/member/governance-tools/national-election/open-membership-toolkit/>

We will be discussing this proposal at our April Meeting. Individual online voting will begin on April 7th and close on May 17th. There is no branch vote. Your comments and feedback, however, will help our branch members with their voting decision.

Thank you!

---Dot

Follow-up from the “Green Book” and Black History Month: MLK’s Connection to CT

In the 1940s a teenaged Martin Luther King, Jr., spent two summers working on the tobacco farms in Connecticut’s Farmington Valley. Historians say the experience shaped King’s worldview in important ways. But today, the story of his time in this valley isn’t well known, even by many locals.

And now, that history is at risk of being lost altogether: a 288-acre property that’s part of a farm where King and his fellow students once lived and worked is vulnerable to development, which could mean the loss of historic buildings, fields, and

forests. But with help from The Trust for Public Land, locals and historians have teamed up to save this special place, known locally as Meadowood, and create a park that shares its remarkable history with the world.

Preserve civil rights history

In 1944, while much of their regular workforce was away at war, tobacco growers in Connecticut recruited seasonal laborers from around the country to keep their farms running. As a student at Atlanta's Morehouse College, Martin Luther King Jr. joined a group of his fellow students who ventured north to work in these fields. In letters home during those summers, King described the liberating experience of getting out from under the Jim Crow laws of the segregated South. "I had never thought that any person of my race could eat anywhere, but we ate at one of the finest restaurants in Hartford," he wrote to his mother.

Share the story

To preserve the history that remains—and ensure that future generations have a chance to explore it for themselves—The Trust for Public Land is part of a coalition, along with the State Historic Preservation Office, working to protect the property from development and restore some of its historic barns. Once protected, Meadowood could be included in the Connecticut Freedom Trail, a network of sites associated with Black history across the state.

"We knew Martin Luther King worked here in the summers, but we didn't know the impact it had on his career and his life," said Todd Levine, coordinator of the Freedom Trail. "The uncovering of the letters showed how much it changed his life. He said this is the ideal, where I can go to restaurants and the movies like a regular person. He brought that ideal back with him to South."

The Trust for Public Land has secured first rights to acquire this land. Protecting this land will lift up a little-known chapter of civil rights history, expand the local food system, and create a new place for people to connect with nature.

Click on the link below to learn more and support this effort: <https://support.tpl.org/campaign/protect-meadowood-saving-land-preserving-history/c308577>

--- Sara & Gerri



SCHOLARSHIP

The Scholarship Committee has met recently to work on the educational grants and NCCWSL registrations. We expect to provide NCCWSL registration to five local students. The conference will be held virtually on May 25-26.

The Scholarship Committee is planning the publicity for the educational grants. The application, posted on our LCV AAUW website, is due on June 1st. Information will appear in local newspapers and social media sites. We expect to be able to fund at least two women with \$2000 grants, thanks to money donated by branch members.

For any questions on the education grants or NCCWSL conference, contact Sue or Olga.

HELP WANTED

We are looking for members who are on local social media sites to help us get the word out about our grants.

The new grant flyer is eye-catching and informative. It is perfect for posting on social media sites, as well as your own Facebook page, if you think your contacts would be interested.

Please let Olga know if you can assist us, and I will send you a PDF version of the flyer.

Alternatively, you can go to our web site for a copy at:

www.lowerctvalley-ct.aauw.net

MEMBERSHIP

Please add Unit 120 to Audrey's new address:

---Margie & Sharon, Co-Chairs

BOOK AUTHOR LUNCHEON

New Date: April 2, 2022

Place: Saybrook Point Inn

The Book Author Luncheon Committee has been busy meeting to plan for this future event. Our authors have already agreed to join us then!

For this 2021 year, due to the generosity of many, we can continue to offer scholarships to at least two women! Sixty people donated the cost of their luncheon tickets to the scholarship fund. Thank you so much for your generosity!

The gift cards and donated items already collected (for the chance and auction table) are being stored and will be used at our next in-person luncheon. Committee members have sent letters to all these businesses to let them know our plans and thank them for their continued support.

Many thanks to everyone who has helped us adapt to this challenging situation with generous sharing of their time, donations, and enthusiasm. We feel reassured to have a plan to provide scholarship funds and to revive the tradition of the Book Author Luncheon in April 2022.

---Penny and Sue, Co-chairs

INTEREST GROUPS

MAH JONGG

Mah Jongg will be held virtually on Tuesday, March 9th, at 12:30pm. Anyone interested in playing, please contact Sharon or Margie.

GOURMET GROUP

Not meeting due to Covid.

---Beth & Sharon, Co-Chairs

AFTERNOON BRIDGE

There is still no Thursday bridge due to social distancing. If anyone would like to play online via Bridge Base, please contact Marcia.

AFTERNOON BOOK GROUP.

Feb 3rd was an invite to all members, planned by Sue and Elaine, with Sara,, for an interesting, well-attended Zoom discussion with author Elise Hooper about her book, Fast Girls: A Novel of the 1936 Women's Olympic Team.

We will be meeting on Wed. March 3rd, from 1-3pm on Zoom to discuss the Jon Meacham book, His Truth is Marching On: John Lewis and the Power of Hope. Don't we all need a dose of John's hope?!

Eileen will lead us thru the book discussion, Civil Rights, and the non-violent approach.

-- Sara, Chair

Follow-up from the "Fast Girls" Zoom Book Discussion: Elise Hooperman's Thank You:

Sue received the following email after the all members' Zoom book club session Feb. 3rd:

Dear Sue,

Thank YOU for inviting me. It was a great group and I really enjoyed chatting with everyone. It's always an honor to have a book chosen by a book club, especially these days when there are so many interesting books out there to read! And yes, please, I'd love to receive a copy of the newsletter. Thank you for spreading the news to people about my work.

That's so interesting about the group's connection to the Philippines and nursing! It really is a small world.

Thanks again for the wonderful feedback and taking the time to connect with me, and I look forward to being in touch. Stay safe and *warm!*

Best wishes --- Elise

EVENING BOOK GROUP

Thank you to Mary Ann for leading a stimulating February discussion of schizophrenia via the book Hidden Valley Road: Inside the Mind of an American Family by Robert Kolker.

On March 23, the Evening Book Group will consider Long Petal of the Sea by Isabel Allende. The meeting will begin at 7 pm on Zoom. If you are not ordinarily a member of the group and wish to participate, please email Mary to be included in the Zoom invitation.

GREAT DECISIONS

On Feb 17th, Carol led the discussion on “Global Supply Chains and US National Security.”

We will be meeting via Zoom again at 7pm on Wednesday, March 17, when Eileen will lead the discussion on “The future of Persian Gulf security.”

Contact Carol if any questions/concerns.

CULTURAL TRIPS

Event: BLUFF POINT STATE PARK

Date: Wednesday, February 24

Location: 55 Depot Road, Groton CT

Time: 10am

Weather permitting, we will hike at Bluff Point State Park in Groton on Wednesday, February 24th at 10 am. Everyone should meet in the parking lot adjacent to the trail.

Our previously planned March trip to Grove Street Cemetery is canceled as there are still no tours being offered due to Covid. (Hopefully, we can schedule a tour on a later date).

Event: COCKAPONSET STATE FOREST

Date: Tuesday, March 23 (rain date March 24)

Location: Cedar Lake Road, Chester CT

Time: 10am

We will do a hike to Cockaponset State Forest in Chester at 10 am on Tuesday, March 23rd (rain date Thursday March 25th). It is a 3-mile hike of

moderate difficulty. **Please be sure to wear sturdy, waterproof shoes.** If you are interested in going, contact Margie.

Event: MATTATUCK MUSEUM

Date: Thursday, April 22

Location: 63 Prospect Street, Waterbury, CT

Time: TBD (Afternoon)

On the afternoon of Thursday April 22nd, we will travel to the newly renovated and expanded Mattatuck Museum in Waterbury, CT. Often described as a “hidden jewel”, this museum features Early American Art (including many CT artists), Modern Art and the delightful Waterbury Button Exhibit.

The number of visitors is still limited due to Co-Vid so we will need to make reservations in advance. Interested members should contact Deb via email as soon as possible.



AAUW MONTHLY MEETINGS 2021

Wednesday, April 14, 2021 – 7pm

**Joint Meeting with Shoreline Branch
& Grant Recipients**



SPRING BEGINS March 20th!