

***A jam-packed agenda for
the April 8 AAUW meeting***

**Note the time change
for April meeting**

1 pm

at Mt. Baker Theatre Encore Room



1. We will hold our annual election of officers.

Our 2023/2024 slate:

- Co-Presidents: Judi Edwards and Uzma Ahmad
- Program Committee: Susan Moen, Cathie Oberg, Carolyn Kinne, Margo Hammond
- Secretary: Margo Hammond

More nominations may be made from the floor, if the person has previously agreed to be nominated.

2. Cheryl Crooks, Executive Director of the Cascadia International Women's Film Festival,

will give us the inside scoop on this year's activities, coming in May. (Our branch is a festival sponsor of this Bellingham-based film festival dedicated to showcasing exclusively the films of women directors from around the world.)

3. A Taste of Nigerian Cuisine and Culture!

Tawakalt Akinjobi is from the Lagos region in southwest Nigeria. She graduated from Ladoke Akintola University of Technology, Nigeria, with a degree in Chemical Engineering. She and her son, AbdurRahmann, now three years old, arrived in Bellingham in August, 2021, for her graduate studies at WWU. Since then, we have been delighted to see her and AbdurRahmann at two of our meetings. In June, 2023, she will receive her Master's degree in Materials Chemistry. While studying for her degree, with a stipend from WWU, she also teaches chemistry to undergraduate students.

Tawakalt will provide a homemade taste of her traditional Egusi Soup and FuFu followed by a slide presentation about Nigerian culture and cuisine.

Her future goals are to find a job working in a refinery or semi-conductor company and eventually get her PhD. She has already received an offer to start her PhD at the University of California, Merced.

For the Winter quarter at WWU in 2022, AAUW-Whatcom provided financial assistance to Tawakalt for child care, a much higher expense than expected when she arrived. As a "thank you" to us, she happily accepted the invitation to give a presentation for our April meeting.



Tawakalt Akinjobi

March meeting recap

Two Whatcom Branch members and an AAUW scholarship recipient bring us insight on a housing issue

by Gwen Parker, Newsletter editor

This is one of the things I love about AAUW — it helps me to be aware of issues that are important but don't always make the big headlines. That was the case with our March program. The topic was affordable housing, specifically, the squeeze being put on people who live in mobile home parks.

I knew the *What*: that the number of such parks is dwindling, but I was not aware of a very scary *Why*. There are two important scenarios. In one common situation, families own their mobile home but rent the land beneath them from the park owner. The landowner is free to raise rents, defer maintenance of the grounds, or add new fees. In another situation, becoming more common, large corporations are buying the mobile home parks and redeveloping them into more lucrative uses such as commercial space for retail businesses.



Margo Hammond

Margo Hammond organized this program, and Robin Kagan introduced our speaker, Esther Sullivan, who spoke via Zoom. Esther received an AAUW national grant, as well as one from a Texas AAUW chapter,

which allowed her to research the effects of housing insecurity in manufactured home parks. She published a book on her findings: *Manufactured Insecurity: Mobile Home Parks and Americans' Tenuous Right to Place*.



Robin Kagan

It's likely that if you live in a mobile home park, you don't have a lot of money. If a park owner tells the residents that they have to move, many find that the manufactured homes are too old to move, even if they can find a spot. In that case, their equity has disappeared. If the home can be moved, it is an expensive undertaking, possibly draining a bank account.

The author, who lived in mobile home parks to understand the effect on residents, found that the uncertainty of their situations was an emotional drain.

One positive aspect: Bellingham is among the cities which have implemented actions to address housing affordability. In 2022, Bellingham approved the Manufactured Housing Preservation Plan and Zoning Overlay. This assures that the future use of the current 10 mobile home parks in Bellingham will be maintained as mobile home usage. 🌸🌸🌸🌸🌸



Mark your calendars now for an important event

May is High School Scholars month!

Our annual High School Scholars Awards event will take place on Saturday, May 13, from 11 AM to 2 PM, at the Ferndale Pioneer Pavilion.

Whatcom AAUW members are encouraged to attend to help us celebrate the 46 high school junior girls who have been nominated as outstanding scholars in the STEM fields and in the Arts and Humanities.

We will need members who are willing to be greeters for our scholars and their families, and who are willing to bring refreshments--sandwiches, cookies, fruit and other finger food to share. There will be sign up sheets at the April monthly meeting. Please help us create a special experience for our 2023 High School Scholars.

We are excited to have Dr. Melissa Rice as our guest speaker. She is a Professor of Planetary Science at Western Washington University, and is a longtime collaborator on NASA's Mars explorations.



Please don't let this happen:



These are empty cabinets at the Bellingham Technical College Food Pantry. Member Kathy Jenkis snapped the photo recently when she delivered our College Pantry donations to the school.

She writes, "Chris (coordinator) and Connor (student liaison) told me they are so grateful to AAUW for our continual support. Their Food Pantry is a life line for many students.

Personal products (see empty labeled drawers) are items they cannot get with their food stamps. There is always a need for these items."

Also, many students are single parents supporting their children.

If you have non-perishable food items or a little cash to spare, please remember to bring them to our next AAUW meeting.

Thank you!

Life's Better with Books!

The April Book Club choice is *Invisible Women: Exposing Data Bias in a World Designed for Men*, by Caroline Perez 318 pages/NF

This book shows us how, in a world largely built for and by men, we are systematically ignoring half the population. It exposes the gender data gap.

This year we are alternating fiction and non-fiction book selections. Don't feel that you have to read the whole thing if it gets a little too nerdy, or wordy, or whatever! You are still welcome for the discussion.

We meet April 27 at 12:30, in the Affinity Apartments library. Contact Gwen Parker for more information - 350-933-4314.



Was your birthday not listed? If so, please contact Gwen Parker, to get your name on "The Birthday List!" Birth year not necessary!



Spreading the news

Our Program Vice President Uzma Ahmad is shown at Susan Moen's home, helping prepare book deliveries for local schools.

Thanks to Whatcom Branch President Judi Edwards, the story on this project was picked up by the March edition of AAUW Washington's newsletter, the *Evergreen Leader*. Thanks again also to all branch volunteers who helped with the project.

As reported in our March newsletter, our branch purchased 20 books and 20 workbooks to be donated to Whatcom County middle schools and high schools. Local author Annie Boochever's book, *Fighter In Velvet Gloves: Alaska Civil Rights Hero Elizabeth Peratrovich*, was the subject of our October program.

Welcome to a new member and a returning member!

Our newest member is **Dr. Sabah Randhawa** of Bellingham. He joins George Edwards as another male to belong to our branch.

Sabah is best known in Bellingham as President of Western Washington University, and to us branch members as husband of our Program Vice President Uzma Ahmad.

Rejoining us is author **Candace Wellman**.

We are pleased and honored to have you both!

State Annual Meeting planned

The Washington State AAUW Annual Meeting will be held April 15, via Zoom.

Time: 8:30 -12 -Annual

Meeting morning program

1 PM - Business Meeting

Cost: \$35 - AAUW member,

\$20 - student member and

\$20 for a 1st time attendee.

For more information, see the Washington State AAUW website,

aauw-wa.aauw.net



Tech Trek is gearing up for another season

The Tech Trek Committee (Pam Sankey, Esther Golde, Judy Fruhbauer, Kathy Jenkis, Maggie Moore, Danette Keegan) has completed student and family interviews and will now select our campers for the July 16-22 STEM Camp at Pacific Lutheran University.

Science, math and/or technology teachers from Fairhaven, Kulshan, Shuksan and Whatcom Middle Schools nominated girls from their classes who best meet the criteria for a Tech Trek Camper. That is, they are excited about STEM subjects, demonstrate a motivation for learning, would benefit from this unique educational, on-campus experience which is an opportunity they might not otherwise have, demonstrate motivation and desire to extend their learning to their everyday life. Camper selection begins this week. We look forward to introducing the Tech Trek Campers in the next newsletter!

Welcome to AAUW

Whatcom Branch of American Association of University Women invites you to join us. Membership is open to college graduates and those with associate degrees from accredited schools. We offer speakers and various interest groups.

Our mission is to offer scholarships and support numerous programs to help women and girls gain equity in all areas of life.

Contact Lynda Buehring,
goldrocket@aol.com
or Sandy Hays, sanhaydaisy@gmail.com

Calendar of coming events

April 8 General meeting at Mt. Baker Theatre Encore Room, 104 Commercial St., **Note Time Change: 1 p.m.**

April 22 Exec Board meeting, 9 a.m. .via Zoom.

April 27 AAUW Book Club, 12:30 p.m. at Affinity Apartments Library. Book is *Invisible Women: Exposing Data Bias in a World Designed for Men*, by Caroline Perez 318 pages/NF



Spread some sunshine!

Do you know an AAUW member who is ailing or has suffered a loss? If so, please email our Sunshine Lady, Suzanne Thorp, who will mail a card from our branch.
sthorp5@comcast.net

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