



*Equity Now*

**MARCH 2024**

## Calendar of Events

**CASA: Community Volunteers Advocate for Children in Need**  
**Monday, March 11 at 7:00 pm**

► Kettering Health Center  
Community Room, 6147 SR 122

*Sharon Flynn, Butler County Recruitment/Outreach Manager, will discuss how Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) volunteers help child victims navigate the court system and act as their advocates.*

**Safe Haven Farms: A Community of Choice**  
**Monday, April 8 at 7:00 pm**

► Kettering Health Center  
Community Room, 6147 SR 122

*Speaker Janie Cochran will explain the work of this non-profit organization, which offers residential, day and community services for adults with developmental disabilities.*

**Music Hall Tour & Lunch**  
**Saturday, April 20 at 1 - 4 pm**

► Cincinnati Music Hall,  
1241 Elm Street, Cincinnati

*Lunch at a restaurant in Over The Rhine, followed by a 2:30 pm tour of historic Music Hall.*

**AAUW Scholarship & Awards Dinner**

**Monday, May 13 at 6:00 pm**

► Location TBD

**Annual Garage Sale**  
**May 31, June 1, 7 and 8**

► 2204 Central Ave., Middletown

**Program Note:** Members will be sent a Zoom invite through email. Non-members who wish to participate should contact Mel Worbis at [worbismm@gmail.com](mailto:worbismm@gmail.com) for a link.

## CASA: Helping Local Children in Their Time of Need

**Monday, March 11 at 7 pm**

Kettering Health Center Community Room & Zoom

This month's speaker will be Sharon Flynn, Outreach/Recruitment Manager For PARACHUTE CASA Butler County. CASA stands for Court Appointed Special Advocates. CASA volunteers are trained to navigate the juvenile court systems to speak up for abused, neglected and abandoned children. Their goal is to find safe, permanent homes for them as soon as possible.



**Sharon Flynn**

Sharon will talk about how CASA helps children in need, from babies to teenagers.

Sharon studied Consumer Affairs & Communication at The Ohio State University. She was an account manager for Abbott Laboratories in Columbus and resource support specialist for Prestige Technical Services. She also worked for the Leukemia and Lymphoma Society in the Cincinnati area, recruiting student groups to help fundraise. Sharon has been with CASA for over a year.

## Summer Garage Sale Work Is Beginning

The Middletown Branch's annual Garage Sale is scheduled for the weekends of May 31/June 1 and June 7/8. Mark it on your calendar.

Branch members have already worked several days to clear out the back of our sale site to make room for new donations. Co-chair Chris Buchert reports that they are having a good time as they gather to socialize and put out items. "Surprisingly, we are not cold as we work," she said. "The best part is being together."

Work days are scheduled from 9:30 to 11:30 a.m. on Wednesday, Feb. 28, Tuesday, March 19, and Wednesday, March 27. April dates will be scheduled at a future time. Regular work sessions will begin Tuesday, May 7.

See the flyer attached to this email for more information.

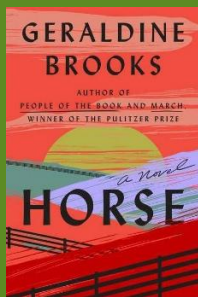
## Joy Luck Book Club

**Thurs., March 21 at 7 pm  
Marti Kreps' home**

(This is a change to what was announced previously.)

### ***Horse* – Geraldine Brooks**

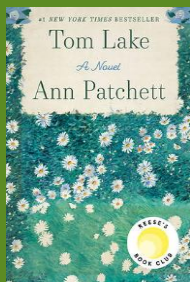
Winner of the Dayton Literary Peace Prize, *Horse* is the remarkable true story of a record-breaking thoroughbred in Lexington, KY. Written by Pulitzer Prize winner Geraldine Brooks, the novel moves from Kentucky in 1850 to New York City a hundred years later, then modern-day Washington, D.C.



**Thurs., April 18 at 7 pm  
Jan Runkle's home**

### ***Tom Lake* – Ann Patchett**

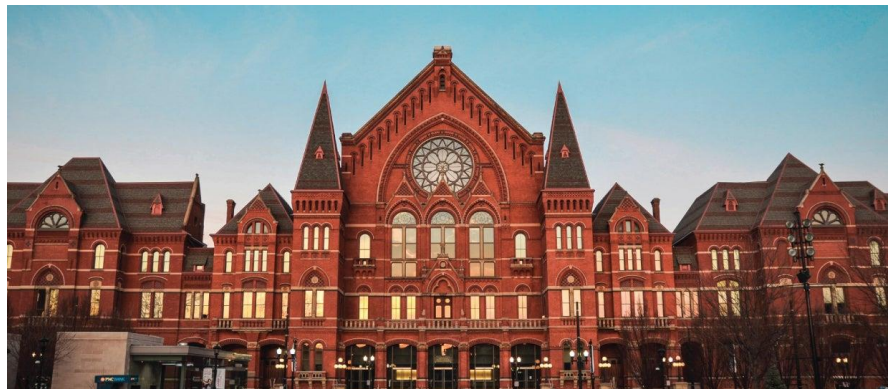
This New York Times bestseller is a meditation on youthful love, married love and the lives parents lead before their children are born. Both hopeful and elegiac, it explores what it means to be happy, even when the world is falling apart.



## Branch To Tour Iconic Music Hall on April 20

Cincinnati Music Hall has stood at 1241 Elm Street since 1878. If it could sing, what music would we hear? If it could talk, what stories would it tell? We hope to hear some of its stories and see behind the curtain during our tour of this iconic Cincinnati Landmark.

Our tour will begin on Saturday, April 20, at 2:30 and will last approximately 75 minutes. Enter at the south end door of the building at the door marked "SCO Box Office." Check-in begins 15 minutes before the tour. Please feel free to bring guests. Music Hall is ADA accessible.



The nearest parking for Music Hall is at the Washington Park Garage, 1230 Elm Street, or at SP Parking Lot, 1228 Elm Street. It is recommended to carpool to Cincinnati.

Come early if you would like to eat lunch nearby. There are lots of places reachable by the free Cincinnati Connector (streetcar). You can learn about the streetcar at [www.cincinnati-oh.gov/streetcar/how-to-ride/hours-route-and-station-stops](http://www.cincinnati-oh.gov/streetcar/how-to-ride/hours-route-and-station-stops).

Helpful maps are available on this site, including one that has restaurants marked.

### **Tour cost is \$11.00**

Make your reservation and/or pay at our meetings on March 11 and April 8.

Cash or check only; correct change is appreciated.

Last day for reservations and payment is April 8.

Questions? Please call Margie Homan at 513-518-3897



## Letter from Our Leader

Branch President Debbie Worbis  
([dworbis@gmail.com](mailto:dworbis@gmail.com))

March is Women's History Month, making it a good time to celebrate women's achievements. At the same time, it's good to remember that our work is not done. We must continue to advocate for women's rights.

One step in the struggle to gain protection for those rights was the Equal Rights Amendment, which was passed by Congress 50 years ago but did not receive the necessary ratification by three-fourths of the states by the March 22, 1979 deadline. Since then, Virginia became the 38th state to ratify the ERA. Then in January 2023, Congresswoman Ayanna Pressley and U.S. Senator Ben Cardin introduced a bicameral, joint resolution to remove the arbitrary deadline for ratification and recognize the amendment as a valid part of the Constitution. However, a year later, this has not been passed. If you wish to add your voice to those wanting to see the amendment adopted, go to [www.sign4era.org](http://www.sign4era.org) and sign their petition.

This is also the time of year when we nominate members to make up a slate of officers for the 2024 – 2025 program year. If you would like to become more involved in the branch and hold a position on the board, please let us know. This is an excellent way to get to know the other members and to have a greater impact on the work of this branch.

This month our program takes a look at CASA volunteers who serve as advocates for child victims in the court system, trying to provide equity for those least able to defend themselves. We hope you will join us at 7 pm on March 11 in the Kettering Health Center Community Room.

## Mark Your Calendars for AAUW Spring Events

AAUW members have many events coming up this spring, so grab your calendar and jot these down. This list includes some events shared with us in an email from Gloria Blackwell, our national AAUW CEO. See [AAUW.org](http://AAUW.org) for more information and registration links.

On Wednesday, March 6 at 7 pm there will be a kickoff call for learning how AAUW can support voter engagement work for the 2024 election.

March 12 is Women's Equal Pay Day, when members are encouraged to contact our legislators to urge them to support pay equity and pass the Paycheck Fairness Act.

On March 20 at 2:30 pm there will be a webinar with a panel of AAUW fellowship and grant alumnae discussing the importance of Advancing Workplace Success for Women.

On March 26 at 7 pm there will be a special webinar organized by AAUW National's Advancement Committee to share best practices for recruiting and retaining members.

AAUW Ohio's Spring Convention will take place on April 13 online and at Central State University in Wilberforce, Ohio. The program begins at 10 am and concludes at 3 pm. Our president and state liaison will both attend in person, and we welcome other members to join us. Information on registration and the proposed AAUW Ohio bylaws change is available at [aauw-oh.aauw.net](http://aauw-oh.aauw.net).

### 2023- 2024 LEADERSHIP

**President:**  
Debbie Worbis

**Secretary:**  
Becky Hamner

**Finance Chairs:**  
Katie DeVilling, Jackie Webster

**Membership Chairs:**  
Marti Kreps  
Eleanor Yeager Stewart

**Communications Chairs:**  
Judy Florence, Virginia Palmer

**Program Chairs:**  
Margie Homan, Mel Worbis

**Public Policy & State Liaison:**  
Carolyn Smith

**AAUW Funds:**  
Erin Eldridge

**Scholarships:**  
Cari Hillman, Maria Langendorf

**Diversity:**  
Amanda Adkins-Ricci

**Garage Sale & Holiday Bazaar:**  
Chris Buchert, Erin Eldridge,  
Rose Grau, Carole Schul

**Book Sale:**  
Libby Abele, Sharon Dowden,  
Tina Newlin

**Newsletter Editor/  
Joy Luck Book Group:**  
Sharon Williamson

**PENS Writing Group**  
Becky Ward

Update from Diversity Chair Amanda Adkins-Ricci

## Diversity, Equity & Inclusion in the News

This article from the Anti-Defamation League (ADL) is a reminder that anti-Semitism, anti-Muslim bias and other forms of hate can manifest during crises, often exacerbated by disinformation.

With the Israeli-Palestinian crisis roiling emotions in our own country, it is essential to reflect on how biases can show up in conversations. Check out: <https://www.adl.org/resources/tools-and-strategies/10-ways-have-conscientious-conversations-israeli-palestinian>

By the way, due to the geographic ambiguity and Eurocentric nature of the term "Middle East," some people, especially in sciences such as agriculture and climatology, prefer to use other terms such as "WANA" (West Asia and North Africa) or the less common NAWA (North Africa – West Asia.)



## PENS: Different Voices, Many Genres

Our AAUW Branch "special interest" writers group continues to meet at the Gardner Harvey Library on the Middletown Campus of Miami University (MUM). We will meet in conference room #123 from 1:00 – 2:30 p.m. on March 1 and 15.

Our writers have shared a wide range of genres, including poetry, journaling, travel blog, memoir, book chapters and words of wisdom. Anyone who has a passion for writing is welcome to join our group. Come share your words. We encourage each other, give constructive feedback and provide an incentive to **put pen to paper and WRITE!**

Our format is to bring a piece of your own writing to share (verbally) with the group (5 minute time frame/each writer). Call or email Becky Ward if you have any questions: [beckward@gmail.com](mailto:beckward@gmail.com) or 513-424-8409.

## Did You Know...? The History of Women's History Month

Women's History Month began as a local celebration in Santa Rosa, California. The Education Task Force of the Sonoma County Commission on the Status of Women planned and executed a "Women's History Week" celebration in 1978. The organizers selected the week of March 8 to correspond with International Women's Day. The movement spread across the country as other communities initiated their own Women's History Week celebrations the following year.

In 1980, a consortium of women's groups and historians – led by the National Women's History Project (now the National Women's History Alliance) – successfully lobbied for national recognition. In February 1980, President Jimmy Carter issued the first Presidential Proclamation declaring the Week of March 8, 1980 as National Women's History Week.

Carter's proclamation included this passage:

*"From the first settlers who came to our shores, from the first American Indian families who befriended them, men and women have worked together to build this nation. Too often the women were unsung and sometimes their contributions were unnoticed. But the achievements, leadership, courage, strength and love of the women who built America was as vital as that of the men whose names we know so well."*