



AAUW  
Oak Ridge Tennessee Branch

*AAUW advances equity for women and girls through advocacy, education, and research.*

National AAUW Web Site  
<http://www.aauw.org>

Tennessee AAUW Web Site  
<http://aauw-tn.aauw.net>

Oak Ridge AAUW Web Site  
<http://oakridge-tn.aauw.net>

**February 2022**

**AAUW General Meeting on Zoom  
Monday, January 28, 12:30 pm**

To enter **Zoom** meeting, click on the link below.

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84026923055?pwd=blkremFFdTZMaUJqNmozB29jSEdkZz09>

If you log into Zoom first, you should enter the meeting ID, 840 2692 3055, and passcode, 387520.

**Importance of Protecting Our Democracy  
By Supporting Our Journalists  
In the Free Press**

**Speaker: Joel Christopher**

Joel Christopher is executive director of *Knox News* and the *Knoxville News Sentinel*. Christopher has worked as a journalist for 27 years as a reporter and editor, including 25 years with the USA Today network. The Knoxville newsroom has been the subject in the past month of two separate national journalism case studies examining its efforts to broaden its coverage to more accurately reflect the community's diversity, including a yearlong collaboration with the University of North Carolina's Hussman School of Journalism and Media. Christopher has worked with The American Press Institute and The Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research and best practices for reporting on extremists and their movements, including the newsroom's handling of the case of a Knox County sheriff's lieutenant who publicly called for state prosecution and execution of members of the LGBTQ+ communities.



*Joel Christopher*

*We Care About Our Members*

If you know of illness or death in the family of a member, please contact Carol Hoffner, 865-441-3151  
[carolhoffner35@comcast.net](mailto:carolhoffner35@comcast.net)

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*Mayme Crowell*

## *President's Message*

Daffodils are beginning to bloom; dogwoods are budding; grass is greening. Soon Spring will arrive. It cannot be soon enough for most of us. The outdoors will be calling us for hiking, viewing, and enjoying. Seasons come, go, and return in our wonderful, miraculous world. Friendships abound and continue. I trust that each of you now has our abbreviated 2021-2022 AAUW Yearbook, thanks to member Mary Uziel's generous efforts.

On February 28 renown *Knoxville New-Sentinel* journalist, Joel Christopher of Gannett News, will speak on the important role of journalism in protecting our democracy. How very timely in our current, deeply divided society! Regardless of your political leanings, you will want to join us on Zoom to hear what he has to say. No doubt he will take questions at the end of his presentation.

AAUW-TN is open for nominations for President and Finance Officer. One can nominate oneself, if one so desires. The nomination procedure is posted in this Newsletter. AAUW Branch membership in Tennessee is down, perhaps because of COVID among other reasons. Our Oak Ridge Branch now has the most members of the nine Tennessee branches.

Just label me a pack-rat. Since 2004 I have kept records of our local RSCC Scholarships. Recently, I compiled the statistics and wrote an article, which you will find in this Newsletter. You should be proud of our accomplishments over the past eighteen years.

More White House ornaments--somewhat smaller and less costly--are now available at The Ferrell Shop in Jackson Square. Check them out for their minute details. A set would be a welcome present for newly-weds, who often do not have any holiday ornaments. Ornament sales profits fund our Local RSCC Scholarships.

—Mayme

## **AAUW-TN OFFICERS NOMINATIONS**

The State AAUW requests nominations for President and Finance Officer. One can self-nominate or nominate others. Send a resume highlighting qualifications to Sue Byrd, Nominating Committee Chairperson, at [sbyrd@utm.edu](mailto:sbyrd@utm.edu). Also, job descriptions are available from Sue. Nominations close on March 3, 2022 and new officers are announced on April 1 to take office on July 1.

## **CONTRIBUTIONS TO NATIONAL AAUW**

The 2021 Contributions Report indicates that Oak Ridge gave \$1,137 to National AAUW last year. We were third in the state in giving behind Maryville and Knoxville. The total AAUW-TN contribution was \$5,933.

Of the contributions associated to our Branch, 10 individual donations and 3 Branch contributions were listed. The monies went to 2 National funds, Greatest Needs and Education and Training.

**KNOXVILLE AAUW VISITS** the Science and Energy Museum on Saturday, March 8 at 10 a.m. Allen Lowe, Director, will make a presentation and lead a group tour thru the exhibits. You may wish to join your fellow AAUW Knoxville members for this event. As you know, often the tourist locations closest to home are the ones least visited by the locals.

*Christopher (continued from page 1)*

Christopher and the Knoxville newsroom spearheaded national coverage for the USA TODAY Network of last year's 100th anniversary of ratification of the 19th Amendment, including an augmented-reality video that brought to life historic speeches by three leading suffragists. As the media landscape continues to change, most notably in how people receive and engage with news, Christopher has played an important role in digital initiatives. *Knox News* experienced double-digit growth in subscribers in 2021, expanding its footprint as East Tennessee's leading newsroom. Christopher is a native of Wisconsin, graduate of the University of Wisconsin and has worked in and led newsrooms across Wisconsin and in Louisville, Kentucky. He and his wife, Sarah, who is also a journalist, have a 9-year-old son.

## **EAST TENNESSEE MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEES**

A Zoom meeting occurred early in February with Knoxville, Maryville, and Oak Ridge Branches Membership Chairpersons. The topic was concern over decreased membership. Actually, our Branch has not decreased greatly, but others have. COVID issues and other branches meeting only quarterly may explain the situation, although membership has been decreasing nationally for years. I mentioned our excellent monthly Zoom programs, where not only our members but also community members are present. Zoom programs have enabled our branch to interact more with our community while giving us additional local recognition. Agreement was made to share program information and Newsletters.

If you know of a potential member, please contact Carol Hoffner, Membership Ch. [carolhoffner35@comcast.net](mailto:carolhoffner35@comcast.net) or me [crowellmr@comcast.net](mailto:crowellmr@comcast.net). We will be glad to make contacts.

## **AAUW LOCAL SCHOLARSHIPS BY THE NUMBERS**

Sometimes we need to reflect on what are some of our accomplishments. For such a relatively small, cohesive group as AAUW Oak Ridge, our scholarship-giving has been spectacular. Since 2004, when we decided to fund annually local RSCC Scholarships, my records indicate that we have provided 48 Scholarships and 14 Education Awards. In addition, we have sent 3 college students to the National Conference for College Women Student Leaders (NCCWSL). Each one of us should be proud of our efforts leading to these excellent numbers. How special to know that we have encouraged and helped East Tennessee females in the pursuits of their educations and dreams!

As a reminder, the RSCC Scholarships have been given to women 25-years-old and older with at least a 3.0 grade-point average. Family and medical needs also have been taken into consideration. Interestingly, the majority of these scholarships have been awarded to women majoring in Nursing. Over the years the needs of community college women have changed. Tennessee started the HOPE Scholarship Program to encourage high school students to enter community colleges tuition free. Poverty in East Tennessee increased; books and transportation costs skyrocketed. As a result, we have changed our application criteria. Our efforts to keep young women working toward their degrees by paying a portion of their tuition have changed to helping them also with other college expenses, i.e., books, transportation, and child care. Many women are now working in East Tennessee because we have given them a boost toward earning their degrees.

The RSCC Education Awards were given to female students majoring in Education who plan to continue their education at a

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## School Vouchers

**HB16721** allows charter schools to ask for state education funds and expands eligibility for school vouchers.

**HB2833** eliminates local school board oversight for charter schools.

According to Lee Anne Carmack, former state Public Policy Chair, “Governor Lee strongly supports expansion of charter schools and there are clear indications that he is expecting a lot of new charters to be affiliated with Hillsdale College.” To learn more about Hillsdale, see <https://k12.hillsdale.edu/Schools/Affiliate-Classical-Schools/>

## List of Bills AAUW is Following

See this link  
<https://legiscan.com/reports/n6gwbzik>

Click on the bill number for specifics. Lee Anne may be contacted at [jlcarmack@gmail.com](mailto:jlcarmack@gmail.com)

No date has been determined for Women’s Day on the Hill as of yet.

AAUW Murfreesboro is working on a multi-organization voter registration event on April 9 from 10-noon at Bradley Academy.

## From LWV-TN Report

Several Hillsdale-related charter schools are already in the process of being established in Tennessee, and the Governor expects and supports a big increase. The new school funding is also a big topic, although specifics are still unclear. An interesting question is how the timing of the school funding focus and the Governor’s deepening focus on support for charters will play out.

## Special Webinar Announcement New National Resources to Address Gender-Based Violence February 24

Webinar is free. For more information and registration, see <https://createsend.com/t/t-22FE3A3518F723A52540EF23F30FEDED>

—*Public Policy Committee: Anne Garcia, Kay Moss, and Virginia Jones, Chair*

**Scholarships** (continued from page 3) four-year institution in order to become teachers. The recipients of these awards are chosen by their professors. The award is a plaque which is given annually to a woman student at the RSCC Awards Ceremony in Harriman each May. Unfortunately, we have had no follow-up on our 14 award recipients to determine when and where they may be teaching.

Two of the NCCWSL students attended the Conference in Washington, DC. One will be attending this year’s Conference via Zoom.

Let’s take pride in our efforts to assist women and girls in their educational pursuits. We are not only verbally stating our Mission Statement at our meetings, but we also are acting with significant efforts to carry out our Mission Statement. Congratulations, friends.

—*Mayme*

*Ruth Johnson Smiley, Newsletter Editor*