

AAUW-Loveland FEBRUARY Meeting @ FUMC-Fellowship Hall on 2/26/2024:

18 Members Present
1 Guest Speaker (Chuck Banks)
TOTAL: 19 Attendees

PROGRAM ~

Jan Witt introduced Mr. Chuck Banks, a long-time Loveland resident. Chuck's now retired after 32 years working as a surgical tech. He currently volunteers helping clients with Dementia & Parkinson's Disease, and is quite the ambassador for *peace, love & compassion*.

Chuck's father taught horsemanship in Perris, CA (near Riverside), and introduced him & his 2 older brothers to riding some **unruly** horses. This did not deter Chuck from starting reenactments of Buffalo Soldiers in 1992 in Southern California. For 17 consecutive years, Chuck Banks rode in Pasadena's Tournament of Roses Parade as a Buffalo Soldier representing the 10th Cavalry, Company H.

Through his grandmother, the Chuck Banks' family owns property in Weld County bordering Dearfield, CO (the former Black agricultural community established early in the 20th century). The land deed dates back to 1914, and Banks wants to reestablish a homestead on the 160 acres. During the Dust Bowl, the family would collect cow pies to help heat their home. His grandmother's instruction to the family was to never sell the property.

It was the American Plains Indians who came up with the name *Buffalo Soldiers* because the soldiers' dark, curly hair resembled a buffalo's coat. African-American regiments were formed in 1866, then disbanded in 1944. Congress established all-black regiments to help rebuild the country after the Civil War, and only white officers could lead the troops. Buffalo Soldiers were paid \$13/day, and food & clothing were provided. The enlisted were treated with more dignity & given more resources than they often received in civilian life. Buffalo Soldiers served as first caretakers of the national parks; to test their mettle, the government ordered a bicycle brigade to peddle from Oklahoma to Yosemite National Park!

Chuck Banks brought many artifacts to the meeting (ranging from clothing, bedding, cook pots/utensils, a saddle/bridle/stirrups, a haversack, a saber & other U.S.-stamped items adorned with regimental & troop designation). Many items were multi-purposed (like the tent which could become a raincoat).

There's a proud legacy of the Buffalo Soldiers in their primary duties to support the nation's westward expansion, protect settlers, build infrastructure, and guard U.S. mail & railways. In closing, Chuck Banks shared that historical accounts of the Buffalo Soldiers are still evolving; there has been a surge of online information in the last 10 years - especially during the past 2 years.

BUSINESS MEETING ~

National Vote on AAUW Membership - From April 3rd through May 15th, Members will be able to vote online for the elimination of degree requirements in order to join AAUW. Both our State & National AAUW are advocating for this change to promote greater inclusivity.

State Convention - Will be held on May 3rd & 4th in Colorado Springs at The Antlers-A Wyndham Hotel.

The Nomination Committee (Martha DiCicco & Karen Danbom) - Will meet in March, and are looking for another volunteer to join them. Current Board Members will have the opportunity to reassess their positions. Based on any changes or vacancies, the Committee will then make phone calls to Branch members who may be interested in volunteering for any openings. In April, a presentation will be made at our next Monthly Meeting.

The Scholarship Committee - Will meet on March 1st @ 10am at the home of Jill Osofsky (3536 Parlin Street in Loveland). Per Leni Bohren, Aims & Front Range Community Colleges are the targets - specifically students completing their 2nd year & transferring to a 4-year school.

Loveland's AAUW Website looks great, per President Karla Marroquin; and, special thanks were extended to Anthony Smith (our Webmaster) & all Website Committee Members for their collective efforts.

Conversations With Authors (CWA) Committee - Will meet on March 6th @ 1pm at the home of Martha DiCicco (225 Alden Drive in Loveland). It was shared that Jill Osofsky is a Friends of the Loveland Public Library Board Member.

Thanks to Claudia Ward for **Club Notes appearing regularly in the Reporter-Herald**. Also, Claudia shared that **Fundraising Flower Orders** are already arriving.

G.L.O.B.A.L. Justice-Empowering Women Program is scheduled for March 9th (2 sessions, from 9am - 3pm). Registration is required, along with a \$15 fee to attend. Founder/President Sosamma Samuel-Burnett was our MARCH.2023 Program Speaker @ Artspace. More program details will follow.

Loveland Loves to Read book selection for 2024 is Luis Alberto Urrea's Good Night, Irene. The author will speak at Thompson Valley High School on Thursday, April 11th @ 7pm. General Admission is \$20; Priority Seating & Book Signing is \$30. For more information, visit www.friendsofthelovelandlibrary.org. [Our Book Group will discuss this read on April 1st (no kidding, for real!). It will be hosted by Claudia Ward (615 W. 3rd St. in Loveland) & led by Susan Gerrard.]

A brief discussion followed about how to best convey to our Guest Speakers our appreciation for their program contributions (cash? / gift cards? / thank you notes?). No decision yet made.