

# AAUW TIMES

**Elgin Area Branch  
1920-2015**



***Working for 95 years to promote equity for all women and girls,  
Life-long education and positive social change***

October 2015

American Association of University Women

Vol. 21, No. 2

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## General Meeting

**Tuesday, October 20 – 7 PM  
Congregation Kneseth Israel  
330 Division Street, Elgin**



### Faith and Gender

Rabbi Margaret Frisch Klein will facilitate an interfaith panel discussion about women and faith. The panelists will address four questions:

1. How does your faith nourish you as a woman?
2. How does your faith treat men and women differently? Has that changed over time?
3. Do you consider yourself a feminist within your religion?
4. What leadership roles are available to women within your religion or denomination, and how has this applied to your own role?

Panelists include Rabbi Margaret Frisch Klein, moderator; the Rev. Denise Tracy, retired Unitarian Universalist minister and former consultant with the Alban Institute; Rev. Jeanne Davies, Interim Minister at Highland Church of the Brethren; and Marion Flynn, an attorney in Evanston who works with the Women's Ordination Conference towards Roman Catholic ordination of women. Please join us for this important program. See you there!

## Calendar

- Oct. 4 **Movie Discussion Group** 4:30 pm  
Colonial Café  
*A Walk in the Woods*
- Oct. 8 **Morning Book Group** 9:30 am.  
Hostess: Joan Berna  
*The Outliers*, Malcolm Gladwell
- Oct. 8 **Crafters** 9:30 am  
Hostess: Jelayne Ewers  
Woven Paper Greeting Card
- Oct. 12 **Great Books** 7:00 pm  
Gail Borden Public Library  
“A Painful Case”, James Joyce
- Oct. 14 **Good Tastes** 5:00 pm  
Schnitzel Platz, 729 North Ave. Glendale Heights  
630/942-9900
- Oct. 20 **Branch Meeting** 7 pm  
November Newsletter Deadline
- Oct. 26 **The Book Club** Time & Place TBA  
*Before I Go to Sleep*, S.J. Watson
- Oct. 27 **Reel Women for Real Women** 6:00 pm  
Gail Borden Public Library  
*Paycheck to Paycheck: The Life and Times of Katrina Gilbert*
- Oct. 28 **Evening Book Group** 7:00 pm  
Hostess: Barbara Evans  
*The Birth of the Pill*, Johathan Elg
- Dec. 5 **Jane Adams Day 2** – 3:30 pm  
Hull House Museum, Residents’ Dining Hall  
Program – Feminist singer and songwriter  
Kristin Lems will share stories about her family’s experiences with Jane Addams and perform songs written about her life.

## Co-Presidents' Message From Jeanne Hebeisen

While my other half is off enjoying herself in Spain (Barcelona, Madrid, etc.), this co-president is hard at work covering for both of us. Hope she is avoiding all the refugee issues!

Pope Francis is getting a lot of headlines on his visit to the U.S., putting religion front and center. In October, our branch will be taking another look at religion. Our branch's October meeting will have a religious theme on a topic that the Pope is not likely to address while here - Faith and Gender.

There is a petition being circulated by a non-partisan coalition named Independent Maps. It is attempting to get a state constitutional amendment to create a non-partisan independent commission responsible for drawing state legislative districts. It needs 600,000 petition signatures and in less than 5 months has already reached more than 300,000. I will have a petition at branch meetings for those who wish to sign. For more information, go to their website [Map.Amendment.org](http://Map.Amendment.org).

The annual Jane Adams Day will be on December 5 this year, so it won't conflict with our branch Holiday Brunch, as has in recent years. See details in the Calendar.

My phone was out of service from 17<sup>th</sup> – 22<sup>nd</sup>, due to the high amount of lightening in the area on Thursday. It fried my phone modem. So, anyone who might have tried to call, or thought you left a message, I did not receiving anything.

A big THANK YOU to Marti Jernberg for her superb job, once again, on our Yearbook! Since this is her final year of creating this impressive yearbook, we will be looking for someone to take over for her. All you need is some computer skills. Marti has everything pretty much set up. I'm sure she will be happy to have a conversation with you about what's needed. I hate to think no one will come forth, and we will be without a yearbook!

## Public Policy From Linda Knight

I have been hearing a lot about the gender pay gap lately and decided to do some research on this issue.

In 2013, women time in the United paid 78% of what Bureau, the of Education, and Labor Statistics the Current Survey), in 2013



working full States were men were the Census Department the Bureau of (especially Population the median

annual earnings in the United States for women and men working full time, year round, were \$39,157 and \$50,033, respectively. In Illinois, the earnings ratio is close to the national average at 79%.

Surprisingly, there is a 12% gender pay gap among college graduates 10 years after graduation. This gender pay gap exists, even after accounting for college major, occupation, economic sector, hours worked, months unemployed since graduation, GPA, type of undergraduate institution, institution selectivity, age, geographical region, and marital status.

This issue affects families as well as women. Between 1967 and 2012, the percentage of mothers who brought home at least one-quarter of the family's earnings rose from 28% to 63%. Many of these women were, and are, solely responsible for supporting their families. The gender pay gap can contribute to poor living conditions, poor nutrition, and fewer opportunities for their children.

### So, what is the legislative history of this issue, and what is being done now?

In 1963, President John F. Kennedy signed the Equal Pay Act into law. This Act makes it illegal for employers to pay unequal wages to men and women who perform substantially equal work. In order to find an employer in violation of the Equal Pay Act, the plaintiff must prove that 1) the employer pays different wages to employees of the opposite sex; 2) the employees perform equal work on jobs requiring equal skill, effort, and responsibility; and 3) the jobs are performed under similar working conditions. However, this Act has a lot of loopholes. For example, even if the individual makes each of these showings, the defendant employer may avoid liability by proving that the wage disparity is justified by one of four affirmative defenses: 1) a seniority system; 2) a merit system; 3) a system which measures earnings by quantity or quality of production; or 4) a differential based on any other factor other than sex.

On January 29, 2009, President Obama signed into law the Lilly Ledbetter Act, his first bill signed into law. This Act states that the 180-day statute of limitations for filing an equal-pay lawsuit regarding discrimination resets with each new paycheck affected by that discriminatory action. Prior to that, the statute of limitations for filing an equal pay lawsuit began on the date the employer made the initial discriminatory wage decision.

In April of 2014, President Obama signed two executive orders on equal pay. The first bans federal contractors from retaliating against workers who talk about their salaries. The second tells the U.S. Department of Labor to collect wage data from federal contractors, including race, sex, and national origin of employees. This will help identify patterns of discrimination and support voluntary compliance.

Specifically in Illinois, in August of 2015, Governor Rauner signed House Bill 3619 into law, expanding state equal pay laws to cover more employers, and increasing penalties against second-and third-time offenders of pay discrimination.

Since 2009, AAUW has been working for the passage of the Paycheck Fairness Act. This Act would update and strengthen the Equal Pay Act of 1963 by closing loopholes in the law that have hindered its effectiveness in ending pay discrimination, and would eliminate certain unfair defenses for pay discrimination that are currently available to employers, prohibit retaliation against employees who discuss their salaries, and improve wage data collection. This Act would also make it clear that, when determining whether wage discrimination exists, individuals may compare themselves to similarly situated employees, even if those employees do not work in the same physical location.

The Paycheck Fairness Act has had a rocky history, most recently being blocked by a Republican filibuster in the Senate on April 9, 2014. On March 25, 2015, the bill was assigned to committee and has not yet been reintroduced.

This is, obviously, a very important issue for women and families. I will let you know when this bill is reintroduced so you can contact your legislators and urge them to pass the Paycheck Fairness Act.

## **Taking a Look at Elgin Area Branch AAUW's Brand**

**From Rosemary Dyson and Fay Kitchin**

Big businesses spend lots of time developing and maintaining their brand. Does the Elgin Area Branch AAUW have an identifiable brand? The resounding answer is YES. The good news is that we are offering an abundance of mission-based programs that enhance the AAUW brand in Elgin and beyond.

Mission-based programs are the true key to recruitment and retention. If we reach out to demographics who are passionate about a particular AAUW issue, it will be easy to convert them to members-----and keep them!

In the past two years we have presented a wealth of mission based programs, such as:

She Didn't? Oh, Yes She Did!

A Thesaurus of Women from Cherry Blossoms to Cell Phones

Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM)  
Superwomen: Why So Few?

Human Trafficking: A Local Perspective

Women, Work and the Will to Lead

Putting the "I" in Immigration Issues.

AAUW national's advice to branches may be the golden bullet to reaching the populations that the Elgin Area Branch wishes to bring into our organization. They advise the following: "Everything you do, every poster you hang up, every program you put on tells your story. If your website highlights your advocacy work, but your events are all National Conference for College Women Student Leaders focused and your tables at community events discuss your monthly book club meetings, you are going to have a branding issue. That doesn't mean you should do one thing only, rather, you need to talk about the common ground in the varied work you do. That will make your brand consistent. It also helps to have everyone in your branch telling the same story. Just like a choir can have four different sections making a harmonious sound, you have to make sure your different ambassadors end up telling a harmonious story."

We are looking forward to continuing to build a strong Elgin Area Branch AAUW membership and advancing equity for women and girls through advocacy, education, philanthropy, and research.

## **Reel Women/Real Women**

**From Margaret Keen/Barbara Evans/Janelle Walker**

**Coming Attraction**  
**Tuesday**  
**October 27<sup>th</sup>**  
**6:00 pm**  
**Gail Borden Library**



***Paycheck to Paycheck: The Life and Times of  
Katrina Gilbert (2014 HBO Documentary)***

This HBO document presents an unvarnished account of a single mom struggling to get ahead, but constantly getting knocked back by a system that almost seems designed to see her fail. From Maria Shriver's groundbreaking multi-platform project "The Shriver Report: A Woman's Nation Pushes Back from the Brink," *PAYCHECK TO PAYCHECK: THE LIFE & TIMES OF KATRINA GILBERT* tells the moving story of a year in the life of one mother whose daily struggles illuminate the challenges faced by more than 42 million American women and the 28 million children who depend on them.

Women on the Brink Elgin Area joins Reel Women for Real Women to present the film and to facilitate discussion.

Women on the Brink Elgin Area is a committee of individuals

and representatives from different community organizations (including Elgin Area AAUW!), whose vision is to empower women to break through the barriers of poverty through nurturing, non-judgmental educational and financial initiatives, in order to support themselves and their families

– a benefit on many levels, not only to the individual households, but to the Elgin community at large.

"The Shriver Report: A Woman's Nation Pushes Back from the Brink" (2014) investigates the crisis of women in poverty in the United States and what women need now to push back from the brink of poverty. Utilizing solutions presented in the Shriver Report, *Women on the Brink* seeks to present educational and financial opportunities related to "women pushing back from the brink of poverty" and to build bridges from poverty to possibility.

*As usual, the program begins at 6 pm at Gail Borden Library's Community Room. Discussion follows the film.*

## **Morning Crafter's** **From Jelayne Ewers**

Are you interested in learning a new craft or joining others who enjoy crafting for fun? Join us on Thursday, October 8 at 9:30 a.m. We will be making a Woven Paper Greeting Card. All paper supplies will be provided for a nominal fee. You will need to bring a ruler, a craft knife or small scissors and a pencil. For questions or directions, call me at 847-515-1145. Let me know if you are coming so we will have enough supplies.

## **A Woman of Note** **And also an AAUW Founding Mother** **From AAUW Website**

Renowned biochemist and Nobel laureate Tim Hunt's recent remarks about women scientists made us think we had traveled back in time. Hunt claimed that women in laboratories are "disruptive to the science." "Three things happen when they are in the lab," Hunt said of women. "You fall in love with them, they fall in love with you, and when you criticize them, they cry."

Hunt's sexist remarks are part of a long history of gender discrimination against women in science. Popular 19th- and early 20th-century theories held that women were both biologically and intellectually inferior to men. It was widely believed that women's generally smaller bodies meant that they had smaller brains than men. Women were also believed to have weaker nervous systems than men, allegedly making them prone to emotional distress and fatigue. These theories contributed to the notion that, rather than in the classroom or workforce, women's place was in the home, where they could properly channel their energies into reproduction.

Unfortunately, a century later, many women still have to challenge this sexist ideology every day. But they have strong shoulders to stand on. Here is one scientist, and an AAUW founder, who overcame severe gender bias and discrimination to become trailblazers in science.

**Ellen Swallow Richards**, chemist (1842–1911), an AAUW co-founder, became the first U.S. woman to earn a chemistry degree when she graduated from Vassar College in 1870, a time when women were largely barred from higher education. But when Richards was accepted to pursue a doctorate degree at MIT, she found that her path was blocked. School officials told her that there was "no precedent" for a woman to pursue graduate work. In order to remain active in her discipline, she eventually volunteered her services to teach chemistry at MIT, including establishing its Woman's Laboratory in 1876. Knowing firsthand the barriers facing women in science, Richards' women-only lab provided much-needed opportunities for women to study and gain entry into science.



## **Message from Newsletter Editors**

Newsletter deadline for the **November** issue is **October 20**. Please submit all items as a **Word** document to **all three** editors.

**Medina Gross** - [medinag@gmail.com](mailto:medinag@gmail.com)  
**Jeanne Hebeisen** - [jeanne@mc.net](mailto:jeanne@mc.net)  
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## **Website**

Website items may be sent any time to  
**Marcia Cameron** - [mec515@sbcglobal.net](mailto:mec515@sbcglobal.net) and  
**Nancy Lamia** - [nancylamia@gmail.com](mailto:nancylamia@gmail.com)

## **Facebook**

Facebook items may be sent any time to  
**Nanci Alanis** - [alanis.nanci@gmail.com](mailto:alanis.nanci@gmail.com)