

AAUW TIMES

**Elgin Area Branch
1920-2020**



*Working for 100 years to promote equity for women and girls,
life-long education and positive social change*

April/May 2021

American Association of University Women

Vol. 26 No. 4

AAUW's Mission Statement

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

[Website – elginarea-il.aauw.net](http://elginarea-il.aauw.net)

[Email Address – aauw.il.elgin@gmail.com](mailto:aauw.il.elgin@gmail.com)

General Meetings

Thursday, April 22, 6:00 pm Zoom

**Payahuunader: Land of the Flowing Waters
From Jennifer Ford, Women and Culture**



In celebration of Earth Day, Teri Red Owl, Executive Director of the Owens Valley Indian Water Commission, and Kathy Jeffers-Bancroft, Paiute-Shoshone community leader, will relate their personal stories, explain the water issues of their California tribes, and talk about the future of natural resources in the United States. Prior to the program, a list of resources will be sent to members who wish to prepare for this discussion. There will be time for Q & A at the end of the presentation.

100th Anniversary Celebration May 6, 5:30 pm Zoom



Please join in the celebration of our branch's 100th anniversary. Yes, it will be virtual, and yes, we will provide our own toasts, but it will be memorable. Our long history will be celebrated with testimonies from our branch members. Highlights of current community involvement will be shared. Members will describe their involvement with AAUW and give testimony to their appreciation of our branch.

Our Poet Laureate Chastity Gunn will give a reading of her celebrated poem.

Our branch will be addressed by Julia Brown, the current AAUW National Board Chair.

Entertainment will be provided by local harpist Catherine Balassie.

Our current scholarship recipients will be introduced and recognized.

This is a celebration for the whole community and members from that community will be invited and recognized. As our branch continues into its next century, let us remember and celebrate its many accomplishments. As an organization, with our support, it is guaranteed to continue its proud heritage.

Calendar

April

- Apr. 7 **Current Movie Discussion Group** 4:30 pm Zoom
Nomadland
- Apr. 8 **Morning Book Group** 9:30 am Zoom
Olive Again: A Novel, Elizabeth Strout
- Apr. 22 **Women & Culture** 6 pm Zoom
This is a joint meeting with our **General Meeting**
Payahuunader: Land of the Flowing Waters
(See above)
- Apr. 28 **Evening Book Group** 7 pm Zoom
Our Towns: A 100,000 Mile Journey into the Heart of America, James and Deborah Fallows
NOTE CHANGE OF READING

May

- May 5 **Current Movie Discussion Group** 4:30 pm Zoom
Movie TBD
- May 6 **General Meeting** 5:30 pm Zoom
100th Anniversay
- May 13 **Morning Book Group** 9:30 am Zoom
Olive Again: A Novel, Elizabeth Strout
- May 26 **Evening Book Group** 7 pm Zoom
Book selections for 2021-22
- May 27 **Women & Culture** 1 pm ZOOM
ELGbtq+ Come meet this Elgin organization

Upcoming

- June 24 **Women & Culture** 1 pm ZOOM
Extraordinary Women of Color
Send your choice to Sue Schulz
- July 22 **Women & Culture** 1 pm TBA
Moving Forward

Co-Presidents' Report From Marlene Daubert

It has been a busy Spring for us. As I write this column, it is March, and we have just finished a wonderful presentation by Leslie Godard as she took on the character of Rachel Carson, a forward-thinking scientist and writer. Our first ever cooking class is around the corner with Tana Fryer, from the "RVFoodie", and a conversation to discuss aspects of the vote

before us in April will be held before the month is out. These events will be history by the time you read this newsletter.

100th Anniversary

As you know, in 2020 our branch turned 100! And as with many celebrations during the pandemic, they were either cancelled or put on hold. I am excited that as a branch we are moving forward with our 100th Celebration, "Looking Back, Moving Forward"! May 6th at 5:30 we will host a happy hour event. Yes, it will be online – a webinar, as it is still not yet safe to gather in person. More information can be found in this issue of the newsletter, but it's important that you know that this event is not only for AAUW members, but our community partners, our friends and family are invited to attend! Do you know someone you would like to introduce AAUW to? You can invite them. There is no charge!

As we get a little closer, you will receive an invitation via email. Feel free to forward it to a friend or family member whom you think might be interested in learning more about AAUW. Upon registration, a link for the event will be sent.

Membership Vote

AAUW's annual election will be open April 7 – May 17 (5:00 PM). Included in the vote is a proposal to open membership to anyone who supports the mission of AAUW. This requires a change to AAUW's national bylaws through member vote. Our national leadership, state leadership and both of your branch presidents are supporting this change. Please read the following as you consider your vote.

You may wonder how might this bylaw change affect my branch?

It will help protect the future of AAUW by opening up opportunities for funding. Because our current educational degree requirement can be deemed discriminatory and not in keeping with our mission, some foundations and corporations will not donate to our organization, since it is counter to their criteria of equity.

It will make it easier for our branch to recruit a more diverse membership, including those who did not have the opportunity to attend college 30, 40 or 50 years ago. In addition to possibly increasing membership, these new members may bring new energy and viewpoints critical to our branch's ability to meet the needs of our community through our mission. It will also remove the embarrassing situations when you must tell someone she/he does not qualify. (Our membership VP has expressed this concern).

It will update the relevance and image of our branch as the world reckons with inequality and systemic racism, much of which disproportionately affects women.

It might open up more opportunities for collaboration. Having a limiting membership requirement can be considered discriminatory and off-putting to other local, like-minded groups.

Today, there are more alternatives to college degrees, which have burdened women with two-thirds of the national college debt. With more careers open to women, i.e., firefighters, pilots, entrepreneurs, artists, politicians, manufacturers, retail managers, and more, our branch may have the potential for a variety of new members.

What won't change if this passes?

It will not affect AAUW's status as one of the leaders in graduate grants and fellowships. Due to the generosity of our members our fellowships and grants are fully endowed and will continue in perpetuity.

It will not affect the name – AAUW. Like the YWCA and NAACP, much of the original meanings are no longer accurate. We have been open to individuals with associate degrees, not just degrees from universities, since 2005 and open to men since 1987.

It will not affect the honor of having earned a degree in times when so few women attained this achievement. Today, with women outpacing men in earning all degrees for decades, we can be proud that we were instrumental in breaking down the barriers for women who followed us.

It will not affect the uniqueness of AAUW. Its uniqueness is its breadth of programming, research, policy, advocacy, fellowships and grants, and grassroots membership. It will not change our branch's involvement in local scholarships or interest groups.

It will not change the mission of the branch. Mission is not determined by a degree, but in belief in and dedication to equality for women.

Each vote matters. Please vote April 7- May 17.

AAUW Illinois State Convention

This year our state convention (a merging of the Northern and Southern Districts) will be April 23 – 24 via Zoom, with the theme "Equity Empowers – Speak Out for Equity!" Here is the plan:

Friday evening 4/23: The convention kicks off with **Michelle Duster**, great-granddaughter of Ida B. Wells. Ms. Duster's program will focus on confronting systemic racism.

Saturday 4/24: Begins with an AAUW update. **Gloria Blackwell**, Vice President for Programs and Advancement will Zoom in from our National office.

We will conduct our Annual Business Meeting and have two additional speakers, **Kimberly Stratton** and **Dr. Gretchen Goldman**. Ms. Stratton is an engineer and will focus on STEM. Dr. Goldman will speak about the impact of the pandemic on women.

The Spring edition of LINK will be coming out late March with convention details.

Attending the convention will be completely free, but you will, of course, need to receive the link to join the meeting. Watch for an early April special edition of the CONNECTION email for more information.

Membership Renewal

From Rita Shaw

New News about Renewal from Membership Chairs

During the first week to 10 days of April you will be receiving a letter regarding renewals of membership. Please read it carefully.

You may still pay dues by sending a check to Bonnie Hill. (An addressed envelope will be enclosed with the letter for your convenience.)

Also, you may pay your dues by credit card. On April 15 all members will be receiving an email from memberinfo@aauw.org, with a link to use if you choose to pay with a credit card. (If you are mailing a check to Bonnie, you can just ignore this link.)

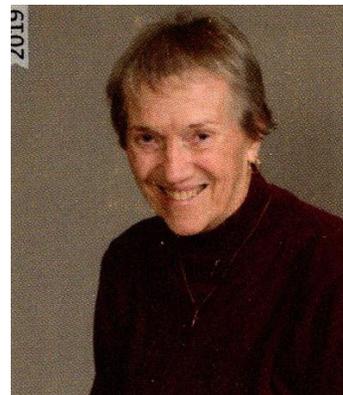
Dues are \$85. (Exception - for the four members who have paid-up national dues for their lifetime the dues are \$23.)

The timely payment of dues is greatly appreciated. Thank you. May the Elgin Area Branch AAUW '21-'22 year be one in which we make great strides to

If you have any questions, please contact Loni Mecum lonimecum3@gmail.com or Rita Shaw wrshaw@sbcglobal.net.

New Member: Evelyn Slaughter

From Barbara Evans



After growing up in Pittsburgh, then earning a BA in Sociology from Ohio's Antioch College, Evelyn's first job led her to Baltimore, where she lived most of her adult life. There she earned two additional degrees from the U of Maryland: a Masters in Social Work with a Community Organization major and a PhD in Sociology through

its Criminal Justice Institute.

Over the course of her career, she worked with agencies to initiate pre-delinquency programs and taught social work at

several colleges, as well as at the U of Maryland. Although now retired, Evelyn still oversees her business in Maryland that offers GED classes.

After her second husband's death (her first died in his early 50s), Evelyn moved to South Elgin in 2017, to be near her daughter and help her with her two children. Nevertheless, Evelyn still found time to teach GED classes. And until the pandemic reared its ugly head, she participated in programs, including the one at Gail Borden that offered homework help to students. She has also written a short book, *Revisiting the Past*.

Needless to say, Evelyn hopes to become involved in our branch and meet us in person sooner rather than later.

Evening Book Group

From Barbara Evans

The evening Book Group has changed its reading for April. On the 28th we will be reading *Our Towns: A 100,000 Mile Journey into the Heart of America* by James and Deborah Fallows

Local Scholarship

From Carol Wieg

SCHOLARSHIP ALERT !!!!!

We are in need of several more applications for our AAUW Scholarship for the 2021-2022 school year. The e-mail deadline for applications is April 6th. If any member knows of a young lady 19 years or older who has completed 12 semester hours of course work, please encourage her to apply asap.

Scholarship forms are available on our local AAUW web site (see newsletter heading), at Gail Borden Library, at ECC, at Harper College and at Judson University. Either Vivienne Bailey or I can also personally email an application to someone if a member gives us an email address. My email address is wieglet@aol.com. Remember, this year we have several Legacy Scholarships we can give out, as well as the Betty Medearis scholarship, so please encourage young ladies to apply.

Also, if any member would like to be on the Scholarship Committee to pick our recipients, please let either Vivienne or me know. We will be meeting shortly after the 6th to read the applications.

Public Policy

Shirley May Byrnes

Local Candidate Forums: The League of Women Voters Elgin Area is conducting candidate forums for local elections. The forums are being recorded from Feb. 16 to March 16. They included candidates for Elgin City Council, ECC board, Gail Borden Public Library board and U-46 board. After recording, they are posted at lwvelginarea.org.

The following information on bills is in no particular order.

Illinois Legislation

HB559 & HB560 Amend the Biometric Information Privacy Act (BIPA). According to ACLU of Illinois in a 3/8/21 email, these bills would end many of the protections in BIPA. B559 is in its second reading in the IL House. HB6560H has been referred to the Judiciary Civil Committee.

Parental Notice of Abortion (PNA): AAUW-IL is urging repeal of PNA. In a 2/19/21 email, Tracey Sherman-Falcon and Paula Purdue, Public Policy Co-Chairs, AAUW IL said AAUW supports the right of every woman to access safe, affordable, and comprehensive reproductive healthcare, and this includes youth. We need to tell our legislators to trust youth with their own health decisions.

Federal Legislation

Violence Against Women Reauthorization Act: The House passed this legislation that provides services for survivors of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, stalking, allocates funding for victim services and the health care system's response to domestic abuse, improves access to housing for survivors, and reduces the risk of firearms turning abuse deadly.

Equal Rights Amendment (SJRes1): On March 17, the US House of Representatives voted to advance the Equal Rights Amendment by removing its arbitrary ratification deadline. This is an important step towards adding the ERA to the Constitution and creating a more equal democracy. The Senate now needs to pass it. LWV email on 3/17/21. In a 3/21/21 email, AJ Conroy reported that North Dakota has rescinded its ratification. This issue will be litigated.

For the People Act (HR1): This Act would improve the country's campaign finance and government ethics laws, while restoring voting rights to disenfranchised Americans. For example, this bill would strengthen Federal prohibitions against foreign contributions in American elections, require that every president of the United States disclose tax returns and prohibit politicians from using taxpayer dollars to settle harassment claims. From Sen. Tammy Duckworth's letter, 3/18/21.

Equality Act: This Act would amend existing federal civil rights laws to provide explicit protection against discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity.

The Equality Act passed the U.S. House of Representatives with bipartisan support. It awaits Senate action. *AAUW Washington Update*, 3/5/21.

Police Training and Independent Review Act. Sen. Tammy Duckworth has introduced this bill to require training for law enforcement officials on fair and impartial policing as well as best practices for working with members of the community with disabilities or mental health conditions. It also encourages communities to use independent prosecutors to investigate law enforcement officials' use of deadly force.

Hate Crimes Commission Act: Rep. Raja Krishnamoorthi reintroduced this bill that would create a bipartisan commission to investigate the rise in hate crimes, potential causes of that increase, and how to combat it. This commission would provide us with the data and analysis we need to address the rise of hate crimes.

Choosing Our Own Lives Over Fast Firearms (COOL OFF) Act. This bill aims to reduce gun violence by requiring a three-day waiting period for all handgun sales. It was reintroduced by Rep. Raja Krishnamoorthi.

From previous email to members

Family and Medical Insurance Leave (FAMILY) Act (S. 248/463). This bill would guarantee workers with 12 weeks of paid leave at up to 66 percent wage replacement, and this permanent benefit would be funded through minimal employer and employee payroll contributions. Sen. Duckworth used S. 248 as the bill number; Sen. Durbin used S. 463.

Build America's Libraries Act (S. 127): This legislation would provide **\$5 billion** in funding to repair, modernize, and construct library facilities in underserved and marginalized communities.

Paycheck Fairness Act (S.270): The bill has already been reintroduced in the 117th Congress with broad support. *AAUW Action Fund Washington Update*, 2/11/21.

Raise the Wage Act (H.R. 582/S. 150) Raising wages has never been more urgent than during the pandemic. The continued stagnation of the minimum wage, combined with the COVID-19 crisis, has reinforced and widened racial and gender wage gaps. Ensuring all workers receive a fair wage is a matter of gender and racial justice. *AAUW Action Fund Washington Update*, 2/11/21.

New Newsletter Schedule

Following is the new schedule for the 2020-21 newsletters.

September-October
November-December-January
February-March
April-May
June/July/August

Newsletter Editors

Newsletter deadline for the June/July/August issue is **May 20**. Please submit all items as a **Word** document to both editors.

Jeanne Hebeisen - jeanne@mc.net

Ina Whitehead - iwhitehead55@hotmail.com

Website

Website items may be sent any time to:

Marcia Cameron - mec515@sbcglobal.net

Nancy Lamia - nancylamia@gmail.com

In principle and practice, AAUW values and seeks a diverse membership. There shall be no barriers to full participation in this organization on the basis of gender, race, creed, age, sexual orientation, national origin, disability or class.

AAUW is open to all graduates who hold an Associate or equivalent degree from a qualified educational institution.

AAUW's Value Promise

By joining AAUW, we belong to a community that breaks through educational and economic barriers so that all women have a fair chance.

AAUW's Educational Foundation

AAUW provides funds to advance education, research and self-development for women and to foster equity and positive social change.

AAUW's Legal Advocacy Fund

AAUW invests in activities that prevent and combat sex discrimination and promote gender equity through support of litigation and educational programs.

The Elgin Area Branch was organized in 1920 with 40 charter members.

**About the Elgin Area Branch and
AAUW Times**