

# AAUW TIMES

Elgin Area Branch

1920-2023

September 2023

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

Vol. 28, No. 1

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



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



## SALAD & DESSERT LUNCHEON

Saturday, September 9th, Noon

St. Hugh of Lincoln Episcopal Church

36W957 Highland Ave., Elgin

(southeast corner of Highland & Randall Rd.)

Plan to begin AAUW Elgin Area's 2023-2024 year lunching on tasty fare provided by our Board members. No need to bring place settings or utensils, but with the exception of guests, \$8 to go into our general fund will be asked of each not bringing food. Look forward as well to a legislative up-date from our featured speaker Suzanne Ness, State Representative for IL District 66. Also most welcome will be goods for the Crisis Center's food pantry.

## OTHER SEPTEMBER MEETINGS

- Sept. 6 **Current Movie Discussion Group**, 4:30 p.m.  
The Grumpy Goat, 975 Sports Way, Elgin  
*Barbie*
- Sept. 11 **Great Books**, 7 p.m.  
Gail Borden Public Library, Elgin  
"The Nose," a Gogol short story
- Sept. 14 **Morning Book Group**, 9:30 a.m.  
Gail Borden Public Library, Elgin  
*Last Bus to Wisdom: A Novel*, Ivan Doig
- Sept. 27 **Evening Book Group**, 7:00 p.m.  
Hostess: Mary Navin  
*Profiles in Ignorance*, Andy Borowitz

**Women in Culture** will not meet in September.

September birthdays are noted at the end of this issue.



## THE CO-PRESIDENTS' MESSAGE

Here we are near the end of August already. The bad news: summer is almost over. The good news: our AAUW Program, Membership, Budget and Women and Culture committees have been hard at work planning a great 2023-2024 year of informative programming and enjoyable events. Our yearbook, thanks to Marti Jernberg, should be available soon, so you will be able to update your calendars.

Thanks to Jennifer Ford and the Women and Culture Committee, we actually had a branch meeting in July, when representatives from Moms Demand Action for Gun Sense of Kane and Kankakee Counties shared with us the important work they are doing. And on August 24 Women and Culture is hosting a garden party at Mary Navin's home with members of the Schaumburg Branch as guests.

We are looking forward to the start of an active year at our September 9 salad and dessert luncheon at St. Hugh Church when Representative Suzanne Ness will update us on the latest legislative news from Springfield. Hope to see you then.

—Linda & Brooke

We still need members for the Nominating Committee. Work on this doesn't start until January but is vital to the survival of our Branch. Please consider serving and contact Jane Watson if you're willing.

Images taken from Linda Alexander's "Physalis II,"  
oil on linen, 2017

## **WOMEN'S EQUALITY DAY PROCLAIMED**

At the request of AAUW-Elgin Area, at the August 23rd meeting of the Elgin City Council, Mayor Dave Kaptain made the following proclamation.

**WHEREAS, women in the United States have continuously worked to gain full rights and privileges—public or private, legal or institutional—as citizens of the United States, and**

**WHEREAS, women in every state and every cultural and religious group worked to secure women's right to vote, and**

**WHEREAS, Congress has designated August 26, the date the Nineteenth Amendment was certified, as Women's Equality Day, and**

**WHEREAS, recognizing Women's Equality Day as a day of celebration throughout the country emphasizes the importance of women's work for democracy,**

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the CITY OF ELGIN will commemorate Women's Equality Day, August 26th, as a national day celebrating the importance of the women's suffrage movement and the work to secure and expand equal rights today.**

## **MOMS DEMAND ACTION PROGRAM from Jennifer Ford**

AAUW does not normally hold programs in July, but an opportunity arose to host a Moms Demand Action [MDA] program. Since many in our branch had requested more information about this group, a last-minute session was scheduled. Thus on July 20th, 18 members gathered at Zion Lutheran Church, listening to the speakers, taking notes and asking questions.

Anita Walls, Kane and Kendall County Legislative Lead for MDA, spoke about the organization, an offshoot of Everytown For Gun Safety. The numbers are staggering. More than 4,000 children and teens are shot and killed each year in the U.S. Suicides make up three in every five gun deaths.

Steve McHugh, the MDA Illinois State Co-Leader of BeSmart and Safe Storage, presented ideas for the safe storage of guns. BeSmart often presents at local events. Volunteers are needed. Training is available.

AAUW is not partnering with MDA, but members were given information about the kinds of activities in which MDA participates as well as how to follow them on FaceBook.

## **MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE from Ruth Bradburn & Cathy Malm**

**Yearbooks** will be mailed digitally to all members. We know that many of you may like hard copies of at least some of the pages and we hope that you will be able to print those or have someone print them for you. New members will be given a hard copy.

Note: Gail Borden Public Library has printers available. Check in at the information desk for details. If digital distribution does not work for you, please contact Cathy Malm to request a hard copy.

We hope all who registered **birthdays** with us have enjoyed the digital cards sent from our committee this past year. For various reasons, we will no longer be able to do this, but know that we always hope your birthdays are good ones.

Last but by no means least, please welcome the following **new members**, whose contact information will be in the 2023-2024 yearbook.

**Sandra (Sandi) McClure** received a B.A. in Sociology from Sonoma State University in Arizona. For 23 years she worked at Antelope Valley Hospital Medical Center, the first 10 as a clerical supervisor in the Laboratory and for 13 years as the Volunteer Coordinator overseeing 250 adult volunteers. She moved to Elgin with her husband in January 2014 and since May of that year has been an active docent and Board member of the Elgin History Museum, where she oversees the museum's gift shop. Also active in her Del Webb community, she helps plan its monthly activities. Sandi and her husband love traveling and have traveled to Europe, Asia, Mexico, and Canada as well as throughout the US. She looks forward to learning about AAUW.

**Renee Skrabacz** received her B.S. and M.S. in Medical Microbiology and Immunology from U of W-Madison. Since 2000 she has worked in higher education in a variety of roles. For the past 10 years she has been at ECC, where she currently serves as Associate Dean of Health Professions, Math, Science and Engineering. She is passionate about education and breaking down barriers to college access and success.

Renee lives in Bartlett with her two teenage daughters, one of whom is headed to Augustana College, the other who will be a junior at SEHS. On the weekends, Renee enjoys watching football. She also loves to read, attend theatre performances (especially ones her daughter is in) and enjoys walking, with the day not being complete until she has her 10,000 steps.

*continued*

A member of AAUW-Springfield since 1975, **Elaine Kadakia** has a BAE from the Art Institute of Chicago and a Masters's in Gerontology from the U of IL in Springfield. After moving to Huntley, she joined the Ceramics classes at McHenry County College and in 2022 had a one-woman show there. Its main focus was on sculptures that celebrate women, including Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony. But also in her exhibit were the Burka Women, a three-piece sculpture lamenting women's loss of identity. Elaine's passion for women's rights extends to attending rallies in support of them and transferring to our branch to continue to support AAUW's efforts to expand them.

## KUDOS TO OUR BRANCH

**a note from Ina Whitehead, former newsletter editor**

Thank you so much for thinking of me and taking the time to send this newsletter. It's nice to see pictures of the members and read that they have received such prestigious awards. I know many worked tirelessly throughout the pandemic to keep everyone informed about the latest events affecting women, and I'm happy to see that so many from the chapter have been recognized.

I have tried to join a couple of chapters in the Hampton Roads area of Virginia and reached out to several people, but they do not respond, or they do not follow up as promised. Unfortunately, the chapters here do not seem to be that dedicated. Work has been busy, and I have had to travel, but I will try once again to join a chapter when things die down a bit. I do miss the ladies in Elgin, and I wish I could participate—it looks like you're having a lot of fun! Be sure to tell the ladies hello! —*Ina* 5/29/23

## SARA PLUMMER LEMMON

**from Ruth Bradburn**

Sarah, a 19th century botanist and artist, was born in New England. But for health reasons, in 1869 at age 33, she traveled alone on the just completed transcontinental rail-way to San Francisco. There she taught herself botany and established Santa Barbara's first library.

At age 43, she married Civil War veteran John Gill Lemmon, also a self-trained botanist. The couple spent their honeymoon in the Santa Catalina Mountains and climbed to its highest peak (elevation 9,1509 ft.). Mr. E. O. Stratton, who owned the land and had accompanied them, gave Sara, the first white woman to summit it, an honor accorded few women: he named it Mount Lemmon.

Subsequently the Lemmons traveled in the Arizona Territory, California, Oregon and Mexico cataloging botanical discoveries. While many of their contributions

were credited as "J.G. Lemmon & wife," many of the plants were named in her honor, often at J.G.'s request.

Sara's many accomplishments include organizing displays of plants from the southwest and speaking on forest conservation at the World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago in 1893. She was the official artist for the California State Board of Forestry from 1888 to 1892 and earned a national reputation for her botanical illustrations. For 10 years she advocated and wrote the bill for the adoption of the golden poppy as the state flower of California. Sara was also instrumental in founding the San Francisco Training School for Nurses.

To learn more about Sara Plummer Lemmon, who died in 1923 at the age of 86, read Wynne Brown's *The Forgotten Botanist: Sara Plummer Lemmon's Life of Science and Art* (2021).

## WOMEN IN THE WORLD

**from Barbara Evans**

On July 27, a group of 11 women in India's southern state of Kerala who had pooled their money to buy one [\$3] lottery ticket won the [\$1.2 million] lottery jackpot. What makes this especially heart-warming is that they are sanitation workers, work that is stigmatized in India and is carried out by people from the unprivileged Hindu castes. Six in the group, in fact, are former untouchables.

The winners—who work to separate non-biodegradable waste at a Material Collection Facility—each earn about [\$5] a day, and all struggle to make ends meet. "It is a low-paying job, but we forget all our miseries and misfortunes when we work here. We sing songs and pull each other's legs," said one.

After deducting the agent's commission and government taxes, nine women will get the equivalent of \$78,000 each. The two who went together to contribute one share of the \$3 ticket will each get \$39,000.

While neither amount may seem like a bonanza to those reading this, the lottery winners agree that "it is the best thing that has happened to our lives." Radha—who lives with five other family members in a two-room, thatched-roof house covered with a tarpaulin—will, for example, use it to secure a better dwelling for them. Lakshmi will have a well for drinking water dug at her home as well as to provide the dowry needed for her daughter to marry. Leela's daughter who was in an accident two years ago will now be able to get the surgeries she needs.

"The poor are expected to toil endlessly for even the most insignificant welfare benefit," said feminist historian J. Devika, who expressed delight that "Lady Luck has cocked a snook\* at neoliberalism's punitive work ethic."

*\*shown contempt*

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### **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.

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The Elgin Area branch of AAUW was organized in 1920 with 40 charter members.

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 baccalaureate degree from an accredited college or university. An undergraduate student enrolled in a regionally accredited educational institution shall be eligible for student affiliation.

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