

AAUW TIMES

Elgin Area Branch

1920-2024

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



CHALLENGES TO INTELLECTUAL FREEDOM: IT'S MORE THAN BANNED BOOKS

Tuesday, April 23, 6:30 p.m.

Gail Borden Public Library, Elgin

Keynote speaker Joyce McIntosh from the American Library Association's Freedom to Read Foundation will detail the reasons the ALA is urging readers everywhere to stand together in the fight against censorship. The president of Gail Borden Public Library Board and a selection specialist from Schaumburg Public Library will add local information.

Co-sponsored by our AAUW branch and Schaumburg's as well as by LWV Elgin Area and Gail Borden Public Library, this program is open to the public. Please register for it at attend.gailborden.info/events

OTHER APRIL EVENTS

- 4: **Current Movie Discussion Group**, 4:30 p.m.
The Grumpy Goat, Elgin
One Life
- 8: **Great Books**, 7:00 p.m.
Gail Borden Public Library, Elgin
As I Lay Dying, William Faulkner
- 11: **Morning Book Group**, 9:30 a.m.
Gail Borden Public Library, Elgin
The Woman They Could Not Silence, Kate Moore
- 19-20: **AAUW-IL State Convention**
E.C.C., Elgin
- 24: **Evening Book Group Potluck** 6:00 p.m.
Hostess: Mary Navin
18 Tiny Deaths, Bruce Goldfarb



ANNUAL AWARDS BANQUET

Thursday, May 23, 5:00 p.m.

Villa Olivia

1401 W. Lake St., Bartlett

Our end of the year banquet will recognize branch members who have received awards in our 2023-24 year and the two students receiving our scholarships. Our branch officers for 2024-25 will also be elected. Surely you will want to be present to congratulate all as well as to renew old friendships and begin new ones.

Closer to the event, the Social Committee will email us the particulars about the menu choices and the date by which reservations need to be made.

OTHER MAY EVENTS

- 1: **Current Movie Discussion Group**, 4:30 p.m.
Place & Movie TBA
- 13: **Branch Board Meeting**, 6:30 p.m.
Hostess: Rachel Campbell
- 13: **Great Books**, 7:00 p.m.
Gail Borden Public Library, Elgin
The Inferno, Dante
- 16: **Morning Book Group Potluck**, 11 a.m.
Hostess: Cathy Malm (RSVP to her is requested.)
Book Selections for 2024-25
- 21: **World Day for Cultural Diversity**
- 22: **Evening Book Group**, 7:00 p.m.
Hostess: Sharon Spates
Book Selections for 2024-25

THE PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE from Linda Youngren

Our March joint program with the Batavia, Geneva and St. Charles branch was outstanding. Paddy Lynn as Harriet Beecher Stowe gave us a vivid glimpse into the life of the abolitionist who wrote the now often-banned *Uncle Tom's Cabin*. The Elgin Historical Society was the perfect venue, much appreciated by our guests. Thank you to our Program and Social Chairs Mary Navin, Jane Watson and Judi Tepi, who assisted with this event.

And thank you also to our successful Nominating Committee headed by Mary Navin. We are especially grateful to all of our nominees who have stepped up to serve our branch.

We are excited to be the host branch for the State Convention to be held at ECC on Friday and Saturday, April 19-20. The final day for registration is April 8. You may register online at aauw-il.aauw.net/conferences as well as view the schedule and speaker bios. The keynote speaker at Friday evening's dinner is Dr. Suzanne Chod, who will explore the relationship between political trust, polarization and disinformation, and their effects on elections and democracy.

AAUW National recently presented the webinar *A Journey Through Time: The Evolution of AAUW*. It was fascinating to learn how we have evolved over the years, especially in the requirements for membership. Did you know, for example, that up until 1963, only women with master's degrees and doctorates were eligible to apply for membership? Those of us who have seen the webinar would encourage those who haven't to do so. To access it, go to aauw.org and scroll down on the home page to it.

In AAUW's upcoming election, members will again be asked to vote on an amendment to "Open Up AAUW" by dropping the degree requirement for membership, something which many in our branch support. Ballots will be emailed and voting will take place online from April 3 through May 15.

We have established the **AAUW Brooke Transue Scholarship Fund** to be awarded by our branch in the spring of 2025. We have arranged to have contributions flow through the state's GEFund which has 501c3 status so that our donations are tax deductible. To contribute to the scholarship in Brooke's name, please make your check payable to AAUW Gender Equity Fund and mail to Brooke Transue Scholarship Fund, % Ruth Holst, 645 N. Kingsbury St. Apt. 1709, Chicago IL 60654.

A Tribute to Brooke Transue, 1942-2024 from Linda Youngren

When Brooke and I accepted the positions of Co-Presidents two years ago, who could have imagined that she would not complete this journey with me. We first met at an AAUW Early Childhood meeting in 1973 and had been friends ever since. In a way, AAUW serves as the bookends of our friendship.

Brooke was the epitome of the "American university woman." With a B.A. and M.A. in speech and communications from the University of Michigan and a doctorate in education from Northern Illinois University, she excelled as a lifelong educator. She worked for District U-46, taught theatre at Judson College and for many years taught speech and communications at Elgin Community College. In fact, at one point several of her friends asked why she didn't retire "for Pete's sake," but she didn't throw in the towel until she was 75.

Brooke was also a business woman, founding a testing and career placement service called Assessment Services, Ltd. Her capability as an educational career mentor was further utilized in her association with the University of Iowa's student teaching fellowship program.

And, of course, anyone who knew Brooke for more than a few hours realized what a loyal, fervent University of Michigan alum she was. She also possessed a great love of the theatre and often traveled to New York City to stay current with the productions on Broadway.

Brooke's deep interest in other cultures was noteworthy, too. The Transues hosted five foreign exchange students through Rotary Club, several of whom are still close friends. And Brooke ensured that Betsy, who they had adopted from South Korea at the age of five months, was well acquainted with the culture of her birth.

Brooke had many additional talents. She was a dedicated mother and grandmother, a generous and gracious hostess and a faithful Episcopalian. We will miss her positive can-do spirit and ability to accomplish whatever she set out to do.

MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE from Ruth Bradburn & Cathy Malm

Information about dues for 2024-25 will be emailed to all by Judi Tepe in early May. For those who prefer to pay online, AAUW National will send out notices for renewal/payment.

NOMINATING COMMITTEE REPORT

At its March 8th meeting, the Board approved the Nominating Committee's recommendations for branch officers for two-year terms beginning in 2024-25. They are as follow.

Co-Presidents: **Jennifer Ford & Judi Tepe**
1st Co-Vice President (Program): **Julie Jindra**
Recording Secretary: **Beth Small**
Corresponding Secretary: **Beth Small**
Membership Treasurer: **Cindy Maldonado**

At the May banquet, after a call for nominations from the floor, the election for the above offices will be held.

Elected for two-year terms last year and continuing in their current positions will be the following.

1st Co-Vice President (Program): **Jane Watson**
2nd Vice President (Membership): **Cathy Malm**
Treasurer: **Sandy Kaptain**

We are grateful for the time our members spent working to fill the open positions. The committee included Chair Mary Navin, Jane Watson, Rosemary Dyson, Barbara Evans, Rita Shaw and Linda Knight. Joining them to assist were Ruth Bradburn, Marcia Cameron, Rachel Campbell, Bonnie Hill and Linda Youngren. And of course all are extremely grateful to those who accepted the nominations.

DIVERSITY COMMITTEE REPORT

from **Jennifer Ford**

The purpose of this committee is to foster awareness of diversity in our community, country and the world, which we strive to do via our Women and Culture programs. We have learned, for example, from a Russian professor, an Afghani refugee, and Muslim women and their daughters. Other programs have focused on Ukrainian refugees and murdered/missing Indigenous women. We have learned about Hindu worship via a trip to a nearby temple as well as about the Elgin's Jewish and LGBTQ communities and the celebration of Juneteenth. We are also participating members of the Elgin Hispanic Network.

We have long list of programs we hope to schedule. And we pride ourselves on often partnering on programs with such groups as other AAUW branches, the Elgin History Museum, the League of Women Voters, YWCA Elgin, Elgin's Women's Club and Gail Borden Public Library.

On a personal note, I have agreed to step up to serve as branch co-president with Judi Tepi. Being chair of this committee has been a highlight of my life, and I want to continue to serve on it. But it is time for one of you to become the chair. I await your call letting me know that you, too, want this committee and its purpose to continue.

MEET LIFE MEMBER JOAN BERNA

from **Barbara Maring**

A 50-year member of our branch, Joan exemplifies the AAUW principles of promoting equity and diversity. She has served our branch as president and on committees for Art Showcase as well as chair of it. For many years she was also an active member of the Evening Book Group.

Joan brought organization and innovation to each task she undertook. In the early 1980s I had the honor of working with her on Art Showcase. She developed the idea of a Purchase Award which resulted in our branch purchasing the first place entry in the show to hang at City Hall or the Hemmens. The goal was to support an artist, promote public art and encourage sales of all the exhibiting artists. Working on Art Showcase with Joan, I learned about the workings of AAUW and how to collaborate with the bright, creative women in our branch.

Although especially passionate about AAUW, Joan has also been an active member of PEO, St. Thomas More Church, YWCA Elgin and Gail Borden Library.

When her four children were very young, Joan worked part time doing public relations for the YWCA. Later, for a number of years she worked full time at the YWCA as Program Director. In that capacity she directed the Elgin Accessibility Project, the English As A Second Language program and the Vietnamese Refugee Project. All of these required obtaining funds from municipal, philanthropic and federal agencies, so Joan also became responsible for writing grants.

The program that Joan initiated as part of the Barbara Bush Foundation for Family Literacy was nationally acknowledged, and she was invited to a recognition luncheon at the White House. During that time Joan put Elgin on the map by bringing First Lady Barbara Bush to speak at the YWCA Leader Luncheon.

For many years Joan was also on the Gail Borden Library Board of Directors and for eight of them was president of it. The current library facility was built during the time of Joan's presidency.

Using her writing and motivational talents, Joan helped many women excel as volunteers and paid professionals. Not surprisingly, in 1985 our branch awarded her our prestigious Susan B. Anthony award. We honored her again in 1999 with an AAUW Named Grant.

Since her move to The Holmstad in Batavia, Joan continues to keep up to date with AAUW activities through the newsletters and member contacts. She attends AAUW events and branch programs as often as possible and enjoys connecting with anyone in the branch whenever members call or visit her.

CURRENT MOVIE DISCUSSION GROUP from Peggie Caughlin

The movie for April is *One Life*, now showing at local theaters. It is based on the true story of Nicolas Winton, a young London stockbroker, who just before war broke out, facilitated the rescue of 669 Czech children from the Nazis. Sir Anthony Hopkins is cast as Winton years later as, via flashbacks, he reflects on the obstacles that stood in his way. And heart-warming is the revelation of how Winton's work came to the public's attention in the 1980s. All are welcome to join us for a discussion of this film on Wednesday, April 3, at The Grumpy Goat. As the movie to be discussed in May will be selected at this time, please bring suggestions for it.

EVENING BOOK GROUP from Patty Golden

Our book group had a special guest on February 22: Christina (Tea) Marrocco, the local author of our selection for the month: *Addio, Love Monster*. A collection of linked short stories about the inhabitants of a fictional Italian-Chicago neighborhood, it received The Best Independent Fiction Award 2022 from the Chicago Writers Association.

Our members found the characters, settings and situations to be very real and reminiscent of those in their own lives. Thus it was interesting for us to learn that some of the characters had similar traits and experiences of Tea's family members and neighbors in Melrose Park, where she had grown up. Her explanations of what had been in her mind when she wrote the stories and the final meticulous editing the collection required were fascinating.

We were also thrilled to learn that Tia feels that there are more stories to be told about her fictional neighborhood and that her collection of linked short stories set in Wales is now in the hands of a publisher.

What an extraordinary evening for our book group. Apparently Tea felt the same, for she posted on Facebook that she had "not wanted the evening to end," praising "the intelligence and care" with which our members delved into the discussion of *Addio*... Many thanks to Barbara Evans for recommending her book and inviting her to participate in our discussion of it.

WOMEN IN THE WORLD from Barbara Evans

While compiling a list of international women to suggest as possibilities for Women and Culture's June meeting, I chanced upon a 2022 compendium that merits an entire program in itself: **"Women of Impact: Inspiring Stories of African Women Leaders."**

Published by the African Union Commission's Office of Women, Gender and Youth Directorate, this document presents 25 women who were "rigorously selected" from over 200 nominees "to represent the spectrum of [current] African women leadership, from grass roots to high-level executives."

One of these women is **Oluwadamilola Akintewe**, the daughter of a poor Nigerian farmer.

She is the founder of Project Rebirth, an initiative that provides skills training in eco-friendly fashion as well as gives collateral-free loans to women in agriculture. Over 140 women have benefited from this project.

As co-founder and vice president of Girl Up Nigeria, Ms. Akintewe has also provided scholarship and career mentorship to over 3,000 secondary school girls across four states in the country.

During the COVID-19 lockdown, she launched Forbidden Topics, an online platform that gives voice to girls and young women who have faced social injustices such as period poverty, institutional sexism, child marriage, female genital mutilation and rape.

She also organized Project Safe School to bridge the educational inequality gap for children in rural communities by creating clusters of socially distanced classes in five Nigerian states and deploying volunteers to teach them. Over 500 students benefited from this project. . . .

The other 24 women are no less accomplished and impressive, especially considering how young many of them are. I encourage you to read about all of them at au.int/sites/default/files/documents/43035-doc-Women_of_Impact_-_Inspiring_Stories_of_African_Women_Leaders.pdf

(As you do, you will discover that often their placement in a specific category is rather arbitrary, for as Ms. Akintewe's profile shows, she could have easily been profiled in two others.)

Also worth your time is the information about each category that precedes the profiles as well as the Forward and Introduction, for in them you will learn about African women's leadership in the past, the challenges that remain and what needs to be done to further advance gender equity and women's empowerment in Africa.

Finally, I would be remiss if I did not note how visually appealing this compendium is. Kudos to the graphic artist responsible for making it so.

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.

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.
