

# AAUW TIMES

Elgin Area Branch

1920-2024

June-July-August 2024

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

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



*Summer is singing with joy,  
and the beaches are inviting you  
with dancing waves.*

—Debasish Mridha

## JUNE

- 1: **Elgin Pride Parade / Festival**, 11 a.m.
- 5: **Current Discussion Movie Group**, 4:30 p.m.  
The Grumpy Goat, Elgin  
*The Fall Guy*
- 10: **Great Books**, 7:00 p.m.  
Gail Borden Public Library, Elgin  
*Ghosts*, Henrik Ibsen
- 13: **Morning Book Group**, 9:30 a.m.  
Gail Borden Public Library, Elgin  
*Our Missing Hearts: A Novel*, Celeste Ng
- 15: **Juneteenth Cultural Festival**, 1:00 - 9 p.m.  
Elgin's Festival Park
- 26: **Evening Book Group**, 7:00 p.m.  
Hostess: Patty Golden  
*Dinners with Ruth*, Nina Totenberg
- 27: **Women and Culture**, 1:00 p.m.  
Hostess: Barbara Evans  
Extraordinary International Women

## JULY

- 3: **Current Discussion Movie Group**, 4:30 p.m.  
Place & Movie TBA
- 8: **Branch Board Potluck**, 6:00 p.m.  
Hostess: Linda Youngren
- 8: **Great Books**, 7:00 p.m.  
Gail Borden Public Library, Elgin  
*The Secret Sharer*, Joseph Conrad
- 11: **Morning Book Group**, 9:30 a.m.  
Gail Borden Public Library, Elgin  
*Dinners with Ruth*, Nina Totenburg
- 26: **Evening Book Group**, 7:00 p.m.  
Hostess: Rachel Campbell  
*Demon Copperhead*, Barbara Kingsolver

## AUGUST

- 7: **Current Movie Discussion Group**, 4:30 p.m.  
Place & Movie TBA
- 8: **Morning Book Group**, 9:30 a.m.  
Gail Borden Public Library, Elgin  
*All the Broken Places: A Novel*, John Boyne
- 9: **National Book Lovers Day**
- 12: **Great Books**, 7:00 p.m.  
Gail Borden Public Library, Elgin  
*Mrs. Dalloway*, Virginia Woolf
- 26: **Women's Equality Day** (By order of Congress, to be noted annually on the date in 1920 that the 19th Amendment was certified)
- 28: **Evening Book Group**, 7:00 p.m.  
Hostess: Barbara Maring  
*Lessons in Chemistry: A Novel*, B. Garmus

## **PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE**

from Linda Youngren

As we approach the beginning of a new fiscal year on July 1, it is time for a changing of the guard on our AAUW Board. It has been an honor to serve as your Co-President for the past two years. I have to admit that I came kicking and screaming into this position, but I soon learned what a pleasure it is to work with the capable, intelligent, dedicated members of the Elgin Area branch.

Also retiring from positions as officers this year are Mary Navin, who has served three years as Co-Vice-President of Program as well as chair of the Nominating Committee; Ruth Bradburn, our Co-Vice-President of Membership for three years (Yes, there is a reason we are the 3<sup>rd</sup> largest branch in Illinois.); Bonnie Hill, who as Membership Treasurer for seven years carefully learned the complexities of the new national membership system; Jan Jones, our faithful Recording Secretary; and Julie Jindra, our Corresponding Secretary who is not retiring but continuing on as Co-Vice-President of Program. Thank you for your service to AAUW.

I want to extend a heartfelt thank you to the other Board members as well, who in leadership positions have done a fabulous job of handling all of your responsibilities. You have helped ensure that we remain a vibrant, robust branch dedicated to the mission of AAUW.

Congratulations and best wishes to Jennifer Ford and Judi Tepe and the new slate of officers that will continue on. We know that you will be a great team. We leave our branch in good hands.

## **BRANCH OFFICERS FOR 2024-2025**

Continuing in positions to which they were elected last year are the following:

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

Automatically assuming the office of Past President:  
Linda Youngren

Recommended by this year's Nominating Committee and approved by the Board, the following were unanimously elected at our May banquet for two-year terms:

**Jennifer Ford**, Co-President;  
**Judi Tepe**, Co-President;  
**Julie Jindra**, 1st Co-Vice President (Program);  
**Cindy Maldonado**, Membership Treasurer;  
**Beth Small**, Recording Secretary and  
Corresponding Secretary.

## **AWARDS & NOMINATIONS**

In January, members of the Awards Committee—Chair, Julie Ford, Ruth Bradburn, Rachel Campbell, Barbara Evans, Bonnie Hill, Patty Harkin, Cathy Malm, Mary Navin and Linda Youngren—selected the recipients of our branch awards and the nominees for two others.

### **Susan B. Anthony Award, 2024: ROSEMARY DYSON**

Because Rosemary has had a heart for women and multi-cultural work throughout her life in so many ways, it is with great pleasure that we have awarded her our branch's prestigious Susan B. Anthony Award.

### **2024 Named Grant Recipients: MARCIA CAMERON & NANCY LAMIA**

Both our honorees are hardworking AAUW members who have contributed hours of tireless work for our branch. Marcia volunteered to start our website 20 years ago. When she asked for help, Nancy stepped right up, and together they have made a fantastic team.

### **Nominated for**

#### **AAUW-IL Agent of Change: JENNIFER FORD**

Though our Awards Committee knew that the state's committee might be reluctant to give this award to a member of our branch two years in a row (Marlene received it last year), they felt that Jennifer was so deserving that they'd chance it, for if a nominee is not awarded it one year, her name may be resubmitted for another. And Jennifer's name certainly will be, for though she did not receive it this year, she certainly deserves to receive it in a coming year.

### **Nominated for**

#### **YWCA Elgin's 2024 Leadership Award in Social Service: MARLENE DAUBERT**

Marlene's work is woven into the fabric of many institutions in Elgin. "I felt this call on my heart to walk with people [children and adults] in challenging times in their lives," she says. Her leadership style encompasses consistency, integrity and a search for opportunities to build bridges with all people. Congratulations to Marlene for all of her contributions to Elgin and beyond. Though she did not receive the award, she is still a winner.

## BRANCH SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENTS

When Gail Cohen, Emily Navin, Mary Navin, Rachel Campbell, Vivienne Bailey and Carol Wieg met to read the applications for our branch's 2024 AAUW scholarships, they were elated, for they had received 17 applications, the most ever in recent years. Below are the two young women selected for \$1,000 scholarships.

**Alexa Del Toro**, the recipient of the **Betty Meaderis Scholarship**, is a first-generation college student who will be starting her sophomore year at Aurora University this fall, continuing in her double major of Business Administration and Health Science. Her ultimate goal is to become a dentist. She is using her real estate license to help her finance some of her schooling.

**Laila Nasser**, the recipient of our **Legacy Scholarship**, will be returning to Harper College this fall, majoring in Earth and Environmental Science. In addition to her academic studies, she is in the Navy Reserves. She hopes that some of the military benefits she receives will aid her financially when she transfers to a four-year institution.

## AAUW-IL STATE CONVENTION OBSERVATIONS

**from the May 15 issue of AAUW Illinois Connection:**

“The choice to hold this convention in Elgin was primarily driven by the beautiful setting and resources, including the amazing tech capabilities available at [its] community college. As a very important secondary reason, we knew that the Elgin Area AAUW branch would support these efforts. They did not disappoint—[their] members organized the table set ups, the registration process, the lunch trivia game, speaker suggestions, and so much more.”

**from Linda Youngren:** We are proud of the the above comments from our AAUW-IL convention planners as well as the fact that 20 of our members were in attendance. We especially acknowledge Jennifer Ford for providing a last-minute program; Cathy Malm for coordinating the branch tables and organizing the display for our branch; Patty Harkin, Ruth Bradburn, Jennifer Ford and Mary Ellen Barbezat for handling the registration table; Barbara Evans for supplying and staffing the “Welcome to Elgin” table; Renee Skrabacz for supplying ECC pens and note pads; Bonnie Hill for adding Fisher Nuts coupons; and Sue Schulz for coordinating the luncheon ice-breaker questions and finding a way to gift our remaining 100th anniversary t-shirts. Great job, ladies!

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**from Cathy Malm:** I volunteered to field requests for the branch tables but was surprised to have only eleven requests for them because *seeing* some of the causes that other branches are involved in is interesting.

**from Ruth Bradburn:** "Best Practices in Programs, Engaging Members and Fundraising" in the convention program booklet was chock full of information from a variety of branches. The reports ranged from those downsizing to social meetings and a book group to those adding special interest groups, such as a study group on aging and a Great Decisions group run through the Foreign Policy Association. Joint meetings with other branches and organizations were detailed as well.

Fund raising was also one of the topics in the breakout session I attended. Discussed, too, was the need to make leadership roles less cumbersome. Offering a zoom link to programs was touted as a means to engage all members.

**from Shirley May Byrnes:** Keynote speaker Dr. Suzanne M. Chod noted that whereas political parties used to have the same goals but different ways to reach them, now their platforms identify differences and drive us apart. She then spoke about ways that keep us polarized. One of them is via disinformation. In contrast with misinformation in which a speaker erroneously thinks what s/he's saying is true, with disinformation s/he knows it's not true, but says it anyway. This is purposeful, dangerous and spreads ten times faster than factual reporting because it creates anxiety, fear and anger. Dr. Chod also gave ways to counter disinformation.

The Batavia-Geneva-St. Charles Branch presented the Dignity Index. The issue isn't that we disagree; it's how we disagree. Developed in 2019, the index rates speech and identifies how to go from reacting with contempt to treating one with whom one disagrees with dignity.

**from Rita Shaw:** My appreciation of AAUW has so increased with my first attendance at a state convention. The speakers were very relevant to the times. The Dignity Index material is something I am keeping close at hand to remind me about my words. Given the polarity we are experiencing all around, perhaps we should consider doing a local program on the Dignity Index.

**from Renee Skrabacz:** As a first time attendee of the convention, I really did not know what to expect. It turned out to be a wonderful experience for me! Our branch members in attendance went out of their way to make me feel very welcome. What really stuck with me is what Jennifer [Ford] said during her presentation. I am paraphrasing here: *We are not going to solve hunger or poverty, but we all can help, even in the smallest ways.*

*continued*

With my job and being a single mom, it is hard to get involved with everything I want to do, but Jennifer is right: there are ways for me to be active in the Elgin community and to make a small impact.

**from Jennifer Ford:** After hearing Dr. Suzanne Chad talk about misinformation and disinformation, after hearing Meghan Kissell encourage members to participate in “It’s Your Vote,” and after listening to Pat Chamberlain reveal the extent of women and children trying to survive poverty, my takeaway from the convention is EDUCATE, ADVOCATE, VOTE!!!!

**from Barbara Evans:** Recognized at the convention were the Illinois members of AAUW's Legacy Circle, which included Rachel Campbell, Karen Paterson and Shirley May Byrnes from our branch. This served as a reminder that AAUW National provides members with the means to make a planned gift to the organization via wills, trusts, insurance policies or IRAs, to cite a few. As there is no minimum dollar requirement for gifts and membership in the Legacy Circle, I would encourage you to read the detailed brochure at <https://www.aauw.org/app/uploads/2020/02/Legacy-Circle-Brochure-nsa.pdf>

## OPEN-MEMBERSHIP ELECTION RESULT

On the ballot for this year's AAUW National's election was the proposal to drop the degree requirement for membership in AAUW. To pass, 2/3rds (66.6%) of the membership needed to vote in favor of it. Only 65.1% did, however. With it just shy of passing, it is not improbable that the proposal will be introduced again in two years. Worth noting is that in Illinois, 70% voted in favor of it.

## MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE

**Stay Connected!** Have you unsubscribed from any email from AAUW National, such as messages from CEO Gloria Blackwell? If so, you were unsubscribed from all and are missing all the latest news, webinars and opportunities from national. To resubscribe, go to [aauw.us/emailoptions](http://aauw.us/emailoptions).

And please welcome our newest member, **Brenda Rogers**, who earned her B.A. from Judson University. Brenda currently resides in Elgin and works as a realtor. With her previous real estate company, she consistently ranked in the top 10% nationwide and has won the title of "Sales-person of the Month" several times. Apart from work, Brenda enjoys traveling.

## FOR OUR 2024-2025 YEARBOOK

from Marti Jernberg

As Yearbook Editor, **I would appreciate receiving all information** from study group leaders, board members, and members **by the end of July**. If anyone is unable to meet this deadline, please contact me beforehand and I will try to accommodate you.

To ensure accuracy, please don't phone in your information; instead, send it to me via email *with as little formatting as possible*. It can be placed in the body of the email or in an attachment or, if you send me the link, shared via Google Docs.

**Board members & Interest Group Leaders:** Look at the pages you are responsible for and notify me of any changes that are needed. (If you are new to the position and don't know what pages you have, I will be glad to let you know.) If no changes are needed, please send me an email saying so. That way I won't have to spend time tracking you down.

**Members:** Check your personal information in our current yearbook. Notify both me and Membership's Cathy Malm if anything has changed or is incorrect.

## WOMEN AND CULTURE

from Barbara Evans

The focus of our June 27th gathering at my home will be on extraordinary international—i.e., non-American—women of the 21st century. Various members will introduce a sampling of these women to the rest via brief (5 min. max) presentations.

But where to start? Attached to the email with this newsletter is a list intended to give you some ideas of women for whom information is available. You are not limited to those on it. So that duplicates can be avoided, if you are willing to give a brief presentation, please give me the woman's name.

Though you don't have to be a presenter to attend on June 27, I'd still appreciate you letting me know that you'll be coming so that I have an estimate of how many chairs I'll need and how many Brandy Ices to make.

## **A RECAP OF OUR PROGRAM ON BOOK BANNING** by Shirley May Byrnes

Joyce McIntosh of the American Library Association's Freedom to Read Foundation stated that censorship is any attempt to restrict materials or free speech. In 2022, 2,471 titles were challenged; in 2023, 4,240 titles were. There has been an increase in organized groups targeting school and library boards. Social media has fueled challenges to predominately diverse content and authors.

In cases that have been adjudicated, judges have deemed that a book must be evaluated as a whole rather than just on selected passages. And to be ruled "pornographic" or "obscene" or "harmful to minors", a book must meet delineated legal criteria. So far no books have, and judges are upholding the First Amendment.

Librarians are guided in material selection by the ALA's Library Bill of Rights first adopted in 1939 and since amended. It asserts that "reading materials should not be proscribed, removed or restricted because of partisan or personal disapproval."

When Illinois' HB2789 became effective on January 1 of this year, our state became the first in the nation to in essence ban book banning by establishing that libraries will only be eligible for state-funded grants if they adopt the ALA's Library Bill of Rights.

Emily Vinci of Schaumburg Township Public Library talked about their book selection policy which is available on their website. They also have a reconsideration form and process available. Typically, she said, books are challenged because of specific passages, not the book as a whole. If a book is on a library shelf, it doesn't mean that the staff agrees with it. It is the parents' responsibility for what their children read, not the library staff's. Sarah from Gail Borden Public Library said that it's important that readers see themselves in books.

Ms. McIntosh noted that *United Against Book Bans.org* is a nationwide, non-partisan grassroots organization that provides a challenge tool kit with talking points for those fighting book bans. (Most schools have an opt-out option for parents who object to titles on a reading list.)

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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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### **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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