

AAUW TIMES

Elgin Area Branch

Established in 1920

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Email: aauw.il.elgin@gmail.com

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

Gretchen S. Vapner
COMMUNITY CRISIS CENTER
Saturday, February 15, 1:00 p.m.
Elgin Township Bldg.

Founded in 1975 and now located in Elgin's former Franklin Elementary School, this is one of the oldest domestic violence shelters in the state of Illinois. Maureen Manning, director of the agency, will speak about the history of the shelter and its mission to provide safety, hope, advocacy, respite and education to those impacted by domestic violence.

OTHER FEBRUARY EVENTS

- 5: Current Movie Discussion Group, 4:30 p.m.**
The Grumpy Goat, Elgin
A variety of movies recommended by members
- 10: Great Books, 7:00 p.m.**
Gail Borden Public Library, Elgin + Zoom
Gilgamesh, trans. Stephen Mitchell
- 13: Morning Book Group, 9:30 a.m.**
Gail Borden Public Library, Elgin
An Immense World, Ed Yong
- 17: Political Engagement Meeting, 2 p.m.**
Hostess: Sue Schulz
- 17: Needlework Group, 1:00 p.m.**
Hostess: Patty Harkin
- 20: Women and Culture, 1:00 p.m.**
Hostess: Patty Harkin
Celebrating Illinois Women
- 26: Evening Book Group, 7:00 p.m.**
Hostess: Barbara Evans
The Sewing Girl's Tale, J. S. Sweet

Save the Date

The AAUW-IL State Convention is scheduled for April 25-26 at the Northfield Inn in Springfield.

NATIVE AMERICAN WOMEN
IN AMERICAN CULTURE
Saturday, March 15, 12:00 p.m.
Elgin History Museum, 360 Park St.

To celebrate both National Women's History Month and International Women's Day, we will gather to hear Kim Sigafus—award-winning Ojibwa author of Native American fiction and non-fiction—speak about the importance of Native American women in our culture. She will also sing and drum to introduce us to Native American music.

Co-sponsor: LWV Elgin Area

OTHER MARCH EVENTS

- 5: Current Movie Discussion Group, 4:30 p.m.**
The Grumpy Goat, Elgin
Movie TBA
- 8: International Women's Day**
- 8: Women's Business/Career Fair, 1:30-3:30 p.m.**
Gail Borden Public Library, Elgin
- 10: Branch Board Meeting, 6:30 p.m.**
Hostess: Judi Tepe
- 10: Great Books, 7:00 p.m.**
Gail Borden Public Library, Elgin + Zoom
The Mystery of Edwin Drood, Charles Dickens
- 13: Morning Book Group, 9:30 a.m.**
Gail Borden Public Library, Elgin
The River We Remember: A Novel, Wm. K. Krueger
- 17: Needlework Group, 1:00 p.m.**
Hostess: Patty Harkin
- 22: Women and Culture, 1:00 p.m.**
Place/Program TBA
- 26: Evening Book Group, 7:00 p.m.**
Hostess: Kathrin Rudland
The River We Remember: A Novel, Wm. K. Krueger

THE CO-PRESIDENTS' MESSAGE

from Jennifer Ford

We celebrated the end of the year at Elgin Country Club, enjoying the surroundings, the music provided by Nancy Lamia and Sharon LeCount, the food and the company. Food For Greater Elgin Board Chair Rachel Traficanti, who attended our luncheon, thanked us for once again "investing in the fight against hunger." And our members were generous, for we donated almost \$900 to the food pantry.

In January, we heard an excellent presentation from our S.T.E.M. Chair Renee Skrabacz. And thanks to the hard work of the Program and Women & Culture Committees, we have more excellent programs for February and March.

Judi must have done an outstanding job of completing AAUW's Five Star survey because we are proud to announce that we received a One Star designation. Congratulations to all of you for your interest and hard work in fulfilling the mission of AAUW. Incidentally, members are reporting how easy it is to use AAUW's 2-Minute Activist. Keep up the good work.

We are reaching out into the community. At the next Elgin Hispanic Network luncheon, Rachel, Mary N, and I will distribute flyers advertising the availability of our scholarships to women. The League of Women Voters is co-sponsoring our March program at Elgin History Museum. The Political Engagement committee is working with several local agencies protecting Elgin's immigrant population. We sponsored a table at the Martin Luther King Breakfast. Renee Skrabacz invited Judi and me to speak to the American Association of Women in Community Colleges at their March brown bag lunch.

At a date TBA, Phil Schneider, librarian at GBPL, will be offering a session of Device Advice (and other computer, phone, or I-Pad questions) geared specifically to AAUW members' needs.

Winter offers its challenges, but Judi and I are excited about the upcoming events in our branch. Hope to see many (we mean all) of you at them. And don't forget: bring a friend.

PUBLIC POLICY / POLITICAL ENGAGEMENT from Sue Schulz & Gail Cohen

After participating in the "National AAUW Priorities in Light of the Recent Election" zoom, which highlighted the historical challenges we will be facing, a number of our members came together to brainstorm about how we will move forward. After an engaging session, we established the following as immediate priorities.

continued

•**Encouraging all members to participate in the AAUW 2-Minute Activist** to stay current with the issues that concern AAUW as well as to make our voices heard. If you have not yet signed up for it, go to AAUW.org then click on TAKE ACTION and follow the instructions.

•**Focusing on immigration**, which will undoubtedly affect people in our community: We have been going to local organizations to learn what they are doing in regard to this concern and what our branch can do to help. At our upcoming planning meeting, we will share what we have learned so that we can make some decisions about what we as a branch can do. *All are welcome and encouraged to attend this meeting*, which will be held on February 17th at 2 p.m. at Sue's home.

•**Networking with area AAUW branches:** We have reached out to the Aurora, Schaumburg, Rockford and Tri-City branches to learn if they are organizing to politically engage and if so, on what issues that are important to their communities. There is enthusiasm in these branches for working together and sharing resources.

As National has clearly stated and encouraged, **it will take all of us.** The array of challenges we will face in the future may feel overwhelming; we need to focus on the areas in which we can be most successful. And we need to partner with other like-minded organizations that share our mission.

SCHOLARSHIP COMMITTEE

from Carol Wieg & Vivienne Bailey

At our upcoming May banquet, our branch will award two scholarships of \$1,000 each, one of which is designated for a woman of color. To qualify, an applicant must meet the following criteria:

- Be a female who will be at least 19 yrs. old by the application deadline;
- Be pursuing her post-secondary education and have completed at least 12 semester hours at an accredited college or university;
- Have a grade point average of at least 2.5;
- Live within a 50-mile radius of Elgin.

Please encourage any you know who meet the above criteria to apply. Applications may be found at elginarea-il.aauw.net under the subheading of Scholarships. They are also available at Gail Borden Public Library or can be accessed through the financial aid offices of ECC, Judson University, Harper University, Aurora University and NIU.

All applications must be postmarked by April 1, 2025 or emailed to the Scholarship Committee by April 3, 2025. Official transcripts must be received no later than April 15, 2025.

MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE

from Cathy Malm

Membership for the Elgin Area branch now numbers 95. If you have friends who are interested in joining us, please give them an application from our website.

We are delighted to have **Janet Ellingson**—a graduate of the U of IL Urbana-Champaign and the IIT Chicago-Kent College of Law—join our branch. She has been practicing law for over three decades, offering estate transactions & planning, business services, personal injury and family law. She is dedicated to giving back to the community through her legal expertise and active involvement in local initiatives.

CELEBRATING ILLINOIS WOMEN

from Rachel Campbell

Illinois has been the birthplace of many women who have made significant contributions to society, the arts and sciences. At our **Women & Culture** gathering in February, I will identify a few of these women and what they accomplished. *Though not required*, it would be fun if each of you attending would bring the name of an Illinois woman you admire who has made a significant contribution. The only caveat is that she must be native to Illinois though not necessarily a life-long resident.

To start off the meeting, there will be a quiz. But it won't be difficult as I'm sure all of us will recognize some if not many of these Illinois women. So please plan to join us at Patty Harkin's home on Thursday, Feb. 20 at 1:00 p.m.

FUNDRAISING

from Carol Wieg & Vivienne Bailey

Because our branch's two major fundraisers, the garden walk and garage sales, are no longer viable, we have had a donation jar at our meetings, primarily to bolster the scholarship fund but also to help with our branch's operating expenses.

While our members have been most generous, we have begun investigating other fundraising possibilities.

We also suggested meeting with Carol Gieske of Elgin's Chamber of Commerce to learn how non-profit community organizations can work with the Chamber.

Finally, in preparation for a yet unscheduled meeting, we would ask all our members to review the AAUW National Fundraising Guidelines and FAQs at aauw.org/resources/member/leader-resources-tools/state-branch/fundraising-policies-what-members-need-to-know.

TO ENCOURAGE CAREERS IN S.T.E.M.

In the final slide of her informative presentation, **Renee Skrabacz** listed the following as actions organizations such as AAUW could take on behalf of women:

- Advocate for equal access to education and professional development opportunities for individuals of all genders;
- Support the development and implementation of national and institutional policies that promote gender equality in science;
- Foster critical discussions on how gender bias can influence scientific research and identify strategies to overcome these biases;
- Provide mentorship programs to guide and support under-privileged groups in their scientific careers;
- Highlight and celebrate the contributions of women scientists, offering role models and inspiration for future generations.

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.
