



ILLINOIS LINK

**American Association of University Women – Illinois, Inc.
Fall, 2020 – Number 310**

Message from the President

Lisa Cherry



I hope this message finds you and your families well - a simple greeting that I don't think I have ever used more frequently or meant more sincerely than in these past months. As with all organizations, we have had to make adjustments at all levels of AAUW. I know branches are challenged with presenting programs, fundraising and outreach to members and the community. Your State Board of Directors is focused on ways to assist you in this "no face to face contact, pre-vaccine" time. Obviously, there will be no Fall Conferences, the topic that would normally dominate this issue. While it is still difficult to predict what, if any, gatherings might be held in spring, we are currently planning a State Convention virtual event. I do think that it has probably never been more important that we stay in touch and connected in this difficult time. Let us know how we can help!

As the 2020 Election Day approaches, AAUW policy reminds us to consider candidates through the lens of six key gender equity issues: Voting Access, Pay Equity, Paid Sick and Family Leave, College Affordability, Campus Sexual Harassment and Violence, Healthcare Access and Reproductive Rights. Many of you are working in voter registration, GOTV and in eliminating voting restrictions and suppression. Nothing could be more important this fall. I am grateful for your efforts!

This is a rare time indeed. Along with a pandemic and an economic recession, an urgent national conversation about racial equity has emerged. AAUW National recently posted a press release condemning systemic racism and committing to fighting for justice and long-term, lasting change. I am already aware of branch commitments to "walk the talk" and look forward to hearing much more and participating in this ongoing learning experience and action mission.

Finally, congratulations to branches as they earn stars while supporting AAUW priorities in meaningful and innovative ways. Schaumburg Branch leads the way in Illinois with Five-Star status!

Thanks for all you do to empower women and girls. And be well!

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2020 AGENT OF CHANGE

AMY JO (AJ) CONROY

Amy Jo (AJ) Conroy of the Chicago, Inc. Branch was honored as our AAUW-IL 2020 Agent of Change recipient. Normally, this would have been announced at our State Convention. AJ has demonstrated outstanding commitment to the AAUW mission in a variety of ways over the past few years. She serves as the Public Policy officer of her branch and has made a significant impact on public policy issues in both the city of Chicago and the state of Illinois. Specifically, she has:



AJ testifying in Springfield in 2017

- Planned and implemented the showing of the “Equal Means Equal” documentary for the August 2016 launch in Chicago, including securing a viewing location and spearheading the fund-raising campaign to subsidize it – More than 100 women attended
- Provided sustained support for ratification of the ERA in Illinois over a period of years, including important database analysis, a Letter to the Editor in the *Chicago Tribune* (September 2016) and another in the *Chicago Sun Times* (September 2018)
- Spearheaded the effort to produce an ERA Coloring Book for 6-8th graders (2018)
- Coordinated a series of WorkSmart workshops in conjunction with LUNA and various hosting organizations such as the YWCA (2017-2018)
- Actively promoted a resolution to rename a portion of Chicago’s Congress Parkway to commemorate anti-lynching activist Ida B. Wells (Spring-Summer 2018)
- Served on the organizing committee for the Chicago’s Equal Pay Day Rally (multiple years)
- Consistently applied pressure on the Chicago Public School System to enhance their Title IX resources in light of the sexual harassment crisis made public by the Chicago Tribune (2018-2019)
- Hosted a table at the Young Feminist Conference “Cause the Effect Chicago” (Nov 2019) attended by more than 300 high school and college girls
- Organized multiple Edit-a-thons to promote the inclusion of Illinois women in Wikipedia (2019)

AJ proudly displays her AAUW membership button wherever she goes. For many of the activities mentioned above, she was the AAUW representative on coordinated efforts among multiple women’s organizations. When the League of Women Voters sponsored a mayoral debate in Spring 2019, AJ made sure that AAUW was one of the organizations that got to submit one of the coveted questions for the debate. The series of WorkSmart events held in Chicago gave AAUW a big publicity boost in the community. AJ represents the future of AAUW. Her enthusiasm for advocating for gender equality is unparalleled, and she never hesitates to take action when it’s needed.

Congratulations, AJ!

History of the Agent of Change Award

The Agent of Change Award was instituted in 1984 by the Board of Directors of the Illinois State Division, now AAUW-IL, Inc. This prestigious award is presented annually to an AAUW member who has served as a catalyst to bring about positive societal change and visibility to AAUW. The District Directors are charged with selecting the Awardee from nominations submitted by AAUW-IL branches.

All efforts that relate to AAUW's missions will be considered, with special emphasis placed on activities that relate to current AAUW priorities and initiatives. For example, individuals who have actively promoted change in the areas of education, equity, advocacy, philanthropy, and/or public policy, and have brought visibility to AAUW, should be among those considered as nominees for this prestigious award.

2021 AGENT OF CHANGE AWARD

The process for selecting our next recipient for this prestigious award will begin in January 2021. The nomination form will be available for download on the state website. The deadline for nominations will be March 1, 2021. **Conversations regarding possible candidates should not be delayed.** Nominees should be outstanding models who have actively promoted change in education, equity, diversity, and/or public policy. The nominee's accomplishments should show direct involvement with the member's branch and/or other AAUW national initiatives.

This award emphasizes promotion of AAUW's mission and purpose as well as bringing visibility to AAUW.

- Nominations may come from individual members or branch boards.
- Current AAUW board members may be nominated.
- There is no longer a "during the past year" requirement for accomplishments.
- Individual members or branch boards may resubmit previously-nominated individuals.

For more information, please contact Donna Jean Simon, Director, AAUW-IL North:

djsimon@questillc.com or 630-248-2213.



AAUW-IL Public Policy Update

**Tracey Sherman-Falcon and Paula Purdue
Public Policy Co-Directors**



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Welcome back to AAUW public policy during a pandemic.

We are sure that you are following the news and understand how important women are in the election on Tuesday, Nov. 3rd. The news is all about how women will be an important part of who gets elected. Now, we have known for decades that women are smart and powerful BUT isn't it wonderful to be talked about as powerful? Public Policy is the way women achieved the right to vote and Public Policy is how we will achieve Pay Equity, the ERA, and Paid Family Leave. Our mission cannot happen without Public Policy. We are excited about increasing the power of women AND bringing attention to the issues important to empowering women and girls of all colors. You, our members, leaders and public policy chairs, are so important to achieving our very important goals.

One of the ways that we gain power is by passing of the Fair Tax Act. AAUW - Illinois supports the Fair Tax. By passing the Fair Tax Act, the state of Illinois will have resources to fund pensions and increase funding for public education for all children. Passing the Fair Tax will cost more money for those that are making more than \$250,000. Depending on one's income, some taxes will be reduced. Instead of paying a flat 5% on income, folks will pay less with a lower income and more with a higher income that is why it is called a Fair Tax.

AAUW, like other organizations, is using Zoom for meetings. The advantage of using Zoom is that you can be anywhere in the state of Illinois and still participate. For example, there have been many virtual presentations on Women's Suffrage, the Illinois Fair Tax, and candidate forums. Most recently, our AAUW Chicago Branch had a presentation with our lobbyist Jenni Purdue and IL State Representative Ann Williams, and our Jane Addams Branch presented on Get Out the Vote. We encourage you to participate in these virtual meetings, whether put on by AAUW, your local library or another organization. Be informed and stay engaged.

What's your plan for our upcoming election? Voting early, mail-in voting, safely voting on November 3rd? Don't delay! Make your plan today! Encourage your friends, neighbors and family to vote and to vote yes for the Fair Tax.

When the Illinois legislature meets again, we will keep you informed on what we need from you to encourage our legislators to create a better world for women and girls of all colors.



Sally Vogl
Co-Membership VP

Membership Matters



Nann Hilyard
Co-Membership VP

There's no denying we're in a most unusual year for AAUW. It's hardly news that the distancing brought on by the epidemic will present unique challenges when it comes to recruiting new members to our branches. Limiting in-person activities to a bare minimum means that branches' media outreach takes on special importance in making others aware of our mission and of all the good reasons there are for joining AAUW.

Guess what! By attending to the public "face" of your branch, you can earn the star for Communications and External Relations under the Five-Star National Recognition Program currently underway. Here are the criteria branches are challenged to meet in order to earn that star:

All existing websites and social media presences include an Economic Security Focus and AAUW Work Smart Online. (Note: Monthly posts are required for social media; Work Smart Online must be included on the website home page.)

By aligning your social media presence with AAUW's strategic plan in this way, you can kill two birds with one stone, as it were: 1) reaching out to like-minded women who share our interest in equity and 2) garnering a bit of recognition for your efforts.

We encourage all branches to consider this national program not as a competition but rather as a means of focusing their efforts and adding to their strength. We know that attainment of all five stars may not be feasible for all branches, but choosing one or several that fit with your branch's profile can help attract potential members, among other benefits.

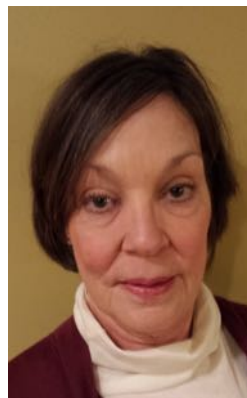
While we're on the subject, many congratulations to the Schaumburg Branch for earning all five stars! This by a branch with fewer than 25 members – food for thought for AAUW everywhere around the state, indeed.

We'd love to hear about your choice of stars, and we'd especially love to share with other branches the locally tailored approaches you identify for achieving them. Our goal as Membership Vice-Presidents is to support you in any way we can, and sharing useful information (i.e., bragging on your successes) is one thing we'd be happy to do. Meanwhile, we'll be working with Directors Donna Jean Simon (North) and Marcia Wherry (South) to learn about your particular issues and challenges and see how we can be of service.

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Laura Desmarais AAUW Funds Director



Donating to National AAUW

AAUW has worked hard the last couple of years to develop a strategic plan that supports our mission to strive for an equitable future for women as well as to provide financial stability for the organization as a whole. There are a number of ways Branches and Individuals can support national in these efforts.

As we all know, AAUW relies on our members' financial support to help drive our mission to provide equity for all women. AAUW has worked hard the last couple of years to refine its strategic plan. A major goal throughout this process was to ensure financial stability for the organization as a whole. As membership is declining, AAUW is reaching out to Corporations who have a willingness to partner in meeting our mission objectives. At the Branch level, all this change has been confusing at times.

There are a number of ways Branches and Individuals can support National's efforts:

Greatest Needs Fund

This fund supports National's efforts to provide equity programming for women outside the Fellowships and Grants program. Such things as salary negotiation and career support initiatives, leadership training at the college level (NCCWSL), and gender and salary equity, to name a few. The updated website clearly describes these programs, which are geared toward increasing awareness of the effect gender bias has on all women. You can donate to the Greatest Needs Fund, or specify which category within this fund you would like to support. When you donate to the Greatest Needs Fund, AAUW has the flexibility to support the program that is most in need of funds at the time. It could be an effort to meet a matching grant, to support a Branch's effort to provide Work Smart programming, or for membership outreach. This is a general fund that has many priority spending objectives.

Fellowships and Grants

The new AAUW website has updated information regarding Fellowships and Grants. The funding options are clearly defined. In the 2020-2021 academic year AAUW awarded \$3.5 million in fellowships and grants. A total of 259 awards were made to women and projects domestically and internationally. You can search the Fellowships and Grants section of the website to locate the names of those who have received these fellowships and grants.

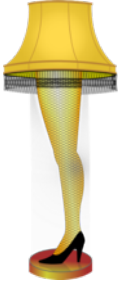
As the State Funding Chair, I am glad to answer questions regarding options for supporting AAUW. I can be reached at lkdesmarais@gmail.com.



GRANT MONEY for AAUW Branches is AVAILABLE!

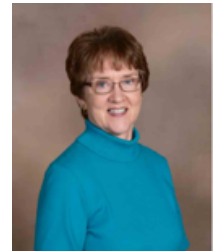


Since 2015, AAUW-IL, Inc. has awarded 27 Local Engagement Grants (LEG), 2 Start Smart Grants, and 3 Work Start Grants. All three types of grants are still available.



Does your AAUW Branch have an idea for a program or activity, but need some help with funding? Apply for a grant. LEG grants are intended to help branches fund programs and activities that promote and reflect the mission of AAUW. The simple application forms can be downloaded from the website at <http://aauw-il.aauw.net/grants-for-branches/>. Applications for Start Smart and Work Smart Grants are also on that website. Applications can be submitted any time during the year and will be acted on within 30 days.

Questions? Contact Carolyn Schjelderup at cs_schj@yahoo.com.



AAUW-IL Districts Realigned

With the recent realignment of AAUW-IL districts and our appointments as directors for the Northern District (formerly Districts 4 and 5) – Donna Jean, and the Southern District (formerly Districts 1, 2, and 3) – Marcia, we are initiating our communications with our branch Presidents with an initial survey to each Branch President. Our intent is to gain a comprehensive view of the Presidents and the challenges they face as well as the successes that have been accomplished in this very unusual and unique time. Branch Presidents will be asked to complete and return the survey to Donna Jean for Northern branches and Marcia for Southern branches. This survey will be coming out in the next several weeks.

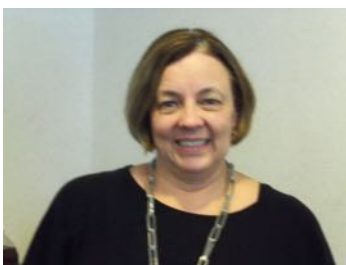
Our intent and focus is to have regular contact with branch leadership in order to share ideas and concerns. Since the vast majority of contacts during the COVID-19 pandemic are via Zoom, our discussions will be virtual rather than the in-person contacts we formerly had at Fall Conferences and Branch meetings. We also intend to open a Google Group in order to facilitate communications among the branches and Presidents. Please feel free to send us your thoughts, concerns, ideas, and suggestions.



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Bylaws and Policy

Andi Danis, Director

Bylaws and Policy.... hmmm.... doesn't sound very exciting, right? They may not be exciting, but they are important! These documents make sure your organization operates effectively and efficiently. So, what is the difference between bylaws and a policy book... and do branches need both?

Did you know the term bylaws was first used in 1283?! It was recorded as referring to a body of customs as a village or manor. Now we more simply define bylaws as the written regulations by which an organization operates. And in fact, an organization does not even formally exist until a set of bylaws have been adopted. Bylaws are drawn up by the founding board or committee and can only be approved and changed by a vote (usually two-thirds) of the full membership. Bylaws normally cover matters relating to the basic structure of the organization, officer and board practices, and how financial and other assets are handled.

A policy document, on the other hand, is normally written and approved by the board and can be changed by the board with or without a vote by the general membership. A policy book (or document) supplements the bylaws by going into greater detail on the operations of the organization. Bylaws take precedent over policies, and policies cannot conflict with the bylaws.

Organizations are not required to have a policy document and many smaller groups do not. However, if your small group starts to expand, or is involved in many different activities, it may be helpful to clarify "accepted operating procedures" in a policy document.

Now.... you might think that once you develop your bylaws and policy document, you don't have to look at them ever again, right? Not so fast.... you do need to review your bylaws periodically. As part of a larger organization, your AAUW branch bylaws must comply with your AAUW state bylaws, both of which must comply with AAUW, Inc.'s bylaws. If the state and/or national bylaws change, then it may require a change in your branch bylaws to stay in compliance. At this moment, all branches and AAUW affiliates in Illinois are in compliance. If that changes, I will let you know, and we will work on your documents together.

You also want to make sure that your bylaws and policy document are still working for your branch. In other words – are they still allowing you to operate smoothly and effectively considering current or changed events. For example: many branches have mandated that certain officers be elected for your branch to exist. But we also know that finding members willing to take on leadership roles is becoming harder, and we may not be able to fill all those mandated positions. Actually, AAUW, Inc. only requires two officers: a president and a financial officer. Other areas can be simplified as well, such as number of meetings required, the minimum level for a quorum, etc. You can operate lighter and smarter and.... I CAN HELP!

Since Covid so rudely interrupted us, we are having to operate differently, and that might mean we need different rules. I am available to help sort it all out! I can offer suggestions to operate with more flexibility. I can answer (or get the answer to) any questions that you have about your branch bylaws and policies. I am here to help - just let me know what I can do for you!

Call for Nominations for State Officers

Jennifer Urish, Nominating Committee Chair



It is time again to think about the officers that will lead AAUW-IL into the future by serving on the AAUW-IL State Board.

Nominations are now being accepted for:

- » **President-Elect** (state board experience required)
- » **Membership Vice President** (state board experience required)
- » **Secretary**

Nominating Committee for 2020-2022

Chair	Jennifer Urish	jenniferurish@gmail.com
	Cindy Grau	cgrau8@gmail.com
	Linda Knogl	l.knoglaltonwood2018@gmail.com
	Lori Switzer	switzer99@att.net

Please contact any of the above members if you know of someone who you think would be a great fit for the one of the open positions, including yourself. **Nominations are due to the committee by November 30, 2020.**

Your 2020-2021 AAUW-IL State Board



College/University Relations

Ruth Holst, C/U Director



Activity involving the AAUW College and University Partner members has been almost absent during the 2020 pandemic, as institutions of higher education deal with issues about maintaining a safe environment for students to return to campus. As of September 23rd, only five Illinois C/U Partners have renewed for the 2020-2021 fiscal year. My main activity will be to contact former members to encourage them to renew. I will also be monitoring what actions (if any) the National Association takes to engage C/U Partners.



Remembering Supreme Court
Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg

AAUW Opposes Timing, Choice
of Nominee for U.S. Supreme Court

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AAUW-IL Link

Published twice annually by
the American Association of
University Women-Illinois, Inc.



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