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President's Message

How can it be mid-August already? In my neighborhood, children are already starting back to school.

During July and August, the State Board has been involved in Strategic Planning and Direction Setting. We will share our results with you in the September *Connection*.

As many of you have discovered and shared with me, the **Community Hub** has not yet lived up to its promises. Like you, the state board is struggling to access the information it needs. While the staff at national has been working hard to get the new project completed, the obstacles have been complex and difficult to address. Normally, the state Directory would have been completed and provided to you on the website. We cannot complete it because of these difficulties with the Community Hub. We hope that this will be rectified soon.

ByLaws are required to be updated every five years. For guidance on how to do this, see the article in this issue, from Andi Danis, who is the Director of ByLaws and Policy.

The **Five-Star Program** for 2022 ended on July 31 and the program restarts this month. The Schaumburg branch, one of the Illinois Five-Star Recipients, shares their experiences in this issue. We hope this will inspire you to work with your branch colleagues to become a Five-Star branch.

The **Public Policy** Chairs are initiating a new opportunity for collaboration and community engagement. This involves working with our local school district boards and other like-minded organizations who share

Other highlights in this issue are an article by **Karen Ackerman Witter** from the Springfield Branch about the newest Illinois Supreme Court Justice, and some information about the benefits of the College/University relationship from **Ruth Holst**, C/U Director on the State Board.

The **Jane Addams branch** provides programs that can be accessed state-wide. See their latest invitation below or go to their website for a list of programs and how to access them at janeaddams-il.aauw.net.

Upcoming events

8/18 – Branch Presidents Zoom Meeting

8/25 – “Building Bridges of Inclusion” workshop sponsored by the Jane Addams branch

8/27 – Springfield branch Kick-off meeting

9/24 – Statewide Fall Leadership Development Conference on Zoom (Watch for Registration Information)

Connection is published the 15th of every month. If you would like your branch event or program to be listed, please make sure you provide that information prior to that date to our editor, Jennifer Urish at jenniferurish@gmail.com.

Wishing you well, Donna Jean

Bylaws Update

I am starting my second term as Bylaws and Policy Chair and thinking about what these next two years will look like...

These past two years have been taken up with reviewing and amending the State Bylaws and undertaking a long-overdue revision of our State Board Policy Book. In between working on those, I was pleased to help many branches review and amend their own branch bylaws.

Why, you may ask, should we even look at that document if there are no changes coming from National?! Well.... YOU MAY WANT TO REVIEW YOUR BYLAWS IF:

You are operating differently today due to changes in your branch, such as fewer members, difficulty in securing leadership roles, making use of virtual technology to meet or do business.

You need flexibility as to the number of meeting or number of officers and other board positions.

Leadership turnover is more rapid than your bylaws mandate.

It has been more than five years since the last bylaws review.

Our bylaws are the operating manual for your branch and that just for your private reading registered non-profit organization with the IRS/State of Illinois, and an affiliate of a much larger nonprofit. Your branch bylaws are a legal document that dictates how your branch does business and a failure to operate according to your bylaws can have profound consequences. Since most branches are small entities, the risks seem minor, but since we are part of a much larger nonprofit, we have a larger responsibility to “follow the rules”.

At its extreme, a court of law will side with your bylaws every time if another board member, a donor, or a general member brings a dispute. But in our everyday world, it is just nice to know that our bylaws guide us in how we need to function and can even help you run lighter and smarter.

And I can help! State affiliates are tasked with assisting branches to make sure branch bylaws are in compliance with, and do not operate counter to, AAUW’s bylaws. I am happy to help review, recommend, proofread during your process. But if you have “things” under control – great! Just be sure to send me a copy of your revised bylaws for the State files, which helps us stay in compliance as well.

Contact me any time at danishouse@sbcglobal.net or 630.606.6366

Urge your local colleges and universities to join AAUW

The next time you attend a reunion of your Alma Mater or run into college officials at local events, please consider promoting membership in AAUW as a way of introducing them to a global community of more than 170,000 individual members and 800 college/university (C/U) members who support women's rights and promote the development of women for positions of leadership. For just \$175 per year, a C/U member will receive personal memberships for two representatives from the member institution. To assist you with selling the value of C/U membership, I have put a one-page document that summarizes the benefits of AAUW membership on the [state website](#).

[Ruth Holst](#), AAUW-IL College & University Relations Director

Branch News & Notes

Meet the Schaumburg Area Branch

The Schaumburg Area Branch earned the Five Star Certificate of Achievement in June 2022. Our branch is small, 22 members, but we worked together to earn this recognition.

In the summer of 2021, the branch board once again aligned our branch strategic plan with that of AAUW,

and interest groups. In turn general meetings, our book group, and our celebrating women interest group all gave attention to diversity. In addition, we committed to *Develop a Branch Diversity and Inclusion Plan*. That plan is a work in progress, however we did meet several related goals, such as *retain membership at 100%* and *Engage branch members in an activity/event that drives the AAUW mission and/or public policy agenda* which we did by distributing payday candy bars with a message on pay equity day at a local Jewel on March 15.

Being a small branch, we were not able to identify one person as our diversity chair; in turn, the branch board assumed that role for the branch. Great success with our mum sale in the fall and our bedding plant sale in the spring as well as Jewel gift card sales allowed us to increase our donation to the Greatest Needs Fund.

We in Schaumburg are proud yet humbled on this accomplishment.



Springfield Branch member Karen Ackerman Witter writes for the *Illinois Times* and has a recent article about the newest Illinois Supreme Court Justice Lisa Holder White. [Click here to read it.](#)



The **Jane Addams Branch** invites you to a Zoom Meeting: **Building Bridges of Inclusion**

When: Aug 25, 2022 07:30 - 9 PM Central Time (US and Canada)

Join us in this engaging mini workshop and explore how to use your network and influence to build bridges of inclusion and understanding. Harriet will guide our discussion with thought provoking questions for our small group discussion. Participation will help your branch understand and include diverse members. Please share this information with other branch members or anyone who would be

Workshop led by Harriet Lewis, PhD, MPA.

Dr. Harriet Lewis is the Founder and Chief Visionary Officer of Konesens Development, a boutique consultancy that supports equity and inclusion through training and support initiatives.

Advance registration is required in order to receive the Zoom login for this meeting:

https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZArd--grj0jGtTsquezRbSiG3D_Bt2Pofr-

After registering, you will receive a confirmation email containing the link to join the meeting. If you have any questions, please contact Kate Skegg, program registrar at aauwJaneAddams@gmail.com

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AAUW Missouri has invited Illinois branches to a screening of the HBO Max documentary "The Janes-heroes of abortion action before Roe."

In Spring of 1972, police raided an apartment in Chicago and seven women were arrested and charged for building an underground service for women seeking safe, affordable, illegal abortions.

"The Jane"s" screening will be at the Ethical Society in St. Louis on September 15th. at 7:00 pm- doors will open at 6:30.

Here is the link to register: <https://conta.cc/3QrT38F>

This movie is so relevant to our AAUW Public Policy advocacy following the SCOTUS decision.

A couple of important things to remember – they are NOT allowing ANY walk-ins for safety reasons. In addition, the Ethical Society requires proof of vaccination or a negative COVID test from the last 24 hours.

Please let me know if you have any questions. Hope to see many of you at the movie.

Karen Francis

President, AAUW MO

314-223-4235

If your branch has a program or recognition or an idea you'd like to share, please [email Jennifer Urish](mailto:jennifer@aauw.org) by the 14th of each month.

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