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NEW YEAR'S GREETINGS!

It would be impossible for me to wish you the best in 2022 without saying good riddance to 2021. I know I am far from alone in acknowledging how difficult the year has been for so many. I am so grateful to my wonderful colleagues on the State Board and branch leaders across Illinois for pivoting and adapting in such a challenging and ever-changing time. Thank you for never losing sight of our mission to advance gender equity for women and girls.

Speaking of our national mission, I hope you were able to join the recent webinar featuring 3 of our national leaders: Gloria Blackwell, CEO, Julia Brown, Board Chair and Malinda Gaul, Board Vice Chair.

just wait a few days and the webinar will be available on aauw.org.

I am proud to tell you that AAUW, IL, Inc. joined an Amicus Brief along 26 other organizations in Illinois, Nevada and Virginia calling for publication of the Equal Rights Amendment as 28th Amendment. The three-fourths (of states ratifying) threshold required was met but was blocked from becoming part the Constitution by a federal official. The brief (in the DC Circuit Court) demands recognition of the ERA in the US Constitution.

Rest assured that we will be monitoring safety conditions but are continuing planning for our State Convention on May 6-7. We do, however, plan to offer online voting for this year's election. This will be similar to our 2020 election, and we will use *Connection* to notify membership of the voting procedure later this spring.

Stay engaged and most importantly, please stay well!

[Lisa](#)

Agent of Change

This prestigious award is presented annually to an active member of AAUW-IL. The Nominee should be an outstanding member who has actively promoted change within the AAUW organization or local/national community.

Selection of the best candidate for the award will be based on the candidate's actions or level of support for one or more of the following activities:

- Identifying or bringing attention to a societal problem that disproportionately affects women and girls,
- Addressing a problem related to the economic security or professional advancement of women,
- Addressing an issue related to gender equity or diversity in public education or equal access to specific occupations,
- Taking action related to civil rights or social justice issues affecting women and girls,
- Taking actions that improve the ability of a state or local affiliate of AAUW to address issues of gender equity and civil rights with the community,
- Taking actions related to mission-oriented issues that raise the visibility of AAUW in the local community or at large.

Nominations may be initiated by any Branch member, Branch Board of Directors or Branch President. Multiple members may be nominated from a single Branch. Branches are encouraged to resubmit nominations, if their nominee was not selected for the Agent of Change Award that year.

announced at the Annual State Convention held each spring.

A nomination form may be found at aauw-il.aauw.net. Nominations must be emailed no later than March 1, 2022 to Marcia Wherry, Southern District Director, mjwherry@aol.com

Questions about the Agent of Change Award or about the process of submitting an application may be addressed to Marcia Wherry.

Public Policy Update

There are many changes this year to our political world here in Illinois. Every ten years, our legislative districts are redrawn to maintain equal number of folks represented by each representative and senator. Each legislator has new area in their district and is running to maintain their seat. Additionally, a new law was passed last year that adds more options to vote in the coming year. The primary was changed from mid March to June 28, 2022. Are you registered? Mark your calendar and VOTE!

Generally in an election year, the legislature closes down for a few weeks in February and March to allow legislators to work on getting elected. Then the legislature runs to May 31st as usual. This year the legislature is ending on April 8, 2022. The combination of Covid, and the change in the Primary Election is combining to have a very short legislative session.

AAUW is supporting the Family and Medical Leave Insurance Act (SB 835). We are going through the new bills that are being introduced with our lobbyist. We will keep you in the loop when your action is needed.

If you haven't already, sign up to be a Two Minute Activist. <https://www.aauw.org/act/two-minute-activist/>

Stay active and engaged!

Public Policy Co-Chairs, AAUW IL

[Paula Purdue](#) and [Tracey Sherman-Falcon](#)

The Spotlight is on Gareth Mann

The city of Elgin has its second poet laureate, and we couldn't be more proud that she is a member of our **Elgin AAUW branch!!**

"I'm looking forward to being able to share my enthusiasm for poetry in the community," she said. "I love the sounds of words, the rhythm of words, but it's the content that makes a poem really touch the reader's heart."

The purpose of the poet laureate is to celebrate the heritage, culture, and diversity of the city through the art and appreciation of poetry. Mann will be charged with writing and presenting poems specifically for local events like public holiday gatherings, graduations, dedications and the like.

"I think it can make an event special," she said. "It can also be a way to expose more people to poetry."

The **Rockford Branch** presents "**Did Black Lives Really Matter in Early Illinois?**" via Zoom on Monday, February 21st at 6:30 PM. Public historian and educator, Caroline M. Kisiel will deliver this program through the Illinois Humanities Council Road Scholar Program and it is free and open to the public. If you would like to participate, please send your email address to fe.marcus@att.net and you will receive a link several days prior to the program. Please join us in exploring Illinois history.

The Illinois Humanities Council Road Scholar Program is supported in part by the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) and the Illinois General Assembly through the Illinois Arts Council Agency (IACA), as well as by contributions from individuals, foundations and corporations. Any views, findings, conclusions, or recommendations expressed by speakers, program participants, or audiences do not necessarily reflect those of the NEH, Illinois Humanities, IACA, our partnering organizations, or our funders.

If your branch has a program you'd like to share, please [email Jennifer Urish](mailto:jennifer.urish@att.net) by the 14th of each month.

Our Mission
Gender Equity and Economic Security

Our Values
Intersectional
Inclusive
Intergenerational
Empowering

Our Focus
Economic Security
Education
Advocacy

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