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## President's Message

February can be a dreary time of year. However, this year there is much by which to be encouraged and to celebrate. If you are not receiving the “AAUW Action Fund Washington Update” in your email, you are missing out on a lot of information about the advocacy efforts of our national organization. In January, highlights included the passage of the Pregnant Worker Fairness Act. The February issue which came out on February 9, highlighted three areas of special interest to women. One is AAUW’s support for ratifying the ERA Amendment. If you need information about why that is important, see AmyJo Conroy’s article in last month’s Connection.

A second area is the 30th anniversary of the FMLA – the Family and Medical Leave Act. AAUW is in a coalition of like-minded organizations who are advocating for the passage of the FAMILY Act – adding insurance coverage and strengthening and expanding the act to provide additional support for women who bear the burden of caring for family members.

A third area of national’s advocacy is in connection with the student debt crisis which affects women disproportionately. Remember that your contributions to the Greatest Needs Fund supports the AAUW National office to act when opportunities arise, such as in the examples above.

Now is the time to put May 5 and 6 in your calendars for our State Convention in Peoria if you have not already done so. See more information from our co-VPs of Programs who are putting together a fascinating program of speakers and activities.

Our Public Policy team is working hard to provide guidance to branches who are collaborating with sister organizations such as the League of Women Voters, in organizing candidate forums and putting together accurate information about candidates in anticipation of the April 4 Consolidated Elections for offices such as School Board members, Library Board members, and municipal leaders. As you plan to vote in these elections, keep in mind AAUW’s Public Policy priorities and values. We want to support those candidates that are against censorship, believe in strong high quality public schools, advocate freedom from violence, firmly believe in separation of church and state, and work toward racial, ethnic, and gender justice.



## 2023 AAUW-IL 98th State Convention

**May 5 - 6, 2023**

Plan to join us at the Embassy Suites in East Peoria to dialog and gain skills on leadership. As an AAUW member we are all leaders of the efforts to support our mission of gender equity for women and girls.

**Everyone is a Leader!**

AAUW-IL President Donna Jean Simon will kick off the Convention on the evening of May 5th. With a festive spirit, we will come together for a cocktail reception, a "Fiesta buffet" dinner and program, and finish the night gathering at the Hotel's riverfront bar with AAUW friends from across Illinois. On the morning of Saturday May 6th, we will continue to delve into our topic of leadership. Throughout the day, AAUW members will interact with experienced and emerging leaders in education and politics, STEM programs, public policy, and more. Continental breakfast, lunch, and afternoon break included of course!

Bring your friends and join us at the 2023 AAUW-IL Convention in East Peoria at the Embassy Suites by Hilton East Peoria Riverfront Hotel & Conference Center, 100 Conference Center Drive 61611.

**The hotel includes a full hot breakfast buffet for those who are staying Friday night.**

The rooms at the Embassy Suites are truly a suite with a separate bedroom, a foldout sofa in the front room, and a shared bath in between. Very conducive to bringing a friend to the conference! You can reserve your room today at the following link: [Reserve Room Now](#) Or you may call: **1-800-EMBASSY and use the code AWW (this is correct, 3-digit code)**. The room block might be full as we are getting very close so call the hotel if you are unable to reserve a room online as there may still be available rooms at this price. Don't delay!

Please reserve your room and watch for meeting registration and agenda details coming in March in your AAUW-IL issues of the Connection newsletter and on the AAUW-IL website. You won't want to miss this annual meeting where together we advance the AAUW mission. Reach out to Becky Glimco or Peg Gallagher AAUW-IL Program, [aauwilprograms@gmail.com](mailto:aauwilprograms@gmail.com) with questions.

Reserve Room

**Be a Leader!**

now going backwards. Our mission is still relevant. Whether we 'win' or 'lose' some of these confrontations, our girls (and maybe some of our men!) need to see adult women taking a stand for our rights. In order to keep AAUW-IL and our local branches participating, leadership is required.

Our group needs members to share their ideas and their organizational skills to keep our branches and boards vibrant and growing. When you are called to take a branch or state position, take a moment to reflect on what you have done and offered. Some of us have served quite a lot and some of us are waiting to take a turn. Hesitant because you think you cannot do it? Please rest assured that the other members will help with suggestions and support.

If you are dedicated to our mission and are looking to join a Board that is committed and working hard to advance women and girls, the AAUW-IL State Board is it! I have made life-long friends at the branch level but I have also met some wonderful women from throughout the State. They are fun, enthusiastic, opinionated, passionate and loud. I'm so glad I know them.

The nomination slate is a work in progress. If you want to volunteer, please contact me at [carolheisler@gmail.com](mailto:carolheisler@gmail.com). We'll have opening next year too. Thanks.

## Branch News & Notes

The **Rockford Branch** invites you to their Zoom program on February 16th, at 6:30pm. **Censored: Banned Books** is a panel discussion including librarians from RPS 205, Harlem School District, and Rockford Public Library. Register below and the link will be sent to you.

### Register

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The **Aurora Branch** invites everyone to join them on Saturday March 11 at 5:30 p.m. for a unique and enlightening program!

### KEEPING FAITH: SISTERS OF STORY

Four women who call upon their personal experiences and traditions to demonstrate peace and the commonalities among people of many faiths. They use storytelling and song to bridge the divides fed by the rise of hateful and vitriolic language in our nation.

Rohina Malik, a Muslim woman, playwright and storyteller;

Lucia Thomas on violin, oud, and guitar

Join us for an evening of story and song that examines who we are going to be as a community and as a nation and how we are going to allow our stories to be told.

Light refreshments will be served and there will be time for Q&A after the performance!

Register at Eventbrite: <https://tinyurl.com/58jhmc9y>



AAUW  
Aurora Area Branch

Presents **KEEPING FAITH: SISTERS OF STORY**

**SATURDAY, MARCH 11, 2023**  
**5:30 PM**

Wesley United Methodist Church  
14 N May St, Aurora, IL 60506

Tickets are \$25

Limited Capacity

The poster features a photograph of four women standing in front of a patterned rug. One woman is playing a stringed instrument, likely an oud or guitar.



**LUNAFEST**  
FILMS BY AND ABOUT WOMEN

**WELCOME TO OUR  
2023 SEASON!**

The poster features a colorful illustration of diverse women in various settings, including one climbing a rock, one playing a guitar, and others in social interactions, all set against a blue background with green foliage.

### **LUNAFEST 2023**

#### **Springfield Branch**

The AAUW Springfield, IL Branch is excited to announce we're hosting **LUNAFEST**, a film festival by women filmmakers about women, at the UIS Brookens Auditorium on **Saturday, March 25 at 12:30 pm**. The funds raised from LUNAFEST will support higher education opportunities for women locally,

Seven short films will be shown. Our featured filmmakers are from all walks of life and range from poets to conservationists, activists, and educators. These stories remind us that when we come together, we all move forward.

After viewing the films, we'll have a discussion with *Emmy winning Chicago based filmmaker*, Samantha Sanders, whose film "Swimming Through" is part of LUNAFEST! We're also working on having one of the swimmers from "Swimming Through" join the live discussion. Ticket information will be available on our website <http://www.aauwspringfieldil.com> by March 1<sup>st</sup> or you may email questions to [aauwspringfieldil@gmail.com](mailto:aauwspringfieldil@gmail.com).



### **March 26, 2023 10:30 am – Madame Curie: Scientist, Nobel Prize Winner**

**Mark your calendar now! Live, in person portrayal of Madame Curie.** Program co-sponsored by the **Des Plaines Public**

**Library** and **AAUW Northwest Suburban** branch. Join storyteller Lynn Rymarz for a dramatic portrayal of Marie Curie. Follow her life's journey from her childhood in Poland where she showed an early curiosity in science, to her years as a determined student studying in Paris. It leads to her Paris laboratory where she tried and failed at countless experiments before making her scientific breakthrough. She earned the honor of becoming the first woman to win a Nobel Prize.

**Did you know that in 1920, the Association of Collegiate Alumnae (predecessor to AAUW) helped raise funds** for Marie Curie?

It was an effort led by Marie Meloney, a journalist and editor of *The Delineator* women's magazine. Meloney had interviewed Curie. During their discussion, the scientist stated she was in short supply of radium, an element that she had discovered. Meloney asked, "If you had the whole world to choose from, what would you take?" Curie replied, "I need a gram of radium to continue my research, but I cannot buy it; radium is too dear for me."

Meloney left the interview determined to make Curie's wish come true. Meloney organized a group of women in the United States and formed the Marie Curie Radium Fund. The Association of Collegiate Alumnae was an active participant in this effort. Within the ACA, the International

large in the group: Virginia Gildersleeve, Ada Comstock, Aurelia Reinhardt, Marion Park, Mary Woolley, and Meta Glass. Several committee members went on to become AAUW presidents.

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

Our Mission: Gender Equity & Economic Security

Our Values: Intersectionality Inclusive Intergenerational Empowering

Our Focus: Economic Security Education Advocacy



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