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## President's Message

It is nearly spring and that is always a time for renewal, growth, and opportunity. It is also the time to start planning for the **State Convention on May 5 -6 in Peoria**. If you want to renew friendships, grow your knowledge about current events affecting women and our communities, and take advantage of opportunities to meet your colleagues in branches across the state, then you will want to register to attend both days of the convention. Our Program VPs, Becky Glimco and Peg Gallagher, have put together an exciting slate of programs and speakers, who will give you new insights, many ideas for your members and branches, and time to meet with friends old and new. See the specifics below.

**National revised the Bylaws** and published them for comment in January. These suggestions and comments have been incorporated into the revised Bylaws that you will begin voting on soon. Please see Andi Danis' article below for details on when the voting begins and how to vote. Your vote is important as these changes will affect each branch and are designed to streamline how branches and the national board operate.

**March is Women's History Month and yesterday was Equal Pay Day.** Women still earn only 84% of what men earn. So, that requires a woman to work until March 14 to earn an equivalent salary to what a man earns by December the previous year. For our sisters of color the timeframe is even worse. One way to celebrate is to contact your legislators to encourage them to support the **Paycheck Fairness Act**, which was reintroduced into Congress. It is unfair and un-American that women are not paid the same as a man for requisite work. You may also want to work with your local library or college or other organization to support the Start Smart and Work Smart trainings that help women negotiate fairer pay for themselves.

**April 4 is the consolidated election across Illinois.** This is when you vote for local officials, like mayors and school board and library board members. (Early voting is ongoing across the state.) Given the current assault on schools and libraries about what books and reading materials they include in their catalogs, this election is very important. Remember, we all have a First Amendment Right to choose to read whatever we want. Libraries and schools should provide opportunities for all members of their communities to read books that they choose and to see themselves in those books and materials. Whether you or I personally like a book should not impact the choices made by a library. They are trained to choose materials that are appropriate for various audiences and are qualified to make those decisions. Librarians, teachers, and school and library board members need our support. Be sure to research and vote for those people who support our values and support education and gender equity.

One of the tenets of AAUW is support for **Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Belonging**. This means support for all women and girls and protection of those who are part of LGBTQ+ community. There may

their physical person. Advances in medicine and science has made it possible for this to be rectified. For many in this situation, they have experienced emotional and physical distress. We should not be adding to that distress by supporting laws that try to limit their ability to become fully their own person.

Donna Jean Simon, [aauwilpres@gmail.com](mailto:aauwilpres@gmail.com)

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## Everyone is a Leader for Equity

This year the AAUW-IL **98th State Convention** reminds us that “**Everyone is a Leader for Equity.**” Whether you enter candidacy for public office, seek out a managerial position at your workplace, mentor a girl in STEM, send emails to your legislators, write letters to the editor, and/or maintain your ongoing membership with the critical work of AAUW you are a leader for equity! All of our actions and our words tell our story and set the path for success as we live the AAUW mission to advance gender equity for women and girls.

We are so excited to share highlights that are confirmed for the convention on May 5 and 6 at the Embassy Suites by Hilton East Peoria Riverfront Hotel & Conference Center. We will gather at 5pm on Friday and conclude on Saturday at 4:30. Even though our focus is on mission-based programming, we will have time for sharing sustenance and conversation with likeminded AAUW members from across Illinois. A member of the executive team from national will be joining us for part of our session as well. Here you can see some of the programming that is planned:

- **Will it play in Peoria?** Presenters: Dr. Sheila Quirk Bailey, President Illinois Central College, and Dr. Sharon Desmoulin-Kherat, Superintendent of Peoria School District. These educational leaders from middle America are well prepared to discuss how the trends we are seeing in the media are playing out for teachers and students. You will hear of their leadership journeys, including what helped them along the path and what could have helped them. In addition, they will reflect on our AAUW research, such as college debt and women successes in engineering and computing, as they discuss educating women and girls.
- **Changemakers Panel** moderator: Dr. Jennifer Robin, Professor of Management & Leadership, Bradley University; Panelists: Representative Nabeela Syed, IL State Representative IL-51; Crystal Owens, AAUW StemED Ambassador. Our moderator, an expert in leadership development and gender studies will provide guidance for us on leadership skills. Dr. Robin will also help to showcase each of the panelists who is a leader committed to bringing about change, sharing their efforts to take creative actions to address social issues.
- **Affinity group session** Know that we heard you last year. Post convention surveys indicated that convention participants want time to gather with members from other branches who have a similar role or interest. AAUW-IL board members will help to facilitate the session.

There is more to come as we have reached out to other experts who are sure to enlighten you with their knowledge and skill. Some of the impetus for this focus on women in leadership came from the article published by our CEO, Gloria Blackwell in MS magazine. If you have not read it, please do as her message [We Need to Push Harder for Women's Representation in Leadership](#) is so important!

We suggest all members of the branch leadership team, as well as those rising leaders from your branch come to the convention. The 2-room suites at the Embassy Suites hotel are amenable to multiple people sharing a room.

Registration is now open! Click below to register and pay online. There will be a form you can download and mail with a check on the [website](#). Early Bird Registration ends on April 15!

Call to reserve your room today as you do not want to miss the full event: **Embassy Suites by Hilton East Peoria Riverfront Hotel & Conference Center**, East Peoria, \$149 + Tax. Please call the hotel directly at 309- 427-2424; ask for Kathryn to assist you (tell her you are with AAUW). Please call today as rooms are becoming limited.

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## Public Policy

Typically at this time of year we are giving you an update on what's happening in the Illinois legislature. But now, we all need to be focused on April 4, 2023, the election of school and library board members!

Many of our AAUW Branches have checked out the candidates running in their districts. Have you done your research? Be aware of candidates that are attempting to destroy public education by banning books, refusing to encourage genders of all children and adults and white washing our racial history are pretending to be 'normal'. Please work with others in your communities to check out the goals of every one of your candidates!

The statewide coalition will have endorsed candidates soon. As we learn who they are, we will contact public policy chairs and let you know. We appreciate all of the work that you all have done to protect AAUW values in our public school and library districts.

Paula Purdue and Tracey Sherman-Falcon  
Public Policy Co-Chairs, AAUW IL

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**YOUR  
VOTE  
MATTERS**

As was noted in the January 2023 *Connection*, the National election is coming up! You will be asked to vote on significant changes to the AAUW Bylaws and the yearly changes recommended to the Public Policy Priorities.

Some of the Bylaws changes being proposed include:

- Revising the wording describing AAUW's charitable purpose to align with large NFP verbiage and appeal to a broader range of corporate sponsors.
- Eliminating the requirement for 60 days' notice before board approval of a dues change.
- Having board officers elected by the board, not the membership.
- Eliminating any reference to conventions when discussing meetings of the membership.

What National has done in their complete review of the Bylaws is to update their procedures and language and streamline their operations. The changes they have made are consistent with the way that most large NFPs govern and conduct business. Having thoroughly reviewed these proposed changes, and finding nothing alarming or inconsistent with best practice, the AAUW-IL, Inc. Board voted unanimously to recommend passage of these proposed changes in the upcoming election.

If passed, some of these changes will result in mandates for State and Branch bylaws. I will be sure

We have once again included the links to the full proposed documents below:  
Take a moment to read the details of the bylaws change and the brief rationale for each change [HERE](#). Review the Public Policy Priorities and send your feedback to National by clicking [HERE](#).

If you have any questions please contact me, and as always, I am happy to help branches with bylaws reviews and revisions.

Andi Danis, Bylaws and Policy Director  
AAUW-IL, Inc.

## Branch News & Notes

The **Jane Addams Branch** invites you to their program: **Pay Equity & Workplace Fairness: How Are We Doing?** on March 23rd at 7:30pm.

The program will answer the question of how are we doing on pay equity. The panelists will share their experience in the workplace, how they overcame challenges and share resources that women can use to overcome workplace inequity. In conclusion, we'll focus on what we need to do next.

**Panel Moderator:** Christine Kuffel, member of the Jane Addams branch

**Elizabeth Leiba**, Professor, author of *"I'm Not Yelling: A Black Woman's Guide to Navigating the Workplace"* host of podcast Black Power Moves, & a Top Voice on LinkedIn.

**Lizzy Diaz-Ortiz**, VP, Senior Manager, Latino Segment in U.S. Personal & Business Banking for BMO Harris Bank, Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion Strategist, Attorney.

**Toni L. Dupree** is a retired military member of the US Navy. She is employed at the National Geospatial-Intelligence Agency as Security Specialist in St Louis, MO. and is Reg'l Mgr of Federal Employed Women.

**Corinne Kodama**, Senior Research Analyst, Women Employed. Visiting Research Assistant Professor, Global Asian Studies at UIC.

Upon registration, you will receive an email with the Zoom meeting link. Any questions, contact Kate Skegg by email [aauwjaneaddams@gmail.com](mailto:aauwjaneaddams@gmail.com)

## Register in Advance

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## Nobel Prize Winner

**Register 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. Register below; space is limited. More information on Madame Curie's connection to AAUW on our website. <https://nwsuburban-il.aauw.net/>

[Register Now](#)

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You are invited to participate in the **Springfield Branch's** 2023 Public Policy Event

### **“What You Don't Know About Gun Violence Could Kill You”**

Gun violence is now the leading cause of child death in the US. Learn how Mom's Demand Action for Gun Sense in America is making a difference and what you can do to help reduce gun violence.

Format: virtual meeting on Zoom

Date: Thursday, March 30

Time: 6:30 p.m.

Guest Speaker: Tara McAndrew

Tara is a journalist, historian, playwright, and founder of the Moms Demand Action chapter in Central Illinois.

After registering, you will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the meeting.

*From AAUW's 2021-23 Public Policy Priorities: “AAUW recognizes that gun violence is a public health and safety crisis. AAUW believes in the right to privacy and freedom from violence.”*

[Register in Advance](#)

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The **Chicago Branch** invites you to "Women in Law Enforcement" with Chief Schenita Stewart of the Evanston Police Department

Saturday, April 22 – 10am via zoom. Advance registration is required.

Chief Stewart will discuss her personal experience as a woman leader in the police department. Policing is often considered a male profession but is seeing more women in the ranks as well as in positions of command. She will discuss her own experiences, positive and negative. She will provide us a glimpse of what women face joining law enforcement and how more women officers may change the profession. Chief Schenita Stewart made Evanston history as the first permanent female police chief leading the department. She wants to increase transparency, increase training, and rebuild trust and community.

*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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