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## *connection*

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### President's Letter

Happy New Year! I realize many of you are either buried in snow drifts or freezing in below zero temperatures or a combination of the two. Winter finally hit us. Hopefully, you are keeping body and soul together and able to manage what mother nature has thrown at us.

January is always an interesting time. For some of us, it is about setting new goals and reflecting on the past year. For AAUW, it is the middle of our fiscal year and time to review what has been accomplished and plan for the rest of the year. You are probably finalizing nominations for the upcoming March branch elections. Hopefully, you are anticipating the State Convention in April. May may bring weddings or graduations or Mother's Day celebrations. June could be similar. July will bring a change of administration for the State and maybe for your branch. In all of these events, there is an opportunity for reflection and renewal.

This year there is also an opportunity to review our membership requirements and vote on ByLaws changes. Information is available from National on this membership vote. The current comment period is open until January 26. Information can be found at [openupaauw.org](http://openupaauw.org). An interesting statistic: 39.1% of all women hold degrees. 60.9% of all women do not. That means the degree requirement excludes 60.9% of all possible AAUW members. We need to break down our own barriers to membership.

Please keep your sister branches informed of upcoming events. I attended two very interesting zoom presentations recently.

The **Jane Addams branch** hosted Sarah Labadie of Women Employed who spoke about the Family and Medical Leave Act. Our Public Policy Chairs are watching the progress of this law in Illinois. This is a matter that affects anyone who has a family member who might need care – parents as well as care givers.

and we need to make sure that what is happening at the national level that may affect women is being watched, so that rights are not taken away through court challenges. It is important that we keep ourselves informed about issues that impact women and girls.

It is time to start considering your Agent of Change nominations. This prestigious award is given at our State Convention. See below for nomination forms and information. Previous years' awardees are listed on the state website.

Wishing you all health, happiness and success in the New Year!

[Donna Jean Simon](#), President



### 2024 Convention Updates:

Book your hotel room early to secure a spot! [AAUW IL HOTEL 2024](#)

#### Showcase your branch accomplishments!

Reserve a spot to share your branch's stories of Empowering Women over the last 100 years or highlight a current star project!

Your branch has made contributions to the lives of women and children in Illinois for many years. To ensure that we all see and celebrate our efforts together, each branch is invited to display their accomplishments. At the State Convention, we will have tables set up in the vestibule of the ECC Conference center. There is plenty of room for each branch to have a half of a table where you can share what your branch has accomplished over the last 100 years. The displays may include historic material: scrapbooks, trifolds, etc., or a specific project that you are currently doing in your community. Branches can set up their table display on Friday, after 4pm. As we are the only group in the building, you do not have to sit at the table throughout the convention, however, you may want to stop by to interact with other members. Our local branch, Elgin Area, has offered to oversee the set up. Please consider sharing your work for this celebration; please email Kathy Malm at [aauw.il.elgin.membership@gmail.com](mailto:aauw.il.elgin.membership@gmail.com) to reserve your space at this event.

Stay tuned next month for registration form and other updates for AAUW-IL 2024 State Convention:

*Celebrating 100 Years of Empowering Women*

Equity for Women and Girls in Illinois! We'll have an engaging program focused on saluting our accomplishments and pursuing new ways to support women as we look forward to the next 100 years. Watch for details on registration, programming, and activities on the AAUW-IL website and via the monthly Connection.

Venue: **University and Business Center at Elgin Community College** - As AAUW has deep roots supporting academic opportunities for women, it seems fitting that we should gather for this significant anniversary at an educational institution. The conference center at Elgin Community College (ECC) in Elgin, IL is perfectly poised as the setting for us to come together. Elgin is situated between Chicago and Rockford on the scenic Fox River Valley and home to Elgin Area Branch, an active AAUW-IL branch.

Hotel: [The Holiday Inn & Suites Chicago Northwest](#) - Elgin, a contemporary hotel just off I90 is holding a block of rooms for us. This full service hotel is less than 5 miles from the ECC. We have a free shuttle to transport us to and from the Friday evening convention session. The address for the hotel is 495 Airport Road, Elgin, IL 60123. The cost for the double queen standard room is \$109 and the junior king suite is \$124 (plus tax).

For your convenience, a booking link and group code has been created. To receive the honored discounted rates per night, please click on the link below, customized to your group's name.

[Click here to Reserve Your Room in the AAUW-IL Block](#)

Group Code: AAU

You can also make reservations by calling 847.488.9000 but you have to say that you are part of "AAUW-IL Room Block" to receive the discounted rate. Please reserve early to guarantee your spot in the hotel block, reservations made after April 5th, 2024 will not be eligible for the group discount.

## From the State Board

### Agent of Change

Nominations are now open for the annual Agent of Change Award. AAUW-IL's Agent of Change Award, established in 1984, is presented annually to recognize a branch member or AAUW member who has served as a catalyst to bring about positive societal change. Please think about who in your branch fits this description. [Click here](#) for the nomination form and criteria. The nomination form is also on the [state website](#) as a form you can download.

Nominations are due March 1st.

### 2024-2025 AAUW National Dues Update

A reallocation of the \$3 currently allocated to the AAUW Action Fund will move to AAUW, Inc., making the current national dues of \$72 for individual membership fully tax deductible. The reallocation of the \$3 from the AAUW Action Fund to AAUW Inc. is both a procedural change to streamline AAUW's operations, a key goal for the Board and an added benefit in that it makes the annual dues of \$72, fully tax deductible. Again, there will be no change to national individual member dues for FY 2025.

## Branch News

### ABCD Book Group

The new AAUW-IL state-wide ABCD book group will meet online on Tuesday, January 23, at 7 pm to discuss ***Three Girls from Bronzeville: A Uniquely American Memoir of Race, Fate, and Sisterhood*** by Dawn Turner

Further books on the overall theme of families fighting poverty in the US will be -

February: *Nomadland* by Jessica Bruder

March: *Forgotten Girls* by Monica Potts

All AAUW members and guests are welcome to meetings. Questions? Contact [Carolheisler@gmail.com](mailto:Carolheisler@gmail.com)

## Register

The **Aurora Area Branch** invites everyone to our February Program:

When: Saturday, February 3, 2024, 10:30 AM

Where: Aurora Library Santori Branch, Room N125/126

101 S. River St.

Aurora, IL

Join us as our speaker, Ms. Bernita Echols, presents a factual history on Tidy Pickett. A Chicago native, Tidy was the first African-American woman to compete in the Olympics. She competed alongside Jesse Owens in the 1936 Olympics in Germany. We have heard much about Jesse Owens – now let's learn about this U.S. Olympic athlete!



### Save the Date

February 13, 2024 at 7 PM @ Zoom

**Naperville Area Branch** presents Dr. Karen J. Parker, Ph.D.: ***My STEM Journey: Tales from the Life of a Female Social Neuroscientist***

Dr. Parker directs the Social Neurosciences Research Program at Stanford, which seeks to advance understanding of the biological basis of social functioning across a range of species, and to translate these fundamental insights to drive diagnostic

Please visit the [Naperville Branch website](#) for more details and the Zoom link.



The **Elmhurst Branch** invites you to an evening with Susana A. Mendoza, Illinois Comptroller.

She will be speaking on the status of fair pay and economic equity for women in Illinois at 7:00pm on Wednesday, February 7th, at Elmhurst University campus. Please visit the [Elmhurst Branch website](#) for more details about how to join virtually.

Susana A. Mendoza became the first Hispanic independently elected to statewide office in Illinois in 2016. She was re-elected in 2022 as the highest overall vote getter in Illinois.

*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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