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## *connection*

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April is an auspicious month for AAUW-IL. Apart from the eclipse, which was hopefully a good omen for everyone, we have many events during April.

If you have not yet voted for your state officers, please do so before April 18. See link below.

On April 19 and 20, we celebrate the 100th anniversary of AAUW-IL. Our state convention is being held at Elgin Community College. The schedule and FAQs are below.

National Bylaws are under review to open the membership requirement to allow us to invite anyone who shares our mission of gender equity for women and girls to join us. If you have not yet voted, please do so. You should have received an email from AAUW and SimplyVoting.com with your voting ID and link to the ballot. If you did not receive this, please check your spam folder. Paper ballots were sent to those for whom a valid email address was not on file at National. Voting ends May 3. For more information, go to [openupaauw.org](http://openupaauw.org).

Our State Convention is an opportunity for us to see friends, make new acquaintances, share stories and best practices, learn ways to support and enhance our mission, and re-energize ourselves to continue our progress toward more equitable communities. Our mission is now more important than ever.

I am looking forward to seeing the attendees at the Convention as well as continuing to visit branches throughout the state.

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

**Vote for State Officers**

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## 2024 Convention Updates

Have questions about the Convention--check out the [FAQ page](#) for all the answers!

[Download the Convention Schedule](#)

*Celebrating 100 Years of Empowering Women*

## Branch News

### Strong Women in Chicago Forged the Way to AAUW-IL

As AAUW Illinois celebrates its 100th anniversary, it's important to acknowledge that the history of AAUW in Illinois goes back much further. In 1882, the Western Association of Collegiate Alumnae (WACA) was established for collegiate women in Wisconsin, Illinois, Michigan and Indiana as a counterpart to the Association of Collegiate Alumnae (ACA) founded by women from eight colleges in the Northeast. Western ACA made a commitment to focus on educational opportunities for women and worked to ease the way for women to enter the professions and occupations open to them. The first WACA fellowship was given in 1886 in the amount of \$350 to Ida M. Street of Vassar College for graduate study at the University of Michigan. This was before ACA gave fellowships and when ACA and WACA merged in 1889, the Western members were instrumental in expanding the range of fellowships for the Association as a whole.

In the early 1890s to 1910, the focus of the Chicago Branch shifted to activism in the public sphere, including activities like conducting surveys on child labor laws and compulsory education, advocacy for kindergartens and school libraries, construction of neighborhood playgrounds and paved sidewalks, and establishment of summer schools and adult night classes. Many early members of the Chicago Branch made outstanding contributions toward making Chicago a better place to live. Several went on to national and international renown. The first of these was **Jane Addams** who established Hull House, an immigrant settlement house committed to working for social, political and economic justice. Chicago Branch created the Hull House Fellowship and many members actually lived at Hull House. The first Hull House Fellow was **Julia Clifford Lathrop**, an activist known for local, state and national reform of hospitals, schools and mental institutions. Later, Ms. Lathrop became the first Chief of the U.S. Children's Bureau created in 1912 by President Taft.

**Edith Abbott**, an economist and social worker who advocated for housing, health care, consumer protection, child labor laws, and trade unions, helped establish the Cook County Bureau of Public Welfare in 1926. Her sister, **Grace Abbott**, published articles about the exploitation of immigrants and became the Director of the Immigrants' Protective League from 1908-1917. Later, she served as Chief of the Child Labor Division of the U.S. Children's Bureau. **Sophonisba Breckinridge**, a close associate of the Abbott sisters, was a founding member of both the Chicago League for the Advancement of Colored People and the Immigrants' Protective League. A noted author of works on child welfare and women's roles in the modern household, Ms. Breckinridge was selected to be the U.S. Delegate to the 7th Pan-American Conference in Uruguay in 1933. One additional early Chicago Branch member worth mentioning was **Marion Talbot**, a founding member

Chicago Branch made many contributions to the war effort during World War 1 and were active participants in the Women's suffrage movement, all before they joined in the formation of AAUW-IL in 1924 along with the other early Illinois branches.

Ruth Holst, Chicago, Inc. Branch

### [It's My Vote!: AAUW Priorities in the 2024 Election](#)

**Wednesday, April 17, 7 p.m. ET**

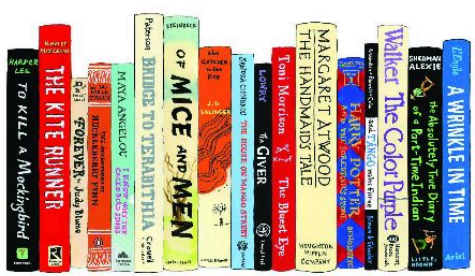
As part of AAUW's **It's My Vote! 2024** voter engagement campaign, join us for a deep dive on the policy issues at stake in this year's national elections, including pay equity, equity in education, reproductive rights, and the ERA. Learn how AAUW members can engage in local voter education efforts. Click the link above to register!

The **Elgin** and **Schaumburg Branches** invite you to "Challenges to Intellectual Freedom," Tuesday, April 23rd, 6:30pm. Register online at [gailborden.info/register](http://gailborden.info/register); by calling 847.429.4597; or at the registration desk.

# Challenges To Intellectual Freedom


## It's Not Just About Banning Books

**Tuesday, April 23**  
**6:30 – 8 pm**  
**Meadows Community Rooms ABC**



Illinois is the first state to ban book bans, but the threat to intellectual freedom persists. Find out how book banning affects communities and how local libraries and school boards are responding. Keynote speaker: Joyce McIntosh, ALA Freedom To Read Foundation. Additional speakers: Jean Bednar--President, Gail Borden Public Library District Board of Trustees. Emily Vinci--Adult Fiction Collection Manager, Schaumburg Township Public Library.

**Please register.**  
Co-presented by AAUW Elgin, AAUW Schaumburg, LWV Elgin Area, and Gail Borden Public Library.



**Main Library**  
570 N. Grove Ave.  
Elgin, IL 60120  
847-742-2411

**Three Ways to Register:**

- Online at [gailborden.info/register](http://gailborden.info/register)
- Call 847-429-4597
- In person at the Registration Desk

[www.gailborden.info](http://www.gailborden.info)

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*If your branch has a program or recognition or an idea you'd like to share, please [email Jennifer Urish](mailto:jennifer.urish@gailborden.info) by the*

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Our Mission: Gender Equity & Economic Security  
Our Values: Intersectionality Inclusive Intergenerational Empowering  
Our Focus: Economic Security Education Advocacy



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