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This is a good news, bad news letter.

The good news is we had a very successful State Convention with over 100 attendees for our AAUW-IL 100th Anniversary – Celebrating 100 years of Empowering Women<sup>®</sup>. Many thanks to our VPs of Programs, **Becky Glimco and Peg Gallagher**, for all their time and efforts in organizing the Convention, the Elgin branch for their hosting at Elgin Community College, the program committee and registrars, and to **Jennifer Urish**, who handled voting, the convention booklet, and a myriad of other details. **Rosie McVay** was named Agent of Change--please see the [website](#) for more details.

The bad news is that although Illinois contributed strongly to the Bylaws vote with a 78% affirmative vote and over 50% voter participation, the nation-wide vote garnered 65.1% affirmative, not reaching the 2/3 vote threshold. I am sad that we are not going to reach the 61% of women without college degrees who might well support our mission.

The Elmhurst branch celebrated their 85th Anniversary on May 11. Elmhurst has made many contributions over the years to their community and AAUW. Some of their efforts included opening a Children's Exchange Shop during WWII to meet wartime shortages of nursery and children's equipment, furniture, toys and clothing (1943); a study that led to the establishment of the Elmhurst YMCA (1948); a study that led to 10 recommendations for the District School Board that were subsequently implemented (1968); a study group that led to active support for the Illinois Prairie Path (1970); advocacy for a recycling program in Elmhurst and when established providing volunteer staff (1972); participation with other branches in establishing the "Dare to Dream" conference for Latina girls and mothers (2009).

The Monmouth branch celebrates their 100 th anniversary on June 1. They were formed the same year as AAUW-IL.

During the Convention, the election of officers (voted on by email) was announced. Congratulations to our new leaders --

President – Laura Desmarais (Wheaton – Glen Ellyn)

Program VPs – Kathyy Battee-Freeman (Springfield) and JoAn Sabonjian (Waukegan)

Bylaws Chair – Carolyn Schjelderup (Rock Island – Moline)

AAUW Funds Chair – Sylvia Martin (Rock Island – Moline)

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



For two days, enthusiastic AAUW-IL members from across Illinois came together at Elgin Community College to celebrate our 100-year AAUW-IL anniversary, Celebrating 100 Years of Empowering Women. Once again, we saw and felt the value of meeting face to face with over 125 participants attending over the two days. Convention attendees enjoyed a look back through history as well as current programs at the branch table displays. We were reminded by Meghan Kissell, AAUW Senior Director of Policy and Membership Advocacy: to follow 5 Calls to Action: JOIN, GIVE, ENGAGE, LEARN, and SHARE. We did all of that at this State Convention.

Speakers were mission focused, providing us with action steps to support and challenge us.

Dr. Suzanne Chod showed us the relationship between trust in government and polarization, the difference between misinformation and disinformation, and maybe most important the enthusiasm of her college students to engage in the political world.

Meghan Kissell in her presentation "Courage. Commitment. Collaboration" gave us highlights from AAUW National including ways to engage ourselves and our members in issues important to women and girls. Some topics she covered were debt relief, ERA, Title IX, and ways to invoke change in ourselves, branches, and communities such as 2-Minute Activist, new 5 Star Program, and the Work Smart/Start Smart programs that will be free to C/U Partners.

Jennifer Ford and Pat Chamberlain, who so nobly stepped in for a speaker who was ill, provided us with an important snapshot on youth/family poverty in Illinois as well as efforts in the Elgin Area AAUW branch to actively address such poverty needs in their community (<https://www.facebook.com/womenonthebrink.elgin/>).

An update on Illinois politics was provided by Jenni Purdue, while AJ Conroy clearly addressed the status of ERA. All of us participated in a postcard campaign for ERA. We are thankful for all the hard work, energy, and enthusiasm that Jenni and AJ give educating us on issues.

Maureen Brandon, Chris Bruun, and Rosie McVay, all members of the Batavia-Geneva-St. Charles introduced us to the Dignity Index (<https://www.dignityindex.us/>) affording us an opportunity to take a closer look at the words we use and the messages being sent.

We closed the convention with an important look to the "next 100 years". Affinity groups provided important dialog that the AAUW-IL Board can consider as they plan for the upcoming year.

As noted over these last two years, our AAUW-IL President Donna Jean Simon provided clear leadership for our convention and beyond. As she closes her term as President on July 1, please remember to thank her for all the work she has done on our behalf.

The AAUW-IL Convention booklet is posted in the members only section of the website; here you will see speaker details and branch highlights.

the members of the Elgin Area AAUW organized the table set ups, the registration process, the lunch trivia game, speaker suggestions, and so much more.

As expected, the opportunity to dialog with like-minded women and men was valued by all. Thank you to everyone who completed the convention evaluation. Your comments are important as we plan future AAUW-IL events. The 100 Year AAUW-IL history slideshow will be posted on the AAUW-IL webpage for your viewing pleasure.

Becky Glimco and Peg Gallagher, Co VP's Program AAUW-IL

## Branch News

The **Batavia-Geneva-St Charles (BGSTC) Branch** Connections team appreciates the engaged, interested response to the Dignity Index Presentation at the AAUW-IL Convention. We are exploring what follow-on contact will be most helpful for you and doable for us. I will send that information to you as soon as possible.

Use this [LINK](#) to more information about the Dignity Index. I invite you to tap into this variety of multi-media materials. They will enhance your understanding of this objective, simple but sophisticated measure that can awaken use of more dignity and less contempt.



Rosie McVay

The Wheaton-Glen Ellyn branch of AAUW is busy collecting books for our 2024 Used Book Sale on June 20, 21 and 22. Annually our local Collection Boxes are filled with thousands of current titles in Great condition. We feature Fiction - Popular fiction, mystery, romance, and sci-fi. Non-fiction - History, politics, biographies and autobiographies. Young Adult and Childrens'. You will love browsing our 10,000 volumes. We have no presale event and no entry fee. There is posted pricing on Thursday and Friday. Saturday is \$10/bag. We earn approximately \$10,000 a year on this fundraiser. Proceeds benefit local scholarships.

Westfield Elementary School  
(Butterfield West Subdivision)  
2S125 Mayfield Lane  
Glen Ellyn, IL

Thursday 6/20	8:00 a.m. - 8:00 p.m.
Friday 6/21	9:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.
Saturday 6/22	9:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.

Please feel free to contact Suzanne Gagner if you need additional information.

630-877-5589

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*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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