

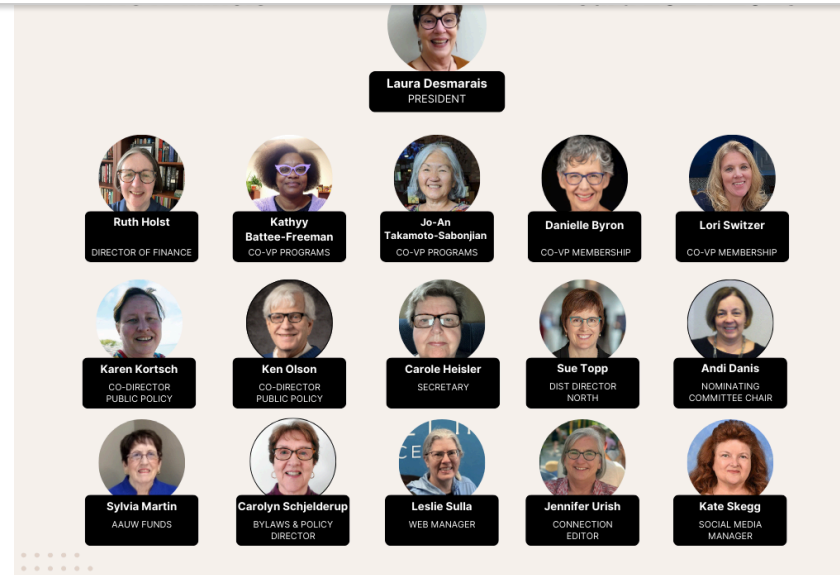
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connection

President's Message

I am excited to accept the challenge to be the next AAUW-IL Board President. Why am I doing this? Because I know that I have the backing of a strong Board and the support of so many AAUW friends that I have met in my sixteen years of service on past Boards at the State and Branch level. It takes AAUW Members working together to achieve what we have achieved in the last 100 years. It is amazing to think of how women's lives have changed. Yes, there is more to do. Working together we can continue to improve the vision of equality for all.



Laura Desmarais, President: Joined the Wheaton-Glen Ellyn Branch in 2003. Served as Book Sale Chair and Co-President. I have served on the State Board as VP of Programs and Funds Chair. I attended my first State and National AAUW Conferences while I was Branch President. I was overwhelmed by the commitment of the AAUW membership to create opportunities to empower women. I wanted to be involved in a group that could make a difference and AAUW became that for me.

Ruth Holst, Director of Finance: Member of the Deerfield Branch from 2006-2011, Joined the Chicago Branch and served as President and Treasurer. Dual member with Jane Adams Branch. At the State level served as Director of College/University Relations and currently Director of Finance. At the National level served on the Review Panel, Career Development Grants, Governance Committee and is currently a Governance Committee Consultant. I joined AAUW because I love the mission of equality for women and girls. Serving on the State Board and National committees has enriched by life in retirement, having met many women who are fierce advocates for the work that keeps the organization vital.

Kathy Battee-Freeman, Co-VP Programs: Member of the Springfield branch approximately 7 years and the Jane Addams branch approximately 2 years. Kathy stated "I initially learned of the AAUW national Wage Negotiation Program because it aligns with my work, that prompted me to explore what the local branch was doing and how I could help. Springfield's focus on membership

Danielle Byron, Co-VP Membership: Currently a member of the Wheaton Glen Ellyn Branch. Before joining Wheaton Glen Ellyn, she was a member of the Lombard Area Branch, serving in various board roles including president and finance director. She has also served as a Regional Director for the State of IL Board. I have had an incredible career in Health Information Technology and am learning to appreciate working full-time in a virtual world for the last couple of years.

Lori Switzer, Co-VP Membership: Life member Chicago Inc branch, Chicago Branch Admin/President and communication chair (website, social media, newsletters) AAUW-IL state co-VP membership, member since 2000 - 24 years. I joined AAUW to be a part of strong, educated women, become involved in my community and advance AAUW's mission. I also enjoy the friendships I have formed and all that I have learned from our programs and events.

Carol Heisler, Secretary: Member of the Crystal Lake Area Branch since 1993 holding several branch positions including branch president. I served on the state board in several capacities before becoming State President in 2014. This is my second series of state positions and I am currently Secretary for AAUW-IL. I've always found the women who step up for state board duties are intelligent, cordial and focused. More members should do it. Women's rights are under attack and we must remain diligent.

Sylvia Martin, AAUW-IL Funds: I am a 50 Year Honorary Life Member of the Rock

pursuing new ways that I can be a part of AAUW. Joining the state board seemed like a natural progression and a fun new way to apply my skills and interests on a larger scale. "

Jo-An Takamoto-Sabonjian, Co-VP of Programs: I joined because I believe in AAUW's mission of gender equity. Became an engaged member because I enjoy working alongside others working toward this goal. Waukegan Area Branch. Member since 2008. Past stints on AAUW-IL board as North District Director and Public Policy Co-Chair.

Karen Kortsch, Co-Director Public Policy: I have been the president of the Waukegan Area Branch for the last several years. I have had an interest in legislative advocacy for quite some time. I have advocated for gender equity, the rights of incarcerated people and other marginalized groups. Voting rights is also a key issue for me. I look forward to learning more about how our state legislature functions.

Ken Olson, Co-Director Public Policy: I am a member of the Schaumburg Area Branch. I serve as Public Policy chair for our branch. I stepped into the role when my wife passed away. She was filling the role at the time. I have a PhD in Dairy Science from UW-Madison and work as Public Policy Coordinator for the American Dairy Science Association. We advocate for funding for science and use of science in regulation and legislation.

Sue Topp, District Director: Member of the Naperville Area Branch where I currently serve as their Communications Officer. This is my third year as District Director. I truly believe education is one of the best paths for women to achieve better economic and life experiences. I'm interested in creating societal systems free of unnecessary barriers and inequities that make it harder for women and girls to succeed.

Carolyn Schjelderup, ByLaws and Policy Director: I have been a member of local AAUW Branches since 1994, serving in various positions, including Treasurer and President in the Pekin Branch and also in the Rock Island-Moline Branch. It has been my pleasure to serve on the AAUW-IL Board previously, as District Director for two years, and two terms as Finance Director. I firmly believe in the mission of AAUW. Serving on the board is both challenging and rewarding and I look forward to serving again on the AAUW-IL State Board in the position of ByLaws and Policy Director.

chair and STEM Scholarship Chair. I am presently the Branch President. I have attended the AAUW-IL State Convention regularly for the last 20 years and attended the 2017 National Convention. Serving as AAUW Funds Chair for AAUW-IL is my way of giving back some of what I have gained from being an AAUW member.

Andi Danis, Nominating Committee Chair: Affiliated with the Aurora Area Branch since 2000; served on Branch Board in various capacities, including 8 years as President. Served on AAUW-IL State Board as Director of Legal Advocacy Fund, District #4 Director, State President (2012-2014,) Nominating Chair and Director of Bylaws & Policy; am currently serving once again as Nominating Chair. I am very committed to the mission of AAUW and feel it is important to give of my time and talents to move that mission forward. I also cherish the relationships I have made in AAUW at the branch and state levels and have met many dedicated members throughout the U.S. by attending, state, regional and national AAUW events. With active involvement in AAUW one can make a difference at the local, state, and national levels all at the same time.

Kate Skegg, Social Media Manager: I joined the Downers Grove Branch in 1990 when I moved here from the UK, served as Co-Chair of the book sale and as Branch Membership Chair. I founded the Jane Addams Online Branch in 2010. I have been the AAUW-IL Social Media Manager since 2016 and an administrator for the AAUW National Facebook members group for many years.

I started the Chicagoland AAUW Tech Savvy conference in 2014. I've been active with the Dare to Dream Latina Conference, which was founded by local AAUW branches, since 2008 - I'm a current Board Member. In 2017, I celebrated becoming a US citizen by becoming a lifetime member of AAUW! My current goal is to restart the Chicago Chapter of the Women's International League of Peace and Freedom, also known as WILPF. Jane Addams a founder and the first President.

Leslie Sulla, Website Manager: Joined Lombard Area AAUW in 1995 where I served all board positions except membership. I am now a member of Wheaton-Glen Ellyn Branch since Lombard disbanded. I've been AAUW-IL web manager for 15+ years. I joined AAUW to meet like-minded activist people who believe in empowering women, continuing education, and politics. Also enjoy sorting at the book sales!

Jennifer Urish, Connection Editor: I joined AAUW because my aunt was a member and I couldn't wait to finish my degree and join. I have served at the Branch level in Belleville, and am a past state President.

Do you think a member may be missing out on vital updates and important announcements from AAUW? Don't let valuable information slip through the cracks! Ensure they stay connected by re-subscribing to AAUW emails. Simply forward this link, aauw.us/emailoptions, to the member to re-subscribe and guarantee that they receive all the latest news, webinars, and opportunities from AAUW. In addition to AAUW National info they will receive this Connection newsletter since we get our email list from National.

Sue Topp, AAUW IL Northern District Director
aauwildist@gmail.com

The **Jane Addams Branch** invites you to "**Truth, Trust, and Turnout: Navigating Elections, Civic Engagement, and Disinformation.**"

Dr. Suzanne Chod, Professor of Political Science at North Central College in Naperville, will explore the relationship between political trust, polarization, and disinformation and its effects on elections and democracy. Specifically, she will offer details on the calculated use of disinformation to divide us further and erode democratic norms. Dr. Chod will also discuss how to spot and combat disinformation in the current election cycle and beyond.

All AAUW members and guests are invited to this Jane Addams branch Zoom program on Tuesday, Sept. 17, at 7 pm. Please register in advance.

Register

Our Upcoming Book Group meetings are held on Tuesdays at 4 p.m., jointly with the Northwest Suburban and Jane Addams branches. Guests are welcome.

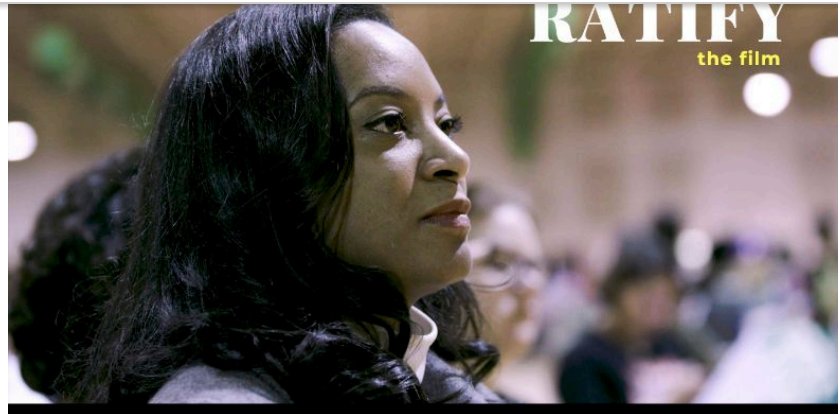
July 23: **Remarkably Bright Creatures** by Shelby Van Pelt (fiction)

August 27: **Find a Way** by Diana Nyad (nonfiction)

September 24: **Maisie Dobbs** by Jacqueline Winspear (fiction)

Register for one or more book discussion meetings below.

Register



Hello AAUW friends, I'm writing to invite branch members to the Chicago premiere of a new documentary at The Gene Siskel Film Center on August 16.

The documentary, RATIFY, is about the successful grassroots effort in Virginia to ratify a constitutional amendment. www.siskelfilmcenter.org/ratify

My connection to the film is working on the Illinois ratification of the Equal Rights Amendment in 2018. That campaign was successful because of AAUW members across the state. Now, I'm helping to promote the film's Chicago premiere, and organize a talk-back after the film.

RATIFY will be shown at the Siskel on August 16 at 6pm. If you aren't familiar with the venue, it's located on State Street across from the Chicago Theater.

The post-screening discussion will be 30 minutes between Jay Young of Common Cause and one of the filmmakers about storytelling for advocacy, as well as the personal toll of grassroots work.

Contact me for a blurb that can be used in a newsletter or social media. I can also reserve rows for members if I know AAUW folks are able to attend.

Best,
AJ Conroy
www.eraillinois.org
312-405-4538

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