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### From the President

The AAUW-IL Board met in person for the first time in July. It was an energetic meeting. Planning focused on ways to support Branches in a variety of ways. The District Director position has a new look – Sue Topp was appointed to the newly created Branch Liaison position. She is planning a Fall Conference for Branch Leadership in October.

Welcome our new Public Policy Co-chairs Ken Olson, Schaumburg Branch and Karen Kortsch, Waukegan Branch. This is an exciting time for Public Policy. Sign up for the state Public Policy Google group for timely updates.

Planning has begun for a State Conference in April– more to come as decisions are finalized.

Your State Board is committed to support you. Please reach out with questions and comments.

Laura Desmarais  
[aauwilpres@gmail.com](mailto:aauwilpres@gmail.com)

### Member News

#### Five Star Program Updates

Kick off your summer planning by ensuring your programs and goals align with the new FY25 Five Star Program criteria, which covers branch activity from July 1, 2024, through June 30, 2025. The [Five Star Program](#) page shows the criteria needed to achieve stars this year. Leaders will receive resources on the Five Star Program in FY25 in future Membership Matters, including an FAQ to guide you through the process.

The FY24 Impact Survey will be emailed to leaders in September. This annual survey is an opportunity for branches to share with AAUW National and celebrate your achievements over the past fiscal year. Not only do your responses determine the stars your branch earned in FY24, but they also ensure AAUW National better understands the work of our branches and how to best support you.

### Public Policy

I would like to take this opportunity to introduce myself and my co-chair to our AAUW-IL members. I am Karen Kortsch, and along with Ken Olson, will serve as Co-Chair of Public Policy for AAUW-IL going forward. Tracey and Paula have left very big shoes to fill and I hope we can carry on with such dedication as they have shown during their terms.

I am a retired Registered Nurse and a passionate advocate for gender equity. I currently serve as the president of the Waukegan Area Branch and as our Public Policy chair. I am looking forward to learning more about our Illinois legislation, getting to know our legislators better, and sharing my newly acquired knowledge with our membership.

Ken is a member of the Schaumburg Area branch and serves as Public Policy chair. His wife was very active in the Branch and was Public Policy Chair at the time she passed. He was asked to carry on as he does work in the policy area. He is also Public Policy Coordinator for the American Dairy Science Association. His PhD is in Dairy Cattle Breeding from the University of Wisconsin - Madison.

Recent legislative news includes the signing of these important bills by our governor. [Illinois governor signs trio of major reproductive rights bills into law \(msn.com\)](#). I am glad to see that Illinois is being proactive in protecting women affected by harsh anti-women policies that have been sweeping through our nation.

Karen M Kortsch  
630-337-1963

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](http://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**, Branch Liaison  
[aauwildist@gmail.com](mailto:aauwildist@gmail.com)

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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](#)

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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.

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](#)

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*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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AAUWILConnection@gmail.com

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