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of Illinois

connection

From the President

A special thanks to Sue Topp, District Liaison, for putting together the state's virtual fall conference: ***Policy Impacts on Women and Higher Education: Learn, Plan, Act*** on September 27. Sue always does a great job attracting interesting speakers. There were 85 registrants across the state. Megan Kissell, (AAUW Public Policy and Advocacy) presented National's priorities and Ken Olson (State Public Policy) presented on ways we can get involved by taking action. Both presentations were excellent. Contact Sue (aauwildist@gmail.com) for a link to the web presentation. This is a perfect activity to fulfill a 5 Star Public Policy Action activity.

I also want to highlight the Zoom Presentations sponsored by the Jane Addams Branch. These presentations highlight AAUW's Public Policy priorities. They are an opportunity to dive deeper and gain a better understanding of the issues. Branches can encourage participation at the Branch level. Watch the presentations in a group, discuss and earn a star!!

Laura Desmarais
aauwilpres@gmail.com

Public Policy

As I write this update, the federal government has been shut down for over two weeks. Those in power are using this opportunity to lay off federal workers. The US Department of Education let go of 20% of its workforce. This means that there are almost 500 staff members that are no longer with the department. The terminations will significantly impact services, particularly in special education and civil rights enforcement. AAUW put out a press release on the 1st of October that you can read [here](#). AAUW called on Congress to end the shutdown and push back on these firings of crucial government employees. We should all make sure we are in touch with our elected officials and send them the message that this attack on education and civil rights is something we vehemently oppose.

At the state level, we are currently in the midst of the Illinois Veto Session. The veto session is a brief meeting of the legislature in the fall. Its primary purpose is to address gubernatorial vetoes, which is why it is called the "Veto Session." Its purpose has evolved and lawmakers now take up new bills and finish unresolved issues at this time. This year the veto session is focused on transit funding, energy and immigration. There is not much business being done that relates to AAUW priorities.

Stay tuned for more news about a Springfield lobby day in March or April of next year. Thank you to the Naperville branch for taking the lead on this. There is also a Lobby Corps that AAUW has put together for members that live in the Washington DC area. Check out info on the AAUW web page to learn more.

Your voice. Your power. Your impact.

Ken Olson and Karen Kortsch, Co-Directors of Public Policy

Branch News



Dry by Jane Harper.

A small town hides big secrets in this atmospheric, page-turning debut mystery by an award-winning author. In the grip of the worst drought in a century, the farming community of Kiewarra is facing life and death choices daily when three members of a local family are found brutally slain.

[Please register to attend:](#)

Guests are welcome!

Next book discussions:

Dec 9: *The Paris Novel* by Ruth Reichl

Jan 27: *Soldiers and Kings* by Jason De León

Questions? Contact Kate Skegg
at aauwJaneAddams@gmail.com

Meet AAUW Fellows and Grantees

Saturday, November 8

11:00am via Zoom using the link below:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/join/REZnuoHzRP64lAmDaLBmZQ>

We will have recent AAUW Fellows and Grantees present their research and programs. For the 2025–2026 academic year, AAUW invested over \$5.3 million to support 228 women scholars and community projects. These grants and fellowships are lifelines — especially for women of color and those in STEM fields who continue to face systemic barriers.

Since 1888, AAUW has been one of the largest funders of women's graduate education, investing in women who go on to change the world. Between FY2020-2025, AAUW awarded nearly \$29.6 million in total (this includes multiple award types and organizational grants) to about 1,538 women and community projects. By 2023, more than \$135 million had been awarded in total since program inception (in 1888) to over 13,000 women and nonprofit orgs.

This program is sponsored by the **Chicago branch** and **Jane Addams branch** of AAUW.

Against All Odds Women who Triumphed in the Male Dominated World of Art

The **Deerfield Area Branch** and the **Waukegan Area Branch** invite you to join us to hear artist and art historian Denise Laurin feature a sampling of the gifted women throughout history who triumphed over the status quo and who emerged as equals in aesthetic and technical skill, despite the obstacles they were forced to overcome.

Tuesday, November 11, 7pm

[Please register to attend.](#)

Questions? flautokaren@yahoo.com

News from AAUW Elgin Branch

Our annual autumn salad and dessert luncheon was a wonderful way to start our new season. Our speakers were Jen Hensen, City of Elgin Homeless Coordinator, Reverend Katie Shaw Thompson, Elgin PADS Director and Mayor Dave Kaptain.

These passionate advocates shared success stories and educated us as to the tremendous need for unhoused persons to secure housing and services. We asked "How can AAUW help to lighten the burden of our homeless population? Not unexpectedly, because of our generous members, we were able to donate almost \$1000.00 to Elgin Pads! In addition, our branch collected funds to add to our operating expenses enabling our branch have a slate of varied speakers and interesting programs as we begin our new year.

Judi Tepe
Elgin Branch Co- President

Join the next AAUW-sponsored rally or event in style! Purchase a special AAUW Illinois Equity warriors t-shirt or hoodie at <http://CafePress.com/shop/AAUWNapervilleArea>. A portion of your purchase supports AAUW.

[Click here to see the shirts and order!](#)

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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