

News from the Northwest

September, 2017



**Newsletter of the Northwest Suburban Branch
American Association of University Women**

***AAUW advances equity for women and girls through advocacy,
education, philanthropy, and research.***

SCHOOLS COST TOO MUCH! LEARN ABOUT THE WHYS AND HOWS OF SCHOOL FINANCE

Thursday, September 28, 2017

7:00 p.m.

**Lincoln Middle School LRC
200 S. Lincoln, Park Ridge**

Once again our branch is collaborating with the Park Ridge League of Women Voters to bring you an outstanding program! Dr. Tom Kersten, professor of educational leadership at Roosevelt University and author of *Taking the Mystery Out of Illinois School Finance*, will speak to us on *Demystifying School Finance: State and Local*. Also appearing with Dr. Kersten on a panel will be business officials from Park Ridge-Niles School District 64 and Maine Township High School District 207.

We hear and read a great deal about school funding in Illinois, and the inequities that exist among the school systems in the state because of the way in which our schools are funded, with property taxes being the primary source of revenue for the districts. This means that districts such as ours have schools that are very well funded, but it also means that the largest single item on our property tax bills is the money allocated to our schools. In districts where property values are much lower, the amount of money generated through property taxes cannot support the kinds of programs that our schools provide. This is the crux of much of the concern about schools in Illinois: the quality of the education provided for children is dependent upon where they live.

The presentation will focus on how schools are financed and how other methods of finance could be utilized to improve education throughout the state and ensure that all children are given the opportunity to experience the same kinds of learning opportunities. Come! Listen and learn! No matter how knowledgeable you are about school finance, you will surely benefit from hearing this presentation. Whether or not you have children in school, if you pay property taxes you are a stakeholder! Our AAUW branch has partnered with the League of Women Voters before, and we are pleased to be able to do so again.

Lincoln Middle School is located two blocks south of Touhy. Lincoln is between Greenwood and Western Aves. There is street parking around the school.

FROM OUR PRESIDENT

Happy September

This month returns us to the school season after a brief hiatus during the summer. Teachers, students and parents make transitions during this time. Our household recently became an empty nest for the first time.

We are lucky that we have saved enough money to pay for our children's college education. It comes at a significant price these days. Most students and families go into debt, and not insignificant amounts of debt. This student debt has had a significant drag on our economy; pushing out the average marriage age and investments in buying homes.

While at convention I learned about AAUW's most recent research, *Deeper in Debt*. It is eye opening. Though median household incomes in the United States have barely budged since 1976, the report says, the median price of college attendance has more than doubled since then. The gap between income and tuition is being filled by student debt. Women take on more debt at almost every degree level and in higher amounts. That coupled with the gender pay gap (18% one year after graduation) makes repayment a bigger burden on women. 34 percent of all women and 57 percent of black women repaying student loans reported they had been unable to meet essential expenses within the past year.

Student loans can be confusing to renegotiate to consider income driven repayment (IDR) plans. Unlike any other debt, it cannot be discharged in bankruptcy. Default fees can be staggering.

There are no easy answers to these problems; but to begin with, students must be aware of what they are getting into with student debt. I see parents who enrolled their children in college only to wonder how they are going to pay for it after the fact. Some students are going to schools with dismal graduation rates, or job placement rates – a lot of these schools are for-profit institutions. These situations aggravate repayment problems. We can be proud that we are helping a tiny bit with our Oakton Scholarship. Often even at Oakton there are students who can't afford tuition and life's other necessities.

Please read more about this study at AAUW's website. There are policy recommendations that AAUW will pursue. However, I think we all could inform those around us going to college of the realities of the situation. If you have ideas of how we can use this information locally, let me or a board member know.

Cindy

IT HAPPENED IN AUGUST

Twelve of our members gathered at Irene Jinks' home in August to kick off our new program year and to celebrate our anniversary. It was an evening of looking ahead and making suggestions for the coming year and also one of reminiscence as we reflected on some of the things that Northwest Suburban Branch has accomplished. We spoke of the role of the branch in starting Oakton Community College, the preschool and medical and dental clinics that the branch sponsored for the children of the migrant workers who worked on the many truck farms that once existed in Des Plaines, among other things. Several of our newer members were present, and those of us who have been members for a longer time shared with them some of our memories of special programs and activities. It was so nice that Diane Forsythe, who was president of the branch for several years but now lives in Wisconsin, happened to be in Park Ridge and was able to join us.

While we talked, we enjoyed refreshments, including a decorated cake commemorating our seventy years as a branch! (You can't celebrate a birthday without cake!) Since the food was contributed by our hostess, the monetary contributions made by those who attended were added to our project fund.

COULD YOU HELP?

Oakton Community College will once again sponsor *Futures Unlimited* next January. This is the STEM program where middle school girls who will be going into high school the following fall have the opportunity to hear speakers who represent many different fields of work – often areas not thought of as being for girls. The school is looking for presenters for this day. Each presentation is scheduled for an hour and is repeated, since the girls are in small groups during the day for the presentations. Last year over three hundred girls participated. If you would be interested, contact Cindy Grau or Pili Richardson for more information.

AN OCTOBER EVENT!

Because our plan to show the film *Equal Means Equal* at Oakton Community College did not work out at this time, we have scheduled an alternate event! On **Saturday, October 7, we will gather at the Koehnline Museum of Art at Oakton at 11:00 a.m. to view their new exhibit.** Please join us there if you would be interested in seeing this special exhibit. Those who would be interested could have lunch together afterward, giving us a chance to share our impressions.

Women and Anger: Resistance, Power, and Inspiration

A Juried Exhibition of Art by Women

A tradition at the Koehnline Museum of Art is its annual collaboration with the Women and Gender Studies program to explore a unique perspective on women's creativity and art. This year's exhibition explores the relationship between women and anger that has always been a complex one. Women have traditionally been discouraged from expressing anger for fear of being perceived as unladylike or worse, as dangerous or destabilizing. But in truth, well-placed anger can often serve as an impetus for healing, transformation, and action. Recent push-backs in hard fought political and legal gains, assaults on the health and safety of women and other marginalized groups as well as on the environment, would suggest that the time is right for righteous indignation.

A SUCCESSFUL FUNDRAISER!

The day was beautiful and the mums were spectacular! Many thanks to Fran and Richard Kampwirth, Irene Jinks and her friend Susan Olsen, and Cindy and Scott Grau who transported the plants from Schaumburg to Irene's home where members picked up their orders. Thanks to the purchases of many members, we realized a net profit of just over \$275.00 for our project contributions.



AN INVITATION

The Schaumburg Branch has invited us to a showing of the movie *Equal Means Equal* on Thursday, Oct. 26, 6:45 p.m., at the Schaumburg Library on Schaumburg and Roselle Roads. The film, billed as the definitive documentary on the status of women in America, examines real-life stories and precedent-setting legal cases and uncovers how outdated and discriminatory attitudes inform and influence seemingly disparate issues. It presents a compelling and persuasive argument for the urgency of ratifying the Equal Rights Amendment. The film is being shown around the state thanks to AAUW Illinois' Gender Equity Fund.

If you are interested in attending, we could arrange to carpool. Please contact Cindy (847-384-8136) or Irene (847-698-3113).

ALSO ABOUT ERA

Our friends at the Chicago AAUW branch are putting together an ERA activity book about the Equal Rights Amendment and Illinois women. After publication, they will distribute the book to middle school students throughout the state. If you are interested in learning more about this project, visit the fundraising page: <https://www.generosity.com/education-fundraising/era-illinois-coloringbook>.



The League of Women Voters of Park Ridge, NWS AAUW and Park Ridge Niles School District 64 proudly present

DEMYSTIFYING SCHOOL FINANCE: STATE AND LOCAL

Thursday, September 28 at 7pm

Lincoln Middle School LRC

200 S. Lincoln Ave, Park Ridge

The panel to discuss school funding will include Luann Kolstad, Chief School Business Official of Park Ridge Niles School District 64, Mary Kalou, Assistant Superintendent of Business for Maine Township High School District 207, and

DR. TOM KERSTEN - AUTHOR OF "TAKING THE MYSTERY OUT OF ILLINOIS SCHOOL FINANCE" AND PROFESSOR OF EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP AT ROOSEVELT UNIVERSITY