

News from the Northwest

February, 2022



Newsletter of the Northwest Suburban Branch

***Our Mission: To advance gender equity for women and girls
through research, education, and advocacy.***

Our Vision: Equity for all.

We're Still Zooming!

Even though the incidence of COVID seems to be diminishing, we will probably not be having face-to-face meetings for a while. We know that the state's mask mandate will soon be modified, but many of us are still reluctant to be in confined spaces with others and it certainly won't be warm enough for us to think about outdoor gatherings for some time! We've been so fortunate to be able to participate with other branches in Zoom presentations that have brought us wonderful presenters on excellent topics. Many, many thanks to our president, Elaine Fisher, for her connections that have made these arrangements possible. She has also been diligent in sending information to our members who have Internet connections so that they could join these presentations whenever they could. Thank you, Elaine!

We will continue to keep you informed of programs that we know will be of interest to you!

In Memoriam

Northwest Suburban Branch lost a faithful, long-time member on January 30 when Irene Sylvester died after having suffered a devastating stroke.

Irene was a valued member of our book group who was extremely well-read; she had a vast knowledge of ancient history and a phenomenal memory! She was also very much interested in world affairs and participated in several discussion groups.

Although her career was in business, she devoted much time in retirement to tutoring adults in English and in helping many neighbors in her building prepare for and successfully complete their American citizenship exams. She gave of herself and in return was loved.

Irene is survived by her daughter and two grandchildren.

FROM OUR PRESIDENT

Dear Friends,

Here we are in another calendar year, with a new set of New Year's resolutions. After two years in a pandemic, we might have hoped to be free of health restrictions; instead, we must adapt and find ways to thrive in this new environment. Women are experts at adapting so let's see what we can do using online resources, Zoom, and networking via the phone, text messages and maybe Facebook or Twitter.

Did you resolve to be more healthy and active in 2022? There are fitness activities online that we can do at home via YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=M6PrVvmMVY>

Do you need to relieve stress? Here are a couple of links to try chair yoga or Tai Chi:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-Ts01MC2mIo>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cEOS2zoyQw4>

I enjoy Bob and Brad, two online physical therapists who guide you through some exercises:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gECNsPHgbc0>

Had you planned to travel, but can't due to Covid-19? Here are some online options:

Yosemite National Park: <https://www.virtualyosemite.org/virtual-tour/#node23>

Hawaii volcanoes National Park:

<https://www.nationalparkstraveler.org/2013/06/take-virtual-tour-hawaii-volcanoes-national-park-video23427>

Did you want to see a coral reef?

Monterey Bay Aquarium: <https://www.montereybayaquarium.org/animals/live-cams/coral-reef-cam/>

Or a Beluga Whale?

Georgia Aquarium: <https://www.georgiaaquarium.org/webcam/beluga-whale-webcam/>

Would you like to attend symphony concerts? https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YT_63UntRJE

Feeling lonely or isolated? I've started calling a couple friends or family members each week. With cell phones, we no longer worry about the cost of long-distance calls, so reach out and catch up on personal news. Since we are avoiding face to face interaction, getting a phone call can be really appreciated and we feel connected.

Want to learn about something new this winter? Libraries are providing programs via Zoom so you can sign up for many programs across the country. Whether it is felting, learning Italian, Artic Animals or a travel talk with Rick Steves, there are many choices. And of course, reading a book can provide an experience of a new world. I'm reading *The Vanishing Half* by Britt Bennett. Join me and we can discuss it at our April meeting.

It looks like our branch programs will continue via Zoom and now we know how to use Zoom to our advantage. After our November Program on sex trafficking, we gained a new member - Kelly Erboe. Welcome Kelly! When you get an email about our AAUW network of programs, feel free to share the email with non-member friends. Perhaps they will enjoy our program and join our branch as well. Due to Zoom, we can join other branches' programs. We had a choice of several February programs. If you lose track of the emails, remember all the details are on our branch website, <https://nwsuburban-il.aauw.net/>

If you have an idea for a program, please let me know.

I hope to see you online soon!

Elaine

NOTES FROM THE JANUARY 27TH PROGRAM:

"CONFRONTING THE RISE OF SCHOOL BOARD DISRUPTIONS"

The speakers were all excellent and shared their expertise and experience. The personal stories shared of the disruption and personal threats were shocking. Jennifer Berkshire is the author of *A Wolf at the Schoolhouse Door: The Dismantling of Public Education*.

1. Welcome: **Leni Manaa-Hoppenworth and Cassie Creswell**
2. School board disruptions in Illinois: **Jim McGrath**
3. Panel: **Jennifer Berkshire, Senator Cristina Pacione-Zayas, Nathaniel Rouse and Julie Harris**
4. Action steps: **Joyce Slavic**
5. Parent organizing perspective: **Kylie Spahn and Jessica Jacob**

In case you missed the program, the recording is available to watch and share with friends on [YouTube](#), [Facebook](#), the [Indivisible IL website](#), and [IL-FPS website](#).

You can [find the slides for the presentations here](#).

A [toolkit of resources in document form is here](#).

The disruptive parents/residents are motivated by dog whistle phrases, such as:

- Mask mandates for Covid
- Covid Vaccine Mandates and Quarantines
- Critical Race Theory (CRT)
- Illinois SB818 – Health Education
- LGBTQ
- Social Distancing
- Protect the Children
- Banning books

The disruptive individuals are generally part of a larger group that is affiliated with right wing conservative political groups that are well funded. If people are speaking out about these issues at the school board meetings, record their names in case they run for school board in 2023. Meanwhile, take action to support your current school board members.

Here are some suggested actions to consider:

- *Attend school board meetings and get others to show up to support the board members*
- *Speak during Public Comments at Board meetings (resource below)*
<https://www.supportourschools.com/become-an-advocate>
- *Write Letters to the Editor*
- *Email School Board (remember to be courteous, emails are subject to FOIA requests)*
- *Run for School Board or find progressives who will run (resource below)* <https://npeaction.org/grassroots-school-board-member-network/>
- *Build coalitions of support*

If you encounter a parent who sounds like a disruptor, here are some talking points to use:

"It's hard for me to think of something that proves white privilege more than white people making it illegal to teach content that makes them uncomfortable" - Advanced History Teacher, Vernon Hills High School

Schools have a responsibility to provide students with a thorough, truthful, and fact-based history education and help students learn that racism is wrong. - www.LearningfromHistory.org

Our kids deserve an honest, accurate education

UPCOMING PROGRAMS/SAVE THE DATES:

Wednesday, February 23: *Career Development Path: From Investigative Reporter to Master Teacher*

7:30 p.m.

Presenter: Alba Mendiola, graduate student at UIC

Jane Addams Branch program; link for advance registration (required)

https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZEpf-2vrzgiHdoHkEqMgaWlh_AfawbkyUvg

After registering, you will receive a confirmation email containing the link to join the meeting.

Thursday, March 3:

6:30 p.m.

Rx: A Prescription for Equity – Dismantling Systemic Racism in Health Care in Illinois

A panel discussion featuring three Illinois legislators on HB 158, the comprehensive reform bill that became law in 2021 to create a more equitable and inclusive health care system in Illinois.

Springfield, IL Branch program; link for advance registration (required)

<https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZYtfuurpj4sGNb6BFqZ6ptHgrHaVRo3B9vr>

Saturday, April 9:

11:00 a.m.

15th Annual Lunch with Fellows, at Lambs Farm

Honorees: Natasha Ferguson, American Fellowship, Rush Univ.

Monica Reyes, American Fellowship, DePaul Univ.

Cost, \$25 including tax and gratuity; choose Chicken Caesar or Chopped Chicken Salad when reserving. Contact Elaine Fisher (elainefisher128@gmail.com); could we get a group from our branch?

Friday-Saturday, May 6-7: *Illinois State Convention*

Lisle-Naperville Hilton Doubletree Hotel. This will be an in-person event!

NEWS FROM AAUW



ECONOMIC
SECURITY

Women and Work: Increasing Leadership and Economic Equity

The pandemic has spurred radical shifts in the workplace—which present an opportunity because women can't wait any longer for trickle-down change. Join AAUW Chief Executive Officer Gloria Blackwell on Wednesday, March 16, at 2 p.m. ET as she leads a panel discussion about the transformation we need to achieve equity at work. This [special webinar](#) is part of the NGO Committee on the Status of Women and UN Commission on the Status of Women.

MARCH 15

All Women's Equal Pay Day

REMEMBER!

FEBRUARY IS BLACK HISTORY MONTH

MARCH IS WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH