

News from the Northwest

September, 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 ALONG!

Although we know that some of our members would love to be back to face-to-face meetings, and we would really enjoy the socialization that entails, many are not yet ready, and a definite plus of Zoom programming is that we have been able to participate in programs with speakers that we could not have had for our branch alone. So, we continue to Zoom!

On Tuesday, September 20, at 7:30 p.m., which is National Voter Registration Day, we will have a speaker from the *Vote Equality* group. The program will provide tips on voting for candidates who support our priorities: equal rights, equity, healthcare rights, safety from violence, and access to an honest public education without religious restrictions (book banning). We need an historic turnout this election to elect pro-choice candidates who support issues that directly impact women, their rights, and their families.

To register for our Sept. 20 program:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZcvcOGrrz4jHdaWXWSKY3jRkmBpsPO2JFI9>

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



NORTHWEST SUBURBAN BRANCH

Founded in 1947

CELEBRATING 75 YEARS OF ACTIVISM IN 2022

FROM OUR PRESIDENT

After the June 24th US Supreme Court decision on reversing Roe v. Wade, there were immediate protests and rallies through the end of June. I went to my local rally, but was still upset and walking around the house talking to myself.

Basically, “how could they make this horrible decision?” and “what will they do next?” and “what can we do about it?” “How can they treat women like livestock?” How will women, who have a miscarriage or an ectopic pregnancy, survive since some state laws dictate that doctors have to endanger the mother’s own health when laws in conservative states have declared it a crime to endanger the fetus. Certainly, no one plans to have an abortion; however, the point is that it should be a personal choice, advised by a doctor and a private decision; NOT a government mandate.

Since the end of June my emotions have been on a roller coaster ride. One option being considered is to add more justices to the U S Supreme Court to balance the court. This is huge challenge since one party would have to have an unwavering majority to do that. This means the midterms would have to have a majority of votes in support of the President which has not traditionally happened in the mid-terms. Experts say the chances are slim to none. So that leaves me in the depths of despair again since the current justices also weakened the ability of the EPA to protect our environment, air and water. Then, Justice Thomas indicated that birth control and gay marriage rights should also be revoked. That means women will not be able to plan their careers, probably not be considered for promotion and possibly lose economic security or independence. Women again could be trapped in a marriage for economic security or healthcare. Next, the US Supreme Court supported measures that discriminate against the voting rights of persons of color.

So the obvious overall trend is that **precedence of prior judicial decisions** does not dictate what the current US Supreme Court justices can do. Which means any decision can be overturned, and any rights can be revoked. **Now my hair is really on fire!**

During July, we saw the terrible results of this court decision in the news headlines. The implications of the new restrictive laws were revealed when a young girl in Ohio (aged 10) was raped repeatedly and became pregnant. **According to Ohio law, this child was going to be forced to have a rapist’s child?** Fortunately she was able to travel to Indiana and get an abortion, however the doctor who provided the care was subjected to legal and physical threats even though the medical service was allowed under Indiana laws. In Texas, performing an abortion is now a felony punishable by up to life in prison after a trigger law went into effect, which has only a narrow exception to save the life of a pregnant patient.

Then in August, the voters of Kansas surprised everyone by voting **NO** to having their constitution revised to ban all abortions. A small glimmer of hope began to appear on the horizon. **Maybe, if enough citizens registered and voted**, politicians who support the voters’ rights would be elected, and we would actually have a real democracy!

So, ladies, citizens, are we up to the task? Can we convince young people to register to vote? Can we get a record voter turnout of 47% like Kansas? (or more)? Can we support voter turnout in other states by writing postcards or making phone calls? Can we counter the voter misinformation? The time for action is now until Nov. 8. 2022.

Let’s make good trouble like John Lewis,

Elaine Fisher

UPCOMING PROGRAM REMINDERS:

Friday, September 9, 3:30-5:30 p.m. – Postcard Writing Event (Read on for details)

Tuesday, September 20, 7:30 pm - Vote for Equality

Saturday, September 24 - AAUW Fall Conference (See next page)

AAUW IL FALL CONFERENCE:

Join AAUW friends and colleagues from around the state at the virtual AAUW-IL Fall Conference on Saturday, Sept. 24, 2022 from 9 - 11 AM. Branch leaders, aspiring leaders, branch and national members (members-at-large): all are welcome.

We'll be meeting on Zoom this year; pre-registration is required. You'll be asked to choose a breakout group when you register.

To Register:

https://us06web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZcrd--tqDwiG9TnXnCgubXx_uq1SSFH3rCg

Agenda

Remarks from Donna Jean Simon, AAUW-IL President

Public Policy Update: "2022 Midterm Elections" presented by Tracey Sherman-Falcon and Paula Purdue, AAUW IL Public Policy Directors

Mini Workshop: "Introduction to Artificial Intelligence" presented by the 1948 Project Team
Artificial Intelligence (A.I.) is changing our world. "Smart" machines are making key decisions in healthcare, banking, employment, social media monitoring, retail and more. It is imperative that the humans who "train" these machines equitably represent the population to prevent biased decision making. In simple terms, women must play a part in the A.I. revolution. As leaders of AAUW, let's understand the fundamentals of A.I. concepts to help influence its direction. This is an interactive module designed for non-technical participants. 1948 Project presented this at an AAUW National STEMEd for Girls Technology session this summer.

Breakout Sessions: Chose one

Strategic Alliances: Stronger Together. How can your Branch multiply its policy impact in the community? Leader: Donna Jean Simon (aauwilpres@gmail.com), AAUW-IL President

Support Public Education through School Board Advocacy. Leaders: Paula Purdue (paulapatchwork@gmail.com), AAUW-IL Co-Director of Public Policy, and Kathy Wessel, AAUW Wheaton-Glen Ellyn

Program Sharing. Come prepared to briefly share ONE mission-based program or event your Branch held last year or is planning for 2022-2023. This is an opportunity to discover impactful programs your Branch can implement in your community. Leaders: Becky Glimco & Peg Gallagher, (aauwilprograms@gmail.com) AAUW-IL Program VPs

Doing the Dues: Using AAUW's Community Hub to Manage Member Dues & Rosters. Leaders: Carolyn Schelderup (cs_schj@yahoo.com), AAUW-IL Director of Finance, and Ruth Holst (holstruth@gmail.com), AAUW-IL Director-Elect of Finance

Reach for the (Five) Stars! Updates on AAUW Recognition for Branches. Leaders: Amy Green & Nann Hilyard (nbhilyard@att.net), AAUW-IL Membership VPs

Grow Your Branch Presence through Social Media. Leader: Kate Skegg (kate@skegg.net), AAUW-IL Social Media Manager

WordPress Websites Q&A. Ask questions and get tips & tricks to make your Branch website stand out using the WordPress framework provided by AAUW. Leader: Leslie Sulla (relsulla@comcast.net), AAUW-IL Web Manager

Remember, please register in advance for the Zoom meeting. You'll be asked to choose a breakout session when you register.

https://us06web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZcrd--tqDwiG9TnXnCgubXx_uq1SSFH3rCg

A SPECIAL OUTREACH EVENT!

Grab some friends and join us for a postcard writing party to help get out the vote for the ERA in Nevada. The event will take place on **Friday, Sept. 9, from 3:30 p.m. to 5:30 p.m. at Whole Foods** in Park Ridge (255 W. Touhy).

On their November ballot, Nevada voters can vote for this state constitutional amendment:

Equality of rights under the law shall not be denied or abridged by this State or any of its political subdivisions on account of race, color, creed, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, age, disability, ancestry or national origin.

This expanded Equal Rights Amendment for Nevada is part of a national trend to amend state constitutions. Oregon and Delaware amended their state constitutions in recent years. The state of New York just approved the first step in a three-part process to amend their constitution for gender equality. Efforts in Minnesota and Maine continue to similarly amend their state constitutions.

The LWVUS is a strong advocate for the ERA. Our League is excited to support the ERA by participating in this grassroots effort to reach Nevada voters. All supplies for the postcard writing party will be provided. Just bring yourself. Family and friends are welcome as well. Plans are underway to secure a location for the event near lots of foot traffic so our League can offer voter registration and education to passersby.

All supplies provided. For more information, contact AJ Conroy at info@ERAillinois.org.

ARE YOU A READER?

Here are some interesting books related to diversity, equity, and inclusion that you might like to read.

The Sum of Us by Heather McGhee

In this book, economist Heather McGhee argues against the Zero-Sum paradigm which assumes that progress for some comes at a cost to others. Instead, she provides proof of what she calls the Solidarity Dividend, that when people come together across race, we can gain substantial benefits for everyone.

Watch a preview with the author's phenomenal TEDTalk here:

https://www.ted.com/talks/heather_c_mcghee_racism_has_a_cost_for_everyone

Crying in H Mart by Michelle Zauner (2021, 256 pages) Michele Zauner is not only the indie rockstar behind the solo musical act Japanese Breakfast. She's also a daughter, foodie, a Korean-American, and a writer who effectively gives voice to grief and complicated mother-daughter relationships. When she was 26, Zauner's mother was diagnosed with cancer and her memoir, *Crying in H-Mart* chronicles the decline of her mother's health and her own journey in finding her sense of self.

The Sun Does Shine: How I Found Life, Freedom & Justice by Anthony Ray Hinton (2019, 368 pages) In 1985, Anthony Ray Hinton was arrested and charged with two counts of capital murder in Alabama. Stunned, confused, and only 29 years old, Hinton knew that it was a case of mistaken identity. *The Sun Does Shine* is an extraordinary testament to the power of hope sustained through the darkest times. Hinton's memoir tells his dramatic thirty-year journey and shows how you can take away a man's freedom, but you can't take away his imagination, humor, or joy.

Our book group will meet via Zoom on Tuesday, September 27th at 7:00 p.m. to discuss *The Daughters of Yalta* by Catherine Katz. In October we will discuss *Vanderbilt: The Rise and Fall of an American Dynasty* by Anderson Cooper. If you would like to join us, contact Irene Jinks at wijinks@aol.com. We would welcome new members!

A BIT OF HISTORY

Northwest Suburban branch was organized in 1947 to support education, research, and equity. Twenty charter members registered to start the branch. One of the first branch projects was a summer school for children of migrant workers on Des Plaines area vegetable truck farms. A branch member, Dr. Elfriede Horst (pediatrician) became aware that the children were lacking schooling and healthcare and convinced the AAUW members that something needed to be done to help the migrant families. Children gained social skills and learned English words at the school.