

News from the Northwest

JUNE, 2023

There won't be horns and champagne, but our AAUW Northwest Suburban new year will be here in just a few weeks. AAUW's fiscal year begins on July 1, and so our branch looks forward to the coming year, having had our annual meeting at the end of May. Our next event: **Sunday, June 11, 1:30 pm** we plan to visit the Des Plaines History Center to see the exhibit on Women of Des Plaines.

Reports were given, photos were shared in memory of Viaju Dunung, who passed away earlier this spring. We held an election for two of the open positions among our officers. President Elaine Fisher was reelected, and will continue to do her usual fantastic job, and Diane Forsythe was re-elected unanimously as Secretary. Karen Heckmann will continue to serve as the branch Financial Officer and also assists us in renewing our AAUW membership each June.

Our officers are:

President: Elaine Fisher

Secretary: Diane Forsythe

Financial Officer: Karen Heckmann.

Now that we are in a new AAUW year, we are planning for the fall meetings. Your program ideas are welcome; please send your ideas to Elaine. We hope that we will be able to meet face-to-face sometimes, but until that happens, we will continue to be virtual, with, perhaps, a group gathering outdoors when the weather is still good.

It is with deep sadness that we learned that Irene Jinks passed away June 5th in the hospital following hip replacement surgery. Her dedication to our branch for many years, her service as president, book discussion leader, treasurer and currently as newsletter editor and her can do spirit will be sorely missed. Our sympathy and prayers go out at this time of loss and sadness to everyone who knew Irene.



FROM OUR PRESIDENT (written May 22)

Hooray, it's May; the time of flowers, Mother's Day brunches, graduations, our branch annual meeting and the AAUW Illinois convention in East Peoria.

The AAUW Illinois convention is May 5-6 and our keynote speaker is Gloria Blackwell, our national CEO. The theme, Everyone's a Leader for Equity, will focus us on our mission "Equity for women and girls through education, research and advocacy." Our speakers will focus on Gender Equity, Pay Equity, Inequities in Medicine, Education Challenges and Leadership. I will share some highlights later in the newsletter.

Our March program was postponed due to illness of the presenter so it was re-scheduled on May 20th 10:30 am at the Des Plaines Library. We joined storyteller Lynn Rymarz for a dramatic portrayal of Marie Curie. Follow her life's journey from her childhood in Poland where she showed an early curiosity in science, to her years as a determined student studying in Paris. It leads to her Paris laboratory where she tried and failed at countless experiments before making her scientific breakthrough. She earned the honor of becoming the first woman to win a Nobel Prize. In addition, Lynn portrayed a second woman Molly, who worked at the clock face factory in Ottawa IL. Many women developed cancer from exposure and ingestion of radium paint. You may want to read the book, *The Radium Girls*. We had a good crowd of over 50 people. It was nice to see some of our branch members in person!

After the program, we had our branch annual meeting at the library to review past and future programs, and to elect officers. We enjoyed a pizza lunch.

Also in March, we were invited to join the Jane Addams program on Pay Equity & Workplace Fairness with an interesting panel of speakers. If you missed this, the program recording link is: [Program recording link](#)
The program slides link is: [Pay Equity panel](#)

On Sunday, June 11, 1:30 pm we plan to visit the Des Plaines History Center to see the exhibit on Women of Des Plaines.

Hope to see you soon, Elaine

Upcoming Program - Sunday, June 11, 1:30 pm

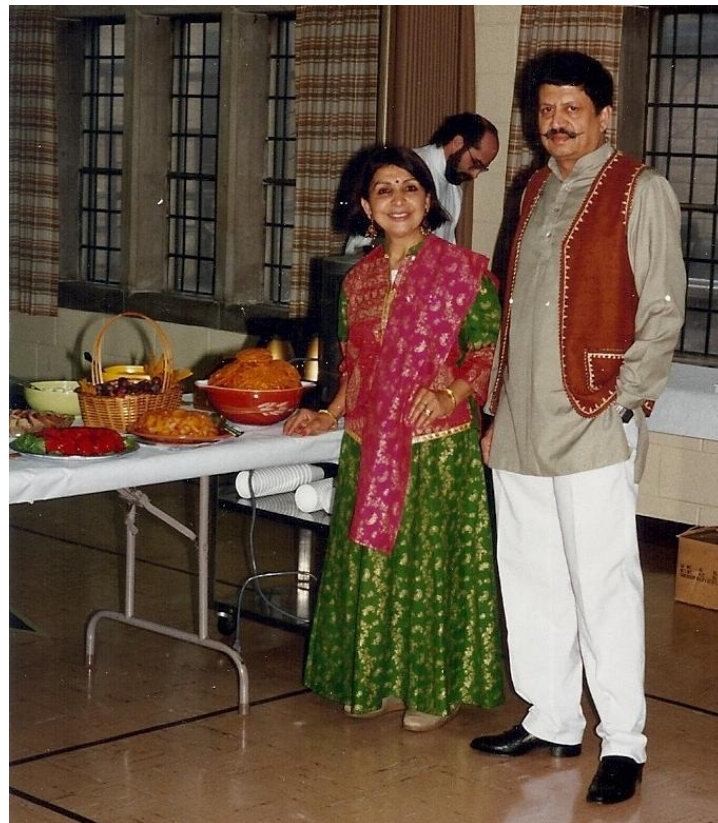
Women of Des Plaines Exhibit

Women's vital role in the development of this community is often obscured and hidden. The further one goes into the past, the less likely it is that the work and achievements of women were acknowledged in the historical record. The stories of Des Plaines' women pioneers, and those of ordinary women who did quietly extraordinary things, will be featured in this exhibit to help us tell a more complete story of Des Plaines.

We will meet at the Des Plaines History Center, 781 Pearson St. No doubt we will discover some new heroines from the early history of Des Plaines.

Remembering Vaiju Dunung, a former long-time member, and her 1990 Indian Fashion Show and food buffet. More photos on our branch website.

<https://nwsuburban-il.aauw.net/2022/06/27/celebrating-75th-anniversary/>





2023 AAUW IL Convention Highlights

AAUW Illinois president, Donna Jean Simon, welcomed everyone to the annual convention Friday evening, May 5. The opening speaker, Sharmili Majmudar of Women Employed, addressed **Everyday Opportunities to Advance Pay Equity**. She highlighted some societal norms that negatively impact women. She pointed out that in general when speaking about the gender pay gap, we focus on full-time employed men and women to calculate the pay gap, 83 cents to a man's dollar. However, women are the majority of part-time workers so when we compare all working women with all working men, the pay gap is worse; 77 cents to a man's dollar. In Illinois, questions about salary history cannot be used in the interviewing or selection process. Women Employed has tip sheets on how to handle this type of question as well as resources on negotiation and workers rights. Citing data from a parental app to record allowances given to children; an early example of pay inequity is the undervaluing of domestic and care-taking actions from childhood on. Allowances given to children are less for girls than boys. Physical tasks performed by boys are valued more than domestic or childcare tasks done by girls.

Saturday morning, AAUW Illinois president, Donna Jean Simon,

welcomed everyone to the second day of our convention. Our AAUW CEO Gloria Blackwell kicked- off the day by speaking about **Advancing Gender Equity**, reviewing our achievements and our ongoing challenges. She reported the states where salary transparency laws went into effect: California, Washington, Colorado, Maryland, Connecticut, Nevada and Rhode Island. She shared that AAUW awarded \$6.3 million in Fellowships and Grants for 2023-2024. Gloria represented AAUW @ the UN. AAUW sponsored a parallel event during the NGO CSW Forum, Tech Power to Economic Power: Closing the Digital Gender Gap.

Gloria closed her talk by stressing the importance of grassroots action and advocacy of branch members. She also complimented the Illinois branches on the achievement of mission based programming and activism in spite of ongoing Covid or other challenges.

Will It Play in Peoria? Educational leaders talked about their actions as leaders to improve the impact of education and how they improved education access for everyone. Dr. Sharon Desmoulin-Kherat, Supt. of Peoria Public Schools, is re-imagining schools to ignite students' passions and empower students to be responsible and successful. Using some of the strategies developed during Covid, the district is able to increase the number of students who take algebra. This course has been shown to influence students to complete high school and consider attending college. Dr. Sheila Quirk-Bailey, Illinois Central College President believes in meeting individuals where they are and realizing high levels of outcome working through an equity lens. She cited one example of having a mobile registration vehicle that traveled to under-served communities. This enabled new students to register for college classes easily and without having to have their own internet access.

During the lunch break, exhibits were open and we heard a legislative report from our state lobbyist, Jenni Purdue. The annual business meeting was conducted, state officer election results were reported and new officers were installed.

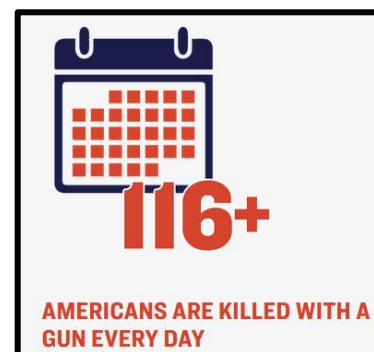
Dr. Elsa Vazquez-Melendez, MD, FAAP, FACP is Asst. Dean of Diversity and Inclusion at the University of Illinois College of Medicine in Peoria. She spoke about **Inequities in Medicine**.

The Changemakers Leadership Panel moderated by Dr. Jennifer Robin consisted of Nabeela Syed, Crystal Owney, and Emily Glimco. Using internet technology, Nabeela Syed joined us via Zoom from Springfield. She is the first time a Muslim, young female was elected as an Illinois representative. Crystal Owney, MBA, graduate of University of Wisconsin, overcame challenges of growing up as an orphan in a series of foster homes and built a career in financial analytics due to mentors, scholarships and education. Emily Glimco is a communications specialist with work experience in public libraries. Emily decided to run for a position on the library board in order to serve her community. As a first time candidate, she earned 1300 votes, but lost the election. For now she works for the Roselle village and volunteers as a Cook County poll worker.

At the close of the convention, an **AAUW Central States Regional Conference** was announced: **Reaching New Heights Together** in St. Louis MO. Mark your calendar, Oct. 19 - 21, 2023. More details to come in August!

Myth: Having a Gun Makes You Safer

You may have heard that more guns make you safer. This myth raises fears that many people are coming to harm you and your family, or violently steal something from you. This is actually part of the marketing campaign of the gun manufacturing industry, using fear of others in order to sell more guns.



The facts show the following results of more guns:

- When a gun is in a home, it doubles the risk of criminal homicide.
- A gun at home also triples the risk of suicide.
- Domestic abusers can threaten to or use guns/a deadly force. ***Each year, over 600 women were killed by a current or former domestic/romantic partner or a family member. In addition, 4.5 million women reported being threatened with a gun.***
- Suicide by using guns are deadly, making gun deaths the #1 killer of children & teens.
- Neighbor arguments, road rage, bar fights or racial prejudice now lead to gun deaths.

The research is clear; gun safety laws work in reducing gun deaths. States with strong gun laws have less gun violence. Overall, our weak gun laws are killing 43,000 people a year; 57% are suicides, 39% are homicides, 1.3% are shootings by police, and 1.2% are unintentional according to the CDC and Prevention, National Center for Health Statistics. The United States has the highest gun death rate of any developed country, and 4 times higher than the next lower country. White supremacists have also exploited weak open carry laws to threaten and intimidate at other rallies across the country, as well as in front of houses of worship, and electoral campaign offices. The U.S. must regulate guns not only to protect life, but to protect its citizens' equal freedoms to speak, assemble, go to school, worship, shop and vote without fear.

This epidemic of gun violence has to stop. **But as long as we refuse to do something about this epidemic, we are not "safe." Nor everyone else.**

So What Can We Do?

Provide information to friends and family to counter the myth that more guns make you safer. Write a letter to the editor. Facts source:

<https://giffords.org/the-issue/>

Contact your federal legislator to improve gun safety laws. One issue affecting everyone is allowing open carry of firearms. This is not allowed in IL, but could be a threat if you travel or vacation in other states. Here is a state by state Gun Safety scorecard which shows most states rated D or F. IL is rated A-. <https://giffords.org/lawcenter/resources/scorecard/>

Advocate use of Firearm Restraining Orders to protect women from partners with a history of violence being able to purchase a firearm. Similarly, support Red Flag laws at the state or federal level to encourage reporting of individuals who are violent or endanger those around them so they cannot purchase a firearm or ammunition.

Join with Moms Demand Action in advocating for safe gun storage as part of being a responsible gun owner.