

News from the Northwest

Jan. - May, 2024

President's letter

What can we do about our shrinking branch? We lost two members who passed away during the past year. We no longer have a newsletter editor. We also need a Membership VP to recruit new members. Currently, we have 11 members. Do you know any women who would consider joining our branch? We need to have 20 members to cover basic branch expenses. Will we have to disband? How will we continue to support our Oakton College scholarship? As a promotion, we can offer a discounted membership of \$58 for the first year for any new members who join in May. The May 28 book (4 pm) discussion is *Necessary Lies* by Diane Chamberlain (a New York Times bestselling author of *Big Lies in a Small Town*.) Please invite a friend or two to come and join the discussion. Here's the zoom link:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87614885627?pwd=eVR4ZXJjenZHeWx6MWhnM01SVmtYdz09>

Save this date: Our AAUW branch annual meeting will be Wednesday, May 22, 7 pm via Zoom. I hope you can attend since we need a quorum to make decisions about our branch future. More details to come.

Important - AAUW Election & Bylaws Voting: Apr. 3 - May 14

The proposed change to the Bylaws would open up AAUW membership to anyone who supports our mission of equity for women and girls. There are many successful and capable women who do not have a degree (40% of women). This would allow us to recruit anyone without worrying if they have a degree. This amendment was proposed by a grassroots member group, and the AAUW national board and our AAUW IL board has voted to support it. I would ask you to support this change as well.

How do we vote? On April 3, you received an email from AAUW <vote@simplyvoting.com> that contained a link to vote. The email also included an ID number and a password. This is specific for each member. Let me know if you need help; I can walk you through it since I've already voted Yes. Ph. 630 335-4917

Programs via Zoom: program recordings (except book discussions) available on Jane Addams AAUW webpage. <https://janeaddams-il.aauw.net/>

Jan. 24, Paid Family & Medical Leave (co-sponsored with Chicago AAUW)

Feb. 21, Sex Trafficking (sponsored by Chicago AAUW)

Feb. 27, State-wide book discussion of *Nomadland: Surviving America in the 21st Century* by Jessica Bruder

Mar. 14, Public Policy: Protecting Public Schools and Libraries

Mar. 28: Prepare for AAUW Vote (membership bylaws)

March 24 - Women's History program (for those who missed an excellent program)

The branch co-sponsored this program with the Des Plaines Library, a live portrayal of Elizabeth Packard - *The Woman They Could Not Silence* (book by Kate Moore.)

What would you do if your spouse committed you to an Insane Asylum for no other reason than he disliked your opinions? What would you do if you learned that the law allowed that to happen, and you had no legal recourse? What would you do if you wanted to speak out, prove your sanity, and change the world you live in?

Elizabeth Packard was committed to the Illinois State Hospital in 1860 and was kept under lock and key for three years, all the while protesting her sanity. While her husband insisted to everyone that she was insane, Elizabeth was able to obtain her release. Realizing that current law allowed married women to be placed in asylums by their husbands, Elizabeth started a campaign to change that unjust law. Through her perseverance, her voice was heard and the laws were changed.

This timely living history portrayal by Laura F. Keyes shows how, throughout history and even up to the present day, women's voices are silenced and marginalized when they dare to express opinions contrary to those of the men in power.

April 19-20: AAUW IL State Convention - Convention report will be given by branch President at our Annual Meeting on these topics: How America Lost Its Mind, Truth, Trust & Turnout, Megan Kissell - AAUW Its My Vote toolkit, The Dignity Index, State Annual Meeting, Officer Installation, Recognition Certificates, Poverty: Risks, Reach & Building Systems, affinity groups.

Branch Annual Meeting: Weds., May 22, 2024 07:00 PM. More details coming in a separate email.

Public Policy:

The Illinois legislature is considering several bills related to gun violence protection and protection of families of victims of gun violence. For safety of women and children, AAUW supports Karina's bill HB 4469/SB 2633. When a victim, like Karina, is granted an order of protection that includes what's known as the "firearm remedy" — a court order that temporarily strips someone of their right to own a gun — the proposal (House Bill 4469 / Senate Bill 2633) would require a court to issue a search warrant that would enable law enforcement to seize the alleged abuser's firearms, and give a judge the ability to require police to execute the warrant within 96 hours. This legislation also adds dating partners and ex-dating partners to the list of petitioners in the firearm restraining orders act. Send a message to your Illinois rep and senator to support HB 4469/SB 2633.

Meanwhile, the U.S. Supreme Court is considering reducing our rights/protections on the life-saving ghost guns rule, protection of victims of domestic abuse by gun owners and the validity of assault weapon bans.

This coming August we will be talking to neighbors about the importance of voting in the November election. Having congressional representatives who support complete healthcare rights for women is essential to combat the current war on women's rights. Whether it is the right to use family planning, or use IVF to have a family; women deserve bodily autonomy to make personal health decisions.

Branch Book Discussion:

In May, we will take suggestions of books to read and make selections. Join us to add your voice on May 28 at 4 pm. At the May meeting, we will select books for the next period of time. Some books that have already been suggested for consideration are:

- *Remarkably Bright Creatures* by Shelby Van Pelt (fiction)
- *Braiding Sweetgrass: Indigenous Wisdom, Scientific Knowledge, and the Teachings of Plants* by Robin Wall Kimmerer (non-fiction)
- *Lab Girl: A Memoir* by Hope Jahren (non-fiction)
- *Maisie Dobbs* by Jacqueline Winspear (fiction, first in a mystery series)
- *Find a Way* by Diana Nyad (non-fiction)

