



# News By Degrees

SCHAUMBURG AREA BRANCH

SEPTEMBER—NOVEMBER 2025

## President's Message

As summer comes to a close, I am once again eager and excited about the year ahead for our branch. I had a few years away from the branch president role; however, I am excited to work with our talented board and you—our enthusiastic branch members—to support the AAUW mission. I appreciate your confidence in me to carry on this important work on the heels of our stellar leadership under Genevieve.

So, let's get to it, no time to waste! Although the AAUW mission (advance equity for women and girls) has not changed, there have been changes in the national AAUW purpose and strategic priorities. As noted on the AAUW.org, "In a time of growing challenges to education access, AAUW must meet this moment. This strategic plan renews our commitment to higher education as the key to equity and empowers a stronger, unified movement to create lasting change". I am very excited about the direction that AAUW will now focus. I think you will see how nicely the work of our branch readily fits into the new AAUW priorities.

**AAUW Purpose:** AAUW advocates for women and girls by championing success in higher education—a vital pathway to economic security for over 140 years, AAUW has led the fight for gender equity through advocacy, funding and collective action.

**AAUW Strategic Priorities include:**

Champion gender equity by directly funding and empowering pathways to higher education for women... (provide grants and fellowships, support women in academia, build networks for alumni).

Champion gender equity through education and advocacy for inclusive policies that remove barriers...(champion legislation supporting paid family leave and medical leave, pay equity, workplace harassment).

## Upcoming Events

- *Welcome meeting: September 10*
- *Mum delivery: September 13*
- *Novel Approach: September 15*
- *AAUW-IL Fall Conference: September 27, Virtual*
- *General Meeting: September 29*
- *Novel Approach: October 13*
- *Celebrating Women: October 27*
- *Novel Approach: November 17*

## Welcome meeting

### Alfresco Lunch at Panera

Join Schaumburg branch members for lunch on Wednesday, September 10 at noon at Panera (830 N Meacham Rd) This is a favorite branch social opportunity to catch up with each other and exchange our summer activities and upcoming plans. Rain or shine we will get together - outside on the patio if the weather is good and inside if the weather is inclement. We hope to see you there.

### September General Meeting Monday, September 29, 7:00 p.m.

Civic Awareness - Navigating Media and Finding Reliable Sources

hosted by the Schaumburg Library via Zoom

Daily Herald Opinion Editor Jim Slusher will explore the expanding and complex media landscape. With 25 years of experience, Slusher will share insights into finding trustworthy news sources and spotting bias in a world of information overload. The program will be followed with a discussion and business meeting. Please register for the library program using the link below. A link for the post presentation will be sent out at a later date.

<https://www.schaumburglibrary.org/events?id=14087377>

## AAUW-IL Fall Conference – Sat., Sept. 27, 2025, 9 - 11 AM CST Virtual

### Policy Impacts on Women and Higher Education: Learn, Plan, Act



Register for link: [tinyurl.com/AAUWILFallConf](https://tinyurl.com/AAUWILFallConf)



Join us for the AAUW-IL Fall Conference! All branch, state and national members are welcome. Our theme addresses the major governmental policy shifts that will impact women and higher education -- educators and students alike. We'll plan ways that we can advocate to ensure that women have the educational and career opportunities they need and deserve.

## Upcoming Meetings

**October TBD                      General Meeting**

**Guest Speaker Illinois State Senator Laura Murphy**

Senator Murphy will discuss current and pending Illinois legislation as it pertains to the AAUW Mission. Watch for details in your email.

**October/November TBD                      General Meeting**

**Public Policy - What's Happening? What can you do? How do we do it together? Ken Olson, Public Policy Chair**

Our very own branch member and Public Policy Chair, and AAUW IL Public Policy Co-Director, Ken Olson, will share his powerpoint program which he presented in Springfield. The subject matter is important and timely and will complement our general meeting with Senator Murphy (date TBD)

**Saturday, December 6 8:30 a.m.      Holiday Brunch**

**Rising Early Café 1477 W Schaumburg Rd., Schaumburg**

optional WINGS holiday stocking assembly at Lynn's house following brunch

**Novel Approach:** We will start at 1:00 PM. Please let the host know if you will be attending.

***Abundance***

By Ezra Klein and Derek Thompson

September 15

Is scarcity a choice? Could we perhaps choose abundance?  
What should the role of government be?  
How can we encourage innovation that benefits everyone?  
What should our vision of the future be?

Host: Janet

***The Violin Conspiracy***

by Brendan Slocumb

November 17

The debut novel about a black classical trained musician. Ray Mc Mullian grew up with A family whose mother and uncle disapproved of his passion for playing the violin. When he finds the Stradivarius violin in his grandmother's attic, he is determined to break the barrier against blacks entering into the world of classical music. When the violin is stolen right before his big concert debut, he is determined to uncover who stole it. The mystery is solved. Most of the book comes from events in his real life. It was Schaumburg's Library pick for 2025. One of my favorite books this year.

Host: Fran

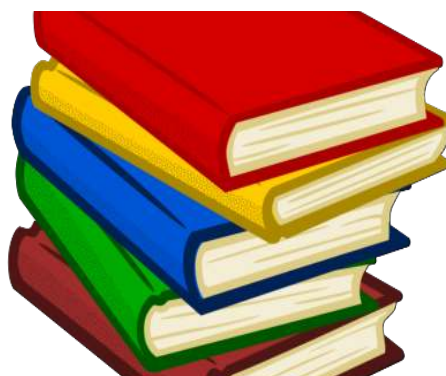
***Dust Child***

by Nguyen Phan Que Mai

October 13

This powerful novel transports readers to Vietnam's past and present. It presents the lives of individuals born from complicated relationships during the war. The tale focuses on two sisters grappling with family responsibilities while becoming bar girls, a veteran facing trauma, and an Amerasian searching for identity.

Host Barb



**Novel Approach Booklist 2025-2026**

<b><u>Date</u></b>	<b><u>Title and Author</u></b>	<b><u>Discussion Leader</u></b>
October 13	Dust Child by Nguyen Phan Que Mai (F)	Barb
November 17	The Violin Conspiracy by Brendan Slocumb (F)	Fran
December 15	Her Hidden Genius by Marie Benedict (Historical Fiction)	Carol
January 19	Lovely One: A Memoir by Ketanji Brown Jackson (Memoir)	Kathy
February 16	Pearl by Sherri L. Smith (Graphic novel)	Genevieve
March 16	The Frozen River by Ariel Lawhon (Historical fiction)	Judy S.
April 20	The Berry Pickers by Amanda Peters (F)	Anne
May 18	The Hazelbourne Ladies Motorcycle and Flying Club by Helen Simonson (Historical fiction)	Sue
June 9	Planning meeting	

## President's Message continued

Strengthen AAUW's reach by supporting local, state, and branch efforts... (support aligned initiatives like 5-star program and grow organizational sustainability through member engagement)

You can read more about the AAUW Purpose and Priorities on the National site <https://www.aauw.org/about/strategic-plan-2025/>

This new more focused charge to support education for women and girls, provides us direction for our own Schaumburg Area branch strategic plan and goal setting. The board will be working on a draft of a revised strategic plan for our branch. That document will include recommendations for our 2025-26 goals. We will get that draft out to each of you in advance of our Sept 29<sup>th</sup> meeting. At that meeting we can discuss and revise the draft created by the board. -Peg

## PUBLIC POLICY UPDATE

The US Congress has been on their August re-veto session in October, so there has been little crisis of some type in the news virtually every has been the result of Executive orders and ac-



## Ken Olson

cess and the Illinois legislature is in recess until the recent legislative action, but it still seems there is a day. Much of the "action" since the first of the year tions rather than legislation.

In case you are unfamiliar with executive orders from Congress, and Congress cannot simply overturn them. Legislation may be passed that make it difficult, or even impossible, to carry out the order, but only a sitting U.S. President may overturn an existing executive order by issuing another executive order to that effect. As of August 27, President Trump had signed 196 executive orders, 47 memoranda, and 81 proclamations since the start of his second term. It's no wonder if we feel overwhelmed as this is about three times as many as past presidents.

Looking at the past eight months there have been attacks on DEI, the Department of Education, health care, reproductive rights, research, indiscriminate (or in some cases targeted) removal of federal employees, controversial appointments and more. One major piece of legislation, HR1 (the Big, Beautiful or Bad, Bill) was passed on a party line vote. This lays the groundwork for implementing many controversial actions.

What is AAUW doing in response? AAUW writes letters to members of Congress, endorses coalition letters that align with our member affirmed Public Policy Priorities and issues Press Releases to demonstrate our strength as a collective behind important policy issues impacting women's access to education and economic security. You can find letters, releases and the "Two Minute Activist" on the [AAUW website](#) in the "Take Action" section. We also have a Lobby Corps that visit members of Congress on a regular basis to lift up AAUW Priorities. We were also a partner in the "Good Trouble" demonstrations.

What can we do? Increase our personal awareness and that of others about what is really happening. Get and share information from trusted sources rather than rumors. We do have several AAUW or AAUW endorsed webinars designed to provide useful information on political action coming up that you may want to attend. The AAUW IL Fall Conference to be held virtually on Sept 27. The title is: "Policy Impacts on Women and Higher Education: Learn, Plan, Act". Plans are to include a panel discussion, breakouts etc. to come up with action plans.

We also have Webinars that will be hosted by the Jane Addams Branch:

Sept 19 - Paid Medical and Family Leave - Sarah Labadie, of Women Employed, will share the ups and downs of getting this complicated legislation passed. Developing and passing legislation is how we get AAUW values working for everyone.

Oct 10 – Introducing the updated <https://ilga.gov/> website, this is the site for contacting your legislators, seeing legislation, filing witness slips and much more.

What else is there? Be sure to be part of the AAUW Action Network, submit "Two-minute activist" letters and Illinois witness slips. We will have at least one branch meeting focused on Illinois' actions and AAUW IL is planning for an AAUW Lobby Day in Springfield.

Thanks for being involved, we can and do make a difference.





## Fall Mum Sale: Raising funds for AAUW and a Harper College students

Congratulations is extended to everyone for another successful Mum Sale fundraiser! Pick up at 208 West Beech Drive in Schaumburg on Friday, September 13<sup>th</sup> from 10-1. We will need some volunteers to help with unloading and distribution of the mums on that day. Thank you to everyone who supported this educa-

tional fundraising effort. You can be proud of your efforts to help women and girls in their pursuit of higher education.—Judy S and Judy L

## Celebrating Women

Kathy & Anne

We are looking forward to a new "season" of Celebrating Women on Monday, October 27 at 1PM on ZOOM. We'll celebrate women who the US Postal Service is currently commemorating with postal stamps (Thank you, Mary and Lynn). You'll even have a chance to select a woman and present a short piece about her for discussion if you wish. More details will follow in an email in October.

As always, we welcome any suggestions for topics. We'll avoid discussing books, since we know that most of you are busy reading for Novel Approach (right?), but newspaper or internet articles, TV shows and movies work. See you this fall!



## Using Social Media

Peg

Are you a "follower" on Facebook or larger user and in turn both subscribe to? Perhaps you are like me, and you use posts by your children? Perhaps you use social media tools? Participation in the "Social Media to Promote AAUW" might be a good way to get out the AAUW branch membership. I heard Twitter (disinformation, hate is spread)



on Instagram? Perhaps you are a regular content and post some of your own? These social media tools to see pictures have no interest or confidence in these Jane Adam's branch presentation helped me to see that social media word on AAUW and perhaps grow our them say that we should not post on which was comforting.

We are lucky in the Schaumburg Area Facebook page active. He shares items posts pictures with detail on our branch activities as well. I learned from the Jane Adams presentation that this effort for social media warrants a team, not a single person. Here is my ask...are you willing to help to support our AAUW Facebook and/or Instagram sites? The suggestion from national is to share 3-5 posts a quarter, some of which can be copied from the national AAUW site. That does not seem to be a high bar, but maybe you are like me and do not even know how to post on these tools.

Branch as Ken has been keeping our from the AAUW national site and

I know that I need to get up to speed so that I can feel confident with posting and using these social media tools. If you want to join me in some sort of zoom instruction on social media tools, let me know. Even if you do not want to actively post, we all might benefit from some additional guidance on understanding and using these tools.

## THE AAUW PROGRAM

As per the AAUW site, our branch earned two of the five available stars for FY24. Kudos to Lynn and Mary who provided us with mission-based programming that allowed us to earn the Programs star. Kudos to Ken who led branch efforts in public policy that allowed us to earn the Policy star. The AAUW Five Star Program is designed to help branches align with AAUW's strategic priorities and advance the AAUW mission of achieving gender equity for women and girls. We have not heard from AAUW yet about the number of stars we earned for FY25. I will keep you posted as our branch continues to get recognized for our good work. There are new criteria for the FY26 "5-star program". We will look at those criteria to help us plan for the year ahead.

<https://www.aauw.org/resources/member/5-star-program/>

### Jewel Gift Card Fundraiser

Thank you for supporting our **first** Jewel Gift Card fundraiser on August 15. There will be a total of **six** Jewel fundraisers again this branch year. This is an easy fundraiser, and every amount counts and is appreciated.

The following Jewel fundraising dates are: **October 3, November 21, January 26, March 23, and May 14.** Please put these dates on your calendar, and I will send a reminder about two weeks before each of the fundraisers.



### 2025 Equal Pay Day Calendar

- All Women's Equal Pay Day – March 25th
- Asian American, Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander (AANHPI) Women's Equal Pay Day – April 7th
- Moms' Equal Pay Day – May 6th
- LGBTQIA+ Equal Pay Awareness Day – June 17th
- Black Women's Equal Pay Day – July 10th
- Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander (NHPI) Women's Equal Pay Day – August 28th
- Latina Equal Pay Day – October 8th
- Disabled Women's Equal Pay Day – October 23rd
- Native Women's Equal Pay Day – November 18th



### Field Trip!

Please join us for a field trip to the Suffrage Plaza in Rockford. This trip is weather dependent, so a date has not yet been determined. Watch for an email with details in September. It will be both a fun and informative event including lunch in Rockford. No need to stress about driving - we can carpool.

<https://rockfordsuffrageplaza.com/>

## **AAUW Awards Over \$5.3 Million to 228 Women Scholars and Community Projects for 2025-2026**

July 14, 2025

**WASHINGTON, D.C.** — AAUW proudly announces our new AAUW fellowships and grants recipients for the 2025-2026 academic year. “For more than 100 years, AAUW’s fellowships and grants have opened doors for women to lead, innovate, and thrive,” notes AAUW CEO Gloria L. Blackwell. “This funding is not just support—it’s a catalyst for change, especially for women of color and those in STEM who continue to face systemic barriers. I am inspired by this year’s recipients and excited to see how their work will shape a better future for us all.” Our 228 outstanding awardees have been granted a projected total of \$5,312,656 to support their academic and professional goals.

The 2025–2026 awardees reflect the diversity, resilience, and academic excellence that define AAUW’s mission:

- 67% of American Fellows, 54% of International Fellows, 42% of Career Development Grantees, and 85% of Selected Professions Fellows identify as women of color.
- Up to 65% of awardees across multiple programs are first-generation college graduates.
- Up to 65% come from or lead single-parent households.
- Science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) remain a strong focus, with up to 73% of fellows in these fields, depending on the award type.
- International Fellows represent 33 countries, with continued growth from underrepresented nations, including our first fellow from the Democratic Republic of Congo.

Community Action Grantees are implementing change in 16 states, with 80% promoting STEM equity for K–12 girls. AAUW’s longstanding commitment to empowering women in higher education and professional fields remains unshaken in the face of the current pervasive dismantling of educational equity in America. “Despite ongoing challenges,” says Blackwell, “AAUW continues to stand firm as a lifeline for scholars navigating political headwinds. We will continue to persist in the face of academic backlash because all women deserve equitable access to education.”

Applications for the 2026–2027 academic year will open on August 1, 2025.

<https://www.aauw.org/resources/news/media/press-releases/aauw-awards-over-5-3-million-to-228-women-scholars-and-community-projects-for-2025-2026/>