



News By Degrees

SCHAUMBURG AREA BRANCH

DECEMBER 2025 — FEBRUARY 2026

Upcoming Events

- *Holiday Brunch: December 6*
- *Celebrating Women: December 8*
- *Novel Approach: December 15*
- *Novel Approach: January 19*
- *Novel Approach: February 16*
- *General Meeting: February 19*

President's Message

Despite the clear cuts to the Department of Education, I suspect that some of you are not aware of the impact this might have on your health care. Allow me to take this opportunity to enlighten you.

Just last month I read in one of my nursing journals that the 2026 federal budget includes full elimination of the Institute of Nursing Research Funds (NINR). NINR funds research that reduces hospital stays, improves chronic care, and advances equity. In 2024, NINR funded millions of dollars in grants and awards. Despite its impact, NINR's budget accounts for less than 0.5% of total NIH funding. Now, even that modest footprint faces risk of termination. The proposed 2026 federal budget includes full elimination of NINR. We need this good work of nurse scientists. Nurse scientists need our help!

Every day a new surprise. Just this week I read that nursing has been excluded as a "professional degree" by the Department of Education. This designation will limit the amount of federal student loans available to graduate students in nursing education. The American Nurses Association reports that "limiting nurses' access to funding for graduate education threatens the very foundation of patient care". These nurses function in roles that include primary care and education of future nurses. We need this good work of nurses!

With 50 years of experience in nursing practice and nursing education, I am most disturbed by these sweeping cuts proposed in the current administration. AAUW's mission to advance equity for women and girls hinges on the foundational belief that economic empowerment is essential for gender equity. Supporting women in higher education is crucial to this mission because it serves as a key pathway to economic security and upward mobility.

(continued on page 4)

Holiday Brunch

We are officially in the holiday season. Join AAUW friends on December 6 at **8:30** at the Rising Early Cafe (1471 W Schaumburg Rd, Southeast corner of Schaumburg & Springinsguth) for breakfast and fellowship. The AAUW brunch is always a festive morning - the hardest decision will be choosing your breakfast entree from the Cafe's tempting menu. This year we will go back to Lynn's house, make ornaments and stuff the stockings for the children at WINGS.

Please RSVP to Lynn or Mary

In order to relieve our wonderful treasurer Barb of calculating headaches, breakfast will cost a flat \$25.00. Most entrees are \$17-\$18 and adding beverage, tax and tip will approach \$25. Thank you for your understanding.—Mary & Lynn

WINGS Holiday Gift Bags

Thank you in advance for your generous participation in our annual WINGS gift bag donations. There is still time to drop off donations. We look forward to assembly at my house immediately after the Holiday Brunch on Saturday. Please message me if you need any ideas. -Lynn

AAUW “*Unite & Rise 8.5*”

If you were not able to join us at our general meeting this week, I want to update you on a new effort from AAUW. “*Unite & Rise 8.5*”

“AAUW is proud to be a Power Partner with the League of Women Voters on **Unite & Rise 8.5**, alongside the National Council of Jewish Women. *Unite & Rise 8.5* is a national, nonpartisan effort to engage 8.5 million people in democracy through civic education, coalition building, and visible, community-led action – aligning with our shared goal of helping people participate confidently and safely in elections....” <https://www.aauw.org/resources/policy/get-involved-in-elections/>

In an effort to help us ready for the important work ahead in 2026, AAUW will offer at least 4 webinars. The first webinar, “Working in Coalition: Building Power through Partnerships” (AAUW webinar-NOV recording) can be accessed on You Tube <https://youtu.be/im6VsWTi7X8>

Three more webinars to come in 2026. Stay tuned. If you want to view any of the AAUW webinars, just go to <https://www.aauw.org/resources/programs/webinars/> or go to the AAUW site and type in webinars in the search. -Peg

PRESS RELEASE

AAUW Announces Collaboration with League of Women Voters’ Unite and Rise 8.5 Campaign

WASHINGTON, DC — The American Association of University Women (AAUW) is proud to join the League of Women Voters of the United States and fellow women-led organizations as part of the Grassroots Power Partners initiative, a key component of the League’s *Unite and Rise 8.5* campaign. Together, these partners are mobilizing women and communities across the country to expand civic participation, foster equity, and build a stronger, more inclusive democracy.

This latest partnership uplifts AAUW’s long-standing commitment to open and fair elections that are broadly accessible to all voters, nonpartisan voter education efforts that will promote equitable political participation and expanding voting rights. Launched in May 2025, *Unite and Rise 8.5* is the League’s nationwide effort to engage 8.5 million people in defending democracy and advancing voter participation. This next phase — running from November 2025 through January 2026 — focuses on partnership and collective action.

“Education and civic participation have always gone hand in hand,” said Gloria L. Blackwell, CEO of AAUW. “For over 140 years, our mission has been to empower women to use knowledge as a catalyst for action — to turn awareness into advocacy and leadership into lasting change. Through this partnership, we’re helping women across the country strengthen their voices, mobilize their communities, and shape a democracy that truly represents us all.”

AAUW’s network of branches and members will collaborate with the League and other partners to promote civic education, increase voter participation, and deepen community connections. Together, these organizations aim to amplify the power of women-led advocacy and inspire civic action in every community.

“Throughout history, women-led organizations have stood at the center of America’s progress- shaping the nation’s conscience, guiding movements, and anchoring the march towards lasting change,” said Celina Stewart, CEO of the League of Women Voters of the United States. “When women come together to lead, we don’t just expand participation, we expand possibility. Partnering with organizations like AAUW allows us to harness our collective power to educate, engage, and empower communities across the country. Together, we’re building an inclusive, multiracial democracy that reflects the leadership, strength, and vision of women everywhere.”

The partnership underscores a shared belief that when women lead, democracy grows stronger. By aligning missions and mobilizing across states and communities, these organizations are demonstrating the power of collaboration in advancing equity, inclusion, and civic participation.

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AAUW (American Association of University Women) is the nation’s leading organization for equity in higher education and women’s economic empowerment. Founded in 1881 by women who defied society’s conventions by earning college degrees, AAUW has since worked to increase women’s access, opportunity, and equity in higher education through research, advocacy, and philanthropy of over \$146 million, supporting thousands of women scholars. Learn more at [aauw.org](https://www.aauw.org).

Novel Approach

Her Hidden Genius

By Marie Benedict

The book is a historical fiction about Rosalind Franklin, the mastermind behind the discovery of DNA.

Rosalind Franklin has always been an outsider—brilliant, but different. Whether working at the laboratory she adored in Paris or toiling at a university in London, she feels closest to the science, those unchanging laws of physics and chemistry that guide her experiments. When she is assigned to work on DNA, she believes she can unearth its secrets.

Rosalind knows if she just takes one more X-ray picture—one more after thousands—she can unlock the building blocks of life. Never again will she have to listen to her colleagues complain about her, especially Maurice Wilkins who'd rather conspire about genetics with James Watson and Francis Crick than work alongside her.

Then it finally happens—the double helix structure of DNA reveals itself to her with perfect clarity. But what unfolds next, Rosalind could have never predicted.

Marie Benedict's powerful new novel shines a light on a woman who sacrificed her life to discover the nature of our very DNA, a woman whose world-changing contributions were hidden by the men around her but whose relentless drive advanced our understanding of humankind.

December 15. Barb is the host.

Pearl

by Sherri L. Smith

In a beautifully crafted and captivating graphic novel from award-winning writer Sherri L. Smith and Eisner-nominated artist Christine Norrie, a Japanese-American girl must survive years of uncertainty and questions of loyalty in Hiroshima during World War II.

Amy is a thirteen-year-old Japanese-American girl who lives in Hawaii. When her great-grandmother falls ill, Amy travels to visit family in Hiroshima for the first time. But this is 1941. When the Japanese navy attacks Pearl Harbor, it becomes impossible for Amy to return to Hawaii. Conscripted into translating English radio transmissions for the Japanese army, Amy struggles with questions of loyalty and fears about her family amidst rumors of internment camps in America -- even as she makes a new best friend and, over the years, Japan starts to feel something like home. Torn between two countries at war, Amy must figure out where her loyalties lie and, in the face of unthinkable tragedy, find hope in the rubble of a changed world.

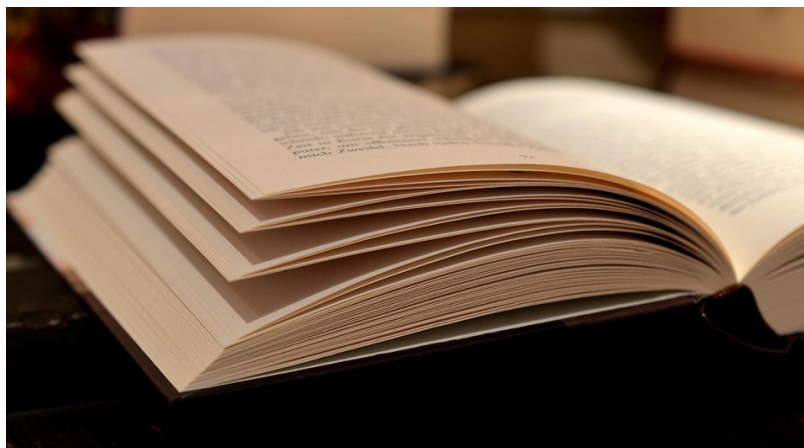
February 16 by Zoom. Genevieve is the host.

Lovely One: A Memoir

By Ketanji Brown Jackson

January's Novel Approach will find us enjoying a lovely discussion about *Lovely One*, written by Ketanji Brown Jackson, the first Black woman ever appointed to the US Supreme Court. I'm reading her memoir now and finding it very interesting to learn about her extended family, accomplished parents and busy childhood in Miami, FL. I have more pages to go, but I'm looking forward to them. This has proven to be a satisfying read so far.

Monday, January 19, 2026 at 1 pm on Zoom.



President's Message (cont'd)

How can we help? According to my nursing resources we can: Voice concerns, support and collaborate, learn and share, mentor and build. According to AAUW we can engage in: Robust advocacy, targeted funding, and steadfast support for the rights of all women and girls to pursue their education free from discrimination and financial hardship.

Call to Action, a few suggestions:

If you are not a subscriber to the AAUW Two-Minute Activist, please do so. This will allow you to quickly see how you can advocate key issues with your legislators.

<https://www.aauw.org/act/two-minute-activist/>

Donate to AAUW; there is a current matching option on the AAUW website so your donation will be doubled if donated before the end of the year. <https://my.aauw.org/donation-product-detail>

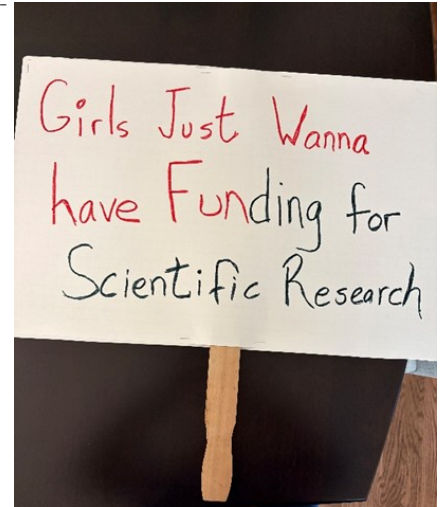
I promise to keep you up to date on how you might help to support nurses, nursing research, and nursing education.

Resources:

<https://www.aauw.org>

[https://www.myamericannurse.com/nursing-science-and-shrinking-support/Newsweek \(tiered subscription model\)](https://www.myamericannurse.com/nursing-science-and-shrinking-support/Newsweek%20(tiered%20subscription%20model))

- Peg



A sign I carried at one of the Women's marches!

Upcoming AAUW Webinars

Defending Higher Education & Public Service

The new Public Service Loan Forgiveness rule opens the door to targeting nonprofits doing critical equity work. AAUW is speaking out. Lawsuits have been filed against this rule and we are closely monitoring this. We also just wrapped up the second session of the RISE Committee negotiations and are tracking expected January proposals that could cap graduate and professional loans and limit access to advanced degrees. And we're not going to be quiet. [Add your voice by signing AAUW's Pledge for Equity and stay ready for what's next.](#)

Building Global Impact through Education and Community Leadership

This webinar on December 11 from 2-3 pm ET will provide space to showcase the critical work being done by AAUW International Fellowship and International Project Grant alumnae. The panel, moderated by AAUW CEO Gloria L. Blackwell, will explore the role of education and leadership in impacting communities around the world. [Join us and register here!](#)



Schaumburg AAUW in the community

You are encouraged to read the monthly AAUW-IL newsletter called Connections. In the most recent issue, sent via email on November 16, there is an article and a picture related to our Payday event at the Schaumburg farmer's market. Ken did a nice job sharing our project with all AAUW-IL members. Take a look: **Schaumburg AAUW at the Market**, in Connections sent to you via email on 11/16!

2026 AAUW-IL Convention | Save the date!

[Hilton Garden Inn](#)

April 24-25, 2026 in Rockford, IL

JEWEL GIFT CARD FUNDRAISER

It's hard to believe that we have already completed half of our six Jewel Gift Card fundraisers for the branch year. Thank you very much for all of your continued support. It is much appreciated.

The remaining Jewel card fundraisers will be placed on January 26, March 23, and May 14. I will send email reminders about two weeks before I need to place each order.

Thanks again and Best Wishes for a Happy, Healthy, and Safe Holiday Season and New Year. -Sue



Celebrating Women

December's Celebrating Women will discuss the new documentary, Marlee Matlin: "Not Alone Anymore" on Monday, December 8 at 1pm on Zoom.

Described as an intimate look at her life and career as the first Deaf actor to win an Oscar (for "Children of a Lesser God"), she continues to champion for more inclusivity and accessibility in entertainment. She shares her story in American Sign Language. By the way, Marlee grew up near Morton Grove.

It's an especially busy time now but take a break for 90 minutes to watch this worthwhile documentary. The links to the show have been sent but will be sent again after Thanksgiving as well as the Zoom link. -Kathy and Anne

Dining Out—Save the Date

Dining out is tentatively set for January 10, Saturday or January 15, Thursday. The place is to be determined.

February General Meeting

Unless you had a wonderful civics teacher in school, most of us have not had occasion to think too much about the Naturalization Test to become a citizen of the United States. So the content of the Naturalization Test will be the topic for our February general meeting. Details are in development but please mark your calendar for a Zoom meeting at 7:00 on 2/19/26 with a business meeting to follow. -Lynn

The Schaumburg Area AAUW Branch goals for 2025-2026 support these AAUW Purpose and Strategic Priorities.

1. Fund Higher Education:
 - A. Support women seeking higher education.
 - i. Award a scholarship to a woman at Harper College that exceeds the previous FY donation by 10%
 - ii. Contribute a minimum of \$10 per member to the Defend Higher Education Fund
 - B. Increase Harper College graduates' awareness of AAUW.
 - i. Engage with Alumni Relations to determine next steps.
 - ii. Offer scholarship awardee a branch membership upon graduation.
2. Remove barriers to Success in Education and the Workplace:
 - A. Champion legislation supporting pay equity for women.
 - i. Distribute information across our community on National Equal Pay Day.
 - ii. Include information on social media and amongst members on Black Women's Equal Pay Day, Latina Equal Pay Day, etc.
 - B. Donate a minimum of \$30 per member in FY26 towards the AAUW Greatest Needs Fund
 - C. Contribute a minimum of \$10 per member to the Public Policy General Fund
3. Strengthen AAUW's Reach:
 - A. Add one to two new members in FY26.
 - B. Participate in AAUW-IL conventions and in Illinois Lobby Day
 - C. Engage branch members in branch Facebook and Instagram sites.
 - D. Share 3 to 5 posts aligned with AAUW purpose in branch newsletters and on social media sites.
 - E. Offer quarterly face to face branch meet ups.



Things on the political scene seem to continue to get even wilder if that is possible. After 43 days the government shutdown came to an end, but at the present time it is only temporary. The major sticking point, the cost of health care and health insurance was not addressed. We are to hear more on those issues by mid-December with a vote promised on extending tax credits. The Continuing Resolution that was passed included three of the twelve budgets that needed to be passed but only provided funding for the remaining nine agencies through January 30, 2026 meaning there is another potential shut-down looming. One good thing was that the Agriculture Budget was passed meaning that nutrition programs are now funded through September 30, 2026. The battle here will now be over regulations regarding access to SNAP and WIC funds.

On the “Bad News” side this week, the Trump administration took a major new step to dismantle the U.S. Department of Education (ED). After deep staff cuts, ED announced six “partnerships” on November 18 that shift the day-to-day work of key education programs to other federal agencies, despite Congress creating ED to centralize federal education expertise and protect students’ civil rights. AAUW released a statement underscoring what’s at stake and rejecting the idea that education should be reduced to workforce development alone. Here’s a quick summary of the announcement. [Click here to read other recent Press Releases from AAUW.](#)

One exciting new advocacy development is that AAUW, the League of Women Voters (LWV) and fellow women-led organizations are joining together as part of the Grassroots Power Partners initiative, a key component of the League’s Unite and Rise 8.5 campaign. Together, these partners are mobilizing women and communities across the country to expand civic participation, foster equity, and build a stronger, more inclusive democracy. The objective is to engage 8.5 million people in defending democracy and advancing voter participation. Look for news and calls to action in the coming weeks, months and years leading up to the 2026 and 2028 elections. It needs to be a long-term and evolving effort.

Things are quieter at the state level. The Veto session brought no surprises. The legislature returns in January, so things will pick up then. The budget will be an ongoing area of concern, we will look to move paid medical and family leave forward as well as ways the state can minimize the negative impacts of federal action relative to education, healthcare, nutrition programs and the environment. You can expect requests for witness slips and I appreciate your responses to them. AAUW IL recently hosted a webinar on witness slips and the new General Assembly website. You can view that as well as one on Paid Family and Medical Leave on the Jane Addams Branch YouTube channel. You will find other videos of interest there as well.

What can you do? VOTE! Vote in the spring primary and the fall general election. Encourage others to vote. If you aren’t already, become part of the AAUW Action Network and a “Two-Minute Activist.” Participate in National and State AAUW webinars as well as local ones from the Schaumburg Library. Two coming ones from the library are:

Upcoming Civic Programs

An Evening with Paul Lisnek

Tuesday, January 27th 2026 7:00-8:00pm Hybrid

Voting in Illinois: A Look into the Board of Elections

Tuesday, February 24th 2026 7:00-8:00pm Hybrid

At the state level we, working in collaboration with the Naperville Branch, in planning an AAUW IL Lobby Day in Springfield. It will be held with a coalition partner “Time to Care,” during the spring session. Details will be coming shortly, but it will be between March 25 and April 15. Please let me know of your interest, We can make plans to carpool for the day. It is important to raise our voices in support of state policy issues impacting women and girl’s access to education and economic security.

Thanks for your support of public policy efforts.

Your voice. Your power. Your impact.

It's My Vote! — And We're Just Getting Started

Off-year elections across the country showed what we know to be true: when women vote, we can change the conversation. This year, AAUW is leveling up our [It's My Vote!](#) campaign with new Partner Spotlights, kicking off with the League of Women Voters and the Unite and Rise 8.5 initiative. Watch for tools, stories, and co-branded resources to help your branch register voters, fight disinformation, and keep equity on the ballot all the way through 2026.



Recruiting New Members

This past week, AAUW offered a webinar called **AAUW Member Recruitment Best Practices**. The recording is not yet posted on the AAUW site, so I will summarize a few pearls that I gained. Perhaps something here will spark with you so we can grow our membership.

Morgan Hall, CA with a branch of over 200 members sponsored many community events, including 2K and 5K runs. Carlsbad, NM offered wine & tapas and a Champagne brunch.

Rapid City, SD gained 13 new members this fall; they attributed this interest to their interesting mission-based programs. (Our branch had several mission-based programs as well this fall and I am sure we will see more in the spring. We are on this one).

North Hills, PA has 20 student members who are enrolled in the university that is in their community, serving as a university member. (Our SCH board will engage Harper College again this spring to see how we can partner more with Harper).

We also learned when we went to Rockford to see the Suffragette statue that Rockford has a very successful “tip the bartender” event annually.

The board will discuss these ideas and more in the spring. Let one of us (Peg, Ken, Lynn, Mary, and Barb) know if you want to discuss a similar event or a new idea you have. -Peg

Harper College
EDUCATIONAL
FOUNDATION

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Palatine, Illinois 60067-7398
847.925.6490
847.925.6028 fax
harpercollege.edu/foundation

November 17, 2025

Ms. Barbara Garvin
American Association of University Women - Schaumburg
Area
1865 Eton Dr
Hoffman Estates, IL 60192-4121

Dear Ms. Garvin,

Earlier this year, I had the opportunity to hear Michael Powell, former chairman of the FCC, speak to the power of philanthropy in higher education. One thing he said resonated with me:

"Social mobility is the promise of democracy, and scholarships help students access this promise."

Your generosity of \$770.00 to the Schaumburg Area AAUW Scholarship for Women Fund creates powerful change in Harper College students' lives. Students, like Preye, don't have to stop dreaming about a better future just because they can't afford an education.

The Harper College Educational Foundation remains mission-focused because of caring, motivated community members like YOU.

With gratitude,

Heather E. Zoldak

Heather E. Zoldak, CFRE
Chief Advancement Officer

*Thank you
for your
continued support!
H.*

Harper College Educational Foundation is a non-profit 501(c)(3) tax-exempt organization. Our tax identification number is 23-7348228. As no goods or services were provided in exchange for this contribution, your donation is 100% tax-deductible.

PREYE I.

2025-2026 JAMES BROWN
HONORS TRANSFER
SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENT

I came to Harper with plans to transfer to a four-year university because it would be too expensive to go straight to one, and I wasn't even sure what I wanted to study. If I'm being honest, part of me felt like a disappointment for going to Harper and not some prestigious university. I know now it was the best decision I could have made.

Receiving this scholarship is very special to me. It feels like a recognition of all the time and effort I've poured into the Honors Program. Transferring is expensive, especially for a low-income student like me, so this scholarship is a big help.

I leave Harper now with a clearer vision for my future, and the knowledge that I have the support of the people at this wonderful school.



