

## THE MAY MEETING HAS BEEN CANCELLED

### Programs in Review

By Margaret Wood, Co-Chair

Yesterday's the past, tomorrow's the future, but today is a gift! That's why it's called the present! -Bil Keane

The unwanted arrival and threat of COVID-19 caused the cancellation of our last three branch meetings for the 2019-20 year. We were unable to learn about the nearby Kickapoo Ice Caves from Chuck Hatfield in March. We were unable to witness the installation of our new officers at the Annual Meeting in April. And we will be unable to celebrate with our scholarship recipients in May! Can you say, "Bummer" ? The rewards for our disappointment and inconvenience, however, will be our health and safety and the leisure time for a morning cup o' tea or coffee.

While enjoying your morning brew, please reflect back on our program year. We welcomed our members at Washburn on the Park, met La Crosse's award-winning baker Jen Barney, had a history lesson with Dr. Greg Wegner, shared personal holiday memories with spontaneity, were introduced to student robotic enthusiasts, and received information about aging resources courtesy of Carissa Pagel-Smith. Your comments about the programs are welcome. Please send them to Margaret Wood (pixielacrosse@hotmail.com or 785-1361) and Cristina Kovacs (ck@ghealtors.com or 386-4586).

What are you interested in for future meetings? What do you think others would enjoy? Members are encouraged to submit speaker names and topics (with accompanying contact information if possible) for consideration. Previous suggestions are kept for consideration as well. Please send your ideas to Cristina Kovacs (ck@ghealtors.com or 386-4586) and Megan Preston (megan\_preston99@yahoo.com or 774-7788).

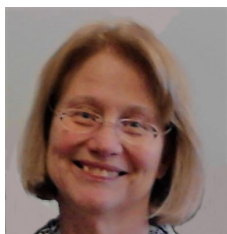
Comments and suggestions would be appreciated by Wednesday, May 13. Thank you! Stay well!

# The Current

a publication of the La Crosse, WI AAUW Branch

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MAY 2020



## PRESIDENT'S PERSPECTIVE:

### Life in the Time of Coronavirus

by Jan Eriksen, AAUW-La Crosse Branch President

This past weekend (April 17-18) I tried not to be too dejected when I thought about the 2020 AAUW-WI Convention in La Crosse and all the months of effort that went into planning it. All we can do now is send good wishes to the committee that is working on the April 2021 conference in Madison. In the meantime we're all "safer at home" and getting by the best we can. I'm so grateful for technology that allows us to Email, Zoom, Skype, and stay in touch in other ways. The kindness and generosity of people is amazing. I've never been a sewer (besides a little bit of mending or replacing a button), but a friend who is very talented made me a couple of nice face masks. My prayers go out to those who are sick and especially to those who have lost loved ones. And bless the health care workers: they are saints.

Now I have some good news to share! You voted unanimously, via Email and phone, to approve the slate of branch board officer candidates. Therefore, we have

new officers to announce, all for 2-year terms: Ann Brice, President; Michele Strange, Vice President-Finance, and Megan Preston, Vice President-Program. They officially take office on July 1. Ann has been Public Policy Chair, active on the

Scholarships and Grants Committee, and assisted with Art Fair on the Green set up. Michele is a veteran AAUW-La Crosse Branch

officer, having served as President from 2016-2018, past Vice President-Finance, Art Fair volunteer, Name Grant Chair in 2019-2020, and our branch's representative on the



*Continued on Page 2 »*

## NEXT BOARD MEETING

### Virtual Meeting

Due to Governor Evers' "Safer-at-home" order, we will conduct an E-mail board meeting on

**Monday, May 4.**

Meetings are open to any member.

Contact Jan at 787-5946 or jperiksen@viterbo.edu if you would like to be added to the E-mail list for the meeting or to place items on the agenda.

### Life in the Time of Coronavirus... (continued from page 1)

Coulee Region's Global Initiatives Week Committee. She was recipient of the AAUW-La Crosse Name Grant in 2011-2012. Megan has attended a few board meetings and encouraged La Crosse branch members to vote for a historic building in Janesville (used by AAUW-Janesville Branch and other organizations for meetings) to receive a grant. AAUW-Janesville was successful in obtaining the funding. Congratulations to Ann, Michele, and Megan; and thanks to Margaret Wood for her two years of outstanding service as Vice President-Program. The other officers were either re-elected or are continuing their terms in their current positions.

## Elected Officers AAUW-La Crosse Branch

Beginning 2020-2021 Program Year

President: Ann Brice  
 Vice President-President Elect: OPEN  
 Vice President-Finance: Michele Strange  
 Vice President-Membership: Marilyn Hempstead  
 Vice President-Program: Cristina Kovacs (2nd year of 2-year term) & Megan Preston (1st year of 2-year term)  
 Secretary: JoAnne Revels

**Appointed** Board Officers may volunteer for the positions. If you are interested in one or more of these appointments please contact Ann Brice or Jan Eriksen.



*Ann Brice*



*Megan Preston*

## Membership News

by Marilyn Hempstead, Chair

### Condolences



Judy Williams passed away in early April. Although she gave up her membership 25 years ago, when she moved to a farm near Viroqua, those of us who belonged to our branch in the 1990s remember her well. She was president in 1993/94, but her most memorable contribution was her years as grounds chair for the art fair. She had both organizational ability and great skill in putting up the difficult primitive tents we used then. Sincere sympathy to her family.

### New Address

June Reinert  
 622 Bennora Lee Ct. Apt 5002  
 La Crosse, Wi 54601  
 Phone 608-881-0456



## AAUW National Election

Voting Takes Place Wednesday, April 8, through Monday, May 18.

AAUW members play an important role in shaping the future for women and girls by choosing the organization's leaders and policy priorities.



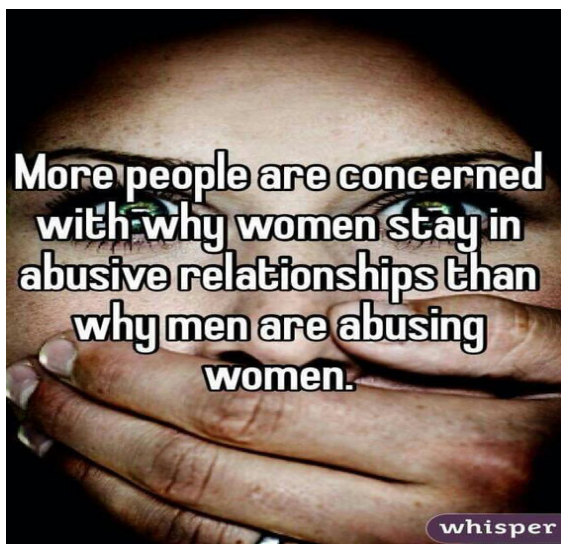
Each spring, AAUW members have the opportunity to vote on candidates for open seats on the organization's board of directors, along with any proposed amendments to the AAUW bylaws. AAUW's board is made up of 15 AAUW members, including 12 board members elected by the AAUW membership and three board members appointed by the board of directors. Board members have staggered terms.

This year, members will vote on four directors. Voting takes place online, unless a member requests a paper ballot. To vote, you will need your member ID and PIN, which have been sent to you in an email.

At <https://www.aauw.org/resources/member/governance-tools/national-election/>, you can read the personal statements from each of the candidates, as well as answers to questions about their vision for AAUW. You can also leave questions or comments to learn more about their position on the issues that matter most to you.

Every Voice Matters

**VOTE NOW**



## What Do Countries With The Best Coronavirus Responses Have In Common?

by Avivah Wittenberg-Cox, Forbes.com

**Women Leaders.** Looking for examples of true leadership in a crisis? From Iceland to Taiwan and from Germany to New Zealand, women are stepping up to show the world how to manage a messy patch for our human family. Add in Finland, Iceland and Denmark, and this pandemic is revealing that women have what it takes. Many will say these are small countries, or islands, or other exceptions. But Germany is large and leading, and the U.K. is an island with very different outcomes. These leaders are gifting us an attractive alternative way of wielding power.

What are they teaching us?

### Truth

Angela Merkel, the Chancellor of Germany, stood up early and calmly told her countrymen that this was a serious bug that would infect up to 70% of the population. "It's serious," she said, "take it seriously." She did, so they did too. Testing began right from the get-go. Germany jumped right over the phases of denial, anger and disingenuousness we've seen elsewhere. The country's numbers are far below its European neighbors.

### Decisiveness

Among the first and the fastest responses was from Tsai Ing-wen in Taiwan. In January, at the first sign of a new illness, she introduced 124 measures to block the spread without having to resort to lockdowns. She is now sending 10 million face masks to the U.S. and Europe. Tsai managed what CNN has called "among the world's best" responses, keeping the epidemic under control, still reporting only six deaths.

Jacinda Ardern in New Zealand was early to lockdown and crystal clear on the maximum level of alert she

was putting the country under—and why. She imposed self-isolation on people entering New Zealand astonishingly early. As of mid-April they have suffered only four deaths, and where other countries talk of lifting restrictions, Ardern is adding to them, making all returning New Zealanders quarantine in designated locations for 14 days.

### Tech

Iceland, under the leadership of Prime Minister Katrín Jakobsdóttir, is offering free coronavirus testing to all its citizens. Most countries have limited testing to people with active symptoms. In proportion to its population, the country has already screened five times as many people as South Korea has, and instituted a thorough tracking system that means they haven't had to lock down or shut schools.

Sanna Marin became the world's youngest head of state when she was elected last December in Finland. It took a millennial leader to spearhead using social media influencers as key agents in battling the coronavirus crisis. Recognizing that not everyone reads the press, they are inviting influencers of any age to spread fact-based information on managing the pandemic.

### Love

Norway's Prime Minister, Erna Solberg, had the innovative idea of using television to talk directly to her country's children. She was building on the short, three-minute press conference that Danish Prime Minister Mette Frederiksen had held a couple of days earlier. Solberg held a dedicated press conference where no adults were allowed, responding to kids' questions from across the country, taking time to explain why it was OK to feel scared.

How many other simple, humane innovations would more female leadership unleash? Who knew leaders could sound like this? Now we

do. Compare these leaders and stories with the strongmen using the crisis to accelerate a terrifying trifecta of authoritarianism: blame—"others," demonize-the-journalists, and blanket their country in I-will-never-retire darkness. There have been years of research timidly suggesting that women's leadership styles might be different and beneficial. Instead, too many political organizations and companies are still working to get women to behave more like men if they want to lead or succeed. It's time we recognized it—and elected more of it.



To read complete article, click [HERE](#)

# Public Policy

by Marissa Tatro, Public Policy Intern

## Equal Pay Day 2020

Equal Pay Day was Tuesday March 31st, and usually the La Crosse branch of AAUW sponsors a table at UWL to showcase this important date, but I wanted to reflect on the importance of equal pay especially given our current health and economic crisis.

Equal Pay Day marks how far into the year women have to work to get paid what men were the previous year. According to the United States Census Bureau, in 2018, women earned 81.6 cents to every dollar earned by men. This was already an issue, but COVID-19 has become a threat to the progress on closing the gender pay gap, especially since mothers choose their jobs based on their children and child-care availability over career goals or finances. According to an article by the New York Times, if women were given minimum wage for their housework, which includes child-care, they'd have made 1.5 trillion dollars last year. When women lose their jobs, it may be more impactful than on men because they were already sacrificing job situations for their children, and because children are at home during coronavirus, they have no choice but to take time off. America's pattern of women taking most of the share of care is to blame for this as well. According to the same article, time spent by women each day doing unpaid labor is an average of 4 for every 2.5 hours men spend. Furthermore, sectors of the workforce that are vastly female, such as hospitality and travel, have been hurt largely by COVID-19.

American women also hold 2/3rds of all student debt, and now that debt is weighing heavier than ever considering the job loss. Women hold most of this debt because they earn 27 percent less than males upon leaving their education, so it takes longer to pay off student loans, which in turn also keep their interest high. According to CNBC, after three years, women pay off less than a third of their debt while men are able to pay off around 40 percent.

In addition to this, The New York Times states that domestic abuse has risen worldwide, as domestic violence may go up when families are spending more time together such as on holidays, or the pandemic which is keeping people inside and on lock-down with their abusers and nowhere to go. What may seem like solutions to these problems are delayed as well, so people seeking help and filing for divorce are put on hold until a safer time (pandemically-speaking). According to

the New York Times, one woman who filed for divorce had a proceeding postponed until April; this was after the police only documented an attack made on her with no further action to help.

Although this time has made it hard for many, especially women, there is hope that women's importance can take the spotlight after this pandemic given that many of the jobs named essential are taken by women. The New York Times presents in a graph that women make up 52% of all essential workers. Women make up 78% of social workers, 77% of healthcare, and 53% of critical retail. We cannot take these things for granted. This is a truly clarifying time that is revealing how jobs we often don't give enough appreciation for, deserve just as much praise, if not more in considering their service for others. There seems to be a lot of negative themes for women in regard to COVID-19, however it is also an opportunity for at-home-working spouses to witness the other's work and may bring about some learning and sharing on both ends. Many are unemployed, and many are working at home, so although it is a scary time with little freedom, it is also a potential bonding time for families to understand the work everyone puts in, in a variety of ways. Maybe this time will bring about progress in some forms.

### Sources:

- <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/04/06/world/coronavirus-domestic-violence.html>
- <https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2020/03/04/opinion/women-unpaid-labor.html>
- <https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2020/04/coronavirus-gender-pay-gap/>
- <https://www.cnn.com/2018/06/06/why-women-hold-the-majority-of-student-loans.html>



## FROM THE TREASURER

by Michele Strange

### Financial Report as of April 21, 2020

Checking Account..... \$13,117.44

Scholarship Bridge..... \$757.00

## Renewal Time

by Michele Strange, Treasurer



To date I have received a total of 21 membership renewals, including 5 sent in online. If anyone wants to pay online with a credit/debit card, it's very easy. Just

let me know and I will email you a personalized renewal form from AAUW National. You just fill it out, pay online and submit it.

For those continuing to pay by check, everyone will have to mail it to me. Remember that we won't be meeting before the end of the fiscal year on June 30, 2020. I would like to receive renewals no later than June 15th. That will give me time to enter them in the national database before the deadline of June 30th.

For those who want to renew with a check, there is an email attachment with the 2020/21 renewal form included with this month's Current. This includes all the information you need to renew. Please mail the form and your check to me at 2442 Redwing Road, La Crosse, WI 54601.

If anyone has questions about this process, please contact me at [mstrange@eagle.uwlax.edu](mailto:mstrange@eagle.uwlax.edu) or 608-781-6962.

Thanks and stay safe.

## Spring Surprise! Name Grants Announced

by Michele Strange, Chair

With the virus shutdown we are unfortunately missing our monthly meetings, state convention and our wonderful scholarship awards presentation. Despite this, the Name Grants Committee, composed of Jan Eriksen, Carol Robertson and me, continued our work by email, receiving several nominations from members. and we decided to go ahead and honor two members again this year.

In the past we have made this announcement at our April meeting and it is a surprise to everyone, including the honorees. We decided this year we would make the surprise announcement in this issue of The Current.



Ann Brice is a fairly new member of our branch, but within a short time she became involved in our organization. Her interest in public policy led her to accept the position as Public Policy Chair. In this area she has been very diligent in keeping up with national and state issues, culling information from AAUW National to write her interesting column in The Current. She is also a member of the Scholarship

Committee, lending her expertise in higher education to deliberations in selecting scholarship winners.

But Ann's willingness to step forward this year to run for a couple of our vacant positions on the board was amazing. When the Nominating Committee met with her, she offered her services for either branch President or VP-Finance. A deal was worked out that she would run for president. In addition, she is willing to continue as Public Policy Chair as well! We are confident that her organization skills will see her through, despite her teaching load at Western and family responsibilities.

Kristen Foehner has been in our branch a little longer and was new to the area when she joined. She soon became more involved and served as co-chair of Programs for two years. She then tackled a more challenging position when she agreed to run for VP-Finance five years ago. Kristen then accepted a second term. Some responsibilities of this job include handling two bank accounts, presenting an annual financial report and proposed budget to the board, and managing dues for new and renewing members. Kristen did an admirable job handling the many details of this position while managing to continue her education, working and helping raise a teenage daughter. Her dedication to this important work of our branch earns her this award.



A donation will be sent to AAUW National in their names and certificates will be presented to them at a later date.

Congratulations and thank you, Ann and Kristen, for all you do!



American Association of University Women

La Crosse Branch

P.O. BOX 2112 • LA CROSSE, WI 54602-2112



**THE CURRENT**

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## AAUW's Mission

AAUW advances equity for women and girls through advocacy, education, philanthropy, and research.

For 130 years, AAUW members have examined and taken positions on the fundamental issues of the day: educational, social, economic, and political. Our commitment to our mission is reflected in all aspects of our work.

## Newsletter Contact & Deadlines

**Newsletter Editor** .....Erica Koonmen ([aauwlacrosse@hotmail.com](mailto:aauwlacrosse@hotmail.com))

**Webminder** .....Barb Fischer ([fischerba@live.com](mailto:fischerba@live.com))

### **Newsletter content submission deadline:**

Please send all content for *The Current* to Erica by the 20th of the month.

### **Problems receiving the CURRENT? Let us know at:**

[aauwlacrosse@hotmail.com](mailto:aauwlacrosse@hotmail.com)