

DECEMBER MEETING

AAUW: Then and Now

When: Saturday, Dec 12th, 10 am

Where: The comfort of your home!

Presenter: Marilyn Hempstead,
Branch Historian

AAUW's story began 140 years ago. In 1881, when higher education was not generally available to women, a small group of women college graduates banded together to form this organization. It worked toward opening the way for others to have that same opportunity and toward promoting women's wider participation in the workforce and society at large.

The story of the La Crosse branch goes back 100 years when the local College Club joined the National Association of University Women. The 1922 Constitution laid the groundwork for the years to come. Presented in this program will be a quick journey through those years highlighting the growth and evolution of our branch to fit the needs and situations of the time. Study groups emerged. A plethora of fundraising



projects were continually being created. These made possible an ever-increasing variety of contributions for women and girls and the wider community.

The meaningful social interaction among us has been and is one important result of our working together. Our branch has offered a century of rich experiences for our members. However long you have been a part of AAUW, you will discover exciting new stories and perhaps something that will jog your memory.

After Marilyn:

We look forward to hearing from and virtually meeting some of our new members! They will take turns on the Zoom microphone to introduce themselves and share snippets of their backgrounds and how they came to join our group. Questions are welcomed! It wouldn't be surprising if some of you have met them already, in other circles, because birds of a feather flock together!



The Current

a publication of the La Crosse, WI AAUW Branch

VOLUME 60, ISSUE 4

DECEMBER 2020



PRESIDENT'S PERSPECTIVE:

End of Year Thoughts

by Ann Brice, AAUW-La Crosse Branch President

It was great to see everyone at our November meeting! Though we can't be together in person, I am pleased that our members are able to visit with each other virtually.

We learned safety tips about Aging at Home from Carlene Roberts and about Acupressure from Silvana Richardson.

By having our branch members be our featured speakers during meetings, we are discovering new things about all of our diverse talent sets.

Carlene and I met virtually to practice Zoom techniques, and our meeting happened to fall a few days after the election. We talked about the need to heal our country and what role AAUW could play in helping to do this. We also talked about helping people who vote strictly one way because they are "pro-life" understand that to prevent abortions, we need to support reproductive health care, domestic violence prevention, and equal pay for women. As a result of this discussion, I wondered if anyone in our branch would be

interested in forming a discussion group to talk about these issues to see what we could do on a local level. If you're interested, please email me at bricea@westernnc.edu.



On another note, AAUW National released a presentation about their finances to give members an overview of restricted vs. unrestricted funds.

The great news is that AAUW National has enough money to fund scholarships for the next 100 to 150 years! That is because 98% of their funds are designated as restricted solely for scholarships. This means only 2% of their assets

Continued on Page 2 »

NEXT BOARD MEETING

Virtual Meeting
Monday, December 7
6:00 p.m

Meetings are open to any member who is interested in attending.

Contact Ann at: 780-5026 or
bricea@westernnc.edu

to place items on the agenda and for the Zoom link to the meeting.

End of Year Thoughts.... (continued from page 1)

are unrestricted and can be used for the many "wonderful and relatively new programs that are affecting many more young women than ever before." If you'd like a copy of the presentation, please email me, and in the meantime, if you donate to AAUW National, please consider making the gift to Greatest Needs or Unrestricted Assets.

Finally, I'd like to wish you a safe and healthy Winter Solstice. In only a few weeks, the days will start getting longer again. I'm looking forward to seeing you for our meeting on December 12th.

Virtual Art Fair on the Green

By Barb Fischer, Webminder; Website Designer & Developer



I hope everyone has visited the Art Fair on the Green website: www.artfaironthegreen.org. During the holiday season please revisit it again. Please consider supporting our artists by purchasing one of their pieces. The site should be very easy to navigate. From each artist's page you can visit their individual sites to view more art work or to contact them

by phone or email. The artists will usually ship your purchase to you, but other arrangements can be made.

Designing and creating the Art Fair on the Green site this year was a pleasure. I could not have done it without the help of Erica, who contacted the artists and organized their photos. It was also important that Ann communicated with QTH.com so that I could begin the site. Thank you, Erica and Ann!

(Watercolor by Sharon Christenson)

Membership News

by Marilyn Hempstead, Chair

Member Highlights

The election is over, but President Ann Brice deserves kudos for her work directing early voters from parking lot to the City Hall voting entrance. John and I voted on one of the coldest days and there was a bundled up Ann stalwartly and cheerfully at her post doing her part to ensure the process went smoothly.



Maybe you saw our Program Co-VP Cristina Kovacs pictured on a billboard as a real estate agent recently. It's heartening to see branch members visible in the community even at this time of isolation.

A Thank You

Now in her 7th week of recovery, Michele Strange expresses a big thank you to all members who sent card and prayers and called her before and after her major surgery. She adds it meant so much to her and Tom.



We are happy, Michele, that all went well and you are participating again in AAUW.

ELECTRONIC RSVP

by Robert Richardson



Please reply whether you plan to attend or not to attend.

In his message to you, Robert includes the ZOOM link for the meeting.

You may save the link in your calendar or save the message from Robert to reopen on meeting day and click the link. Members may also use their phones to participate in the meeting.

SCHOLARSHIPS & GRANTS COMMITTEE (SGC)

by Robert Richardson, Co-Chair

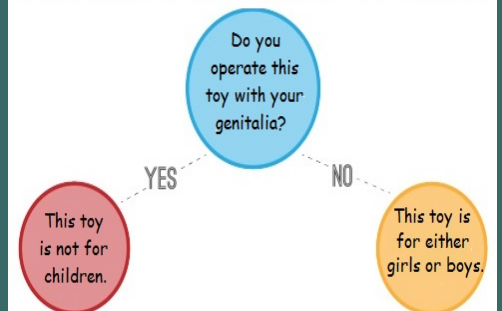
The Scholarships & Grants Committee continues our work. AAUW-La Crosse Branch scholarship applications are posted on our website and at all area high schools and colleges. The application due dates are in early February.

AAUW-L members can nominate a female student at least 30 years of age for the Karen Wilson Scholarship.

Nomination/application forms are available on our website: www.aauwlacrosse.org

Holiday Toy Guide

HOW TO TELL IF A TOY IS FOR BOYS OR GIRLS: A GUIDE



Thriving Livable La Crosse

By Noreen Holes, La Crosse County Aging Unit Director

Approximately 45 million Americans are age 65 or older. By 2030, that number will reach 73 million. At that point, fully one in five Americans will be older than 65. By 2034, the United States will — for the



first time ever — be a country comprised of more older adults than of children. AARP Livable Communities supports the efforts of neighborhoods, towns, cities and rural areas to be great places for people of all ages. We believe that communities should provide safe, walkable streets; age-

friendly housing and transportation options; access to needed services; and opportunities for residents of all ages to participate in community life. By 2030, the number of La Crosse citizens who are 60 and older is projected to reach 28% of the population. Keep in mind that three colleges are effectively lowering that percentage.

As a member of the AARP group, Thriving Livable La Crosse is a group of local volunteers working to make La Crosse a more Age-Friendly Community. The City of La Crosse supports this effort and we work with the Planning Department. Currently 25 volunteers are participating in a training session called Community Heart & Soul. This training, conducted virtually, will help us move forward with our initiative by learning to get community input from people of all ages. This will help us learn how to get community input from older people and younger people during Covid, as community input is critical to the effort. Early in 2021 we will begin our outreach through email to a network of agencies including AAUW. We will ask for your input. When we ask for your input, please be willing to provide your ideas to help us in our effort. For more information you can visit:

<https://www.aarp.org/livable-communities/about/>

For local information, you can also look for “AARP What’s up in La Crosse” on Facebook.



Study Group News

AAUW IN ACTION (AIA)

See this page for meeting info

Contact: Erica Koonmen, 366-1509

HEARTH & HOME

See below for meeting info

Contact: Sharon DeCicco, 788-5356

CONTEMPORARY AUTHORS

3rd Tuesday of the month at 2pm

Contact: Alice Ross, 788-4206

SCHOLARSHIP BRIDGE/CARD GAMES

TBA; Contact: Sharon DeCicco, 788-5356

AAUW IN ACTION

AAUW in Action is a study group that serves as a spring-board for community service activities for our branch that promote AAUW’s mission.

If you are interested in joining us for a meeting, or just knowing what we’re planning, please ask to be on our email list by sending an email to Erica at moogs56@hotmail.com

Next meeting: Email meeting on Tues, December 15.

Lois Gilbert, who has been the indomitable chair for the **International Women’s Day event in March** for the past 6 years, has given notice that she will not be able to chair it for 2021. We are looking for someone willing to take over the chair position. There is an active committee with representatives from 10 other local organizations who will remain involved! Betty Kruck, Erica Koonmen and Miranda Panzer (from UWL’s International Student Dept) are willing to help with re-envisioning the celebration as a virtual event for 2021! Please contact Betty or Erica if you are interested in chairing the committee.

HEARTH & HOME

Hearth & Home study group meets monthly to explore new ideas, culinary experiences, fun activities and our area through visits to local businesses or in-home happenings.

Currently on hiatus, the group is looking for ideas and at ways to do activities. Please contact Sharon at sharon.decicco@gmail.com for more information.

Public Policy

by Ann Brice, Public Policy Chair

At the time of this writing, it is two weeks after the election and eight months after our country began shutting down businesses in order to try and contain the COVID-19 virus. The New York Times reported today that “for millions of working women, the coronavirus pandemic has delivered a rare and ruinous one-two-three punch.” The article went on to explain that the first businesses to shut down were ones where women dominated: restaurants, retail businesses, and health care. Then in the second wave of shutdowns, local and state government jobs were affected, another area where women outnumber men. Finally, women, who do the majority of childcare and household work, are also the ones most affected by the closing of childcare centers and the switch to online learning.

The new challenges brought by the pandemic make AAUW’s commitment to resolving the gender pay gap and addressing the “motherhood penalty” in which being a mother can jeopardize a woman’s economic security more important than ever. How can the Biden-Harris platform help women and further AAUW’s work? When discussing his plan to Build Back Better, President-Elect Biden points out that “Black and Latino Americans, Native Americans, immigrants, and women have never been welcomed as full participants in the economy.”

Many aspects of the Biden plan concern economics. He plans to raise the minimum wage to \$15 an hour, provide state, local and tribal governments the aid they need to prevent layoffs of educators and other essential workers, extend COVID crisis unemployment insurance, and provide a public option for quality affordable healthcare.

As part of his plan to strengthen the economy, Biden plans to address systemic issues that contribute to economic inequity: racism, education, and the lack of caregiving options for children, elderly, and the disabled. He also plans on addressing discrimination and harassment in the work place and on passing the Paycheck Fairness Act so that women are paid equally for equal work. If President-Elect Biden receives the cooperation he needs to enact his plans, AAUW’s mission to support women will become easier than it has been the last four years.

<https://joebiden.com/build-back-better/>

<https://www.nytimes.com/2020/11/17/business/economy/women-jobs-economy-recession.html?action=click&module=Spotlight&pgtype=Homepage>

AAUW State Convention 2021

by Jan Eriksen, Convention Committee

Thank you to everyone who responded to the survey, sent via Email in mid-October, regarding the annual state convention. The convention planning committee received more than 158 replies from throughout the state and is working on selecting conference session topics based on that feedback. The highest scoring topics of interest were: ideas for branch programs that are mission-driven and affordable, how to promote social justice and diversity, membership retention and recruitment ideas, climate change issues and action, ideas for increasing branch visibility through social media and other venues, interest group ideas, and fundraising ideas.

Our branch will have a major role in the convention because President Ann Brice has just been announced as Technology Coordinator for the event. Member Pam Thiel will help kick off the conference by portraying early suffragist Carrie Chapman Catt. Tegan Jerde-Koonmen, daughter of member Erica Koonmen and granddaughter of honorary life member Joan Koonmen, designed the logo for the convention.

The convention will be held via Zoom on Friday, April 23, 7 pm-9:30 pm, and Saturday, April 24, 9:30 am-3:00 pm, 2021. Conference attendees may come and go as they wish and it is anticipated that registration will be at no charge for members of AAUW branches in Wisconsin. Please mark your calendars for these dates and times. More information about the convention will follow in each issue of The Current and in Email messages.



Still Fighting for the ERA

The majority of Americans mistakenly believe that women and men have equal rights under the Constitution. The 14th Amendment of the Constitution explicitly states that men are guaranteed equality under law but is poignantly silent about women. The Equal Rights Amendment (ERA) provides the constitutional guarantee that all women and men are truly equal under the law and that these rights cannot easily be abridged.

Let’s all come together to ask the new administration to order the Archivist to publish the ERA immediately.

To the new Biden/Harris Administration: please write a letter to Mr. David Ferriero saying “Disregard Mr. Barr’s previous letter and publish the amendment as required by Article V of the Constitution.” Mr. Ferriero has said that he has no problem doing so, he just didn’t want to lose his job. So, let him know that his job is safe!

<https://www.harpersbazaar.com/culture/politics/a32175363/what-is-the-equal-rights-amendment-today/>

FROM THE TREASURER

Michele Strange

Financial Report as of November 20, 2020

Checking Account..... \$9,425.96

CDs none at this time

Scholarship Bridge..... \$321.00

National Women's History Museum

Looking for something new and interesting to watch during your stay-at-home time? The National Women's History Museum has over 30 virtual exhibits! You'll find everything from "Women of NASA" to "Inventive Women." <https://www.womenshistory.org/womens-history/online-exhibits>

Here's one: Maria Tallchief: America's Ballarina. The exhibit explores the life and career of Tallchief, the first prima ballerina in the United States and the first in the nation to perform beloved roles such as The Nutcracker's Sugar Plum Fairy and the title role of Firebird. A proud Osage woman, Tallchief broke boundaries as she navigated the rigid expectations of the ballet world and cultural

stereotypes of Native Americans. As a performer, teacher, and role model, Tallchief inspired women from all backgrounds to become performers and ballet enthusiasts. The Maria Tallchief: America's Prima Ballarina exhibit is available on the Museum's website, and a biography of Tallchief is featured [here](#).

NCCWSL Scholarship Opportunity

By Robert Richardson

- National Conference for College Women Student Leaders
- Three days of leadership training, inspiration, and networking.
- May 26-29, 2021, College Park Maryland



To learn more about the conference: www.nccwsl.org or www.aauw.org.

November 12, 2020: Early-Bird Registration and National Scholarship Application Open

- Save \$100 by registering by 02/21/21 at the Early Bird price of \$485.
- Call for national scholarship applications opens.

Please note: National scholarship applicants need only fill out a scholarship application. Do not fill out a separate conference registration.

February 16, 2021: Early-Bird Registration and National Scholarship Application Closes

- Last day to register with fully refundable registration.
- Early-bird registrations must be paid in full by February 21, 2021, at 11:59 p.m. ET
- Last day to apply for our national scholarship
- Accepted applicants will be registered by AAUW staff and declined applicants will be eligible to register at the early-bird rate.

Eligible nominees must be currently enrolled in a program leading to an Associate degree, Bachelor's degree, or Master's degree at a technical college or two- or four- year public or private college.

Candidates must be nominated by an AAUW Branch with a limit of one nominee per Branch.

Branches are also encouraged to provide additional support to their nominee for air fare and other expenses beyond registration.

AAUW believes NCCWSL provides valuable opportunities for students from all backgrounds, and each year National AAUW awards over 100 full and partial scholarships to the conference.

Full scholarships cover:

- Regular residential or commuter registration
- Scheduled meals

Our AAUW- Wisconsin state board will offer two \$500 scholarships for students to attend NCCWSL in May 2021, but only if the conference is held virtually. We want to support our future leaders, but it must be done safely.

AAUW-La Crosse needs to complete a Scholarship Nomination Form for their nominee. The form is sent upon request by the branch.

Please email requests, questions and completed nomination forms to: Maggie Winz, AAUW-WI Leadership VP at: mrwinzster@gmail.com

Nominations must be received by February 16, 2021.

The winner will be notified and payment sent as soon as possible, to ensure a space at the conference.

For more information and an application, please visit our website:

www.aauwlacrosse.org



American Association of University Women
La Crosse Branch
P.O. BOX 2112 • LA CROSSE, WI 54602-2112

THE CURRENT

a publication of the La Crosse, WI AAUW Branch

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 EditorErica Koonmen (moogs56@hotmail.com)
Webminder Barb Fischer (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