

## MAY MEETING

**When:** Saturday, May 8, 10 am  
**Where:** The comfort of your home!

## Announcement of 2021 Scholarship Awards

Please join us for the last general meeting of the year as we award scholarships to hard working students.

The Scholarships and Grants Committee shares this:

All of our 2020-2021 committee goals have been accomplished. Everything we did, we managed to do it safely ... most often by Zoom, sometimes needing texts to make confirmations. In/on this committee, everyone participates and everyone contributes in meaningful ways.

The Tribune has started a cheers/jeers column. The S&GC members get three cheers: hip, hip, & hooray.

At our April meeting, we revealed our Grant recipients. At our May meeting, we will reveal our 19 scholarship recipients. Eighteen women will each receive a \$1000 scholarship. What about #19? Join us on May 8th for an update.

In alphabetical order, the S&GC:

Francie Ball  
Ann Brice  
Sharon De Cicco  
Jan Eriksen  
Marilyn Hempstead  
Betty Kruck  
Mary O'Sullivan  
Robert Richardson  
Silvana Richardson  
Carol Robertson  
Sandy Sechrest  
Michele Strange.

# The Current

a publication of the La Crosse, WI AAUW Branch

VOLUME 60, ISSUE 9

MAY 2021



## PRESIDENT'S PERSPECTIVE:

### Toast to 100 Years!

by Ann Brice, AAUW-La Crosse Branch President

Hello Everyone! I am writing this the day after our AAUW WI State Convention. This was a wonderful experience and I know some of you were able to be there! As you may know, I was the volunteer technology coordinator for this event, and I was able to meet and work with so many wonderful women.

We had a few snafus, like when I realized last minute that you can't host simultaneous meetings and webinars, but overall, it was a great way to celebrate AAUW. I was fascinated by the presentation by Jessie Jack Hooper and Carrie Chapman Catt by Helen Bannan and our own Pam Thiel because I was not aware of how much women had to endure to get the right to vote.

We heard from State Representative Shelia Stubbs as she talked about issues facing people of color and women. We saw a wonderful presentation by Mrs. Kathy Evers, commending us on our commitment to women's issues. And our last session by Jessica Mischna called "Women Who Dared" helped us understand

some of the things women had to go through not only to vote, but to survive before 1920. During the presentations, I kept hoping more women, especially girls, could be exposed to women's history.

I came away from the convention realizing there are so many more ways we can get even more involved in issues facing women and girls. AAUW WI State

President Joan Schneider shared her experience about being chosen to be on Governor Evers' Council on Library and Network Development. She told us that anyone can apply to be on one of the Governor's Boards. You can see more information here: <https://evers.wi.gov/Pages/BoardsCommissions.aspx>.



## NEXT BOARD MEETING

**Virtual Meeting**  
**Monday, May 3rd**  
**6:00 p.m**

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

**Contact Ann at:** 780-5026 or [bricea@westerntc.edu](mailto:bricea@westerntc.edu)  
to place items on the agenda and for the Zoom link to the meeting.

# 2021 Name Grant Awards

by Jan Eriksen, Chair

The 2020-2021 Name Grant recipients were announced at the April 10 branch meeting. Francie Ball, whose name was proposed by Robert Richardson, was honored based on her work on the Scholarship and Grants Committee. Francie chairs the subcommittee which reviews the large number of applications submitted by University of Wisconsin-La Crosse students. Robert’s letter of nomination indicates, “Because of Francie’s leadership, the subcommittee makes reliable and valid decisions and recommendations.” Francie has also been a major contributor to the Art Fair on the Green Concessions Committee by earning her ServSafe certification to be qualified to assure that food vendors are following La Crosse County Health Department regulations.



Marian Schiesser received her award due to her service as Publicity Chair for the Art Fair on the Green since 2014. In that capacity she negotiated a contract with the billboard company that gave the Art Fair free advertising on the new electronic boards, she arranged for articles in area-wide newspapers and magazines,

and she placed AAUW La Crosse members as guests on radio shows. Marion also worked with Explore La Crosse for a raffle giveaway that included a free hotel stay and local restaurant meals, further increasing the Art Fair’s visibility. She ordered yard signs with dates that could easily be changed, so that the signs could be used from year-to-year. Marian was nominated by Erica Koonmen and Carol Robertson.

Name Grants are an AAUW La Crosse tradition since 1960. Members who provide exceptional service to the branch are nominated and honored each year, chosen by a committee of past honorees, and money is sent in their names to AAUW national’s Greatest Needs Fund. Thank you to everyone who nominated members this year and to Betty Kruck and Mary Hall who served on the selection committee

## Membership News

By Marilyn Hempstead, Chair

News is scarce this month...

Happy Spring to all branch members!  
Here’s hoping we can be together in person by fall.



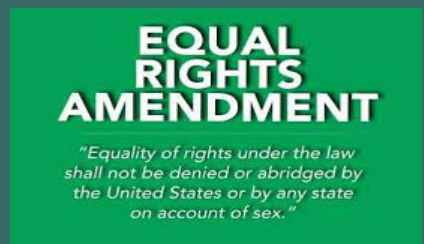
## TAKE ACTION ON THESE AAUW POLICIES!

Now that PFA has passed the House, it joins several AAUW public policy priorities waiting for action in the Senate. These bipartisan bills need your vocal support now more than ever:

**Paycheck Fairness Act (PFA):** AAUW has worked for decades to pass this landmark legislation to advance pay equity, and this is the year it will finally triumph. Demand equal pay for equal work!



**Equal Rights Amendment (ERA):** The historic amendment, which would once and for all ensure constitutional gender equality, was first proposed nearly 100 years ago. Tell your Senators to ratify the ERA now!



**Equality Act:** America’s civil rights laws should provide explicit protections against discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity. Ensure your Senators know equality means including all people!

The Equality Act will fight discrimination in:

- Housing
- Education
- Credit
- Public spaces and services
- Federally funded programs
- Jury services

Ask your senators to pass the Equality Act today.

## How Women Invented Book Clubs

Condensed from *The Washington Post* 3/27/21 article by Jess McHugh

American women had been getting together to study the Bible since the 17th century, but it wasn't until the late 18th century that secular reading circles emerged, around the same time as their European counterparts. Reading circles, a precursor to book clubs, ranged widely in what they read, from belles lettres to science.

An avowed interest in expanding women's freedoms was often a driving force behind these groups. Hannah Mather Crocker, who founded a reading circle in 18th century Boston, was an advocate for women's participation in freemasonry and would go on to write the foundational treatise "Observations on the Real Rights of Women."

Journalist Margaret Fuller, the first American female war correspondent, a magazine editor and an all-around feminist renegade, held one session of what she called her "conversations" in 1839. Her conversations, much like many literary circles, were a way for women to pursue truth, knowledge and an understanding of themselves and the world around them.

Reading circles crossed racial and class lines, too. In 1827, Black women in Lynn, Mass., formed one of the first reading groups for Black women, the Society of Young Ladies. Black women in other cities on the East Coast would soon follow suit.

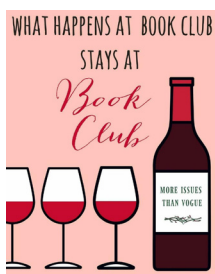
The first half of the 20th century was the heyday of the Book of the Month Club and the Great Books movement, both of which encouraged average Americans to take on hefty literary novels. As women continued to be barred from many top universities, the craving for a space to explore big ideas through books never went away.

After women began being accepted to institutions of higher education en masse in the 1960s, the role of these groups flipped: Where women once joined book clubs to make up for the education they were denied, now they joined to extend the pleasures they enjoyed at college.

Once on the fringes, women are now one of the most important driving forces in the book world. They continue to amount for a staggering 80 percent of all fiction sales.

One commentator went so far as to write: "Without women the novel would die."

Oprah Winfrey's launch of her book club in 1996 was a turning point in the history of book clubs. In the first three years, each book Oprah chose averaged sales of 1.4 million copies.



## Study Group News

### AAUW IN ACTION (AIA)

See this page for meeting info

Contact: Erica Koonmen, moogs56@hotmail.com

### HEARTH & HOME

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

### SANE (SALIENT AND NEWSWORTHY EVENTS)

Contact: Ann Brice, annbrice@bricecohey.com

## AAUW IN ACTION

AAUW in Action is a study group that serves as a springboard 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: Picnic lunch at Myrick Park, Wednesday, May 26, Noon -1pm**

All are welcome to join us for our end-of-year recap meeting! We'll be picnicking at Myrick Park; bring your own lunch and drink and share some socially distanced companionship.

Christy Craig, PhD, is a sociologist who examined the subversive possibilities of women's book clubs. From 2013 to 2015, she conducted research on book clubs in the United States and Ireland, interviewing 53 women ages 19 to 80. "Women turned to book clubs to really construct important social networks, and that proved incredibly valuable," she said. "Through these book clubs women found important partnerships to support themselves through things like chemotherapy."

That has proved true during the pandemic, as book clubs meet online, and some have seen increased attendance. Readers seek out a particular intimacy that can be bridged through books. They find "real society," as Margaret Fuller once wrote. In an uncertain world, book clubs can still serve as a place built on "patience, mutual reverence, and fearlessness".

# Public Policy

by Ann Brice, Public Policy Chair

Simply by being AAUW members, we are telling the world that we demand equity in education, economic security, and leadership. It is not enough to demand these things, however. Positive change for women and children will never come about until voters choose their legislators instead of legislators choosing their voters. During last weekend's convention, our AAUW WI Public Policy chair shared with us a history of gerrymandering which goes back to 1812. Massachusetts Governor Elbridge Gerry backed a redistricting plan with boundaries so convoluted; his district looked like a salamander. Both parties have since used gerrymandering to gain the advantage by "cracking" (i.e. diluting the voting power of the opposing party's supporters across many districts) and "packing" (concentrating the opposing party's voting power in one district to reduce their voting power in other districts).

Downsides to gerrymandering include allowing elected officials to pick their voters rather than the other way around. The political party that controls the state assembly, the state senate, and the governorship are able to rig maps to keep themselves in power for another ten years. It makes districts less competitive, so elected officials in those districts do not have to listen to their constituents.

## For The People Act



Protect & Expand Voting Rights



Create An Ethical & Accountable Government



Reduce The Influence Of Big Money In Politics

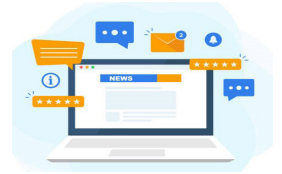
We must keep fighting against gerrymandering if we want elected officials who listen to us. This is a non-partisan issue.

According to Heather Cox Richardson, 74% of citizens want to see nonpartisan redistricting while only 11% of people polled do not. Write your legislators and ask that they support For the People Act, which among other things, eliminates gerrymandering, addresses campaign finance reform, requires presidential and vice-presidential candidates to release the past 10 years of their taxes, and supports admitting the District of Columbia as a state.

- <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gerrymandering>
- <https://www.wisdc.org/support-nonpartisan-redistricting-for-wisconsin>
- <https://billmoyers.com/story/the-for-the-people-act/>
- [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/For\\_the\\_People\\_Act](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/For_the_People_Act)

# On The Web

by Barb Fischer, Branch Web Manager & Art Fair on the Green Web Designer



Below are some first page links on our AAUW La Crosse branch website:

[www.aauwlacrosse.org](http://www.aauwlacrosse.org).

Hopefully these links are helpful.

Membership information is at the bottom of page one and includes a link to the renewal form.

<https://lacrosse-wi.aauw.net/wecome/2021-membership-renewal-form/>

Article links include the following:

- First is the financial information presented by Megan Preston titled "Foundations of Financial Wellness".

<https://lacrosse-wi.aauw.net/2021/03/28/planning/>

- Next is the Public Policy Articles all in one place.

<https://lacrosse-wi.aauw.net/2021/03/04/public-policy/>

- The 2021 Women's History posts are included in case you missed any.

<https://lacrosse-wi.aauw.net/2021/03/01/whm/>

- Numbers 4 to 9 are all worth reading if you have not already done so.

- Number 10 link is of previously presented AAUW webinars.

<https://www.aauw.org/resources/programs/Webinars/?emci>

- Number 11 link is to the National Site with more great articles.

<https://www.aauw.org/>

A registration link for the documentary "Can You Hear Us Now?" is at the top of the first page.

Register to view it by clicking [HERE](#).

For complete information on the documentary, see the article on page 5.

If you have ideas or suggestions, please contact Barb Fischer at [fischerba@live.com](mailto:fischerba@live.com).

## Apply to Serve on a Committee

From AAUW National

Serving on an AAUW committee

is a wonderful way to give back

to the organization and shape

the future for women and girls.

Our national committees advise

AAUW's board of directors on

public policy priorities, inclusion, equity, organiza-

tional governance, investment, finance and more.

They also provide opportunities to lead and connect

to the AAUW community.

**GET INVOLVED!**



Join a Committee

We hope you'll consider applying for the next two-year term, which starts on July 1. We'll begin accepting applications on Wednesday, April 21. Click [HERE](#) to view committees and an application.

FROM THE TREASURER

Michele Strange

Financial Report as of April 21, 2021

Checking Account..... \$10,059.96

CDs .....none at this time

Scholarship Bridge..... \$321.00

**Dues Renewal**  
by Michele Strange, treasurer

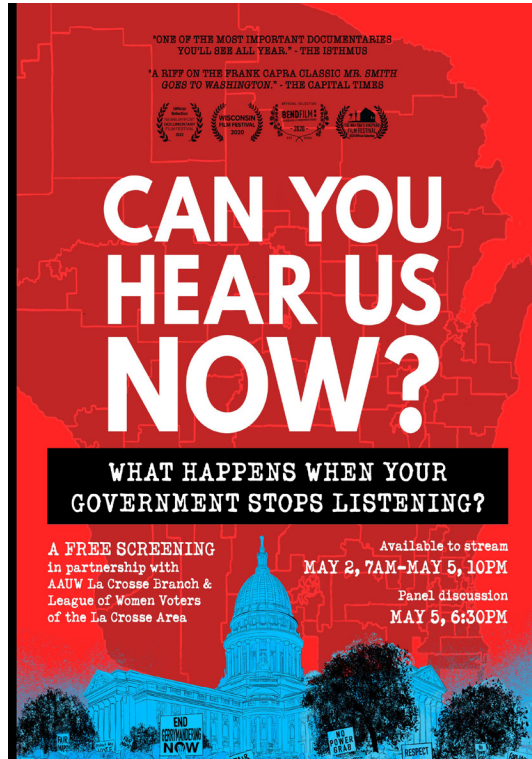
Renewals for branch membership have been trickling in, so many of you have yet to renew. As in the past few years, you have a choice of renewing directly online with a credit/debit card through AAUW National’s database or sending me a check. The total dues this year is \$83.

For those who want to renew online, I will need to send you an email directly from AAUW National. Just email me a request and I will send you the form. You will be renewing for national, state and local. Your state and local dues will be paid automatically into the Wisconsin and La Crosse branch bank accounts. I will receive a notice from national when your renewal is processed.

For those who want to renew with a check, there is an email attachment with the 2021/22 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.

If anyone has questions about this process, please contact me at mstrange@eagle.uwlax.edu or 608-781-6962.

Can You Hear Us Now?



The Fair Maps Movie “Can you Hear Us Now?” will be shown May 2 – 5, 2021.

This is a free event but pre-registration is required. Registrants will receive an email reminder when the film is live for viewing.

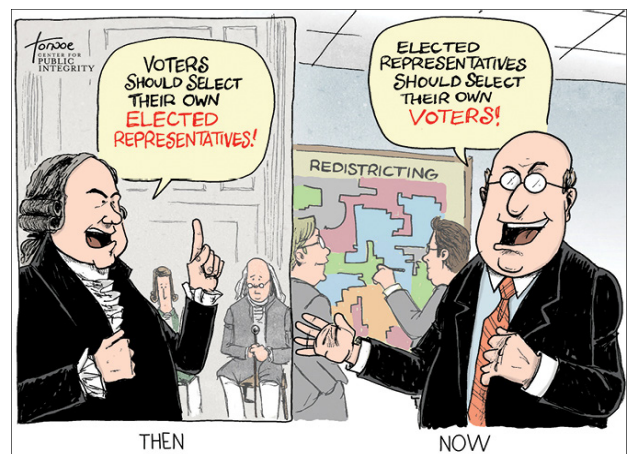
To Register click [HERE](#).

This powerful documentary looks back at two legislative campaigns in Wisconsin’s 2018 election to reveal the personal and political impact of gerrymandering in Wisconsin. Registered guests may view the film anytime between May 2-5 and join a community discussion at 6:30 p.m. May 5

about the work happening in Wisconsin to pass legislation and draw fair maps in 2021. Along with filmmakers Jim Cricchi and Susan Peters, organizers will be joined by a panel of guest experts including People’s Map Commissioner Annemarie McClellan; UW-La Crosse political science professor emeritus Joe Heim; and former State Senators Dale Schultz and Tim Cullen. The one-hour discussion will include a lively Q&A to share reactions to the film and learn more about the Fair Maps movement in Wisconsin.

Organizers hope that raising awareness of what’s at stake in 2021 will inspire more Wisconsin residents to join the fight to end gerrymandering when new voting maps are drawn this year.

This special event is sponsored by the AAUW La Crosse Branch and League of Women Voters of the La Crosse Area; co-hosts include the Driftless Voter Coalition; Vernon Friends of Fair Maps; Monroe County Friends of Fair Maps; Richland Friends of Fair Maps and Citizen Action of WI-Driftless Co-op.





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 Editor** .....Erica Koonmen ([moogs56@hotmail.com](mailto:moogs56@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)