

The
Initiative
American Association of University Women — Rockford Area Branch

AAUW
empowering women since 1881
May 2021



Encourage

See the President's
Letter on page 3

The Initiative

Published by and for AAUW
Rockford Area Branch members

Editor: Sharon Boehlefeld

Submission information:

Send items to sboehlefeld@gmail.com at any time.

Deadline for the August Initiative is July 15.

Photos should be high resolution .jpg or .pdf files.

Text should be unformatted and may be included in the body of your email or as an attached Microsoft Word, Apple Pages or Google Docs file. Other formats will be returned.

Your Branch Officers

Co-Presidents—Theresa Gilbert and Diane Kuehl

Co-Vice-Presidents Membership—Christine Haeggquist and Karen Hoffman

Co-Vice-Presidents Programs—Judy Schultz and Jean Herro

Secretary—Erna Colborn

Treasurer—Regina Potts

Board meetings: 6:30 p.m., third Wednesday of the month via Zoom

Contact Us

aauwrockford@gmail.com

Your Branch Online

Website

<https://rockfordarea-il.aauw.net/>

Webmaster: Donna Ogle
dogle@rockford.edu

Facebook

<https://www.facebook.com/AAUWRockfordIL/>

Administrator: Diana Vlase
diana21vlase@gmail.com



Calendar

Watch our website, Facebook and your email for calendar updates.

All meetings are via Zoom.

Sat May 15

10 a.m., Annual meeting
via Zoom [Page 3](#)

Tue May 18

1 p.m., Book Beat

Wed May 19

6:30 p.m., Board meeting

Fri June 4

12 noon, Let's Talk Public Policy

Tue June 15

1 p.m., Book Beat

Wed June 16

6:30 p.m., Board meeting

Fri July 2

12 noon, Let's Talk Public Policy

Editor's Note

Enjoy Your Summer

With the annual meeting this month, AAUW activities in Rockford are winding down for the summer.

The Interest Groups — Book Beat and Let's Talk Public Policy — will continue to meet.

And don't forget our annual summer fundraiser for our STEM scholarships on July 20.

On the Cover

Rockford violinist Aria Beert (left) will entertain and 2020 AAUW STEM scholar Khushi Patel (right) will inspire Rockford Branch members at our annual meeting

Tue July 20

5-7 p.m., Lawn Party

STEM scholarship fundraiser [Page 5](#)

Wed July 21

6:30 p.m., Board meeting

Fri Aug 6

12 noon, Let's Talk Public Policy

Tue Aug 17

1 p.m., Book Beat

Wed Aug 18

6:30 p.m., Board meeting

Fri Sept 3

12 noon, Let's Talk Public Policy

Wed Sept 15

6:30 p.m., Board meeting

Tue Sept 21

1 p.m., Book Beat

The next issue of The Initiative is scheduled for August, when we plan to spell out the upcoming fall programs.

In the meantime, watch your email for branch updates.



Sharon Boehlefeld

via Zoom at 10 a.m. May 15. Mark your calendar and see the President's Letter on page 3 for more details.

Celebrate Our STEM Scholars

Plan to join us on Zoom for our annual meeting at 10 a.m. May 15.

We will be greeted with a beautiful musical interlude by one of Rockford's favorite violinists, Aria Beert, who has been performing this year in various venues with her parents, Rachel Handlin and Michael Beert.

Khushi Patel, AAUW 2020 STEM awardee, has some words of encouragement for the current awardees that success is possible during challenging times. Keep an open mind!

(See Aria's and Khushi's pictures on the cover of this issue.)

Meet the 2021 AAUW STEM scholarship awardees! Each awardee will share her passion for STEM and commitments for the future.

The 2021 STEM scholarships



Theresa Gilbert



Diane Kuehl

will go to:

McKenna Handy, Pecatonica High School, biomedical engineering;

Natalie Horgan, Belvidere North High School, pharmacy;

Phoung Pham, Auburn High School, mechanical engineering;

Ava Sommer, Auburn High School, neuroscience; and

Megan Thiravong, Rochelle Township High School, mechanical engineering.

The 2021 nontraditional community STEM scholarship will go to Marla Gravino,

Rockford University, biochemistry.

We'll also hold our annual business meeting, led by Paulette Gilbert, co-president.

We'll offer our appreciation to all board, committee chairs, and members!

We'll vote on our 2021-2022 budget and on proposed changes in chapter bylaws.

Barbara Simon will review the bylaws changes, as well as explain dues changes for 2021-2022.

We'll close our session with the installation of officers.

Please mark your calendar to join us for this exciting and interesting morning.

— Paula Gilbert and Diane Kuehl, Co-Presidents, Fourth Quarter

Email us at t.gilbert@rockvalleycollege.edu or d.kuehl@comcast.net

2021 AAUW NATIONAL

ELECTION

You have until May 17 to cast your vote in the AAUW national election for board members and on policy and bylaw changes.

Check your email for voting information from Julia T. Brown, Esq., national board chair.

[AAUW Home](#) | [AAUW National Vote Information](#)

2021-22 Dues Deadline is July 31

Dues for 2021-22 will be \$89.

This year, our Branch is going to participate in the e-renewal program. This will enable more members to pay by credit card.

You should have received an e-renewal notice after April 15 that will be a prompt for renewal.

Please reply to the renewal notice rather than going onto the national web site.

If you prefer paying by check,

you can do that as usual by sending a check for \$89 to Regina Potts, 4907 Streamside Dr., Loves Park, IL 61111.

Please note any new information such as address or email with your check.

Thank you for your continued support of AAUW's mission of equity for all!

Regina Potts, Treasurer

Thank you to all my dear friends in AAUW for nominating me for the YWCA Leadership Award. I find it a joy to be involved with AAUW and loved serving as president and co-president for this group of dedicated women. I am also thrilled to be a part of the WSC2020 Coalition. Thank you to the Board and membership for supporting me and the work of AAUW.

— Barbara Simon

Interest Groups

Public Policy

Let's Talk Public Policy meets the first Friday @noon on Zoom. Join us.

For a Zoom link, email Faye Marcus at fe.marcus@att.net

Illinois bills will affect women

The "Let's Talk Public Policy" group has met to discuss two important bills that AAUW-IL is supporting. They are: Repeal the Parental Notification Act (HB1797/ SB2190), Illinois Healthy Youth Act/REACH Act (HB1736/SB647). Parental Notification of Abortion (PNA) is a very harmful and unnecessary law that puts young women in danger and interferes with their access to time sensitive health care. Please go to www.repealpna.org for more information.(See more information on page 6.) The REACH Act (Responsible Education for Adolescent and Childhood Health Act) will require that all schools teach

comprehensive appropriate personal health and safety education K-12. This includes public charter schools. You can google REACH ACT for more information.

By the time you read this Initiative, the Public Policy group will have met via zoom with our local state representatives to discuss these important bills and other AAUW public policy priorities. More information will come your way in AAUW NEWS. (See related story on page 6.)

Election updates

Several elections are occurring during the months of April and May. AAUW supports voting. The Consolidated Election in our region was on April 6, including Winnebago, Boone, and Ogle counties and cities within those counties. We will also have voted to elect officers for the AAUW-IL Board. The Open Membership by-law vote for AAUW.org is taking place until May 17. You should have

received a pin number to allow you to vote on line or you can receive a paper ballot.

Our branch held a zoom meeting with AAUW-IL state President Lisa Cherry and Marti Sladek to discuss this issue.

For more information, go to www.aauw.org/openmembership.

Equity activities

Our branch and Rockford University collaborated on Pay Equity events on March 31. These events included mock interviews and talks about pay equity issues that continue to affect women. An Unequal Pay Day bake sale was conducted on the RU campus. Women were charged 80 cents and men \$1 for items. Because of COVID-19 restrictions, all baked goods were store bought and pre-packaged. Money raised was provided to one of the women's athletic teams at RU.

— Faye Marcus

**Raise a stem for
STEM scholarship!**

LAWN PARTY!

**University Club of Rockford
945 N. Main Street**

**Tuesday,
July 20, 2021
5 PM – 7 PM**

**Support the AAUW scholarship fund for
female scholars who are majoring in Science,
Technology, Engineering or Math (STEM).**

**Bring your friends to a lawn party with
designer drinks, games, and a
50/50 raffle from 5 – 7 PM.**

Dinner can be ordered from 5 – 8 PM.



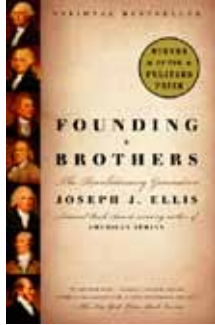
Interest Groups

Book Beat

Book Beat Interest Group meets on the third Tuesday of the month at 1 p.m. Starting in May, the group will meet both in person and online.

Everyone is welcome to join in by letting Enid Michalowski or Barbara Simon know that you would like to receive the Book Beat email.

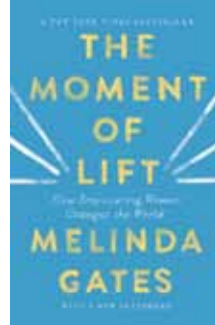
The books for



(Photo courtesy Penguin Random House)



(Photo courtesy Penguin Random House)



(Photo courtesy Macmillan)



(Photo courtesy Penguin Random House)

the next few months are:

May 18 — *Founding Brothers* by Joseph Ellis. Reviewer: Carol Jacobs. Hostess: Faye Marcus.

June 15 — *The Story of Arthur Truluv* by Elizabeth Berg. Reviewer: Faye Marcus. Hostess:

Karen Shifo

July — No meeting

Aug. 17 — *The Moment of Lift* by Melinda Gates. Reviewer: Kathy Dierstein. Hostess: Barbara Simon.

Sept. 21 — *The Kitchen Front* by Jennifer Ryan. Reviewer: Barbara

Simon.

Hostess: Carol Jacobs.

— Enid

Michalowski,

endiski@

yahoo.com;

Barbara Simon,

bjsimon61114@

yahoo.com

Illinois Bill Proposals Will Affect Women

The Illinois legislature is considering two several bills that could make changes in women's status and in the education of our children. They are:

Parental Notice of Abortion (PNA) SB 2190 and HB 1797

The harmful PNA is the last roadblock to making Illinois 100% pro-choice.

We need to trust youth with their healthcare decisions, and pass the repeal of PNA.

Responsible Education for Adolescent and Children's Health Act (REACH) HB 1736 and IL Healthy Youth Act (IL HYA) SB 266 & HB 3071

Both the REACH Act and IL HYA are to update the personal health and safety education in all grades to make sure they are

inclusive, comprehensive, medically accurate and age appropriate.

REACH Act is a mandate; IL HYA is a guideline. Same end goal, different strategies to get the bill passed. Currently legislators want the bills to merge to get it passed.

Family and Medical Leave Insurance Act SB 835

The Family and Medical Leave Insurance Act creates a state-run insurance program that allows Illinois workers to use 26 weeks of job-protected leave a year.

- ◆ To welcome a new child into the home
- ◆ To maintain a healthy pregnancy
- ◆ For their own family member's illness
- ◆ For reasons related to domestic or sexual violence
- ◆ For reasons related to military

The Naperville Branch is putting

on a program on May 15 on the importance of paid family leave. Hear from distinguished panelists, watch Zero Weeks documentary and understand the pending state legislation.

Ensuring Success in Schools Law (ESSL) HB 3223

ESSL would guarantee that K-12 students who are survivors of gender-based violence, teen parents, or expectant parents can stay in school, stay safe, and complete their education. The law would:

- ◆ Allow excused absences related to their circumstances
- ◆ Ensure one staff member is trained to help advocate for students and connect them to resources
- ◆ Create confidentiality protocols to keep students safe.

— Faye Marcus