



empowering women since 1881

Ithaca Insights

May 2020

President

Jeanette Knapp
jdk454@gmail.com

Program V.P.s

Kathy Earnest-Koons
kael@cornell.edu
Margaret Nichols
mnrl@cornell.edu

Membership V.P.

Norma Goldberg
ncg@twcny.rr.com

Treasurer

Muriel Everhart
meverhart@earthlink.net
Alene Wyatt
alene@lightlink.com

Recorder

Sharon Turecek
sturecek416@gmail.com

Action Fund Chair

Kim Edgar
kimberlysedgar@gmail.com

Public Policy Chair

Madeline Hemmings
madeleine.hemmings@gmail.com

Newsletter Editor

Sharon Barrie
spibarrie@hotmail.com

AAUW MISSION:

To advance gender equity for women and girls through research, education and advocacy.

VISION:

Equity for all.

The AAUW Legal Advocacy Fund provides funding and a support system for women seeking judicial redress for sex discrimination.

The AAUW Educational Opportunities Fund provides funds to advance education, research and self-development for women and to foster equity and positive societal change.

The AAUW Fund allows AAUW to put resources where they are most needed.



A SPRING TO REMEMBER

What can we say about this spring and the COVID19 outbreak? Unprecedented, monumental, life altering, tumultuous... and the list goes on. I taught infectious disease for over 25 years and none hold a candle to this one. I hope you are all staying safe, practicing social distancing and finding fun and interesting things to keep you happy and occupied at home.



As I reflect back on what the programs tried to accomplish for AAUW this past year, it was to highlight diversity in our midst in all its many forms. We started the year in September at the newly renovated and beautiful History Center listening to Dr. Sean Eversley Bradwell of Ithaca College speak about the history of diversity in Tompkins County. Our theme for the AAUW District III conference, which we hosted at TC3, was "Diversity: It's More Than You Think". Suzanne Young-Mercer, NYS AAUW diversity chair, spoke about Intersectionality and all the various facets that make up who we are. Ithaca Planned Parenthood's own Devon Ritz discussed gender and identity. TC3's Seth Thompson, Chief Diversity Officer, and Sharon Clark, Director of Human Resources, talked about the steps the college is taking to increase diversity among faculty and students. In November we discussed housing diversity in the county with Liddy Barger, Coordinator of Housing Initiatives at the Human Services Coalition, and Ellen Morris-Knowler, local realtor with Howard Hanna.

This Spring our programs were going to continue with our theme of diversity, discussing town and gown food insecurity issues and the history of diversity at Cornell with Elaine Engst and Carol Kammen. We are hoping that these programs and our annual dinner can be moved to the fall so stay tuned.

One of the things that has come out of the COVID19 outbreak is that diversity plays a role as to who is most affected by the disease, their treatment options and how and if they recover. So I feel that continuing to look at these issues as we go forward is more important than ever. Hope to see you in the Fall.

Kathy Earnest-Koonen
Program V.P.

Sunday May 10th is Mother's Day.

Remember to wear a face mask.



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Time to Renew!

What gives me hope during this strange time? The willingness of AAUW members to carry on. Bobbie Kohut has already asked how to renew her membership. See attached membership renewal form.

Yes, the Ithaca Branch and AAUW are still ready, willing and able to do what we can to achieve education and equity for women and girls. Eventually we will be able to do it in person, but until then our membership speaks volumes. Our numbers give us a national, state and local voice. In addition, we can make phone calls and send letters and emails to make sure that the new economic order is fairer. That includes health care for all. We all do better when we all do better. And if the Ithaca Festival does happen in August, we hope to join with the League of Women Voters and Rejoice the Vote to promote voting and action. Stay tuned.

1918

Our branch was founded the year of the great flu epidemic. Over 15 months in 1918-19, some 675,000 Americans died out of a population of 107 million. The flu or “grip” or “grippe” hit Ithaca in October 1918 and never made the front page of the Ithaca Journal. The October and November papers were full of the astounding news of the collapse of the German front line, of the liberation of France and Belgium, and the end of World War I.

Buffalo, Rochester and Philadelphia closed their schools and saloons, but not Ithaca. Even though the city hospital on Quarry Street was full, and Cascadilla Hall and the Masonic Lodge had been opened for overflow patients, news stories remained positive: “Few New Grip Cases Here Today, Outlook Improves.” In Ithaca, 140 died, including 37 Cornell students.

I have just looked at the early minutes to see how our founders handled the outbreak. I found very little. The Sept. 28th minutes mention a Field Day planned for the last Saturday in October “at which time the seniors of the high schools in the county would be entertained at the University.” The only suggestion that something was afoot was a short meeting on October 4, 1918, to discuss the “Field Day” that had been postponed, no mention of why. “Among other things it was decided to confer with Mrs. Bostwick of the university and also with representatives of the Ithaca High School.”

The next branch meeting was Saturday afternoon, December 7, 1918, at Prudence Risley Hall at Cornell. Guests included high school junior and senior girls and their chaperones plus the Cornell seniors who had welcomed them to campus and taken them to lunch that day. The speaker was Anna Botsford Comstock, who spoke on the Value of College Training for Girls. She said college would help them to attack any problem that may arise.



Hail & Farewell



We lost two members this winter. Maria Stycos passed away on February 4. She was a professor and lecturer in romance languages at Cornell. She spoke Polish, English, French and Spanish, and is remembered for her kindness, intellectual curiosity, love of music and flowers, and “genuine delight in the exploration of life.”

Christie Lerch passed away on March 27. She was a graduate of Mt. Holyoke and had taught college English and worked as an editor. I am remembering her as very precise and pleasantly opinionated. She was an enthusiastic member of our art group and a longtime volunteer at the

Friends of the Library book sale.

More Thoughts

It is hard to know what would have happened if we had not all stayed home for the past two months, but I am glad we did. Our spring trip to Spain, Portugal, France and England was cancelled,. But spring in Ithaca, when it is warm enough to enjoy it, can't be beat. Stay well.

—Jeanette Knapp

AAUW BOOK GROUP NEWS

Reading Doesn't Need To Pause!

As is obvious, the Book Group is not gathering for our discussions this spring. And sadly the June potluck celebration of a successful year completed cannot happen. But I suggest that "Keep Calm. Read On" can be our mantra during this uncertain time. By the way, do you know that "mantra" is a word or formula to be recited or sung? Its roots are in the Hindu tradition.

Four books remain of the list we had planned to read and talk about this year. We will schedule them into the list of books for 2020-2021. When we are able to meet again, perhaps even as a few smaller groups while keeping safely distanced, our first task will be to select new books for the list. I'll be looking forward to learning your recommendations for us.

True or false for you? In a piece in the New York Times recently, the writer was noticing that the only energy and enthusiasm for reading that she had right now was for the classics. So, I'm off to read some Jane Austen again. What will you be reading this summer? What's your comfort book? Reading is not paused! Keep Calm. Read On!

Betta Hedlund
Book Group Chair



2019 - 2020 Book Group Selections

Looking for a good read? Here are the books the Book Group is reading this year:

September: ***Educated***

by Tara Westover

October: ***The Storied Life of A. J. Fikry***

by Gabrielle Zevin

November: ***Becoming***

by Michelle Obama

December: ***Where the Crawdads Sing***

by Delia Owens

January: ***Being Mortal***

by Atul Gawande

February: ***Strangers in Their Own Land: Anger and Mourning on the American Right***

by Arlie Russell Hochschild

March: ***Little Women***

by Louisa May Alcott

April: ***Woman's Hour: The Great Fight to Win the Vote***

by Elaine Weiss

May: ***Fascism: A Warning***

by Madeleine Albright

June: ***The Nightingale***

by Kristin Hannah

ACTION FUNDS NEWS

As we mark Antonia Glasse's first year in memoriam, as well as the other brave Cornell 11 demands for pay equity over 43 years ago, I ask you to consider offering your words of support to LAF-supported plaintiffs.

Historically, our branch members were strong advocates in convincing the AAUW Board to create the Legal Advocacy Fund (LAF #3999). We continue to recognize that many women still face the same pay inequities today and they continue to need our support to achieve pay equity for all women.

In September, 2019, LAF adopted the case of Professor Jennifer J. Freyd vs. the University of Oregon's Psychology Department for salary inequities compared to less-senior male colleagues. Professor Freyd has connections to our area. She lived in Ithaca from 1983 to 1987, while working as an assistant professor at Cornell University.

Professor Freyd and her students have been recognized as national leaders for their research into the causes of interpersonal violence and institutional betrayal of mental and physical health. Her work includes being the director of the Project on Institutional Courage (jjfreyd.com/project-on-institutional-courage). Her current projects include studies of campus and workplace sexual assault and harassment, minority discrimination, gender and sexual orientation and how institutions disclose and address the abuse. To show your support to her case, please visit <https://jenniferfreydpetition.blogspot.com/>.

Another LAF supported case involving Dr. Zoe Spencer has unsuccessfully ended in favor of Virginia State University. If you would like to share some words of encouragement to Dr. Zoe Spencer, please send a letter or note to: Dr. Zoe Spencer, Virginia State University Professor, 2011 Colson Hall, PO Box 9036, Petersburg, VA 23806.

Please visit AAUW newly launched website at <https://www.aauw.org/resources/legal/laf/current-cases/> to read more about the current LAF-supported cases. Your personal words of encouragement to LAF-supported plaintiffs are greatly appreciated at any time. Kate Nielson, LAF manager, welcomes letters and notes for the LAF-supported plaintiffs and has agreed to pass the letters and notes along. Letters and notes can be sent to Kate Nielson, LAF Manager, AAUW, 1310 L St. NW, Suite 1000, Washington, DC 20003.

Kim Edgar - Action Funds Chair



MEMBERSHIP NEWS



Our membership for the year is 40. This number includes four new members. Please encourage anyone you know to join us for the coming year. New members are important. We are a diverse group of women who have excellent programs throughout the year. Our national and state dues are used to lobby for issues important to women. The local dues have been reduced to \$10. Please renew your own membership as soon as possible and by June 30 at the latest. If you are able, please round up your dues. If the total is difficult for you to pay at this time please send whatever is comfortable for you. Just print the form attached with the newsletter and follow the instructions to return it..

Norma Goldberg-Membership V.P.



Staying At Home - Sharon Turecek, May 5, 2020.

Two months ago we started our long days of quarantine due to the Coronavirus Pandemic. Outside my window I watched the falling snow, rain, and sleet. I saw the winds whip through the pines. I watched the skies, hoping for signs of blue. Now it is May, and as spring reluctantly comes, we still are supposed to stay home. We must wear masks when going to the grocery store and pharmacy. We need to maintain 6 feet from other people if we must venture out. What I like most about this time at home is the freedom from obligations, the time to work on my own projects, the time to remember, daydream, think, and feel. My appointment calendar is a pristine white grid. When we walk in our neighborhood, we see people whom we never knew lived here. We wave at passengers in cars. They wave back. Like everyone else, I am learning new ways to live. I use my computer to interact with my family, do medical appointments, order groceries. I need to do a lot more cooking. We no longer have housecleaners. I have clumsily cut my husband's hair, and mine. I need a pedicure. This whole experience makes me realize how much we rely upon the good services of others. We are looking after an elderly neighbor who lives alone, we call friends and family to make sure they are OK. We check up on my 90 year old aunt who is in a nursing home and has Covid-19. I know that this will eventually pass; we might all be OK. I know we must be patient. Meanwhile I love being a part of my neighborhood, of Ithaca, of Tompkins County, of New York State. I love knowing that we all are New Yorkers, and are "New York Tough," as our Governor says. This realization makes me feel like I can do this. And so can you!

TREASURER'S REPORT

We are entering this fiscal year with a larger-than-normal balance in the Treasury, partly because of the current situation. Also, we want to thank everyone for their most generous support of our Tompkins County Community College scholarship. Local dues have been reduced from \$20 to \$10, because of the enforced lack of programs/meetings, but we do need to cover the newsletter costs and our insurance liability policy.



Reminder: Time seems to be moving much more slowly, but our AAUW Fiscal Year is coming to an end on June 31, 2020. This means that all but four of our newest members will owe dues for the year July 1, 2020 through June 31, 2021! The cut-off date for dues collection comes early in the fall, so that information appears correctly in the national database, and you will receive all the information sent out by National AAUW.

Hard to believe how the time gallops on, when so little seems to be happening, but this election year will be critical as we partner with LWV to help get the vote out. Since we won't have our usual exciting Annual Dinner this May, at which dues have traditionally been collected, we are asking you to please follow the instructions on the attached membership renewal form. If you have questions about the dues procedure, don't hesitate to call me. Many special thanks to board members, Norma Goldberg, Alene Wyatt, and Kim Edgar for their help this past year.

Muriel Everhart
Treasurer

Looking at the map for some weekend travel ideas.

