



empowering women since 1881

Ithaca Insights

November/December 2022

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Ithaca Insights is the monthly publication of the Ithaca, New York, Branch of AAUW

AAUW Mission

The American Association of University Women (AAUW) advances gender equity for women and girls through research, education, and advocacy.

In principle and practice, AAUW values and seeks a diverse membership. There shall be no barriers to full participation in this organization based on age, ability, ethnicity, gender, gender identity, geographical location, national origin, race, religious belief, sexual orientation or socioeconomic status.

Programs Fall 2022**Holiday Luncheon at The Bistro**

Saturday, December 3, Noon

All branch members and guests are invited to attend our holiday luncheon at The Bistro, the farmhouse restaurant in front of La Tourelle, 1152 Danby Road (Route 96B), Ithaca. Our guests will be the new president of Tompkins Cortland Community College, President Amy Kremenek, and our TC3 scholarship recipient, Carin Hopper. We will order off the menu. **Make your luncheon reservation by Monday, Nov. 21.** Email Barbara Stewart at bbs2@cornell.edu.

Our two October programs reflected the diversity of members' interests. Author Lisa Harris read from her latest poetry collection, *Carry Light, Carry Fire*. Listeners were in awe of the word pictures she painted, "We have a right to light . . . in satchels, jars, lanterns . . ." She explained that "the poems come to me, I don't seek them." And she is often awake at 3:00 a.m., which she has been told is "God's time." If you would like to order *Carry Light, Carry Fire*, contact Lisa at lisaharris.harris52@gmail.com.

Robin J. Lucas, Grassroots Advocacy Manager at AAUW, was forthright about the crisis in women's reproductive health. She was equally direct about what we could do about it. Not everyone is ready to join the Abortion Access Force of which she is a volunteer member, but it is good to know it exists. Letters, petitions, phone calls, marches, money, lobbying, organizing, and voting, all are part of the activist tool box. See aauw.org for how to use these tools most effectively.

We were all invited to take part virtually in an Equity Summit in October. See page 4 for more information and takeaways for branch discussion. The November program on Learning through Leading will be rescheduled.

Dates to Remember

Monday, November 14 • 7:00 p.m. • Book Group
The Four Winds by Kristin Hannah

Saturday, December 3 • Noon at The Bistro
Holiday Luncheon

Monday, December 12 • 7:00 p.m. • Book Group
Change Sings by Amanda Gorman & other children's books

Monday, January 9 • 7:00 p.m. • Book Group
Drive Your Plow Over the Bones of the Dead by Olga Tokarczuk

President's Message

Happy 141st Anniversary of AAUW!

This month, 141 years since its founding, AAUW continues to be as relevant as it was at that first meeting in Boston in November of 1881. AAUW and its members are continuing to promote educational opportunities and equity for women and girls. During my 32 years of AAUW membership, I never thought before last summer that the Supreme Court would take away so much of women's rights, especially as we celebrated the 50th Anniversary of Title IX.

Programs Feature Amazing Women

Barbara Stewart has done a fantastic job with diverse programs featuring amazing women talking about their life's work. Our speakers offered good advice. Writer Lisa Harris noted that she follows doctor's orders and does not allow herself to write throughout the night, even though her mind may want to do that, an example of work/life balance that is good for her overall long-term health.

One of Robin Lucas's main points was that AAUW members can get involved in many ways in issues that are important to them. She advised us to pursue our interests within our personal comfort zones and not overextend ourselves into situations that we are not comfortable with. Our November 3rd program has been postponed and will be rescheduled. Barbara is working on 2023 Programming and welcomes your suggestions. (bbs2@cornell.edu).

Ways to Give and Receive

November is our annual fundraising month. Your ongoing support of AAUW Funds and our local branch scholarship for a returning non-traditional female student at Tompkins Cortland Community College is greatly appreciated. Thank you to Carolyn McPherson for serving as our AAUW Funds Chair and to Jeanette Knapp for assisting Carolyn with the mailing.

This fall semester's scholarship awardee is Carin Hopper. Carin and the new TC3 President Amy Kremenek will be joining us for our December 3rd Holiday Luncheon, so you will have the opportunity to get to know both exceptional women over a relaxed social lunch. At the luncheon, we will also

be collecting food donations for Ithaca's Loaves and Fishes. See <https://loaves.org> for what to bring. Our branch Angel Fund is available to assist any member with the cost of the lunch. When you make your reservation with Barbara Stewart (bbs2@cornell.edu), just let her know.

Happy Thanksgiving!

Kim Edgar (kimberlysedgar@gmail.com)
President, Ithaca Branch

Diversity, Equity & Inclusion

No Book Challenges Locally

Many of the books being challenged are by or about Black, Indigenous or People of Color (BIPOC) community members, or the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Intersex, Asexual plus (LGBTQIA+) community. I am not aware of any challenges in our area at the moment. Of course, this past June residents checked out the entire Pride exhibit at Tompkins County Public Library, making those books unavailable to others. The Friends raised nearly \$7,000 to replace them.

Across the country, some of the school libraries are proactively strengthening their various policies. The town of Kittery in Maine adopted a Freedom to Read policy. <https://www.seacoastonline.com/story/news/local/2022/10/17/kittery-freedom-read-ricelibrary-book-bans/10468407002/>. A school librarian (of the year!) in Louisiana has fought back via lawsuit against the people harassing her online. <https://www.slj.com/story/School-librarian-of-the-year-amanda-jones-fights-back-against-online-attacks>

In June the Book Group will be reading *Gender Queer* by Maia Kobae, a graphic memoir that is one of this country's the most frequently challenged books.

Mary-Carol Lindbloom (pleiades416@hotmail.com),
Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Chair

Website: ithaca-ny.aauw.net

Facebook page: [AAUW Ithaca Branch](https://www.facebook.com/AAUWIthacaBranch)

Book Group

Meet in Person & Via Zoom November 14 & December 12

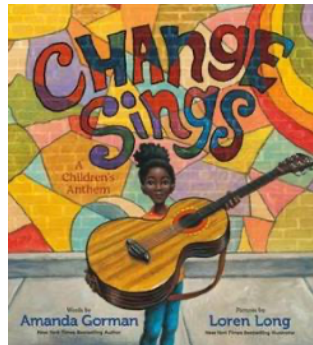
Join us Monday evening, November 14, for our discussion of *The Four Winds* by Kristin Hannah. The Depression and dust bowl of the 1930s doesn't make for a cheerful story, but in this Thanksgiving season, it does remind us to be grateful for problems we do not have. Kathy Earnest-Koons will lead our discussion.



We meet at 7:00 p.m. for tea and conversation. Our discussion begins at 7:30. Both our November and December meetings will be hybrid: in person at Kendal of Ithaca on Triphammer Road and via Zoom. Directions and the Zoom link will be sent to our Book Group e-list. All members and guests are welcome to join us. Contact

Lin Tollefsen to be added to our list.

Lighter fare is planned for our December 12 meeting. Jan Scarlett will lead our discussion of *Change Sings: A Children's Anthem*, by Amanda Gorman, illustrated by Loren Long. This children's book was written by the young poet who wowed the country at President Biden's inaugural. The illustrations were drawn by artist Loren Long, a well-know illustrator of children's books. In addition, all who attend are invited to bring their own favorite children's book to discuss.



In January we will read *Drive Your Plow Over the Bones of the Dead* by Olga Tokarczuk, one of the few women to win the Nobel Prize for Literature. Join our discussion on January 9.

Lin Tollefsen (ltollefsen11@gmail.com) &
Jeanette Knapp (jkd454@gmail.com),
Book Group Co-chairs

Author Receives Genius Grant

The author of our September book, Robin Wall Kimmerer, has just been awarded a MacArthur Foundation Fellowship of \$800,000. The foundation recognized Kimmerer as an ecologist, a writer, a scientist and a storyteller. Professor Kimmerer is also a mother, educator and member of the Citizen Potawatomi Nation. She lives in Syracuse, New York, where she is a SUNY Distinguished Teaching Professor of Environmental Biology, and the founder and director of the Center for Native Peoples and the Environment.

Professor Kimmerer is also the author of *Braiding Sweetgrass: Indigenous Wisdom, Scientific Knowledge and the Teachings of Plants*. This extraordinary collection of essays contains both scientific information about the natural world and an eye-opening look at Native American wisdom about how to live more lightly on our earth and with each other. She describes her book as “. . . a braid of stories, meant to heal our relationship with the world.”

Books for 2022-2023

September 12, 2022 • *Braiding Sweetgrass: Indigenous Wisdom, Scientific Knowledge and the Teachings of Plants* by Robin Wall Kimmerer

October 10, 2022 • *The Henna Artist* by Alka Joshi

November 14, 2022 • *Four Winds* by Kristin Hannah

December 12, 2022 • *Change Sings* by Amanda Gorman and Loren Long plus favorite children's books

January 9, 2023 • *Drive Your Plow Over the Bones of the Dead* by Olga Tokarczuk

February 13, 2023 • *The Heidi Chronicles* by Wendy Wasserstein

March 13, 2023 • *Beautiful Country* by Quan Julie Wang

April 10, 2023 • *The Chilbury Ladies' Choir* by Jennifer Ryan

May 8, 2023 • *Radioactive: Marie & Pierre Curie: A Tale of Love and Fallout* by Lauren Redniss

June 12, 2023 • *Gender Queer* by Maia Kobae

AAUW Funds

Funds Support Scholars & Action

We encourage you to respond to the Branch letter inviting you to contribute to AAUW Funds and/or to the Ithaca Branch AAUW Scholarship at Tompkins Cortland Community College, which benefits nontraditional women students returning to college. If you want to know more about any of the AAUW Funds, go to <https://www.aauw.org>. The deadline for our Branch to be credited by AAUW for 2022 is Saturday, December 3. Mail your contributions to Kim Edgar, 1233 Salt Springs Rd., Chittenango, NY 13037 or bring them to the Holiday Luncheon on December 3.

Did you notice that the stamp on the Branch mailing celebrates the 50th anniversary of Title IX? Title IX is a landmark federal law prohibiting sex discrimination in education. It protects staff and students in any educational institution or program that receives federal funds. AAUW strongly supports the vigorous enforcement of Title IX. See below for more on Title IX.

Thank you for supporting AAUW.

Carolyn McPherson (cjm6@cornell.edu)
Action Funds Chair

Leveling the Playing Field 50 Years of Title IX

Title IX prohibits sex discrimination in education. It covers women and men, girls and boys, and staff and students in any educational institution or program that receives federal funds. This includes local school districts, colleges and universities, for-profit schools, career and technical education programs, libraries and museums.

The law affects all areas of education, including career and technical education; science, technology, engineering and math (STEM); sexual harassment and assault; harassment based on gender identity; recruitment, admissions and housing; pregnant, parenting and/or married students; comparable facilities and access to course offerings; financial assistance; student health services and insurance benefits; and athletics.

Thanks to Title IX:

- Women now make up over 56% of America's college students.
- Women hold nearly half (48%) of tenure-track positions.
- Since Title IX's passage, the number of female athletes climbed more than 10 times: female athletes now make up 42% of all high school athletes.

Unfinished business

Despite the many positive effects of Title IX, women and girls still do not have equal educational experiences or opportunities. Consider that:

- Sexual harassment continues to be a significant problem for female students, creating barriers to an equal education.
- A 2017 study found that men dominate 9 of the 10 college majors that lead to the highest-paying jobs, all 10 of which are in STEM fields. Women, by contrast, dominate 6 of the 10 lowest-paying majors.

AAUW is pushing for strong enforcement of Title IX and policies that will extend equity protections.

Equity Summit Report

The Creating an Equitable Economy panel focused on the real issues that women and families are facing today. The wage gap between men and women is provoked by race, gender, COVID work disruption, and motherhood. This difference can result in over \$900,000 loss over the worker's lifespan and later retirement or no retirement benefits. Women lack paid leave and paid child care to make a better work/home/life balance.

Liz Shuler, President of AFL-CIO, supports a hybrid work environment of home and office and a pay transparency law. Women are efficient managers of many jobs. We have to value women's work nationally with laws to benefit women and caregivers who kept the society going during the Pandemic—nurses, cooks, workers helping the elderly.

Goss Graves, President and CEO of the Women's Law Center, said tipped workers need one fair wage. We need to vote in candidates who support reproductive freedom, and ERA needs passage NOW. Women must keep organizing and not fear retaliation to gain the benefits needed. The panel ended with a call for "Storming the Castle" — an idea for an AAUW Lobby Day in the spring to support legislation to benefit women.

This brief summary is from the report written by Nan Scinta, AAUW NYS Public Policy Vice-President. A recording is available from Nan, who asked us to discuss three questions. She writes:

1. How will we create a caring economy that values and supports women and families?
2. What policies will we promote to build equitable workplaces?
3. Do we support the NYS Equal Rights Amendment that will codify protections for marginalized groups?

Please send me your thoughts. I would like to forward that feedback to PowHerNY for further evaluation of this summit.

Nan Scinta (nscinta@roadrunner.com)