



empowering women since 1881

Ithaca Insights

March 2023

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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 Spring 2023**Learning by Leading • March 7**

Join us, via Zoom, on Tuesday, March 7 at 7:00 p.m. to hear Lynn Swain explain a new approach to developing the next generation of environmental leaders. Lynn is Director of Development at Cornell University's Botanic Gardens. "Learning by Leading" involves students in stewardship, co-creation and a sense of place.

Ezra Cornell and the University Land Grab • March 29

On Wednesday, March 29, at 7:00 p.m. join us, via Zoom, to hear our own Lin Tollefsen explore the details of Cornell's land grant. Linn sends this background:

From the General Records of the United States Government; National Archives. Morrill Act (1862) "Passed on July 2, 1862, this act made it possible for states to establish public colleges funded by the development or sale of associated federal land grants. Over 10 million acres provided by these grants were expropriated from tribal lands of Native communities. The new land-grant institutions, which emphasized agriculture and mechanic arts, opened opportunities to thousands of farmers and working people previously excluded from higher education."

This legislation set the stage for Cornell University to be the largest beneficiary among the 52 land-grant recipients. Cornell's unique land-grant story involves not only Ezra Cornell's vision, but also what some consider the greatest land speculation deal in U.S. history.

But this was a deal based on a narrative myth of free land provided through the generosity of the Federal Government, a myth that covered up
(continued on p. 4)

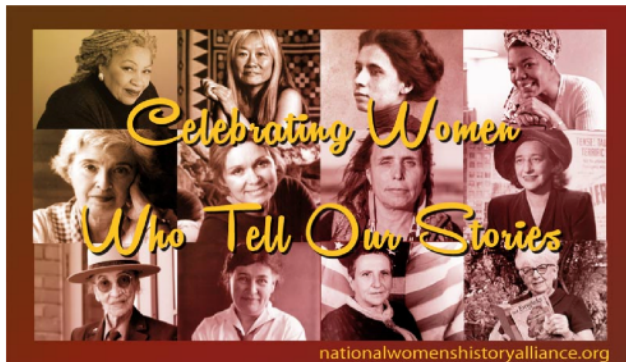
NO CHILD . . . • April 16

Join the Theatre Group at the Kitchen Theatre in downtown Ithaca to see *NO CHILD . . .*, a comedy by Nilaja Sun. We will be attending the Sunday afternoon performance at 2:00 p.m. on April 16. This play is described as "insightful, hilarious and a touching master class for anyone concerned about the state of our education system and how we might fix it."

To order your ticket, see www.kitchentheatre.org or call 607-272-0570. If cost is an issue, see the Kitchen's Name Your Price Tickets, or contact Jeanette Knapp (jdk454@gmail.com).

President's Message

2023 Theme



Top: Toni Morrison, Maxine Hong Kingston, Jovita Idar, Maya Angelou
Middle: Gerda Lerner, Gloria Steinem, Winona LaDuke, Lillian Hellman
Bottom: Betty Siskin, Willa Cather, Gertrude Stein, Marjory Stoneman Douglas

Celebrating Women Who Tell Our Stories

The theme of this year's Women's History Month, chosen by the National Women's History Alliance, is "Celebrating Women Who Tell Our Stories." The goal is to recognize women of the past and present who have told women's stories in many ways, stories and poems, films and art, speeches and demonstrations, histories and news reports, songs and plays. Pictured above are Toni Morrison, Maxine Hong Kingston, Jovita Idar, Maya Angelou, Gerda Lerner, Gloria Steinem, Winona LaDuke, Lillian Hellman, Betty Siskin, Willa Cather, Gertrude Stein and Marjory Stoneman-Douglas. Stories that women share facilitate our knowledge and understanding of our families and communities, and strengthen our connections to each other.

A Hockey Team of Their Own

During my time as a member of the Ithaca Branch, I have heard and read a great many stories of extraordinary branch members past and present. Many accomplished members have made significant achievements in the local community or had great societal impacts during their lifetimes. Too often life goes by so quickly that we do not take the time to recognize and record their accomplishments.

Recently, branch members were made aware that Ithaca High School dropped its Girls Hockey Team this year. Petitions are underway to reinstate it for next year. Some 25 years ago AAUW branches across Upstate New York worked together to convince high schools that already had boys' hockey teams that Girls also Really Expect A Team (GREAT). Teen-age girls in these towns were playing hockey, but had to compete on private teams funded by their parents and a lot of bake sales.

Many branch members actively supported the establishment of the Ithaca Girls Hockey Team and knew its history. For these members, I can assume a high level of negative emotions because the current situation is a major step back to all that was achieved for the Ithaca girls so long ago. Newer members to the branch were not aware of the involvement that branch members had with the team's establishment and its current status. Understanding the past and present stories surrounding the girls' team is critical for us both for the branch and as individuals to decide how to best support girls.

Let Us Tell Our Stories

Following the Women's History Month 2023 Theme of "Celebrating Women Who Tell Our Stories." I would like to propose an open idea: Members, please submit stories to our newsletter about our branch and branch members of our diverse talents and devotion to addressing equity issues over our 105-year history. Stories empower better understanding and closer connections among us.

Enjoy the mild winter,

Kim Edgar (kimberlysedgar@gmail.com)

Dates to Remember

Saturday, March 4 • 10:00 a.m. - 12 noon

Family Program at the Johnson Art Museum, Cornell

Tuesday, March 7 • 7:00 p.m. via Zoom

Lynn Swain • Learning by Leading

Monday, March 13 • 7:00 p.m. Book Group

Beautiful Country by Quan Julie Wang

Wednesday March 29 • 7:00 p.m. via Zoom

Ezra Cornell and the University Land Grab

Saturday, April 8 • 9:00 a.m., via Zoom

"New York State Women College/ University Presidents and Their Challenges"

Monday, April 10 • 7:00 p.m. Book Group

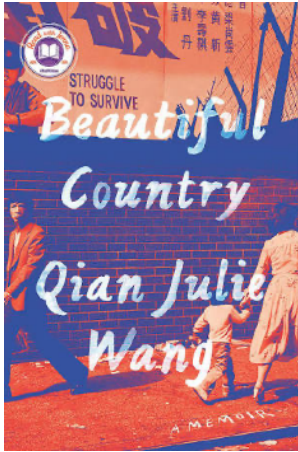
The Chilbury Ladies Choir by Jennifer Ryan

Sunday, April 16 • 2:00 p.m. Kitchen Theatre

• *No Child . . .*

Book Group

***Beautiful Country* Is a Memoir about Immigrant Life Today**



Immigration is the story of America. That's why *Beautiful Country*, a modern-day immigration story, is so moving and so important to read now. Join us, via Zoom, on **Monday evening, March 13**, to discuss this beautifully written memoir by Qian Julie Wang.

When I (Jeanette) was growing up in a Midwestern factory town, many of my

friends had parents or grandparents who barely spoke English. My grandmother's first language was Lithuanian. I was too young to notice how good her English was, but apparently she never wanted to talk about "the old country." I suspect thinking about it made her sad. But I know she saved us by leaving Lithuania before World War I—and all that was to follow, World War II, the Nazi occupation, and 46 years of Soviet rule.

Mei Guo, the Chinese name for America, literally means "beautiful country." But for undocumented immigrants, that promise is particularly hollow. The author shows how hard it is to make a place for yourself where nothing is familiar and so much turns on the casual cruelty or kindness of others. For many, their home country is still a hard dangerous place. What is our obligation to welcome the stranger?

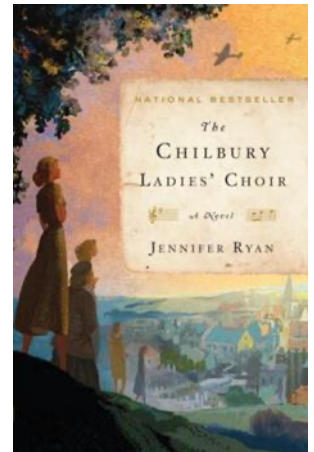
On March 13, we meet, via Zoom, at **7:00 p.m.** for tea (yours) and conversation. Jeanette will lead the discussion, which begins at **7:30**. Contact Lin to be added to the Book Group e-list and for the Zoom link. All members and guests are welcome to join us.

In the bleak midwinter (February) we had a rousing discussion of the *Heidi Chronicles* by Wendy Wasserman, led by Alene Wyatt. We did not find the 1989 play dated at all. We loved the consciousness-raising scene read aloud by our talented members.

Join us April 10 to discuss *The Chilbury Ladies' Choir* by Jennifer Ryan. This is a wartime tale of English ladies who courageously carry on singing. One reviewer says, "Warms the soul like a hot toddy."

Lin Tollefsen

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



Gift Supports Family Program at Johnson Art Museum

Saturday, March 4, 2023, 10 am – 12 noon

If you have not been to the Johnson Museum of Art on the Cornell University Campus in Ithaca lately, consider attending Saturday morning, March 4. The Ithaca Branch donated \$1,200, a gift restricted for the Herbert F. Johnson Museum of Art 1st Saturday of the Month Family Program for Spring, 2023. This restricted donation is from the bequest Connie Reps gave to the Ithaca Branch AAUW and is given in memory of Connie Reps, a longtime member of AAUW and the Ithaca Branch and a devoted supporter of Arts and Theatre in the community.

A Family Workshop is planned for Saturday, March 4, 2023, 10 am – 12 noon at the Johnson Art Museum. This workshop will feature cultural educator and traditional storyteller Perry Ground of the Turtle Clan of the Onondaga Nation, then participants will explore the exhibition: *The Prints of Marie Watt from the Collections of Jordan Schnitzer and His Family Foundation*. Please note that Perry Ground will begin his performance at 10:30 am.

This free family program is appropriate for ages 3 and up and is supported in part by the Ithaca Branch of AAUW in memory of Connie Reps. AAUW members are invited to participate by bringing a family or a child to this family program.

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

Plan to Diversify, Equalize and Include

In the next several months, our branch will be developing a Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Plan, which is recommended by our national organization. If you would like to be involved in developing it, please contact Mary-Carol Lindbloom pleiades416@hotmail.com.

We are excited to celebrate Women's History Month throughout March. Here are some web spaces to visit:

- National Women's History Alliance <https://nationalwomenshistoryalliance.org/>. The 2023 theme is *Celebrating Women Who Tell Our Stories*.
- International Women's Day, March 8. This year's theme is #EmbraceEquity. <https://www.internationalwomensday.com/>
- Exhibit-wise, if you've not had a chance to check out the online exhibit, *Recognizing Women's Right to Vote in New York State*, it is a good opportunity. The exhibit includes information on the role of Haudenosaunee women in suffrage, as well as Black women. Julia Corrice, Susan Goodier, and Sally Roesch Wagner curated the exhibit. <https://nyheritage.org/exhibits/recognizing-womens-right-vote-new-york-state>. Also visit the Library of Congress online exhibits <https://womenshistorymonth.gov/exhibits-and-collections/>

April is Black Women's History Month.

- The History Center in Tompkins County has an excellent Black Women's History Month page featuring historic Black women of Tompkins County. Check it out! <https://www.thehistorycenter.net/Black-Womens-History-Month>
- The National Museum of African American History and Culture will have streaming events. <https://nmaahc.si.edu/> including Historically Speaking I am Debra Lee on March 10.
- *YES! Magazine* recently republished their 2016 article entitled, "10 Black Women Innovators and the Awesome Things They Brought Us." <https://tinyurl.com/mvzsah68> From 3D movies to better heaters to home security—these are just a few of the many inventions Black women have created.

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

Ezra Cornell & the University Land Grab *continued*

the real source of the land. In the case of Cornell it was almost a million acres of land that had been taken from Native Americans, frequently by force or fraud.

This is not just a story of something that happened in the past. Cornell University became economically and morally tied to Indigenous Nations whose traditional lands are located where Cornell now rests.

Lin is currently the branch's secretary and Book Group Co-Chair. With a Doctorate in Education from Columbia University, she describes herself as an "educational entrepreneur. My new project is The New Life Purpose Plan, helping retiring academics to use their character strengths to create a plan for a new life filled with engagement, contribution and passion."

Help! We Need You!

It is time to find new officers for 2023-25. We are looking for President, Vice President for Programs and Secretary. Would you consider taking on one of these positions? Yes, some time is involved, but we believe in having a good time while working toward broader education and equity for women and girls.

Those of us who have been members of the board have enjoyed getting to know really interesting women with a wide range of experiences. And we also believe in job-sharing, Co-sharing duties or being active for short periods of time each year is definitely available for most of our leadership positions.. New officers will be elected at the annual meeting in June and serve through June 2025.

We also need Nominating Committee members. Your help in nominating or serving as a new branch leader is critical to the ongoing success of the Ithaca Branch. Please contact Kim Edgar if you are interested in being an officer or serving on the Nominating Committee.

Thank you!

Kim Edgar (kimberlysedgar@gmail.com)
President

Website: ithaca-ny.aauw.net

Facebook page: [AAUW Ithaca Branch](#)