



empowering women since 1881

Ithaca Insights

September 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 Fall 2023

Meet Three New Members • September 18

On Monday evening, September 18, at 7:00 p.m. via Zoom, we will introduce and welcome our three newest members: Patricia Carey, Aidan Kelly and Jessica Scott. We asked them to tell us about themselves. See p. 4..

Open Doors English • October 16

Join us in person at Lifelong, 119 W. Court St., Ithaca, on Monday, October 16. We will begin at 4:30 p.m. with cider and donuts. At 5:00 p.m. Liz Sussman will describe Open Doors English and introduce us to some of the international students who are learning the English language and American culture through this remarkable organization.

Guidance Counselor 101 • November 20

On Monday evening, Nov. 20, at 7:00 p.m., via Zoom, we will meet Eva Heffner Collier, who will talk about her experiences as a guidance counselor in Ithaca and Candor.

Open Books Open Minds • December 9

On Saturday, December 9, from 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. the Ithaca Branch will be hosting a public forum on the dangers of book banning at the Tompkins County Public Library in downtown Ithaca. This event was originally scheduled for September 23, but had to be rescheduled due to library renovations.

We are excited about these fall programs, We hope you will put these dates on your calendar and plan to participate.

Bobbie Kohut & Carolyn McPherson

Co-Program Vice Presidents,

Dates to Remember

Monday, Sept. 18 * 7:00 p.m. Meet Three New Members

Saturday, Sept. 30 • 12:30 p.m. Book Group picnic and discussion

President's Message

Barbie Thanks AAUW

Barbie is making a name for herself in movie theaters all around the country. You could, in fact, see her in Ithaca at Cinemapolis or the Regal Theater at the mall. Directed by Greta Gerwig, *Barbie* has brought in to the box office \$1.381 billion! Quite a girl!

But did you know that Barbie has an association with AAUW? AAUW helped her get beyond the idea that she had trouble with math. "Teen Talk" Barbie used to say, "Math class is tough," but no more, after AAUW pointed out to Mattel in 1992 that the phrase was not only sexist, but also incorrect.

Research shows that girls' math achievement is related to the degree of gender bias in their country of origin. In countries with more gender bias, girls are more likely to have lower math scores. In Iceland where gender bias is historically low, girls outperform boys in math. This suggests that gender bias can have a significant impact on girls' education in STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) subjects.

Yet there remains a significant gender gap in STEM. Women make up only 28% of the STEM workforce. This number is even lower in some of the highest-paying and most in-demand STEM fields, such as computer science and engineering.

Why So Few Women in Math & Science?

There are many factors, backed up by significant research, that contribute to this gender gap, including:

- Gender stereotypes: Girls are often discouraged from pursuing STEM subjects from a young age. They are told that they are not good at math or science, or that STEM careers are not for them.
- Lack of female role models: Girls need to see other women who are successful in STEM careers in order to believe that they can do it too. However, there are still too few female role models in STEM fields.
- Work-life balance challenges: Women are more likely than men to take on caregiving responsibilities, which can make it difficult to balance a STEM career with family life.
- Sexual harassment: Women in STEM fields are more likely to experience sexual harassment than women in other fields. This can create a hostile work environment and make it difficult to succeed.

How to Help Girls Succeed

Many things can be done to support girls and women in STEM careers. The American Association of University Women (AAUW) leads the way to advance equity for women and girls in education and the workplace.

AAUW has programs and initiatives that support girls and women in STEM careers.

- Providing more opportunities for girls to learn STEM subjects: This can be done through programs such as after-school STEM clubs and summer STEM camps.
- Encouraging girls to pursue STEM careers: Provide girls with positive role models and by helping them to overcome any stereotypes that they may face.
- Supporting women in STEM careers: Create flexible work arrangements and a more supportive work environment.

Check out what AAUW is doing at: <https://www.aauw.org/resources/research/the-stem-gap/> and <https://www.aauw.org/resources/programs/stempacks/>

I look forward to seeing you at the many engaging activities the Program Committee of Carolyn McPherson and Bobbie Kohut has planned.

Lin Tollefsen, Co-President
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P.S. I'm an information junkie. If you are too, and would like specific research references to any of these ideas, let me know. Many of them are available online, and I might be able to help you find them.

Membership News

Many Renewals and 3 New Members

Membership in our branch continues to be strong. Thank you to everyone who renewed for the 2023-2024 year. A special thanks to members who were able to send a little extra to help anyone who needs assistance.

Welcome to our newest members, Patti Carey, Aidan Kelly, and Jessica Scott. Patti joined us after being a long time member of the now disbanded Skaneateles branch. Aidan and Jessica are first-time members. Jessica is a graduate of Swarthmore College and works on solar energy projects for 3 states. Aidan is a SUNY Binghamton graduate in Women Studies. Cornell hired her in their Women Studies Department. She likes social media and has created our branch's first Instagram account: @aauw.ithaca. Meet all three, via Zoom, at our Sept. 18th meeting. Also, see p. 4.

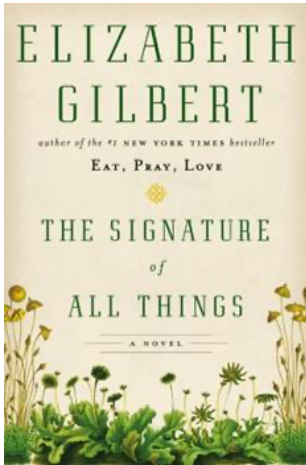
Contact me if you would like a membership brochure to give a potential member or better yet just to have one if you meet someone who might be interested. You never know where you will be when this happens. I was discussing a book from our book group at a wine tasting and someone there was interested. Diane is now a member.

Norma Goldberg, Program Vice President
ncg@twcny.rr.com

Book Group

Explore Plants and the World

Join the Book Group in person on Saturday, September 30, for a picnic and discussion of *The Signature of All Things* by Elizabeth Gilbert. Jan Scarlett has again invited us to her beautiful hilltop setting at 88 Hollister Road, Freeville. (directions below). Come at 12:30 p.m. for a dish-to-pass picnic. Our discussion begins at 1:30 p.m. If the day is cool, dress warmly as we will be outdoors at Jan's pavilion.



If you know author Elizabeth Gilbert for her better-known *Eat, Pray, Love*, you will be impressed by the depth and complexity of this historical novel. For her this story began with a beautiful leather-bound 1783 edition of *Captain Cook's Voyages* that her family owned. As a child she loved studying the elegant maps and botanical illustrations. Botany, exploration, and family dynamics are at the heart of this sweeping novel,

which begins in England, moves on to early Pennsylvania, and then to the south seas and beyond.

The title, *The Signature of All Things*, comes from an early theory that God has imprinted a message into the shape and form of each plant that signifies how it is to be used. Many of the characters are obsessed by plants, and through them we learn a lot about the evolving science of botany and evolution. Carolyn McPherson will be leading our discussion.

Directions: Jan writes, "My address is 88 Hollister Rd., Freeville, NY. Despite the Freeville mailing address we are not in the village of Freeville, but rather quite close to Slaterville Springs. Drive east (away from Ithaca) on Ellis Hollow Rd, past the intersection with Ellis Hollow Creek Rd, until you come to Hurd Rd. Turn left on Hurd Rd. Go up Hurd until you come to Hollister Rd. Turn right on Hollister and ours is the first driveway on the right.

OR

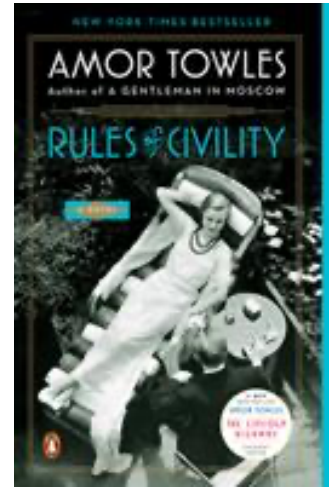
Drive out of Ithaca going east on Rte. 79, past the Caroline Elementary school, until you come to Midline Rd. Midline is just BEFORE you enter Slaterville Springs. Turn left on Midline and take it about 1 1/2 miles until there is a sharp right curve. Turn left on Hollister just before the curve and go up the hill. We are the last driveway on the left."

In October, we will be reading *Rules of Civility* by Amor Towles.

We hope to see you on the 30th. You can bring a salad, fruit, dessert, potato chips or whatever, but come and meet your fellow book-lovers in person. If you would like to be added to the Book Group E-List, contact Lin.

—Lin Tollefsen
(ltollefsen11@gmail.com)
& Jeanette Knapp
(jdk454@gmail.com)

Book Group Co-Chairs



2023-2024 Book Group List

September 30 • *The Signature of All Things* by Elizabeth Gilbert.

October 9 • *Rules of Civility* by Amor Towles

November 13 • *Lessons in Chemistry*, by Bonnie Garmus

December 11 • *Prairie Fires: the American Dreams of Laura Ingalls Wilder*. by Caroline Fraser

January 8 • *Having Our Say* by Emily Mann

February 12 • *The Master and Margarita* by Mikhail Bulgakov

March 11 • *What Are Old People For?: How Elders Will Save the World* by William Thomas

April 8 • Our Current Political Climate: Choose 1
The True Believer, Eric Hoffer
Escape from Freedom, Erich Fromm
The Authoritarian Personality, Theodor Adorno, et al.
Our Own Worst Enemy, Tom Nichols
Strongman: Mussolini to the President, Ruth Ben-Ghiat
Fascism: A Warning, Madeleine Albright
Cultish: The Language of Fanaticism, Amanda Montell

May 13 • Cornell Community Read, to be announced

June 10 • *The Sum of Us: What Racism Costs Everyone and How We Can Prosper Together* by Heather McGhee

Meet Our Three New Members (cont.)

Aidan Kelly, Ithaca: “I am the Program Assistant for the Feminist, Gender, & Sexuality Studies and LGBT Studies Programs at Cornell University. I moved to Ithaca in 2018 after receiving my B.A. in English and Rhetoric at Binghamton University. In my free time I like to read, write, and practice yoga. I’m so excited to become involved with AAUW Ithaca as Branch Secretary this year!”

Jessica Scott, Trumansburg: “As background, I work for a company that provides residential solar and energy efficiency to underserved communities, and I can talk about the impact of the Inflation Reduction Act and how the new funding is spurring historic investment in clean energy with a focus on environmental justice. My job title is Director, Community Partnerships at PosiGen Solar and Energy Efficiency.” (Update - Jessica will be in San Diego on September 18 but we hope to interview her before she leaves and share some of what we learn about Jessica.)

Patti Carey, Skaneateles: “ I joined AAUW in the early 70's when the women in the Lake Forest, Illinois, branch were hopeful that ERA would become a reality. With young children, I so appreciated time with women who read books, traveled and weren't discussing pediatricians and baby schedules. My husband's broadcasting career that began in Southern California where we grew up, necessitated many moves, so finding the AAUW branch was first on my 'to do' list after unpacking those boxes.

My longest stay was in Chappaqua, NY, for 17 years, where I headed up membership in that very active branch and was part of the NYS board for membership, for a while. After my husband retired from running WCBS TV in Manhattan, he was asked to teach at the Syracuse Newhouse School of Public Communications which is what brought us to buy a home in Skaneateles where we had a Branch of AAUW for many years. With help in providing an afternoon of finger foods from my Branch pals, I organized an art show, "Celebrating Women in Art" featuring over 50 Syracuse/Skaneateles artists that drew over 500 people for the day. We hosted it each November. - great fun!

My husband died eight years ago. I have three grown sons, located in LA, St. Paul and Monroe Township, NJ. I have been active in the Skaneateles community for 23 years, travel quite a bit and, most recently, enjoy being part of the management team for the John D. Barrow Gallery where I hope to welcome the members of the Ithaca Branch in the future. “

More Member News

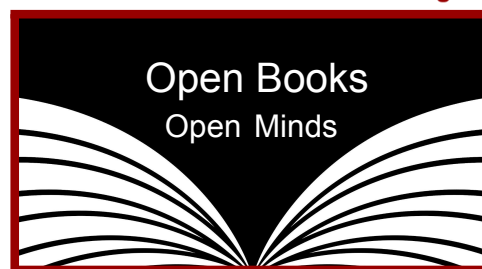
Lenore Bandler, one of our longtime members, turned 90 this summer. She said she is doing fine, but doesn't travel much any more. She and her husband used to spend winters in Fort Myers, Florida, but sold their home before Hurricane Ian hit last September. Water made it to the second floor of their former home.

Lenore joined the branch in the 1970s and was a member of the Art Group for many years. She helped organize outings to museums, art galleries and the studios of many local artists and often did the table decorations for our Fellowships dinners. She is an artist and photographer who turned many of her photos into beautiful greeting cards. Lenore welcomes calls or emails: 607-564-3379 or lenore@bandlers.com.

Samira Surfs

This spring the branch made a donation to the Tompkins County Public Library in memory of longtime member Jeanne Peck, who was fond of children's books. We have just learned that the book selected in Jeanne's memory is a middle grade novel in verse. *Samira Surfs* was written by Rukhsanna Guidroz and illustrated by Fahmida Azim. Samira is a young Rohingya refugee, and the story is about her journey from isolation and persecution to sisterhood—through surfing.

A Public Panel on Book Banning



December 9, 2023 ←
10 am to 12 pm

Tompkins County Public Library
101 East Green Street, Ithaca, NY 14850

**“Banning books is just another form of bullying.
It's all about fear and an assumption of power.
The key is to address the fear and deny the power.”**

James Howe, Oneida, NY author of the renowned Bunnica series,
winner of more than ten Children's Choice awards.

For more information contact Kim Edgar, kimberlysedgar@gmail.com

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