



empowering women since 1881

Ithaca Insights

September 2024

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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.

Fall Programs

Saturday, Sept. 21 • Noon • Luncheon & Discussion

What Racism Costs All of Us

Our first AAUW Ithaca Branch event of the 2024-25 year is a welcoming dish-to-pass luncheon followed by a discussion of Heather McGhee's book: *The Sum of Us*. We hope all members and guests can attend to meet each other in person and share perspectives on a vital issue. Place: the home of Jeanette Knapp, 1143 Ellis Hollow Road, Ithaca. R.S.V.P. 607-272-3367 or jdk454@gmail.com. See Book Group news on p. 3 for more info and directions.

Monday, Sept. 30 • 7:00 p.m. via Zoom

Meet New Members & Student Leaders

Please join us on Zoom on Monday evening, September 30, at 7:00 p.m. to meet and welcome three amazing new members: Dana Brenklin, Gabby Krain Sasson and Chiamaka Ezeh. All three women are new to AAUW.

In the second half of the program we will learn about AAUW's National Conference for College Women Student Leaders (NCCWSL). Two Ithaca College students will share their experiences at NCCWSL last summer. Nandini Agarawal '25, is an Environmental Science major, student program manager for the Eco Reps, President of the IC Nature Club, and Director of Communication for the Senior Class.

Annika Michel '25, is a Business Administration major, Treasurer of the Ithaca Pre-Law Society, member of the IC Varsity Golf Team, and Beta Gamma Sigma honor society inductee. See New Members on p. 2 and photo on p. 4 for more information.

Friday, October 4 • Essay Contest Deadline, See p. 2

Saturday, October 19 • Noon, Lunch @ Ale House
• 2 p.m., Essay Contest Awards

Monday, October 28 • 7:00 p.m. via Zoom

From School Counseling to Advising

Do you want to understand more about students today? Our speaker will be Eva Collier, who has worked as a school counselor in Ithaca and Candor and is now an undergraduate coordinator at Cornell.

President's Message

Enter Equal Rights Essay Contest

The branch is holding our first community-wide essay contest on the proposed NY Equal Rights Amendment. See insert for details. Share information about the NY Equal Rights Amendment, write your own essay, and encourage others to participate, especially students. The deadline is Friday, October 4. The essay contest is an *in-memoriam* tribute to Dr. Antonia Glasse, who was a former professor of Russian Literature at Cornell and member of the Ithaca Branch. Dr. Glasse was one of the lead plaintiffs in the *Cornell Eleven* lawsuit that documented gender discrimination at Cornell University and led to the founding of the AAUW Legal Advocacy Fund.

If you would like to share a memory of Antonia Glasse for the Awards Ceremony Booklet, please send your memory to me by Friday, October 4th. Please plan to attend the Awards Ceremony at the Tompkins County Public Library on Saturday, October 19, at 2:00 p.m. to recognize Antonia and our essay contest winners.

More Program Plans

Throughout this past summer, the branch board has been working on a lot of activities for members and the community. Carolyn McPherson and Bobbie Kohut are planning many programs that are AAUW Mission-based and enjoyable. The traditional monthly meetings will be held on the 4th Monday of each month and mostly over Zoom. We hope the change in day will enable more members to participate. We are also planning a few Saturday programs. The first is hosted by the Book Group on Saturday, September 21. See pp. 1 & 3 for details. Please tell Bobbie or Carolyn about your program ideas or if you need a ride or can take others to programs.

When we surveyed members last winter, we discovered that social activities were especially popular. Thank you to Barb Stewart and Norma Goldberg for acting on that information and organizing our August lunch at the Finger Lakes Cider House. The following weekend, we enjoyed a special Summer Sunday in Skaneateles thanks to Patti Carey and Bobbie Kohut. Our next Social Luncheon will be Saturday, October 19th at noon at the Ithaca Ale House.

Betta Hedlund, Sharon Turecek, and Margaret Nichols will be reviewing our branch finances later this month. I would like to thank them for volunteering for this important compliance task and thank Margaret for her dedicated work as Treasurer.

The Kitchen Theatre Group and the Film Group are back again for this year. Please contact Jeanette Knapp if you are interested in learning more about the Kitchen Theatre Group and Lin Tollefsen for the Film Group.

Finally, we greatly appreciate your membership as we support AAUW's mission of education and equity. We also need your participation to make our activities successful. Please consider volunteering for an activity of your interest, such as Public Policy, Bylaws, AAUW Funds, Social Activities, Nominations or Strategic Planning. Getting to know other members is a definite plus to volunteering for the branch.

Enjoy the fall! *Kim Edgar*, Co-President

New Members Join

Three new members joined our branch this summer. You will have a chance to meet them, via Zoom, at our program on September 30.

Dana Brenklin: "I am a new English PhD student at Cornell University. I am studying Black Feminist Theory, Black women's writing, and Post-Colonial Theory. I grew up in Los Angeles, California, and earned my B.A. in English at the University of California, Berkeley. This is my inaugural year as an AAUW member. I look forward to meeting other members soon." You can contact Dana at dmb476@cornell.edu or 310-350-9861. She lives at 2250 N. Triphammer Rd., Apt U3F.

Gabrielle (Gabby) Krain-Sasson: "I am honored to be a part of Ithaca's AAUW chapter. I graduated from Ithaca College in May with a BA in Women's, Gender, and Sexuality studies. In addition, I minored in Sociology and History. While at IC I was very involved with Hillel, the hub for Jewish life on campus. I also worked in the Office of Student Engagement as a Student Leadership Consultant. My leadership experiences, studies, and extracurriculars have furthered my passion for community building. After graduating I moved back to my hometown, Blue Bell, PA (just outside of Philadelphia) and I am currently working at an Elementary School as a Para-educator. I hope to pursue a career in child advocacy. In my free time you can find me on a hike, cooking, or enjoying live music or shows."

Chiamaka Joy Ezeh: "I am a first-generation student, originally from Nigeria. I am a second year PhD student in the Genetics, Genomics, and Development Program of the Department of Molecular Biology and Genetics at Cornell University. My research is centered on pancreatic cancer metabolism, and exploring novel therapeutics to improve the treatment options of pancreatic cancer. Before moving to the US, I had my Bachelor of Science in Biochemistry at the Michael Okpara University of Agriculture Umudike, MOUAAU-Abia State.

"I am thrilled to join AAUW as a new member. AAUW's mission to advance gender equity for women and girls through research, education, and advocacy strongly resonates with me, especially in areas of healthcare disparities."

Book Group

Come for Lunch

Find Out How We Can All Prosper

Begin your AAUW year with a fun luncheon and a thought-provoking discussion. The Book Group invites all AAUW members and guests to our dish-to-pass luncheon this coming Saturday, September 21 at noon. Place: the home of Jeanette Knapp, 1143 Ellis Hollow Road, Ithaca (directions below).

Our book discussion will begin about 1:00 p.m. Come whether or not you have read *The Sum of Us* by Heather McGhee. We have all lived with the issues she presents, and your perspective is valuable. The subtitle of her book is *What Racism Costs All of Us and How We Can Prosper Together*. I valued her look at some recent events — the great recession mortgage meltdown — and finally understood what happened.

Mary-Carol Lindbloom, our Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Chair, will lead our discussion. She says, “Heather McGhee’s *The Sum of Us* is important on many fronts. She uses real world examples to show how racism intersects with economics to harm everyone, i.e., marginalized communities and white people alike. Instead of zero-sum thinking where someone’s gain is another one’s loss (resulting in a net gain of zero), Heather McGhee provides solutions. She challenges us to consider how dismantling systemic racism would lead to an equitable society where everyone can thrive. The discussion questions are available at Heather McGhee’s website. Hope to see you on the 21st!”

https://heathermcghee.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/McGHEE_TheSumOfUs_HC_DiscussionGuide_Final.pdf

Lunch & Directions

If you can, bring a dish to share: salad, main dish, dessert, veggies, fruit, cheese & crackers, potato chips, bread, or drinks, etc. Surprise us. R.S.V.P. to Jeanette Knapp at jdk454@gmail.com or 607-272-3367 so I will know how many chairs to get out.

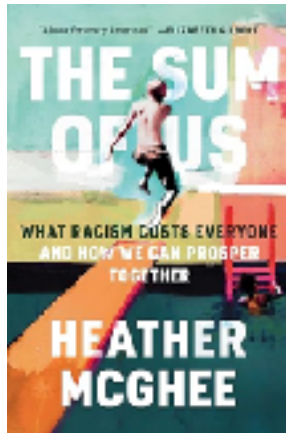
Directions: I live one and 1/4 miles out of town from the stop & go light at East Hill Plaza where Mitchell Street becomes the Ellis Hollow Road. I am about 1/4 mile past Game Farm Road, but if you get to Dodge Road or Snyder Heights Road, you have gone too far.

1143 Ellis Hollow Road is on the right as you are heading east (uphill, out of town). My black

mailbox with the house number on the post is right next to the first entrance to my u-shaped driveway. You will see the garage first in front of my red brick house. If you are early, park in front of the garage or pull all the way through the driveway so you are headed out. There is room for a double line of cars.

Don't park on the road. There is a deep ditch. If the driveway is full, you can park on Dodge Road. —Lin Tollefsen (ltollefsen11@gmail.com)

& Jeanette Knapp (jdk454@gmail.com),
Book Group Co-Chairs



Join the Book Group!

Books for Sept. 2024 to June 2025

Saturday, September 21: *The Sum of Us: What Racism Costs Everyone and How We Can Prosper Together* by Heather McGhee

Monday, October 14: *Horse* by Geraldine Brooks

Monday, November 11: *The Frozen River* by Ariel Lawhon

Monday, December 9: *The Return of the Light: Twelve Tales from Around the World for the Winter Solstice* by Carolyn McVickar Edwards,

Monday, January 13: *Tomorrow and Tomorrow and Tomorrow* by Gabrielle Zevin

Monday, February 10: *Nutshell* by Ian McEwan

March, date TBD: *Born a Crime: Stories From a South African Childhood* by Trevor Noah

Monday, April 14: *Lady Tan's Circle of Women* by Lisa See

Monday, May 12: *Trust* by Hernan Diaz

Monday, June 9: *Chocolate Chip Cookie Murder* by Joanne Fluke

If you want to be added to the Book Group e-list, contact Lin at: ltollefsen11@gmail.com

Ithaca College students at NCCWSL



(left to right): Thuw J-Elmi, Annika Michel, Hailee Daunis, Nandini Agarwal, Leticia Rebelo de Oliveira, Sydney Jacobs

NCCWSL is the National Conference for College Women Student Leaders sponsored by AAUW. You will meet Annika & Nandini, via Zoom, at our program on Sept. 30.

Open AAUW (an opinion)

Open AAUW was defeated once again this spring. A majority of members voting favored it, but not quite the two-thirds required by the by-laws. Will it come up again for a vote? For the sake of AAUW's future, I hope so.

Open AAUW is a movement to enable all people who support AAUW's mission to become members, whether or not they have at least an associate's degree. AAUW has been open to all genders for a long time, as long as they have that degree. And therein is the question: Should people without a degree also be welcomed into AAUW?

There are reasons some AAUW members want to keep AAUW for degree holders, including that for many, the degree was hard-fought and the ability to join AAUW is hard-earned, too. Another is that the degree provides an important commonality among the members. Some members worry that if non-degreed people join AAUW, they would be eligible to join the National Board and divert millions of dollars away from educational or scholarship funds to projects that work against women and education. While I certainly hear the concerns, I

would also suggest that there are already those with college degrees who could join AAUW and the National Board and divert money.

Many people earned their degrees against all odds, and yet others have not had an opportunity to attend college—and yet, they support the AAUW mission.

As with so many associations, the membership base is aging. There are more AAUW branches lost every year than are added to the national roster. Exclusionary associations may attract fewer members, i.e., even some who are eligible to belong refuse to join associations that exclude. In the future, there will be fewer positions that require degrees, e.g. see a recent blog post about that: <https://blog.ongig.com/job-descriptions/no-degree-requirements/>. How do associations like AAUW pivot to meet the needs of women and girls if this becomes the reality?

Opening AAUW to all could not only increase numbers, but could spark more creative and innovative thinking plus insights around fulfilling the mission and achieving the goals of AAUW in the upcoming decades.

The national AAUW organization wants Open AAUW, as do the Inclusion and Equity Committee and virtually all diversity officers who attend the nationwide monthly calls. On a recent call, some questioned whether or not they could remain in AAUW if it continues to exclude people without degrees.

To delve into Open AAUW more deeply, AAUW created a toolkit, which is located here:

<https://www.aauw.org/resources/member/open-membership-toolkit/> For those of you reading Heather McGhee's book, *The Sum of Us*, how does Open AAUW factor into this?

Sincerely,
Mary-Carol Lindbloom, Ithaca Branch DEI Chair

Dates to Remember

September 21 • Noon, Lunch & Book Discussion

September 30 • 7:00 p.m., via Zoom, Meet New Members & Ithaca College Students

October 4 • Essay Contest Deadline

October 14 • 7:00 p.m. via Zoom, Book Group

October 19 • Noon, Lunch @ Ithaca Ale House
• 2:00 p.m., Award Ceremony, TCPL