



empowering women since 1881

# Ithaca Insights

October 2025

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## **President**

Lin Tollefsen

ltollefsen11@gmail.com

## **Program Vice President**

Members interested in program planning needed

## **Membership Vice President**

Diane Doyle

dianedandoyle@gmail.com

## **Secretary**

Aidan Kelly

aidankelly@cornell.edu

## **Treasurer**

Margaret Nichols

mnr1@cornell.edu

## **Diversity, Equity & Inclusion**

Mary-Carol Lindbloom

pleiades416@hotmail.com

## **AAUW Funds Chair**

Kim Edgar

kimberlysedgar@gmail.com

## **Newsletter Editor**

Jeanette Knapp

jdk454@gmail.com

*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.**

Friday, October 31 • 1:00 p.m. • Ithaca College

## **Implementing Cost-Effective Climate Solutions on Campus: Ithaca College Energy and Sustainability**

Due to illness, we needed to reschedule our October program. The new date is Friday, Oct. 31. The new time is 1:00 p.m. We are meeting in Room 202, Park Center for Business and Sustainable Enterprise, Ithaca College's LEED Platinum-Certified Business School building.

Scott D. Doyle, Ithaca College's Director of Energy Management & Sustainability, will offer some insights into how IC is working to reduce its carbon emissions through cost-effective projects with the IC campus community. The challenge is to balance this reduction with equally important priorities related to enrollment, educational focus, deferred maintenance, and energy and sustainability. All campus communities face these issues.

Parking is available at the nearby Visitor's Lot just off Route 96B. (Turn right at traffic circle, visitor's parking is at right.) Walk 1/4 mile up to the Business School. Or take the TCAT Route 11 bus up the hill from downtown. Need a ride? From your home or the Visitor's Parking Lot? Call or email Diane Doyle (585-259-0778) dianedandoyle@gmail.com. Be at the Visitor's Lot by 12:30 p.m. if you need a ride from there.

Monday, November 17 • 7:00 p.m. • via Zoom

## **Child Care Today: What it Means to Be a Working Parent in a Child-Care Desert**

Join Ruth Merle-Doyle, Cornell Work/Life Program Manager, for a conversation about child care. Ruth is eager to hear your stories of managing care of children with a career. We will share what current families, in particular working mothers, face when it comes to living in the child-care desert that is Ithaca. Ruth will discuss how the pandemic has changed child care in the Ithaca area and how Cornell is helping its working families find child care. Find out what you can do for our next generation of families.

Saturday, December 13 • 10:30 a.m. • Kendal

## **Holiday Party: Values Workshop & Luncheon**

Save the date. Meet our scholarship recipient. Invite friends & family. Details in the November/December news.

## President's Letter

### Honoring Alene

Cooler, fall weather has come to Ithaca with the beauty of the changing leaves, rustic red, orange and yellow. It's my favorite season. The laid-back days of summer are past, and it's time to get busy. We have a full year of AAUW activities in store. One of the first things on the agenda is to find a significant way to honor our member, Alene Wyatt, who passed away July 29, 2025

We're reaching out to those of you who have known Alene well to see if you have suggestions for the best way



to honor her life and dedication to AAUW. We'd love to hear your ideas. Please feel free to contact me so I can present them to the Board.

- We are inspired by memories of her energy and generosity.
- She was President of our Branch from 1982 to 1984.
- She was our webmaster, using her technical skills to

keep our members informed of our activities and the public informed of the important work of AAUW.

- She created our Directory each year and our GoogleGroup.
- She was an active member of the Board, the Book Group and the Theater Group.

In addition to her contributions to AAUW, Alene was a member of the boards of The League of Women Voters, The City Federation of Women's Organizations, The Human Services Coalition, The Health Planning Council, and The Social Services League. She also volunteered as a poll site manager and sorted books for the Friend of the Library book sale.

Early in her career she helped create a resource center for childcare providers at the Day Care & Child Development Council (The Gathering Place) which led to her career in early childhood education, ultimately as Day Care Developer at the Council.

When she moved to Kendal in 2006, she used her technical know-how to run their television station. She said, "Who ever imagined I would grow up to be a television producer!" But her contributions to her community extended far beyond her technical skill.

Alene's contributions to our Branch were beyond measure. In April of this year she shared photos and told the story of her generous, rich life at our monthly Branch

program. I recorded the meeting and Alene was happy for me to share the recording. Please let me know if you would like me to send you the link to it.

—Lin Tollefsen, President (ltollefsen11@gmail.com)

### Member News

The new membership directory for 2025-26 has been printed, and we have new membership brochures for 2025-26. Pick these up at any of our October meetings. The remaining directories will be mailed in November. Let me know if you would like some membership brochures. We are all members of the membership committee.

—Diane Doyle, Membership VP  
dianedandoyle@gmail.com

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### Books for September 2025 to June 2026

September 15, 2025 • ***Bleak House*** by Charles Dickens,

October 20, 2025 • ***We Solve Murders*** by Richard Osman

November 10, 2025 • ***The Thanksgiving Play*** by Larissa FastHorse

December 8, 2025 • ***Miss Austen*** by Gill Hornby

January 12, 2026 • ***The Great Gatsby*** by F. Scott Fitzgerald

February 16, 2026 • ***James*** by Percival Everett

March 9, 2026 • ***The Three Mothers*** by Anna Malaika Tubb

April 13, 2026 • ***Down and Out in Paris and London*** by George Orwell

May 11, 2026 • ***The Backyard Bird Chronicles*** by Amy Tan

June 8, 2026 • ***Maisie Dobbs*** by Jacqueline Winspear

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## Book Group

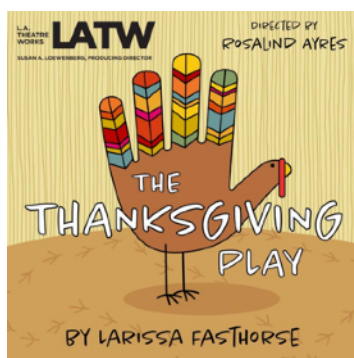
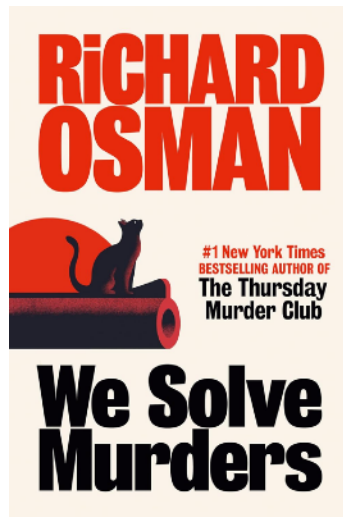
### Trouble in Paradise

Forget the longer colder evenings with a new mystery, *We Solve Murders*, by Richard Osman. Then join the Book Club on Monday afternoon, October 20, to discuss this 2024 murder mystery by the author of *The Thursday Murder Club*. The setting is small town England, a South Carolina island paradise—and the rest of the world in a high-flying, high-stakes chase.

There's a fun cast of characters. My favorite was the mystery writer, but the retired detective, the surprising body-guard, the office manager, and the super-hero actor are also memorable in action. I (Jeanette) hope you have better luck than me solving this puzzle.

We will meet at 1:30 p.m. Monday, October 20, at the home of Phyllis Rappaport, 30 Horizon Drive, Ithaca. Kathy Earnest-Koons will lead our discussion.

All Ithaca Branch members and guests are welcome to join us. Contact Lin Tollefsen to be added to the Book Group E-List.



In November, the Book Group is preparing for Thanksgiving by reading and discussing *The Thanksgiving Play* by Larissa FastHorse. This classroom comedy raises important questions about what children should learn about that first Thanksgiving and the people who were already here when the

Pilgrims arrived on their shore.

Mary-Carol Lindbloom, our Diversity, Equity and Inclusion chair, will lead our discussion. She suggested that we might also want to read the companion play by the same author, *What Would Crazy Horse Do?*

The November discussion will be on Monday evening, November 8. In November, December and January, we will meet, via Zoom, at 7:00 p.m.

—Lin Tollefsen ([ltollefsen11@gmail.com](mailto:ltollefsen11@gmail.com))  
& Jeanette Knapp ([jdk454@gmail.com](mailto:jdk454@gmail.com)),  
Book Group Co-Chairs

## Diversity, Equity & Inclusion

### Save Freedom to Read

[Banned Books Week](#) was this past week, October 5-11. The theme was “Censorship Is So 1984. Read for Your Rights.” The week concluded with *Let Freedom Read Day* on October 11. Banned Books Week reminds us how important libraries are in protecting intellectual freedom and our democracy, plus in providing access to a diversity of voices. A disproportionate number of book challenges continue to target works by Black, Indigenous, People of Color, and LGBTQIA+ authors, as well as their communities. Note that there is intersectionality across these identities.

[According to the American Library Association](#), *All Boys Aren't Blue* by George M. Martin was the most frequently challenged book in 2024. Meanwhile, PEN America reports that the most challenged book in the 2024-2025 school year was *A Clockwork Orange* by Antony Burgess. In an interview with [Newsweek](#), Stephen King said that he is the most banned author.

PEN America's [website](#) indicates that they have “documented nearly 23,000 book bans in public schools nationwide since 2021, a number never before seen in the life of any living American.” Wow. On Thursday, ABC News [mentioned PEN America's new report on the normalization of book banning](#) across the country--and interviewed George M. Martin.

Why mention a week that has already happened? The fight for the freedom to read continues on. Please urge Governor Hochul to sign the Freedom to Read Act without delay (she has until December). Here is the [contact form](#); or, call her office at 1-518-474-8390.

—Mary-Carol Lindbloom, DEI Chair  
[pleiades416@hotmail.com](mailto:pleiades416@hotmail.com)

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### Dates to Remember

**Monday, October 20, 1:30 p.m. Book Group** discusses *We Solve Murders* by Richard Osman at home of Phyllis Rappaport, 30 Horizon Drive

**Friday, Oct. 31 • 1:00 p.m.** • Campus Climate Solutions & Sustainability • Ithaca College, Room 202, Park Center for Business & Sustainable Enterprise

**Monday, Nov. 8 • 7:00 p.m.** via Zoom • **Book Group** discusses *The Thanksgiving Play* by Larissa FastHorse

**Monday, Nov. 17 • 7:00 p.m.** via Zoom • Child Care Today: What it Means to Be a Working Parent in a Child-Care Desert

## Education & Equity in Action

Great news! The Ithaca Branch of AAUW Scholarship for a student at Tompkins Cortland Community College was awarded to Brandi Henry for the Fall Semester 2025.

Brandi Henry will be joining us for our Saturday, December 13, Holiday Program. We can learn about her education and career goals during the program and lunch.

Brandi wrote a wonderful thank you note to the TC3 Research Foundation Staff that was shared with us: *"Wow, I'm truly honored to have been selected for this scholarship. This scholarship is going to help with my commute cost, as well as give me a little more time to postpone seeking employment, being able to focus strictly on my schooling. I can't express how extremely grateful I am for this scholarship, it truly is a blessing. Thank you from the bottom of my heart."*

I would like to thank all the members who have consistently donated to the scholarship fund over the years. Your donations have made a significant difference in the lives of the TC3 students who have been awarded the branch scholarships since the Fall 2019 Semester.

## Gender Pay Gap Widens

Recently AAUW CEO Gloria Blackwell announced, "For the second year in a row, census data shows the gender pay gap is widening—proof that inequities in the workplace are not going away on their own. Yet instead of addressing this crisis, this administration is doing the opposite: systematically dismantling the very protections meant to ensure workplace equity.

"Women are being told, in no uncertain terms that their rights and opportunities are expendable. Please use your voice and energy to combat this downward direction for all women by speaking up and encouraging young women to take AAUW's Start Smart and other Virtual Economic Empowerment Trainings.

## By-Laws Revisions Approved

The revised by-laws of the Ithaca Branch of AAUW have been unanimously approved by the branch membership. Thank you for your vote.

—Kim Edgar, AAUW Funds Chair  
kimberlysedgar@gmail.com

## AAUW Core Issues

### Championing Education for All

We work to break down barriers in education by advocating for Title XI enforcement, equitable school policies, and inclusive learning environments where all students can succeed.

### Advancing Economic Security

AAUW fights for fair pay, paid leave, affordable child care and access to higher-paying careers so women can achieve lasting economic stability and upward mobility.

### Protecting Civil Rights & Social Justice

We defend civil rights through policy advocacy and legal action that promote equity, end discrimination, and ensure all women can participate in society.

[AAUW.org](https://www.aauw.org)

[aauwnys.org](https://aauwnys.org)

[ithaca-ny.aauw.net](https://ithaca-ny.aauw.net)

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

Instagram: [@aauw.ithaca](https://www.instagram.com/aauw.ithaca)