

Branching Out

Mission: Advancing equity for women and girls through advocacy, education, and research

Des Moines Branch to Host Program on the Reckless Gun Rights Amendment

In November, there will be a gun rights amendment to the Iowa Constitution on the ballot. This amendment has been described as reckless by the Iowans for Responsible Gun Laws coalition, of which AAUW Iowa is a member. We want to inform our members about this dangerous amendment and ask them to vote NO in November. The program will be on Zoom, and is scheduled for 7:00 p.m. All AAUW members in Iowa will be invited to participate. We hope to have a presentation by the leadership of Iowans for Responsible Gun Laws during this program. The gun rights amendment is dangerous, because it adds the words “strict scrutiny” when it refers to gun rights. The effect of this language is to tip the balance for gun rights above considerations of public health and safety. The program will prepare members to discuss the issue with family and friends. Please mark your calendars and join in in September. A link will be sent closer to that date.

September 13 was the original date for our next “antique quest” similar to one that we did last year at the Brass Armadillo. Informing everyone about the gun rights amendment is important, so we gave it priority. Expect another antique quest opportunity in the spring.

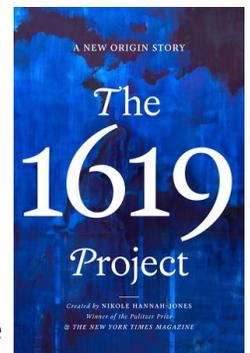
AAUW DM to host 1619 Project Study

At the annual meeting, there was a general consensus that there was sufficient interest in *The 1619 Project* by Pulitzer Prize author Nikole Hannah-Jones to move forward. We plan to begin that study in January. We will use zoom and invite members of other branches to participate. We will be using the book version of this work, rather than the shorter series of articles from the New York Times.

The following zoom dates have been confirmed by AAUW Iowa web technician Lois Enger. All meetings are scheduled for 7:00 p.m.

- Jan 3 – Ground rules and preface. See ground rules used by Grand View University.
- Jan 10 Chapters 1-2
- Jan 17 Chapters 3-4
- Jan 24 Chapters 5-6
- Jan 31 Chapters 7-8
- Feb 7 Ch 9-10
- Feb 14 Ch 11-12
- Feb 21 Ch 13-14
- Feb 28 Ch 15-16
- Mar 7 Ch 17-18

Please mark your calendar, and invite your friends to participate as well. A zoom link will be sent closer to these dates.



Writer Mary Helen Stefaniak at Beaverdale Books in November

Mary Helen Stefaniak lives in Iowa City, and is a member of the eNetwork branch of AAUW. She presented breakout sessions about one of her books at the AAUW Iowa spring conference last April. That book, *The World of Pondsides*, is a high-tech thriller set in a nursing home. Her newest book, *The Six Minute Memoir: Fifty-five Short Essays on Life*, will be

published in October. Mary Helen will do a “Meet the Author” event at Beaverdale books, 2629 Beaver Avenue, Des Moines, on November 2nd at 6:30.

Members are invited to meet her for dinner at Christopher’s at 5:00, and then go to the book event at Beaverdale Books at 6:30.



AAUW and Women's Health Care

Following the recent reversal of Roe v. Wade by the United States Supreme Court, several states are moving toward increasing restrictions on women's rights for reproductive health care. Iowa Governor Kim Reynolds has already spoken about her opposition to abortion. If there are activities at the state level to further restrict choices, our branch intends to express support for women's choices. Please keep in touch with branch leadership on this issue. In the meantime, members are encouraged to attend rallies and write letters to the editor.

Interfaith Alliance Award Celebration

The Interfaith Alliance of Iowa will have their annual award celebration on August 29 at the Meadows Event Center in Altoona. There will be a reception at 5:45 and a dinner and program at 6:45. The cost for an individual in-person reservation is \$125. You may also attend virtually on YouTube. The keynote speaker is Deborah Turner, MD, JD. Faith and Freedom award recipients are Gavy Smith, March for Our Lives Iowa, and Senator Sarah Trone Garriott. More information is available at www.interfaithallianceiowa.org/.

Branch Holiday Tea at Sharon Gee's Home

Sharon Gee will host a holiday tea at her home on December 10 from 2:00—4:00. Members are encouraged to come with an appetizer or sweet treat. Sharon lives at 4323 Grand Avenue, Apt 427. Please park in the back. There is an intercom in the breezeway of the building. Contact Sharon from the breezeway, and she will buzz you into the building. Call Sharon with questions at 515-274-8156.

Spring Activities

Our original idea was to have an antique quest activity at the Brass Armadillo in September, and tour the Pappajohn Sculpture Garden in October. With a dangerous gun rights amendment on the ballot in November and a possible attack on women's reproductive health care coming soon, it appears that our time will be better spent addressing these issues. In the spring, possibilities include an antique quest at the Brass Armadillo, a trip to Reiman Gardens in Ames, and the Pappajohn Sculpture Garden.

Renew Branch Membership Now

Annual dues for regular AAUW members is \$67, plus \$10 for state dues, and \$10 for branch dues. \$3 of the national dues goes to the AAUW Action Fund's lobby corps and get out the vote activities. This portion of your dues is not tax deductible, but the other \$64 is tax deductible as a charitable contribution. If you would like to renew your dues online, it is possible to do that through the AAUW membership hub. Ann Gale has done this and promises that it worked, and she received an email receipt quickly.

Many of you will prefer to handle this through the US Mail. In that case, please send your check to treasurer Janet Pickerell, 915 NW Prairie Ridge Dr, Ankeny, IA 50023-1548. Janet can be reached for questions at jmpickerell49@gmail.com or (515) 210-3222.

Lifetime members of AAUW include those who paid extra for this status, and those who have been members for 50 years. We congratulate all of them and thank them for their years of advocacy. Lifetime members are not required to pay dues.

Virginia Naney, 1932-2022

Virginia Naney was originally from Ottumwa. She graduated from Iowa State Teachers' College (now UNI) in 1953. She taught kindergarten in Cedar Rapids and 1st grade in West Des Moines. She had several children and grand children. She died on June 9, 2022 in Des Moines. Virginia was a member of the Des Moines branch of AAUW in the past.



Annual Meeting Held June 15

The Annual Meeting was held on June 15. Current officers were re-elected, so our officers for 2022-23 are Ann Gale, President; Joanne Page, Membership Vice President; and Janet Pickerell, Treasurer.

Jean Williams Lifetime Member

Jean Williams reached a milestone of 50 years of membership this year. Jean, thank you for your advocacy for women and girls.