

### President's Message

#### OFFICERS AND COMMITTEE CHAIRS

President, Rose-Linda Baldwin; Co-Presidents-elect/ Programs, Phyllis Driver and Bari Gerbig; Secretary, Judy Anold-Rogers, CU Relations, Anne Loy; Treasurer, Patty McGrew; Membership/ Diversity, Oladayo Bello; Bylaws/ Policies, Judy Poulson; Public Relations, Janet Murray; Public Policy, Linda Murawski; Website, Cindy Serbin; Newsletter, Sherry Scott

#### What Is Your History?

March is **Women's History Month**, and I'd like for you to think of your own history. Do you remember a woman who influenced you or an earlier generation of the women in their time? Have you researched the activities she participated in that were seminal to her peers?

Make sure your family knows their history of these fabulous females. We don't want our personal history lost to future generations. Vague stories told over the kitchen table can be lost in the hectic pace of our unsettling times. I urge each of you to write these stories or use our wonderful technology to tell these histories to the future.

March has also been AAUW's traditional time to go to Nashville and approach our legislators with our concerns face-to-face. This year we are doing a virtual **Women On The Hill** meeting with members of the Banking and Consumer Affairs Committees on **March 8**. Although this is a restricted format, it is still a good way to present AAUW's interests in bills now in motion.

When we receive the registration link for this event, it will be sent to all Branch members to sign up as participants. Let's hear what our legislators have to say and let them hear our concerns.

While our Branch is still meeting remotely now, hopefully by May, we will be able to meet in person safely. Until then, be well and get vaccinated.

Rose-Linda

**Dr. Joanne Logan**, who spoke about climate change at our January meeting recommends this book for further reading: *The Thinking Person's Guide to Climate Change* 2<sup>nd</sup> edition by Robert Henson. She says that her students have found to be very readable.



#### AAUW Vote to Change Membership Rule

A proposal is before AAUW membership to drop the college degree requirement. Voting begins April 7. See page 5 for details.



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## March 20<sup>th</sup> Membership Meeting

“Our Heroes: The Women behind the Manhattan Project in Oak Ridge”

Richard Cook has written an oral history of Oak Ridge titled *Ignored Heroes of World War II: The Manhattan Project Workers of Oak Ridge, Tennessee*. Cook has lived in Oak Ridge since 2000. His wife was born and raised in Oak Ridge. He wrote an opinion column for *The Oak Ridger* from 2003-2005. He has written over 160 op/ed columns which have appeared in *The Oak Ridger*, *The Oak Ridge Observer*, *The Knoxville News-Sentinel* and *The Tennessean* website. His book has been profiled on WBIR, WATE and PBS. He was interviewed on PBS in Japan in August of 2020 for the 75th anniversary of the bombing of Hiroshima.



Richard Cook

In 2016 Cook was an advocate for Manhattan Project workers from Oak Ridge to be included on *Honor Air* flights from Knoxville to Washington D.C. To date, seven Manhattan Project workers have taken the trip.

He also urged local and state leaders to nominate Manhattan Project photographer Ed Westcott for the Presidential Medal of Freedom. Members of the Tennessee delegation submitted the nomination to the White House in 2017.

A quote from Wesley Pruden, editor of *The Washington Times*:

*Hiroshima and the men who conceived the bomb, put it together and dropped it, is a story that has been told many times in books and movies and news accounts, but the story of the men and women — and mostly women — who manufactured the pieces has largely gone untold. Until now. Richard Cook, a Tennessean, has lovingly put together their story, told in the words of their oral histories, in a handsome book with dozens of photographs collected from official archives only recently available.*



### Share Your Ideas With Us

Word of mouth is a great way to recruit new AAUW members. We'd like to grow with your help.

In March you'll be getting a short AAUW Member Recruitment Survey in your email from us. Please give the questions some thought and return it as soon as possible.

*Bari Gerbig & Oladayo Bello*

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# AAUW

Knoxville (TN) Branch

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## Our Members



Barbara LeFevre

### Thank You, Barbara!

**Barbara LeFevre** recently resigned as our branch Secretary. She has been a member since 2017 and served as Secretary since July 2020.

We appreciate your work taking Minutes for Board and Member Meetings!



### Welcome Judy!

**Judy Arnold-Rogers** is our new branch Secretary. She has been a member since 1993 and was President 2002-2004.

Thank you, Judy, for stepping up to fill this office!

## Notice of AAUW Dues Increase

As approved by our National Board of Directors in October 2020, our annual dues will go up by \$3 for our next Fiscal Year (FY) 2022. This will make our upcoming renewing dues in June:

- \$62 for National
- \$12 for Tennessee State
- \$13 for Knoxville Branch
- Total of \$87

Current Life Members will not be affected by this change. All but \$3 of the National portion of dues remains tax deductible.

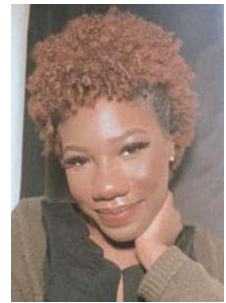
## College and University Activity

Congratulations to two more NCCWSL winners! AAUW-TN had budgeted for a live conference in 2021. When it became a virtual format, more funds were available for additional scholarships. Tennessee branches were encouraged to nominate other young women, and two nominated by AAUW-Knoxville were chosen.

**Jessie Li** and **Gianna Noel** will be featured in the May/June newsletter.



**Jessie Li** is a Sophomore Chemical and Biomolecular Engineering major.



**Gianna Noel** is a Senior Architecture Major.



YWCA Knoxville will dedicate 21 days in March to learning and building more effective social justice habits, particularly those dealing with issues of race, power, privilege, and leadership!

AAUW-Knoxville proudly announces it is partnering with YWCA in this project. More information is available at [YWCA Great Race](#)

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## *Public Policy 2021*

### **AAUW National Agenda**

AAUW has worked for decades to enact the *Paycheck Fairness Act*, which would update the Equal Pay Act of 1963 and give us important tools to close the pervasive pay gap. The House of Representatives passed the legislation with bipartisan support during the 116th Congress, but it stalled in the Senate. This year, both chambers must act to send this critical bill to President Biden's desk, so it can finally become federal law.

The **Paycheck Fairness Act** would:

- Prohibit employers from relying on salary history to set wages.
- Close loopholes that have weakened the law over time to allow employers to justify paying workers unfairly.
- Create more robust remedies for those who have suffered discrimination.
- Prevent employers from retaliating against workers who discuss or disclose their wages.
- Provide much needed training and technical assistance, as well as data collection and research.

**Your elected officials need to hear from you today about this important bill. Tell them to co-sponsor and quickly pass the Paycheck Fairness Act once it is reintroduced in this Congress.**

### **Tennessee 112<sup>th</sup> General Assembly**

- The Tennessee General Assembly (TGA) is a bicameral system - two assemblies comprised of 33 Senators (4-year terms) and 99 Representatives (2-year terms)
- Both assemblies have a Speaker. In the Senate that is Lt. Governor Randy McNally In the House it is Cameron Sexton
- The Republican Senate Leader is Jack Johnson
- The Democratic Senate Leader is Jeff Yarbro
- The Republican house leader is William Lamberth
- The Democrat House leader is Karen Camper
- Tennessee is a trifecta state meaning the Governor and Both Assemblies are the same party

**Did you know? Redistricting will take place as a result of the 2020 census. We will be working in conjunction with the TN LWV on the TN Project on Redistricting.**

*Linda Murawski, Public Policy Chair*

You can join the virtual "Women On The Hill" on Monday, March 8. These and other issues will be discussed with TN Legislators. Watch your email for the link to the session.



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## *Proposed Change to AAUW Membership*

*Voting begins April 7      Make Your Opinion Count!*

AAUW's annual election will start on April 7. Included in the vote is a proposal to open membership, which requires a change to AAUW's national bylaws through member vote.

### **How Might This Bylaw Change Affect My Branch?**

It will help protect the future of AAUW by opening up opportunities for funding. Because our current educational degree requirement can be deemed discriminatory and not in keeping with our mission, some foundations and corporations will not donate to our organization since it is counter to their criteria of equity. This disadvantage, along with the now 400-plus organizations competing with AAUW on women's equity issues for funding, greatly affects National's ability to get much needed funding. Declining membership, now at 50,000, only provides 15-20% of the annual budget. This is not enough to support branch and member services.

It will make it easier for your branch to recruit a more diverse membership, including those who did not have the opportunity to attend college 30, 40 or 50 years ago. In addition to possibly increasing membership, these new members may bring new energy and viewpoints critical to your branch's ability to meet the needs of your community through our mission. It will also remove the embarrassing situations when you must tell someone they do not qualify, such as a government official, a non-profit leader or even a Tech Trek parent. Remember, Eleanor Roosevelt and Lily Ledbetter would not qualify for AAUW membership with our current educational requirement.

It will update the relevance and image of your branch as the world reckons with inequality and systemic racism, much of which disproportionately affects women. It might open up more opportunities for collaboration. Having a limiting membership requirement can be considered discriminatory and off putting to other local like-minded groups. When speaking at community functions, it demeans the branch to say that not everyone can be a member.

It will no longer limit your membership by penalizing women who cannot attain a degree due to today's skyrocketing educational costs, childcare, elder care, transportation, working multiple jobs and language barriers. Today, there are more alternatives to college degrees which have burdened women with two-thirds of the national college debt. With more careers open to women, i.e., firefighters, pilots, entrepreneurs, artists, politicians, manufacturers, retail managers, and more, your branch may have the potential for a variety of new members.

### **What Won't Change If This Passes?**

It will not affect AAUW's status as one of the leaders in graduate grants and fellowships. Due to the generosity of our members, our fellowships and grants are fully endowed and will continue in perpetuity.

It will not affect the name – AAUW. Like the YWCA and NAACP, much of the original meanings are no longer accurate. For example, we are international, not just American. We have been open to individuals with associate degrees, not just degrees from universities, since 2005 and open to men since 1987.

**It will not affect the honor of having earned a degree in times when so few women attained this achievement. Today, with women outpacing men in earning all degrees for decades, we can proud that we were instrumental in breaking down the barriers for women who followed us.**

It will not affect the uniqueness of AAUW. Its uniqueness is its breadth of programming, research, policy, advocacy, fellowships and grants, and grassroots membership.

It will not change your branch's involvement in local scholarships or interest groups.

It will not change the mission of the branch. Mission is not determined by a degree, but a belief in and dedication to equality for women.



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It will not attract a large number of younger members which numerous national studies show Millennial and Generation Z women and men prefer projects and not membership programs.

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