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President’s Message



Mary Williams
President
AAUW Washington
president@aauw-wa.org

How could I have nothing to say when it’s the time of year when we’re supposed to be our most philosophical and profound? When I sat down to write this and realized that I’ve spent more time in the past year facing down writer’s block than I have in the past 50 years put together, I thought that I would make a short and sweet message my holiday gift to you. I could just get to the point, wish you a happy holiday season – whatever that means to you – and be done with it. Then, I realized that this is also supposed to be my new year – new beginnings message, and the words began to flow.

Here are my top 5 wishes for 2022:

1. I really hope that we finally get this IRS mess under control and start fresh for the first time in more than a decade. That work has to be our primary focus



this year, so if you have any knowledge or expertise in this area, I'd love to hear from you!

2. I hope we will find another topic as interesting as health care access for women and try offering a second year of mission-based webinars. Our first year was really successful, so I hope we can do it again.
3. I hope that we will remember how well offering some of our statewide programs on a virtual platform worked. Obviously, we all want nothing more than for this virus to disappear as suddenly as it arrived. While I know we are all eager to be able to get together again, I hope we won't forget how good we've gotten at virtual meetings and webinars. Now that we have been forced to develop our technology skills, I hope we'll continue to use these tools to be more inclusive and include all our members no matter far apart we live. Many of our state-wide activities like Lobby Day and our Summer Leadership Meeting work so well virtually (and are so much less expensive to produce) that I hope we can continue to do that.
4. I wish more of you would step up and volunteer in some capacity. Our branches, our state board, and our auxiliary organizations (Tech Trek, SPF, etc.) need your time and talents as much or more than we need your financial support. I kind of hate the phrase "teamwork makes the dream work." The first time I heard it, I thought it was cute and clever. Now, having heard it an additional 50,000+ times, it's pretty trite. That doesn't mean it isn't true. We have had an amazing board this year, and for most of the year the board has been full. Several "retired" state leaders have also been willing to step up and bring their expertise to some of our more important issues. Over the past couple of months, I've appointed several committees to address some of our more perplexing problems. I have been continually impressed with how engaged our board is. They are always willing to go the extra mile. I hope they will inspire some of you to take on a leadership role.
5. This year, I hope we can improve our external marketing. I know I've said this before, but I think it's worth repeating. The excellence of our communications team is the key to our success. We work better together when we communicate more. The monthly EL, the outstanding weekly Legislative Updates (during session), and our monthly president's meetings have all greatly improved our ability to communicate with each other. Now I would like to figure out how we get better at letting the rest of the world know what a great group we are and what good work we do.

Well, so much for brevity. I do, however, want to return to my original idea:

HAPPY HOLIDAYS!

State News

Public Policy

Sandra Ripley Distelhorst
Public Policy Director
AAUW-Washington
publicpolicy@aauw-wa.org

Here are some Save the Dates:

January 5th registration opens for Lobby Day which is Monday, January 24th, ~ 9 am to 12:30 pm. The registration fee is \$15.

January 5th, 5 - 6 pm. **Keep Our Care Act** event – a panel discussion facilitated by ACLU-WA and co-hosted by AAUW-WA.

January 24th, **AAUW-WA Lobby Day.**

Week of January 24th – meet with your legislators.

Check our website for registration links and updates. Sign up for the Legislative Update if you haven't already. E-mail legupdate@aauw-wa.org and ask to be added to the list.

Your Branch represents AAUW-WA

22 of our 49 Washington State legislative districts include only one AAUW-WA Branch. We need you on Lobby Day! Many of our legislators, especially the ones sponsoring bills we are supporting, are looking forward to meeting with you. They are expecting your email or phone call to schedule a meeting. Let me know if you want a copy of your legislators' profile and voting record so you can thank them for their support on one of our bills from last session or find a common area of interest to talk about.

Partners wanted for Lobby Day!

While 22 of our legislative districts include only one branch, all but two of our branches have members living in more than one district. When members of more than one branch live in a legislative district, we consider you "partner branches" for representational purposes. I hope you will work with your Branch Partner(s) to set up a joint meeting the week of January 24th. Let me know if you need help getting started. See our Public Policy webpage for a list of Branch Partners or email publicpolicy@aauw-wa.org.

Virtual Advocacy

Looking for tips on Virtual Advocacy? Check out the narrated Slide Deck *AAUW-WA Legislative Advocacy*. The three 15-minute sessions include a great refresher course on *How a Bill Becomes*

a Law. You can customize the presentation and get ideas from the script in the note sections. Email publicpolicy@aauw-wa.org for more information.

What's happening on Lobby Day

Our Lobbyist, Nancy Sapiro, will provide an update on the coming 2022 session. A panel of branch Public Policy leaders will discuss the bills we are supporting for Lobby Day – and provide talking points for you to use when you meet with your legislators. We will also share some success stories of our visits last session and invite you to share your success stories. Please send me your stories! We will hear from experts about several bills such as Keep Our Care Act (hospital mergers) and Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women. We won't have a final list of bills or speakers until after January 5th. This short session starts January 10th and we anticipate some good bills will be introduced at the beginning of the session that we will need national to vet before we can support them.

Reference materials including the final list of bills and talking points will be sent out the week before Lobby Day.

Hope you all have a great winter holiday!

Keep Our Care Act

Sandra Ripley Distelhorst
Public Policy Director
AAUW-Washington
publicpolicy@aauw-wa.org

Last session we supported SB5335, Keep Our Care Act (the “hospital merger bill”). It didn't even make it to a public hearing. This year, AAUW-WA is part of the Keep Our Care Act (KOCA) coalition. A huge amount of work has gone into making sure this bill will move forward in 2022. The goal of the bill is to make sure mergers do not increase costs or diminish quality and types of services provided.

In Washington, we have been fortunate to have had access to the full range of reproductive, end-of-life, and gender affirming health care services thanks to previous supportive legislation. However, even with these legislative protections, health entity consolidations in Washington have resulted in material reductions in services. Learn more about this on January 5th.

We really need your help to make sure this bill passes in 2022. We are looking for members who want to write letters to the editor, submit comments, or testify. Training will be provided by ACLU-WA. I hope you can join us on January 5th at 5 pm to learn more about the bill and this critically important issue. More information will be available soon, but for now, please SAVE THE DATE.

*Diversity, Equity and Inclusion:
the key word is **ACTION***

Yvonne Berliner
Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) Officer
AAUW-Washington
diversity@aauw-wa.org

Last month, November 2021, we observed Native American Heritage Month in the U.S. As reported in an earlier Evergreen Leader Article, this has inspired several WA branches to invite tribal members to speak on indigenous history, rights and equity issues. In addition, the AAUW-WA state board has been discussing land acknowledgments, where a speaker says the names of the local tribes on whose land the meeting or event is being held.

Is this enough? No, it is just a first step to create awareness in our branches. We need to be informed and educated, but the key word here is ACTION. What will we do with this knowledge? If the first step is educating AAUW-WA branch members about local Indian tribes and women's issues within them, what action will follow to make AAUW a truly inclusive women's organization? These dynamic next steps are essential toward allyship and inclusion and this is where AAUW is providing powerful [tools for branches](#).

To find out some concrete ways for branches to act, I contacted several tribal members. The consensus is that land acknowledgments have become rote, performative and mostly meaningless. The mention of "this meeting is taking place on Spokane tribal land" creates awareness, but the next step is for the branch to take action. Here are some ideas that branches have shared and tribal members have suggested: fundraising towards scholarships for tribal women to finish college; offering to send indigenous girls to Tech Trek Camp; food for Native American homeless people in your city; lobbying local legislators to pass Washington HB1571, a bill concerning protections and services for indigenous persons who are missing, murdered, or survivors of human trafficking; but most importantly, volunteering time/talents to a project that the tribes want. "Nothing About Us Without Us" is an old slogan denoting respect and inclusion when seeking allyship and supporting others. As author and change catalyst [Vernā Myers](#) said: "Diversity is being invited to the party, and inclusion is being asked to dance." "Belonging is choosing the music" was added at a recent AAUW National DEI meeting.

Please do share your experiences in the Evergreen Leader, so we can all learn and grow together.

Plans for the Annual Meeting

Karen Anderson
Programs Director
AAUW-Washington
programs@aauw-wa.org

As we wind up our health webinars and work to develop public policy agendas that derive from them, we are also looking forward to the AAUW-WA annual conference on Saturday, April 9, 2022. The primary focus of that meeting will be strengthening public education while making it more equitable for girls, students of color, and LGBTQ students. To that end, we have invited nationally recognized education journalist Jennifer Berkshire to serve as our keynote speaker. She will be supplemented by education experts from the state of Washington, who will reflect on her message and discuss what Washington needs as it reacts to the problems created by the pandemic and as it moves to improve schools generally.

Berkshire is the co-author, with Jack Schneider, of *A Wolf at the Schoolhouse Door: The Dismantling of Public Education*, a very important book on current school politics. She is also the co-host and co-producer of *Have You Heard*, a monthly podcast on education issues. Her articles and interviews on the debate over the future of public education have appeared in *Salon*, the *Washington Post*, the *Baffler*, the *Progressive* and on EduShyster.com, a blog that she created.

Obviously, Berkshire is a major author/expert on a significant topic central to the AAUW mission. Her message is new to many and highlights problems that will require innovative policy approaches. Citizen awareness is crucial if we are to avoid the pitfalls that Berkshire and Schneider document and analyze.

To help our members familiarize themselves with the issues she will address, we will be organizing a statewide book group meeting in late March focused on *A Wolf at the Schoolhouse Door*. Alternatively, you can center a branch book group meeting on her work.

We will provide further information on the April meeting and on the statewide book group at a future date.

In the meantime, please look for updates on our Lobby Day speakers and topics and on how to engage effectively in online meetings with legislators, which will be available soon.

All AAUW-WA programming will be held virtually until it is safe to meet in person. At that point, we hope to have a hybrid virtual and in person model.

It is impossible for me to overstate my gratitude to our members statewide, who have been so instrumental in the success of our virtual meetings. Without you, none of this is possible. THANK YOU!

AAUW: Its History and Legacies

Karen Anderson
Programs Director
AAUW-Washington
programs@aauw-wa.org

In 1881 a group of young college educated women joined together to form the Association of Collegiate Alumnae, later renamed the American Association of University Women (AAUW). They did so in order to dispel stereotypes about educated women and to improve women's opportunities for advanced education. They also wanted to ensure that women received workplace opportunities appropriate for their education and skills. At the time, popular and so-called scientific opinion held that women lacked the intelligence, vigor, and temperaments to pursue advanced education or to assume leadership in public life. Moreover, many Americans believed that women went to college not to pursue knowledge, but to pursue immoral relationships with men. Clearly, the ACA/AAUW faced substantial challenges.

It would be wonderful to report that our organization had by 2021 achieved all its goals. Clearly, that is not the case. It is useful, however, to examine AAUW's strategies, successes, and failures in order to celebrate our collective achievements and learn from our setbacks. Such a review also illuminates the ongoing policies and practices that characterize the modern AAUW.

In the early years, the ACA was based on strong friendships, shared concern about the detrimental effects of sex discrimination on women and on society, and on self-interest. In short, AAUW reflected the priorities, values, and contributions of its members. As broadly educated women, its leaders and members had a strong faith in the utility of scientific studies to dispel stereotypes and in the need for strong ties to other women's organizations to advance a shared agenda.

The admission of women to higher education had provoked a firestorm of criticism. One of the most notable opponents of women's education was Harvard Medical School professor Edward Y. Clarke. In 1873 he published *Sex in Education: Or a Fair Chance for the Girls*, an evidence free polemic that received widespread attention. He predicted reproductive disorders, sterility, poor health, insanity, and even death for women who ignored his warnings against the pursuit of higher education. So, what did the ACA do? In 1885 it published a scientific study which concluded that "...it is sufficient to say that female graduates...do not seem to show, ...any marked difference in general health [from] the average health ... of women engaged in other kinds of work, or in fact, of women generally...."

At present, AAUW continues its research focus on girls and women in education. AAUW has produced milestones in the documentation of issues central to this cause. In 1993 it published a study of sexual harassment in the schools entitled *Hostile Hallways: The AAUW Survey on Sexual Harassment in America's Schools*. A 1992 study of the differential treatment of girls and boys in America's classrooms, *How Schools Shortchange Girls*, generated widespread comment and

efforts at change. Today, sexual harassment remains a focus, given the rise of bullying in the schools, much of it focused on gender and sexual identity. Finally, AAUW remains committed to the goal of ending the epidemic of sexual violence on America's college campuses.

Because so many colleges and universities in the United States discriminated against women in admissions, especially at the graduate and professional levels, the ACA began raising funds for scholarships for women to attend European universities in order to receive advanced training. Scholarships remain a crucial priority for AAUW, whose branches raise large amounts of money to support college scholarships for young women and whose national scholarships support advanced training for American and international students attending American universities. At present, AAUW raises more funds for women college students than any other organization. In the state of Washington, AAUW has implemented and funded a highly successful program of STEM camps for middle school girls to support its efforts to prepare them for higher paying careers and to increase the influence of women in STEM fields.

Over time, AAUW has worked with other groups to eliminate discrimination against women in education at all levels and in America's workplaces. Indeed, it issued its first report about the pay gap between women and men in 1894! In the modern era, AAUW's lobbying and legislative efforts have enabled the passage of important milestones for women, from the 1963 Equal Pay Act (which took 17 years to pass) to Title IX, which prohibits sex discrimination in higher education, to the Lily Ledbetter Act of 2009. The latter reversed a Supreme Court decision that started the legal clock on pay discrimination with the first discriminatory paycheck instead of with the last one. That decision made it all but impossible for women to prove sex discrimination in pay. Because employers work so hard to hide discriminatory wage scales and to obstruct women's efforts to seek redress to inequitable pay, further legislation, including the Paycheck Fairness Act, remain important to AAUW, its state organizations, and other feminist organizations. Moreover, they have faced staunch opposition as employer organizations like the U.S. Chamber of Commerce have worked hard for a very long time to lobby and litigate against women's ability to address sex discrimination in hiring, promotion, and pay.

AAUW has achieved its greatest successes when it worked to build coalitions with other groups in order to pass legislation that makes it harder for institutions to discriminate and when it has issued reports that educators and other institutional leaders take seriously. Its goals have been most hampered by the opposition of business and other groups opposed to government regulation of employers' personnel and other practices and by the difficulty of achieving systematic change without substantial levels of voluntary compliance with laws against discrimination. The focus on laws has sometimes come at the expense of other forms of institutional pressure to treat girls and women fairly.

I am proud to be a member of AAUW and to support its continuing efforts to secure equal opportunity and equitable treatment in all institutions and endeavors. Please let us know your priorities and ideas for our organization and join me by giving generously of your time and money so that together we can work successfully to make the future brighter for women and girls in the state of Washington and the nation.

*Qualified Charitable Donations
From Your Retirement Funds*

Karen Manelis
Tech Trek Washington Director
AAUW-Washington
techtrek@aauuw-wa.org

Did you know that you can reduce your taxable income by making a Qualified Charitable Donation (QCD) from your retirement funds (such as IRAs and 401Ks) including your Required Minimum Distribution (RMD) from those funds? If you designate retirement funds to go directly to a charitable organization (such as AAUW Funds or AAUW WA SPF, for Tech Trek) this distribution can be excluded from taxable income! Here are the steps to take

1. Notify your financial planner or the administrator of your retirement funds that you want to make a QCD distribution.
2. Provide the administrator with the following information: Full name and address of the charity/charities you wish to donate to (include their tax ID number if available; AAUW-WA SPF Tax ID number is 68-0463071).

With the increase in the standard deduction, itemizing deductions is no longer an option for many of us, thus we lose the charitable deduction amount. By doing a QCD, although you cannot deduct the donation as an itemized deduction, you don't have to pay any tax on that distribution.

A true WIN:WIN situation.

Branch Events

Educational Resources on Toxic Cosmetics



Marianne North
Co-Vice President of Programs
AAUW Edmonds SnoKing Branch
aauwprogramvp@gmail.com

Educational Resources on Toxic Cosmetics

Women, and especially women of color, are more adversely affected by the endocrine disruptors present in many personal care products.

“The products we use every day on our bodies...should be as well-regulated as the food we eat. Toxic ingredients and contaminants in cosmetics and other personal care products like shampoo and conditioner, deodorant, makeup, baby powder, vaginal douches, lotion, body sprays and perfumes, and hair dyes and straighteners have been linked to ovarian cancer, breast cancer, early onset of puberty, fibroids and endometriosis, miscarriage, poor maternal and infant health outcomes, diabetes and obesity, and more,” according to the National Women’s Health Network (see their website at [Personal Care Products | National Women's Health Network \(nwhn.org\)](https://www.nwhn.org/Personal-Care-Products))

Learn more about these toxic elements by taking the Endocrine Disruptors seminar offered by AAUW Edmonds SnoKing and Seattle Branches starting January 11. Taught by environmental scientist Dr. Fran Solomon, the on-line course will describe what these toxic elements are, how

they affect our bodies, and what we can do to protect ourselves and our families from them. The on-line seminar is open to all including high school and college students for whom scholarships will be available based on need. **A recording of the Seminar will be available to registrants unable to attend at the times scheduled.** For more information and to register, download the flyer at [Fran-Solomon-seminar \(aauw.net\)](http://Fran-Solomon-seminar(aauw.net))

There are several Washington State and national bills in process about toxic chemicals in cosmetics and personal care products. Visit the AAUW ESK website Public Policy page to read about these bills: [AAUW Public Policy | Edmonds SnoKing \(WA\) Branch](#)

Socially Conscious Investing

Marianne North
Co-Vice President of Programs
AAUW Seattle Branch
aauwprogramvp@gmail.com

Socially Conscious Investing is the featured topic in Money Matters, an AAUW Seattle on-line seminar January 26, 7:30-8:30 p.m.

How to select investments that are beneficial for women, the environment, and other concerns will be discussed as part of a monthly seminar focusing on topics to enhance women's economic security, led by AAUW Seattle Member and financial planner Dana Twight. Topics are driven by participants.

For more information and to register go to:

[Money Matters - AAUW Seattle Seminar | What's New | What's New | American Association of University Women - Seattle Branch \(aauw-seattle.org\)](#)

Free and open to AAUW members and nonmembers

Zero Waste Washington



Geri Carlson
Co-Vice President of Programs
AAUW Issaquah Branch
programs@aauw-issaquah.org

AAUW Issaquah January Branch meeting
Saturday, January 8th, 10:00 am

Please join us on Saturday, January 8th as Heather Trim, Executive Director, Zero Waste Washington, gives an overview of their work to drive policy change for a healthy and waste free world. Zero Waste Washington works towards a just, equitable and sustainable future through their publications, legislative work, waste summits and Zero Waste Hackathon. More information can be found on their website: www.zerowastewashington.org.

Heather joined Zero Waste Washington in 2016. Prior to Zero Waste Washington, Heather has been active in zero waste issues, including helping lead the Seattle bag campaign and helping get the ban on Styrofoam service ware products passed. Previously, Heather was Director of Science and Policy at Futurewise, focusing on habitat, shoreline, stormwater and other issues related to land use. Heather earned a BS in geology from Yale University and a PhD from UCLA in geochemistry.

There will be a branch business meeting after the presentation.

If you wish to join us, please contact the branch at admin@aauw-issaquah.org to receive the Zoom meeting information.

General Information

Publishing Schedule

The next issue will be published on Saturday, January 15, 2022. Articles submitted for publications are due by Saturday, January 8, 2022. Please send the articles to Mary Williams at president@aauw-wa.org, Judy Peasley at communications@aauw-wa.org, and/or Melinda Hearsey at evergreenleader@aauw-wa.org.