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January, 2025



Lobby Day is January 27



The "Evergreen Leader" Newsletter

Hello Mary!

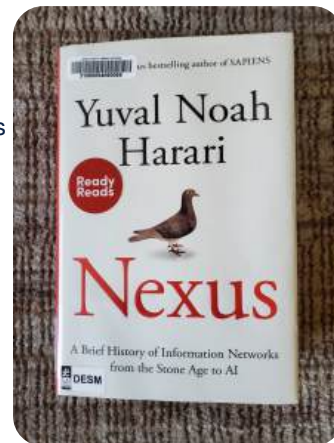
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Emily Hitchens
president@aauw-wa.org

As I write this letter, I am listening to the news about the fires in California. This morning my daughter called, and a family friend had to evacuate her family at 3:30 a.m. to escape to her office in downtown L.A. I am glad that our Public Policy Team analyzed our state ballot climate initiative, I-2117, as an issue that affects woman. To me, climate change is the concept that explains this fire situation and scientific research suggests strategies for dealing with these effects.



I like having some sort of conceptual framework that helps explain ideas. Before the November election, I joined a virtual group, "Fridays at Four," started by a couple from Oregon to support each other and to write letters. I had written letters before for "Vote Forward," but this time the letters were to be personalized, and we were asked to speak of issues from our point of view and experience. I wrote 160 letters on the topics of the

environment and gender-nonconforming. Now the group is focused on democracy.

I am currently reading the latest book by historian and philosopher, Yuval Noah Harari, *Nexus: A Brief History of Information Networks from the Stone Age to AI*. I like his discussion of democracy in chapter 5. For example, “. . . democracy doesn’t mean majority rule, it means freedom and equality for all. Democracy is a system that guarantees everyone certain liberties, which even the majority cannot take away.” (page 124)

However, the majority do decide major policies such as foreign affairs, defense, education, and taxation. This is why it is important to vote. What the majority do not decide is human rights and civil rights. Human rights include the right to life, the right to work, right to privacy, freedom of movement and freedom of religion to name a few. People can live their lives as they choose if they do not harm others. Civil rights include the right to vote, freedom of the press, academic freedom and freedom of assembly. These rights allow the opposition to challenge the government; it is a self-correcting mechanism, limiting the power of the central government. Civil rights also require a duty to act on citizens’ behalf. So, I am challenged to think about how to analyze upcoming legislation, melding it with our national organization’s goal and priorities.

Consider joining our [Public Policy Team \(publicpolicy@aauw-wa.org\)](mailto:publicpolicy@aauw-wa.org), participating in Lobby Day on January 27, and contacting your legislators.

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National AAUW just released the draft 2025-2027 Public Policy Principles and Priorities. [Click here](#) to review the proposed changes. All members have until January 31 to comment. All members can vote to approve or reject the final version in April. Please let me know if you have any questions or want to participate in the AAUW-WA Public Policy Team review and comment process, publicpolicy@aauw-wa.org.

What's changed? The new document is shorter with a more straightforward format. The principles have narrowed, but still cover familiar areas: Education, Economic Security, and Social Justice. The 2025-2027 federal priorities have been strategically trimmed down to only one: Higher Education (our original priority way back in 1881). There are lots of reasons for this pullback, including anticipation of funding cuts and policy changes by the Trump Administration and the 119th Congress.

States can develop their own state level priorities to reflect state politics. In Washington, we have a Democratic trifecta (one of [15 Democratic trifectas](#)) so we face different challenges than states with a Republican trifecta (23 states) and different challenges than national. Our state public policy priorities are a critical tool we use to review and vet local bills and policies for support during the session, on Lobby Day, and throughout the year in our advocacy efforts.

So far, for the 2025 session, over 300 bills have been pre-filed (there are often over 1,000 bills introduced during the session and last year about one-third of the bills passed). Many of these bills fall under the broad umbrella of our public policy priorities but don’t get flagged for support. Here is an example of how bills related to [education](#) and [economic security](#) might fall under the AAUW-WA broad umbrella. The policy team reviews the list of bills, in consultation with our legislative consultants and trusted allies, to determine which bills to consider for support and which bills to feature on Lobby Day. Bill titles can be deceptive, bills may have too high a “cost” (fiscal note), bills may touch on a key area but not be well-written or timely. Knowing who are the sponsors, who opposes the bill, who are the stakeholders, can help us better understand a bill’s intent and how likely it is to move through the process to a vote.

What bills are your legislators sponsoring? Is there a bill you think AAUW-WA should support? Oppose? Here is a [link](#) to see what bills your legislators are sponsoring in 2025. Be sure to let your legislator know if you like a bill they are sponsoring or if you don't like it. If you have an idea for a bill, share that too! Share your personal or community story related to your request for a new policy or funding. Here is a [link to the legislator roster](#) with the email and phone numbers for legislators and their staff. Be sure to ask your branch public policy leader to send your legislators our AAUW Lobby Day list of bills and/or set up meetings with your legislators during Lobby Week to talk about AAUW priority issues.

Join us on Lobby Day ([register here](#)) to learn more about how to effectively advocate for AAUW issues in 2025. On Lobby Day, you will hear from Nancy Sapiro, our legislative consultant, about what is happening in Olympia (also sign up for [This Week in Olympia](#)). We will talk about the **BUDGET** deficit and what we can do to make sure budget cuts don't hurt the programs that women rely on. We will hear from the [LGBTQ Commission](#) about their advocacy work and the bills they are supporting. We will hear about the challenges in health care ([access](#), [affordability](#)) for Washingtonians.

Sandra Distelhorst
publicpolicy@aauw-wa.org

Comment Now on Proposed Changes to National Dues, Bylaws, and Public Policy Priorities

Barbara Sando, Bylaws Chair, bylaws@aauw-wa.org

As you may have seen in a recent email from National ("Dues Change and Governance Proposals"), AAUW is proposing changes to dues, bylaws, and public policy priorities at the national level. Although it's the national board which votes on dues changes, the membership votes on changes to bylaws and public policy priorities, and members can make comments on all three of the proposed changes between now and the end of the comment period on January 29 at 5 p.m. EST. As usual, the voting period will begin in April.

No worries if you can't find the e-mail. Here are the links to review and comment on proposed changes in each area:

- [Click here](#) to review and comment on the proposed bylaws amendments.
- [Click here](#) to review and comment on the proposed changes to the Public Policy Priorities.
- [Click here](#) to review and comment on the proposed changes to membership dues.

If you have questions, please review the [FAQ](#) or email AAUW Managing Director and Chief of Staff, Shannon Wolfe, at wolfes@aauw.org.

We encourage all members to review the proposed changes online and submit any comments they may wish to make for consideration by AAUW National.

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Jodi Forsell
programs@aauw-wa.org

**Want to get informed and stay engaged?
Join us on Lobby Day, Monday, January 27, 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.**

We will be hearing from our legislative consultant Nancy Sapiro, and from Mia Shigemura, Senior Policy Analyst with [Washington State Budget and Policy Center](#)

Also, we will have a speaker from the [WA State LGBTQ Commission](#) with information about what their commission is currently working on, how they work and how we may collaborate with them in their work.

We are still lining up a speaker to talk to us about health care in WA State

Via Zoom, [register for this free event using this link.](#)



We continue our "Fireside Chats" on February 19.
The topic is **Fundraising.**

Does your branch currently have a successful fundraiser? What tools do you use to sell tickets, advertise, and reach out for sponsors? Come chat, share ideas, or get ideas on how to get started.

Wednesday, February 19, 7 p.m.

Via Zoom, [register using this link.](#)



Do you want to learn how to use [Canva](#) to create visual products such as website images, social media posts, flyers, and fundraising tools for your branch?

Using Canva, you have a choice of a Free or a Pro account. (See [Canva Free Versus Pro: What's the Difference?](#))

Register now for one of the online workshops (via Zoom) presented by the AAUW-WA Communications Team. These workshops are free and registration is limited. (Workshops will be repeated in the spring.)

Getting Started: Using a Free Canva Account (two sessions, same content)

Sunday, February 9, 6-7:30 p.m.

Use this link to register: https://us06web.zoom.us/meeting/register/th9ZrSH1TYiJj00kRY5u_A

Wednesday, February 12, 7-8:30 p.m.

Use this link to register: <https://us06web.zoom.us/meeting/register/mW2v4I-9RZSE7XtKud76Aw>

Learn the basics of Canva—creating a design; sizing; adding text, logos, and other images; using the basic library of elements and templates; creating a simple brand kit, saving to a folder; and downloading your image.

Pre-requisite: Having a free Canva account.

Class Project: Creating a Zoom background for your branch

Moving On Up: The Canva Pro Account

Wednesday, February 26, 7:30-9 p.m.

Use this link to register: <https://us06web.zoom.us/meeting/register/uyobpb4CSA2jA1yIf-uQqw>

Explore the added features of a Canva Pro account: an expanded library of elements and templates, Brand Kits, Magic Resize, Background Remove, using Template Link to share an image.

Pre-requisite: Experience with the basic tools in Canva. Having a Canva Pro account is not required.

Class project: Creating an event announcement for your branch

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Jeanne Nygard
membership@aauw-wa.org

January is when we make new resolutions and set goals. According to the [2025 Statista Poll](#), the most popular New Year's resolutions in the U.S. for 2025 are to save more money (21%), exercise more (17%) and eat healthier (19%).

As you might have gathered from some of my columns, I like quotes – bits of wisdom or fun that I can remember. Instead of making the average type of resolutions (e.g. add number of members by June) for our Branch's Membership Development, I would like to share a bit of wisdom from the American Cartoonist, Lynda Barry.

“No matter what, expect the unexpected. And whenever possible BE the unexpected.”
– Lynda Barry

Let's expect the unexpected as we go forward with our AAUW Branch plans and events for membership development. Let's be open to the new, the odd, the surprises we might encounter this year.

Please join us February 10, 2025, at 1:30 p.m. for our State Membership Zoom Meeting. Our topic for discussion will be —

Where to Go to Attract New Members – Events and Places

We are meeting the second Monday of each month at 1:30 pm. The Zoom link is always in our AAUW-WA Calendar.

Join Zoom Meeting
<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/81312331083?pwd=ZE9qTXdXblJyQUI4S0FOK3hmaEZTQT09>

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On a sad note: we gain new members as we lose them; the cycle of life. Let us celebrate all of our members.

RIP: **KLARAS DIETMEIER IHNKEN**

By Kay McMurry

AAUW-WA and the Hudson's Bay Branch lost a leader this month. Klaras (Kdi) Ihnken, state president (1978-1979) and co-founder of Hudson's Bay Branch (in the mid 1980s) suffered a stroke late in December. She did not survive, passing on January 5. She was 91 years old.

Born in Minneapolis, MN, she lived for a time in Helena, MT (her favorite city) before moving with her parents and brothers to Vancouver, WA. Klaras' early education was at Providence Academy in Vancouver. She earned degrees at four higher education institutions: Clark College in Vancouver, the University of Oregon, Radcliffe (because Harvard would not accept female students in the 1950s), and the University of Portland, OR. She worked for thirty years as a math teacher and then as a high school administrator in the Battle Ground School District, Clark County, WA.

Marianne Craft Norton (state president, 1973-1977) recruited Klaras and others to be VoL T trainers in an AAUW-WA program designed to train community group leaders in leadership skills. After she retired, Klaras served as a board member for the Fort Vancouver Regional Library. She taught Art Literacy at her parish school, Our Lady of Lourdes in Vancouver. She joined AAUW in 1966 and was recognized as an honorary life member in 2016.

Klaras and her husband Ernie raised two daughters, Kathleen and Patricia. They welcomed one grandson, Patrick.

Always an independent thinker, in her branch autobiography Klaras declared that ice cream and coffee were "necessary for her continuing existence." She would go out to eat anytime. Her interests were varied – "Why was the male of the species called a Renaissance man but the woman a gadfly? C'est la vie!" She enjoyed reading histories, biographies and mysteries (often reading the end of a fiction book before she finished reading all of it to find out what would happen).

During her last years she lived in a memory care unit in Vancouver while her husband Ernie lived in an assisted living unit at the same facility. When his health permitted, he visited her every afternoon. Ernie passed in August, 2024. A Mass will be celebrated for both of them on Friday, January 31, 2025, 11 a.m. at Our Lady of Lourdes Church in Vancouver.

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Dear Washington State AAUW Members,

Join us for the next **Branch Development** Peer Group meeting on Tuesday, January 28, 2025, at 7 pm. We will be presenting Part 1 of a two-part series on attracting and leading volunteers, called “**Volunteers First: A Cutting-Edge Training Program** for Leaders of Volunteers.” This program is listed on the [WA state calendar](#).

This is a follow-up to last year’s three-part series “Engaging the Head, Hearts and Hands of Volunteers,” with Barry Altland. If you did not attend the series or wish to review any part, the recordings are available [HERE](#).

In keeping with AAUW’s long and successful tradition of measuring the success of our AAUW programs, we are asking attendees to take a short survey before the January 28 peer group meeting. The survey is available [HERE](#).

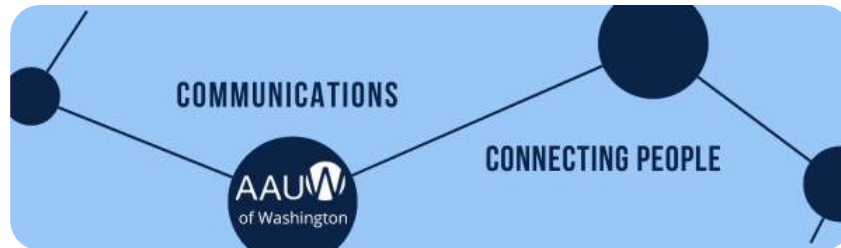
“Volunteers First” is a program that AAUW leaders will likely want to try, implementing in your own way and style. Having a baseline will give you (and us) a quick and easy way to measure any of the Volunteers First leadership practices that touch your head, heart and hand. Should your successes be significant, and we are sure they will be, we want to use the results to help other AAUW branches grow.

Be sure to click [HERE](#) to **register for the January 28** Branch Development Peer Group meeting.

We hope to see all of you on January 28!

Beckie Gomez & Sigrid Moranz, co-directors, Branch Development
branch-development@aauw-ca.org

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AAUW branches in WA State with WordPress websites on the national AAUW web server have had a “theme refresh.” See the [AAUW-WA website](#) for an example of the refresh.

Communications Team member Leslie Roubal has created a webpage in the Member Center called [Branch Web Help](#). Check there for some documentation, a YouTube video produced by AAUW of California, and who to contact for help.

Registration is now open for the Canva workshops hosted by the Communications Team. See the list of workshops and registration links in this newsletter.

This first series of workshops is in February and will be repeated in the spring.

Mary Ross
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Nancy Sapiro on **Important Washington State Issues**
February 15, 10 a.m. Free on Zoom. <https://us06web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZEvcuevpjkjEtdYjN3xt38oFZ2UYnIHTxZ1S>

Seattle Branch Program. Other branches and guests welcome.

Our AAUW Washington State Lobbyist, Nancy Sapiro, will speak to us on pending legislation and other relevant political issues. Don't miss this informative presentation.

Nancy Sapiro is an attorney and contract lobbyist. She has represented AAUW in Olympia since 2012. She specializes in health care, including reproductive health and end of life care, civil rights, economic and social justice, promoting policies that support working families, and civic engagement. More information <https://aauw-seattle.org/calendar/filter-by/event/217/2025/02/15>

Tonna Kutner



Editor's Ramblings

Happy New Year everyone! My January began with a series of **scam emails** sent to branch board members requesting money to reimburse a member for program expenses. It was rather well written and generally used member names the correct way. The members involved were panicked to say the least. AI and sophisticated website scrubbers now enable scammers to carry out scams that are fooling over 50% of users. An alarming number.

So, what to do to **protect** yourself:

- Check the from (sender's) email address - is really from the member
- Does the request make sense - why does she need a gift card
- Do we carry out business this way (how we pay our bills)
- Even with AI, check the language and syntax
- Never Never respond (reply) to the email
- Pick up the phone and call the sender to double check - good excuse to visit
- If you must respond, start a new email to the sender with the sender's real address

Stay safe out there - Judi Edwards, CCP, MBA

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Calendar and Upcoming Events **AAUW-WA State Calendar**

The official calendar for AAUW-WA can be found on our website at:

<https://aauw-wa.aauw.net/activities-information/calendar>

If you wish to have a branch event added to the calendar, please send event details to communications@aauw-wa.org

You can also use the template provided in this [Branch Sharing Form](#).

Newsletter Publishing Schedule

Please send articles and images for the state newsletter to Judi Edwards at evergreenleader@aauw-wa.org by the 8th of each month. Evergreen Leader issues are published on the 15th of each month.

The newsletter will be reviewed by our AAUW-WA President, Emily Hitchens, before publishing - and as always, available on our website [AAUW-WA State](#)

- Please send photos separately - do not embed them in your document
- Please use MS Word format; Font: Calibri size 12
- Articles with images, limit to 450 words; without images, limit to 550 words

We are hoping that most articles can meet these guidelines. If you have a special article that exceeds this limit, we understand, but ask that you do your best to limit the article length.

**Remember that written permission for publishing is required from any person shown in a photo that is published. The branch or officer submitting the photo is responsible for getting and keeping the signatures of the people granting permission to publish.



Together we can achieve a vision
of equal opportunity for all

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