



## Message from the Interim Administrator

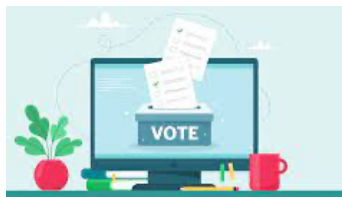
By Carolyn MacRae

### Wow! Our new state structure is working!

We're six months in with our new state structure. The Council meets every two or three months, via Zoom, for an hour and a half. Gone are the days of long drives and longer meetings. The meetings are productive and discussions stay on topic. Council members keep in mind our charge to act as a resource and provide help and support to Maine's branches.

All three standing committees – communications, membership, and program and public policy – are also meeting regularly, also via Zoom. Committees are comprised of the committee chair, who is a member of the Council, and at least one member from each branch. Committee members are getting to know each other and learning more about the other branches. They have broken through the barrier of “the way we’ve always done things.” The ideas and suggestions are positive, imaginative, and workable. And best of all, each committee’s recommendations come from their combined knowledge of the strengths and needs of all our branches. It does my heart good to see such enthusiasm and creative ideas bubbling up and bodes well for AAUW’s future in Maine.

If you are interested in serving on one of these committees now or in the future, contact me at [carolynmacrae@gmail.com](mailto:carolynmacrae@gmail.com).



## Spring Elections

We will be holding AAUW of Maine Council elections in May 2024 and announcing the election results at our annual convention (May 31-June 1). The Council has five elected positions. Terms are for two years, with three

positions being filled in even years and two positions being filled in odd years. This year, we will be electing a Council Administrator, Membership Chair, and Communications Chair.

The first step is to form a Nominating Committee, which shall be comprised of one member from each branch. Nominating Committee members serve for one year and meetings will be held via Zoom. As a group, this committee is well placed to identify members from among all the branches who would be a good fit for these positions. If you would like to serve on this year’s Nominating Committee, please let your branch leader know.

A call for nominations will officially begin on March 31, and the slate of officers will be sent to all members by April 30.

If you have questions or want more information, please contact [carolynmacrae@gmail.com](mailto:carolynmacrae@gmail.com).

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## State Membership Increases

By Membership Chair Betty-Jane Meader

According to the figures submitted by Angela “Angie” Cooper from National AAUW on January 10, 2024, the number of AAUW members in Maine has increased to 109. That number represents the addition of 10 members since the last report.

The number of college/university members remains at seven: Colby College, Northern Maine Community College, Southern Maine Community College, Thomas College, University of Maine, University of Maine at Augusta and University of Southern Maine. The new representative at USM is Gina Guadagnino.

As the AAUW of Maine Membership Committee chair, I am hopeful the number will increase again. If each branch member convinces a friend/acquaintance to join AAUW, membership will double!

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## News from the Program and Public Policy Committee

By Beth Clark, Chair

The Program and Public Policy (PPP) Committee members have been busy making plans for the State Convention. Members include: Mary Cathcart from Penobscot Valley, Judy Fuller from Hancock County, Jackie Kulik from Waterville, and Debbie Melvin from Aroostook. The State Council has approved the theme of Women's Rights for the Conference. The aim is to celebrate the 100th anniversary of the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA), support its re-submission to the U.S. Congress, and to consider how the 2024 election may impact the rights of women.

Convention dates chosen are May 31-June 1 and the location is the Hilton Garden Inn in Bangor. Committee members are in the process of choosing speakers who will support the theme and inspire members to action.

We are resurrecting some of the past traditions of the organization. One is to have a statewide book and include a discussion of the book at some point during the convention. Our selection is *Your Voice, Your Vote* (2020-21 edition): *The Savvy Woman's Guide to Politics, Power, and the Change We Need* by Martha Burk (<https://www.marthaburk.org>).

"Part primer, part call to arms." —*The Washington Post*

**YOUR VOICE  
YOUR  
VOTE**

★ ★ 2020–21 EDITION ★ ★

The Savvy Woman's Guide  
to Politics, Power, and the  
Change We Need

MARTHA BURK, PHD

A MS.  
MAGAZINE  
SELECTION

It covers a variety of topics related to women's rights. Members can read cover to cover, chose selected chapters of interest, or spread the reading among branch members. The book is available on Amazon for \$17.99 for paperback and \$12.99 kindle.

The committee also proposed bringing back the Unsung Hero Award. We will be sending out criteria after our February meeting. Branches should begin to think about a present or former member who has gone above and beyond to support the goals of AAUW and taken action to help raise the status of girls and/or women. We hope to have at least one nomination from each branch.

On the public policy front, there are several things members can do to support the public policy priorities of AAUW. **One is to become a Two-Minute Activist.** You will receive email alerts when an important AAUW priority issue comes up and can quickly take action. You can tailor your notifications to your preferred issues. Those who have used this resource found it easy and helpful. You can sign up at:

<https://www.aauw.org/act/two-minute-activist/>.

**Support is also needed for the Equal Rights Amendment** to become a valid part of constitutions at both the federal and state level. U. S. Congresswoman Ayanna Pressley (MA-07) introduced Res #25 on January 21st 2023 with 133 co-sponsors. In the Maine 23-24 legislative session, Lois Reckitt introduced LD 1412. You can find more information and sign up at: <https://www.equalrightsmaine.org/maine-state-era>

**You can also share your thought with your state and national legislators.** Ayanna Pressley's press conference in Washington, on December 13, 2023, can be viewed at:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2uEqBE1nD2M>.

This 25-minute video includes speeches by many women's organizations including AAUW's Gloria Blackwell. Gloria will also be speaking before Congress on March 11, 2024.

Another issue to discuss with your state and national legislators is women's pay inequities and **Equal Pay Day 2024 which is March 12, 2024.** AAUW National has not yet updated their site from 2023 but more information can be obtained about the March 12th and other Equal Pay Days at: <https://www.equalpaytoday.org/who-we-are>

**Have you completed the 2023 legislative survey for your state senator or representative?** You can find your senator at: <https://www.mainesenate.org/2023Survey/>. For the representative it may be found on the individual representative's web site or latest mailing.

The next PPP Committee meeting will be held on February 23, at 1:00 pm. Please share any ideas, feedback, or concerns with your branch representative, or you can contact me at: [clarkbeth100@gmail.com](mailto:clarkbeth100@gmail.com).

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## Report from the Communications Committee

By Martha Arterberry, Chair

The inaugural Communications Committee includes Martha Arterberry (Chair), Mary Ayers (Aroostook Branch), Judy Dinmore (Waterville Branch), Susan Landry (Penobscot Valley Branch), and Kristin Sweeney (Waterville Branch). The goal of the Communications Committee is to facilitate communication among AAUW of Maine members.

Typical communications are invitations to attend events and programs, distribution of the *Dawnbreaker*, announcements of events or initiatives from other organizations whose topics align with AAUW priorities, resources of potential interest to members, and the like. The Committee also maintains the AAUW of Maine website and manages the Zoom account.

**Requests to send emails to all AAUW of Maine members** should be sent to: [aauwofmaine@gmail.com](mailto:aauwofmaine@gmail.com). In your message, **please add a name and email address of at least one contact person** in case recipients would like more information. Similarly, additions or changes to the AAUW of Maine website may be sent to: [aauwofmaine@gmail.com](mailto:aauwofmaine@gmail.com).

AAUW of Maine also has a **subscription for Zoom**. We encourage all branches to make use of this account. We hope to train at least two people per branch on how to use this Zoom account. In the meantime, requests to set up a meeting may be sent to Martha Arterberry ([Arterberry47@gmail.com](mailto:Arterberry47@gmail.com)).

We are considering other ways to reach new members including **social media**. If anyone would like to help us with that initiative, we welcome your expertise.

### Recorded Programs

On the **AAUW of Maine website, under events**, you will find two recordings of recent programs. One by Lydia Moland is about the life of Lydia Maria Child, an early American abolitionist, and one by Anne Gass is about four women who made a cross-country road trip in 1915 for the cause of women's suffrage. See: <https://aauw-me.aauw.net/events/>.

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[2024 Maine NEW Leadership application](#)

## Finance Report

By Helene Maraghy, Treasurer

In May 2023 the Maine AAUW finances included four Certificates of Deposit which were opened in 2009. The current value of the CDs totaled \$10,793 with each earning anywhere from 0.35% to as little as 0.15% interest rate. Total interest gained in the first five months of 2023 for all four was a "grand" total of \$8.29.

Subsequently, at the end of May \$10,000 was deposited into a new one-year CD at a rate of 4.745%. As of December 31, the total yield to date on that certificate was \$281.54.

The original face value of the four CDs is unknown, but we might assume they started at \$2,000 each. Considering the elapsed time of 14 years since origin, our investment did not yield much of a return over that period. Assuming rates continue to stay high, the rate of return on the new CD should more than exceed the gains of the old deposits by mid 2025.

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## News from Your Editor

By Kristin Sweeney

### Maine lost two stalwart advocates for women's rights in late 2023.

- **SHARON BARKER**, a former member of the Penobscot Valley Branch: [Bangor Daily News obituary](#).
- **LOIS RECKITT**, one of the founders of the Maine Women's Lobby: [Portland Press Herald obituary](#).

### Timeline from the Maine Department of Labor for Paid Family Medical Leave (PFML),

signed into law in Maine on July 11, 2023. Beginning in 2026, eligible workers in the private and public sector will have 12 weeks of paid time off available to them for family or medical reasons including illness, to care for a relative, or for the birth of a child.

- PFML Program Established: October 25, 2023
- Authority Appointed: January 1, 2024
- Rulemaking begins: Spring 2024
- Payroll contributions begin: January 1, 2025
- Benefits begin: May 1, 2026

**Women in Iceland Go on Strike Against Gender Inequality (October 2023)**

- [The New York Times article.](#)
- And yet, Iceland had the best overall score in the [Global Gender Gap Report 2023](#) from the World Economic Forum.

**Pay Gap for Women in New York City Is Unchanged Since 2007, Study Says** (and has declined slightly since 1997)

- [The New York Times article](#)
- *Closing the Gender Pay Gap: Why Pay Equity has Stalled in New York City and the Urgent Need for Action* (November 1, 2023): [The study.](#)

**50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary!** Maine ratified the federal Equal Rights Amendment on January 19, 1974, one of 38 states to have done so.

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**Branching Out: News from Our Branches**

**Aroostook Branch**  
By Carol Pierson, Secretary

Our last meeting for 2023 took place in October with a Zoom meeting featuring Tom Cote, a local woodcarver. Tom’s presentation started with his stories of his mother, also a woodcarver, and the unique wood carvings she created. He then showed us many of his own creations which focus on the northern Maine Acadian culture and animals such as bears and horses.

Our branch plans to sponsor two girls in the 12–14-year-old range to attend a STEM summer program at the Maine School of Science and Mathematics in Limestone. Other girls we have sponsored have given us enthusiastic stories about their summer STEM school experiences.

We do not meet in the winter months, but look forward to our 2024 programs, some of which include an update on the plans to develop the Caribou waterfront and an August meeting that will deal with immigration issues.

Five of our members will be meeting to discuss what we will do to celebrate the 50th anniversary of our branch. That celebration will take place during our October

meeting. We are all really excited about putting this 50-year celebration together!

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**Penobscot Valley Branch**  
by Susan Landry, Secretary

We held a program meeting on December 6 featuring Destie Hohman Sprague, Executive Director of the Maine Women’s Lobby (MWL), who filled us in on successes of the past legislative session and priorities for advocacy in the upcoming session.

For our next program we will piggyback on the UMaine Fogler Library “Salon Series” on March 19. This hybrid presentation (attend in person or by Zoom) is entitled *From Surviving to Thriving: Ensuring that We Support the Whole International Student*. The speaker is Dr. Rajika Bhandari, an international higher education expert and author of the award-winning memoir *America Calling: A Foreign Student in a Country of Possibility*. She’ll share her personal and professional insights on attracting international students, aligning their needs with campus diversity and inclusion efforts, and positioning them for success.

We proudly note that Dr. Bhandari shares frequently that an AAUW international fellowship was instrumental in her completing her graduate studies in the U.S. Once again, all AAUW of Maine members are invited to join us; those who miss it can access the recording through the Fogler Library website.

Pizza and Politics met by Zoom in September, October, and November; we’re resuming in January with plenty to discuss. Coordinator Susan Wishkoski points out that our democracy has survived many challenges in the past (Vietnam, assassinations, Watergate, 9/11 ... ), and that by remaining alert, informed, and involved each of us can work to preserve our way of life despite apprehensions about the current political landscape.

We look forward to selecting at least one non-traditional student to receive our scholarship and we hope to host that woman at our annual meeting in late spring – with any luck in person! – to hear her story and her post-graduation plans. It’s always inspirational to meet our scholarship recipients and gratifying to know we’ve helped in a small way as they reach their goals.

A joint committee has been formed at UMaine to administer both the Maryann Hartman and Maine Women’s Hall of Fame awards, with presentations in the spring. Keep an eye out for announcements about these!

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## Waterville Branch

By Martha Arterberry and Kristin Sweeney

HAPPY ANNIVERSARY! 2024 marks the 100th anniversary of the founding of the Waterville Branch. On February 9, 1914, the branch was founded due to the forward thinking and efforts of Nunetta May Runnals, Dean of Women and Professor of Mathematics at Colby College. (More about Professor Runnals [here](#).)

In addition, Sam Eddy (Colby '13) has done research in Colby Special Collections and shared her [work](#) with Cathy Bevier.

We started our year-long celebration by looking back on the last 100 years and conducting history harvest in January 2024. The Colby archives contains a wealth of information about the branch, in addition to other allied initiatives such as the Waterville Women's Association, and we made a call for members to bring items to enhance this rich collection.

Branch member Beth Clark spent considerable time among the archives and delivered a superb oral review of our interests and activities over the century at our hybrid branch meeting on January 17, 2024 at the Colby Miller Library. Beth, a relatively new member, noted that she recognized the names of many current branch members over recent decades.

The Waterville Branch also held its annual holiday auction in December 2023, and we raised a record-breaking \$1850. This is our main fundraiser of the year and we donate most of the proceeds to national AAUW. Thanks to all who participated!

## IMPORTANT DATES

- March 8, 2024 International Women's Day
- March 12, 2024 Equal Pay Day
- March 14, 2024 AAUW of Maine Council meeting (virtual)
- May 30 – June 1 NCCWSL (National Conference for College Women Student Leaders), University of Maryland
- May 30 – June 4 Maine NEW Leadership
- May 31, 2024 AAUW of Maine Council meeting (hybrid)
- May 31 – June 1 AAUW of Maine Annual Convention Hilton Garden Inn Bangor

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