



FINAL MINUTES

Wheaton-Glen Ellyn AAUW Board Meeting

February 10, 2021

IN ATTENDANCE (via Zoom which was recorded): Donna Jean Simon, Maureen Sheehan, Frankie Robinson, Tracy Kline, Nancy Possinger, Ewa Bacon, Mary Sue Brown, Fran Kravitz, Susan Levy-Creed, Kathleen McCullough, Carolyn Oesterle, Jane Palmer, Patricia Spence, and Patricia Bernhold

CALL TO ORDER

Co-President Donna Jean Simon called the meeting to order at 7:05 p.m.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Carolyn Oesterle moved to approve the January 2021 Board minutes as written. Patricia Spence seconded the motion, and the motion passed unanimously.

OFFICER AND CHAIR REPORTS

Membership Co-Vice President Nancy Possinger shared that Ruth Fink-Winter's membership renewal brought total Branch membership to 112 members. She also stated that she and Co-Vice President Jean Lindsey reached out to two prospective members who were in attendance at the January Branch meeting. One of the prospective members, Dee O'Neill, was especially complimentary about the Branch, but since she lives in Naperville, she reasoned that joining the Naperville-Lisle Branch made more sense for her. Co-Vice President Possinger provided the slate of candidates for consideration in the upcoming election- Co-Presidents: Mary Sue Brown and Carolyn Oesterle; Program Co-Vice Presidents: Peggy Connolly, Barbara Roos, Cindy Trennert-Lukens, and Kathy Wessel; Secretary: Lillian Sorensen. Carolyn Oesterle asked if all four Program Co-Vice Presidency candidates were elected, would they then all come to Board meetings. She opined that perhaps two of the Program Co-Vice Presidents could serve during the first year of the term, and the other two could serve during the second year of the term. Membership Co-Vice President Possinger stated that this issue needs to be resolved sooner rather than later given that the election is next month. Several members suggested that the Membership Co-Vice Presidents and/or Co-Presidents talk to the four Program candidates

regarding how they were planning on dividing the duties of this role. Jane Palmer wondered if anyone had checked the by-laws regarding situations of this type. She also added that this position has existed in Committee format in the past. Co-Vice President Possinger shared that the four candidates felt that they would work well together. Susan Levy-Creed stated that if the by-laws prohibit four Co-Vice Presidents, perhaps, two of the candidates could serve as co-chairs, and two could serve on the committee. She also expressed concern about the effects that one position- comprised of four members- could have when the Board is voting on issues. Patricia Spence read from the by-laws regarding how two members can share duties of one office. Co-President Simon reiterated the value of and problem with continuity if four Co-Vice Presidents were to alternate attending meetings and tending to responsibilities. Jane moved that Membership Co-Vice Presidents Lindsey and Possinger resolve this issue with the by-laws and present a proposal to the Board in March. Carolyn opined that perhaps only two candidates could be elected and the other two would serve as committee members. Co-President Simon reminded members that only elected members serve on the Executive Committee. Membership Co-Vice President Possinger wondered if Branch by-laws would allow Program responsibilities to be performed by committee instead of Co-Vice Presidents. Co-President Simon suggested that Co-Vice Presidents Lindsey and Possinger discuss this issue in more detail and then work with Carolyn and Mary Sue in order to develop a plan in which the Program Co-Vice President candidates are contacted and a determination is made regarding which two women will be candidates for Program Co-Vice Presidents and which two women will serve as committee members. Jane withdrew her previous motion. Co-President Simon requested that the aforementioned determination be decided before the slate is officially identified prior to the election in March. Membership Co-Vice President Possinger shared that she and Patricia Spence had had a conversation about the manner in which votes would be cast in the election since it will occur via Zoom during the March Branch meeting. They suggested that members could submit their votes through the “chat” feature on Zoom. They also suggested that members at this Branch meeting engage in a “dry run” using the chat feature. Patricia Spence provided instructions regarding the use of this feature, and members then attempted to send Patricia Spence a message. Confusion and difficulties navigating this feature ensued as members attempted to use it. Co-President Simon reminded members that when members met for in-person elections, a voice vote of using “yeas” and “nays” was used. Therefore, she suggested that a voice vote be used on Zoom during the March election. Board members decided that this was a reasonable option. Membership Co-Vice President Possinger excused herself from the meeting in order to attend a previously scheduled event.

Treasurer Maureen Sheehan shared that there was not a lot of activity as of late. A late contribution of \$100 was credited to last year. A member donated \$200 to support LunaFest. The cost of a \$200 honorarium was incurred. Currently, the Branch’s balance is \$30,981. This is an increase of \$5,591 since July 1, 2020.

Program Vice President Frankie Robinson shared that 37 members were present at the beginning of the February Branch meeting at which guest speaker, Leslie Goddard, provided a presentation on women’s suffrage. She stated that the March Branch meeting will occur on Saturday, March 6th at 9:30 a.m. via Zoom. The guest speaker will be Jennifer Kelley who is a professor at College of DuPage and will provide a presentation on race and racism. The April

Branch meeting will be held on Wednesday, April 7th at 7:00 p.m. via Zoom. The guest speaker, Katie Slivovsky, will present on topics related to LGBTQ inclusivity. On May 1st, LunaFest will be held.

Book Sale Committee Chair Ewa Bacon shared that she would like to form a sub-committee which would focus on the development of plans related to a Virtual Book Sale and present the plans and ideas to the Board in March. Three possible plans of action are: 1) Members are asked to donate a prized book to raffle off at LunaFest; 2) A silent auction is held for the prized books; 3) Straight-forward donations are solicited via email from one of the following options: a) Branch members only; b) Branch members and book sale contacts; c) Branch members, book sale contacts, and LunaFest contacts. Book Sale Committee Chair Bacon requested that the following members serve on the sub-committee: Jane Palmer, Karen Bondy, Marilyn Mayer-Wiedemann, Jean Lindsey or Nancy Possinger, and Janet Arden or Donna Jean Simon. Book Sale Committee Chair Bacon asked if other members should serve on the sub-committee. Patricia Spence recommended Suzanne Gagner due the potential overlap between the Virtual Book Sale and LunaFest. There were some concerns expressed regarding the feasibility of a raffle format to raise money. Jane shared that the sub-committee would most likely consider a silent auction format instead of a raffle format. Fran Kravitz said that she would donate copies of *Women in Science*. Book Sale Committee Chair Ewa Bacon stated that she will also be proposing the idea of a “pop-up Book Sale” for the sub-committee’s consideration. Co-President Simon suggested that local schools be contacted to see if they would like to work with the Branch in the event the Branch conducts a pop-up Book Sale. Book Sale Committee Chair Bacon suggested that a vote be taken at the March Branch meeting regarding whether a Book Sale should be conducted or not.

Community Relations Committee Chair Mary Sue Brown reported that she is getting a list of contacts and materials ready for her successor.

Educational Opportunity Funds Chair Susan Levy-Creed reported that she received a letter from national thanking her for the Branch’s contribution to the Greatest Needs Fund. She will let members know about this letter in her report for *Twigs*. Educational Opportunity Funds Chair Levy-Creed shared that she has heard from the counselors at all four of the high schools with which the Branch works. She reported that the counselors are very grateful for the scholarships. Co-President Simon shared that as District Director, she heard that some Northern District Branches provide memberships to scholarship recipients. Educational Opportunity Funds Chair Levy-Creed shared that she currently provides information regarding AAUW and AAUW membership to the scholarship recipients. Jane reported that the by-laws allow the Branch to provide student memberships for \$5 each. Educational Opportunity Funds Chair Levy-Creed moved that two-year student memberships be provided to each of the Branch’s scholarship recipients. Patricia Spence seconded this motion, and the motion passed unanimously. Co-President Donna Jean said that she would follow-up with Jean and Nancy regarding this decision.

Fundraising Walk Chair Carolyn Oesterle reported that she has nothing new to report.

LunaFest Committee Chair Suzanne Gagner was not in attendance at the meeting. However, two members shared that they had just received an email from LunaFest Committee Chair Gagner's email account asking them to open a DropBox document. Mary Sue called LunaFest Committee Chair Gagner and learned that she had not sent such an email. It was suggested that Karen Bondy be notified so she could alert Branch members to not open an email from LunaFest Committee Chair Gagner.

Newsletter Editor Kathleen McCullough reminded members that she moved the deadline for submittals for the March issue of *Twigs* to February 12, 2021. She also reminded members to let her know if they are not going to submit an article for this month's *Twigs*.

Public Policy Chair Patricia Spence reported that the ERA is "alive and kicking" in the national legislature as evidenced by House Joint Resolution 17. Public Policy Chair Spence is hoping that AAUW will become more active regarding the promotion of the ERA. She also wondered if a mentoring system should be established for new members to inform them more thoroughly of issues related to public policy. Co-President Simon previously provided Public Policy Chair Spence with contact information for Angie Cooper who has been found to be a reliable source of information at national. In a conversation with Ms. Cooper, Public Policy Chair Spence confirmed that all members receive the following publications from national: *Mission and Action* and *Washington Update*. She feels that other publications from national are not branded well, and reported that Angie Cooper agreed with this assessment. Public Policy Spence reported that the initial letter that is sent to new members from national provides her with "common ground" from which she can go forward. In response to Public Policy Spence referencing a successor, several members expressed dismay due to the wonderful job that she does. Public Policy Chair Spence said that she thought that Claudia Finley might be interested in being the Public Policy Chair in the future. Overall, Public Policy Chair Spence is frustrated with AAUW's lack of focus on issues of long-term concern- like the ERA. Mary Sue commented that she feels that national needs to do more with connecting with members and reassessing the value of providing national officers with such high salaries.

STEM Coordinator Fran Kravitz shared that no events will be offered through Tech Savvy in 2021. There may be events in 2022. She also reported that three experiments have been prepared for distribution for Science Girls on the Go. The one that will be distributed soon is an experiment which involves Oobleck, which contains corn starch. The topic of the second experiment is a clock reaction, and it involves use of tincture of iodine and hydrogen peroxide. The third experiment focuses on the DNA of strawberries. STEM Coordinator Kravitz reported that she is thinking of developing a book contest for children who participate in Science Girls on the Go.

Website Chair Jane Palmer reported that she moved *Twigs* to the members-only page on the Branch website. She also removed any personal information from the public side of the website. Members were reminded that the password for the website is "twigs". Website Chair Palmer shared that she would like for this to be the last year that she serves as Website Chair but that she would still be available to train her successor. She reminded members that she has been the Website Chair for 15 years. Co-President Simon asked members if there were any

recommendations to take over the Website Chair position. Maureen said that she would talk to another member and then get back to Jane. Co-President Simon asked about the interest that new member, Tziporah Ladin-Gross, may have in this position. Fran said that she might be interested but that Tziporah is currently recovering from an accident. Someone will tell Donna Jennings to send a get-well card to Tziporah. Patricia Spence said that she could still manage the Branch's Facebook page.

NEW BUSINESS

Co-President Simon said that there will be an article in the March issue of *Twigs* that will outline the AAUW membership criteria change proposal. The article will emphasize the importance of members voting on this issue. Co-President Simon said that she wanted to include a statement from the Board regarding this issue. Co-President Simon and Patricia Spence shared that the proposal will state that a university degree will no longer be a requirement for AAUW membership. Instead membership criteria will include a belief in the mission of AAUW, a willingness to support AAUW, and payment of dues. Ewa shared that she is so outraged by this proposal that she will not vote on it. In Ewa's opinion, AAUW is moving away from education and toward work empowerment. Jane shared that she will be voting against the proposal. Ewa also shared that based on discussion during the January meeting, it is her understanding that AAUW is changing due to corporations finding their current membership criteria discriminatory. Patricia Spence shared that she feels that AAUW is trying to be more inclusive. Carolyn shared that she attended an AAUW webinar in which they explained that the proposal is reflective of an effort for the organization to become more inclusionary. Carolyn does not think that a change in membership criteria will change the character of the Branches. Ewa thought that if AAUW changes the membership criteria, they will need to change their name. Carolyn said that this issue was raised during the webinar, but it was "pushed to the side". Co-President Simon pointed out that many accomplished women did not attend college but under the current membership criteria would not be able to join AAUW. Fran opined that people who have not graduated from college could be granted "associate member" status until they earned a college degree. Since there was no consensus among Board members regarding this issue, there will not be a statement from the Board in *Twigs*. Co-President Simon stated that she and Co-President Arden are in favor of the proposal and will be stating as such in the upcoming issue of *Twigs*.

Patricia Spence moved to adjourn the meeting. Carolyn seconded the motion, and the motion was unanimously approved.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:45 p.m.

Next Board Meeting: March 10, 2021 at 7:00 p.m. via Zoom