

November 2020

NYS District 1

<https://aauwbuffalo.org>

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### DECEMBER ADVOCATE

The deadline for each issue of the Advocate is the 10th of the previous month. Submit articles to the editor:

[NEWSLETTER@AAUWBUFFALO.ORG](mailto:NEWSLETTER@AAUWBUFFALO.ORG) via email by November 10. Please be sure to put "AAUW Buffalo Advocate" in the subject line.



## So We Voted ... Now What?

DATE: Thursday, November 19, 2020

TIME: 7:00 p.m.

PLACE: Via Zoom

Co-sponsored with the

League of Women Voters of Buffalo/Niagara

### Panelists:

- Lee Coppola, dean (retired), St. Bonaventure University School of Journalism
- Peter Yacobucci, associate professor of Political Science, SUNY Buffalo State
- Robert J. McCarthy, political reporter, *The Buffalo News*

Who will be inaugurated on January 20, 2021? Will there be a peaceful and orderly transition of power? Which party will hold the majority in the House and the Senate? Is our nation in the throes of a constitutional crisis? Or has our noble experiment in democracy managed to withstand the challenges of recent months? Whatever happens in the November election, you won't want to miss this lively discussion!

RSVP by Monday, November 16, via email to [lwvbn@lwvbn.org](mailto:lwvbn@lwvbn.org).

**IMPORTANT:** The program is free, but you **MUST** provide your email address in order to receive Zoom participation instructions.

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## President's Message

*Laurie Eikemeyer*

### WHAT COMES NEXT?

**A**t the time of writing this message, we are only a few weeks away from the election. It has been a tumultuous year with the onset of a pandemic and another contentious presidential election on the horizon.

We have lived this year in isolation to reduce the spread of COVID-19. The pandemic has brought uncertainty and challenges. Depression and anxiety are up considerably as a result of stay-at-home orders, social distancing, and restriction of activities. Even now, parents struggle with the requirements for their children's safety and schooling under pandemic rules while managing their jobs. Unemployment in Buffalo was at 11.1% in August, having peaked in April 2020 at 19.5%. And the end is as yet unknown. How will we recover from this?

I have, over the years, come to dread election ads and endless campaign solicitations. In recent years I have found negative campaigning intolerable. As an information technology professional, I have watched social media become a test bed for ridiculous and offensive memes designed to sway the opinions of voters, forge distrust, and undermine our very democracy. In the Netflix documentary "The Social Dilemma," tech giants reveal how, during the rise of social media, by the use of artificial intelligence, its focus has been on exploiting its users for financial gain. It has affected our mental health (including that of teens), manipulated our beliefs, used as a political engine to spread lies about candidates, and used by our

country's enemies to cause distrust in an effort to undermine our democracy.

What comes next? In "The Social Dilemma" one technology professional replied, "civil war." Indeed, several people have suggested the same to me. We are a country divided, isolated, and manipulated. I am horrified to hear anyone utter the words "civil war." Really? Who have we become? How are we to change it?

I believe that in order to institute change and encourage peace, we must find common ground. We must work together to assist those most adversely affected by the pandemic. We must decide, for the sake of our democracy, that we will unite as Americans. We have a duty to preserve our democracy for our children and grandchildren.

Let's do what we do best: Support women and families through these difficult

times. Let's start a program to help unemployed women find jobs or help them with childcare. Most of all, let's mitigate this insane talk about civil war and instigate change through our actions and our words. And VOTE!

This year has been a battleground. The most contentious and challenging of the issues are the coronavirus pandemic and the Presidential election. We cannot move past this in a day, but rather, step by step, address each challenge, encourage change, and move ahead. In the words of the late Justice Ruth Bader Ginsberg, "Real change, enduring change, happens one step at a time." She said, "Fight for the things that you care about, but do it in a way that will lead others to join you." Can we join together to make a difference?



**THE BUFFALO BRANCH  
ADVOCATE**

is published monthly, September to June, as a bulletin of events for members and as an update on AAUW issues and programs.

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President:

Laurie Eikemeyer

Publisher/Editor:

Betty Preble (interim)

Assistant Editors:

Lee Cohen

Judy Weidemann

Barbara Carier

Laurie Eikemeyer

For prospective or new-member questions, contact:

Membership Recruitment VP

Melissa White:

[recruitment@aauwbuffalo.org](mailto:recruitment@aauwbuffalo.org)

Send address changes to:

Mary Crocker

375 Parkhurst Blvd.

Buffalo, NY 14223

[database@aauwbuffalo.org](mailto:database@aauwbuffalo.org))

***Readers, Actresses, Dramatic Voices Needed!***

**Welcome to AAUW Buffalo Branch's Past!**

Join us

December 10th at 7:00 p.m.

as we step back in time for

**A Readers Theater Presentation!**



**Who:** This is an interactive Zoom event and we need volunteer readers (Yes, we need you!) To be a reader, you must be able to access Zoom and you must RSVP by 11/16/20 by emailing Lilyen at [lilyenm@gmail.com](mailto:lilyenm@gmail.com). No auditions necessary!

Firm deadline for audience attendance will be announced in the December Advocate.

**What:** Our volunteer readers will read from a play which builds on three previous plays, produced in 1950, 1960, and 1980. This new presentation is being produced by our very own Diane O'Brien, Lynne Rapin, and Betty Preble with additional historical research by Judy Weidemann and Barbara Carier.

Members not reading will sit back and enjoy the show!

**When/Where:** Thursday, December 10, at 7:00 p.m. via Zoom from your favorite chair! No worries if you can't access Zoom, as you can dial in to listen as well.

Before the event: Make sure you are able to access ZOOM, as a link for the event will be sent to you to participate.



**PLEASE WELCOME  
our newest members!**

Amelia Torres  
256 Marinda Drive  
Fairfax, CA 94900  
647-629-3143

[miatorres.photo@gmail.com](mailto:miatorres.photo@gmail.com)

Karen Kurdziel  
8500 Lakemont Drive  
East Amherst, NY 14051  
716-523-1444

[KKurdziel@Ktufsd.org](mailto:KKurdziel@Ktufsd.org)

**Interest Groups (via Zoom):**

**Dinner by the Book—Wednesday, November 18 at 6:30 p.m.**

Book: *THE ALICE NETWORK*, by Kate Quinn

FACILITATOR: Lynne Tauriello

DL: Mary Bashore

Marilyn Carmichael will be sending out the invitation for the Zoom meeting each month. We will meet at 6:30 p.m. on the third Wednesday of the month.

**CLUELESS—Wednesday, December 2 at 12:30 p.m.**

Book: *A COLD DAY IN HELL*, by Lissa Marie Redmond

DL: Paula Salamone

For technical information, contact Paula Salamone, ([SalomonePaula@yahoo.com](mailto:SalomonePaula@yahoo.com)). For other questions contact Barbara Libby ([BPLibby1@verizon.net](mailto:BPLibby1@verizon.net)).

**Culinary Delights** is currently not meeting.

**Happy Wanderers** is not wandering as a group in November.

**AAUW BUFFALO BRANCH  
ELECTED  
BOARD MEMBERS 2020-21**

**PRESIDENT**

Laurie Eikemeyer

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Lilyen Mascellino

**VP MEMBERSHIP  
RECRUITMENT**

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**VP MEMBERSHIP RETENTION**

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Mary Crocker

**CHAMBERLIN/FUNDS FOR  
EDUCATION TREASURER**

Kate Collins

**SCHOLARSHIP DIRECTOR**

Rosaleen Nogle

# THIS and That

## SCHOLARSHIPS!

The Buffalo Branch offers a variety of scholarships, interest-free loans, and grants to local students and teachers. The applications are all available on our new website: <https://AAUWBuffalo.org>. Just choose the "Scholarships/Loans/Grants" page to learn the details.

Please pay attention to the deadlines:

**The scholarships (women only) all have a January 11, 2021 deadline:**

- [Women Entering College Scholarships](#)
- [Olga Lindberg Scholarships](#)
- [Catalyst for Change Scholarships](#)
- [Jacquie Walker Scholarship](#)

The [Chamberlin and Funds for Education](#) offerings (grants and/or interest-free loans) are available to men and women. They are offered twice a year—the next deadline is **December 1**.

Applications for the [Clarine Radt mini-grants](#) for public-school teachers are accepted at any time.

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## BRANCH LEADERSHIP

Our branch bylaws provide that approximately half the officers are elected each year and each serves a two-year term. Officers may serve for no more than two consecutive terms in the same position. Any of the positions may be shared by two people if desired.

Although we just elected officers for the 2020-22 biennium, it's time to think about nominations for those to serve in 2021-23! The positions to be filled in our spring election are:

- President
- Program VP
- VP Membership Retention
- Branch (Operations) Treasurer
- Chamberlin/Funds for Education Treasurer

If you are interested in joining the board in any of these positions - or if you have a suggestion/recommendation of someone for the nominating committee to consider, please contact one of the committee members: Lilyen Mascellino, Susan McClary, or Betty Preble.



The AAUW Dinner by the Book group members extend their sincere sympathy to the family of Joan Spencer at her passing. Joan was a long-time member of our book club and a former branch member.

The former knitting group also remembers fondly its long-time leader and former branch member Karen Howard. Karen and her husband Fred were also faithful workers at the book sale.

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## To Debate or Not to Debate

*Marian Deutschman*

**E**ven as far back as 1960, when John F. Kennedy and Richard Nixon squared off in the first televised presidential debates in American history, it was clear that presidential debates test very little that is germane to the performance of presidential responsibilities. Nixon was said to have won on radio. Kennedy won on television because of issues such as style and looking directly at the camera. Nixon lost on television because of his *5 o'clock shadow* and *used-car salesman* appearance. The Kennedy-Nixon televised debates not only had a major impact on the election's outcome, they also introduced an era in which showmanship became an essential ingredient of a successful political campaign. Television began to play a significant role in the democratic process.

The League of Women Voters Education Fund (LWVEF) sponsored three presidential debates in 1976. These debates between Jimmy Carter and Gerald Ford were the first to be held since 1960. The League continued to sponsor the presidential and vice presidential debates every four years (Reagan/Carter in 1980, Reagan/Mondale in 1984). After the 1984 election the Democratic and Republican national parties decided to move sponsorship of the debates under the purview of the parties.

The LWVEF argued that putting control of the debate format in the hands of the two dominant parties deprived voters of the only chance they had to see the candidates outside of their controlled campaign environment. In 1987 the parties announced the creation of the Commission on Presidential Debates. The Commission chose LWVEF to sponsor the last presidential debate of 1988, but placed so many rules and restrictions on the format that the LWVUS president stated that the League had "no intention of becoming an accessory to the hoodwinking of the American public."

In the election of 2020 some people have said "Can't the Democratic Party produce a better candidate?" We certainly had a huge array of Democratic Party candidates but some were eliminated when they didn't demonstrate

good showmanship skills at the televised debates. If they made one mistake and their gaffe or flare-up became next day's negative headline, cuts to contributions and support could be the potential result. On the other hand, a zinger may be good for media ratings. Do we blame the lack of substance on the candidate, the 24/7 media, or the process?

We reached the point where nothing more would be revealed in the final 2020 presidential debates that we didn't already know. Would more debates make us better informed voters? Some of the earliest research on debates suggested they matter under four conditions ac-

According to an article in "The Nation" by Edward Burmila: if the election is close, if many voters are undecided, if one or both candidates are unknown, or if partisanship is low. We have yet to determine if this election will be close, but it is unlikely that these debates will make a difference except to highlight showmanship.

Can we find an undecided voter anywhere? The President's positive diagnosis of Covid-19 leads to the likelihood of cancellations this year, thus eliminating the discussion of fact-checking, and microphone cut-outs to reduce the interruptions and simultaneous shouting of degraded information of the first debate. Some called it a debacle.

Ordinarily the party-faithful got excited about elections, primaries, conventions and get-out-the-vote efforts. Some of these traditions may have outlived their usefulness as the pandemic forced changes in 2020. The televised debate is no longer a forum for candidates to argue on behalf of competing platforms in front of an electorate committed to assessing their vision and character. It may be useful to continue debates for other offices but not for presidential candidates. Most vice-presidential debates are not consequential, but given the age of the presidential candidates, voters and their parties needed reassurance that they were capable of handling the presidency. Showmanship was under control.



## DATES TO REMEMBER

Please check our website for last-minute information.



**Sat., Oct. 24—EARLY VOTING BEGINS!**

**Tues., Nov. 3—LAST DAY TO VOTE!!!**

### All upcoming programs via Zoom:

**Wed., Nov. 4, 6:00—Board Meeting**

**Thurs., Nov. 19, 7:00—Branch Program (see pg 1)**

**Wed., Dec. 2, 6:00—Board Meeting**

**Thurs., Dec. 10, 7:00—Branch Program (see pg 3)**

**BOOKSALE WORK ON HOLD UNTIL FURTHER NOTICE!**

**NO DONATIONS ACCEPTED AT THIS TIME!**

**Next sale PLANNED for June 2-6, 2021**

AAUW has been empowering women as individuals and as a community since 1881. For more than 130 years, we have worked together as a national grassroots organization to improve the lives of millions of women and their families.

**Mission:** *To advance equity for women and girls through research, education, and advocacy.*

**Vision:** *Equity for all.*

**Values:** *Nonpartisan. Fact-based. Integrity. Inclusion and Intersectionality.*

*In principle and practice AAUW values and seeks a diverse membership. There shall be no barriers to full participation in this organization on the basis of gender, race, creed, age, sexual orientation, national origin, disability, or class.*

to see you as a branch member.

If there are asterisks by your name, you're either a local AAUW national member or someone who has expressed interest in joining - we'd love

Moving? Please contact Mary Crocker 716-838-2796



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