



Branching Out

March 2023



Improving Women's Literacy – Improving Women's Lives

Join us at 7:00 p.m. on March 8 for our interactive Zoom program featuring Mary Taylor, Executive Director of **Literacy Volunteers of Bangor**. Mary has led LVB since 2003. She has a Master's degree in communication studies from the University of Maine and a certification in Volunteer Administration, and she is a nationally certified poverty coach. Mary is passionate about the connection between literacy, poverty, and culture because they were part of her own life. She grew up in northern Maine in a French speaking community. Despite selling insurance for Met Life, her grandfather was illiterate until Mary's mother taught him to read using the *Bangor Daily News*. As a young woman, she had an unplanned pregnancy and became a single mom. She credits her family's support for enabling her to complete her college education and to escape long-term poverty for her and her son.

That deep understanding of and passion for addressing the problems of low literacy, poverty, and cultural diversity brought her to Literacy Volunteers of Bangor twenty years ago. She has taken it from a small organization to one with 200-300 volunteers helping between 200 and 300 local adults improve their literacy and their lives every year. Mary will discuss how improving literacy has improved the lives of countless women and their families over the last twenty years and why this work is even more important now than ever before.

International Women's Day

International Women's Day is a global holiday celebrated annually on March 8 as a focal point in the women's rights movement, bringing attention to issues such as gender equality, reproductive rights, and violence and abuse against women. The purpose of the day is to uphold women's achievements, recognize challenges, and focus greater attention on women's rights and gender equality. International days and weeks are occasions to educate the public on issues of concern, to mobilize political will and resources to address global problems, and to celebrate and reinforce achievements of humanity. The existence of international days predates the establishment of the United Nations, but the UN has embraced them as a powerful advocacy tool.

Meet Our Scholarship Recipients

We have two very deserving recipients of our non-traditional student scholarships this year, Nicole Blair and Kristen M. Cartier.

Nicole is a Social Science major at the University of Maine Augusta. Nicole left high school with honors to work in the healthcare field. Her life changed dramatically when at age 45 she became a victim of domestic violence. This left her a single mother of five and a grandmother of five. She returned to college in 2019 when family demands allowed. Nicole has continued to pursue her education and currently teaches pre-school to support her family and her education. When she graduates in the spring of 2023, she plans to go on to graduate school in trauma management.

Kristen is enrolled in UMA's mental health/human services bachelor of science program. She is currently attending classes online because she's needed by her elderly parents and three other family members living in Florida. By leaving Maine to help them, she lost her federal work study grant and other benefits she received due to her permanent disability. Kristen's short-term goal is to graduate with her BS in mental health and human services. Her long-term goal is to continue in her own recovery and to become an equine mental health therapist specializing in grief, trauma, and addiction.

Both Nicole and Kristen have agreed to speak at our annual meeting in May.

~ Susan Wishkoski

Treasurer's Report

As of 2/17/23--

Total Resources: \$3970.06

Total Expenses: 2710.00

Balance: \$1260.06

Burby and Bates in Orono is still depositing **bottle refunds** into the AAUW Penobscot Valley Branch account there. Don't forget to contribute your returnables when possible.

Thanks to the generosity of our members, **we have raised \$1,020** this year toward our scholarship funds. If you would like to donate to support our education goals, please use the addressed envelope in the recently sent fundraising letter, or send your check made out to Penobscot Valley AAUW to Fran Haines, 24 Page Place, Orono ME 04473. Your contributions are especially appreciated by the scholarship winners.

~ Fran Haines

Directory Updates

Cindy **Dunlap**: Orono Commons, 117 Bennoch Rd., Orono 04473, 866-3504,
cynthiadunlap207@gmail.com

Charmen **Goehring**: area code is 207, not 916.

Brenna **Thornton**: 20 River Breeze Lane, Eddington 04428

Gratitude

We've received the following **note from Mary Cathcart**.

Dear AAUW Friends,

Thank you very much for your continued support of the Maine NEW Leadership fund. This June there will be a full, in-person program for undergraduate women from all over Maine. Since Director Amy Blackstone is still suffering from long covid, Dr. Mary Mahoney-O'Neil is leading, with able assistance from Susan D'Angelo!

Sincerely,
Mary

Maine Women's Hall of Fame

The BPW/Maine Futurama Foundation in partnership with the University of Maine at Augusta will conduct the 34th MWHF induction ceremony on Saturday, March 18 (snow date Sunday March 19) at Jewett Hall, UMA. The **2023 inductee** is **Sandra L. Caron**, Ph.D., sexuality professor, therapist, and author. Dr. Caron is respected internationally for her creative teaching and groundbreaking research, which have touched countless lives and contributed to inclusivity in our communities.

BPW/Maine Futurama Foundation maintains an active scholarship program which since 1962 has been helping outstanding and deserving Maine women achieve economic self-sufficiency; recipients have gone on to contribute to the economic wellbeing of their families and the State of Maine.

If you'd like to attend but have not received an invitation, contact futuramafound@gmail.com; reservations must be received by March 6.

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AAUW Legacy Circle

By making a **planned gift** to AAUW National, you become a member of the AAUW Legacy Circle and affirm your commitment to equity. These gifts — or bequests — are donations that you designate in your will, estate or trust.

There is no minimum gift requirement to join the Legacy Circle, and the benefits are many. For example:

- Planned gifts afford you flexibility to provide for your family and support AAUW.
- Certain planned gifts may reduce estate or capital gains taxes.

- Planned gifts need not affect your cash flow during your lifetime.
- Certain types of planned gifts allow you to support AAUW while also providing income for the rest of your life — or a fixed income for a loved one.
- The joy of knowing that your legacy gift will sustain AAUW's programs for years to come is the ultimate benefit!

To learn more, contact AAUW Director of Advancement Katrina Sun Breese at 202.785.7766 or planned-giving@aauw.org. Branch member Charmin Goehring (charminme@yahoo.com) is also available to discuss this program with you.

Pizza and Politics

Our Pizza and Politics discussion group continues to meet for an hour on the third Wednesday of the month at 4:00 p.m. Our average attendance is nine eager participants. The current political situation offers the opportunity for a wide range of topics to dive into. Please join us for our **next meeting on March 15** at 4. We will be on Zoom unless you are notified otherwise. We hope to resume in-person meetings this spring. Note that current P&P information is always on the branch website. See you soon!

~ Susan Wishkoski

Leaders Needed!

At our annual meeting we will vote on our **Leadership Team for 2023-2024**. If you're currently on the team think about whether you'll continue in the same position, you'd like to try a new position, or you'd prefer to mentor a successor. Those not currently on the team should consider joining— you would be welcomed with open arms! Importantly, we will need a new liaison to the state and national teams; ask Janet Givens all about serving in that capacity. Also get in touch with her about your interest in any LT role.

Monthly Webinars

AAUW CA has been conducting monthly webinars on Zoom since the COVID-19 pandemic began as a way to **keep members connected and "in the know."** All webinars are on different AAUW-related topics from membership recruitment to DEI to using social media for marketing our branches, to listening to AAUW Fund recipients speak about their research. The webinars are recorded and posted on the state website (www.aauw-ca.org) within a few days of the event-- available for all of us to view! If staying up until 10pm is not ideal, you can watch the recording a few days later. There are dozens to choose from.

The next webinar will be held on March 29, 2023 at 7pm/10pm EST and will be about cultivating leaders in your branch. The registration can be found here: <https://www.aauw-ca.org/help-wanted-workshop/>.

To find past webinars, go to <http://www.aauw-ca.org> and click on the "webinars" link at the top of the page.

~ Charmin Goehring

Announcements/Notices

- For more than three decades, the National Conference for College Women Student Leaders has been the premiere leadership, advocacy, and equity event for college women. AAUW is thrilled to announce that **NCCWSL** is back in-person this year from May 31 – June 3, at the University of Maryland, College Park for an exciting weekend packed with training, inspiration, and networking for future leaders. Please notify any potential attendants you may know that they should visit the [NCCWSL branch and institution information page](#) for information.
- Don't forget to vote by March 3 on the proposed revised administrative structure creating the **AAUW of Maine Council**. Information and voting link were sent by email on February 19.
- Waterville Branch, which is hosting the 2023 annual convention, has decided to include a **basket raffle**. If you have a suggestion for our Penobscot Valley Branch basket, the Leadership Team wants to hear from you!
- The Orono annual **municipal election** is Tuesday, March 14 7am-8pm – Council chambers, 59 Main St. For more info, <https://www.orono.org/304/Elections-Voting-Information>
- Useful **websites**: National, www.aauw.org ; State, aauw-me.aauw.net ; PVB (updated regularly), <https://penobscotvalley-me.aauw.net/>