



# HIGHLIGHTS

IN EQUITY

## AAUW Heights-Hillcrest-Lyndhurst, Ohio Branch

A newsletter for members and friends who support gender fairness  
November/December, 2024, Volume 2024-2025, Issue 3

### The Equal Rights Amendment



#### The Equal Rights Amendment: Where we are now and How we Move it Forward in the Rest of the Year—

We are honored to have as our speaker Carolyn Casper, President of the Ohio National Organization for Women and a long term partner of the ERA Coalition. She will speak about the Equal Rights Amendment and How We Move it Forward, on Wednesday, November 20<sup>th</sup> at 7pm in person and on Zoom. We will meet in person at the Bertram Woods Branch of the Shaker Heights Library, 20600 Fayette Road. The room will open at 6:30PM.



We are hoping that Jennifer Tucker, from The ERA Coalition Staff will be joining us also. She serves as Senior Advisor, Strategic Partnerships and Engagement. She has had three decades of experience in bringing the intersectional diverse voices of women and girls into the policy arena.



*Kay*

**Zoom link for November 20 meeting** about ERA at Bertram Woods Library will be—

**Join Zoom Meeting**

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86538939724?pwd=13srd9BqTQ4ePQ6jEsC4qb43p59b8r.1>

**Meeting ID:** 865 3893 9724

**Passcode:** 545601

**One tap mobile**

+13092053325,,86538939724#,,,,\*545601# US

+13126266799,,86538939724#,,,,\*545601# US (Chicago)

**Dial by your location**

• +1 309 205 3325 US

• +1 312 626 6799 US (Chicago)

Carolyn Casper has a life-long commitment to obtaining a level playing field for all women. Her mother took Carolyn to her first Columbus NOW meeting in 1974, she told her she needed to there, and she has been involved ever since. A graduate of The Ohio State University, she helped organize Take Back the Night Marches, and helped seven other single mothers figure how to get funding for their degrees. She was involved with a group called “MaMa” which was a group of single mothers trying to get through school.

As a working mother she raised three daughters. Her mother was her role model who raised three children as a single mother, she watched her step up and solve problems rather than waiting for others to assume the responsibility. Carolyn worked in the Ohio Auditor’s Office and the Department of Jobs and Family Services, giving her a firsthand knowledge of government.

She is a resident of Upper Arlington, a suburb of Columbus, Ohio. Once her children were grown she decided to run for office as an Upper Arlington City Council Member. As a member of City Council she discovered a female employee was underpaid and worked together to increase salaries to equal gender parity. She was chosen and endorsed as a “Matriot” Candidate when she ran again for City Council in 2019. (The Matriots mission is “To Elect more women who will promote an Ohio where women can thrive and prosper. Their strategy is to endorse women who share our values and we fight to get them elected.” (75% of their candidates have won.) She is quoted in their article “Because I have had my consciousness raised I see many things and experiences for what they are, sexist and very patriarchal. Many women have experienced the same things but have no idea things can and should be different. My life experiences have made me a fighter for women’s rights. **There can be no free men until there are free women.** We are all caught in a trap. It is not good for any of us. I will continue to fight for women and their families as long as I live. Oppression is never acceptable.”

Her vision/goal for women is The Equal Rights Amendment will become a part of the Constitution of the

Continued on page 3

## Branch News: Also in November; NRA Background

### Diversity-themed Theater Outing

You are invited to join us on Sunday November 17, 2024 at 2:30 pm, at The Cleveland Public Theatre, 6451 Detroit Ave., Cleveland (just east of W. 65) for a theater outing as part of our AAUW diversity mission for the year. The play *The Elephant in the Room*, written by and featuring Priyanka Shetty is presented by Cleveland Public Theatre and Federation of India Community Associations Cleveland.

“Unapologetically Indian, Irreverently American, “One-Woman Wonder” Priyanka Shetty’s *The Elephant in the Room* is a witty, dark comedy about your typical Indian metalhead and software-engineer-turned-actor who must navigate life as an immigrant arriving in Trump’s America. The Play navigates Priyanka’s real life journey as she transitions from her deeply embedded roots in India to finding context and common ground in America.



Theatre doors open at 2:30pm and the play starts promptly at 3pm. There are four free parking lots within walking distance of the theatre. HHL Branch President Kay has tickets at \$15 each. Please let Kay know that you want to attend, and she will hold tickets for you. You can pay her for them when you get to the theater.

(krasmusen@hotmail.com, or Phone 216-316-0596 or 216-692-1539) If you need transportation please contact Kay. We plan to meet for dinner after the play, so we can enjoy each other’s company. We are saving a block of seats that are accessible so please get back to Kay as soon as possible. *Thank you from Kay.*

### And In December—

President Kay and Program Vice President Donna are working on a social event for December. More on this later. Watch for a newsletter supplement—



### Some Background on the ERA—

According to *Wikipedia*: “The Equal Rights Amendment (ERA), is a proposed amendment to the US Constitution that would explicitly prohibit sex discrimination. It was written by

Alice Paul, an American Quaker, suffragette, feminist, and women’s rights activist, along with Crystal Eastman, an American lawyer, antimilitarist, feminist, socialist, and journalist. They introduced the proposed amendment to the National Woman’s Party announced its plans to campaign for passage of the amendment, thereby guaranteeing women equal rights with men under the law.



Alice Paul



Crystal Eastman

When the Fourteenth Amendment to the United States Constitution was adopted in 1868, the Equal Protection Clause, which guarantees equal protection of the laws, did not apply to women. It was not until 1971 that the United States Supreme Court extended equal protection to sex-based discrimination.

Constitutional Amendments may be proposed either by the Congress with a two-third vote in both the House of Representatives and the Senate; or by a convention to propose amendments called by Congress at the request of two-thirds of the state legislatures. An amendment becomes part of the Constitution, according to the language in Article V of the US Constitution, as soon as it is ratified by three-fourths of the States (38 or 50 States.) The Federal District of Columbia and five territories (American Samoa, Guam, Northern Mariana Islands, Puerto Rico, US Virgin Islands) may not vote on the legislation. Article Five is silent regarding deadlines for the ratification of proposed amendments, for most amendments proposed since 1917 have included a deadline for ratification.

The original text of the proposed Equal Rights Amendment read as follows:

Section 1. No political, civil, or legal disabilities or inequalities on account of sex or on account of marriage, unless applying equally to both sexes, shall exist within the United States or any territory subject to the jurisdiction thereof.

Section 2. Congress shall have the power to enforce this article by appropriate legislation.

Today, the amendment reads:

Section 1. Equality of rights under the law shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any State on account of sex.

Section 2. The Congress shall have the power to enforce, by appropriate legislation, the provisions of this article.

Section 3. This amendment shall take effect two years after the date of ratification.”

Heights-Hillcrest-Lyndhurst AAUW, September, 2024

# Branch News: President's Column;

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## President's Column—Kay Rasmusen



The AAUW Ohio's Fall Summit "Hold the Date" email had a picture of women sitting in a circle and the message "**your influence MATTERS**". Our guest speaker Carolyn Casper told me she is an 80 year old activist. I read the articles about her life when I googled her and saw that her life and leadership mattered to the women she influenced and helped over the years and how she went into politics to matter even more to her community. Each of us can look back or see in our daily lives how we matter or mattered to others. I am hoping that we can look forward to the ERA being passed and that it will matter to the women's lives that it will protect and improve.

I kept a quote from my daily calendar which I felt related to the ERA. "When we are protected, when we are respected, when we are able to thrive and given the same opportunities as our male counterparts, when we are given space to lead and rise-- our nation will rise."—

Linda Sarsour, Women's March Organizer

The Officers of AAUW HHL and I wish everyone a Happy Thanksgiving, Merry Christmas, Happy Hanukkah, Happy Kwanzaa, and a Happy New Year.

— Kay

November is American Diabetes Month®, a time for the American Diabetes Association® (ADA) and the world to rally behind the fight to end diabetes. Nationwide, over 38 million people have diabetes and nearly 98 million have prediabetes. In the last 20 years, the number of Americans with diagnosed diabetes has more than doubled.



For many, a diagnosis of diabetes brings shock and worry about costs, care and how life will change. The ADA is here with resources to meet people where they are, offering nutrition and diabetes education, mental health encouragement, and evidence-based recommendations for

**Universal Human Rights Month** is observed throughout December to raise awareness about the fundamental rights enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and promote respect for these rights worldwide.



It celebrates the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which sets forth principles regarding equality, fairness, and fundamental human rights.

### November birthdays:

- 19 Donna Black
- Cindy Goldberg

### December birthdays:

- 17 Betty Slick
- 23 Kathe Mayer



Carolyn Casper continued from page 1—

United States. She stated, "We will have reached a point where we are guaranteed protections under the law that we are currently denied. We will have the ability to provide for ourselves and our families on equal footing with men. Women do govern differently and when we have an equal share of the leadership, we all will benefit. It will be more about what is good for us and our nation and much less about money and control. Currently we are rushing around constantly putting out fires started to control us on all levels."

# AAUW Ohio Update

## Ohio Update—Nancy Stellhorn



“I am against gerrymandering, so I voted ‘No’ on Issue 1.” I am grateful that HHL helped us understand a poorly written proposed amendment, but I am sorry that our online folks were not part of the discussion to clarify the wording. We can learn from this. Those who edited the wording were those who did not want it to pass—did not want non-partisan editors to write it.

AAUW Ohio continues to encourage us to become a more diverse group, one that welcomes working with other organizations and different people. Join us in our Saturday discussions. Once a month we use a book to ground a discussion about inclusion and to learn about people who are different but similar to us.

Do you want a book that leaves you wanting more? Read *Firekeeper’s Daughter* by Angeline Boulley. We will discuss it in the Saturday morning series in January.



AAUW Ohio has distributed the requirements for its branch awards: Starz, Diversity, and Communications.

A copy of the requirements should be available now from your president, Kay. Ask her if you didn’t get yours. They are intended to be a guide to branches for doing AAUW work through the year.

Nancy

Is your phone asking you to update it? Is the request from the maker of the phone? If so, do the update. Protect yourself from recent malware. Don’t bury your head in the sand and hope it goes away. Indeed, it may go away, taking your phone with it. Take action from a trusted source.



Nancy



## Join BG AAUW for their 2024-2025 Lunch and Convos.



Enjoy book discussions with dessert and coffee for the discussion in November and lunch for the discussions next year.

Email [dgwoold@bgsu.edu](mailto:dgwoold@bgsu.edu) to RSVP if you are attending in person and for a parking pass. See the dates, book titles and Zoom links below.

### Wednesday, November 20, 2024 from 2:30 - 3:30 p.m., Hayes 203

*In Defense of Witches: The Legacy of the Witch Hunts and Why Women Are Still on Trial* by Mona Chollet

Discussant: John Zibbel

[Join Zoom Meeting](#)

Meeting ID: 869 0884 3588 Passcode: 595887

### Thursday, February 13, 2025 from 12 - 1 p.m., Hayes 203

*What We Don’t Talk About When We Talk About Fat* by Aubrey Gordon

Discussant: Laura Sheets

[Join Zoom Meeting](#)

Meeting ID: 890 9381 1510 Passcode: 218590

### Thursday, April 10, 2025 from 12 - 1 p.m., Hayes 203

*Hags: The Demonisation of Middle-Aged Women* by Victoria Smith

Discussant: Kacee Ferrell Snyder

[Join Zoom Meeting](#)

Meeting ID: 862 8132 1639 Passcode: 803296

Check out our branch website for the latest branch information <https://hhl-oh.aauw.net> and our blog: <https://aauwahl.wordpress.com> and find us and like us on Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/AAUWHHL>

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## Diversity—Cindy Goldberg, Co-Chair



### Overcoming what seemed like overwhelming and insurmountable odds--

Today, as I write this, I am waiting for the results of the 2024 election. It's afternoon and no one will know for quite a while what the results will be. For some there will be celebration; for others it will be a sense we must overcome what appear to be almost insurmountable odds. In any case, no matter how we feel today, we can take comfort in the recognition of the work of those past heroes who have overcome great odds and gone on to incredible achievements.

I think you will be inspired when you read about the life of Maggie Lena Walker. Her life shows how someone in a world that seemed so hostile and overwhelmingly, lacking in support, could achieve and overcome the challenges that she faced.

From *Smithsonian Magazine*:

"At the turn of the century, Maggie Lena Walker was one of the foremost female business leaders in the United States. She gained national prominence when she became the first woman to own a bank in the United States. Walker's entrepreneurial skills transformed black business practices while also inspiring other women to enter the field.



Walker was born to enslaved parents on July 15, 1864 in Richmond, Virginia. After the **Civil War**, her mother worked as a laundress and her father as a butler in a popular Richmond hotel. Walker's father was killed and she had to help her mother financially by working. Although his death was ruled a suicide, Walker later revealed that she believed he had been murdered. She attended a local school in Richmond and upon graduation, began teaching. She stepped down from teaching after she married a successful brick maker.

When Walker was 14, she joined the Independent Order of St. Luke's, an African American benevolent organization that helped the sick and elderly in Richmond. Within the organization, Walker held many high-ranking positions. In 1902, she began publishing the organization's newspaper, *The St. Luke Herald*. She encouraged African Americans in Richmond to harness their economic power by establishing their own institutions through the newspaper.

Walker had always focused her efforts on accounting and math. Her first business endeavor was a community insurance company for women. From there she continued her entrepreneurial pursuits. In 1903, she founded the St. Luke Penny Savings Bank. Walker was the first woman of any race to charter a bank in the United States. The bank was a powerful representation of black self-help in the segregated South. The Penny Savings Bank not only attracted adults but Walker worked to appeal to children by

passing out banks which encouraged them to save their money.

In 1915, Walker's husband was killed by her son, after he mistook him for a burglar. Her husband's passing left her in charge of a large estate. She continued working for the Order of St. Luke's but also held leadership positions in other civic organizations, including National Association of Colored Women (NACW). She also served as the Vice President of the Richmond chapter of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP).

By 1924, the Penny Savings Bank had spread to other parts of Virginia and included more than 50,000 members. While other banks collapsed during the Great Depression St. Luke's Penny Saving survived. The bank eventually consolidated with two other large bank and moved to downtown Richmond. It is still in operation today.

After an illness in 1928, Walker was forced to use a wheelchair. Although limited in movement, Walker remained a leader in the Richmond African American community. She fought arduously for women's rights as well. For much of her life Walker served as board member of the Virginia Industrial School for Girls.

On December 15, 1934, Walker died from complications due to diabetes. Walker's house in Richmond has since been designated a National Historic Site by the National Park Service."

So, why is something that happened so long ago relevant to us so many years later? Many of us have faced and will continue to face challenges. Some will celebrate today; others will mourn the outcome. Nonetheless, women have overcome incredible barriers in the past and will continue to do so. Maggie Lena Walker is an inspiration to us all no matter what challenges we face and against those odds we must prevail; success is possible. Fondly submitted by Cindy for the diversity committee.

Fondly submitted by *Cindy*,  
for the Diversity Committee

**AAUW Diversity Policy:** In principle and in practice, AAUW values and seeks an inclusive membership, workforce, leadership team and board of directors. There shall be no barriers to full participation in this organization on the basis of age, disability, ethnicity, gender, gender identity, geographical location, national origin, race, religious beliefs, sexual orientation or socioeconomic status.

## 2 Minute Speech on ERA

By incorporating the ERA into the Constitution, we ensure that the rights and freedoms of all citizens are protected from being undermined by future political shifts. It is an essential step toward a more just and equal society, safe from the influence of right-wing extremists and the reactionary Supreme Court.

The Equal Rights Amendment (ERA) provides a permanent guarantee of equality, making it difficult for any future administration or judicial body to revoke these rights. This permanency is vital in safeguarding against political and judicial fluctuations.

The ERA empowers survivors of sexual assault to seek justice in federal courts addressing state level inadequacies that often fail to effectively tackle gender-based violence. It also ensures reproductive rights, acting as a robust defense against the rollback of abortion and other reproductive health services. And protects marriage equality and other rights important to the LGBTQ+ community.

Economically, the ERA addresses disparities by eliminating discrimination in pay, insurance, retirement, and social security benefits. Women currently face significant financial inequalities, and the ERA will help rectify this by making gender-based discrimination illegal in these areas.

The ERA has widespread public support, with a significant majority of votes (75%), recognizing the importance of constitutional protection for gender equality. This support underscores the necessity and urgency of finally securing the ERA.

By securing the ERA, we are not just protecting rights for today but ensuring they remain safeguarded for future generations. It is time to take this essential step towards a more just and equal society.

—Sign4ERA.org

## Around Northeast Ohio District

Northeast Ohio Branch met on Tuesday, November 12, at Morley Library in Painesville for dessert. The program: Women in Islam—Faten Odeh, Executive Director of CAIR (The Council on American-Islamic Relations)-Ohio spoke.



## Grapevine



We are delighted to report good news: Amy Mayer, daughter of branch member Kathe Mayer has been named News Director for KAZU 90.3, NPR for the Monterey Bay Area of California. We congratulate her.



Meryl Johnson was given an award in recognition of exemplary service to education from the Ohio School Board's Black Caucus. Congratulations!



**\*\*NOTE:** If you have an item or know of an item for the Grapevine, be sure to let Jan Bowden know at either [jeb7747@aol.com](mailto:jeb7747@aol.com) or 440-255-6631.\*\*



## Diversity in Action

AAUW HHL has enriched its history of diversity by seeking members of diverse backgrounds, by attending plays and reading books that provide learning experiences and provoke discussion. We support and attend AAUW Ohio's programs and actions on diversity, intentionality, and inclusion.

We support opening membership to all who want to speak for our vision of Equity for All. Since 1881, AAUW has worked for equity—first, for education and economic parity of women. Realizing we cannot have equity without equity for *all*, AAUW updated its vision and its work to achieve it.

Become a member. We welcome you to join our branch of the national AAUW. Our events are all hybrid. If you are looking for a community of activists, join us. Email us at [aauwhh@roadrunner.com](mailto:aauwhh@roadrunner.com).



**It's About Justice—  
Meryl Johnson**



Itsaboutjustice@gmail.com  
Listen to Meryl every Saturday on  
"Its About Justice?"  
1:00 to 2:00 pm  
WRUW. 91.1 FM

**In Project 2025, police will have complete immunity. This poem is dedicated to young boys and their dreams.**



### **Dying Before I'm Done by Sharon G. Flake**

In case somebody shoots me,  
In case someone does me in,  
Here's what you should know about me.  
I am a loyal, dependable friend.  
I eat ice cream with a fork.  
I love bacon, but I'm allergic to pork.  
Cookies with sprinkles are my favorite treat.  
I know it's gross, but I like to smell my own feet.  
In sixth grade I made all A's,  
By eighth grade I was more into babes.  
There's a secret only my mother knows.  
Every Mother's Day I polish her toes.  
There are lots of things I plan to do.  
Spend a summer working at the Louvre,  
Take my sister to New York on the train,  
Convince my dad to ride in an airplane,  
Show my brother how to have a good time  
playing chess instead of drinking wine.  
Only some things end sooner than you want,  
Like your first kiss and fourth-period lunch.  
So if I die before I'm done,  
Don't let 'em forget  
While I was here, I had me some fun.

*Meryl*

## More Branch News—Public Policy

### Public Policy—Kathe Mayer



AAUW's National CEO, Gloria Blackwell, summed up what many are feeling after this year's presidential election—the fight will continue.

*Kathe*

As you know by now, the 2024 presidential race has been called — and for the second time, our country has decided it wasn't ready to have a highly-qualified woman hold our nation's highest office.

As a dedicated member leader and AAUW volunteer, we acknowledge and thank you for the work you have been doing in your local communities to educate and encourage voters.

We did see some wins on state ballot measures that I'm happy to share. Of the 10 states that had abortion measures on the ballot, seven chose to defend women's reproductive health last night. While progress was made, I know that it is not enough. This is a time where we must persist together and continue advocating for women's rights in this way.

Trump being back in office may set us back, and it will require a defensive strategy of advocacy from us like never before. But we will not back down from our belief that women's work should be valued, our bodies should be respected, and that our education and workspaces should be inclusive and free from violence, discrimination, harassment, and bias.

It is our commitment to gender equity that allows me to write to you today with a clear-eyed promise: We will persist.

I urge you to reinforce a message of civility and nonpartisanship to members at this time. We may be in a defensive position, like in 2016, but we must focus on coming together as a community in the fight to advance equity for women.

AAUW has been preparing for this scenario, and we will share more updates and information in the coming days.

Read the [official statement](#) on our initial reaction. Please register and encourage members and those in your professional/personal networks to register for our November 19th event, *Securing the Future: A Post-Election Conversation on Women's Economic Security*.

AAUW has been in this fight for a long time. Our strength comes from our collective voice, and together we will continue the work to support women's education and economic empowerment.



In solidarity,

Gloria L. Blackwell  
Chief Executive Officer





# AAUW HHL Branch is involved in the community



## Luggage for Foster Kids:

Every Child Needs a Family. Unfortunately, not every family has the means to house a child that needs them. There are over 2000 children in DCFS custody through no fault of their own. Many continue to live unstable lives and can be moved from pillar to post because of the actions of adults who are not always able or competent to care for them. Last year, I asked you to imagine not being able to take any of your belongings with you if you were being relocated to the care of strangers. I asked you to imagine the psychological impact of having to move everything you own in a large garbage bag at a moment's notice. You listened and we were able to donate lightweight luggage to the Department of Child and Family Services. We won't stop at a few items. This year, we are looking to donate more small, carry-on sizes approximately 22 x 14 x 9 inches. Please help by contacting us on Facebook to arrange a pickup.



It costs you nothing to do this. Your help is needed to provide mammograms for those who cannot afford one.

## Collaborative to End Human Trafficking

We've talked about it before. Let's refresh. Human trafficking continues to be a world-wide problem. Human Trafficking is defined as the exploitation of humans for profit. US law defines human trafficking as the use of force, fraud, or coercion to compel a person into commercial sex acts or labor against their will. Victims include male and female children and adults who are US citizens as well as foreign born individuals.



The Collaborative to End Human Trafficking reports that 21 million people are estimated to be trafficked globally. Forced labor generates \$150 BILLION per year with \$90 BILLION being generated from commercial sexual exploitation. They report that 54% of victims are female and 46% are male (children and adult).

The National Hotline is 1-888-373-7888; Ohio Attorney General Dave Yost can be reached at 800-282-0515 from 8am to 6pm.

Who thinks like this? I cannot think in these terms, even after a 13-year career in law enforcement as a Parole Officer. I am certain you cannot either. I am sure this is why this crime goes on unabated by wholesome individuals. I've seen a lot of perpetrators but none like these. But I'm willing to bet I've seen victims I never imagined were victims. I believe we see the consequences of these crimes on the lives of victims. We just don't realize it. That's the problem. I know people care. We just need our eyes opened. We need to learn how to be up to the task or nothing will change.

Go here to download your resource guide of Supportive Services for Victims of Human Trafficking in Northeast Ohio – <https://collabtoendht.org/human-trafficking/#resourceguide>.

We will also be participating in the Long-Sleeve Shirt Drive again this year, so begin to collect your contributions now. It will be the end of March so you have plenty of time to prepare your donations of a new or slightly used long-sleeve shirt to help farmworkers mitigate exposure to pesticide residues and reduce direct exposure to the heat.

If you have any other ideas about how AAUW HHL can be involved in the community, share those ideas with either Kay or Donna.