
2020-21 Branch Officers

President:

Elaine Baumann 715-425-5727
Elaine.baumann1@gmail.com

Program VP:

Gwen Paulson 715-425-0250
gepaulson@comcast.net

Membership VP:

Rebecca Davis 641-236-9919
davis.rmax@gmail.com

Secretary:

Alyson Sauter 651-269-4670
Alyson.Sauter@gmail.com

Treasurer:

Tina Kelly 715-307-4120
tk36698@gmail.com

PROGAM LEADERS

Public Policy:

Barbara Peterson 715-425-5638
lbpeters@dishup.us

International Relations:

Yolanda Dewar 651-459-3843
yolandadewar@gmail.com

Communications/Newsletter:

Cheryl Maplethorpe 715-307-8036
cheryl.kay.maplethorpe@gmail.com

Website Administrator and Facebook Coordinator

Rebecca Prendergast 715-441-3979
bepren@hotmail.com

Book Sale Co-chairs:

Lorraine Davis 715-629-7392
Ldavis4762@aol.com

Jeanne Zirbel 715-425-2669

jeanne.zirbel@gmail.com

Scholarship:

Jeanne Zirbel 715-425-2669
jeanne.zirbel@gmail.com

Lorraine Davis 715-629-7392

Ldavis4762@aol.com

University Liaisons

Maureen Olle-LaJoie 715-222-7384

Maureen.olle-lajoie@uwrf.edu

Karla Thoennes 715-425-4666

Karla.Thoennes@uwrf.edu



FALLS NOTES

aauwriverfalls@gmail.com

Branch Newsletter: August 2021

Next Meeting:

September 14, 6:30 p.m. in the River Falls Public Library Community Room on the lower level. Our program will be presentations from our NCCWSL attendees. We will **wear masks** and dispense with refreshments.

PRESIDENT' S COLUMN

Elaine Baumann

President's Message

Welcome to the 2021-22 AAUW year. I hope you have noticed the new logo and branding colors introduced this summer!

I am looking forward to working with all of you to accomplish a year of activism and learning. Our meeting formats for the year may change in response to the Delta variant in our area, but as of now, we are planning to meet in person on **September 14, 6:30 p.m. in the River Falls Public Library Community Room on the lower level.** Our program will be presentations from our NCCWSL attendees. We will **wear masks** and dispense with refreshments for this meeting, but it will be tremendous to be able to gather in person. For those unable to join us, we will have a Zoom meeting connection to enable virtual participation (link listed below.) As we move forward, we will follow public health guidance for future meeting arrangements. We know from last year that we can provide productive meetings and excellent programs on Zoom if necessary.

Another major activity that is already in motion will be our **book sale**. There has been great enthusiasm for the sale

among our members and in the community. We are expecting high volumes in donations and sales this year since we missed last year. As always, **we are needing help with sales** and members can sign up online through Sign-Up Genius (<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/805084DA5A92DA6F58-book>) or by calling me at 715-307-2694. To use this link, hold down the CONTROL button and click on the address in the parentheses. Wait a second or two and it will take you to the signup genius. Or copy and paste the address into a new tab address bar.

In addition to our local initiatives and programs our state and national offices have identified priorities for our focus. Our state office is encouraging us to be activists for the **creation of fair voting district maps in Wisconsin**. The current gerrymandered maps have made it difficult to get legislators to take up legislation that support our mission and that positively impact women and children. The national office has identified **DE&I – Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion** – as the focus for this year, again with special emphasis on equity for minority women.

I look forward to seeing you all on September 14.

Topic: AAUW Meeting – Zoom Meeting Link - Sep 14, 2021, 6:30 PM, Central Time (US and Canada)

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84014155479>

Meeting ID: 840 1415 5479

One tap mobile

+13462487799,,84014155479# US (Houston)

+16699006833,,84014155479# US (San Jose)

Dial by your location

+1 346 248 7799 US (Houston)

+1 669 900 6833 US (San Jose)

+1 929 205 6099 US (New York)

+1 253 215 8782 US (Tacoma)

+1 301 715 8592 US (Washington DC)

+1 312 626 6799 US (Chicago)

Meeting ID: 840 1415 5479

Find your local number: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84014155479>

BOOK SALE INFORMATION

The book sale committee met August 9 to make plans for this year's sale. The following was discussed:

- The annual book sale will be held for the last three weeks in October on Thursdays (10 am – 6pm), Fridays (10am – 6pm) and Saturdays (10am – 4pm) at the former site of **Global Made, 126 N. Main Street**.

- Please save your books and encourage friends and family to do the same. This year we are taking **complete puzzles and media such as DVDs, Blu-Ray and computer games** as well. Please remember to discard moldy books, textbooks, out of date resource books, condensed books and magazines.
- Bring books to **Family Fresh** and **Dick's Market in River Falls** and **Country Market in Hudson**. Donation Barrels will be set up on September 1st. Large quantities of books can be dropped off at Global Made (126 N. Main) on Wednesdays (4 to 6) and Saturdays (10 to 12) beginning September 1th through October 9nd.

To volunteer for three hour selling shifts you can sign up through this link -

<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/805084DA5A92DA6F58-book>

or call Elaine at 715-307-2694 or email Elaine at elaine.baumann1@gmail.com or Lorraine at ldavis4762@aol.com.

- **Save October 9th for the “Book Sorting Extravaganza”**— we work from 9 a.m. til done—usually around noon. Come when you can!
- Help: Save **grocery bags** for books and **cardboard flats** which will be used for book storage.
- Help: Distribute Signs locally. A sign is attached to the email that brought you this newsletter. Send it electronically to your friends or print it and hand it out.
- **Save November 1 and 2 for cleanup and drive away.**

After the pandemic hiatus, we are expecting a lot of books so be prepared to help. There will be more information and assignments to come.

Elaine Baumann, Lorraine Davis, Jeanne Zirbel

Book Sale Worker Sign Up

Sign up to work at the Book Sale, Thursdays – Saturdays, Oct. 14-30 using the Signup Genius link below or by calling Elaine Baumann at 715-307-2694.

<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/805084DA5A92DA6F58-book>

Program update

Program VP – Gwen Paulson

The September 14, 2021 **AAUW** meeting will be held in hybrid format connecting you by **Zoom** or in **person** at the River Falls Public Library at 6:30 for the business meeting and 7:00 for the program. Our program will feature our NCCWSL attendees will share features of the convention and their personal insights. It is always a delight to hear how the National Conference for College Women Student Leaders encourages young women success in leadership roles.

Looking forward to seeing you in person or by Zoom.

MEMBERSHIP RENEWALS

IMPORTANT INSTRUCTION TO RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP FOR 2021-22.

THERE ARE TWO WAYS TO RENEW:

1. **Mail a check** payable to AAUW-RF for \$86 to Tina Kelly, W9908 State Rd 35, Hager City, WI 54014-8343. Your cost includes \$62 for National membership and state and local dues at \$13 and \$11 respectively. (\$59 of national dues is tax deductible.)
2. **Renew online.** In early April you no doubt received a dues invoice via email. That had a personalized, secured link to pay online with no login required. Click the link and provide the requested information.

RIVER FALLS BRANCH MINUTES – May 11, 2021

AAUW Annual Meeting, via Zoom May 11, 2021
6:30 p.m. Call to Order

Welcome New Members Evelyn Purdy introduced herself

Introduction of NCCWSL attendees – Lorraine Davis (Alexandra Miller, Grace Higgins in attendance, Emily Kupka, and Juliana Pundsack)

Secretary's report –April 13, 2021 meeting minutes Magdalena Pala pointed out that the stated number of voters in the school board election (10,000) could not have been possible. The number was corrected to 2,000.

Finance report – *April 1, 2021 totals (Checking Balance: \$6820.83) which includes Scholarship (\$787.00), Travel (\$1500), and Operating (\$4533.83) Approved as stand.*

President's Report

Approximately 15 members of our affiliate attended the virtual State Convention.

Committee/task formation for 2021-22

Suzanne will send out postcards for each member to return, indicating their areas of interest in which they can best apply their talents. She thanks the current board members for their work this past term and as a thank you gift, each board member will receive an AAUW "100 years of suffrage" pin that National had created as a commemoration.

Committee Reports

Membership - it's time to renew your membership. You should receive an email reminder with a link to pay online. Dues are \$86. (\$59. goes to National, \$15. to State, and \$11. to our local affiliate)

Public Policy - Barb Peterson thanks Suzanne for her unflagging work and strong leadership in her term. State public policy wants to get the word out on gerrymandering. Because of the current situation, our representatives don't think it is necessary to listen to our concerns. There will be a webinar on Thursday May 13th (Cheryl has sent out an email with the link) that will provide much information and talking points on this very important, non-partisan issue, that affects all residents. We need to try to influence change now, because once the lines are drawn for districts, based on the most recent census data, they remain in place for 10 years!

Legacy Circle - Ann Gustafson spoke on the opportunity to join the Legacy Circle. 18 people at the State Convention are Legacy Circle members (3 of them from our affiliate: A Gustafson, K Montgomery, J Zirbel). You can join by making a planned gift through your estate at any level of contribution to your choice of policy or cause areas or to the general fund. Two great things come of this - you ensure that AAUW will continue its mission of empowering women for years to come and you receive a beautiful circle pin.

New Business:

Installation of New Officers – Kay Montgomery thanked the outgoing board members and swore in the new.

- Elaine Baumann as President
- Rebecca Davis for membership
- Alyson Sauter as secretary

In addition, Rebecca Prendergast will take on the website, helping with Facebook and media presence.

Breakout groups to brainstorm ideas for programming for the 2021-2022 year.
See attached list of ideas generated by the four groups.

Adjournment at 8:00.

Respectfully submitted, Gretchen Toman, Secretary

RIVER FALLS BRANCH BOARD MINUTES – June 8, 2021

12:00 via Zoom

In attendance: E Baumann, R Davis, A Gustafson, S Hagen, T Kelly, C Maplethorpe, K Montgomery, K Morgan, M Olle-Lajoie, G Paulsen, A Sauter, G Toman

Minutes of the March 11 general meeting - approved as stand

Finance Report: As of 6/4/2021

Balance in checking - \$9,055.83 in savings - \$2,703.06

Public Policy update from Suzanne on gerrymandering; she and Barb Peterson met with a leader from the group Western Wisconsin for Non-Partisan Voting Districts to brainstorm ideas on how to get the word out on this issue. It's a non-partisan issue that needs attention to ensure that we have fair voting districts.

Possibilities: signs (talk to Cheryl Maplethorpe) to put in the yard for Menomonie and the 7 other counties on our side of the state.

A booth to distribute brochures at River Falls Days, jointly with the WW group and Pierce County GROW, a local group who can speak to the cause.

Also possible is to have at the same table the message on pre-printed, stamped postcards with room for people to add their name and address, ready to mail.

There is still time to register and get a table for the reverse parade.

The call to action on this is to phone your senator or assembly person and tell them you want them to vote for fair non-partisan voting districts.

There is a State Public Policy toolkit that includes sample letters/ email scripts and talking points for calling or contacting your representatives.

See the St. Croix County League of Women Voters for more information on this issue.

Program and format plans - we need a group to work with the ideas generated at the May 11th meeting to find an overarching theme for next year's programs. Some possibilities: economic issues for women, equity/diversity or social justice issues. We need a group of people who have contacts and resources to assist with programming. Gwen will set dates for meet-

ing dates and times for this group. Going forward, a hybrid format for our meetings would make them more available to a larger number of people.

After discussion, we decided on a longer, bigger, celebratory social time at the opening meeting in September to better reconnect with one another in a more relaxed timing. There is much interest in a book discussion group. We have volunteers, Gretchen and Maureen, to work on choosing titles. Some discussion on having the discussions at separate meeting times (i.e., not during the program time post-meetings).

Book Sale Planning - we will most probably be able to hold the sale this fall again. We still need a physical location. Which weekends to hold it are yet to be decided, most likely late September into October.

Year End Reports - for the transition, it was requested that the outgoing officers write a year end report of success, challenges, and tasks, along with some helpful notes for the incoming people. Submit those to Elaine. The incoming president will need to update the list of new officers' contact information to send to State and National so they can receive the pertinent to their new position communications.

Copies of our bylaws are available for incoming officers.

Continuing Outreach to members - Please inform Karen Brohaugh of life events and other items that you would like to share so she can send cards.

The question was asked, "How do we know about newcomers to our area?" How do we know about members from other branches who move here, to reach out to them? Suzanne, as the new District 4 Coordinator may be able to address this in the upcoming year.

Through the Shape the Future initiative, we have two free National memberships to award in the next two weeks. Suzanne asked for suggestions of members for this. Barb Peterson and Lorraine Davis were this year's recipients.

Kendra is cleaning up and updating the Membership application. Membership V-P Kendra (outgoing) will meet with Suzanne, Elaine, et al. to clarify the membership rates, which can be a confusing structure.

Meeting adjourned at 1:25 p.m.

Respectfully submitted, Gretchen Toman, Secretary

AAUW-River Falls Finance Report Tina Kelly, Treasurer
AAUW-River Falls Finance Report

June 29, 2021 – August 25, 2021

Checking balance 6/29/2021	\$8568.23
Receipts Membership Dues	\$ 244
<i>Total receipts (6/29/2021- 8/25/2021)</i>	\$ 244
Disbursements AAUW Dues	\$ 150
<i>Total disbursements (6/29/2021- 8/25/2021)</i>	\$ 150

Balances 8/25/2021

Checking: \$8,662.23

Savings: \$2,703.06

Total: \$11,365.29

Tina Kelly
Treasurer

AAUW navy blue UFF-DA masks

AAUW navy blue UFF-DA masks are available from Kendra, if any members want to sell some more now that masks are making another appearance. They can pick up at Kendra's office at 714 N Main Street and make cash or check payable to Kendra since she prepaid for them!

University Update

Karla Thoennes - University Liaison

Residence halls at UWRF officially opened on Saturday, August 28 for new students. New and returning students continued to move into the residence halls until the first day of classes on Thursday, September 2. Over 2100 students will live on campus this fall. While official enrollment numbers will not be available until after the start of the academic year, typically about 40% of the undergraduate student population lives in the residence halls. The age range of students living on campus this fall is from 17 to 32 years.

AAUW Newsletter – August, 2021 - Public Policy Article

Submitted by Barbara Peterson

I'M PROUD TO BE PART OF AAUW by Barbara Peterson

I'm so pleased that AAUW-WI has prioritized fair mapping for redistricting in 2021. As a large and active group from across Wisconsin, we have more clout in asking our legislators to act on our behalf. Each of you has an opportunity to be an activist, supporting legislation that can effect redistricting for many decades. While AAUW considers fair maps a nonpartisan issue, political parties are using gerrymandering to their benefit. Both parties have done this. It must stop!

Jane Benson of Suamico, WI explained the situation well in the following article. I have taken the following comments from unsigned documents. I can't take credit for the wording but I think the facts are accurate.

IT ONLY HAPPENS ONCE EVERY TEN YEARS

"Every 10 years, the US census counts people, and political maps are re-drawn to account for changes in population. Maps include: municipal wards, county, state assembly and senate districts, and Congressional districts.

Wisconsinites face a difficult situation, because the 2011 maps were gerrymandered toward Republicans.

Gerrymandering skews results. For example, in 2018, 5 state-wide positions: Governor, Attorney General, etc. were ALL won by Democrats with more than 50% of the vote. Democrats won 52.99% total votes for the assembly, Republicans' 44.75%, but 63 assembly seats went to Republicans and 36 to Democrats. In 2020, Democrats elected Joe Biden President, but lost most district races.

The Republicans' "safe seats" allows them to ignore the people's demands. Legislative leaders often limit discussion and votes only on issues reflecting their partisan agenda. Governor Evers requested special sessions on how to handle the Covid19 crisis; expanding Medicaid to gain substantial federal monies and gun control. Legislative leaders subverted those efforts by refusing to address them.

In 2019, US Supreme Court held "partisan" or political-party gerrymanders are beyond the reach of federal courts, removing a significant voter protection. Wisconsinites have no right to binding referendums. Instead, 55 of 72 counties in the state (representing more than 80% of Wisconsinites) passed nonbinding referendums/resolutions by super majorities requesting legislators use a nonpartisan method to draw our 2021 maps. Despite this support, the legislature has done nothing.

Although the Governor's biennial 2021 budget proposed money for nonpartisan redistricting, the legislature stripped it from the budget. To establish a nonpartisan procedure, the People's Map Commission was formed, traveled to all 8 congressional districts, holding listening sessions, asking citizens how they think the maps should be drawn. Wisconsinites may submit proposed maps of their communities for its consideration.

2021 differs from 2011, because we have a split government: Democrat governor and Republican legislature. If the legislature ignores nonpartisan procedure and presents maps, Evers may veto them. If Evers' veto is sustained, litigation is likely and courts will draw the maps. This is costly and unnecessary.

To get the nonpartisan districting we have voted for and save unnecessary costs, contact your legislators demanding nonpartisan redistricting in 2021."

Thanks to Jane Benson for this fine explanation of the gerrymandering dilemma.

The Census data was released August 12, which starts the process of redistricting in the legislature and also by The People's Map Commission. They are likely to draw significantly different maps.

Gerrymandering has also allowed the legislature to avoid hearings on critical issues like elections during COVID19, healthcare, reasonable gun control, and policing practices. Governor Evers called seven special sessions from 2018-2020 to address these issues, Republicans gaveled out of some immediately, while others that remained open were eventually gaveled out months later without action. An independent study identified the Wisconsin legislature as the least active full-time state legislative body in the country since states began taking measures to combat the COVID-19 pandemic. This gridlock will continue as long as legislators need not respond to the will of the majority.

But here is the good news. So many people like you are putting pressure on the legislature that they are taking notice. Will they dare to draw the districts out of the sight of the public and without hearings again this time? Maybe not. You have an opportunity to be heard again and again before it is too late! A teacher/activist is using open record laws to access and report the number of letters, emails and calls each legislator gets for and against this issue. These reports may be used in the court case that could follow redistricting maps.

Wisconsin deserves good government and fair representation. Demand Wisconsin's Legislature end partisan districting without delay. Write, call, email your legislators and demand that they address the issue of nonpartisan districting and support Legislative Bills AB395, (Assembly version) and SB389 (Senate version) creating nonpartisan redistricting.

Take action Now!

INTERNATIONAL ISSUES –August, 2021- Yolanda Dewar, Chair
PLEASE CLICK ON THE LINKS PROVIDED TO LEARN MORE ABOUT EACH ARTICLE.

Part of the All-Girls Robotics Team Flees Afghanistan, by Sarah Ruiz-Grossman, Huffington Post, World News, 08/19/2021

As the Taliban quickly took over the country amid the U.S. military's withdrawal in recent days, many have raised concerns about women's rights in the nation, which were severely curtailed under the Islamist insurgents' rule from 1996 to 2001. At the time, girls were banned from school and women from work, and they were allowed out in public only if fully covered and escorted by a male relative. Though the Taliban has said girls will be able to attend school and women's rights will be respected "within the framework of Islamic law," many have expressed skepticism that girls and women will be allowed to live freely under the ultraconservative group's rule.

The all-girls robotics team rose to international fame in 2017, when the U.S. denied them visas to come to the country for a competition, then relented after public outcry and intervention by then-President Donald Trump. The girls won a medal at the contest for "courageous achievement." Members of the team had planned to leave Kabul on a flight, according to The New York Times, but their flight was canceled amid the chaos at the airport as thousands attempted to escape. The government of Qatar sent a plane and expedited visa processes to bring the girls to Doha, according to a statement from the Digital Citizen Fund, the team's parent organization. The United States, the European Union and other nations, (including Graduate Women International), said in a joint statement: "We are deeply worried about Afghan women and girls, their rights to education, work and freedom of movement. We call on those in positions of power and authority across Afghanistan to guarantee their protection."

https://www.huffpost.com/entry/members-afghanistan-all-girls-robotics-team-flee_n_611ec040e4b0e5b5d8e7e314

<https://www.nbcnews.com/news/world/oklahoma-mom-11-helps-rescue-10-girls-afghanistan-s-robotics-n1277153>

Athletes who show that sport and study go hand in hand

The results are in. Team USA's biggest Olympic winners are ... women. They made history in Tokyo, nabbing nearly 60% of all U.S. medals. Kate Nielson, AAUW

Gabby Thomas, is an American track-and-field athlete. She is the third-fastest woman of all time in the 200 metres with her result of 21.61 seconds, which was set at the 2020 US Olympic trials. She won an individual bronze medal and a team silver medal at the 2020 Summer Olympics in Tokyo. Thomas is African-American on her mother's side and Jamaican on her father's side. A graduate of Harvard University, she studied neurobiology and global health as an undergraduate. While at Harvard, Thomas won 22 conference titles across her three years of athletics in six different events, setting the school and Ivy League records in the 100 meters, 200 meters, and the indoor 60 meters. She signed a contract with New Balance and turned pro in October 2018, forgoing her last year of collegiate eligibility. After Harvard, she

moved to Austin, Texas. She is pursuing a master's degree at the University of Texas at Austin in epidemiology.

Anna Kiesenhofer (born in Austria, on 14 February 1991) is a **cyclist, mathematician and Olympian**. Kiesenhofer, studied a doctorate in mathematics at the Technical University of Vienna and the University of Cambridge in the United Kingdom. She is currently a postdoctoral fellow in mathematics at the École Polytechnique Fédérale de Lausanne (EPFL). (Wikipedia).

Hadia Hosny of Egypt, is the World No. 40 in women's doubles in badminton and a three-time Olympian. The 32-year-old is also a parliamentarian in Egypt in the Sport and Welfare committee. A professor at the British University of Egypt, she also holds a Master in Biomedicine at the University of Bath, UK, and has a Ph.D. In Pharmacology of El Cairo University.

Charlotte Hym, was born in Paris. She asked for a skateboard at the age of twelve because she saw so many people skateboarding in her local area. Hym was an undergraduate student at the Paris Descartes University, where she majored in sports science. After graduating, she started a master's program in neuroscience. She remained in neuroscience as a doctoral researcher, focusing on cognitive neuroscience. She looked at the impact of maternal voices on newborn babies.

Louise Shanahan (born 26 January 1997) is an Irish athlete. A graduate of the University of Cork in her native country, Shanahan is pursuing her PhD at the University of Cambridge in England. Her main interest is medical physics. She studies and develops devices that could improve cancer diagnosis and treatment.

Andrea Murez from Israel, is a swimmer who participated in 50, 100 and 200 meters free-style and 4x100 mixed relays. Outside the pool Andrea is a biologist from Stanford University in the US.

Nadine Apetz is the first German boxer in an Olympics. She has received medals in European tournaments and in the World Boxing Championship. Nadine has a Masters in Neuroscience from the University of Bremen and hopes to complete a PhD at the University Hospital of Cologne. Apetz is studying a technique called deep brain stimulation, which involves applying electrical or electromagnetic currents to certain areas of the brain's "gray matter" – the goal, to help Parkinson's sufferers.

[Tokyo Olympians: Harvard Olympic medalist and neurobiologist, and 6 other Olympians and scientists - The Saxon](#)

Ukraine Army Criticized For Making Female Cadets Parade in Heels

Huffington Post, WORLD NEWS 07/06/2021

Ukraine's defense minister is under pressure from members of the government over the decision to have female military cadets wear pumps with heels in an important parade. "The pur-

pose of any military parade is to demonstrate the military ability of the army. There should be no room for stereotypes and sexism,” said a joint statement from three Cabinet members, including Minister of Veterans Affairs Yulia Laputina. It noted that about 57,000 women serve in the country’s armed forces and “have proved their worth not in heels, but with machine guns.” The military offered no explanation as to why female cadets were wearing a different type of shoe than male cadets.

[Ukraine Army Criticized For Making Female Cadets Parade In Heels | HuffPost](#)

Canada Names 1st Indigenous Governor General, by The Associated Press Reporter, July 6, 2021

OTTAWA — An Inuk leader who has served as a Canadian diplomat was named the country’s first Indigenous representative of the crown on Tuesday — an announcement that comes in the wake of a scandal over the nation’s long mistreatment of Indigenous people. The appointment follows the revelation that hundreds of unmarked graves of children have been found on the grounds of former residential schools across Canada — institutions to which Indigenous children were forcibly relocated for generations. Simon began her remarks by speaking in Inuktitut, and then in English thanked Trudeau for the “historic opportunity” saying she is “Honored, humbled and ready to be Canada’s first Indigenous governor general.”

[Canada names 1st Indigenous governor general - The Washington Post](#), [Canada names first Indigenous governor general \(breakingnews.ie\)](#)

Samoa welcomes 1st woman PM after court ends constitutional deadlock, by Gigi Suk, AXIOS, July 24, 2021

The Samoan court of appeals ruled that Mata'afa's Faatuatua ile Aua Samoa ua Tasi (FAST) party was the winner of the Pacific island nation's early April election that resulted in a tie. At the time, the two competing parties won 25 seats each in the 51-seat legislature, with the remaining seat held by an independent member. FAST's Mata'afa and the Human Rights Protection Party's Tuilaepa Sailele Malielegaoi, who had served as prime minister for more than 22 years, both claimed to be country's rightful leader, per NPR.

What happened: After the election, the Samoan electoral commission declared that an additional candidate from the HRPP, Ali'imalemanu Alofa Tuuau, won a seat in the legislature due to the requirement that a minimum of 10% of seats in parliament be held by women. The independent then backed FAST, deadlocking the legislature at 26-26. Samoa's Supreme Court ruled in May that the electoral commission's decision to add the extra seat was invalid, giving FAST the 26-25 majority.

Why it matters: This brings an official end to Malielegaoi's reign. At the time of the election, he was the world’s second-longest serving prime minister, per the Guardian.

<https://www.axios.com/samoa-first-woman-prime-minister-38073838-985c-4b11-9c55-df5bff5a2263.html>

“We Will Live in a Completely Different World”: A Conversation with Svetlana Alexievich, By Nadezhda Azhgikhina, The Nation, Translated by Antonina W. Bouis, August 2, 2021. (Partial Interview) The Nobel laureate on a new wave of repressions in Belarus, the role of women in revolution, and life after the pandemic.

You have often said that the Belarus opposition has a woman’s face. What does that mean?

SA: I couldn’t say that women composed the absolute majority of the protesters. Of the leaders, yes. When we think of our revolution, we think primarily of women in white on our streets and squares, women with white flowers calling for a peaceful solution. I am certain that if men had been in charge of the revolution, there would have been bloodshed. Minsk was stuffed with military equipment, military troops were brought to the city, and young people were ready to fight for freedom. **The merit of our revolution is that women did not allow bloodshed.** I was against violent methods from the start. We did not win victory, but we vanquished the dictatorship morally. For complete text and a follow up on this interview read:

[“We Will Live in a Completely Different World”: A Conversation With Svetlana Alexievich \(thenation.com\)](https://thenation.com)

Graduate Women International UPDATE - 21 July 2021, Human Rights

Council 47th Session On 21 July 2021, concluded its forty-seventh regular session with the adoption of 25 resolutions.

Promotion and Protection of All Human Rights, Civil, Political, Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, including the Right to Development, the Council adopted 25 resolutions including:

- **Resolution ([A/HRC/47/L.1](#))** on “**civil society space: COVID-19: the road to recovery and the essential role of civil society**”
- **Resolution ([A/HRC/47/L.2](#))** on “**menstrual hygiene management, human rights and gender equality**”
- **Resolution ([A/HRC/47/L.3](#))** on the “**realization of the equal enjoyment of the right to education by every girl**”
- **Resolution ([A/HRC/47/L.4/Rev.1](#))** on “**the right to education**”
- **Resolution ([A/HRC/47/L.18/Rev.1](#))** on “**accelerating efforts to eliminate all forms of violence against women and girls: preventing and responding to all forms of violence against women and girls with disabilities**”

Indonesia's army stops 'virginity tests' on female recruits, By Niniek Karmini, Associated Press, August 12, 2021

Human rights groups are welcoming Indonesia's decision to stop abusive "virginity tests" on female army recruits seven years after the World Health Organization declared they had no scientific validity.

A spokesman for the Indonesian Navy, said, "It's not virginity test, but we call it obstetrics and pregnancy test." **He said men and women were subjected to the same test.** He added, "With these tests, we will know the complete condition of the navy officer candidate." Indan Gilang Buldansyah, a spokesman for the air force, described its test as a "reproduction health test" for male and female recruits. For women in particular, he said, the test is meant to ensure that "the recruitment candidate will have no problem in her education and placement." He said the discovery of a cyst could interfere with a woman's education. The tests still happen in other countries. In January, a Pakistani court banned their use by the police in sexual assault cases, saying the procedure was "used to cast suspicion on the victim." Afghanistan also banned the tests, without success. In Indonesia, many women have endured it. Women in the army and the wives of male soldiers were also subjected to the procedure.

[Indonesian Army to End So-Called Virginity Tests, Chief Says - The New York Times \(ny-times.com\)](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/02/12/indonesia/virginity-tests.html)

Ethiopia confirms rapes 'without a doubt' in Tigray conflict, By CARA ANNA - Associated Press – 2/12/ 2021

Rape has occurred "conclusively and without a doubt" in Ethiopia's embattled Tigray region, the country's minister for women said in a rare government acknowledgement of the toll on civilians during 100 day of fighting. Tigray is a region of some 6 million people that remains largely cut off from the world. The minister's statement came hours after the Ethiopian Human Rights Commission in a new report said 108 rapes had been reported to health facilities in the past two months. The report said. "There is a possibility that the actual number of cases might be higher and more widespread than the reported cases."

Several witnesses have told The Associated Press about alleged rapes by Ethiopian soldiers or those from neighboring Eritrea, an enemy of the fugitive Tigray leaders and whose presence Ethiopia's government denies. "There are also disturbing reports of individuals allegedly forced to rape members of their own family, under threats of imminent violence," Pramila Patten said in the U.N. statement. "Some women have also reportedly been forced by military elements to have sex in exchange for basic commodities, while medical centers have indicated an increase in the demand for emergency contraception and testing for sexually transmitted infections."

[Ethiopia confirms rapes 'without a doubt' in Tigray conflict - Washington Times](https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/ethiopia-confirms-rapes-without-a-doubt-in-tigray-conflict/2021/02/12/)

— Dates and events worth noting —

8 September International Literacy Day, Global

14 September-2 October Human Rights Council, 48th session, United Nations Office, Geneva

18-20 September	Centenary of the French Association of University Women (AFFDU)
21 September	International Day of Peace, Global
5 October	World Teacher's Day, Global
11 October	International Day of the Girl Child, Global
15 October	International Day of Rural Women, Global
17 October	World day for the Eradication of Poverty, Global
24 October	United Nations Day, Global
17 November	Student's Day, Global
19 November	World Toilet Day, Global

2021-22 Meeting and Program Calendar

Monthly meetings are usually the second Tuesday of each month September to May with business meetings at 6:30 and programs open to the public at 7:00 p.m. **Please save the following 2021-22 meeting dates on your calendar:**

September 14: Lower level of the River Falls Public Library. Presentation by NCCWSL participants.

October 10: Lower Level of the River Falls Public Library – Program TBD

November 9: Lower Level of the River Falls Public Library – Program TBD

December 14: TBD

January 22 (1:00 p.m.): Women in Science Program

February 8: TBD

March 8: TBD

April 12: TBD

May 10: TBD



AAUW's MISSION STATEMENT

AAUW advances gender equity through advocacy, education, philanthropy, and research.

AAUW's VALUE PROMISE

Nonpartisan, Fact-based, Integrity. Inclusion and Intersectionality.

VISION STATEMENT

Equity for all.

INCLUSION

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, and socioeconomic status.