**Presidents’ News September 24, 2020**

Happy Fall!

It’s almost time for the next **WA Online Branch Program** to discuss the 19th Amendment Project as presented by the Burning Coal Theatre Company. We hope you had a chance to view one or all of these original short plays inspired by the Centennial of the federal amendment that prohibited denying the right to vote based on sex. If not, you’re very welcome to attend and participate. It’s next week, **Oct 1, at 4:30;** we will meet with the Artistic Director of the series—Jerry Davis—and Linda Martin, the chair of the Board of Directors of the Burning Coal Theatre Company. Carolyn will lead our discussion. Zoom link will be sent to all members soon. (If you would like to invite any non-members, please send us their email addresses so we can send the link) [https://burningcoal.org/the-nineteenth-amendment-project](https://burningcoal.org/the-nineteenth-amendment-project/)

**News from national:** We sat in on the latest AAUW Town Hall for members and the Board of Directors to preview two important changes that will affect all of us.

1. *Pending Dues Increase*—In October, the Board will take up the proposal to increase national dues, currently $59.00 per year. The dues may go up as little as $3.00 or as much as $10 for next year. If it’s $3, then it is likely that more increases will be phased in over the next couple of years. For WA Online, $10 increase will increase the annual dues, including state and branch dues, to $99.

Reasons for the increase are simple: Not enough funds are coming in to support member services AAUW delivers. Out of the $16 million AAUW budget, $3.9 million supports members services, while the member dues amount to just $2.9 million. Participants asked about other sources of funds such as the endowment and grants. None of the money in the Education endowment may be used for anything other than the administration of the endowment and educational grants for graduate research. As for grants, they rarely support administration services and even if they did, the COVID pandemic has greatly limited available funding for equity organizations such as AAUW.

2. *Removal of Degree Requirement for Membership—*We can expect to vote on this proposal in the Spring of 2021. We know that this is not a new issue, but it has become much more compelling to many leaders and members in recent years. In the past, one of the primary arguments in favor of this action was that the requirement was a barrier to expanding our membership because it excluded many who agreed with AAUW goals. Now the focus of the arguments in favor is the relevance of removing barriers to equal membership. The argument also recognized the hypocrisy of an organization whose primary mission is to seek equity for women and girls yet erects a barrier to full equity for those who agree with the mission. Removing this hypocrisy will remove an impediment AAUW faces when dealing with corporations and foundations who don’t want to be associated with a restrictive organization.