



***Jan has been a tireless crusader for the cause of women in film.  
Her award is well deserved.***

Martha M. Lauzen, Ph.D., Executive Director, Center for the Study of Women in Television and Film  
Professor, School of Theatre, Television and Film, San Diego State University

For immediate release

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## **Jan Lisa Huttner named 2012 “Agent of Change” by AAUW-Illinois**

***Jan has been an inspiration ... An example of how one woman can make a difference  
by starting with a small idea and making it an international phenomenon.***

Lois Strom, President, AAUW-IL, Inc.

CHICAGO—Chicago Film Critic Jan Lisa Huttner was honored with the 2012 “Agent of Change” Award from AAUW-IL, Inc. (the Illinois division of the American Association of University Women). Established in 1984, the award is presented annually to a member who has served as a catalyst to bring about positive societal change in the areas of education, equity, diversity, and/or public policy.

Huttner received the 2012 “Agent of Change” Award at the AAUW-Illinois Spring Convention on April 28. She was honored for providing leadership on two projects considered outstanding examples of AAUW’s mission, priorities and initiatives. Each project drew crowds to a special event in 2011: SWAN Day at the Goodman Theater in March, and the 5<sup>th</sup> annual Jane Addams Day celebration in December.

In presenting the award, Marilyn Lawler, AAUW-Illinois District 2 Director, said: “It is without hesitation that Jan Lisa Huttner embodies the boldness and beauty of a modern, American woman. All forms of media, especially cinema, are powerful avenues toward cultural understanding. Jan Lisa Huttner created a way to begin the necessary changes which will occur in this male dominated arena... Under her direction, Jan advanced equity for women and girls through the WITASWAN ideals and the SWAN Day project. The 2011 SWAN Day [activities] proved that Jan's actions are ingrained in AAUW's mission, purpose, and diversity.”

Huttner is an award-winning author/activist who writes regular columns as well as freelance articles for multiple print and Internet outlets. She received her B.A. from St. John’s College in Annapolis, Maryland (the “Great Books” school), and Masters Degrees in Psychology from Harvard University and the University of Chicago. A member of AAUW Chicago, Inc. for more than 25 years, Huttner has served AAUW at branch, state, and national levels. In addition to her commitment to AAUW, professional memberships include the Association for Women Journalists, the Chicago Film Critics Association, the Illinois Woman’s Press Association/National Federation of Press Women, and the Women Film Critics Circle. Writing under the Blog name “Penny,” Huttner has posted hundreds of reviews of movies by women filmmakers at [www.TheHotPinkPen.com](http://www.TheHotPinkPen.com). She is author of the 2011 book, *Penny’s Picks: 50 Movies by Women Filmmakers 2002-2011*, and co-publisher (with her husband Rich Miller) of the website *Films for Two: The Online Guide for Busy Couples* ([www.films42.com](http://www.films42.com)).

“One of the reasons we published *Penny’s Picks* was to let women know they have a voice,” Huttner said. “My goal is to persuade women to use their tremendous box office power – not only for themselves, but also for their children – for their sons as well as their daughters. When we choose films written and/or directed by women filmmakers, we put our money where our mouths are – *and in Hollywood, those people in the backrooms who tabulate the dollars, they will notice!*”

*Continued on next page...*

**From WITASWAN to International SWAN Day.** AAUW-Illinois' WITASWAN initiative began in 2002, after Jan read an article in *The New York Times* which implied that women do not succeed in the film industry because "some women in Hollywood, like female politicians and corporate executives, choose to interrupt their careers to have children." Huttner's enraged response, published by the *NYT*, brought the AAUW Value Promise to the forefront – that AAUW is a community that breaks through educational and economic barriers so that all women have a fair chance.

The AAUW-Illinois Board encouraged Huttner to organize multiple statewide programs which turned into the new project WITASWAN (Women in the Audience Supporting Woman Artists Now) in 2004. In 2007, the AAUW-Illinois Board invited Martha Richards (Executive Director of *WomenArts*) to speak at Spring Convention. Collaboration between Huttner and Richards on the International SWAN Day concept began immediately after.

"I am so happy that AAUW-Illinois is recognizing Jan's tireless work in support of women filmmakers. Jan's passion, energy, and sheer *chutzpah* have been a constant source of inspiration to everyone in the SWAN movement," said Richards.

International SWAN Day is now an annual holiday officially celebrated on the last Saturday of March (as part of *Women's History Month*). A variety of events celebrating women artists in all media are held around the world throughout the months of March and April — all honoring the achievements of women artists — and the necessary alliance between women artists on the one hand and women in the audience on the other. Since the first International SWAN Day in 2008, there have been almost 1,000 events around the world, including Argentina, Australia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Canada, China, Croatia, France, Germany, Ghana, India, Indonesia, Israel, Italy, Jamaica, Kenya, Philippines, Romania, Uruguay, Wales/U.K., and the USA. (For more information on WITASWAN and International SWAN Day, visit: <http://www.films42.com/witaswan.asp>).



Left: Barbara Spiegel (President, AAUW Chicago, Inc.)  
Right: Jan Lisa Huttner (2012 "Agent of Change")

Jan has been a member of AAUW Chicago, Inc. since 1983. This is the first time since 1989 that a Chicago Branch member has been named Illinois' "Agent of Change."

(Photo by Richard Bayard Miller)

"Upon meeting Jan for the first time at an AAUW-IL, Inc. state board meeting, she exhibited the light on her face and the sparkle in her eyes that made you know she was going to run with the idea of promoting change for women in the creative arts... I only see these efforts growing and continuing!" said Alice J. Huebner, AAUW-IL, Inc. President (2002-2004).

**Jane Addams Day Celebration.** "When the Jane Addams Commemorative Holiday was announced in Illinois, Jan recognized the opportunity and inspired AAUW-Illinois to promote statewide programs... Jan's dedication has made her an effective Agent of Change in Illinois and worldwide," said Marla Kim Benziger, AAUW-Illinois State President (2004-2006) and Chair of the first AAUW-Illinois Jane Addams Committee (2007-2008).

The special guest in 2011 was Anita Hill, senior advisor to the provost and professor of social policy, law, and women's studies at Brandeis University. Hill also appears in Suzanne Lacy's 2000 film *Dinner at Jane's* - now publically available from the Video Data Bank ([www.vdb.org](http://www.vdb.org)) in part through Jan's efforts. The Illinois-born Addams was the founder of Hull House, as well as the first American woman to receive the Nobel Peace Prize (1931).

**Ten years ago Jan cleverly decided to focus her time, talents and energy to change societal attitudes toward women in cinema. I imagine that by 2025 Oscar will be wearing a dress!**

Alice H. Smith, AAUW-IL, Inc., President 2000-2002

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