Our Mission: To honor women and girls, empowering them through education, service and leadership development.

**President’s Message**

April showers bring May flowers. And AAUW has showers of activities this month for you to enjoy. You won't want to miss our April branch meeting, Tuesday, April 12th. We have an outstanding speaker Sara Benzkofer, discussing on the subject of advocacy. We will also be nominating our 2016-2017 newly nominated officers so please plan on being there to voice your opinions.  We will also be discussing the upcoming book sale and need your help. I encourage you to attend all activities. Speaking of activities, I can hardly believe this year is coming to a close. However, that doesn't mean the work stops. Our new board will be busy planning activities and adventures for you to take advantage of for next year. I will be calling on people to step up and say YES to appointed positions, and to join in our AAUW 2016-2017 adventure!

~Courtney Wyant, President

**April Program**

Sara Benzkofer will be presenting our April program, "Every Voice Matters:  The Importance of Advocacy."

We often underestimate our ability to impact policy making at all levels of government. Yet, individual and collective action can be a powerful force for improving our community. Advocacy is about changing the conversation and defining the debate. Participants will learn how to use their voice and share their story to impact change.

Sara has more than 10 years of experience in developing, advocating for and passing legislation at the state level. As Director of Policy and Communications at the Minnesota Association for the Education of Young Children (MnAEYC) and the Minnesota School-Age Care Alliance (MnSACA), she has grown the policy and advocacy work of the organization by creating a Policy & Advocacy Advisory Group, having a strong presence at the legislature, providing resources and information to its members on how to be active participants in their democracy and leading the CARE (Child Care Advocates Ready to Emerge) Public Policy Fellowship, which builds advocacy leaders in the fields of early childhood and school-age care. She has a BA in English and Political Science from Gustavus Adolphus College and is a native of Austin.

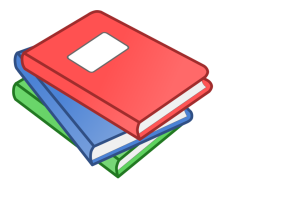
Social time will begin at 6:30pm with the program beginning at 7pm. We are meeting at Riverland in Room C110 in Austin East.  Park in the lot by the Theater and come in door E5.  Room C110 will be down the hall on the right.

Jill Maxfield and Catherine Haslag, Programs Co-Chairs

**May Banquet Approaches**

This year's spring banquet will be held at the Austin Country Club on May 10.  Dinner starts at 6pm.  You will have a choice of one of 3 main dishes: Italian Herb Breast of Chicken, Oven Roasted Cod Fillet, or Rosemary-Garlic Pork Loin.  A raspberry Romaine salad, Green Beans Amandine, and Roasted Yukon Gold Potatoes will also be served with dinner.  We are finalizing details regarding cost.  We will announce the final cost of the meal as soon as that has been established.  All those who RSVP for this event are responsible for paying the Country Club directly the night of the banquet, even if you cancel after the final RSVP date.

Please contact Catherine Haslag at [cshaslag@gmail.com](mailto:cshaslag@gmail.com) to RSVP for this event before May 5.  Be sure to include your entree choice with your RSVP.

**Spring Used Book Sale**

Books! Books! and More Books!  
The Annual Spring Used Book Sale is May 6 and 7.  
Book donations will be accepted at the library starting on April 22. Please  
take some time those two weeks before the sale to help sort and set up.  
The sign-up sheets were passed around at the March meeting and they are  
very slim in numbers!  We need everyone to help so please check your  
schedule and be prepared to sign up for the sale days. The sign-up sheets  
will be passed around again at the April meeting.

Thank, Joyce and Laura

**Small Groups**

**First Friday**

First Friday Luncheon will be at Steve's Pizza at 11:30 on Friday, April 1st. Contact Dorothy Krob by Thursday, March 31st if you would like to attend at [sdkrob@live.com.](mailto:sdkrob@live.com.)

**PM Book Group**

Evening book group will be at the home of Catherine Lemons (304 7th Pl. NW) on April 19th at 7:00 p.m. We will discuss *The Pearl That Broke Its Shell* by Nadia Hashima. Our May selection is *All the Light We Cannot See* by Anthony Doerr.

**Travel Group**

The Travel Club is going to meet on Thursday, April 14th, at 1:30 P.M. at the home of Dorothy Krob (2203 West Oakland Ave.).  We encourage everyone to bring ONE special item or purchase that they got from a city that they especially enjoyed visiting.  This can be a city within the United States or in a foreign country.  Please let me know if you plan to join us.  Thank you.  DedaRae Graber (433-7897)

**AM Book Group**

Morning Book Group will meet Thursday, April 21, 9:00 a.m. at Perkins.  Gerry Rustad will lead discussion of the book *"Deadline"* by John Sandford.

**Public Policy**

Evelyn Guentzel

At the beginning of March, 2016, The AAUW Board of Minnesota signed on to the Initiative, Courts Matter Minnesota Coalition (other members include NCJW – Minneapolis, Growth & Justice, Infinity Project and Gender Justice) to educate its members and the public about the huge number of vacancies in the lower courts and the need to fill these positions with a variety of people of different personal and professional backgrounds. Of additional concern is the need to confirm federal judges, including the Supreme Court Justice nominated by the President of the United States.

Senator Amy Klobuchar spoke on the Senate floor regarding the Supreme Court Vacancy on March 3rd:  “The critical importance of filling this seat is clear, and it is not something we can wait on for over a year. Not since the Civil War have we had a vacancy for over a year. And, may I add, there is plenty of time for the Senate to consider and confirm the nominee. Is it convenient? No, it is not convenient. There is a lot going on. It is an election year. Things happen. Unexpectedly, Justice Scalia died. And many people who knew him well, such as my law professor in Chicago, miss him. But he died, and that triggered a duty on the part of the President and on our part.” Even Sandra O’Connor has weighed in.

So what is the urgency:  As of this writing, there are 81 total vacancies; 31 Judicial Emergencies, 12 nominees awaiting a vote from the full US Senate have cleared the Judiciary Committee; 22 nominees are awaiting a vote in the Judiciary Committee. There is no action on the Supreme Court and no intent.

BITS AND PIECES

\*\*\*Women have been leaders throughout history, and today the tradition of volunteer female leadership continues to flourish. Yet in terms of paid leadership, women’s elevation to top positions is relatively rare. Why do men still vastly outnumber women in these positions? AAUW’s newest research report, [*Barriers and Bias: The Status of Women in Leadership*](http://www.aauw.org/research/barriers-and-bias/), explores this question, drawing from scholarly research and paying special attention to stereotypes and biases.

\*\*\*MARCH 8 was International Women’s Day. There are worldwide efforts to put more women in leadership positions.

\*\*\*Can Austin Branch be more inclusive?

\*\*\*Anita Rosen, a member of AAUW-Maryland, testified in favor of pay equity in Maryland. She highlighted barriers to pay equity such as employers’ realization practices, and discrimination based on gender equity.

\*\*\*Did you hear Lady Gaga sing “Til It Happens to You” at the Oscars? She was introduced by Vice-President Joe Biden who spoke first about sexual assault and abuse on college campuses.

\*\*\*Governor Dayton has proposed six weeks of paid parental leave for all state employers, a common practice among local governments, and many businesses

**APRIL 12 IS EQUAL PAY DAY!**

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| **AAUW Monthly Financial Report** | | |
| **February 26 - March 25, 2016** | | |
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| **Period: 2/26/16 - 3/25/16** |  |  |
|  |  |  |
| **Opening Balance:** |  | **$5,599.63** |
|  |  |  |
| **Income:** |  |  |
|  |  |  |
| **Total Income:** | **$ -** | $5,599.63 |
|  |  |  |
|  |  |  |
| **Disbursements:** |  |  |
|  |  |  |
| Check order | 55.77 |  |
| Dues Paid | 21.25 |  |
|  |  |  |
| **Total Disbursements:** | **$77.02** |  |
|  |  |  |
| **Closing Balance 3/25/16** |  | **$5,522.61** |

*Mission Statement*: AAUW advances equity for women and girls through advocacy, education and research.

*Vision Statement:* AAUW will be a powerful advocate and visible leader in equity and education through research, philanthropy, and measurable change in critical areas impacting the lives of women and girls.

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AAUW Southern Highlights

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