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

**President’s Message**

As we reach the end of the calendar year, it is the perfect time to reflect on what we have accomplished in the last twelve months. The Austin Branch has continued to level the playing field for women and girls in Minnesota. We have raised thousands of dollars during our book sale which funds our scholarship programs, contributed to national causes, conducted successful science fair programs and awarded scholarships to deserving women while we remain in engaged in informative discussions at our monthly meetings. Your time, talent, participation and monetary contributions have made it possible to be inspired by a very successful year as we gear up for 2016. Let’s keep up the good work!

Before we begin to bake, shop, sing, decorate, travel or entertain I would like to remind you to attend our Annual Holiday Party on December 8th at 6:30pm located at the lovely Coffee House on Main. Please bring a monetary gift for our Science Fair Award program this year.  Whatever makes you grateful and warms you, I hope you will enjoy your holidays with passion.

Happy holidays to all, and best wishes for a bright and happy new year!

~Courtney Wyant, President

**Upcoming Programs**

Our annual holiday social will be held at Coffee on Main at 6:30p on December 8th.  We will also be collecting money to help cover the special award AAUW will provide at the 2016 STEAM Expo (science fair).  Bring a few dollars with you to support this award and help inspire our local young scientists.  Come and enjoy food, your favorite hot beverage and great company while we ring in the holidays.

Next up, Dawn Helgeson with the Arc of Mower County will be presenting during our January 12th program.  Come and learn more about the barriers faced by those with developmental and intellectual disabilities.  We will be meeting at the Arc of Mower County, located at 401 2nd Avenue NE in Austin.  Social time will begin at 6:30 PM with the program beginning at 7 PM.

Jill Maxfield and Catherine Haslag, Programs Co-Chairs

**Small Groups**

**AM Book Group**

Our morning book group is meeting Thursday, December 17th, 9:00 a.m. at Perkins.  Each member will review a book of her choice.  We are reading ***The Nightingale*** by Kristen Hannah for our January meeting.  Jan Gilbertson will lead the discussion and we will meet on at 9:00 a.m. on January 21st.

**First Friday**

First Friday will be at the Old Mill on Dec. 4th at 11:30 AM. In January, we will meet at El Mariachi on the second Friday, January 8th.  The First Friday is New Years Day.  Email Dorothy Krob by the Thursday before at [sdkrob@live.com](mailto:sdkrob@live.com)

**PM Book Group**

Evening book group will be at the home of Sue Grove on December 15th at 7:00 p.m. We will discuss *Rocket Girl* by George Morgan.  Please RSVP to Sue at sgrove@riverland.edu. Our January selection is *The Other Wes Moore* by Wes Moore.

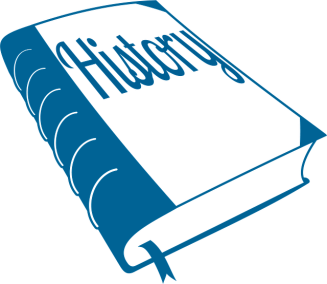
**Travel Group**

The Travel Club will meet at 1:30 PM on Wednesday, December 16th, at the home of Pat Purcell.  Everyone is asked to each bring and share a favorite Christmas ornament, photo, or memory with the group.  Also, please bring a small snack or treat to share.  We look forward to learning more about each other.

The Travel Club will meet in January at the home of Ann Odegaard.  Ann will be sharing information on her travels from visiting all of the United States Presidential Libraries.  This will be an interesting and informative meeting.

**Great Decisions**

The Great Decisions group completed its 2015 discussion program in October. We are looking forward to reconvening in February of 2016. Anyone interested in joining is encouraged to contact Evelyn at [erguentz@charter.net](mailto:erguentz@charter.net).

**Women’s History Project Update: Help needed!**

As already announced, we have engaged the explorer, Ann Bancroft to be the speaker for the all school assembly at AHS in February. (The school chose the date.) Her fee is $2500 and so far we have received donations from Austin Human Rights Commission, Early Morning Kiwanis and Rotary for a total of $1400. Any contribution you can make to this effort will be much appreciated, no matter how small. And if you have ideas of other groups who could be approached, please let us know.

Sue Grove and Carolyn Bogott had a very supportive meeting with the past and present AHS Honors History teachers. The new teacher, Dennis Schwab, is enthusiastic about working with his students on their women’s history projects. He will let us know the date of the judging so that some of you can see the projects and help with the evaluations. The projects will be on display in an open place so other students can see them as well. The two parts of this project reach all students at AHS, a rare opportunity, so please help if you can.

Women’s History Project Committee

Sue Grove, Jill Maxfield, and Carolyn Bogott



**AAUW STEAM Expo (science fair) Award**

During the November board meeting, the board decided to offer a special award at the STEAM Expo scheduled for February 26, 2016 at IJ Holton Intermediate School.  This award will be called the AAUW Inspiring Scientist Award.  It will be given to one project from each school and judged based on proper use of the scientific method, creativity/originality of the project, and the student's ability to explain their findings and their meaning.  This is an excellent opportunity for AAUW to get their name out in the community and support our students in their study of science.

One project from each school will receive this award.  Since students often work in pairs, this means we need to be repaired to provide 10 total awards and prizes.  The winning students will be able to choose a science kit or book for their prize.  Students will complete a form indicating which prize they want and then AAUW will order it and ship it to them.  In order to cover this, we are asking for donations from our members.  There will be an opportunity to donate to this effort at the December meeting.  Based on the funds that are raised, the possible prizes for students will be identified and announced at the January meeting.  We will also need volunteers to help judge this award at the science fair.  We will send around a sign-up sheet in January to identify these volunteers.

Please help support this effort by bringing your donations to the December meeting.  If you have any questions, contact Catherine Haslag at [cshaslag@gmail.com](mailto:cshaslag@gmail.com).

Science Fair Mentoring Project Update

We held our first mentoring session at Neveln on November 19th.  The kids learned about the scientific method and had the opportunity to talk with some scientists about what they do and how they became interested in science.  We are still looking for mentors to work with the kids.  You don't have to help at every session, just the ones you are able to attend.  For more information, please contact Catherine Haslag at [cshaslag@gmail.com](mailto:cshaslag@gmail.com).

Catherine Haslag

Science Fair Mentoring Project Coordinator

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| **AAUW Monthly Financial Report** | | |
| **October 31 - November 27, 2015** | | |
|  |  |  |
| **Period: 10/31/15 - 11/27/15** |  |  |
| **Opening Balance:** |  | **$6,047.58** |
| **Income:** |  |  |
|  |  |  |
| Donation - City of Austin | 1,000.00 |  |
| Donation - Kiwanis | 50.00 |  |
|  |  |  |
| **Total Income:** | **$1,050.00** | $7,097.58 |
|  |  |  |
| **Disbursements:** |  |  |
| Insurance | 185.00 |  |
| **Total Disbursements:** | **$185.00** |  |
|  |  |  |
| **Closing Balance 11/27/15** |  | **$6,912.58** |

**AAUW Board Meeting**

November 10, 2015

AAUW Board met at the Austin Public Library.

Secretary’s report was approved. The Board discussed the 2015-16 proposed budget. The budget was approved. Catherine Haslag submitted a check for $1000 from the City of Austin to be used for the Women’s History Month speaker.

Catherine Haslag gave an update on the program schedule. There will not be a Board meeting in December.

The Board discussed holding the May Banquet at the Country Club where members can order a meal from a menu. Catherine Lemons gave an update on membership and will work on an updated membership list.

Catherine Haslag reported on the Science Fair Mentorship Project. On November 12, 4th graders from Neveln will be transported to Riverland Community College for several activities: learning about germs and handwashing, coloration in animals, water cycle with the help of a drone, and oil spills. All children will receive a t-shirt. Mentors are still needed. Catherine proposed that AAUW provide an award and it was decided that the branch will award 5 prizes (to girls or boys), one at each of the 5 schools. It was discussed that the winners will choose a science kit worth $25-$30 each. Catherine H. will think about the criteria for these awards and report back to the Board in January.

Ruth has submitted her resignation as Secretary. The Board discussed a replacement and Courtney will announce the vacancy at the General meeting. Meeting adjourned.

Respectfully Submitted,

Ruth Monson, Secretary

*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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