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

**Co-President’s Message**

With 2016 coming to a close, we want to wish all of you a very happy and joyous holiday season. Our January and February programs will look a little different than in previous years. We will not be meeting in the traditional sense, as we did in October and November. We look forward to seeing you all at the social event planned for January and in smaller groups at the potlucks in February.

See you all at the December Holiday Social. Have a happy start to 2017.

****~Jill Maxfield and Catherin Haslag, Co-Presidents

**Upcoming Progams**

**December 13 - Holiday Party at the Coffee House on Main at 6:00 p.m.**

Please consider donating mittens, scarfs, hats and everyday socks for children in grades pre-k through high school. We are partnering with the Women’s Leadership Initiative (WLI) to meet the needs of children who do not have these items.

**(Upcoming Programs, cont.)**

**January 14 – Saturday Luncheon at the Austin Country Club at 11:30 a.m.**

Our guest speaker is John Haymond. He will discuss the Dakota tragedy. John, who is a former infantryman and paratrooper in the U.S. Army, is a conflict historian who researches the impact of war upon society. He has a BA in History and English Literature from the University of Minnesota and an MSc in History from the University of Edinburgh, Scotland. Originally from Florida, he currently resides in Austin, Minnesota with his wife and three children, where his is the Executive Director or the Mower County Historical Society.

**Please note the change of day and time for our January meeting. We know it is hard to go out on those dark winter nights, so please plan to join us on a Saturday for lunch!**

~Marijo Alexander and Sue Grove, Program Vice Presidents

**Small Groups**

**Great Decisions\***

The group will begin again on January 23rd at 1:00 P.M. at Riverland in Room C124.

\*We are planning for the next round of discussions for 2017. Anyone who is interested should email Evelyn at [erguentz@charter.net](mailto:erguentz@charter.net).

**AM Book Group**

Morning Book Group will meet Thursday, December 15.  We meet at 9:00 a.m. around one of the round tables at Perkins.  Ellen Stark will lead discussion of the book "I Am Malala" by Malala Yousafzai.  The book for January 19 is "Me Before You" by Jojo Moyes.

**PM Book Group**

The evening book group will not meet in December. We will meet next on January 17th at 7 PM at the home of Judy Pesonen. Please RSVP to Judy at [rpesonen@smig.net](mailto:rpesonen@smig.net). Our selection is *LaRose* by Louise Erdrich. Our February book is The Martian by Andy Weir.

**First Friday**

First Friday will be 11:30 on December 2nd at the Old Mill.  On January 6th we will meet at Japan Panda at 11:30. Please remember to email Dorothy Krob by Thursday noon of the day before at [sdkrob@charter.net](mailto:sdkrob@charter.net) if you plan to attend.

**Travel Group**

The Travel Club will be meeting at Pat Purcell’s home on Thursday, December 15th at 1:30 P.M.  We encourage everyone to bring a Christmas Memory to share.  This may be a photo, an ornament, some special treasure, or just a special story.  Also, please bring a Christmas treat to share with the group.

In January, our Travel Club will be meeting at the home of Dorothy Krob on Thursday, January 12th at 1:30 P.M.  We will be sharing information on different National Parks.  We hope to see you there.  Please either email or call (433-7897) DedaRae if you plan to join for either.  Thank you!

**SPOTLIGHT ON MEMBERS**



**AAUW’s Learnings of Laura!**

My life began in St. Paul, Minnesota. I was raised with one sister and one brother. Life was good!

My college career began at Anoka Ramsey Community College. I paid for my first two years of college by teaching private piano lessons through a Community Education program. I completed my Bachelor’s Degree at Midland College in 1973. I began teaching music and third grade at Trimont Elementary School in Trimont, MN.

I was introduced to AAUW while I was teaching Adult Education in St. James, MN. However, at that time the meetings were in the evenings and I taught night school. I did keep in close contact with the wonderful women I meet with that group. In 1994, after completing my Master’s Degree from Mankato State University in Community Education I was hired by the Jackson School District as their Community Education Director. I was introduced to many wonderful women that worked at Minnesota West Community College and they invited me to join AAUW at that time.

The Jackson Branch held two large fund raisers each year. In the fall we did “Tour of Tables”. This was really a fun event. We used the gym of an old school building, decorated it all for the event and invited women to host a table. They created their theme and set the table for 10 guests. We usually earned over $1,000.00. In the spring we used the same gym and held a rummage sale. People in the community waited for this sale, as it was big and “classy”. Our funds supported scholarships for non-traditional women attending Minnesota West.

When I came to Austin in 2000, I immediately looked for AAUW. I wanted to meet new friends, and I was not surprised when I called upon Terry Becker-Ersland to inquire about the meetings. She invited me to attend the September meeting and the rest is history.

I wrote my Master’s paper on Literacy, so it is no wonder that I jumped in on the Used Book Sale with both feet. I love to read, any type of book and I read old cook books from cover to cover. I have a huge collection of antique cook books. Besides reading I enjoy spending time at my lake home and share it with my three sons, their families and 8 grandchildren.

Words of wisdom from my mother, who would have been 95 last week, “You may not think AAUW is so important when you are raising a family, but you will develop friendships that will last a lifetime!” Truer words were never spoken. AAUW is a lifetime of friends.

~Laura Tjomsland

**Public Policy**

Another year is quickly drawing to a close. 2016 has been an active year for AAUW at the national level, with its focus on Get Out The Vote strategies and providing ways for us to keep track of candidates’ initiatives from local through national campaigns. As always the emphasis for AAUW is the effort to encourage and support women who choose to run for public office. For anyone it is a commitment of time and energy and, sometimes, sacrifice. This November, 2016, AAUW gives thanks for milestones which women have achieved through their activism:

--AAUW ACTION NETWORK supporters sent tens of thousands of messages to state and federal legislators.

--Iowa elected its first female Speaker of the House, Iowa State Representative Linda Upmeyer (R.-Clear Lake). Now, the leader in the Senate, also female, is Senator Pam Jochum (D-Dubuque).

--The first Native American woman, Deane Humetewa, member of the Hopi tribe, has been confirmed as U.S. District Court Judge.

--Vermont became the fifth state that requires employers to provide paid sick days (3 each year in 2017, and 5 by 2019).

--The newest National Monument is the historic Sewall-Belmont House that was designated by President Obama on Equal Pay Day. Alva Belmont was a president of the National Women’s Party (NWP), and Alice Paul was the founder of the NWP and the author of the Equal Rights Amendment.

--In time for Memorial Day Women’s inurnment honors were restored at Arlington Cemetery by Congress and President Obama. Women Airforce Service Pilots (WASP) flew domestic missions during WWII.

--The U.S. Supreme Court upheld affirmative action programs in *Fisher vs. University of Texas.* The goal is to ensure a diverse student body and access to education.

--The Department of Justice is going to begin a program of implicit bias training for over28,000 employees including law enforcement agents and prosecutors. AAUW’s research has shown that the training can uncover subtle views on race, sexual orientation and gender.

--Several states—Connecticut, Oregon, California Colorado—have been utilizing forms of automatic voter registration and reaching out to the general population and students in colleges and universities. States are also providing more early voting opportunities.

--Carla Hayden is the first female and African to be sworn in as the American Chief Librarian of the Library of Congress.

--The Historic Sexual Assault Survivors’ *Bill of Rights* has been signed into law. The bipartisan legislation was signed into law by President Obama in October.

--Women are making gains in the U.S. Senate; there are now 21 serving, the highest number in history.

--AAUW supported ballot initiatives have passed: workers are getting raises, sick leaves are being being provided and/or extended, automatic voter registration is increasing, and publc education is being protected.

Progress may come slowly, but with determination, it comes. For AAUW, 2016 has been a good year.

**Austin AAUW General Meeting Minutes**

November 8, 2016

AAUW board met at the Austin Public Library. Present were Catherine Haslag, Jill Maxfield, Nicole Cizik, Marijo Alexander, DedaRae Graber, Catherine Lemons, Sue Grove, Evelyn Guentzel and Peggy Benzkofer.

DedaRae made a motion to approve the minutes of the October, 2016 meeting. Marijo seconded the motion and the motion passed.

Nicole reported an opening balance of $6,000. The addition of dues and House Tour proceeds brings the closing balance to $9,296.97. All dues have been sent to national.

The program for December will be the Christmas Party at the Coffee House. Members are asked to bring winter gear for children. Sue pointed out that we will not be able to meet at the library unless we change our meeting time as the library now closes at eight. The decision was made to begin the meeting at 6:30 and there will be no refreshments but there will be a social time after as time permits. This will not be an issue until March as there are other plans for meetings before March.

There are 69 paid members.

By laws updates and website update were tabled until the next meeting. Evelyn offered to help with the by laws update.

Women’s History Month committee met with the teacher at Austin High School. Linda Matts of AAUW will speak at the assembly. The suggested question for students to use for their project is comparing women’s lives in 1920 and 2016 using specific examples.

Catherine Haslag reported on the Science Fair Mentoring project. There are 44 students enrolled at Neveln. There will be an AAUW award for each school at the Science Fair. There will be special Science Fair preparation sessions held at the library on November 18 and December 10.

NCCWSL (National Conference for College Women Student Leaders) committee of four will be formed to work on this.

Peggy made a motion that AAUW nominate Bonnie Rietz to be honored as a Pillar of the Community. Nikki seconded the motion and the motion passed. Hopefully, a woman will be nominated by AAUW each year.

Sue made a motion to adjourn the meeting. DedaRae seconded the motion and the motion passed.

After the board meeting, members enjoyed a brief social time followed by a short general membership meeting. Catherine and Richard Lemons presented the program on poverty in Austin.

Respectfully submitted: Peggy Benzkofer, Secretary

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **AAUW Monthly Financial Report** | | |
| **November 1 - November 30, 2016** | | |
|  |  |  |
| **Period: 11/1/16 - 11/30/16** |  |  |
|  |  |  |
| **Opening Balance:** |  | **$9,196.97** |
|  |  |  |
| **Income:** |  |  |
|  |  |  |
| House sale proceeds | 30.00 |  |
|  |  |  |
| **Total Income:** | **$ 30.00** | $9,226.97 |
|  |  |  |
|  |  |  |
| **Disbursements:** |  |  |
|  |  |  |
| **Total Disbursements:** | **$0.00** |  |
|  |  |  |
| **Closing Balance 11/30/16** |  | **$9,226.97** |

*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.

**Southern Highlights Editor:** Rae Dawn Rao [rao\_raedawn@yahoo.com](mailto:rao_raedawn@yahoo.com) **Minnesota State Website:** <http://www.aauwmn.org> **Association Website:**  <http://www.aauw.org> **Association e-mail: info@aauw.org**



\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

AAUW Southern Highlights

1001 22nd Ave. SW

Austin, MN 55912