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

**President’s Message**

March comes in like a lion, and out like a lamb. Well, that is certainly true of AAUW's planned activities for the upcoming month. I am particularly excited to hear about the subject of Women’s History at a local level from John Haymond the Director of Mower County Historical Society. We have a whirlwind of opportunities and responsibilities. The Nominating Committee will soon be gathering our slate of officers for the upcoming year. You may receive a call from members of our Nominating Committee giving you the opportunity to step into action as one of our officers for the 2016-2018 year. While I have been off duty for a few months with a foot surgery many board members have stepped up to help out and I have realized that not only are we a group that supports our large mission but a focused group that enhances our connections to each other through creating a community of caring. That caring has taken the form of supporting each other during times of loss, health issues and transitions. I continue to feel it is an honor to be a part of a growing organization of caring women who value the uniqueness that each and every one of us contribute to the value and teamwork of our caring community. Thank you for the contributions you make to advance equity for women and girls!

~Courtney Wyant, President

**Upcoming Programs**

John Haymond from the Historical Society will be presenting our March program featuring women in history on March 8th. The winners of the Women’s History Contest held in February will be our special guests. Sydney Bina will share her presentation on "Sexism in Advertising" and Vanessa Garcia will share her presentation on "Opportunities for Women 50 years ago vs Today”. Social time will begin at 6:30pm with the program beginning at 7pm.  We are meeting at the Library.

Jill Maxfield and Catherine Haslag, Programs Co-Chairs

**Small Groups**

**AM Book Group**

Morning book group will meet at Perkins at 9:00 a.m. on Thursday, March 17.  Lois McConnell will lead discussion of the book "The Nightengale" by Kristen Hannah.  Our April selection is "Deadlline" by John Sandford.

**First Friday**

The First Friday Luncheon will be at King Buffet on Friday, March 4th, at 11:30. Contact Dorothy Krob 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 Rae Dawn Rao on March 15th at 7:00 p.m. We will discuss the Page Turners’ selection *The Life We Bury* by Allen Eskens.  Please RSVP to Rae Dawn at rao\_raedawn@yahoo.com. Our April selection is *The Pearl That Broke Its Shell* by Nadia Hashima.

**Travel Group**

The Travel Club will be meeting at the home of Lois McConnell on Thursday, March 3rd at 1:30 P.M.  (Notice this is a change from our regular meeting day).  This is a meeting to get us organized and ready for several more meetings in the future months.  We invite you to join us and become a part of this fun and interesting group.  Please bring your ideas, calendars, and positive energy with you on the 3rd.  We always welcome new members.  Please let me know if you plan to join us.  Thank you, DedaRae Graber.

**Great Decisions**

Great Decisions discussions group will meet March 28 at 1:00 P.M.  “The Rise of Isis”.  Born out of an umbrella organization of Al Qaeda in Iraq, the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (ISIS) burst onto the international stage after it seized Fallujah in December 2013.  Since then, the group has seized control of a number of critical stronghold in the countries and declared itself a caliphate, know as the Islamic State. Still, the question remains: What is ISIS, and what danger does it pose to U.S. interests?

**Women’s History Month**

**Well-Celebrated …A Little Early!**

On February 12th, 70 students from Dennis Schwab’s Honors American History Class at AHS presented 37 projects on various subjects relating to Women’s History. The topics ranged from “ Billie Jean King”, “Women in the Work Force”, “Women Inventors”, to“ A Summary of Women’s History in the U.S.”. Mr. Schwab had allowed the students to choose their own subjects this year. Branch members Jill Maxfield, Sue Grove, Kathy Kester, Dorothy Krob, Nikki Lindberg and Carolyn Bogott were on hand to assist with the evaluating process. It was apparent to the “judges” that most of the students, boys and girls alike, had developed increased awareness of some of the past struggles of women to achieve equal rights and equal pay. They told us that they had taken for granted girls and women’s rights that are currently available and did not know before that these rights were long fought for and relatively recently won.

Arctic explorer Ann Bancroft (center) is pictured with winners Sydney Bina (left) and Vanessa Garcia (right).

The winners were Sydney Bina with "Sexism in Advertising" and Vanessa Garcia with "Opportunities for Women 50 years ago vs Today". Cash awards were presented at the all school assembly on February 23. These two students will present their projects at the March Branch meeting.

On February 23, our Branch sponsored an all school assembly featuring Ann Bancroft, Polar Explorer. Sue Grove served very graciously as the Mistress of Ceremonies and presented the awards to the Women’s History project contest winners.

Ann Bancroft held the audience spellbound as she described her polar expeditions, as well as her current work in spreading awareness of the need to protect and conserve water around the world. She had just returned in December from an expedition rafting the entire length of the Ganges with a group of seven other women, one from each continent. The purpose of the trip was to bring awareness to the local people and people around the world about the importance of water.

A number of students and teachers came up after the presentation to speak to Ann about how inspiring her presentation had been to them. It was an amazing morning and AAUW members can feel proud to have offered this to the student body of AHS.

Thanks to Sue Grove, Peggy Benzkofer, Carolyn Bogott, and Jill Maxfield for their help in soliciting funds and arranging for this assembly.

**Public Policy**

Evelyn Guentzel

March comes in like a lamb……….unless your paying attention to the political season. Enough said.

Meanwhile, this news letter continues where I left off to recap AAUW’s successes in 2015. We have much to be proud of as members of AAUW. At the national level the leadership is ever vigilant when it comes to issues concerning women and girls.

-President Barack Obama”s paid leave executive order includes many AAUW priorities: 1) Healthy Families Act allows for up to seven days of paid sick time; 2) the budget plan would help create paid leave programs; 3) a memorandum would ensure federal employees have access to at least six weeks of paid sick leave for the birth of a child. Moreover it includes a recommendation to Congress that it provide the same; The White House blog included AAUW’s statement.

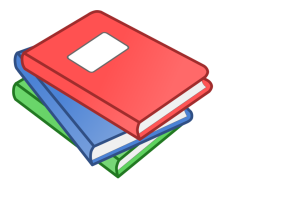
- Final Rules were issued by the U.S. Department of Labor which prohibit federal contractors from retaliating against employees who ask about or share salary information. AAUW led the fight that secured the executive order. Over 1000 AAUW members submitted comments in support to the Department. It protects almost 28 million people who work for federal contractors.

-The Violence Against Women Reauthorization Act of 2013 took years of hard work and dedication to ensure campus safety provisions. Colleges and universities are now required to take new and better steps to end sexual violence on their campuses.

-AAUW holds an annual event to honor TITLE IX. Over 200 attendees attended this bipartisan event, including 45 congressional and committee offices, 25 advocacy and civil rights organizations and AAUW members. AAUW’s Title IX Champions for the year were Lobby Corp members.

-AAUW public priorities were included in the 2015 State of the Union Address:  reforms that would provide concrete economic benefits to women and their families, for example, equal pay for equal work, expanded care tax credits, paid sick days and paid family leave, more accessible and affordable college, improved retirement savings,raising minimum wage, investments in education. The focus on these issues impacts all working citizens.

-AAUW has launched its 2016 GET OUT THE VOTE campaign.

**Spring Used Book Sale**

Get ready!  Start clearing out the winter selection of books.  The sale is May 6 and 7.  We will need plenty of your help in the two weeks before the sale to set up and organize.  Sign up list will be ready at the March meeting.

Thanks! Joyce and Laura

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| **AAUW Monthly Financial Report** | | |
| **January 25 - February 25, 2016** | | |
|  |  |  |
| **Period: 1/25/16 - 2/25/16** |  |  |
|  |  |  |
| **Opening Balance:** |  | **$7,439.63** |
|  |  |  |
| **Income:** |  |  |
|  |  |  |
| Dues Received | 25.00 |  |
| Donation - Speaker | 335.00 |  |
|  |  |  |
| **Total Income:** | **$360.00** | $7,799.63 |
|  |  |  |
|  |  |  |
| **Disbursements:** |  |  |
|  |  |  |
| Women's History Speaker | 2,000.00 |  |
| Women's History Awards | 200.00 |  |
|  |  |  |
| **Total Disbursements:** | **$2,200.00** |  |
|  |  |  |
| **Closing Balance 2/25/16** |  | **$5,599.63** |

*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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