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

**Co-President’s Message**

Happy Spring! The snow has melted (at least it was when we wrote this), birds are appearing, and a few irises are starting to appear in flower beds. You may have even started to clean some of the winter grime out of your house (even though it seems we never really get all of that sand and grit no matter how thoroughly we vacuum).

As you clean the bones of winter out of your house, you may find yourself thinking about new ways to be involved in AAUW or just our Austin community on the whole. Maybe you would like to be a more active volunteer. Maybe you are already active but want to find some new or different ways to volunteer. Here are a few ideas on how to be more involved:

1. Attend AAUW state and/or National Convention. If you’d like more information on how to register for these conventions, please email Catherine Haslag at [cshaslag@gmail.com](mailto:cshaslag@gmail.com). Our branch can send 5 delegates to the state convention, but they need to register by April 7. National Convention will be held in June in DC, so there is more time to register if you are interested.
2. Volunteer to help with the book sale at the library. You can either help the days of the sale (May 5 and 6) or help sort books for the event. Please contact Laura Tjomsland at [viola212.lt@gmail.com](mailto:viola212.lt@gmail.com) to sign-up or for more information.
3. Talk to other AAUW members to see how they are involved in the community. There is a plethora of ways to be involved: Austin Artworks Center, mentor at an elementary school or at the Community Learning Center teaching English to adults, Science Fair Mentoring Project, Habitat for Humanity, Red Bike Program, etc. There are so many ways to be involved, you just need to find the right opportunity for you.
4. Be an officer in AAUW. A great way to be more involved in AAUW is to become a leader in the organization. When a leadership position opens up, consider running for it. This will grow your leadership skills and bring new ideas and leadership styles to the organization. It also keeps others from burning out because they are always acting in a leadership role.

Looking forward to seeing you all as we emerge from our winter hibernation and get involved in the rebirth spring brings.

~Jill Maxfield and Catherin Haslag, Co-Presidents

**April Program**

**April 11th Program – Women’s History Month**

Please plan to attend the April 11 AAUW program at 6:30 p.m. at Riverland Community College in the Austin East building, Room C110. Our program features the winners of the 11th annual Women’s History Month Contest that centered around the theme, “The Changing Role of Women in the Twentieth Century.”

Austin High School students Hannah Alberts, Emily Sayles and Isaac Christopherson all tied for first- place.  They pose with Lisa Maatz in the photo below.  **Note:** Lisa serves as Vice President of Government Relations and she works to advance AAUW’s priority issues on Capital, in the White House, and in coalition with other organizations.

From left to right:    **Austin High School students:** Isaac Christopherson, Emily Sayles and Hannah Alberts.   **Women’s History Month Speaker:** Lisa Maatz.

Please help us congratulate them and learn about their amazing project presentations!

**COMING IN MAY:**

Our AAUW spring banquet will be at The Hormel Historic Home on May 9. Social time begins at 6:00 p.m. in the Historic Home and dinner will be served at 6:30 p.m. in the Banquet Hall. A cash bar will be available. **The cost is $20.00; pre-payment is required on or before May 4.** Marijo and Sue will receive your checks at the April 11th meeting −OR− you may call to make other arrangements.

**Anyone attending must RSVP on or before May 4**.You mayemail Marijo at[***marijo.alexander@riverland.edu***](mailto:marijo.alexander@riverland.edu)or Sue at[***sue.grove@riverland.edu***](mailto:sue.grove@riverland.edu)***.*** When you arrive at the Hormel Historic Home, please check in with us.

**We hope to see you on April 11 and May 9!**

~Sue Grove and Marijo Alexander, Program Committee co-chairs

**SPOTLIGHT ON MEMBERS**

**Angie Ruhter**



Angie grew up in Jackson, MN. And went to school in Issaquah, Washington where she met her first husband. They lived all over Minnesota and Wisconsin and she went to a variety of schools. When their fourth child was born, she was a student at Austin Community College (now Riverland) completing a nursing degree. Her first nursing jobs were in in the Twin Cities area, and Redwing. The family then moved to St. Louis, MO. While they were living there, Angie’s husband left them.

After her oldest child graduated from high school, she moved the family to Austin to be near close friends. Eventually she married David and moved to his farm north of town. “I love living in the country!” she says.

While her middle son was attending St. Thomas University, Angie took classes for free through their parent’s program. With all the credits she had accumulated through the years, she was able to complete the BSN degree one year ago.

“I had heard about AAUW for 15 years, however because I did not have a four-year degree, I was not invited to attend. Even though the policy changed, I wasn’t sure I would be welcome so I did not attend. I have two very close friends who kept trying to get me to attend. Finally, I attended a book club meeting. I really enjoyed the discussion and how friendly and accepting everyone was. I enjoy being challenged and always like to learn new things. I like meeting new people. I especially liked the recent potluck in February. I have invited others to come to meetings and the book group.”

Angie expresses the essence of AAUW membership - learning new and challenging things, meeting new people, as well as deepening old friendships. We are so honored to have her in our branch!

**Small Groups**

**Great Decisions**

Great Decisions will meet on April 24th at 1:00 pm in Room C 107 at Riverland.  We will be discussing the 3rd article in the 2017 book.

**AM Book Group**

Morning book group is reading A Tree Grows in Brooklyn by Betty Smith.  We will meet at Perkins at 9:00 a.m. on Thursday, April 20.

**PM Book Group**

The evening book group will meet next on April 18th at the home of Peggy Benzkofer, 104 21st St. NW, at 7 PM. The book is *Lab Girl* by Hope Jahran. Please RSVP to Peggy at pjbenzko@gmail.com. Our May selection is *Indian Givers* by Jack Weatherford.

**First Friday**

First Friday is at 11:30 on Friday, April 7th at the Coffee House on Main. Please email Dorothy Krob by Thursday at [sdkrob@live.com](mailto:sdkrob@live.com) if you are interested in joining us for lunch.

**Travel Group**

The Travel Club will be meeting on April 20th at 2:00 P.M. at the home of Gail Minerich.  Dick Flisrand will be sharing information and photos from their trip to Cuba.  I’m sure this will be an extremely interesting program.  Please let me know if you plan to join us.  Thank you.

DedaRae Graber

**PUBLIC POLICY**

Evelyn Guentzel

As we wind down another successful year of AAUW—Austin Branch we can reflect on the actions of AAUW at the national level. Politically this has been a tumultuous year and national has been in the thick of some of the events, outspokenly voicing its concerns about the future for women and girls. While we may disagree about some of the issues it is difficult to ignore those which directly affect girls and women of all ages. As members of AAUW and women who pay attention to what the variety of media has to tell us and discuss and what we ourselves think about and analyze we more than likely consider how decisions affect girls and women. Without going into a lot of detail this policy report cites a few of the topics that AAUW looks at closely.

We can celebrate AAUW’s efforts to promote equity.

We’re just one week away from Equal Pay Day 2017! On Tuesday, April 4, people across the United States will observe a national day of action to combat the gender pay gap. This date symbolizes how far into the year women must work to bring home what men made in 2016. While that's not exactly cause for celebration, observing Equal Pay Day (EPD) with events, press, and calls-to-action can be an effective way to raise awareness about the gender pay gap in your community. Now, AAUW has made it easier to take action with a letter to an editor tool. On the website one can find important talking points which may also trigger your own thoughts. Tell your Congress embers to support strong, effective legislation to close the gender pay gap.

• In addition to sharing chants and signs representing a myriad of female issues in Washington, D.C., members of AAUW and other organizations and individuals raised their voices locally and through various media outlets to send the message of equity and respect for women and girls.

• On Martin Luther King Jr. Day, AAUW celebrated the achievements of AAUW awardees of the Coretta Scott King Fund.

• As we approach the 45th anniversary of Title IX in June 2017, AAUW is assessing the recent efforts of the U.S. Department of Education’s Office for Civil Rights (OCR) and evaluating the tremendous positive effect it’s had in the past eight years with enforcing this longstanding civil rights law. Take action in your community by delivering Title IX resources to local schools and help to support gender equity in education.

• New data on Human Trafficking paints a disturbing picture—building awareness and fighting this ruthless practice must continue.

• Continue to advance equity for women and girls through advocacy, philanthropy and research.

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| **AAUW Monthly Financial Report** | | |
| **February 22 - March 31, 2017** | | |
|  |  |  |
| **Period: 2/22/17 - 3/31/17** |  |  |
|  |  |  |
| **Opening Balance:** |  | **$9,153.24** |
|  |  |  |
| **Income:** |  |  |
|  |  |  |
| Dues Received | 74.00 |  |
| Misc income | 15.00 |  |
| Book sale proceeds |  |  |
| House sale proceeds |  |  |
|  |  |  |
| **Total Income:** | **$89.00** | $9,242.24 |
|  |  |  |
|  |  |  |
| **Disbursements:** |  |  |
|  |  |  |
| Dues Paid - National | 43.31 |  |
| Dues Paid - State | 18.00 |  |
| Women's History awards | 200.00 |  |
| Hormel Historic Home rental | 184.80 |  |
| NCCWSL registration | 425.00 |  |
| National Convention dues | 674.00 |  |
|  |  |  |
| **Total Disbursements:** | **$1,545.11** |  |
|  |  |  |
| **Closing Balance 3/31/17** |  | **$7,697.13** |

**Used Book Sale Approaches!**

****The Annual Spring Used Book Sale will be held at the Austin Public Liibrary on Friday, May 5 and Saturday May 6.  A sign up for volunteers was passed around at the last meeting.  There are still MANY hours to fill. We need all of our members to help with this event.  The Book Sale is one of our biggest fund raising events each year.  It cannot be done without your help.

Collection of books from your personal library are encouraged.  We will collect and sort for the two weeks prior to the sale.  Help is needed every day, especially the last few days before the sale.

Sign up lists will be passed around at the next meeting. Calls for help will follow.

Laura Tjomsland and Joyce Goetz

Book Sale Co-Chairs

**AAUW Board Meeting Minutes**

March 14, 2017

AAUW board met at the Austin Public Library. Present were Catherine Haslag, Nicole Cizik, Marijo Alexander, DedaRae Graber, Catherine Lemons, Sue Grove, Dorothy Krob, Carolyn Bogott and Peggy Benzkofer.

Catherine H. called meeting to order at 5:50.

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

Nicole reported that there was no activity in the checking account in the last month. She has paid the awards to the Women’s History month winners. The closing balance is $8,953.24.

The program for April will be the winners of the Women’s History Month competition. The May meeting will be the dinner.

There are 71 paid members with the addition of two new members. They are Melissa Siebke and Susan Fell Johnson.

By laws updates have been submitted.

Women’s History Month event was wonderful. The speaker gave a great presentation to the assembly and then stayed after to meet with the winners of the contest. Carolyn reported that she has spoken to Karri Miller of MPR about presenting next year. Dorothy suggested Anne Brown Linnea as another possibility. Anne is a graduate of AHS and had a very successful career as an environmental writer and educator.

Catherine Haslag reported on the Science Fair Mentoring project. 41 students from Neveln competed which included 38 from the project. Twelve students from Banfield competed. There are 38 students who qualified to go on to the regional competition in Mankato.

NCCWSL (National Conference for College Women Student Leaders) will be held in June. Kathyn Schmick will represent our branch. She received a state scholarship to offset the cost.

The state convention will be held April 28 and 29th in Wilmer. The Austin branch has five voting delegate positions. One person has said she is attending. Other members are urged to take advantage of this wonderful opportunity to meet with other members of AAUW from across the state. A basket of books written by local authors will be put together by Marijo for the silent auction. A hat was passed for donations for the basket. Members are also asked to give a cash donation or an item for the basket.

Dorothy made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Marijo seconded the motion and the motion passed.

Respectfully submitted: Peggy Benzkofer, 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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