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

**President’s Message**

The yearly programs are planned, the contact books are in the process of being printed, and now the first newsletter is in your hands! It is time for another wonderful year in AAUW! September 8th is our kick off branch meeting for the new program year. Our interest groups are ready to dive into a new year and will be presenting on their group activities at this first meeting. Remember this is the best time to invite your friends, neighbors and acquaintances to come explore the mission of AAUW and what this dynamic branch has to offer! Guests to the September branch meeting receive a reduced price on their first year’s national membership if they join that day. Please help by taking the time to talk with someone you don’t know. Invite them to sit at your table, find out something about them, and please include them in your conversation. Thanks in advance for helping make our branch meetings friendly.

I also regret to announce co-President Carla Anderson-Diekmann has moved North to Sauk Rapids be closer to her family. Although we will miss her dearly, she is truly enjoying spending time with her grandson.

Looking forward to another great year!

~Courtney Wyant, President

**C:\Users\Rae Dawn\Pictures\Microsoft Clip Organizer\00357247.wmfSeptember Program**

We will be holding our Wine and Cheese Social at Christ Episcopal Church at 6pm on September 8.  This is a membership drive event.  You have likely received a mailing and/or Facebook invite for this event from Catherine Lemmons.  Please invite someone you know to join us and to learn more about AAUW.  There will be tables with information about our different activities and programs for prospective members to learn more about us and allow current members to explore other opportunities to be involved.  We look forward to seeing you and meeting prospective members there.

**Small Groups**

**AM Book Group**

    Morning book group will meet at Lois Connell's home on 9:00 a.m. on Thursday, September 17.  Bonnie Ripple will lead discussion of the book *Miss Julia Speaks Her Mind* by Ann Ross.  New members are welcome to come and try us out.  We have room for more members.

**First Friday**

There will be no September First Friday luncheon because of the Labor Day Holiday Weekend. We will resume First Friday lunches on October 2nd at the Old Mill Restaurant at 11:30.

**PM Book Group**

Evening book group will be at Kathy Kesters's home at 16322 St. HWY 105 on September 15th at 7:00 p.m.  We will discuss *Some Luck* by Jane Smiley.  Please RSVP to Kathy at kkester2013@icloud.com.

**Knitting & Handiwork** We continue to meet most Saturdays at the Coffee House on Main at 9:30 AM. You need not be able to knit/ do handiwork to attend!

**Travel Group**

The AAUW Travel Club will be meeting on WEDNESDAY, September 9th at 1:00 P.M. at the home of DedaRae Graber. This is a different day of the week that we are going to try this year.  At this meeting we will work together to organize and set up our calendar for the year.  Also, we will share the Mason City Trip together.   Please let DedaRae know if you plan to attend. Thank you.  I look forward to seeing you on Wednesday, September 9th.

DedaRae Graber

**Great Decisions**

GREAT DECISIONS will meet again September 28 in C123 at Riverland. The topic is ‘Human Trafficking: A serious challenge to humanity.’

**PUBLIC POLICY**

Evelyn Guentzel

Welcome back for another year of stimulation and social gatherings. After wonderful summer breaks from routines, many of us are ready for different activities and challenges. Each time you receive a newsletter I try to give snapshots of what AAUW is up to. We can always consult the website if we want more in-depth information on any topics mentioned here. If we want our voices heard at the state and/ or federal levels, AAUW makes it easy for us to do it through MISSION IN ACTION.

For example, on August 6 we celebrated the 50th anniversary of the Voting Rights Act, an act intended to protect millions of Americans from discriminatory voting restriction. In 2013, the Supreme Court struck down a preclearance provision of the law. Some key states have violated this provision by making voting changes which no longer protect women, minorities, college students, young voters, the poor, and the elderly. In other words the heart of the Voting Rights was gutted . AAUW, along with other organizations called on Congress to support the Voting Rights Advancement Act, to ensure that the RIGHT to VOTE in not compromised.

Other opportunities to participate in MISSION IN ACTION initiatives include:

●The Minnesota Women’s Consortium of which AAUW is a member, gathered in the Women’s Suffrage Memorial Garden on the State Capitol ground for ‘Pivoting Towards Equity: A women’s Equality Day Conversation’. Plus, they were served complimentary ice cream sundaes by local business. There was also rally in Washington D.C. for Helene de Boissiere-Swanson for the last miles of 7000 mile walk across the country in support of the Equal Rights Amendment. Minnesotans were represented by Betty Folliard, founder of ERAMN.

●Concerns about the lack of women running for office, which seems to have plateaued. AAUW’s ‘Elect Her’ program can help.

●Look under ‘Economic Security’ to find the quiz which challenges misconceptions people have about Social Security – celebrate its 80th birthday!

●Did you know that one of AAUW’s fellows has been helping to lead the Pluto expedition?

●September 22nd is National Voter Registration Day. You may be able to help someone register.

●The 2015-2017 AAUW Public Policy Program, the backbone of its work, is available on line. All members may have input, approval was given earlier in the summer. It is an ambitious program, one of which we can be proud.

●We will most likely be hearing more about the US’s abysmal maternal and paternal leave policies in the coming months. Nearly 1 in 4 new mothers return to work less than 2 weeks after the birth of their children.

**AUGUST 26 was WOMEN’S EQUALITY DAY. We Celebrate the RIGHT TO VOTE!**

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| **AAUW Monthly Financial Report** | | |
| **July 1 - August 30, 2015** | | |
|  |  |  |
| **Period: 7/1/15 - 8/30/15** |  |  |
|  |  |  |
| **Opening Balance:** |  | **$7,640.58** |
|  |  |  |
| **Income:** |  |  |
|  |  |  |
| Dues Received | 1,300.00 |  |
|  |  |  |
| **Total Income:** | **$ 1,300.00** | $8,940.58 |
|  |  |  |
|  |  |  |
| **Disbursements:** |  |  |
|  |  |  |
| Dues Paid | 1,035.00 |  |
|  |  |  |
| **Total Disbursements:** | **$1,035.00** |  |
|  |  |  |
| **Closing Balance 8/30/15** |  | **$7,905.58** |

**AAUW Summer Board Meeting**

August 3, 2015

AAUW Board met at the Austin Public Library. Present were, Nicole Cizik, DedaRae Graber, Evelyn Guentzel, Dorothy Krob, Catherine Lemons, Ruth Monson, and Courtney Wyant.

Secretary’s report was approved. Nicole reviewed the 2014-15 financial report and the 2015-16 proposed budget. Nicole will continue to work on the proposed budget and present it to the Board in September. Next week, Sue Grove and Marijo Alexander will audit the 2014-15 financial report. Courtney presented a current list of the 2015-16 Board members. The Board reviewed the AAUW program schedule for 2015-16:

September 8: Wine and cheese social at Christ Episcopal Church. Members will be encouraged to bring a friend. (6:00 pm)

October 13: Movie Screening at the Riverland Theater - *Arrival: Finding Home.* (6:30 pm)

November 10: Jennifer Lawhead from *Austin Aspires* speaking about Educational Excellence from Cradle to Career.

December 8: Holiday Social at the Coffee House on Main (6:30 pm)

January 12: Dawn Helgeson from *The Arc of Mower County* speaking about Barriers Faced by Those with Developmental and Intellectual Disabilities.

February 9: (tentative) Program by the Hy-Vee Dietician

March 8: John Haymond from the Historical Society

April 12: Sara Benzkofer, Director of Policy and Communications at the Minnesota Association for the Education of Young Children and the Minnesota School-Age Care Alliance.

May 10: Social/ End of Year Celebrtion

The monthly meeting schedule: 5:45 pm Board meeting, 6:30 pm refreshments, 6:50 pm brief Board update, 7:00 pm program begins (unless otherwise stated). Courtney and Catherine Lemons (along with the Program VPs Jill Maxfield and Catherine Haslag) will plan the September event.

Catherine reported on membership. Our Branch has 52 paid members and 17 unpaid members. The Board agreed to contact those who have not paid and invite them to renew their membership.

There will not be a Home Tour this fall because of lack of volunteers to organize the event. The Board will consider hosting a Home Tour next fall. Courtney will appoint a group to look into an additional fundraiser to replace the Tour.

Newsletter items need to be submitted to Rae Dawn on or before the last Friday of the month and Board agenda items need to be submitted to Courtney on or before the first Tuesday of the month.

The Board will send a card and gift to Carla Anderson Diekmann who has recently moved to St. Cloud. Members will be able to sign the card at the September social.

The September meeting will be at 6:00 p.m. on September 8 at Christ Episcopal Church, 301 3rd Avenue NW. The Board will meet at 5:45 p.m. 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.

**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**

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AAUW Southern Highlights

1001 22nd Ave. SW

Austin, MN 55912