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

**Co-President’s Message**

The holiday season is upon us.  It seems to have snuck up on us faster this year than in previous years.  We want to wish you all a very Merry Christmas and Happy New Year.  May 2018 bring you new opportunities and success.

Going into 2018, we want to encourage members to attend the business meeting that is held before the general program.  These start at 5:30p.  This way, members can have more of an active voice in the business of the organization.  We want members to be involved and this is a step in that direction.  The business of AAUW is everyone's concern, not just the Executive Board's.  Please come join us if you are able.  Become more active in our branch and help shape the direction we are headed.

See you all at the Holiday Social December 12.

~Jill Maxfield and Catherin Haslag, Co-Presidents

**Upcoming Programs**

**December 12th – 6 PM**

**Coffee House on Main**

Come to beautiful downtown Austin to our wonderful Coffee House on Main for an evening of greeting friends and enjoying the lights of downtown and goodies and beverages.

Drew Becker

This year we are collecting money at our holiday social to sponsor a wagon for Warrior Wagons, Inc.  Warrior Wagons Inc. gives newly diagnosed pediatric cancer patients a collapsible wagon filled with many comfort items to help them on their cancer journey. The organization buys the wagons and fills them with things like plates, cups, metal silverware, gift cards, towels, movies and much more. It's a way to help them feel more at home, more comfortable in the hospital setting.

We hope to collect $250 which will purchase a wagon along with all the supplies to fill it. The organization was started by the Becker family whose son Drew died of cancer at age 2 after spending more than 160 days in the hospital. Heidi Becker will join us at the Coffee House on December 12 to tell us a little bit about her story. Checks can be made to Warrior Wagons, Inc.

**January 27 – 11:30 AM (Saturday)**

**Austin Country Club**

Also, mark your calendars for Saturday, January 27, 2018! We will be meeting at 11:30 at the Austin Country Club for lunch followed by our guest speaker, Gary Schlinder, who will be speaking on “Drama in the Kennedy Limousine” which will focus on the reaction and thoughts of Nellie Connally and Jacqueline Kennedy on the day of John Kennedy’s assassination.

Gary is the Dean of Student Affairs at Riverland Community College and an expert on the Kennedy assassination.

Marijo Alexander and Sue Grove, Program Vice Presidents

**Small Groups**

**Great Decisions**

On January 22 we begin a new series of thoughtful discussions. The first topic is *The Waning of Pax Americana?* Peggy will have the new books for everyone.

By Carla Norrlof

During the first months of Donald Trump’s presidency, the U.S. began a historic shift away from Pax Americana, the liberal international order that was established in the wake of World War II. Since 1945, Pax Americana has promised peaceful international relations and an open economy, buttressed by U.S. military power. In championing “America First” isolationism and protectionism, President Trump has shifted the political mood toward selective U.S. engagement, where foreign commitments are limited to areas of vital U.S. interest and economic nationalism is the order of the day. Geopolitical allies and challengers alike are paying close attention.

**AM Book Group**

On December 21 at 9 AM at Perkins, Liz Richardson will lead the discussion of a memoir by Anna Quindlan, Lots of Candles, Plenty of Cake.  January 18 a 9:00 AM at Perkins, Janet Gilbertson is leading the discussion of THE SUNDAY PHILOSOPHY CLUB.

**PM Book Group**

Evening book group will not meet in December. In January, we will meet at 7 PM at the home of Dorothy Krob to discuss *Dead Wake* by Eric Larson.

**First Friday**

First Friday Luncheon will be held at 11:30 on Friday, December 1st at the Old Mill. In January, we will been at 11:30 AM at 1910 on Friday, January 5th. Please RSVP to Dorothy Krob at [sdkrob@live.com](mailto:sdkrob@live.com) if you plan to attend either date.

**Travel Group**

The Travel Club will be meeting at the home of Pat Purcell on Thursday, December 14th at 1:30 PM.  We are asking everyone to bring and share a Christmas Memory.  This may be an ornament, a story, a photo, or anything else.  Also, please bring a snack or treat to share with the group.  So, we will relax, eat, laugh, and share.  We have enjoyed this gathering in the past and look forward to learning more about each other again this year.  If you have any questions, please call DedaRae (433-7897).  I look forward to seeing you there.  Enjoy this Special Christmas Season.

In January, the Travel Club will be meeting at the home of Ann Odegaard on Thursday January 11th, at 1:30 P.M.  Ann will be sharing information on, “Traveling with Viking River and Ocean Cruises.”  Mark this on your calendar and plan to join us!  We hope many of you are able to join us on the 11th.

~DedaRae Graber



**Member Spotlight**

**Sandy Folk**

Sandy was born in South Dakota and then lived in North Dakota until she went to Northwest School of Agriculture in Crookston, MN, for high school. This school was part of the University of Minnesota and focused on farm kids and had a very unique program. Students lived in dorms during the week and had a wide range of classes from which to choose, plus music and sports activities during the six months school year. Then, during the summer, students had projects to complete at home, and instructors came from the school to see how they were doing. Sandy loved it there. Be sure and ask her about it!

Sandy graduated from Northwest in 1960 and went straight to Mayville State College in Mayville, ND, for the spring quarter. She got married in 1962 and graduated with a BS in Elementary Education in 1964. Sandy says, “That was a very busy time as we had twin boys in 1963.”

Her teaching career included one year in North Dakota, two years in Northern Minnesota, and thirty-three years in Austin where she taught at Southgate, Webster and Shaw Schools. During her teaching career, she had the twins and a daughter, adopted a Korean daughter, and got her MS degree in Library Science and Elementary Education! What a full life she led!!!

And her busy life continues. Since retirement in 2001, Sandy enjoys time with her husband, her four children, ten grandchildren and five great-grandchildren, as well as traveling, playing bridge and attending meetings of the groups to which she belongs.

During her early years in Austin, Sandy explains, “At that time ‘Recent Grads’ was a part of AAUW and many gals were part of this fun group. When this disbanded, I joined AAUW for a while until it became too much while going to school and having a family. After I retired, I joined AAUW again because I missed the people and learning more about the issues that AAUW promotes. I enjoy the small groups that AAUW has now because you get to know the gals better and do fun activities together. AAUW is a wonderful organization for women of all ages and occupations. ”

Our branch is very fortunate to have Sandy in our membership!

**PUBLIC POLICY NOTES**

Evelyn Guentzel

AAUW’s Advocacy Program is the most significant strength of this organization. This time I will share some aspects of AAUW’s efforts to maintain its nonpartisan stance on the myriad issues that are timely. It considers leadership and research-based advocacy reinforced by our mission its most important work. The political world of today challenges many of AAUW’s goals, and it strives to advocate for women and girls. What follows are some brief descriptions to ponder of AAUW’s view of strategic opportunities:

--**Begin as we mean to proceed**, seeking common ground when possible, and standing our ground when it is not.

--**Remember that personnel is policy**. The stated policy is a unified nation, but those chosen to be policy makers must reflect that goal.

--**Hold their feet to the fire and remain nonpartisan.** We do this by politically adhering to the member approved PUBLIC POLICY PROGRAM.

--**Understand that facts do matter**. AAUW speaks truth to power through its extensive array of research it has done that matters to our communities.

--**Be an ally in the fight against hate.** Words matter. AAUW stands against bullying, bigotry, bias, gender-based crimes, harassment, hate speech and cyberbullying.

--**Stand up to everyday sexism whenever you can.** Events of the last few weeks have made us focus on this landscape: sexism, gender discrimination, harassment, rape culture. Understanding the situation and be complex.

--**Support women leaders**. We are challenged to confront our own implicit biases and to pay attention to hiring decisions, job evaluations, pay equity and leadership positions.

--**Never forget that voting rights and fair representation are fundamental to our democracy.** No longer is there full protection of the Voting Rights Act of 1965 in many states. And, not voting is a vote.

--**Recruit a friend (or five) to subscribe to the AAUW Action Network** and help ensure that our message is heard at every level.

--**Help build our AAUW community** by recruiting new members.

--**Work locally as well as nationally** to promote AAUW’s policies.

--**Keep in mind that the more things change, the more they stay the same.** AAUW will remain focused on its public policies; its values are nonnegotiable (educational and economic equity and civil rights for women and girls). “Throughout its 135 year history we have always stood for solutions that work for all women and families …. government must represent all of us.”

**Austin Branch AAUW**

**Business Meeting Minutes**

**November 14, 2017**

Those in attendance included Catherine Haslag, Jill Maxfield, Marijo Alexander, Jeni Lawhead, Jenni Braaten and Peggy Benzkofer. Catherine read a note from the English As A Second Language program thanking members for their donations to the school store.

Catherine and Jill announced that they are going to invite members to attend board meetings to help members become more involved in the decision making process. To that end, board meetings will be called the business meeting.

Marijo made a motion to approve the secretary’s report for the October board meeting. Jill seconded the motion and the motion passed. There was no treasurer’s report. There was no program report. Jenni reported that there are 61 members.

Peggy reported that Dylane Ulwelling Wallat will be the speaker for Women’s History Month. Catherine reported that the Science Fair project is going well with 46 students at Neveln and 23 at Banfield. There are enough mentors at Banfield and a few still needed at Neveln. Students will be picking projects this week.

The state convention will be April 27th and 28th in Faribault so it is hoped that many members can attend. The presidents will appoint a nominating committee to find candidates for the board positions coming up for election.

Jill presented an idea for donations to be collected at the December meeting. She suggested that we donate to Warrior Wagons which is a program to provide wagons full of supplies to pediatric cancer patients.

Jenni made a motion to adjourn, Marijo seconded and the motion passed.

Respectfully submitted by Peggy Benzkofer, Secretary.

**Hostess’ Wanted!**

Back by popular demand, we will once again be conducting our February meeting as dispersed potlucks in individuals’ homes. We are currently looking for hostess’! A hostess need only provide the house & beverage! If you would like to be a host, please email Sue at [sue.grove@riverland.edu](mailto:sue.grove@riverland.edu).

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| **AAUW Monthly Financial Report** | | |
| **November 1 - November 30, 2017** | | |
|  |  |  |
| **Period: 11/1/17 - 11/30/17** |  |  |
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| **Opening Balance:** |  | **$11,083.41** |
|  |  |  |
| **Income:** |  |  |
|  |  |  |
| Dues Received | 65.00 |  |
| House tour | 75.00 |  |
|  |  |  |
| **Total Income:** | **$ 140.00** | $11,223.41 |
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| **Disbursements:** |  |  |
|  |  |  |
| Dues Paid - National | 49.00 |  |
| Dues Paid - State | 9.00 |  |
| Lodging for meeting speakers | 128.02 |  |
| AAUW Fund | 750.00 |  |
|  |  |  |
| **Total Disbursements:** | **$936.02** |  |
|  |  |  |
| **Closing Balance 11/30/17** |  | **$10,287.39** |

*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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