Our Mission: To honor women and girls, empowering them through education,

service and leadership development.

Co-President’s Message

There was a great turnout for our November meeting on Islam. John Emery and his wife presented this complex topic in a very informative and engaging way. Not all our questions got answered as we ran out of time, so we may have to invite them back in the future.

The program on Immigration Issues at our January 26 luncheon aligned perfectly with one of AAUW’s initiatives, to promote civil rights for all immigrants and a fair and just path to legal status. Many thanks go out to our talented program committee for arranging both of these outstanding presentations.

January and February are always tough months in Minnesota because of the cold weather. Here are some suggestions for how to “beat the winter doldrums”:

* Reach out to someone you haven’t connected with in a while. It will brighten their day as well as yours.
* Send a note of support to a woman in our community that you admire. Random acts of kindness are real “perk-me-ups”.
* Make a donation to a local charity (diapers to the Parenting Resource Center or canned goods to the Salvation Army, etc.) Donations help us remember our blessings.
* Treat yourself to some time alone to read or listen to music, or to a special treat like a manicure, or coffee with a friend. You have to love yourself to be able to love others.

Carolyn Bogott and Jen Lawhead

Co-Presidents, Austin Chapter – AAUW

**February Program**

According to the National Domestic Violence Hotline:

 \*Nearly one in five women have been raped in their lifetime.

\*One in six women have been a victim of stalking.

\*33% of women killed at work were at the hands of a spouse or domestic partner.

\*One in four women are a victim of physical violence in the home.

These sobering statistics are a reminder, to all of us, as to the violence and victimization many women endure. The National AAUW's program "Violence Against Women" works to influence legislation on the national stage for the protection of women. Additionally, there are AAUW national funds available to assist with women escaping domestic violence. In keeping with AAUW's mission, please join us on February 12 at 6:30 PM at Riverland in room B116 in the west building for our monthly meeting as we welcome Tori Miller from the Crime Victim's Crisis Center in Austin. Tori will provide a local perspective on the crisis center's role in supporting women (and sometimes men) impacted by violence or crime. Members may come in door W1 on the south side of the building.  Turn left when entering through the door.  B116 is down the hall on the left.

Looking ahead to March, we will have the popular "dinner in the homes" again. This provides a more intimate setting to really connect and get to know AAUW members on a more personal level. In order to enjoy this fun event, we need volunteer members who are willing to host 4-6 women for dinner in their home on the evening of Tuesday, March 12.  Here's the good news, if you host the dinner you do not have to cook! Each guest will bring a dish to pass. For example, one person will bring a salad, another person the vegetable, another the main dish and another the dessert. An additional volunteer will help coordinate the menu for the group. So, we are seeking members willing to open up their homes to host, members willing to cook and members willing to do the meal planning. There will be a sign-up sheet at the February meeting. However, if you cannot make it on February 12, please email either Jenni Braaten ([jennibraaten@hotmail.com](mailto:jennibraaten@hotmail.com)) or Barb Hunter ([hunterbarb41@gmail.com](mailto:hunterbarb41@gmail.com)) to sign up. With good food, good conversation and amazing AAUW women, it promises to be a great evening of fun and connection for all!

Jenni Braaten & Barb Hunter

Program Committee co-chairs

**Women’s History Month Activities at Austin High School**

Women’s History Project presentations by Dennis Schwab’s honors American History students will be on February 20th at 9:45-10:35 and 11:35 to 12:25. We will need some volunteers to help with the evaluation of these projects. Contact Carolyn Bogott (csbogott@ charter.net) if you can help. It is lots of fun to see what the students come up with!

The Women’s History Assembly will be March 12 at 2 P.M. Laura Lee from KAAL will be the speaker. Branch members are welcome to attend. Seating for us is in the front rows in the center.



**Member Spotlight – Vickie Spyhalski**

One of our new members this year is Vickie Spyhalski.

Vickie was born in the neighboring city of Albert Lea, MN, the youngest of three girls.  While attending high school, Vickie was very active in music and church activities.  After graduation, Vickie went to Concordia College in Moorhead, MN, where she met her husband, Paul.  She graduated from Concordia College with majors in Religion and Russian Studies and a minor in French.

After living in the Twin Cities for 3 years, Vickie moved to Austin, where she enjoys the slower pace that allows her more time to get involved in community activities.  Vickie works at Hormel and in 2012 she graduated with an MBA from Augsburg University.  She has traveled to Guatemala three times for service project work.

In her spare time she enjoys music, reading and genealogy and traveling with her husband.  She is also very active at the Austin Congregational Church.  She joined AAUW because it aligns with her passions of amplifying women’s voices to make the world a better place and advance social justice.

Vickie, we are so glad to have you in our branch!!

**Small Groups**

**PM Book Group**

We will be meeting at the home of Barb Hunter on February 18th at 7 PM to discuss *A Wrinkle In Time* by Madeleine L’ Engle Please RSVP to Barb at hunterbarb41@gmail.com. We will meet at 7 PM on March 18th at the home of Peggy Benzkofer to discuss the Pageturners’ selection *Stars Over Clear Lake* by Loretta Ellsworth.

**AM Book Group**

Morning book group will be discussing *Rocket Girl* by George Morgan on February 21st at Perkins at 9 AM. Janet Gilbertson will lead discussion.

**First Friday**

First Friday will be Friday, Feb. 1st at 11:30 at Bella Victoria. Please RSVP to Dorothy Krob at [sdkrob@live.com](mailto:sdkrob@live.com) by Thursday if you wish to join us for lunch.

**Travel Group**

The Travel Club will be meeting at the home of Dorothy Krob on Wednesday, February 13th at 1:00 PM.  Again we will be sharing information about different cities/towns in Minnesota.  Sandy Folk, Janet Gilbertson, and Sue Grove will be sharing information in February about Angle Inlet, Brainerd, and Grand Marais.  Thank you to the women that shared reports in January.  We all learned a great deal from them and I’m looking forward to what we will learn in February.

Please check your calendars and let me know (433-7897) if you can join us on February 13th.  Thank you. Stay warm.

DedaRae Graber

**Great Decisions**

Great Decisions will meet at 1 PM at Riverland, room TBD, on February 25th.

**Public Policy**

**Evelyn Guentzel**

It’s almost February, hard to believe how quickly the days go by.

In February, Tori Miller will share information about the Crime Victims’ Crisis Center.  AAUW advocates for “Freedom from violence, including domestic violence, problems in the schools, workplaces, the community, and hate crimes. One of the big issues has involved violence against women on college campuses.  It will be very interesting to hear about our local efforts to deal with crises.

Two more biennial Action Priorities are as follows:

1.    Supporting a strong system of public education that promotes gender fairness, equity, and diversity. A major area of concern is vigorous enforcement of TITLE IX. In 1972 the Education Amendments was a comprehensive federal law to prohibit sex discrimination in education. It is inclusive, covering women and girls, men and boys, and staff and students in  any educational institution or program that receives federal funds. It affects the following areas: recruitments, admissions and housing; career and technical education; pregnant, parenting and/or married students; STEM; sexual harassment and assault; comparable facilities and access to course offerings; financial assistance; student health services and insurance benefits; harassment based on gender identity; and athletics.

The law has not met its expectations and in some areas is challenged for questionable and sometimes illegal reasons. For example: sexual harassment continues at an alarming rate; opportunities in career and technical educational programs are not equitable for a variety of reason; Women are only 39% of the professors at colleges and universities; women’s teams receive 33 percent of recruiting dollars and 36 percent of athletic dollars; Women receive 17 percent of degrees in computer science, and 18 percent of engineering related technology BS degrees.

The Office of Civil Rights accepts complaints or advocating for those with complaints without retaliation. AAUW supports adequate funding to this office to fulfill the law’s requirements.

     2.     Achieving economic self sufficiency for all women, particularly the fight for PAY EQUITY.  More on that next time.

HAPPY VALENTINE’S DAY.

**BOARD MINUTES OF AUSTIN, MN BRANCH AAUW**

A meeting of the board of the Austin, MN Branch of AAUW was held at 5:30 p.m. on December 11, 2018, at the Coffee House on Main. Members of the board in attendance included Carolyn Bogottt, Jennifer Lawhead, Jenni Braaten, Barb Hunter, Nicole Cizik and Peggy Benzkofer.

The decision was made to table the AAUW Science Fair Award for a year on the advice of Catherine Haslag until the reorganization is completed from one district fair to fairs at each school. It was decided that a similar amount will be given to the Science Fair Project.

Members are urged to continue to think of women to nominate for the Pillars of the Community program and then to nominate.

Jennifer Lawhead agreed to co-chair the Story Show project and because of time constraints it has been postponed until fall. Brain stormed people who could share their stories. Also brain stormed venues in which to hold it. (Decision was made following meeting that Story Show will be held in spring of 2020 as house tour will be next fall).

Nicki reported that there is $10,490.67 in the checking account with little activity recently. We received an additional $32.50 from book sale. AAUW gave $50 to Kyle for December meeting at Coffee House. $750 was sent to national AAUW. It was suggested that we consider sending a percentage of yearly receipts instead of same amount each year.

Lora Lee of KAAL-TV will speak at the Women’s History event at Austin High School which will be held on March 12 at 2 p.m..

There will be no board meeting in January. The January meeting will be held at 11:30 a.m. at the Austin Country Club on January 26th. The next board meeting will be at 5:30 on February 12th.

Respectfully submitted: Peggy Benzkofer, Secretary

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| **AAUW Monthly Financial Report** | | |
| **December 1, 2018 - January 31, 2019** | | |
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| **Period: 12/1/18 - 1/31/19** |  |  |
|  |  |  |
| **Opening Balance:** |  | **$10,540.67** |
|  |  |  |
| **Income:** |  |  |
|  |  |  |
| **Total Income:** | **$ -** | $10,540.67 |
|  |  |  |
|  |  |  |
| **Disbursements:** |  |  |
|  |  |  |
| December social - Coffee House | 50.00 |  |
| Meeting space - ARC | 50.00 |  |
| Meeting speaker | 25.00 |  |
| January luncheon | 281.33 |  |
|  |  |  |
| **Total Disbursements:** | **$406.33** |  |
|  |  |  |
| **Closing Balance 1/31/19**  ***Save the date!***  ***2019 AAUW State Convention***  ***Celebrating Grand Rapids AAUW’s 70th Anniversary***  ***Friday, April 26 and Saturday April 27, 2019***  ***Timber Lake Lodge & Event Center, Grand Rapids, MN*** |  | **$10,134.34** |

*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

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