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

service and leadership development.

Co-President’s Message

Much appreciation and many congratulations are due to Jenni Braaten and Jen Lawhead for co- chairing the inaugural “Story Show”. Their selection of speakers and their gracious introductions framed the event. It was a huge success with about 100 people in attendance. Thank you goes to Peggy Benzkofer and Evelyn Guentzel for being readers of the speakers’ scripts. Thanks also goes to those of you who helped to publicize it and who sold tickets. The wonderful tri-fold poster made by DedaRae Graber and Dorothy Krob, that described AAUW, gave our organization great visibility to the attendees. Many people who attended have had very positive comments. We owe a debt of gratitude to the speakers, as well. They represented very diverse viewpoints on the topic of curiosity. Some presentations were very personal and some were more philosophical. All were excellent!

This was quite a successful fundraiser for our scholarship fund. And the other good news is that Jenni and Jen will co-chair next year’s “Story Show.” These two dynamos already have some ideas for themes a well as for story tellers. If you have suggestions about themes or speakers, please let them know.

With our February Meeting, we have another opportunity to carry out this year’s theme of “Connections” Come and learn more about your community as Mark Raymond tells us about “The Changing Demographics of Austin Public Schools.” Change is happening and we need to be tuned in and connected!

The best way to be connected is to communicate. Rosie Seltz, in her interview for the “Notable Women of Austin column (that our branch is sponsoring), said that in teaching she knew that “Students won’t always remember what you said, but they will remember how they felt.” The following quote about relationships and communications says it well.

**“Open, honest communication is the best foundation for any relationship, but remember that at the end of the day it’s not what you say or what you do, but how you make people feel that matters the most.” ~ Tony Hsieh**

Carolyn Bogott and Jen Lawhead

Co-Presidents, Austin Chapter – AAUW

**Upcoming Programs**

**February**

Do you have questions regarding our police department? Come to the Austin Public Library at 6:30pm on February 11, 2020 to ask your question. The speaker at our meeting that night will be a representative from the Austin Police Department. Jorge Jimenez will give a presentation on community awareness and the minorities in our city. Please join us to learn more about our community.

**March**

For the past few years, the March meeting of AAUW is to have an intimate dinner in the homes of members. This year the dinner in the homes will be on Tuesday, March 10.  Without a doubt, it is a wonderful time to build relationships between members as we have time to really learn about each other. Typically, the number of guests is between four to six members. In order to organize this, we need AAUW members willing to host the dinner in their home. The good news with hosting is you do not have to cook! The members who come to the host home will bring the food. For example, one person will bring the main dish, someone else will bring the salad, another person brings the vegetable and so forth. This is one special opportunity to connect with other members in our branch and enjoy a meal together. Please let Barb Hunter know if you are interested in hosting or participating by bringing food to the dinner by Monday, March 2, 2020. Once we have the list of hosts and participants we will let you know where to go for that evening. It promises to be a fun evening of great conversation with AAUW members!

Jenni Braaten & Barb Hunter

Program Co-Chairs

**Happenings from Membership**

Please give a warm AAUW welcome to our newest member, Nancy Krouse, who joined AAUW in January. Nancy graduated from the University of Missouri with a Master in Food Science. She worked at the Hormel Institute for a number of years before recently retiring. Harriet Ulland encouraged Nancy to consider becoming a member and brought her to the December meeting. Prospective members are always welcome to come to a meeting or an event so please consider inviting someone to join us this spring at one of our meetings!

**Women’s History Month Project Judging Set for February 20**

We need members to help with the judging of the Austin High School American History students’ Women’s History projects at 7:55-8:45 on Thursday, February 20 in the high school Commons. It is very enjoyable to listen to the students explain their projects. The teacher, Dennis Schwab, supplies a rubric to help with judging and he makes the final decisions, with our input. If you can help, please contact Carolyn Bogott ([csbogott@charter.net](mailto:csbogott@charter.net)).

**Alert : A Webcast Conference Instead of an Annual Convention and Dates for a Regional Conference**

Communication from the state level has not been the best this year. News of these meeting is just coming to our attention and the details are yet to come. Please note these dates and check out the February Pine online.

Annual AAUW-MN State Meeting

Saturday **April 25, 2020,** we'll be having our Minnesota AAUW Annual Meeting, via webcast. The details are not yet available about the exact location, but it will be somewhere in the Metro, if you want to attend in person. The meeting will be broadcast to all branches statewide.

 AAUW Regional Conference

Also mark your calendars for **June 18-20, 2020** to attend our regional AAUW Conference to be held in the Quad Cities. Lots more information and registration will be shared through the Pine and direct e-mailings to members. Our branch has fund to help with attending this conference. Let’s have representation!



**Member Spotlight – Angie Loecks**

Angie is one of our newest members. She was born in Dubuque, Iowa and grew up on a farm in eastern Iowa. After receiving her early education from the Franciscan sisters, Angie got her B.A, from Briar Cliff College in Sioux City in 1972. After college, she moved to Philadelphia where she worked in various positions in social work. She earned a M.Ed. degree in therapeutic recreation from Temple University and moved to Tidewater Virginia, to work at Hampton Veterans Administration Medical Center as a recreational therapist. In 1987, Angie moved to the Twin Cities and spent almost 20 years as a recreational therapist at the Minnesota State Veterans Homes in Minneapolis and Hastings.

Angie says, “When my daughter left for college, I returned to school, myself, to earn a doctorate in clinical psychology from Capella University. I spent a year in Kansas doing my internship at Larned State Hospital and then completed a post-doc residency in geriatric psych in Victoria, Tx. After graduating, I worked with the Associated Clinic of Psychology in Minneapolis.”

She retired from working fulltime and moved to South Carolina after her husband became ill. About two years ago, following her husband’s death, Angie moved to Austin to be closer to their daughter, Sara.

Currently Angie works part-time with Catholic Charities counseling services. When she is not working, she enjoys traveling and watercolor painting and fixing up her old house. Her interests also include being an advocate for persons with mental illness.

“I’m looking forward to being involved with AAUW!”

And we are looking forward to getting to know you better, Angie. Thanks for joining us!!

**Small Groups**

**PM Book Group**

We will be discussing *No Baggage* by Clara Bensen at the home of Carolyn Boggot with Morgan Carlson leading discussion on Monday, February 17th at 7 PM. Please RSVP to Carolyn at [csbogott@charter.net](mailto:csbogott@charter.net). Heads up: The evening book group has a change for March. Dorothy Krob, 2203 W. Oakland Ave., will host and lead the discussion on Monday, March 16th at 7:00 pm. Peggy Benzkofer, the original host is having knee replacement surgery at that time. We will be discussing the Page Turner’s selection *Never Coming Back* by Alison McGhee. Please RSVP to Dorothy at [sdkrob@live.com](mailto:sdkrob@live.com).

**AM Book Group**

On February 20th, we meet at 9:00 AM at Perkins to discuss THE STORIED LIFE OF A.J. FIKRY by Gabrielle Zevin. The story of A.J. Fikry's life is told in short-story narrative form over the course of two parts and 13 chapters. Each chapter is titled after a book, though there is no pattern to the titles other than the fact that they give a slight hint as to what will be discussed or described in the forthcoming chapter.

**Travel Group**

The Travel Club will be meeting this Wednesday February 5th at 1:00 PM in the home of Sonia Larson.  Some members will be sharing favorite travel experiences with us.  Please let me know if you are able to join us (433-7897) or via email (drgraber@charter.net).  Thank you.  I hope to see you there.

DedaRae Graber

**First Friday**

First Friday Luncheon will be at Bella Victoria on February 7th at 11:30. Please RSVP to Dorothy Krob at [sdkrob@live.com.](mailto:sdkrob@live.com.)

**Great Decisions**

On Feb. 24 we will meet at 1:00 at Riverland—room TBD.  We will be discussing CLIMATE CHANGE and the GLOBAL ORDER by Ronald Bee.  Climate change has become one of the defining issues of our time. As much of the world bands together to come up with a plan, the U.S. remains the notable holdout. What is the rest of the world doing to combat climate change? What impact will the effects of climate change have on global geopolitics?

**January Luncheon Enjoyed by All!**

Thanks to Barb Hunter and Jenni Braaten for planning the lovely January lunch and coming up with such a great substitute program when their speaker cancelled. Good food was enjoyed and we were delighted to hear the details of the new YMCA/Community Recreation Center from Diane Baker. The fee schedule seems very reasonable:

* Youth: $10/month 14-18 years old.
* Young adult: $35/month 19-25.
* Adult: $55/month.
* Family: $68/month.
* Senior Single: $35/month 65 and older.
* Senior Couple: $50/month.

We were pleased to hear the public meeting area may be available for our monthly meetings. All of us are anxious to have a tour during the month of February. Our own branch member, Carolyn Rugg, is in charge of YMCA memberships and will be available to give tours.

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

**January 13, 2020**

A meeting of the board of the Austin, MN Branch of AAUW was held at 7:30 p.m. on January13, 2020, at Carolyn Bogott’s home. Members of the board in attendance included Carolyn Bogott, Jennifer Lawhead, Jenni Braaten, Barb Hunter and Peggy Benzkofer.

A discussion was held of the very successful Story Show project. Initial return was $1,535 which was excellent for the first year. Thanks were expressed to Jen and Jenni for their excellent work. Expenses included $150 for the graphic designer, $105 for printing of program, $26 for printing of tickets and $100 for Jazz One. Jenni and Jen are willing to chair the event next year. They are asking members to e mail them with suggestions for theme and story tellers.

It is time for nominations to be in place for officers for next year. Barb Hunter and Jenni Braaten have agreed to be vice presidents of membership and program but they need co- chairs. Also needed are co-presidents, treasurer and secretary.

The scheduled speaker for the January luncheon meeting has cancelled. Suggestions were made for a replacement.

Three people are interested in joining so Jenni will check to see if there are reduced membership dues at this time. The next meeting will be at 5:30 on February 11.

Respectfully submitted: Peggy Benzkofer, Secretary

**Great Decisions**

Evelyn Guentzel

It’s February already, amazing how the time goes! My first comment is “Congratulations to the creators and participants in Austin AAUW’s first THE STORY SHOW.” The response has been a “roaring success”, judging from my informant’s comments.

January brought thoughts about “kitchen table” issues from AAUW’S “equity express”. Topics such as childcare and affordable housing and health care are frequently discussed and we hear them these days in presidential debates.  AAUW also addresses topics such as sexual harassment, rights of employees, pay equity, wage gaps and voting rights.

 AAUW’s report, LIMITING OUR LIVELIHOODS: THE CUMULATIVE IMPACT of SEXUAL HARASSMENT on WOMEN’S CAREERS provides research that shows there can be lifetime affects which compromise the physical, mental  and economic health of women in the work place. In addition, the report, AAUW’s KNOW YOUR RIGHTS EMPLOYEE GUIDE suggests knowing the employee policies in their workplace and steps women and men can take to address complaints that have been documented.

Economic news still informs us that most women collect 80% of what men do in Social Security benefits. Now, 49 states (except Mississippi), the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico have addressed pay equity in some form. Federal workers and some companies offer 12 weeks of parental leave. Transparency of wage gaps between men and women is still limited (13% for government workers and 29% pay disparity in for-profit companies).

Lastly, voting rights continue to be disturbingly restricted in some areas and disproportionately affect people with disabilities, lack of transportation. women, people of color, students, for example, Gerrymandering is an astounding example of efforts taken to determine voting results. AAUW provides the opportunity in the TWO-MINUTE ACTIVIST to Stand Up for Voting Rights.

In 2020 we celebrate the 100th anniversary if women’s right to vote. We can find stories of the struggles and commitment of women to the suffrage movement in every state that make for fascinating reading. In January, the Arizona Republic featured the story of Maude Francis Willard, the granddaughter of Alexander Hamilton Willard who was a member of the Lewis and Clark expedition. Maude Willard is remembered as a leader in Arizona promoting women’s voting rights. She gave up on pressuring the legislature to grant the right and instead went after the male popular vote. At the time, the governor opposed the suffragettes, fearing they would jeopardize statehood which, nonetheless, came in 1912. Then Maude Willard took advantage of the new state Constitution which provided citizen initiative and built a larger coalition of support and help from outside the state as well.  Women’s suffrage impressively won 70% of the vote. Arizona, one of the last states to join the union, was among the first 10 states to ratify the amendment. It prides itself on the “smarts, tenacity, courage and can-do attitude of women in the American West”. The article goes on to highlight the role of women in all walks of life in Arizona, including the rise of Sandra Day O’Connor to the Supreme Court.  Maude Willard herself was elected in 1914 as the state’s first senator and several women became part of the legislature. First initiatives involved regulating the work-day and increasing wages!

I am currently re-reading THE PRIVILEGE for WHICH WE STRUGGLED: Leaders of the Woman Suffrage Movement in Minnesota, by Heide Bauer, and will share stories from time to time.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **AAUW** | | |
| **December 1 - December 31, 2019** | | |
|  |  |  |
| **Period: 10/1/19 - 12/31/19** |  |  |
|  |  |  |
| **Opening Balance:** |  | **$11,954.41** |
|  |  |  |
| **Income:** |  |  |
|  |  |  |
| **Total Income:** | **$ -** | $11,954.41 |
|  |  |  |
| **Disbursements:** |  |  |
|  |  |  |
| Story Show expenses | 26.97 |  |
| Holiday gathering - Coffee house | 50.00 |  |
| AAUW Fund - Honoring Peg Seath | 750.00 |  |
|  |  |  |
| **Total Disbursements:** | **$826.97** |  |
|  |  |  |
| **Closing Balance 12/31/19** |  | **$11,127.44** |

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **AAUW** | | |
| **January 1 - January 31, 2020** | | |
|  |  |  |
| **Period: 1/1/20 - 1/31/20** |  |  |
|  |  |  |
| **Opening Balance:** |  | **$11,127.44** |
|  |  |  |
| **Income:** |  |  |
|  |  |  |
| Dues received | 75.00 |  |
| Story show proceeds | 1,595.00 |  |
| January luncheon | 178.73 |  |
|  |  |  |
| **Total Income:** | **$ 1,848.73** | $12,976.17 |
|  |  |  |
| **Disbursements:** |  |  |
|  |  |  |
| Dues Paid - National | 59.00 |  |
| Dues Paid - State | 9.00 |  |
| January luncheon | 203.88 |  |
| Story Show expenses | 355.72 |  |
|  |  |  |
| **Total Disbursements:** | **$627.60** |  |
|  |  |  |
| **Closing Balance 1/31/20** |  | **$12,348.57** |

*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**



\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

AAUW Southern Highlights

1001 22nd Ave. SW

Austin, MN 55912

507-358-7237