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

service and leadership development.

Co-President’s Message

Our speaker for the February meeting program was Officer Jorges Jimenez from the Austin Police department. He charmed us all with his friendly demeanor. We learned about the day-to-day work of the Austin police officers as well as the community outreach programs that they sponsor. Thank you to Barb and Jenni for arranging another great program.

Dennis Schwab’s class presented their women’s history projects on February 20. Thanks to Peggy Benzkofer, Nancy Krouse, Carolyn Bogott and Fred Bogott (drafted at the last minute!) for listening to the presentations and helping Mr. Schwab decide on winners. The topics all centered around the nineteenth amendment and the ERA. As usual it was gratifying to see that at least this group of students gained a new understanding of women’s struggles for equal rights, pay, and opportunities.

At our board meeting this month, Jen shared a new strategy that she is implementing at work. When she feels stress starting to take a toll, she stops and takes time to send a thank you or a compliment to a colleague. This strategy is proving to be effective in her maintaining a positive attitude. She recommends that we all try this!

Which brings us to this month’s quote on “connections”:

“Your connections to all the things around you literally define who you are.” – Aaron D. O'Connell

Carolyn Bogott and Jen Lawhead

Co-Presidents, Austin Chapter – AAUW

**March Program**

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 ([hunterbarb41@gmail.com](mailto:hunterbarb41@gmail.com)) 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

**IMPORTANT CHALLENGE**

Barb Hunter and Carolyn Bogott are serving as the nominations committee to find officers for the next two-year term. After many contacts, we are still looking for those willing to serve in this way. Please consider, or reconsider, saying yes to this opportunity. Our branch is very strong in the area of small groups and in our fundraising efforts, but we have to have people who will give their time to leadership, as well, if we hope to continue our other activities. We are very grateful to Jenni Braaten and Barb Hunter who will continue as co-vice presidents of Membership, and Program, respectively. They would like partners in each of those jobs. Catherine Haslag has graciously agreed to be Secretary. Carolyn and Jenn Lawhead have agreed to do one more year as co-presidents, as a stopgap measure. We must find a treasurer and co-vice presidents of program and membership and get someone in line to be co-presidents in 2021. Can you help? Let’s not end up “folding” for lack of leadership!

SAVE THE DATE!

Library Used Book Sale: May 7-9

Set up begins April 27.

Your help is greatly appreciated! - Laura & Joyce

**Happenings from Membership**

Please give a warm AAUW welcome to Robin Brown! She joined AAUW after coming to the Story Show in January and picking up a membership application. Robin had attended AAUW meetings in Albert Lea when she worked over there and had an interest in joining. Robin is currently an art teacher at Austin High School. Robin, we are so glad you decided to become a member!

At this time, the Austin branch currently has 61 members. There are a few other women who have expressed interest in joining. We will be having a new member recruitment event in the future which will provide dues at half price at that event. In the meantime, please keep reaching out to friends, colleagues, neighbors or whomever to consider becoming a member. We want to ensure our branch remains vibrant and viable.

Jenni Braaten & Kerry Bartlett

Membership Co-chairs

**AHS Women’s History Month Assembly to Feature “History Alive” –**

**Celebrating the 100th Anniversary of Women’s Right to Vote**

On March 10th at 8:45 AM in Knowlton Auditorium, “History Alive”, a drama group from Lanesboro, will recreate a suffrage rally where four Minnesota suffragists from history will give speeches to inform the audience about the suffrage movement. Austin High School band members will play as the suffragists march in and a few AHS girls will also be involved in the presentation. Our branch is partnering with the Mower County Historical Society to make this event possible.

The Women’s History Project winners will be recognized at the assembly and be awarded their cash prizes.

Branch members are invited to attend. Our seats are always in the front middle section. Come and join us!

A person looking at the ocean

Description automatically generated**Member Spotlight – Nancy Krouse**

Nancy grew up on a dairy farm in Crocker, Missouri. It was a small town of 800 people with 50 kids in her high school graduation class.

She holds both a B.S. as well as an M.S. in Food Science from the University of Missouri-Columbia. When she started college, she had not heard of Food Science, until an undergraduate advisor suggested that she take a “Introduction to Food Science” class. Then Nancy knew this was the area she wanted to study.

Between her B.S. and M.S., she took a year off and worked for Banquet Foods as a microbiologist. After completing her master’s degree, she went to work for Hormel Foods. Nancy started in Hormel Research and Development and then had the opportunity to move into Operations in the Corporate Office. Next she was transferred to work in three Hormel plants, Austin, MN, Houston, Texas, and Knoxville, Iowa. Nancy completed her career as Director of Product Development Refrigerated Foods in Research and Development. She retired in 2018 after 38+ years with Hormel.

Since she followed a non-traditional path going from Research and Development into Operations and then back to R&D, she found she had to take very opportunity to build her knowledge base, “getting her hands dirty” to learn what she needed to know. She learned she always had to be open to change, “willing to listen and willing to learn in order keep growing.”

Other lessons she learned are that “you never know when someone is watching you and forming an opinion about you. You should always do your job to the best of your abilities, even those tasks you don’t like. Take responsibility, and accountability for your work, including your mistakes, and stay positive. I went from R&D to Operations because someone formed an option about me that I was unaware of.”

Since retiring my goals include volunteering and get involved with organizations like AAUW to help others and give back.

**Small Groups**

**PM Book Group**

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. 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). In April, we will be discussing *Waking Up White* by Debbie Irving.

**AM Book Group**

AM Book Group meets March 19th at Perkins Restaurant at 9:00 A.M. We will be discussing *Where The Crawdads* Sing by Delia Owens. Discussion will be led by Lois McConnell.

**Travel Group**

The Travel Club will meet Wednesday, March 4th, at 1:00 PM at Austin’s new “Community Recreation Center” where we will receive a private tour. After the tour, Sue Grove will share information on the Trinity Site at the White Sands Missile Base National Park in New Mexico. I look forward to learning more interesting information from Sue. We invite everyone to join 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 lunch group will meet at Mixto on Friday, March 6th at 11:30. Please RSVP only to Dorothy Krob by Thursday afternoon.

**Great Decisions**

Great Decisions will meet on March 23rd at 1:00 P.M. at Riverland. Room TBD. The topic is INDIA AND PAKISTAN, by Barbara Crossette. We will consider nuclear power, the rising tide of populations, demands for better lives, and diplomacy.

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

**February 11, 2020**

A meeting of the board of the Austin, MN Branch of AAUW was held at 5:30 p.m. on February 11, 2020, at the Austin Public Library. Members of the board in attendance included Carolyn Bogott, Jennifer Lawhead, Nicole Cizik and Peggy Benzkofer.

Carolyn reported that the nomination committee consisting of her and Barb Hunter have contacted many people but have not found anyone to agree to be nominated as presidents. Catherine Haslag has agreed to be nominated as secretary.

Nicole reported that there is $12,348.58 in our account.

Jen Lawhead and Nicole will serve on the scholarship committee. Nicole reported that Ebise Walga did not register for this semester. She picked Zinsou Assogba to replace her.

The Women’s History program judging will take place at Austin High School from 7:55 to 8:55. Four members are needed.

Dinner in the homes will take place on March 10th. Homes are needed. Please contact Barb Hunter if interested.

Respectfully submitted: Peggy Benzkofer, Secretary

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| **AAUW** | | |
| **February 1 - February 29, 2020** | | |
|  |  |  |
| **Period: 2/1/20 - 2/29/20** |  |  |
|  |  |  |
| **Opening Balance:** |  | **$12,348.57** |
|  |  |  |
| **Income:** |  |  |
|  |  |  |
| Dues received | 75.00 |  |
| January luncheon | 25.59 |  |
|  |  |  |
|  |  |  |
| **Total Income:** | **$ 100.59** | $12,449.16 |
|  |  |  |
| **Disbursements:** |  |  |
|  |  |  |
| Dues Paid - National | 59.00 |  |
| Dues Paid - State | 9.00 |  |
|  |  |  |
| **Total Disbursements:** | **$68.00** |  |
|  |  |  |
| **Closing Balance 2/29/20** |  | **$12,381.16** |

**Great Decisions**

Evelyn Guentzel

MARCH 8 IS INTERNATIONAL WOMEN’S DAY.

AAUW’s concerns and campaigns continue to center around the topics I discussed in February:  child care, affordable housing, health, sexual harassment, rights of employees, pay equity, wage gaps, and voting rights. Wherever you can, give voice to major concerns of your own. Go to AAUW’s Activist site.

Meanwhile, I am focusing on suffrage. In 1994 a group of 33 Minnesota women began discussing the idea of a memorial to 25 main activists in the suffrage movement in Minnesota. They were looking ahead to the 75th anniversary of the 19th Amendment in 1995. September 8, 1919, Minnesota had been the 15th state to ratify. In 1995, a celebration, “Women Win the Vote Day” was held at the State Fair and The Upper Midwest Women’s History Center commissioned a curriculum for elementary and high school students about the suffrage movement. The group, with the leadership of historian, Barbara Stuhler (U of M), they began to plan for a memorial to be established on the St. Paul Capitol grounds and kicked off the plans in October 0f 1995 at the Minneapolis Women’s Club. In March of 1996,  the Minnesota Legislature allocated $250,000 toward the planning and construction and required a grant of $50,000 from other sources—private and corporate. A juried design competition was then held for an accessible memorial, 150 feet by 100 feet in the northeast corner of the upper state  Capitol mall in St. Paul. It became the “Garden of Time: Landscape of Change”, and has a path, a bench or two, trees and shrubs, beds of yellow daffodils or gold and white flowers with touches of green and purple, native prairie and woodland plantings and a series of plaques telling the story. It also has a 90 foot trellis inscribed with the names of twenty-five key Minnesota suffragettes, leaders in the long journey to justice. The dedication occurred August 26, 2000 on the 80th anniversary of ratification. Refurbishing with some hardier plants took place in 1994. Final cost: $500.000.

A Minnesota treasure:   <https://www.monopedia.org/thing/minnesota-woman-suffrage-memorial-st-paul>

The first four women who are marked as “Trailblazers” were Harriet Bishop (1818-1883), Mary Jackman Colburn (1811-1901), Jane Grey Swisshelm (1815-1884), and

Sarah Burger Stearns (1836-1904).  A native of Vermont, Bishop taught for ten years in New York schools and then learned of the National Board of Popular Education’s plan to send teachers to “western settlements” to educate children in isolated areas. After some training by Catherine Beecher, Bishop was the first volunteer and in 1847 landed in St. Paul,  a village of five liquor selling stores! Bishops’ students were English, French, Swiss, Chippewa, Sioux, and African. The first Public School teacher in Minnesota, Bishop’s first classroom was a renovated blacksmith’s shop festooned with pine boughs to freshen the air. After the first week of school the children were invited to come back for the first interdenominational Sunday School. This simple beginning led to Bishop’s leadership to building the first school, to leading an assortment of organizations including the Sons of Temperance (response to much drunkeness), a ‘Home for the Friendless”, a reading and discussion group (The Philecclsian  Literary Society),  the Women’s Christian Temperance Union, leading the cause for prohibition and the right to vote until her death. She became an author, a poet, and a promoter, her first book “Floral Home or First Years in Minnesota”. She collected materials on Indian  Massacres and War in Minnesota” (1862). She wrote poetry and wrote a book featuring Minnesota poets.

More to Come!

*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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