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

service and leadership development.

Co-President’s Message

Our Theme this Year is Connections

Our common experience with this pandemic certainly has brought to the fore of our consciousness our connections with and dependence on others. With things shut down, we question so many things that we took for granted- getting our groceries, taking care of our health. Will someone be there to help us with these basic needs? And who thought about that if the schools and restaurants were not open, farmers would have to dump milk, and egg farmers would have to kill thousands of chickens. Who thought of the fact that, with airlines and factories closed and people not driving, there would be a problem with storage of the surplus oil.

Now we are honoring our garbage collectors, health care workers, food producers, farm workers, shippers, truck drivers, grocery clerks, public transportation drivers, all those we took so much for granted in pre-pandemic times.

Besides those self-serving connections, we are all staying home, not just for our own “good” but to help others who may need the healthcare resources available that we would need if we got sick. Also, heaven forbid, we could become infected and pass the virus on to others. This makes us uncomfortably aware of our connectedness.

There is a lesson here. Our “Connections” go way beyond the people we consciously choose to “connect with”. We are reminded that we are part of a huge inter-locking “people system” whether we acknowledge it or not, just as Earth Day reminds us we are part of the whole of the natural environment.

Carolyn Bogott and Jen Lawhead

Co-Presidents, Austin Chapter – AAUW

**May Program**

Our next AAUW event would be the spring banquet on May 12. Unfortunately, due to the current health situation, the board has decided not to hold the banquet.  We are trying to look out for the health and safety of our members. We hope you are doing well and staying healthy.  
  
We had a great year with some informative and fun meetings. We look forward to seeing all of your smiling faces in the fall.

Jenni Braaten & Barb Hunter

Program Co-Chairs

**Membership**

Normally, AAUW membership dues for the upcoming year are collected at the spring banquet in May. Due to concerns of exposing members to the transmission of COVID-19, the AAUW Board canceled the banquet this year. As a result, all dues the upcoming 2020-2021 AAUW year will be collected through mailing a check made out to AAUW in the amount of $75 to:

Jenni Braaten

707 11th Street NW

Austin, MN 55912

507-481-7176

jennibraaten@hotmail.com

If you have decided to not renew your membership for the upcoming year, please send Jenni a text message or email. That will ensure you will not continue to receive pestering emails. Thank you in advance for renewing and hopefully, we will be to a more normal way of living next fall!

Jenni Braaten

Membership

**Small Groups**

**PM Book Group**

The evening book group will be meeting virtually, via the meeting app Zoom, on May 18th at 7 PM! We will be discussing *Where the Crawdads Sing* by Dalia Owens. PLEASE RSVP to Rae Dawn Rao if you would like to receive the meeting invites via email with your reminder on May 17th. If you have questions regarding how to join via the app, Rae Dawn can also try to assist. The scheduled meeting links are as follows and have to be in ½ hour time blocks due to meeting length restrictions for Zoom (basic): Session 1 (7-7:30) <https://us04web.zoom.us/j/71759105149>, Session 2 (7:30-8 PM) <https://us04web.zoom.us/j/74013085257>. On June 15th at 7 PM, we will tentatively be making our reading selections for the upcoming 2020-2021 year. Judy Pesonen has offered to host if we are able to meet in person. The group will make a decision on when/ how best to meet closer to the June 15th date.

**Travel Club**

The Travel Club will not be meeting until our world gets back to our “new normal,” whenever that happens to be. Maybe when we get together, we can share all that we have accomplished during this time. In the meantime, take good care of yourselves, keeping washing your hands, wear a mask, be thankful for your health, keep positive, and say your prayers.

I miss you all very much.

~DedaRae Graber

**First Friday, AM Book Group, and Great Decisions have been cancelled for May.**

**Scholarship Consideration**

The spring book sale has been canceled because of the pandemic, which means that AAUW will need to find another way to raise funds to support scholarships at Riverland.  I want to encourage members to help bridge this gap.  If you are able, please make an additional donation to AAUW for scholarships.  Maybe you can use some of your stimulus check to make a donation.  Perhaps you can donate the money you haven't been spending on gas and automotive repairs (we are all driving less).  Every little bit helps.

I understand some members are not in a place where they can do this, but if you are able, please make an additional donation to AAUW so we continue to have the funds necessary to help the next generation attend college.  Please send any donation to:

Nicole Cizik

18198 536th Ave

Austin, MN 55912

Make the check out to AAUW and be sure to mark "scholarships" on the memo line of your check. Remember, this is a tax deductible donation and we can provide a receipt for your tax records.

Thank you for your consideration.

Catherine Haslag

**Quarantine Quotes From Some of Our Members!**

*Bonnie Rietz*

“Oh, my goodness gracious sakes alive!  How our lives have changed since mid-March!  Now, instead of zipping here and there, I am Zooming at home.  Instead of getting fully clothed, I only concentrate on the waist up.  I am having trouble remembering what day of the week it is and a good friend of mine said, "Let's just work on remembering the month!"  It is May isn't it?

We have much to be thankful for and we keep the workers on the front lines in our prayers.  Hope that all you AAUW members are safe and healthy.

Remember to support our local businesses in every way you can!

I love this news that a friend sent me, "After years of wanting to thoroughly clean my house but lacking the time, this week I discovered that wasn't the reason."”

*Joyce Goetz*

“I am getting lots of cleaning out of files done.  Reduced one file drawer to 1/2 it's size.   We went through over 2000 of old picture slides we had and got about 270 of them sent in to be preserved on a memory stick.  Something we have been putting off doing for a long time.  Also finally getting some of my computer files cleaned up.  If this lasts too much longer, I will have the best organized home is the area!  Bob started a new hobby--jigsaw puzzles.  Also catching up with correspondence with long-distance friends, some by snail mail!!!!  We're calling friends that we never seem to have the time to connect with. We miss seeing our son and family in PA.  We usually spend Easter with them. Not this year.  We all pray that this passes soon. Stay healthy.”

*Catherine Haslag*

“I am doing well and thankful that I am able to work safely from home.  All of my classes for the spring and summer are being taught completely online at Riverland, which has been a challenge that is allowing me to examine how I teach my classes during a non-pandemic semester.  I have a lot of great ideas for future semesters.

I have been reading, working in my yard, doing some home projects, and holding many virtual happy hours as well.  I am learning all about how to use new technologies or better use the ones I was already familiar with.  So thankful it is starting to warm up so I can get out and cycle too.”

*Barb Hunter*

“I am going between my home and my oldest son's to provide childcare three days a week as both he and his wife are working from home. The positives are I get to spend a lot of time with my son and his little family and receive and give my granddaughter hugs. As someone who lives alone, I would greatly miss the physical contact a hug or handshake provides. Her little hugs aren't the same as getting a great big hug from a loved one though. I have read a lot of books in my leisure time. The negatives are the loss of freedom to go where and when I want. I usually end up making do with what I have or decide that I really don't want to do the project anyway. I miss the contact with my social activities but then I don't feel the desire to connect virtually with them either.  We will wait and see what our new normal comes to be.”

A close up of food

Description automatically generatedA brown horse standing next to a pile of hay

Description automatically generated

*Angie Ruther*

“I am an essential worker so I still go to work.   The difference is that they cancelled all elective surgeries,therefore we don't have a lot to do in surgery.   They have been having us cross train to other departments getting ready for a surge of patients.   We have been distributing masks.   Some I have picked up from local people (Jenny Braaten's mom).  We did pull Lydia out of the group home.   She still works at Papa Murphys two days a week.  She is bored with us.  We play games when it has been cold.  My baby chicks came in.  We also are in the middle of having calves.

*Katie Ulwelling*

“On the positive side:  having time to reflect on all the things I haven't done in my life, I am trying to remedy some of my "never dones."  For example, I have tackled my FIRST EVER jigsaw puzzle.  Granted . . . it's only 400 pieces, and it IS of the Peanuts family (Linus, Lucy, Woodstock, etc), so some might consider it a bit juvenile for a woman of my tender years.  However, I consider it "right up my alley."  That being said, I see now why I've never done a jigsaw puzzle before . . . I find it a bit slow paced, resulting in some additional boredom.  When I'm not bored, I'm frustrated because I can't find the right piece for this or that area . . . resulting in some additional stress!  I fear this will be my first and last jigsaw puzzle . . . at least I can cross it off my "bucket list."  Gee, what will I do next?  Well . . . let's see . . . I've never played Monopoly; I've never played Scrabble . . . perhaps I'll have time.

On the more challenging side:  Wearing a mask in a public place (such as Hy-Vee) has proven to be just about more than I can handle.  Here's why:  first of all, I wear eyeglasses.  At Hy-Vee the other day,  when I had the mask on, my glasses fogged up, so I had to move them to the top of my head.  Then, if I had to read something on a label, I had to move my glasses back down and SPEED read before they fogged up again!!   Do they offer on-line speed reading courses?

Secondly, I had to wear the mask for a significant amount of time that morning (which is only necessary since Hy-Vee recently rearranged ALL their shelves and now ALL the aisles are one way, too).  This extended mask usage resulted in my body overheating, which resulted in me nearly passing out.  Seriously, it reminded me of my menopausal days.  This, naturally, was not a fond memory and added to my stress.

Thirdly, and worst of all . . . the other day when I was shopping, I suddenly needed to blow my nose.  This meant I had to figure out a way to get my Kleenex and my two hands up inside my mask to accomplish this task, without exposing my mouth and nose to the outside potentially contaminated air.   Okay . . . I wish someone would have been videotaping me during this particular adventure.  I swear, if I had any sort of comedic talent I would work this into a stand-up routine to present to a live audience when the time finally comes.”

*Jenn Lawhead*

A positive for us is that I think we are discovering creative ways to engage with family. I learned about Zoom calls which we did on Easter with both families. I joined Marco Polo and am communicating with my sister in a better way all the way in Honduras. We are enjoying more family time - playing spoons, board games, cooking meals together.

My dad and Will and I played three handed cribbage over facetime for the first time.

I am also  thinking about what we want to add back/keep when these restrictions are lifted? I think I am going to add/require family game night even for my big kids... it has been glorious. I am going to "keep" making more home cooked meals. I am going to keep giving myself permission to stretch, take a breath and clear my head during the day.

**Public Policy**

Evelyn Guentzel

AAUW encourages all of us to be advocates for the right to vote. These are startling times when we must hear about all the stumbling blocks placed in front of citizens in the United States. This should be a nonpartisan issue.

Meanwhile, I introduce you to Ida Tarbell: “The Woman Who Made Modern Journalism”. She was not a suffragget, but a model for women to emulate over time. At the turn of the 20th Century the “Muckrakers” were active, challenging and informing the public through magazines, the sources of information about technological innovation and its impact on inequality, There were “stark and angry political divisions—conservatives and progressives, racial injustice, woman suffrage, the behemoth rise of corporations, the plight of workers with few protections. Theodore Roosevelt was President, ready to upend things with his bully pulpit..”  Enter Ida Tarbell, investigative reporter before the term was used. Tarbell wrote a twenty-part expose for McCLURE’S magazine about Standard Oil and the “rapacious” practices of founder John D. Rockefeller. Tarbell grew up in a family of small oil producers and watched as these independent producers were swallowed up by Rockefeller who switched to trains for delivery.  She wrote a deep biography of Lincoln, spending four years researching his life through early days in Kentucky to archives and librarians. She interviewed numerous people who had never been asked, and met Lincoln’s son, who shared information and a daguerreotype that had never been seen before.Her career began with WRITING FOR CHATAUA/QUA ; she then went to Paris and wrote about life there, she researched Emile Zola and Louis Pasteur. Her writings were well known and S.S. McClure asked her to join his magazine—other members were Viola Roseboro (fiction editor) Ray Standard Baker (labor unrest among coal miners), Lincoln Steffes ( municipal corruption ), William Allen White, Will Cather              What came out of the close professional work between Tarbell and McClure and others were terms significant today: investigative reporting, fact checking, objectivity, off the record. on background, and narrative nonfiction, all to keep power accountable. Ida Tarbell was highly regarded in the world of journalism and its readers.  Ironically, she was not invited to attend the first publishers’ dinner event—only for male journalists. Her response was classic Tarbell: “It is the first time since I came into the office that the fact of petticoats has stood in my way, and I am half-way inclined to resent it’.

I have enjoyed reading about women who led way to speak for the right of women to vote and it finally became reality. Now, ironically, we continue to fight for access to voting, and gerrymandering which distorts the privilege. At the same time, and overtime, we have seen women continue to march forward in a variety of areas:  science, education, music, theater, medicine, politics, military, community service, and it is a tribute to women everywhere.

The current issue of Covid 19 has certainly interrupted our routines; we have not been able to gather for discussions about books and world affairs, to enjoy or plan for our meetings and collecting books for our sale, a major fundraiser. We will put our energies and creativity to work to continue the mission of AAUW, Austin Branch.

*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