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Mission Statement

AAUW advances equity for women and girls through advocacy, education, and research.

Vision Statement

AAUW will be a powerful advocate and visible leaders in equity and education through research, philanthropy, and measurable change in critical areas impacting the lives of women and girls.

A Message from our President – Snippets from Sue

How can it be October? We are well into our program year with small groups having started and our first meeting of the year successfully completed.

I'm excited for our partnership with the Riverland Community Gay Straight Alliance for our October program: LGBTQIA+ Advocacy and Allyship Event October 14th at Riverland in the East Building.

In addition, the 2025-26 directories will be available at that meeting. If you are bored on a Saturday morning, join some of us at the Coffee House on Main at 9:30 for a beverage, conversation, and needlework if you wish.

Sue

October Meeting

LGBTQIA advocacy and allyship are essential for creating a world where everyone can live authentically, safely, and with dignity. Discrimination, exclusion, and violence still affect LGBTQIA individuals around the globe, making it critical for allies to stand up, speak out, and take action. Advocacy involves fighting for equal rights, representation, and protections under the law, while allyship means using one's voice, privilege, and platform to support and uplift marginalized communities.

This work is deeply connected to the idea of being a superhero. Superheroes fight for justice, protect the vulnerable, and challenge systems of oppression—values that align closely with LGBTQIA advocacy. Just like a superhero, an ally chooses courage over comfort, standing against hate even when it's unpopular or risky. In everyday life, this might mean challenging harmful language, educating others, or supporting inclusive policies.

Please join us on October 14 for a program on LGBTQIA Advocacy and Allyship. An Le, with the Human Rights Commission and organizer for the Austin Pride event, will speak on how we can be better allies for our LGBTQIA neighbors. Social and announcements start at 6:30p, program begins at 7p.

This event will take place in the Austin East Building of the Riverland Campus, Room C110. Please park near the entrance to the Frank Bridges Theater and enter the building through Door E5. C110 will be the second door on your right. This event is open to the public. Please invite members of the community and promote this event on social media to spread the word.

Branch Updates

Evening Book Group

Evening Book group will be meeting at Dorothy Krob's (2203 W. Oakland Ave.) on Monday, October 20th at 7 PM. We will be discussing The Magnificent Lives of Marjorie Post by Allison Pataki.

Morning Book Group

The Morning Book Group will meet at 9:00 on Thursday, October 16 at Perkins Restaurant. Harriet Ulland will lead the discussion of *The Last Bookshop in London* by Madeline Martin.

Travel Club

The Travel Club will be journeying to Lanesboro on Thursday, October 16th. We will meet at the southeast corner of the Riverland parking lot at 9:30 and carpool to Lanesboro. (Sonia Larson has made many calls to arrange this great adventure. Please thank her.) We will visit the studio of Joanne Finnegan (Joanne formerly lived in Austin and taught many different art classes), the Lanesboro Art Gallery, and one or two other artists. Plus stop for lunch in between. We plan to be back to Austin around 4:00-4:30. It should be an enjoyable day in the beautiful Lanesboro area with the lovely Fall colors.

Please let me know by Monday, September 23th if you are planning to join us. Thank you.

Also, if you are willing to drive, please let me know. Thank you again.

I hope this will fit into many of your schedules. - DedaRae Graber

First Friday Luncheon

First Friday Luncheon is this Friday, October 3rd at Bella Victoria, 11:30. RSVP by 6:00pm on Thursday, October 2nd. - Dorothy Krob, 1-507-279-0920

Needlework

Do you crochet, knit, embroider, or participate in any other needlework hobbies? Do you like to sit in coffee shops and enjoy delicious beverages while talking with other people? If you answered yes to either of these questions, then the Needlework Small Group is for you. We will gather on Saturdays at **9:30 am** at Coffee on Main starting September 6 Bring whatever crafting project you are working on and enjoy some time creating with others. If you don't know how to crochet or knit, bring some needles and yarn and we will teach you. Contact Catherine Haslag at cshaslag@gmail.com if you have any questions.

Story Show

We are so excited to share "The Power of Hope" with you for our 6th annual story show on January 10, 2026. We are thrilled to share this year's storytellers:

Sue Grove (AAUW Representative)

An Le

Bob Rosel

Sarahi Duenes

Linden Anderson

Emily Hovland

Jen Weibrand

Adam Boes

Tickets will be available for sale by members in December and will continue to be \$20 a piece. Thank you for supporting this fundraiser and positive community event. - Jenni and Jen

Great Decisions

Great Decisions will meet on October 27th at noon at KSMQ to discuss AI and American National Security. Our next "season" starts in January when we begin with a new book. We would be delighted if others would like to join us to discuss topics affecting our world today. Topics in the new book include: America and the World: Trump 2.0 Foreign Policy
Trump Tariffs and the Future of the World Economy
U.S.-China Relations
Ruptured Alliances and the Risk of Nuclear Proliferation
Ukraine and the Future of European Security
Multilateral Institutions in a Changing World Order
U.S. Engagement in Africa
The Future of Human Rights and International Law

We read a chapter in the book and then meet to watch a lecture about the topic and then discuss. If you are interested, please contact Peggy Benzkofer at 612-770-9328 or pjbenzko@gmail.com.

Public Policy

There is so much going on in the public policy sector right now that it is hard to focus. One thing that I feel is vital is that while we are busy advocating for positive change it is also important to foster communication with those who have differing opinions. Sara Benzkofer (Peggy's daughter) works for the Humphrey School of Public Affairs. A big thank you to her for writing the following article for us:

Building Bridges Through Conversation by Sara Benzkofer

The Humphrey School of Public Affairs' Policy Fellows program at the University of Minnesota is rooted in the belief that Minnesota needs leaders who can listen, learn, and work together across divides. That mission feels especially urgent right now and something all of us can use more of in our daily lives. In the wake of the recent assassination of Charlie Kirk, we must say clearly: all political violence is wrong, full stop. It tears at the fabric of our democracy and makes the hard work of building trust across lines of difference even more difficult. And yet—it is precisely in these moments, when it feels hardest, that we need to extend a hand.

Working across difference isn't easy. It takes practice, like exercising a muscle, and it often means leaning into discomfort. Some practical ways to begin:

- Lead with curiosity. Ask open ended questions instead of making assumptions.
- Acknowledge values, not just opinions. Often we care about similar things, even if we disagree on solutions.
- Slow down. Give conversations space, rather than rushing to respond or win a point.
- Know when to pause. Sometimes the most respectful choice is to step back and continue later.

It may not seem like it, but there is so much more that connects us than divides us, but finding that common ground requires courage and effort. In this hyper-divided time, the alternative to listening and engaging is retreating into our corners and that serves none of us.

This does not mean softening convictions or ignoring conflict. As Republican Governor Spencer Cox of Utah said recently, "...we can choose a different path." Each of us has the power to decide whether we close off or lean in, whether we reinforce divides or help bridge them. Every conversation is an opportunity to choose differently.

That's what our Policy Fellows practice each year. And it's something we can all practice more of in our daily lives. Will you join me in choosing to extend a hand, to listen, and to look for common ground, even when it's hard?

I'd also like to encourage members to utilize the AAUW "Two Minute Activist". This gives you alerts about specific issues and provides tools to call or send messages to legislators. You can access this by going to the website at aauw.org. Click on the menu button and go to "Take Action". This is quite convenient and helpful!

Submitted by Angie Loecke

Financial Report

AAUW		
8/25/25-9/26/25		
Period: 8/25/25-9/26/25		
Opening Balance:		\$8,862.99
Income:		
Membership Dues (National + State + Local)	\$ 425.00	
Total Income:	\$ 425.00	\$9,287.99
Disbursements:		
Membership Dues (National + State)	\$ 719.00	
Total Disbursements:	\$719.00	\$8,568.99
Closing Balance 9/26/25		\$8,568.99