



EMPOWERING WOMEN SINCE 1881

INDEPENDENCE BRANCH

Empowering women since 1940

Vol. 81 No. 5 February 2021

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

Message from Jolene



And just when I thought January would last forever, it's February! This month has lots of cool things going on like Valentine's Day and Mardi Gras. Our February program on student loan debt will be pretty cool too. Did you know that women hold 2/3's of the student debt amounting to \$929 billion? Women tend to borrow more for their education—and struggle more to pay it off—in part because of the gender pay gap. The following link to the AAUW website is the 2020 update on this topic.

[Deeper in Debt: Women & Student Loans – AAUW : Empowering Women Since 1881](#)

It is also **Black History Month**. From Sojourner Truth to Amanda Gorman, the contributions of black women have influenced the course of our nation and enriched our American experience. Excerpts from Gorman's inauguration poem are printed in this newsletter.

Starting April 7th, AAUW members will have the opportunity to vote on changing the degree requirement for membership. To make an informed decision, take time to review the national website

[2021 Comment Period: Bylaws Amendment – AAUW : Empowering Women Since 1881.](#)

Enjoy February and see at the next ZOOM meeting.

Jolene Cerveny

Upcoming Events:

- ~February 22 = February Members' Market = Watch your email!
- ~February 23 = Branch Meeting - Program: Panel Discussion on Deeper-in-Debt; the Burden of Student Loan Debt for College Graduates
- ~February 26 = Woman Achievement Nomination(s) Due
- ~March 8 = Pizza Ranch Fundraising Night
- ~March 9 = Book Club = Book: The Gifted School by Bruce Holsinger. Led by Gail Metcalf Schartel.
- ~April 7-May 15 = Voting on AAUW Bylaws (Degree Requirement)

At our January meeting, our Branch agreed to place a "thank-you" ad in the Examiner recognizing jobs essential in the current health crisis and thanking people who do those jobs.

The ad ran in the Examiner **Saturday, Feb. 6th in Section A** (Shown to the right)

A very special thanks to Pat Bounds, Barbara Leabo, and Judy Tyson for making this happen in record time!

You guys are rock stars!



February Program ~ Kathy Keeton, Program Chair

Three panelists will discuss the topic Deeper-in-Debt, the Burden of Student Loan Debt for College Graduates for the February program on the 23rd.

Mindy Hager will speak from the perspective of a banker providing financial aid for students.

Dena Norris will provide information as the financial aid associate vice provost director of education at Kansas University. She is also the liaison for homeless students.

Sarah Morris received her college degree in December. We will hear her perspective of repaying the loan debt as she was employed and attending college classes.

AAUW Book Club ~ Jane Campbell, Book Club Chair

March 9 will be a Zoom meeting and will be hosted by Jane Campbell, so please notify Jane if you are not a regular member of Book Club and would like an invitation. The book is

The Gifted School by Bruce Holsinger. Gail Metcalf Schartel will be the discussion leader.

REENTRY WOMAN OF THE YEAR AWARDS VIRTUAL EVENT, SATURDAY, APRIL 17, 10 AM

The ReEntry applications have been sent out to our institutional partners, UMKC, Penn Valley Community College, and Kansas City Kansas Community College. Thanks to an unexpected windfall this year, the amount offered this year is at least \$750 per student. Members of the Interbranch Council expressed the hope that their respective members will donate, perhaps, the amount they would have expected to pay for the annual brunch and increase the scholarship awards even more. Students have been especially impacted by the pandemic this year and any extra amount will certainly help.

The InterBranch Council is pleased to announce that the keynote speaker will be *Joni Wickam*. Wickham served as Chief of Staff for former Mayor Sly James and she is the author of *The Thin Line Between Cupcake and Bitch: Taking Action, Driving Change, and Getting Results*. More information will be forthcoming about getting the link to join this virtual event. Stay tuned!

Nominating Committee News ~ Karen Johnson, Chair

The candidates for 2021-2022 officers are:

President - Renee Freers, Programing Vice President - Pat Bounds,
Recording Secretary - Gail Schartel.

Congratulations and Thank You, Ladies!!

'THE HILL WE CLIMB' By Amanda Gorman

U.S. Poet Laureate Amanda Gorman shared a strong message at the Jan. 20, 2021, Inauguration. Here are two excerpts:

"... while democracy can be periodically delayed, it can never be permanently defeated..."

*"We are striving to forge our union with purpose
To compose a country committed to all cultures, colors, characters, and
conditions of man
And so we lift our gazes not to what stands between us
But what stands before us
We close the divide because we know to put our future first,
we must first put
our differences aside
We lay down our arms
so we can reach out our arms
to one another
We seek harm to none and harmony for all"*

WOMAN OF ACHIEVEMENT GUIDELINES FOR NOMINATION (Form is printed below)

Fill out the nomination form for Woman of Achievement and return to **Joyce Gillespie, Woman of Achievement Chair**

- 1) Nominations are to be made by branch members.
- 2) Nominee must work or have worked, or volunteer or have volunteered in the Independence, MO area.
- 3) Membership in AAUW is optional.
- 4) A branch member must submit a written nomination listing the Nominee's achievements in the areas of: Professional / career experience and Volunteer / Special activities and Educational background (college is not required)
- 5) A brief statement of personal recommendation by the AAUW member making the nomination.

AAUW Independence Branch Woman of Achievement Nominee

(Please feel free to submit the information in your own words or in paragraph format. Include any recommendations, words of accolade from friends or co-workers). Attach additional pages as needed.

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone _____ Mobile Phone _____

e-mail _____

AAUW Member making this nomination: _____

Member Phone/Mobile Phone _____

e-mail _____

NOMINEE'S INFORMATION Professional / Career Experience:

Volunteer / Community Activities:

AAUW Activities (if a member)

Educational History and Achievements:

On the reverse side, please write a brief statement telling the committee why you feel this nominee should be considered for this award.

Member Signature _____ Date _____

Send nominations to Joyce Gillespie

**With your support,
there is so much
we can accomplish
this year...**



Dear Independence AAUW Members,

It's time to turn the page on history. But the work ahead is monumental. As we look to recover from one of the most tragic, turbulent and divisive periods in memory, we cannot return to the "normal" that got us here—a status quo characterized by systemic gender and racial inequity.

We need you to build a new foundation for the democracy we fought so hard for last year.

Renew Now

With your help, we'll partner with the Biden-Harris Administration, state legislators, and the historically diverse 117th Congress to create the equitable future we all deserve.

Our 2021 priorities include:

- Providing urgent COVID relief and paid leave to the women on whose shoulders our economy depends.
- Canceling student debt, two-thirds of which is borne by women and which weighs most heavily on women of color.
- Closing racial and gender pay gaps by outlawing the use of salary history in job applications and adopting other measures.
- Raising the federal minimum wage to ensure the millions of low-wage and essential workers—most of whom are women—can support themselves and their families.

We're heartened by the new Administration's commitment to equity in its policy agenda.

There is so much we can accomplish this year together. [Please, don't turn your back on equity now.](#)

With gratitude,



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kimberly Churches".

Kimberly Churches
Chief Executive Officer

January 2021 AAUW Financial Report
Lois Domsch, Treasurer

CHECKING ACCOUNT

BALANCE ON HAND 12/31/2020		\$3342.5
RECEIPTS		
1/28/2021	Deposit Memorials for Shery Lane	250
TOTAL RECEIPTS		\$250
DISBURSEMENTS		
4620 1/30/2021	Jane McClain speaker January	40
TOTAL DISBURSEMENTS		\$ 40
BALANCE ON HAND 1/31/2021		\$3552.50

SAVINGS ACCOUNT

BALANCE ON HAND 12/31/2020		\$10337.21
RECEIPTS		
1/31/2021	Dividend January	0.22
TOTAL RECEIPTS		\$0.22
TOTAL DISBURSEMENTS		\$0.00
BALANCE ON HAND 1/31/2021		\$10337.43

Minutes = Jeanne Schneider, Recording Secretary

January 26, 2021 = AAUW Program

Our guest speaker, Jane McClain presented "Failure Is Impossible", the history of women's suffrage in Missouri, Kansas and beyond. Two guests from the Booneville branch and one guest from the Columbia branch joined us for this program.

January 26, 2021 = AAUW Branch Meeting

The January meeting was called to order by President Jolene Cerveny.

No additions or corrections to the minutes from our November meeting published in the newsletter, they stand approved.

VP, Program: Kathy Keeton reported that February's program will be a panel discussion about the burden of student loan debt for college graduates. The panel members will be Mindy Hager, Dena Norris, and Sarah Morris.

Public Policy: Renee Freers asked us "Why did you join AAUW? One member said, "to meet people your own age". Another member said, "to be with dynamic women". Renee reported highlights of the Missouri Women's Network Legislative Retreat she attended. This Zoom event brings many resources together which all work to advance the rights of women. Several resources shared include: **VOTE411.org**; which is the League of Women Voters information, and the AAUW website, **aauw.org**. **FastDemocracy.com** is a free website that provides information on legislative bills affecting women.

Minutes (cont'd) = Jeanne Schneider, Recording Secretary

Public Policy (cont'd)

Kelley Reetzke wanted to cover two bills of significant interest in Missouri.

SB 59 – modifies provisions relating to employment practices relating to gender.

SB 143 – creates new provisions governing employer hiring practices. (i.e., about your salary history).

Federal bill the Paycheck Fairness Act includes steps to update and strengthen the Equal Pay Act of 1963; to help close the gender pay gap.

Membership: Sue Raymond asked us to please send email notes to her about what we have been doing, in an effort to stay in touch. Members also shared of memories of Judith Gutekunst.

Financial Officer: Lois Domsch presented financial report (see Financial attachment)

Corresponding Secretary: Nancy Comtois sent out cards in January. A Get-Well card to Judith Gutekunst. Sympathy cards to Karen Johnson, Lisa Cox, and Judith Gutekunst families.

Book Club: Jolene reported for Jane. Book Club was postponed for a month. Will be meeting in February.

Fundraising: Jolene reported the January Members Market made \$96. Next Market will be February 22.

½ Price Book Sale: Jolene picked up books from Examiner and will take appropriate books to ½ Price Book store. Thanks to Jeff Fox for reaching out to make this contribution.

Pizza Ranch event is scheduled for March 8. We will be asking for volunteers as the date approaches.

Organic Seed Fundraiser was discussed, and Jolene will order the forms for this project.

Nominations: Jolene reported that we have two members that agreed to serve on this committee; Patty Chadwick and Karol Palmer. Karen Johnson announced the upcoming officers that will be on the ballot are President, Vice President Programs and Recording Secretary.

Publicity: Jolene reported about taking out an ad in the Examiner, "Thanking our Heroes". After discussion, it was moved and seconded that the branch proceed with placing a quarter page "thank you" ad in the Independence Examiner, crafted by Pat Bounds and Barbara Leabo. The cost will be \$281.50.

Minutes (cont'd) = Jeanne Schneider, Recording Secretary

Re-Entry/Student Awards: Kathy Vest is still trying to get ahold of Blue River, because the information has already gone out for re-entry scholarships. As no in-person events are being held, recipients will be recognized via Zoom; details are still pending.

Woman of Achievement: Joyce Gillespie reminded us nominations are due in by February 26th. If we do not have a single person nominated, maybe have to consider a group award.

Other Discussion: Jolene mentioned proposed change in the AAUW bylaws, regarding the degree requirement was discussed. Members will be able to vote on this change from April 7 to May 17. Following is the link to the AAUW website further explaining the amendment. [2021 Comment Period: Bylaws Amendment – AAUW : Empowering Women Since 1881](#)

Jolene also discussed the 10-Star Award Application and the branch's deficiency in the Educational Equity portion emphasizing recognition of girls' involvement in STEM activities. Renee Freers offered to assist Kathy Vest and Gail Schartel with this.

Sue Shineman is now a member of the Legacy Circle. Legacy Circle honors donors who have expressed their commitment to the mission of AAUW through a planned gift, such as a charitable gift annuity or through a bequest. Sue joins Patt Braley as a member of the Legacy Circle.

With no further discussion, the meeting was adjourned.