



EMPOWERING WOMEN SINCE 1881

## INDEPENDENCE BRANCH

Empowering women since 1940

Vol. 84 No. 2    October 2023

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

### President's Message

October 2023

Thank you to everyone who helped make our September meeting a success! The food was delicious, and it was great to be back together. Sue Shineman led us in a discussion of "What AAUW Can Do for You." We had terrific participation and great ideas were generated.



Five of us will be traveling to St. Louis for the AAUW Central States Regional Conference on October 19-21. Patt Braley, Lois Domsch, Gail Metcalf Shartel, Sue Shineman, and I will join approximately 150 other AAUW members from 11 states. Conference topics include: voting rights, reproductive rights and women's health, equity and inclusion, pay equity, AAUW and the future. Keynote speeches feature Gloria Blackwell, CEO of AAUW and Lia Maatz, Public Policy and Organizational Consultant. We will be sharing information and what we learned at the conference at our October branch meeting on October 24. I look forward to seeing you then!

Karol

"Stronger Together as We Advocate for Women and Girls"

### Upcoming Events:

**October 19-21 = Central States Regional Conference = St. Louis**

**October 23 = Pizza Ranch Fundraiser, 5-8 p.m.**

**October 24 = AAUW Independence Branch Meeting = Informative Report Central States Regional Conference = presented by Sue Shineman, Karol Palmer and Conference Attendees.**

**November 14 = AAUW Book Club = *The Last House on the Street* by Diana Chamberlain, led by Lois Domsch. Book Club is held at Jane Campbell's house at 10:30 a.m.**



## Special Event Outing

Shelly Lowe, Chair of National Endowment for the Humanities,  
Keynote Address



On September 6, 2023, Joyce Gillespie, Kathy Vest, Lois Domsch, and Karol Palmer traveled to Metropolitan Community College-Maple Woods in Kansas City to hear Chair Shelly Lowe from the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) give a public keynote address to discuss the importance of the humanities to society and how the “roots and routes” shape our individual experiences and our state and national stories. This was a unique opportunity because since the founding of the NEH in 1965, no chairperson of the NEH has visited Missouri in an official capacity. Lowe is a citizen of the Navajo Nation and grew up on the Navajo reservation in Ganado, Arizona. Lowe shared that some of her roots are in Missouri and Iowa as she had a grandfather from Missouri and a grandmother from Iowa. Lowe’s career has included positions as executive director of the Harvard University Native American Program, assistant dean in the Yale College Dean’s Office, and director of the Native American Cultural Center at Yale University. In addition, she spent six years as the Graduate Education Program Facilitator for the American Indian



Studies Programs at the University of Arizona. Lowe was appointed chair of the NEH in October of 2021 by President Biden. Lowe is the first Native American to head the NEH. A goal for Lowe is to bring the humanities to everyone including reservations and small farm communities.

Kathy Vest stated that Puppetry Arts Institute (PAI) in Independence has been fortunate to receive several grants from the Missouri Humanities Council. PAI and AAUW-Independence were given special recognition as sponsors of the Maple Woods event.

## Program Notes

Welcome back everyone to September meeting and program. After a yummy meal, members learned weird facts and traits about each other, in Mingle Bingo mixer - like who liked anchovies, or who lived in Korea. Sue Shineman led us to reveal what we want to gain from our AAUW membership, and what we can contribute. Highlights included: more outings for fun and entertainment, as well as learning!! / Ideas for increasing membership / coordinating with AAUW – KC wide / Social Justice and Equity / Be more visible in our community. Maybe this year

*"The Future's So Bright, I Gotta Wear Shades"* Timbuk 3, 1986

See ya next - October 24 - Sue Raymond & Patty Chadwick, Program Co-Chairs

**Congratulations** to Sarah Schofield Wimberly for being one of the Eastern Jackson County Women of Distinction!!

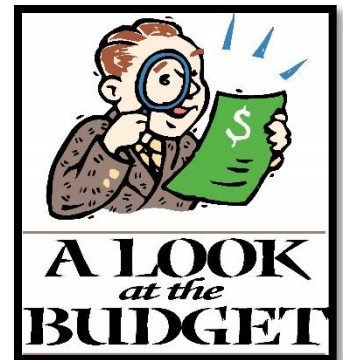
**College/University** - A big thank you to Lois Domsch, Judy Tucker, Karol Palmer for helping Sue Shineman and Barbara Leabo at Blue River on September 26th. Fifteen new voters were registered and several students signed up to be student members of AAUW. Our next day at Blue River will be December 5th. We will continue registering voters and sharing AAUW info plus will have little favors with a note of luck during final week. We will be making the favors on November 20th. More information on where will be announced later. We will also need people to help on the 5th of December. Contact Sue or Barbara if you're interested in helping.

**Membership** - Independence Chapter does have new members: Deb Horton and Marilyn Lowrey, but we certainly would love more. Please bring prospective members with you to the meetings and events. Hopefully some of you have considered being a volunteer with the ISD. If you have an idea for a day event or evening happening, let Karen or Barbara know. They can research ideas and set up the information for others.

Barbara Leabo

### **Financial Report = Patt Braley, Financial Officer**

Patt has experienced some computer difficulties and has submitted the October financial report as a pdf document. Please click [here](#) to access the report online. The report is also being attached to the October newsletter email.



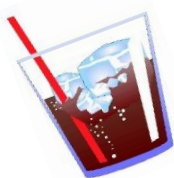
Joyce Gillespie, Fundraiser Chair = joyceannegillespie@yahoo.com

AAUW Independence Branch

Pizza Ranch Fundraiser

Monday, October 23, 2023

5-8 p.m.



Volunteers Needed!

Proceeds benefit the AAUW Scholarship Fund

Support the Branch...Work the Ranch!!

**WHAT THE CONSTITUTION MEANS TO ME: 2017 American Play** by Heidi Schreck.

As a fifteen-year-old, Heidi earned her college tuition by winning Constitutional debate competitions across the United States. In this hilarious, hopeful, and achingly human show, Heidi resurrects her teenage self in order to trace the profound relationship between four generations of women and the founding document that shaped their lives.

The play addresses themes such as women's rights, immigration, domestic abuse, and the history of the United States. The play was a nominee for Best Play in the 73rd Tony Awards and was a finalist for the 2019 Pulitzer Prize for Drama.

KC Rep Theater is performing the play at the Copaken Stage (Power & Light District), 1 H&R Block Way, KC, MO. The play runs from October 24 to November 12. Ticket prices range from \$35-\$65. Visit [KCRep](http://KCRep.org) for performance and ticket information. You can view the official trailer on the play on YouTube. You'll love it!

Jolene Cervený

"Fall" into the AAUW Fund.  
Contribute this year  
and help us meet our goals:

\$30/member and  
50% participation



Bring your "Fall" bag back to--or get one at--  
the October meeting for a taste of "success".

*We wrap up the FUND drive Dec. 9.*

**See the following article on the Century Club.**

## Century Club 2023 – AAUW Independence

*Independence Branch has a great tradition of supporting AAUW scholarships and programs at the national and local levels. Since 2015 AAUW Independence has recognized members who have made personal donations to the AAUW Fund and to our branch projects. Your support to these funds is greatly appreciated and helps us meet our budget!*

**“CENTURY CLUB”** refers to a \$100.00 donation in any of these levels:

### **State Level: “Century Club” Recognition**

- \$100.00 donation to national AAUW Fund – tax deductible-
- To support the programs and projects at the national level.
- Checks made to AAUW or on-line donations at [aauw.org](http://aauw.org), (log on to your personal profile and follow the prompts)

### **State Level: “Century Club Plus” Recognition**

- \$250.00 to national AAUW Fund – tax deductible –
- To support the programs and projects at the national level.
- (Checks made to AAUW or on-line donations at [aauw.org](http://aauw.org))

### **Branch Level: “Century Club” Recognition**

\$100.00 cumulative donations to any of the following:

- **AAUW Fund** – tax deductible – to support the programs and projects at the national level. (Checks made to AAUW or on-line at [aauw.org](http://aauw.org))
- **Independence School District Foundation** – tax deductible – local high school scholarships. (Checks made to ISD Foundation: AAUW account on the memo line OR submit to AAUW Finance Officer and she will send in.)
- **AAUW Independence “As Needed” Fund** – flexible funds for additional branch projects. (Checks made to AAUW Independence)

*Contributions to the fund(s) of your choice will be credited within the calendar year (same as national AAUW: January 1-December 31, 2023). Recognition will be given at our annual May luncheon.*

**Deadline for 2022 Century Club contributions is December 9, 2022.** Checks may be given to Patt Braley, Financial Officer, or to Lois Domsch, AAUW Fund Chair.

**Thank you for your continued support of AAUW!**

Lois Domsch, AAUW Fund Chair



## **Public Policy News = Kelley Reetzke, Chair**



The passing of Democratic Senator Dianne Feinstein marks the end of an era. She served as United States Senator from 1992 - 2023. She was the longest-serving woman in the U.S. Senate, and a tireless advocate for gender equity.

A section of the United States Senate website dedicated to “[The Women of the Senate](#).”

### **AAUW-Endorsed Bills Reintroduced in Congress in September:**

- ✓ The [John R. Lewis Voting Rights Advancement Act](#) would restore and strengthen the protections of the Voting Rights Act. The bill would prevent the adoption of discriminatory voting practices. To date 45 states have introduced more than 300 anti-voter bills. The integrity of our democracy depends on ensuring that every eligible voter can participate in the electoral process.  
See how your members of Congress [previously voted](#) on the John R. Lewis Voting Rights Advancement Act and [ask them to support it](#).
- ✓ The [Schedules That Work Act](#) and [Part-Time Worker Bill of Rights Act](#) would give workers more certainty about their hours and incomes and strengthen protections and benefits for part-time workers.
- ✓ The [Tyler Clementi Higher Education Anti-Harassment Act](#) would require colleges and universities receiving federal funding to establish anti-harassment policies prohibiting harassment and bullying based on sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, and more.
- ✓ The [Student Loan Deferment for Sexual Violence Survivors Act](#) would create a student loan deferment option for survivors of sexual violence and sex-based harassment who temporarily withdraw from their school for mental and physical health rehabilitation.

### **FROM THE MISSOURI STATE PUBLIC POLICY MEETING**

Caitlyn Adams, Executive Director of Missouri Jobs with Justice provided ballot initiative information and training. Jobs with Justice is collecting signatures for a ballot initiative to gradually raise Missouri’s minimum wage to \$15 by 2026 and allow employees to earn paid sick leave. This will help part-time employees earn 1 hour of sick leave for 30 hours worked.

Check out Missouri Jobs with Justice at <https://mojwj.org>.

Missouri State Senator Tracy McCreery, 24<sup>th</sup> Senatorial District in St. Louis County, gave a preview of legislative agenda items for 2024. Some items of concern for Senator McCreery included the following:

- The Missouri legislature has been trying to send a ballot item to voters that would raise the threshold to amend the state constitution from a simple majority to 57%. GOP lawmakers have admitted that making the constitution more difficult to amend is critical in stopping an initiative petition to expand abortion access in Missouri.
- Criminal justice reform
- Childcare
- School choice

There is a record-setting number of women serving in the Missouri Senate.

Twelve out of 34 senators are women.



## **AAUW Independence Branch September 26, 2023 Meeting Minutes**

Members Present: Patt Braley, Jane Campbell, Jolene Cerveney, Patty Chadwick, Lisa Cox, Lois Domsch, Deb Horton, Kathy Kelley, Barbara Leabo, Melissa Morawitz, Karol Palmer, Sue Raymond, Kelley Reetzke, Gail Metcalf Schartel, Sue Shineman, Judy Tucker, Judy Tyson, Kathy Vest

Guest: Pauline Testerman

Karol Palmer opened the business portion of the meeting at 6:40 p.m. after all had enjoyed a delicious pot luck and a lively session of Mingle Bingo

Karol called upon Patt Braley to review the 2023-2024 budget. The proposed budget is in the 2023-2024 Yearbook. She explained that the Finance Committee had met over the summer to audit and review past budgets to establish the current one. She explained the budget was a plan and could be modified as needed. She also noted that some funds had been designated as miscellaneous to cover any expenses that arose. The Balance in Community America Credit Union (\$10,138.87) which includes \$1,084.69 that is for the Kansas City Interbranch ReEntry Scholarship Fund. Actual Combined Checking & Savings Accounts total \$9,054.18. Karol Palmer noted that the budget line for Community Connections/Publicity could be used for a membership in the Independence Chamber of Commerce in hopes that some recruiting and publicity would result from such a membership.

Patt said that the Designated Funds for membership may be lower because there are fewer than 40 members in the Branch. She noted that fund raising has increased and allowed a CD to be purchased for investment. The budget was unanimously approved by voice vote.

Lois Domsch announced that Jolene Cerveney had acquired coloring books about women in STEM from the National Museum of Toys and Miniatures and were available to distributed to area classrooms. People interested in distributing the books should contact Lois for a supply.

Lois then recognized individuals who had made contributions to the AAUW Fund without being prodded with bags of goodies. She recognized the Bridge groups who had also made contributions. She encouraged all to make similar contributions to meet the goals for the year. (\$30.00 per member)

Patt Braley noted that two members, Carolyn Weeks and Teresa Dean, have died recently and she is preparing to make contributions to AAUW Greatest Needs Fund in their names.

Sue Shineman then led the group in an activity "How to Re-Energize Our Branch". A short Power Point presentation was followed by members answering questions at their tables and gathering the answers to be shared with all.

This is the summary of what was discussed during the activity:

### **Share 1 reason you are a member of AAUW**

- I was asked to join!
  - Joined at a Tea for Teachers
- Programs, Scholarships, Advancement of Women
  - Progressive Women
  - Mission of AAUW – sharing focus for a common goal
  - Keep current on women's issues
  - STEM focus
- Socializing: Book Club, Bridge, Friends (old & new)

## **AAUW Independence Branch September 26, 2023 Meeting Minutes (cont'd)**

### **What is your favorite part about AAUW?**

- Programs: Variety, excellent speakers
- Connection to local education and politics
- Special Events: Educational

### **What activities, projects, adventures, etc. interest you?**

- Conference on Women's Issues – collaborating with KC Branches and other groups
- Social Justice Issues
- Education: Local History
- More diverse groups and activities: Visit women in non-traditional jobs
- Unique field trips – ie STEM, KC Public Library programs, educational and fun ones
- Wine & Chocolate Event (at Andres')
- Scholarships: High School and Reentry
- Support ISD Schools
- Book Club – focus on women's issues

### **What is your Vision for us in 5 years? What will this look like?**

- Unify 4 KC Branches
- Be more active – involved in community
- Double Membership – have 100 members by 2029
- Co-Host a city-wide program for women with exciting speaker & workshops
- No Zoom Meetings

### **What can we do to increase our membership?**

- Offer More Group Activities / Unique Outings AND Invite Friends to attend
  - Attend City Council meeting
  - Programs offered in KC Metro
  - Social Justice activities
  - Ethnic based outings
  - Truman Library Events
  - Focus on current members, newly retired, empty nesters, college students
  - Get current members involved in branch committees, activities
- Branch Programs – with current & high interest
  - Invite friends – Each one – Invite one
- Make AAUW more visible in the community
  - Participate in community events and wear AAUW tee-shirt
  - Social Media – Instagram, Twitter, Facebook
- Outreach Events
  - Tea for New Teachers / young members
  - Rush Party – Get Acquainted Event
  - Drop degree requirement

Karol noted that the October program will be a discussion of the Regional Conference being attended by several members: Patt Braley, Lois Domsch, Karol Palmer, Gail Metcalf Schartel, and Sue Shineman.

Barbara Leabo discussed the Independence School District's Inspire One Student at a Time opportunity for volunteering in area classrooms or working with individual students



## **AAUW Independence Branch September 26, 2023 Meeting Minutes (cont'd)**

Patty Chadwick shared her research into having new t-shirts ordered. She advocated for a baseball style shirt with  $\frac{3}{4}$  sleeves as a compromise. She will present information on design and cost at the next meeting.

Karol encouraged everyone to heed emails sent out by Lisa on how to be a two-minute activist on issues consistent with AAUW's mission.

Another fund-raising event will be held on October 23<sup>rd</sup> at Pizza Ranch from 5-8 p.m. Joyce Gillespie will have more information on it.

A group of members visited Blue River Community College and registered 14 students to Vote and registered 8 as student members of AAUW. The next visit at BRCC will be December 4<sup>th</sup>. Both Barbara and Sue Shineman noted that they had been thanked for coming to the campus. Gail suggested that the fact the group wore their AAUW shirts made them more visible than at past visits when identifying clothing was not worn by all.

Book Club will meet at Patty Chadwick's home on October 11<sup>th</sup> as Jane Campbell will be out of town. Deb Horton and Sue Raymond will assist with hospitality during the October meeting.

Jane Campbell read a note from Pat Bounds about a play she will be in at the Englewood Arts Institute October 6, 7, 13, 14 and 15. A Candle Against the Dark is the story of a family's battle with polio. Evening performances start at 7:30 p.m. on the 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup>, 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> and matinees on the 8<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> start at 2:30. Tickets are \$40 with proceeds going to Polio Plus/Rotary International. Tickets for the opening show on the 6<sup>th</sup> are \$100. The play is based on the family of Carl Chinnery.

Patty Chadwick reminded all to pick up their yearbook and one for any member they might see.

Kathy Vest thanked those who attended the lecture by Shelly C. Lowe, chair of the National Endowment for the Humanities. She noted that both AAUW and the Puppetry Arts Institute had slides presented showing their contributions at the event.

Jolene announced that 'What the Constitution Means to Me' will be held by the Kansas City Repertory at the Copaken Stage (Power and Light District) at H&R Block Way October 24 – November 12.

Karol and Sue Shineman invited any interested in seeing the Barbie Movie to meet at 1:30 p.m. at Chili's on 39<sup>th</sup> Street and 3:45 at the Independence AMC 20 on Friday, September 29<sup>th</sup>.

Karol said she would be participating in several Swap Shops/ small gatherings, during the Regional Conference to discuss recruitment and fundraising. She asked for any information members could provide prior to the conference.

October 7<sup>th</sup> is the newsletter deadline.

Kathy Vest introduced her friend Pauline Testerman, a retired archivist at the Harry S Truman Library who was in attendance. Sue Raymond introduced Deb Horton as the newest member of AAUW.

Judy Tyson won the door prize.

The meeting adjourned at 8:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Gail Metcalf Schartel