



EMPOWERING WOMEN SINCE 1881

## INDEPENDENCE BRANCH

Empowering women since 1940

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

### President's Message

November 2023

The Central States Regional Conference in St. Louis last month was a terrific success. This event took many months of planning and many volunteers to make it happen. I want to thank the Regional Planning Committee which represented 11 states and 26 branches for all their hard work. I especially want to recognize and give my appreciation to the Missouri Planning Team: Karen Francis, Sue Shineman, Diane Ludwig, and Pat Shores. "Awesome job, ladies!" Thanks to the Independence Branch and the state for providing funds to help us attend. The conference was "jam-packed" with amazing speakers and information. It was a wonderful opportunity to make connections with other AAUW members throughout the region. I hope you are grateful as I am to be a part of an organization like AAUW that stands for and advocates for voting rights, reproductive rights, diversity, equity, and education.

Karol

Stronger together as we advocate for women and girls



Pizza Ranch numbers will be provided at our November meeting. Meanwhile, thanks to our many awesome Branch ladies, their families, and friends who contributed to Ranch results enriching our Scholarship programs.

Joyce Gillespie

### Upcoming Events:

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

~ **November 28 – AAUW Independence Branch Meeting** – Program: Review of Legislation relating to Women" and "Legislation in Review" by Aaron Crossley, Missouri District 29 State Representative. *Bring \$24-\$26 to the November meeting for the December 9<sup>th</sup> Luncheon at V's. Bring donation to Fisher House, see information below under Programs and Parties, Page 3.*

~ **December 9 – AAUW Independence Holiday Luncheon – V's Italiano Ristorante – 10819 US Hwy 40, Independence, MO 64055, 11:30 am.** *Large candy bars will be available for purchase with a donation to the Scholarship Fund.*

### AAUW T-Shirt Order

The cost of the shirts will be \$17.45. There is a \$2.00 up-charge for a 2x size. The shirts are uni-sex size.

I will have a chart showing size measurements — also a couple of shirts to try on at the November meeting.

Patty Chadwick



### AAUW Fund

You're hearing how National leaders were out in force at the Central States Regional Conference supporting Missouri and other states learn ways to implement our national goal of equity for women and girls.

Now it's our turn. We're close to our FUND goal this year supporting national in its work. If you haven't already done so, please consider contributing a little (or a lot) to help the "Greatest Needs Fund". Our goal is for at least 50% of our members to donate as well as reach \$30/member.

Deadline for contributions is December 9 at the Christmas luncheon. Bring your donation then or mail it to Patt Braley or Lois Domsch.

Thanks for your generosity as we work for equity for women and girls!

**Lois Domsch, Chair**

## PROGRAMS AND PARTIES

Get ready for an awesome program at the Nov 28 meeting. Aaron Crossley, MO State Representative will discuss State legislation affecting women; and share tips & tidbits he has learned from his *"fellow female representatives"*.

Gather for socializing and refreshments at 6:30, program at 7:00 pm.

Our chosen holiday charity is to donate to the VA Fisher House. Fisher House Foundation builds these off-site residencies for Military families so the family can be close by during prolonged recovery or treatment periods for the veteran. Families pay nothing, and may have a private room or suite.

Linens, TV, internet, kitchen access, and common area is provided. Recently, our own Joyce Gillespie lived in a Fisher House when her son was very ill in Texas.



Please bring your financial donation to the November meeting. Give to Patt Braley for our joint gift.

### **Get ready to party Dec 9!**

We have 11:30 am reservations at V's 10819 E US Highway 40, Independence, MO 64055.

**SEE email from SUE R to RSVP for the Dec lunch.** Bring to the November meeting payment of \$24- \$26; a gluten free option is available.

Meantime, get your tale regarding ethnic, traditional, or favorite family recipes to share with the group. **Each person will have a chance to tell their fun story.** Please submit your recipe (one or two) to Sue Raymond ([raymondsl2002@yahoo.com](mailto:raymondsl2002@yahoo.com)), in advance of the holiday party. **Sue will compile to distribute to all ladies and guests present.** She will keep your secret regarding your recipe until you reveal at the meeting. **It should be a fun time to contribute some of our personal history.**

Speaking of contributions, you will again have the opportunity to donate to the Fundraising Event when you buy a giant candy bar from the Scholarship Tree! **Door prizes too!!**

Sue Raymond, Membership VP

### **Patt Braley, Financial Officer**

Patt has purchased a new computer and is in the process of restoring her files. She will have hard copies of the latest Financial Report available at the November 28<sup>th</sup> Branch Meeting.

## AAUW Independence Branch October 24, 2023 Meeting Minutes

Members Present: Jane Campbell, Patty Chadwick, Lisa Cox, Lois Domsch, Joyce Gillespie, Deb Horton, Karen Johnson, Jan Keeler, Kathy Kelley, Barbara Leabo, Karol Palmer, Patty Petet, Sue Raymond, Gail Metcalf Schartel, Sue Shineman, Kathy Vest

Karol Palmer called the meeting to order at seven o'clock and welcomed all. She noted the program would be a review of the Central States Regional Conference. She thanked the Branch for their support. Karol noted that Sue Shineman was on the planning committee for the conference.

Karol discussed a presentation by Denise Lieberman, Director and Legal Counsel of Missouri Voter Protection Coalition titled 'The Ongoing Fight for the Right to Vote. Ms. Lieberman is in St. Louis and stressed that democracy is under assault with the spread of misinformation and numerous threats to voting by all eligible Americans. She noted that there have been 60 voter access bills restricting voting since 2021. She represents a non-partisan election protection organization, pledged to protect the right to vote. Two websites with more information on this issue: [MOVPC.org](https://MOVPC.org) and [protectthevote.net](https://protectthevote.net).

The second presentation Karol reported on was by Meghan Kissell, AAUW Senior Public Policy Director entitled 'ERA – Because Equality is Overdue'. Ms. Kissell noted that the launch of the Equal Rights Amendment started in 1923. The current amendment: ***No state shall make or enforce any law which shall abridge the privileges or immunities of citizens of the United States; nor shall any state deprive any person of life, liberty, or property, without due process of law; nor deny to any person within its jurisdiction the equal protection of the laws.*** was passed by Congress in March 1979. In 1982, 35 of the 38 states needed had ratified the Amendment. In January 2020, Virginia became the 38<sup>th</sup> state to ratify the amendment. While 5 states have tried to rescind their ratification, there is no provision for that action within the Constitution. At this time, there are two actions that would add the 28th Amendment: 1) The Archivist of the United States could publish the Amendment; or 2) Congress could confirm there was no time limit for passing the amendment.

Gail Metcalf Schartel thanked the Branch for supporting her attendance at the Conference. She discussed briefly the e-branch created in Iowa which meets strictly on-line via Zoom. She cited that despite its small size, the Iowa e-branch adopted a project to spread information on Human Trafficking. The branch, with financial support from Rotary, produced a brochure on the subject and distributed information and training materials for use by hotel/motel staff to recognize both sexual trafficking as well as labor trafficking. She shared the universal hand signal for help with those present.

Gail discussed the Dollars for Scholars efforts by the Ballwin-Chesterfield Branch. That branch has 150 members and prior to COVID, scheduled multiple outings each month for members. Members paid \$10 above the ticket or admission price, with those funds going into their scholarship fund. In addition, the branch holds an annual bean soup sale and puzzle/book sales for their members, with proceeds going to scholarships. The branch gives 4 college scholarships (2 to Maryville University, 2 to University of Missouri St. Louis) with preference to women who have been out of high school for 10 years, have a 3.5 GPA, are enrolled in 6 hours, and are near completion of their degree. In addition, they work with three high schools to identify 5 junior girls interested in STEM at each. They host a breakfast for each school with the students, parents, teachers and branch members. The girls are awarded a certificate and small check during the breakfast. Since COVID, the branch is suggesting participation in on-line events with members making donations to the Dollars for Scholars program. Members also work at Kiwanis bingo games.

Lois Domsch expressed how well Rachel Gonzalez (a student the Independence Branch has given scholarship support to in the past) who is now a Social Justice Advocate, presented during the Conference. She spoke on topics of interest to Millennials (those born between 1997 and 2012). An issue of special...

## AAUW Independence Branch October 24, 2023 Meeting Minutes (Cont'd)

...significance was Free America from Violence. Keeping guns locked and away from children is important. It was noted that 90% of guns are sold by 5% of dealers. This statistic makes it reasonable to control who buys guns. An ASK DAY is being promoted to schools, parents, and others. The ask is 'Is there an unlocked gun where my child is?' Lois suggested that the Independence Branch consider this as a possible project that could include the City Council.

Lois also discussed a STEM presentation called Math Magic that hosts a 1/2 day STEM experience for 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> graders, possibly at a local college, with professors and college students leading hands-on activities and AAUW members helping. Students apply for the program and are charged \$15 and receive treats and t-shirts.

Lois reported on Meghan Kissell's policy work at the national level. Ms. Kissell said that their work was non-partisan, fact-based work. Prior to 2016, sexual harassment was defined as unwelcome contact of a sexual nature. Former President Trump had that changed to 'conduct so severe and pervasive that it prevented someone from obtaining an education'. In addition, protections of transgender and LGBTQ+ were overturned during that administration. President Biden intends to restore the protections and clarify protections of LGBTQ+ and clarify transgenders participation in sports according to Ms. Kissell. One hundred and twenty-six organizations, including AAUW have asked President Biden to do this quickly.

Sue Shineman also spoke on the conference, noting that five national officers: CEO Gloria Blackwell, Vice Chair Malinda Gaul, Board member Jeanie Latz, Meghan Kissell and National DEI Committee Chair Melissa LaDuke had registered and attended every session of the three-day event. She announced that the Missouri Voter Protection group meets every Monday at 10 a.m. via Zoom and is open to all to observe. She said when the planning committee asked others about holding such a conference, they were told not to waste time or money of those who would attend. The planning committee took that advice and the result was a non-stop event. Attendees were 166 members from 16 states. Fourteen of 16 Missouri branches were represented, most by their presidents.

She reported on Gloria Blackwell's presentation. Ms. Blackwell noted that after 147 years, AAUW still hasn't worked itself out of a job. AAUW awards \$6.3M in grants and fellowships each year and will continue to do so as the endowment for scholarships is fully funded.

The issue of a degree requirement for membership will be voted upon in the spring. While AAUW has 170,000 members and supporters, there are actually only 45,000 dues-paying members. With the change in degree requirements anticipated, there are no plans to change the name of AAUW.

Sue said that Missouri will launch an e-branch, once by-laws, a president and treasurer are in place.

Membership outreach should focus on collaboration and acting and thinking locally. Branches should also rethink their focus on young members and consider holding meetings inside senior communities and centers. Sue then asked members to watch an inspiring video by Representative Cori Bush advocating for formal adoption of the 28<sup>th</sup> Amendment.

Karol then called the business meeting to order.

Lois Domsch advocated for the AAUW Fund and Century Club. She stated the goal was to have at least 50% of Branch members contribute to the AAUW fund for a total of \$1200 to meet the branch requirement. She said if \$100 is donated by someone to it qualifies for membership in the Century Club. Because the scholarship fund of AAUW is fully endowed, most gifts to AAUW are directed to the greatest need fund.

Karol announced that the financial report was in the September newsletter. It was accepted and filed for audit.



## **AAUW Independence Branch October 24, 2023 Meeting Minutes (Cont'd)**

Joyce Gillespie said that Pizza Ranch did not have AAUW on their schedule for October 23<sup>rd</sup>. She said that October 30<sup>th</sup> or November 6<sup>th</sup> were open dates to do the fund-raising activity. A show of hands determined that November 6<sup>th</sup> would be the night Branch volunteers would work 5 p.m. to 8 p.m. at Pizza Ranch.

Reporting for the Program Committee, Sue Raymond reminded everyone that State Representative Aaron Crosley would be the speaker on women and legislative matters at the November 28<sup>th</sup> meeting. She encouraged all to attend. Payment for the December luncheon would be due at the November meeting as well. Information on the cost will be distributed by Lisa prior to the November meeting.

Patty Chadwick shared a design proposed for t-shirts. She will have more specifics at the next meeting as to sizing and costs.

Jane thanked Sue Raymond and Deb Horton for providing the evening's treats. Karen Johnson and Lisa Cox volunteered to provide treats for the November meeting.

Karol reminded members there were positions open: Historian, Publicity, and Woman of Achievement. She asked for all to consider serving. She also announced that Lisa Cox needs items by November 7<sup>th</sup> for the newsletter.

All were reminded about 'What the Constitution Means to Me' showing presented by the Kansas City Repertory Theater at the Copaken Stage.

Karen Johnson won the door prize and the meeting adjourned at 8:08 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Gail Metcalf Schartel, Recording Secretary