

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

President's Message

December 2023

As we all know, this is a very busy time of the year. We take on extra duties such as shopping, wrapping, baking, and decorating just to name a few. It all becomes such a flurry of activity. The Advent season is a time of waiting and watching and reflecting. This special time of the year sometimes gets lost in the bright lights of the Christmas season it precedes. I invite you to step away from what can be a frenzied time and take a few moments to reflect on your own personal thoughts as well as our work together as an organization. We can be proud of our efforts to champion women's issues and education. I am grateful for each of you and your work to support our scholarships; to stand for diversity, equity, and inclusion; and for your friendship. I wish you Hope, Peace, Joy, and Love during this holiday season and for the New Year. Merry Christmas!



Karol

Stronger together as we advocate for women and girls

Upcoming Events:

January 9 ~ AAUW Book Club ~ *The Japanese Lover* ~ by Isabel Allende, Led by Jane Campbell.
(Also, if you have time, read *Hotel on the Corner of Bitter and Sweet* by Jamie Ford)

January 9 ~ AAUW Independence Branch Board Meeting ~ 6:00 pm ~ First United Methodist Fellowship Hall

January 23 ~ AAUW Independence Branch Meeting ~ Program: "How the Independence ISD is Focusing on Equity, and How to Support Schools in this Equity", presented by Montel Evans, Principal, Thomas Hart Benton Elementary.

Fundraiser News

Thanks for working the Pizza Ranch, Monday, November 6.....
Your three hour volunteer efforts raised \$267 in addition to Ranch percentage \$147.

Adding those numbers with \$100 member donations, the AAUW Scholarship remains a vital program in the Independence Branch.....

Best Wishes to you and your loved ones for a joyous Christmas season and a happy, healthy, safe New Year....

Joyce Gillespie



College/University

Patty Petet, Karol Palmer, Sue Shineman, and Barbara Leabo spent the morning at Blue River Community College on December 5th.

Nine new voters were registered, information for ReEntry Scholarship was shared, and students signed up for student membership. Eighty cookies were given out with notes of encouragement for the upcoming Final Week. Cookies were for all students and a couple of staff members who looked like students.



Barbara Leabo

Happy New Year, may the awesome programs continue!

Thanks to attendees at the November program to make up a receptive audience for our speaker, MO Representative, Aaron Crossley. Aaron gave a fun and informative presentation of House Bills introduced, and a few even passed – Bills introduced by his fellow women MO state representatives. Most concerning issues of mental health, families, support for the people, who sometimes slip through the cracks in state legislation. He inspired us to take interest, take heart, and 'be involved' in the goings on in Jeff City.

Coming up in 2024 we have some more programs of local interest, and hope YOU will support our branch with your attendance!

Patty will be placing an order for new AAUW T-shirts, so we can proudly wear matching attire when we attend events and fundraising opportunities.

Looking forward to a prosperous 2024!

Sue Raymond and Patty Chadwick, Program Co-Chairs

Congratulations, Branch!

The branch has met all AAUW-MO Action Plan expectations for the FUND. We've surpassed our donation goal and we're over 50% participation of our members. Way to go! Our efforts will help national continue its work towards equity for women and girls.

Lois Domsch, Chair



2023 Winter MO in Motion - Missouri Woman of Distinction Award

AAUW MO has many distinctive women who are dedicated to the AAUW Mission and their communities. Each branch is encouraged to submit an application to honor an AAUW Missouri member. She need not be a member of your branch.

Service to others is the focus of this recognition including service to branch, state, profession, community and society, and service to other women. The Nomination Form can be found on the state website at aauw-mo.aauw.net home page or click this link: aauwmo.aauw.net/membership/forms/

The award will be presented at the May 6, 2023, state meeting via Zoom. The deadline for submitting your nomination is Friday, April 7, 2023. Send to Sue Shineman, past president. The instructions are found with the application on the state website, as is a list of previous recipients.

AAUW National Membership History ~ Sue Shineman, AAUW MO President-Elect

Knowing how AAUW membership requirements have evolved over the history of the organization helps put the current debate in context:

- **1881** Seventeen women envision an organization in which women college graduates band together to open doors of higher education to other women and to find wider opportunities to use their training.
- **1884** Branches are admitted as local groups of the parent organization, with the provision that they cooperate in the general work of the Association while carrying on independent work.
- **1889** ACA established a membership policy for educational institutions, which marked the beginning of using AAUW's membership as a means for encouraging higher standards in education for women. To be eligible for ACA approval, colleges and universities must display high academic standards, adequate provision for women students, women on faculties and administration, a sound basis of liberal education, and intellectual freedom.
- **1913** Members begin pay equity efforts with a report on U.S. Civil Service job classifications and compensation.
- **1920** Women gain the right to vote.
- **1949** AAUW members voted that any woman holding an approved degree from an institution approved for AAUW membership-eligibility is entitled to membership in both the national Association and its branches.
- **1963** AAUW eased membership requirements, allowing degrees in fields such as home economics, nursing, and education.
- **1975** AAUW drops the list of "approved" colleges and universities for membership and accepts all accredited colleges and universities.
- **1979** members vote to maintain a single-sex membership until society is ready to grant women equality.
- **1987** AAUW extends membership to men who hold college degrees.
- **2005** AAUW expands membership to include graduates holding an associate or equivalent degree.
- **2009** AAUW's newly approved Bylaws changes the organization's purpose from "uniting graduates of different institutions for practical educational work ..." to "promote equity for all women and girls..."

OPEN UP AAUW – eliminate the degree requirement for membership

This spring we will have the opportunity to change the path for many women who would like to work alongside AAUW members in our advocacy for equality and equity for women. The OPEN UP AAUW vote to open AAUW membership to all women will begin April 8, 2024.

Members Comments: We won't be able to truly understand gender inequity until we invite those without a college degree to sit at our table and join us in our efforts. Then their battles will...

OPEN UP AAUW – eliminate the degree requirement for membership (continued)

...become our battles for equity. We each have unique life and career experiences that make us stronger as we advocate together. There is much to be learned from each other.

The purpose of AAUW is to advance equity for women and girls through advocacy, education, and research.

- We need to align our Purpose with our Actions – this is a DEI issue.
- DEI National Committee plans to hold a webinar for members in a few months

39.1% of women have a degree. That means 60.9% of women are not eligible to join our fight for women's equality! Things have changed. There are many Certificate Programs for professions not requiring a degree. The world has changed. Family structure has changed. Student Loan Debt is a big deterrent for women.

Let's pass this important action step to lead AAUW into the future of Equity for All!

Christmas Luncheon at V's

Several Members enjoyed a wonderful luncheon at V's on Saturday, December 9th. Holiday recipes and traditions were shared, and a new family connection was discovered. I hope to share more about that in an upcoming issue of the newsletter. There wasn't a dry eye in the group!



Pictured from left to right, starting with the top row...Lisa Cox, Patty Petet, Pat Bounds, Patt Braley, Jane Campbell, Kathy Vest, Lois Domsch, Jan Keeler, Kelley Reetzke, Sue Raymond. Bottom Row...Sue Shineman, Patty Chadwick, Karol Palmer, Joyce Gillespie, and Barbara Leabo.

AAUW Independence Branch November 28, 2023 Meeting Minutes

Members Present: Patt Braley, Jane Campbell, Jolene Cerveney, Patty Chadwick, Lisa Cox, Lois Domsch, Joyce Gillespie, Karen Johnson, Jan Keeler, Kathy Kelley, Barbara Leabo, Melissa Morawitz, Karol Palmer, Patty Petet, Sue Raymond, Kelley Reetzke, Gail Metcalf Schartel, Sue Shineman, Kathy Vest, Sarah Schofield Wimberly

Guests: Aaron Crossley, Michelle Blubaugh, Kelly Johnson

Karol Palmer called the meeting to order at seven o'clock and asked Jolene Cerveney to introduce the evening's speaker. Jolene introduced Aaron Crossley, Missouri District 29 State Representative. She noted that he is a Licensed Master Social Worker and has a specific interest in the complex landscape of health services and insuring quality care for everyone. Crossley works as a behavioral health business strategist and project manager at a local safety net hospital and is a passionate advocate for community health care.

Representative Crossley introduced his intern, Michelle Blubaugh, and credited her with helping to identify bills presented by women legislators for his presentation. He reiterated his background in health care advocacy and discussed how he became interested in serving in the Missouri House of Representatives via his work helping several women candidates campaign for various positions in government. He noted that there are one hundred thousand more women in Missouri than there are men. Despite that numerical advantage he noted that only 28% of the 163 Missouri Representatives are women; and 35% of Missouri Senators are women.

He then commented on bills before the legislature in 2023. He reported that in most years leading up to 2023 about 150 bills were passed each year. In 2023 only 43 bills were passed into law.

Males sponsored 63% of bills proposed with women sponsoring 37%. When asked, he confirmed that Missouri has term limits of 8 years in each division of the legislature. He addressed another question about school choice bills, indicating that most proposals were to divert funds from public schools to private, religious, and home schools.

He then cited bills from both the House and Senate proposed by women. Topics included: tax credits for teachers purchase of school supplies, income tax reduction for teachers, increasing teacher salaries to \$35K from \$25K (this was adopted), tax credits for child care, removing sales tax from baby formula, modifying policies for public assistance programs to avoid persons being dropped from programs because of slight increases in their earning (this was adopted), providing six weeks paid family leave for parental or family needs, addressing campus sexual assaults, providing free breast examinations, eliminating sales tax on feminine hygiene products, extending post-partum care to one year (this was adopted), allowing pregnant women to divorce, requiring equal pay for all genders, prohibiting individuals to be fired for hair style choices [Kansas City and St. Louis have this in place], and requiring diverse membership on the Pregnancy-Associate Mortality Review Board.

It was noted the commonality of the bills discussed was their focus on women's issues. He ended his presentation by indicating what actions can be taken to assure more equity for women. He called for Leverage, Advocacy, Dialogue, and Yield [LADY]. He said advocating for women's issues, supporting public officials, encouraging more women to run for offices, speaking with local representatives at all levels and empowering women through education were actions all could take.

AAUW Independence Branch November 28, 2023 Meeting Minutes (Continued)

The group thanked Representative Crossley for his excellent presentation. A short break was then called.

Karol Palmer called the business meeting to order at 8 p.m

PROGRAM: Sue Raymond reviewed the luncheon choices at V's for the December 9th meeting. The Portofino menu was selected, the cost for the meal is \$28 payable to AAUW prior to December 9th. Sue reminded all that Fisher House (Ronald McDonald-type house for families needing to be near Veteran's Hospitals) was the charity selected this year. She noted that big candy bars in stockings will be at the December meeting as well for members to purchase with donations.

INCLUSION INFUSION: Sue Shineman led the group in an Inclusion Infusion Activity. She discussed the proposal to eliminate a college degree as a requirement for membership in AAUW. She noted that a webinar on the topic would be presented by National in the coming weeks. She also noted that only 7.4% of all AAUW National Only members nationwide voted in the last AAUW election. Of those 10% were no votes on the proposal to eliminate the degree requirement. To pass this motion, 67% must approve. She said that more members needed to vote, noting Missouri had the highest rate of members voting at 47%. Sue reported that 39.1% of women had college degrees, meaning to advocate for all women, the degree requirement should be eliminated so AAUW can walk their talk.

Sue asked that tables discuss the pros of removing the degree requirement. Tables reported out:

- Lois: Those without degrees have a lot to offer.
- Kathy: Opportunities for training without college in career fields would be included
- Jolene: When AAUW was founded 142 years ago, women were in small numbers. If AAUW hasn't moved forward, shame on us.
- Karol: Increased diversity and being supportive of equity.

She asked for negatives about the change and two replies were whether AAUW would change its name and whether the perception of all AAUW being affiliated in some way through a university would occur. She affirmed that AAUW will remain AAUW. The perception issue is an unknown.

FINANCE: Patt Braley distributed copies of the October financial report. She noted that there were many expenses related to supporting those who attended the Regional Conference but there were funds expected from AAUW to offset some of those expenses. Funds from the Pizza Ranch were anticipated to be at least \$414; \$282 in tips and \$147 representing 10% of sales. She mentioned that she is still working to establish her records in a new computer (named Albie).

AAUW FUND: Lois Domsch noted that the Branch had met the dollar amount required but not quite 50% of members had contributed to the AAUW Fund or Century Club. She encouraged those who hadn't donated to consider making a minimal contribution to reach the 50% mark.

FUND RAISING: Joyce Gillespie thanked all those who worked at Pizza Ranch and reaffirmed that it was a good fund raiser for scholarships.

COLLEGE/UNIVERSITY: Barbara Leabo announced that she would be at Blue River Community College on December 5th distributing goodies with good luck on their final exams messages to

AAUW Independence Branch November 28, 2023 Meeting Minutes (Continued)

students who stop by in addition to registering students to vote. She encouraged others to be there for part or all of the 10 a.m. – 1 p.m. visit.

SCHOLARSHIPS: Jolene reported on behalf of herself and Kathy Vest that they were exploring the idea of a new scholarship to be given to a woman who graduated from an Independence high school who qualified for the A+ program; was completing an associate degree; and was continuing on to a four year college in a STEM field. She cited that she felt a \$500 scholarship would be a boost. She asked that all consider whether this was worth pursuing. She went on to discuss the way the current scholarship program was being awarded. She stated that it seemed that the top student selected was frequently the recipient of many scholarships and wondered if selecting someone who wasn't the top wouldn't be a better approach.

T-SHIRTS: Patty Chadwick reminded everyone to look at the t-shirt samples she brought for sizes. She said that she would bring more information to the December meeting and would plan to take orders in January. She said that the shirts will be white with blue sleeves and have a prominent AAUW on the front. A final price will be determined before the January meeting.

HOSPITALITY: Jane Campbell thanked Lisa Cox and Karen Johnson for providing goodies. She asked for volunteers for January. Lois Domsch and Barbara Leabo volunteered.

ANNOUNCEMENTS: Karol announced there was a Board Meeting on January 9th at 6 p.m. at the church.

Patty Petet won the door prize and the meeting adjourned at 8:57 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Gail Metcalf Schartel