



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

February 2024

“The mission of the American Association of University Women (AAUW) is to advance gender equity for women and girls through research, advocacy, and education.”

One important way to advance our mission is to stay informed and involved. We have a great opportunity this month to inform ourselves about what's happening in the Missouri legislature. On Saturday, February 24, there will be an AAUW Missouri Legislative Retreat via Zoom. Organizations that work to influence legislative action will be sharing information on economic justice issues, educational issues, gun safety, ERA, LGBTQ+ issues, reproductive health, and voter protection. One of the speakers on voter protection issues will be Denise Lieberman from the MO Voter Protection Coalition. Denise was a presenter at the Central States Regional Conference in St. Louis in October. Denise is a dynamic individual and speaker. I am looking forward to hearing from her again. I urge each of you to attend. There are more details about the Legislative Retreat in this newsletter. 2024 is an important election year. Of course, every election is important, but it truly feels like so much hangs in the balance this year. Stay informed! Stay involved! Take action!



Karol

Stronger together as we advocate for women and girls

School Board Election Information ~ Sue Shineman

The Independence School District Board Election is April 2, 2024.

Having the right people on our local School District Board is very important to our community. Please share this information with family and friends. I encourage you to attend a candidate forum if possible.

This is a list of the School Board Candidates Forums.

2/26 Time and Location yet to be determined

3/5 7:00 p.m. Walnut Grove Church

3/21 7:00 p.m. Independence Chamber of Commerce

3/26 7:00 p.m. Mike Onka Hall - Sugar Creek

Upcoming Events

♥ **February 13** ~ AAUW Book Club ~ (rescheduled from January) **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.) Book Club takes place at Jane's home, 10:30 am.

♥ **February 27** ~ Branch Meeting ~ Program: "How the Independence ISD is Focusing on Equity and How to Support Schools in this Equity Endeavor.", presented by Montel Evans. Social time at 6:30/Program begins at 7 pm.

Program Information for February and March ~ Karol Palmer

On February 27, Montel Evans, Principal at Thomas Hart Benton Elementary School in Independence, will present a program on "How the Independence ISD is Focusing on Equity and How to Support Schools in this Equity Endeavor."

On March 26, Bridget McCandless, Independence City Council Member At-Large, will join us to speak about some Independence charter changes and general obligation bonds for the city. These are issues that may be voted on within the next year, so come and stay informed! We are also giving our members the opportunity to submit questions to Bridget on topics concerning Independence about which you are interested. Please submit your questions at our February 27th meeting, or email your questions for Bridget to Sue Raymond or Karol Palmer. Please find the One Year Update from Bridget which is attached to this February newsletter [here](#).

AAUW Book Club Update ~ Jane Campbell, Chair

Because of weather, Book Club was skipped in January. Everything is now moved ahead one month. The last book will be in June instead of May. See below for the new Book Club schedule, or click here to see the new dates on the website.

February 13 ~ **The Japanese Lover**, by Isabel Allende, Led by Jane Campbell (If time, also read **Hotel on the Corner of Bitter and Sweet**, by Jamie Ford).

March 12 ~ **Horse**, by Geraldine Brooks, led by Doris McCartney.

April 9 ~ **The First Ladies**, by Marie Benedict and Victoria Christopher, led by Jolene Cerveney.

May 14 ~ **The Heaven and Earth Grocery Store**, by James McBride, led by Karol Palmer.

June 11 ~ **My Name is Barbra**, by Barbra Streisand, led by Gail Metcalf Schartel.

*****Book Club takes place at Jane Campbell's home, 10:30 am.**

Fundraising Information

Our Independence AAUW Branch is scheduled to work at **Pizza Ranch** on **April 15** from 5-8 pm...



- to enhance our Scholarship funds.....
- please think about this springtime volunteer opportunity.....
- seven ladies are always valued and needed to make this event successful....

Thanks for your time and attention,
~ Joyce Gillespie, Chair

COLLEGE/UNIVERSITY: Barbara has been in touch with Julie Adolphson about registering voters at Longview MCC. She will let Barbara know where that will take place on March 5th. Those of you who are willing to help will be notified. Volunteers are needed for Tuesday, March 19th at Blue River to share information about Equal Pay Day plus voter registration will be available.

MEMBERSHIP: Membership Committee is organizing an event to entertain prospective members and for members to experience a social time. The City Theatre is performing *The Diary of Anne Frank* on Friday, April 5th and Saturday, April 6th at the Roger T. Sermon Center. Tickets are \$12 or \$10 for seniors. Friday or Saturday is a decision that needs to be made. Dinner before???

Barbara Leabo, College/University Chair, Membership co-VP

Woman of Achievement Nominations

It's time to be thinking about our annual Woman of Achievement nominations. Women of Achievement have been honored by our branch since 1957. We are proud to recognize outstanding women in our community. Please find the nomination form attached to the February newsletter. The nomination form can also be found on our Independence AAUW website. Nominees do not have to be members of AAUW. Please fill out the nomination form and return it to Karol Palmer no later than March 31, 2024. The Woman of Achievement recipient will be honored at our luncheon on May 11, 2024, at the Bingham Waggoner Carriage House. If you have questions, please feel free to contact Karol Palmer.

- Award Selection Criteria [here](#)
- Nomination Form [here](#)

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 Karol Palmer, no later than March 31, 2024. palmer9141@sbcglobal.net
or 14608 E. Berkshire Dr., Independence, MO 64055

**2024 Virtual AAUW Missouri
– Legislative Retreat –**



**When: SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 24, 2024,
via Zoom: 9:00-11:30 am**

Join with leaders from seventeen organizations who have strong advocacy positions and who work to influence Missouri Legislative action.

The Legislative Retreat allows Missouri organizations with common missions to share their activities with others at this free public event. Organizations will give a brief overview of their organization and an explanation of their main legislative priority, along with the bill number, title, and author of two bills they would like us to monitor.

Typical legislation being followed includes bills affecting:

- **Gender Pay Equity & Economic Justice Issues**
- **ERA**
- **Book Bans & Educational Issues**
- **Sensible Gun Safety**
- **LGBTQ+**
- **Abortion Action and Reproductive Health**
- **Voter Protection**
- **Many other areas**

Organizations participating include:

- AAUW Missouri
- Abortion Action MO
- Empower Missouri
- Healthy Families & Fair Wages, Jobs With Justice
- Kids Win Missouri
- League of Women Voters of Missouri
- Missouri Coalition Against Domestic and Sexual Violence
- Missouri NEA
- Missouri NOW
- MO Equity Education Partnership
- MO Voter Protection Coalition
- Moms Demand Action For Gun Sense in America
- National Council of Jewish Women
- Planned Parenthood
- PROMO
- Right to Read Coalition
- Women's Voices Raised for Social Justice

Please join us as we strive to do what Ruth Bader Ginsburg suggests:

"Fight for things you care about, but do it in a way that will lead others to join you."

The Zoom link comes from Karen Francis, AAUW MO President:

Meeting ID: 811 4538 4169 Passcode: 589130

For more information contact Karen, at 314.223.4235 or karenbitzafrancis@yahoo.com

Sponsored by the American Association of University Women Missouri (AAUW MO)

Nominating Committee News ~ Jolene Cerveny, Kathy Vest , & Joyce Gillespie

The following ladies have been nominated for positions for the 2024 Year:

Financial Officer: Patt Braley has agreed to stay on in this position.

Corresponding Secretary: Kathy Kelley has agreed to stay on in this position..

Membership VP: Karen Johnson has agreed to stay on in this position, although a co-chair is being sought out.

AAUW Independence Branch January 23, 2024 Meeting Minutes

Members Present: Pat Bounds, Jane Campbell, Jolene Cerveny, Patty Chadwick, Lois Domsch, Jan Keeler, Barbara Leabo, Melissa Morawitz, Karol Palmer, Sue Raymond, Kelley Reetzke, Gail Metcalf Schartel, Sue Shineman, Judy Tyson, Kathy Vest

Guests: Jennifer Hurst

Karol Palmer called the meeting to order at seven o'clock and introduced the evening's speaker, Jennifer Hurst, Chief Development Officer of the Community Services League.

Ms. Hurst introduced herself and explained that she had been involved with non-profit organizations for most of her professional life, including domestic violence shelters, foster care and others involved with helping individuals achieve a sound footing in life. She then shared a video of Cindy Chowning, a graduate of the Family Self-Sufficiency Program offered by the Community Service League (CSL). Ms. Hurst explained that SL serves the most urgent needs of the community by assisting with food, clothing, utilities and housing needs. More than 20,00 clients a year seek help from the CSL. More information can be found at www.cslicares.org. She talked about the Independence Together program initiated in the fall for three months to employ homeless individuals to pick up trash in Independence, receiving payment each day. The hope is to expand the program.

She noted that a fund raiser for the Community Services League would be held by Rotary on February 18th. [For more information on this go to [Home Page | Rotary Club of Independence \(clubrunner.ca\)](#)]. The hope is to raise sufficient funds to open a Drop-in Center near I-70 and Sterling Avenue in the basement of a Community of Christ building. The facility would serve as a place where individuals could drop in to talk with individuals, pick up food and clothing, to use it as a mailing address and learn of other services. She noted that the Hawthorn project has been successful, allowing residents to walk across the parking lot to pick up food and clothing as needed from a designated site. Other services provided include various Christmas stores, the BlendWell Community Café [10725 E. US Highway 24] and educational programs for individuals to learn how to manage money.

Ms. Hurst noted that support can come in many ways, through volunteering and through financial support. One such way is through the 1916 Club [[Donation Form \(donorperfect.net\)](#)], a monthly giving program. She encouraged questions and said she was available to answer them via e-mail [jhurst@cslicares.org] or by phone: (816) 491-2011.

The group thanked Ms. Hurst for her informative presentation. A short break was then called.

AAUW Independence Branch January 23, 2024 Meeting Minutes (Continued)

Karol Palmer called the business meeting to order at 7:45 p.m.

INCLUSION INFUSION: Sue Shineman reminded the group that discussion in November was about the pro side of including women without degrees to AAUW. She asked for reasons against this change. The only response was the question of the organization's name. Sue noted that other organizations including the YMCA and AARP had not altered their names when they adopted broader definitions of inclusion. She noted that members would receive an email from vote@simplyvoting toward the end of March to vote on the amendment to the by-laws. She encouraged members to review information on the AAUW website prior to voting. Voting will be open from April 3rd through May 15th.

Sue noted there were two webinars being offered on January 31st by the Inclusion and Equity Committee and on February 7 by the Public Policy Committee.

FINANCE: Karol reviewed items from the February financial statement, including the fact that \$457 had been raised at the holiday luncheon and \$210 had been sent to the Fisher House.

PROGRAM: Sue Raymond noted that Montel Evans will be the speaker at the February meeting. Karol noted that City Councilwoman Bridget McCandless would speak at the March meeting and asked members to submit questions for Dr. McCandless at the February meeting.

COLLEGE/UNIVERSITY: Barbara Leabo reported that Longview Community College has reached out and asked for help registering students to vote. On March 5 a group including Barbara, Sue Shineman, Lois and Patti Petet will go to Longview to assist. The next visits to Blue River Community College will be on March 19th for Equal Pay Day and April 9 Sexual Assault Awareness. She noted that teal is the official color for sexual assault awareness.

MEMBERSHIP: Barbara Leabo said that she hoped to get a group together to attend the Community Theater's play, Anne Frank, on either April 5th, 6th or 7th. She will have more information at February meeting.

SCHOLARSHIPS: Jolene reported that a new scholarship at Blue River Community College would be for a female, graduating from BRCC, having used the A+ program and continuing her education would be posted to the ScholarWise site once an application had been developed and linked. She noted that A+ does not cover books or fees so a \$500 scholarship would be a boost. There was discussion about whether to restrict this to those finishing the program or being currently enrolled at BRCC. The Scholarship Committee will develop an application form and share it at the next meeting.

FUND RAISING: The next Pizza Ranch volunteer event would be held on April 15 from 5-8 p.m. Volunteers will be needed.

HOSPITALITY: Jane Campbell thanked Lois Domsch and Barbara Leabo for providing goodies. She asked for volunteers for February. Pat Bounds and Jan Keeler volunteered.

NOMINATIONS COMMITTEE: Karol announced that Kathy Vest, Jolene Cerveny and Joyce Gillespie were elected by the Board to serve on the Nominations Committee and would be seeking candidates for membership vice president, finance officer and corresponding secretary. A slate of officers will be presented at the March meeting.

Karol reminded members that newsletter articles were due to Lisa Cox by February 8. She noted that applications for the Woman of Achievement were on-line and that she could also provide them. Nominations for Woman of Achievement are due by March 31.

AAUW Independence Branch January 23, 2024 Meeting Minutes (Continued)

INTERNATIONAL WOMAN'S DAY: Sue Shineman noted that on Friday, March 8, at 6 p.m. an International Woman's Day celebration would be held at First United Methodist Church and would include several churches from the Square area and would include a light meal. She encouraged members to send her lists of any other organizations that might want to attend. She also suggested that members wear white and yellow sashes about getting the vote for women. RSVPs are needed to insure sufficient food is prepared.

RE-ENTRY BRUNCH: KC-IBC Entry Brunch will be held on April 13 at 11 a.m. It will be a fund raiser. Sue Shineman indicated she will need 6 volunteers to help prepare, set up and clean up. In addition, she will ask other branches to help. The cost is \$30 per person with proceeds going to the Re-Entry Scholarship. That scholarship will also be on ScholarWise website.

LEGISLATIVE RETREAT: A Legislative Retreat will be held February 24 from 9-11:30 a.m. via Zoom. Missouri legislative updates will be discussed.

ANNOUNCEMENTS: There will be a Community Services League fund raiser at 3 Trails Brewing Friday, January 26 from 5 – 10 p.m. Aaron Crossley will be one of the bartenders. \$1 from every beer sold will go to the CSL; there will be a 50/50 raffle, and a coat drive (collecting coats for those in need).

T-SHIRTS: Patty Chadwick noted that t-shirts are ready but the shop was closed when she went to pick them up. The cost is \$20 and she will have them at the next meeting.

Melissa Morawitz won the door prize and the meeting adjourned at 8:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Gail Metcalf Schartel