



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

March 2025

After a cold snowy January, February, and beginning of March, I think we can finally see spring. "In like a lion; out like a lamb" – maybe? With the arrival of spring, we begin thinking about graduations. The highlight of our program year is always the presentation of our scholarship to an outstanding graduating senior from an Independence high school. This year we will be presenting one \$1000 scholarship. We have received the completed applications and will soon be making our selection. Our scholarship recipient will be honored at our branch meeting on April 22.

In addition to the high school scholarship, we were able to establish a scholarship with funds given in memory of Barbara Leabo. Since Barbara was so involved in our College/University program, it was decided that the Barbara Leabo Memorial Scholarship in the amount of \$500 will be awarded to a student at Blue River Metropolitan Community College. The application will be offered to Blue River students next fall and for the next several years to come. An important part of the mission of AAUW is to make a positive impact in the lives of women and girls through education. The Independence Branch of AAUW can take pride in our dedication to this mission!



Stronger Together!

Karol

### Financial News ~ Patt Braley

A deposit will be made on Monday for the St. Pat's donations at V's.

A Quarterly Report will be issued at the end of March, and will include all of the figures for interest, etc. for January and February.

## Upcoming Events:

~March 11 ~ AAUW Book Club ~ Lady Tan's Circle of Women by Lisa See, led by Gail Metcalf Schartel

~March 14 ~ AAUW Scholarship Selection

~March 24 ~ Pizza Ranch Fundraiser ~ 5-8 pm at the Pizza Ranch, 4660 S Bass Pro Dr., Independence, MO 64055. Email Joyce Gillespie if you are able to help greet customers and buss tables... [joyceannegillespie@yahoo.com](mailto:joyceannegillespie@yahoo.com)

~March 29 ~ AAUW Outing ~ Dinner and a Show ~ Dinner at 5 pm at Brewer's Wrap House (in Three Trails Brewing on the Square) and at 7 pm "Radium Girls" at the City Theater of Independence in the Sermon Center

~March 31 ~ Woman of Achievement Nominations Due

~April 5 ~ AAUW Metro Members Meet-Up ~ 10 am-12 pm, First United Methodist Church

~April 22 ~ AAUW Branch Meeting = Social Time - 6:30 pm/Meeting – 7 pm. The High School Scholarship Winner will be celebrated.

~May 3, 2025 ~ State Meeting Via Zoom ~ 9:30 a.m. to 12:30 PM

~June 7, 2025 ~ End of Year AAUW Celebration ~ CELEBRATE the successful and rewarding AAUW year. Award - Woman of Achievement. Event at Café Verona. Guest presenter Cindy McClain. 3-5 pm.

### CHANGE OF LOCATION FOR SCHOLARSHIP SELECTION ~ Karol Palmer

Kathy Vest has been called out of town to be with her sister-in-law who is critically ill. Please keep Kathy and her family in your prayers.

We will be meeting at my house to read applications and make the selection of our high school scholarship recipient.

Karol Palmer  
14608 E. Berkshire Dr.  
Independence, MO  
816-769-1930

March 14, 2025  
9:00 AM - 12:00 PM

Karol will have the applications. We need nine people to help. Email Karol if you are able to assist.

*Please bring a snack to share!*

# AAUW Metro Members Meet-Up

Kansas City, Parkville, KC Northland, Shawnee Mission  
Hosted by the Independence Branch

Saturday, April 5, 2025  
10:00 AM – 12:00 PM  
First United Methodist Church  
400 West Maple  
Independence, MO 64050

Kansas City Inter Branch Council (KC IBC) has been considering the idea of coordinating our program planning to have a few meetings/programs together next year (2025-2026). Towards that end, the Independence Branch would like to invite you to an informal gathering of all our members to meet each other, get acquainted, and share ideas. The Independence Branch members will provide coffee and light snacks. Please bring your questions, comments, and ideas about how to make this vision of collaboration among our branches work for the coming year. Some questions you might consider:

- How do you envision this?
- How many meetings/programs could we do jointly—three or four?
- What program would your branch work on and for what month?

We look forward to seeing you on April 5<sup>th</sup>! Stronger Together!

Please RSVP to Karol Palmer, [palmer9141@sbcglobal.net](mailto:palmer9141@sbcglobal.net), by **March 30**, to help us with planning. Thank you!



Our March 8th luncheon at V's Restaurant celebrated International Women's Day. We also gave a "shout out" to St. Patrick's Day with a "Pot o' Gold" fundraiser.

## **Stronger Together**

On February 8, Joyce Gillespie and Karol Palmer attended a luncheon and program at the Kingswood Senior Living Community in Kansas City, Missouri. This was a meeting held jointly by the Kansas City and Shawnee Mission Branches. An informative program entitled "Social Change Through Athletics: One Woman's Journey" was presented by Kristin Gillette, the Athletic Director at Park University in Parkville, Missouri.



On February 15, the Parkville and KC Northland Branches held a luncheon and program which Karol also attended. This meeting was held at our Lady of Mercy Country Home in Liberty, Missouri. The program was a presentation by Reverend Sandra Campbell who portrayed Fannie Lou Hamer. Ms. Hamer was an American voting and women's rights activist and a leader in the civil rights movement. Rev. Campbell is a native of Kansas City, Kansas, an ordained Unity minister, and graduate of Unity Urban Ministerial School. She is also a dynamic play writer and historical reenactor.

## **NOMINATIONS** ~ Karol Palmer

Since we are not having a regular meeting in March, members will be asked to vote on officers by email late in March or early in April.

The following names have been placed in nomination for office during 2025-2027:

### Co-Presidents

Kelley Reetzke and Karol Palmer (2025-2026)  
Kelley Reetzke and new nominee (2026-2027)

### Recording Secretary

Gail Metcalf Shartel (2025-2027)

### Program Vice President

Rather than a single Program Vice President, a group including Lois Domsch, Karol Palmer, Sue Raymond, and Sue Shineman will serve as Program Coordinators to organize future programs during 2025-2026. What programs would you like to see? In what events and outings would you like to participate? **All** members are asked to contribute ideas for programs, events, and/or outings on June 10, 2025. This is an already scheduled board meeting to be held at the church at 6:00 PM. We also hope to plan some joint meetings with KC IBC which include Kansas City, Parkville, KC Northland, and Shawnee Mission.

## 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 this email. The nomination form will also be attached to the February newsletter and can 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, 2025.** The Woman of Achievement recipient will be honored at our end of the year celebration on June 7, 2025, at Café Verona from 3:00-5:00. The Woman of Achievement Guidelines for nomination include the following. More details can be found on the website.

- 1) Nominations are to be made by branch members.
- 2) Nominees must work or have worked, or volunteer or have volunteered in the Independence area.
- 3) Membership in AAUW is optional.

## Online Security ~ Sue Shineman

There have been several AAUW MO members whose email, phone - texting, have recently been hacked. This article contains very good information.

A few simple guidelines:

If you don't recognize the sender don't open any links within the email or text.

If an email address looks strange with letters and numbers, don't respond to it.

Send the message to SPAM and then delete everything in your SPAM folder.

If you discover that you have been hacked, please share it with your branch president, or other organizations you belong to.

Share on your social media that you have been hacked, so others don't respond to your 'fake' requests.

This link is safe and is provided by AAUW (American Association of University Women.)

<https://stlouis-ibc.aauw.net/online-security-1-types-of-fraud/>





## **Public Policy ~ March 2025 ~ Kelley Reetzke, Chair**

An executive order to dissolve the Department of Education. There is some back and forth on this issue. More to come.

There's lots of action in the Missouri Legislature.



The Missouri Legislature is considering [HB 594](#) and [HB 798](#), bills that would exempt capital gains from the state income tax, overwhelmingly benefiting the wealthiest Missourians while leaving working families behind. Click the link below to send a message now!

**[We can stop this bill, but lawmakers need to hear from you](#)**

Here are some bills to look out for during Missouri's 2025 Legislative Session:

- HB 567 delays paid sick leave
- HB 546 exempts millions of businesses from minimum wage increase
- HB 758 enables age discrimination
- SB 8 would cut unemployment
- SB 121 would allow counties to be exempt from Right-To-Work



LWVMO OPPOSES the following bills:

**[SJR 33](#)** ~ Establishes provisions relating to reproductive health care.

Prohibits abortion except in cases of medical emergency, fetal anomaly, rape or incest; in cases of rape or incest the abortion must be performed or induced before 12 weeks gestational age and only if the rape or incest has been reported to law enforcement.

Contact members of the Senate Families, Senior and Health Committee [HERE](#) and tell them you OPPOSE this bill. Click on the Senator's picture to be taken to their individual page for their contact information.

Dear [Elected Official]:

I urge you to oppose Senate Bill SJR 33.

This bill:

- Overturns the Reproductive Freedom Amendment that voters approved by majority vote on November 5, 2024
- Imposes the will of a minority and ignores the majority of Missourians
- Discounts women and girls who may not report rapes or incest out of fear from their abusers or interacting with law enforcement
- Ignores the will of the people and demonstrates that legislators are not representing their constituents

Please oppose this bill!

Sincerely,

Name

Address

Email address

## **Public Policy (Continued) ~ March 2025 ~ Kelley Reetzke, Chair**

If you are interested in a writing letters about these other bills, email me and I will send bill information and letter outline to you. Other bills that need immediate attention:

[SJR 8](#) ~ Defines person in relation to the equal protection of laws

[HB 398](#)

Note: Additional information about DEI, Education, Taxes, Preemption and Prop. A in the accompanying “Legislative Bulletin” for this week. You can find a PDF at [Legislative Bulletins & Alerts | MyLO](#).

**Stay strong my sisters.**

Respectfully submitted,

Kelley Reetzke

### **AAUW Independence Branch February 25, 2025 Meeting Minutes**

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

Guests: Jolene Cerveney, Teresa Dorsch, Brandon Schnur

Karol Palmer called the meeting to order at seven o'clock and welcomed all. She asked Sue Raymond to introduce the evening's speakers. Sue introduced Teresa Dorsch and Brandon Schnur from the Englewood Arts Center.

Ms. Dorsch outlined the goal of Englewood Ars which is to make the visual and performing arts accessible and to create affordable housing for educators, artists, and the existing community. In 2019 students from the Metropolitan Community Colleges in the Construction and Building Sciences program were utilized to help transform the former Comprehensive Mental Health building into the Englewood Arts Center. The goal was to develop a regional arts center to engage the community. The group worked to attain special zoning for the Englewood Area. A \$4M capital campaign is underway with \$3.6M raised.

The building includes exhibition space, a glass blowing studio, and a performance center on the first floor. The second floor has a ceramics studio and classrooms. The third floor includes painting and fiber studios, artist's studios and exhibition space. On the lower floor there is a woodshop and metal fabrication area. In addition, there is an exterior gathering space and a shop featuring goods made by the various artists in residence. Spaces within the Englewood Arts Center have areas available to rent for group gatherings. Classes and workshops are also offered in all mediums.

Various groups, including Special Olympics and Polynesian Cultural Festival have been hosted in the facility. During the summer there are camps for kids with 50% of those attending from lower income families with scholarship assistance. Participants receive two meals each day and take home meals. In 2024, 150 students participated in the summer camps.

Artists in Residence have studio space in exchange for working 10 hours a week with classes and producing items to sell in the on-site shop. The Artists in Residence have housing in the immediate area.

Having established the Englewood Arts District, there are plans to help grow the neighborhood by working to build new homes on vacant lots, encouraging people to rehab existing homes and building auxiliary housing in backyards.

## AAUW Independence Branch February 25, 2025 Meeting Minutes (Continued)

More information on all offered by the Englewood Arts can be found at <https://www.engagewoodarts.art> After answering many questions, the speakers were thanked for their presentation. Brandon Schnur and Teresa Dorsch are pictured to the right.



At 8:00 p.m., Karol called the business meeting to order.  
**SCHOLARSHIPS:** Karol reported that the scholarship committee had met to discuss the application for the Barbara Leabo Memorial Scholarship for students at Blue River Community College. Gail distributed copies of the proposed application.

Kathy Vest said that the high school scholarship applications would be read and rated at her home on March 14<sup>th</sup> beginning at 9:00 a.m.

**NOMINATIONS:** Kelley Reetzke and Karol Palmer have been nominated to serve as co-presidents. Gail Metcalf Schartel has agreed to remain as Recording Secretary and rather than a single Program Vice President, a group including Lois Domsch, Karol Palmer, Sue Raymond, and Sue Shineman will serve as Program Coordinators to organize future programs .

**PROGRAMS:** At the Board Meeting on June 10, 2025 the program coordinators and all members are asked to attend and discuss program ideas. In addition to Branch meetings, the group hopes to implement the plan to have joint meetings/programs with other branches of the KC IBC.

**COLLEGE/UNIVERSITY:** Gail reminded members that the Branch would be at Blue River Community College on March 27 from 11:30-1:00 for Pay Equity Day and again on April 23, 2025 for Sexual Assault Awareness (Denim) Day.

**WOMAN OF ACHIEVEMENT:** Karol reminded the group that nominations for Woman of Achievement were due by March 31.

**CITY OF INDEPENDENCE DAY OF THE CHILD:** The Day of the Child event has been rescheduled for September 6, 2025 from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. She, Lisa Cox, Lois Domsch, Karen Johnson, and Judy Tyson have been brainstorming ideas for a STEM activity for the day.

**MARCH OUTINGS:** On March 8 (International Women's Day) members will meet at V's Restaurant at 11:30. Sue Raymond reviewed RSVPs she had received and asked that all let her know prior to that day to assure table space is saved. This is lunch on one's own with a Pot of Gold opportunity to contribute to scholarship funding by buying candy bars.

On March 29, 2025 members are invited to meet for dinner at Brewer's Wrap House at 5:00 p.m. before going to see 'Radium Girls' at the City Theatre of Independence inside the Sermon Center at 7:00 p.m. Sue Raymond will check to see if tickets need to be purchased prior to the day of the performance.

**FUNDRAISER:** Joyce Gillespie asked for volunteers to work at Pizza Ranch on Monday March 24 from 5:00 – 8:00 p.m. Many present volunteered to be there.

**AAUW METRO MEMBERS MEET UP:** There will be an AAUW Metro Members Meet-Up including the Kansas City, Parkville, KC Northland, and Shawnee Mission branches hosted by the Independence Branch from 10:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. on Saturday, April 5 at the First United Methodist Church.



## **AAUW Independence Branch February 25, 2025 Meeting Minutes (Continued)**

**APRIL BRANCH MEETING:** On April 22, 2025 at 6:30 in the church, the High School Student Scholarship Award recipient will be recognized at the meeting.

**MISSOURI STATE MEETING:** Members are encouraged to attend the Missouri State Meeting via Zoom on May 3, 2025 from 9:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.

**JUNE 7, 2025 MEETING:** The group discussed ideas for publicity for the event to be held at Café Verona from 3:00- 5:00 p.m. with Cindy McClain speaking. Having a good attendance at this presentation is important. The cost to attend is \$25.

**NEWSLETTER:** Lisa Cox requested that items for the newsletter be submitted by March 7<sup>th</sup>.

**HOSPITALITY:** Jane thanked Kelley Reetzke and Patty Chadwick for providing refreshments for the evening. Lisa Cox and Karen Johnson volunteered to provide refreshments for the April meeting.

Kathy Vest won the door prize.

Karol said that she would ask members to vote on officers via e-mail.

Lois Domsch gave an update on Patt Braley, who had fallen and was hospitalized.

The meeting adjourned at 8:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Gail Metcalf Schartel