



# Catalyst

Plymouth-Canton Branch  
January 2024

## ANNUAL CHILDREN'S PLAY - COMING SOON

We are in the final month of preparing to tell Cinderella's story through our annual play! As you know, this is our branch's largest fundraiser for the year with profits going to college scholarships for women at Garden City High School, Schoolcraft College, and Starkweather. The success of the play helps local students achieve their educational goals and **you** can be part of making their dreams come true!

There are many ways to help this year's play efforts.

- Distribute postcards - Leave a stack at your salon or favorite business. Mail some to friends or family in the area. Drop one off at your neighbor's house.
- Hang up a poster - Whether at your library or your favorite restaurant, our play posters will look great on any bulletin board you pass!
- Share posts about the play on social media such as Facebook and Instagram.
- Consider being an usher or helping with ticket sales during play weekend.
- Donate to the scholarship fund  
( [https://www.paypal.com/donate?hosted\\_button\\_id=NKTS3WE4WN46W](https://www.paypal.com/donate?hosted_button_id=NKTS3WE4WN46W) ).

Please reach out to Monica Nick or Meredith Conte to get postcards and posters or if you are interested in helping out the weekend of the play.

Most importantly, be sure to get your tickets to come see the play!

Monica Nick ([mmnick@yahoo.com](mailto:mmnick@yahoo.com)) and  
Meredith Conte ([mereconte@outlook.com](mailto:mereconte@outlook.com)) -  
Co-directors



Plymouth-Canton AAUW Presents:

# Cinderella

Thurs Feb 1 @ 7pm  
Fri Feb 2 @ 7pm  
Sat Feb 3 @ 11am and 2pm

Garden City High School  
6500 Middlebelt Rd., Garden City, MI

\$7 online  
\$10 at door

<https://plymouthcanton-mi.aauw.net/play/>

*Profits given to local women for college scholarships*

**FLYER:** Please note this play flyer is sent as a separate attachment which you can print or forward electronically to your family and friends to publicize the play.



## IS YOUR CALENDAR UP-TO-DATE?

NOTE THESE IMPORTANT AAUW DATES:

January – Mondays & Wednesdays – play practice.

February 1, 2, & 3 – Play Production.

February 15 – Branch Meeting. The February Branch Meeting is in fact the Play Evaluation meeting. But it's not just for play participants. Everyone in the branch is encouraged to come. Meet some of the new members who joined to be in the play. Hear about the ins and outs of putting on the play. Help with ideas for future productions. All the details aren't finalized, but plan to come for food and friendship!



March 7 – Board Meeting

March 21 – Branch Meeting

April 4 – Board Meeting.

April 20 – We are looking at possible Saturday Spring Luncheon

### **N** 2024 National Conference for Collegiate Women Scholars (NCCWSL)

**C** The conference will be held at the University of Maryland, College Park, May 30 through June 1, 2024.

**C** This year's conference theme is "**Dare To Be**". The participants will be challenged to be bold, engaged and a leader. Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM) track sessions will be designed to engage women interested in STEM. The goal is to provide young women with an inspiring, transformative experience.

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For More Information: Natioal Website: AAUW NCCWSL or Shirley Zaetta  
[szaetta@wowway.com](mailto:szaetta@wowway.com)

# *From the Presidents ...*

Dear AAUW Friends,

We are proud to be a part of such a dynamic group of women! Our Plymouth-Canton branch members truly demonstrate how people who stay informed on issues facing women and who work together for positive change can make a difference for girls and women in our world.

So, let's get the New Year started! Below are three areas that can help all of us contribute to our AAUW mission. Consider making a New Year's resolution to increase your participation in one (or more!) areas.

Become a regular reader of the AAUW National and State of Michigan websites. Stay informed and become better educated about the issues facing women and learn how to you can volunteer and/or contact lawmakers.

Attend monthly branch meetings. Enjoy a dinner with friends and learn from the scheduled speakers and programs. Stay for the business meeting to find out what our Plymouth-Canton branch has on the agenda and the many interest groups for you to join and enjoy.

Participate in fundraisers. Our annual children's play brings live theater to Garden City High School each February. Proceeds help raise funds for educational scholarships. "Cinderella" takes place February 1,2, 3. Spread the word!!!

Stay tuned for more information coming soon about: Our Garden City Business Alliance membership, National Membership Requirement vote scheduled for April, AAUW Michigan Convention on May 10 and 11 and hosted by our branch, Voter registration and the upcoming 2024 Election!



Together we CAN make a difference! And a Happy New Year to all!

*Dawn and Mickey*

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## Shout Out

By Dorothy Grant

What a great five years we have had in our Plymouth-Canton AAUW Book Club thanks to our wonderful co-leaders Helene Lusa and Mickey Edell. Recently, we celebrated the Fifth Anniversary of our reading group with a special dinner at the home of Esther Nelson and a cake especially designed for the occasion. As I look back over our reading list these past five years, I am amazed at the breadth and depth of the selections. Our two leaders truly deserve this Shout Out as they have deftly summed up each selection for us, and kept us right up to date on the most interesting bestsellers out there. Belonging to this group has not only expanded my book knowledge but has also increased my friendships with our numerous members. Looking forward to many more enjoyable years of reading, learning and friendship with our AAUW Book Club.



By Becky Copenhaver

Happy New Year everyone! I'm excited about what 2024 has to offer us and how we can be a helper along the way.

As diversity chair for our branch, I have been invited to join (once a month) other AAUW diversity leaders on Zoom throughout the United States as we discuss issues of interest on the topic of diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI). It is interesting to hear about what the other branches are doing, and it has made me realize how lucky we are here in Plymouth-Canton when we participate in various activities, such as buying books on diversity for local school districts. At these monthly meetings, members share incidents of being blocked with any of their ideas or projects. One branch bought books on diversity for their local library, only to have a group check out all the books and keep them out of the library with a flier stating, "Save our white children." Many branches are scared and worried about even participating in controversial topics.

One of the ideas mentioned was to have an in-person meeting or a Zoom meeting about topics that might be difficult to discuss. There is a website called "Living Room Conversations" which give rules and guidelines for instigating such a discussion. I am proposing we try one of these discussions in March (date forthcoming). We could talk about anything you suggest at a later time, but I would like the first meeting to be on the membership rule for AAUW. I myself have never heard both sides discussed, and I would like to hear that before I vote in April. I hope everyone will join me for that meeting on Zoom wherever you are at the time. I will send the date, rules for discussion, and the Zoom link in February.

One last thing – Canton will be hosting a traveling exhibit called, "We Don't Want Them" Race and Housing in Metropolitan Detroit. This exhibit serves as a tool to begin looking deeper into the issues of racial equity in Metro Detroit. The exhibit will be on display at the Summit on the Park from Friday, January 12 – Sunday, January 21. There is no cost to view the exhibit, which will be set up in the pre-function area in the Summit Banquet Center. For more information on the exhibit call 734-394-5185. If you google "We don't want them" you can watch a short video on the exhibit. Who knows? That could be another topic for our conversations.

### **Membership Care & Concern**

Laurie Kempisty has recently been diagnosed with breast cancer and is having tests in the coming few weeks to plan a course of treatment. Her doctors have been encouraging and Laurie is feeling positive and is confident of a good outcome.

## **BOOK GROUP**

The Book Group celebrated its fifth anniversary in November with a discussion of Tom Lake by Ann Patchett. Our next meeting is at 5:30pm on January 25th at Becky Copenhaver's home. We will be discussing The Covenant of Water by Verghese. All are welcome!



Helene and Mickey

## Memories from 2007

*(Long article but a lot of history of our Plymouth-Canton branch)*

When we moved to Plymouth from Connecticut where I had been active in the League of Women Voters and a history teacher, I was looking for an organization to join. I attended a meeting of AAUW held in the cafeteria of West Middle School on Ann Arbor-Trail and was hooked. Lynn Culotta was president at the time, and I thought this was a very interesting group of women involved in the community and issues of the day. There were a lot of tables about various interest groups for people to sign up for. As a stay-at-home mom with two young children at the time, this was my salvation. I joined a variety of groups and became a very active member. Later, when the children were older and my career took more of my time, I did less with AAUW, but now semi-retired, I am again more active.

A former member, Mimi Settles, started the Plymouth Co-Op Nursery School along with another woman. AAUW introduced me to this school and my daughters attended. There I met a lot of other AAUW members and carpoled with Marlene Llyod and Carol Kavalhuna.

The gourmet group of AAUW was an offshoot of the Plymouth Newcomer's Club and for a while, we were in both, but couldn't handle all the fine dining. We had a morning book club and many activities for stay-at home moms during the day. Sometimes we brought our kids when we would collate the Catalyst. My kids enjoyed attending play practice and watching their mother make a fool of herself on stage. In Cinderella I danced as the male with Mary Uhl. Donna Rennolds made a lot of the costumes in those days and Sally Fedus really cracked us up as stage manager with her jokes and antics.

I enjoyed the role of hostess for our meetings, finding places to meet, and arranging food. At one time we had an excess treasury, and I had the pleasant task of ordering lots of food and treats for meetings. I also arranged speakers for our well-attended monthly meetings that attracted educated women. We had elaborate tea and coffee servers with traditional fancy table service. I remember carting all these fancy implements to various locations. Now I serve as the Educational Foundation and the Legal Advocacy Chairperson.

Sometimes I meet former members, Terry Secord was a member and started a chapter in AZ when she retired. Shirley McKeon and her husband often talked about the early plays when Jim built and carted scenery. AAUW has touched many lives in the Plymouth-Canton community.

Another activity that was meaningful was belonging to the Investment Club. We had quite a few members including Nancey Vernon, Esther Nelson, Sandy Gross, and Pam Rawlinson. We studied stocks and charted them before we purchased them as a club. We learned about the workings of the stock market. Many memories are connected with the annual Book Sale. We stored and sorted in the basement of St. John's Seminary, and then for a while at West Middle School, among other places. We had a huge sale at Westland Shopping Mall and a collection box at the Plymouth Library. Now, as President of the Friends of the Plymouth Library, we appreciate AAUW turning this money raising activity over to us. I enjoyed selling paperback books for AAUW at a rented booth during the Plymouth Fall Festival.



-- Dorothy Grant--

## PUBLIC POLICY

Mickey Edell

Happy New Year to all!! Although I tend not to make resolutions—too easily broken—I do take the opportunity at the beginning of each year to ponder and renew my commitments, especially to the AAUW mission of equity for all women and girls.

As you might have read in the latest Washington Update, AAUW is also making a commitment to all of you. This year AAUW will:

- Continue fighting for all women to achieve economic self-sufficiency through pay equity and paid family leave policies.
- Advocate for a strengthened Title IX and a strong system of public education that promotes gender fairness, equity, and diversity.
- Pursue policies that advance full access to civil rights for a diverse society.

December 13<sup>th</sup> marked the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Equal Rights Amendment's introduction to the U.S. House of Representatives. As a founding partner of the ERA Coalition's National Strategy Task Force, AAUW marched alongside the ERA Coalition and partners in Washington D.C. to call on Congress to affirm the ERA and for President Biden to publish the ERA as the 28<sup>th</sup> Amendment to the U.S. Constitution.

Together we can advance the policies that continue to break down educational and economic barriers for women.

### **FYI:**

Names that will appear on the February 27<sup>th</sup> Michigan presidential primary ballot, depending on which ballot you choose.

Democratic Party: Joseph R. Biden, Jr., Dean Phillips, Marianne Williamson

Republican Party: Ryan Brinkley, Chris Christie, Ron DeSantis, Nikki Haley, Asa Hutchinson, Vivek Ramaswamy, Donald J. Trump.

Governor Whitmer's 6<sup>th</sup> State of the State address will be January 24<sup>th</sup> at 7:00 p.m.

**If you haven't, please sign up and become a Two-Minute Activist.**

(You can accomplish this easily on the National AAUW website.)

**It takes just minutes and an internet connection to make your voices heard on issues impacting women and girls.**

**May 2024 bring us closer to our goal of equity for all women and girls.**

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ANNOUNCEMENT FROM NORTHVILLE-NOVI AAUW:

MICHIGAN FASHION DESIGNER SHOWCASE

'Peek at the Unique II'

Saturday, April 13, 2024 9:15 AM - 1:15 PM -- VisTaTech Center, Schoolcraft College.

**Tickets go on sale FEBRUARY 1st.**