



Catalyst

Plymouth-Canton Branch
September 2023

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September Branch Meeting

**Thursday, September 21 at 6:30 pm
Plymouth Community Arts Council**

Welcome Back!!! September has the feeling of a new year as we get back to business after the summer break. When you check your calendar, make sure "AAUW meeting" is underlined to show its importance.

Dr. Melissa Machnee is a woman with many areas of interest and experience including welding – yes, a woman welder. At the meeting she will tell us about her welding career – her path to becoming a professional, and her passion for sculpture.

She developed courses in welding, metal sculpture, and traditional sculpture which she teaches at Schoolcraft CC and Wayne County CC. She has semi-private sculpture park called Goose Lake Sculpture Park, which currently holds over 20 of her sculptures.

In addition, she is devoted to yoga which she practices in her daily life and also teaches. She received her Yoga Teacher Training Certification at Vedangas in Rishikesh-Himalaya, India in January 2013.

We hope you will join us to meet this very interesting speaker and reconnect with friends.

The meeting begins at 6:30 with a light supper of pizza, salad, dessert, and beverages.

Please plan to pay \$10.

From the Presidents ...

Dear AAUW Friends,

We hope that you had a wonderful summer and are now ready for school buses rolling down your streets, cooler weather ahead, colorful leaves on trees and mums decorating front porches.

We are so happy to welcome you to our first meeting of the 2023-24 year on Thursday, September 21st at 6:30 pm at the Plymouth Arts Council. Please invite a friend, relative and/or work colleague to join us at this first meeting.

Spread the word about AAUW! Many women are searching for a group to join and are interested in learning about our Plymouth-Canton Branch. Just in the past few weeks, we have talked to neighbors who are out for their morning walk and have stopped to chat and to former colleagues who are now retired and want to know about joining the group, attending meetings and performing in our annual children's play. And there even was the young bank representative who asked about our group after our AAUW banking business was finished!

Some people have asked what our group stands for and have asked if we are a political organization. Our answer is that AAUW is non-partisan, but not values-neutral. We fight to remove barriers and biases that stand in the way of gender equity. Our mission is to advance gender equity for women and girls through education, advocacy and research. The AAUW National and State of Michigan websites (aauw.org) are also great resources for new (and current) members.

So bring a friend with you to the meeting and find out about the wonderful speakers and programs that are lined up for the year. We'll be discussing the annual children's play, scholarship program, election news, book club, holiday event, AAUW Michigan spring convention (yes, we're hosting!!) and so much more! And of course we can't forget the friendship, food and fun we enjoy together, as well!

Dawn and Mickey



This year, as of April 1, dues are \$94 (\$72 for national, \$12 for state, and \$10 for our branch).

Renewing is quick and easy – most of us are used to buying online with a credit card. If you haven't renewed, and it is time – **do it now!** Some members joined in December or January (especially true of play members.) Look for a reminder in your email from the National

(and from me) when it is time for you to renew.

Sue Sayers, Membership Chair



I was thinking about students going back to school, and as a teacher myself, I remember how exciting it was to start a new school year. Meeting the diverse students or new staff, arranging seating patterns, etc. were all part of the routine. I was always concerned about how the students dealt with diversity when I wasn't around.

Then I started thinking about the increasingly popular buzzword I'm hearing lately – Allyship. Allyship is shortly defined as using your power and your privilege to help marginalized groups and individuals empower themselves. Rita Bhasin states that “when we are an ally, we don't self identify as coming from a particular community or a group, but stand next to that community or behind them. Never in front - as a friend, an advocate, or a supporter. We might not identify as coming from that group, but advocate for their advancement.”

Whatever the new word is, as a former teacher I just hope everyone looks after each other and respects them as individuals. Have a great school year everyone!

On another note: The St. John's House for new Americans is about ready to welcome the first refugee family. Hopefully by the next Catalyst I'll have more information.

Becky Copenhaver



Cinderella Play Tryouts: Wed., Oct. 25

You know that old expression, "If the shoe fits"? Well, we'd like to think the shoe fits on all our AAUW members when it comes to our annual play because we are performing the mother of all plays involving a shoe: Cinderella!

Play tryouts will be Wed., Oct. 25 at 6pm at Mickey Edell's house, 47927 Vistas Circle Dr., S. Please come out and have a blast as we audition for parts. It sounds so official but the last thing our tryouts are is SERIOUS. We also hope to have a Zoom link for tryouts if you can't be there. And, if you can't make the tryout, just email me or Meredith with what part you might like!

This year's play will be held at Garden City High School from Jan. 31 - Feb. 3.

See you there!

Meredith Conte
mereconte@outlook.com

Monica Nick
mmnick@yahoo.com

Co-directors

Promoting Public Policy

Mickey Edell, Public Policy Director

For me, starting another AAUW year is energizing and exciting and a reminder that our fight for equity for women and girls must continue.

On August 26th AAUW and a number of other like-minded women's organizations celebrated Women's Equality Day in Livonia. Our speakers included Laura Callow, AAUW Livonia, Meghan Kissell, AAUW National Public Policy, and MI Representative Laurie Pohutsky. Their fervor, knowledge, and dedication instilled all of us with the importance of passing the Equal Rights Amendment.

In March 2023 Rep. Pohutsky introduced House Concurrent Resolution 3, which was passed by the House and calls on the Archivist of the United States to certify and publish the ERA as the 28th Amendment to the Constitution. She has stated, "This resolution is a reminder that our work is not yet done, when it comes to our commitment that all people, regardless of their gender, should share equally in the rights they deserve, and that Congress still needs to pass the ERA."

Laura Callow gave a detailed history of the ERA, since it was introduced in 1923 by Alice Paul, and emphasized that we can further this great pause by voting. We must make sure we know the positions of the candidates and be sure to let them know that we want the ERA ratified. Laura reminded us of Susan B. Anthony's words, "Failure is impossible." And Laura added, "As long as we are vigilant."

Meghan Kissell, Senior Director, Policy and Member Advocacy for AAUW, indicated that National AAUW is working in coalition with other gender equity and civil rights organizations, including the ERA Coalition. AAUW is mobilizing AAUW advocates and members through targeted calls to action on important legislation like J. Res. 17/S.J. Res.1, which would remove the deadline for ratification of the ERA.

So, we must spread the word to our friends, co-workers, relatives—and anyone who will listen—that the 28th Amendment must be cemented into the Constitution to protect the rights of all women. Let our mantra be #Embrace Equality!

What is Public Policy?

Public policies are contained in laws, rules, regulations, decisions, and practices created by

- executive, legislative, and judicial branches
- government bureaucracies
- regulatory agencies
- other public decision-making bodies

Reach every Victim of Trafficking, Leave no one Behind

This is this year's theme, and July 30th was designated the "World Day against Trafficking in Persons to raise awareness and strengthen global efforts for the preservation and elimination of Human Trafficking". An informative webinar discussing this issue is posted on the AAUW website if you missed the original the program. For more information on trafficking crack downs, contact global@aauw.org.

Dorothy Grant

Memories AAUW Plymouth-Canton Branch
April 2007

Esther Nelson

I became a member in 1976. The first meeting at West Middle Schools in January 1977 was a riot. There were all these perfectly groomed women with beautiful linens and beverages were served from a silver tea set. My first thought was “this isn’t going to work”. My branch in Pennsylvania was much more relaxed. Fortunately, Donna Rennolds came up and introduced herself. She was totally relaxed and made me feel welcome. We later became good friends and worked on the play for many years. I have served as treasurer, corresponding secretary and have worked on costumes as well as various committees over the last 30 years.

Mickey Edell

The small twists and turns of fate that lead us into the future can seem insignificant at the moment. When Sharon and Pam encouraged me to accept the role of Figaro in Pinocchio 20 years ago, I quickly acquiesced. How could anyone have predicted the grandiose impact one small decision would make in my life? After one play season I was definitely addicted.I am so grateful for the leadership opportunities and experience that have enhanced my existence and provided for personal growth. The greatest gift of all has been the friendship, love, and spirit of my branch. You are to be celebrated and “touted” as the best!



Mary Fritz

I really got to know the membership in my term as program chairman and later as president. During this time, the area was experiencing rapid growth and many eligible women were able to join the branch. Study groups met in the homes, usually in the evening. The branch has always had members with exceptional talent and executive ability. Among those were Shirley Spaniel, Director of Elementary Education, Plymouth-Canton, Elaine Kirchgatter, Clerk of Canton Township, and Jane Moehle, Trustee Schoolcraft College. Esther Hulsing was on the Plymouth-Canton School Board and was a dynamic leader in community activities. A significant number were teachers. Others had administrative positions in area schools and in the private sector. I am a dual member of the Venice, Florida Branch and a member of their book group. This article was compiled and edited by Dorothy Grant.

BOOK GROUP

Here's our schedule for the next few months. All are welcome to join us!

Thursday, September 28 – Drowning by TJ Newman at Mickey's

Thursday, October 26 -- First Ladies by Marie Benedict at Kay's

Thursday, November 30 -- Tom Lake by Anne Patchett at Esther's

The group does not meet in December.

We are planning to read Covenant of Water by Verghese for January. We did not set a date or host for that meeting.

Take care all -- Helene and Mickey

